



IMPERIAL SLAVE

OVERVIEW

Imperial Slave is a thrashy death metal band from New Zealand, formed in 2020, with two critically acclaimed albums and extensive live experience across their home country, Europe and Japan. The band has steadily built its reputation through both headline and support performances.



Metal Frenzy Festival 2025, Germany (Credit: Michael Stahlschmidt)



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Their sound blends the riff-driven energy of 80s and 90s metal with relentless, slamming death metal, delivered with a powerful live presence. Imperial Slave is currently working on their third studio album, scheduled for release in 2026.

Imperial Slave was formed in Palmerston North, New Zealand in 2020 by vocalist Sam Sheppard, formerly the drummer for influential New Zealand metal bands Sinate and 8 Foot Sativa. Sheppard stepped into the frontman role and completed the line-up with Anthony Hati (guitar), Isaac Johnston-Lundy (guitar), and Achilles Manley (bass).

After a year of writing and recording, the band released their self-titled debut album, "Imperial Slave", in 2021. Influenced by 1980s thrash and 1990s death metal, the album received strong critical responses locally and internationally.

Drummer Matt Wright joined shortly after, and the band toured extensively throughout New Zealand before expanding overseas, including a European tour with Fleshgod Apocalypse and Omnium Gatherum.

The band's second album, "...STILL AT LARGE", which was released in 2023, marked a shift toward a faster, heavier and more aggressive death metal sound. In support of the release, Imperial Slave toured Japan in 2024 with US death metal band Nile, followed by a return to Europe in 2025 for several festivals and club shows.

Having achieved significant international exposure in a short period of time, Imperial Slave has established itself as a formidable presence within the extreme metal scene, both as headliners as well as supporting acts for renowned metal bands. The band is currently working on their third studio album, scheduled for release in 2026.



Left to right: Anthony Hati, Achilles Manley, Sam Sheppard, Matt Wright, Isaac Johnston-Lundy

RELEASES

tba. (2026)



New album to be released in 2026.

...Still at Large (2023)



The band's second release takes their sound to a new level of aggression and technicality. Faster, heavier, and more intricate than their debut, the album is pure slamming death metal. With unrelenting energy and a sharper, more precise production, it showcases the band's growth and their commitment to delivering extreme metal at its most intense.

 [Listen on Spotify](#)

Imperial Slave (2021)



The debut album blends the raw energy of 1980s thrash with the crushing weight of 1990s death metal. It features riff-driven songs, relentless rhythms, and aggressive vocals. The result is a powerful introduction to the band's sound, combining precision, intensity, and a commanding presence that immediately set them apart in the metal scene.

 [Listen on Spotify](#)

IMPERIAL SLAVE

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Imperial Slave have so far played over 100 shows across 11 countries on three continents.

This includes numerous headline performances in New Zealand as well as supporting internationally renowned acts such as Vader, Suffocation, Massacre and Pig Destroyer.

Abroad, Imperial Slave have toured Europe twice, including a 12-day run supporting Fleshgod Apocalypse and Omnium Gatherum in 2022 and multiple festival and club appearances in 2025. In 2024, Imperial Slave toured in Japan as support for Nile.



Antitrend Festival 2025, Czech Republic



Space Odd Tokyo 2024, Japan



Godless Mountain Open Air 2025, Germany



Credit: Jechtography

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