

## **Tom G. Warrior (Thomas Gabriel Fischer) Celtic Frost**

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### **Betrayal**

One of the major merchandisers in the music industry, one whose work had been recommended to us by other bands and whom we favored up to this point to become an imminent partner to Celtic Frost, deemed it appropriate to spice their most recent contract correspondence to our management with the proposal to screw over one of our most important mentors, H.R. Giger.

When we, then still in Hellhammer, approached Giger in early 1984 to ask him whether he would be inclined to collaborate with us and, if so, what his conditions would be, we were fervent fans of his work but our band was still almost totally unknown and without any funds to actually purchase the rights to any of his paintings. We felt inexorably drawn to Giger's dark art and felt there were parallels between it and our work, as pretentious as this was for a bunch of inexperienced extreme metal kids.

But Giger's reaction surpassed even our vivid imagination. He not only offered us the free album cover use of the glorious "Satan I", the painting we had inquired about, but, astonishingly, suggested we also use a second painting from his exceptional "Victory" period, equally free of charge. His only condition was that we would refrain from exploiting these works in any other manner, namely as merchandise. We agreed and never broke the oath, to this day.

The result was the "To Mega Therion" album, arguably the most important release in Celtic Frost's history. The combination of Giger's art and the album's dark musical blend of classical elements and metal is the cornerstone of what is now perceived to be Celtic Frost's legacy and part of death/black metal history. In short, the album and Giger's mentorship significantly shaped Celtic Frost.

There have always been those eager to exploit the "To Mega Therion" Giger cover as merchandise. There exist what seem like a million bootlegs, some even manufactured by past affiliates. I suppose this was unavoidable, but it has always infuriated me. We have made a promise to Giger.

Into this situation comes this particular merchandiser, keen to work with us for quite some time. Of course they badly want a "To Mega Therion" t-shirt in the merchandising line. Ignoring the facts we communicated to them, they still advocate the production of the t-shirt: "... seriously, I think [Giger] would NEVER know anyway and this would be a great shirt, there [are] plenty of bootlegs around on this also ...". In other words, they intend to coerce us, the band, into mandating the production and sale of a bootleg, screwing Giger over behind his back to thank him for his incredible help. And perhaps they would even do it without our blessing (and knowledge).

I can almost taste the irrepressible greed that oozes out of every word. And whether or not Giger would "NEVER know" - and how utterly disrespectful to assume his ignorance! - is not even the issue. Well, we knew what industry we would encounter when we all got together to write a new Celtic Frost album. It's heartwarming to see nothing has changed in all those years.