

TEMUJIN



Pretty soon after starting up my own Myspace page, I got a request from a band. Nothing much special about that, since so many bands desperately try to promote themselves through Myspace. Every now and then, one gets lucky and discovers something new or "catchy" and you click on more than one song of their Myspace player to check out their music. Exactly what happened with the Australian Goth metal band "Temujin" and their music.

The more I listened, the more Kelly's voice enchanted me. No eerie Goth distorted guitar sounds, but guitarist Karl seems to be born with the instrument and the floating "up and down -Rammstein-touch", really makes my Goth soul rock. Where Evanescence really bored me after their debut album, and where Nightwish just sounds the same for me each song, Temujin just fills every gap. Made me curious enough to buy their album "1000 Tears", and I have put it on repeat quite a few times. For more information on the band, check: <http://www.myspace.com/temujin1>. Interview by Lucretius

Please introduce yourselves...

Kelly - Hello, I'm Kelly. I sing, play keyboards, and write the lyrics and melodies for Temujin. This is my first 'professional' band, and I'm loving it!
Karl - I play guitars, bass and drums in Temujin. I've been in several earlier bands, mostly metal, and this is the band I've been waiting for.

What does "Temujin" mean? How did you come up with that name for the band?

Karl - 'Temujin' is the tribal birth name of the Mongol warlord Genghis Khan. We spent a lot of time and energy trying various names, and finally decided on Temujin because it had the right 'feel'. No special meaning for us - we're not Mongolian, and we're not warlords!

On your Myspace page it says: "Australian metal". A lot of Goths love to put everything in pigeon holes. Would it be ok to categorize your music as "Gothic metal"? And how do both of you feel about "labelling" music?

Kelly - The "Australian Metal" tag is just something we like to use to help differentiate ourselves from the other bands out there. Our music is just whatever it is, though. We're more than happy to write tracks, put them out there, and let people find them. Gothic Metal feels like an excellent description to us because we certainly draw inspiration from many other bands that are often tagged with that label.

What's the Gothic scene like in Australia / Victoria ?

Karl - Dedicated, but relatively small I guess. Although Melbourne is a big city (3.5million), there's so many 'scenes' running side by side. The local metal scene has always been a big part of my life, and I've been involved in the punk scene in the past to some extent. Even though these lifestyles are relatively small in number, the sense of community is strong.



How has the response so far been to "1000 Tears"?

Karl - Excellent. As an unsigned band the hardest part is actually getting product into people's hands, so we've focused on getting as many independent avenues up and running as possible. The end result has been great, and we've had a fantastic response from all over the world.

Are there any plans for touring? Any festivals or places you dream about?

Karl - Australia is a difficult place to build a following with live performances - there is a real lack of venues and no industry support for any music that isn't clearly "top 40" material. So we've put the initial focus on writing and recording. That's pushed touring very much into the background. That will change soon, although gigs outside Australia are not likely in the near future.

Kelly - We'd love to play at some of the festivals like "Metal Female Voices Fest" or "Flight Of the Valkyries". Perhaps in 2008 we can achieve one of our goals and make it onto the bill at one of these.

You produced the album yourself. How was that and why?

Karl - It's hard to find producers in Melbourne with much experience in Metal, especially featuring female vocals. So we decided to handle the production ourselves. The advantage is that we knew pretty much how we wanted it all to sound, and we were able to keep the production focused on what we felt was important. The bad news though is that production is a skill all of it's own, and it sometimes took a long time to get the results we were after. We're looking at doing some new recording later in the year, and we might try bringing in a producer this time to see what difference it makes.

Personally I was really impressed by the vocal talent of Kelly. Kelly, how did singing began for you? How did you end up with Karl?

Kelly - Since I was a kid I have always loved to sing. My mum is welsh and used to sing at home all the time. I used to muck around with my friends with a microphone and sing along to our favourite records. In high school I was involved in a music group and recorded some demo's on a 4 track but I'd never had any formal vocal training. Karl and I were introduced by mutual friends. He had written a couple of tracks and was keen to find a vocalist. I had a listen and really liked what I heard - the rest as they say is history.

Karl, is Temujin different than the other bands you were involved with?

Karl -Very different. I spent almost 10 years in 'Nothing Sacred', and we were very much a speed metal band by the end of that time. Loved it, and would do it all again if I had my time over, but with Temujin it was time to move in a different direction. We both want to focus on writing music with 'depth', and Temujin feels much less 'one-dimensional' than my earlier bands.

The cd comes with a single leaflet. To my regret no song texts. Was that a deliberate choice? Furthermore, who writes the lyrics? Where do you get your inspiration for that? Can you explain how it works?

Kelly - Yes it was deliberate, but not because we don't want the lyrics published. Basically it comes down to economizing - we had limited funds to produce the CD and a single leaflet cut the cost considerably. Since the release though we've had lots of people request the lyrics of various songs so we plan to post them on an official Temujin website as soon as we can.

The lyrics are written mostly by myself, however All Of You and Throwing Stones were co-written by Karl. The inspiration for the songs come from life experience and the process is a very personal journey for both of us. There's no formula approach- some lyrics are written prior to the music and vice versa. The songs are constantly evolving and often sound completely different from start to finish.

Why "refuse to be denied"?

Karl - It's just a great motto for life. Basically, when you know you're doing is right, don't allow yourself to be distracted. Stake a claim for the kind of life that you want, and don't let people bring you down.

Kelly, your outfit looks awesome. Can you tell us some more about your wardrobe preferences?

Kelly - Why thank you. People are so casual these days, sometimes it's nice to get really dressed up in sexy outfits. I love corsets and boots, anything that's black, red, purple, satin or lace. Although by day I'm often pretty casual - jeans and t-shirts are pretty standard. You can't live in a corset forever or you'll stop breathing. Love shopping for great outfits, though.

Some more personal questions: What do you both believe in? What's your view on life, religion, politics?

Kelly - Now here's a dangerous set of topic's. Will "no comment" do? No seriously, we have thoughts and opinions on things of course - everyone does, but we're not trying to make any political or religious statements through our music. As for our view on life - life is for living and you should enjoy every minute of it in whatever way makes you happy!! It's a great time to be alive, and we're determined to make the most of our opportunities.

Karl - To keep things as simple as possible, I'm a Humanist I guess. Let people be themselves, try not to get in each other's face. Not much more complicated than that.

Why the Myspace page? What's your view on Myspace? Who runs it?

Karl - MySpace has given us the opportunity to reach people all over the world. For us, that's huge. The Australian music industry has no great love of home-grown metal bands, so reaching out to Europe and the Americas is vital for us.

MySpace is such a strange place in so many ways - funded by the advertising dollars of corporate America, yet filled with so many counter-culture communities. A real contradiction on several levels.

Kelly - The Temujin site is run by both of us, alternating and trying to keep up with everything that's happening. The support from around the world has been literally overwhelming, and we've struggled occasionally to keep up with it all. We try to answer any comment or question that anyone sends to us, and we've met some fantastic people through the site.



Is there a Temujin website due?

Karl - Coming soon to an Internet near you! We've held back from doing a site until we can do it right. Partly because the MySpace site has been so successful. We hope to have a site up with the next 2 months ... just finalizing some details.

Is being in band an obstruction for your personal life's?

Kelly - Being in a band definitely crosses over into our personal lives but it's not really a problem for us because we love what we do.

Karl - In many ways our personal lives shape the band too. We draw on life to create our lyrics for example.

Do you envy other bands? Any idols for Karl and Kelly? Is there in your experience pressure amongst musicians?

Karl - I've had the pleasure of meeting one of my early idols Lemmy from Motorhead. Always loved the band and the approach to music - fast and simple. There are so many great bands to listen to and learn from but at the end of the day if I could pick any band to join, I'd be in Temujin.

Kelly - I really have a lot of admiration for Amy Lee (Evanescence). Their first album really resonated with me and inspired a lot of my own creativity. I am also a massive Foo Fighters and Bad Religion fan and would love to meet all the band members in person.

I personally have a soft spot for dragons. You use a dragon as some sort of icon on the album and the site. What's the reason or motivation behind that?

Kelly - Over the years we seem to have surrounded ourselves by dragons. It just seemed to be a logo that worked for us. Visually strong, and an easily recognized symbol.

Finally: any messages for the readers?

Karl - Thanks for reading, and thanks for listening. We love what we're doing, and we'd do it even if no one was interested! But so many of you have let us know that you enjoy it too, and we thank you for that. "1000 Tears" is just the first step in the journey, and there's plenty more yet to come. Refuse to be denied!