

# COUNTESS SABBAT

## BARATHRUM

GERMANY/NETHERLANDS 1997 TOUR MEMORIES BY ORLOK (COUNTESS)

WRITTEN IN SUMMER 2007

Since it's been ten years since Countess played live this year, I thought I'd write down some memories of the gigs we did back then. Maybe I'll write down some more memories later on, but I'll start with what I consider a high point in Countess' career: the gigs we did with Barathrum and Sabbat from Japan in April and May 1997. Since I'm writing this all from memory, ten years on, I may leave out certain things or get a few details wrong. Alright, here we go: a trip down memory lane . . .

In early 1997, the line-up that had been together for two years by then, admittedly with a few interruptions, was on the brink of breaking up (what a surprise - we may have split up more often than we played "Countess Bathory"). Then all of a sudden we got two offers for gigs, one in Bussum and one in Wassenaar and we thought, whatever, let's continue. Those gigs turned out pretty cool and got us enthusiastic about the band again. We decided to record three new songs for a mini CD and when around that time Opyros informed me that he was putting together a tour for us, BARATHRUM and SABBAT from Japan, we were pretty excited. It would be a privilege to play with the legend that Sabbat is and ever since Demonos and I first met in January 1995 (when I was recording "Ad Maiorem") we had wanted to tour together. Of course, 'tour' is a big word for what would be seven gigs, but at least they were in two different countries (Netherlands and Germany). However, complications arose when one of us had other priorities that would prevent him from doing the last three gigs. This nearly killed our chances of being on the bill at all, but Opyros managed to find a solution: we could do the first four gigs and then WIZZARD would step in and take our spot for the final three. This wasn't what I had imagined, but it was better than nothing. Nevertheless, it was a telling sign that ultimately this line-up would be going nowhere. But that's not the point here.

The first gig was in Geleen. We were pretty pissed that we didn't have the mini CD yet, that we were supposed to promote, because of incredible delays due to fuck-ups by the guy responsible for the printing. Nevertheless, we went down to Geleen with Warhead's

old Ford Sierra stationcar. There, we met SABBAT. They were cool, but we couldn't really communicate with them 'cos they didn't speak any English. Well, they knew two English words: 'beer' and 'fuck'. And they were cold constantly; everywhere we came the first thing they did was try to turn up the heat, even before attacking the fridge... BARATHRUM were there too, having driven all the way from Suomi in a rented car. I think they told us that they had gotten into a fight as soon as they had arrived in Maastricht the day before...

The place was all right but there were not that many people in attendance. Opening were CONQUERED MY FEARS (basically BIFROST with a different name) but I didn't really catch that much of their show as we were preparing for our own, since we were up next here.

We took the stage and played a decent set, but somehow it wasn't that good. There were some problems with the amps or the sound at one point if I remember correctly and we fucked up "The Wrath" in a major way. The audience barely responded (save for the guys from the other bands). When we were done the others drove back to Rotterdam (where they lived and the next gig would be the day after) but I decided to stick around to see BARATHRUM and SABBAT. Both bands were amazing, but with them, too, the audience response was below par.

After the gig, we (the BARATHRUM guys, one of the SABBAT guys and myself) bought some 50 cans of beer and started drinking. I also remember showing one of the BARATHRUM guys how to play "Bloed In De Sneeuw" while

sitting at the bar with a guitar. Then one of the Finns went back to their car and fetched a bottle of Finnish vodka. If you check the inside of the "Revenge Part II" booklet, the photo on the upper left was taken that night. You can see the (almost empty) vodka bottle. The SABBAT guy is passed out on the table and Demonos is close to falling down too . . . I'm behind him making the sign of the horns. It was really late when we finally went to bed. Actually there were no beds so I slept on the stage; a few hours later Opyros was kicking me and yelling I had to get up 'cos we had to drive to the next gig. Yeah, those were the days...

We drove to Rotterdam in a van Opyros had rented for the tour. Somewhere near Dordrecht, we stopped at a McDonald's for some junkfood breakfast. Eating made my hangover go away rather quickly and I was feeling fine again when we reached Rotterdam. It was a sunny day and we just hung out around the Baroeg, having a few beers, until time came for the show to begin, which was pretty soon since it was an afternoon show.

Opening were WROK, who made quite an impression. Not so much because of their improvised brand of extremely primitive BM as because of the slideshow of various massacres and holocaust images they projected onto a screen during their gig. I thought it was entertaining, but the Baroeg people thought otherwise and just cut off the power to end their show. Sometime later, they even provided WROK



with a trophy for being the worst band ever having played there.

Next up were BARATHRUM, who were pretty good again and after that SABBAT took the stage, being utterly brilliant as they had the night before. They were even better a live act than I had thought. I was shocked that there were few people in the audience. This was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see one of the most legendary BM bands ever live, after all. Maybe the fact that this was a holiday in the Netherlands (the queen's birthday) had something to do with this.

In Rotterdam, we were the headliner. With the other bands, we had agreed that we would shift the playing order every day and both BARATHRUM and SABBAT thought it obvious that we would headline in our town, Rotterdam. The guy from the Baroeg who had booked the show wasn't happy about this (of the bands playing, he only liked SABBAT and had announced them as headliner).

We took the stage and we triumphed. We played true metal for an hour and the audience enjoyed it. Of course, we started with "The Priest Must Die" (though I changed the words to "The Queen Must Die" for the occasion - I wonder if anyone noticed). From then, it was utter chaos. Had the gig the day before been somewhat subdued, this day we had the real metal spirit. We ripped through our classics and a few new ones with true conviction (setlist: The Priest Must Die, Fire & Blood, The Wrath Of Satan's Whore, Hell's Rock & Roll, Into Battle, Thus Spoke The Master, Son Of The Dragon, Ritual Of The 7 Priests, On The Wings Of Azazel, Bloed In De Sneeuw, Metal Warriors, Countess Bathory).

There was a certain incident while we were playing, when Demonos climbed onto the stage and onto an amp, opened his trousers and started to masturbate on stage. I thought that was pretty funny, but the Baroeg people had other ideas and dragged him from the stage. Still, we were pretty satisfied with the performance we had given in our home town.

Afterwards, we went for a bite with some friends and after that, we went home. The next the would be a day off and the day after that we were going to play in Berlin...

We drove to Berlin in Warhead's old Ford Sierra stationcar again. It comfortably

managed 180 kph on the Autobahn but when we were nearing Berlin we got caught in a major traffic jam because there had been an accident involving some trucks or whatever. We got stuck there for several hours, which was especially unpleasant since it was awfully hot that day. Nevertheless, we did make it in time to "Die Insel" in time. "Die Insel" was a really cool place, sort of a castle-like building located on an actual island somewhere in Berlin. We had played there a year earlier as well and found that not much had changed. There were several floors in this place and the floor above the floor where we were playing was the 'goth' floor, so we spent the afternoon looking at all kinds of barely dressed goth chicks. When they went up the stairs, many of them offered a nice view of what was under their skirts. We weren't there to gawk at chicks in skimpy black skirts though, so we duly did a sound check and then we were fed. We were quite anxious about the food, because the year before they'd given us vegetarian food and we had rather loudly complained about that. This time, the food was exactly the same, with the exception that they added some minuscule bits of sausage here and there to pacify us. At least there was enough beer to wash it down with.

The evening came and it took ages before things went underway. After the first band had played, SEIRIM, BARATHRUM took the stage and we were up next. I think it was 02:00 hours by then. The place was packed, though, so the atmosphere was great. I think there were about 200 people there and the place wasn't that big. I even recognized some faces in the audience from the year before.

We started playing and the crowd reacted enthusiastically. People were banging their heads and singing along. This was a real metal night. It was incredibly hot on stage, but we kept playing with as much or perhaps even more vigour than in Rotterdam, because the audience reacted so well (after the gig, someone who frequently attended gigs there told me he'd never seen such a response from the audience to any band before). When we had gone through our entire set and anything else we could think of to play, the audience still kept on yelling for me. So as a final encore, we did "Kneel Before The Master's Throne" which sounded awful because Zagan's

guitar had become terribly untuned by then, but still it was great, simply because of the incredible atmosphere. Looking back, I think this was the single best gig we ever had.

After our own gig, I grabbed a beer and watched SABBAT, who of course were brilliant again. After that, we had to leave to drive to the next gig. I think it was 6AM or so by then. It was getting light again, but in spite of that we got somewhat lost trying to find our way of Berlin. We drove most of the day until we arrived sometime in the afternoon in Bramsche, near Osnabrück, where the gig would take place at the 'Alte Webschule'. We walked around the place a bit and found it to be a very unlikely place for a BM gig. All the walls were painted white and they had been painted recently, so the whole place smelled of paint.

After eating a bit we did a soundcheck and discovered that the amps were pretty crappy worn-out pieces of equipment that didn't seem to produce a lot of volume. When the first band played, THA-NORR on this day, our fears about the amps were confirmed. I was standing next to Zagan in front of the stage and we could just talk to each other without even raising our voices while THA-NORR was playing. That was pretty weird. We didn't have a lot of time to think about this, though, since there was one other band and we were up after that. I don't remember that much about this gig except that it was pretty all right, considering the circumstances.

When we were finished with our set, we got into the car and drove home straight away, arriving home in the middle of the night.

### TOUR DATE SCHEDULE:

- 29/4/1997 'DE BOERDERIJ' GELEEN, HOLLAND SABBAT, BARATHRUM, COUNTESS & CONQUERED MY FEARS
- 30/4/1997 'BAROEG' ROTTERDAM, HOLLAND COUNTESS, SABBAT - BARATHRUM - WROK
- 2/5/1997 'DIE INSEL' BERLIN, GERMANY SABBAT, COUNTESS, BARATHRUM, SEIRIM
- 3/5/1997 'ALTE WEBSCHULE' BRAMSCH (NEAR OSNABRÜCK), GERMANY BARATHRUM, SABBAT, COUNTESS, MOSU QUMA, THA-NORR

