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British Power Metal Icon DragonForce Returns to Moscow

By Ingrid Burke

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Epic British power metal band DragonForce is en route to Moscow for an evening of moshing, fantasy-based lyrics and supersonic guitar solos. Be sure to catch them on Saturday at Moscow's Red club.

British power metal legend DragonForce is set to take Moscow by storm this weekend, leaving a trail of head-banging, epic fantasy lyrics and supersonic guitar solos in its wake.

As the London-based speed metal sextet prepares to play its first Moscow show since 2012, the members are nothing shy of thrilled. "We love playing in Russia! We've always had a great time there, great shows and great parties afterwards!" said bassist and backing vocalist Frederic Leclercq in an e-mail interview with The Moscow Times. "The crowd is very energetic, and people are extremely kind and friendly!"

What's more, any Muscovite that turns out for the show this weekend can do so with full faith that the band will be game for a party and photos afterward. "We always come out and hang out with our fans after the show. ... If it wasn't for them we wouldn't be doing what we are

doing, so fans should definitely be able to take a picture with us, have a chat and buy us a drink (!?) or more," Leclercq said.

Longtime fans of DragonForce have witnessed a profound evolution from the 2003 album "Valley of the Damned" to 2014's "Maximum Overload." Through the course of 12 years and six albums, band members have come and gone — including the front man, swapping ZP Theart for Marc Hudson, not a position generally thought of as expendable — but the band has not simply pulled it off; it has flourished.

"Valley of the Damned" featured an array of epic anthems. "We fight the battle on the fields tonight, to save us from the master of all evil sign. And to the battle on forever standing strong, we feel the fire power of the night warriors," the band sings in "Black Winter Night."

Over the years, the band's passion has expanded beyond the mythical battlefields, but it has not waned. "High the mountain we must climb — so far beyond the ocean's tide — we're torn apart but soon we'll all be home. And our hearts forevermore entwined — we'll save the night we said goodbye. No matter where you are, you're not alone," they belted out in 2014's aptly titled "You're Not Alone."

In addition to a rousing after-party, fans that turn out Saturday night can expect an even mix of old and new, Leclercq assures: "We tried to combine new songs and all-time favorites, so it's difficult to imagine what people ... are gonna enjoy from the new album. We chose what we thought would work best live, and seeing Russian fans are indeed energetic and excited I'm sure they gonna enjoy our setlist!!"

Leclercq is particularly amped up about the new album, however, and with good reason: it's largely his brainchild.

"Maximum Overload is the first DragonForce album I've put so much into," he said. "In the past, [guitarist Sam Totman] was writing most of the material and the rest of the band would contribute to the general arrangements and maybe co-write one or two songs. This time Sam and I co-wrote most of the songs, and also wrote songs on our own. I think that's a good reason why the album sounds different — because there's a lot of 'me' in it."

Leclercq's favorite song on the new album is "Symphony of the Night," a fast-paced ballad, accented by operatic vocals and gripping guitar solos that culminates in the emotional: "I'll find my peace another way; under the stars where we'll shine again some day."

The bassist and co-songwriter loves it because "we play it every night and I can see people enjoying it a lot. But really, I'm proud of the entire album," he said.

Fans of DragonForce may be in for a long wait before the next album. Leclercq says they won't have a chance to record until the current tour wraps up at some point in 2016. But in the meantime, fans can expect to tide themselves over this summer with a new DVD/Blue Ray filmed at last year's Loud Park Festival in Tokyo.

"It's always hard to classify a fan base/country, at least I find it so. For me its either good or not so good. So I'd say it's definitely very good in Russia and I'm really looking forward to playing there in April ... спасибо!" wrote Leclercq.

DragonForce plays Saturday at 8 p.m. Red club. Bolotnaya Naberezhnaya. Metro Kropotkinskya, Polyanka. red-msk.ru

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