

Title:

An interview with drummer Mykill(mike) aresco of Dead skin mask, pawns of christ and formerly of Lost Soul

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Summary:

An impressive interview with an impressive drumme mike aresco.

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Article Body:

Tribute bands usually play the music of a certain to get people through the door to see the bands OWN songs thrown in between the artist of tribute. Since December 2004, I have been watching one band in particular, a Slayer tribute act. Not once, has this band added their own music to their set list. NOT ONCE. When a fan of a band (particularly Slayer) is out on the town checking out live entertainment, they what to see what they are paying for, a tribute. Not a little of this and a little of that. So, do they have their own songs? According to the drummer of the band, yes. Dead Skin Mask is the most accurate Slayer tribute band I have ever seen. Monster drum kit, stacks of amps, and most important, the ability to convey the music through that equipment. That is what really counts. There is no Slayer act out there better than Dead Skin Mask, well except for the metal masters themselves. To date I have checked out a handful of them, since I have lived all around the USA. I have contacted the drummer of the band, to get the inside info on the Dead Skin Mask project and the progress of their original music as well as the scoop on what he is up to...

Slayer Girl: So Dead Skin Mask isn't "dead"!

Mykill: (Laugh) Nah! We are around. There are a lot of different things I'm doing. Sometimes one is put on "hold" for a bit. But, with exception of one in particular, I really enjoy my bands.

SG: Which one do you not?

M: Hahaha! I .. uhh.. Yup!

Sg: I see. DSM is writing originals now?

M: Oh yeah. It has been talk for a while, but we are in the process now. Between The 3 of them (Danny M, Joey K, Romeo V) there are some great ideas. One of the last projects, the guy wanted to write poseur ass ballads, like love song sh*t! I hate that crap. The "hair band" and bullsh*t spandex days are fortunately dead and buried. This band is into some serious music, not like the ridiculous sh*t that other guy is into.

SG: So I take it you don't like love songs?

M: No, not really. There is what I listen to... What I buy... and what I compose. All 3 are VERY different. My CD collection would make you think I'm schizophrenic.

SG: How many projects are you involved with right now?

M: Well, a new development has arisen. A while back, I came up with this name the last band (1 person) did not like. It could have been used as a song or album title. I really wanted to use it as the name of the band, but certain people were/are set in their ridiculous ways. So, on one of the many hiatus's this particular band had, three of us used it. The name I came up with is PAWNS OF CHRIST. Angel F, Romeo V, and I decided that we 3 will go on working together, and that will be our band name. It will have absolutely NO connection to the "other" band we were in. NOTHING at all! The music will be a combination of all our tastes combined. Not so much just that of one like before. The past endeavor was discouraging. Idiots not showing up, scheduling a practice... then not showing up, canceling shows, and so on. Real childish sh*t. Well, the three of us are sick of it. All 3 of us will now go on leaving the "problem" behind, so to speak.

SG: Issues?

M: Me? Nah!

SG: So you must practice a lot?

M: ahhll, mostly the only time I play is when we practice or play a show. The way my life is situated right now, does not really allow me to. When I need to write something, I pretty much compose it in my head, and am fortunate enough to be able to "play my thoughts". Yea, it takes a run through or so, but not much more than that. I recall a time when what I would "play in my head" was way more difficult than I could actually do. I am glad that I have been able to develop the skills, in actual ability, to be able to do that. Real glad.

SG: What do you do to get ready before a live performance?

M: I try to get my hands on as much coffee as I can! (laugh) Usually that is difficult, though. I think we will have to add fresh coffee to our rider! I stretch a bit, do some little things to get the blood flowin. Usually the pre-show nerves and adrenalin are enough for that.

SG: So no pre-show rituals or superstitious activities?

M: Of course, blood drinking and we all talk in 3 word sentences.

SG: Really?!

M: No. I'm kidding. How are you recording this anyway?

SG: I have a receiver-mounted microphone that goes to a micro cassette. A suction cup holds it to the earpiece and it picks up both ends of the conversation.

M: Aah.

SG: So how many songs are played at "sound check"?

M:(laugh) None! There are many factors that prevent it. Most of the time, it is because of the lame-assed bands ahead of us. They all have to COMPLETELY disassemble their sh*t in the stage. F*cking losers. There are so many reasons, it is pathetic.

SG: Who is the biggest name you have shared the stage with?

M: Biggest to me, or the "biggest" name?

SG: Both.

M: Well to the general public, the biggest names would be Judas Priest, Budgie, and George Lynch. There are a few more, but I don't want to be obnoxious. To me, though, it has to be Fear Factory and Exodus. Once again, there are more, but I'll stop there.

SG: What band(s) did you do that with?

M:(silence)

SG: Okay! What is Pawns of Christ about?

M: What does the name mean, or what is the project about?

SG: Both again.

M: Well, the definition of the project is simple, fast. The material is a style that the 3 of us could not do before due to... whatever. As for the name, uhm. Supposedly we are all here and really have no control of what is to happen. Call it fate, karma, God, whatever. There is some force that controls everything. I heard the metaphor that life is a tape that is playing. We don't know what is ahead, but it is already recorded. We just have not "heard" it yet. We're puppets, so to speak, no control over anything. Our actions seem like our doing, but some say it is not. Something is controlling us, moving us...just as in chess. The pawns are of the least value, therefore, they are sacrificed first. They are almost worthless. Just as humanity is, or seems to be if you look at it a certain way. Just look around you. Life is not exactly great. All the sh*t balls around, and whatnot. I don't want to step on too many toes, so I'll stop there. Hope I answered you somewhat.

SG: Somewhat, damn!

M: Alrighty!

SG: So 'Pawns' will be heavy, musically?

M: You could say that. Lyrically...I don't want to even consider the bullsh*t it will contain. All of us are pretty god dam angry about something or other.

SG: I see in all you interviews with other people talk of your drum set. You seem to love talking about your "stuff". What are you using?

M: And oh how I do. I am using the best. Just like when I first started back when I was 12 or 13. But today, it is on a larger scale. The drums I use are the strongest I have EVER seen. TAMA, of course. I have somewhat older ones. The toms are a combination of older ROCKSTAR DX, and newer SWINGSTAR's. My Kicks are ROCKSTAR PRO. Also a bit older. The pedals I use vary from time to time. Mostly I use my HP-25's. I believe they are called FLEXIFLYER. Other times I use modified IRON COBRA JR's. I have 2 18X22 SWINGSTAR kicks still in the boxes. I just have to replace my older toms with the same sizes of newer ones. I don't need to, but I do want to. My gear is fine as is, but new is good! So I have, right now, 2 26" kicks, 2 MTH 100's, 1 MTH 900, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 mounted

toms and a 16 floor. Maple 3.5 X 14" piccolo snare.

Cymbals are also top notch, especially. PAISTE. I use a combination of almost series line they came out with! RUDE, 2002, 3000, SIGNATURE, 2000, DIMENSIONS, ALPHA, PST 3, PST 5, 802, 502's (new and older), 2000 COLORSOUND...I think that is all. If I keep going, I'll rattle off all the sizes of each and every one!

SG: NA, NA, NA...

M: Okay, then... Sticks are VATER 3A FATBACK nylon. With VATER stick and finger tape.

SG: You wear gloves, too.

M: Yeah.

SG: I see! Are you about your projects?

M: Well, very. I will take what talent, or whatever you want to call it, as far as I'm allowed to, whatever that means.

SG: Whom do you admire, or, who influenced you?

M: DAM! No short answers for these 2! Shhhewww, where do I start? Growing up, it was Ron Bushy. My parents had 2 Iron Butterfly records I adored. Ron Tutt from Elvis fame caught my ear as well. I heard a solo he did way back when....WOW!!! During that time The Police were pretty popular. Stewart Copeland was cool. I liked his riffs. Well, I still do. Around then I was finding Alex Van Halen. I focused on him for years. As a younger kid, he was the most sought after in my little world. I really dug his work. You have to remember, ALL these drummers, I really admire. There is no order to which are "better" or not. All are so different, musically, that this is in no way a comparison.

SG: OKAY, OKAY!

M: I just want to stress that fact, that's all. Later I got into heavier music. Drummers like Dave Lombardo, Louie Clemente, Charlie Benante, Sid Falck, Paul Bostaph, Raymond Herrera, Scott Travis...wow, I just realized that most if not all use TAMA and or PAISTE! Sh*t, coincidence? Hmm. All of them are great drummers, it only makes sense that they would also use great gear as well.

SG: So sharing the stage with JP must have been an honor and a thrill?

M: Those 2 words don't even express what I feel when I recollect that show!

SG: What is this Internet Band I saw on the Lost Soul Forum?

M: Oh yeah, Lost Soul was my old band from back in Connecticut. The guitar player (Bryan Reilly) and I are collaborating again. It, as of yet, is just in a real beginning phase. He is putting together some riffs, and I have some drum ideas I need to record and e-mail him. I don't know exactly what to expect with this type of arrangement. Bryan (Reilly) is great, so as for quality of the material, I am not concerned at all. It will be very good, with out a doubt. So Bryan and I are going to send ideas to one and other, and see what pops up...

SG: Sorry to cut you off, but won't that be expensive and extremely time-consuming?

M: In today's digital age, it is a lot easier and quicker than one would think. The worst part is writing the music. The easy part is recording and transferring files via FTP or e-mail. It is instantaneous. No more waiting for an ADAT tape or cassette through the Postal System. Don't get me wrong. I love ADATS. That is what I record everything on. I'll transfer the 8 tracks to the computer then convert them to a WAV or MP3 for FTP.

SG: How's it going?

M: Software and computer glitches have delayed this way more than necessary. I'm very optimistic, though. Bryan is amazing on the geetar. Your phone bill is gonna kill you for this conversation!

SG: Nah, it is a cell and after 7pm.

M: ...alright.

SG: I guess this will be my last one. I'm sure you are busy...

M: (sarcastically) OH YEAH, SURE AM!!!!

SG: ...anyway, what is the largest group you have played for at one time?

M: Something close to 2,500. A bit less or bit more. Around there.

Wow! A very entertaing interview. Most musicians I interview to are way too serious. Some act as if they're out to cure the world of its ails. RIGHT! A big thanks to Mike for his time and cooperation. I truly appreciate it. Check out some of his sites:

<http://www.mykill.net>
<http://www.lostsoulband.com>
<http://www.pawnsofchrist.com>
<http://www.deadskinmask.com>

Later,
SLAYER GIRL.