

# TROUBLE AGENCY

Belgium

## **How did you form the band and how did you choose your band name?**

DIDIER: I wanted to form a band which was both influenced by hardcore and thrash. I wanted a serious project that would last and thus started looking for musicians with whom I had a good relationship and which were part of the 80ies Belgian thrash scene. Each musician respectively knew other musicians and consequently we were enough to be a metal formation. Back then the first line up was I Didier Vancoppenolle (ex- Braincancer), Kalle Vanlint (former guitarist of Cyclone), Bart Brion (ex-Decadence & Cyclone) and Alain Fabry (ex-Necrosis). After that we spent almost 3 years looking for a singer that would satisfy our expectations. It ended up being Toad (still our present day singer).

When we started looking for a band name we wanted to look for something that wouldn't stick too much to the "blood-skull-satan" stuff, so typical in all the other metal bands back then. Also our lyrics denounce social problems and that's the reason why we chose to name the band Trouble Agency.

## **The band was formed from the ashes of bands like Cyclone, Decadence, and Necrosis, what's the biggest difference between those bands and Trouble Agency? What band was most fun to play with?**

DIDIER: There is not any actual difference in the essence of our band and for example Cyclone and Decadence but maybe we could say that we continued listening to a lot of metal of all kinds in the meantime and never refused ourselves any influence, be it modern or old school, as long as it could fit in the spirit of the band.

## **You released your first demo in 1996, when metal was quite extinct sort of, what response did that demo get?**

DIDIER: Each band had its worse and better times, but I have to admit that after 15 years Trouble Agency is musically very close to the ideal we wanted to reach when we started it. We would also like to say that we never got bored and are still motivated as much as on the first day.

## **In 1998, Your second demo, called "Angry", was released and was more thrash-oriented than the first one, what made you decide on playing more thrash-oriented music?**

DIDIER: We didn't really expect anything from it. We just wanted to put down our best songs to make them available for our fans and the people who came to see us at our shows.

## **Afterwards your drummer quits to form another band, what band was that? I read that you had a quite difficult period during that time.**

DIDIER: It was not a question of choice but rather a question of natural evolution of our music. The different members took a certain time to get involved into the project and only when they felt themselves a 100 percent into it, they would impose their personal touch on the music more firmly.

ALADIN: This difficult time was more due to the fact that all our instruments, effects got stolen and that we had to start everything back from scratch. The departure of our drummer was an additional difficulty at that time but we were strong enough to hold on.

## **And about a year later you found a new drummer called Aladin, who had experience of more varied types of drumming, what opportunities did it have for the band?**

DIDIER: Since we had just gone through a harsh time, Aladin entering the band was perceived with a lot of enthusiasm, as he was very motivated. His drumming style was quite unusual as it was rather based on groove and maybe a little bit less on power.

**So after that you went on the road again, any memories from those shows?**

ALADIN: Since that moment our line-up became more stable and as we could play more live shows on a regular basis, we ended up in Paris with Immortal and Hypocrisy, which was probably our biggest show, with a 1000 people attending to it and responding favourably to our music. Concerning our relation with other bands we really appreciated hanging out with Macabre and Exodus. They are really cool guys.

**How would you describe a typical Trouble Agency live performance? Do you have a fanbase in your hometown or home country who use to go to your shows and mosh and stuff?**

FRANCOIS: We like to start a Trouble Agency show with a really teasing or exiting song, to get the people into it. We really think it's important to have a good interaction with the crowd. Our singer is a real madman when enters the stage, which never seems big enough to carry his jumping and enormous screams. Concerning our fan base, we have to say we are really proud of them because every time they manage to slam, mosh, dive in all directions and sing along with our songs and they keep up the tempo in shows that sometimes last an hour which is truly incredible! Sometimes the fans even force us to play all the songs we have till the last drop of sweat. It's always a great moment of fun.

**Xavier Carion (From Cyclone and Channel Zero) produced your third demo "Bite Into Life" in his home studio, how was it getting the demo produced by him?**

DIDIER: Working with him was kind of enriching. Xavier really took care of every little detail and the recording conditions were very comfortable. We have to say he knows when to work and when to kick back with a good beer or joint .We learned a lot from this experience and also lost a couple of neurones on the way (laughs).

**Is he still playing in any band or active in the thrash scene in any way?**

DIDIER: He quite often works for metal bands in his home studio as a producer. Since Channel Zero I think he has played in 2 other projects called Sumo and Sons Of Jonathas.

**After that demo was made, you played your first big stage performance as co-liners of Immortal in Paris, how was it playing a large show like that and how was it playing in a foreign country?**

DIDIER: As Larry said before it was an unforgettable experience playing in front of that many people and moreover sharing the stage with 2 very successful bands. This event was a kind of enlightening moment. I think the band understood that they were able to play in front of 100 as well as in front of 1000 people. We got over a hurdle that night.

**You have played with other big bands like Exodus, Anvil, Macabre, Destruction etc, what band was most exciting to play with? Are you big fans of those bands?**

ALADIN: We remember the guys from Macabre being really supportive and friendly.

LARRY: Playing with Anvil at a small venue was also a special moment because we had seen them before in huge concert halls like Forest National in Brussels. They still have this genuine passion for their music.

DIDIER: I'm proud of having played with Exodus. I'm a big fan of their music since the early days.

**You have a new self released album out called "Moneycracy", What response have got on it so far?**

DIDIER: Our audience has always responded very positively to anything we did, so naturally this release was accepted with a lot of enthusiasm. Also media have positively perceived and criticized "Moneycracy". On the other hand we realize that nowadays it is quite useless to pump money into trying to promote your material by yourself in order to try to catch the attention of labels or majors. This is why we decided to sell our music at concerts. We also think it may be useful to re-release our old material and even to release new stuff on vinyl, since we got several proposals to do so. For us the most essential thing is to produce good music, playing gigs and having fun.

**In year 2008 Aladin quits after 8 years in the band, what made him decide to quit and how has it effected the band?**

LARRY: Aladin left the band for reasons we won't discuss out in the open. We immediately wanted to forget this delicate episode. Our present day drummer had just split with his former band at the time so we asked him if he wanted to give it a try. It worked out well immediately and we decided to continue.

DIDIER: François's qualities are power stroking, regularity and a very positive and constructive attitude. I think he's really into music at large.

FRANCOIS: When I entered the band, the guys seemed in need of some energy and I think I was the right person for that. I even sometimes tend to give a little bit too much of it, certainly since I was part of Trouble Agency's fanbase before becoming their drummer!

**How's the thrash scene in Belgium at the moment?**

DIDIER: There seems to be a kind of revival at the moment with some bands like Indemnity, Exterminator, The Dying, M-bush ( with former Cyclone guitarist Johnny), Trenchfoot,...

**What do you think of the new retro-thrash scene with teenagers playing old school thrash? With band like Merciless Death and Violator etc.**

DIDIER: I think it is a breeze of fresh air, because in Belgium the thrash metal scene seemed almost extinct a couple of years ago. Now we feel like we have a well deserved place amongst all those other bands. I also appreciate Evile and Municipal Waste in the recent thrash bands.

**A lot of old thrash bands has reunited lately, any old favourites that has reunited and you maybe even has seen live recently?**

FRANCOIS: Yes. I'm a huge fan of Sabbath (UK). I went to see them a couple of years ago at the Hole In The Sky festival in Norway and at Wacken Open Air in Germany and it was fantastic to see them reunited after so long. I also saw Sacred Reich and Mortal Sin which were also still up to today's standards. Great shows!

LARRY & DIDIER: For us Death Angel stays the best thrash metal act we have seen. They haven't lost an ounce of precision and punch.

**What's the difference and similarities of having a thrash band in the 80s and having one now? How has the scene developed during these 20 years?**

DIDIER: In the 80ies a lot of bands had their originality and a very personal touch. Today a lot of bands seem to focus on patterns, sound quality or even aggression but they have lost spirit and the sense of song writing. Back then the bands weren't afraid to have for example a high pitched singer on violent music...nowadays everything seems formatted. Also looks seem to have a lot more importance than music, probably because of TV and Internet.

In the 80ies there was a scene because everyone gathered in the same places and had a common interest. Now it seems a lot more difficult to bring people together around for example thrash or heavy metal. There's very few thrash bands in Belgium and they barely know each other or play together...we can't really speak of a "scene" today.

**Do you know if Cyclone, Decadence or Necrosis will by any chance get back together and get out on a reunion tour?**

DIDIER: Definitely not. Most of the members are no longer into metal or have lost the interest or habit of playing this type of music. But of course you can listen to Trouble Agency if you are eager for music that has its roots in what we call the "Belgian Thrash Metal Area".

Link: <http://www.thrashassault.com/inter-troubleagency.html>