



## Arctica soon to rock your Xbox

The Finnish band has a videogame on the way and a few new members to boot

### musicpreview

#### Sonata Arctica

With Sanctity  
Sunday, 10 February at 8pm  
Starlite Room

SARAH STEAD  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

While on tour, many bands play video games to pass time between gigs, but Finnish power/progressive metal group Sonata Arctica are likely the only ones who can boast that they've got a video game created about their band.

"A company from England contacted us and asked if it was okay to do a game about us, and we were at first a bit suspicious," keyboardist Henrik Klingenberg explains.

"[The company] showed us some demos [...] and it's basically a role-playing game where you can choose your character—all the band members are there. It's situated in the future after some nuclear holocaust or something like that."

The game, which is still in development, will be called *Winterheart's Guild*, after the group's fourth album. While hardcore fans of Sonata Arctica eagerly

anticipate the game's release, according to Klingenberg, the band also "can't wait" for the game to be commercially available.

Since the band's genesis in 1996, they've undergone a radical shift in musical direction, two name changes, and four member-swaps, the most recent being the replacement of former guitarist Jani Liimatainen with current guitarist Elias Viljanen in 2007. Though Liimatainen left in the midst of the band's tour last spring, Klingenberg says the speedy guitarist replacement has actually strengthened the band.

"It's actually quite good [having Viljanen in the band] because the last guy was not too social, and we had some trouble with him. Of course, when you've been playing with the same guys for many years and a new guy jumps in, in the beginning, it takes a while to check him out and find out what kind of person he is. But we have a busy touring schedule, [so] you get to know each other quite fast."

Klingenberg was himself a new addition to the band in 2003 when Mikko Harkin left. While searching for a new member, the band held auditions and narrowed it down to a few hopefuls who were then taken out to a local bar as an informal

"personality test."

"First we started off in the studio playing some songs, and then after that we went to the bar," Klingenberg clarifies. "[We] started hammering away the whiskey and beer and [...] some people go really crazy when they're drunk and do stupid things. [They] probably just wanted to test how much I could drink and if I could still behave myself and not puke all over the place. We drank until the bar was closed. I was still walking and talking, so they figured I could handle it."

When it comes to the live shows, it's not uncommon for the band to have a few pints in preparation for their performance. Though Klingenberg confesses that touring is sometimes "a drunken haze," he also says that fans should anticipate a good time, a lot of guitar solos, and maybe even a cover of Bette Midler's "Wind Beneath My Wings."

"[W]e're just drinking beer, jumping around on the stage, and doing stupid things. It's basically one fun party for everybody," he says. "We try to do a 'best of' collection of all our albums and obviously a lot of new stuff from the new album [*Unia*]. We try to keep the set list as balanced as possible [...] . It changes everyday."

## Frankenstein a beautiful, monstrous work

### theatrereview

#### Frankenstein

Runs until 24 February  
Directed by Jonathan Christenson  
Starring Nick Green and Andrew Kushnir, and Tracy Penner  
Catalyst Theatre (8529 Gateway Boulevard)

MARIA KOTOVYCH  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

When Mary Shelley wrote the novel *Frankenstein*, she probably didn't imagine that a theatrical remake would include singing, dancing, and jokes, but Catalyst Theatre has managed to imbue its version of her tale with all of those. This production of *Frankenstein* retains the gothic feel of the novel while infusing it with elements that augment the intended tone. The product is a chilling work of imagination that's beautiful and terrifying.

Narrators and a chorus move the action along, keeping the story clear and easy to follow. The beauty of the narration lies in how it's done: with cleverly devised rhymed verse. The narrators recite stanza after stanza of poetry to tell the tale; the script beautifully summarizes much of the plot, while creating an ominous mood and a sense of foreboding. The chorus'

spot-on harmonies add to the storytelling, throwing in a few cheeky jokes here and there. Melody, music, and rhyme enhance character and story development throughout the play, adding a fresh element to a piece that likely wouldn't qualify as a musical.

And then there are the visuals. Most of the costumes, created primarily from paper and glue, can best be described as creepy. For example, the creature that Dr Victor Frankenstein (Andrew Kushnir) creates out of "hand-me-down skin" looks like an *Edward Scissorhands* piñata.

The monochromatic colour of the costumes doesn't remain dull and grey for long: lights of different colours illuminate the costumes and the set to match the characters' feelings and the overall mood of the scene. This is done so subtly that one might not even realize it's happening, and works extremely well: the effect is fluid and dreamlike, a feeling that is intensified by a gauzy backdrop that occasionally occludes the characters standing behind it. The costume and set design work well together to recreate the nightmarish horror that permeates throughout the gothic novel.

A visually stunning play like this would certainly not be complete without some dancing, and in this respect, *Frankenstein* definitely delivers. The dancing, like the music, doesn't overshadow any of the other staging

elements; however, the dreamscape where Dr Frankenstein and Lucy (Tracy Penner) dance is one of the most touching and tender moments of the show. As in much of the play, the fantasy and the reality of this scene blur together, creating a suspended present state where time and space are irrelevant, and the imagination and the physical intertwine like paints of different colours all swirling together. *Frankenstein* keeps the audience in this state right from the start and then effortlessly recaptures this feeling once intermission has ended and the more somber second half begins.

While the acting is superb, as for the characters themselves, the creature's personality is slightly underdeveloped: while Shelley's novel allows the creature to speak at length about how he learned to become human, this play unfortunately devotes much less time depicting the creature's development into a sensitive and philosophical human-like being. While this aspect of the novel leads to our seeing the creature as a complex being deserving of our pity, this element isn't as well-developed in this play, perhaps resulting in a character with whom audiences might not sympathize as easily.

Despite this, the play works very well as a beautiful, cohesive whole. After all, when it comes to creations, *Frankenstein* is nothing short of impressive.

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