

After *New Moon* came out, Swallow the Sun were faced with an overwhelming barrage of gig bookings. The band toured for an entire year on the back of the album.

In late 2009, the band still had time to embark on a tour of Europe with their old friends in Insomnium and Omnium Gatherum. The tour was called *New Moon Over Europe*, and it included about 20 shows in mainland Europe and another six in the UK.

It may have been the wet and cold British weather – who knows? – but the band was in for a rather epic experience in Wolverhampton. Hahto, who only moments ago had surprised everyone with his sudden enthusiasm for loading, abruptly collapsed while assembling his drum kit. He didn't get up.

"I saw him go down on all fours first. Then he fell over to his side like a horse," Honkonen recalls. "We spent our entire soundcheck trying to get Kaitsu off stage. Eventually we tried to drag him away on top of the drum rug he'd collapsed on, just so Insomnium could get started on their own soundcheck. But even that was too painful for him."

Just like with Munter's toothache during their tour of North America, first aid came in the form of Insomnium guitarist and distinguished surgeon Ville Vänni. He popped open his medical kit and served the drummer "a handful of pills".

Even then, the drummer was in too much pain to move an inch. Ultimately the band had no choice but to call an ambulance. The paramedics arrived and pumped the lumbago-stricken drummer full of laughing gas.

"First he got a handful of pills on an empty stomach, then two or three servings of laughing gas. Kaitsu definitely started feeling the effects after that. 'Shiiiiit, it's hitting me now!'" Honkonen says, cracking up.

Eventually the paramedics managed to lift Hahto by his armpits into a wheelchair and started driving him to the hospital. Raivio remembers the scene like it was yesterday.

"We were watching Kaitsu being wheeled away wearing these giant woollen socks and all his winter gear and thought, well, that's our drummer gone. All we could see was his bald spot, his 'new moon', shining through his greasy hair as they rolled him up the ramp into the ambulance."

The story didn't end there. It turned out that there was a big football match in Wolverhampton on the day of the gig, and a rather impressive number of fans had been beaten up in the run-up to the event. Consequently, the hospital had very little time to pay attention to our Finnish metal drummer with the constant stream of football hooligans needing TLC. At some point, Hahto asked Vänni to get him a chocolate bar. Invigorated by the snack, the drummer decided the hospital visit was over.

In the meantime, Insomnium's Markus Hirvonen and Omnium Gatherum's Jarmo Pikka had taken turns trying to learn Swallow the Sun songs. When Hahto and Vänni arrived back at the scene, Hahto didn't think he could play. His head was swimming "like I'm

in the ocean". After the opening bands were finished, Swallow the Sun got up on stage with two stand-in drummers.

"We were maybe three or four songs in when Kaitsu turns up wearing a beanie, a winter coat and those giant woollen socks and says: 'Get the fuck away from the kit, I'm playing.' And then a godawful racket began," Raivio says. "Both the band and the crowd felt great for a while. Then came 'Descending Winters'."

Raivio realised in the middle of the song that Jämsen was no longer playing guitar. Instead, the man was running full tilt through the audience "red-faced like a traffic light". Moments before, Honkonen had already noticed Jämsen switching his usual wide-legged stage pose to a more sphincter-tightening stance with knees glued tightly together. Not to put too fine a point on it, the guitarist had nearly shit his pants.

After Jämsen returned from the bathroom, it was time for Kotamäki's sphincter to clench up.

"I didn't drop everything in the middle of a song, I just told Raivio that there would be no encore. I really needed to take a shit."

Since the band believed their gig was up, Raivio decided to compensate for the lack of an encore by doing the classic rockstar move of handing his guitar pick to a member of the audience. Then for a classy exit.

"Backstage I told Jämy and Mikko: 'Well fucking done, guys.' And Mikko says: 'Actually, my stomach's no longer churning. Let's get back on stage.' In the background I can hear Kaitsu yelling on top of the outro: 'Dooooo you want more?' The thing is, though, that guitar pick was the only one I had on me. I had probably found it on stage after some other band had left it behind, actually. So I had no choice but to go find the fan I had given it to and ask for it back."

In the end, the fan was found, the crowd got their encore, and the whole band headed to the merch stand to sell T-shirts. Hahto continued on the drum throne for the rest of the tour.

"Maybe he faked the whole thing so he wouldn't have to do load-in," Kotamäki speculates.

Raivio runs with the idea:

"Kaitsu definitely got over his back pain by getting entirely wasted once again. Then he climbed into his bunk to sleep it off and wrote this wonderful note above it saying: 'Do not disturb'."