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INTERVIEW WITH ALEX VARKATZAS

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An Interview with Alex Varkatzas of Atreyu

by Michele Mussatto



Five-man metallic rock band Atreyu opened for Ozzy and Black Label Society at Ozzfest 2006 in Chicago on July 16. Atreyu just released their album "A Death Grip on Yesterday" and are planning a headlining tour this fall. UnRated met up with Lead Singer Alex Varkatzis after their performance.

Michele Mussatto: How many Ozzfests is this for you?

Alex Varkatzis: It's our second one.

Michele: How does it feel to tour with the Prince of Darkness?

Alex: It's awesome. It's surreal, especially just from being a fan you know, and now getting to tour with them. Or just hearing stories like about Sharon Osbourne and stuff and how she runs

things, and then her laying down those kinds of laws on us, it's crazy! We're like part of the story now, you know.

Michele: How do you guys deal with the heat?

Alex: Oh, we don't! We just try to stay on the bus, we drink lots of water, wear lots of sun block, wear very little clothing!

Michele: What does Atreyu mean?

Alex: It's a character from the Never Ending Story. Our buddy Scott actually, he's like our PA dude, he came up with the name for us back in '99.

Michele: How would you describe your music?

Alex: It's kind of like metallic rock, you know - it's got metal aspects, it's got a lot of rock aspects, it's also got a little bit of hardcore in there. We're kind of a hybrid band, you know, a little bit of everything. We can't really just settle on one sound so we just put it all together and make the most of everything.

Michele: Where are you guys from?

Alex: Orange County, California

Michele: I imagine the metal scene's a little different out there.

Alex: Back in '99 it was a lot different, you could kind of see the differences between east coast bands and west coast bands, but nowadays it's really become just one giant scene, like everywhere you go everybody kind of looks the same, and everyone's into kind of the same stuff.

Michele: What are your plans for the future?

Alex: We're starting to work, probably at the beginning of next year, with a new record label. We've got another headlining tour to do at the end of this year in the fall, and then probably after that we'll get started on a new record.

Michele: Are you looking to record the same type of music you have in the past?

Alex: For the most part. We always try to reinvent ourselves, but at the same time we want to keep that Atreyu sound. We just try to always top ourselves and make sure we're on top of our game, and that what we're putting out is the best thing we can do for that period of time with what we've got going on.

Michele: Do you guys follow different tangents when creating, or do you pretty much head in the same direction?

Alex: A little bit of both. Everybody's totally into different kinds of music. Not a single one of us likes the same bands, it's really weird. But we can all agree when it comes to our music. Everyone gets their say and gets to put something in there that's their flavor. It makes us unique - it makes us us.

Michele: Who does most of the writing?

Alex: Our drummer Brandon (Saller) and I. We usually write most of the music and then our other guitar player Travis (Miguel) will throw a little something in there. And sometimes our bass player Marc (McKnight) will throw a little something in there. And usually after that Alex comes in and puts



the lyrics and vocals on there.

Michele: Are there any ego problems?

Alex: Not really actually, I mean, we're all pretty grounded dudes. It's so surreal, it's really hard to take in any of this stuff. It would be one thing if we just got really big over night, but we've been doing this for so long, and it's been such a gradual climb, that we've been able to ease into everything. So we're pretty normal dudes still.

Michele: What advice do you have for aspiring young metal bands?

Alex: Listen to the classics. That's when it was the best, that's when it was done right. Everybody else nowadays is just trying to copy that. If you want to get into metal get into that, then work your way into the new stuff.

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