

NEUROSIS

Neurosis are one of the most intense bands I have ever heard. They are truly creative and moving. Inspiring. Get their new cd on Relapse. This interview was conducted by Frank FOE in the late summer of 1996.

FOE What was behind the label jumping you have done over the years?

NEU From Alchemy to Lookout to Alternative Tentacles to... "Pain Of Mind" originally came out on Alchemy. They had a lot of promising bands on it, Melvins, Poison Idea, Clown Alley. The guy basically ripped everyone off. He disappeared. Lookout was good honest people, but we didn't feel like we fit. We were the black sheep of that label artistically. We fit really well artistically with Alternative Tentacles, and it was a real honor to be a part of that. But some things happened with the European side of the label, so we had to move on there. We needed to expand our reach, so Relapse had released our Tribes of Neurot project, and we received more advertisement for that project than any of our Neurosis releases, so they really impressed us, and they were getting into more types of music than just metal. So the artistic respect was there too.

FOE How did your live show evolve to where it is now, over the last 10 years of your existence.

NEU It all was just a natural flow. We knew we wanted to take the whole thing, the music and the presentation to where it hadn't been before. We've always had the ethic that everything had to be 100% and honest, and try to create something that is completely overwhelming and lends validity to the intensity of the music. We use a combination of 16mm film and many, many slide projectors. Pete is a member of the band (the vid guy). We are a six member band.

FOE Where does all of the material come from?

NEU We steal it, we shoot it, we create it ourselves.

FOE What kind of a response do you get in the US vs Europe? Is there a difference?

NEU There is a definite difference. The US is a strange uncultured mass. There isn't an inherent respect for art or individuality. And there isn't an inherent respect for human beings in general. When you travel Europe, it's a basic thing, even if you don't get paid so much, you get food and a place to stay without question. You have to fight for that in the US. Everything is contractual. Same goes for the fans. The US has so many different cliques. People in Europe are open to different things, and aren't so tied into one particular type of music.

FOE You are one of the most intense bands around right now, lyrically, musically.. do you think a lot of that intensity goes over people's heads?

NEU Definitely. The amount of people who understand it are very few. There are a few that are really tapped into it. We're dealing with concepts in a lot of ways, that are even over our own heads, that is why they require artistic expressions. They can't be expressed logically, with language. It gets down to deeper things. Those are things that people choose not to deal with in their lives, because that is the way they have been brought up. Some people don't seek the divine, the spiritual, confronting the dark sides of their souls. They



don't deal with their inner issues, and that is what we are about. So of course a lot of people aren't going to get it.

FOE Why do you choose to deal with that lyrically?

NEU I don't think it was a choice. It just is. I think that is what we have to do. It is why we are here. It transcends all the bullshit. We don't do it in some sort of new age, religious way. We refuse to deal with politics or social situations that are false. That are just the surface. We try to get behind what is all of that. What is behind the state of humanity. What makes people create these situations.

FOE So if someone was out there and they had never heard of your band and you had to tell them what you are about... what would you say to them?

NEU (laughs) It is a difficult question because you have to put it in some sort of frame of reference. It depends on who the person is...

FOE OK, just your typical punk rock kid.

NEU I don't know, I guess I would just say that it is really fucking heavy and spiritual and deep. Psychedelic. The true spirit of neurosis. The meaning of the word. Defies categories. Whatever. Punk to me always was doing something totally intense and totally different. Not a style of music, it was an attitude behind the music. Now it has turned into simple Rah Rock, which is bullshit. I think we have the original true spirit of the true punk ethic, taken to whatever state we've taken it to.

FOE Say you were to put together your own package concert, Lollapalooza/Warped thing. Who would you want to tour with?

NEU That'd be tough. I've had fantasies of that before. Taking some gigantic festival on the road. Unfortunately it would be one no one would care about.

FOE Well, financial matters aside, and people's tastes aside.

NEU It would probably be a mix of lots of different things. Different cultural music, really fucking intense tribal shit, bands doing things that are different like Crash Worship or Galloping Coroners from Hungary.. they are like pagan warrior rock. They have fucked up pagan theatre that they travel with. Mixed with really good heavy bands that we like, Zeni Geva... and mix it with people who create weird sound, experimental art.. push it to the limit.

FOE Are you familiar with Sepultura?

NEU We invited them to play on one of our drum jams, at the end of our live sets for the last few years, we just go into tribal mayhem, and we played a small club next to a big club where they were playing and they came up and jammed with us. I think that was inspiring for them, they started doing some percussion stuff after that.

FOE As far as what you do listen to, your music is so intense, what do you listen to when you are out on the road to balance that out?

NEU On the road you have ten people in the van, so you have to find a common factor. Usually that is bad rock. Everyone starts singing along to Lynyrd Skynyrd or whatever. When I am on my own I tend to listen to Gorecki, who is a Polish composer that just does the most haunting violins, strings sections... It's beautiful but not happy stuff.. I've been listening to a lot of Brian Eno's weird ambient stuff. Irish folk music, bagpipe music. Planet of the Apes soundtrack...

FOE I am a big soundtrack fan...

NEU That is a goal of ours to someday do a soundtrack. Between the stuff we do with Tribes of Neurot and Neurosis I think we could score a pretty intense film.

FOE Explain the Tribes of Neurot stuff...

NEU It is an artistic platform that we formed last year so we could further express the concepts we were dealing with, in ways that were unrelated to rock bands in general. For as much as we try not to be a rock band with

Neurosis, we still have that format, the instrumentation. It has given us the opportunity to explore the philosophy and spirit of what we are doing in other ways with less attachment. We are pretty fascist about the way Neurosis has to be. But the Tribes of Neurot allows us to throw that out the window as long as we are delving in the same spirit. We've released a few experimental sound recordings under that title. One is on Relapse, we've released a double 7", a couple of compilations, we are going to put out a 12", 10", 7" package on Frank Kosics label. That is just a sound aspect. It only makes it into Neurosis as an intro. or outro. or a texture in a soft part. But it just might be a little blurb from a 35 minute ambient piece.

FOE You used bagpipes on the last album...

NEU Yeah, we had a friend of ours play. Its a very influential instrument. I've just begun learning to play. It's the loudest acoustic instrument. Its so fucking loud when you are standing next to those things.

FOE So what is up with the tour.

NEU 60 shows in 67 days, all US. We just got off a three week break, after a three month tour of Europe.

FOE Say, you weren't in Neurosis for the last 10 years. What do you think you'd have been doing for the last 10 years?

NEU I definitely would be doing something along the same lines. Maybe not a band, but there is a fire that drives me to do certain things in my life. I would have been developing my spirit and my soul. I would be following a warrior path.