

# BROKEN CROWN HALO

## CRISTINA

Ryan started out working for us as a drum tech for Criz. I don't know who suggested him; all I know is that he jumped on the bus one day in 2009, this really young guy. I said: "Who's this?" and someone said: "Oh, that's the new drum tech." He's been with us ever since.

Even when our drummer Criz was still in the band, one day he had a foot issue and couldn't play, so we said: "Ryan hears these songs every day. Can't he play them?" And that's what happened; he played perfectly after half a day of rehearsal. Then, later, Criz had a baby girl

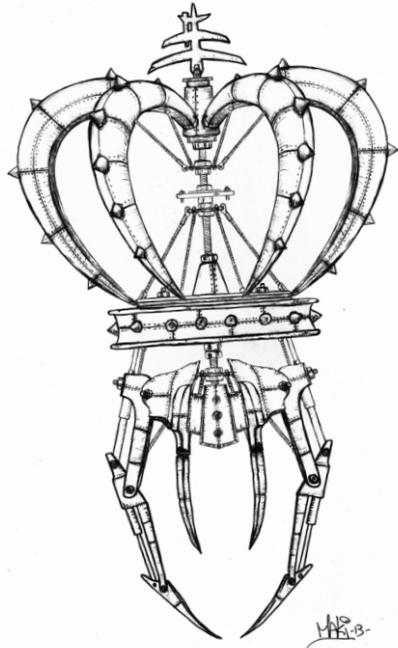
## OPPOSITE

Press shot, London, 2014



and was really suffering while on tour. Also, I always felt that he had different aspirations to ours. He always talked about how he wanted to move to the mountains, far away from Milan. He wanted a simple life, and it seemed to me that he was tired of both the instrument and touring. He wanted a total change of life.

Around the same time, Pizza wanted to move to the U.S. He had that plan in place before he and



Criz communicated the decision together that they wanted to leave the band in December of 2013. We decided to record *Broken Crown Halo* with them as a last record together, and then we'd announced their departure early in 2014 once the album was done.

Looking back with hindsight, which is always easy, I don't think we got that decision right. I can now see that, when you make a record with a particular line-up, you should go forward with that line-up into supporting tours etc. If you don't, it all feels strange – not least because when people looked at the pictures on *Broken Crown Halo*, they'd see two people who weren't even in the band anymore. That alone upsets the dynamic of the band and even though many of the fans knew more or less what had happened, we still got a lot of: "Oh, where are they?" It was a confusing message in an equally confusing world.

**MARCO**

Getting Ryan into the band was a good thing. One, he's young. Two, he has a different style with a lot of focus on kick drums. I wanted what he brought to the band. Not just that, when he was our drum tech we got the chance to get to know him as a person, not just as a drummer. The fact that he's a great person was one of the main things in his favour.

Pizza and Criz left for different reasons. Pizza wanted to move to the U.S and was probably tired of touring. We talk to him all the time and he comes out to see us when we play near his hometown.

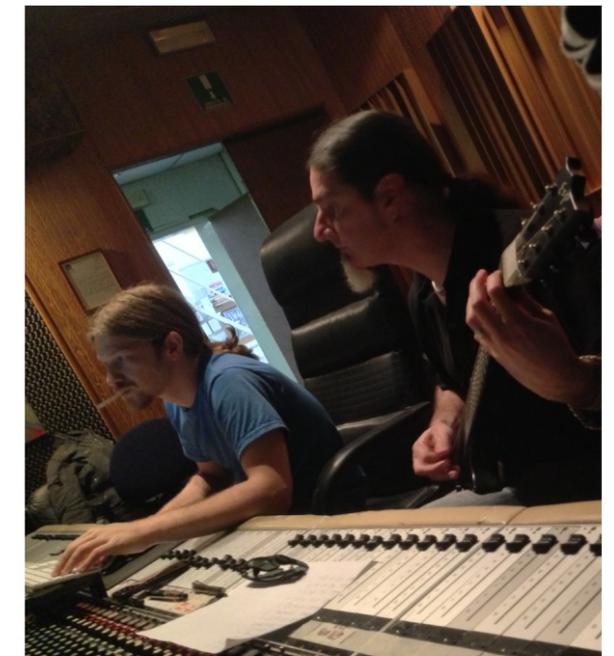
Criz is still working for us as a webmaster, but him and I aren't really in touch any more, don't really know why.

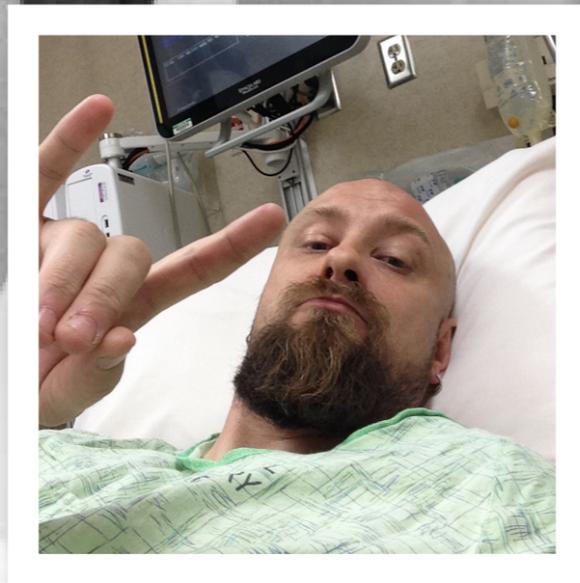
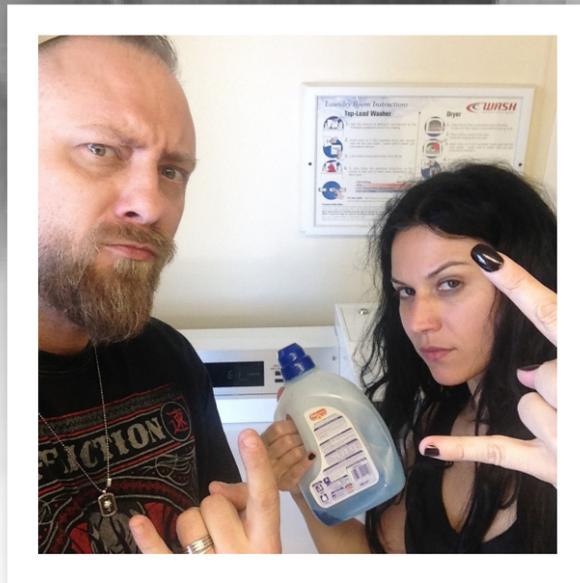
**ABOVE**

Sketch for the iconic Broken Crown Halo symbol.  
Trivia: the symbol is a composition of King and Queen crowns

**OPPOSITE**

Recording Broken Crown Halo at  
Officine Meccaniche studios, Milano, 2013





**CRISTINA**

I have to be honest, as singers, we don't always know how things have gone with a producer. Because we come in further down the process and Marco's there from the beginning until the end, he's more qualified than anyone to discuss Jay Baumgardner. What I do know is that it was weird for Marco to work with a guy who had a different attitude and a different work ethic. On my side it was business as usual. I recorded my parts easily in Milan with Jay and his assistant Kyle – at the same studio where we recorded the music for *Dark Adrenaline*. This time we did both the vocals *and* the music in Milan and then only the mix was done in the States

**MARCO**

Honestly, I don't remember how Jay Baumgardner came into the picture for *Broken Crown Halo*. What I do know is that Don Gilmore wasn't available, so Century Media gave us a few names, one of them Jay's. I didn't know much about him, so I went online to see what he'd done and thought: "He's done a lot of awesome stuff." When I worked with him i realised, and this is purely my personal opinion, that he's a great sound engineer but not my ideal as a producer when it comes to making songs.

I had disagreements with him, in particular on the song 'One Cold Day', written in January 2013 when our friend and former guitarist Claudio Leo passed away. I poured my whole heart into that song (as i did in 2010 when i wrote the music to 'My Spirit' dedicated to Peter Steele) and i really wanted to keep the intended sad vibe in it as it was describing how heartbroken I felt. I was particularly sensitive on the issue and wouldn't be moved to change a note, regardless of a long discussion on whether major or minor notes suited the song best. These things happen in the studio and eventually the album sounds pretty much how I intended it to sound. A lesson I must be grateful to Jay for is how to best connect drums to vocals, something i still carry with me today.

**BELOW**

Having fun on the set of 'I Forgive (But I Won't Forget Your Name)' video, Circus Studios, Milano 2014

**OPPOSITE**

Bacstage of video shoot, Milano 2014



**OPPOSITE**

Broken Crown Halo stage clothes

**RIGHT**

The 2014 U.S. tour ended early for Marco when he was hospitalised in Boise, Idaho for a severe emergency condition.

**DON**

The end point between Lacuna Coil and I wasn't in any way dramatic. The phone just didn't ring. That's sometimes how it is: the call comes in or it doesn't. Or maybe I'm scheduled up when they reach that point where they say, "We have to have this record out on such and such a date because we have shows to do", and it just can't be done on my end. In my business, you can't wait for the phone ring but inevitably doubt starts to creep in and you start thinking, "Maybe I didn't do a good job." It's all a bit weird how that works – and I knew that from some experience I had from working with a band called Dashboard Confessional several years prior. They got some dates with U2 so they said to me, "We have to put the record on hold." I said: "Cool." Then they said: "Why don't you come to one of the shows up in Toronto?" I went along, and to the after party where I met Bono etc. It was an amazing night. By coincidence, some of the guys from Pearl Jam were there and I'd worked on their first record as an engineer. As I'm talking to a few of them, while Eddie's sitting a little distance away, he came by and said: "Oh dude! I haven't seen you in years. You helped me so much on that first record on harmonies. You taught me how to sing all this stuff." I remember thinking, "Oh, he remembers all of it and he's very thankful." I never, ever got the phone call, but you just never know what artists are thinking. They just go off on their own thing. It was a great lesson.

**ANDREA**

Because Marco injured his arm, he was forced to be at home for a while. It was typical of him that by the time we finished touring that year, he had assembled a lot of demos in his home basement studio. So, as

broken crown halo sample libe clothes A



broken crown halo stage clothes sample B



**BELOW**

Sketch by Marco for 'Die and Rise' t-shirt artwork

soon as we got back, we dived into new songs and started collecting a lot of ideas separately. Then we'd meet together and go over everything we had. It was a very fluid process. By the end of the summer of 2013 we had an album's worth of songs in shape and ready to take to the studio.

**MARCO**



My every day revolves around my basement studio. I live with my girlfriend, Serena, in a weird house on four floors, like a tower. It's not huge, but when I saw the basement for the first time, even before we bought it I thought: "Yes! This is my studio!" That area is now the place where every Lacuna Coil song comes to life. I basically spend all my time down there and the only reason I'd get out of it is if I have to prepare some food or because the phone signal isn't that great. My girlfriend isn't always very happy about that but when she met me I was already a musician so she knew it was going to be this way. I love to work on music and computer art and I have everything I need: my laptop, monitors, mixers, keyboards, microphones and a sound card. I don't have a massive amount of equipment as a professional studio but it's good enough to create music; I do most of my creations on my laptop. We created and record all the vocals for the song 'Naughty Christmas' in my basement without ever going to a studio, the result came out awesome. We only went to a studio to mix everything and work on the drums.

**CRISTINA**

I've heard it said that *Broken Crown Halo* had a cinematic grandiosity to it and, honestly, that wasn't intentional at the beginning. It is something we realized after working on a couple of songs. We noticed there were subtle influences appearing, possibly drawn from some of the movies we all watched and liked when we were younger – particularly those by horror director Dario Argento. As we worked through the songs, we started to realize we really like the characters from these movies – even the formulaic characters from horror movies like vampires, werewolves, and zombies. We then attempted to play with that idea by creating our own interpretation of how some people act out these types of characters in today's world. It was all a lot of fun.

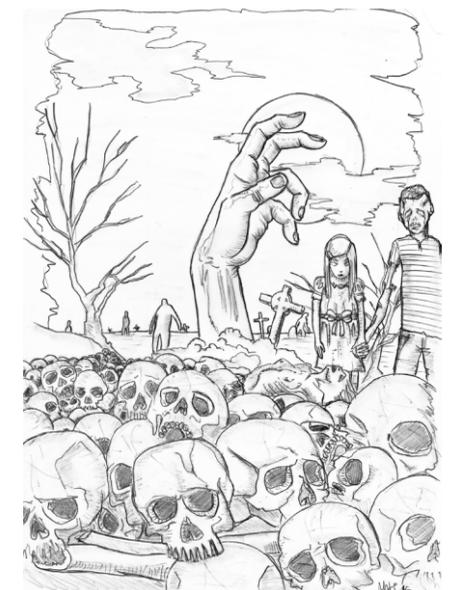
**OPPOSITE**

(top) Cristina working on one of her signature personalised drum skins; (bottom) Sketch by Marco for 'We Fear Nothing' t-shirt artwork



*Broken Crown Halo* to me is pretty similar to *Dark Adrenaline* from a strictly musical perspective. The thing that separates them for me, and it makes a *big* difference, is the mix. If I remixed *Broken Crown Halo* at home with Marco Barusso, it would sound just like *Dark Adrenaline*. Jay's mix was made mainly for American radio and that worked very well for songs like 'Die And Rise' for example. When I listen to that song through my Italian car sound system, it sounds very "American" and very focused on mid-frequencies – far removed from a European sound. On few occasions though I've heard the same song in an American car or on U.S. radio and it sounds completely different! The explanation is that radio stations in the U.S have massive compressors which alter the acoustics of mid-frequencies. It sounded awesome! On the other side if you listen to a song like 'Trip The Darkness' on U.S radio, it almost sounds too compressed. I hadn't realised that compression could make such a difference, until then.

**MARCO**



## ANDREA

We recorded everything at home because we'd reached a point in our career where we believed that Milan is, from a number of standpoints, the best environment for us to work on our records. We've done L.A, Belgium and Germany. Not just that, because we tour for many months of the year, we've always found it difficult to write while we're sitting on tour buses – no matter how comfortable and homely they can be nowadays. For whatever reason it just never works. Reflection and inspiration evades us on the road because there's too much going on: travel, sound-checks, interviews; it's full on every day. Home in Milan is much more comfortable.

Marco, who will always be the main songwriter, has developed habits that work for him. He has his own studio at home and he likes to write at night while watching TV with the sound off – and that's the kind of thing he could only really do in his own home. Furthermore, with time comes inspiration – and it works for him. Beyond that we are older and more family oriented than we were when we were younger. To be around family and friends in our home country is where all the parts that we need to create our specific kind of music can best align.

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### RIGHT

Second to last show of the Broken Crown Halo cycle, Manila, Philippines, 2016.  
 Trivia: this show holds the record for three premiers: Lacuna Coil in Philippines, Diego on stage as an official member of the band and the live debut of 'The House Of Shame' and 'Delirium'.



# DELIRIUM

## MARCO

Delirium is the heaviest record ever done with Lacuna Coil. I composed the music playing whatever I was feeling without boundaries or thinking about a specific genre. If I liked something I wrote, I kept it, regardless, even if it was not in our usual style.

I like very much the contrast between Andrea and Cristina's vocals on this record. I personally like Andrea better when he screams than when he sings. We already have one "singer", so having two doing the same kind of thing doesn't bring much to the table, in my opinion.

The version of Madonna's "Live to tell" was written as a birthday gift for Cristina as I knew how much she loves that song. I gave her a usb key with the track and she loved it and immediately put down her vocals, and it ended up being in the extended edition of Delirium.

## OPPOSITE

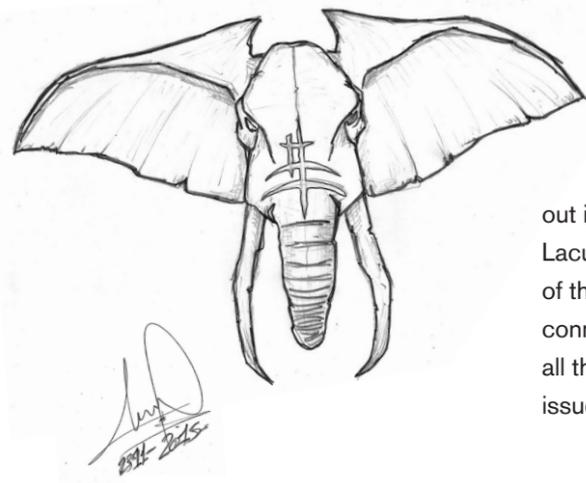
Press photo, Milano, 2015



Everything started with the song 'Delirium' and for a while we were looking for words that could serve the chorus in the way that it now is. We were kind of obsessive with those kinds of words and then we came up with the word delirium. Once we had that word, it kind of opened a much bigger world that we were all living to some degree, so it made sense to use it as the title of the record.

## ANDREA

With one emblematic song in place, we started to visualize the artwork, the clothing we were going to wear in it; we thought about the album as a complete concept which encapsulated our thoughts about the craziness of life juxtaposed against our own personal experiences of mental illness. We drew lyrical inspiration from the time we'd all spent visiting disused sanatoriums – the empty rooms, the energy of the people



who once resided there. From that point on the ideas flowed and it became obvious that a lot of tension and intensity was coming out in what was becoming a very heavy and strong set of songs for Lacuna Coil. I think that the fans responded so well to *Delirium* because of that age-old thing a band is always trying to create with its listeners: connection. In the end *Delirium* itself became this big sanatorium, with all the different rooms containing people who had a variety of different issues. It was an ambitious idea without doubt, but it worked.

**CRISTINA**

With *Delirium* we all felt it was the right time to do everything ourselves. It was our eighth record and we'd been collecting advice from producers and experiences from a variety of studios for many years. I don't want to say that we knew everything, but we were pretty experienced – especially Marco. I have to give him a big thumbs-up



because he's just so damn talented. He learned from nothing and now he's able to do everything. Whenever he's enthusiastic about something, he seems to have this inherent ability to learn everything about it in the blink of eye. Graphics? He learned to use Photoshop and can now do it better than most graphic designers – just because he likes it. He's so multi-talented, it's not even funny.

Also, the business had changed. Back in the day I think it meant a lot in the magazine interviews to say that you had a famous producer on board for your album. It meant something, but now it means less because people only care that the band, music and image is good. And when we heard the songs that we wrote we thought, "Wow, these are perfect in our minds. Let's have Marco produce." We knew what sound we wanted and we didn't want to change much. If songs were on the long side (and producers all seem to want to cut length, as we know) we were resolute in saying, "This is how we imagined these songs. It doesn't matter if they are 'right' or 'wrong'."

So, when we all discussed the idea of doing an album ourselves, I completely agreed. Everyone did. We all completely trust Marco – not just on the songwriting side but also as a producer. In a way, a producer has to be the leader, the one that says, "OK guys. It pretty much has to be this way." That was never the case with anyone who'd produced us previously, because we had a lot of discussions and

**ABOVE**

Gambling with the studio gear while the engineer is away, Brx Studios, Milano, 2015

**OPPOSITE**

(top) Sketch by Marco of the iconic elephant logo of *Delirium*; (bottom) Live at Trezzo D'Adda, Milano, 2016



conversations. But to do it with Marco was perfect because he's the one who kicks everyone's ass – which is a good thing because in some ways I'm lazy as hell. I'm often a person who postpones things if I don't feel the pressure. Whereas he's the guy that's going to call you and say, "No excuses. You're going to be here and we're going to do this and that." He imparts a healthy stress on everyone that makes you think, "Oh my God. The deadline is close. I've got to do it." I appreciate that as he pushes me to always give my best

**ANDREA**

Obviously, we've always done our own writing, but this time, on *Delirium*, we had more control because we decided to produce the record in-house with Marco taking the reins. After working with a lot of big name producers like Waldemar, Don and Jay, we had collected a lot of experience on how to produce music, so we decided that Marco was not only more than capable of doing it, but also, because *Delirium* is so personal to all of us, we really didn't want any outside influence telling us what to do. When you work with a producer, obviously they have your band's best interests at heart. Changes are meant to be positive – with the aim being to create the best possible record. We understand that perfectly. But, occasionally that means you have to compromise on certain things because your vision for the music differs from that of the producer. It's not that one is wrong, and one is right – it's natural to have differing views and most of the time that leads to great results. But this time we wanted to see how just us in the studio with Marco producing would work out and the answer is that he did a great job – mainly because he's always been the guy who keeps us on track with deadlines. The only difference was that nobody was holding his hand, in a figurative sense.

**BELOW**

Marco getting ready for the stage, Milano, 2016

**OPPOSITE**

Delirium shoot pre-production, Milano, 2015

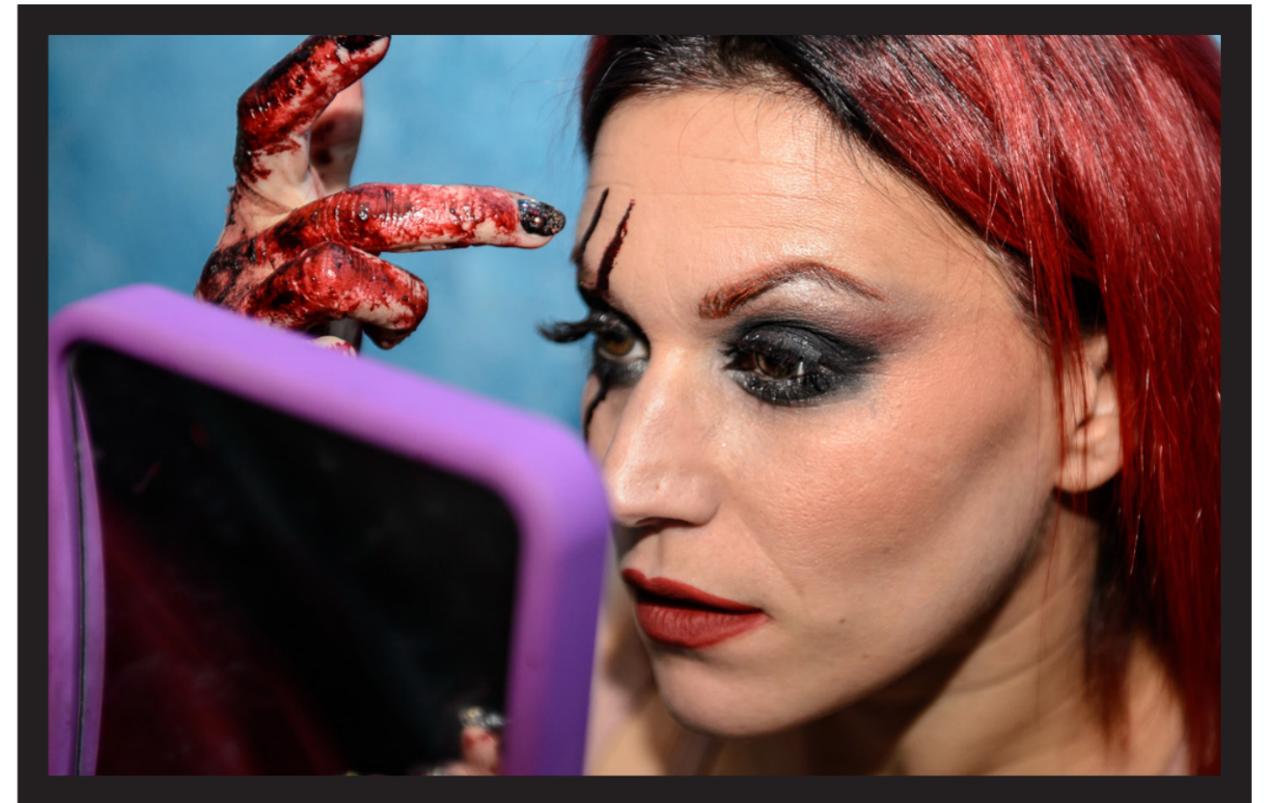


MARCO

On my own as a first time producer, I found myself experimenting, exploring different roads so I could learn something new about songwriting. I wanted to do something I've never tried before and see if I could come up with a song that could be good for the US market. That's when "Delirium", the song, came up. For some reason I thought that the repetition of the word "Delirium" in the chorus could help in making the song more radio friendly. To my surprise the song wasn't very appealing to the American radios while, on the contrary, Europe liked it very much, alongside songs as "Blood tears dust" and "You love me 'cause I hate you". I was very happy to have written songs that turned into singles in Europe as I felt we left behind our continent because of our extensive touring schedules around the rest of the world.

The main goal in the beginning was to write new stuff thinking about Ryan (at this point he was our drummer already for a couple of years but this was going to be his first experience as official member on a Lacuna Coil record). I knew he was capable of great drumming skills and he proved me right. Also I had to evolve the songwriting as we had one guitar player instead of two and I wanted to write parts that could be reproduced live without the help of backing tracks so that the result would not sound somehow fake on stage.

Things turned extremely stressful when Maus resigned unexpectedly only a few days before his actual recording. Thankfully, we managed to quickly recruit some friends who contributed with guitar solos while I had to record all the rhythmic guitar parts myself.



Myles Kennedy, Mark Vollelunga, Marco Barusso, Alessandro La Porta and Diego Cavallotti helped us out, gracing us with their talent and working very fast in the process. Looking back at that period, I feel their inspired solos helped the record to become even more dynamic. Soon after, Diego Cavallotti joined us as our new official guitar player.

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE  
Getting ready for the show,  
Milano, 2016



ABOVE

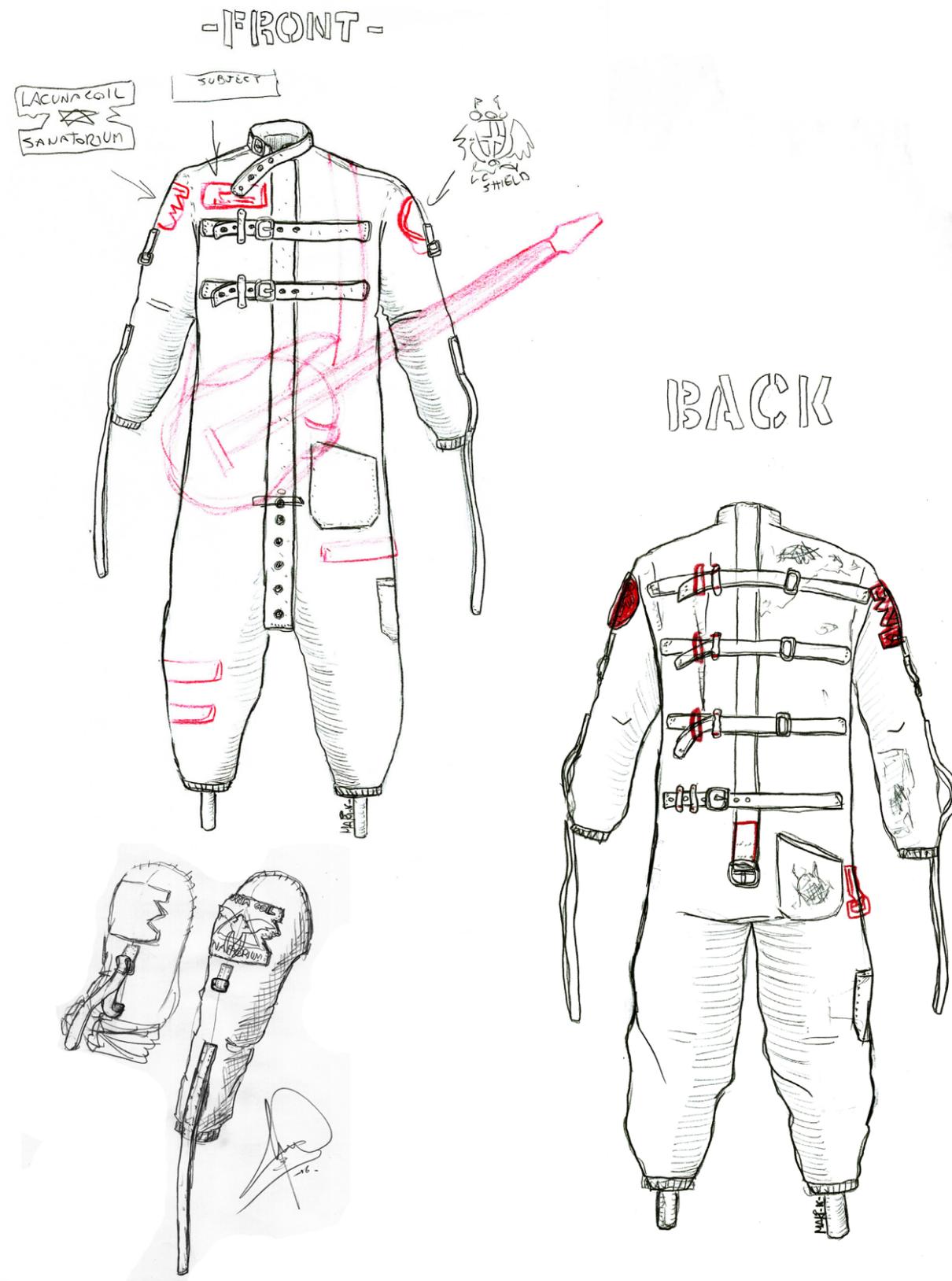
Fans know how to take care of Captain Maki, 2016

OPPOSITE

Sketches for Delirium stage clothes, 2015

ANDREA

It's always difficult when somebody in the band or extended band loses interest in what's happening or decides that they want to do something else. Because we're a family, the ramifications of a breakup are felt that much harder. That's inevitable. But if you are trying to keep a project



going and somebody else isn't, it's frustrating. In Lacuna Coil we always need everyone to be pushing with equal strength – even if they're doing different things within the band. And this was the scenario with the band members who left us. Their interests and needs changed over a few years and that was difficult for us because we'd all been together for such a long time and we were, first and foremost, good friends. But, at the end of the day you can only respect that other people want to go in different directions and move on. Thereafter, the best you can hope for is to bring in new members who add something to the energy of the band. We did that.

## RYAN

Because Criz had played on *Broken Crown Halo* and I'd played live on the one hundred and five-day tour that followed as a fill-in guy, *Delirium* ended up being the first album cycle I was involved with from start to finish. When Marco started the process of writing songs for *Delirium*, I made myself available to be on hand to help with the songwriting discipline. When we were ready to start recording, I'd been there since the beginning.

From a drummer's perspective, it's interesting how Marco works. What he'd normally do is send me a chorus, a breakdown or bridge with rough drums in place that broadly match the guitar patterns. Because he's a bass player, he's already very rhythm oriented, so a lot of the basic ideas he has down are pretty much right on the money. However, it still allows me to say, "OK, let's try this or that." There were some songs where I didn't change anything other than some fills and cymbal placements. And then there were others where I was giving him an idea and he'd run with it.

On 'Downfall' the ballad, for example, I had the drum part that we used, kicking around on my computer for a couple of years – just this simple drum beat. He then took it and wrote the whole song around it. Equally, I'm sure that if I'd taken it upon myself to write a full song, I'd certainly have been allowed to bring that to the table.



gettyimages  
Francesco Prandoni



gettyimages  
Francesco Prandoni

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He's a fucking awesome drummer. I love that Ryan can play crazy stuff, but he also likes to play simple beats which is great because a lot of technical drummers lack that capability. But that's sometimes what Lacuna Coil songs need. He flew to Italy to do the drum tracks on *Delirium* and we did those before we anything else. I don't have a whole range of drum sounds for pre-production either; I have one kick drum sound, one snare and cymbals. I keep it simple with no fills. All I have in my mind is the vision for a song, so I rely on him to understand what to do with what I give him. He knows how to change stuff properly too, without adding a whole mess of shit, just because he's a technical drummer. And that's one of the many reasons I really like him. In this way he helps me in constructing the backbone of the song.

## MARCO

### ABOVE AND OPPOSITE

Andrea and Ryan live in Milano, 2016

**ANDREA**

Although he toured on *Broken Crown Halo*, *Delirium* was the first opportunity for Ryan to contribute to the recording and arranging process of Lacuna Coil. Having arrived sometime in 2009 as Criz's drum-tech, he was an integral part of the family until Criz left and we all thought: "Ryan is the obvious choice to step into Criz's shoes." He knew all the parts anyway; he'd deputised for Criz on one or two occasions.

It soon became clear that Ryan's style gave Lacuna Coil a new dimension from a rhythm perspective. Because he's so good with the bass kick-drums, you could say he's a modern drummer. To that end you can really push him to do fast work or, equally, tricky fills. He takes all of that in his stride. As well as being a great technical addition, Ryan is also a lovely guy. He was already part of the family when he joined us, but now that he's a full-time band member, that bond has only strengthened. He's always positive, never complains and he's happy to travel back and forth from the U.S to Milan whenever we need him.

While we went through some tough times of various kinds during *Broken Crown Halo*, they weren't *that* bad...considering that throughout the period of creating *Delirium* we had some really tough times. We had serious illnesses in our families and serious changes in our lives –stuff that really affects you profoundly. Everything was there – particularly in terms of my experience with my mother's illness, where I was going back and forth, to and from hospitals and neurological centres. Even before we decide to call the album *Delirium*, we were all fascinated by the idea of sanatoriums. And there are a couple around Milan that we went to visit because they're now abandoned. Seeing how things were years ago, versus how things were then for my mother, really made me think.

**CRISTINA**

I was very sad during the whole songwriting process but we never gave up. I can definitely remember that there was a period when my mum was in a nursing place because we could no longer take care of her at home. She was too sick, even with help – and then my dad had a heart attack and ended up in a different hospital. So here I was juggling two places, while still trying to find the space in my life to meet the guys to work on the new album. Then I'd go back and visit my dad, and then my mum.

**OPPOSITE**

Cristina, Milano, 2016



The result was that *Delirium* was a very stressful project, but one that came with a degree of intensity that I couldn't say was entirely negative. The album saved me, and keeps on doing it, because it was an *outlet* for all my stress and intensity. And then everything that happened after it: the passing of my dad, deaths in music generally – that whole period was indeed pure delirium. Everything around me was crazier than I could have ever predicted but because I have this attitude to life whereby I'm super positive and very naïve in equal measure, somehow, I survived it.

## MARCO

When *Delirium* came out everyone came to me and said: "Fuck! What happened?" I just said: "Nothing. I just did what I've been doing on every album and the result is what it is. It's metal." Some people produce their first album in their twenties; I was forty-two.

What people forget is that I've had the benefit of working with all these great producers over the years and have learned pretty much everything that I can about what's involved. When people say that you have to be a master musician to produce music, that's bullshit. You just have to know how to put it all together. I've done ten albums and I've never studied music theory in my life. I just love music and listening to music, and have acquired a good ear.

## CRISTINA

We trusted Marco and apparently that was a very good choice. The old fans were totally pleasantly surprised, and we got a whole new group of fans, too. It was the perfect compromise and it came about as a result of us deciding to take our destiny in our own hands having spent valuable years listening to experts and learning from mistakes along the way. After twenty-plus years, we'd earned that right.

## MARCO

Song length is one of the things we've battled with producers the most over the years. I understand that when you become successful, you are sometimes seen as a money-making machine that can produce radio singles. But there's a balance to be struck,

### ABOVE

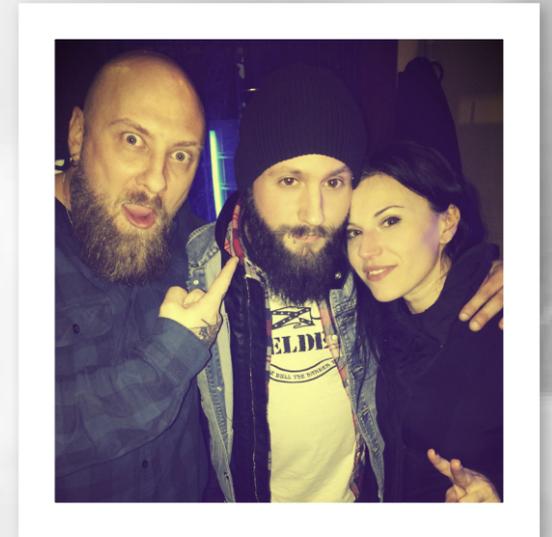
After the two videos shoots for 'Blood, Tears, Dust' and 'You Love Me 'Cause I Hate You' on location at the Santuario D'Oropa, Piemonte, 2016

because of the genre we're in. Goth-style music is emotional. It's a style of music where time is important. When you want to give the fans the time to think about a part, or dream, or cry or whatever – and you have a producer focused on making singles with Cristina's awesome voice, then it becomes a very difficult balance to find. It's not easy to give the fans that time – and that's why, in the future, I'm happy to produce the band with the proviso that, should we need input from someone in the event we need a radio sound, we can bring someone in for a couple of numbers. But I would like to keep our music as personal as possible.



## ANDREA

Diego Cavallotti is the latest addition to the band. He didn't really have the opportunity to contribute to the record– aside from a few lead guitar overdubs. Again, he's a friend – he used to play in a band that Marco produced in the past and that's how we got to know him. He's a very nice person to have around and he really values the opportunity we have given him to tour the world with us, playing music. Stylistically he's a very good blend of the guitar playing styles of our previous guitarists and I look forward to seeing where he can contribute to the band in the future when it comes time to work on the next record.



## ABOVE

With longtime tour manager, Mark 'Gus' Guy, Uncasville, Connecticut, 2016,

## OPPOSITE

Andrea and Marco reconnecting with Waldemar at Graspop Metal Meeting, 2015

## MARCO

In the early stages of writing it's just me on my own, until I find something I really like and feel is worth bringing to the rest of the band. I'd like to involve Diego in the songwriting too. I could use the input. I set him up with a computer to record and told him: "play riffs, solos, arpeggios...give me anything you've got and let me hear it" I want to understand what's in his mind.

## WALDEMAR

Of course, I have listened to each record that Lacuna Coil have released over the years and it would be unfair of me to appraise the work they did after me. The band chose their way forward, and as long as that choice was theirs, it was the right decision. I'm not the kind of person who would ever criticise another person.

I produce for love of music, but I also do it from a place of deep respect for the people who are in the business. Backstabbing happens so much in this business, but never by me!

### VALERIE

I came on board as manager in late 2016 during the Delirium album cycle. I think that record really helped them reconnect to their fanbase. It's such a great album and the imagery is really strong. I'm particularly fond of the two videos they filmed with Cosimo Alemà for Blood, Tears, Dust and You Love Me 'Cause I Hate You. It was an ambitious plan and they pulled it off amazingly, proving themselves not only as future actors but also great cinema score writers!

### MARCO

I love the outfits and the whole look we used for the Delirium touring cycle. I put some make up on my face for the first time in Milan, when I reunited for a day with the band for a show on a tour that I could not join for health issues. I remember it felt great and the adrenaline flow was massive. Makeup brings something special to the show: we are hiding our facial features in a way but at the same time it reveals so much of us and our real nature. It's like we can be someone else, still being ourselves. I feel free from any boundaries on stage and sometimes almost an actor...as the stage is the theatre.



### LEFT

Backstage before the last show of the tour with Epica New York Playstation Theater, 2017



People pay to see you perform, so it's better to put on a show visually as good as possible. I started to think about what usually scares people in the most classic clichés and thought that among other things, clowns, zombies and skulls did. We started to use only black at first and then added other colours according to the different “characters” that were somehow describing our personality. I also remember thinking “We don't have to look “good”, instead we need to express the intensity coming from the topic we are talking about. We were meant to look poorly because we were talking about a bad place to live in, in that case the fictional asylum we created. Usually Cristina is appreciated for her appearance in pictures but this time, even if we knew some people could find it awkward, we all (including her) wanted to impersonate that dark feeling. She did it very well either in pictures or on stage every night. She acts really well and some videos from “Delirium” prove that. Loving photography, I created the whole art for the Delirium booklet including pictures taken by me during the preproduction of the official photoshoot (taken later on by Alex 'T-One' Olgiati).

### ABOVE

First band photo with new guitarist Diego, Madrid, 2016