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**HARDLAND**, are a sensational melodic hard rock quintet from The Netherlands. They have a new ten track album out now called 'In Control' which runs in at just over forty minutes long and is the bands third album.



Hardland are: Aeilko Venema – vocal/lead guitar, Paul Evers – vocal/rhythm guitar, Remi Riegel – bass/backing vocal, Marco Kuiper – Keyboards/vocals, and drummer Eric Gijzen. It is a sunny August afternoon in The Netherlands. Singer and guitarist Aeilko Venema had croissants and coffee for breakfast this morning, and he has just finished lunch, "I had an Emmmentaler cheese sandwich with coffee. As you can tell, coffee is one of the main ingredients to help me make it through the day," he tells me. As a little kid, age 6 or 7, Aeilko sadly lost his dad due to a train crash. "Losing him lead to my mom's younger sister to come and live with us. She listened to a lot of music from bands like: The Band, Santana, Rolling Stones, The Beatles and Helen Shapiro! I was always singing along to that music with a 'guitar' that I crafted myself with my granddad. Singing along to 'walking back to happiness' from Helen Shapiro, or 'It's all over now' from The Rolling Stones got me hooked on music. Later I wanted to learn how to play drums, but since my mom was afraid of all that noise, she decided that if I really wanted to get a drum-set I first needed to prove to her that it wasn't just a fluke. I had to learn how to play the

hammond for a year," he explains to me. After that she would get Aeilko a drum-set. "That's where it began...it was a long and tough year, playing an instrument that I didn't like, but nevertheless with only one goal in mind...I struggled on. After that year I played a few songs on that hammond for my mom and it convinced her...I got my drum-set: a pearl export. I beat the living daylight out of that thing!! But as I had got older, during one of the classes at high school one of my friends told me they needed a rhythm guitarist. So I bluffed my way into that band and sold my drum-set to get me a Laney amplifier and an Ibanez Explorer (by the way, I still have that guitar). We practiced and played one gig at my friend's former school. That same night I was asked by a different band who thought I was too good as a musician to be playing covers. They wanted me to join them and write our own material. That band, The HeroeZ, taught me a lot of very valuable lessons on how to let your creativity flow and let the sky be the limit. We wrote only our own original material and called it 'blubberrock', a mixture between hard rock and punk. Our logo showed a pig wearing a leather coat and shades, smoking a cigar!! OK, I warned you...the sky is the limit," he smiles. Singer and rhythm guitarist Paul Evers became interested in music due to friends who had a band and asked him to become their sound engineer and do their bookings. "The guitar player of that band happened to become the mixing engineer and co-producer of Hardland," he tells me. In his younger year's bassist Remi Riegel had a new friend who played guitar and bass. "That made me consider

trying and learn to play myself. And because of him I learned to listen and appreciate other genres besides the pop music that I listened to on the radio," he adds. Drummer Eric Gijzen started getting interested in playing drums at the age of 14. Ever since I have been playing in bands and has it become a major part in my life" he enthuses. For keyboardist Marco Kuiper, music was love at first sight. "I was 7 years old when I visited my brothers drum lessons. There was also an original Hammond B3 in the room, and I was hooked. I was too small to reach the bass pedals, but I was hooked to the sound of the Hammond and the old Korg synthesizer that was laying on top of the organ," he says.



Aeilko believes that 'In Control' is the natural follow up of Hardland's debut album. "We grew as musicians, singers and songwriters. During our lives we all had our share of difficult times and music was our way out of it. We wrote about everyday life struggles, or things that we have done, or read about...we write about all the usual topics as happiness, fear, love, helplessness and deceit. The overall sound and atmosphere of this new album is a little darker than our debut, I believe. There are always a few components that are important to us: one is that the song is always the

most important factor. Meaning, we do whatever needs to be done to make a song the best possible version it can be (in our humble opinions of course). No ego's, no BS," he expresses. "The second important component is that we try the hardest not to copy ourselves. We don't want to make a new version of the same old...if you know what I mean? Variety within the style of rock that we have chosen. And the last important component is that once we have recorded the tracks and think about how to package it all, sleeve concept etc we look at it from a buyer's point of view. If this would have been released by any great band that we like (eg. Whitesnake, or Journey), would we be willing to buy the album? Does it look great, does it sound great? Is it musically and visually appealing enough...if so...than we are happy with the result? And yes...we are totally excited about the final result of the new album," he enthuses. The main difference between 'In Control' and the band's debut album is that the debut was recorded over a longer period of time without the idea of becoming a band and releasing new albums every so often. "We had recorded way over 100 songs in all kinds of styles (rock, blues, big-band, country, you name it) and after listening to those tracks it showed initially ten songs that kind of fit together soundwise...we invited some befriended people from the music business over to have them listen to these tracks and they all thought we really needed to just take these songs to the next level and release them as an album. That's what we did," explains Venema. "For the second album 'In Control' the two main composers (Aeilko Venema and Paul Evers)

wrote most of the material, except for one track, a cover of Tubeway Army's 'Are Friends Electric!' We recorded a rock version of that famous synthesizer track. As mentioned before, the overall sound and atmosphere of 'In Control' turned out to be a little darker but still melodic."



Aeilko's musical inspiration came from all the music and bands that he listened to from the sixties to the eighties and even some nineties rock such as Alice Cooper, Kiss, Tubes, The Who, Frank Zappa, Rage Against The Machine, Journey, Dream Theater, Whitesnake, and King's X, but also eighties wave bands like Talk, Tears for Fears and Tubeway Army. "Even today's new rock and metal bands are interesting to me, such as KXM and SIXX AM. In the vocal harmonies of some of our songs you can also hear that we really love the polyphonic vocals that the Eagles and CSN & Y were so good at. The list of musicians and groups that inspired me is endless. You will absolutely hear those influences back in the music I create in some sort of way. But I do make sure to transform it into our own Hardland style and sound. I do not want to just copy someone or something. I want to make it my own and add something to it. My main source of inspiration will always be life itself and the things I see, hear, smell, feel or fear. As I grow as a human as well as a musician, I will always put those elements into a song or lyric in a different way than I did

before. Because I look at things differently now, I react differently now, I play music differently now, all because of gaining more experience, but always stay true to myself and the Hardland sound," he explains to me. Paul's musical inspiration comes from bands and artists like The Beatles, Pink Floyd, Steve Vai, Joe Satriani and Glenn Hughes. "In my younger years I was totally into the Beatles and later on when I had learned how to play guitar myself, I became a huge fan of David Gilmour and Pink Floyd. Such melodic playing and beautiful guitar-sound," he enthuses. Remi began with blues rock, fusion and rock. "Now I'm inspired from bass players, who can rock and groove at the same time. I'm more into the less-is-more type of bass players: Stuart Zender from Jamiroquai, Geddy Lee from Rush, Pete Trewavas from Marillion, Roger Glover and Glenn Hughes from Deep Purple, Robert Trujillo from Metallica, Fieldy Arvizu from Korn, Damon McKinnon from Twelve Foot Ninja are all bass players who somehow inspire my playing," he expresses. Dave Grohl is one of Eric's all-time favourite drummers. "He keeps it simple but powerful," he marvels. Marco grew up listening to a wide range of music. "So, I am inspired by the big artist like David Bowie, Queen, Deep Purple, Pink Floyd. In the 80's and 90's I was listening to the big rock groups like Marillion, Journey, Whitesnake, Europe, but also loved the works of pop musicians like Human League, Simple Minds, Duran Duran, Howard Jones, and Jean Michel Jarre. The videoclip of Marillion's Kayleigh made me decide to start collecting synthesizers. With Joe Zawinul I did my first tour as a keyboard-tech, I worked at

a series of one of the last European shows of Prince. So, I am inspired by a lot of musicians," he tells me. When he is not writing or performing Aeilko enjoys checking out the news on a daily basis. "I'm really interested in history and what we are making of today's history for future generations. Everything that's going on in the world, Brexit, global trade wars, noticing that more and more narcissistic people becoming today's leaders. Like it's time for history to start repeating itself. The influence of social media on everyone's life in positive but most certainly also in negative ways. These are definitely times that call for writing down lyrics on how it makes me feel and what it does to the people around me," he expresses. Besides all of that I have a family, wonderful wife and two kids who are obnoxious as the can be as twenty-five- and twenty-eight-year olds. My wife and I also love to travel to places we've never been before, to be amazed by historical places, cultures etc. And try new foods. By the way: my wife makes the best Cheesecakes in the world!!! With flavours you have never tasted in your life," he smiles. Paul loves building his own all-parts guitars. "I have four no wand they all have their own character. Live I basically use two guitars. An all-parts Telecaster model and an all-parts Superstrat model. I also love video-editing and be creative in photoshop. It comes in handy for the band, creating our own video teasers. In Photoshop we create our merch prints and backdrops for our love shows," he adds. Remi is into computers, and he loves to solve software related problems, and he also enjoys gaming. "I am also learning to play the cello over the last year," he tells me.

Besides playing drums in Hardland, Eric works as event security and also has his own little family. "So even at my daily job I work in the world of music," he adds. In the 80's Marco played in all kind of rock bands, road touring and started to build a recording studio. "After studying at the university I became also a touring sound-engineer, and started working as a stage manager. (North Sea Jazz and Caribbean Jazz are a few of the places I work at). I do a lot of things in music. Beside playing in bands, traveling from festival to festival as a stage manager or keyboard-tech, I also collect synthesizers, advise musicians, repair synthesizers and studio equipment. I have a large collection of synthesizers, I guess I have 70+ synthesizers at the moment. If I have some 'spare time', I also coach young musicians. So? Is there a life outside music," he smiles. What makes Hardland different from other artists is a difficult question. "We do what we love the most, try to build a musical atmosphere that's build on all the great memories of times that have gone by way too fast. Between the sixties and the new millennium there were probably the most extraordinary changes in the world, not just in music," Aeilko explains to me. "What we do is write modern day rock music with all those great elements that made us feel good back in the days coming back into our songs. Therefor we notice that our audience is also mainly people who have been around, so to speak, and recognize much of the things that we sing about, or the musical atmospheres that we create. They feel 'at home' at our gigs." On this album Venema has tried to raise the bar musically, vocally and

lyrically for himself. "There are a number of tracks on this album that are a highlight for me for all different reasons. But the tracks that appeal the most to me are 'Love Love Love' (for being so completely different than everything else on this record



– Beautiful harmonies on a waltz in the middle of an ocean of rock!), 'The Nation's Biggest Enemies' (brutal and in your face with a lyric that came to when noticing that most of our biggest enemies are those who pull the strings!) and 'Last Goodbye' (The lyric came to me on an experience of being with someone who lived a life based on suspicion and fear. No self-esteem or self-reflection. After a while it becomes a choking atmosphere. Musically I wanted to compose it in such a way to try and pay tribute to one of my all-time musical heroes Pete Townshend from The Who)," he explains to me. Hardland are performing as often as they can in The Netherlands. "We realise that our country is not as rock minded as for example Germany, Canada, the US and Japan, to name a few. We also focus on Germany to do live shows and that works out great. And from there we try to build a bigger circle to perform in. Hopefully we can come and rock England as well. We would really love that. The home of so many great bands and artists. You people are so lucky to have seen all these great bands rise to their full potential, the Beatles, Stones, The Who, Deep Purple, but also Sex

Pistols, Clash, Talk Talk and all these others. We had Golden Earring and ....all these female fronted metal acts, such as Delain and Within Temptation. What we as a band are hoping to gain is that people start recognizing our name and love our music, which will lead to more shows all over Europe and perhaps elsewhere on this planet! That, while having fun while doing it, is what makes us the happiest campers around," smiles Venema. 'In Control' is, just like Hardland's debut album, is a home recording. "We recorded and produced the record at our home studios. We had a really good friend, Dick Kok (in Holland a real common name, but I understand that the pronunciation of his name may cause some laughter in English speaking countries!) mixed our songs. We gave him cart blanche to do whatever he felt needed to be done to make the songs even better than they already were. And so he did! That guy is absolutely one of the best mixing engineers I know and an even greater friend," expresses Venema with admiration. "After that we took our music to Abbey Road Online and had mastering engineer Sean Magee (known for his work with the Beatles, Rush, Deep Purple and Pink Floyd/David Gilmour) do the mastering. That man is a true genius! The whole process took us about a year from start to finish." There's a lot in store for the future for Hardland. "We are already writing music for our third album and maybe some EP's in between. We are overloaded with great musical ideas that we would love to share with our fans and everyone who loves great melodic rock music! We are working on a documentary on the band. Besides that we are working

hard on finetuning our live performances to make those the best possible experience for our audiences. On a personal level I continue to write all kinds of different styles of music and would love to see those sung or performed by different artists. Music is such a big part of my life that one life doesn't seem enough for me to do all the things that I would love to do," concludes Aeilko, bringing an end to our conversation. 'In Control' is now available on CD, and you can also purchase it digitally through all major music services. Check Hardland out at <https://www.facebook.com/HardlandRocks/>, <https://www.youtube.com/c/HardlandOfficial/>, <https://instagram.com/hardlandrocks/>, <https://twitter.com/hardlandrocks/> / Label LO41 Records - <https://www.lo41records.com>

With seven albums now under their belts it's time once again to start about the hard working, hard rocking **BADHOVEN**. They are a fabulous melodic hard rock quintet from Graz, Austria, and if you are looking to support a band with a consistent slew of regular quality album releases, then these are the guys to get into.



They have a new thirteen track album out now called 'All The World's A Fake' which runs in at just over fifty-five minutes long and is the bands seventh album. Badhoven are: Kurt Christian – lead vocals/guitars, Mario

Pohn – lead guitars, Gerhard Paar – Keyboards/backing vocals, Flo Verant – bass guitar, and Gerd Sojka – drums/backing vocals. It is an early Sunday July morning in Austria, and everything is quiet outside. "It seems to be becoming a sunny day and nature is awaking slowly. I like this daytime when birds start to whistle from the roofs of my hometown. It is like a different kind of music. Life is awaking and thoughts are open and so free," expresses singer and guitarist Kurt Christian. "For I know there is a song for every situation in life 'Miracle Of Life', a monument of song from the band 'Yes' from the album 'Union', is now in my brains as I start the day with a cup of coffee and a small viennese breakfast. A roll, different marmalades, some butter and honey. And then a second cup of coffee again," he tells me. "I also remember now that 'Good Times' was one of the first songs I wrote for our current album. And it's a good start into the day, too. Even a good start into life or back in life. And I'm really thankful for living my little dream in a rock band for such a long time." Drummer Gerd Sojka's father was a musician, and so he was surrounded by music since he was a child. "My father played traditional music and threw me into a music college at the age of thirteen because his intention was that he and I could play together," he explains to me. Following this, Sojka spent almost five years learning to play the clarinet. That time his passion for playing drums and rock music grew, opposed to playing Mozart, Bach or Beethoven. "So I finally quit that college. After that, a coincidence brought me together with one of the best drummers we had in my hometown at that time. And without any doubt he still