

Strings 'n' Things



As we all know, there would be no shows without the guys 'behind the scenes' putting everything together and keeping things working. PT's current guitar technician is Dutchman Hans Nagtegaal. We asked him a few questions about working for PT and life on the road.

How did you get the job as stage technician with Porcupine Tree?

I work for Anathema, who were supporting PT on the *Deadwing* tour in Spring 2005. For the Summer festivals the band needed a guitar tech when the previous tech, Jason, had to take a break. I actually work as a stagehand at one of those festivals, and that's when they asked me. Of course I didn't have to think long about that offer!

Is it just guitars that you look after or do you do bass and keyboards as well?

I actually do all the instruments except for drums. Adrian takes care of the drums, Ian does all the microphones and cabling. Everything else concerning strings or keys is in my care.

What's the best thing about working for Porcupine Tree?

The best thing? There's lots of good things about working with this band, but if I strictly talk about the instruments and gear, I'd say the best thing is that all the gear is high quality, in very good shape and the setups are failsafe. Problems with this gear are really rare. I've worked for too many bands already where I spend hours just to get gear to work 'properly'.

What's the worst thing about working for Porcupine Tree?

I wouldn't really know. When there's things I don't like about working with this or that band I'll try to either change them so I like the situation more, and if that proves futile or doesn't seem to be 'worth it', I'll go elsewhere.

Tell us exactly what happened when SW's BadCat amp blew up at the last gig of the recent US tour - how did you work around this to keep the show going?

All of a sudden, towards the end of the first song, the sound of Steven's guitar just disappeared. The last thing we thought of, was that it could be the amplifier itself. We thought "there must be a cable disconnected or broken somewhere in the chain". When all the trying and reconnecting failed, the last stop was the amp itself. It powered up correctly and seemed to be alright, there was just NO output at all! I don't know how and where exactly we got a replacement amp from; probably the act that played the small venue earlier. Wes then decided that Steven would use his amp, and Wes would use the replacement amp. All this time, Steven 'just' performed some acoustic songs; 'music while you work! A friend of Wes' was standing in first row, and he happened to be a BadCat owner and player himself. He offered to help out to try and fix the amp, while I would focus on the rest of the show.

Which of the current Wes/SW guitars is your favourite?

I would have to say I like Wes' black single cut PRS best.

What is your favourite venue that PT have played and why?

There's a few venues I always love going to; like 013 (Tilburg, Nether-

lands) and z7 (Pratteln, Switzerland) but there's also some venues I've done with PT only and liked a lot like The Grove (Anaheim, California). Usually the things that make me love a venue are that everything works, they have motivated good local crew, everything is clean and in order and the tiny details they take care of too are the cherry on the pie. It's all "just right".

What other bands/artists have you worked for?

I won't mention them all, that would just take too long, and quite a few names would be unknown to most of you but if you're interested, check out my website <http://surrealm.net>. Anyway, the other bands I currently work for are: Anathema, Samael and Amon Amarth.

What three things can't you live without when you're on the road?

I will always have (at least) the following items with me on the road: iPod, chocolate and laptop.

If PT fans want to buy you a drink at future gigs what should they order?

Depending on the situation, country and time (before or after a show) I could be made very happy with chocolate milk (hot or cold), a fine scottish or irish whisky, salmiakki or just orange juice.



Diana Nilschke