Multi-talented guitarist and producer, Davide Tiso (Ephel Duath, Gospel of the Witches), was always fascinated by the symbolism of the sycamore tree, which has special significance in Egyptian religion and which “bridged the world of the dead and the living” in David Lynch’s cult TV series. Visually the sycamore is particularly striking in winter when it gains a ghost like appeal: the bark turns white and it reflects the moonlight in otherworldly ways, bearing not only mystery but also a certain component of solitude and pain. These were the inspirations for Tiso as he assembled his extreme, progressive ensemble, Howling Sycamore.

Tiso elaborates, “Howling Sycamore was born from the stubborn idea of melting together different styles of heavy music into something powerful, sincere and with a strong identity. I wanted to mix extreme metal drumming, layered down-tuned guitars and old school prog metal singing. Add to the equation also baritone sax freak outs plus mid-era Death guitar solos.  I can proudly say that our debut album sounds like exactly the idea I was chasing in my head.  I’m so grateful that these amazing musicians helped shape the album into the beautiful weirdness that it became.”

The musicians he speaks of are none other than former WatchTower and Dangerous Toys singer, Jason McMaster and drumming sensation, Hannes Grossmann (Necrophagist, Obscura). Tiso first approached Grossmann remembering the time in 2003 that his jazz metal band Ephel Duath shared the stage with Necrophagist at Brutal Assault Festival in Czech Republic. Grossmann had just joined the band and Tiso had the chance to see the young phenom in action from behind the kit. In the years that followed Grossman established himself as one of the best extreme metal drummers and session musicians in the business combining precision, speed and creativity. When contacted Grossmann was excited about the project and ready to learn the material. After a few weeks he started recording at his own studio, Mordor Sounds, in Nuremberg, Germany.

Howling Sycamore’s producer and mixer, Scott Evans of Antisleep Audio Studios in Oakland, had the idea to contact ex-Watchtower singer Jason McMaster. Tiso saw McMaster in action years before, when Watchtower and Ephel Duath were in the same bill at the 2004 edition of Holland’s Headway Festival and felt his vocal register and wide dynamic range was exactly what Tiso was aiming for. Evans sent a few demos to McMaster and after listening to a few tracks, he was in.

McMaster remarks, "Having never met Davide, or anyone else who helped create this vision, was comfortably strange. When I received the invite to work on the material, I was only skeptic for a few first notes of the rough demo recordings. No vocal ideas, just lyrical content that I was to use to create the melodies. By the third vocal track recorded, I was hooked on this, as it reminded me of my young Watchtower days."

It took approximately a year to put everything together. During this time some very special guest musicians had the chance to contribute to the songs: Bruce Lamont (Yakuza, Brain Tentacles) on baritone saxophone, Kevin Hufnagel (Dysrhythmia, Gorguts) on guitars, Fester (Burials, Humorous) on guitars.

Finally, in August 2017 Howling Sycamore’s debut album was mastered by Brad Boatright at Audiosiege Studios in Portland, OR. The self-titled album that Tiso set to create, an extreme metal drumming, layered, down-tuned guitars and old school prog metal singing,, will be released on January 26th on all digital platforms, compact disc and a limited edition, silver vinyl LP on Prosthetic Records.

"I can’t imagine a better way to launch Howling Sycamore than signing for such a good label as Prosthetic Records. I have believed in the potential of my new band since day one but I was somehow convinced that due to the peculiarity of the songs themselves, the natural trajectory of Howling Sycamore would have a much more low key starting point. The fact that our debut album got the attention of such a respected label makes me dream even bigger for the next steps ahead.

Prosthetic Records has always supported forward thinking bands that pay a certain amount of attention to technical proficiency. For most of my career, my music has been labeled in the same way: it felt right to join forces.”