



16/09/2004

---

## SONATA ARCTICA: interview with Jani Liimatainen

---

*phoner by*

**Dimitris "Heartcollector83" Theodoropoulos** \_\_\_\_

08/09/2004

<http://www.gryphonmetal.ch/InterviewSonataArctica.html>

---

### FINNISH PEOPLE ARE NOT THE BEST AUDIENCE EVER

**Dimitris** -Hello Jani, how are you?

**Jani** -Oh,i'm fine this is the last interview of the day!

-So, you're in Athens?

-Yeah for the first time!

-Do you like the city?

-Well i have only seen the road from the airport to the hotel so i haven't seen anything.

-Oh ok, so lets begin with the interview. How would you compare 'Reckoning Night' with your previous albums?

-Well i think Reckoning Night is pretty much us taking the concept of Winterheart's Guild a bit forward, its a bit heavier, darker and maybe a bit more progressive and complex. People say its our most intellectual album ever whatever that means.

-Your new single 'Don't say a word' has been in the stores for a few days. What kind of response have you gotten out of it so far?

-When it was released in Finland it went straight to number 1 of the charts so i take that as a pretty good response.

-Can you tell us a few things about the lyrics of the album?

-The lyrics basically deal with the things we have always dealt. Stuff that people can relate to, normal everyday relationships maybe with a bit darker way but its the basic of Sonata Arctica lyrics.

-What's the story behind the album title?

-We already had another different title but then we were sitting with Tony in the studio and say no that's not a good title, i wish we could come up with something else. We talked for a while and went through some stuff and then we came up with Reckoning Night which is a good title and describes the dark mood of the album.

-Can you tell us which was the working title?

-Oh,no i can't tell that!

-Ok no problem. How hard was Reckoning Night to write and record as compared to your last album?

-It was actually easier than the last album which was really hard, for this one we had again a

lot of time in the studio but we got lazy as always. In the last minute we were in terrible hurry, that always happens! But all in all writing started after the christmas this year, we had three songs ready in the studio by March which is quite a while but all in all we spent two and a half months in the studio and after that it was ready to our own surpiselement.

*-Which is the most important song of the album for you personally?*

-I wrote My Selene, that's important for me but i love the single track Don't say a Word. That's one of the best songs we've ever done.

*-When you write new songs do you feel that there is a pressure to create an even better album than the last one?*

-Well of course sometimes you think of that but you shouldn't really worry of comparison. You did an album back then and now you got to make another one. If you think it's better than the last one then that's enough.

*-Before you start working on a new album do you have a plan in your head on how it should sound?*

-No we never have that, we just start working and see what comes out, it's our style of doing it.

*-What are the biggest influences of the band?*

-Influences...i don't think we actually have any influences at the moment. After Winterheart's Guild we really captured our own direction and now we just follow up upon that task. Of course you draw some things from stuff that you hear but really we don't have any big influences anymore.

*-Are there any plans to make a video for a song off the new album?*

-Yeah we actually already did it, it's in the editing now. We recorded a video for Don't say a Word last week.

*-When should we expect to see it on tv?*

-Editing should be done before Friday i think so after that you can ask for it from Nuclear Blast.

*-Your albums seem to get more varied and more progressive i'd say. Is this done on purpose?*

-No it's not done on purpose. It's just us making it more interesting for ourselves and also for the listeners. They don't want to hear us doing the same things over and over again. We try to come up with something different and this time it turned out a bit more progressive than usual.

*-Tony's vocals keep getting better and better. Did he take any vocal lessons?*

-No he hasn't taken any but i totally agree that his vocals are getting better and better all the time. He's losing the high scream part and getting more of his own voice and with a harder edge to it. I love it.

*-How important is the Japanese market for you?*

-Well, it's really important, that's like our single biggest marketplace where we're the biggest band of this genre there and of course this is very important.

*-Will there be any bonus tracks for them?*

-Yeah one bonus track Wrecking the Sphere, we always have to do one bonus track whether we like it or not.

*-Do you plan to release a Sonata Arctica dvd?*

**-We have plans for it but i don't know if they will come through. There's a plan that when we go on tour in Japan now on February then we can film one or two shows and base the dvd around that and then just add some stuff that we have recorded earlier.**

*-Will you put any backstage videos?*

**-You can bet on that! We have so much of that, that's the funniest stuff to watch anyway!**

*-Are there any plans to visit Greece for a concert?*

**-Unfortunately not at the moment. We're hoping to be able to come here next year but it depends on lots of things.**

*-Which is your favourite country to play in?*

**-In South America was amazing but then again their arrangements aren't that good. I have to say that Chile, Brazil, Japan and maybe France.**

*-What about Finland?*

**-Finland is ok but Finnish people are not the best audience ever.**

*-Are there any countries where you haven't played yet and you'd like to visit some day?*

**-Greece. I heard so many good stories about the people, the fans in Greece and i'd really love to play here.**

*-Well wait until you play here and witness it with yourself!*

**-Yeah i really look forward to that**

*-You have once opened a show for Ronnie James Dio?*

**-Yeah we have opened for him in Finland**

*-What's your opinion about him?*

**-He's a great singer, i can't believe how old he is, his voice is amazing! I wish that i am in such a good shape when i'll be 60!**

*-Do you prefer club gigs or open stadium concerts?*

**-I really prefer the clubs, the feeling is more intimate**

*-How come you released a live album after only 2 studio albums back then?*

**-I thought it was way too early to release a live album after only two studio albums. Our Japanese label wanted to release it for the Japanese market and then at some point it turned out to be released everywhere. It's an ok live album but it was done too soon.**

*-In the past you did a few covers. Do you plan on covering any other songs in the future?*

**-Yeah, we did two covers now on these sessions to use on singles as B tracks**

*-Which songs did you cover?*

**-We did Two Minds One Soul by Vanishing Point and then we did World In My Eyes by Depeche Mode.**

*-How was your co-operation with Jens Johansson?*

**-Basically on the last album when we ended the tour we were supposed to start working on Winterheart's Guild, our keyboard player left and that left us without a keyboard player and**

Tony plays like the basic stuff but he can't play the solos. So we thought of asking Jens who is a friend of the band and a really nice guy and an amazing player. He said sure he would play but end of story, it was just a friend helping us out.

*-Will you work with him again in the future?*

-Well i'd like to but now we have a full time keyboard player so maybe not with Sonata Arctica but hopefully on some other project.

*-What does Sonata Arctica mean?*

-When we started we had a different name and a friend came with this name which is a lot better. In the beginning we had many classical influences and Sonata is for the classical music and then Arctica, we come from the north, Arctic. It describes the band very well.

*-How much have Stratovarius influenced Sonata Arctica?*

-In the beginning it influenced a lot, like in the first album, all we wanted was to do the same thing as Stratovarius but then we shade away from that and i don't think Winterheart's Guild sounds nothing like Stratovarius and the new one definitely doesn't sound like them. We don't want to sound like them anymore.

*-If you had to pick 3 songs from Sonata Arctica which would those be?*

-Holy shit, this is a hard one! From the new album Don't Say A Word, maybe My Land from Ecliptica and i can't decide upon another one, stick with those two!

*-What's your opinion about the internet and mp3 downloading?*

-Of course it sucks that people can download your art for free, but its a good promotion. You can find our new album on the internet and that really sucks. As i said it's a really good promotion so i have mixed feelings. I am very pissed because you can't help at all.

*-What have you been listening to lately?*

-Nothing actually. When you do this job 24 hours, 7 days a week and it's your life, when you have some time off you don't feel like listening to any music anymore. You better stay inside or go for a walk with the girlfriend or something like that.

*-Is Sonata Arctica the most important thing in your life?*

-Not the most important maybe but it's a top priority and also my life with my fiance.

*-What do you think about today's power metal bands?*

-I don't really follow the power metal scene, there are so many bands and most of them to me sound the same like it's been done before and there's so much crap there. Not many of them have their own personality anymore.

*-Which are the latest albums you bought?*

-A Tom Waits collection and then the City album by Strapping Young Lad, i really like that band, it's their best album.

*-Do you like Nightwish?*

-Yeah i like them, not my favourite band, they are totally ok and they are good friends of us.

*-What do you think about their latest album?*

-It's ok, it's not their best album. I think the production is kinda too big and sometimes the orchestra obscures the fact that it's actually a band playing.

*-Back when you were called Tricky Means, did the label ask you to change your name?*

-The label suggested that it was not the best and we totally agreed with that. We only had that name because we couldn't come up with anything better.

*-Which are your favourite bands?*

-I love Metallica from Master of Puppets up to the Black Album and Dream Theater has been one of my favourites. There is so much great music and nowadays i don't really have favourite bands. I just listen to lots of different kinds of music.

*-Which guitar players have influenced you?*

-When i was beginning and when i was 12 or so it was like Slash from Guns n Roses and then Kirk Hammet from Metallica but then i grew older and when i was 14 and found Yngwie Malmsteen and Steve Vai and all these technical players and started to go on to that direction. Then i discovered Dream Theater and John Petrucci and i really like his style of playing which was technical but a bit more melodic and i stucked with that. I really like his playing especially on the older albums.

*-What does the future hold for Sonata Arctica?*

-The future holds a promotion and touring and then more touring. We'll do the European tour and then go back to tour Finland and then we go to Japan. Then hopefully at some point late next year or 2006 we start to work on the next album. It's the cycle of music album-tour album-tour.

*-Ok, thanks you for your time and i wish the best for Sonata Arctica in the future!*

-Thank you!