**WUTHERING HEIGHTS**

**Biography – long version**

**Way back when...**
Originally formed as way back as 1989, the progressive speed metal band Wuthering Heights started to draw attention to themselves on the small metal scene of Copenhagen, Denmark. Different musicians as well as early names ‘Angelica’, ‘Minas Tirith’ and ‘Vergelmir’ have come and gone in the history of the band, leaving songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Erik Ravn as the only founding member today.

The band´s first proper recording experience was in 1994, when they recorded a demo-tape at the famous Sweet Silence Studio (Metallica, Blind Guardian etc.) in Copenhagen. Although the demo-tape didn´t quite achieve the desired sound, it accomplished its task of promoting the band, as it circulated through the European metal underground, where it was well received especially in countries like Italy and Germany

The next major event in the history of the band came in 1996 when they were one of the bands featured on the CD sampler ‘Extremity Rising Vol.2’ released on the Serious Entertainment label. The track ‘Sorrow In Memoriam’ was lifted from the demo-tape and nicely summed up all that the band were about: huge, complex compositions with orchestral parts, folk-influences, intriguing lyrics and a healthy dose of speed- and progressive metal.

In the summer of 1997 the band finally signed a deal with German record label Prophecy Produc­tions and started recording their debut album. However, the deal quickly fell through, as the label was disappointed in what the band saw as progress. The band´s sound was steadily developing into a more progressive metal direction, while the label had apparently hoped for an album full of the gothic tones that had somewhat unintentionally plagued the demo-tape. So the band was left with no choice but to try shopping the finished album around to other labels.

 **WITHIN**
Fortunately at around the same time, the band had joined the newly formed Intromental Management, who came to the rescue, pulling every string they had to secure a new home for the finished album.

In a matter of weeks the band was offered deals with different record companies worldwide, and in early 1998 Wuthering Heights started what was to be a long cooperation with the American progressive rock/metal label The Laser's Edge/Sensory. There was only one small obstacle – the label wanted the whole album to be re-recorded from scratch!

But, this was not something the band was too reluctant to do, given the rather primitive circum­stances that had surrounded the earlier recording. So – once again – the band entered the studio to record their debut album! This time the sessions took place at the Aabenraa Studios with pro­ducer Jacob Hansen, and finally the band´s songs were getting some of the majestic sound they deserved.

After more line-up reshuffling Wuthering Heights now featured guitarist Erik Ravn, keyboardplayer Rune S. Brink, bassist Kasper Gram, drummer Morten Nødgaard plus well-known Swedish vo­ca-list Kristian "Krille" Andrén (Fifth Reason, Street Talk, Tad Morose, Memento Mori).

Following the release of ‘Within’ - the first part of a planned album trilogy - in October 1999, Wuthering Heights experienced tremendous response from media and fans all over the world. Numerous interviews were arranged, mainly with Erik, and the name of Wuthering Heights started to spread throughout the metal scene.

In late 1999 and the first half of 2000 the band played several gigs in and around their hometown of Copenhagen, enlisting Peter Jensen (Communic, Sinphonia) as extra guitarist, and even though the band had limited live experience the concerts were hugely energetic events earning them some die-hard fans.

**TO TRAVEL FOR EVERMORE**
In the fall of 2000 new problems arose in the Wuthering Heights camp. Arguments, mainly over the business side of things, resulted in drummer Morten and bassist Kasper leaving the band. Having tried keeping a stable line-up, unsuccessfully, for a decade, Erik had had enough and de­cided to take full control of all decisions for the band in the future. In close cooperation with the management plans were laid to lift the band to a new level of professionalism. The goal: to make sure personal issues would not stand in the way of Erik´s musical vision.

Finding new musicians for Wuthering Heights would seem a hard task. However, through the contacts of Intromental Management the band quickly enlisted Swedish lead guitarist Henrik Flyman (Evil Masquerade, Zool, Moahni Moahna) plus drummer extra-ordinaire Morten G. Sørensen (Pyramaze, Aurora). Also, Italian bassist Lorenzo Dehó (Time Machine, Khali) were contracted for an album-only appearance.

This line-up recorded and released the next Wuthering Heights masterpiece entitled ‘To Travel For Evermore’. The famous Jailhouse Studios were chosen for the recordings, which took place in June 2001 with producer Tommy Hansen (Helloween, Pretty Maids, Chroming Rose, Beyond Twilight etc.). The chemistry between Erik and Tommy was great and their collaboration was to be long-lasting.

The album proved nothing short of a brilliant epos of majestic and symphonic progressive metal. With the new wiz-kid Morten behind the drums there were no limits to the technical aspects of the songs, and the trademark huge Tommy Hansen production pushed the band to a new level. The album was released by several different labels in various territories: July 10th 2002 in Japan by Toshiba-EMI, September 3rd 2002 in the U.S. by Laser's Edge/Sensory, September 20th 2002 by Sail Productions in Korea plus in Russia by CD-Maximum. However, the band´s European label Lucretia Records delayed the release until 2003, causing some confusion about the availability of the album.

 **FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD**
After the release of ‘To Travel For Evermore’, Erik and the band got really busy with interviews and promotion, but unfortunately never made it out on the road. Instead Erik soon was putting the final touches on the material for the third album, ‘Far From The Madding Crowd’. Recordings took place in the summer of 2003, once more at Jailhouse Studios with Tommy Hansen.

This time the band had truly struck gold – in the shape of unknown Swedish vocal wonder Nils Patrik Johansson (later to star in Astral Doors, Lions Share a.o.). Nils Patrik proved a perfect fit for the intricate music of Wuthering Heights with his amazingly powerful and versatile voice, sometimes reminiscent of singers like Russel Allen, Jorn Lande, Tony Martin or even the great Ronnie James Dio. Despairing at trying to find that elusive bassist, Erik chose to record the bass himself on this album.

"Far From The Madding Crowd" is a less technical album than ‘To Travel For Evermore’ with more emphasis on the folk music elements - in many ways it is more of a classic hard rock album with inspiration from the likes of Thin Lizzy, although it still packs plenty of metal punch. Lyrically the album functions as the final part in the trilogy loosely based around the character of ‘The Wanderer’.

The media and fans went wild over this amazing album, released in December 2003 by Toshiba-EMI in Japan, followed by Sensory Records in USA, Hellion Records in South America and Locomotive Music in Europe in January 2004. With its big, warm sound it even got a “hard rock album of the year” in the Swedish ‘Hifi & Musik’ magazine and today the album is still something of a classic in the minds of many fans.
 **Moving onwards...**
In 2004 Wuthering Heights went through another round of line-up changes, when some members proved rather unenthusiastic about the prospect of live performance. So, with relatively short no­tice Swedish keyboard player Andreas Lindahl (Platitude a.o.) replaced Rune S. Brink, Martin Arendal (Manticora) took the place as lead guitarist instead of Henrik Flyman and Swedish multi-talent Teddy Möller (Mayadome, F.K.Ü, Loch Vostok and a wealth of others) joined on bass.

The reason for all this was that the band had been offered to perform their first gig ever outside of Europe at the prestigious ProgPower Festival in Atlanta, GA, U.S.A. in August 2004. The band´s limited expectations were met with an overwhelming response from the fans. In fact, this “tempo­rary” line-up had so much fun together, that they decided on the spot that they were indeed the new “real” band! A rough´n´ready live CD was recorded to be released as a bonus disc on the U.S. version of the next album, serving both as a document of this great event and as a thank you from the band to the fans who were there.

In the summer of 2005, the band did their first gig on European soil in many years, as they played the Park Rock Festival in Sweden in front of a very enthusiastic crowd – some having travelled far to witness the band in action. Excerpts from the band´s performance were even broadcast in Swedish primetime TV. At this particular gig guitarist Toke Skjønnemand stood in for Martin Arendal, who had to take a couple of months off from music to nurture an injured hand.

 **THE SHADOW CABINET**During 2005 Erik began work on the next album to be entitled ‘The Shadow Cabinet’. Deciding to go with the same line-up that had performed at the ProgPower Festival in 2004, Wuthering Heights was not only rejuvenated, but also experiencing a better internal harmony and friendship than ever before.

During the spring of 2006 the album was recorded at several different studios in Denmark and Sweden. Everything was put together and mixed once again by Tommy Hansen at Jailhouse Studios.

‘The Shadow Cabinet’ was released in October and November 2006 (through Soundholic, Locomotive and Sensory for Japan, Europe and the U.S. respectively) and even made it into the charts in Sweden. A dark and aggressive album performed by a band with a new confidence, it solidified Wuthering Heights' status as one of the most unique bands to emerge on the modern metal scene.

 **SALT**
Following three years of silence, time had finally come for Wuthering Heights to release their fifth effort – simply but ambiguously titled ‘Salt’. Still going strong with the same line-up, Erik and the boys have created what must be without doubt their strongest album to date.

Again using multiple studios, the band chose to rely on the talents within the band as Teddy did the mixing and Erik finally acquired full “producer” status, though of course Tommy Hansen was still involved, lending his golden ears to several of the recording sessions.

The album sees the band moving into new conceptual territory as the whole thing takes a some­what maritime twist. While writing the lyrics for the album, Erik found that the imagery of the sea was a great vehicle for his increasingly dark tales of personal and global Armageddon. Conse­quently the music has traded some of its Celtic delicacy for the rawness of the sailor´s tune. The title ‘Salt’ sums up many different aspects of the album´s lyrics - from salty sea winds to salty tears, from the salt of the earth to the salty taste of whisky! And musically the band delivers these "shanties from hell" with burning intensity. Never before has the end of the world sounded this uplifting!

**Taking a break...**
Sadly, once more dark clouds were gathering over Wuthering Heights. Having suffered from back problems for many years, Erik finally had to throw in the towel. In spite of three attempts at sur­gery and vast amounts of medication he is currently not in a state to compose and perform at the level that the music of Wuthering Heights demands. Consequently the band is on indefinite hold since March 2011, though the guys have NOT officially split up. “Hope remains while the com­pany is true…”