

WOLFPACK UNLEASHED

At the vanguard of the revitalized thrash-metal genre is Wolfpack Unleashed, whose debut release, "Anthems of Resistance," combines traditional thrash and bash with a keen sense of melody in the swirling guitars of Wops Koch and Karl Preininger. Bassist and vocalist Günther "Tschunta" Wirth took some time out of his busy schedule—Wolfpack Unleashed is presently touring with Visions of Atlantis—to discuss his views on thrash and politics.

EI: What would you say attracted you to thrash metal so much that it made you want to play it?

GÜNTHER WIRTH: "It's the great and intensive mix of aggression-speed and melody—that are united in thrash. Generally, it is a very emotional kind of music. If you listen to those classics like Megadeth, Testament or Metallica, you are kind of forced to move your head. Thrash also demands good musicianship to play it, so it is very interesting for musicians to listen to a thrash song, to dive into it, chop it and find out the all the details. It's just the music we love and that we wanted to play."

EI: Tell me about "Anthems of Resistance." What can listeners expect to experience?

GÜNTHER WIRTH: "It is a melodic thrash album in the style of early bay-area bands like Megadeth, Exodus, Testament or Metallica, charged with minor chords to generate a more unique music because in thrash it seems that every riff has already been written. It is a balancing act between old school without ripping anything off and a modern sound without being just trendy, like lots of these casted plastic neothrash bands."

EI: "Anthems of Resistance" tackles many sociological and political issues. Would you call yourselves a political band or would you simply say that you are merely reflecting many of the concerns of today's complicated world?

GÜNTHER WIRTH: "Generally, for me it's no bad thing, to be political. Every opinion is some kind of politics. It depends on the way you [express] your opinion. Song texts should not impose something, they should inspire [for listeners to] think [for themselves]. So the answer to your question is a yes and a no."

EI: How do you go about composing a song, both musically and lyrically?

GÜNTHER WIRTH: "First of all, the riffs, the melodies and the song-structure are generated by [guitarist] Wops [Koch] or [guitarist] Karl [Preininger]. They make a rough recording on a PC and send that file via mp3 to the rest of us, so everybody can comment and [provide] some input and do their homework by writing the text, creating the drum-line or a solo. After this, maybe the song gets modified a little to optimize it—for example, on the vocal-line. For the lyrics, most times the topic develops out of the music, of its mood. Then I Google this topic to get a little inspiration; when I find something that fits, I write the text by listening to the song and trying to fit the lines into it until I'm satisfied with it. Sometimes the texts are more personal, and [in such cases] I don't need to investigate."

EI: What's the best thing about recording in the studio? What's the worst?

GÜNTHER WIRTH: "I think the best thing is to be part of a new thing, to watch everything grow and finally to hear the final songs for the first time when everything is finished. The worst thing, if there is any, is maybe listening to the same five seconds of a song about a hundred times to find what is disturbing you—something that makes you mad—that just doesn't fit into the whole thing. Nobody else but you is hearing it, and it drives you crazy, but you cannot define it."

EI: Your vocals sound just like those of Metallica's James Hetfield. Is this mere coincidence or intentional on your part?

GÜNTHER WIRTH: "Well, Wops wanted vocals that fit the music, that are aggressive and melodic at the same time. He didn't want a singer that shouts down all details and melodies. So we met one day and rehearsed for probe and it felt good from the beginning. There is no intention to sound like Hetfield, although he is a great frontman. For sure he is some kind of an idol, but in fact this is my voice and my kind of singing, so even if I wanted, I couldn't do it any other way. But I think my singing is a little rougher and more aggressive, and in some parts I use growls too, so in my opinion there is a difference, too."

EI: Are you presently working on new material? If so, can you give me a sneak peek as to what to expect?

GÜNTHER WIRTH: "In the meantime we have already a couple of new songs, although we have to write some more to reach album-length and these songs have to be worked a bit. The new songs are an enhancement of the trademarks of 'Anthems of Resistance.' On the one hand, we have very technical and fast songs that will rip some heads off; on the other hand, there are really great hymns with epic and heroic choruses."

EI: Anything you would like to add?

GÜNTHER WIRTH: "Thanks for the interview. I hope some people check out our record, maybe they'll like it. And don't forget: thrash or be thrashed!"

Octavio Ramos Jr.

