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Steve Thorne

# IN A REVERIE

## CRISTINA

My recollections from back then are a little blurry but we had more experience than when we recorded the EP. Certain things were familiar: we were in the same studio, and Waldemar was producing again. The process was the same too, in the sense that we collected ideas beforehand and then went into the practice room to jam on them, all of us together. Again, as with the EP, we were in Germany and again we felt like immigrants in that we drove there in a van and stayed together in the Century Media apartments, which were, on reflection, a little creepy. Basically, it was one room with three double beds in it. We were there for a month, and I did a lot of cooking – it was like having five husbands! There was a lot of interaction going on, there was a TV, a games console and a few games. It was a lot of fun.



## OPPOSITE





## ANDREA

For *In A Reverie* we built a large proportion of the album on a version of a four-track in the rehearsal room. Computers weren't so advanced so you couldn't do a lot at home as you can now, but at the time we built songs primarily in the practice room. We'd practice every day and change parts of songs as we played, and then we did a bit of pre-production with Waldemar in the practice room before entering the studio with more or less the final structure of an album. We just had to finish some of the lyrics for vocal parts; it was all done pretty quickly. Looking back, *In A Reverie* was a solid if rather standard within the genre, debut. Although you can still hear our influences pretty clearly.

ABOVE

Lacuna Coil and Skyclad on tour, 1999

## WALDEMAR

By this point, as much as I was helping them go in a certain direction, that desire was also coming from them. It's never easy as an outsider, and with *In A Reverie*, honestly, there were many parts that I didn't agree with. However, I accepted that the band were still evolving, so I focused on giving them enough support so that they could find themselves by themselves rather than by me trashing their ideas and going in a different direction. Of course there were changes, and many

## IN A REVERIE

instances when I said, "You have to try and do this differently..." But it was part of a learning process; they were young people. I wanted to give them time because I knew that the results would be more honest because of that. I used to say: "When I change parts, I'm not doing it for my own good. I'm doing it for the music. The song is everything. A good song is worth so much more than a shitty song with a great sound."

BELOW

Tour books, 1999

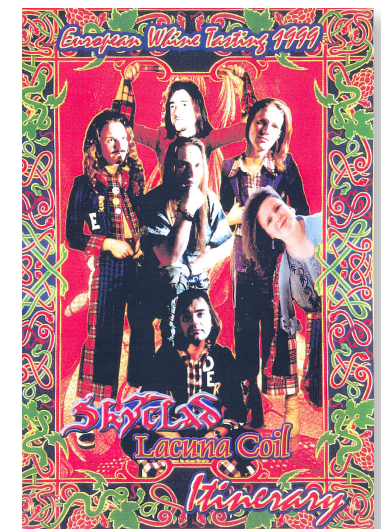
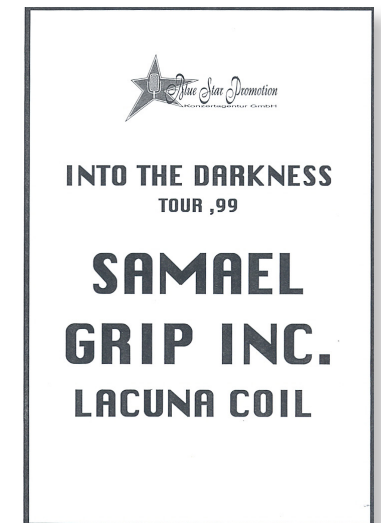
## MARCO

In general – and this applies throughout our career – songs appear based mostly on how I feel, that's the main thing. If I feel like shit or I'm too happy or too sad, I can't do anything. I have to be in the right mood. If I'm not, I can sit in a room, stare at the walls for hours and nothing will happen.

Once I'm in the right mood, I go into my home studio and start with keyboards, unless it's a very rhythmical song, in which case I'll start with the drums. In the very beginning I always began with the guitar, playing arpeggios or melodies. I always have the TV in the background, it's on all day in my basement, playing movies and documentaries constantly rolling without the audio. I need this in the background to be at my best creatively. Not just that, I need the images for inspiration and I usually come up with good ideas. If I see something that I like, I stop what I'm doing, turn up the volume and from there the process begins and the good ideas come.

One of the more complex issues we had at the time Pizza and Criz joined was we all had completely different styles of playing music. Andrea, Cristina and I liked mostly the same thing, but Pizza had been playing melodic and technical arpeggio-based guitar; Criz came from a place that combined funk metal with Dream Theater!

We flirted with the idea of just going into the practice room with a view to making a new song afterwards from start to finish. But, as it turned out, there was more work needed at home to get these songs to where we needed them. When we had ideas, we'd go into our rehearsal space and work as much as we could on a four-track machine; I was mostly playing guitar at the time. Then, later, I'd go





home and work on the structuring of the parts with Pizza so that we could later go back and finalise in the practice room. It's the only album we made in that way, though. It was hard; I lost a lot of weight. But in the absence of computers and programming, it was the only way we could do it at that time. It was the only album where I worked with someone else on the structuring and arrangement. The songs came out quite well, but obviously we had a lot of help in the studio from Waldemar.

RIGHT

Pizza, live Into The Darkness tour, 1999

OPPOSITE

Band shot for In a Reverie



RANK WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY

'RANK WHITE PHOTOGRAP

Marco can be very blunt and stubborn! When he gets a certain idea, he'll go all-in for it. I can remember going head to head with him on several occasions about different things. He was never unreasonable though, and in the end, we were always able to work things out and could always find a compromise one way or another. Of course, Marco was always the main driving force music-wise – but it felt to me that we were always, in the early days certainly, more of a democracy than a dictatorship. Marco was always the one who had the vision to take the ideas that we all had but couldn't quite express and turn them into finished entities. He always had that gift.

PIZZA

It has always been easiest for Marco to create the first batch of ideas. Then, when Andrea and I give him our ideas, he works on them alone. He does tend to change things a lot, so we might give him an idea for a song and the next day he'll say: "Hey guys, I changed things completely", and we're like "What the fuck?" In the end, we all have to agree but Andrea and I trust Marco so much that, even if we took vocals to him that we thought were the best in the world and he said: "We can find something better..." we might not like it, but we work harder to find that very best idea. He's the internal producer of the band. It's not that he makes the final decision and we don't like it; we know he's mostly right, particularly when the final result is something we all like.

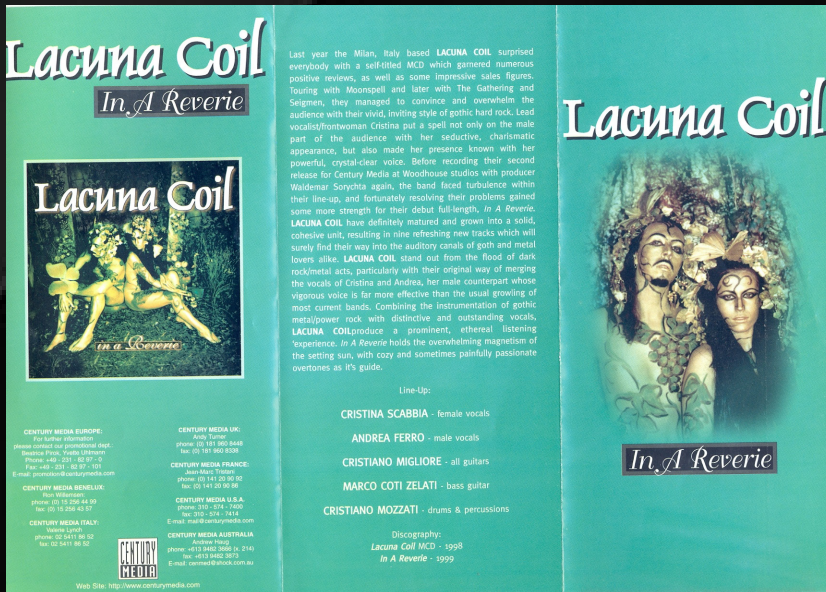
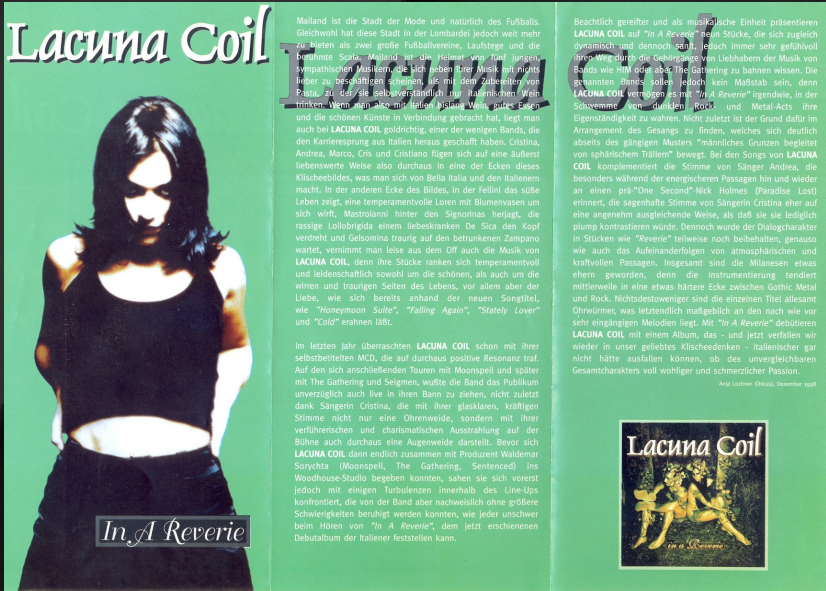
CRISTINA



## BELOW

Press flyers from In A

Reverie



## MARCO

I don't mind when the guys tease me calling me 'the dictator', I'm the kind of dictator who listens and learns a lot from other people. I still do that. I'm a dictator with the band when I don't have time and we have to follow a schedule to meet a

deadline. Sometimes you must be strong to support your dream.

With producers, I learn a lot from them but equally, even if they've produced Metallica or some other huge band and are the best producer in the world, if they say something to me that I think is bullshit, I'll tell them: "You are wrong."

## WALDEMAR

Sometimes I was literally a member of the band in that, on occasion, I'd take the bass guitar, play something, and in that way practically explain the ideas that I had which were designed to enhance the arrangements that they already had. Then, and only then, when we were totally happy with what we had, would we enter the studio. To me, studio is a *privilege*. Even if you have millions in your bank account, you have to see it that way. By all means try things out at home, but only go to the studio when you're completely ready and everyone is completely focused only on the part that they have to perform.

## PIZZA

I can't stress enough how great a guy Waldemar is. I got to know him pretty well because, being the only one with my own place, he'd sometimes come and crash at my apartment when he was in Milan. Beyond that he really taught me a lot about guitar, in a very hands-on way. If I couldn't figure something out he'd sometimes say: "Let me see." I'd give him the guitar, he'd play and then say: "See, it goes like this." We'd always work on things to make them easier for me and be in no doubt: Waldemar is an incredible guitar player.



## CRISTINA

Making *In A Reverie* was much more about jamming than it would be nowadays. Where now you can sit in front of a computer, that technology didn't yet exist. We were still finding our way lyrically in those early stages. Our English wasn't remotely near the standard that it is now. In the beginning it was very basic and doing interviews and such was very difficult. I had no experience and I couldn't really have a conversation. I picked up words here and there and presumed that I was being asked certain questions, and I would compose an answer based on my very poor grasp of English. That was how it went with lyrics in the early days, too.

So on *In A Reverie* we were writing lyrics that were poetic but also very abstract because some of them made no sense at all. People were probably attracted to these weirdly abstract lyrics, despite there being little in the way of story or message behind any of it, because they didn't address anything specific. Obviously we'd have some idea about what we wanted to talk about in each song because the music was suggesting atmospheres that were connected to *something*. But there wasn't a discernible narrative. It was more a case of: "Oh, this word is cool. Let's put it together with this one..."

Despite that, some of our fans would come to the shows and say things like, "This song means so much to me because it talks about this or that." We didn't disagree and say, "Well, no" because fans love to tell you about your songs and it's great that people can interpret them in different and personal ways. But still, we were privately thinking, "We weren't actually talking about that, we meant this other thing." It was kind of curious, but it gradually changed as we moved through our career.





ANDREA

There was no single song that was the centre point of *In A Reverie*. At the time it was our tendency, given our relative inexperience from a song writing perspective, to work through them all until the end as far as possible. Sometimes a really good song could come very late in the process, even as late as our already being in the studio itself.

OPPOSITE

Alternative photo shoot for In A Reverie

From a lyrical perspective, looking back now, I think that when you're starting out there's an inclination to try and impress too much by using words that either sounded really poetic or had some kind of deep, obscure meaning. I don't want to say that they were meaningless, because there was meaning in there, but the lyrics weren't by any means straight to the point – because we didn't know how to do that. The broad concepts were, I guess, love and hate, but from a very sentimental and gothic perspective. These were inner expressions of feelings and the only difference is that we're better at it nowadays. Personally, I find more inspiration in the dark side when it comes to lyrics because I've been prone, at times, to periods of mild depression and/or anxiety. My mother experienced some of these feelings too, so perhaps it was in my blood. Consequently, for me it's generally easier and more interesting to express tragic feelings than put across a happy, powerful message. At the time I refused to write happy lyrics because they seemed too far away from what I was actually feeling.

Knowing that I have a tendency to focus on the darker side of things, it probably helped me to push those thoughts out via my lyrics, almost as if they were a reflection. The result is that I think people can readily reflect with these themes – simply because it's such a common problem. Although mental health has been explored more in recent times, it has been called different names, but it has always been there in every human being to some extent. Everyone has parts that are dark and parts that are light– which, for us was also more interesting.

Unlike everything later, we conceived most of *In A Reverie* by going to the rehearsal room and practising. At the time, we went every day as often as we could and jammed together as a band. All of this was so much easier than anything I'd done previously. I was actually coming up with some guitar parts in conjunction with Marco; there was some cool

PIZZA



synergy. He and I would sit there together with a guitar each to see if we could create parts together.

When we went into the studio to record, I think we had nine songs in good shape. Obviously, some fine-tuning always has to be done once you're in the studio later, but all the vocal lines, all the guitar, bass and drums were basically done. I also think we had a couple of ideas that were half-formed.

When I got to the studio, I knew exactly what I was supposed to be doing, though. Still, it was super-scary because you know that you have limited time to finish recording because you're spending money all the time that you're in there. Maybe you'd have two or three days to do drums, then the bass, and then all the guitar parts. Because I was the only guitar player in the band at that time, I had to record everything myself. This was 1998, so we were recording on tape, and the thing that I remember more than anything were three words that Waldemar kept repeating: "One more time." We'd be recording, I'd fuck up, and... "Stop! One more time." It was my nightmare. I'd go home at night and dream about Waldemar. We all laughed about it though, we had a blast.



THIS PAGE

Cristina and Valerie, Gods Of Metal, Milano 1999

OPPOSITE

Cristina and Marco about to celebrate after the show (PG 70+71: Cristina transforms water into wine!)



I had very little lyrical input because, at this point, Lacuna Coil had just two people who could speak serviceable English. I was too far away. My language is German, and I didn't see my English as being strong enough to even be an adviser for English lyrics. I just wasn't good enough. So I suggested they get help and guidance from someone for whom English was their first language.

WALDEMAR



America, criticising the lyrics and saying things to the effect of: “What was the producer thinking?” But what they don’t realise is that not everybody is perfect in English from the first day. They should be happy that we even tried to do it in the best possible way. There’s no reason to blame either me or the band! I’m a musical producer, and it was always more important to me that Cristina or Andrea sang in a way that enhanced the melody. If they got hung up too much on the pronunciation, they sometimes lost the melody. In the end I said I said: “Fuck it. Sing how you feel comfortable, because we’re making a musical record, not doing English language dictation.” The way I saw it, they were from Italy, so there was no crime in having an Italian accent!

## CRISTINA

We suggested the photographer to do the photos for the first EP; Dario Plozzer, who was Marco’s neighbour at the time. Prior to that he’d done the pictures that we sent to labels when we were looking for a contract. At the time of the demo, we wanted to do something cool because we thought: “Whoever is listening to this needs to know what we look like.” We thought it would give a good impression, and it worked. We almost looked professional!

*In A Reverie* was a different, interesting story. I fucking hate that cover and there’s a reason for that, even though from an artistic point of view it is interesting. Andrea and I were on a promo trip, going city to city, before going to Germany for a photo shoot for the cover. We had no idea what the shoot was going to be; we were still inexperienced. They just told us it was something artistic, something cool with this guy (Wolfgang Bartsch) who was able to create scenography and theatricals etc. So Andrea and I ended up in this huge hangar amid a scene that looked something like a forest. Then they covered us with body paint and made us look like you see on the cover. Initially we said to each other: “What the fuck is this?” We were so confused. After a while we started to have fun with the photo shoot, mainly because it was something different. But at the same time, it was the least heavy metal image you could possibly think of. It’s my least favourite cover, but in its own way it became kind of iconic.

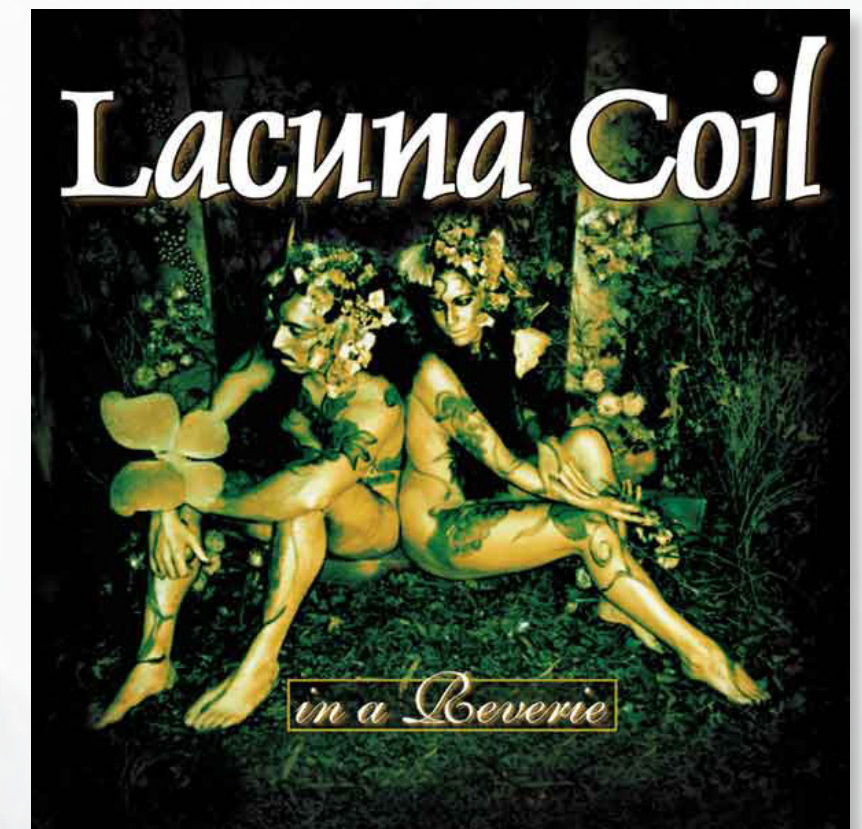
## OPPOSITE

The controversial original cover of *In a Reverie*

## PIZZA

That’s not the best cover ever! Andrea and Cristina left for a press tour and they didn’t know that, when they got to Dortmund, Century Media were going to set them up with this photo shoot which called for body paint. They were sending us pictures at the time – and remember that this was the days of flip cell phones that weren’t the best for sending images. Nevertheless, we got these little shots and I remember that Marco was getting super-pissed off because his girlfriend was half-naked. He was saying: “Oh, she’s there, half-naked with Andrea.” We went to rehearsal that night and someone was saying, “What the hell man? You shouldn’t allow her to do that.” It was that whole typical Italian alpha-male overreaction. I said, “Guys, chill. They’re just taking pictures. Of course they’re not doing anything!” I always seemed to be the reasonable, diplomatic guy in the band – maybe because I was the oldest.

The band pictures and individual shots for the album were done in my living room. We hung a black curtain on the wall and a couch where we sat holding Cristina. Looking back now, it was ridiculous. Afterwards we went out to the Midnight pub with patches of body paint still on our face, to drink and tell everyone who’d listen about what we’d just done.







ANDREA

That was a very painful photo session. It was cold, and awkward sometimes – we should have been paid injury money! But, in the end I think it was an artistic statement, even though the result wasn't quite as great as I expected it to be. To do something like that back in 1999, covering our bodies in body paint was definitely unique. It's not the greatest cover we ever did, but I definitely don't hate it. At least we tried to explore a creative path that in some way referenced an *In A Reverie* situation: somewhere in between reality and dream.

MARCO

I had zero input into that horrible cover! Century Media brought in the artist, whose work wasn't to our particular taste. The only upside was we were able to chose, from that photo session, the pictures we liked most.

When we finished and mixed it, we all loved *In A Reverie* –it was the first thing we'd all done together. We were supposed to go on a tour with The Gathering, but at that time I still had a job. While my parents obviously knew that I'd joined a band, they didn't really appreciate this was what I planned to do on a full-time basis, even though I'd obviously gone to Germany to record.

So, when The Gathering tour came up, which was a big deal at the time, I had to say: "You guys, I can't make it because I can't leave work for a month and a half." Instead, they recruited a friend, Alice Chiarelli, who could also play keyboards, and it all seemed to go well. When they played the show in Italy in a town near Turin, I of course wanted to see them play. I drove there, arrived in the afternoon, parked by the tour bus and everybody came out yelling and hugging me. Marco's a big guy, and when he saw me he came and jumped on me. I was trying to hold him up; he almost broke my back because I'm not a big guy at all.

Regardless, it felt good that everybody seemed so happy to see me. I watched the show, hung out afterwards and then they left for the next town. I remember that, while I was driving back, I couldn't stop thinking: "Man, I wish I was with them.' It was at that precise moment that I decided that I wanted to be a musician full-time. I didn't want to miss anything again so at work the next week I went to my dad and said, "Hey, you know. I think I want to quit my job and try this." I remember him not being super-happy about it – mostly because he was probably thinking "He's going to become a musician. What's going to happen? Soon he'll be living under a bridge in a cardboard box and taking drugs." He was only being protective. Of course in the end, everybody was fine.

PIZZA

BELOW

Cristina on the cover of the Vera club's magazine in Holland, 1999

OPPOSITE

Marco hanging out with The Gathering on tour, 1998

