

## "We would never have any label tell us what to do"

Peter Iwers

One of the most influential and innovative bands to grace the entire scene, In Flames have, in the short span of but a few years, helped re-create metal as a whole. 1996, the year that marked Metallica's downfall that came in the form of one Load of complete shit, also marked the breakthrough of a struggling new band's battle cry in "The Jester Race". Since then, we have seen the five young Swedes rightfully become serious contenders for that abandoned, much-coveted throne by remaining true to their own roots, as well as heavily dabbling in some carefully controlled experimentation that only seems to be improving with every album. At a recent gig in Pomona, CA, I talked with Peter Iwers about everything from selling out to toilet paper, and what his views on the future are for the group.



# In Flames

**E.I.:** You guys have fulfilled your contract with Nuclear Blast now. Are you still shopping around and looking at other labels?

**In Flames:** Yeah. We'll see what happens.

**E.I.:** Any ones in particular that have caught your interest?

**In Flames:** Uh...

**E.I.:** Or can't you talk about it?

**In Flames:** Yeah—it's nothing I can talk about, really. We're just looking around.

**E.I.:** Well, what's an important quality you look for in a label? Good exposure, supportive, romantic, likes to take long walks on the beach? I don't wanna mention any names, (Roadrunner) but a lot of labels tend to press their bands, it seems, to become more commercial. What are your thoughts on this?

**In Flames:** We only care about having a label, really. And being able to make a record and have exposure.

**E.I.:** What kind of artistic say-so does Nuclear Blast have in what you guys record?

**In Flames:** Zero. We would never have any label tell us what to do.

**E.I.:** And this is probably the millionth time you've been asked this, but what made you decide to use another producer besides Fredrik Nordström?

**In Flames:** Basically we didn't

feel that Fredrik fulfilled his role as producer on the 'Clayman' album, and we wanted to do something different, get somebody that was going to do 100% good work on this album. Daniel (Berstrand, producer) was exactly that. He'd worked with bands like Meshuggah and Strapping Young Lad.

**E.I.:** So do you guys see yourselves delving more into electronica and Anders singing, just more melody in general, in the future?

**In Flames:** Right now I really don't know. We're just gonna have to see how things go. We sort of let things happen naturally of course we get inspired by the bands we play with—but we make it a point to keep on evolving.

**E.I.:** I had planned to ask Anders the next one, but maybe you can explain this to me somewhat: as far as the lyrics, but I notice that a lot of guys like Anders from your band, Bjorn Strid from Soilwork and Mikael from Dark Tranquillity—their lyrics seem very surreal, almost fantasy/science fiction oriented—do you know where the singers draw their inspiration from—movies, etc.? They seem much closer to actual prose than just blathering about Satan and death like a lot of other bands.

**In Flames:** Yeah, they have more to do with issues in his (Anders') own life. It's a little more about feelings towards himself and vio-

lence in him and his own life. I wouldn't go too deep into it, being that it's not me, but that's pretty much what I know.

**E.I.:** So do you know what the hell "Pinball Map" (Clayman) is about?

**In Flames:** No.

**E.I.:** Also, I guess I've been meaning to ask this question to a lot of different bands...but since you guys covered "Eye of the Beholder" on a Metallica tribute album a long time ago, you obviously had some major respect for them, at least prior to 1996. What do you think of what they did with the whole "Load" fiasco? Do you see yourself ever being in a situation like Megadeth with "Risk"?

**In Flames:** Uh, I don't really give it any thought. Obviously I don't like it...

**E.I.:** I'm just wondering sort of out loud I guess, how much of a label thing it was with Metallica.

**In Flames:** Well, I'm sure they (the band) wanted to as well. They were already selling millions of albums anyway.

**E.I.:** So what happens when you guys get really big? Are you gonna go KISS style, and start selling In Flames lunch boxes, bed sheets, toilet paper?

**In Flames:** (laughing) I think I'd have to worry about that when I come to it.

**E.I.:** No "In Flames vs. The Phantom of the Park"?

**In Flames:** (now looking like he wants to wrap it up) We'll see what happens...

Jeff Nau