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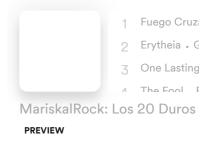
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Interviews | Michael Kiske (Helloween)

"The key is to make a record that shows that we are still creative"

By: Jason Arbor



(//mariskalrock.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Helloween2.jpg) Halloween | Photo: Franz Schepers



For many years, the return of Michael Kiske and Kai Hansen to the band that catapulted them to stardom was a utopia, but sometimes dreams come true and in the case of the hundreds of thousands of die-hard German power metal pioneers, It happened when, under the name of **Pumpkings United Tour , the meeting of the then current Helloween** with its two most relevant former members for a tour was consecrated . Even more surprising was knowing that the pumpkin band will continue with the same super formation and have a DVD release and even a new studio album in sight. Jason Arbor Talks At Length With Revered Vocalist **Michael Kiske**, who exclusively reveals multiple details of the present and future of a band whose next stops are the **Altice Arena in Lisbon (December 6)** and the **Multiusos Fontes Do Sar in Santiago de Compostela (December 8)**.

It seems that in the end, the experiment of this Helloween formation "Pumpkins United" has worked so well that you are going to continue with it. Are you still surprised or are you no longer?

"I am no longer surprised. Things have gone very well, not only at the level of success, which is always well received, of course, especially for managers and others. For us as musicians the personal aspect is much more important and that has worked very well. No one expected that, least of all myself. I was happy that, in the beginning, we were able to get together and talk things out, which is always good, especially when there is a past like the one we had. But going on tour together for months I didn't see it, it was

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the litmus test, because you are under a lot of stress and often you don't get much sleep, apart from the fact that we are together basically all the time. And it just turned out great."

"It's like the circle of karma is closing now"

Having moved on from that, do you think Helloween will continue this lineup long term?

"Yes I hope so! It's great playing big venues and it's like the circle of karma is closing now. I started with this band when I was very young and after years together, I left. Then I did a lot of other things and went through a lot of changes, until we finally got back together for this kind of final chapter, which is nice. Only life can write stories like this."

Your next stop is the concerts in Lisbon (Portugal) and Santiago de Compostela. Will you incorporate variations with respect to your last visits to our country?

"Have we been through your area?"

In Madrid, in fact, you filled a huge pavilion and it was a great success.

"On tour last year I caught a virus; in Santiago it will be different, let's hope"

"Ah yes, that concert! Ugh, he was dead at the time. On tour last year I caught a virus.

That's going to be different, hopefully (laughs). I don't remember exactly what we played last year, but there are no big changes in the repertoire, maybe two or three songs that can vary. It is still the same tour and we are currently already in the closing chapter. We will play "Pumpkins United", which we didn't do last year, although we did at Rock Fest Barcelona".

RADIO TODAY



SURVEYS

What were the best albums of 1993 in Spain and Latin America?

The era of boludez - Divided
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Bad News - The Soft Ones
Sun and Rage - Repeat Offenders
We are pulling - Platero and You
And that one who talks so much - Soziedad Alkoholika

Chaos AD – Grave



So, isn't there any important news that you could highlight for us?

"Among this bunch of people there are some very lazy"

"Not too many. We haven't sat down

together to practice new songs. Among

this bunch of people there are some who are very lazy, so it's hard to get them to learn

new repertoires. There will be no songs like "Save Us", "You Always Walk Alone" or

"We Got the Right", but rather we play the same setlist with small variations".

 \bigcirc The hidden book – White Rat \bigcirc Made in Memphis – Paranoid Mice

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(//mariskalrock.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Helloween-3.jpg) Michael Weikath, Michael Kiske and Kai Hansen | Photo: Franz Schepers

What do these concerts mean for the band, now that you have already announced that you will continue together with this formation and that there are releases on the way?

"I think the band is pretty tired of touring right now, but on the other hand, we're happy to be able to keep doing this and the offers keep coming. But everyone's like, "Okay, let's wrap up these last few shows, take a long break, and then we'll try to write



songs and see what happens." When you have been non-stop for more than a year, your head gets tired. But be that as it may, there are only seven more shows left and we'll be fine, although everyone wants to get off the stage for a while now."

"The band is pretty tired of touring at the moment"

Let's talk about future releases. The first of these is a DVD that we would like to know more about. What images are you going to use in it? You recorded the concert in Madrid in its entirety with a good display of media.

"We have decided not to make the DVD from images of a complete show, but to take recordings of several. We recorded two really good concerts in Sao Paulo (Brazil) last year in which everyone was tremendously excited, although it was not as imposing a venue as the one in Madrid, from which we will also use certain material. Apart from those concerts, there are images of Wacken and more. We're not completely happy with a full concert, so we'll approach it more as a documentary of this Pumpkins United Tour."



(//mariskalrock.com/wp-



So will it also feature interviews and such instead of just concert footage?

<u>content/uploads/2018/12/Helloween-</u> <u>4.jpg)</u> Michael Kiske | Photo: Franz Schepers

"Yes, exactly".

Is there an expected date for the release of the DVD?

"I have no idea. I would say it will probably come out around January or February."

And the announced new studio album would see the light towards the end of next year?

"Maybe yes, if things go fast. I don't know what the plan is, but I would say it will probably go on sale in early 2020."

So, do you still have ahead of you to lock yourself in the rehearsal room and the studio to compose?

"The new album will probably be out at the beginning of 2020"

"That's how it is. You have to take into

account that now there is a different line-up, with two singers, and it will be very interesting to work with that as Kiss does with Paul Stanley or Gene Simmons. They have always had two voices, sometimes other members also sang. We can do a lot with that, and we also have to build writing teams. Look, the first thing I'm going to do next year, especially when the weather starts to get on my nerves in Hamburg, is going to fly to Tenerife to meet Andi (Deris, vocals) and see if we can write songs together. I get along very well especially with Andi, and it will be interesting to see if we can write together. I will do the same with Sasha (Gerstner, guitarist), who lives not too far from me, he lives in Berlin and I live in Hamburg. That will be when the weather improves a bit in Germany.



Do you already have a complete song composed and even rehearsed or layout at this point?

"Everyone has ideas. I have some ideas on my own that I don't know if they will fit or if I will show them to my colleagues and they will come up with another idea. We are all somehow constantly collecting ideas; there is stuff. But rehearsing them together is still far away. I already have complete themes, but as they are now, I don't think they fit; I'll just send them over and we'll see if they can do something with them. Usually, my way of composing is very different. I don't write metal specifically, I just write songs. It was like that in the early days too, my songs were very different and then Kai (Hansen) or Michael Weikath would get their hands on them and make them work for the band. I guess that's what will happen again."

Knowing how your songs shape up and taking into account what you may know about other members' songs, are they Deris" going to sound like that old school *happy metal* of the 'Keepers' or do you think they will also have similarities to the latest work? from Halloween?

"The first thing I'm going to do next year is fly to Tenerife to meet Andi

"I still like the sound of the 'Keepers' songs, it's something I've grown up with and I hope there are more songs in that direction. I'm pretty sure we're going to cover pretty much everything this band has done since they've got a long career with a lot of CDs, but what I'm good at is the epic tunes stuff we used to have in the Keepers. I am convinced that everyone thinks so. And i has his own qualities and I have mine, and I'm sure the songwriters will try to make songs that suit the voices.

Do you think that Kai Hansen will also sing in any song?





<u>(//mariskalrock.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Helloween-en-Madrid-Alfonso-Davila.jpg)</u> Michael Kiske and Andi Deris in Madrid (2017) | Photo: Afonso Davila

How do you think you will manage to combine these different voices in the upcoming songs?

"In the end, Andi is a great songwriter. In fact, he is one of the best in this band, and he has already told me that he is very excited to be able to write songs for my voice and for our voices together. He seems to be already highly motivated. I'm looking forward to seeing what they compose and hearing demo versions that I can make my own, sing



them and give them back to the person who wrote them. If you are not physically with the person, you have to do it via the internet or travel where he is; it is a process that is not predictable. Sometimes you send a fairly developed idea to the rest of the members and then Kai still gets his hands on it, he has another idea and completely transforms the original one. That happens very often, and that's why it's so interesting that there are so many creative minds. Everything is possible".

"I still like the sound of the 'Keeper' songs"

Let's talk for a moment about projects outside of Helloween, like your participation in Avantasia, on whose new album, 'Moonglow', you collaborate again, this time on a single song. Is there any chance you'll play some shows on the upcoming tour or are you scrapping it entirely due to your Helloween obligations?

"I could do it, of course; if i really wanted to do it i could but i'm tired of spinning now. Unfortunately, the Avantasia tour is very soon, too soon, and I'm too tired, I don't want to be on the road all the time. I might as well join in as a special guest at a concert, that could happen, but I need a breather, relieve myself from touring to make room for new ideas. It's still too early, I might have time and I could do it if I wanted to, but of course the manager doesn't want me to do it because he cares about Helloween and everyone wants me there. But of course, I am a free person, and if I really wanted to, I could. I've already talked to Tobi (Tobias Sammet) about this and he understands. Of course he would like it to be there, but he understands that I am tired of touring at this point ".

What do you ask of the future in the long term and where would you like to be in five or ten years?



"I don't know if I'll still be doing this in ten years, but in five years I hope to be able to create good music. I know the records don't mean as much in terms of the market and record sales anymore, but acoustically they are still extremely important in my opinion. They are an art form, an album is unique in itself. Live is something different, you can do different things on it. I adore albums, and it makes me sad that they have been devalued so much. Although in metal it's different and there are still people who worry about buying a record. I keep buying records; if I like something, I want to have the CD, I don't want to just "rent" it through Spotify or platforms like that. With that you don't own the music, and I want to have the CD. When I like something and want to have it, I just buy it. Regardless of the industry, I still find it important to make a great record. The key for this band is that we have to make a really good record that shows that we're still creative. This is very important. Apart from that, we can have good tours in the future. That would be great".



Jason Gazebo

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