RVH PROJECT



ALDORA BRITAIN RECORDS

Interview with Rick van Heuzen taken from:

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“Tomorrow’s Music Today”

Heads Are Gonna Roll (Judgement Day)

The **RVH Project** brings a new perspective to the realms of hard-hitting rock and roll. Indeed, their recent long player, *Land of the Damned*, looms large, with infectious grooves and rhythms, soaring guitar lines, and a direct vocal full of unrestrained intent. There is musical maturity, an evolution on show, whilst staying true to their creative, youthful spirits, finding a middle ground that allows for brilliant creation and innovation. These songs certainly take on meaning, developing out of their energy and raw, primal foundations. A brilliant powerhouse of metallic tones and hard rocking textures. And taking a break from these exceptional musings, bandmember Rick van Heuzen had a chat with *Aldora Britain Records* about his musical journey so far. We discussed the long-lasting impact of the COVID era, early artistic memories from his youth, the beginnings and early days of RVH Project, and much, much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time.

Keep up to date with RVH Project HERE. Listen to RVH Project HERE.

And please don't forget to send a magazine-sized donation to Aldora Britain Records HERE.

Aldora Britain Records: Hello Rick, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such a fantastic band from over in the Netherlands. It is amazing how music can bring us together. Let's start off by travelling back in time. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Rick van Heuzen: I'm doing great, thanks for having me! My father was a professional musician and there was always music in the house. Not just records that were played, but also many musicians who came by, and then there was often jamming. As a kid, the drums impressed me the most, and whenever I got the chance, I would always climb onto the drum stool and make as much noise as possible. That's how it all started. At first, I was only focused on drums, but over time I started diving deeper and deeper into music as a whole. I also played a bit of piano, but I liked the bass guitar much more, and in the end, that became the instrument for me.



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Aldora Britain Records: And now, let’s take a leap forward to the present day and a brilliant project of yours out of the Netherlands. The beginnings of RVH Project must have been an exciting, invigorating time. How did it all come to be? How did you meet the other members and what was the initial spark that brought you together on this creative, musical level?

Rick van Heuzen: Orion Roos and Gerry de Graaf were already working on an AOR album in Gerry’s home studio when I ran into Orion at a rehearsal space. They were looking for a bass player, and although we’d done one session together, I didn’t know them very well at that time, I agreed to join. I had plans to release a solo album and asked them in return if they wanted to contribute. I had already suggested a few ideas for their AOR project, but they didn’t know that I already had a lot of songs written and ready for my own album. As we started to play more in sync with each other, and despite the fact that I had written all the songs, it didn’t really feel as a solo album anymore, but was increasingly becoming a band effort. That's how the RVH Project came about.



Aldora Britain Records: You are fresh from the release of a superb new record called *Land of the Damned*. This was also my introduction to your work, so it already holds a special place in my record collection. Thank you so much for the music, let’s delve deeper with its creation process. What are your memories from writing, recording and releasing it, and how would you say you grew and evolved as artists throughout this process?

Rick van Heuzen: Thanks for the compliment. We had decided to release a single to coincide with the release of the vinyl edition of the first album. That's when we recorded ‘Butterfly’. We still had some time left and the studio was still available, so we threw around some ideas, and before we knew it, we were already working on a new album. Over the past few years, we have gotten to know each other much better socially and musically, and as a band, you could just tell that we had grown enormously. The process of writing and recording songs went very smoothly.

Aldora Britain Records: I am definitely drawn in by the band’s dynamic composition and songcraft. How do you approach this part of your creative process? Is it collaborative or more individual? Are you drawn to specific themes or topics? Perhaps coming from more of a personal, observational, or even fictional perspective or point of view?

Rick van Heuzen: It's still a pretty individual process, usually I work out a song at home and then bring it to the band. The difference this time is that I’m getting much more feedback and ideas from everyone, and we shape the songs together. There’s no big theme running through the record, but a few songs were definitely influenced by the COVID and lockdown days. I usually write either from personal experience or from what I see happening around me.

Aldora Britain Records: Let’s get more specific with this one now. I would like to focus on two personal favourites, ‘Marilyn’s Here’ and ‘Voices’. For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and performer of each?

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Rick van Heuzen: 'Marilyn' began with a little idea I played during a soundcheck. Everyone joined in, and it instantly sounded fantastic. I remember thinking, there's a song in this. Later, I developed it further. Around the same time, I had watched a documentary about Marilyn, and it stuck with me. The lyrics grew out of that, and they ended up fitting the arrangement perfectly. John 'JayCee' Cuijpers did a great job singing that one, but so did everyone else.

'Voices' is actually a very old song I wrote around a drum pattern I really liked to play. As I have said before, I started as a drummer and I recorded a demo with an old mate of mine, Salvatore Carlino, some thirty years ago. I programmed the drums and we have been working on it and made a rough mix, but for some reason, I honestly can't remember, we never finished it and we shelved it. You can find the old demo on YouTube. Sounds very dated now. Over the years I played it occasionally in rehearsal rooms with different drummers because they all liked it, and so did I of course. The middle section got a totally new arrangement and Orion knew the song and really wanted to use it for the new album. Gerry was obviously up for this as well, and he really nailed it. I am extremely satisfied with both songs and the way they turned out on the album. I think both are really showcases of what the RVH project is all about and how we sound.



Aldora Britain Records: I have been doing some crate-digging over on Bandcamp, leading me to 2022's *Enter the Machine*. This is another exceptional snapshot of the band. Thank you for the music! How do you reflect on this outing as a whole now, and is there anything that you would edit or change when looking back with the benefit of hindsight?

Rick van Heuzen: Well, thank you! This was the first time I recorded an album this way. Usually, I was in a band and many songs came out of the jams. I would come up with basic ideas too, but often we just played freely. This time I approached things completely differently, I arrived with fully written songs. I shared them with Orion and Gerry, and they began working on them. Everyone stayed focused and the whole process was very disciplined. I had never produced an album before, and it's definitely not an easy job keeping the whole recording process on track, but in the end it turned out to be a really rewarding experience. I'm still very proud of it.

Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love that RVH Project sound and your approach to making and creating music. That hard-hitting and progressive rock foundation. How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist currently?

Rick van Heuzen: At home, we listened to a lot of rock and roll at first, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, but my father also played a ton of jazz, both old-school and modern, along with soul. He had a really broad musical taste, and I absorbed all of it. I myself started listening to more and more rock. Maybe my style is simply the result of different styles coming together over time. I think I have been very privileged to grow up in an environment where there was always music around me. Deep Purple has been my biggest influence, and Frank Zappa's music still inspires me. Lately, I've been listening a lot to funk, like Dumpstaphunk and Paulo Mendonça.

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. There have been a lot of changes in the world in the post-COVID era, both throughout society, with political turmoil and even bloodshed in Ukraine and Palestine, and within the music industry too, AI for example. How would you say these several years have impacted you, both personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad?

Rick van Heuzen: That's a tough one. Every day you see those horrible images from Gaza, and you just can't ignore it. Ukraine too, it's the same story. The world leaders are playing their games, and ordinary people are the ones who suffer. It definitely affects me, but at the end of the day, you feel powerless, so what can you really do? The COVID period certainly came with its challenges, and the lockdown made life even more complicated. However, everyone was in the same situation. What surprises me most now is how quickly people seem to have forgotten about it, even though it was only a few years ago.

The music industry has changed so much, and these days it's really hard to make a living from it. But I guess it's always been a challenge to some extent. I've been fortunate to have some good years, and I'm grateful for that. The internet has brought the world closer, your music can reach everywhere, but the downside is that artists earn almost nothing from streaming, and that feels a bit unfair.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist or band? **Rick:** Deep Purple.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Rick:** *Machine Head*. **AB Records:** First album you bought with your own money? **Rick:** The Sweet, *Sweet F.A.* **AB Records:** Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Rick:** The Vintage Caravan, great band from Iceland, the album *Portals*.

AB Records: First gig as an audience member? **Rick:** Golden Earring. **AB Records:** Loudest gig as an audience member? **Rick:** Manowar.

AB Records: Style icon? **Rick:** David Bowie. **AB Records:** Favourite film? **Rick:** *Reservoir Dogs*. **AB Records:** Favourite TV show? **Rick:** *Breaking Bad*.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist or band? **Rick:** Not really new but I recently discovered the band Valley of the Sun, stoner rock band, their latest album is amazing.

