Bio

Before The Dawn

Cold Flare Eternal

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In order to create, you must destroy. The deeply archaic meaning behind this saying hold special significance for Tuomas Saukkonen, Finland’s most prolific purveyor of Northern tales and crushing sounds. In the past 20+ years, the multi-instrumentalist, self-declared treehugger and heavy metal Renaissance man has created and destroyed various projects that shaped Finland’s musical landscape and played a prominent part in providing the trademark of Finnish metal with many a cornerstone. And after he finally brought back his revered band Before The Dawn back in 2023, Saukkonen and his band of brothers are already returning with yet another subliminal masterclass in melodic death metal storytelling from the Karelian isthmus.

When in 2023 “Stormbringers” marked the rebirth of Before The Dawn after eleven long years, the world of heavy metal rejoiced because they could finally welcome home a camaraderie long lost. And a mere two years down the road from there, it’s already high time for a worthy successor. “Things just kept getting better and better after the release of the comeback album,” Tuomas looks back with a satisfied grin. Or as satisfied as a grin you can possibly expect from a restless soul like him. “The chemistry in the band is at an all time high.”

You can feel it, too. Recorded alongside vocal force Paavo Laapotti, guitarist Juho Räihä, bassist Pyry Hanski and keyboard player Saku Moilanen, multi instrument wielder Tuomas Saukkonen “only” takes care of rhythm guitars and drums this time around. “Nothing remains the same ever,” he sums up. “Big changes have been made but it still feels like the same band. To me it even feels like there was no break at all.” In contrast to some of his many other projects, Before The Dawn was always destined to be a band, not a solo project. And now that this band has been unleashed with what’s without a doubt is their strongest line-up ever, it sure is fitting that this is the best Before The Dawn record ever. “Cold Flare Eternal” is a hard-hitting work of musical brilliance, Northern magic and a biting, aggressive edge hitherto unknown to this group, chaos unleashed and forces of darkness controlled, all under the spell of endless rivers, lakes and forests. An album like a torrent, unapologetically sweeping you off your feet and yet offering you repose and serenity.

However, you gotta ask how he’s pulling it off: Saukkonen, the genius behind the likes of Wolfheart, Dawn Of Solace, Black Sun Aeon and, of course, Before The Dawn, has released four thrilling tales from the thousand lakes since 2022 alone. He has created and destroyed time and again, ever the phoenix rising from the ashes of his own creations. And he’s sure not stopping there: This summer, he will return with Before The Dawn to once again shroud the world in a tempest of Karelian Melodic Death mastery, delivering the heaviest and yet quintessentially Nordic version of this band yet. And it’s only the beginning: After working as a gardener for many years, Tuomas Saukkonen finally went pro back in 2023. And while he managed to churn out 20 albums in 20 years before that, we can all just marvel at what he’ll be capable of doing now. You see, quantity and quality not always excludes themselves. “The great thing is, though, that I not only have way more time to write and play but also more time to spend outdoors and go fishing,” he laughs. Life goals.

The first song Saukkonen wrote for the ninth Before The Dawn record traditionally became the lead single off the album. And with “As Above, So Below”, a song loosely based on the Hermetic principles and the duality of all things inside us, there couldn’t have been a better choice anyway. “We went back into the studio full of energy after the first European tour in 14 years and a great festival season. It was not the original plan to enter the studio so quick but the momentum was already there and none of us saw any reason as to why slow it down,” Tuomas explains. The agenda: transfer this momentum they experienced on stage directly onto the new record. “It was all about capturing this visceral and overwhelming energy we feel on stage when we share our favourite songs live with our fans.”

Like every single Before The Dawn album since “Deadlight” (2007), they recorded it at the studio of their guitar player Juho Räihä, making it a “super smooth, efficient and fun session” for all involved, as Tuomas Saukkonen points out. Ultimately, this is the album of a band enjoying playing together, creating hugely intense, dramatic and furiously heavy songs, interwoven with these painfully beautiful melodies so closely associated with Finland’s vast and forlorn beauty. “There is a lot of rebellious energy in the album lyrics brought about by the energy of the music and overall cocky mood inside the band,” he says and smiles: “We are the hammer and the rest of the world is the anvil.”

It’s astounding that after more than 20 years and 20 albums, Tuomas Saukkonen is still burning for the cause. “I love writing music and being in the centre of the creation process building the songs track by track, layer by layer. Travelling and playing music together with some of the best   
humans I have met in my life is just the icing of the cake. It has been good quarter of a century and hopefully many more years to come. I only fear,” he adds laughing, “that it is just a matter of time when I show up to a venue with a wrong band.” No worries there: It’ll be a great band no matter what.