

Fot. Asia Kubicka www.kubicka.asia

„Twój pierwszy koncert będzie za dziesięć dni na Impact z Rammstein, Slayer, Korn... i jest 14 piosenek do nauczenia. Dasz radę?”

‘Your first show is in ten days at Impact Fest with Rammstein, Slayer, Korn... and there’s 14 songs to learn. Can you do it?’

MERIM LECHNER

„Telefon z piekła”

‘A call from hell’

„MIREK” APPEARED ON POLISH SCENE IN THE MOMENT OF DECAPITATED REACTIVATION. HE HAD TOUGH JOB TO FILL IN FOR LEGENDARY VITEK, BUT ALSO REPRESENT HIMSELF, MAKE NEW QUALITY. HE MADE IT. AND WHEN EVERYBODY THOUGHT THAT DECAPITATED HAD THE PERFECT DRUMMER, MIREK LEFT THE BAND. HE WAS AGAIN ON EVERYONE’S LIPS WHEN HE REPLACED FILTHY INFERNO, AFTER HIS NASTY ACCIDENT THIS YEAR.

„MIREK” ZAWITAŁ NA POLSKIEJ SCENIE W MOMENCIE REAKTYWACJI DECAPITATED. MIAŁ CIĘŻKIE ZADANIE ZASTĄPIĆ GODNIE LEGENDARNEGO VITKA, ALE TAKŻE ZAPREZENTOWAĆ SIEBIE SAMEGO, STWORZYĆ NOWĄ JAKOŚĆ. UDAŁO MU SIĘ TO I GDY WSZYSCY MYŚLELI, ŻE DECAPITATED MA PERKUSISTĘ NA LATA, MIREK ROZSTAŁ SIĘ Z ZESPOŁEM. PONOWNIE ZROBIŁO SIĘ O NIM GŁOŚNIEJ U NAS W TYM ROKU, GDY ZASTĄPIŁ W BEHEMOTH PLUGAWEGO INFERNO, KTÓRY DOZNAŁ PASKUDNEJ KONTUZJI...

As everyone knows, Mirek (read his name backwards) comes from Austria and unlike many of our countrymen wandering there for bread, Kerim came to Poland to boost his career. Soon his high skills and attitude earned him sympathy on Polish metal scene. Despite being rather young musician his professionalism can be envied by many of our so-called 'drummer stars'. Mirek knows his value which is highly required on music scene but on the other side he is very humble person and he is far from making sulks. He joined the best known Polish band in very curious moment. Behemoth has just finished recording the new album and was to about warm up with some live shows and word tours when suddenly... BAM! News like a bolt of lightning! Inferno landed in a hospital and a new drummer is needed to cover at least those biggest festivals. The greatest candidates are heavily busy. Pawulon played in Decapitated, and Daray was up to his ears in work with Hunter. The band contacts Mirek and without mincing words Orion makes an offer he can't refuse but Mirek himself will share with us the details...

At the beginning I will just ask – how are you?

I feel good and satisfied; nothing to complain. :) Just finished touring with BEHEMOTH and still feel the good mood from that amazing experience. Sad that it's over but that was the deal and it was a time I would never forget! Besides, I am trying to write new songs for my solo project KRIMH. I have some cool ideas already but they need more time to develop.

Generally, where do you live right now?

Where do I live right now? I spend most of my time in Warsaw. I have my Polish girlfriend here and it seems there are more musical opportunities in Poland than in Austria. Austria is great, I love it, but it's just a small country with only eight million people. I guess that's why there is not much going on in the music business. Every second month, I go back there to visit my friends and family.

We didn't have enough time to comment on your leaving Decapitated. For many people you became the perfect drummer for that band. What's happened?

It's sad that it didn't work out with DECAPITATED. It definitely wasn't an easy decision. I wanted to be sure my decision was not made out of some random mood so I took some time to think about it.



I spent almost three years in that band and it was good experience which I didn't want to be wasted. It was the first time for me when I played in a professional band which achieved international success. I am really thankful for that and the good times we had. It's not that I didn't enjoy playing with them. It just didn't work out in the end. Vogg and me had some problems and I think we are just too different people with different ideas, behavior and goals. No offense Vogg! I mean that is life and sometimes people just can't work with each other anymore. I decided to go my own way.



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What happened next, what did you do after leaving Decapitated?

After DECAPITATED I spent my time looking for another band, doing some drumming sessions for REDEMPTOR and working on my solo project. I have been writing songs for KRIMH since 2007 but never recorded an album. It was mostly focused on YouTube videos but many people kept asking about a full album. I actually thought, why not? I had enough time and songs to record LP. So I booked the studio for whole November in 2012. Drums were recorded in Austria at my friend's studio and I did the rest at home. It was really a cool thing to hear and see how your own songs are coming together and form one album. As I said before, it was first time for me to record a solo album so I was really thrilled to finish it

Did you record all instruments by yourself?

All songs and instruments were played by me. Only in one song I asked Jakub Zytecki for a guest solo and he did an amazing job. The whole album graphics is based on deep sea images with crazy creatures that live down there. For some reason I love this deep sea stuff a lot and it fits perfect for my music. Also the album title "Explore" fits the whole topic. Being a solo artist is pretty cool! This album is a self-release and its 100% my creativity and ideas but it also means all the costs of making it have to be covered by me. That's why I started a crowdfunding campaign on Indiegogo. People could pre order the CD and help me raise money to finish the album.

The support of my fans was more than I expected and I was overwhelmed by the fact that so many people wanted to hear my music. Because of the tour with BEHEMOTH I had to push the album release a bit back but on September 26th "Explore" was officially out! After that I spent almost a week on packing hundreds of CDs and T-shirts, visiting Polish post office, waiting there for hours to ship them to more than forty countries. It was super exhausting but totally worth it. I still go to a post office once, two times a week to ship new orders. Its going well and I can't complain. :)

And the key question of our interview – how did it happen with Behemoth?

Well, that was a bit funny story. :) I was in Austria at that time. After a week at home I got an email from Orion on Facebook. He was asking for my phone number because it was an emergency. Five minutes later he called me and told me about the crazy idea of me helping them out. Inferno had to go to a hospital and BEHEMOTH had many shows booked. Orion said: "Your first show is in ten days on Impact Fest with Rammstein, Slayer, Korn...and there's fourteen songs to learn. Can you do it?"

Classic Orion! What was your reaction?

At first I was speechless and than super scared. :) But I told him I would love to play with them and I would do my best. So I started a practice marathon for every day. Four days before the show we practiced together. I actually over trained muscles in my left leg during that time. Inferno's drumming is totally different to what I am used to. Its hard to adjust to his style in such short time. During the first two shows I had many problems with my leg. I was pissed about that because I knew I can do better but we are humans not machines. At least we had some days off between the shows so I could chill out and take care of my leg. After that the shows got only better and it was great great fun to play all those summer festivals with them.

But you stayed in the band longer ...

The plan was to play only six festivals during summer but Inferno needed more time to recover and a big Asian Tour was about to start in October. I had nothing else to do. I already knew the songs and the shows were good so they asked me if I could also join them for their Asian and Polish tour. Of course, I said yes!!! :)

ORION – BEHEMOTH'S BASS PLAYER ON COOPERATION WITH KERIM



Fot. Rafał Kojlak www.kojlak.pl

Behemoth is a specific band taking into account people. We've been playing instantly for 10 years so temporary 'replacement' of the drummer wasn't an easy decision. We chose Kerim. We knew him from Decapitated and many times saw him on stage. He learnt the material in few days and played on rehearsals. Kerim is a great drummer but completely different than Inferno. Their way of playing differs dramatically. But we didn't want to cover up that difference, we even wanted to highlight it. Why should we force somebody, who is already fully shaped, perfect musician to mirror the original, instead of showing his own strengths? We wanted him to be himself from the beginning to the end. He is super precise, strict, very 'smooth' dynamically. He is just reliable. Austrian precision and effectiveness. He was the most organised and systematic cog in our tour wheel. It's a kind of person you can leave with any big thing or difficult task and when he says he'll do it, he means it. During the first few rehearsals we knew that everything would be fine. On behalf of the band I would like to thank Kerim for everything. He saved our butts. And we played together some great and unique concerts.



Fot. Fregeed Photography

When I asked Inferno, right after his injury, who would replace him he immediately said "Only Daray!". At that time Darek had hell of work with Hunter. Have you ever wondered why they called you?

I asked this question myself many times but I never asked the guys why they chose me. I was once on tour with DECAPITATED supporting BEHEMOTH, which means they knew how I play, but that was in 2010 and since then I didn't have contact with the guys. I also thought they would pick Daray but, as you said, he had HUNTER so I guess they kept thinking, "who else?" It's not that BEHEMOTH songs are easy to play! Probably I impressed them with my play during that tour back in 2010. When I think about that right now I am very happy that I took part in that tour. :) Probably without this tour they would never come up with the idea of asking me. I am very happy they gave me a chance and had confidence in me.

I like small drum sets. In my opinion - less is more but I have to say behind Inferno's drums you feel like a king.



What is the difference between your play and the Inferno's?

Each drummer plays differently and has his own way to arrange drum parts. It's the same with Infernos and my drumming. Usually I would say my double bass drumming is one of my strengths but I had the biggest problem with his kick drum parts and not so much with the infernal fast blast beats. He plays more super fast but short accents on the kick drum. Its like a machine gun which is not firing all the time, if that makes any sense. The speed wasn't the problem but more the way he arranged his kick parts. I really had to spend some time to get my legs in the right shape. On the other hand I am used to play a bit slower but longer double bass drumming. Good example is the song 'Homo Sum' from DECAPITATED last album 'Carnival Is

Forever'. It's like 216 bpm but long double bass parts.

Which songs were the most difficult to play and why?

I had problems with two songs. The intro part of 'Ov Fire And The Void' and the main kick part at 'Alas, Lord Is Upon Me'. Of course 'Ov Fire And the Void' had to be the first song of the set list. Pretty shitty if you fuck up the first seconds of the first song. It doesn't help your self-confidence at all but it only happened during the first two shows. And about 'Alas..', its actually a slow BEHEMOTH song and very groovy but still I had my problems. I don't know why. Sometimes those parts which seem pretty easy are the hardest.

I also have to say, I used Infernos Czarcie Kopyto Pedal and I didn't know that its a custom version which has couple of changes compared to the normal Czarcie Koypto. My CK pedals were in Austria and I thought 'Ok, its Czarcie so it should be the same!' Well, it wasn't. :) With this kind of extreme music even this small difference in the pedal can be a problem. So that aspect also didn't help to play those parts correct. But with my pedals and some extra practice I had no problem anymore.

And what about the rest of the drums? You don't have as big set up as Inferno.

Yes, not only our drumming style is different, also our drum setup. He uses a huge drum kit with two kick drums, five toms, snare and big rack and many, many cymbals. Compared to that my kit looks like the one of a jazz drummer. I only use two kick drums, three toms, snare and seven cymbals. I used Inferno's big kit for band practice but it was a nightmare to set it up! And every second of play you hoped it would not fall into pieces. Those are good drums but the whole hardware is more dead than alive. I think Inferno and Adam, their drum technician, will agree with me! :)

So I was pretty happy when I finally could use my drums even if they are smaller. I like small drum set ups. In my opinion, less is more, but I have to say, behind Inferno's drums you feel like a king. I use Meinl cymbals, Czaracie Kopyto Pedals, Regal Tip Sticks and Evans Skins. This combination works great for me and I've just signed a contract with Tama drums. I can't wait to get my Starclassic kit and play on them!

You were wearing make-up. Was it something new for you?

The make up thing is really cool. No, it's not the first time for me. Once I had a band back in Austria which was a mix of black and death metal. We used corpse paint for our live shows but we didn't have the satanic images like BEHEMOTH. I like to play with make-up. You somehow change after you put on make-up and you are a different person on stage. And BEHEMOTH wouldn't be the same without make-up. It's part of their image and I didn't want to ruin it by playing without paint. Of course I am not as "advanced" as they are if it comes to cool corpse paintings but I am already much better than before! *(laughing)*

How did your communication on stage look like?

Normally, the communication on stage is more based on signs rather than talking but I think it's obvious, because it's super loud there. We played so many shows together that later we didn't have to communicate that much. Everyone knew what was going on and we could rely on each other. Sometimes we pushed ourselves to put more energy in our performance by screaming to the other guy or just doing some weird evil face expressions. After a song ended I always had to watch the other guys what they were doing. I am the one who counts the song in. If I start everyone has to play. In BEHEMOTH I played all songs except one with a click track and samples. Adam, my drumtech started the click track for me. I barely had time to drink or clean my hands between the songs. It would be too much to also change the click track in the sampler. It's a bit complicated and you have to go in special menu of the sampler to do that. So actually, Adam and I were constantly checking if the other guys were ready. If so, Nergal gave me a sign. Sometimes he just said 'go!' or the guitar technician gave me a signal with a flash light. After that we started the next song.

What did you learn during that tour?

You know, I learnt so much during that time,. I am not only talking about the musical side but also me being a different person after that experience. BEHEMOTH is the biggest Polish metal band nowadays and it was the first time for me to play in such a big band. There is a certain level of professionalism you have to have to play in such bands and I wasn't sure if I am ready for this level. I remember, after Orion called me, I had so many thoughts running through my head. From the fear of failing to this positive thinking "yes, let's do it!" It was really short period of time to learn the songs. I think I wouldn't have said yes if someone else asked me to learn fourteen songs in 10 days. You know, I didn't want to say "Yes, I'll do it!" and then actually were not able to play the songs. But here it was -all or nothing! You don't get such a chance twice. The quote "blood, sweat and tears" fits perfect to this situation. It was a huge challenge for me but I did it! And this fact really pushes your self esteem up.

I played my biggest shows with them. Some of them in front of 20 000 people and I felt ready to do it. I think I am also more chilled out in general. I try not to worry all the time that something can go wrong. Even if so, shit happens! Now it's more like "Just do it, have fun and give your best!"



I also learnt quite a lot from the musical side. Each time I play with different people I learn something new. It was the same thing during my time in DECAPITATED. I wouldn't be the same drummer now after those three years playing with them. Before BEHEMOTH I never had to play that fast blast beats and those fast accents on the kick drum. Plus, I appreciate the simplicity of their music. Please don't get me wrong with that. They have their complicated songs too, no question about that, but I would say their song structure is usually easier than what I am used to play. Maybe it's also because I just recorded new album with REDEMPTOR and they have very complicated songs. But I like more simple forms. Especially live that kind of songs always work the best and people love it!

Do you think that this adventure will help you in your career?

I am sure it will help me in my career. I hope so. I played in countries and in front of people I have never played before. BEHEMOTH is a great band with many fans all around the world. If you can prove yourself in such a band then I think it has to help you in your future career. Anyway, it was great to share the stage with guys and go on the Asia tour. The best tour I have ever played so far. There were so many priceless moments.

Several days ago in Warsaw you took part in Drum Academy as a guest. How did you feel as a teacher?

One day I got an email from Aggie, who is the founder of Drum Academy. She told me about Thomas Langs camp in her school and she asked me if I wanted to be some kind of special guest during this camp. I would have loved to be there. Thomas is a killer drummer and Austrian too. I am sure I could get some good tips from him. :) Sadly I had no time because I was busy with BEHEMOTH. We still kept the contact and after I finished my last show with them we set up this Master Class at Drum Academy. It was really a lot of fun and something different from other lessons I gave. It was



a small class with a couple of people between 12 and 16 years old and most of them were beginners. So I had to adjust all the exercises to their level. Usually you have those crazy drum nerds who ask you super technical questions about some bass drum technique. I wanted to show them something they can actually use right now and practise. It wouldn't make sense they become frustrated when they go home and try to play this technical stuff. Everyone starts from zero level, me too! And I remember how I felt during my first years. I would have liked to talk with my favorite drummers and get some good tips.

I feel weird as a teacher. (laughing) I am not sure if I am good enough to teach someone. Yes, sure I can play but it's a different thing if you just play for yourself or you have to teach someone what you are doing. I don't have any knowledge of theory. Everything I've learnt so far was based on things I heard or observed watching my favorite drummers play. That's why I showed those kids all the tricks and exercises which helped me in my early years as a drummer. Not so much sheet music.

...but if comes to metal you have really good drummers. Slimak, Daray, Inferno, Pawulon,

What's your opinion on our local drum scene after those few years you spent in Poland?

Next year will be my fourth year here in Poland. Pretty long mhh?! :) I met a lot of people during this time and played couple of shows all over the country. The metal scene here is very good. You have good shows and many people show up. But I can say, Polish people like more old school metal music rather than new genres like metal core. And if I compare the scene to Austria, there are more opportunities as a musician or band to grow and achieve international success. I don't want to say it's easy to be famous band but here, it seems you have better chances.

About the Polish drum scene: I don't know too many Polish rock or pop drummers because I don't listen this music a lot. But if it comes to metal you have really good drummers: Slimak, Daray, Inferno, Pawulon, Lukass...just to name a few.

Where will we meet in the near future? I understand that you are not going to change your profession?

Yes you are right. I don't want to change my job; not yet. What will be next, I don't know. Of course, I want to play music and I keep my eyes and ears open just in case a bigger band is looking for a drummer. But its not easy! I get some offers but I also have to think about my financial situation. I play music because I love it and not because of the money. On the other hand it's not a hobby anymore, its my job. I am a musician and you have to earn something to survive. That's why I cannot take every offer. I think it's important to keep going on. What I mean is, to play every day, practise, try to get good musicians around you, be open for new challenges and chances. You never know when you get an offer. Playing with BEHEMOTH was the last thing I expected. It could be that the next offer is waiting right around the corner or not! Anyway, I will keep on working on my solo album and do studio, live session jobs. Just in case you know a band that needs a drummer, let me know. :)

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