



Alev

Azrael from rockinchina.com, **Patrick, Martin and Alexandra** from Alev and **Nicola** as their China Management. Interview for Rock in China and Painkiller Magazine.

I'd been lucky enough to meet up with Alev on Saturday, April 15th 2006, in Patrick's flat in Munich. Despite the lurking rain and gloomy light that shined through heavy clouds I found my way into the apartment of Patrick and was delighted to see that I'd been in a rock home: old vinyls of Iron Maiden and Twisted Sisters, posters on the wall and a huge sound system give proof to the fact that I'm in the home of one the best and hottest underground bands Germany is offering.





Azchael: Alev is quite a young band in Germany that worked up its band all by its own. How have you done it? What is the secret of your success?

Patrick: Self initiative! Self made demos that we distributed! Booking of concerts by our own! The determination to do it! We also said that we have to tour through whole Germany and not only through a small part of it!

Azchael: Did you distribute your demos via CDs or via the internet?

Patrick: Only real CDs. Wait... one song was sent by the internet. Better saying we created a website not open for the public and published the song "Cause'n'Effects" there. Then we sent out the link to all venue owners and record labels. The reaction to this song was amazing, everybody loved it!

Azchael: Your bands' name is Alev (which actually was the first name of your first singer – left the band 2005), but what is the meaning of the word Alev now for you? What is the meaning of "Flame"? (Alev is Turkish and means translated flame)

Alexandra: The energy, the fire behind the music. Fire is the strongest of the four elements.

Patrick: Well, it has four letters. (laughing)

Azchael: I've read on your website, that you're working on a new CD recently. What can you tell me about it?

Patrick: It's definitely going to be harder!

Martin: It's powerful and straighter than the debut album.

Alexandra: It's directly going into your mind.

Azchael: And what are you singing about?

Alexandra: About personal freedom, not in a political sense, but in sense of a feeling and emotion. Freedom that is coming from the inside of oneself.

Azchael: As you're recording new songs with a new singer, how about your old songs? Are you going to rerecord them and release them as a CD or maybe via a live album?

Patrick: No, that's not possible due to legal restrictions, the only song we can and we will rerecord is going to be "Staind". But for the others it's not possible.

Martin: And we also do not want to rerecord them.



Patrick: So it's only Staind and for those who go into detail: the song "Devotion" is also rerecorded, but that had been only a demo track and wasn't on the debut.

Azchael: In German TV you've given to interviews (Channels: RTL / SAT1) and it was mentioned that as Turkish-German band you're an example for cross-cultural understanding and friendship. You yourself define Alev as music band and not as international band. Don't you think that this Turkish-German thing has helped you to be successful?

Patrick: No! Well, maybe during our Turkey tour yes, but otherwise no!

Martin: This whole cross-cultural understanding thing was pushed in the interviews by the TV channels, but actually it's just about the music.

Alexandra: You see, we're all no "pure Germans" or "pure Turkish" but our parents also come from different countries. I'm half Russian.

Azchael: You're an underground band yourself. How do you see the underground scene in Germany at the moment?

Martin: Loud! (laughing)

Alexandra: I think the rock is coming up again...

Patrick: As usual, there are always good and bad bands...

Azchael: Which one is a good underground band for you (except Alev)?

Patrick: The band "Sweet me" rocks!

Martin: But what actually is underground? It doesn't exist! Rock is coming more and more into mainstream.

Patrick: A lot of bands try to use rock and then they have Pop-Rock. But even in mainstream there are good bands!

Alexandra: In Munich there is no underground scene! Everything that comes up is discovered and sold out in the market. It's commercialized!

Patrick: And there are more and more bands; now it is so easy to make music by your own with all the computer software (drum software) and so on. The quality is afflicted by the use of computer. And I'm no friend of thinking in boxes or genres...

Martin: It's just the music!

Patrick: ... you should see it on a global stage, that's also better for people like you looking into bands. If they see oh, they toured in Germany and the Netherlands.



Martin: Our music also has elements of underground. A good crossover should be good.

Patrick: Think of System of a Down, they aren't really mainstream and when you hear the music or watch the video everybody just stares and glares.

Martin: And if I hear that even Metallica changed their producer to System of a Down's one, I think they also want to sound like that (laughing).

Alexandra: Even major bands want to sound underground now. Where is the diving line? Where's the border? But that way I think this can be positive.

Azchael: Now coming to speak of China: How come you go to China? What's the story behind? *(Everybody points to Nicola, who blushes)*

Nicola: I think it was a misunderstanding...

Patrick: No misunderstanding.

Nicola: Before I went to China to work on a project in my regular job I got a call from Patrick and he told me to arrange a tour. And because he sounded so sure about it I believed it and started immediately after arrival in Beijing to get contacts and find the right persons. And as Patrick always kept asking me I made it possible.

Azchael: And how could you arrange the Midi festival gig?

Nicola: That happened via Jon Campbell. He made the contact to Midi.

Alexandra: I never thought it's going to be so big and it's still growing every day.

Nicola: But because the Midi festival was already in May we only had two choices: either wait a long time and fix everything or be spontaneous and do the Midi gig.

Patrick: So we said: Do the Midi!

Alexandra: Nicola did really a great job! She mailed and mailed...

(Martin imitates someone typing on a keyboard, everybody laughs)

Azchael: So what are you thinking about when you... China?

Martin: Nothing at all, no idea about it...

Patrick: Asia!

Martin: Ok, you saw a few documentaries on TV with all the reports about rice and poor people, the feelings watching the beautiful landscape...



Patrick: A large country!

Alexandra (who had been in China for two weeks already): It's so amazing and so completely different from all expectations! The manners, the hospitality that you can get in touch with people immediately. When I was in Beijing I experienced it as a cultural city, whereas Shanghai was really westernized.

Azrael: What are your tour expectations? And what do you expect about the audience?

Patrick: We already had the chance to read and hear many reports also from our friends "The Lucky Punch", that had been on a tour in China beforehand. That the people are extremely euphoric, but actually I do never expect too much.

Alexandra: That they are going to like our music.

Martin: Nothing! It's already great that we have the chance to get to China. Anyway it's going to be exotic and even our parents and friends can not really believe it.

Patrick: We want to spread our music, so we're looking forward how it's going to be and how they will like our music. Because success comes from fans that go to the concerts and buy your music.

Azrael: Did you prepare yourself in any way for the tour?

Patrick: "Ni hao"

Martin: No, actually not.

Azrael: What do you know about Chinese underground music? Any bands you've heard of?

Martin: Subs! Nicola showed us a video of them.

Alexandra: It was so raw music, so good! Rebellious.

Martin: So wild and free music.

Patrick: That they are screaming their souls out of their body! That's great, I really like it!

Azrael: And my last question: Are you going to make a photo or video coverage of the tour?

Patrick: Well, we have in mind to make a DVD later, maybe with some footage we're shooting by ourself.

Azrael: Ok, that's the end of the my questions, do you wanna see the Midi 2004 DVD?

All: Sure, let's rock!