

ALBUMS:

- FILMTHemes: SOUNDTRACKMUSIC BY JAN WILLEM VAN AALST - 1995 - PRIVATE
- TO DESOLATION ISLAND - 1997 - PRIVATE

DEMOS:

- THE HANDS OF TIME - 1995

DEMOS: (AS AVLANTAS)

- MEDITATIONS - 1990
- ANCIENT AGE - 1991
- INTEGRATION - 1992
- THE ALTAR FALLS - 1993

DEMOS: (WITH LAREDO)

- LIFTOFF - 1989

DEMOS: (WITH SYNERGY AT WORK)

- STORAGE FOR THE MASSES - 1992

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THE GATHERING

Line-up: Bart Smits (vocals), René Rutten (guitars), Jelmer Wiersma (guitars), Hugo Prinsen Geerligs (bass), Hans Rutten (drums), Frank Boeijen (keyboards)

The Gathering - the band's name was taken from movie "Highlander" - from Oss in Noord Brabant, was founded in October 1989 by brothers Hans and René Rutten with vocalist Bart Smits. They started as a primitive deathmetal band, influenced by bands like Hellhammer and Celtic Frost. When Jelmer Wiersma, Hugo Prinsen Geerligs and keyboarder Frank Boeijen joined, the musical direction turned into a more experimental and atmospheric direction. They recorded their first demo in 1990 after which they did several gigs in Holland with Morbid Angel and Death, building a loyal fan-base and attracting the interest of small Dutch independent label Foundation 2000 to which they were signed in late 1991.

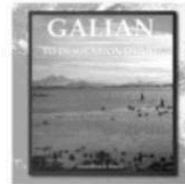
During the first week of March 1992, The Gathering recorded their debut-CD at the Beaufort Studio's in Bovenkarspel with additional musicians Marike de Groot on vocals, strongly adding to the atmosphere, and Henk van Koevorden on keyboards and electronics.

"Always..." was released in June 1992 and became a great success on the European continent, where it sold nearly 20.000 copies, and Israel. The distribution in Israel was done

through Semaphore, who suggested to do some concerts there, which - after an invitation by the largest concert-promoter in Israel - resulted in two concerts in Tel Aviv together with GBH. From these concerts even a bootleg was released, "Live in Tel Aviv". Some more concerts abroad (Belgium, Germany) followed and The Gathering could even be seen on MTV Europe in the "Headbangers Ball Goes Dutch"-special, where some recordings from Dutch tv - a bit amateurish ones as the band later said - were used.

Around the time of the Israelian gigs, rumours started that Marike wanted to leave the band. She wanted to have a more important role in the band (to be leadvocalist) and also she wanted to change the musical direction. This led to several discussions in the band, finally resulting in Marike's decision to leave.

Through an advertisement in Aardschok and Music Maker and endless auditions, a suitable replacement was found in Martine van Loon, who had been in several bands before (none of these had ever recorded anything with her).



Although the band didn't agree with Marike on her musical ideas, The Gathering *did* change their direction for the next CD: away from the strictly slow doomy deathmetal with the typical grunt vocals, into more progressive metal direction (including also more uptempo parts) with *normal* vocals and psychedelic and new wave influences. Originally it was also Bart Smits' idea to sing most vocal parts and only grunt a minor part of it, but while the writing of new songs progressed, musical and personal differences grew. Several tracks were recorded with Bart in pre-production of the new CD, but the band wasn't satisfied at all with the result and it was decided that it was the time to part ways with the vocalist. Bart Smits left to form his own band, Wish, which released an album on the Moonlight label in 1995.

A replacement for Bart was found in Niels Duffhues, whom the band met in a bar in their hometown. They asked Niels to sing a few tracks in the studio and things worked out fine. During the next two months, Niels wrote the lyrics for the second CD. The album was recorded in only eight days time in September 1993 in the Spitsbergen Studio. "Almost a dance" was released in November and reactions were not too positive in the press, which resulted in a mixed response from the (potential) buyers.

The album was pretty much of a commercial failure. Although everyone agreed, that the band had improved their soundquality and production, most criticism was directed towards Niels' vocal abilities. Still, there were some people, who really liked the album. Aardschok did a split review on "Almost a dance" in which one reviewer (Michiel van de Moosdijk) said that Niels made a "...very weak impression..." and "...you can hear that this band has entered the studio too soon. Perhaps they should have taken more time to let their vocalist work himself into the material...", while the other reviewer (Ferry Bovet) stated: "...a product that can be counted among the most mature albums recorded by a Dutch band, which will get The Gathering a well deserved place among their respected foreign colleagues...". Unfortunately Bovet proved to be wrong with this, even though the band did a support gig for Faith No More in Ahoy before thousands of people. As a consequence of the failure, The Gathering parted ways with both vocalists and went into a one year hiatus during which they wrote music and tried to find a suitable singer. Martine van Loon went to Orphanage and Lords Of The Stone, Niels started a solo-career (well, career is a big word...) as a singer/songwriter and released several demos. His last in late 1997. Also he appeared on the compilation "Bijna boven! 3" of Stichting Brabant Pop in 1997.

Finding a good vocalist proved to be more difficult than they had expected. Meanwhile they also broke up with Foundation 2000 - according to the band "...a shitty label..." - on which in 1994 a remixed (the remix was done by original producer Han Swagerman sr. in July 1994) was released.

At the end of 1994, The Gathering came across 21 year old Anneke van Giersbergen, who had been in a jazz/blues duet called Bad Breath (Anneke's favourite female

vocalist is Ella Fitzgerald) and in a melodic speedmetal band Second Episode. Neither of them ever released any recording.

It turned out, that Anneke fitted exactly into the band - personally and musically. With her, new musical influences entered, like Pink Floyd and Dead Can Dance. The band decided not to replace the vacant position of the male vocalist and to focus entirely on Anneke's emotional vocals. When Anneke joined the band, all music had been written, to which she added lyrics and vocal harmonies.

The first thing the band recorded in the new line-up was the track "In motion (part 1)" for a compilation album "D.S.F.A. 6: Paradise of the underground" (1994 - Displeased Records). This compilation was sent to various labels. Along with some other labels, German Century Media liked the band's music a lot and offered them the best deal. In early 1995, the band signed a contract with Century Media and went into the studio to record their new album with producers Sigg Bemm and Waldemar Sorychta of Grip Inc., who had also produced Tiamat's successful "Wildhoney"-CD. The recordings in Woodhouse Studios in Hagen, Germany, took the first two weeks of June 1995 during which the band had to sleep in one room. But the result turned out to be very satisfying. "Mandylyon", the title was taken from the cloth that Jesus was wrapped in after he was taken off the cross, received enthusiastic reviews in Holland and abroad. World wide sales went over 30.000 copies in a very short time (and way over 100.000 copies in a little longer time - cb).

The music on "Mandylyon" - featuring a different version of "In motion (#1)" - meant a definitive goodbye to deathmetal for the band. After the death of a close friend to whom the album was dedicated, the band didn't want to be associated with this genre anymore. Still, their live-sound turned out to be more heavy and guitar-oriented, than their progressive/symphonic CD-sound. And the band got many chances to prove this, like their appearances on wellknown festivals like Pinkpop, Lowlands and Dynamo Open Air in 1996 before tens of thousands of people and tours through Holland and Germany (in a package with Gothic bands like Lacrimosa and Dreams Of Sanity). Since all members, except for Anneke, still attended college, touring and playing live could only take place on a limited scale.

"Mandylyon" brought also two CD-singles: "Strange machines" (the Aardschok-reviewer said it was "...*simply the best song of 1995...*" and that Anneke was the "...vocal revelation of 1995...") and "Adrenalin/Leaves" with 2 non-album tracks. A live performance of "Leaves" was recorded in May 1996 for a videoclip. Also Anneke sang some Gathering-songs in a special concert at the Amsterdam Paradiso with the Metropole Orkest under the name of "With a little help from my friends". These songs were later released on a CD (released through PIAS) of the concert and on the "May song" single-CD.

During autumn and winter 1996, The Gathering wrote and recorded their new

