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'Blood Magick Necromance'

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BELPHEGOR

For the past twenty years, Austrian axe grinder Helmuth has completely ignored musical trends and has to date delivered nine extreme metal masterpieces.

words Fabio Marraccini

As he enters the studio to work on his tenth full-length album, the front man, growler, shredder, and only remaining founding member Belphegor takes some time off to talk about the band's upcoming release, controversy and trends in music, and touring plans.

Austrian axe grinder Helmuth and his crew Belphegor deliver a blend of death and black metal designed to please and shock in equal measures. When asked how he intends to top most recent album *Blood Magick Necromance* with their forthcoming record, Helmuth admits it may be a challenge.

"It is getting harder and harder after nine full-lengths to come up with new arrangements. The master plan is always to top previous albums [because] people that support Belphegor deserve only the best music-wise – they're the reason why we're still here kicking arse."

The new record will have renowned musician Erik Rutan (Morbid Angel, Hate Eternal) at the helm as producer.

"I've been in contact with Erik since around 2007. I've always wanted to record in the United States, but it didn't work out before due to schedule conflicts. This time it finally worked. Erik is totally on top of his game and into it. I'm sure he's going to make the album sound brutal. When people read this, we'll have just tracked the drums and bass at Mana studios [St. Petersburg, Florida]. It's going to be an awesome experience. Extreme and raw European chaotic sound combined with a brutal American sound production – it's the perfect combination."

Combination is not a new concept to Belphegor. Blending together two genres of metal marked by brutality and controversy – death and black metal – they pioneered so-called

'blackened death metal,' without ever having the intention of doing so.

"We have nothing to do with this trendy blackened death metal term – on the contrary. We've just been doing our thing since 1993. It's a symbiosis of brutal and raw death metal with blasting and haunting black metal."

During Belphegor's almost twenty-year career, a lot has changed in the world of music. Back then, black and death metal were genres growing in the underground, while metal in general almost went into a coma – only emerging again after the turn of the century.

"That didn't affect us. We don't play extreme music because it's trendy or to shock Christians. We're into it because we're enemies of the cross. We are one of the only bands that have never followed any trends, changed their style drastically, or split up."

Shocking audiences and being controversial isn't new to metal. From Venom to Deicide, metal has always been associated with controversy. According to Helmuth, that's the way it has to be.

"If metal isn't controversial, it's sheep music. Our attitude, our music, and our lyrics speak for themselves. No excuses to anyone – we are Belphegor and if you don't like it then f**k you all."

Now basically a duo, with Serpenth on bass and backing vocals and hiring session musicians whenever needed live, when will Belphegor haunt our shores?

"My health issues don't allow intense touring in 2012. We'll return to the stage in July. The new album should be finished by mid October. Soon there'll be a few more shows announced. We have never shredded in Australia up to now, but we hope we'll get to do that soon." **M**