

Vision Éternel Interview for Sadness By Name

Editor's Note: This interview was conducted on March 18th 2010 for Sadness By Name magazine. We have decided to repost it here for archival purposes and because it is truly an amazing read.

-Hello Alex, can you introduce yourself and let everyone know what your musical repertoire is?

Hey! My full name is Alexandre Julien. I've been playing guitar since 2002, starting my first band in 2003 (a band which I don't actually care to discuss much because looking back on it, it was pretty corny). My first serious band was Throne of Mortality in 2005. I then had short stints with a variety of bands incorporated under the Triskalyon banner, including Vision Solitude, Vision Lunar, Vision Sufferance, Gallia Fornax, and of course Vision Éternel.

Since then, I've had Projection Mina, Lanterns Awake, Human Infect and Vision Sufferance has since been revamped into Soufferance. From 2006 to 2008 I ran Mortification Records, and since the folding of that label, I now run Abridged Pause Recordings.

-Since this interview is trying to focus only on Vision Éternel, we'll try to keep the questions focused only on the perspective of that band, even if a lot of the other bands you were in connect closely. Can you tell us how Vision Éternel started out?

VE started out in January 2007 by pure accident. At the time Triskalyon was already in progress, and had been for about four months. I was recording some jams for Vision Lunar, and recorded this part that was just too smooth to fit under Lunar. I think that I could have incorporated it in Lunar,

but during that phase of my life I would actually separate every different type of composition into different bands (something I still make the mistake of doing). That short song was recorded and later took the name of Love within Beauty, the first song on the first EP. That's pretty much how the idea originated.

-How did the recording of the first EP “Seul Dans L’obsession” take place? How was working at Mortified Studios?

Well Mortified Studios is actually just what I call my home recording studio. The songs were recorded on my computer, and slightly better produced than the Lunar material of the time. So that's why I mentioned it was recorded and produced at Mortified Studios. The recording was pretty laid back. It has always been for Vision Éternel because I never force myself to record or write unless I really feel inspired. Art for arts sake is a bullshit expression.

-The first single of the EP was “Love within Narcosis”. You also made a music video for the song, and it was very similar to the artwork of the album. How was this received when it came out? How did you promote the single and how was Mortification Records implied?

Narcosis was in the first half of songs I wrote of the album, and from the moment I showed it to my close friends after it was recorded, they loved it. So it only seemed natural for me to release it as a “single” for promotion. It was really only a digital single, because there never were any cds pressed of just that song, but it was used on a compilation by Mortification Records, which also released the album digitally. As far as promotion it was mostly Myspace, Last.fm, PureVolume, YouTube, occasional forum posting. that sort of thing... It was well received actually. People loved it and that's pretty much what put Triskalyon on the map (along with the two Lunar songs released at the time). People weren't sure how to react to Éternel and I

even gave an interview back then with this girl from Cali and simply trying to explain to her the difference between Lunar and Éternel was difficult (she wasn't very intelligent either).

The music video was what helped Vision Éternel the most I think. I filmed it in the backyard of my parent's house, where I had recorded the album, on a dusk sky, and with this Lantern that I had bought at a garage sell. I love that lantern, it still has that nostalgic Narcosis feeling to it. I took the pictures the previous night actually, and it was the same dusk sky, setting over the forest. At the time my monitor was dying out and it was super dark, so I couldn't really tell all the mistakes of the video while I was editing it. I'd have to go back to it and remaster it to make it darker and fix up some cuts. It was my first music video though, and I still feel 85% happy about it, so it's not that bad.

-You then released “Love within Isolation” as the second single. Can you elaborate on the state of the band at that time? How was the EP doing by then?

Well to be honest, it wasn't huge. But I was doing a lot of promo. And Isolation was my second favorite song off the album. It was also on the compilation from Mortification Records. I guess that's the reason it was considered a single, and also because we used it for the Myspace. We had an edited cut to it that took off the extended ending that was on the album.

-Now around this time Triskalyon ended. You also stopped doing music for a while. What was going on in your life at that time? Did you not want to continue doing Éternel or any other music?

It's a difficult situation to explain because with me I have a lot of downs. Not ups and downs, just downs. And some

people really got to me at that time, and pissed me off, so I just decided to take a break from the music. I had written so many poems and songs in the last year that I felt it was what I needed. It was emotional but in the way of relief. Weird to describe it. Anyway, it didn't take me long before I started to write music for Vision Éternel again. In fact at the time it was the only band I actually kept going. Soufferance later came back, and Lunar has spurts of creations once in a blue moon, but Éternel is really the only band from Triskalyon to have really taken off. That's why I decided to keep the Myspace only for it.

-How was the composition and recording period for your next album "Un automne en solitude"? Did you feel you were comparing it to the first, or did you worry how it was gonna turn out?

That album actually happened naturally, at the beginning at least. One day it just happened, and I wrote "Desperation". Then came "Neglection". I did compare it at times. I wanted it to be in the same theme. It had a different mood, but it was the same idea. Another breakup, yet this one was more hopeful. That's the feeling I get when I compare them. "Un automne..." is more hopeful. The last song or two to be composed on the EP were a bit hard, and were dragged out for a while. Took me longer to complete it. I still self-recorded it at Mortified Studios. Just about when the EP was done being recorded I moved back to Montreal. The artwork took forever to do because I had no access to a camera. I ended up taking pictures from my cell phone in negative of this construction site outside my window in the winter at like 3 a.m. I really wanted to do a music video for "Absence" but I never got to because of a lack of camera. Some fan in Europe did a video of it though (I don't think it was very good). But right now, over two years later, I'm finally in the post-production phase of the official music video for Absence.

-The album was released March 14th, 2008, and you then decided to recruit band members? How did this come about, was it to play shows?

Well I actually had been trying out members here and there since summer 2007. My friend Phil, who was in Triskalyon as Darklink, used to jam out solos over Eternel songs when we would hang out. That's where the idea originally came from. I just wanted to record some b-sides. Then when I moved back to Montreal I jammed with Josh from MadParish who I worked with, a couple times, but it didn't last long. By then I was considering possibly doing some shows so that's why I tried him out. Then in like January/February of 2008 I had Adam and Nidal come in from the school I was going to at the time. Nidal played rhythm on acoustic and Adam did solos. It was really cool, and the EP wasn't released yet, so I had the idea to put off the EP's recordings as just demos and redo the whole album with us three. It had a much more indie and full post-rock sound to it. I loved it. However we never got to record anything with us three on it. Nidal left because he was bored, and Adam naturally gave up after I was bummed out. I ended up releasing the EP as an EP in the end, again on Mortification Records (it ended up being the last thing released on the label).

-Through out 2008 and 2009 a lot of plans were talked about concerning Vision Éternel, including a split with Ethereal Beauty, a split with Tasharg, a compilation album, re-issues of the eps on tapes, a full length album, a third ep, and even of ending the Eternel name. Can you elaborate on the things that happened and the ones that didn't, up to about where the new ep comes in the picture?

Wow. A lot happened during that time. You've listed the majority of them. The first of them that came about was the split with Ethereal Beauty. I found the band because they had actually listed Vision Éternel in their influences on their Myspace, and upon checking it out I loved the music. I

got a long great with Jordan and we decided we would do a split on vinyl, that I wanted to self-release on my new record label. EB has been sort of hiatus for a while, but that split WILL happen some day. It is a promise.

The split with Tasharg came a bit later when I considered doing a series of Vision Éternel splits on 7". I think I kinda wanted to do the same thing that Poison the Well did with the recent series of 7", and then release them all on CD on a foreign countries label. Tasharg kind of went under and disappeared for a while... I haven't talked to her since the proposal (I'm not even sure there was an official proposal actually), but now shes back under another name. I wouldn't say that idea couldn't ever happen.

The idea of re-releasing the material comes from almost the beginning. Initially I self-released the two EPs digitally on my own label because I didn't think anyone cared enough about the band or music to actually put money into it (I should of looked just a bit further because there were). So after the second EP came out in 2008 and more people started to once again ask me where they could buy the CDs, well I wanted to get them released on CD. Except I didn't want to do it myself because it wouldn't have added much more fame to the band because no one new would of heard of the band. A label was needed to bring new ears. Then I started thinking about the third EP... Everything kind of happened at once. I wanted to write new material for a third EP but it wasn't working out so I thought that maybe the band may never end up releasing another one. So when I came in contact with Frozen Veins in Japan, what we decided to do was a compilation of both EPs with some unreleased material. It was in sorts a discography (though even at the time incomplete). Then in the summer of 2009 I decided to find someone to re-issue the EPs on cassette tapes. I spoke to a few labels, and finally set up a deal with Winterreich Records. The EPs were supposed to be released in 300 copies

each. I did brand new artwork for them, with professional pictures, I got the songs remastered, I sent everything to him. The guy never got back to me, and ignored all emails and messages I sent him. I guess he lost interest. But the plan will happen, I'm conceptualizing a box set for all the EPs to be released on Valse Sinistre Productions on tape. And Valse Sinistre is a great label that you can depend on (one of my other bands is currently signed with them).

-You then released to the public a Rehearsal from November 30th, 2009, for free download on Bandcamp. What was the deal with that?

I really wanted to release "Abondance de périls" in February. I had a schedule in the past to always release the Vision Éternel material in either February or March. And I really wanted to get this one out in Feb. But me and Adam worked on the masters a bit longer and I ran into some delays with Abridged Pause Recordings. In the past I also liked giving the fans something extra, whether it was to send them the upcoming single a few weeks ahead, just so long as they asked me, I've always been open to fans. So when Feb was almost over I decided to find something to release to get the hype going on the new album and start up the promotion.

I had recorded this rehearsal in November right between takes of the the album's recording session. I often jam around Eternel songs like that at home, but I never recorded a full rehearsal before. I thought it was just gonna sit in my collection forever. But in mid February I made a Vision Éternel page on Bandcamp, and I really liked their ideas and way of handling things, and I wanted more people to check out the page I had on there, because for a first, you can download all of Vision Éternel's releases for free, in high quality. So the rehearsal was released exclusively on Bandcamp. I'm not sure exactly where it fits in with my releases, or if I consider it an official release, but all I

know is that I've gotten good feedback from it from fans (except in Poland, haha)

-Why Poland?

Well I really don't want to discuss it because it had nothing to do with Vision Éternel to begin with, but some polish individuals decided to take out their personal disagreement with me out on my music and spread around bad reviews. That's all I'm gonna say.

-The third EP “Abondance de périls” was for you a huge step up from the past releases. It was also the one that took you the longest to write and release. Can you tell us more about all the changes from the past releases and about why you decided to have external help for the first time?

That release was really hard for me finish up. I set myself to compose new material four different times (in four different phases of my life, in other words, over four different girls). I just couldn't get anything out. The very first session was in October 2007, and produced three songs, one of which made it on the album, the other two were combined into a single one, re-recorded and b-sided. The second session, I can't remember if I kept any. The third brought two and the last one brought five. At some point I even wanted to make a full-length album, but decided against it. It just wouldn't of worked.

Now in the post-production phase of the album, I already knew that I wanted this album to be mastered. I sent it to Adam to get it mastered. When it came to the artwork I was totally clueless this time. The album had gone through so many moods since it's original incarnation that I didn't know which fit. My roommate Marina is a photographer and I was borrowing her camera to take pictures but they were all horrible. One night she wanted to show me pictures she took that may suit Vision Éternel and that I could use. The very

first one she showed me I fell in love with. I didn't need to look at any other ones, I wanted THAT one. Later on I found out that she didn't actually take the picture, she simply found the negatives in a garbage can while visiting Europe and decided to say it was hers. Whatever, it looks good. The album is now out on Abridged Pause Recordings for free digital download. I wanted to keep this in the digital format because of the last two EPs. I feel like that's the proper format for the music right now. At least for the EPs.

-Will there be any music video for this album? Or any merch that will be made?

You know it's funny you should ask because we are in the process of creating shirts for Abridged Pause Recordings. As far as a music video, once again I would like to, but I don't have the equipment. I am thinking of something though. Video promotion is always really good. That's why Narcosis is still the most famous song from the Vision Éternel catalog, because of its video...

-Can you tell us about the concepts within all your releases? How do you go about doing them? Each are about past relationships?

In general the concepts of the albums are based on a specific girl. So far each has been based on important girls in my life. Each song takes you through the phases I went through with the girl, from the meeting to the post-breakup sentiments. There are more concepts within the albums, and they are easy to figure out, so I like leaving some things for the fans to discover.

-What are the future plans for Vision Éternel?

Things are bound to change... But since you asked... The split with Ethereal Beauty will happen some day. The cassette tape box set I hope will happen some day. There will be another compilation in the future. It will be a discography CD (or

whatever popular physical format will be around then), but that will only be once Vision Éternel is fully over with... If that ever happens... And it will also have the videos incorporated.

But the current and immediate plans are to do a lot of promotion. I want to have as many new ears that I've had for the last two EPs combined just for this one. Abridged Pause Recordings is a great way to get to all those new ears that are just waiting to stumble upon Vision Éternel. Thanks for this great interview!