

SEPULTURA

I (Frank FOE) got to interview Max Cavalera, vocalist and rhythm guitarist for the Brazilian band Sepultura. In case you were left in the dark, their last album "Chaos AD" was a masterpiece of thought, rage, power, creativity and heaviness. One of the best discs I've ever heard. After hearing an advance of their new cd, "Roots", they have taken another step in their evolution... increasing the aggro...

FOE Do you still have the bullet belt you used to wear in the pictures from your earlier releases?

MAX Yeah, and I still wear it sometimes. It reminds me of playing like old Celtic Frost covers.

FOE You write some of the heaviest music around, as well as heavy handed lyrics...

MAX It comes out of me naturally. The lyrics on the new album are a little more personal than political. That's how I'm feeling right now. I'm feeling that I can give people more strength to fight back, than to just complain. I'm giving people the tools, the energy, the inspiration to fight the shit back. Don't let the bastards grind you down kind of feeling. So that's more about "Roots", it's less whining and more attitude.

FOE Do you think that previously, your political lyrics were going over your audiences heads?

MAX I think if I would have kept going, I would have just come off as a fucking complainer. And that is not me. I'm about taking action. It is very important to get a message across. My favorite artists like, Jello Biafra, Bob Marley... they had something to say. They weren't bullshitting around... it was not about cars and girls and dragons. It was about real shit that hit you every day. The music and the lyrics help you get through that shit.

FOE Do you find it more difficult to do now (relating to everyday shit of normal people)? Your days are probably just filled with the touring and recording grind. How do you keep up with the rest of the things?

MAX I'm very in touch with normal people. I keep my feet on the ground. Whenever we tour, I'm always talking to people and going to places. Like the urban areas and trying to get involved with people. I guess I'm what you would call a weird person. Normal bands they go drink in the bar and go looking for titty bars. I go looking for weird things and places to go and talk to people. I talk to people from prostitutes to street kids and bums. That helps me write lyrics. I've always been like that since I was a kid.

FOE Do you have strong religious beliefs?

MAX I think they are strong, but they are not connected to any organization or anything like that. I am spiritual myself. I don't believe in any religious group. I pray. And if I need something I ask and I pray... when I get it back, I pay him back, by lighting a candle or prayer.

FOE You seem to be pretty disciplined. Do you find it hard to stay away from the just going to bars or just hanging out while on tour or is it easy for you to not do those things, and just go out and try to meet new and weird people?

MAX My days of doing the boozing and drugging are over. I did it a lot, a huge amount of it. Now I just want to do other things. I know what it's gonna be like, I know how the night's gonna end, I know how I'll feel in the morning. So why should I do it again. In a way I am more disciplined than the people in my band and most of the people that I know. But I feel better doing things this way.

FOE Do you think that the life experience that you went through, with the drinking is a good thing to go through?

MAX If you can survive, if you have a mind left. If you end up with a brain that is like a fried egg, then it's not worth it. If you have the choice of not trying, if you would ask my opinion, I would tell people to stay away from hard drugs. But as far as other stuff goes, pot, it opens your mind. I mean if you drink some wine, there's nothing wrong with that. Everything in a moderate way is ok, that's how I feel. If you do a lot, it's bad. The only thing there can never be enough of is music! You can always have more and more and more and never overdose!

FOE Are you a big fan of current music?

MAX Everything, everything from the newest band with a demo tape to early recordings of tribes and stuff like that.

FOE Do you look at the album "Chaos AD" as turning point for your band?

MAX Yes. We found our own sound.

FOE What inspired that change?

MAX It just came naturally. Natural things come and you don't understand them... when they first hit you, and then you understand them later. I figured "Chaos AD" out after months, I finally understood it. When we first recorded it, I didn't understand what we were doing. I didn't realize what it was all about. Now I know it was a turning point. If we were going to stay alive as a band, we had to do "Chaos AD", otherwise we would have been totally washed away, like a lot of the metal bands that couldn't survive. Even if the record wasn't successful, I still would have been satisfied with the music. We redefined the Sepultura sound.

FOE With the expansion of your audience, have you noticed any negative impact? As in more violence at the large gigs?

MAX It's just crazier than ever. It was the perfect name. The whole tour was chaos. The crowd is just sick, every individual is just like in a trance, like in a ritual. How can it get crazier



than that... I get crazy with the new record "Roots". It's going to be scary to see what happens live.

FOE Have you witnessed anything that goes against the "good chaos"? Like bad security or anything...

MAX No, cuz we will stop playing and stop the show and do something about it. You can never ignore a situation like that. Never did and never will. You gotta be a really fucked up person to see a kid getting beat up and not do something about it. They pay to see the band, not get beat up. We respect the fan a lot.

FOE How does it feel being the conductor of all of this? You being in control of all of this chaos basically?

MAX Ummm... Feels good! We do it together. I can't do it without the crowd, and they can't do it without me. It's a connection. It's just letting frustrations out. I think the problems are with the people who can't let their frustrations out. They are like a time bomb ready to explode. Never dealing with their demons or dealing with themselves. You have to confront your demons?

FOE What has been your greatest demon to confront?

MAX Probably, dealing with my father's death. It is my biggest fear... disappointment... and biggest demon really.

FOE Are you still confronting that demon?

MAX Yeah, I'm still confronting that.

FOE You'll have to forgive me for my ignorance here. But what does the name of the band mean?

MAX It means "grave" in Portuguese.

FOE And why did you chose that as the name?

MAX Perhaps it is connected to my father's death. Grave has always been a huge symbol for me, of different things. And I like it because it is in Portuguese. It sounds different. I don't see grave as something that is spooky. I see it as something that is beautiful. I think graveyards are really peaceful. I like to go there, they make me feel good, I feel a connection.

FOE I notice the mention of the word "envy" in your material... Do you think that is one of the biggest demons?

MAX I just think envy is a bullshit fucking quality of the human race. Most people have it. Most people are two faced, talking shit behind your back. Because they want what you have. There are more important things in life than material things. I don't envy bands and things like that. I look up to people who can live in harmony with nature, people who are totally complete with that. Those are the real happy people of this planet.

FOE Do you see yourself as a person like that, or do you see yourself getting to be a person like that.

MAX I am working on that. I have a lot of tribulation to confront, til I can be like that.

FOE If you were a person like that, could Sepultura be a part of your life?

MAX Probably not.

FOE Do you see the band as more of a vehicle to get to that point?

MAX Yeah. The band is my help. It's how I get my frustrations out.

FOE Do you know what the sales of "Chaos AD" were?

MAX About 400,000 in the US. It did better in the rest of the world than it did in America. It sold twice as much as "Arise". I think it was 2 million worldwide. Which is amazing to me, there are a lot of bands out there who are selling millions of records without being honest about their work. We don't compromise, we do what we want. It makes me proud and I think it makes the fans proud that we can get a gold record in Brazil and in Europe.

FOE If you could change one thing in the world what would it be.

MAX Probably the deforestation. There are all kinds of problems, but this is one of the irreversible problems, where once all of the forest is burned, you can't go back and replant. It effects the whole atmosphere and the planet.

