

## Interview With Ton Scherpenzel Of Kayak

**Greetings from Metalheads Forever Magazine, A real pleasure to have this chat with you, I'm Keith, How are you today Ton?**

I am fine, thank you. And pleasantly surprised to be asked for an interview by your magazine, not really being a metalhead myself. And one could hardly categorize Kayak as a metal band, sorry. So, I appreciate this.

**Your latest release Back To Shore – The 2022 Farewell Tour was out on Feb 25, Recorded at Zoetermeer & Hilversum, With 22 Live Tracks featured on this release via OOB Records, Can you tell me about the making of the release and production behind it?**

We recorded two shows during the Farewell Tour. After the tour was over, I immediately went on tour with a Dutch artist who is huge in the Netherlands and Belgium, selling out big theaters 4 times a week, but unknown anywhere else. He is a comedian, story teller and singer in one. I have written and performed his music since 40 years. This tour lasted two years. In the meantime our guitarist Marcel Singor started working on the audiomix, and John Vis did the editing of the 6 camera footage. Not being fond of mixing live stuff myself (and being too busy with touring), I let Marcel do the work cause I knew he would be very dedicated and able to make a great mix. There was no rush, so it took some time. I wasn't involved really until Marcel sent me the raw mixes and video, and I was impressed by the quality. I then gave them my thumbs up to continue and finish it, sent him some production input, and went on looking for a label that would be interested to release it. That became OOB Records, that has released my solo albums in recent years.

I'd like to mention we still had two songs that didn't make it to the last studio album. Not because they weren't good enough, but just because there was enough material for Out Of This World and at that moment we didn't yet know that this would be the last studio album ever, so we kept these tracks on the shelves, unfinished. To make Back To Shore even more special, we finished them and now they have been added to the track listing of the CD

Basically I only concentrated on that and on doing the artwork, which has become a sort of hobby for me lately. I really like doing graphic stuff- rather than mixing, would you believe?

**Would you like to tell about the musicians you worked in this album and how was the recording process?**

Well, that would be the band of course. Marcel Singor, guitar and vocals, Bart Schwertmann, lead vocals, guitar and bass, Kristoffer Gildenlöv, bass and backing vocals, and Hans Eijkenaar on drums. As I said before, I was not involved in the recording and mixing process itself so you'd have to ask Marcel about the technical stuff. I just know two shows were recorded,

and they took the best of each show, making it seem it was one show. Marcel and John did a great job, editing out most of the announcements and make seamless connections between songs.

**Did you celebrate with a release party as this being the last live recording?**

Yes, it was a wonderful occasion, but in a way it was sad as well. I told the audience that to me it felt like a combination of a school reunion (with all the fans as well), a birthday party and a funeral. But in the end, a positive feeling remains.

2021's Out of This World was the last full length from Kayak, with a farewell tour in 2022, Is it the end of Kayak or there will be more albums coming out?

Never say never, but I honestly can not believe there will be. I did not make the decision to stop lightly. There were lots of reasons and considerations why I did not want to, and could not, continue with the band. Nothing has changed really since that decision was made. I can't see anything will change in the future for the better that would make me start again. The album is called Back To Shore, and that's exactly what it means. We've been sailing for 50 years, but we'll stay in the harbor from now on. Let others roam the oceans now.

**A Pioneer of Dutch Prog Rock and a legacy through Kayak, How do you feel about where you are now?**

They say when one door closes, another one opens. Well, we'll see about that. We've closed an era about 50 years of releasing albums and touring (not counting the 18 years of absence between 1981 and 1999), and there is no way to simply replace that, or follow it up. Kayak has been a big part of my life, it shaped me and though I'm not longer active with the band as such, it will still keep me occupied for some time to come. I will always carry that past with me, and be identified with it. Which is fine. I have never seen or planned Kayak as a career, and I don't fancy a solo career either. I am not a solo artist and do not plan to go on the road. That doesn't mean I'll shut up the rest of my life, because I am writing and releasing new music because the inspiration and creativity is still flowing, it's part of who I am. I have released six or seven solo albums since 1978, and I hope to keep on doing that. But I am not going to try and force anything that goes against my nature. At the moment I am releasing a myriad of new material via band camp ([tonscherpenzeel.bandcamp.com](https://tonscherpenzeel.bandcamp.com)) and we'll see where that takes me. In the meantime I am always open for people asking me to play or write for. I have almost never said no to anything in my musical life, and I have only learnt from that. It broadened my musical horizons and allowed me to do things I never dreamt of.

**Kayak was formed back in 1972 with 19 Studio albums, Compilation, Live DVD, and decades of musical awesomeness and Live shows around the world, How has the road been so far?**

Bumpy, to say the least. It's been great and it's been hard, but never easy. We've had very successful periods, even a platina and number one album, but also times that I believed the whole world had forgotten us. I suppose that goes for almost any band. We've had many line up changes, and not all of these were very friendly. We've also had a manager that almost made me go bankrupt. But, long story short, I can't complain, I have always been able to make a living by my music, and in a small country like Holland for a band like Kayak, that's remarkable.

**Being the lone founding member with lots of lineup changes, looking back through the years, was the road a hard one, Did you face any obstacles?**

See previous answer. As band members came and went, I ended up as the sole original member. I was the band leader, not because I wanted to, but out of artistic necessity, determining which way we had to go. But as a person I do not need the spotlight or front stage- not to be mistaken with not needing the recognition. Anyway, that attitude sometimes caused some confusion under certain band members. One of the hardest obstacles was whether to continue or not after the death of my friend and co-founder Pim Koopman. But we did and made it all the way to 2025.

It was never easy because of the fact that we originate from Holland, a small country, and we were not exactly mainstream (well, maybe we were for a while in 1979), it's hard to keep going when prog's your main audience. You can only fill so many venues in a year. I am certain that had we been an English or American band, things could have been different. It was hard to jump over the Dutch dikes, if you see what I mean. But it made us look for other solutions, and be creative with small budgets.

**Making History with decades of awesomeness, I know there has been lots of great awesome memories, But looking back what would be some of the best that you would like to share with us?**

No specific events, just general moments of feeling gratitude and recognition, to know that we, as a band, and me, as a composer, mattered. We could touch people's heart, which is why I became a musician in the first place. The first time hearing your own music on the radio. The platinum album of Phantom Of The Night in 1979. The resurrection in 2000 with a fantastic reception by the audience in the Amsterdam Paradiso. The second resurrection in 2018 with a complete line up and the vinyl issue of Seventeen peaking at number one in Holland. That sort of thing.

**What would be your next plans, Will you work on more music in the coming days/years, Will you be collaborating and helping other musicians with your legacy and wisdom?**

See previous answers. I don't intend to stop making music. And I am open for everything, I'm just not going to lead a band anymore and go on tour. But as long as inspiration and creativity flow, I'll be making music. I am sure that'll find its way to people that want to hear it.

**Finally, any message you have for the fans around the world?**

Thanks for all the support throughout the years, especially the support that's pouring in at the moment. In these final Kayak days that's worth so much. Thanks for staying with us since the beginning (if you're that old), because with so many line up changes, we have asked a lot from you. We couldn't have lasted so long without you.