

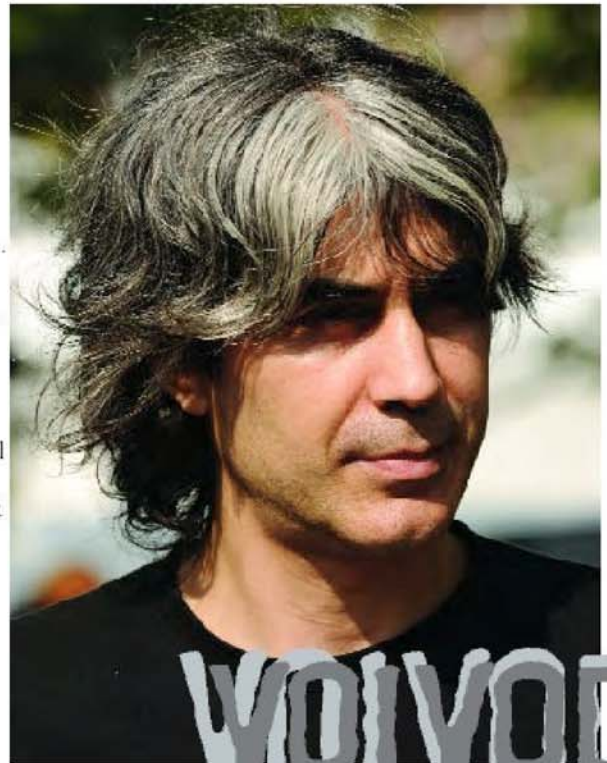
Mongrain, took over the guitar duties.

Voivod's last release, 2006's *Katorz*, featured Piggy on guitar, using tracks he wrote and recorded while undergoing cancer treatment. Away remembers Piggy diligently working at his laptop, perfecting his guitar parts despite being bedridden at his partner's house and in the hospital. Their new album, expected in early 2009, will be recorded the same way. "We have to finish off the remaining 13 tracks [left from Piggy's demos]. There are no bass tracks, drums or vocals, and the three bass players that were in Voivod's history – Jason, Blacky and Eric ["E-Force" Forrest, former member] will all provide parts for the tracks," Away reveals.

As for lyrics, he believes that chief songwriter Snake will probably focus on the current social and political climate. "In the first few albums, it was about nuclear war, but as the concepts developed they focused on the environment and social aspects of this planet, but it was also under the guise of almost sci-fi folktales. They were like metaphors. I used to write concepts for all the albums in the '80s, but it's better that the singer concentrates on the lyrics and the drummer focuses on the drumming, because it creates tension otherwise," Away laughs.

Despite the recent demand for the band to take the stage again, Away seems adamant that this album and subsequent farewell tour in 2009 will be their last. They have no desire to record original material without Piggy, he says, as his influence was imperative to both the band's philosophy and

sound. Plus, all the founding members have found other rewarding careers, musical and otherwise. An accomplished artist, Away was asked by the Foo Fighters' Dave Grohl to design the cover for 2004's *Probot* album. After the overwhelming response and resulting increase in demand for his work, he started an online gallery where customers can order prints or commission original art at awayvoivod.webs.com. He also hints that maybe it's time for a younger generation of bands to show their stuff. "I know that we are part of the innovators of technical metal, but it has developed to the point of bands like Messugah," he says. "It is really impressive stuff. And I wouldn't want to go on after Mastodon!" ❖



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