

In conversation with Lizette &



The whole band starts to start talking about their genre on their own.

Alex explains:

Do you remember when there were record stores everywhere, such as the corner in the Old Town. This is something that strikes me right now. The record industry sold everything in different genres such as rock, hard rock, prog etc. and fans of no genre ended up in the rest of the box. We ourselves have screamed about a genre that does not directly exist in Sweden, so we end up in this other box. If we had said that we are a different metal band, we would have ended up in a categorized box, but we are fighting for industrial rock.

Some small discussions arise about what to call their music and some different opinions arise about what to call it. One genre that you stuck to was goth metal which was then rejected because it is not. A question what I think it is, I think it's industrial rock with a modern touch that fits in with the time and their own styles mixed into their own style, with this it's industrial rock second generation or industrial rock 2.0. And what to call it is difficult when, as Tomas says,

-Of course, you end up between the chairs when we ourselves don't know what the hell we are playing.

Everyone laughs.

Alex continues that they now have constant contacts with the German music industry and there is no problem at all because there you immediately understand that this fits on the goth scene, and then you can say Goth & Blandat. Lizette who comes from pop, me (Alex) the galloping metal like Iron Maiden and insane fascination with Led Zeppelin, Tomas with roots in music like Rush and Kraftwerk with German electro and weird stuff, then we have the musical Marqz who likes to listen to Christian piano singing, musicals jazz and soul, Goth & Mixed with a certain confusion in terms of genre and roots with us. The confusion, says Lizette, doesn't consist of what we do, but what we should call the. Marqz agrees that we

know exactly what we are doing in our heads, even if we cannot verbally express ourselves in what we are doing.

Immediately we move on to the technology of music now.

Marqz tells us very funny how the different keys matter and really don't.

-When I hear strings play minor, I take a minor chord and am told not to play minor, or major, it should just be something else. Then comes the chorus and I pointed out that it has only been 3.5 turns. Well, it should be like that I am abruptly interrupted and oh well you think and get black in the eyes every now and then and get a little angry. But then when you started to let go of counting and instead feel, it became easier and simpler.

Tomas goes on to explain that you feel when it is 4 turns or 8 bars and you feel that when it is time to change but Lizette continues with 7 or 9, always uneven so that feeling thing you must put aside and take it one more time before you change. But that's also what makes it a bit charming, and personal.

And together it will be great, Generation 2 of industrial rock.

Alex jumps in again and slips in on the fact that it is Lizette who put together this band with love and very funny frames of reference. Among other things, we needed a keyboardist and Lizette called me and screamed with happiness that "I've found our keyboardist" and I was a bit like, well, who the hell is that?, He's awesome he's done that and they he can do everything, Lizette said and continued, shit the same, he's fucking good-looking, Alex then asked if Lizette had heard him play and got the answer yes, eh, 20 years ago.

Well, we'll see what the hell it is then. In comes Marqz, no keyboard with him but a guitar So here stands our new keyboardist without a keyboard but with a guitar.

Tomas adds that Marqz's main instrument is trumpet but plays saxophone and here he comes to a new band as a keyboardist with a guitar. Lizette adds that he also sings best. Alex says that Marqz also got angry with him because he managed to pull off a string on the guitar that had been there for 16 years. Then Marqz continues, that when he got the keyboardist assignment, he had gone down to the basement and found his old guitar that he played in a band in high school, and when I drew a chord, it was still right so then I brought it instead and that's how I started playing guitar in the band. Oh, it was late one night when we were going to rehearse, and Alex called and said that I had to buy strings because he had driven one off. Of course, you got angry, they had been sitting there for 16 years. So, then I bought a new guitar.



So, it was a bit like dancing for Nanne Grönwall back then. You said you could dance even though you didn't know and practiced like hell before you were going to rehearse?

No, it wasn't really. It was only when I was standing at the mic stand and saw a YouTube video and they said that this is what we are going to do today that I found out was about dancing, Marqz explained.

Alex thinks that all these little things say a lot about the band.

Yes, we are not easily stressed, Lizette adds.



Lizette goes on to explain that things happen all the time that we solve in the best way in some way.

It was like when we were going to play at Siljarocken and Alex didn't come so we didn't have a drummer and then he called and said that there had been a fire at his place and Lizette asked if he could come anyway, even though Alex's family was still shaking with shock. He didn't, of course.

Tomas then says that the first night we played the background from the computer then, and the second night we played with a drummer we found on the boat, who listened through our songs once up in the cabin. Certainly, a good drummer from Gothenburg who is really good.

It was like another time at Fagersta city festival, Marqz continues, when Alex called and said that he is not coming

because he is stuck, in Greece and no one believed him. I was stuck, Alex says quickly. And Tomas says that they had to program the drums on the way up to Fagersta, and when we are on stage and it is completely pouring rain, Marqz continues, we had to move the drum kit and push ourselves up as much as possible against the wall so as not to get wet.

So, you had the drums with you?

Well, Lizette says as if it's obvious and continues that they missed someone who counted us in then. Which the first night at Siljarocken the audience counted us in which was great. But we told them what had happened so the audience thought it was ok.

And a third time at Rock Bitch Boat when we were also away, we brought in a drummer and the computer messed up so the background was completely wrecked, says Lizette and Tomas goes on to say that after 20 minutes of our playing time he thought we would get off as the technology was messed up and Lizette said that we would go anyway. No, it is not possible, said the drummer and Lizette just explained that it is calm, Marqz and Tomas will help you, it will work out, says Lizette. Then the drummer says that Tomas must count me in. Tomas continues with that of course I do and counted him in, but on the wrong song. The result was that the drums went way too slow in relation to the song, which was very strange.

From this we have learned, says Alex, that when it is, it is because I am not there, but we have never cancelled a gig since the first album in 2003.

So, it's you Tomas and Alex from the beginning with Lizette &?

Alex start.

Lizette had made the first record and needed a drummer and brought in a fantastic drummer, I was in the studio then but there was something that wasn't quite right to get it the way Lizette wanted it. I'm a drummer so what the hell, we tried and then we went for it.

Lizette explains it all by saying that he was so damn good that it became difficult for him to play the simple heavy rock that I wanted then. He simply couldn't just go on just because he's so damn well. But if you have Bonham in your genes, you can do it, you just keep going. But you were a little reluctant from the start.



Yes, but I didn't understand the genre, says Alex and laughs and everyone else laughs too. It had a lot to do with the fact that I'm not a trained drummer but self-taught, and my playing style is don't do anything because then it will be wrong, but I just went on in the simple style I know and fucking stick to it with attitude. And that was exactly what Lizette wanted. So, when I stepped in and did what I did, it was great.

Tomas says that he liked a lot of metal and heavy metal where I could just stand and pump with the bass on a damn note for half an hour if I wanted to. And then I make it damn easy.



There was one thing I noticed at Copperfield. That you climb with your fingers a lot back and forth on your neck and make it look more advanced than it really is.

Well, I keep it very simple, but as in "Reduced" there is really room for as much as you want, but it's not the time for that, the bass should just pump on as easily as possible. And that's a lot of what made it the three of us in the first place, just because we make it simple suits us well. Sure, when you've done the songs a hundred times, you float out and add or change a little, but usually it ruins the feeling of the songs instead. The focus ends up elsewhere and then things go wrong. But sure, many songs have developed if you listen to the previous versions and how some are today. But still the core of the songs is

still there. Then we have the song No Ones where the bass sounds didududududidu didudududididu and continues like that for seven minutes. The dynamics in that song are guitar that comes on and off, drums that come on and off and also the vocals, and when I then stand and do that for seven minutes is so damn nice. Then I enjoy it.

Marqz is the newcomer in the band as he has only been in the band for 6 years, Lizette continues laughing.

I've also fit in well since Lizette doesn't like blubillullullblublubb, fast heavy metal, and I can't play like that and it's perfect. If Lizette had said that she wanted blazing guitar solos, I would probably have said goodbye, Marqz explains.

You started with guitar in high school?

Yes, it was my parents who made the mistake of buying a steel-stringed guitar, because then there wasn't so much school because I played guitar instead. Much more fun. I played the trumpet. And in Mellösa where I come from, we had a beach party with barbecue and homemade drinks, and quickly you noticed that there was no one who appreciated the trumpet playing on the beach. It was filled with sand pretty immediately and it was nothing good, but with a guitar you could easily sit and sing together, much more fun people thought. So that's why I chose guitar instead of trumpet.

And when did the saxophone come into the picture?

In Katrineholm I went to the folk high school and there a whole world opened up for me. At a theory test that you got before you started, I was given a chord with three black dots on each other. Then it became in my trumpet head, no, it's fucking impossible to play three notes at the same time, a sludge crawler I thought. And you could do that if you play the guitar, and then you started playing the piano too and it was wow how cool. But then I had a friend who played scissors and he stopped doing that, so I bought it. And it was pretty easy to play on it until there were a lot of signs and you had to trick it with a lot of flaps. Otherwise, it's built up like a recorder, you have an octave and then you have a flap and another octave, super simple, if you just get the sound of it, it's really fun. After a week it was time for a school concert which was so much fun, unfortunately only with an alto, it looks cooler with a tenor or something. You slipped in on a lot of things, but I'm pretty lazy but have an easy time learning and can cheat my way on almost all instruments, but no virtuoso on anything.

Tomas quickly adds that Marqz actually has a huge memory. He remembers all the themes, how they go, and so on. It's absolutely amazing how he remembers things.

Just a good music hard drive in your head, says Marqz.

Well, he remembers all the shots made in the studio, Lizette comments. I don't remember anything, but Marqz can ask what happened to this and that tone there e.g. Absolutely huge.

Is Lizette & the first band you're in Marqz?

No, I was in a band in high school, Karma was our name. We played for 4 years. Then I've been doing pub shows at Wallmans with Nanne Grönwall, among other things, and danced and so on.

You've been in the Eurovision Song Contest in Azerbaijan too, says Tomas.

Well, I joined in dancing and sang in Mello a few times. It was just after that with Nanna that I got a lot of dance work, I don't know how it happened really. And my colleagues then asked too, can you dance? And then it happened, that when we were going to rehearse once, the financiers didn't want any dance boys with them anymore. Then you were without a job all of a sudden, and at a very bad stage, because all the other ensembles were already cast, so there was nothing to do then. So then I took a taxi leg and met Lizette. That's when I got started playing bands again and discovered shit how long ago this was and how fun it was. Then we were two guitarists and you mostly stood and just sounded. But I wanted to be cool too and preferably have the guitar down at my knee, but then I got more to do, or rather a little more difficult stuff, and with that I had to raise the guitar as well. So now I can't look cool with the guitar down to my knees and I've got a taxi ban from my wife, because I'm always grumpy when I get home. So now it's not a taxi either, just this or with the guitar too high up.

Alex, you are the one who worked with music on the business side, do you have other bands before Lizette &?



Well, I've been working with music for as long as I can remember. A fun project with 7 musicians with cello and other oddities was Timeless. When I started playing drums with them, I lied that I had played a lot of drums before. But the first gig with Tidlösa was the first time I played drums live. Funny but strange. But it all started in Gothenburg. When I turned 18, I bought a studio with a colleague. At that time, it was VHS cassettes that recorded company

presentations and we made the jingles for them. Then we did a lot of radio jingles, added music to weird documentaries, recorded other artists. So, after Timeless it's Lizette & which is the real band I'm in. And when I started here, it was noticeable that I had worked a lot in the studio and programmed drums, because I sat and showed how it should go with my index fingers, as when you program. But you could say that I have been shaped into the drummer I am today by Lizette &.

Lizette, you have worked a lot with music before, is this the first band for you?

Well, that I have started. I was in a few different constellations but as real bands it's the first. Tomas chimes in and reminds us, you had a band called Lizzy's Lizzards.

Well, that's right, you're right, I had forgotten that. We played 70% own songs and 30% covers. But I've worked as a singer and worked as a songwriter in studios.

You've worked with Michael B. Tretow. He has actually declared you and your way of working as a producer and songwriter genius. What was it that distinguished you from others?

Well, what I can immediately guess why is because he had tested them all, and by that, I mean all the speaker cables that exist and that cost thousands of dollars per meter. What he finally came to the conclusion is that Statoil's jumper cables were the absolute best speaker cables available. So, he had no preconceived notions about how to do or do when you work, and neither did I, so we could do a good job together. It was he who started by e.g., putting blankets in the keg to dampen the sound and get a special sound. According to the establishment, you couldn't do that, and I guess I was the same. We actually broke the rules for how to work. He was at the forefront of all the crazy and crazy. For example, his studio was a teenager's room. It was where you wanted to hang out with Coca Cola flyers on the walls. A couple of shelves in the living room were the singing booth. You ignore what you can't do and just keep going until you get it to sound the way you want it and use what you can to achieve what you have in your head to sound the same.

That's how it is in your songs too, it's not verse chorus verse chorus and so, take for example "Nothing" which is just a 9-minute ambient suggestive thing, Tomas adds.

It's just this thing about there being no rules, but there is a feeling that you want to convey, and you find a way to convey it. And there we were so similar and agreed, the lovely old man and I, Lizette continues.

When I record demos, I want something to sing on that sounds cool.

Then I have a jazz

guitar with only three strings on it that I tune in something cool then I record it on a fuzzbox or something else that I find. I usually save that and keep it as a background on the recordings. That is an example of how to solve it. Mandolins that I have used as a background in many songs are plastic bags, so I get cramps in my fingers and take bar chords with a finger and a crown for the plectrum I never find. Just Smile the album I wrote seven songs on mandolin in the kitchen at home. Then I forced Sofia to sit and listen to me so that I finished and recorded on my mobile phone.



Tomas steps in and tells us that if you are interested in how a song comes about, you should watch The Diva by Lizette & on YouTube.

For example, it can be mentioned that in the beginning Lizette was totally anti to everything that guitars were, Alex adds. And I had a friend in Gothenburg who was so tired of guitars and had put them away, but when I called and asked if he wanted to come up and put guitars on the next record, he said yes. It was flower sticks and blow dryers that were used to find the right sound.

He burned himself on the strands because we used a hair dryer that got hot and had to take breaks to care for his fingers," Lizette comments.

Marqz also says that everything possible has been used for the guitar to find the right one. I have driven with screwdrivers and electric toothbrushes for example.

Lizette liked it very much with the electric toothbrush because if you put it as a bar chord over the strings, the vibrations caused a constant lovely sound, she says. It doesn't matter how or why, but only because of that it matters if it sounds good.

Tomas, you have roots in metal. What is your music background?

There was a band in Eskilstuna that we had called Transylvania and then I was involved in forming a band called Skaar which is now called Days of Anger. So, I played a little bit with Days of Anger when we were on a European tour last year. But also, with Lizette & I do metal, at least in my head, because I like that energy. But then I like the 70's rock too. Like for example Alice Cooper had a bass player, Dennis Dunaway, I love his way of playing bass. Which is also noticeable in many of Lizette & s songs. Then I think the most important thing is to deliver than to play right. When I'm in the studio I play what I'm supposed to, but right as it is, the hell goes into me and I do a bluppblupppblurr, and usually it turns out great. Then when I'm going to do it live, I don't know at all how I did it. But usually when it happens, none of us understand anything and we stare at each other and then exclaim, damn that's cool. And I have no idea what I did. And if I've ended up in that situation, sometimes Marqz can come up and show, this is how you did it.

It is you Lizette who writes everything yourself and controls what is to be recorded and produces yourself as well. Are you allowed to be involved in deciding anything?

Usually when some material is ready, everyone listens through it and comes to the conclusion that it is finished and cannot be done anymore. But then when we rehearse, a lot comes out that can be changed. Tomas puts on the bass and does what he thinks, Alex drums on in his style and Marqz comes up with his ideas. Then we use it because everyone has their personality, and it is reflected in the songs and on stage. On the first record I cut and pasted it the way I thought it should be and basically did everything myself. But then from Just Smile until today, we've worked in pretty much the same way, and that's because we have a studio, which we didn't have on the first album. But everyone knows who the dictator is, and if the ideas don't fit, they won't be included. And there's a reason why it's called Lizette &.

Marqz adds that when he was going to a beer night with Tomas, we would quickly record my song. When we listen through the material, it is only included on one single, and we ended up recording my song on a continuous tape between 19.00 and 09.00. Tomas got his beer night by sitting alone packed in front of the TV

But we like this setup because when we go into the studio, we do our job and then it's Lizette who works with it. She is a producer, studio technician and gets everything ready while other bands that don't even have their own studio have to rent it, producers and technicians. So, it's great for us," says Tomas. When I talked to a drummer a while ago, he complained that he had only received 250.000 to record a single and thought it wasn't enough anywhere. Damn for that money we could have recorded a whole box of 18 records and also salary for everyone. In addition, we have our sound engineer Alex from RedDoor Studio who mics up everything and helps us a lot. We see him as our fifth member.

What are your sources of inspiration?

Marqz says he likes musicals, jazz and soul. I like to listen to Yngwie Malmsteen for 5 minutes because he is such a good guitarist but get spunk on it after a while because there are too many notes, but then I can listen to a trumpeter for several hours. You could say that I'm an omnivore.

Tomas says that when he started playing bass, he listened to Dag mainly because Stig Vig played such a simple bass that was easy to imitate. But then I jumped on Geddy Lee and Rush and Dennis Dunaway (Alice Cooper), as well as Steve Harris, (Iron Maiden). But then I love Kraftwerk and rock-hard fucking music like distorted angle grinders. But even before that, I listened a lot to reggae and Bob Marley mixed with heavy metal. So that's why I became a really weird bass player, really.

Alex says that his first drum god was Simon Phillips, (Toto, Judas Priest, Michael Schenker Group) after hearing "Shadows on the Wall" by Mike Oldfield. But Simon Phillips is one of those technical pig monsters so there was no point in trying to hook him up. But I was completely saved when I started listening to Led Zeppelin and "Achilles Last Stand" which is the edition of pretty much all Iron Maiden's songs. So, I'm probably most colored by John Bonham. Another band I really loved is Saga.

Lizette likes to talk about her influence Nine Inch Nails and that it is Trent Reznor who inspired her the most.

Addition. Trent Reznor is just like Lizette, songwriter, singer, instrumentalist, and producer.

Do you have anything new in the works?

Well. All the material is finished, and the live album is completely finished and a new studio album is on the way, Faith.

Is there any tour going on as you are discussing a lot with Germany now?

We have serious discussions with a German manager who knows that market. And it is mainly Switzerland, Austria and Germany, but also Russia and the Baltic countries. And they react so positively because this is really the right market. He was the one who broke Rammstein among other things and he immediately understands what Lizette & is about. Not that we are leaving Sweden behind, but after 3 Rockbjörn nominations and flapping around the country, it is time to expand the territory and then the German-speaking areas are just right now.

After the release of the new album there will surely be a lot of gigs in Sweden as well. But then it also depends on how quickly it hits Berlin. They want us to come down and do a showcase as soon as possible.



What can be said about Lizette & is that it consists of individual egos with humility that have great self-awareness. And when you meet them offstage, you notice what wonderful people these are. And thanks to the fact that they are different characters with a hell of a lot of attitudes on stage, it works.

At the end of the evening, I 'we got a private gig in the rehearsal room by Lizette &. After hearing two super songs, I went home with a smile on my face and "Reduced" recorded in my brain.

Text: Jan Yfver