

ControlMAG: El Santuario del Rock



An interview with **KORN**



Ray Luzier
Drums

Hello Ray, First of all I would like to say thank you for taking the time to answer some questions with El Santuario Del Rock! (which is an online metal news website for Latin America).

El Santuario del Rock: The metal audience knows you by your work with Korn but what they don't know is the musical history and career you have behind you. Could you summarize how you became a drummer and your music experience with other important musicians that led you to where you are today?

Ray Luzier: Yeah sure, I started a long time ago in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on the East coast. I started playing when I was 5 years of age and I just played along

with stacks of records or anything I can find; influences from Kiss, Rush, Ozzy Osbourne, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple. Through High School I was always participating with the marching band, jazz and symphonic classes and when I graduated from high school I moved to Hollywood, California. When I was 18, I attended Musician Institute where I studied pretty much everything from Jazz, Latin and Rock. I learned how to read music, how to be a session player, learned to adapt to different styles and from there I received small gigs. I got signed to an independent record label called Shrapnel records, where I contributed on guitar for artists and finished working on 12 cds.

I played with a lot of cover bands and a couple failed original bands but my first national band was Jake E. Lee from Ozzy Osbourne; I played in his band for two and half to three years in 94'. I played with Arcade (Steven Percy from Ratt) for 6 months and then I did a lot of session work after that movie soundtrack. I also put out an Instructional DVD through the school that I'm proud of; it

has a lot of different exercises and things that I do. The reason I made this instructional dvd was because people always asked me what I do to warm up, or what exercises they can work on to make this better or that better. So I said I'm going to make a video where I can just hand it to people and just show them. Around 97' I got the David Lee Ross gig.

I was with David Lee Ross for 8 years from 97'-05', it was a very good experience as Van Halen is one of my favourite artist. No one really has ever done anything like him in regards to his singing or performances. It was like going to school, I used to call it the school of rock.

El Santuario del Rock: You have been with Korn for 4 years and "The Path Of Totality" is your second studio album with the band. Between the two albums, "The Path Of Totality" and "Korn III: Remember Who You Are".

What was the biggest challenge for you playing drums in this album, knowing that "The Path Of Totality" is focused on programmed sound / dub-step feel? Was it any different playing drums on this record then "Korn III: Remember Who You Are?"

Ray Luzier: Yeah, it's totally different as before I got the Korn gig I was with Army of Anyone. It was a different kind of band with the Stone Temple Pilots members (Dean DeLeo, Robert DeLeo) and Filter frontman Richard Patrick. When you play with different bands it's fun to adjust and go off the deep end and play different styles. So, when I got the Korn gig, the first recording I did was with The Nightmare before Christmas - Nightmare Revisited album "Kidnap The Sandy Claws".

Korn III: Remember Who You Are(2012), was completely organic, no clip track, 2 inch tapes, we put 3 months off the road and really just focused on doing a record with Producer Ross Robinson working with us. With 'The Path of Totality(2012)', Jonathan Davis met up with a lot of the dubstep producers and they would write a song and once that was completed sometimes I would be the last person to record on the album when usually drums are the first thing recorded. The Path of Totality was done all over the world and with technology these days, it's very different on how we used to record an album years ago. Jonathan would do vocals in Korea; I would do a drum track in Hawaii.

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El Santuario del Rock: According to many interviews, Jonathan Davis was the one who proposed the idea of mixing the sound of Korn with Dubstep. When you heard that the next Korn album would have an interesting twist to the band's sound, what was your reaction?

Ray Luzier: I love to be in a band that is not afraid to take chances or be creative and branch out. There are many bands that have been around as long as Korn has



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and when they put out a record, you know what to expect because they put out the same record every two years. It may sound a little different but it's still the same format or style. For this album, it was challenging as a drummer because a lot of beats were programmed and I wanted it to be important that I play it live, which I do.

At live shows, I put out an electronic snare and electronic drum kit and play to a clip track; it's totally different from the other songs but at the end of the day it's still a

Korn record and you know it still sounds like Korn. I think it's great, you know? When a lot of my favourite bands (AC/DC and Iron Maiden) put out a record you know what it's going to sound like. I like the fact that we put something out which has made everyone step back. We just won album of the year from revolver magazine. It makes me proud that some people have an open mind when they listen to it. You are always going to have the diehard fans that want to hear 'that' metal record but a lot of people are accepting it, which is fine.

El Santuario del Rock: There were a lot of musicians involved in the new album, was it challenging or difficult to agree with each other's musical taste when creating the final version of the album? Also, how was it like working with these artists?

Ray Luzier: I met them; in fact Skrillex is on our DVD. We did a blu-ray recording in December that may come out towards the fall. Skrillex actually plays guitar on his songs; he didn't just DJ which was kind of funny he wanted to play an instrument.

Jonathan would meet with the producers first and they would get a song structure going and then we would put our sounds in last. Some of them I met and some; however, some I was present with them during the majority of the process but they were so unique with their sound. You can't make those sounds with a guitar or keyboard, there is a certain process you have to go through and you have to make the deep bass sound.

El Santuario del Rock: I have noticed that when you play Korn's older catalogues, you have added your own particular style to every song. However, there are some songs that have changed since you



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have played as Korn's new drummer. Was this a decision that Korn collectively as a band decided when you stepped in? Or was it just a natural thing that happened in rehearsals and the band liked what they heard and decided to keep it that way?

Ray Luzier: Well, the good thing about it is that sometimes when you get in a band as big as Korn where they have such a strong following; for example, I have friends that have joined bands 10-15 years later when they're established and sometimes they will say 'play exactly like the record, play exactly like this' but they liked my playing before the *Army of Anyone* record. So when I got in they said, "you can pay homage to what David Silveria did in the past with the records but we want your personality in the band", which meant a lot to me. I was fan of Korn, so when I would play the old songs, I didn't want to go too crazy but I definitely want to give it my own personality.

This October actually, will be 5 years with the band and through the years you start meshing and jelling as a band. You start to know and feel what each other are doing and it could be a wonderful thing; there is no other band that plays like this. I have been with a ton of bands in L.A and have done mini sessions which has allowed me

to adapt to other musician styles but these guys play so unique that it took a little bit to get really inside but once you're there then its magic; it's really a great thing you know?

El Santuario del Rock: Also, how did it feel to play the Korn's classic songs? Did you feel at any way pressured or was it more like a freedom feeling, like this is what I can do, this is my style and this is how I will deliver it whether it'd be live or in rehearsal.

Korn has been touring in support of the new album, we noticed that you will be in the U.S. and Europe. Are there any plans in the near future to return to South America for "The Path Of Totality Tour"?

Ray Luzier: I keep hearing talks about it and South America always comes up in our conversations of where we're going to go but I haven't seen anything confirmed yet. It has definitely been talked about as we love it down there; the crowds are always amazing so it's just a matter of time. The last time Korn was there was in 2008 so we are due for a return hopefully so keep your fingers crossed!

El Santuario del Rock: I have noticed that Korn's set list during the last tour have been divided into 3 parts, the beginning starts off with Korn's older songs, followed by the new album and the end of the set list Korn plays hits and covers.

What was the main idea to this set list? Why not mix all of Korn's songs together instead of 3 different sections? Was there a purpose behind this set list?

Ray Luzier: Jonathan came up with the concept where we would play more than just 2 songs off the new record. We really wanted to give... There are some bands that come out that are really proud of their new record and they will play the whole thing which will always piss fans off especially when you have a huge catalog like Korn does. You want to play as many songs as you can and Korn fans are so die hard that they want to hear the old obscure songs then the hits then any of the new ones.

So John had the idea "hey lets open up with 4 old song, we even do the demo version of 'Predictable' which you really have to be a diehard fan to know. We have been switching it up with 'Good God' back in and now we have added 'Devine' last week so we have been switching the old stuff in the first four songs and then we have a small break where I switch the snare and kick drum to get into the process to do the dub stub live on stage. We can't just mix 'freak on a leash,' play one dub-step and go into 'blind' and go back into another dub-step because we have to change the drums and the computers and everything; it's a big process so that little pause between the first and third set it kind of works just fine , so we kind of stuck with it.

El Santuario del Rock: The next year the band celebrates 20 years of experience. Will there be a special event to celebrate these 20 years?

Ray Luzier: There's talk but there is nothing confirmed, we definitely want to plan something big. Korn fans will definitely be impressed.

El Santuario del Rock: Jonathan has been involved and focused on his new project "J Devil," Fieldy is in "Stillwell" and Munky is in "Fear and the Nervous System" ...

It seems like everyone has their own side projects, are there any future plans aside from Korn that you may



have, such as collaboration, a special concert, or do you have your own project in the works? Tell us about it!

Ray Luzier: Well I have this side band called "The Hideous Sun demons". It's an instrumental trio; I'm very much into the progressive side of rock, funk, and jazz. We haven't put out a record since 2006 but we are working on a new record and I also have a studio in my house so I play guitar, bass and I write stuff. I have a couple side projects going on, I did the last two Billy Sheen solo records, you know the famous bass player and we were working on something else like a drum and bass thing so I always have something going on. I'm not just working with one band, I'm kind of crazy like that [laughs]

El Santuario del Rock: Tell us a little about the equipment you use, bass drum, cymbals, sticks, live settings, brands, etc ...

Ray Luzier: I signed a promo for drum equipment 3 years ago, I have been using Sabian cymbals since 94' (The Jack E. Lee tour) from the time I got endorsed. I've never used other cymbals; I have my own drum stick now from pro-mark which is called the The Ray Luzier TX757W model. It's hitting most stores and getting out there. All of my hardware equipment in pedals are from the DW workshop. I just recently got an LP Ridge Rider Cowbell percussion endorsement and Remo Drumheads. I got a ton of shit, you know Drummers have a ton of equipment and if I had to pay for all this stuff then I would be broke. I break a lot of stuff [laughs]; I'm a very hard hitting drummer, always breaking heads, sticks, and cymbals. I need the endorsements you know? [laughs]

Ray Luzier

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