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The Lion roars again - The Narnia story so far... the first 20 years.

Vocalist **Christian Liljegren** and guitarist **CJ Grimmark** met for the first time in 1993, in Jönköping - a town in the south of Sweden. At this time Christian and his band **Modest Attraction** were just about to release their first album, ***The Truth in Your Face***, and CJ was active as bandleader, vocalist & guitarist in a local band called **Sentinel**. They remained in steady contact during the years that followed.

In 1996 Modest Attraction released its second album ***Divine Luxury***. At that time Liljegren phoned Grimmark and asked him whether he was interested in working together on a musical vision Liljegren had in mind. Since the late 80's Christian had had a huge passion for bombastic, melodic, neoclassical hard rock & heavy metal, which he was not able to explore in the band Modest Attraction. CJ was instantly interested. After having seen the animated movie about the ***The Witch & The Lion***, Christian figured "**Narnia**" would be great name for the new band.

A few months later, as Modest Attraction guitarist **Stephan Mohlin** had to turn down a German tour for personal reasons, Christian phoned CJ and asked him to temporarily replace Stephan, which he did. Stephan soon left the band all together, and Grimmark was asked to become a full-time band member. Grimmark accepted.

During the time with Modest Attraction Liljegren and Grimmark kept working on their vision of the new band. They took a few old songs from **Borderline**, Modest Attraction & Sentinel, altered them to their own preferences, and added a couple of new songs. In September 1996 they settled in **Topz Recording Studio** to record their debut album.

The recording, the mix, and the mastering of the debut album ***Awakening*** was finished in the spring of -97.

Magnus Söderkvist, at that time at **MTM Music**, became Narnia's agent and presented their album to 10 different Japanese labels at the **MIDEM Festival** in France. No less than nine of these labels immediately wanted to sign Narnia. Narnia decided to team up with **Pony Canyon Inc.**, a solid label that worked with **Yngwie J. Malmsteen** and **Joe Lynn Turner** among others.

In May 1997 Liljegren and Grimmark headed on their final tour with Modest Attraction. In Germany they met **Matthias Mittelstädt** who, along with his brother **Rainer** and **Saviour Machine** frontman, **Eric Clayton**, was running a management company called **MCM Music**. MCM Music loved the album and took on the task of becoming Narnia's management.

The *Awakening* album was released on July 18, 1997, and several thousands of copies were sold on the day of the release. Media was impressed by the new Swedish guitar virtuoso CJ Grimmark and a special team from Japanese **Young Guitar Magazine** flew over to Sweden to make a special report about CJ Grimmark & Yngwie J Malmsteen. CJ and Yngwie met, and Yngwie commented on Narnia's early material, saying: "*That sounded quite a bit like me*".

The demand to see this new metal outfit increased, and Narnia started touring in Sweden in 1997.

Narnia line-up, 1997:

Christian Liljegren	Vocals
CJ Grimmark	Guitars
Andreas Johansson	Drums
Martin Härenstam	Keyboards
Jakob Persson	Bass

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MCM Music sealed a deal with German record company **Nuclear Blast** – one of the world's biggest metal labels to this day - and the *Awakening* album was released in Europe, on CD and Vinyl LP, in February 1998. Nuclear Blast promoted Narnia as **The Melodic Metal Masters**, and along with **Hammerfall** and a few other acts, Narnia pioneered the new wave of melodic metal of the late 90's.

In April 1998 Narnia went to Finland to guest a big TV show and to play shows together with **Stratovarius** and **Children of Bodom**. The band continued to play festivals in Europe during spring, and recordings for the 2nd album *Long Live The King* began during summer. The recording went on NON STOP, literally, for about 60 days and was finished on the very day before the next big event was about to take place:

In September they went back on the road again, this time to support legendary **Ronnie James Dio**. CJ & Christian then went to Japan to promote their 2nd album *Long Live The King*. The album was eventually released in Japan in December 18, 1998. Now the ball was rolling.

The next 10 years saw more albums, and live shows to follow them up:

Desert Land	(2001)
The Great Fall	(2003)
At Short Notice... Live In Germany (DVD)	(2004)
Enter The Gate	(2006)
Decade of Confession	(2007)

The Narnia fanbase is still growing and the albums have sold 6-digit numbers. Songs by Narnia have also appeared on hundreds of samplers and compilation albums together with high profile artists such as **Metallica**, **Korn**, **Red Hot Chilipeppers**, **Scorpions**, **Europe**, and **Avantasia**, to name a few.

Some line-up changes has taken place over the years. Bass player **Jakob Persson** left the band in 2001, and was immediately replaced by **Andreas Passmark** (**Royal Hunt**, **Rob Rock**). Keyboard player **Martin Härenstam** departed from Narnia in 2003. During the years 2003-2009 **Linus Kåse**, **Andreas Lindahl**, and **Anders Berlin** fulfilled the keyboard duties the road.

In 2008 vocalist Christian Liljegren left the band for personal reasons. Narnia then recruited singer **German Pasqual** to finish the album *Course of a Generation*, and the tour that followed. In the first days of 2010 Grimmark made the decision to put Narnia to rest.

The reunion

The break lasted for four years. In late 2013 CJ Grimmark & Christian Liljegren started discussing a possible reunion and the idea of making the best and strongest Narnia album ever. On January 31, 2014, the band announced it's return. Celebrating the 15th anniversary of the classic album *Long Live the King*, Narnia got back on the road for a few shows.

In March 2016, while the band worked hard on the new album, all previous albums were released for digital download and streaming, some of them for the very first time.

So far, 2016-2017 has been the most active years since the beginning of Narnia's career. Trying new steps to strengthen the brand Narnia, working out new strategies to put Narnia on the metal-map again, including the production of new merchandise like Narnia-branded coffee and tea, coffee mugs, different t-shirts, jerseys, hoodies, beside CDs and vinyls. All for the fans, who has followed the band for so many years, and still wanted more.



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The demand from fans to see Narnia live in concert became bigger, as the band has a reputation to be one of the best metal-live-acts these days. Narnia decided to make a new, great live show during 2016 featuring new songs and a best-of set from Narnia's career, way back from the start in 1996. A lot of time was invested in creating and designing a fitting image for Narnia, as the band once again hit the road. And of course, an exploding, new album...

On the new self-titled album Narnia re-visited their melodic roots but with an updated sound, creating a perfect blend. A powerful production by CJ Grimmark, mixed and mastered by **Thomas "Plec" Johansson**.

During the pre-production of the live-shows, bass player **Andreas Passmark** decided to take a break for family reasons, so the band hired **Jonatan Samuelsson** as replacement on bass for the Sweden Tour, that took place in September, followed up by the European dates in November. In December 2016 Andreas Passmark decided to leave the band on permanent basis.

Around the same time in January 2017 **Massacre Records** and Narnia planned how to deliver a 1st class product to be released July 21, 2017. Massacre Records wanted some more songs, and a new version of Narnia's biggest hit **Living Water** was re-recorded. The song is taken from the bestselling album **Long Live The King** by Narnia, featuring a very special-guest keyboard-player – **Jens Johansson (Stratovarius, Rainbow, ex-Dio & Yngwie Malmsteen's Rising Force)**, who makes a marvelous duet with guitar-virtuoso CJ Grimmark.

The album was released by:

Massacre Records	Europe
King Records	Japan
Icarus Music	Argentina
Narnia Songs/Ulterium Records	Rest of the world

As mentioned before, the band invested time and money to establish Narnia again. Four new promo videos was produced, and posted on YouTube and other social media channels, as the scene has changed a lot, how to promote a band these days.

Reaching For The Top, the first promo video taken from the 7th self-titled album, was produced by Mats Vassfjord (**Grand Design & 220 Volt**). Classic metal with roots in Dio, and Rainbow-style in a fresh modern way.

Messengers – 2nd video by the band shows a more modern approach but also direct. A favourite live-song, during the concerts. This time an animated video produced by Russian artist **Anatoly Kuris**.

I Still Believe, the 3rd video was also produced by Mats Vassfjord. A big favourite, both among the members of Narnia and the fans. So far the video has over 100 000 views on YouTube. Stylewise it is a faster and harder song, a bit like **Masterplan, Impellitteri & Rob Rock**.

Thank You – the 4th video, was produced by **Per Schelander (Astrakhan, ex-Royal Hunt)**, with filming both in Sweden and USA. A different, but great track, with a incredible guitar solo and composition made by CJ Grimmark.

MANAGEMENT & BOOKING:

info@narniatheband.com
booking@narniatheband.com

EPK & PRESS:

narnia.jonomusic.com

BAND:

narniatheband.com
narnia@narniatheband.com
www.facebook.com/narniatheband



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South America-tour finally happens

In the beginning of 2017 it was confirmed that Narnia would be touring South America for the first time. After tons of requests to see the band there, it finally happened.

Together with production company **EV7 Live**, eight shows were made in Brazil & Argentina in April. The response from the fans were remarkable, since many of them have been waiting to see the band live in South America for 15-20 years.

This also marked the start for **I Still Believe Tour** that took Narnia around the world in 2017-2018. During this South America-tour **Jonatan Samuelsson** became a permanent member of Narnia.

The band also made the live-recording for the band's second live-album entitled **We Still Believe – Made in Brazil** (released September 1:st 2018).

The line-up for Narnia 2017:

Christian Liljegen	Vocals
CJ Grimmark	Guitars, backing vocals
Andreas "Habo" Johansson	Drums
Martin Härenstam	Keyboards
Jonatan Samuelsson	Bass, backing vocals

The **I Still Believe Tour** continued the same summer with Swedish festivals like **Sabaton Open Air** and **Skogs-röjet Festival**, along with festivals around Europe together with acts such as **Sabaton**, **Steve Harris (Iron Maiden)**, **British Lion**, **Saxon**, **Pretty Maids**, **Yngwie Malmsteen**, **D.A.D**, **Blind Guardian**, **Hammerfall**, **Eclipse**, and many more.

In 2018 Narnia focused on writing new songs for another studio album, along with releasing their second live-album: **We Still Believe – Made in Brazil**, produced and mixed by **CJ Grimmark**, and mastered by **Thomas "Plec" Johansson**. This album was released by **GMR Music Group** and **Narnia Songs**.

Along with the release, the band also made one live performance as one of the headlining acts on a festival in Switzerland.

The Lion roars again, See you on tour!

For more info about Narnia:



narniatheband.com



facebook.com/narniatheband



instagram.com/narniatheband



narnia.jonomedia.se

Discography:

Awakening	(1997)
Long Live The King	(1998)
Desert Land	(2000)
The Great Fall	(2003)
At Short Notice... Live In Germany (DVD)	(2004)
Enter The Gate	(2006)
Decade of Confession	(2007)
Narnia	(2017)
We Still Believe – Made in Brazil	(2018)

MANAGEMENT & BOOKING:

info@narniatheband.com
booking@narniatheband.com

EPK & PRESS:

narnia.jonomusic.com

BAND:

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narnia@narniatheband.com
www.facebook.com/narniatheband



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