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Temujin

When Melbourne Gothic metal outfit Temujin (whose name comes from the original tribal name of Genghis Khan) first contacted me for an interview to help promote their debut CD, '1000 Tears,' the image my mind conjured up of them could not have been more wrong. While I'd expected them to be another young metal outfit consisting of four or five guys, they instead turned out to be a two-piece whose guitarist, bassist and drummer, Karl Lean, is something of a veteran of the Australian metal scene.



"I've been around the block once or twice," he informs me. "While this is the first "official" band the other member, [singer and keyboard player] Kelly, has been involved with, I've been in plenty of other bands myself. The main one was called Nothing Sacred, which went for nearly ten years before splitting up. I've played in Adelaide a few times with other groups; I even used to play with some of your bands, ones like Basket Case and Almost Human. We're going back a fair way with the latter one! I'd been out of the scene for a little while when I started Temujin - just taking a break after several bands I'd been involved with sort of just petered out. I wrote for a while, and then decided I needed a vocalist, because if there's one thing I'm really bad at, it's singing! So yeah, a mutual friend put Kelly and I in touch; we started working together and have taken it to the next level now by putting out a CD. At the moment, we want to keep the band to just the two of us because I've found from past experience that if you've got too many people in a band, it can take you all day to come to a consensus about anything. We're fortunate, though, to have a pool of associates and friends who're more than happy to play with us on stage, so we just throw together a lineup whenever we want to play live."

Not that the group has been doing much of the last one, Lean admits; instead, the emphasis has been on writing and recording material. "There just aren't that many venues where we can play the stuff we're doing at the moment," he confesses. "Unfortunately, these days you can't do the old band thing of earning your keep by doing the hard yards in the pubs, and building from there. Also, the bigger market for what we're doing is overseas; the style of music we're playing is very popular in Europe, for example. Although you get bands like Evanescence that are quite popular here, there often isn't that trickle-down effect - just because you get a fairly heavy, female-fronted band that can sell out all the major stadiums in the capital cities, it doesn't necessarily follow that all the local bands like that are also going to be widely supported."

One place overseas where the band seem to be particularly popular is, strangely enough, Turkey. "We get a lot of feedback from Turkish people," Lean tells me. "They sign up on our Myspace page, and some of them already know the story behind our name; they relate to it straight away for some reason. Obviously, Genghis Khan must really mean something to the people of Turkey, although I couldn't tell you why because I'm not exactly an expert on the country and its history myself! There's no particular reason we chose the name ourselves; I suppose it just felt like a good, strong name. There's also nothing wrong with being associated with someone who took over



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half the world; it's not a bad plan!"

Given Lean's involvement with other groups, I'm curious to know if the material he's playing now varies from what he's done in the past. "I suppose it's reasonably different," he muses. "With Nothing Sacred, for example, we had a bit of reputation for being a thrash band, although we never started out that way (and I don't think we ever did become a full-on thrash band myself); we just got faster and faster and faster, which might be what happens when you play live a lot, as we used to; you write faster or something! What we're doing now definitely represents a different direction for me; I'm making an attempt to focus on constructing light and shade, if you like. I like to think there's a varying dynamic in the songs I'm writing now."

James Brazel

'1000 Tears' is out now independently.

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