

## Marcus Sorenson interviews Leonardo Estarellas, Kyle Baggaley of Blast Torment and Jed Nethers at Loony Bin Records.

Welcome, everyone. Today, I'm sitting down with one of the relentless forces in the Salt Lake City heavy metal scene—*Blast Torment*. These guys are building a reputation for crushing riffs, high-octane energy, and a sound that refuses to compromise. They're not just playing metal; they're living it even as working family men.

I'm Marcus Sorenson, and in this conversation, we're going to dig into what drives their music, their journey so far, and what's on the horizon for a band that's unapologetically loud and proud. So, buckle up—this is going to be one hell of a ride.

Let's welcome *Blast Torment*

**Marcus:** What inspired you to pursue heavy metal music, and how does it influence your creative process?

**Kyle:** I've been around music my whole life. Before I ever got into metal, I was listening to whatever my parents had on—and that was mostly classical. My mom was a piano teacher, so the house was always full of Chopin, Bach, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky... all that good stuff. I've always loved it. Classical music has these cool contrasts—soft, beautiful parts and then these technical sections that some may say have 'way too many notes' (laughs). Take Moonlight Sonata, for example—you get these calm, serene moments and then suddenly it feels dark and heavy. Honestly, I could talk forever about how similar classical, and metal are, but that's probably a whole other interview. My love for metal

started with my family, too. My oldest brother introduced me and my siblings to the Scorpions and Van Halen when I was a little kid, and I just loved that energy. Then one day, a friend handed me a Metallica cassette, and the first time I heard ‘Blackened,’ I was blown away. That’s when I really got hooked on thrash metal.

**Marcus:** What got you into guitar?

**Kyle:** That’s a great question. I actually started out on piano and then trombone in junior high marching band—but deep down, I wanted to rock. So, I got a drum set, took a few lessons, and for a while, I really thought I’d end up being a drummer in a band. I’m still a huge fan of drums and honestly wish I could play like Jed. I’ve always loved all those instruments.

At some point, I had a friend whose brother owned an electric guitar. I remember watching him play for the first time—it was the first time I’d ever seen someone play an electric guitar in person—and he ripped into ‘Rock You Like a Hurricane’ by the Scorpions. From that moment on, I couldn’t stop thinking, ‘One day, I’m going to have an electric guitar.’ Funny enough, I ended up buying that same guitar from him years later (laughs).

Then another friend’s older brother was a real thrash guy—he had this Peavey half stack in their basement, and when he played, the whole house would shake. I loved it. That just sealed the deal for me—I knew I wanted to play. A little later, when I was about 13, a neighbor lent me an old electric guitar he wasn’t using. I didn’t have an amp, so I plugged it into the mic jack of my stereo. It sounded awful, but I didn’t care—I was hooked.

**Marcus:** Who are the Metal Dads? Is that just Leonardo and Kyle? Jed, are you also a metal dad?

**Jed:** (Laughs) No I'm not. I'm not even a dad for one thing (laughs). I'm just a drummer of many music styles for multiple bands and not limited to metal.

**Marcus:** My understanding is you're a session drummer with no commitments to any band. Why not establish yourself with a band?

**Jed:** Marcus, you and I go way back, and you know I'm more of a quiet guy. I live out in this tiny town—you even made the trek all the way to Wyoming to visit me, so you know how peaceful (or boring) it gets there! Most of the time, I'm just making phone calls, chatting about drum parts with bands, recording my tracks, and sending the files off. I'm basically the “studio ninja” who nobody really sees but somehow gets the job done (laughs).

Honestly, I don't think anyone needs that over-the-top, “Look at me, I'm the star drummer!” guy showing up to rehearsals. Let's be real, rehearsals work better when everyone's focused, and sometimes that means keeping the drama out of the room. Usually, guitarists will just hit me up and say, “Hey, we need a fill here,” or “Can you switch up the beat there?” I email them a new track accordingly and that's how I roll.

Working with Blast Torment has been one of the easiest gigs I've had—no headaches, just straight-up good music and good vibes.

**Marcus:** You don't play drums like a quiet guy...

**Jed:** I guess my drumming can mislead one to understanding my personality I suppose (laughs).

**Marcus:** You plan to continue to work with Blast Torment?

**Jed:** Yeah sure. Blast Torment is great to work with, and we are working on more tracks so more to come.

**Marcus:** Leonardo, can you share some insights into the themes and messages conveyed through your music?

**Leonardo:** Life is challenging for everyone in one way or another, and we create music that speaks to those shared struggles. Our goal is to explore the torments that affect humanity, with the belief that through suffering and hardship, we grow and learn. Expressing these themes through metal allows our fans to feel seen, heard, and truly understood.

**Marcus:** How do you balance the raw energy of heavy metal with more intricate musical compositions or lyrical storytelling?

**Leonardo:** For me, that balance reflects the reality of life, its storms and its calm seasons. Both are essential to express. If every track was just pure speed and energy, it could become overwhelming and lose its impact. We love creating contrast with slower, more reflective sections, because after a moment of calm, the heavy parts hit even harder.

That balance isn't a formula—it varies from song to song. We simply follow what feels right for the music and let the emotion guide us.

**Marcus:** What are the biggest challenges you face as a heavy metal band in today's music industry?

**Leonardo:** There are tens of thousands of metal bands out there, so from an industry perspective, standing out can be tough. But honestly, we don't focus on that. We focus on who we are and the music we want to create. We share what we do because we love it—and if that brings us fans, that's amazing. If not, that's okay too.

Of course, we value feedback and we're always looking for ways to improve, but at the end of the day, staying true to ourselves is what matters most. That authenticity is the core of Blast Torment, and we're not willing to compromise that.

**Marcus:** Kyle, how does Blast Torment approach live performances, and what do you hope audiences take away from your shows?

**Kyle:** Right now, we're not performing live yet. The main challenge is getting a full lineup ready for shows, and for me, it's important that we only hit the stage when we're right and tight and truly ready. Jed is an incredible studio drummer, but he rarely travels, so for live performances, we may need to bring in a different drummer. That said, Jed will continue working with us on all studio projects for as long as he's willing and available.

The exciting news is that we've recently brought in a new bassist who goes by Bass Sama, and he'll be playing on our next release. He's an experienced live performer, so we're hopeful that this opens the door to putting together a solid live lineup soon.

**Marcus:** Could you discuss any significant influences that have shaped your sound?

**Kyle:** Every member of Blast Torment brings different musical tastes to the table, and we embrace that. There's so much amazing music across genres—why limit us? For us, it's about exploring and blending whatever feels authentic in the moment.

Our next album will be different from *Shadows Around My Mind*. It will still be heavy and thrashy with some classical elements—but maybe even heavier in some parts and lighter in others. Personally, I've been influenced by early thrash metal, classical music, and even a touch of jazz fusion. We don't want to box ourselves in or chase a single “signature sound.” Instead, we follow our instincts, even if that means experimenting with different styles along the way.

Take our first song, *Corazón Roto*, for example. It started out years ago as an acoustic folk piece Leonardo wrote, but when we recorded it with a metal edge, it just clicked. At that point, we didn't even know thrash metal would become our primary direction.

At the end of the day, we'll always keep it metal—but to us, metal is a broad canvas. It can be raw, melodic, aggressive, or even soulful. That freedom to create without limits—that's what keeps this exciting.

**Marcus:** What role do visuals and aesthetics play in enhancing the overall experience of your music, whether it be album artwork design?

**Kyle:** I'd say visuals and aesthetics are almost as important as the music itself because they set the tone for the entire experience. Metal isn't just about sound, it's a culture, an attitude, and a feeling. The album artwork, even the way we dress, all feeds into the world we're creating for the listener.

When someone picks up our album or streams it online, the cover is their first glimpse into what they're about to hear. It's like the portal to

the universe we've built. If the artwork is powerful, dark, and intricate, it prepares the mind for the sonic chaos or storytelling that's coming. We look forward to using more imagery in our live performances when that time comes. We don't just want fans to just hear the music; we want them living inside it.

The riffs, the lyrics, and the visuals all work together to make the experience unforgettable. Heavy metal has always thrived on creating an atmosphere that pulls fans into something bigger than just sound. That's what keeps people coming back for more.

**Marcus:** Can you share any memorable or unusual experiences you've had as a band?

**Leonardo:** For me, it all began in the simplest yet meaningful way. I met Kyle at church, and one day he invited me to a cookout at his place. While we were there, I picked up a classical acoustic guitar and started playing—just for fun. Then Kyle looked at me and said, “*We should record something.*” I'll never forget that moment because it felt like the start of something special.

We began with a song called Corazón Roto, and what we created completely blew me away. I never imagined that a casual afternoon with friends would turn into something so real, something that would put our music on every major streaming platform. It's been an incredible journey, and it all started with that one simple invitation.

**Kyle:** I wouldn't call it unusual, but the way this all began still feels incredible—a metal band that started at church, at a time when I least expected it. That alone makes our story special.

What I love most about Blast Torment is the journey. Week after week, we meet—some sessions full of breakthroughs, while others are just us



wrestling with ideas or pushing through writer's block. And honestly, that's part of the beauty. Creating something meaningful isn't easy, especially when music isn't your full-time job.

Both Leonardo and I work full-time, and we're husbands and dads to young kids. It's tough being a metal dad, balancing riffs and responsibilities, but we make it work because our priorities are clear: family always comes first. Music is our passion, but family is our foundation—and I think that gives everything we create even more heart.

**Marcus:** How do you see heavy metal evolving in the future, and what do you hope to contribute to its ongoing development?

**Kyle:** Metal will never die, it keeps evolving. New subgenres are emerging all the time, and younger generations are embracing it like never before, which is incredible to see. Unlike the 80s, when metal was under attack and even blamed for society's problems, today it's far more accepted and respected as a powerful art form.

That said, I do believe something has been lost over time. Modern recording technology, while amazing, often makes productions sound too similar. Back in the day, every album had its own character because each mix was unique, giving the music a distinct flavor.

With *Shadows Around My Mind*, we're bringing that spirit back. We're intentionally moving away from the overly polished, uniform sound and reintroducing a more raw, authentic mix. Our goal is for every album we release to have its own identity, not just sound like everything else out there.

Ultimately, our contribution to metal is about breaking stereotypes and showing the world that metal isn't evil—it's honest. It dives into real



emotions and gives listeners a space to feel understood, empowered, and connected. That's what metal has always been about, and that's the message we want to amplify.

**Marcus:** Finally, what advice would you give to aspiring heavy metal musicians looking to break into the industry?

**Leonardo:** First off—play because you love it. If you're getting into metal for fame or money, you're in the wrong genre. This music is about passion, energy, and connection. So, find your own voice. Don't just copy what's out there—learn from the bands you admire but write music that feels like *you*.

Second, practice like hell. Learn your instrument inside out, and don't be afraid to push yourself technically and creatively. Metal fans can spot authenticity a mile away, so bring the real thing every time you play.

And finally—be patient and love the process. This is a tough industry, and it's easy to get discouraged. Stay consistent, stay hungry, and keep creating. If you love what you do and keep grinding, the doors will open.

**Kyle:** Believe in yourself and don't give up. Every great musician started as a beginner who didn't quit. If you're passionate about heavy metal, let that drive you. Practice every day, even when it feels hard, and keep learning—because progress comes from consistency.

Write music that feels real to you. Don't worry about trends or what other bands are doing. Metal is about honesty and energy, and people connect with that. Your unique sound is your biggest strength.

Also, find your tribe. Surround yourself with people who share your passion, whether that's bandmates, local scenes, or online communities. Support other musicians and they'll support you back.

And remember—it's a journey. There will be setbacks, but every challenge is part of the story. Stay focused, stay hungry, and keep creating. If you love it, never stop—because the world always needs new voices in metal.

### About the Author:

#### Marcus Sorenson

Marcus Sorenson is a die-hard underground metal fan with a passion for amplifying the voices of lesser-known bands from around the globe. When he's not headbanging at a dive bar or conducting raw, unfiltered interviews, Marcus runs *Sorenson's Salmonry*—a private fishery he proudly calls his second home.

He's also the founder of the International Seal Fish Agency (ISFA), a unique secret shopper service dedicated to evaluating fast-food customer service worldwide—because why not? Beyond that, Marcus is a seasoned real estate investor, a philanthropist with a heart for community projects, and a relentless advocate for all things heavy metal.

Whether he's scouting new riffs, raising salmon, or checking drive-thru accuracy, Marcus lives life loud.