

Let's start off by introducing your band Zeal & Ardor! You'll warm up the crowd before the mighty Behemoth, what do you play and what is your mission here?

We play a mix of Black Metal and slave spirituals. Our mission is to unify the crowd and get them ready to have their eyebrows burned off by Behemoth. Our music has a lot of vocals (we have three singers) and it is inviting for people to sing along. That was never our intention, but it happens. After a crowd of people sings together they are more open to extreme experiences, because they feel a sort of camaraderie. That's what we're here for.

Tell us about the beginning of Z&A – let's jump over the famous 4chan story, that everyone can find on google, did you have any interest in Afro-American culture already before that or 4chan just opened the doors to something absolutely new? Would there be any similar form of Z&A even without 4chan?

I did have a passing interest in it. But it wasn't something I really looked into before that incident. I'm sure I would be making music in another capacity, but probably not these particular genres.

4chan influenced your path to Zeal & Ardor, are you still visiting the website for influences and ideas?

Not regularly, I'm usually too caught up in things. It is a great way to lose a lot of time.

Your previous project Birdmask wasn't that popular as Z&A, was it your intent to find something that could grow faster? The departure from chamber pop to avant-garde metal is something that just doesn't happen overnight.

Not at all. I started Zeal & Ardor just for myself. I would never had thought it would get this popular. It's really just luck.

Moving on to the tour! As I already said it before, you are coming to Riga with Behemoth, what do you think of them?

Behemoth are just one of those bands you think of as mainstays. They have set the standard for mainland european Black Metal and that is no small feat. We are beyond excited to be able to play with them.

Behemoth have been playing almost for 30 years and they have almost 350 000 listeners on Spotify, you on the other hand have been around only for 6 years with ~116 000 listening ears, do you consider your band big?

Not at all. We know that we were a hype based band and we know that doesn't last forever. We want people to see that we actually are worth seeing and not just an interesting story from the internet. But that is something we still are trying to do, so it would be very silly of me to say we are big.

Back in nineties, black metal took over the metal community, could such a genre that you created exist back in nineties?

Maybe. It was such a different time, since the internet wasn't there to spread things globally in a second. So maybe it even did exist, but it simply stayed obscure.

From the last album "Stranger Fruit" my favorite song is "We can't be found" with the "Disposable Heroes" -ish part in the beginning, do you have any favorite part or parts in the new record?

It's weird, but because we played it so much my favorite parts keep changing. It's usually a segment that we recently made better. That being said, I do enjoy that part quite a bit.

In an interview in 2014 you said that your perfect breakfast would include coffee, fruits, pancakes, different types of bread and a variety of cheeses. Has anything changed since then considering you are now playing completely different genre?

I forgot about meat. How could I have forgotten about meat?!

I've done a lot of interviews, but only few of them were via email. Once I had a band from Saudi Arabia, Al-Namrood and they were afraid that someone could catch them spreading the metal music. Are you afraid of anything nowadays?

I don't think so. At least nothing special. I'm afraid of stepping in water with fresh socks on after a shower, but I think every human shares that fear. Other than that sort of thing, I think I'm ok. Even if everything with Zeal & Ardor ends tonight I'm just happy with what we've gotten to experience.

What's in the future for Zeal & Ardor?

We're not quite sure. It would be easy to continue with a similar sound and put out an album every year, but I think we would be disappointed in ourselves. I'd rather take some time to figure out how to expand on the idea and hopefully create something new and interesting.