

## **AXENSTAR; Interview with Magnus Winterwild on [www.tntradiorock.com](http://www.tntradiorock.com)**

Formed in 2001, now comes your eighth album "Chapter VIII", which will be released by Inner Wound Recordings on December 1st. Your previous work End of All Hope was published in 2019. What has Axenstar been busy with in these 4 years, in which, among other things, we have experienced a pandemic?

**Yeah it's amazing really that we are now about to release our eighth album, who could have guessed that back in 2001! Well we've been busy with adapting to the pandemic and more or less just taking care of family and staying safe I guess, and somewhere in between we got together and wrote some great music that you will hear on our upcoming album!**

Now comes "Chapter VIII." After releasing several singles, which from what I have seen have been very well received by your followers, what feelings do you have regarding this new release?

**Yeah the response from our fans have been great, they seem to have missed us and it is of course a great feeling that they are looking forward to this new album. We are really happy to finally being able to release this album and I don't think the fans will be dissatisfied!**

The foundations regarding Axenstar's sound are quite clear after more than 20 years. How do you think your sound has evolved throughout these eight albums, and what do you think we found in "Chapter VIII" that makes the difference with what was done previously?

**I totally agree that we have found our sound during the years but I'm not sure that we have evolved that much from the original sound. With every release we, at least within the band, think that we have pushed the boundaries of the sound really far but in the end it always has that typical Axenstar sound. Now with "Chapter VIII" we have 10 brand new songs that is shaped in the same form but with a new mixing and mastering guy (Ronnie Björnström) so I think it has a really clear and open sound.**

If we take the first three songs of the album as a reference..."Heavenly Symphony" which is a clear melodic power metal anthem, "Through the Fire and Brimstone" with a denser and harder rhythm and riffs, and a certain touch of Hard Rock, and "The Great Deceiver" which has a more epic background. Here we have 3 songs that, maintaining the essence of Axenstar, mark their differences from each other. Which gives "Chapter VIII" a more dynamic character. I don't know if you agree, and if you can go a little deeper into it.

**Well we have tried to set the track order to make it interesting for the listener. A fast melodic opener to catch the interest of the regular power metal fan, followed up by a heavier more groovy tune maybe appealing to all the hard rock fans and then turning into a more mysterious world that "The Great Deceiver" will give you that maybe can interest the modern metal fan that is looking for something more "evil"? Maybe it's not important at all in which order you put the songs but we wanted to present the diversity of the album by choosing those three songs and putting them first.**

Then we have songs like "The War Within", which surrounds a certain darker air and stands out from the rest of the album. Tell me about this song.

**Yeah it's a quite dark and depressive song I guess, lyrically dealing with how life can be really tough and lonely. No matter how hard you fight life keeps beating you down and how easy it is to lose sight of what is important in life. The only thing that's certain is that we all reach the same end.**

I really liked songs like "Holy Land", "Through the Fire and Brimstone" or the aforementioned "The War Within". Which song on the album do you think best represents "Chapter VIII"?

**I would say that for me at least at this point I think that "The Flame of Victory" is the song that best represents the album, don't know why really, maybe it's the medieval inspired lyrics that I think has the best connection with the cover artwork. It's a groovy and quite fast song so I think it represents the album well but of course I think that this will change over time and that if you would ask me again in a couple of months I would probably name another song.**

You have hired Ronnie Björnström, known for his work in bands like Persuader and Sorcerer, for the mixing and mastering of "Chapter VIII". What was it like working with him and how did he influence the sound of the album?

**I contacted Ronnie asking him if he was interested in working together and he almost immediately said yes, so we gave him pretty much free hands to mix one song just like he heard the music and how he thought the sound should be. And the end result is not far from how the first mix turned out actually. He's a great guy and really easy to work with.**

The cover art for "Chapter VIII" is a work by Rafael Tavares. What can you tell us about the relationship between the cover and the content of the album? What messages are you trying to convey on this occasion?

**Well when we had decided on an album title we started to search for an artist that would be up for the job of putting our ideas together to form a cover artwork. And so we had actually been contacted by Rafael some months earlier and he showed us some of his previous work and after some messages back and forth we decided to work together.**

**We wanted the artwork to represent the album as well as being true to the old-school power metal covers and I think we managed that and Rafael did a great job.**

They have mentioned that "Chapter VIII" is perfect for fans of power metal and bands like Stratovarius, Sonata Arctica, Helloween and Hammerfall. Axenstar is also a band that has remained constant over its more than two decades in terms of work and presence on the scene. What do you think Axenstar brings to power metal that makes it unique or different?

**I honestly don't know but we must be doing something right I guess haha.**

**Well I think that we have been consistent in our musical style, maybe too far between album releases on occasions but we have never changed our style or tried to adapt to new influences too much so maybe that is one key to our success staying in the business for so long.**

If you look back, at the beginning of the band with the release of their first album "Perpetual Twilight" (2002). What have these more than 20 years been like for Axenstar? What positive balance would it make?

**All live shows and tours are of course what makes it all worth while, the unbelievable feeling being on stage performing songs that you have written, hearing and seeing people singing along. Meeting fans and making friends in the metal community. And of course being able to continue to release albums, that is something I feel really fortunate to still be able to do.**

And negative?

**All the money and time you have put into the band, time spent away from family and friends.**

"Chapter VIII" is published on December 1, what plans do you have for the weeks leading up to the release?

**We will release our third single in the beginning of November then we will just wait for the album release and maybe do a little bit of planning of live shows, new merch etc.**

And once the album is out... What can Axenstar fans expect for live performances?

**Well since it's released in December we probably won't do that many shows before Christmas but early 2024 we will hopefully get out on the road to play as many live shows as possible!**

Finally, what message or emotion do you hope listeners get from listening to "Chapter VIII"?

**Happiness! Long live Rock'n'Roll**

Thank you very much for your time.