

Issue 2 Spring 2001

MANDRAKE MAGAZINE

Mandrake Magazine

FEATURING INTERVIEWS WITH

SATYRICON

MARDUK

IMMORTAL

AND OCEANS

AGATHODAIMON

CENTURIAN

MOONSORROW

EPHEL DUACH

SERPENT LORE

DRACONIS SANGUIS

OBSIDIAN GATE

VINDSVAL

WARLUST

SECRETS OF THE MOON

REQUIEM LAUS

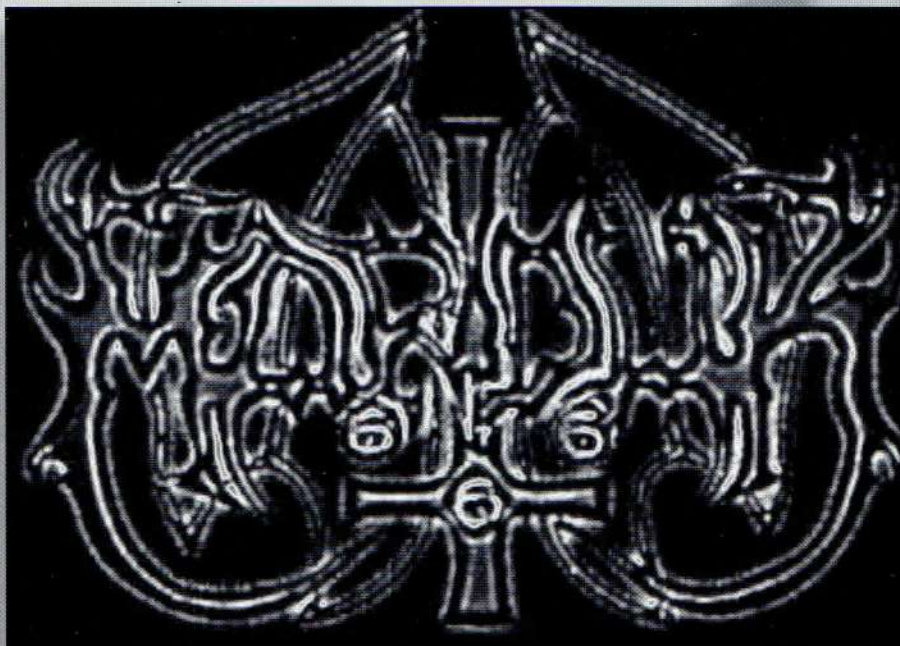
AND LOADS OF CD AND DEMO-REVIEWS



Why did you choose the subject of obedience and S&M in general to write about on your 'Obedience' EP?

I mean, who's not interested in sex? We wanted to do something new, like with **Marduk** we're always stretching the limits and we go for extreme stuff. So if we want to make a CD about a sexual subject, we have to go for the hard stuff.

With this subject, you're getting a bit away from the more regular satanism stuff? Or do you still see a link?



wanna take everything. When we were working on 'Nightwing' we already had some 'Panzer...' songs ready. 'Nightwing' was pretty much blood-themed, so we thought we'd do an album about fire, so of course then there's gotta be one about death and that will be the concept of the next album. It will be a concept album like **Slayer** did with 'Reign in Blood'. It has that touch of death.

Is there any material finished yet?

Not as complete songs, no. But we do have a lot

WITHOUT APPOINTMENT WE HEADED TO THE INFAMOUS 013 VENUE IN TILBURG FOR THE 2000 EDITION OF THE NO MERCY FESTIVALS. WITH QUESTION SHEETS READY, WE TRIED TO GET TO INTERVIEW THE ALMIGHTY MARDUK. IT TOOK SOME EFFORT BUT IN THE END WE MANAGED TO SECURE A SLIGHTLY UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION ON SOME STAIRS BACKSTAGE FOR A FACE TO FACE GET-TOGETHER WITH MARDUK'S LEGION. IN THE END THE SOUND QUALITY OF THE TAPE PROVED TO BE LESS THAN PERFECT, SO SOME ERRORS MAY HAVE GOTTEN INTO THE TRANSCRIPTION.

What is not satanism? I believe in like a divine power which is everywhere. If you see it like a giant force, no matter how strong or great you are, you are just like a tiny little shit compared to that. It's in everything, actually. So I mean, why not write about sex. It still has the genuine touch of Marduk or of evil. So I don't think we're bailing out on our concept. We've done so much over the years, I got the same question when we recorded 'Panzer Division Marduk'. If we should always stick to medieval stuff, which we've done pretty much in the past. If everything just died and passed on with the Dark Ages, then what the fuck are we doing here. When you look at 'Obedience' and 'Panzer Division Marduk' -the lyrics of which will be out in a couple of months- it still has that touch.

Is there a plan to it. I mean, first you switched from regular satanism to Vlad Tepes and then 'Panzer Division...' and now you go to S&M. Is there a bigger plan in it, a certain goal? The goal is doing what we like. I mean artistic freedom. 'Cause if you do what you want to do, it always turns out the best. If there was some guy in Osmose telling us what to do and how to act and what to say in interviews, it would all turn out like shit. 'Cause then it would not be what we feel like doing or saying. It's not a plan, just stuff you read about or stuff you discover or whatever, that you feel is cool or great. Then we just put our personal touch on it and do something with it.

You were talking about Osmose, but the EP was not released on Osmose...

No it was not. It was released on our own label **Blood Dawn Records**. Morgan takes care of the business side of it, since he's not up to much besides Marduk. We use it as a forum to put our stuff out on, what we like. It was just because we were between two contracts and we just wanted to release something and see what it was like, taking care of all the business



by ourselves, how much energy and effort you really got to put into it to make it work. I'm certain that we could have done it anyway, even if we'd had a contract with Osmose. But the upcoming live CD and the following two studio CDs will be released by Osmose. Osmose didn't have any hard feelings about us putting it out ourselves. I mean we've known each other for so long, we've been working together for so long. I mean, it's cool, it's more like family actually. That's the great thing about our label, we don't really have a business relation but they're more like a couple of friends.

Are you considering putting out more stuff on your label?

There will be some **Abruptum** stuff but apart from that I don't know. We don't really plan so far ahead. We always have a vision where we

of ideas and a lot of lyrical ideas as well. So we're working on it and during the summer or fall everything will come together. We've always done it like that. We even finished some stuff of 'Panzer Division Marduk' in the studio and the 'Nightwing' album was completed the day we left for the studio. So we really like working under pressure. In those final weeks most of the stuff is like perfected.

Will you do a lot of research again like on the second part of 'Nightwing'?

No, it doesn't require that much research. It's stuff that we've always read about. We'll dig it up from any of the obscure books that any of us has. In the end all the lyrics are just personal views. Apart from 'Obedience' I've made all the lyrics since I joined in. It's either that I've got some lyrics and give them to Morgan or he has some cool riffs and I listen and find the vocal rhythm for the whole thing and then we just rehearse until it sounds really great. Or otherwise it's like me and Morgan discussing like, we should have a song that is like this and that and so on. So me and Morgan do most of the stuff, B.War contributes with some music and stuff like that, Freddy doesn't do anything like that, he's just a drummer. Everybody is involved in the arrangement of the songs. But the riffing and the lyrics, it's mostly me and Morgan.

What about some release dates?

In October we're going to release the live album. We already recorded some shows. The way it looks now, it's going to be like a French assault. Since we already did the German one. We've altered our live set for different nights, so we were able to record all of them. I think there are like nineteen songs all in all. We are selecting versions and

stuff like that right now. And then we'll hand it to some guys who I was told are fucking great at it. They'll just try to smoothen it up a bit, because the sound is very different from place to place. You'll hear that. If we wanted to do a well-sounding album, then the original CD is much better. Live it's more about pure aggression, energy and joy of playing.

What will you use as a front cover? You cannot use an eagle this time...

No, it's gonna be a picture drawn by the guy who made everything for **Motörhead**. We already bought it. It's like some kind of demon sitting on a horse in armor and like all hell breaks loose behind him. I think it turned out pretty cool.

What about the next full-length?

It's going to be released somewhere next year. It's all up to Hervé. We will enter the studio most likely at the beginning of December and be there until New Year's Eve. And then we'll have to do a proper mixing on it. We'll record it in the Abyss Studios again. It's really cool to record there, because we really get along great with the guys there. I mean Peter, he's like a really close partner, he's like the fifth member of Marduk. He's been on some tours with us. Maybe he will come with us again. Right now he's growing pretty big in Sweden. His first single, he's got a gold record for it now. He's also making music for some Swedish movie, which will be out, I don't know when. Also he's got these new studio and he's got a family. He's a complete workaholic.

I heard a rumour that his first wife divorced him for this reason...

Well, eehm... I remember he was out on tour, it was after he joined in as the second Marduk guitarist. Peter went crazy with us, we just drank like animals and thrashed around. That was rough, we were like completely hammered and then we went on tour and he was like working all the time. And then she called him and just screamed on the phone she was going to divorce him because those fucking Marduk idiots were turning him into a fucking animal. I don't know, we've talked to her since then, she's living in the USA right now. She was kind of frustrated, because he like hung out with us too much. But, he's got a new wife and two kids and stuff like that.

Is this new studio just for recording metal?

They are for recording anything you want actually. But they have like different mixing tables, which is good at certain frequencies, depending on what sound you're after. Tommy, Peter's brother, has done some stuff there. The new studio is more like an accessory to the big Abyss studio where Peter is technician. So you can for instance do the bass, while you're working with some other shit. And now he's building up a complete new third studio. In the rooms where he used to have the old studio, he's building up a new studio again, which is going to have a different sounding recordings. So then he has three great studios and one accessory studio. I don't know exactly what he's up to, but he's got some crazy ideas and just investing like an idiot. He's even thinking about buying that entire village. He lives in a small villages out in the forest, like twenty kilometres from a small town, which is like in the middle of nowhere. So it's really desolate out there. It's just a

couple of houses, like between five and ten houses. And he's thinking of buying all of it and become like the chief of Abyss Town.

Now some questions about the 'Panzer Division Marduk' album. To end all discussions, which tank is displayed on the cover of the CD?

It's a **Centurion** tank. The Swedish defense used it in the past. They're not using those tanks anymore. From the sight, they're kind of awesome. When we saw that picture, we thought that it should be the '**Panzer Division Marduk**' cover. Since it was used by the Swedish defense, it was a great choice I think. There were a lot of Panzer divisions, but Marduk was not one of them. We're not trying to put ourselves in some country's army, or whatever. We just thought it sounded so much better. It's equally Swedish as it is German, I mean it's the same thing in both languages. It sounded so much better than something like 'Armour Battle Division Marduk'. I mean, there's been some rumours among German journalists in the past who think that we are too extreme and doing things that shouldn't be done. When we released that album, on the press conference nobody said anything. They just said like, 'Yeah, great album'. Now they understand what we are up to. The first time I met Mike of Metal Blade Europe, he was like, 'Guys take it easy, because I put the Marduk logo on the Cannibal T-shirts because we were touring together. Don't get me into trouble'. After a couple of years he was much friendlier. I mean some people immediately associate panzers with fascism. But they are stupid if they cannot think for themselves. I can't respect people that are following others and listening to rumours, not having an opinion of their own.

Does that mean that the rumours that in the past you said some pretty extreme things are not true?

That was a giant fuck-up with one interview. I don't really know what happened, since Morgan did it. But they could not, once all the discussion was going on, come up with one single proof for what Morgan is supposed to have said. We don't have an attitude problem. It's more like people having a problem with our attitude and we won't apologize.

But you were boycotted at some point...

Yeah, but then we met Gotz and we talked for some hours and after that it was cool. When all of it started, everyone was like at the wrong place at the wrong time. I don't really know what happened, but anyway things are cool now.

The intro of 'Panzer Division Marduk' is actually from a British propaganda movie, isn't it?

It's from the battle of El Alamein against the Africa Corps. So that's looking at it from the other side. Talking about modern warfare, what is more fascinating, gigantic and incomprehensible than World War II? Because it was so fucking gigantic and like so extreme.

Why were the lyrics not printed?

Because of a booklet fuck-up. I mean, the way we wanted to put it, we should have had like two booklets or something. Because it looked so shitty, with the lyrics over the pictures featured in the booklet. There was like fucking

lyrics everywhere and it didn't seem good. At that time we were in contact with some guy in Stockholm, who promised to make us a homepage. We thought it was OK, and that he could really pull it off. He was supposed to put out all the Marduk lyrics along with some biography and an exclusive photogallery from like 1990 and onwards. But it turned out like shit and we're not working with that guy anymore and we're setting up a homepage on our own with help from some guy who lives really close to us. We'll see what happens, but all the lyrics will come out somehow. This guy is not a professional web designer, but he showed us some other stuff of what he could do and that looked good, so...

On 'Nightwing there is a rerecorded version of 'Deme Quade Thyrane'. Why did you rerecord it?

Because it suited the concept of **Vlad Tepes** really well. It's about Vlad Tepes' most violent period, where all the war takes place basically. So we thought, let's just add it to the rest of the stuff. We used pretty much the same lyrics. In the beginning I added some lines.

On the album before that there was a track called 'Dracul va Domni', dealing with the same subject. Was that the reason to do an entire album about the subject?

I mean, like, who hasn't heard about the vampire guy, **Dracula**. Once you get into it, and look behind all the myths, I got like really carried away with it and thought let's do something about it. It turned out like '**Deme Quade Thyrane**' at first and then we thought to do some more about it and then it got '**Dracul va Domni**' and then we thought, 'Let's go on from that and do his entire life story'. It was hard at first to cover so much stuff in just one or two songs on 'Heaven shall burn...', so we did just one song and focussed a lot on it on the next album. He did a lot of stuff, he was like that kind of strong man, the kind of man that you really admire, because he was not afraid to go his own way. He made whatever decisions necessary to fulfill his visions. He's like a kind of Romanian Braveheart or however you want to put it. If it weren't for him and those that followed him, we would all be muslims today. He was a great warlord.

There's only one strange thing... Vlad was basically a christian guy...

You can't really say that. He was only that up to a certain point but then he turned his armies against the great christian warlords. So I guess, he fell from grace. He did whatever he needed to do.

I heard someone in Romania did all the research for you...

We just collected whatever we could. We discovered some books about it. And also some guys at the museum... we got into contact with everyone we could and just collected it all. Some pen pals of ours knew somebody who knew somebody, just collected information. Because it's not really well documented really. There's like some movies about it and some books. For some events in his life there are different versions and then we chose the one we liked most. But it's all a long time ago, so it's not really well documented. At that time Romania was like a slave state to Hungary anyway. Romanians were not appreciated as good humans. So nobody was

really interested in what was going on there. To begin with, there were no stories about it at all, except for his cruelty, of course, which the Germans used as propaganda, since so many of them got wiped out. But apart from that, it's like dug up like in the sixties, they started to do some research in old temples, and churches and abbeys and just dug up as much as they could.

Did you get any reactions from Romania?

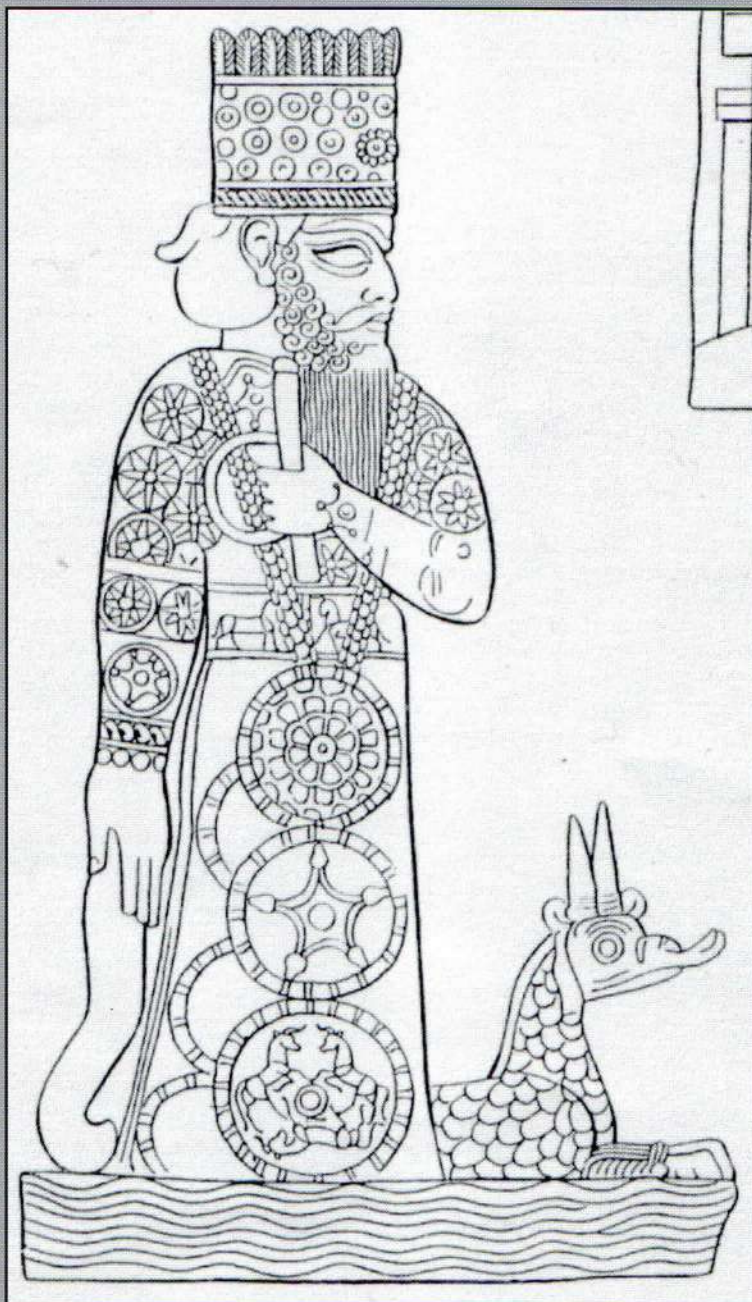
Not particularly. I don't know what is going on there, if there's a metal scene. I've heard there is not.

Now for some more general questions. At first you were more like a death metal band on 'Dark Endless', that's before you joined. Do you by any chance know why they changed the musical style?

I mean bands like **Deicide** and **Morbid Angel** are in my opinion already black metal due to the lyrical content. As long as it has brutal music and satanic lyrics, it's a black metal album. Of course there's a Scandinavian way of playing that, which has become more or less scripture. At least, that's what we discover when we get down here and see some local acts and get some demos and everyone really thinks they have to look like this and that and say this and sound like **Darkthrone**, otherwise they are not true. But I mean, the point is, what the fuck is true? As long as you do what you feel like doing and practice what you preach, then you're true to yourself and what could be more true? You don't have to listen to what everybody tells you. I mean, this Scandinavian black metal which is what people refer to as black metal, I mean I like some of the bands, but it would be more fun if people thought for themselves and really put out stuff they feel is excellent. If everybody was thinking for themselves and got like their own ideas, the scene would be so much greater, I think. Because what is happening with black metal now is the same thing that happened to the death metal scene in the early nineties. Before that it was a pleasure getting a demo tape, but after some years it got so boring, even though some were trying to be original. So the whole scene just exploded and fell into oblivion. It's just too bad that it should happen to the black metal scene as well.

But is there a chance of you returning to death metal? I mean, I read in some interviews, especially with Morgan, that he's really interested in death metal nowadays...

Well, we really love death metal. I mean, why should we stop listening to death metal, just because we play another type of music. I mean, like fucking **Glen Benton** loves **Elvis**... But, we've always been into death metal, but especially earlier, there was a great rivalry between the Swedish bands. Like between death and black metal bands. We thought they were really out of track, saying like hardcore stuff in interviews like that they were a bunch of wimps compared to **Deicide** or **Morbid Angel**, who were really devilish and cool guys. They just acted like fucking idiots. Some of the early lyrics from some of the Swedish bands are like 'Boycot Coca-Cola and don't go to MacDonalds' and stuff like that. What the hell has that got to do with death metal. I mean,



Possessed would turn in their graves if they read those lyrics. I mean like **Slayer** and **Possessed** and **Exodus** and all those bands were the guys taking things a bit further, so the death metal scene could be born, because the time was right. And then there were all those Swedish bands and some Norwegian ones as well, just trying to be a bunch of fucking hardcore guys. So, we thought everything was out of track. I mean, some bands survived and

all the new bands like **Krisiun** and **Angelcorpse** and all those guys are like very closely related nowadays. I mean a tour like this would have been fucking impossible a couple of years ago, but now it's great and we're getting along really well with the death metal guys as well. I think that's really great. I mean the basic ideas of doing death or black metal are not very far away from each other. Like a couple of bands were leading the scene and made way for the following and that's why it turned into two separate styles.

Yeah, I mean especially in the beginning in Norway, Euronymous was really agitating against the death metal scene, encouraging people to lose the heavy death metal production...

It was his vision. But that was mainly due to all the shit going on between the Stockholm death metal scene and the Oslo black metal scene. On the other hand, everybody that I've known that was into black metal, didn't think that bands like **Deicide** or **Morbid Angel** were crap. Because it's so brutal and hellish. And the ideas behind it are exactly the same. Yeah, there was some rivalry, I guess you could say that. It was most likely, like, basically the Stockholm guys. Especially when **Dead** moved over there and then when he died, they blamed it all on the other guys. They felt that they were responsible for him committing suicide. But he didn't hold those guys in high regard, the Stockholm guys, as far as I know. Yeah there was like tons of shit going on in the past. But it's more general, since Norway was a part of Sweden and we treat them like our kid brother. And they do not like that. So it's always, when there is some Olympic Games going on for instance and the Swedes are bad at something or the Norwegians are bad at something, the other nation's newspapers make like stupid sketches of those guys making a complete fool out of themselves. That is something between the Norwegians and the Swedes, it's always been like that.

So what do you think about for example Dismember who are still making what used to be called Swedish death metal?

Dismember are probably the only Swedish death metal band that I really liked. The old demos are the absolute best. Because they are like so extremely brutal. With the first CD, I thought like it's OK music, but... But the early **Dismember** stuff is fucking excellent. But apart from that I don't think that Sweden has had any great death metal bands. I mean **Entombed** is OK, I mean their first album. But apart from that I don't think they ever made any great music, whatsoever.

So you felt more connected to the Norwegian metal scene?

Yeah, I mean we don't have many

friends left in Norway, because of the old league, there's hardly anything left. Everybody has done their thing and it's more or less died out. But earlier we hung out a lot with the Norwegians and also with those guys in Sweden that were on the same track as we, like the **Dissection** guys for instance.

I heard that recently some extreme right wing people came to see your shows. What do you think about that?

I don't care. I know that there must be a guy who's really red out there as well. As long as they are there because they appreciate our music and listen to what we have to say, they are all welcome. It's so strange, I mean like a couple of months ago, all the four biggest Swedish newspapers got together and published a list of names and addresses of Sweden's 100 most dangerous anti-democrats. Mostly it was Hell's Angels members and some skinhead guys. Doing that is not only a crime against Swedish law, but also against the United Nations' declaration of human rights. But they totally skipped that and everybody felt like, 'Alright, this is the way things should be'. What would have happened if there would have been some communist in there? Everybody would have protested, so I mean, it's kind of a witchhunt. All of today's nations say, 'We help people into our country, because at home they can be shot or harassed or whatever because of their political beliefs.' What about those guys? Their lives are ruined, I mean, they got like kicked out from their jobs. So, I mean, I don't care because I am not a politician. If some guy shaves his head and thinks that all that shit that happened in Europe 50 or 60 years ago is OK, I don't mind. Everybody who's into the music is welcome.

I see you have a motorcycle club T-shirt. How's the war between the Hell's Angels and the Bandidos going?

It's finished. They made a truce. Nowadays they are like hanging out together, like once in a while. It was some **Bandidos** guy getting killed in Denmark and the **Hell's Angels** showed up at the funeral riding their bikes alongside the coffin. So it's cool right now. But it was really brutal before with massive bomb explosions, guys getting gunned down in broad daylight and so on. But it's the media that blow up this kind of news. I mean, every summer on holiday I ride along with some bikers to some parties that are hosted by clubs. And always these guys are like really really nice, they are really cool, as long as you don't mess with them. But it doesn't matter, you should never turn the other cheek, if you're being provoked. So I don't have a problem with such organisations.

Are you a member of such a biker club yourself?

No no, I don't have time for that. And I don't wanna be in one of the regular clubs, because I don't see the point of being in a club just for the sake of being in a club. Just having some club parties, and riding together and fixing your bike together and that sort of stuff. That's not for me. If I would ever get into a club, it would be a really hard club, you know, like the Brotherhood, like the wolfpack against the world. That's kind of fascinating.. But with all the shit going on right now, there's not a chance in hell that I would have the time to do it. So just ride my bike along

with some clubs, which I know. If they are going somewhere I just join in.

OK, let's change subject a little. Since you mentioned there was going to be an Abruptum release on Blood Dawn Records, it must mean that they still exist...

It's only Morgan nowadays. Because it, fuck what can I say, he's just a shit guy. Nowadays he's back with some Monster Magnet band, I heard. He's turning into one of them trend guys, just hooking onto something he thinks will lead somewhere, so he can get some easy money. He's just a fucking idiot. I mean like, we liked him a lot in the past. But when we all got together, me and Morgan and Jon from Dissection, comparing what he had been saying to each of us, we found out he was nothing but a simple thief and backstabber. So we thought, 'Fuck that guy'.

Does that mean that Morgan is going to find some new band members for Abruptum?

No, that's just rather meaningless, it's Morgan who is Abruptum really and nothing else. I don't know how he will record stuff, that's up to him.

How did you actually get in touch with them when you joined in?

I met Morgan the first time in 92 and we just sat and talked for a while and stuff like that. And then I spoke to him a couple of times on the phone in 93 and we even briefly discussed that I would join in back then. But to keep the band together, they put Joakim on vocals, because he was not a good drummer. And then in 95 I really joined.

If compare albums, then the ones recorded after you joined in are much more brutal...

Yeah, I know what you mean. It was like so great when I joined in and got to know the other guys really well. It really felt like we had like come full circle. When they told me what they had been through with previous line-ups and stuff... Now it felt like it was really working, like a brotherhood. So we could just like give it all and just go ahead.

How do you see the musical style of Marduk in the future? Is there music that is even more extreme than what you are making now?

You never know, because the next album is not going to be like '**Panzer Division Marduk**' part 2. Because that would be rather meaningless. And also it's hard to find riffs that go with blast beating all the time. Some other riffs which we use normally would just sound like crap. For the next album it's going to be more like varied and epic, you know, like a big sound with seven string guitar and some '**Funeral Bitch**' style songs and of course some real rippers as well. So it's going to be much more up and down. We really felt like conclude the millenium with '**Panzer Division Marduk**'. And doing something for the metal scene, like Slayer did in the eighties, I mean, taking things a bit further. Because there have been grind bands of course, but nobody has grinded for an entire album. So we really felt like doing that, just reaching a peak of aggressiveness. But just look at **Slayer** now, who's trying to deny that every one of us exists. They don't want to be a metal band anymore. Like all the journalists have to smooth-talk them, because they are so used to have like the biggest balls in town. And they know that when the masses discover this

entire new generation of like really brutal metal bands, they will be dead. So they won't let that happen. Most likely they never even understood this kind of music and it's the same with us. I mean in a couple of years, most likely there will be an entire new hungry generation doing brutal and intense shit and we will be like, 'Fuck why didn't we think of that'. So we might do something that is even more extreme, but today I don't really see how. But there will be some new tracks in that vein in the coming years, which we have already been planning a little bit, which will be even more aggressive and we'll try to speed it up, because I know we can if we really try. It was the same when we did '**Heaven Shall Burn...**' and every body said it was the peak of our aggressiveness, and that we could never do anything even more aggressive. But the next time we'll just use the ideas that we couldn't use on '**Panzer Division Marduk**', because it sounded like shit with grind to it. But we got a lot of more crushing and moodful riffing along with some really extreme stuff as well. Like the paces will be different and when you go for some slow stuff, it's much better to use five-string bass guitars and seven-string guitars and just go for some really fat chords and that adds up to the feeling as well. But how the stuff will be really, I don't know, 'cause we find out when we are creating it. We just have some ideas about how we want to sound and then we just like write riffs, get together, try it out, arrange the drums and alright that is it. So we never tear up the riffing and put them here and there and change this and that, because then we get nervous and feel like everything is getting out of hand. The things that you create and are satisfied with at that moment are most often the things that really turn out good. At least that's the only way we know how to work.

What do you think about Grishnack these days?

Ahh... we don't care. He's proven to be a fucking moron. He stated like the entire metal scene is nigger music. But some Danzig songs, have like blues riffing and they are fucking excellent, so I don't care. But metal music in general like hails from the classical scene. But the rhythm section is not based on blues, it's just there to set the pace and then there's the guitars making like what is going on. So it's more like classical music, you have something going on in the background and then there's like the violins telling you what is going on. So I think metal music hails from classical music. He's going to end up like a monk in a Buddhist temple or whatever absurd, because he changes his mind about everything all the time.

And that was it..... (Joris, Jorre and Rahab)

Discography:

- 1991 FUCK ME JESUS D
- 1992 DARK ENDLESS (NO FASHION)
- 1993 THOSE OF THE UNLIGHT (OSMOSE)
- 1994 OPUS NOCTURNE (OSMOSE)
- 1995 FUCK ME JESUS EP (OSMOSE)
- 1996 HEAVEN SHALL BURN... WHEN WE ARE GATHERED (OSMOSE)
- 1996 GLORIFICATION MLP (OSMOSE)
- 1997 LIVE IN GERMANIA (OSMOSE)
- 1997 HERE'S NO PEACE EP (OSMOSE)
- 1998 NIGHTWING (OSMOSE)
- 1999 PANZER DIVISION (OSMOSE)
- 2000 OBEDIENCE MCD (BLOODDAWN)
- 2000 ETERNAL INFERNAL (BLOODDAWN)

Next to Secrets of the Moon, Draconis Sanguis is the other German demo-band to be featured with an interview on these pages. I do not really recall whether it was Morgueldar from Elven Witchcraft, releasing the band's second demo 'Gloria Draconis' or Florian, writing a feature on the band for the German Legacy magazine, who drew my attention on Draconis Sanguis. Fact is that we got in touch and traded demos – a fair trade in my view, as could be read from the review on 'Gloria Draconis' I wrote for the previous edition.

One of the most striking things about this band has to be their attitude and their fanaticism – as a demo band they were featured in the most important black/death magazines in Germany – this really deserves respect I'd say. Below you can read the interview I did with guitarist Ophis telling all about Draconis Sanguis' past, present and future.

I read two different versions concerning the founding of the band. Would you be so kind to reveal the correct one? You got together through an ad in the Rock Hard... isn't that very artificial? I mean, what was the first couple of rehearsals like?

When I met Michael, he told me that he would start to play the bass-guitar soon, so I decided to buy a guitar and we started to search for a band. That was in summer 1996. By reading the Rock Hard we recognised an ad of Stephan who was searching for band members. Michael did not wait an hour and phoned Stephan. Some hours later our band was firstly named **Flames of Udun** and we began to search for a singer and 2nd guitar player. We spread some flyer in the surrounding of Osnabrück and put another ad in the Rock Hard. Actually, we found someone who could scream like hell and play the guitar - his name was and is **Eldravn** (winter 1996). But as Eldravn is some years older than the rest of the band and he also used to play in some bands, the first rehearsals were a bit strange - like the wise man and the inexperienced boys. But as time passed on we harmonised very well and as I did good progress in playing guitar, Eldravn decided to concentrate on his vocals, so we worked on with only one guitar. In the meantime the band name changed to **Caradhras** and finally to **Draconis Sanguis**. And with this line-up we recorded our first demo '**Cursed by Sorrow and Lust**'.

Surely it is very difficult to get a line-up through ads in magazines, at least a stable line-up. But perhaps it is destiny but our 'co-operation' in the band is nearly perfect. As a matter of fact we have different opinions on some topics as well, but we also have many different characters in the band. We harmonise both as musicians and as friends.

About the band name... why in Latin? What

does dragon blood mean to you, what does it stand for? Why use it for a band name?

The idea for the band name came from Eldravn who surprised us with this name. At the beginning, we had some problems with the name though (Is it not too long; could the fans remember our name) but by thinking of the meaning, the original sound of the name we kept it. As the most bands use English names we decided to use a Latin name. At this time we also thought that nobody would use a band name like this....but then we heard of **Sanguis et Cinis; Draconis** (US-Black Metal); **Cultus Sanguine** and last but not least **Ordo Draconis** (ha,ha...). Additionally, the word dragon blood is a powerful word with a strong atmosphere, which made it easier for us to decide and use this name. The idea **Draconis Sanguis** (Dragon blood) on the one hand means the immortality to us (like Siegfried in the Nibelungensaga who killed the dragon and bathed in its blood in order to become immortal) and on the other side the independence of our thoughts. Transferred to our band it means that our band and our music is immortal and we do our own thing and no one could influence us in order to do something he would like to have. So by summing up immortality and independence you come to the conclusion (MUSICAL) FREEDOM and this is the way we follow because only we decide what our lyrics and our music are about.

Before Aegeon entered the band you recorded the 'Cursed by Sorrow and Lust'-demo. Can you tell some more about this period and this release? What are the main differences between this release and 'Gloria Draconis' If a label would offer to release your first demo on CD – would you agree to that?

The '**Cursed by Sorrow and Lust**' demo was also recorded in the W.B.M. Studio in August

1997. The tape contains 7 songs and an intro and lasts about 40 minutes. As we recorded only one guitar the sound is not very powerful and the booklet is only in black/white and not comparable with the '**Gloria Draconis**' layout. We sold about 110 to 130 copies of it and now it is sold out. The songs were also slower and rougher. We obtained some good reviews in zines like **Ablaze** and **Heavy Oder Was!?**. In this period we didn't have the knowledge or experience for arranging the songs so that the whole demo is very underground-like but in my opinion there are many demos that are less worth than this one. A main difference in comparison to 'Gloria Draconis' is surely the lacking of clean vocals and the content of the lyrics because the lyrics of C.B.S.A.L. are more about death, sorrow, lust and longings and not fantasy-orientated. In my opinion we would only re-release our first demo if we would have the chance to record it in a professional studio and if we would have the chance to rearrange and change some songs. But I think that we will not release it a second time, the first demo should be more of a rare demo that only some fans possess.

When and why did Aegeon enter the band? What do you think has been his influence on Draconis Sanguis' sound?

As Aegeon is Eldravn's best friend since a long time and as they also played together in a band, Eldravn tried to convince Aegeon to join us. But as Aegeon was not very interested in this musical style at that moment he hesitated because he was not sure if he could play Black-/Death Metal without practising a long time. At the end of 1997 he finally decided to join us, but at first he concentrated on his vocals so that we had Jan for a short time as our 2nd guitar player. But after Jan left the band Aegeon decided to play the 2nd guitar AND to sing, which closed

the circle and the line-up. In my opinion his entering to the band was very important because now we have this clean original vocals which fit perfect to our style and we have a great guitar player and songwriter, who, together with the other band members, creates the actual Draconis Sanguis sound. His influence becomes clear by considering the fact that on 'Gloria Draconis' Aegeon only wrote 2 songs and the epilogue but now he writes more than half of our new songs and they are really great.

You all started out using pseudonyms, but at a certain point (when?) Michael and Stephan could no longer identify themselves with their pseudonyms (what were these pseudonyms?) What caused this and why didn't they choose a new one?

Before the recordings of 'Gloria Draconis' Michael and Stephan did not want to use a pseudonym any longer because they did not want to hide their names. In a way they could not identify themselves with their old names (Michael was known as Soulreaper and Stephan called himself Archem) and as they find it somehow ridiculous to use pseudonyms they did not choose new ones. Another reason was that at this point Michael and Stephan had the contact addresses so that their

actual names were on every flyer, so that they dissociate from their pseudonyms - the rest of the band understands and accepts this.

If they think it is somewhat ridiculous - why did they use pseudonyms in the first place?

In the first place they wanted to use pseudonyms in order to strengthen the atmosphere and the aura of the band. But as they didn't take enough time to find the right ones, they lost their identification very soon. And as the number of 'Black Metal' bands was growing on and on and everyone wanted to be more evil than the other one, Michael and Stephan didn't want to follow this way of producing artificial and silly images and decided not to use pseudonyms anymore.

The 'Gloria Draconis'-demo was released through Elven Witchcraft. How did you get in touch with label boss Morgueldar? Are you satisfied with the co-operation? How did the co-operation work? Did Elven Witchcraft get the right to release the demo and did you receive a number of copies in return or what? How many copies have been sold? Do you know Morgueldar's own band Heresiarrh? What do you think?

When we saw the Enid - 'Nachtgedanken' demo we liked the layout very much and as we were in contact with Florian Dammasch (GREETINGS FLORIAN

Are you still alive???) who managed Enid, he gave us the address of Morgueldar. We send him three promo-songs and he was very enthusiastic about them to such an extent that he wanted to release and design our 'Gloria Draconis' demo together with the band. Well, although some things took a bit longer than expected and despite the fact that that we did not get any money for the tapes he sells, we are really satisfied with his work because he made a superb booklet for 'G.D.' and he sells and spreads our tapes all around the world which is great. The thing is that we order the number of tapes we need and we have to pay about 3 to 4 DM for every tape including box, booklet and postage. And in return



Elven Witchcraft have the right to sell our demos and keep the money for themselves. At the moment the first print of 500 copies is nearly sold out and we are thinking of a second print-run of another 500 copies with a perhaps slightly different booklet. This fact makes us a bit proud because we are the first band of Elven Witchcraft who managed to sell the whole print-run of 500 tapes, so thanks for everyone who bought our demo. I

have only listened to Heresiarrh's demo one time so that I cannot give a real review, but what I heard and remembered it was very original and I hope that they have more luck with their new label than with Invasion Records.

In general I think the reviews to 'Gloria Draconis' have been very good. What was, in your opinion, the most flattering criticism (please be precise)? .. and what the most devastating one?

The reviews to 'Gloria Draconis' were all enthusiastic or at least good. The most flattering criticism was the review by Florian Dammasch in the Legacy number 2 where our demo was demo of the month. I hope I translate it right - he wrote: 'This is the best demo that I have ever heard and seen. It looks good, it sounds good and if necessary it would also taste good. The booklet is so beautiful: of course it is coloured, decorated with the band logo which is depicted upon the tasteful cover. And the music: 46 minutes on a pro-duplicated, printed cassette - where have you ever seen such a layout. Draconis Sanguis are now for me the band with an all-round perfect demo. Indeed they play Black Metal but with so many different details that a progressive, pretty melodic and different mix originate. No keyboards, no female vocals, but a clean male voice and grunts/screams. Drummer Stephan is very good for his age, like everyone in the band. Draconis Sanguis have

their own trademarks and for me there is no question that they will have success with it. And the sound...well it is not a Peter Tagtgren production but this has been recorded live. Nevertheless it sounds good, a bit indistinct but that fits and from a demo band with two guitarists and such complex material, you should not expect too much. Shall I tell you something?! When I want to listen to German Black metal, I listen to Draconis Sanguis-Gloria Draconis and I am happy. And I promise you will do so too. Send 10 DM and be happy with what good bands we have.' It is a bit difficult to translate it - in German it sounds even better. And really we did not get any bad review at all. Only the opinion of a Dutch demo-distributor (Eurekal or something like that I forgot it) was devastating; he liked nothing; he said we could not play because of the unbelievable timing problems, we were not original and at all we would do really worse music. But he was the only one and we accept his opinion.

For a demo band you have had an excellent coverage in major German magazines dedicated to the extreme metal genres (Ablaze, Legacy). How did you achieve this? Do you do a lot of PR-activities for Draconis Sanguis? How important do you think such activities are for a demo band? Don't you think a band start to resemble a small business like this (PR, finances, sales, etc)? Do you enjoy promoting yourself in this way or will you be glad when a record company will take this burden off your shoulders?

The only thing we did considering the excellent coverage in German zines was sending them a demo, a band biography and that was all. And after a short time some editors of the zines contacted us and showed us their great interest in our band. We only knew F. Dammasch from Legacy and Magacinum ab Ovo, because he stayed in contact with us since the first demo. I think we do not do more PR-activities than other bands; even less because we unfortunately play only few gigs and we are sometimes a bit lazy concerning interviews, but we actually send tapes all around the world and try to answer every question or interview so that we even did an interview with a fanzine from Thailand. Since a demo band must first spread their name in the underground, it is important to send many demos to zines, other bands, labels, etc. But I think when your band have no quality it is not worth doing much promotion because they will be forgotten soon. It is true that a band with PR-activities and finances, sales, etc. is like a small business but we like it that way because in this way we are in contact with nearly everyone who buys our tape, it is more personal. Of course we hope that a record company will take it off our shoulders because a record company has more chances to make the band grow and is known better in the scene, but unfortunately you will lose the personal contact with the fans, because you cannot control the sales... So there are advantages and disadvantages.

Germany is known to be particularly loyal to German bands, but what has the response from outside Germany been like (fans, mags, etc.)?

The responses from outside Germany were pretty good. We got some very good reviews

and responses from Austria, The Netherlands, France and Thailand and the responses from the Baltic States and Italy were not bad but they were not so convinced of our music like the other countries. But we have no contact to Scandinavian zines or fans in Great Britain but we work to enclose those states. I hope this interview will raise our number of Dutch metal fans and the people from Belgium are also welcome to join our music.

Has there been any serious interest from record labels to sign Draconis Sanguis since the release of 'Gloria Draconis'? If so, from which label(s). Did you find a suitable label in the mean time?

Actually, some labels showed interest but no one sent us a deal or something else. The only label were CCP who wanted to release our demo 'Gloria Draconis' on CD, but we did not want to release it on CD because of the not CD-like sound and we wanted to get a name in the German underground first. Besides, I think that if our tape had been released through CCP, the magazines would not have been so euphoric, because we would have been compared to the other bands who could use an expensive studio and who had much more budget, so that we would be only an average band like many others. When we release a CD it should have a good sound, a great layout and most important great songs. So we have not found a suitable label in the meantime, as labels like **Last Episode** or **Undercover Records** firstly showed interest but then did not answer at all. The only label which answered and with whom we have contact is **Moonstorm Records** and it would be great to sign a deal with them but we also would not deny a good offer from labels like **Napalm**, **Hammerheart** or **Prophecy**. This weekend we'll record a 6-song promo-CD for the labels and we hope to impress some label-chiefs - time will tell.

While listening to 'Gloria Draconis' it struck me how much atmosphere you manage to capture without the use of keyboards. Especially the clean vocals and the samples play an important role in this matter. Do you have anything against the use of keyboards? Is it possible you will use them in the future? Wouldn't you be able to create even richer atmospheres that way?

No, we have nothing against keyboards but many (Black-) Metal bands use too much of them so that you nearly cannot hear the guitars and in my opinion metal stands for loud distorted guitars and not for sweet loud keyboard melodies. The guitars should play the main part of the music. But if the keyboard is used to create a richer atmosphere like e.g. Emperor use or used it I like it very much, but I do not think that we will use keyboards in our music at all. Perhaps for one song in order to experiment a bit but I think one of our trademarks is creating a strong atmosphere without keyboards. Another thing is that we would need a sixth band member and I do not know if we could find the right one.

About the lyrics. Could you tell some more about those? Who is responsible for writing them? Are there specific themes that take up a central place in the lyrics?

All lyrics are written by Eldravn who also writes

some short stories and things like that. As the 'G.D.' demo is a fantasy concept the lyrical themes are about war, dragons, magic and other fantasy themes. The new lyrics are more about serial killers, mass murderers and about the chasms of the human soul. Besides some new lyrics are about werewolves but we do not want to repeat ourselves so that both the lyrics and the music change a bit or a bit more from release to release.

How do you like Macabre? Do you approach the serial killer topic in the same way as they do (based on real life serial killers) or are your lyrics more fiction?

Although Eldravn is very interested in real life serial killers and he knows pretty much about this topic, his lyrics are more fiction. But in my opinion his fiction lyrics are mostly more cruel and brutal than the ways the serial killers treat their victims. As I haven't really heard the music of **Macabre** I cannot say anything about them.

'Gloria Draconis' is a concept album - please tell some more about the concept

When we were discussing what to do in the future we got the idea of a concept album which should be fantasy-orientated so that Eldravn developed this concept of the twins. Although the whole content of the concept could only be understood by reading all the lyrics I will try to give a short summary of the story. Since the birth of the twins there existed a deep hatred between them so that the one son became a servant of the light and the other a warrior of the dark. The first chapter is in a way the last chapter where the dark warrior after having killed his brother finds the oracle of space and time, which shows him his past, which appears, like a mirror on the surface of a lake. The next chapters tell the past of the two brothers. After the homeland and the parents of the warrior have been slain by the servants of the cross, he left this cursed land in order to learn about the black arts and the dragons. Then the white brother burned the stake where the warrior's pregnant mistress was standing because she had been convicted by the Christians. Of course the dark brother swears revenge which he wants to fulfil by destroying all holy life. In the fifth chapter the brothers meet each other and the white one tried to convince his brother of the path of light but the warrior refused and stabbed his lance into his brothers body. But the dark warrior is not satisfied with his act so that he promises his burned wife to free the land of the holy filth. In the last chapter he fights with the dragons against the heavenly creatures and he is victorious. Although the summary sounds like an average and not original story because I cannot sum it up, you really should read the whole of the lyrics which are in my opinion really great and they are written in English and German. If you do not want to buy our whole demo and you only want to read the lyrics write us, e-mail us or visit our homepage so that we can send you the lyrics.

The lyrics for 'Gloria Draconis' seem rather fantasy-oriented. Are you guys fans of fantasy books? If you had to pick between fantasy books and mythology, what would you choose? The concept of the twins was already worked out in the Dragonlance Chronicles - were you aware of that? Have

you read them?

Yes, we really like fantasy literature especially authors like Tolkien, Brooks, etc. but if we had to choose between fantasy literature and mythology there would be a great discussion because I prefer fantasy literature and Eldravn favours the Sumerian mythology so that it would be hard to decide which themes we would use for our lyrics. But as we just have used the fantasy theme, we should use other subjects for our lyrics in the future, which we actually do. Although Eldravn read some Dragonlance books he was not aware of the concept of the twins because if he wanted to copy the book it would not have been very original so that resemblances are just accidental.

You mentioned in an interview that you use 'the black dragon' more or less as a pseudonym for Satan in your lyrics? Are you an antichristian band? What is your opinion on Christianity? And what on religion in general?

Yes, in the story of 'G.D.' the dark warrior praised the black dragon, which should symbolise both the fantasy figure and the dark forces which the humans mainly named Satan. Considering our band, I think that we have different opinions of religion, Christianity and Satanism. In my opinion Christianity and Satanism, or better religions in general are bad in the way they because all religions including Satanism have the same aims. The only difference is that Satanism inverts the Christian symbols. If the perfect religion would be impossible it would include taking the best things from all religions to strengthen the quality of life. So I take the freedom of thought and the idea of everyone being his own god from Satanism and mix it with the Christian aim of helping socially weak persons e.g. people who have problems with drugs, their family or with the world in general. I just try to find a place to study social work -so even metal-musicians can be social (ha,ha). Now many so called evil Satanists will laugh and declare me as an untrue 'black-metal' musician but if you really think Christianity and Satanism over, you will find out that both have good and bad qualities. But in general our band is an anti-Christian or perhaps better an atheistic band as no one really believes in god or the other Christian fairy-tales. But we want to mark ourselves off from metal-bands like **Dark Funeral** who are only silly with their interviews where they claim to stay in contact to Satan and that Satan leads them through their life and that all Christians should be killed. This is not funny at all; it is just a lack of intelligence.

Why do you want to become a social worker? Has there been a particular event in your life that has led you to this? What attracts you in other people's problems? Have you ever been to a social worker yourself? Did it help you to get over your problems?

The reason why I want to become a social worker is that on the one hand I like to work and help people and on the other hand doing theoretical work. I find it very interesting to hear about people's lives and the way they became what they are. And these 9 points characterise the work of a social

worker. I came in contact with this job by doing my 'civil-work' instead of the army in an institution for homeless people but I haven't been to a social worker at all.

How important is it to be original in your opinion? Do you think you are succeeding in being original? Do you think being original is worth making sacrifices for? Are restrictions acceptable in order to obtain originality?

I think it is important to be original because especially in these days where so many records are released and many are crap because they only make a bad copy of the old bands, bands should try to play their own style. Surely a good copy is mostly better than a bad new style of music and I also like many bands that manage to capture the old spirit of bands like **Darkthrone**, **Emperor** or **Celtic Frost** and achieving this is pretty difficult. In contrast we try to weave our own style which contains on the one hand stylistics many bands have used before us, but on the other hand we try to mix them with our own arrangements and riffs which are also based in metal, gothic or even in rock. And in my opinion and in the opinions of many magazines and fans we seem to be original. Furthermore our 'G.D.'-demo is not half as original as our new songs that we will release soon. But I think you should not accept restrictions in order to obtain originality, you should always do the music you like and not write riffs that you only use to obtain originality. That is not the purpose of making music and playing in a band.

What is the purpose of making music and playing in a band then?

The purpose of playing in a band is realising your own ideas and dreams in your music and having fun, fun, fun. It's like the slogan Sex, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll. You should do the music you like and don't lose your independence.

In a previous interview you said you were thankful for every contact by letter you got... is this still the case? Don't you get sick and tired of people begging for promo copies or who want a band picture or an autograph? Do you like the attention? Does it flatter your ego?

Yes it is really still the case that we are thankful for every letter, bad or good review or wishes like an autograph, etc. Although we sometimes need a bit longer to get our interviews ready, we are VERY thankful that those magazines and fans show interest in our band. At this point a big SORRY to the Dutch In Darkness-zine (I really lost your interview questions after searching for them for a long time I think that if you are still interested we need the questions a second time but I will also write to you soon). And surely every good reply from fans makes you a bit proud and every bad reply shows you that you can do something better next time. And in fact we would be happy if more people would write us, if more magazines would write a feature about us and especially if any band or fan would invite us to play a gig in their town because we really have difficulties with getting opportunities to play live. And we are also interested in trading demos or demo-CDs from other bands with ours - just get in contact. And when you get

responses from all over the world and nearly everyone likes your music you really feel good, because of the fact that other people like yourself composed music, a really great feeling.

Do you really take criticism that seriously? What about the factor of personal taste... not everybody can like your music?! Don't you know for yourself which things you want to have improved with the next recording? Isn't it somewhat contradicting the independence/musical freedom-idea(, that seems to be so crucial in the band) that you care some much for the opinion of others?

Well, it isn't so that we read the criticisms concerning our music and listen to the opinions of others and change our music, melodies or speed of our songs. But it is really interesting how others feel and think about your music. And sometimes someone has a very good hint how to improve the next recording, by mentioning something we simply forgot, so that we can write better songs for US. If the other people like our music is another thing. So I think you will be surprised about our new CD too because it is in a way different from our 'G.D.'-demo but it is obviously **Draconis Sanguis**. So we think the opinions of others over, but in the end we do decide how and if our music changes or not, just how WE like it.

The German black metal scene got a lot of attention lately because of National Security investigating probable nazi labels such as Darker than Black and No Colours. What do you think of this? What do you think of the mixing of black metal with politics?

In my opinion everyone has the right to write the lyrics he wants to but I do not know if it is really necessary to mix black-metal with politics. Especially this sort of brown shit some bands publish should be despised. When the content of the lyrics is just a founded criticism against the government or society it is okay for me, but this brainless and senseless lyrics dedicated to the fight against foreigners or against social or disadvantaged persons like homeless or physically disabled people is absolute bullshit. And I think that black-metal fits better with atmospheric lyrics than with political ones.

Is there a lot of attention for this topic in the German media?

The topic of fascistic movements and Nazis is very actual as the 'brown-hearted' people get more and more in especially (eastern) Germany. But the connection of metal music and fascistic tendencies isn't a topic at all at the moment.

What do you think of Secrets of the Moon, who are from Osnabruck as well?

We already played some gigs with **Secrets of the Moon** and in my opinion they are one of the better German black-metal bands and they have deserved their deal with Skaldic Art. I am looking forward to their debut CD. But although we have no problems with each other we are not really friends in the sense that we do not drink a beer or smoke pot with them during the weekend. We only talk about our bands when we meet each other so there exists no real brotherhood between the two bands. But in December we will probably play a gig with **Secrets of the Moon** and **Eternal Frost** in

Bergisch Gladbach, so metallic greetings to Lars and the rest of **Secrets of the Moon**.

When can we expect a new release from Draconis Sanguis? Another demo or a CD release this time? Is there already sufficient new material? What is the new material like compared to 'Gloria Draconis'? In what direction are you developing?

We have just recorded a 6-song promo CD in the W.B.M. Studio which we will first send to some chosen labels in order to get a record deal because we think that the new material is really good enough to be released on CD. But if we do not get a deal we will publish it as our next demo on CD, so it should not take too long till our next release will be available. As our new promo CD lasts about 34 min. and we are working at some other songs too; we would be able to record a full length CD soon and when the labels show no interest in our new songs I think that our promo CD will be published as our 3rd demo at the latest in two or three months. Compared to 'Gloria Draconis' the songs are on the one hand more brutal and faster and on the other hand we used more harmonic melodies. The songs contain more death-metal elements and as the lyrics are mostly about serial killers and the chasms of the human mind the whole atmosphere of the songs is sicker and more psycho. I think the people will be surprised as we have done at least two steps forward, as the arrangements and the sound are much better and more brutal. Although it sounds a bit arrogant I think that we have written some little hits. Furthermore we also use the clean vocals which sound very emotional this time and the screams/grunts for which Eldravn really lives his sick lyrics as he screams/grunts/whispers/etc. like an absolute psycho serial killer. But all at all it is too difficult to describe the new songs but I think that these original songs are absolutely great although they can not be compared to the 'Gloria Draconis'-demo because of the brutal intensity of the new material. So watch out for our new material.

Final Words...

We hope to meet every one of you at one of our gigs and perhaps we will have the chance in the near future to play with **Ordo Draconis** in the Netherlands. And watch out for the 'Gloria Draconis'-demo (send 10DM or 5\$) and for new material which you can order at our contact address. Last but not least thanks to everyone who supported us in the last months and years. (Rahab)

Contact Address:

internet:
<http://www.draconissanguis.ultracool.de>
snail: Michael Wächter
Am Kreimerhof 14
D-49324 Melle
Germany

1997 CURSED BY SORROW AND LUST D

1999 GLORIA DRACONIS D

6-SONG PROMO CD

Please tell us the history of Vindsval (How did

...And suddenly out of nothingness, there was Vindsval with their debut album 'Imperium Grotesque', which is one of the best debuts I have heard during the last couple of years! They play a kind of original, morbid music, which they call 'Grotesque Metal' and I hadn't heard anything really like it till then. Beautiful, obscure keyboard symphonies creating an atmosphere of untraceable uneasiness, in contrast with sharp guitar riffs and sick (though not over the top) vocals take you into a realm of psychosis. And if their music wouldn't be enough reason to draw attention, the band has their origin in Luxembourg — I didn't even know people listened to metal in Luxembourg... Anyway, all the reason to get in touch with Vindsval's vocalist Tyrann, a very nice and down to earth person, to have a chat about Luxembourg, composing through the internet, internal affairs, ambitions and some more grotesque tales... And I am telling you all to keep an eye on this band - I think they will raise a good deal of dust with their musical achievements.

you get to know each other? formation, line-up changes, demo- recordings, etc)

It all began in the winter of 1996 when Hagalaz and me (knowing each other for a long time then) came to meet Berzerk in a pub. We quickly found out that we had the same musical interests and since Hagalaz and me were trying to found a band, we asked Berzerk whether he'd like to join us. He agreed and so we began making music together. Since we got no drummer of our own at that time, both Hagalaz and Berzerk partially took place behind the drum-kit. But we very early got aware of the fact that we needed a full-time drummer. By pure luck we met Shadow (drummer of Luxemburgish black-metal band 'Black Candle') and Mogon (playing bass for that same band). They were very interested in helping us out and after a few rehearsals we decided to put our first songs on tape ('Of Heathen Blood and Soil'). The sound quality of that tape was very bad and so we solely distributed it among friends of the band. Shortly after the recording, Mogon was thrown out of both of the bands because of lack of musical interest and ability. As Hagalaz and me decided to move to Germany to study construction-engineering, we also had to leave Shadow and the Luxemburgish rehearsal-room.

After a long time without rehearsals we asked Boltthorn (drummer of Luxemburgish heavy-metal band 'Dreams of Nabid' and also living in Karlsruhe/Germany for educational-purposes) to play the drums for us and he instantly joined the band. Few weeks after this, Might (the only German band-member and ex-bassist of progressive-metal band 'Timesphere') completed our line-up on bass. But on our album, Hagalaz still recorded the bass-lines.

Before you called the band Vindsval it had the name Dregoth for a while. Why did you change Dregoth into Vindsval? What does Dregoth mean?

Dregoth is the name of an Undead Dragon King in an AD&D game. We chose that name simply because its spelling and sounding did appeal to us. We changed the name into 'Vindsval', because at that time, we were very much into northern

mythology and that name, which stands for the father of winter, did fit perfectly into our concept. Even if we don't use northern mythology in our lyrics today, we still kept the band-name. We think it is a beautiful and characteristic name and we don't want to create a new logo for a new name, haha!

In a previous interview for Vae Solis you mentioned you had started out playing old thrash metal songs. Do you have a general appreciation for thrash metal? Which tracks did you play? What do you think of this whole retro-thrash-hype? Do you think your composing is influenced by the old thrash metal (like for instance in 'Retaliation'..)?

The songs we covered in our beginning were limited to Slayer and Metallica only. Those two bands got us into the metal-thing and so we paid a little bit of an homage to them. Today we are no longer listening to thrash metal very much. As far as the retro-thrash-hype goes, I think that each metal-genre will have its resurrection (even if it was not dead yet). I have no problems with that as long as I am free to

metal (each genre) sells! It is no longer an underground-music style.

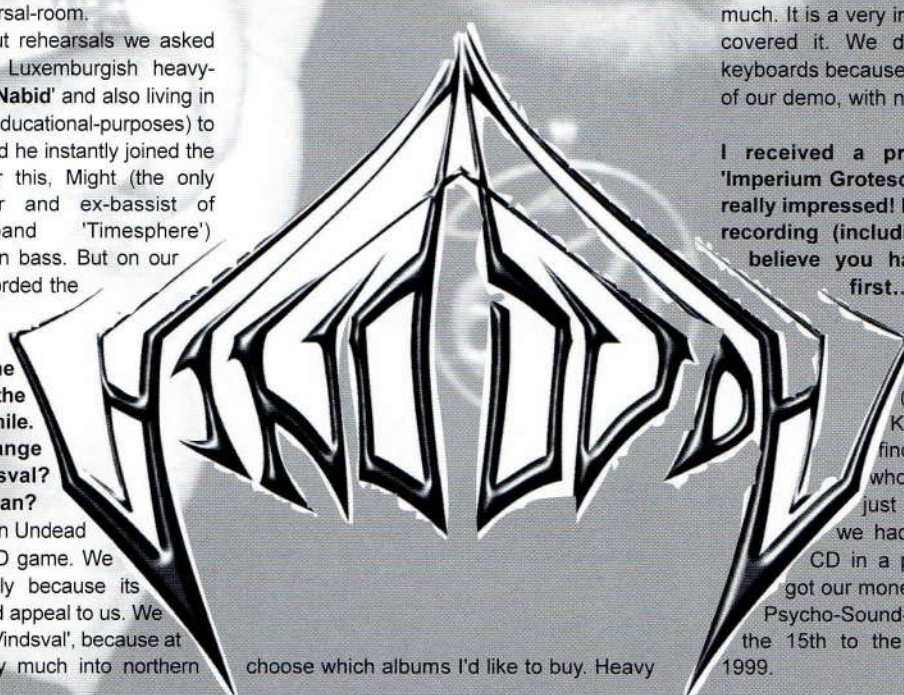
I don't think that our composing is influenced by old thrash-metal, except perhaps, as you found out, for 'Retaliation'. But that song was also more inspired by Immortal than by anything else.

Your first demo is called 'Of Heathen Blood and Soil'. Is it very different from 'Imperium Grotesque'? Is it still available? Will you re-record the tracks from your first demo? The demo contains a cover version of Immortal's 'Blashyrkh' - why this particular track? Did you rearrange it with keyboards? There are worlds between the demo and our debut-CD! The biggest difference is that we did not use keyboards on the demo and the songs were quite simple yet melodic and fast. The demo is not available anymore as it was limited to 50 copies only. Maybe one day we will re-record the songs, because we still like to play them live. But if we do so, we will add them as a bonus on an album and we will not try to make money out of old material.

We decided to cover 'Blashyrkh', because both the video and the music impressed us very much. It is a very in-your-face song and so we covered it. We did not re-arrange it with keyboards because it was recorded at the time of our demo, with no keyboards involved.

I received a promo from your debut 'Imperium Grotesque' and I must say I was really impressed! Please tell the story of the recording (including where and when). I believe you have released it yourself first... how did Skaldic Art come into the picture?

As I already mentioned, most of the band-members (4 out of 5) are living in Karlsruhe/Germany. And by finding an excellent drummer who got into the songs after just a few rehearsal-sessions, we had the ambition to record a CD in a professional studio. So we got our money together and entered the Psycho-Sound-Studios in Karlsruhe from the 15th to the 17th of February 1999.



choose which albums I'd like to buy. Heavy

You are absolutely right, we first released the album ourselves but we found out quickly that it was hard to get an adequate promotion as many record-companies or dealers don't even take a look (or listening) at self-produced and -released albums.

By an advertisement of Skaldic Art Productions at the back of a German fanzine, we got in contact with Vratyas Vakyas. He liked the album very much and so we got into co-operation and decided to re-release the album with a new artwork and booklet.

Why did you change the lay-out for 'Imperium Grotesque' with the release through Skaldic Art. The current cover is a (modified) painting by Jeroen Bosch I think - why this painting?

The new cover has actually been painted by Mathias Grünewald and not by Bosch, but both painters paint very much alike. We fell upon that picture and instantly new: that's it! It had those happy colours but in the picture you could see lurking demons and monsters. It was perfect for us as our music also has positive/negative elements in it - a combination where you never know what/who's good and what/who's bad. We modified it to make an impression of ordered chaos: the cover has got a perfect symmetry, but the contents: the demons seem to do what they want.

You recorded 'Imperium Grotesque' in only three days - still it has a very agreeable sound. How did you succeed in recording the album this fast? What was the recording session like? Are you still satisfied with the result?

As you might figure out we did not decide by ourselves to enter the studio for just three days, but we didn't have more money, so we got our asses ripped up in the rehearsal-room to practise in order to get a first-take-recording. Well, that did not perfectly happen, but we were all good at our instruments, so it didn't take a long time. The sound-engineer was also absolutely bright and so we got a really good sound out of that short recording-session. We are indeed still satisfied with the result even if we would do some changes if we could re-record the album.

Your biography says that Berzerk also handles the guitar - however on 'Imperium Grotesque' he only played the keyboards... Enlighten me! (How do you manage live?)

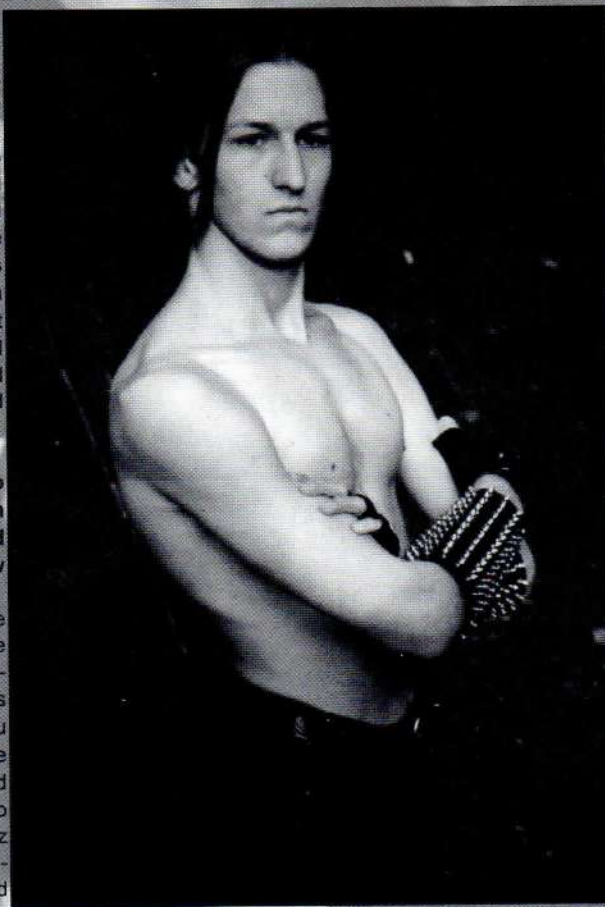
He played only keyboards during the recording-session. He still plays the guitar at home and he is still our live-guitarist - live he plays both keyboards and guitars (not at the same time as you can imagine). We manage to split the live-songs between keyboard-songs and non-keyboard-songs, and I think we do well. When we were recording, Hagalaz took the job to play all of the string-instruments - just a matter of time and organisation.

made somewhat of a 'carnival bizarre'-impression on me - can you relate to that?

Have you ever thought about earning your living as a fortune-teller? Indeed one of our new songs will be named 'Carnival!!! Now I am perplexed... OK, back to the interview, we describe our own music as 'Grotesque Metal' and we will deliver the definition to it on our next album. We do not want to be forced into one special music-genre, so we create our own one. We (will) try to create metal music that has never been heard before (I know, that is an old phrase), sick, disturbing and yet overwhelming with classical bombast-arrangements. We would like to leave the listener with an uncomfortable feeling on one side, and with a majestic one on the other. Anyway, I thank you very much for your question because it bears one of the greatest compliments you could make us!

Berzerk has had a classical education on both guitar and piano - how would you say this reflects in your music?

The fact that he had classical education solely means that he can handle his guitar/keyboard, but he is also able to compose music of his own that is just overwhelming. He is such a great musical talent and combines metal-typical elements with classical scores he creates by himself. He is lead by his inner feelings that he just lets flow out through his guitar/keyboard. When he writes a song, you never have to ask yourself whether one note fits or not, he just knows it and does it right. That's probably the best thing he got out of his musical education.



I already explained the meaning of Grotesque Metal in an answer before and I hope that I explained it in a way that your readers can understand it. If they don't, so they've got the exact explanation for 'grotesque', haha! I must admit that I just know the band 'Grotesque' by name, but I heard that they were great, am I right?

(I'd say so, yes! I still listen to their 'Incantation'-MLP quite frequently - ed)

What does 'Grotesque' stand for to you? Does it have to do with the experience of two opposed emotions at the same time? What is it that fascinates you about the grotesque? Could you illustrate the concept of grotesque with an example from your own life?

Hey Rahab, why do you make the interview with me when you already know the answers, haha!! Really, you are again absolutely right at this point!! It is indeed the experience of two opposed emotions at the same time. I cannot give you an example from my own life, because I try to avoid the grotesque as much as possible - it is just frightening and you have nothing you can do against it.

I can give you the example of an evil clown. I mean, a clown is funny and interesting; in a circus, his actions are accompanied by funny and summoning music that makes you follow his path. You trust him until he shows his real (evil) face - now you are lost and cannot return anymore.

Why do you want to create confusion with your music?

Our main goal is not primarily to create confusion but to create feelings that the listener of our album has never felt. Well, listening to a metal album you may feel hate, fear, majesty, even love but very few metal bands create confusion within the listener's mind. That's why we try to do it. We try to be something outstanding and it is in the listener's hand to judge if we are or not.

You chose Vindsval for your band name in a time you were very much inspired by Northern mythology (Vindsval is the Father of Winter). The first couple of lyrics were also inspired by the Edda. However, you have more or less moved away from that now. Why didn't you change the band name? (I mean the name Vindsval was not that much an 'established one' in the underground before the shift...). What are the lyrics about these days? What was it that particularly attracted you to Northern Mythology (.. and not to Greek Mythology for example..)?

We decided to quit with northern topics because we thought that someone could think we were just jumping on the Viking-Trend-Train - which was coming up at that time. I must say that we are no trend-following band and so we only live

out our fascination for northern mythology in our private life and not in our music.

The new lyrics are absolutely fiction, based on a sick world that just exists in our music. I think

I think you have quite a distinguishable style - how would you describe your own music? It

Why did you label your music 'Grotesque Metal'. Do you know the band Grotesque (R.I.P.)? Do you like their music?

it is more interesting for the consumer to read a dark fantasy story than about my personal beliefs. On the upcoming album I will also combine historical facts with my own imagination to create a new (more realistic) kind of fantasy-story.

What made northern mythology appeal more to us than the Greek one was for example that the northern gods were full of faults - both in their outlook and in their behaviour. That makes those deities more applicable on real life than those all-mighty deities from other Mythologies. (Hmm, I think the Greek deities suit your description as well -ed) You can get something out of northern mythology without being a believer.

And by the way, I can think of no other culture that rose so fast out of nothing, just because of their dedicated beliefs - that fascinates me!

You have a strong fascination for H.P. Lovecraft. What is your favourite story? What is it that gives his stories so much suspense? Would you consider using his works as a theme for your lyrics? What makes Lovecraft such a good author in your opinion?

I must admit that I haven't really got a favourite story, but stories that I can keep on reading over and over again are 'Mountains of Madness', 'The Music of Erich Zann', and of course 'Call of Cthulhu' and Cthulhu-related-stories. I would not say that it is the suspense that makes me be such a Lovecraft-fan but the way he keeps describing his figures and the feelings they resent. It is no 'hack-slash-kill'-horror, but a lurking fear that just keeps crawling up your spine straight to your brain where it gets to rest and to feed its brood... We will definitely not use his works as theme for our lyrics, because we would never be able to recreate the Lovecraftian feeling with mere words. But we already have an instrumental song on our actual CD ('Rise of the Great Old One') which is the musical background for the rise of Cthulhu from R'lyeh in the story 'Call of Cthulhu'.

You hail from Luxemburg and you are the first band from Luxemburg I heard about. How is the scene over there? (many bands? Clubs/venues to play? fans?) What about the other bands - are they recommendable in your opinion?

The scene in Luxemburg, as far as there is one, is very small and very tight-together. Everyone knows each-other and tries to help each-other out. I will try to give you a complete list of all the metal-bands I know in Luxemburg: **Black Candle, Desdemonia, Dreams Of Nabid, Fetuxion, Lifeless, Stormthrone of Dripping Blood and Unfolding** and us of course. There are only one or two clubs to play in and I have to admit that we never played in Luxemburg until now, but if everything works out alright, we will be playing there in October.

As far as the other bands go, I only know the music of Black Candle (True Old School Black Metal), Desdemonia (Death Metal), Dreams Of Nabid (Heavy Metal with female voice) and Unfolding (Melodic Death Metal) well. I must say that all of them are quite

good in their genre.

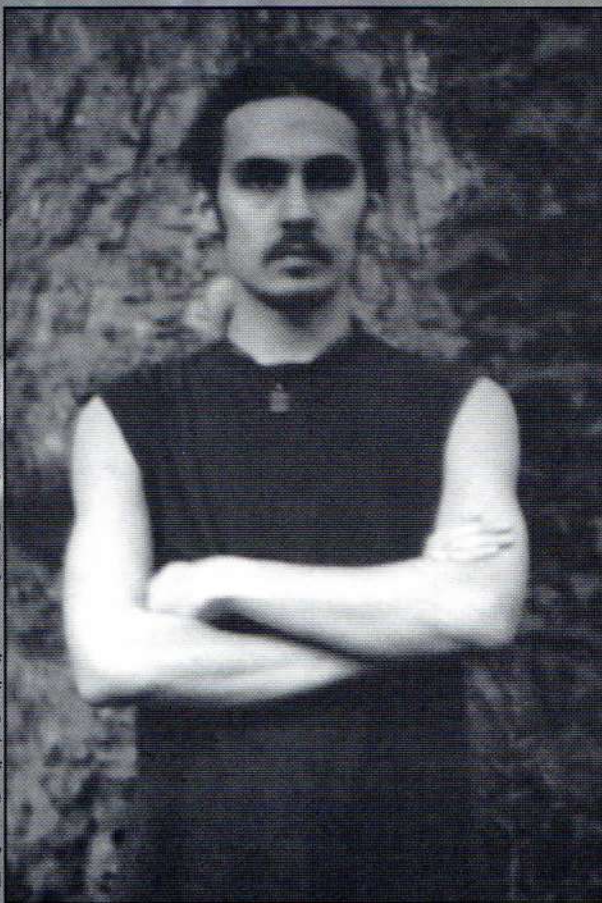
Unfortunately there aren't many metal-fans in Luxemburg, so there is no chance of getting great responses from our own country.

What are the internal relations within Vindsval like - you somewhat gave me the impression that the band-core are Hagalaz, Berzerk and yourself. And that the other two (Bolthorn & Might) are more or less session-members - am I correct? Why this construction? Don't you think a band should be a democratic unity as a whole?

In one way you are correct: The core is formed by the founding members Hagalaz, Berzerk and me. We put all of our blood and sweat into this band and so we are the main part. If someone of us three decides to quit the band, then we will bury Vindsval. If one of the other members will quit the band, then we are weakened, but will still continue. But Bolthorn and Might are more than just session-members: they are friends and also belong to the band. But we cannot expect total consecration from them because they either have other bands they play in or jobs they have to do.

Vindsval is the child of Hagalaz, Berzerk and me and we will make it grow up!

Of course a band should be a democratic unity as a whole - in our case it is the foundation-trinity. We went all the way from the biggest shit to the point we are now, we deserve all merits. Maybe in the future the other two band-members will get the same priorities, but until now the only ones to LIVE for Vindsval are Hagalaz, Berzerk and me.



About half of the band (3 members I believe) live in Karlsruhe these days - doesn't this complicate the band's

existence tremendously, not in the least since the main composer Berzerk still lives in Luxemburg? Do you intend to return to Luxemburg or will Berzerk go and study in Karlsruhe too? How does the fact that you live so far apart influence the rehearsing? I suppose you can hardly ever rehearse all together? How about preparing for playing live then? What about preparing for recording the new album?

As I already told, even 4 out of 5 members live in Germany and you are right, things aren't too easy to manage. But in times of internet and so on, it isn't such a great problem. Berzerk (still living in Luxemburg) writes the basic lines for a new song, gets it in an e-mail-attachment and sends it to Hagalaz who refines the song and takes it to the sound-studio (where he also works nowadays).

Neither will we return to Luxembourg nor will Berzerk study in Karlsruhe. We have such great musical understanding in the band that only one (complete) rehearsal-session is enough for us to enter the studio or to play live. But sometimes it is difficult to organise a concert, because 5 people from 2 countries have to get together. But if you put all your strength into it, everything is possible.

Why did Shadow leave and did Berzerk, who also stayed in Luxemburg, remain part of the band?

Well, as you might have found out by now, Berzerk is one of the founding members and without him (or Hagalaz or myself) Vindsval could not exist. We also know Berzerk for a longer time and the three of us are best friends. I also think that it is better for Shadow to fully

concentrate on his main band 'Black Candle' (He had two rehearsals in one day!). Our new drummer does rehearsals with us in the middle of the week and during the weekend he returns to Luxemburg to play with his main band.

Do you think that the fact that you are from Luxemburg is an advantage in order to get attention/noticed? What promotional activities did you do in order to get your name established in the underground scene before signing to Skaldic Art Productions? How did you promote 'Imperium Grotesque' after you had released it yourself?.. and looking back, what do you think you might have done better?

Perhaps it is an advantage in order to get attention because many people don't even know where Luxemburg is situated (Shame on those who think Luxemburgish is a German dialect - it is a language of its own!!) So, if you come from an extraordinary country, people will faster remember your band. Our goal is it to make people think of Vindsval when they think of Luxemburgish metal.

We were very naive in the beginning and thought that with the release of our

album, everybody would like to buy our CD and that nobody could make his way past Vindsval. Unfortunately

reality convinced us of the opposite... We thought that the album would promote itself but we only got reviews in some minor fanzines and people only got to know it via mouth-to-mouth-propaganda.

I do not know what we might have done better, because I think that you have to get support from a record-company in order to get established. (Well, Ordo Draconis convinced me that it is also possible to do it on your own. Deepest regards to you guys for your beliefs in yourselves and the work for your band!!)

The first thing that comes to my ignorant mind when thinking of Luxemburg is 'tax-paradise'.. but I suppose your country has much more to offer. Please enlighten me a little! Are you interested in the history of Luxemburg? If so, what are in your opinion the most interesting historic events that took place in your country?

Haha, one more thing that we have to offer is the same national flag as the Netherlands (red-white-blue). Why the hell could they not create two different ones, hahaha !!???

As the name Luxemburg already unveils, there are many castles in our country, which are the remains of a very moved history. Founded in 963, many foreign nations took over Luxemburg because it had a really important geographical situation (it was named 'Gibraltar of the North' during the Middle Ages). After many centuries of oppression, we finally got independent in 1839 and as there exist very few Luxemburgers (about 300.000 native ones), we are very proud to be some of them. This has got nothing to do with extreme-nationalism or right-winged-thinking!!

On our forth-coming album there will be a song called 'Lucilinburhuc' which means 'small castle' and was the first name for our country. The lyrics will be in the Luxemburgish language because we don't know why we should deny our roots.

Now living in Germany, what is it you miss most about Luxemburg?

My upcoming answer may sound a bit strange after all I wrote before, but I really miss nothing about Luxemburg while living here in Germany. I mean, I can at all time return to my home and hear my mother tongue, but Germany has so many more possibilities to offer. I also got my girlfriend here in Germany and I am not willing to leave her, so I am possibly staying here for a while...

Do you like playing live? What have been your best and your worst live-experience so far?

We very much enjoy playing live - even if we haven't done it that often. It is just a great feeling being on stage and offering the people in the front a really great time. We try to play as often as possible but as I already told you, things aren't always so easy to manage.

We had our best live-performance together with **Accelerator** and **Karkadan** at a gig near Stuttgart, where a small gig in a small club turned out to be a great metal party. It was real fun playing with all of the people going wild.

Our worst live-experience was the last concert we did at a painting-academy in Karlsruhe. The sound was shitty, we had no sound-check, the lights were

stuck in a way that they always kept on shining very bright in my face and most of the people there were complete assholes trying to make our gig turn bad. But such things may happen. We learned our lesson and will hopefully continue stronger than before.

Skaldic Art is planning a kind of tour for the end of this year, offering the bands on the label the opportunity to play together with a well known band as Falkenbach and gigs in various countries - a rather unique chance I'd say - what do you think of this?

As you might also know the tour has actually been cancelled. All the bands that are able to play live from the Skaldic-Art-Label should do a tour together with Falkenbach, but first of all Obsidian Gate had to cancel. It is also impossible for two of us to play those gigs because of really important exams and so the tour was cancelled. I regret this very much because I would have liked to play with all of the Skaldic Art bands, because I think that each one of them is very unique and very good. I also think that the still young label will gain lots of attention in the future!

But I hope that, if a whole tour is impossible, we could at least do one big festival with all the bands involved.

In a previous interview you stated you were rather naive when you started out, thinking that with a couple of good songs you would conquer the metal world? What are the most important changes in your view on the metal scene? Are you disillusioned? What do you dislike about the music industry - and in what way have you experienced negative consequences from this branch?

I now look at the metal-scene from a very different point of view. I always thought that bands creating great music would get the attention they deserve (I am not talking about us!). But metal has become a business - a very sick one. The big labels and magazines that make people aware of your band are only interested in you if they can make a benefit of it. Art is being murdered by money. I would be disillusioned if there weren't people like you and your (underground)-zine or like Skaldic Art Productions who are truly interested in the work created by dedicated artists. The negative consequences I had to experience were of a minor kind but still... I can give you a small example: We sent promo-CD's (first 'self-release) to several magazines and distributors. We didn't even get a response! We sent promos again (this time with Skaldic Art in our back) and, oh wonder, we got noticed and even more than that! If you are at your own, you have practically no chance of getting noticed (correct me if I am wrong!). You have to have someone influential who speaks to your advantage.

What has been your biggest set back in the band's career so far?

As the overall tendency of the 'Vindsval-career' is positive, I can't tell you about a real set back! And I hope that we won't have one soon! :-)

What can you tell concerning the next album? When will it be recorded? Do you already have an album title? (what does it mean?) What about song titles?

We are actually involved in the composing-process for the forth-coming album. We do not know yet when we will record it, but we hope to get into the studio by the end of this year. There is already a title for the new album, but it is not definitive yet: 'The Great Maddening'. This title is the logical follow-up to 'Imperium Grotesque' - and again the music will fit the title...hehehe.....;-)

I mentioned 2 of our new song titles. Another song will be called 'An Entrance to the Epic Within', but as I already told you, nothing is definitive yet!

I understood you have quite some ambitious plans for your next album, both with samples/orchestral arrangements and with the vocals - can you tell a bit more about this?

On our actual album, we used the keyboard to create a very unique atmosphere. On the next album we will try to work with samples to enhance the feeling of an orchestra playing in the back and maybe in the front. The songs will be even more complex than on our actual album and the guitars as well as the vocals will bring lots of alternation into the songs. As far as the vocals are concerned, we try to involve more clean vocals and choirs to make the listener experience epic feelings.

Hagalaz works in a sound studio - does he intend to make a living with his work there after he has finished his studies? In what way does Vindsval benefit from Hagalaz job?

I do not know if he will continue working in the sound studio after his studies. As you know, he is studying construction-engineering, which is far away from sound-engineering, but you never know what the future will bring. We benefit very much from his work in the studio because he is really good at it and this flows into the arrangements he does for the band. He can also try out several things before we definitively enter the studio. I think that Vindsval would not be the same if Hagalaz wouldn't do such a great job in the studio!

All the very best with Vindsval! You may close off the interview now...

Thank you very, very much for your in-depth-interview! You helped me regain confidence in the metal-scene - which is absolutely not dead - but which needs more people of your kind! I would also like to thank the reader of these lines for having got through this interview to this point. Visit our homepage at: <http://www.vindsval.de> and download the whole title-song of our album!

Hope to see you on stage. Rahab and Ordo Draconis!

Sombre and Grotesque Greetings,
Tyrann/VINDSVAL

(Rahab)

Discography:

**OF HEATHEN BLOOD AND SOIL D
2000 IMPERIUM GROTESQUE
(SKALDIC ART PRODUCTIONS)**

First of all, congratulations with the good sales for 'Choronzonic Chaos Gods'. How many did you sell by now? One reason for asking is that we heard you left Full Moon Productions because of their bad promotion in Europe. Did you notice an effect of this on your sales?

Thanks! We sold about 5000 to 6000 'Of Purest Fire' mini-CDs and even more of the 'Choronzonic Chaos Gods' ones. We do sell more in the US and South America than here in the Netherlands, but apart from that we haven't received any overview from Full Moon Productions. It's true we left them, because of the promotion in Europe (which amounted to nothing at all, in spite of promises to the contrary). Especially because we needed it in

Initially you were very satisfied with FMP and their promotion. Did their efforts decrease or your demands increase? Did you split with FMP as friends?

The better we were doing and the more famous we became, the more we expected of them (especially promotion in Europe). First they promised to do a lot of promotion in Europe and only then they looked at how much that would cost!! Furthermore there was a problem with their CD presses that put whole pressings full of scratches on the market and when the promised tours were also cancelled we had enough. The first few months after the split there was no contact, now it is at a reasonable level. But now we have another problem with

About Listenable: Did they contact you or did you contact them? Why Listenable? Why not a bigger label?

I notice that you are not well-informed about Listenable Records. Listenable has a number of very well-known bands and they sell a lot of CDs. Listenable cooperates a lot with bigger labels such as Metal Blade and Century Media and also does some good promotion. For example Deranged, Soilwork, Abscess, Devilyn, Grief of Emerald and now Aborted and Centurian as well are with Listenable. I've known the label manager for more than ten years now and when he heard we were splitting with Full Moon, he contacted me. Why not a bigger label??? Listenable is becoming a bigger label! Wait and see.

Centurian is one of the new death bands that have exploded onto the scene. Their mini-CD 'Of Purest Fire' scoured the underground like a raging inferno. 'Choronzonic Chaos Gods' was the full length attempt to top the mini. They didn't come from nowhere, since the Wim who's giving the answers used to be in the cult band Inquisitor. Just before sending the interview questions the news reached the Mandrake headquarters that they had left Full Moon and made a deal with Listenable. This was surprising since they were supposed to do another album for them. Below you can read the reasons why. I translated the interview from Dutch.

view of gigs and so on. Apart from that, Full Moon is a very unprofessional label, they worked with bad CD printers and so on and so forth. They did do very good promotion in the US which got us a load of good reviews and made us well-known there.

You had a contract for two albums with FMP for two full-length albums, apart from 'Of Purest Fire'. What about the second one? Will something be released on FMP? If not, what about the contract? Was there something in the contract about the amount of promotion they were supposed to do?

They realized themselves that they hadn't delivered what they promised. We let them choose: either improve or we're out of

here. They couldn't fulfill what they promised, so we looked for another deal. So, no Centurian stuff is going to be released through Full Moon. When a label states in a contract to do 'the best possible promotion' you have to wait and see what that means!! But again, the promotion in the US was very good, we've become a very well-known band there partly due to their promotion.



How are the preparations for the new album going? Do you have a title for it or for some songs yet? Will it be recorded in the QSA studio?

Almost all the songs are finished, we are working on the last two. We're not going to the QSA studio this time, that time is past. We want a very good sound now, apart from very good tracks. QSA is nice for a demo, but we shouldn't even have recorded 'CCG' there. Soon, you'll hear where we're going to record it and when. A title I cannot give you. I can give you some track titles: 'Heading for Holocaust', 'Beyond God', 'For the Glory of Satan' and 'Forever Forgotten'.

How do you view the production of 'Chorozone...' with respect to 'Of Purest Fire'? What can be

improved on the next album? After 'Of Purest Fire' we went to the QSA studio again because there was supposed to be new equipment with which we could have a much better sound. That was a bit of a disappointment. We've become better as a band as well and we want the sound to be good for a change as well. 'Choronzonic...' sounds kind of OK, but

improved on the next album? After 'Of Purest Fire' we went to the QSA studio again because there was supposed to be new equipment with which we could have a much better sound. That was a bit of a disappointment. We've become better as a band as well and we want the sound to be good for a change as well. 'Choronzonic...' sounds kind of OK, but

in spite of the ultra brutal music it can be ten times better.

About 'Choronzonic...' What does Choronzon mean to you? Does this reflect in the lyrics? What does the number 333 mean? Why was the cover drawn in blood? Good marketing or does it have a deeper meaning?

Choronzon means the end everything to do with god and order. 'In the Name of Chaos' says that if hell breaks loose for real on this world, mainly in the countries where christianity reigns, we'll see who makes it through undamaged. The rest of the lyrics speak for themselves: death to everything that is sacred, death to everything that's in the way of chaos. 333 is the number of Choronzon and hence the number of chaos. The cover was drawn in blood in loyalty to Choronzon and Satan and to show that this is not for fun but a very serious matter. It's very easy to fill the cover with demons and pentagrams while you don't do shit for Satan in your spare time. If we did it for the marketing we would have sounded like Take That or the Vengaboys. God dammit, of course it has a deeper meaning. Rob, with who I started Centurian and the one that is responsible for all the lyrics and the Centurian concept had been busy with Satanism for at least five years before we began Centurian.

What do you think about the positive reactions of for instance Erik Rutan who always performs in a Centurian shirt?

We think it sucks!!!!!! No, of course that's super cool. what do you think???? I've noticed that many musicians of other bands are really into our music. According to me, that's because of the super brilliant guitar lines by Rob. Only a few people can play so brilliantly, fast, hard and complicatedly. Besides Morbid Angel we've seen more well-known band perform in

Centurian shirts, for example Cannibal Corpse, Marduk, Angelcorpse, Krisiun, Immolation and more.

How deep is your hate against christianity? Were you raised in a (strict) christian manner? Or are the lyrics more generally typical for death metal? To what extent do you think the lyrics are different from Inquisitor's? Personally I find them very comparable, even though the music is completely different.

In that case you should pay more attention to the lyrics. Inquisitor and Centurian are totally different!!!! Inquisitor was a anti-christian band by kicking against everything, without going deeper. Centurian is a Satanic band with lyrics that are very important in the whole concept, at least as important as the music. The lyrics are very serious and go deeple into the Satanic subject matter. On the new Centurian web site, that I'm working on, the lyrics of all the tracks are explained, and for even more explanation you should talk to Rob at a Centurian gig.

Had the musical style changed at the time of Erik's departure before the name was changed? Was the change of style a reason for his leaving the band? What do you think of Inquisitor's music these days?

Inquisitor still appears to have a very good name. Especially lately I've received many questions about merchandise and so on. Inquisitor's music was thrash/death metal, while with Centurian we play pure death metal exclusively. This was not a choice but the way things went. In Inquisitor's last year thre were some problems. I had kicked out he singer and bassist because of total lack of interest and Erik left for Ancient Rites then, because he thought he could achieve more there. I followed through and looked for new people to continue Inquisitor. When I found Rob and Seth

and later Patrick, the sound changed to such an extent that we sounded like a completely new band, so it seemed better to have a new name as well. We never regretted this, since Centurian is doing ten times better than Inquisitor and is regarded as being much more professional.

You can profit very well from the revival of death metal, it seems to me. What do you think? To what extent can you evolve musically? Can we expect more style changes or will you continue/perfect this musical formula?

What do you mean revival? Death metal always lives, sometimes less noticeable than other times but death metal is there to stay. I don't think we profit from death metal, we are death metal. Centurian has certainly contributed to the renewed popularity of death metal!!!! When we recorded 'Of Purest Fire', only keyboard-black-gay metal was played which we countered brutally and which was necessary looking at the sales figures of the mini-CD. Of course, Centurian will evolve, but in the sense of expanding the extreme concept, the perfecting of the music and persevering Chaos. The music and the Chaos will win.

How's it going with Severe Torture and the 'Feasting on Blood' CD?

Call Severe Torture!!! OK, the CD is out and is getting very good reactions; buy it! But pay special attention to the new Centurian CD that is in the shops around April 2001. (Joris and Rahab)

Discography:

- 1998 OF PUREST FIRE (FULL MOON PRODUCTIONS)
- 1999 CHORONZONIC CHAOS GODS (FULL MOON PRODUCTIONS)

MOONGLEAM

The Silent Shining - compilation CDR

14 high quality undergroundbands
CDR comes with a pro-printed/full-colour booklet,
with band addresses, photos & logos

- Ophidian
- Dweorgesblod
- Astray
- Ordo Draconis
- Secrets of the Moon
- Anthropolatri
- immemoreal



- Moonsorrow
- Iscariot
- Lost Dreams
- Nebular Mystic
- Temple of Tiphareth
- Meads of Asphodel
- Pest

Graphic designing / Lay-out jobs

If you are in need of a graphic design and/or lay-out for your upcoming release, Moongleam is the answer.

We can provide you a quality design just the way you want it.

Do not hesitate to ask for more details.

Distribution / Mailorder

Also ask for our free distributionlist with over 200 real underground releases such as; Cremation, Devilry, Ephel Duath, Fall of the Leafe, Horna, Korozyn, Midnight Sun, Negura Bunget, Ork, Pest, Serenade, Thyane, Uranis and many more

8 USD / 15 DM / 15 Hfl. (p+p incl.)

- MOONGLEAM -

C/O ARCO - GLORANTPLANTSOEN 30 - 2805 XB - GOUDA - THE NETHERLANDS
EMAIL: MOONGLEAM@PLANET.NL

FINNISH ...ANDOCEANS ARE A SOMEWHAT UNCOMMON BAND IN TODAY'S (BLACK)METAL SCENE. APART FROM THE MUSIC, THE LYRICAL AND ARTISTIC SIDE OF THE BAND HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH STRAIGHTFORWARD BLACKMETAL. FORMED IN 1995, THEY RELEASED THEIR FIRST ALBUM 'THE DYNAMIC GALLERY OF THOUGHTS' ON SEASON OF MIST RECORDS IN 1998 AFTER RELEASING 2 DEMOS AND A PROMO. THE ALBUM GOT A VERY GOOD RESPONSE FROM THE METAL SCENE AND GOT GOOD REVIEWS FROM THE UNDERGROUND AS WELL AS FROM THE LARGE METAL MAGAZINES. THE SAME YEAR THEY ALSO RELEASED THE 'WAR-VOLUME 1' SPLIT CD TOGETHER WITH LABEL MATES BLOODTHORN. BY THAT TIME, ...ANDOCEANS ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES AS ONE OF THE SUB-TOP ACTS IN THE BLACKMETAL SCENE. IN 1999 'THE SYMMETRY OF I, THE CIRCLE OF O' WAS RELEASED AND IT SHOWED A MORE DARING, EXPERIMENTAL ...ANDOCEANS. THEY ARE SURE TO BREAK SOME NEW METAL BOUNDARIES NEXT TIME. IN NOVEMBER 1999 THEY EMBARKED ON THEIR FIRST EUROPEAN TOUR, TOGETHER WITH BLOODTHORN AND AGRESSOR. ...ANDOCEANS SURPRISED A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH THEIR ACT, AND ESPECIALLY VOCALIST K-2T4-S GOT A LOT OF (NEGATIVE) ATTENTION. NARROW-MINDED AND PEA-BRAINED PEOPLE THOUGHT IT WAS REALLY COOL TO INSULT THEM AND THROW BEER AT THEM, SO THEY DID. KIDS... ANYWAY. TIME TO HAVE A CYBERCONVERSATION ABOUT ALL THIS WITH VOCALIST AND WEIRDO K-2T4-S.

There were some very mixed reactions about the European tour with Bloodthorn and Aggressor. Especially the stage acts raised some eyebrows. Resulting in all kinds of insulting and beer-throwing. That, combined with your health problems during the tour doesn't result in a positive experience I think. What is your personal reaction to all the things that happened? And how do the other guys look back at the tour? Do they support your stage act? I can imagine they get really pissed being yelled at and getting things thrown at them just because the vocalist has a controversial image.

K-2T4-S: Haha, yeah some naive mullets didn't comprehend my way of performing on stage. Well, I don't blame them, it's not easy to be psychosomatically weak and have a low IQ. That was a one time happening, when we got the beer all over us on stage (like in de Baroeg, really 'true' of those beer-throwers. NG), but it pissed off the guys more than it pissed me off. The tour in itself went good, except the health problem. We were all catching the fever and flu, but after all we had good response and one hell of a good time. Well, everyone in the band is not happy about the way I act on stage, but they do accept the provocation....maybe I just get too far once in a while.

Apart from this all, were there also good reactions? What was the best experience during the tour? Did you get along well with the other bands?

K-2T4-S: The response was pretty good, but some people seemed to dislike my a bit provocative way of expressing my 'other sides', maybe they felt threatened themselves. The members behind Bloodthorn and Aggressor were really great and we sure had a good time during the tour. The bus company will never hire any bus to us again and same goes for a couple of

hotels we staid at, sometimes it just went out of control. It's not an excuse, but when you are like 30 people very fucked up something will definitely happen. I'm still in contact with the bands once a week.

How did the 'WAR' CD come to life? Was it just Michael from SOM saying 'hey you guys, let's do this' or was it an initiative of the 2 bands? Did you already know the people from Bloodthorn? And were the songs especially recorded for the album, or were they just songs that didn't make it for the first album?

K-2T4-S: Well, the WAR-split was SOM's idea and it also was an additional release to our contract. The bands on that particular release didn't have anything special to do with the release nor concept in itself, both bands thought it'd be a nice idea, so we went for it. I think Neptune had been in contact with some of the Bloodthorn guys, but we actually met them for the first time before the release of WAR when we took some band photos and shit for WAR. We really got to know each other very well on the tour and there for we keep the contact alive, abnormality is a normal state of mind. Yes, the tracks were actually created for this release, weird eh?!? We should've done more weirdish material for this particular release coz the current tracks on WAR are pretty weak in my opinion.

Well, a lot of bands release covers for tributes, bonus tracks etc... just cause they had them 'lying around' somewhere.. And speaking about covers, what do you think about Bloodthorn's cover of your song??

K-2T4-S: It's a pretty Bloodthornish version, but I'm not fond of that particular release myself coz all the tracks should have been properly done and we should've got more personality in the

whole album, more experimental to colour-up the music.

Regarding the lyrics, do you feel restricted by the music genre? Personally I don't care about this at all, but there are black metal fans who think lyrics should be about darkness, Satan and that kind of stuff. Not about a bald Finnish guy wishing he was pregnant. Will the music evolve with the lyrics in the future, i.e. become weirder? And will you continue to write them in English? What do you think the benefits of expressing yourself in English are?

K-2T4-S: You gotta be kidding, right?! No we don't feel restricted by any genres. Some people seem to think that black metal should be about darkness, Satan and blah blah, and in a certain way I do agree, but I think it still is a bit too naive way of expressing oneself. Firstly, I agree on that a black metal band has to focus on satanic lyrics, but as ...andOceans is not a black metal band we don't have to stay within these restrictions. Secondly, if a band wants to reflect their miasma or show their feelings towards a certain group then it would be better to do it the opposite way. Like wearing all the satanic images, but concentrate on christian lyrics. That would offend the christians even more, total blasphemy in my opinion. The same thing is with the transsexual stuff I provoke on people, something christians can't accept, again blasphemy. I stand behind the lyrical curtain and I don't find anything odd in them, but it's up to the listener to decide what the deeper semantic construction is all about. I don't want to affect anybody particularly coz it's always better for the listener to construct his own surrealistic mindworld into something suitable for him and his mind. There's no certain propaganda on the run here, just follow your own patterns and search for the

right colours for your mind. Contradictions can be constructive coz in the long run the train goes backwards. And what comes to the language, I just felt like writing down my thoughts in English this time. There's no specific reason, but these lines occurred naturally in English, so why change it to some other language? Yes, the next album will contain 90% of English lyrics, but the whole album will be a bit different both musically and lyrically.

Especially on the last album, the artwork is very abstract. Even more when you compare it to the first album. Do you have a special interest for art? And do any of you create art (paintings, photography etc..) themselves, apart from the music?

K-2T4-S: Yes, the digipack format of 'The symmetry of...' is more abstract than the previous releases and that was the point also, it came out as planned. I hate all the typical BM artwork, it gives me even less than the music. Visual art is as important as the musical excrement. I was born with artwork around me, my grandfather was an architect, my cousin has an art gallery and his other grandfather is painting all kind of pictures and has a gallery too. I myself do not physically paint anything, but I mentally create pictures combined with colours and I have other people who paint them for me. I took a lot of photos when I was younger, but nowadays I really don't have the time.

I keep wondering about the inner 'bandpicture' of 'The dynamic gallery...' Does it represent you guys? Whose idea was it, yours, or artist Alf Svensson's?

K-2T4-S: It's supposed to illustrate us. Actually it was made by a friend who also did the front cover and not by Alf Svensson. We didn't have the time to take photos and the ones we had were too crap, so we thought a painted picture would do it.

Are the members of ...andOceans involved in any other bands or projects? What about the future plans for those?

K-2T4-S: About projects, we have members in other bands, but these bands are not projects, they were formed before ...andOceans. Some of our members are part of **Enochian Crescent**, **Rotten Sound** and **Black Dawn**. Enochian Crescent are on **Avantgarde** and they recently released their new full length, Rotten Sound are signed to **Necropolis** and they will release something new later this year. Black Dawn is also on **Necropolis** and their debut album should be released before summer.

What about 'You'? Is he some kind of materialised 'other side' of yourself or some kind of metaphor? I'm not really sure, but weren't you (K2T4S) called 'You' in the beginning??

K-2T4-S: I replaced You before 'The symmetry...' was finished, he did some vocals, but that's all. It's not the name that has changed, it's just the physical structure and combination of letters taking a new form. The name k-2t4-s is symmetrical and is in equilibrium with my personalities, almost as harmonized as my second name 11b20d19 which is the opposite of k-2t4-s. 11b20d19 is more like a code in a mechanized form.

How did you get in touch with Puissance for 'The symmetry...' album?? Was it planned for the recording, or did you come up with the idea to include it after the recording was finished? Do you think that Puissance with their negative and nihilistic vision of life on earth fit into the 'concept' of ...andOceans?

K-2T4-S: I've known one of them for pretty long time and I've always liked their apocalyptic music. Their nihilistic side is just one colour of the sector of ...andOceans and the sectors are constantly in motion. 'The symmetry...' was supposed to contain 2 tracks performed & created by 2 different bands. Puissance sent me their track long before we went to the studio, but Tiernes never got their track finished. It would have been perfect for the concept of that particular album.

Will Tiernes get another chance doing something for...andOceans in the future then?

K-2T4-S: Naah, I don't even know if they exist anymore. We haven't been in contact with them lately, so I don't know. But you never know what the future brings, eh!

What can we expect from ...andOceans in the future? Any plans for a new album yet? Will you release it through SOM again??

K-2T4-S: Some changes have occurred, both musically and lyrically. We are taking a completely new turn in a certain degree: new website, new logo, different image etc. The next full length will be recorded in September, but it also depends on if we get everything completed before fall. The new album will be released by **Century Media**.

I once heard someone say: Century Media has the power of turning something good into something mainstream and boring. And personally I think it's true to a certain extent (The Gathering, Moonspell, Tiamat). A lot of bands on CM have the typical CM sound. Flashy, poppy and a good production in favour of good songs. I'm confident this will not happen with ...andOceans, but what's your opinion on CM??

K-2T4-S: We will get as poppy as Tiamat and Gathering too coz CM forces us to do so, yeah right. I think it's good for a band to change their style once in a while, recycling same shit leads to stagnation and the creative side ceases to exist. I think the bands in question have done their decision of changing their styles. If something doesn't appeal to the listener, don't buy the album. Well, I wouldn't say they all have a 'poppy' sound, but yes I do agree that some bands are a bit too clean sounding. Is that a bad thing then?!?! I don't know and I don't care.

I know about your interest in ambient and weird noise, hence you released the bonus disc with 'The symmetry...'. Who made the 'music' for that one? Can we expect more of that in the future? Will the ambient and noise influences get a more prominent place in the music of ...andOceans or will it still be mostly Black metal?

K-2T4-S: It was created by Anzhaar, me and Neptune. I think we'll add one electronic track on

the next album, but nothing is definite yet. I don't think ambient will become the strongest part of ...andOceans coz we will have the regular instruments, but there will always be new forms and elements added. We are taking more distance from metal in general, but some basic metal elements will stay.

What are your views on today's BM scene? Do you still have an interest in BM? And what are your other musical influences?

K-2T4-S: The scene in general consists of numerous bands and labels that are uninteresting to me, it's all out of line and simply sucks. Good for those who still believe in it, but what once was will never be again. I used to listen some old goldies and new ones that occurred to be interesting, but nowadays I don't listen to music at all. I just concentrate on different pulses and colourful emotions. We don't have any specific musical influences coz we are not consciously affected by any certain bands nor styles. One day it's Beherit the other day it's Bomfunk MC's, it depends on the mood, but creative bands are always interesting.

I've read an article about the Finnish midsummer parties. 3 days of drinking, fucking and generally indulging yourself in life's pleasures. Would you say that those parties are an outlet valve for all frustrations and boredom throughout the year? They say that Dutch guys are considered sexual experts by the Finnish girls, is that true? And they drink huge amounts of alcohol (hmmm, makes you wonder if that has anything to do with each other...). But aren't alcoholic beverages extremely expensive in Finland???

K-2T4-S: Maybe, but I also think most of the people are there to actually see some bands too. And what's better than seeing your favourite band and at the same occasion getting drunk, high and penetrated?!? Sexual experts, hehe. Where did you get that one from? (From an article in the Dutch Panorama magazine, so that instantly makes it not true. NG) Well, it might even be true, but I guess it has something to do with alcohol and just being horny. Yes, alcohol is pretty expensive here. One bottle of beer is like 1,5\$ and that's in a regular market. Usually at a normal pub it's around 4-5\$ / pot.

Any last words??

K-2T4-S: Thanks Bjorny and dress yourself in the curtain of colours.

(Nervengeist)

Discography:

1995 WAVE D

1996 PROMO 96

1997 MARK LIBERUM D (DEFENDER PRODUCTIONS)

1998 DYNAMIC GALLERY OF THOUGHTS (SEASON OF MIST)

1998 ...AND OCEANS VS. BLOODTHORN (SEASON OF MIST)

1999 THE SYMMETRY OF I THE CIRCLE OF O (SEASON OF MIST)

Please tell us the entire Secrets of the Moon history (including details like the keyboard player, your first gig, Schizo's departure –why did he leave and how did you come into the picture? And the demo and promo releases)

Secrets of the Moon was born in the early days of the year 1995, consisting of Daevas (Vokills / bass), Schizo (Guitar) and Frazer (Drums). Later that year they recorded the first

Lunar Aurora, but due to several problems (to be told in one of the next questions) the EP has lain on ice for almost two years! The years 1998 and 1999 were full of great experiences, because we played many gigs with different underground acts, which used to be all a great success. And in January 2000 we re-

and reputation of that period in mind – what do you think makes it so difficult for Secrets of the Moon to get a record deal? To be honest, I don't know. Many people told me that our music is not made for the masses and though we have lots of good contacts to 'important' people (be it label, bands, zines or whatever...) an actual deal never came along. We got several offers but none of them was suitable. Moreover, we were not ready to record an album in the last two years

Secrets of the Moon must be one of the biggest cult bands in Germany's black metal scene – rising from the ashes of Martyrium but without the release of an album they have succeeded in gaining a lot of respect throughout the scene world-wide, because of their simultaneously conventional and unconventional approach to the black metal genre. My first acquaintance with this band was when a friend of mine showed me their promo tape, which sounded quite impressive... I liked the band's style both musically as in their approach I just mentioned. This made me decide to contact Secrets of the Moon's guitarist Golden and to ask him to enlighten me and the readers of Mandrake about the band's past present and future, their fascination for early black metal and the occult and much, much more.... Golden's kind cooperation lead to a more than interesting interview! Read all about this fascinating band – and sense what true 'underground' is all about!

demo tape called 'Unearthed Arcana' in this line-up.

This demo contained three songs, an instrumental and an in / outro. In late 1996, Schizo left the band due to personal reasons and I entered the band. After some months of intense rehearsing we decided to have a keyboard player called Pest in the band as well, but one day before recording the second demo 'Vanitas' he disappeared and we never ever saw him again. He had some serious problems with his alcohol consumption and he worked as a drug dealer for some time and it seems that he finally didn't manage his fucking problems. Perhaps he's already dead, we don't know! So, the day after his disappearing we recorded the 'Vanitas' tape with some microphones and a wretched tape-deck in our rehearsal-room. Our bad mood reached its deepest point that day. We have never been satisfied with the recordings but it all went the way it came. On the B-side of the 'Vanitas' rehearsal demo you also find some live-recordings from 1996. In addition to that I have to say that both demo tapes are sold-out and there won't be any re-pressings. Perhaps some distributions have some copies left. We sold, traded and sent away about 700 copies from both tapes.

Well, the next year 1997 we spent most of the time composing new songs and playing live and in early 1998 we went in a studio for the first time to record a promo tape, which was limited to 100 copies only. It was mainly spread to several zines and labels and we sold only a few copies of it. One song of the promo tape should also have appeared on a split 7" with the guys from

recorded the song 'Through Golden Spheres' for the split 7" EP, which is out for quite some time now through Darkwind Records.

because we concentrated more on different things like playing live, rehearsing and spreading tapes. To release an album would definitely have been too early. A band should collect experiences and learn from them before releasing a whole album, I think. The underground work is one of the most important steps in the history of a band.

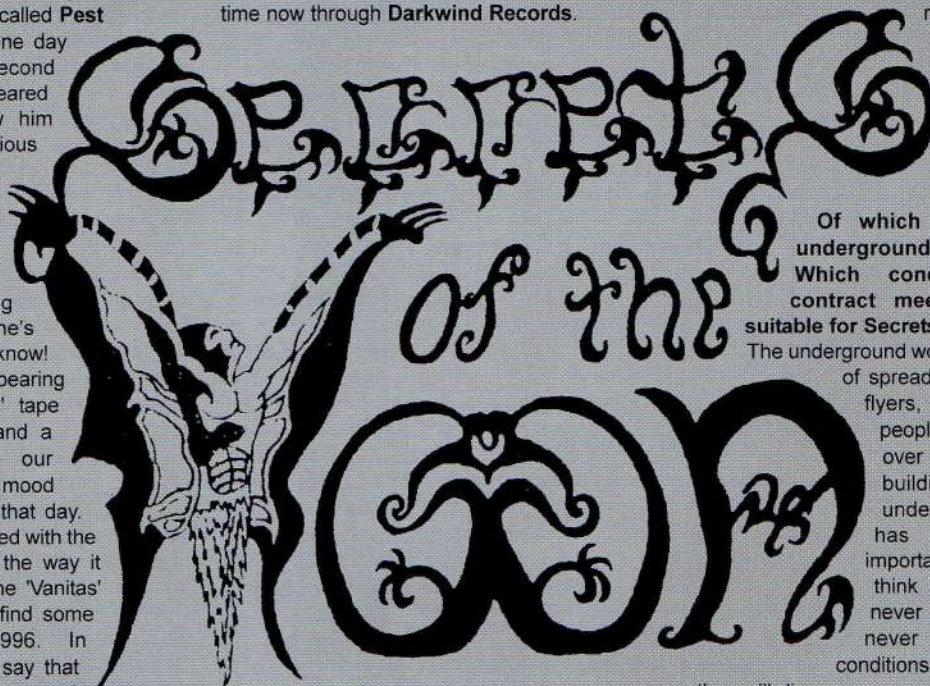
Of which aspects does the underground work consist? Which conditions should a contract meet in order to be suitable for Secrets of the Moon?

The underground work in my eyes consists of spreading tapes and tons of flyers, contacting important people, zines and labels all over the world, all in all building up a so called underground status. This has always been very important for us. Moreover I think that bands that have never built up this status will never ever have the right conditions to become big and they will disappear sooner or later. Just think of your work with your band and your magazine, do you think you would be so known without having spent so much important time in underground work? I do not think so...

A record contract should have important conditions like for examples an honest share out of the profit made, good advertising (not only in big magazines but in smaller ones, as well as spreading flyers which is probably the most important thing for us). Yes, and of course the musical freedom because we are Secrets of the Moon and we

Right now, we have just finished recording new songs which will probably be released on a limited Mini LP. There is also a strictly limited tape planned (100 copies) which will contain older rehearsal / live stuff and will be available through Sombre Records in some future!

Daevas used to play in Martyrium – a band that released a CD through Merciless Records. With all the contacts, experience



would give a shit of business men telling us what to do. Well, there are hundreds of conditions but to name them up here would exploit the frames...

How do you experience the fact that Secrets of the Moon includes an ex Martyrium member (Daevas)? Is it beneficial, because of Martyrium's underground status? It seems to annoy you when questions concerning Martyrium come up during interviews – why is that?

Well, it doesn't annoy us but we think that Secrets of the Moon is something very different compared to Martyrium. Many people think that Secrets of the Moon is Martyrium and vice versa but that's absolutely not correct. Aharon (Guitars) and Neophyte (Drums) were the leading musical spirits in Martyrium and these two persons don't have anything in common with Secrets of the Moon except for Aharon who helps here and there from time to time.

Personally I have to say, that I really like their music and I followed their ways since they released their classic 'L.V.X. Occulta' album. It was not the music that influenced me, but the way they worked and co-operated. Martyrium was one of the very few bands on this planet that had created a real conceptual background and also their music had a very special and significant sound. That's what we learned from Martyrium. All of us used to play in some bands before joining Secrets of the Moon, so we all made our experiences in the past. Secrets of the Moon are probably a mixture of all our cults from the past.

You released two rehearsal demos. Why? Why wait so long to record in a studio? You seem to be very sincere and dedicated to what you're doing – it's not such a major sacrifice to financially invest in what you're doing then, is it?

Well, the 'Unearthed Arcana' demo has been recorded on a 4-track recorder in the rehearsal-room, so it is more or less a rehearsal-demo. With the 'Vanitas' demo we wanted to do the same but the keyboarder who wanted to arrange the recorder sucked, so...you know the story! It is just the way it came. I have no problems with that.

But you are right, it's not a major sacrifice to invest money into the band when you are dedicated to what you're doing but the problem was that our financial situation was very bad in those days. We haven't earned money with gigs and stuff like that and the sales from the demo were invested in the producing of new demos and postage so there was no money left. Also from our jobs we couldn't give any money away. It changed with the promo tape where we could finally invest money for a bigger production (with which we are still very satisfied with!) because we earned some money with playing gigs. It was a good feeling to see the band improve more and more...even today!

The lay-out of your promo very much resembles the lay-out of the early Profanatica releases (white background, band members in black and white, etc) Was this resemblance intentional? Are you familiar with Profanatica's work? How do you like it?

Ha, you are one of the first guys who noticed that! Yes, all members of Secrets of the Moon admire Profanatica. They were one of the rawest and most original

bands in the history of black metal. There has never been a similar extreme band, beside Sadistik Exekution perhaps. No, it wasn't that intentional. We just decided to do a photo session in front of a white background. At first, we wanted to do work with different backgrounds and collages, but then we thought it would fit quite well to us, so...! We do not betray our roots, though we would never do something similar again.

Isn't there some info on the WWW on Profanatica that is written by you? What do you think about Ledney's views (e.g. his cumlicking)

Written by me? Well, let me see.... I can't remember having written anything about this band in the WWW. Where have you seen it? I know quite a lot about Paul Ledney's extreme views but I have to add that one has to have an extreme way of thinking to play and to understand the meaning of black metal. I remember an interesting interview of Profanatica (which is banned on video!) where they masturbated on the book of lies, pissed in glasses and drank it afterwards...well, what should I think about it? It is definitely extreme and shocking but it is of great blasphemous nature and it fitted perfectly into the concept of Profanatica but definitely not into ours, haha.

You've just released a split 7" with Lunar Aurora. I understood the bloody thing should have been released years ago.... (Please tell about all the things that fucked up and how the release finally was a fact – I have heard a rumour that Darkwind Rec especially came into existence to release this recording....)

This is a long and a very terrible story as well. 'Voices Productions' from Germany once wanted to release a split 7" with Lunar Aurora and us in early 1998, but due to financial problems the 7" couldn't be paid for. 'Last Episode', Germany's trend-label no. 1, wanted to pay the EP's but they were too stupid for this job as well. Afterwards many different labels had interest in releasing the EP but they all failed. So, we finally asked a friend of us called Timo Kötter of Vanitas Productions to release the 7" and he liked this idea a lot. Suddenly Skaldic Art Productions showed interest in signing us for 2 CDs and as we were still looking for a suitable recording-studio, we decided to check out a studio by re-recording the EP-track there. Now, the EP is finally released through Darkwind Records (who work hand in hand with S.A.P.). It is limited to 500 hand numbered copies and contains one unreleased song by each band. Check it out. You won't regret it, I think...

Yes, the split EP should have been the one and only release of Darkwind first but I have heard that Peter (the owner of Darkwind) is now searching for some new acts and will also release the new Nattvindens Grat album. I am not informed about his projects but he told me that the EP's sell very well and that's most important, haha...

The strange thing is, that you have an excellent reputation in the underground and 'everybody' seems to be wondering why you aren't signed – but you still aren't... are you?
We are very thankful to several people in the underground. We have a quite good status in the world-wide scene and I can imagine that we are even more famous than some bands that

have released albums after one or even no demo at all. I think one of the reasons for this was that we recorded demos of low-quality in the rehearsal-room because of the always returning problem: Money! We had several offers from labels for releasing our stuff, but we kept on making demos instead, because none of the labels did fit to the concept of Secrets of the Moon. We had no interest in releasing Secrets of the Moon stuff with the stream of trend and false business. We have always been a band that went against the stream. Nowadays I think that the trend is almost over and now it is time for us to show the world that there are still bands around who are able to carry the right feeling and attitude.

You seem to have a special appreciation for the late 80s/early 90s bands like Blasphemy, Beherit, etc... please tell some more about this. Where does this appreciation come from? Why is Beherit's Holocausto God...?

Well, for me he was only a very dedicated musician who lived for his ideals and his music, but I wouldn't call him a god. Frazer often addresses to him as 'god' because he's very much into his music and his being. I think that bands from the early 90s like Blasphemy, Beherit, Impaled Nazarene, Darkthrone and Mayhem had an immense influence on our music, because Secrets of the Moon grew up with these band and the atmosphere they mediated. Each band had their own way of composing music and though they only had quite low musical skills, their music sounded unique and above the average. This is what we appreciate in these bands and this is what we want to reach with Secrets of the Moon as well.

You dedicated a track on your second demo 'Vanitas' to Caller of the Storms of the legendary Blasphemy. Why to this particular person? I heard some rumours about a Blasphemy reunion and a co-operation with Black Witchery (who have covered the 'Demoniac' track by Blasphemy on their latest album) – what do you know about this? You used to play 'Atomic Nuclear Desolation' live – why? Did you see Blasphemy live during the Fuck Christ tour? What did you think of their show?

Interesting question. Where to start? Yes, Canadian godz Blasphemy are alive again. As I stand in contact with Impurath of the mighty Black Witchery (hails!!!), I know that they will soon play a couple of live-gigs and will hopefully release some new material right afterwards. But I think that this band cannot hold the standards in today's black metal genre. The old albums are pure cult but I can not imagine that they are able to release something similar. This time is finally over. Why playing a Blasphemy cover version and dedicating a song to them? Well, we wanted to show our respect towards this band. Unfortunately, I have missed them on the 93 tour but the other members saw them a few times even before this tour, when they played some gigs with Gorguts here in Germany.

... But why especially dedicated to Caller of Storms?

Ha, why not? He's a fucking heavy and cool guy on stage with his sunglasses, his mega-spikes and his black skin. With his guitar riffs he made Blasphemy sounding so goddamn heavy and marked the style of this unearthly band, so it's more than natural to pay tribute to him. Nowadays something like this would be

unthinkable for Secrets of the Moon but four years ago it was just a cool idea, you know?

You once criticized a lot of (German) black bands (in another interview) for not being able to play one real song out of their instruments – on the other hand a band like Beherit, which you all seem to admire is not really famous for their playing skills. Isn't this conflicting? ... should the pioneer bands be forgiven for not being that good with their instruments yet?

Well, I didn't mean that much their musical skills, but the way they play what they call Black Metal. I don't want to mention any names here but my heart bleeds if I see what is sold under the banner 'Black Metal' nowadays. NO, this is definitely not what I call black metal. This music has to be raw, atmospheric, it has to have something inhuman, but this is what most of today's bands are not able to transport. Just look at bands like **Master's Hammer, Grottesque, Mortuary Drape, Root, old Rotting Christ, Samael, old Mayhem, Darkthrone, Bathory, Mystifier, Burzum, Sathanas, Emperor, Necromantia, Satyricon** etc... These bands were able to transport this feeling but 90% of today's bands are not. I don't want to name any bands here but I guess you all know which bands I mean. Everyone should make the music he likes, but to sell this music under the label 'black metal' totally distorts the ideology behind it. That's like a thorn in my eye...! I have to hail bands like **Katharsis (Ger), Moonblood, Judas Iscariot, Gospel of the Horns, Decayed** etc. etc. because they do their music for the right thing and not mainly because it is cool.

About your lyrics – can you describe what they are about? Are they written from a particular perspective? Does the moon play a role in all your lyrics? What aspects of the moon play a role in your lyrics? Lycanthropy seems to be a returning subject in the older lyrics – why? What's your view on lycanthropy? Does it per definition include a physical change?

The lyrics are a reflection of my inner self as they are mostly of a very personal character. Simply said, I try to catch my emotions, thoughts and experiences in words, which is not that easy to reconstruct for most people when reading it. I wouldn't describe myself as an astronomical specialist, but I deal quite close with topics like these and I would finally call it as an inspiration as well... yes! I like to read a lot about voyages to the moon, the way people feel when they set their feet on it and I always try to imagine which emotions and thoughts storm their minds then. It's hard to describe this in words but sometimes I even cry when diving into this mood. The universe is endless and mankind only knows an unbelievably small part of it. Isn't it fascinating to let your thoughts and imaginations flow when thinking about that? This is no fantasy, it is reality! Moreover the lyrics deal a lot with occult phenomena and experiences and the way I feel connected with different (non-) systems of chaos magick and its guiding principles.

Talking about the wolf in man, I think that every person has a lycanthropic and bestial side, though most people aren't able to show this side ever in their life. Maybe it even has become extinct in the bodies of today's human beings. Sometimes when I am on stage I turn this side to the front, it helps me to release my aggressions, my hate and my anger towards the blindness of today's society. I wouldn't connect

lycathropy to a disease, it is a natural instinct of man!

It is evidently clear that the moon is an incredible source of inspiration to you... what is it about this giant rock, circling around the earth, that fascinates you so much? Why do you think there is so much superstition connected to the moon. What powers does the moon hold for you and what does it symbolize? How do you think the moon influences man?

The moon influences a great part of our human existence and shows us the way through different stages in life, be it of positive or negative nature. I personally see the moon as a symbol of strength and exaltation, which is what we try to convey through our music as well. The occult secrets and legends that surround the moon are inexhaustible, so there is no better concept to be chosen I think.

For many people the moon is the key to a dream. The dream to be led by something above everything, a power that influence our daily life which finally results so much superstitious. If the moon wouldn't exist many people would never find answers to their questions, no matter if the answers given by the moon are right or wrong.

...In what way does the moon influence our human existence then?

Well, she doesn't exactly influence our human existence but our daily life (sorry for the wrong expression). Just think of normal things like turning the day into night, the changing of tides, the sleepless full moon nights etc. etc....that's how she influences, how she makes us suffer and how she let us dream and believe.

What's your opinion on Aleister Crowley's and his moon magic? What does the concept of the Moonchild mean to you? Did you ever draw down the moon?

Well, I read some interesting lectures by Aleister Crowley and about him and his character, be it his book of the law **Liber al vel legis, Astrologick** or his most famous book **Moonchild**. His works are highly fascinating because he's able to create some kind of relationship between me, a human being, and far away planets in our sun-system (when thinking about his moonmagic!). It is very hard to reconstruct his thoughts, I think. He was a person who lived for his own law = there is no law. Sometimes he is even an idol for me, sometimes I despise him for his even brainless way of thinking. But one thing is clear: if it wasn't for him, the occult research would have developed into a far different direction.

Some of his teaching has a deeper meaning for me, as well as some of his poetry. The Moonchild is 'only' among them. I could also add here that I am currently reading an interesting Crowley biography written by R. Tegtmeier. Are you familiar with this book? (No, I am not –ed) Well, sometimes I listen to **Beherit** while watching the moon through my telescope, but up to date I have never ever drawn down the moon.....

What was your impression of last year's solar eclipse?

It was one of the most fascinating impressions that I have ever seen with my own eyes. I even drove to some friends in the south of Germany where the moon reigned to 100% about some minutes. Thanks to P.H. for the hospitality. It had

been a supersonic experience for me, which I will never forget. What else should I add here...it is impossible to describe.

You have just recorded a Mini LP. How did the recording go? (which studio, which tracks, which producer, etc)

We had entered a very huge studio to record the song for our 7" and weren't that satisfied with the final result, so it was time again to go back to the roots. We recorded the drums in our rehearsal-room and the rest in a very small and unknown studio called 'Thelema Abbey'. Responsible for the sound is Clavis Imperial and I am very glad to have him as a producer, as he absolutely knows how Black Metal has to sound and he loves this music as much as we do. Coming to the tracks: 1. 'Inverted Chaos Principles', which is meant to be an intro and already drifts into a very experimental direction 2. 'Praise the Kaos', one of the most intense songs we ever did, a very fast, long and avantgardistic one, 3. 'Asleep', some kind of spoken hypnosis to be concentrated for that what will follow 4. 'His Fire / My Flame', a very fast and straight one 5. 'Nemesis', a brand new one, quite long and raw, my personal favourite, 6. 'The Rite of Mercury', is meant to be an instrumental and it is based on a ritual of Frater Perdurabo and finally 7. 'Moonstruck', already a very old one from the '97 era. The whole song is based on only one riff and it is definitely one of the strongest songs we ever did, even keyboards do appear here.

...In which studio did you record the track for the split 7"? Which label is going to release the new material?

Well, the studio is called Noiseless Studio and the producer was called Jörg Seemann. He was a cool guy but it was his first black metal production and somehow I think that he was a bit demanded by our imaginations. And that's why we are ultimately not that satisfied with his work. But we have learnt from that and that's damn important. Only time will tell which label will release the new songs and we hope to find an underground label with enough experience for the realisation of a vinyl release.

Why did you decide to record a Mini LP instead of a full length album, I suppose you have more than sufficient material by now to record a full length. Has it anything to do with the fact that you consider the 'old material' no longer representative or what?

No, not at all. All the material on the Mini LP represent Secrets of the Moon in the best way: raw, atmospheric and avantgardistic. We often played with the thought to release a Mini LP before any kind of regular album, because it is a very traditional and honest way, I think. Just think of bands like **Emperor** or **Mayhem**. With this release we want to show our dedication to and our membership of the scene.

On your studio releases there are more than one guitar line... How will you handle this live? Have you ever considered getting a 2nd guitarist? If so, why are you still a trio?

It has never been a problem to play live with only one guitar, as the distorted bass almost takes up the role of the second guitar. We have always been searching for a second guitarist, but didn't manage to find a person who is suitable for this job. So, if there's someone out there who would like to walk this hard way with us, feel free to contact me.

You live near the Teutoburger Wald – what do you know about the great slaughter of the Romans that took place there? Do you know the legendary statement attached to the slaughter? Do you feel closely related to the ancient Germanic tribes? Are you proud to be a German?

Well, for me it is more a personal relationship to this forest, as I grew up in the Teutoburger Wald and I spent most of my early years there. Even today I like wandering through these areas and it is still a part of me in one way or another. Moreover I think that I could never live without a forest in my surrounding because it has always been a place of security for me. If I feel hurt by this nasty treatment in today's society or if I have to think about a different kind of things, a stay in the forest is the best thing for me to clear my soul and my mind. There are some special and personal places I visit then. The historical importance of this forest has no special meaning for me. I studied and learned a lot about this area when I visited school but furthermore I think that every person has to have knowledge about his/her surroundings. One lives in this area, so the historical past is more or less general education.

Proud to be a German? In some ways.... yes...but as political views are too personal to be spread and have nothing to do with the main topic of the interview I will leave my mouth shut here. I think you know why!

I think the word tribe has lost its meaning during all those years. I am a free thinking person, a solitary person, a loner, free from any kind of religion (or any other forms of dictatorship), and though I live in an area, a country with an interesting historical past it doesn't influence my way of living in any way.

You are also editor in chief of Twilight of the Gods-zine Why did you decide to start this zine? What has the response to your debut issue been like? Will there be a second issue? What qualities should a band have in order to be featured?

I decided to start a zine to support the bands, which are really worth being supported. I live and will probably die for this music, so it is more than natural to pay tribute to it. I am very satisfied with the response to my first issue though I don't like the contents nor the layout anymore. But it was a good start and you always get the chance to make it better next time, so I will handle these things with more care in my second issue. If a band wants to be featured in **Twilight of the Gods**, it has to convince me with their music, their conceptual background and of course their ideology. These are the most important things in my opinion. I don't care about how evil they seem to be or how much make-up they wear.

Yes, there will be a second issue but I won't tell you any exact dates. Perhaps earlier than one expects...

How is the scene in Osnabruck? (As far as I know Draconis Sanguis and Mosu Quma are from there as well)

How do you bands get along?

Quite good I think. There are lots of bands here in our area and most of them are great friends of us. The Osnabruckian scene consists of **Secrets of the Moon**, **Embedded**, **Bound for Tomb** (ex-Mosu Quma), **The Vast** and **Pest**. There's a great communal spirit between the bands, the way it should be. I haven't counted **Draconis Sanguis**, as they live about 40km from Osnabrück. But sometimes we meet at concerts, have a good talk and share experiences but that's all. They are cool guys. Hails to the Draconians!

I hope you enjoyed this interview – you may close it off now....



...It was in the spectral summer when the moon shone down on the old garden where I wandered; the spectral summer of narcotic flowers and humid seas of foliage that bring wild and many coloured-dreams...

...and finally staring back with the sinister resignation of calm, dead faces...

I have to thank you for some challenging and interesting questions on behalf of **Secrets of the Moon** and I hope you are satisfied with my answers. **Leviathan's** lifework is soon to be completed...tetelestali...

Last but not least, I have a question for you and hope you answer it honestly: Sometimes I wonder why some fanzine writers dedicate such a huge number of pages to a demo band and it makes me quite proud that people deal so close with our music which is definitely not something

which happens ordinarily and to every band. What do you think makes **Secrets of the Moon** unique (without sounding conceited now, hehe) because I can not answer this question for myself?

Hahaha, once more I end up answering questions in my own magazine, but OK – I except. I have to admit though that it's difficult for me as well to specifically explain why a certain band appeals to me. There are several aspects about **Secrets of the Moon** I like a lot, but I think the essence is to be found in the mixing of the 'early days' (late 80s/early 90s) black metal feel with innovative or avantgardistic elements. It's like modern, sometimes almost progressive

black metal with this precious feeling that black metal used to have in the days that I started listening to it...so a certain share of my appreciation for your band is certainly based on sentiments. To put it short: you keep this flame burning without becoming outdated... And you're musical approach in doing so is rather unique – like all the early black metal bands used to be unique and easily distinguishable from any other black metal band.... the same goes for a band like **Serpent Lore** by the way. The cult element of your band only adds to my appreciation – lots of underground activities, much appreciation, but no record deal.... while you have all the qualities required (and much, much more!) – it used to be like that before the black metal hype (just take bands like **Tormentor**, **Poison**, **Morbid**, etc) – and don't get me wrong I am not saying that black metal becoming big has had only negative consequences, it simply became different. And by the way, it is not of that much importance whether a band is signed or not to be featured with many pages – the main criteria are: I have to have an appreciation for the band and the band must have something to say... I must admit that sometimes my estimations are incorrect like with the **Requiem Laus**-interview... I can say that **Secrets of the Moon** meet both criteria perfectly and then all the space required will be reserved in **Mandrake**, no matter how long the interview turns out to be. Let me just use this opportunity to state once more that the main aim with **Mandrake** is to support bands that we think are worth it... and a record deal is no criterion in this matter!

(Rahab)

Contact: Phil Jonas, Im Steerte 47, D-49205 Hasbergen, Germany, Fax: +49 (0) 5405-4752, secretsofthemoon@hotmail.com (only honest letters are welcome)

Discography:

1995 UNEARTHED ARCANA D

1997 VANITAS D

2000 SPLIT 7' WITH LUNAR AURORA (DARKWIND REC.)

Let's talk a bit about the new album first. The music is quite similar to ATHOW. Do you agree?

Abbath: We go from the heart when we make music. ATHOW was the first album I collaborated with Horgh, making music. So that was very much an experimental thing to find

and early Sepultura as with 'Schizophrenia', fast kind of riffing. We also get a lot of inspiration from Bathory, which is a big influence for Immortal--the atmospheric, melodic stuff.

Again there is a semi-limited edition (15000

pronounced.

The lyrics are slightly less focussed on Blashyrk. Agree?

Abbath: Well, we can't write about Blashyrk all the time (laughs). Demonaz is also writing lyrics, writing about a concept we wrote and

ORIGINALLY WE PLANNED TO HAVE A GET TOGETHER WITH THESE GUYS AT THE NO MERCY FESTIVAL. UNFORTUNATELY WE WERE A BIT PRESSED FOR TIME DUE TO OTHER INTERVIEWING DUTIES AND DECIDED TO WAIT FOR ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY. THIS OPPORTUNITY CAME A FEW MONTHS LATER WHEN IMMORTAL WERE PLAYING IN THE NETHERLANDS AGAIN, IN DEN BOSCH TO BE PRECISE. NO INTRODUCTIONS ARE NEEDED FOR ONE OF THE MOST RENOWNED BLACK METAL BANDS IN HISTORY..... NOTE THE EXCLUSIVE PICTURES OF ISCARIAH AND ABBATH, THE UNPAINTED BRUTES

which direction we wanted to go after 'Blizzard Beasts'. It was a big turning point--I started playing guitar and Demonaz was out of the band. With DIB we knew more which direction we wanted to go and we wanted to spice it up more, make it more intense. Also we learned a lot about production and how to make things sound right. We were working with Peter with ATHOW. DIB is pretty much a natural development. Now we're working on four new songs. It's not like it's DIB, Part II, but it's a natural development. It's still intense, total Immortal. It's still intense and brutal but at the same time atmospheric.

The music changed with that album. Why? Because of Abbath picking up the guitar? He was already doing most of the composing before, so why the style change?

Abbath: I played bass before but I've always made music on guitar. I also get better at it. We're also inspired by old death metal bands so you can hear a lot of death metal-like riffs, but there is also a mix of death and black metal.

Why does Abbath want to learn all the instruments. Will Horgh have to fear for his job in the future?

Abbath: I can play drums as well but Horgh is such a creative drummer and such a steady drummer. He's worth gold for this band. What I do is come up with an arrangement, guitar riffs and melodies and put songs together with Horgh and he has so much to add. Sometimes he can change the whole idea about things. Very often when I work with him the whole idea changes from how I thought it would be. It's very interesting working with him.

It's very much a creative process then, with the two of you influencing each other?

Abbath: We work very much as a unit and I guess Iscariah will be more involved in the song-writing in the future.

There are also some differences musically: some death n'roll bits that could have been done by Carcass. This is getting quite popular. Why did you do this as well?

Abbath: Really? Carcass! I don't know, we've been very inspired by early Morbid Angel albums and stuff like that. Also old Possessed

copies) with a cardboard box, like ATHOW. Why?

Abbath: That was Osmose's idea. They came up with it to sell more records, I guess. (laughs)

How many do you expect to sell? What did ATHOW sell?

Abbath: I don't know how much we sold with the limited edition, but I know ATHOW sold about 50,000 all in all. With DIB we expect to sell 100,000. I heard it's sold around 80,000 so far.

I heard you just recently signed with Nuclear Blast. Is it a four-album contract, or?

Abbath: It's one album and three options.

I heard a rumor that Osmose took it rather personally?

Abbath: Yeah, there's not a good feeling between Nuclear Blast and Osmose. But we felt we had to do the best for the band. Plus they (Nuclear Blast) offered a very fucking good deal. I'm sure they can do a very good job for Immortal.

As DIB also has a cover by JP Fournier, I wonder how did you get in touch with Jean Pascal Fournier? Through Osmose?

Abbath: Yes. We had this offer when we did ATHOW to work with this painter. We gave him an idea and he came up with this sketch and we said, 'This looks cool.' And when we got the final result, we were fucking amazed. It was great.

Will you continue to work with this artist?

Abbath: Yes, I think so. He also painted these side drops which we use on stage.

Again there is the readable logo. Why do you use it? Every Immortal fan recognises the old one. Pressure from Osmose? Who designed the original logo?

Abbath: We had so many complaints from all kinds of people that they couldn't read the name. And the name is the most important to people. Osmose came up with the new logo and we thought it was fucking cool, but actually we use both the old and the new logos. But the new logo is the main logo now. We're very proud of the old logo though; I have a tattoo on my arm of it. We just needed it more

he'll continue to write lyrics in the future for Immortal. They're very much 'mind travelling the darkest paths' and fantasy and visions. Blashyrk is a very sacred place for me and Demonaz back in the countryside which inspired us a lot. We named this place Blashyrk. It has creative visions for us.

The recording of DIB is better than ATHOW, which contains some playing errors. More studio time? Abbath better guitar player?

Abbath: Because I'm playing better guitar (laughs). I collaborate better with myself now. ATHOW there's two guitars on the album; this time I have more collaboration with the other guitar. So it sounds more tight. On the new album it sounds like one guitar, but it is two.

You have a new bass player, Iscariah. Introduce him. How did you get in touch?

Abbath: I met him in a gay bar! (laughter from all) We had actually known him a long time. He has always been around. We knew he played bass in this band called Enchanted. We just asked him since we were desperate to find a bass player. We asked him and he was honored. He's an old Immortal fan having followed the band since the beginning, and he's a perfect choice for us. He's fucking great. Iscariah: Thanks.

What kind of band was Enchanted? What did they release?

Iscariah: It's death metal-oriented--appears some black metal parts in it, but there haven't been any new releases. As for an album I don't really know yet--gotta find the old dusty tapes. We have a CD single just as a promotion for labels and magazines and a demo, but we'll be recording a CD later this year. I need to talk to some labels before we know something.

So you'll be contributing to the music for Enchanted and Immortal in the future, or just Immortal?

Iscariah: I think I'll still do Enchanted.

As a side project then?

Iscariah: Yeah, we just have to get the CD out first. I've got some material lying around for about 10 years, I really have to release it.

You also run Edged Circle, right?

How's that going? Future releases? 23



Iscaiah: Yes, it's on ice now because it costs a lot of money to release 7" by French bands. It's expensive. Actually, it's not very interesting, I just had to do it to see how what it was like. It was more out of curiosity.

Why did Ares not join Immortal? You did ask him right? Going from Aeternus to Immortal seems a good career move.

Abbath: He did get an offer after the '98 tour to join the band permanently. He's a great guy; he did a really good job on the tour. But he wanted to work more on Aeternus. He had a choice; he had to choose between Aeternus and Immortal.

In what way did Ares influence Immortal's music?

Abbath: He didn't influence us at all; he was just a session bass player for the tour.

In what way did Immortal influence Aeternus?

Abbath: I don't know. It's very different music.

What exactly is Demonaz role in Immortal nowadays? Manager?

Abbath: He's kind of a spokesman, business-wise. We have these meetings and reach agreements. He's the guy who speaks to the label and stuff like that. And he also writes lyrics.

Why does Demonaz still write lyrics? Why



not Abbath? Why are Demonaz lyrics so special?

Abbath: Because he's ten times better at it. I don't have the talent. But I give him a lot of ideas and we work on the concepts together and he writes them.

I heard someone named Simon was going to help. Who is he, why didn't this happen?

Abbath: He is this English guy who used to live in Bergen; he lives in Trondheim now, I think. Demonaz and he were working together on some words and sentences which we didn't know, which you don't find in any books or anything. He gave us ideas, but we haven't worked with him since 'Blizzard Beasts'.

Demonaz has a new band. I think it's called Perfect Vision.

Abbath: He doesn't work on it now. Me and Demonaz are going to release this one album from a project we're working on which is more atmospheric and epic stuff. He's going to sing and I'm going to do the instruments. We're probably going to record it in Grieghallen.

Reference to 'Perfect Vision of the Rising Northland'?

Abbath: He and his friend were looking for a name for this band and I just suggested, 'Why not Perfect Vision, from 'Perfect vision of the rising northland'? And he said, 'Yeah, that's great.' And also perfect for the band as they play very vision-oriented stuff.

Does this mean his wrist is better? If so, why doesn't he return to Immortal? Were there other reasons for leaving?

Abbath: I don't think he'll return to Immortal. He's much better but his arms are still not strong enough. When he plays the guitar for five minutes he feels the symptoms coming back right away. He's going to go on this cure, take this medicine for two months where he can't drink or anything to get rid of the lumps in his arms. (ed. This affliction sounds like it's carpal tunnel syndrome.)

What is different about Horgh that he's staying?

Abbath: He's one helluva drummer. He has a lot of ideas to add and he's very important to our music.

I heard rumours about a live album. True? If so, when?

Abbath: Yes. I'm not sure when we're going to do it. Probably, probably we have some shows in Scandinavia right after the New Year and maybe in Oslo and Bergen before the New Year. We thought about trying to record these shows because it's easier if we can prepare for a couple days and get a better sound and I know we get enough people at these shows. So we'll see.

Do you know Live in Zaandam? What do you think? There's also a split 7" bootleg with Dissection, live in Copenhagen. Do you know of any more bootlegs?

Abbath: No, I'm not sure if I heard it, but I'm sure it sounds like shit (laughs).

Do you see yourselves as a live band?

Abbath: Yes. We love touring. We hate all this travelling and all this waiting, but it's all for the show, to get up on stage and fucking blast

away.

What is the importance of the show element? Why do you like playing live so much?

Abbath: Good question. Hmm—to release our demons, to get out aggression.

In the beginning your live reputation was not very good.

Abbath: We're getting better and better at it, but some people still miss me playing bass on stage. But that won't happen again.

Will you release another video? Live or clip?

Abbath: Yeah, we definitely will—but when? We'll see.

What do you think about the 'Masters of Nebulah Frost' video?

Abbath: I love it; it's special.

I also heard about an Immortal home video. Whose idea?

Abbath: Mine.

What will it be like?

Abbath: We have a lot of stuff, especially from earlier tours. It's a lot of cool stuff too, from behind the scenes and on stage. Also some old vintage, very old stuff. We've thought about maybe putting the coolest things together and maybe releasing a video. We'll see. We also have a lot of old pictures so maybe we can release a video and a booklet, with the history. We SHOULD do it. I think we're ready for it.

What kind of image of yourselves do you want to get across. Clips/studio scenes?

Abbath: Studio, backstage, amateur video footage. The kind of stuff our fans would love to see. Sort of like Pantera's 'Watch It Go.'

As wild as Pantera?

Abbath: We don't smash up backstage; we're pretty relaxed off stage.

The concept of Blashyrk. Where does the word come from? Blass and hyl with ic ending? Did you make up the word yourself? What exactly does it mean for you? I know it's very personal.

Abbath: Yeah. Euronymous had a special place called 'Grymyrk', so we decided to name our sacred place Blashyrk. So it's very much in that way that the name came up.

When did you start developing this mythical world?

Abbath: Around Euronymous' time.

I heard you ran your own fanclub at one time. How's the situation now? Who started it?

Abbath: We started it but we got sick of it—all these letters and writing. We're not into that. We were too lazy.

Is being in Immortal a full time job? If not, what do you do besides?

Abbath: Immortal has been full-time now for almost two years.

What do you think about the BM scene nowadays? Do you follow it? If so, any bands that you can recommend?

Abbath: There are so many bands which I've never heard. For me, it's very confusing nowadays. I mostly listen to the old bands from the 80's and early 90's. Ask Iscariah about that; he listens to all kinds of weird stuff.

Iscaiah: I don't follow it too much either. There are so many exciting new bands every day. It's kind of hard to catch up on it all.

How are the side projects going? Abbath - B6mbers,

Abbath: Now and then when I'm in the mood for it, it's nothing serious. It's just me and Tore who also used to play in my old band Old Funeral and another guy on drums. We all grew up listening to **Mot6rhead** (we're all Mot6rhead fans). We all thought it would be cool to get together and play Mot6rhead covers sometimes. We've had a couple of shows. When we have time and when we're in the mood for it.

Horgh - Pain (with Peter T6gtgren?)

Abbath: Yeah, Peter asked him, when we did DIB, if he could play drums. And he (Horgh) also likes the music.

Abbath once said Immortal is the Mot6rhead of BM. Why?

Abbath: Maybe because we're so one-track-minded (laughs). We stick pretty much to the same thing; we don't like too many big changes. We'd like to do this shit maybe 10-15 years from now.

Why did you change from Grieghallen to Abyss?

Abbath: Because Peter is much, much more experienced with metal than Pytten from Grieghallen is. He also has so much more to offer. We've learned a lot from him. But it's gonna be exciting to do this demo with Demonaz with Pytten again. Show him how much I've learned.

... what is it with this pinball machine in Abyss...?

Abbath: Peter has this 'Star Wars' pinball machine. And when Horgh does the drums I play pinball all the time and when I do the guitar parts he plays---we played pinball all the fucking time. We're all trying to beat the record of Lars Sz6ke, the drummer of Hypocrisy. But that's impossible. There's a lot of waiting, so it's good for the patience.

Did your original drummer Armagedda/Gedda end up in other bands? Why did he leave?

Abbath: He was asked to leave; also, when he was asked to leave he was kinda happy about it because he didn't have the guts to quit (laughs). It was not his kind of music and he was getting more and more lazy---quitting rehearsals and stuff like that. THAT was fucking annoying, and irritating. He's a great guy, though, and he still plays drums for different hobby projects, cover stuff.

You always distanced yourself from the churchburnings. But you did play in the same band as Varg Vikernes. So what did you think? Are you still in touch with Vikernes?

Abbath: It was just this one rehearsal, just for the hell of it, with me, Demonaz and him. It was called Satanael and it was only one rehearsal.

After that we went our separate ways with him starting Burzum and us continuing as Immortal. Actually, I didn't have much to do with Varg; he was more involved with Demonaz. I didn't talk to him very much.

Why did you split up? Why did he leave Old Funeral?

Abbath: He was pretty much like me in that he didn't find the right collaboration; he wanted to do something different.

How did you meet in the first place?

Abbath: Demonaz' sister had this party and he was there. He said he played guitar. At the time I played in Old Funeral and we wanted another guitar player and we asked if he wanted to audition. He was good, so he joined. Shortly after I quit Old Funeral and he continued for awhile. Then he started Burzum. And we shared the same rehearsal place and just for the hell of it he, Demonaz and I had this one rehearsal with Satanael. So many people are still talking about that---it's crazy. It was just one rehearsal.

What do you think of the stuff he's done since?

Abbath: I like some of it, though most of it is not my cup of tea.

What type of music did Satanael play? Which Immortal/Burzum songs contain bits of Satanael?

Abbath: It was a mix between 'Diabolical Fullmoon Mysticism' and Burzum (laughs). Some riffs from that rehearsal ended up on the 'Burzum' album and some riffs ended up on 'Diabolical...'. It was only one fucking rehearsal.

What did you think when your old drummer Erik committed suicide? Did you expect it? Were you still in touch? Do you know why?

Abbath: He was suffering from manic depression. I remember in '94 I think it was, he and Demonaz were walking down the street and he just collapsed. He had taken too many pills. And Demonaz had to take him to the hospital right away. No one knows if this was an accident or on purpose. No one knows that.

Amputation was originally supposed to be released on Deathlike Silence. Why didn't that happen? Why did Immortal never sign with them?

Abbath: Because we got this good offer from Osmose and I felt Osmose could do a better job than Deathlike Silence. Deathlike Silence was too slow because Euronymous was slow and lazy. That was also one of the reasons he and Varg became enemies because of money, albums didn't get released, etc. We didn't want to get involved in that. So we got this good offer from Osmose and we went with that.

Amputation started out as DM, why change to BM. Influence of Euronymous?

Abbath: Amputation was Demonaz' old band and I came from Old Funeral. I met Demonaz at a party and we decided to start a new band. He had a lot of good ideas and I had a lot of good ideas. And I was more into Bathory and stuff like that. And he was more death metal, into Possessed, Slayer, Sepultura, stuff like that. And we mixed it together and found this great collaboration. We shared the same visions and the same ideas---it was just magic.



Hammerheart released the Old Funeral demo and the 7'. How did that happen?

Abbath: Tore, the old guitar player from Old Funeral---that's his thing---he wanted to release it (Old Funeral material) on Hammerheart.

They also released the Old Funeral album 'The Older Ones'. What do you think about that?

Abbath: I don't care. I really don't give a fuck.

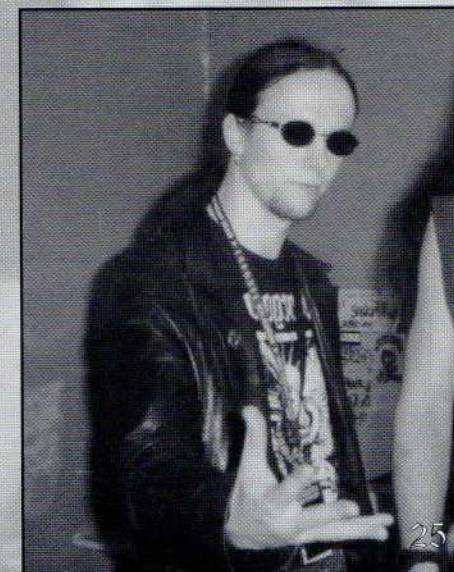
How do you look back on that period in your lives?

Abbath: We were young. It was exciting. It was the beginning---1988. It was pretty cool to go in a different direction and find someone else to work with. I guess I was more serious.

(Glenda, Rahab and Joris)

Discography:

- 1990 2 TRACK DEMO
- 1990 THE NORTHERN UPINS DEATH D
- 1991 2 TRACK REHEARSAL
- 1991 IMMORTAL 7'
- 1992 DIABOLICAL FULLMOON MYSTICISM
- 1993 PURE HOLOCAUST
- 1994 BATTLES IN THE NORTH
- 1996 MASTERS OF NEBULAH FROST 2 TRACK VID
- 1997 BLIZZARD BEASTS
- 1999 AT THE HEART OF WINTER
- 2000 DAMNED IN BLACK



Please tell us about the beginning of Requiem Laus up until the 2nd demo. Is the 1st still available?

In October 92 I formed **Requiem**, as a homage to my favourite classical composer, **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**, and his great work 'Requiem'. In 1994 the band name changed to **Requiem Laus** (praise rest, to Mozart) and our first demo '**Life Fading Existence**' received good reviews. In 1996 our second demo '**...For the ones who died**' was released. The demo '**Life Fading Existence**' is not available anymore.

Tell us about the line up changes after the release of '... For the ones who died'? What was the reason?

Jorge, who entered after the release of this demo, had already been handling the promotion for the band for two years at this point.

Where did you know this guy from? What kind of understanding did you have before he entered the band?

After the release of '**...For the ones who died**' our guitarist Bruno Sousa and bass player Oscar Pereira left the band. The reason for this change was that they preferred another life. Jorge Castro has been our friend for 6 years (and our neighbour). One day in 1995 he asked me if he could promote our band. His dream is to be recognised as a writer - that's the reason why he wrote some lyrics for Requiem Laus. You have to know that I just wish him good luck, because he has talent.

Recently your

keyboard player Jorge departed from the band - this came to me like a complete surprise, not in the least since I intended to do this interview with him. What circumstances have led to his departure? Will you continue using keyboards? Will Jorge continue writing lyrics for the band? Are you still in regular contact? From what I understood Jorge was responsible for the large share of the promotional activities as well. How

are you going to fill up this gap?

Jorge Castro departed from the band because he has a different view on reality, and we never succeeded by dialogue with him. Requiem Laus is no longer using keyboards. About the lyrics: we'll work it out, and all promotional activities

aren't satisfied with some things on '**Through Aeons**'.

Once more you have worked with Luis Barros for a producer - were you that satisfied with '...For the ones..'? What do you think of Luis' band Tarantula?

We are not satisfied at all and I think that Luis Barros is good producer, but he isn't the right producer to Requiem Laus.

In my opinion there has been a radical change of style in between your demo '...For the ones who died' and your latest release 'Through Aeons'. What has caused this change?

We didn't choose what kind of songs we would make; death, black, heavy or.... It's about feeling and we know it will be metal.

I think you have moved away from doom metal into the black metal direction. People might accuse you of following the trend. Could you comment on this? How would you label your own music?

Requiem Laus has some elements from doom, black, death, etc....but we are not a black metal band. We don't have our roots in black metal,... time will tell.

How have the reactions to your MCD been so far?

Any interesting response from record labels?

You know we live on an island, far from everything... It's very hard to get real interest for our band from some labels. We had some answers but only negative ones so far.

Tell me about your live shows. Do you play live often? What is it you are aiming to achieve with your live shows (... is there a specific atmosphere you want to bring over

OK -this is an interview with a story attached. I had been in touch with Requiem Laus' keyboard-player Jorge, who also handled all the promotional activities for the band, for quite a while even before the whole idea of Mandrake arose. Since I think Jorge is a very nice person with interesting views and since I like Requiem Laus' second demo '...For the ones who died' quite a lot, I decided to have the band featured with an interview in the second edition of Mandrake. So like with the preparation of any interview, I started reading biographies and stuff... and of course re-reading my personal correspondence with Jorge was quite useful in the matter. Then, when I had the interview finished, I suddenly received a formal e-mail message from Jorge, saying he had left Requiem Laus due to differences in ideas and he wished the band all the very best. I drew the conclusion from this that both parties had 'broken up in peace' and still had a good understanding - though it meant I would have to adjust my interview big-time, I decided that I was still going to try and promote Requiem Laus with an interview. I mean, I know such unpleasant things like break ups occur and since the relation between Jorge and the band seemed good and nothing had changed as far as my appreciation for their music was concerned, I sent the interview to the band. I explained the situation: that I had intended to do the interview with my friend Jorge, but that however he had left I still wanted to promote the band and I asked if they would be interested in doing the interview with me. It was shortly after sending the interview that I found out the 'divorce' hadn't taken place as peacefully as I had assumed. Now I don't want to get into details here, nor do I want to put oil on a possible fire. It should be clear that I have my personal view on the whole situation - but as an editor for Mandrake I think I should show to be at least a little professional and keep the things separated.... And since I believed to be dealing with adults I expected the band to do the same. Really shortly after I had sent the questions to Requiem Laus, I received their answers. Happy with such a fast reply I opened the file attached to the message... and I was astonished.

I don't know whether bandleader Miguel Freitas was or wasn't able to separate me being friends with Jorge and the fuzzi he had himself with Jorge from the opportunity I was offering him to promote his band. What I do know is that he did a lousy job in answering my questions! The fact that half of the questions were (in some cases even relevantly) larger than the answers he gave, might just be some indication. If you dislike doing interviews so much, then why answer them at all - this is not going to be any promotion - rather the opposite I would say. And then I'm not even mentioning the disrespect towards all you readers who are making the effort to learn more about Requiem Laus and myself who invested a nice share of time in preparing the interview. Still this interview might be of some use - to all the bands that are just starting out I would like to say: 'This is the perfect example of how not to answer an interview'. Now, I won't waste any more words on the whole thing (neither did Miguel, so why should I..?) Just read the interview and make your own opinion....

are done by me and by our new promoter -EXTREME PROMOTIONS-from the Azores Islands.

How did the recording of 'Through Aeons' go? I understood you we're all having some mixed emotions about it...

With some problems. 4 days in studio offers only little time, but that's only what we can get these days. It worked, but with some pressure. That's only natural and it's natural too, that we

to the audience?)

On our island we have done one live show for over a year. Like I said, it's very hard - we did more live shows in Porto, Lisbon... We have something, that only the audience can tell...

I know former member Jorge had a really broad musical taste ranging from My Dying Bride to Cannibal Corpse and Megadeth, but he loves classical music as well... This broad musical taste, is that something all remaining Requiem Laus members have in common as well? Does this show in your music? In what way?

I listen to metal music since 1984 - bands like Slayer, Bathory, Destruction, etc...then came classical music, first in my musical education and as a result of that, I listened to 'Requiem' from Mozart and I also listened to other kinds of music. So that way I think in some way these influences appear in our sound. About the other members, they have their own feelings and their own musical taste, which translates itself jointly in Requiem Laus work.

Your band name is a homage to Mozart - please explain. Why this particular composer? I say Mozart to me is a God of Music. He is my favourite composer - Requiem Laus means praise rest to Mozart.

The composing of a requiem has a strong 'memento mori'-edge. What is it that fascinates you about requiems? In what way are you dealing with the prospect that someday you will die? Are you consciously preparing for that moment?

Yes, some day we will die; we don't know what the other side looks like. To me it is something that raises my curiosity; we see many people dying, our relatives and friends and we stay waiting for our own time. Unconsciously we are preparing through our music. Requiem Laus have one new song with this title 'Death! the final function'.

Should we take 'Requiem/Beyond the Darkest Horizon' as the personal requiem of the Requiem Laus- members? Aren't you guys a little young to be writing requiems, or don't you think age is a determining factor in such matters? Do you have any clue what might lie beyond the darkest horizon? What are you hoping for?

Yes, and we will make more requiems because it's the reality, our age tells to explore more about the dark side and hoping that dark side is not an end.

What's your view on art? Are you interested in art in general - or do you prefer sticking to music only? How can you say something is art and something else isn't? Would you say the music of Requiem Laus is art? Do you believe in art for the sake of art? Do you think one can obtain eternal life through art?

I only can say I believe in my thoughts and in my feelings and I'm interested in possibly real factors, like movies: 'The Crow', 'The Sixth Sense' 'The Big Blue' It's the source of Requiem Laus. But the world is full of surprises. About art, that can be anything I want it to be

How is life on Madeira? Is it pleasant to live on an isle or is it very isolated? Please tell us about Madeira's charms and discomforts. Is there a metal scene?

Life is good but nothing is happening. There isn't any metal scene, only some people listen to metal. About Madeira charms, there is plenty of sea around us

Jorge once told me you were we strongly experiencing the prejudices against metal fans? Could you tell some more about that and illustrate it with examples?

I don't know what Jorge means.

I've heard there's going to be another shift in style into more exotic musical dimensions... what can we expect?

You people wait and see.

Any final words?

Thanks to all who believe in us and in our music.

(Rahab)

Official and only band contact RequiemLaus@hotmail.com

Discography:

1994 LIFE FADING EXISTENCE D

1996 ...FOR THE ONES WHO DIED D

2000 THROUGH AEONS PROMO MCD

Empire Productions

the exclusive distributor for

EDGERUNNER

In BELGIUM and HOLLAND

For this moment I've got the following items available:



RINGNEVOND - "Nattverd"
a Norwegian band playing
fast Black-metal with melodious
medieval parts

Get this masterpiece for only
500BEF/25Gulden (P&P incl.)

More edgerunner releases can be expected
later, also distributed on Empire

*Empire productions is also in charge for the promotional stuff in
Belgium and Holland.*

*With each release I get 5 copies to distribute amongst zines,... If
you want to be in that select group, just send your latest release and
I'll decide whether or not you can have a free promo!!*

*Empire Pr. is not responsible for any damage, loss or other
problems during delivery*

Get also in touch for my demo releases and the small tradelist

Get in contact via this address and email:

Karel De Brabanter
Burgemeester Kintlaan 8
9473 Welle
BELGIUM

karel_de_brabanter@hotmail.com

Vlad: I have been here in Rotterdam, I can't remember where, like four years ago ... and I loved it! And I've also been to Amsterdam...

... Maybe you have to live here instead of in Germany..

Vlad:..Hmm, yeah, I don't like Germany so much. Holland is for me, the most beautiful country.

take it from some...

Sathonys: Ehm, while I was searching on the net for some more explanations of the name I stumbled across many different explanations and some of the parts are written by me and some I took from other sites.

Did you chose the name Agathodaimon first and then looked up what it meant or did you have an idea of what things should be and

Sathonys: Yeah, it depends - it's a tough question... Anyway, looking at me as a person I would say - the philosophy that I have is that I don't believe in any higher beings nor do I worship any idols. I don't follow any religion
Vlad: Most of us share the same philosophy.

Do you study the occult?

Sathonys: Well I guess you can't name it real studying, because I don't spend most of my

AGATHODAIMON IS REVILED BY MANY UNDERGROUND DISCIPLES, BECAUSE OF THEIR SO-CALLED COMMERCIAL ATTITUDE. HOWEVER, YOU MIGHT ASK, WHAT IS WRONG WITH EARNING SOME MONEY IF YOU WORK YOUR ASS OFF.... AND NOBODY CAN DENY THAT THE BAND HAS DONE A LOT OF HARD LABOUR TO GET WHERE THEY ARE NOW! THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS ARE IMPRESSIVE: INCREDIBLE AMOUNTS OF DEMOS SOLD, A SIGNING TO NUCLEAR BLAST AS A DEMO-BAND (AND I CAN'T NAME YOU ANY OTHER EXAMPLE OF THAT LOOKING AT THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS!) AND ALMOST TWENTY THOUSAND COPIES SOLD OF THEIR DEBUT 'BLACKEN THE ANGEL'.

WHEN WE HEARD AGATHODAIMON WOULD PLAY IN 'DE BAROEG', WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A NICE IDEA TO USE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BAND. I HAD ENJOYED THEIR DEBUT 'BLACKEN THE ANGEL' QUITE A LOT, I EVEN DARESAY IT CONTAINS SOME CLASSICS. THEIR MOST RECENT RELEASE 'A HIGHER ART OF REBELLION' IMPRESSED ME LESS, AT LEAST PARTLY BECAUSE THE PRODUCTION OF THE ALBUM. THE ATTEMPT TO INCORPORATE MORE DIFFERENT STYLES INTO THE MUSIC DID APPEAL TO ME THOUGH.

AGATHODAIMON

BEFORE THE GIG WE SIMPLY APPROACHED BAND LEADER SATHONYNS WHO WAS INSIDE THE SCARCELY FILLED BAROEG, LOOKING A LITTLE TROUBLED 'THERE WILL BE MORE PEOPLE DURING THE GIG, WON'T THERE?' HE ASKED. 'USUALLY THERE ARE..' WE ASKED IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO DO AN INTERVIEW AND FIVE MINUTES LATER WE WERE SEATED INSIDE THE TOURING BUS TOGETHER WITH VLAD AND BYRON. THE GUYS WERE MORE THAN KIND AND VERY CO-OPERATIVE AND TOOK ALL THE TIME REQUIRED TO GIVE SATISFYING ANSWERS TO OUR QUESTIONS. ALL THIS LED TO THE LONGEST INTERVIEW I EVER DID, LASTING NEARLY ONE AND A HALF HOUR. ESPECIALLY THE CONTRAST IN CHARACTER BETWEEN VLAD AND SATHONYNS WAS AMUSING TO PERCEIVE; SATHONYNS IS LIKE 'THE MANAGER', TAKING CARE THAT EVERYTHING IS ARRANGED PROPERLY AND THE CONTENTS OF HIS ANSWERS SEEMED THOROUGHLY THOUGHT THROUGH. HE SEEMED A LITTLE LIKE AN ARISTOCRAT WITH HIS CALM DISTINGUISHED WAY OF SPEAKING, DISPLAYING VERY LITTLE EMOTION. VLAD SEEMED LIKE THE ARTIST, SPEAKING ARDENTLY ABOUT HIS CREATIONS AND ANSWERING MUCH MORE ON IMPULSE WITH AN ANIMATING ENTHUSIASM AND A PROPER SENSE OF HUMOUR. AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW HE OFFERED US A COPY OF THE CD BY HIS SIDE PROJECT RA... AND WHEN WE WERE BACK INSIDE 'DE BAROEG' HE CAME OVER AGAIN TO SAY HI. THE GUY REALLY MADE AN IMPRESSION ON ME! IN GENERAL I CAN SAY THAT MY RESPECT FOR THE BAND AND THEIR WAYS INCREASED BECAUSE OF THIS INTERVIEW - A VERY AMUSING ONE INDEED. WHAT CAN I SAY MORE THAN: READ FOR YOURSELF!

We did some research on your band's homepage and there was this really elaborate explanation of the band name - is this stuff reflect in your music somehow, the things you tell about 'Agathodaimon'?

Sathonys: Yeah, I think so. I mean, on the website I stated some explanations of the name or some of the meanings that this name could reflect. The way, I guess we see it as a band is like a symbol representing evolution.. or something like that.

Vlad: ...evolution or revolution

Did you write this part or did you

then thought 'Agathodaimon' was a fitting name to reflect on that?

Sathonys: The first thing that I knew about this name is the so-called riddle of the Agathodaimon. And right after that I got interested in other explanations and other meanings of the name and eh, yeah there are lots of them.

The things you wrote on the internet pages seemed very eclectic - does this reflect on your philosophy of life? Are you eclectic in your ways...? I mean there's some alchemy there, there's freemasonry.... there's both modern and ancient philosophy.

daily time studying it, but I am interested in many views concerning occult things or I don't know... I think you can't judge anything if you don't know it. Like people who spit upon Christianity, who haven't even read the bible or something. You have to know your enemy first, or something like that..

So you said you didn't spend all day studying this - does this mean you are busy with Agathodaimon all day or is there other stuff you have to do?

Sathonys: Of course there are other things. We can't live from the money that we earn with Agathodaimon. And the funny thing is that

many people think that, because we are signed to Nuclear Blast, we earn lots of money with this band. I mean we invest a lot of money, I think that's the other way around and everyone of us has to do other things to make his living. I mean I am working for Nuclear Blast since a few months, before I worked for IBM. Other in the band are studying or....

What are you doing for Nuclear Blast if I may ask?

Sathonys: the official job description is 'head of mail-order' I am responsible for the mail-order program, so I check which items to take in stock. I decide whether a book might be interesting for our customer or a certain CD or... just thinking: will it sell a hundred times or only ten times, then I won't take it into the program and stuff like that. And also editorial things like checking interviews or whatever that is featured in the mail-order catalogue.

A little bit back to the explanation of the band name now. The explanation focusses a lot on the duality like yin and yang and the black and the white. The name Agathodaimon means 'good spirit' which is only one part of the universe more or less....

Sathonys: Yeah...

Vlad: It doesn't mean good spirit. It comes from the ancient Greek. And at that time 'agatho' meant... Let's say 'good and evil' was something - it wasn't split up like in these days, so. In that time 'agatho' was only good and evil, together.

Sathonys: Even Homer called the gods demons because there was no real separation between good and evil at that time. There were no gods or demons - they were just both the same way and I mean 'agathodaimon', anyway is a rather let's say positive force instead of a negative force. But I mean this doesn't have anything to do with our direction or views upon life or anything.

About Byron - there is also a Byron in Bal Sagoth and at first I was mixing you to up, did you know about this guy?

Byron: ... no, no...

.. Because I guess it's not your real name

Vlad: Does he play keyboards too?

Sathonys: He's composer and handles the vocals, but Byron is not so much... he's not at all into black metal you could say. He's more into other musical direction

Byron: Progressive retro rock....

So how did you all get in touch? You knew him from Rumania, or...?

Vlad: ... long story...

Sathonys: When we formed this band we put some adverts in the magazines or we read some adverts.

Vlad: Which is funny, 'cos, I called him... I read it (the advert) in Ablaze and it was far... I lived in Germany for seven years and by that time - I guess in '95, in August I read this advert from him (Sathonys) in Ablaze and I thought it was like 80 kilometres away from my hometown. I thought... I didn't have a car, I could only get there by train or by plane or something, so it was rather... I don't know, but I just phoned him and then... I had been playing with a bass player for two years at home. I had some project - I had been looking for a drummer for like a year, but I couldn't find anyone. I was playing guitar together with our bass-player nowadays, Marko. He was my bass-player back then and I thought let's try this 80 kilometres. He had a car... and let's have a jam session, let's see what happens... look what happened.

Now that we have started on some history anyway - it said on the web-site, that after the first demo there was some interest already from Century Media. But somehow that went wrong.... Didn't they make a nice enough offer or..?

Sathonys: Yeah, I mean they offered a contract but it took them a very long time, because there were so many people working for Century Media at that time and I had to speak to this guy to ask for the contract, but he was at that time in San Francisco and then he was in London... it took weeks and weeks just to get

negotiation with Century Media.

Sathonys: Yeah, they were still interested and I mean that we recorded the second demo was more or less because Century Media wanted to hear some new stuff. And they even gave us some money to record it, because we couldn't afford to pay all the studio costs, just having the rights to be the first to listen to the new material and again it took them weeks and weeks you, know... even for an answer. We even drove over there and brought them some video-tapes of gigs we made. Then, someday I got a phone call from Nuclear Blast, from a guy I knew since quite a long time, **Andy Siry** - he was the A&R manager at the time and very young and He came new to Nuclear Blast, I didn't know at first that he was working there, he just said: 'Could you send me your second demo', and then a few days later he rang me up again and said: 'I played it to **Markus Staiger**, the head of Nuclear Blast, and he also likes it very much.' So within two weeks or so we made the final contract and everything was signed. We also had interest from other labels like **Listenable** and **Last Episode**, but the contract of Nuclear Blast was the best one.

...In all aspects?

Sathonys: No, not really. Of course there are some smaller labels that offer better contracts. You know, you get more royalties and everything, but it depends on what you are looking for. A label like Nuclear Blast can give

you much more promotion and they support their bands more than a small label can do. And therefore you always have to decide what is more important to you. And as I knew, most... or let's say some of the persons working at the staff of Nuclear Blast, I knew that it wouldn't be a bad decision, because when you listen to bands that are on smaller labels, you sometimes hear like 'they don't give us enough support or they aren't reliable or anything.'

On the other hand you often hear remarks related to the lack of integrity from big labels and stories of bands having to make adjustments to their music, because the label

tells them to... they can't do this and the can't do that and their songs should sound like this to be commercially attractive...

Sathonys: Ah, you mean that Nuclear Blast tries to convince their artists to go in a certain direction...

That's something you often hear, so I wondered....

Sathonys: Ah, OK.

Vlad: Where did you hear that?

Sathonys: In our case, I only can speak about our case and they never tried to convince us. They do some... they say: 'What about this, would you like to do this? We can offer you to work with this artist,' or so, you know. I heard for example that Hollow, this band which is also on Nuclear Blast,



the standard contract, you know. And when we received it and checked it, we saw that there was so many stuff in it which is really negative, you know. Like the duration of the contract or the rights that we would have left or the royalties we would get and everything.

Vlad: Also that we could not have any side projects.

Sathonys: Yeah, we weren't allowed to have side projects.

Vlad: And at that time I had one....

The Drusus - project...

Vlad: Yeah, right.

So there was more or less the same problem that you had after your second demo, because then you were also into

that they were quite angry that Nuclear Blast had convinced them to use to use a different cover, you know this modern cathedral I think it was, the LP. Because they had a different album-artwork. I haven't seen the original one, but I mean they can't really force you to do something. They can just say: 'OK, we offer you this and we think it's more useful to do it this way,' but as an artist you don't have to do it. If you let yourself to be convinced by the label or by any other person, than it's your own fault. And so far they didn't force us into anything.

...So it's not like if you go our way, we will offer you extra promotion....

Sathonys: I think it's kind of a personal subject, because when you're getting too angry or anything, when you're losing your good manners and say: 'hey, boss, I just say you are the biggest asshole I ever knew', then of course he might get upset and say: 'well, Ok then you get only standard promotion or whatever.' But I mean this could happen in any order case or with any other record label. You just have to do your job and when you do this everyone is fine and there's nothing to worry about.

I heard you were working for Ablaze magazine and bad tongues say that this was the only reason why you succeeded in signing to Nuclear Blast; you had the contacts, so....

Sathonys: Yeah, I was working for four years with Ablaze magazine. ...but you have to consider; what was the last band that was featured in Ablaze magazine, that is on Nuclear Blast? ... it's years ago! Because Ablaze magazine doesn't work with Nuclear Blast at all – they have a very bad relationship from the beginning. And I think it's the label that Peter Schramm, the editor of Ablaze hates most of all, so there's no connection at all between Ablaze and this. I mean as I said, I met Andy Siry, the A & R manager something like in '92 to or something. I met him at a rock café in Mainz, my hometown. Route 66 it was called and back then he had this distribution – it was called Master Records (or something sounding alike –ed) or so and he distributed many progressive metal, thrash bands – he was manager for **Dark Millennium** for example. And back then I was the official distributor for Anathema. I distributed their second demo, right after they had changed their name into Anathema 'All Faith is lost', I guess it was called. So we got in touch, you know – he was doing the distribution for Dark Millennium and I for Anathema and we exchanged T-shirts and stuff. And we just stayed in contact since then and eh... I mean it was luck, but it didn't have anything to do with Ablaze magazine.

For how many albums have you signed?

Sathonys: For five albums.
So you have three more to go... Did you like the security of having a record deal for five albums?

Sathonys: Yeah... It's no security at all, you know, because record contracts are for one album and then there are a certain amount of options. And we had one album and four options, which means that the record label can say at any point, after any album: 'I don't like you anymore, you are off', but we don't have the freedom to say this, you know. It's like this with every record label, for example the standard contract of

Century Media now, is for one album and six options, so it's for seven albums. And after one album the record label can say: 'OK, you didn't sell enough records – be lucky with another label', but you as an artist are signed to this label for this time or this amount of releases.

So that might be an advantage of a small label – that you have more freedom and that you can both quit, or...

Sathonys: I think the main reason to do this is for a label is just to have the security that when you put a lot of money into advertising that you're sure that after the next album the artist isn't switching to another label. So let's say when you promote a band like Dimmu Borgir for, I don't know how much money you put into such a band. Let's just say something like one hundred thousand or two hundred thousand Marks and then right after the album's out the band says: 'Oh well, we now go to Virgin Records or Sony' and the label then isn't very happy with it at all.

Akaia – he was singing with you (he did the vocals on the first album, because Vlad wasn't allowed to return from Rumania). Is he still in Asaru?

Sathonys: Yeah, he still works with Asaru and they will release a third demo soon. I guess they already recorded it and music-wise it's also very good. I think they'll succeed in getting a record deal.

Are there any labels interested already?

Sathonys: I don't know, I mean it's more the traditional style of black metal and I don't know which label might be interested, but concerning just the quality, it's good enough, I guess.

Will he also continue to work for Agathodaimon?

Sathonys: I think so yes, I mean, it will certainly be a problem with Vlad to have him on a steady basis with us. I don't know what we'll do when Vlad is able to stay in Germany. I don't know what we'll do with Akaia, because he helped the band out so much, but we always said that Vlad is the original singer and that if he's able to come back to Germany he will stay in the band and Akaia more or less is a session vocalist. Although he has worked so long with us... I don't know what we'll do – we'll have to see.

I heard that he's also contributing to your material, is that correct?

Sathonys:... Akaia?

Yeah

Sathonys: Well, yeah, he worked on, what's the song – 'Heaven's Coffin' – it's more or less his creation. I also did one riff on that song, but...

Vlad:... the last one...

Sathonys: Yeah, the last song

Vlad: No, the last song...

Sathonys: Yeah, the last riff on the last song, yeah.

How did you get in touch with Gerald Axelrod to make all these nice pictures? (The layout of the booklet of Agathodaimon's second album 'A Higher Art of Rebellion' is stuffed with them)

Sathonys: It was shortly before we recorded the album, I guess. I was still looking for a cover and for one or two weeks I ran to every bookstore and postershops I could come across, just to have a look which motive to

take. You know, I was quite desperate, because I didn't find anything that suited to the band and then in a shop I saw this book '**Als lebten die Engel auf Erden**' and I found it very appealing and I went to the lady who ran the shop and asked if I could get the address of the pressing company – it was the EUL-Verlag, which had published the book. And after I had rang them they were even so kind to give me the telephone number of Gerald Axelrod and I spoke to him. It turned out he was also a fan of bands like **Theatre of Tragedy** for example and he liked our music much and we made a good... not a contract, but an agreement concerning the rights to his pictures.

Did you have to pay or did he say: 'Oh, you can use them if just state my name and the number of my book'?

Sathonys: Now we had to pay him some, but it's nothing compared to the sum you would have to pay if you would have to pay if you'd work with Simon Marson (fair chance that this name is misspelled – humble apologies – ed)) for example. And Gerald is really good!

One of these pictures on page 9, on the first album, the one with a lot of bones is also on the cover of 'Nightwork' by Diabolical Masquerade. Is that a coincidence? And what is it actually, this picture?

Sathonys: I think this cathedral is named Kutna Hora and it's based in former Czechoslovakia, somewhere. I think it's a very famous cathedral, but I don't know exactly where it is and I haven't been there. The strange thing it's a real church if I'm not mistaken and I'm also in touch with the lady who shot the photos for Diabolical Masquerade. This is also a coincidence, that I got her address – I mean it's not the same photo as you could recognise... it's a little disturbing or evil or whatever.

About the production of the new album, it's much more primitive I would say than the first one... is that because of the recording facilities in Rumania, or.... I don't know

(laughter and quasi indignation from the Rumanian delegation)

Sathonys: I only can state my opinion. Just concerning from the technique I would say you can compare the eastern and western standard, but...

Vlad: The sound engineers don't have much experience with this metal domain, so it was kind of we were telling him what to do actually. One was working the mixer and the other one with the computer in the end – so we were telling him: 'Hey, we want this and that', and he was doing something, but not really what we wanted, so...

That's a pity... wasn't there the possibility to record everything in Germany except for Vlad's contribution...?

Sathonys: The problem is that we would have needed the songs to be finished first. Vlad does most of the songwriting therefore it was simply hard to get everything finished before and also there is the problem that in the studio they have a one inch machine, you know and normally in the eastern studios you have a two inch master-tape, so you would need another machine just to transfer the tape and everything, so it would just be complicated. And also, if the master-tapes would get lost somewhere it would have been a catastrophe.
Vlad: We didn't want to risk so much...

(To Vlad) Did you play any guitar on the album?

Vlad: Me??? I have...

...That's another rumour, I heard.

Vlad: Where do you hear all these rumours?

(...well like Einstein said: The secret to success is knowing how to hide your sources....) One of the rumours I heard is that you recorded in Rumania, because the guitarists in Agathodaimon weren't able to play certain parts, and you were....

Vlad: Well, the problem was that, I was so lazy to... I composed most of the material and I was so lazy to send them the notes and stuff, but it was already so late and the date of entering the studio was already approaching, so I thought, you just come here and learn something... I'll play the guitars, I'll record the guitars and you learn them by the time and I guess two songs weren't so ready, so well structured before the studio and we just finished them in the studio, so.

Which tracks?

Sathonys: I think, Neovampirism

Vlad: Neovampirism and eh...h...

The sample at the beginning of that track, where does that come from?

Vlad: This is a techno-priest - it's a real sample from America. It is a church and this guy is preaching before thousands of people.

Byron: And you can hear Vlad: 'Satan!!', haha.
Vlad: Yeah, I am screaming the opposite stuff. I don't believe in such crap like Satan or God or something - it was rather fun stuff.

About you returning to Germany - you said there was a possibility that you, in the near future you could go back....

Vlad: Yeah, there are two possibilities...

... except marrying of course...

Vlad: ...oh well, except that, there's only one
(..laughter)

Was there anybody in particular you had in mind for marrying...?

Vlad: Yes, ..ehm Cindy Crawford!

(.. more laughter...)

Vlad: But I guess it won't happen, so. I don't want to marry, OK -so....

But apart from that there is no option...?

Vlad: There is one option....

Sathonys:.. he would need to get a working contract.

Vlad: For one year, for six months, I don't know, I don't care... And it doesn't have to be from Germany, it can also be from Luxembourg or from Holland or from Greece, or something. I have... let's say I can go to any Schengen-country. But not particularly Germany; I have got some problems there - we were gonna fix them, but I need some back up.... so.

Another question concerning the recording of your latest album. Isn't it a rather stressful situation when you enter a studio, songs unfinished, not knowing what you'll find in Rumania?

Sathonys: Yeah, I mean eh...

Vlad: I'm kind of used to the situation, I always like to change the songs

Sathonys:.. yeah, he always does that.

Vlad: When I send them a song three months before entering the studio, it might happen that I change something before we can enter the

studio, so.

Sathonys: That's why I travelled to Rumania one week before we started recording...

Vlad: ... and you also came in the winter...

Sathonys: I came in the winter when he had some songs already finished.

Vlad: It's hard to work without a band - I write something and then I have think if this would fit, if they can come up with some better ideas. I have to listen how the band plays the stuff, so it was kind of hard to get in the studio and to organise and to record something that we didn't rehearse so much.

So how large is your share in the composing of the tracks...

Vlad:..pfff, I can't count them.

Sathonys: The majority.

So you (Vlad) send the rest of the band a tape and you (Sathonys) start rehearsing the track in Germany with the rest of the band...

Sathonys: Yeah, well part of this, part of that. I mean when I was there in winter, we wrote down a few song and at the end I learned my parts on my guitar and then I formed the parts that Hyperion, the other guitarist for example would have to play and stuff like that... We also spoke on the phone and through the internet.

Vlad: Also in the studio - we created some parts, so...

About the live line-up, there are a lot of names in the CD-booklet. Is everybody going to be there on stage?

Sathonys: Not really, I mean, Byron - he's only mentioned as vocalist on the album - he also does the keyboards, because Christina she wasn't able to come with us on tour, because she has final exams at school... and it's the same with Akaias, he has a new job and he's doing his trial period, and he isn't allowed to get more than a few days off, so that's why is only with us for the last two shows, but apart from that everyone is there.

Vlad: And there are two gigs where I can't be there.

Who will handle the vocals then?

Sathonys: Shoggoth - he does the car wash job on this tour...

Shoggoth: That's me...

And in what band do you play....

Vlad: Come a bit closer....

Shoggoth: Insignium.

And you're still not signed?

Shoggoth: No..

Sathonys: No, .. it was a guy, that... I got to know him through the internet, through his homepage. It turned out that he's a really good vocalist and I just asked him if he'd be interested to try in Agathodaimon as he always mentions it's too commercial for him....

Bookings go through Black Daimon promotion. The manager is called M. Wickler that is you, no?

Sathonys: Yeah, that is me.

Is this a small company only for the promotion of Agathodaimon or are there also other bands under BD's supervision?

Sathonys: I wanted to enlarge it also to other bands, but I mean this was just basic on the idea that I was also playing with **Nocte Obducta** and I thought it would be quite a good

idea to enlarge it and to work with other bands, but I just realised that it is far too much work to do, so it's more or less only Agathodaimon now.

About Nuclear Blast - you are still on with them for a long time - are you still satisfied with what they are doing for you?

Sathonys: Yeah, I am very much satisfied with it. I mean, of course you can't compare the work they do for Agathodaimon with the work that they do for **Hammerfall** or **Dimmu Borgir**, but you always have to see the relations, you know.... And if a band sells ten times more records then your own band does, of course, you can't get the same....

Vlad: You can't compare us to another band - musical wise and also... we're at the beginning, this is only our second album... **Dimmu Borgir** they have got far more records out.

So what kind of number of albums do you sell, if I may ask?

Sathonys: From the last record it was near twenty thousand, something like that - it is the best selling black metal record from Germany, so that was great....

What do you expect for the new one?

Sathonys: I hope it will be the same amount, you know there is a little recession or whatever it's called concerning black metal at this time. There are so many albums out and no one knows which album to buy, so most people stick to the more known band. And also it's a tough situation for the fans, because our new album features more elements, more styles... And some of them of course just wanted to have '**Blacken the Angel** - part II' and now, I mean... The most important thing for many people is sometimes the vocalist - when you get used to a vocalist it is really an important part of the band and I mean Vlad always was with us, he did the first two demos of course, but then on the first album he couldn't be heard. So many people thought 'Well, what is this?', when they heard the second album, because they awaited to hear Akaias voice only or whatever....

Vlad: Also the production....Most of the people don't like it so....

Sathonys: There are some structures I think that...

Vlad:.. they are not so linear and so... so, don't know what to call it... like any other band - like **Dimmu Borgir**, or some other band - they have the same fucking production every time. And this is getting boring after a second - to hear the same and the same production.

So you are satisfied with the production (of your album)?

Vlad: Not really....

Sathonys:..could have been better, but I think it's quite a unique production - it doesn't sound like any other studio, at least. An I mean, the problem with the black metal scene itself is; I would say that it is so limited to certain things - many people await the same album or the same structures with every new album that comes out and it's just, I mean there are so many...

Vlad: We don't wanna fit in to a certain matter, so

You don't want to have a formula and stick to that with the next ten albums....

Vlad: ..no, you can hear that on this album – we have a lot of variety, we have many musical styles – you can not say this about any other band, I guess... not this extreme
 Sathonys: If you're once in any direction I think it's hard for you to get out of it. Imagine **Darkthrone** would do a very polished and high produced album, I think their fans would be quite pissed off.

About side project – which of you has a side projects?

Sathonys:.... You first...?
 Vlad: Hmm, well I guess you know about my 'ancient' side project **Drusus**....

...This project is no longer running...?

Vlad: Well, actually – yes, I have something else now: **RA**. Have you heard of it?

I saw the CD – it's for sale right?

Vlad:.... and this is actually a development to **Drusus** – it's like an evolution. It's something else though, but it features the same basis.

And I also do the whole stuff – some guitars, some keys and...., but **Byron** is singing and he also has a track there. Most of the songs were composed in the past, like three years ago or something....

... About the same time you were working on Drusus..?

Vlad: Yes, but they now are... I tried to give them another touch, to give another aura. And it's not like, you could say about **Drusus** that it was like metal combined with dark wave – am I right? How would you describe it?

... Geez, that's quite hard to say...

Vlad: For me too... for you it must be even harder. And I guess **RA** is more than that, it's no more metal, it's no more dark wave, but the essence of both is kept and it's... I tried to build on this like... to integrate classical influences and rock and also pop stuff and eh even a touch of Rumanian folklore. I wanted to keep every track very different from the others. Because I always get bored hearing a CD where every track has the same structure and the same... **RA** will always be like that – every track or every record will be – not totally different, but different from the future ones.

And do you have a record deal for RA?

Vlad: Well, a friend of mine has a... I do everything by my own, so I pay the studio, I pay for the CDs, I pay for everything, so. A friend of mine is head of a record label in Rumania and I just asked him: 'Can I come with a finished product and will you then release my debut CD through your label...' it's also a limited edition of 2000 copies

...Any more guys who have side projects?

Sathonys: I... Matthias and myself were playing in **Nocte Obducta**. After the second album I decided that I can't work with this band any longer, because I had to move to Donzdorf, to **Nuclear Blast** while they lived in Mainz before and it's 270 kilometres away from Mainz. We have at least the weekends for **Agathodaimon** and there

is not enough time to work with two bands at the same time... so it was just a natural decision to leave the band. Also, I think it's a really good band – I would have loved to stay with them, but it's just not possible.

Vlad: They play more the traditional way of black metal...

Sathonys:.... Yeah, but....

Vlad:... more than we!

Sathonys: Have you heard **Nocte Obducta**?



Yes, I actually thought that your latest album was going more into the direction of Nocte Obducta than your previous album Sathonys:....of Agathodaimon???

Yeah.. song like, eh... the one with the Rumanian title

Vlad: 'Glasul Artei Viitoare'

It's a...

Vlad:.... very good!

The last riff, the volume goes down and goes back up again; you did that with Nocte Obducta as well

Vlad: That was my thing, I also helped out in the mixing session after the recording of the album, so all is played a little different

Sathonys: You have to know that the material that is composed for **Nocte Obducta** is solely composed by Marcel – he's the songwriter – and he isn't involved in **Agathodaimon** at all. Whatever it is with **Nocte Obducta**...

Vlad: It's a coincidence. I didn't even hear the album of **Nocte Obducta** (How do you know they play a more traditional type of black metal then? Ed.)

Sathonys: I just did my bass-lines and this was all. So there can't be any comparison concerning the compositions of both bands and Marcel also hates it – it's the worst thing you can tell him, if you say: 'You sound like **Agathodaimon**'....

More side projects?

Sathonys: **Hyperion** has a solo project, but I don't know in which state it is right now. And I mean, **Byron**, he has his own band as well in Rumania

Byron: It's also called **Byron**.

Vlad: They're the best unknown band. They will record a demo in the future...

Byron: ...and then we will see if we can manage a record deal.

Vlad: ... it's very cool stuff! It's something completely different.

Byron:... madness. I went to school of music – I studied flute and I think I am making music for 15 years. I know how to play the violin, piano,

guitar and flute... and voice.

Did you have a classical education in singing?

Byron: Yes, I did have a singing course 'Canto' – classic, but I hate it I think.

Vlad: You must hear it! We will play a special song '**Body of Clay**' and he will show you.

Byron: It's a pity that we can't play '**Glasul Artei Viitoare**'

You seem to have been very professional from the very beginning – is this due to experience in previous bands?

Sathonys: Not really. I played in a band before for a short period of time, but it was in a totally other direction. I also played in a school band

(... sounds of despise from Vlad....!)

... I mean it was the only possibility to play in a band and to play guitar.

Vlad: Actually **Agathodaimon** was the first big act for all of us. We were like virgins before, hahaha

Sathonys: When I look at my person I would say concerning the band; it's just that I want to do things as perfect as can be.

Vlad: **Agathodaimon** – it means struggling for perfection, so... In the future I hope we can manage to work tighter together and we will show that we can do more than we have done 'till now.

Do you think it will become more extreme in the sense that the diversity will increase?

Vlad: I can not say now. You know, you wanna do something and you go into the studio with a certain idea or something and it turns out by the end of the studio-session, when you're mixing it, it is... it became different from what you wanted it to be – we're not...let's say, maybe when we'll be thirty or thirty five, we can go into the studio with a certain idea and it will remain that idea, because now we are so young and... how can I say it... you put your previous experience into the next record.

The executive producer is Markus Staiger – the big boss of Nuclear Blast, more or less. So in what way is he involved?

Sathonys: He gets the money...

Vlad: We're the bank.

Sathonys: Executive producer just means that he handed out the money to have it for recording. He doesn't stand behind the mixing desk or something like that.

You always had some gothic elements...

(... Vlad, pretending to put a shotgun into my direction and pulling the trigger at point blank gives me just a small indication that I'm entering risky territory right now – ed)

You disagree...?

Vlad: Yes!

Sathonys: Yeah, I mean 'gothic' – I don't know what to combine with this word 'gothic'

Vlad: What do you mean with gothic by the way? (Way to go Vlad! Shoot first think later! - ed)

Sathonys: ... is it keyboard or female vocals?

NO! not at all – just the 'gothic' atmosphere in the music and even the photos in the booklet.

Sathonys: Yeah, OK. I can't share your view concerning the music. Concerning the

aesthetics I would say there is a connection I would say, but it's just because black metal and gothic – some basic elements might be the same; this antipathy against Christianity or wearing black clothes or anything there is a connection. But concerning the music, if I hear the word gothic, I only think of bands like Theatre of Tragedy or...

Oh, no, when I talk about gothic music, I mean bands like Fields of the Nephilim or Sisters of Mercy, or...

Sathonys: Sisters, I think, is the only band that Vlad and myself like from the genre.

Take for example a track like 'Body of Clay' – in my opinion this song holds many characteristics from the gothic genre, like the guitar sound for instance...

Vlad: In the beginning 'Body of Clay' was actually meant to be for RA. But the guys liked it so much, so

Sathonys: Yeah, perhaps it's German... it sounds a little sinister or dark or whatever.

Vlad: Maybe the text, the lyrics.

...As well..

Vlad: It's very macabre, very romantic...

...that's gothic as well...

Vlad: That's why I say so, but music-wise, I don't know – I don't think so...

Sathonys: Many people tell us that there are gothic influences or anything – it is just, that I mean at least myself in person, I can't find any parallels, not in the music....

Now for another rumour... concerning gothic

Vlad: Can you please make me a list of all these rumours that you have heard...I am rather curious.

I heard it from somebody from Mainz, so...

Sathonys: Aha Nocte Obducta....

No it was from somebody who likes Nocte Obducta....

Sathonys: Yaya, tell me something...

He said, you were doing some modelling for gothic clothing...

Sathonys: A ja, well this was this 'Extra'-fashion catalogue – you know 'Extra' is the biggest let's say gothic, dark wave, anything.. black metal... furthermore Dimmu Borgir, Theatre of Tragedy also Crematory.. I think Dani of Cradle of Filth will be in the next catalogue, also Ancient, perhaps.

It's just that I like this way of clothing – it had nothing to do with the whole band, it was just me as an individual person and I mean it's a good way to get your clothes – it's much cheaper.

Did you get any response to that from people who came up to you after a show for example?

Sathonys: Some of them liked it, some of them said: 'Oh, that's very commercial – just look at what you wore at the time, look at this picture hahaha... you did wear this'... and everything. It was a job you know, 'cos I can't... at first I thought I could decide which clothes to take on for the photo-shootings, but when I appeared there... I was the last one for the shooting so, there were only few clothes left that had been featured there and so I had to take or to wear some clothes that I wouldn't wear in my private life. But I mean it was OK and it was a lot of fun

and the people make up their mind about it and exaggerate everything. It was just fun for me...

Did you like the style of..

Sathonys: It depends. I like black lace very much... extraordinary clothes in general. I wouldn't wear any skirts or anything but, I mean, but I like it in general.

Vlad: Somewhere in Germany I guess, at a gig there were two guys wearing a dress-coat like they wear in Scotland... a kilt. I went: 'What the fuck... do we play gay-metal or something?'

Some stuff about the lyrics – 'The higher Art of Rebellion', what does that mean?

Vlad: What do you think?

I wondered, maybe something with the fall of Lucifer – I thought I had also recognised this topic in your lyrics, in 'Novus Ordo Seclorum'.

Vlad: 'Well, it's about this stuff of the angels, it's like a metaphor. I always think of angels like a metaphor for all the pure stuff, all the good stuff all the ... you know, when you think of something... Ok, when I think of something, let's say so, when I have to make an opinion, to make my opinion about this stuff, my first – what first comes up is colour – if something is pretty... it's hard to explain. If something is simple either in the thinking or in the presentation or in I don't know, the colour is white for me. Everything what... what the fuck... everything that is complicated... complex or obscure is dark for me. So I always think of angels like something very pure. It depends on the texts – In 'Novus Ordo Seclorum' it's a metaphor for all this...ehm...

Byron: ... money hahaha.

Vlad: ... all these illusions of the world, that it is so good. This angel represents this world and it doesn't have anything to do with Lucifer – because of this decaying, the angel of decay or something – this is like the world going down. The world and all this religions and all these matters... it's in years of decay.

Sathonys: I would have to totally disagree with this. I'm into angeology very much and I think that angels have nothing to do with a positive force at all. Angels in general...

Vlad: I didn't say it was a positive force.

Sathonys: Yeah, but you see it as something pure.

Vlad: I said it represents the world... also in the bible.

Sathonys: It's a very spiritual form of existence. The angel doesn't have any soul...

Vlad: You have got to realise that this is poetry. In poetry you can write about anything..

Sathonys: Of course...

Vlad: Do you understand? It is a word of metaphors...

Sathonys: The definition of an angel for me, I mean....

Vlad: I mean if he reads the lyrics of 'Body of Clay', he can come up with another interpretation than I do.

Sathonys: That's the funny thing, I... what I get...

Vlad: For myself I have two different interpretations for 'Body of Clay' – I wrote this, but I have two interpretations...

Sathonys: I also have an interpretation, which doesn't fit to this interpretation.

Vlad: One of them in the romantic way – where a guy; me or someone else who is dying....

Sathonys: ... two guys..

Vlad: Oh, shut up... and a girl who is becoming the last rose on his grave. Or I am the one who

is staying alive and the world is dying.
Byron: I have no interpretation of all this.

Thank you!

Byron: I think, I just feel it.

Sathonys: The interesting thing about these lyrics is that they are open to every form of interpretation. Everyone who listens to it, I guess, will have a very own kind of interpretation for the lyrics and that makes them so worthy in my opinion. They are very poetic – it's not the typical 'Hail Satan'-stuff and...

Vlad: For 'Cintec de Mormint', for the first song, I used lyrics from a very famous Rumanian lyricist, he's called Eminescu

You used his work for Drusus as well..

Vlad: Yes, it was the basis for Drusus. Also for RA.

The second track on the Drusus-EP had lyrics by someone else though...

Vlad: By Jorge Bacovia He is very, very grotesque. If I can manage sometime, I can try to translate the lyrics.

Sathonys: There are also some by Jorge Bacovia on my web-site now...

Vlad: ... five poems.

Can you tell some more about this person Eminescu?

Vlad: Wow, I can tell you his whole life if you want, but it will take some time.

Why is he so inspiring to you?

Vlad: He lived a century ago, but he has this urge to break out of this world, to find the real beauty in life, living itself. Not the living as we know it, because this is not a living. I guess this is more a struggle in this world. To live on is like a struggle for staying alive. And he discovered in his own words – Rumanian is a language is very, very melodic language when it comes to poetry – and all these rhymes and all these very complex metaphors he managed to create a very, very nice world. He says that he was a very romantic person – he has very nice, let's not say love-poems, but very nice romantic poems. Very, very...

Byron: Very, very, really very, very....

Vlad: And he also has something against society as a principle. As I wrote in the booklet, we had a translation for the first song 'Ne Cheama Pamintul (The Earth is Summoning Us)'

Why this particular poem?

Vlad: Because it brings up all the hate and all the... hate against the system – not the particular system, but the system that is ruling the world – any, government. It is like we are marionettes and the lyrics show, that during the history there were wars, like... Most of the wars were caused by religion.. races and religion.

You have got to read the English lyrics – I tried to translate them as good as possible.

Might I say that he's an anarchist in some way?

Vlad: Not really...

...Because he doesn't like the social structure and he doesn't like the religious structure...

Vlad: You gotta.. he was a religious actually, but he has some other opinion about religion. He has his own

definition of religion.

Byron: I think he was a humanist.

Vlad: Yeah, more or less. He was.. he found something beautiful in death, also. He created another world, besides life and death, in its own world.

Byron: But, you know, if you try to read the lyrics in English, it is not so miraculous.

Vlad: It's like the Rumanian language, does it.

That's why you use the Rumanian language...

Vlad: Yes. Also for the rhymes- it's so beautiful to read it. It's like Dante in Italian. I also like John Milton ('Paradise Lost'), better than Dante's 'Inferno' - very hard to read, but a very great work.

Did you study literature?

Vlad: Actually, no. I am very much into poetry, but I have never studied officially. I have been reading for many years and I am also writing and stuff... some good stuff, some bad stuff...

I noticed that clay is a repetitive element in the lyrics... it was in 'Body of Clay' and 'Novus Ordo Seclorum' - what does it stand for?

Vlad: Clay is like - It's when we die, the energy that keeps us alive, it disperses into nothingness, into the universe - something goes to heaven, something goes to hell, that's bullshit -.. anyway, it's physical stuff and the body goes to earth, it becomes again what it was: carbon. That's why clay. Body of clay is like....

...Ashes to ashes

ashes to ashes, dust to dust. And clay to clay...

There is not some link to the golden era..?

Vlad: No, no.

In the booklet there are three words: 'Memoritur si rege' - what does it mean?

Vlad: This is a very well known sentence from Eminescu. He wrote in his last strophe of 'Lucifer', which is a very known poem, a very long poem... it's a very nice love poem actually - it's published on our web-page. You can read it there in English. The last strophe says: ...

Sathonys: I will reign in my own kingdom...

Vlad: Yes, I will reign like Lucifer - he was a star, the morningstar and he came down to the earth as a man and he was in love with an earthling. But he couldn't... he was like a god, you know. At night he... when the night was over he had to go back to the stars. And he wanted to be with his love, but he didn't give up his nature for the love. And that's why the last two sentences are so very famous: 'And I will reign in my own kingdom, beautiful and cold' - beautiful is... memoritur is like undying, forever living and cold. Rege is cold.

Byron: But I think not because of his nature he has done so...

Vlad: Not only, I approve, but we cannot discuss the whole poem now.

Byron: No, because I hate women sometimes... I am not gay, but sometimes 'What is the fucking girl thinking'.

Vlad: It's a poem. It's poetry and that's why I wrote it in the first album, in the booklet: 'I am undying and cold'. The guys: Sathonys playing guitars and... I just was.

Sathonys.. to just have him on the list, you know, just as a statement...

Vlad: I didn't want to have stuff printed saying I had composed it.

Now another question for Sathonys - it's a rumour again...

Vlad: haha.. he, promise me to make a list!

I read in some interviews with Nargaroth...

Sathonys: I can tell you much about this stuff.

And he referred to some personal vendetta with you.

Sathonys: Ya, I think the reason for this is the same as with **Mystic Circle**. You know he also published 'Fuck Mystic Circle' shirts, I don't know if you have seen them, with Graf von Beelzebub on the backside and... it's just that he's a very jealous person. His girlfriend.. he's married to a person, to a lady with whom I was together with for a period of one year or more. And he just can't face the fact that somebody touched his girl before he did... and that's the sole problem, you know. He tried to convince her not to stay in contact with me, because he was just jealous you know... and it's the same with **Mystic Circle**. **Graf von Beelzebub**, the vocalist of **Mystic Circle**, he has also been together with this girl and that's his own problem. It's not because we are so commercial or anything, or that he's the king of underground. It's just that he's a little guy who's very jealous in every definition, you know. It's just that Claudia, he had posters of me on the wall and everything in her house and he didn't like that at all... also with **Graf von Beelzebub**. And that's why he always says in interviews: 'Oh, I hate this guy!', and everything, but ask him about the real reason...

...And I'll certainly start up getting death threats from him...

Sathonys: Ohhh, I don't think he has the guts to do it. I mean, at first, I don't have any hard feelings for him, you know. I even did an interview with him for **Metal Hammer**, I worked for the **German Metal Hammer**, because I liked the first album a lot...

... Is there a second album then..?

Sathonys: Not so far, I guess... And he was very neutral at that time. I even had a conversation with on the phone and he seemed to be a very intelligent guy at the time.

Vlad: ...at the time..

Sathonys: And right afterwards I heard some rumours and read some interviews where he wrote complete shit about me. I don't know what happened there or if **Claudia**.. her name is **Claudia** - his wife, said some things about me, that he didn't like or anything, I don't know. Perhaps he has some personal problems...

But in principle you don't have any problems with him...?

Sathonys: No, I don't care if he.. Of course I do care if he spreads shit about me, but if he has a personal problem with me it's not my problem - he can come up to me at any time and then we can discuss about it. But if he spreads shit about the band than it's something I might get angry about, because that is something that I would call totally unprofessional or anything. Because he does it.. or he claims to be true underground or whatever and it's just that he's not, let's say he's not an adult in anyway concerning his relationship. He should be aware of the fact that **Claudia** is a person who stays with her partner, but obviously he fears that somebody else might touch her and he's just a little insane I guess.

Then a question about the situation in Germany. I heard some troubling stories about the German black metal scene, death threats, nazi-extremism raids by national security, etc.. especially concerning the No Colours and the Darker Than Black label. Do you still want to be part of such scene?

Sathonys: No, of course not. I mean, we totally despise such artists or let's say those artists who claim to do black metal... I mean: look at some band that, uhm.. they don't have musical substance, you know. They do some rehearsal recordings and it's just total shit, but they have very extreme lyrics like- I don't know 'Heil Hitler' or anything and there are some followers in this scene that buy any shit as long as it is nazi stuff.

Vlad: This is for kindergarten

Sathonys: Yes or something. Of course we don't want to be compared to such kind of bands. We are in for the music, not for the image.

Vlad: I guess we are in high school and they are in kindergarten or something. But you don't care about this stuff, because I don't think we are part of any scene.

Are you going to take distance from black metal in general, by saying something like: 'He, we are Agathodaimon, we are doing our thing and you can call it whatever you like...?'

Sathonys: I think the roots are based in black metal and the.. something that fascinates me about the black metal is the atmosphere of the music, just the feeling that you get when you listen to some records.

Vlad: It's all about the atmosphere. And I don't think we play 'black metal' as it is... I think for me black metal is **Darkthrone**, **Immortal** and stuff like that... And I don't think we play like **Immortal**. We have, or most of our influences are from black metal, but we don't claim to be a black metal band. But nowadays, in the beginning some years ago, I always thought **Nuclear Blast**, our label promotes us as black metal, all the magazines and all the writer said we were playing black metal.. and I was very, very angry, because I don't feel we are.. we don't... I think black metal should be satanic. We are not satanic in any way. We are not religious or anti-religious or something. But nowadays I can live with this, because I know what we are doing now what we are capable of.

How healthy do you think the scene in Germany is at the moment?

Sathonys: It depends. There's a lot of rumours going around from band to band. I think it is much worse than it was years ago. I mean the quality of the bands is better now than it was years ago, but the underground-feeling, or let's say the definition of the term underground that I'd use is to support each other, you know, to support fanzines, bands support each other, they arrange gigs, exchange gigs or anything and nowadays it's just that everybody is jealous and spreads rumours.

Vlad: And I don't get this, I mean. You can do his at a higher level, but not here in the underground.

Sathonys: The strange thing is that years ago, the thrash metal fans, they said: 'Look at these posers from LA, they are just too wimpy or shitty' or whatever... and now bands from the same scene the attack each other and this is something ridiculous I would say. It is no support at all and there is no scene when the scene fights itself - against each other.

Are there certain elements, next to the extremism you dislike? What do you think about a band like Mystic Circle for example.. about the way they present themselves to the press?

Sathonys: Eh, Mystic Circle is red colour for me, because as I said their vocalist Graf von Beelzebub also has a personal problem with me because I have been together with Claudia...

... Must be an interesting young lady...

I mean, he doesn't like me as a person, but I think there's anything between both bands.



There's no quarrel or anything, but ... I mean I also have a certain respect for him, because he gained a lot with his band. He is the driving force behind the band, but I don't think he has a very good taste when it comes to certain things... you know, running around on stage with these horns, it looked a little ridiculous I would say, but anyway, it's his own vision of black metal or what black metal should look like and I respect that. I don't have anything against that, but it's nothing I would...

Vlad: There must be a certain amount of respect between the bands, 'cos otherwise everything is going wrong. For my part: I don't like Mystic Circle – I think their music is pretty primitive and childish.

Sathonys: The new album is very good music-wise

Vlad: I didn't hear it yet... so I can't talk about it.

Sathonys: I mean, I could reveal some inside stuff about this, but that would be backstabbing and I don't like it.

Vlad: We don't have anything against them personally... with anyone.... Only with you guys if you talk shit about us....

Can you recommend any bands from the region of Mainz?

Sathonys: The only bands that are from Mainz are, I guess, Nocte Obducta and Agathodaimon. There are also some other bands doing more traditional metal like Shark Rage. Our keyboard player Christine once played in Shark Rage. But apart from this I can't remember. There was a band called Fracture, which was really cult Mainz, because it was something like a total Judas Priest clone, you know – even the vocalist looked like Rob Halford. They split up years ago and there's no real scene in Mainz or the surrounding... I don't know. The only good bands from Germany that I could recommend are Lunar Aurora – I like them very much, Disaster are very good at what they're doing and Ancient Ceremony.. Although I don't like the second album that much, but the vocalist

is a really nice guy... Empyrium are good and...

What about smaller bands?

Sathonys: I could mention many.... But I have heard from some smaller bands that they despise Agathodaimon in anyway, because we are so commercial...

Vlad: The think we play commercial stuff, I don't get that. They think we earn so much money, that we.. they think we're rock stars or something – I don't get this.

Sathonys: If you would sum everything up that we have earned with this band I think it wouldn't even cover the costs we had so far for everything... the rent of the of the rehearsal room and stuff.

Vlad: I guess it's due to the fact that we play so diverse – that we have so many influences and that we show that we can play more than this primitive stuff.

Sathonys: If you just consider.... If you think about twenty thousand copies sold, it's a number that would be a dream for underground bands, but you have to subtract the costs that you had in studio, you know, for travelling , for everything.. and you know in the end you don't get money then.

Vlad: They travelled to Rumania by plane and there were like six guys... and that's very expensive.

Sathonys: So we don't earn money. And I think that 'commercial' is a very strange word when it is connected to the metal scene I guess. I mean in the pop-scene you can be commercial, but not in metal – even Dimmu Borgir, I would never call them commercial. They do what their fans want to get and they do it on a very professional basis and everything... and they also sell a lot of records, but it's not commercial, it's all the same stuff that they did years ago. It's even more extreme than their first album – I don't get the point concerning this discussion about being commercial or not.

But there is a lot of silly merchandise



around – I heard that there are even Dimmu Borgir condoms around at the moment, so....

Sathonys: Yeah, this was a joke with **Sonic Seducer**, it was a magazine, I think it was at the Wacken festival, that they had an issue out with.. I mean it was not a real Dimmu Borgir condom, it was just a usual condom and they had made a new package for it, you know with the Dimmu Borgir cover on it. I think Type O Negative did this in a much better way. I think it was just a joke – I mean they don't sell it as a merchandise article and when it comes to merchandise, I think it just

depends on the fans – when they want something from Dimmu Borgir, then they buy it... and if they don't want it, they don't have to buy it, so.. I don't care – of course there are a lot of T-shirts around, but there's no Dimmu Borgir toilet seat or anything.
.. not yet at least.

Any recommendations from Rumania?

Vlad: Which bands do you know?

I only know Negura Bunget as far as the music goes

Byron: Aha..hahaha

Sathonys: Abigail..

Vlad: OK, recommendations... **Byron..** for black metal we have **Negura Bunget**, but they're not so good...

... There should be this white metal band, which should be really good...

Vlad: **God...** they are very good. They play cool stuff.

Byron: I will recommend something, but it's not suitable for every ear...

Vlad: There is also black metal from Bucharest, called **Dies Irae**, which in my opinion is better than Negura Bunget... They only recorded on demo so far.

They wanted to record their second demo now... and then see what happens.

Byron: I'll recommend you **Kumm** – they play the best progressive I ever heard. And it's not really old, because it's new, but it's not metal. It's something alternative, progressive, but I really like it.... And they are my friends.

OK, now for the final final question – you re-recorded 'Ribbons – Requiem' as a bonus for the bonus edition...

Sathonys: It was not really re-recorded. We had something like a playback version of it without the vocals from the first album and Andre just made new vocals, cut something out...

Vlad: I was playing again with computers.. I am sorry – so if you find anything strange on the album it's me... blame me, don't blame the others. You said you had this Drusus-EP...

...Yeah..

Vlad: So you might have recognised that 'Ribbons – Requiem' is the same song as 'Nervi de Toamna' the second track on the EP. Actually 'Ribbons – Requiem' is very, very fucking old – it's roots lie in the first demo of Drusus, like in 1995. So, I guess the first version of this song was pretty dark wave, more keyboards, a bit softer and a bit crazier and we liked it a lot and played it in a metal type.

OK that was it....

Sathonys: Thank you guys for the interview

(Rahab and Joris)

Discography:

CARPE NOCTEM D

NEAR DARK D

BLACKEN THE ANGEL (NUCLEAR BLAST)

HIGHER ART OF REBELLION (NUCLEAR BLAST)



Please tell about the very beginning of Moonsorrow. (When, how, why and by whom was the band formed?) Please tell a bit about your previous projects - were you two already making music or doing something else in the musical field together at the time?

Moonsorrow was formed in 1995 by Henri and me. Why? For the sake of playing some more music... we had this paganistic concept we wanted to express, so to say. And how? The same way we formed all the other projects back then, i.e. the other one of us got an immortal idea and consequences followed. So we had a significant number of different projects already, however those projects are more or less dead by now. Moonsorrow has survived through the years, because it was something we really wanted to do and eventually it even became an actual band. The projects we had prior to Moonsorrow included such legends as **Ahti** and **Masturbory** as well as dozens of one-rehearsal projects that never recorded anything (at least not to be published). We were really expressing ourselves in every way from thrash metal to folk music... and as we were kids, the results were usually pretty terrible. The experience, however, was valuable.

About the band name - is there any deliberate reference to the Celtic Frost classic 'Sorrows of the Moon'? Do you know the song and the alternative version 'Tristesses de la Lune' - what do you think? Would you consider covering the track (despite the fact that it has been done before by Therion and Nocturnal Mortum)? What does the concept of Moonsorrow mean? Should it be placed in your heathen views?

36 So you revealed it! Actually it was that Celtic Frost track our band was

For the ones who read my review of Moonsorrow's second demo 'Tama Ikuinen Talvi' in Mandrake #1, it will come as no surprise that there's an interview feature with this incredible upcoming band in this issue. The Finnish heathen metal band Moonsorrow is one of the biggest underground promises, in the humble opinion of yours sincerely and 'Tama' still is one of the very best demos I have ever heard. So shortly after the release of our first issue I decided to contact bass-player/ vocalist Ville, who turned out to be a very nice and sympathetic person. He immediately offered all his co-operation in order to make a nice in-depth interview - I even received an advance-recording of their upcoming 'Suden Uni' album. In the following interview you can read all about Moonsorrow's heathen pilgrimage, both musically and philosophically, the numerous underground activities of the dedicated band members and.... Ville even offers some specials excerpts from 'Finnish for alcoholics & rangers'!. Need I say more? I hope you'll enjoy reading this interview with one of the most pleasant interview partners I had so far, just as much as I enjoyed doing it. This band really deserve your support!!

originally named after, and when Henri introduced the compound for our moniker, I thought it would be a good symbol for picturing our band. And it is. Moonsorrow consists of two powerful words, the combination of which can have many meanings; it doesn't require any strict concept to be connected to, and neither have we ever felt like doing so. I don't know if it particularly reflects our heathen views, but it for sure suits our music and also our Finnish origin. I mean, as a posteriori as my impression would be, our music pictures 'moonsorrow', and 'moonsorrow' as a symbol mirrors the dear Finnish melancholy or whatever. About the Celtic Frost track then, I think it's a good, innovative piece in itself. (I don't quite get the cross-artistic attempt in the French version, but undeniably it shows how 'ahead' the band was at their time.) Covering that track isn't a totally excluded option, but we haven't thought about it before. If we decide to cover a track, we are led by the criterion of being able to give something new to the song as arranged by Moonsorrow and it shouldn't matter if the same track has been covered a thousand times before if only our version would be

distinguishable from the others.

Looking over your discography, a striking element are the cancelled releases. What went wrong with the 'Thorns of Ice'-demo? Why didn't it satisfy your expectations? Did lack of experience play a role in that? Then for the promo '97 - what happened here? Were you in a phase that experimenting was a higher goal in itself at the time? Were you striving for originality? Why did you take these recordings up in your discography though they were never released?

What didn't go wrong with 'Thorns of Ice'? We recorded it very shortly after Moonsorrow was formed, which roughly means that we hadn't had enough time yet to find our own style, to some extent resulting in numbness and naivety of the compositions. Of course we also had severe lacks in our experience, but I think it didn't play such a role in the unsuccessfulness of 'Thorns of Ice'. After all, the songs were pretty damn easy to play. Not that the music in itself would have been a total failure - in retrospect it was a good picture of our

capabilities in 1996 - Moonsorrow just didn't sound ready yet. I remember that we were about to release the demo anyway, but thanks to the divine intervention of half of the mastered material disappearing mysteriously we very cleverly withdrew from the idea. Then for the promo '97 - the disaster. It wasn't like we would have been striving for originality, we never were; we just wanted to try and write a different, somewhat joyous song. If it wasn't a horrible attempt already, I made it a nightmare by trying to sing clean! Furthermore, we blew up the mix by making the channels distort very badly. The simple reason why these recordings are placed in our discography even though they do not exist, so to say, is that they still have their position as milestones on the path of Moonsorrow - they are a part of what we have done.

In my opinion, with each release by Moonsorrow, it's like listening to a completely different band. What do you think of this? What's the reason for this? I can understand something like 'natural development', but this is really extreme. Have you found a musical direction now you will stick to or will we never know what to expect from Moonsorrow?

I have to disagree, because I can find the characteristic 'Moonsorrow-sound' on all of our recordings. Perhaps it's because I've been there, but if you compare 'Tämä Ikuinen Talvi' with 'Metsä', you rather easily notice that it's made by the same band, only two years older and wiser. It's faster because we wanted it to be faster and it's more symphonic not only because we wanted it to be that way, but also because we had obtained better synth equipment; on 'Metsä' there already are traces of 'orchestral ambitions', just played with a terrible game-console-alike instrument. And if you compare 'Suden Uni' with these demos, you can only conclude that musically it's not so radically different from either one! The most striking element must be the reduced speed, but we wanted it that way, and as you know 'Metsä' you know that it's not a new thing for Moonsorrow. Although I do not foresee such radical turns in our continuation now, we will always develop, and on the next release - as with every previous work - we will again be closer to how we wanted it all to sound. And don't say you don't know what to expect... expect Moonsorrow!

Your first released demo 'Metsä' sounded like Immortal (Diabolical Fullmoon Mysticism-days) with keyboards to me. What's the most memorable response you got to this demo? What do you think of this recording nowadays? Will you ever re-record these tracks? Thinking back of the recording session - what comes to your mind?

That reference was new to me indeed! I don't think 'Metsä' sounds like Immortal at all, but that's your opinion and I can't argue with it. Rather, it reminds me of Enslaved (which I think was a part of the purpose), but be it what it is, 'Metsä' is a good effort and I'd say we can be proud of it. Thinking back of the recording session, I remember it was going really smoothly, because it took us only a day to record and mix everything; we weren't trying to make any hi-fi stuff you know. The sounds are bad and so are the vocals, but the songs themselves turned out good. And because of

their potential, we have already discussed re-recording the tracks, probably for some exclusive release. We have already rearranged 'Hvergelmir' and played it live and it sounds marvellous indeed. The most memorable response to 'Metsä' must be from a reviewer who concluded 'horrible sounding computer drums, boring riffs and annoying sounds', giving us 1 point of 5... or from the other who asked 'what's actually positive here?', still giving us 0,5 points more. Well, of course there were the folks who liked the demo, but they weren't the critics.

Your second official demo 'Tämä Ikuinen Talvi' has become an absolute masterpiece. But as with the birth of beautiful children - the labour was hard! Please tell about all the things that went wrong. How did you cope with this? Weren't you taken by total despair after so many fuck-ups?

Thank you very much for your compliment. I'm very satisfied with that demo as well, and perhaps part of the satisfaction is in the happy ending of the painful recording process. So where to start? The first obstacle was that we had several problems with booking the studio of Sibelius-lukio, because it was often full and a few times even double-booked - which shows something about their organisation. And on one of the occasions we entered that studio the mixing table had simply disappeared! (Or was it just broken? Hell, I can't remember.) When we finally got things together and got as far as recording the synth tracks (including the drum computer), everything was destroyed, and we had to start all over again. And when we finally got on the recording again and managed to take in the synths and the guitars, everything was destroyed again when we were recording the bass! I have to admit that we were both very pissed off because of everything that had happened, but I think it only increased our will to get 'Tämä Ikuinen Talvi' done. Anyhow, it was a huge relief when we finally made it.

Up to and including 'Tämä..' you worked with a drum computer instead of an actual drummer and in previous interviews you stated that Moonsorrow would always be the two of you. What made you change your mind and led to the introduction of Baron Tarwonen? Did the option of playing live play a role in this? Do you like the way it is working out?

On our demos we worked with a drum computer (on 'Thorns Of Ice' I actually played the drums, but as it was never released, fortunately no one will be able to witness that) mainly because Henri did most of the arranging and he was already recording something with the programmed drums as the basis when I got to hear the new material. Also, it would have been impossible to obtain proper sounds from real drums on home studio conditions, and last but not least my skills weren't adequate for the beating. However, we wanted to have lively drumming for our album, and so we ended up asking Baron Tarwonen to join in. After all, he is one hell of a drummer! Before him it seemed that Moonsorrow would function the best with only the two of us, but how wrong were we after all... our unity in this three-piece is perfect and new blood has really helped to enhance the 'Moonsorrow-sound'. Tarwonen also made it possible for us to play live as a band and that is a step forwards indeed.

You have already done some live-playing - what was it like? (experience, response, line-up - what about the accordion?)

Playing live is always a great experience, and especially with Moonsorrow it seems that we are a 'live band' above all. Just unfortunately we haven't got the chance to play live too often. Considering that we're still a young band with no name, the response from the audience has certainly been positive. At all but one of our gigs there has been a pleasant number of people and they have seemed to like what we're doing. Our live line-up differs from the arranging and recording line-up so that Henri plays the guitar and the keyboard duties have been transferred to a man called Lord Eurén. Also there is another guitarist called Shadow to strengthen our live sound. So far the accordion has been played from the synthesizer, although it wouldn't be a bad idea to use the real instrument instead. The main question is who should play it.

You said you did some reckless promotion after the release of 'Tämä'- in what way? You managed to score 4 offers for a record deal!! From which labels? Why did you choose for Plasmatica? Plasmatica is a rather young label - don't you consider that a risk? (will they keep their promises, will they do a good job?..) How is the collaboration/communication going so far?

Reckless is a relative term; for us poor students it meant nothing but sending a 100 free copies of the tape to record labels and zines which weren't chosen too carefully (the costs for this operation were circa \$200, about as much as what we paid for the recording). Although we got response from only a fraction of those 100 people, we eventually scored 4 offers for a deal as you said. Mentioning the 3 other labels that were in the 'contest' is not relevant, but I can say the reason for rejecting their offers in the first place was that they had an inadequate studio budget or insufficient conditions for promotion - two things that are of the highest importance in a deal. We didn't choose Plasmatica only because their offer was the best we got, but because it was truly good. Yes, Plasmatica is a young label, but if there's no risk, there is no gain either. Seriously though, I had been in contact with Carlos (the head of the label) for a while before 'Tämä Ikuinen Talvi' was even out and because of all the trading we had done prior to the negotiations I was already convinced of his reliability. Also I sensed a sort of a promise in his label, and now when I have witnessed two of his releases coming out (Kranium and Unhola), I can be sure that they do a good and serious job. They really work for their bands so that everyone in their team can feel that they have priority.

Tell us about your debut album (When and how recorded, changes in style of music, expectations, etc, etc). I must really congratulate you with the great production by the way - who produced the album? (how much studio time in which studio?)

Our debut album 'Suden Uni' was recorded, mixed and mastered in Tico-Tico Studio (Kemi, Finland) during the short period in between the 7th and the 16th of February 2000 (8 hours a day, excluding the weekend) and the result - as you are able to hear - became simply astonishing considering the schedule. It was really produced by us, but a huge gratitude for the result is of

course to be paid to the universal guru Ahti Kortelainen, who was our engineer. The composing process of the album didn't take quite as short, though, as the first notes of the material were written shortly after 'Tämä Ikuinen Talvi' was finished. Our style, however, begun to require more musical imagination and so we had to abandon many of the old ideas during the course. Most of the composing was executed in autumn 1999 and two of the songs were still unfinished in the beginning of 2000. Also the lyrics went through such a long hard way, and there are a few lines on the album that I wrote just a few days before the studio. In January/February when we started seriously rehearsing for the album, we collectively arranged all the songs to 5% from the final. Changes in style of music? Well, as I already mentioned in a previous question, this album is decisively slower (or should we say 'less fast') than 'Tämä Ikuinen Talvi' - on the same occasion, it is also much heavier. There are more folk influences and the proportions of the songs are more epic. I could well describe it as 'bombastic heathen metal' and I dare say that it's more Moonsorrow than anything we have done before. Ok then, what do we expect from the album? Nice question. We have already achieved the primary goal, i.e. the satisfaction of ourselves. But of course we also hope that many people will enjoy it and that everyone who could like it could get it in their hands. Money and fame are not important, after all we're doing this for our own enjoyment, but as we're not rich, all bucks we could ever earn with it are of course welcome!

Though the songs on 'Tämä' already had an epic touch, I think this aspect of your songs has grown to be more important - the same goes for the influences from folk music - do you agree? What has caused this change? Have the later Bathory-albums influenced you in your music in any way?

As can be understood from the previous question, I definitely agree with you on the interpretation about the growth of epic and folkish aspects. With Moonsorrow we have always wanted to reach the ultimate in epic and folk themes connected to METAL, so the development is certainly the most natural; we have advanced in our skills of composing and arranging music and I'd say our taste has increasingly gone for the better. Also we have given up ripping others off (which, despite the futility of excusing, has never been completely intentional), even though there still are some familiar atmospheres disgustingly shining through, the most obvious of which indeed are reminiscent of the 'viking-albums' of Bathory. However, anyone can separate 'Suden Uni' from 'Twilight of the Gods' on very clear grounds.

Do you know the Finnish band Furthest Shore? What do you think of their work?

Yes, I know the band but I haven't had the chance to check out their production on a larger scale. I'm sure you wouldn't have asked this question as completely irrelevant, so do you think we sound like them?

(Well, there are certain similarities I think. Their music is also very epic - their album is dedicated to Quorthon as a matter of fact, so you might figure that epic-Bathory has also

been a big source of inspiration for them - ed)

On your debut album you use rather unusual instruments like an accordion, a mouth harp - who's idea was this? Can we expect more of this kind of instrument extravaganza?

Great that you took notice of them! Both of these instruments were Henri's ideas, and although I had a slightly reserved attitude towards the accordion, it turned out to serve our music damn well. The funny part of it was that we had originally planned to play the accordion with keyboards - simply because we didn't own an accordion and no one of us was supposed to be able to play it anyway - but when we sneaked around in the studio we found this age-old instrument and Henri actually practised to handle it within a few hours! And so we ended up recording a live accordion on our album. We are not actually talking about an instrument extravaganza, but yes, accordion and mouth harp will remain in our selection, most certainly. Our hope is also to add a few more real instruments instead of playing everything with keyboards, but as a matter of economy it remains to be seen.

Don't you think it's a shame that non-Finnish listeners/readers can't understand your lyrics (for they are in Finnish), especially considering the fact you once said you want people to interpret your lyrics for themselves? Will you print translated versions? Maybe switch (back) to English someday?

It is a shame that people who can't understand Finnish can't understand my lyrics either, but when translated they wouldn't have exactly the same content anyway. I first tried to compose English translations for the lyrics on 'Suden Uni', but after days of pondering and numerous attempts I realised that it wasn't going to work. However, I ended up writing English frame stories for all the songs and I hope that these could help foreign listeners to understand the texts. Of course the Finnish people are now left with much better opportunities to interpret the lyrics for themselves, which has never been my purpose, but it's just that I have found writing in my mother tongue to bring forth better expressions. Writing some lyrics in English (or in other languages) in times to come is always possible, it merely depends on in which language I can express a thought in the most effective way.

Please tell a little about the content of the lyrics for 'Suden Uni'

Well, as much I hate explaining my lyrics, I can never avoid that it seems. So here a brief piece-by-piece content for those who hunger for something general (I still wish to leave the deeper interpretation of the lyrics, or the frame stories at least, to the listeners). There are two historical songs, the first is based around the famous axe murder on Kõyliönjärvi and the other scans the demise of the Vikings. This anti-Christian heathenish approach is also used to display the common fact of Christians stealing the traditional pagan feasts. Then there is our home-sweet-home anthem, a song about the heathenish relation to death and lastly a lyric my beloved Kaija Kokkonen could tell more about. If there is a general 'theme' connecting all these lyrics it must be paganism.

To what extent are your lyrics influenced by Finish folklore/mythology? What do you think of the way a band like Amorphis used

it? In an interview for Domain'zine Henry said that folklore/mythology still have quite an impact on the daily lives of many people in Finland. Could you tell me how and illustrate how big this impact is?

Direct references to Finnish mythology in our lyrics are few, it is rather the primaevial sphere of ideas they reflect; honour, unyielding disposition in front of an enemy, deep respect for nature, beliefs of afterlife and so on. Writing about mythology does sound tempting, though, but for some reason I haven't done it yet. Okay, we do have mythological lyrics on 'Metsä', but they are about Scandinavian mythology (which also played a role in Finnish culture, but is not what we comprehend as the Finnish mythology). The way Amorphis has employed Finnish mythology is good P.R. for it and I think they've done it pretty well, the only minus being that they haven't bothered to dig deeper than just the oral heritage collected in the 19th century - by that time Finland had long been inhabited by Christians. I wouldn't say that the old folklore would have any actual impact on the daily lives of regular Finns, however it is remarkable how strong a position the divinities still have in modern language (the sea is still 'the realm of Ahti', people are still talking about elves and gnomes doing all kinds of little stuff and so on, and yeah, of course the Finnish word for thunder is ukkonen)... but it really isn't the recipe for revolution, is it? Fortunately the number of people interested in their national heritage is gradually increasing and we might see it actually affecting society someday.

What treasures are there to be found beyond the oral heritage. What are the differences compared to the Kalevala? What has the influence of the Christians been like?

Huge treasures. There is so much to know about Finnish mythology and folklore and only a little part of it is exposed in public through Kalevala and Kanteletar. The role of the Christians in this has simply been the systematic destroying and suffocating of the 'godless' traditions, so that there wouldn't be options for their monotheistic belief. There are many rituals (seasonal/agricultural/hunting rituals, sacrifices, funerals...), spells, holy places of the heathens and everything, there is to be found a deeper knowledge of the gods and other mythical folk and of course there is the entire interesting history of the pagan past. Some of the knowledge may be hard to obtain, and I can't claim to have found all the bits of information myself either. There are various books exploring Finnish traditions and of course there is a dose of information scattered around on the internet. It takes some trouble, but (in my opinion) Finnish mythology is so interesting that it's certainly worth it.

You label your music 'Pagan Metal' but I dislike this labelling business as much as you do. But how would you describe your music? What are the influences (traditional Finnish folk music?) and what are your sources of inspiration?

Epic pagan metal, bombastic heathen metal... it's all the same I think. Labelling does seldom tell a thing about the music itself. The best option would be that everyone could listen to the music himself or herself so that I wouldn't have to tell what we sound like in my opinion. But as many people simply don't have the chance to check out a record before buying it,

descriptions and reviews are obligatory to prevent a complete surprise/disappointment. To begin with, our music is metal, giving intimations of its representatives generally known as 'black' and 'heavy'. The songs are rather lengthy, structured in an epic way and arranged to be as bombastic as possible, in which the keyboards play a significant role. Moreover there are the folkish influences bringing in a touch of Finnish musical heritage. The vocals are mostly shrieky but there is also clean singing in places, and the lyrics strongly support the heathenish atmosphere of the music. And even though sounding just like Moonsorrow, it may reveal influences of some other epic metal bands such as Bathory.

Does Finland have a rich tradition in folk music? Do you listen to Finnish traditional music yourself? By which artists?

Yes, there is a rich tradition of folk music in Finland. The melodies from centuries and centuries ago are preserved by many musicians; some of them perform them as they were and some of them are bringing them into the present fashion. There are numerous active folk music groups in Finland, and there are also a couple of vital festivals devoted to (Finnish) folk music. I like traditional (and semi-traditional) Finnish music very much, all the way from more or less pure folk groups like **Gjallarhorn** or **Värttinä** to those who build their folk music on the corner stones of 'popular culture' like **Hedningarna** or **Pohjannaula**. Also those who use Finnish folk music in music of totally other genres, for example **Pekka Pohjola**, are generally to my liking.

You say you are heathens - what does this mean to you, to be a heathen? Is there a difference between heathendom and paganism? Have you always felt a heathen or has there been a certain point in your life that you reached a certain insight? Isn't it a very individual thing to be a heathen? Are there general rules & values shared by all heathens?

To me being a heathen means at its simplest a profound respect for nature. It also includes living by values that can be characterized heathenish (e.g. sincerity, rightfulness, honour, wisdom, reasonableness) and not accepting the twisted morals of any contemporary religion. I do not worship any heathen divinities as such, as I don't see it as a very crucial factor in heathenism itself; I rather consider Ukko and the other fellows to be symbols as which nature could be personified. I don't see any difference between heathendom and paganism, after all they're synonyms, yet they both can appear in many forms (depending on who applies) under the very same name. Heathenism is, as you said, very personal and quite free to be shaped to respond to the needs and conceptions of an individual. There are no general rules in the sense e.g. Christians would understand, but the basic values are somewhat common with all heathens. What comes to the development of my heathenism, it has just inconspicuously happened alongside the growing of my knowledge and the focusing of my interests. I think I can claim to have been a heathen soul since a child, because I was never turned into a heathen. I just hadn't recognized it until recently.

Nature seems to take up a special place in your philosophy of life. Why? What precise

role does nature play in your view on life? Who or what created nature? Are you familiar with the Gaia theory? If so, what do you think of it? Should you be considered an environmentalist?

To cut it short, nature is the only thing I 'believe in', so to say; it is the superior entity and the divine for me. And because from my point of view nature is the 'creator' itself, it was never created, it has always been and it will always be. But what makes nature a different 'creator' is that it has not to be particularly worshipped., all we need to 'sacrifice' to nature is just to live and breathe with it. We all are a part of nature but unfortunately few ever realize it - let alone act according to it. The Gaia theory is a fascinating alternative for comprehending the world and in a way the earth can be perceived as one breathing creature, but I rather deal with it (her) as a sum of all organic and inorganic it counts. We really can't talk about nature as collectively conscious anyhow. I am definitely an environmentalist in the everyday sense of the word, but that's a far cry from any sort of activism.

Living in harmony with nature, what does that mean?

Basically it is an ideal of not consuming more than one needs and not harming nature in any way with one's actions. This is of course impossible in practise, as humans as we are, and I seriously cannot claim to have achieved that ideal either. Quite self-evidently, living in harmony with nature also presupposes spending one's time with nature, communicating with it and understanding its ways.

You consider life to be 'a unique incident in nature's course' - what's the reason for existing in your opinion? Do you believe that when you die, you live on in one way or another? What happens to your essence/spirit? Please respond to the following statement 'Life is not to be enjoyed, it is to be endured' (From 'The Prince of Abyssinia' - a 18th century novel)

There is no particular reason for existing; we have just been born to continue nature's course. We do not have to strive for anything remarkable while we walk the earth, we just have to try to live our lives in harmony with nature and all its creatures (and the principle concerns everyone no matter if they live in cities, on the countryside, in forests or wherever). Everything we do has a meaning to nature but there are no instructions of what exactly we should do, so it may be concluded that when nature is satisfied with us we can start satisfying ourselves. And, of course, that part of it is very individual. People should seek the joy from life and make it a pleasant experience, and although life is often hard and miserable, it should be endured to be enjoyed again. I don't know if any spiritual afterlife expects us when we die - so far I have rationalized that it doesn't - but our corpses will nevertheless return to earth, continuing the eternal course of nature from the bottom of the food chain.

What is the cause that life is often so hard and miserable? What role does society play in this? Is there any justification for society the way it is in your eyes? Why not 'move into nature'?

Mostly it's us humans who make our lives

miserable; greedy, envious, hostile, untrustworthy bastards always gathering obstacles on each other's way instead of just concentrating on enjoying being. Not only does society play a significant role in this by encouraging this cannibalism, it also has its direct means of making us all less happy. All students, unemployed people and generally everyone who has too little money to spend in the eyes of our profit-centered society must know this. Basically everything about 'the modern society' disgusts me, but that's where we live in and we cannot run or hide from it. Yes, society is justified as a system, but somehow it has all gone wrong and now we find ourselves struggling in this materialistic, superficial, hypocrite forecourt of hell. Moving into nature is a nice thought, but I doubt if any of us crowns of creation would survive there for long, at least not alone. For most people I think the game would end in the search for food.

Are both Henri and you still active for Meathooked zine? Please tell some more about the magazine and why you started it. What is it that makes Meathooked zine stand out? You also include 'social critical features/articles'. Why? How do you pick the bands for the interviews?

As active as it permits; we work for Meathooked zine every once in a while which however isn't too often. We are not attempting to make any frequent magazine anyway. It is more about expressing ourselves and occasionally shattering the underground zine circles by bringing some quality into them. We have had two issues so far, both containing 64 pages in A4-format full of information and good humour (see how relative the term is). I think it's our individual style of writing and handling various topics that makes Meathooked stand out. By including socio-political articles we have shown our indifference to the 'general underground rules'; we are proud to be aware of humanistic issues and we speak about what we want even if some people wouldn't respect or get it. They are not an end in themselves anyhow, but we really would like people to think about what we say. We may or may not write about such topics in the future, all depending on what we have in mind at that time. Concerning the choice of bands for the interviews, I think you have noticed that the spectrum is rather vast. It happens to be that, for the sake of artistic freedom, we all have taken uncontrolled hands to bring anything onto the pages of Meathooked.

Usually it happens (surprisingly enough) that we choose to interview bands we like; moreover, it is often our guidance that a person who really has something to say is more interesting to question than someone who does not have any opinion.

Ville, you are currently doing your civil service; a necessary evil or do you consider it useful to contribute to the well-being of society?

Definitely the first option. It is true that the civil service system offers extremely cheap labour to employers in service of the nation, the commune, the church or certain generally useful organisations, but I believe that a few thousand nearly unsalaried workers per year in often just partly useful tasks do not make such a big difference to the well-being of society. After all, we do not even pay taxes. If the service (either military or civil) wouldn't have been obligatory, I

wouldn't ever report for it. Who would want to spend 13 months of his life in civil service anyway? I have to admit, though, that my service in Alppila senior high (a local high school) has been rather comfortable because of the fabulous staff and students and the inspiring assignments, and it is a welcomed break to my studies, but the payment for it does not really contribute to my well-being.

What kind of assignments? Please tell your most amusing experience with the students

During my service I have worked as a substitute of the janitor and the school secretary, held tests and lessons (mostly in mathematics, but also in other subjects), organized various happenings, counselled students, helped the staff out in computer problems, stored archives, done some repairing and whatever. Basically everything you can imagine happening in a school building. I can't remember anything too amusing at the moment, but the most memorable experience I've got must be the lessons I've held. It was always so nice.

In an interview you said, that after your civil service you are going to study mathematics with the intention of becoming a teacher - is this still what you are planning to do? Why do you want to become a teacher? What charm does the passing on of knowledge have for you or is it simply a well-paid job in Finland?

Not only mathematics, but also physics and computer science (long live scientific heathens). Anyway. Supposedly the very idea of becoming a teacher is in my blood, because I first thought about it when I was still very young, 5 years old or so. It must have something to do with the fact that my father is a teacher, and that his father was also a teacher - it's some kind of a curse, I think. Anyway, when I started to grow of age and begun to think for myself, the idea didn't fade but gradually started to seem a worthwhile option... and eventually I applied for a teacher's education at the university. Not because it would be my 'natural heritage', but because I really like teaching (thanks to my civil service I may talk of experience) and furthermore I think our knowledge is one of the most precious things we can give to the next generation. Besides, the popularity of teaching is decreasing all the time and thus there will be more jobs to graduated teachers when my time has come. It certainly is not a well-paid job, but as all the teachers I know are able to make a living of it without problems, that's enough! However, I seriously believe that the salaries will rise as the teachers are becoming fewer. But hey, anything can happen and I may become a space shuttle engineer or a roof carpenter instead.

Ville, you are also involved in Meathook Productions. How are things going at the moment? Would you want the label to grow bigger and sign more bands for CD-releases? What about future releases?

Again, as actively as it permits. Because of its high level of unprofitableness, we haven't released much stuff lately, concentrating more on the distribution side of it - which however also due to the high level of unprofitableness has slowed down in growth. As everyone knows, we are just a d.i.y. demo-label and the most likely that will never change, but if we got an enormous amount of money it wouldn't be a bad idea to turn MHP into a real label. After all, there still are some unsigned bands who would really deserve a

proper cd/lp-release. I don't have a clue about possible future releases other than **Lunar Womb's** still unfinished 3rd demo, I'm just 99% sure that it will be released as a demo tape.

Henri is making music for money, to earn himself a living. In what way does he do so?.. is he a session musician that can be hired? Does he play in a pop band as well?

Henri is a professional musician (although his education is still halfway), making it his work to play for artists in the studio, supplying groups on concerts and composing and arranging themes for whatever they're needed for. It is however surprising how little work Henri has got recently considering that he is really good. He can play anything from lounge jazz to hip hop, as long as he's paid, including pop music. Just note that those bands where Henri is a permanent member (Moonsorrow and those which I list in the next question) are not his employers but a sincere hobby.

Please tell some about your side projects! I recently heard one track from Finntroll (before I knew Henry was a band member) on a sampler of the German Legacy magazine. A friend of mine was playing it and during the Finntroll track - I especially asked for the CD-cover to check out which band made this great music!! It turned out to be the unknown (to me, that was) band Finntroll. How are things going for Finntroll? I saw they were going to do a gig in Germany on a festival 'Partysan Open Air' this summer (please tell a little more about that) What about Baron Tarwonon's other band Gorewinter?

At least according to my perception things are going pretty well for **Finntroll** (the keyboard wizard of which is Henri). They have reached fair sales numbers with their debut album and a second one is already in the plans. For the summer they are booked for many gigs, including two appearances in Germany in August... check out if you're nearby for that band simply kills live! **Gorewinter** (where Baron does the drumming and vocals and plays some guitar) is not doing as healthy currently, as I haven't witnessed any action in their camp since the demo-cd 'Buried By Night', but I'm sure the project is still together and that they will do another recording someday.

I just hope they will get a deal because they deserve it for sure. Other bands the members of **Moonsorrow** are involved in include **Circus Of Flesh** (attitude wrenching, Baron on guitar), **Kuha**. (weird rock, Baron on the other drums), **Luokkasota** (70s' prog/heavy, Henri on keys) and **May Withers** (dismal rock, Ville on drums), not forgetting the solo project of Henri, **Lunar Womb** (neo-classical/ambient). There are also **Thornfrost** (black/whatever metal, Ville on drums/vocals and Henri on keys) and certain other projects but their level of activity has been extremely low lately. If you also want to know where our live session members come from, the guitarist **Shadow** is from a Helsinki-based black metal group **Tyrant** and the keymaster **Lord Eurén** is the other founding member of **Gorewinter**.

Aren't you afraid that Finntroll will impose a threat to Moonsorrow in the sense that it'll take up too much of Henry's time? How do you look at Finntroll's succes? Please tell some more about Tyrant..

As far as I'm concerned, Henri has set his priorities into this band. I am not afraid that he would choose to leave **Moonsorrow** for **Finntroll** if such a decision had to be made, but even if he chose otherwise I believe it would be

carefully considered and thus better for him. I think there has happened no wrong if **Finntroll** succeeds, after all, it is a great band. If you'd wanna find out whether I'm jealous, no, not a bit. Our time will come. Then **Tyrant**, ehm... as far as I know, they have one official demo out, recorded in 1998 or something. Perhaps they're not ready to break out from the 'demo level' yet, but some day they could be if they keep on doing their own thing.

Finland has the highest suicide rate in Europe, what do you think is the reason for that?

As if the Finnish mentality wouldn't be dismal already, in autumnal and wintry times, when it's really chilly and dark many people get extremely depressed. And if they're lonely on the top of it, that's when the suicides happen. When loved ones die, there are people who can't bear the pressure, and because our profit centred society causes so much stress with all its demands, it is the most likely to increase the risk of people taking their lives even more. Also a stereotypical Finn is supposed to be ready to die for his (stubborn) principles, however suicide does not grant martyrdom, does it? Well, I don't know if I got even close with my kitchen psychology, but at least I answered your question sounding intelligent.

I've never been to Finland - if I was to go there, what should I expect? Which phrase (in Finnish + translation) should I definitely remember in case I pay you country a visit?

You should expect to see a very beautiful country with snow in winter and sunshine in summer (though on the coast, where I live, winters are mostly wet and summers windy). Our traditional pride is in the midnight sun on midsummer and in the famous ten thousand lakes and the Finnish nature in general. The people though are rather introvert, which must be strange to a traveller from the talkative Central Europe (heh), but you'll learn to cope with them by time. A phrase you should remember is definitely 'anteeksi, missä voisin tavata luonnonvaraisia jääkarhuja?' ('excuse me, where could I meet wild polar bears?') or perhaps 'ykisi olut, kiitos' ('one beer, please'); pronounced exactly as written. But so that this wouldn't become any traveller's guidebook, I'll leave the presentation for the possible time you are actually paying a visit to our country.

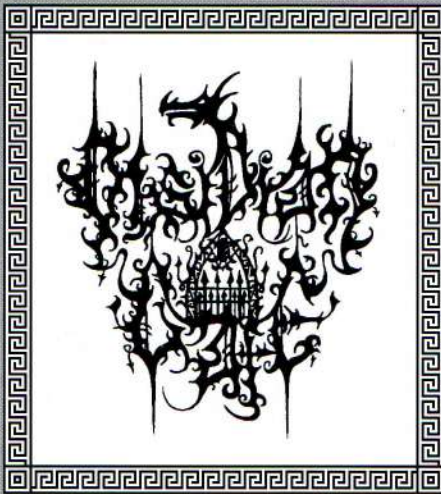
If you're not totally worn out by now, please finish off the interview.

Although I am worn out (after answering these questions on all work days of a week), I will have to add something like a word of gratitude and respect for the great work you have done to expose us. This interview was certainly the best I have answered recently, and although it took its time, I took a great deal of pleasure from it... and I hope that this chat was as enjoyable for the readers as well! We raise our chalices with you for a new heathen age to come!

(Rahab)

Discography:

- 1997 METSÄ D** (MEAT HOOK PRODUCTIONS)
- 1998 TÄMÄ IKUINEN TALVI D** (MEAT HOOK PRODUCTIONS)
- 2001 SUDEN UNI** (PLASMATICA RECORDS)



Please introduce yourself and Obsidian Gate to the readers of Mandrake Magazine by giving a brief biography (mentioning the line up, line up changes, your demos, etc) Well, OBSIDIAN GATE are Marco (21, guitar, bass & keyboard), Daniela (20, keyboard) and me, Marcus (22, guitar, vocals, drum-sequencing). We started in 1994 when we founded our first union. Daniela came to us in 1996, then we recorded our first demo 'Die Essenz der Finsternis' on a four-track recorder, that we had bought just a week before the recording sessions. The songs were really good, but the sound was awful, so we didn't release it. It was pure Black Metal, without many keyboards. One year later, we recorded 'The Prime Uncreation', again on four tracks. It contained more keyboards and some really weird experimental soundscapes. This demo paved the way to our deal with Skaldic Art, and in January 1999 we recorded our first album, 'The Nightspectral Voyage'.

Why did the band name change from 'The Gate' into 'Obsidian Gate'?

The change was necessary, because there is a German zine called The Gate and we even heard about a Croatian band using this name. But it was a good step; OBSIDIAN GATE sounds even better and more original.

When did you find out? Why did you chose 'Obsidian'?

Well, all was purely by chance. When we went to a concert, we got a copy of the magazine from a CD-dealer at this gig. The zine was for free, so we took some, at first very amused when we saw that the zine was also called 'The Gate'. But when we heard about the Croatian band - a friend who had bought a CD where the thanks list contained a band called 'The Gate' called me up to tell me -, we chose to change our name at once. I came up with 'Obsidian', because it is a black lava-stone which is said to contain many magical properties. For example, the Incas used daggers made from Obsidian to sacrifice chosen people to their gods. So we thought to chose 'Obsidian Gate' as a magical symbol for our art.

What does the Obsidian Gate stand for as a concept?

'The Gate made from Obsidian' - for us it stands as a magical portal to all dimensions of our imagination. There are no limits behind the Gate, every new recording is a new step through the Obsidian Gate and reveals another perspective of ourselves. The cosmos was just the beginning, new worlds and minds have to

be explored.

You've recorded two demos - however the first 'Die Essenz der Finsternis' was never actually released. Why is that? You say you still enjoy listening to this work every now and then... it can't be that bad then, can it? 'Die Essenz der Finsternis' had really good, fast and intense songs, but just after recording it, we thought we could even do something better and more original. And because of the bad sound (although there are tapes which

To be one step ahead of potential criticism: 'Yes, I am aware of the fact that this is the second band on Skaldic Art Productions featured with an interview in this edition of Mandrake. And yes, my own band will release (or has released by the time you read this) our debut through this same label. However, no, I don't give a fuck - I can't help the fact that label boss Vratyas Vakyas signs bands I happen to turn out to like a lot And thus I spoke.'

Over to more interesting matters now: Obsidian Gate. This band might be considered as the German answer to Limbionic Art or Sirius, however Obsidian Gate is all but a cheap copy of the aforementioned bands - by adding elements from soundtrack music and using more complex structures this band has succeeded in creating an identifiable sound of their own. Their debut album 'The Nightspectral Voyage' has been released hardly a year ago and the release of their second album 'Colossal Christhunt' is already at hand. Reason enough to have a good conversation with guitarist Markus, who enlightens me on the band history, the realisation of their debut, his views on organised religion, consumer society and matters of life and death.

even sound worse) we decided to keep it for ourselves. Yes, I like listening to it since then, but it is completely different from what we create nowadays.

Do you think a good sound quality is a necessity for a demo?

I think, it is VERY important to have a good sound. Why selling tapes that sound like a rustling ocean for good money? Even with a demo, the fans should get something for their money.

You did release the 2nd demo 'The Prime Uncreation'. Was it with this demo that you found the musical direction you were going to take with Obsidian Gate?

Well, it was the same bullshit as with 'Die

Essenz der Finsternis' before. We recorded it, and just shortly after the release we made big steps forward in composing and we changed parts of our style to a more classical, bombastic kind of Black Metal with long songs and so on. We weren't satisfied and got lazy with the promotion of the demo. Surely there already were some aspects on the demo that are now typical for our songs, but it all came too hacked, if you know what I mean. I think it wasn't mature enough.

Not mature enough for what? ...playing in a band and composing is a process of development isn't it?

We are very much perfectionists in thinking. We recorded our second demo and afterwards there were many aspects we could have done better. For sure, it is development. But it is a demo which still contained many things especially I dislike, for example the arrangements sound somehow constructed. But just after the recording-sessions we felt very proud of it, however as soon as we wrote some new stuff, we realized the aspects we should change. This is our development and I can tell you, that goes very fast in OBSIDIAN GATE.

You mentioned in an interview that the promotion you did for this demo was really poor. Don't you think it's a main priority for a demo band to show what they have got? Weren't you really looking for a record deal? Weren't you proud of your accomplishments that you wanted everyone to hear?

Surely it is very important to promote any recording you make, but we were just too ambitious in creating songs, without knowing the importance of promotion. Yes, nowadays I think it was wrong to undervalue this fact. It was a lack of business-knowledge and we had a lot of luck getting a deal this fast.

Do you think it only has to do with business knowledge... what about pride? What has changed in your way of dealing with promo-activities since then?

Yes, we were for sure proud of our demo, but when we wrote the new material, we were even more proud of our new stuff. As I told you, the development went very fast, so we just





undervalued the aspect of doing something to bring our demo forward, we wanted to do even better. The result is our first album, and I think the result is really worthy to be proud of, so it has been a good step to be a little reserved in promoting the demo not that much. And the album even was a new beginning for us, you know, because of the change of our band name. Well, we could have sold a thousand demos, the fans wouldn't have realized that we are the former 'The Gate', even if we would have put informing stickers on the album, because the music is yet really different from the demo. And now we do anything to bring us forward, except playing live that much. But that is just a technical question, we like playing live, but we hate it always having to keep an eye on the equipment. We would need a drummer, a bassist and at least four keyboarders to play without sequencers that maybe work wrong or computers that surprisingly hang during the gig and other shit like that.

If the promotion was that poor, how did you find your way to Skaldic Art Productions?

When Marco still went to school, he had a classmate who lived in the neighbourhood of Vratyas. They knew each other and so Vratyas got one of our demos. Well, he seemed to like the recording and so he offered us a good deal.

Please tell something more about the deal... about why you accepted it, which condition made you decide to sign?

Well, we promised Vratyas not to tell details about the deal, but we accepted the deal because we have any musical freedom and the deal is really fair in all conditions.

How is your understanding with label boss Vratyas? How is this affected by the fact that you both live in Düsseldorf? Did you know each other before you signed?

The understanding is great. We didn't know each other before the deal, but we developed a good friendship with him. He's indeed a great and honest personality with lots of business-knowledge and we can say nothing bad about him. Skaldic Art just rules.

Why does Skaldic Art rule - what makes the label stand out? What kind of friendship have you developed with Vratyas?

It is a label just for quality music and is from and for individuals. Vratyas only signs bands he really likes, not only to gain profit by them. Remember Nuclear Blast and other big labels that sign bands that are trendy and thus profitable for the label. Vratyas doesn't follow any trend. I think, this makes Skaldic Art so outstanding. Every band on this label offers individual and great music.

We often meet Vratyas beside any business. We go drinking and having some parties as well, we telephone often and talk a lot of shit together. You can sometimes have real fun with him, although he's very own and sometimes a little bit strange, but why not? He's indeed an individual and we respect him very much.

Please tell about the activities in/for other bands for each band members of Obsidian Gate? I understood that you are handling the drums in a pure black metal band called Ignis Uranium - could you tell a little more about this band? Why don't you do the



studio drumming for Obsidian Gate then?

I founded Ignis Uranium together with a friend two years ago to improve my drumming and to create Black Metal that is at the limit of speed and intensity. We're going into a studio here in Düsseldorf in the beginning of July, to record a MCD called 'Terra: Scorched Ad Infinitum'. We try to perform the fastest Black Metal ever done in Germany, still containing the raw touch of the early '90s Black Metal. Marco started a side-project together with Vratyas, called Vanadis. It's some kind of folkloric and heathenish Metal, but it is yet too early to say more about that it surely will be great! You asked why I don't perform the drum parts for Obsidian Gate myself. Well, I just play too fast and straight for Obsidian Gate. We need a lot of perfection, details and weird rhythms and breaks, so the drum-computer is the first choice. But I always try to program the drums sounding very naturally.

Who will release 'Terra: Scorched Ad Infinitum'?

Oh, good that you asked. We just had to cancel our studio date, because first of all we lost our rehearsal room and then, my war-brother got two surgical operations in his throat. It takes a lot of time until he's healthy again, so I think we will have to wait until next year to record our MCD. But that doesn't matter, until that time, I have done something with my own project The Infernal Throne, which is extremely fast, technical satanic Black Metal with some dark

melodic influences. Maybe a mix of Setherial and older Marduk with some old Abigor-influences. Two years ago I recorded a first demo limited to 100 pieces, which is sold out. Now, two session-musicians support me and I hope to record the first piece yet this year. But I got no deal until now, so let's wait and see.

The album 'The Nightspectral Voyage' was recorded in the highly acclaimed Blue House Studios. Please describe what the recording has been like. The album was produced by Tilo Rockstroh and Jens Bachmann - what was it like working with these people? I believe it was your first time in a studio - how did you experience all the opportunities of a studio (which can be highly useful for the type of music you are making)? Were you overwhelmed in anyway?

It has been a great time in the Blue House-Studio, both engineers were funny people with immense know-how, lots of patience and goodwill. All went well without any big problems, but unfortunately I got ill just during the vocal-recordings, and so I had to pause and do the remaining vocals just hours before the mix in the second studio-session. But yes, it was overwhelming to witness the great studio-equipment and to realise the possibilities we could use, but we did no spontaneous experiments.

How much time did you spend in studio for the recording of 'The Nightspectral Voyage'? With all the opportunities offered by computers, it should be possible to record the large share of the songs at home (the keyboards and the programming of the drums) - which would leave only the guitars and the mixing to be done in the studio. How did you divide your time over the several studio activities?

We got 9 days in the Blue House-Studio. During six days we chose the sounds for the keyboards and the drums, recorded all guitars and some vocals. Two weeks later, we entered the Blue House again, to do the remaining vocals and the mix. Yes, the keyboards and drums were arranged at home, but it took a lot of time to find the specific sound for each instrument. Why not use the best sounding instruments, when the studio offers countless possibilities?

What has the response to 'The Nightspectral Journey' been like? Are you still satisfied with the album? Do you agree the guitars should have been more up front in the mix - or do you want the keyboards to be this dominant?

We still like 'The Nightspectral Voyage' very much, it is a great debut. Surely, some details could have been made different - like the guitar-mix - but that's always the case after a production. The response has been really good, we got a lot of positive reviews and responses, the fans seem to like it, and this drives us to present them with even better stuff in the future.

I suppose you are often compared to Limbionic Art - does this bother you?

No, not really. And with the next release, the comparisons should weaken, cause it will be a little bit different in concept and sound. We'll see.

About the artwork of 'The Nightspectral

Voyage!— did you come up with the concept yourself? What does the picture tell you? What about the person with the candle? What's your interpretation of the name of the picture 'The Little Man's Tongue'?

When I spoke with **Viktor Witkowski**, the artist, I just gave him some essentials, such as cosmos, eternity, death, and so on. The result has entirely sprung from the mind of Viktor, and it's great. It shows me the weakness of humans against the cosmic eternity and it's forces. But everyone should interpret the artwork for him/herself. But I don't know why Viktor named the painting 'The Little Man's Tongue'. This seems to be his secret...

What are your main ambitions and sources of inspiration for creating music?

We have a lot of sources of inspiration. First of all there is the will to create, independent of all other things. Then, we are inspired by books, dreams, movies, sounds, and places. Every single moment could be a source of inspiration. We don't sit around and just write a new track. The feeling has to be there, the kick in the brain.

How does the composing process go within Obsidian Gate? Are all three of you involved?

First of all, we got ideas and Marco and/or Daniela put them into a classical orchestration with a huge instrumentarium. Just when all members are satisfied with the result we proceed with the next step. Then I program the drum-parts over the orchestrations, paying attention to a dynamical drum-articulation to get it as natural as possible. Then come the guitars, which Marco and I nowadays share. When the song is ready this far, I listen to it again and again, to write the lyrics inspired by my thoughts and the feeling of the song. The bass guitar gets composed afterwards.

Your music contains elements from soundtrack music... do you have any ambitions in the field of soundtrack music?

Soundtracks offer a musical intensity, which is rare in most other kinds of music, except Metal. It is a kind of music, which is real art and not simple easy-listening-music. You can dive into its tides, and even if you haven't seen the movie, it produces images in the mind and brings you away from what's here and now. Great soundtracks are indeed 'Conan-The Barbarian', 'Omen I + II', 'Star Wars', and even the new 'Gladiator'-soundtrack, to mention just some well-known.

Hm, if we would have enough time for it, I think it would be very interesting to make a soundtrack. If it would be a fantasy- or horror movie with lots of dark atmospheres, I'm sure we wouldn't refuse an offer to create a soundtrack.

Let's talk a little about the lyrics. The cosmos and the realm of spirits and spectres keep up returning in the lyrics. What is it that fascinates you so much about the cosmos? The cosmos is proven to be infinite yet expanding – can you comprehend that? What's your view on the cosmos like? Do you believe in mighty (evil) entities roaming throughout the cosmos? In what way is your approach to the cosmos subject different from bands like Limbonic Art and Abigor?

For sure, it is the unknown, which fascinates me this much. We humans prove to see ourselves being the most superior species. Fools, how can we? We are so small on earth and nothing in the cosmos. We will never know what the cosmos really is. Maybe a living being for itself? Maybe planets are just organs in the black belly of the cosmos and animals and humans are just bacteria for the planet, like we have organs and bacteria in ourselves. You see... just absurd speculations, but we don't know the facts and we never will. As long as there is something, which is unknown, it will be fascinating. For the lyrics I have thought a lot about such things. Spiritual energy, soul-travelling... My lyrics should bring the reader to think about these things and bring him a fantasy of his own. I don't know what other bands' intentions are to write about cosmic themes, but I think it's the same fascination for

think that you become nothing, that you are just erased. Maybe your spiritual energy and knowledge change form and become a stream of unseen and unmeasurable energy that reaches for other worlds. For me, the meaning of existence is to gain more and more knowledge and to develop. Why should I die without solving all tasks life holds for me? When I speak of evil entities, I speak of spiritual energy that roams around without aim but to harm those souls who fulfilled their lives. It's just belief, but who knows what really exists.

What tasks does life hold for you?

First of all, personal development, earning wisdom and more and more mental strength, founding a family and other things... Haha, you surely wanted to hear that my life's biggest task is to destroy the whole world or something like



that, am I right. (No- ed) Sorry, that I just disappointed you...

Please tell about your experiences playing live. I have heard there are some Obsidian Gate gigs being planned for the future. Can you comment on this? Are you going to work with session members then or will you make use of computers? What about the bass?

We did two live gigs so far, without good equipment and we had a bad sound. After releasing our 2nd recording, we plan to do some more gigs, but we don't know what it's going to be like. A bass player is the least problem, but we would need a perfect, versatile and fast drummer. But unfortunately, there is no one to be found in our region. Let's wait and see.

Your debut isn't out for even a year when you'll be re-entering the studio. Do you compose that quickly? I would expect that the complex arrangements of your songs would take up quite some time – do you have that much time to compose?

We got six songs written for the next album. Remember that 'The Nightspectral Voyage' was recorded in January 1999, so there is more than a year and a half between the two recording sessions. For sure it takes a lot of time to compose our songs and all of us are working, so we need to divide our time.

these ever-unknown regions of space. And what makes my lyrics different from the other bands? Hm, I think, I write more abstract and fantasy-influenced.

Are the lyrics sheer fantasy or do they contain aspects of your outlook on life? If so, in what sense?

Yes, just pure fantasy and the wish to know what the secret of life and death really is.

What do you believe lies beyond the threshold of death? What's the reason for living? Is there a deeper meaning to existence, do you think?

I don't know what lies beyond death, but I don't

I believe your new album is to be



recorded in autumn. What can you reveal at this stage? (title of the album, song titles, re-recorded demo-tracks?, which studio?, artwork?, etc) I have heard you are going to record a whole lot of material at once... can you tell some more about that?

Yeah, we wanted to record our 2nd full-length this autumn, but we have all material together, so we'll enter the studio in July / August. The album will be called „Colossal Christhunt' and will contain six songs: 'Urgewalten', 'Behold The Imperial Rise', 'Tide Of The Envenomed Oceans', 'Dux Bellorum', 'Of Purest Pandaemonium' and the title track 'Colossal Christhunt'. This time, we changed our lyrical concept. For example, 'Urgewalten' is the only cosmos-influenced song and 'Colossal Christhunt' is about the christhunting in the ancient Roman Empire. The layout will also show this. The songs are a little bit shorter, more intense and a little more metal, nevertheless as orchestral as before. All songs are new material written since the recording of our debut album. I think it's becoming a killer.

In the interview you did for Ablaze you made a statement that you hated all religions – hatred is an emotion of people who feel hurt or threatened. In what way are hurt or threatened by religions? Don't you think that religions may offer a key to lead a better life? Maybe not for you, but for others....?

Religions, especially Christianity ('cause it's our state-religion), are definitely misleading human beings by dogmas which nowadays absolutely make no sense. Just take the Catholic Church, they are ripping the money from the people, becoming richer every day and still talk the same nonsense like a thousand years ago. They christianised nearly all the native tribes, often with violence, and all they can say to this now, is that they pray to 'God' for forgiveness. This isn't punishment enough! Or look at the Islam. Fanatic terrorists kill thousands of people in so called holy wars just for their God. So where is the sense for religions? Ah, you just stated it: To lead a better life. Maybe for people with a weak mind, who aren't able to believe in themselves nor to see the world and its mysteries with their own eyes. Belief is a personal thing and religions just mislead the personal development. Tell me, what does the shepherd do with his sheep? Right, he leads them among green meadows to let them feast and then, he shaves them...

What is wrong with shaving sheep? - at least the shepherd cares for his sheep and offers them protection.

OK, on the first look that is right. But remember that the shepherd leads his sheep into the direction HE wants. They can live and eat and everything appears quite normal. But when some sheep try to break out of the herd, he sends his dogs after them, to force the sheep back into the herd. It is fact: The shepherd tries to stand above the sheep and make profit with the sheep's wool, milk or even flesh. And when you transmit this picture on the church, on the first look it seems that the church cares for people, but all is based on the church's stupid Christian dogmas. Remember that in the past people who tried to contradict the pope and the laws of the church were judged as heretics and then punished with torture and death. The church has done more crime than anybody else and is still alive. Sure, their practices have changed but their

dogmas and laws and their greed for money (you know, we pay taxes for the church here in Germany, I don't know what this is like in Holland) are the same like in the beginning. So where's the sense for believing in virginal birth and other bullshit in the year 2000 if not being weak and not mature enough for creating own believes and see the world and nature with own eyes? Ha, I wait for some ugly aliens landing on earth so that the pope and the other wannabe-saints witness that the humans aren't the coronation of 'God's genesis.

In an interview with the Norwegian zine Imhotep, you stated that you hate this planet and most of the leeches crawling on it (I'm not making any strange assumptions when I take leeches for people here, am I?). In the same interview you mention you don't despise people for their way of life.... Seems a little contradictory to me – I wonder, what reason do you have to hate these leeches then if it's not in their way of life (... even it's a religious one???)– care to explain?

First of all, people can do what they want and have any way of life. Therefore I don't hate them. It's the lack of individuality and the stupid living in a stream of trends without thinking for themselves. There is no honour, just a wave of envy and capitalism. And this is why I call them leeches. Every person for itself is an individual and easy to stand with. But the mass, the so-called society, is just shit.

What do you have against the consumer society?– I suppose you're quite happy with the fact that people can buy Obsidian Gate CDs everywhere and you probably don't have a problem with being able to buy the stuff you want either... If you dislike this consumer society so much and you feel strong ties with nature, why don't you move away back to nature and go and live with some tribe in the rain forest or something ... nobody is keeping you I guess, or what? Why should I escape? It's my task of life to endure here, and so I will.

Why should you escape from what? What is keeping you imprisoned? Who says it is your task to endure your life here? What's your reason to endure?

Hey, you asked why not moving back into nature. This would be an escape, am I right? Nothing keeps me imprisoned here, I am one of a hundred among thousands. The thousands I just dislike because they aren't honest and living as others tell them. But I ignore them, they are no prison for me.

When you are born, it is your task to live until you die. You should make the best out of it. This world has so many possibilities to make life very comfortable. You can develop, chose your own way of thinking, style and belief... So I asked why there are so many people around who prefer to follow the mass, to do all what the mass praises as great without thinking about the sense behind. Just therefore I have to endure, to show myself that I can exist without bowing to a collective way of life in the mass. Nature is a kind of resting-place for me where I can recover. I am no coward, so why should I become one? I feel a strong binding to people that think like me, to people who are individuals, and as long as those people exist, and they still are numerous, there is no reason to escape.

So you call people who think like you individuals? ...seems to have something collective to me...

No, they needn't really think like me. They just have to think for their own, they have to be individual from most of the others. I even know people who aren't metallers at all but they have their individual thoughts, preferences and way of life. Such people deserve big respect.

Concerning the consumer society I need to say that it's really good to get everything we want, and it's also good when people can buy our album. For me it's an honour to witness that there are some people around who like our music in which we invested a lot of time, sweat and blood, those people deserve big gratitude. But isn't it bullshit when you look at the CD-prices or the actual petrol-prices? To rip the money from the consumer, this is the aspect that makes me so sick. And then come some labels that overflow the market with useless merchandise or more than twenty different T-shirt designs. Who the fuck shall buy all this at these prices?

You needn't buy all of them... you can just have the pick... more precious potential, wouldn't you say?

This is all good and fine, but I'm afraid that the Black Metal scene, which was always very own and a little bit mysterious to the others, could be destroyed by such over-ambitious practices. I mean, two or three different motives are enough at all, and every fan would be satisfied at all, but standing in front of such an enormous palette of shirts from a single band, and every design looks great, the fan would enter into a crisis of how to purchase every shirt, especially if the shirts are from his favorite band? And I always ask myself what coffeepots, lighters, condoms and pencil-bags have in common with the intention of Black Metal. Nothing I think (in the case of lighters you might Aske yourself again -ed), all this is a way of sell-out for the big record industries. I remember it wasn't long ago when the big labels like Nuclear Blast boycotted Black Metal in their catalogues, and now they try to push every BM-band they sign into the charts and producing all this useless merchandise. Seems massively dishonest to me, thus less would be often more. Especially for the necessary mysterious flair of Black Metal.

You may give us your final words to close off the interview now....

Yeah, thanks for the interview, was a big thing. And to all metallians interested in black orchestral Metal-art, you should listen to „The Nightspectral Voyage' or keep an eye open for our CD „Colossal Christhunt'. Keep burning!

(Rahab)

Discography:

1996 DIE ESSENZ DER FINSTERNIS D

1997 THE PRIME UNCREATION D

1999 THE NIGHTSPECTRAL VOYAGE (SKALDIC ART PRODUCTIONS)

2001 COLOSSAL CHRISTHUNT (SKALDIC ART PRODUCTIONS)

Invited by the representative of the record company, we headed to the Maasport sports centre, where Satyricon were to play as support for Pantera. After first enjoying their shortish set, which -to me unexpectedly- was also quite well received by the predominantly Pantera-minded audience, we headed to the dressing room. There we met the clean shaven (including his armpits!) Satyr, ready to answer our questions.

What did you think about the show tonight?

I thought it was alright. I mean, the first three shows we did were in Scandinavia. We have an extremely strong standing in Scandinavia so that's always good. That part of it was excellent. Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen were all very cool. We did Berlin and Cologne, that was horrible. Because it's Germany. I don't like Germany and Germans. This show was definitely better than Germany, but not half as cool as Scandinavia. The people in the front usually wear black metal shirts, while those in the back have Pantera shirts.

How did you end up with Pantera on this tour?

It was because Philip (Anselmo) and I play in a band together called Eibon. Knowing each other through that, he asked me if we wanted to come along. He knew that we were going on a headlining tour in America that was going to last a month. We cut down the last two weeks of that tour in order to make it for the first date of this tour. The reason we did that is that we can always go back and finish America later, but this is sort of a big thing that you don't want to let go by. I think there's more to it than just knowing each other, because he has underground consciousness. He likes a lot of underground music.

Do you think you will gain more fans because of this tour?

Yeah. But how many I don't know. This is also a reason to do this. I mean, Satyricon is a dead serious band, we're not fucking around. This is not a hobby, you know what I mean. This is what we do, this is what we want to do all the time, making black metal music. Going on tour comes in as a part of that. Going on tour with a band like Pantera is an attempt to make the next step, to reach beyond black metal. Because Satyricon is already a big band within black metal circles. I think that aggressive music has got a lot in common. I mean it's totally possible to like Slayer, Sepultura, Pantera, Emperor and Satyricon. I know a lot of people that actually like those bands. If people can like classical music and heavy metal, why can they not like heavy metal and black metal? I doubt we'll get a lot bigger by this, but it could be a stepping stone for something more. We're not going to change. I mean if we have a bad

night, we're not going to play softer songs or be less aggressive on stage the next.

What does Frost think of all these new things. I mean, first you experiment with industrial sounds, and now this. I always thought Frost was more a 'standard' black

this tour and then write some more material. I hope and I think it's realistic that there's going to be an album in a year's time on Moonfog in Europe. It's not been decided who's going to put it out in America.

The track on the Moonfog sampler has been recorded partly in New Orleans and in Oslo by Philip and you, respectively. Can you say that Eibon is a real band since presumably you don't get to practice a lot together.

Actually, I brought the master tapes from Oslo and went over to New

Orleans. It's like a side-band. I mean Fenriz has Darkthrone, Killjoy has Necrophagia, I've got Satyricon obviously, and Phil's got Pantera. Eibon is like the second priority, even though it's serious.

Why do you use Wongraven as your last name again in this band, like in the band Wongraven?

It's my real last name. It means from the grave actually. Actually, I don't sit down and plan such things. Sometimes you just put it in there, sometimes you don't. I don't have any deep thoughts about that.

Speaking of which, will there be another Wongraven album?

I'm pretty sure of that! But when... Wongraven is a project that does not know time and does not know genres. A Wongraven album could be coming out next year. It could be a black metal album. Or it could be in ten years and it could be a techno album. The point is that Wongraven functions as a moniker for me to do whatever I want, whenever I want.

You worked together with Fenriz before on the Storm project. At that time you were quite close to him, weren't you? Can you tell us something about that period?

It was very enjoyable. I think we taught each other a lot. I can't really talk for him. I know he said to his mother, that I taught him more in a month than anybody else in his whole life. What he taught me is more about musical understanding. I don't know, I



metal type of guy...

But he's intelligent and he understands music. He's not this primitive, stupid, narrow-minded guy. He understands darkness. He finds darkness in what we do. He also likes the Norwegian band When, which has nothing to do with black metal. He comes across as a black metal guy because of the way he dresses on stage, like the old school black metal bands. That's what it's coming from.

Apparently the guys from Pantera like black metal and Satyricon in particular. So what about the opposite: Do you like Pantera?

Hmmm... Do I like Pantera? Well... On the albums, just a few songs, but in general no. But live I'm very impressed. I thought it would be quite boring because I like about three or four songs out of five albums. I'm growing to like more songs, because when they play they are so heavy and so tight, I'm just so impressed. They're the tightest band I've ever seen. I like 'Yesterday don't mean shit', I like 'Revolution is my name', 'Becoming', I think that's it. When I heard 'Yesterday don't mean shit' on the album I didn't like it. But when I heard it live I thought: 'What is that? Have I heard that before?'

Back to Eibon. Have you planned any release apart from the track on the Moonfog sampler?

Apart from that song, we're working on four or five songs. Philip and I plan to record some stuff on an off-day in London on four tracks. Hopefully Fenriz, Philip and I can hook up after

just like him. It felt good being around him. It's an honour to play with him, which also a reason to do Eibon.

About 'musical understanding'. You said once that to like Satyricon is to understand it, which is a situation different from other bands. So what exactly does 'musical understanding' mean?

The ability to flow with the music. The ability to understand and digest what's going on. To have the ear for those extra details. I read a review of 'Rebel...' today, which said something about musical understanding. If you listen closely, pay attention to those small effects here and there, it gives the album an extra dimension and that's what I thought as well. There are parts of 'Supersonic journey', sometimes very small, but very significant. For some these moments just fly by, but others pick them up and then they understand.

In that sense Satyricon is art, in the sense of paintings and such. Some art is open to different interpretations. Is that true for Satyricon?

Everybody can have their own interpretation as I have mine. My focus is now stronger than ever. My decisions are even more deliberate and thought through these days than they've ever been. I don't mind if other people think something completely different. But I don't necessarily have to agree with it.

Are you interested in other forms of art yourself?

I'm quite interested in graphic design, actually. I think that's a very interesting subject. And just esthetics in general, whether it's a sculpture or a painting or a CD cover or leather pants or a beer bottle. I notice if there's something that makes me watch a little extra. Like for instance the cathedral in Cologne. It's almost like it's dripping black down the wall. It's actually pollution, but to me it's like the church is bleeding black, just like dripping down. It doesn't look like a christian church, more like a satanic one. I like the church in Trondheim in Norway. What's interesting there is that it's a catholic church and when you study the church from the outside, there all sorts of demons and evil looking creatures on the outside. If you stand outside and use your camera and zoom, you can see it very well. Every once in a while I notice, just going by a harbour, you have these cranes. Sometimes the metal constructions in them are very interesting, with metal bits shining and going everywhere, with sharp edges. It actually looks quite aggressive.

A question about Storm. Fenriz once said that the idea was good, but the outcome less than you hoped for.

I think it's fucking stupid and I've told him that. He sortof denied saying that. He told me that he was misunderstood and that's not what he really said. I said to him, regardless of what you think now, you did like it when we did it. And I think you should stand up for what you've done. I think it's his lack of the ability to take things for what they were. It was actually very good when it was done. Today it would maybe have been a little bit cheesy. A lot of that material was written mid-1994 (it came out in February 1995). Our cooperation on this project came out of our

friendship. I would have done it anyway.

Is Fenriz a person that changes his mind a lot?

Yes, constantly. And he's proud of it too. That makes it difficult working with him. He's sulking a lot and complaining a lot. He's just too emotional sometimes. But it's all worth it, because he's such a good musician. I mean, everybody's got bad sides.

'Rebel extravaganza' is more regular black metal than the EPs that came before it. Are you planning to keep EPs more experimental than the albums?

EPs and compilations and such are a good way to present material that's a little bit on the side track, as albums demand a continuous flow, a red thread through the journey which is history. But that's true for 'Megiddo' but not for 'Intermezzo' which I don't find experimental at all.

What kind of experiments will you do in the future?

There's no plans for an EP. The next thing will be an album. It's hard to say. I guess I've written about half an hour of music. Some of it's quite groovy, like heavy rock based stuff, while other things are quite evil and dark and I plan to have very fast drums on it. And that's where I stand now. Some of the stuff is a bit psychotic in a way, bizarre, morbid. I hope to do something about the Satyricon next year. It depends on touring activity. The more we tour, the less music we get to write.

Have you always listened to other stuff than black metal?

I always listen to lots of different music. Since 1991/1992 I've had my periods of progressive rock, pop music, classical music, electronic music, industrial music, all sorts of things.

The album title, 'Rebel extravaganza', does that have something to do with your own person?

It represents the lyrical and musical content of the album and it also reflects what Satyricon is about in general, in the way that Satyricon has always been an unconventional and extravagant band. It has always been very unafraid in its approach. I don't care if it sounds arrogant, but Satyricon is a leader band. Satyricon is not a follower. It's our responsibility to challenge ourselves and the scene with what we do.

Can the change in lyrics over the years be ascribed to the same thing?

When I wrote the lyrics, I wanted to use a simpler language to make it more direct. Just right there in your face. On the other hand using a lot of metaphores in the lyrics on the new album raises a lot of questions too. It makes people think, which is important as well. A lot of people have been focussing on negativity in black metal. I see a lot of lyrics as very positive. When Fenriz says, 'I am the fist in the face of god', that's not something destructive, it's a positive statement. It's something I can stand behind, I agree, I feel the same way. I see it as a positive force. We don't point at what we believe to be good, we point at what we believe to be bad. Such as christianity, such as the ways of humans in

today's society. I don't see that as being negative. I see it as an outlet for what we feel. It's pinpointing an important subject.

What do you think about the fact that 'Rebel extravaganza' reached the 22nd position in the Norwegian hitlist?

I think it's a great achievement for Satyricon. I think it proves we do quality music, regardless of genre.

Do you think that the hitlist is a reflection of quality music?

It could be. It doesn't necessarily have to be, but it could be. The hitlist is a reflection of two things. On one side you have quality music, that people like. On the other hand you have bad music which reaches the charts because of advertising and good marketing and such things. I think it speaks for itself that not everybody on the hitlist has the financial possibility to do this kind of advertising. There's some techno stuff and us that don't have this kind of machinery, but people buy it because they like it, they heard it's a good record.

Then what do you think of well-selling bands like Dimmu Borgir and Cradle of Filth, who are always accused of being crap and selling-out?

I think Cradle of Filth is fucking awesome. It's better than the death of Jesus.

Are you serious?

No. This conscious effort to be commercially successful through merchandising and imagery is not something I would do, it's not something I agree with. If they want to do it, I don't care. I think it's fucking stupid and I like what we are doing a lot better.

Then how do you explain the use of a naked woman in the 'Mother North' video? I suppose that didn't do the sales any harm.

First of all, we didn't use a naked woman for the purpose of using a naked woman. If we would have needed a motorbike for that video we would have used that instead. We needed something to represent Nordic beauty. Whereas with Cradle of Filth, it's a kind of cheesy attempt to use sex as a tool to sell and that's a significant difference.

OK. Something different. Who was playing live tonight?

There was Tyr, who played bass live for Emperor before but is not a band member and Cyrus who played live with Old Man's Child played rhythm guitar. And then a guy who has been playing with Nocturnal Breed for instance played keyboards and finally Steinar from a progressive metal band called Spiral Architects on lead guitar. They won't be involved in any writing, it could be that we use some of them for appearances on records. Obviously I play a lot myself on the record. For instance I recorded six guitar layers for each song on 'Rebel extravaganza', I played bass on every song and I produced it.

About Thorns. Are you permanently involved in that band?

No, I'm a big fan of Thorns' music, ever since I first heard them. I'm doing like co-production and vocals on a couple of songs. He wanted me to do the vocals for the whole album, which

I would have liked to because I love the music. But it doesn't feel right, because I want to use my voice exclusively for Satyricon. I can do a little bit here and there, a couple of songs, but a whole album, that would be wrong.

Will more of the old tracks be re-recorded?

That's up to him. At the moment I know there are no plans.

What will their new album be like?

I've heard every song written so far and all the tracks have been written. I think that it's very dark and very mechanical, eerie and gloomy. If the production works out the way I want it to, it will be one of the best metal albums ever in history. You can still hear it's Thorns, because of the way he plays guitar, which is so extremely characteristic, but it's been ten years since he wrote his first stuff, so obviously there is a difference. If you follow Thorns, you can recognize it instantly. But it's a lot different, the music and that's what I like about it too. I have enormous expectations.

What will be the recording line-up?

Well, some of the guitars and all of the bass has been already recorded and some of the programming has already been done. There's going to be some drum machines, but most of it is going to be live drums played by Hellhammer. I will do the vocals on two or three songs and the rest will be done by Aldrahn of Dødheimgard. Snorre will produce the album and I will co-produce it.

How did you get in touch with him after he was released from prison?

I got in touch with him a long time before he was released. I contacted him and told him that I loved his music and that I wanted to put out the old stuff. And then I told him that I wanted him to start playing again. If people hate Thorns, hate me for it. If they like it, thank me for it, because I got him to start playing again. He really didn't want to. But I just kept on pushing him and pushing and pushing...

The band name Satyricon implies some kind of satire. True?

Frost: That's a bit hard to explain for me as the one who came up with the name didn't want to explain it himself. It was our former guitar player who came up with the name. He felt that that to reveal his intentions in choosing that name would destroy a bit of the magic. There is a strong link between Satyricon and Satyr, the main man in the band. In that way, it could be interpreted as the icon of Satyr, the forest demon in Greek mythology. So there's like a mystery to it all. I don't think the name has anything to do with Fellini's film or Petronius' book. It was more about a ritual that the guitar player was performing.

About your pseudonym, did you think it up before joining the band?

It was a natural result of my great fascination for Greek mythology. It was a result of my fascination with nature. I didn't see it as being something Greek or Nordic. Satyr is a demon of nature, the god of the woods.

How is Moonfog these days?

Moonfog is doing well, because we've been very patient, just picking what we like not what we were expected to pick. You know, just having a few bands, but working hard with

them, working hard with Moonfog's profile. Slowly but securely we're getting a lot of good feedback for that, people respect us for that. I'm not only talking about fans, I'm talking about distributors and press and record stores and such as well.

Did you recently sign any new bands?

Eibon

What kind of bands are you looking for?

They have to have character, identity and integrity. That is supplement to musical quality which is kind of obvious. I've never deliberately signed only Norwegian bands.

How did Moonfog start out?

It started with us signing to an avant-garde label called Tatra Productions and they put out a lot of weird shit, but not really metal. And they suggested we set up our own sub-label.

Did you look for other labels in the beginning?

We got an offer from Osmose, but they wanted to put out a Sadistik Exekution album first and then release Satyricon. I remember that very well. That would result in us waiting for like six months. So I said, 'Either you put it out now, or it goes somewhere else'. Hervé might regret that now, a little bit. Same with Candlelight. They wanted us to put out 'Dark Medieval Times' on another label and sign us for the second album. I said, 'Fuck you, either you believe in us or you don't'. And there were like tons of the small labels and we actually signed to No Fashion Records from Sweden. And when we recorded 'Dark Medieval Times', we recorded it for them. But halfway through the recording they didn't pay the advance to the studio, so we just called them up and said, 'Obviously you don't have the financial possibility to do this, so we're going somewhere else'. And I gave the tape to Tatra because they put out stuff that I like and they were interested so that's how it came about.

The intro of 'Dark Medieval Times' was taken from 'Death in the Blue Lake' by When. What can you tell about this one man band?

I think that Lars Pedersen is a very gifted musician. I don't know him personally, but I've met him several times and talked to him. He's made a lot of dark music throughout his career which I enjoy a lot. I would suggest to people that would like to check out something by When, 'Black Death' and 'Death in the Blue Lake' are the albums to look out for. I don't listen to it a lot these days. For instance, I listened to 'Black Death' for the first time in years, like six months ago and I listened to 'Death in the Blue Lake' for the first time in years about a month ago. I used to listen to it a lot.

Who's this Thorden who plays keyboards on 'Dark Medieval Times'?

He was a jazz musician, a weird guy. He was really weird. I mean, he was probably one of the most eccentric people I ever met. He was into anything that was experimental on the side-track and weird, anything that was unconventional. He was very interested in Satyricon. He was a very cool guy, a very good musician, very good at playing keyboards. I just asked him to play keyboards. He was never intended to be a part of the band. He did it as a

job and he did a good job.

Sverd from Arcturus played keyboards on 'Shadowthrone'. Why is Samoth at that time more or less presented as a real band member and Sverd is only thanked in one line?

Because Samoth was a cool guy and the other guy sucked that was why. In a way it was intended that Samoth be a Satyricon band member. Both him and us had doubts whether it would actually work, but we were attempting to make it work.

Why did Kveldulv, who played on 'Nemesis Divina' leave?

Because he didn't have the same ambitions that Frost and I had, in the sense of touring, all of it.

There is a rumour that Dismember's first bass player left to join Satyricon. Is that true?

That's true. It's a long and boring story. He played with us for a while, socially and musically it was working very well. He was supposed to go back to Sweden to pick up some personal belongings and shit and then come back and stay in Norway permanently. That's the last time we heard from him, he never returned. I've never heard what happened. I've met Dismember guys and they don't even know. Fred from Dismember met him at a festival and said to him, like 'Haven't seen you in a long time, weren't you supposed to play with Satyricon and he said, 'Let's not talk about that, cheers'.

Why did you go for 'Orgasmatron' if you don't like Motörhead?

Because I like that song very much. It is very different from other Motörhead songs which are more like rock 'n roll. It's a weird song, I don't know what it is. It's a song that I've always liked and have always considered to be very cynical. It's got like this cold arrogant feel to it. I felt that Satyricon had the capacity to make even more cold and cynical, that's why I wanted to do it. And I think I succeeded.

Do you have anything to add?

After almost an hour? No...

Aren't you used to such long interviews?

Not on tour. On the phone, yes. But on tour it's usually ten minutes maybe fifteen. That's because you have a time schedule. When you do phone interviews you're hooked up to do phone interviews and that's it.

In that case I'd like to thanks you very much.

No problem.
(Joris and Rahab)

Discography:

- 1992 SATYRICON, 2 TRACK D
- 1993 THE FOREST IS MY THRONE D
- 1994 DARK MEDIEVAL TIMES (MOONFOG)
- 1994 THE SHADOWTHRONE (MOONFOG)
- 1996 THE FOREST IS MY THRONE SPLIT WITH ENSLAVED (MOONFOG)
- 1996 NEMESIS DIVINA (MOONFOG)
- 1996 MOTHER NORTH VIDEO (MOONFOG)
- 1997 MEGIDDO EP (MOONFOG)
- 1998 INTERMEZZO II (MOONFOG)
- 1999 REBEL EXTRAVAGANZA (MOONFOG)

Please tell us all about Ephel Duath's history up until this very moment.

Ephel Duath is a project born in February '98. It is a duo consisting of **Giuliano** (vocals, guitars, bass and programming) and me, **Davide**, (backing vocals, guitars and programming). In October '98 the first

step was set in the musical and inner evolution that we are pursuing: 'Opera' our first demo tape. In June '99 **Code666 Productions** offered the band an important record deal, and in few days the band signed the contract. In the meantime 'Opera' blasts the mp3.com top chart reaching the first position in the top 200 Black Metal, with more than 17000 contacts and downloads in the few months online... After this great results mp3.com reprints 'Opera' in a DAM (Digital Automatic Music).

In the meanwhile the band continue to prepare the new material that will be featured on the debut full length album 'Phormula' (out in July 2000). The album was recorded from December '99 to January 2000 at Fear Studio in Ravenna and it is out in a fascinating 8 pages digipack.

'Ephel Duath' means Mountain of Shadows and comes from Tolkien mythology. Why did you choose 'Ephel Duath' in particular - for

Tolkien came up with a lot of mysteriously sounding names? What is it that attracts you in Tolkien's work? In another interview (printed in Eclipse #5) you mentioned you have had strong ties with Tolkien. In what way? Are these ties broken now? Why?

We have chosen this name for various reasons that make Ephel Duath really a source of mystery for our sensibility. Maybe it's the sound that reminds of ancient magic or for the sequence of the letters like a sort of enchantment. Tolkien was able to create an atmosphere that permits the reader to enter in the narration with a sort of magic transport: the book completely becomes your life during the reading, and maybe after the reading too... No other

Fantasy books (if you want to consider Tolkien a Fantasy writer and not a historic...) could offer an experience so complete and amplified this strongly, if the reader is a child...

The ties that we had with Tolkien in the past were, in fact simply more irrational, more

your music on 'Opera', I think the lyrics are rather cliché. Are they subordinate to the music? What do you want to express with your lyrics?

I respect your opinion... Our lyrics aren't subordinate to our music, and they reflect

It was in the previous edition of Mandrake that I stated, I had never been too impressed by the Italian scene as far as bands were concerned (of course there always have been a couple of exceptions). Shortly after writing the review in which I made this statement I heard Ephel Duath's demo tape 'Opera', and though the sound might not be optimal it made me wonder if I would maybe have to revise my view or if opening another exception would suffice. It was immediately clear that this band had a lot of potential - their highly symphonic, classically inspired, complex black metal appealed to me very much. So it came as no surprise that shortly afterwards I heard that Code666, a young and equally promising Italian label that had released Rakoth's debut album, had picked up the band. This summer the band's debut 'Phormula' saw the light of day, making clear that the band wouldn't have themselves pushed into one particular musical direction. In the following interview I talked with guitarist Davide amongst others about the band's current release, human behaviour and above all, about Art!

particular fragments of feelings that are filtered by symbols and natural images. They have allegorical meanings that, I have to admit, sometimes are difficult to be captured for their hermeticity.. May be is your case!

In the thanks list of your demo you thank a number a well known musicians from Scandinavia (Mikael Stanne, Jesper Stromblad, Kimberly Goss) How did you get in touch?

Two years ago we have been to Gotenburgh for 15 days, where we had the opportunity to meet the members of Dark

emotional. As you can easily comprehend, the relation that a child has, in particular with the things that fascinates him, is almost physical!

Listening to your demo 'Opera' it struck me that an actual rhythm guitar is missing as well as a bass guitar. Was this a deliberate

Tranquility and In Flames: their disposability was really astonishing!!! We have also had the opportunity to see the guyz of In Flames playing in studio, preparing for the support tour to 'Whoracle'.. Really great musicians!!!

I heard about some rip off label pressing you demo 'Opera' on CD. Could you please tell the whole story? Were you ever in touch with this label? If so, what was the contact like?

A rip-off label, called 'Kiss The Stone', has reprinted 'Opera' on CD-format, with other material too, and it

has deposited the royalties of our band without any sort of our approval. Some months ago I received a message from a Spanish guy, who asked me why we said that 'Phormula' was our debut album; in fact he already had an Ephel Duath-CD, entitled 'Adulta Hieme', like the second passage of our demo tape, released by a label called KTS. I was furious! Our label manager immediately found out all that is possible to find about this one; only the nationality (ITALIAN!!!), of this very famous ghost-label for pirate material... There is also The Beatles in his fucking 'catalogue'!

You have been high in the download charts of the 'MP3.com' - internet site for a very long time, making you one of the most



choice? Don't you think your music could sound a whole lot heavier by adding rhythm/bass guitar?

Recording 'Opera' without bass guitar has been a deliberate choice. The songs were in fact very rich of different instruments, and two or three different guitar lines, so we were worried about a possible sort of confusion, caused in the mixing phase, by our inexperience. It has been not a very good choice, but I can say this only now... after another experience in studio, and a new album, 'Phormula', that does contain bass parts! The sound turned out much more powerful and compact... as you soon will hear!

Despite the fact I admire you very much for

established underground acts of the moment. How established do you think Ephel Duath's name is by now? Did you get a lot of response to the downloads? Who came up with the idea to promote your band in such a way?

Mp3.com really has been a great help to promote our music! Our label, Code666, concentrate their work on contacts through the internet. So when we signed the deal, Emiliano, the label manager, immediately made mp3 files of the songs on 'Opera', and in less than two weeks the title track 'Opera' was in the first position of the mp3 black metal chart! You can imagine our surprise!! So we started to receive messages from Mp3.com visitors every day, in particular from Americans. And because of these great results the Mp3.com have reprinted 'Opera' in a DAM (Digital Automatic Music) CD version for computer. You can buy it going to www.mp3.com/ephelduath. The downloads till now are really numerous. Only the title track, 'Opera' had over 17000 downloads!

How did you come in touch with Emiliano from Code 666? What do you think of the co-operation so far? For how many albums did you sign? What made you decide to sign to Code 666? What do you think is the best condition in your contract? Is it a pro for you to be signed to an Italian label?

Code666 contacted us in May '99 after some good reviews on the demo tape. Emiliano offered us a really good contract and the best condition in the deal is the complete artistic freedom that he offers us. It shows the great trust he has in our possibilities, and for a musician a similar support is very important.

We are very lucky! In Italy there is no other label with such a winner policy like code666, and the results demonstrate it!!

We're at the eve of the release of 'Phormula' - please tell us all about the recording. Did you recording Blue Train's again? How many tracks? Could you describe the most important musical changes compared to your demo 'Opera'? When will it be released?

'Phormula' has been out in the first days of July. It contains 8 new songs: 'Embossed', 'The Greyness grows already Old' (these tracks are the single, present on the web since February), 'Danza', 'A Flickering Warm', 'Myriad', 'Pursuing the Instinct', 'The Blow's Rhymer', 'Elapsed' (an unreleased song from the 'Opera' period). We have recorded the new material at the Fear Studios in Ravenna. The new material is really more experimental than the previous. I consider the new songs really more mature and, above all, more personal...the aim that we are pursuing. It is of basic importance for us to have a recognisable sound and style and 'Phormula' represents and show this objective...

We have used a lot of new synth-sounds, captured by new equipment. We have inserted

the bass guitar too, played by Giuliano... I think that the result is really mysterious and fascinating....

What has caused the delay on the release of your album - it should have already been released in February 2000?

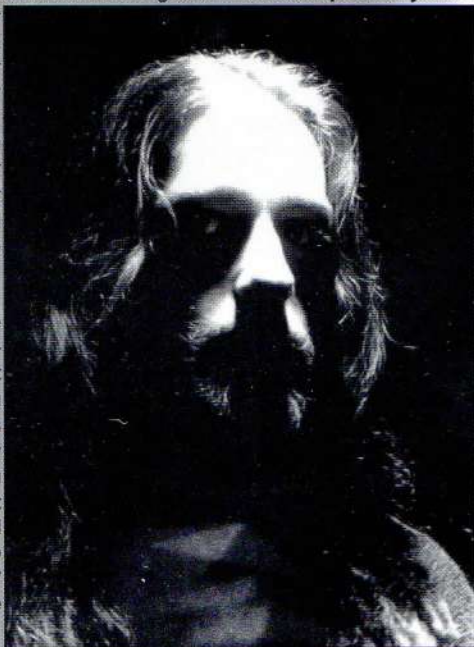
Problems with the graphics; the designer, Mauro Berchi of Eibon Records, was in fact very busy with the recording session of his own band in that period. And for others: hitches caused by the bastards of Kiss The Stone.

Looking at your homepage, I think you attach quite a lot of value to appearance. Could you tell something about the lay out of the CD? Will there be any special limited edition of the album (vinyl maybe)?

We have always cared a lot about our presentation, like, for example for our demo's artwork, or the promotional photos taken by an up-coming and talented young photographer Marco Schievenin... 'Phormula' is out in a splendid digi-pack edition of 8 pages, by Mauro Berchi, who also did the artwork for Rakoth's debut album (Code666' first release). The lay out is really very minimal and mysterious. Probably, a second time there will also be a special and limited edition on vinyl and on cassette.

Ephel Duath currently consists of only two band members. Will you consider expanding the line up in the future? Why (not)? Isn't it problematic to play live with only two band members? What about the visual aspect of your live shows (only two members on stage). How do you fill up this gap? What's the use of playing live when both the drums & keyboards are programmed ? Can't I just as well listen to your demo/album then?

At the moment it is really impossible for us to play live shows. We have refused important offers; because of technical and material reasons we can't offer what we want to give to the public. We want that our live shows, for the particularity of the music, are a



kind of experience that touches various senses. For example, we want to include visual aspects to our shows by the projection of short films and images related to every single fragment that we perform, supported, certainly, by computer programming. We have a session bass player at the moment, and we hope that in a near future it will be possible, also as far as the financial aspects go, to create what we are searching for...Are you curious?

Your music sounds heavily influenced by classical music... the way the melody lines are build up and so on. is there a specific reason for that? Did one of you guys do an education in classical music?

This is a very usual question for us. Neither of

us has a classical education. Giuliano listens to classical music, but this is only a passion, not supported by particular study. At the moment we are interested in particular forms of measures, typical, for example, of the jazz movement. We find the percussion and the rhythm parts in this genre very particular and so distant from what is common in the metal genre with its sterile paces. In this way we will try to insert rhythmic elements in our next songs. These will add a lot of unforeseeability to our music...I found this really very interesting to experiment with.

Why are these influences from classical music so omni-present in your work? Do you consider yourself a black metal band and if so, do you think black metal lends itself to incorporate classical influences? What are the most important influences for you besides classical music?

We don't consider Ephel Duath a black metal band. People always seem to have to label a band in some way! We consider our music avant-garde metal, but this is restrictive too...

I think that experimental or classical elements in black metal could give really great results, but the real Black Metal is cold and dirty without thrills. So it is to be found only in the past, in which this element was exalted for the particular situation and scene. The classical influences, so omni present in our music as you say, have been an instinctive choice in a particular period of our musical travels. As you will hear (very soon!), on 'Phormula', our evolution touches other influences too, like noise and electronic music. So I don't consider classical elements basic for my band and above all for the black metal genre. It represents an important factor in the creation of the first step in our evolution: 'Opera'...nothing else!

Who is your favourite classical composer in general? Why? And from Italy?

I don't have a favourite composers...The classical influences in our songs are so very unconscious that it is very difficult for me to find a precise distinction...I can mention some composers that we appreciate; Beethoven, for example, and Paganini, Albinoni, Ravel.

Did you ever visit the opera yourself? Which operas did you see? Do you prefer operas by Italian composers like Rossini and Verdi or do you like the more bombastic works of e.g. Wagner better?

We have never visited the opera, and there is no particular preferences between Rossini, Verdi or Wagner because no one of these composers fascinates us in any way.

Why did you call the demo 'Opera'?

It has been a very instinctive choice (as a lot of the Ephel Duath's decisions) after the creation of the song we decided that it would be the title track. Talking with Giuliano after a music session I have underlined that the song was really an...opera: we have immediately chosen this title both for the passage and the demo tape.

Under what circumstances do you compose Ephel Duath's work? Is a specific atmosphere required? Do you compose under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs?

We usually compose the guitar lines - 49 the basis from which our music is born

- separately. When we unify our creation, the only atmosphere that we need is peace and calm. In fact the parts of the synths and the drum machine, some of the most important characteristics of Ephel Duath, are really very delicate and refined in our music. For this reason we need concentration and a peaceful atmosphere. Drugs could slow down the composing even if they could give, if used in a moderate way, a particular atmosphere in the music created...But when the effects disappear, it seems to change, losing what in a previous time was exalted.

Can you describe the sensation of composing? Could you compare its intensity and purity with any other experience in daily life? What are you trying to achieve with your composing?

The sensation that composing gives to me or, simply, observing the growth in all the spheres of my band is something that I can't substitute in my life. I can't compare the inner satisfaction that playing in the band gives to me, with other things. Playing represents the best and the purest way that I can express my feelings and with our compositions we are pursuing more and more confidence in the link between our intentions and the music we play with our instruments.

If you would have to chose, never to make love to any woman for the rest of your life or never to compose again - what would it be? And why?

Your question is...terrible! These two aspects in my life, love and music, are in a sort of complementarity, and it is really impossible for me to deprive myself of one of these essences, so basic. I prefer to die rather than living without love, sex or my music. I know you wish a more definite answer but...Try to answer you to this sort of mental torture!!!

Does Ephel Duath's music reflect your entire personality or just certain aspects? You once said that there is no difference between Davide in Ephel Duath and Davide in daily life - why is this so important for you? Why not emphasize certain aspects of your personality through your music to get a stronger contrast? What do you think about the image many black metal bands take up? What about the image of bands such as Arcturus and Solefald?

Ephel Duath reflects particular aspects of our inner ego, but for this reason I don't want to alter one of these aspects, creating differences and moving away from our spontaneity, for example by using war names or with particular photos confirming to be part of a certain movement. I find the image of many black metal bands like their music: simply without personality!

I love Solefald. I consider this band really ingenious and provocative: they put various elements, taken from different genres into their music and have developed in a unique and personal way...great! Moreover they are supported by my favourite label: Avantgarde Music, symbol of quality products!! I think that their strange image is perfect for the music they create, I like it!

Arcturus' 'La Masquerade Infernale' is really an interesting and experimental work full of great ideas and an astonishing sound, all perfectly performed and produced. Their image is 'a little bit studied' - it is very original but I don't think that it reflects spontaneity...

is it like some kind of selection?

Because of the great spontaneity of our will to create there isn't any kind of selection of the inner feelings we want to put into our music present in our compositions. By composing we discover new faces of our sensibilities: music could also be considered a way to understand some aspects of our personality that in the every days life are suffocated. It's simpler for me to explain which aspects aren't taken into consideration for our creation, in fact what I feel isn't so easy to be understood only by reading my poor words. Our music is for me like a sort of reconciliation with my real essence: the best way that I can feel my purest instincts. Sorry, I can't be more precise...

I understood you have aspirations with a camera - are your aspirations getting more concrete forms? Have you ever considered making a movie with Ephel Duath's music as a soundtrack? What is it that you like about movies? What's your all time favourite movie and why? Is the director of this movie a source of inspiration for your own future camera work?

One of our goals is to create a film based on our music, somewhere in the future when the situation will be ready for it... to create a perfect fusion between images and our instruments, I think to a sort of concept story. I consider this one of the most complete and definitive ways to explicit our vision of art. It could be really fantastic.. It will be really fantastic.

What fascinates you about human manners? While observing them with others, doesn't it scare you how easily they are influenced by 'outside factors'? Do you reflect this on yourself? Are you trying to avoid changes in your own behaviour due to outside influences or don't you care about these changes?

I'm really very fascinated by human manners. For example, I find it really interesting to notice the relation between completely different persons... The sort of 'adaptation' to the situations, the defences and the uneasinesses... This sort of attraction derived from the continuous and instinctive adaptation, yes real adaptation, I found in my own behaviours. It is a characteristic of my mind to combine different persons in my inner reality for different situations.... This process is caused, as you say, by the fear created by the notice of how easily a person is affected by outside influences....Anyway, I want to defend myself paradoxically with all my adapting to the situation. I seem to undergo the same process as 'normal people'...I hate the social situation that is growing in my city and unfortunately in my country, too false for me: I have to answer with my falseness..

What is this social situation you are referring to like? What is changing?

Unfortunately I see that the values of a lot of people lie solely with material things. I see the ghost of the American colonisation everywhere, and it is terrible to notice that some people are really so fascinated by these poor thoughts. I'm talking about the standard American way of life that is entering in our European society through the monopolisation of the TV, music, cinema, all food!!...American power is immense in all the fields, but this power is only used to create products that have to be sold. I profoundly hate this.

Do you believe in eye for an eye? Don't you think that by answering with falseness you will only harm yourself even more in the

end (like the loss of purity)?

No, I don't believe in this 'ancient' revenge that in my opinion for its animality has no reason to exist in a civil society. I think that my answer to the general falseness present in the society in which I live could be considered an extreme and impulsive reaction that directly hits me. I hope that with the years I will be able to find a strong personal dimension that would permit me to move away from this falseness that indirectly (and, may be, stupidly) has also entered into my own behaviours.

What about your label Ahryman Execution? When can we expect the first release? Have you found any interesting band yet? Why this name for the label?

Unfortunately, I haven't found a band to collaborate with...but I am confident! My first preoccupation at the beginning of this experience is to preserve the possibilities that a band could have, leaving all the possible ways open to the band, in case a new deal or better conditions offered by another label come along. In fact I don't want to damage the ones, who

believe in me in any way because of my inexperience. I think that passion is very important and I put, better, I try to put, this in everything I do, but in such a competitive field like the music business, the most important thing is experience!...And this could be also an advice to all the bands that give confidence to the first 'micro-label' that is ready to propose a 'sort' of deal to them...Pay attention!!!!(May be it could be superfluous....I hope this!)

The name Ahryman Execution was the first name of the guys of Nazgul who collaborate with me in this project.

How is the local scene in Padova? Could you recommend any bands from where you live?

The Padua metal scene is really very rich...There are bands for every taste! Black metal ones, like **Abhor**, **Death Dies**, **Satanel**, **Mater Tenebra**; Swedish Death/Black, like **Glory** or **Fields of Asphodel**; and dark gothic like **Eventide** or **Diableria**. These band, I can assure it, are really professional. and the results that they have obtained confirm my words!

You may close of the interview now..

We will record one or two new songs this winter that will be featured on the code666 compilation 'Better undead that alive' that will be out in the spring 2001, and it will contain exclusively unreleased passages from **Rakoth**, **Ephel Duath**, **Aghora**, **Diabolicum** and other special guests.

Thanks a lot for the interest shown in my band!

(Rahab)

For every question or contact write to us!

Ephel Duath
P.O. BOX 751
35136 Padua
(Italy)
ephelduath777@hotmail.com

Visit our new web site! www.ephel.cjb.net
and...search the Phormula!

Discography:

1998 OPERA D
2000 PHORMULA (CODE666)

IN A DUTCH UNDERGROUND MAGAZINE AN INTERVIEW FEATURE WITH A TALENTED DUTCH UNDERGROUND BAND SHOULDN'T BE LACKING, OF COURSE! AND THIS TIME WE HAVE TO OFFER AN INTERVIEW WITH THE EXTREME BLACK METALLERS OF WARLUST WHO CAUSED QUITE SOME COMMOTION WITH THEIR MCD 'THE FINAL WAR'.

I GOT IN TOUCH WITH GUITARIST 66SICK WHO PROVIDED ME WITH A GOOD SHARE OF PROMO MATERIAL AND WHILE READING SOME PREVIOUS INTERVIEWS TWO THINGS STRUCK ME: FIRST THAT THE BAND SEEMED TO BE BURDENED BY AN 'ACCLAIMED' NAZI IMAGE AND SECOND THAT OTHER GUITARIST FUROR MADE A HABIT OUT OF GIVING UNSHADED PROVOCATIVE/SHOCKING ANSWERS. TWO OF THE THINGS I WANTED TO CHECK OUT WITH THIS INTERVIEW WERE WHETHER THERE WAS ANY SENSE IN THIS WHOLE NAZI-ACCUSATION THING AND IF THESE SHOCKING STATEMENTS WERE JUST A CHEAP AND CHILDISH WAY TO GET ATTENTION OR IF THE BAND HAD ACTUALLY THOUGHT ABOUT THEIR 'EXTREME' VIEWS MORE PROFOUNDLY. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS I CAME UP WITH A NUMBER OF CRITICAL, YOU MIGHT EVEN CALL IT PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS MYSELF AND I SENT THEM TO THE BAND, WAITING FOR 66SICK TO REPLY. HOWEVER, SOME DAYS LATER IT TURNED OUT TO BE FUROR AND DRUMMER NOCTURNASZ WHO HAD REPLIED, AND MY INTERVIEW HAD CLEARLY WENT DOWN THE WRONG WAY. ... AND I CAN'T SAY IT BENEFITED FROM THAT. (ALTHOUGH I CAN'T HELP FINDING THE WHOLE THING WAS SOMEWHAT AMUSING) ANYWAY, EVENTUALLY 66SICK ANSWERED THE INTERVIEW FOR ME AGAIN - AND HIS ANSWERS YOU CAN READ BELOW. I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT I THINK HIS DISCRETE WAY OF REPLYING DESERVES QUITE SOME RESPECT AND IF THERE IS ONE THING TO BE CLEAR FROM THIS INTERVIEW IT SHOULD BE THAT WARLUST HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH NAZISM... ABOUT THE REST, YOU SHOULD JUST JUDGE YOURSELF .

Please reveal the history of Warlust (founding, line-up changes, releases, etc)

Warlust was raised back in 1998... Up 'till then, there are only rehearsal recordings. Warlust had only three members back then: **Nocturnasz** (drums), **Furor & 66Sick** (Guitars). When the band was ready to record some songs for a demo-tape or MCD, they asked **Lord Charagnanna** (Ex-Sabbatical Goat) to perform as a vocalist on the recordings. So early in 1999 Warlust recorded their debut-MCD 'The Final War'. Later also **Troll** (ex-Sabbatical Goat) joined Warlust on bass. We have played some live concerts by now...with bands such as **Marduk**, **Angelcorpse** (RIP), **Centurian**, **Liar of Golgotha** and **Trail of Tears**. Early in 2001 Warlust will be releasing their debut full-length CD...that will contain about 45 minutes of Warlust-a-like terror noise!!!



Warlust consist of former members of Sabbatical Goat and Denethor. Why did these bands split up? The opinions in the underground on both bands were rather mixed to say the least. Has this ever been like a burden to Warlust? I have heard a rumour that Sabbatical Goat are back together, with a new female bass player - Is there any truth in that?

I don't really know why SG split up, because I

didn't play in that band, but I believe they had some personal problems about their music.

Also I think they didn't get the appreciation from the fans and other bands they hoped for...But I know that they are rehearsing again...Very relaxed, so don't expect anything too soon. I don't know anything about a female bass player though...Sounds interesting. **Denethor** split up because we had a reputation of being a nazi-band. There were a lot of rumours about Denethor being involved with racism, fascism and nazi-ideals. These were false rumours, though, because Denethor was a black-metal band, and not a political punk-

band. However, some members of Denethor wanted to become a more political (BM) band, and that was the reason we split up. These members are no part of Warlust, and have nothing to do with Warlust.

Lord Charagnanna also used to be a member of **Unshrouded Bitterness**. Does this band still exist? What about his acclaimed contribution to the **Hungarian Mare Tenebrarum** magazine?

Unshrouded Bitterness still exists. I don't know whether they will record something or not, but they still exist. Warlust have played two or three times with **Unshrouded**, not too long ago, so I think I'm right here. I think it's possible he has contributed to this zine...I don't know it however, and I've never

heard the Lord about it, so who cares?

Why did you name your band Warlust when there already had been a **Bestial Warlust** around. Aren't you afraid of confusion?

Confusion? Come on, like everyone in BM-land is original... We just wanted a name to express the aggression and violence in our music. We don't care about **Bestial Warlust**. It's quite a good band though...I think there will be some other bands called Warlust world-wide, but since we're the only

one with a CD right now, and since we're the most famous right now... we don't care. I think Warlust sounds cool. Anyway... I think that anyone will be able to notice a difference between different band-names... and the music they make... By the way... how did you like Dark Funeral, Black Funeral, Funeral Winds, Mortum, Mortus, Mortis, Mortifier, Mortification, and so on... who has the best ideas?

Your MCD 'The Final War' has been released by Happy Holocaust Records, a rather small & obscure label. How did you get in touch?

It's quite simple. The Holocaust-manager lives in the same town as Nocturnas and Furor. Since the metal-scene is quite small over there, they came to know each other. He told us he was interested in releasing some music from Warlust, since he owned a small label. The result of that is our first MCD 'The Final War'

How would you describe your own music and what are you most important influences?

I'd describe our music as furious, aggressive black terror-metal. Or something like that. I don't know what our most important influences are... Of course black metal bands... But I don't think one or two bands in particular, but the whole scene... We all like bands as **Dark Funeral, Marduk, Setherial, Niden Div. 187, In Battle** and so on. But Warlust likes to bring more different influences into their music. Our newest songs have thrash- and death metal influences as well. Of course Warlust still play black metal... and always will, but we try to make our music not too boring and all-black to listen to....

Some of the riffing reminded me of Denethor (slightly folk inspired) Did you use any riffs from Denethor for Warlust?

We have used some riffs from some songs yes. And why not? Since we would not record any old songs with Denethor, we thought we could better use our best riffs with Warlust, rather than throwing them away... But we didn't copy them literally... All riffs are played faster or slower... they have improved since we played them with Warlust... so you won't recognise them...

The war-samples you have used for the miniCD are the same ones Marduk used for 'Panzerdivision Marduk'.... plagiarism? Please tell the story concerning these samples.

I know that we haven't used the same samples as Marduk did, 'cause Marduk used samples from German war machines like the Stuka... as you can hear on 'Panzer Division'... We took our samples from an old Vietnam-movie, so we used different samples. Besides that... we were finished with the recordings and mixing of the mini album months before the Marduk album saw the light... So I guess that we had released our war-sampled-CD before Marduk did. But because Marduk is so 'famous' and 'true' everyone thinks we stole their idea. We were also surprised when we heard the 'Panzer Division'... it resembled very much to our CD... at least the samples... Anyway, everyone who calls this plagiarism can fuck off and buy another CD.

War' been like - any offer from a bigger label? The reviews I have read were excellent - haven't there been any exceptions?

I haven't read all the reviews we had, but the reviews I read were all positive... I guess their will also be some less positive reviews, but none of them is really bad, or I would have heard about it, one way or another... Even **Nordic Vision**, that almost killed our partners in black (from the Lowlands) **Cirith Gorgor**, was quite positive. But besides good album-reviews, and some good live-reviews, we haven't had too much response. So far no interesting offers from bigger labels, but I guess we didn't pay enough attention to the promotion of the MCD... I think with the good reviews we should be able to get a good offer from a label, but it's difficult these days....

Why are some of the lyrics written in English and others in Dutch? What's the general reason for using Dutch for the lyrics? Should we expect more lyrics in Dutch like 'Haat' (Hatred)

We write lyrics in every language we like, if we want to. There is no reason but only that we are Dutch people and the rest of the world likes English best. Why do Norwegian bands write Norwegian lyrics? Because they like their native tongue, and so do we. It's easier to express yourself in your native tongue than in another... And yes, there will be more lyrics in Dutch... one song is called 'Wraak' (Revenge -ed) and another song is called 'Het Onkruid' (The Weeds -ed). So far those are the only songs written in Dutch.

In an interview Furor mentioned you are all true atheists.... Song titles like 'Murder of God' and Diabolical Hordes' don't make too much sense then do they? Neither do lyrical fragments like 'My soul belongs to Satan' (from 'The Final War'). Or should I see the lyrics more like stories that have not that much to do with your personal convictions?

Let me first tell you that all our lyrics are just stories... Or is that a revelation to you? We all reject Christianity like we reject every form of organised religion. I think their might be more than this life... But I don't believe in heaven and hell. The rest of the band doesn't belief in a god either... So from a Christian point of view you could say we're atheists, yes... But since we shit on Christianity, we don't really care what they call us. Back to the lyrics. I don't think that 10% of all black metal-maniacs are truly a slave to Satan or something. It's all just pure old-fashioned image. I don't think Legion and B-war will kneel in front of their antichrist every evening to tell Satan their sins... We use our lyrics to tell sick stories about life and death and about how we feel about religion and many other things. Some of it is real, some of it is fiction. I will not explain the meaning of every single word in our lyrics... We don't need to explain... it's our band.

The follow up to you MCD should have been recorded by now - please give us some previews.

Well, it isn't recorded yet, so no previews. We're hoping to record it in January 2001, it will be a full-length-album this time. There will be war, lots of war. And not like Marduk, with every CD a new and fucked-up image. From satanic and war to masochism right now... We will be

doing our thing, like we did in 1999. Pure terror and war. The songs will be more Bon Jovi inspired, because we want to sell more... No... the songs will be fast(er) and more aggressive. And we're able to play better than before, so it will be a killer, especially for Dutch standards.

When a person comes to a Warlust gig, what should he/she expect? What's the main thing you want to get across? What's the idea with the bivouac caps on stage?

When people come to a Warlust gig, I think they should expect about 50 minutes of pure noise. We all think metal, black metal in particular should be very aggressive and hateful. So that is what we try to show the people when we're on stage. And that is what they'll get. Sometimes the sound at a Warlust gig is somewhat chaotic, too often that is because the local sound-engineers can't handle our speed and kind of music. When you're able to listen through that, and you're into fast black, just come and check us out. Why the bivouac caps? First of all because we think that looks far more aggressive than just old-fashioned paint. Everyone paints their faces, and looks exactly the same, makes the same boring black metal, and looks black and white on stage... We try to create some kind of an own image. So I don't hope that soon every band will wear bivouac caps or something like that. There are already so few original bands around. And I think the caps fit right into our terror and war image. It's not that we're afraid to show our ugly faces to the audience, but we'll just save them from that....

Why did you play a cover track from Vondur live? The release of their rock 'n roll MCD was rather controversial - what do you think of it? Former Vondur member It is quite a cult figure, what do you know about this guy?

I really don't care about IT or ALL or what cult figure from the black metal scene... I don't care that he has moved from Norway to Finland (I thought he did)... But I like the music he made... and I think that is far more important. I like the first Vondur-album, and I like the second one as well. I like the covers they chose, because they're just great. Fuck off with all those evil-superstars, that only want to cover a song from **Dark Throne** or **Mayhem** (Deathcrush!!!) or Marduk. Vondur at least have succeeded to play an original cover. That's what we also like to do. So we chose Vondur. Sometimes we play a cover from **Gorgoroth**: 'Begravelsessnatt'. But we play the song faster than the original, so it's not just a copy of the original...

Furor doesn't seem too proud of the Dutch black metal scene. Do you share his opinion? (In a previous interview Furor mentioned there was only one band worth the attention: Salacious Gods- He hadn't heard the band himself, but Henry Sattler (God Dethroned/Cold Blood) had told him they were good... What a remarkable attitude!... Yep, and Christians are easy to manipulate!)

Christians are easy to manipulate indeed. But I don't think Furor or one of us is a Christian... I don't know all the underground bands from Holland, but I think there are not too many good and original bands. I think that's just a fact, and not a strange thought. A lot of Dutch

BM bands are just weak copies from a far greater example. The best Dutch bands I think are the most famous ones...I'm referring to **Cirith Gorgor**, **Ordo Draconis**, **Liar of Golgotha**, these are the most experienced bands I guess, they're able to do better than the rest. I mean bands like **Sammath**, **Fluisterwoud**, **Countess** or **Sauron** are able to play nice black metal, but they have nothing really interesting to offer, not on CD, nor live on stage. There are a lot of underground bands and projects in Holland, but most of it is just hobby-metal or too ripped-off to listen to...Some other projects are quite good, but there's just too much to name it all. Besides the fact that there are quite a few bands in Holland, it seems that everyone is afraid to make really fast and aggressive black. Most bands use many keyboards and slow, melodic Cradle-like parts. That is not the kind of black metal we like. So for us there are just a few interesting underground bands over here....

Do you think the Dutch black metal scene is divided in two – on one hand commercial keyboard black metal and on the other actual raw black metal the way it should be?
I think the Dutch underground is too small to be divided. There are different kinds of bands, that is true. But I don't think there is a real line between the 2 groups. I don't believe there is real hate or war among the Dutch bands. And why should there be? The underground should help itself instead of pissing off all bands except their own (friends). But that is something else than being critical towards other bands, I think. Some people think that everything you say is meant to attack them...a real true underground attitude that just kills yourself...

Lord Charagnanna made a statement, which was spread through e-mail, concerning your reputation as being nazis. What do you think has led to this reputation? How do you look at this? Please summarise the statement and tell a little about what consequences the reputation thing had for Warlust.

The statement tells that Warlust are not a nazi-, nor a political band. And that everyone who thinks so, or who says we are, can fuck off and tell us in our face, and not behind our backs - so that we can defend ourselves from these rumours, instead of hearing them weeks after... I don't really know why we have that reputation. Partly because some of us have played in Denethor, that had the reputation of being a nazi-band. However, all political-influenced members have left the band. Besides our Denethor-past, I think some people don't like our music and war-image, and the fact that we're one of the more interesting Dutch BM-bands around. So that are just people who want to have something to talk about and have nothing better to do than to accusing us of being nazis. Those people are not interested in music, but just in spreading rumours and being popular. Therefore everyone who claims that Warlust are a nazi-band should die slowly and painfully. Like the way enemies are killed in war.

Do you think music (in particular black metal) and politics can/should be mixed?
I think music and politics can be mixed. That is, if one plays punk, ska, rap or oil. Metal was never truly involved with politics, and should never be, I think. As soon as a band involves

politics or something like that in their music/lyrics, everyone seems to forget about the music, and wants to attack that band because they involve politics with music. I think politics are something for the band itself to judge about and not something to talk about during 80% of an interview about music. Because that is the only thing that people try to do these days: attacking other people and in this case bands, because they should have a particular political point of view that could be too radical in these fucked up days. I think that if a black metal band wants to involve politics in their music, they should do it. I don't care if it's right-or left-wing politics, but they should think about it first. Because everyone tries to attack and poison you when you talk about politics in the BM-scene. One can better kill a white person than say something about a coloured person these days. That's my opinion...

What is it exactly that you want to say with your statement; that Warlust as a band doesn't want to be associated with the national socialistic movement, or that the individual members don't have any rightwing sympathies?

For all those stupid mother*ckers that still don't understand our statement or whatever we say: Warlust is not a political band at all. Our lyrics are not politically influenced. We don't try to tell you a political message. We don't force anyone to listen to our music or lyrics. But when everyone keeps asking these questions the rumours will never end, especially when those questions comes around about 50% of an interview. To prove themselves that Warlust is not a nazi, nor a political band, everyone should come to see us live, because our vocalist is truly a foreigner... He's somewhere from Asia...that's what I can say when I see him, I've never asked him though... But a real nazi-band would never have a foreigner to sing for them. If this is not the ultimate proof that we're not political I think that everyone is too stupid to listen any longer to black metal or Warlust.

In a previous interview Furor stated 'I think the nazis lived 55 years ago and people should lighten up'... I can understand you being annoyed with the whole affair, still I'd say such a statement displays a kind of ignorance which can be extremely hazardous – what do you think?.. A little like 'the concentration camps never existed and the systematic mass murder of the Jews never took place' Do you really think there are no nazis these days?

I don't care about nazis. Real nazis lived 55 years ago - that's true. Hitler's dead by now as well as his formal fans. So nazis are dead. Nowadays there is something called neo-nazism. I know there are neo-nazis. In Holland, in Germany, in Belgium, in Norway, everywhere. But I don't care. I don't want to have anything to do with politics. I don't think it's my job to do or say something about those people. They believe in something, and they're willing to die for it. That's it. There are also black racists, but they don't show up in Europe, let's talk about them next time....

'War' seems to be an important source of inspiration to you. In a previous interview Furor stated that you all like the murder of women and children and the invention of sick weapons during war time. What is it

you like about such things?

Hi kids, do you like violence...? I like the aggression that always comes to life during war times. It seems that as soon as there is war, people lose their minds and just think of one thing: Protect your own kind, and destroy the other. We can see that in every war world-wide. The rage and anger that fills people's minds during war times is just unbelievable. People slaughter and rape each other. Like in Yugoslavia some years ago. I mean, such a small country that can hold up against the world's most powerful armies, that's the beauty of war. The madness, the blindness. There is never mercy in times of war: to kill or to be killed. That is the mental part of war I like. There is also a technical side. People try to invent the most destructive weapons, just to protect themselves. It's just unbelievable when you see what kind of weapons humanity has thought out, just to kill themselves. Nerve-gas, H-bombs, Zyklon-B, Agent Orange, and many, many more... That side of warfare also interests me a lot...Enough?

The concept of war should be as old as civilisation itself – throughout the history of mankind war has always been a constant? Why do you think that is?

Because there is always the idea that one is threatened when there are other people, or cultures around. Something is strange, and therefore it should be eliminated. That is one of the basic instincts we still have: to protect our own property, or country, or people. And that is the reason why there has always been war, and why there will always be war, unless humanity will be exterminated at last.....

Wars have been fought over a great many of reasons. Do you think any reason can justify a war? What about justifying the act of killing itself? Do you think a war bears an inner-justification?

Should war be justified? That is just a western thought, I think. I don't think there has to be a reason for war. Sometimes the reason is that a country is overpopulated. Sometimes religion is a reason to start a war. Sometimes war starts because one doesn't like another race... There needn't be an explanation. When there's war, there is war. And there is no use for an explanation, because that will not stop the war. I don't justify the act of killing. I don't disapprove of it either. If anyone kills someone else, it's too late to do or say something. Than you can just talk after it happened. I can imagine that someone wants to murder a person, because of lust or hate or whatever. And then someone gets killed. It's just the survival of the fittest. Maybe I'll get killed tomorrow. That would mean I'd be too weak and therefore I should die. Maybe I'll kill someone tomorrow...than I was the stronger...and maybe no one gets killed...that means there will be an outbreak of war in some years, because the world gets too populous...

Would you like the idea of being involved in a war yourself? From what I've heard you are living rather peaceful lives... and I suppose that if you'd want to be involved in a war it shouldn't be too much of a problem. Why don't you choose to do so? Aren't you just talking the talk instead of also walking the walk? Why didn't you go to Kosovo to fight for example?

I didn't go to Kosovo because I don't

want to fight their war. Let them kill themselves, and not me. I will not do their dirty jobs. Why should I risk my life to fight their war? I don't hate people from the different parts of that country, so why should I choose any side in that war by going there? That is one of the most stupid thoughts I ever heard. (Is it? What better way to experience the insanity of war (that you like so much) than being in the middle? And since you think that war needs no justification it doesn't matter which side you'd pick to fight on -ed) Have I said that I wanted to die or that I'm suicidal? (No, you just said you should die if you'd be too weak -ed). No...I'm just interested in war and warfare, like the other members... Besides that I think that the army that our country has nowadays is nothing more than a stupid circus. I don't take the Dutch army seriously. When there's a war, we will not be able to defend ourselves. I will not participate in such a freak show. We're trying to teach our soldiers how to drop from a chopper or how to build a prefab officers-lounge. That is not the kind of army I'd like to join. But when there will be a war over here, I know that I'll be willing to fight for something I support...war on national ground. Than there'll be something to fight for, something to defend, and then I'll be in our army...I don't think the national army, but some kind of terror-movement like the paramilitarists in former Yugoslavia...

In Holland there is no compulsory military service anymore – would you still consider joining the army as a professional? Why (not)?

I don't consider joining the army as a professional. First of all because I don't want to listen to some soldier that's higher in rank. I'm not a puppet that lives under command. I don't want to put my life in the hands of an officer that can send me to the end of the world with a blue UN-helmet on my head and rubber bullets to defend myself with... Besides that I don't understand the use of the Dutch army itself. If we would be in war, our army would be too weak and too small to defend our country for even one day. There are no soldiers, there are no good weapons. Our army just costs a lot of our tax-money and is just a way for the government to show other countries our willingness to sacrifice ourselves. Why should our soldiers fight wars in Africa or the Middle East? They didn't do it a couple of hundred years ago, so why should they do it now? Just because some countries, like GB and the USA, want to control the world. A small country like Holland can just kiss America's ass and do what they're told. I don't want to be a part of that world wide 'control' network of western countries and so-called 'peace' clubs like the UN...The only reason why I would join the army right now, would be a direct war against our country. I don't see the use of joining the army when your country is not threatened. Europe these days is a fort protected by Germany, GB and the USA, so why would I join the Dutch army? There are no reasons at all...

Do you have a particular interest in WW II? What do you know about Hitler's ideologies? Have you read 'Mein Kampf'? There's a great deal of occultism involved in the ideology of the Third Reich – what do you know about that? Do you think Hitler was the actual composer of the nazi-ideology (the actual ideology) and if not, who was it in your

opinion?

I have an interest in every war, I guess. But WWII always has something special. It's just the mass-insanity that is so special. How could one man convince a whole nation of his ideas? How was it possible that half of Europe joined Germany to seek and destroy over 6 million Jews? That war is a good example of how humans can react when they're threatened, I think. I've read 'Mein Kampf', and I've also seen a movie of 'Mein Kampf'. I've seen lots of documentaries about WWII as well. So I know a lot about the ideologies Hitler had. I also know about the occultism involved in the nazi-ideologies. I will not share all my knowledge right here, but I'll give some funny examples. Hitler and his staff used occult knowledge and rites to find out where the allied army divisions were at that time. Sometimes it worked out good, some times it didn't. In the Hitler Jugend and other youth-organisations lots of pagan rites and ceremonies were used and adapted to support the nazi-ideologies. The magic of the rites made the people feel as if they were part of a whole. Hitler himself used occult knowledge to gain his own luck, and he succeeded. He was worshipped as a god, like he wanted to. But in the end he couldn't handle those occult forces, what caused Hitler's suicide and the fall of the Third Reich. I think there has always been a nazi-ideology, and I don't know who was the composer. But I think Hitler was there in the right time on the right place to make the nazi-ideologies fit into modern life. He used old-fashioned anti-Semitism and the bad economical circumstances in Germany, to try to take control over Germany and he succeeded. The real composers of nazi-ideologies are humans themselves. Afraid of all that is strange and willing to follow a leader, no matter what.

What was the most fascinating event in the WW II in your opinion and why?

I think it was the suicide of Adolf Hitler. After a decade of violence, war and hate, in which he was the central person, that was the most anti-nazi action there could be. The great Führer himself, afraid of nothing, the leader of an Aryan Nation, the destroyer of 6 million Jews killed himself, because he was afraid to pay his price. With that the whole magic disappeared. Hitler was just human, and he lost his war too. A shame for all those who believed in him. The end of the Führer was the real end of WWII.

One of the most famous Dutch literary works concerning WW II is 'De Aanslag' by Harry Mullisch. Have you read it? What do you think? If you'd be the only survivor of your family (. the rest would have been executed) how do you think this would affect your life? Do you still like the killing if it also concerns your own family or even yourself?

I haven't read 'De Aanslag'. I don't know why I haven't read it, but it's just something I haven't done yet. I don't think I would be very happy when my whole family would be executed and I'd be the only one left. But who would be? Of course I don't like the killing if it concerns my family or me. Because than I would be dead. It's to kill or to be killed. I think I'd try to defend my family and myself when someone wants to kill us. Wouldn't you? And when I'm lucky I'll not be the one that's getting killed, but the one that tries to kill me. So then I'd still like the killing.

There has been a lot of commotion related to Anne Frank lately –do you know why? What's your opinion on this commotion and how the Vatican was involved? Have you read 'Het Achterhuis' (her diary)? What kind of impression did it make on you?

I don't know a lot about Anne Frank, and I don't really know what commotion you mean. I haven't read 'Het Achterhuis' and I think I never will. I don't like Anne Frank. The only thing that makes her special is the fact that she left a diary. I don't want to read it, because I don't think I'd be interested enough to read it 'till the end. Maybe in a couple of years. I'm sorry, I can't give you any better answer to this one....

What's your opinion on Dutchbat and their acts in Srebrenica (in former Yugoslavia)? Do you keep yourself informed on such issues? How?

I think that's a good example of my reasons to not join the army. Those guys were just Dutch soldiers, willing to do their jobs as good as they could. Some officer sends them into war with no weapons to defend themselves. They're being attacked, they can't defend themselves. A lot of locals get killed and those Dutch soldiers are the ones that are blamed. Why? They couldn't do anything else, because they were sent into war, without being informed well. Even the Dutch government didn't really know where those guys were going. And still they sent soldiers. This is what I hear and read. I don't really follow each war second by second....

Do you think there will be WW III? Where will it be fought? How will it start, what will be the cause and what will be the most important parties?

There will be a WWIII. I think this or next century. It will be fought all over the world. There will be no peace at all. Total war and total chaos. I guess the parties will be the world-wide government on the one hand, and the civilians on the other hand. Because some countries are trying to take world wide control, by starting trade organisations and so on. The civilians will be abused by the government, like today, but worse. This will come to a certain climax, and then the war will start. Just in one day. There will be no warning and no peace till there's total anarchy and freedom.

Is there anything you'd be willing to die for?

I think it would be immortality. (You aren't turning poetic on me now, are you Sick? -ed)

Final Words....

Thanks for this interview. I hope I've made clear (once more) that Warlust is not a nazi-band, but just horny on war. I hope more people will buy our next CD than that bought this one. I hope everyone will keep on pissing off Christians and of course also Muslims and other filth. Mental war rules just as much as physical war. Don't kill yourselves like Hitler did. Better hang yourselves. Don't fuck with corpses, because that'll just hurt. Amen.

(Rahab)

Discography:

1999 THE FINAL WAR MINI-CD (HAPPY HOLOCHRIST)

I know that it's not the most inspiring

This summer, during my very pleasant break from the dismal greyness, which suffocates my desolate existence, I had the opportunity to visit Porto for a couple of days and meet three of Serpent Lore's band members. I already was familiar with their debut demo 'Brandishing Damnation Sword' and I had enjoyed it quite a lot – apart from that I had heard quite some good and interesting things about the band... It's for sure that Serpent Lore is one of the biggest underground promises to come from Portugal, which was confirmed by Sirius' main man Darconiis who already recommended the band in the interview in Mandrake #1. The band play a combination of old-fashioned, thrashy black metal and modern black metal more or less in the Norwegian style – some (and some more) keyboards are present to enhance the atmosphere. The following interview is the result of collaboration between the renowned Portuguese underground newsletter 'The Land of Sorrow' and Mandrake Magazine. This interview will also so be printed as such in the upcoming issue of 'The Land...' I wish to send very many... thanx to Morgana, who is also managing Serpent Lore these days, for helping us out once more.

question to answer, but- please tell all about the Serpent Lore history, with all its obscure details. If the question is to boring – try and give the answer some innovative twist or something (please include details about the formation of the band, line-up changes, recordings etc.).

Schhh, I always save this one for last... Well we started in late '94 as a 3 piece (without bass), then later another guitar came (Valfar). In early '95 the drummer got kicked out and P.M. joined altogether with me on the bass guitar. Later on that year B. Schizo joined us to fill the gap on the keys – we were 6 piece then. In '96 Yrrskall substituted P.M. on the drums (he left to play in a new punk project...). In the summer of '98, after the demo recording, Lord Q. (lead guitar) left us and formed another project. Since then our line up is a 4 piece consisting of Crusher on vocals, Valfar on the guitar, C. LaFey on the bass guitar and Yrrskall on drums. I guess this is all.

I have heard your guitarist is involved in a kind of Celtic metal band called Mandragora – could you tell some more about that. Are there any more band members who also play in other bands or have side projects?

Actually it is a Celtic folk band – it has no relation with metal whatsoever. They released a demo earlier this year (2000) which was very well received by the critics of that scene. They played in a somewhat important Celtic music festival this summer and I think they'll soon find a good contract. The mentor of that band is Serpent Lore's drummer Yrrskall, but the guitarist Valfar also, as you stated, plays there. Apart from this, Crusher plays bass in Apocalypse – a band whose mainman is our former rhythm guitarist Lord Q.

You play a kind of black metal with clearly noticeable influences from thrash – How would you describe the style of music you play yourself? Are the old thrash metal bands an important source of inspiration to you? What do you think about this retro-thrash hype?

Well, I guess we have a clear Thrash-Black flavour. We're undoubtedly influenced by old acts such as Razor, Destruction, Sodom, etc. etc – but you know, we don't insert riffs to sound like this or like that – what happens is that we listened to those bands so much throughout the years that when we're doing music things come out that way. I believe that to a higher or lower extent, every Black Metal band is influenced by old Thrash Metal. I guess there's really no point in doing things already made by someone, some years back in time – I'm recalling the Hellhammer clones; Warhammer for instance. You know in the 90's Metal expanded and strayed out of the path so

much that people seem to want to revive the 80's spirit again. I of course, have nothing against bands who do the retro-thrash you mention, but that's not our way.

If I was to compare you to (old) Carpathian Forest – what would you say?

Though the band was formed quite some years ago, you have only released one



demo so far. What is the reason for this low productivity? (... another resemblance to early Carpathian Forest??)

People compare us to a lot of bands – Running Wild (hahaha), Children of Bodom, etc. Metal listeners seem to find similarities in things they enjoy or have heard before. Usually people compare riffs to ones they have in their mind, and do an automatic comparison. I would say that Carpathian Forest is another possible comparison. The low productivity has to do with our working method and with having no real label to support us. In our earlier days we would meet up to rehearse, but we rather went out and got drunk – what was the hurry? We didn't have nothing to prove to no one... - nowadays we are more constant in what comes to rehearsing but we don't have any deadlines from any labels or anything, so why jump the gun, perhaps too early?. You know – it was the label manager who approached us in order to record the demo. We would probably have no material released today if it wasn't like that. We always want to record the best thing possible – the next release material for instance, we've been working with it since we finished recording the demo in March '98 – and still, we find things to improve. This all ends up being the same old issue of quantity versus quality. You'll probably think – 'But the demo production is crap and the tracks were outdated the moment they got out of studio!' – ok, but believe me, with the tight budget we had we did a pretty good job – have you ever tried to mix a complete set of drums with two tracks (of the 8 we had available)? It's a fucking nightmare!! The tracks were made in a period from '96 to '98, so it's natural they sound

outdated (whatever that term means in Metal anyway).

Your demo 'Brandishing Damnation Sword' was released through Satanachia/Hades Prod. – why did you decide to have your demo released through a tape-label instead of releasing it yourself? I understood you aren't that satisfied with the label's work – how come? What are the reasons for your disappointment? If you had no alternatives, would you release anything through them again?

Like I said on the previous question, we really didn't look out for any label – Paulo Mira from Satanachia/Hades approached us one day – and that was it. Some felt that recording something regardless of the quality of the label was imperative, - and we would certainly save some money by associating with a label. Money was and is a capital issue to underground acts such as us...

We are disappointed with Satanachia because they promised us things they didn't end up doing – A capital issue quality. I must be honest – I wouldn't buy the Serpent Lore demo if I saw it on a stall!! The paper is too thin, the printing is bad (actually it's just a Xeroxed copy), the tape is of the worst quality possible, the sound is too low, and the copies they send us (120 of 500) didn't even have jewel boxes. The result for us is that we had a return investment of 0% (we ended up giving all our copies...), and we spent 750 EUR on studio. On the other hand Satanachia had a profit of at least that amount without spending any important funds. I'm glad we did this with our first demo – we certainly learned a valuable lesson for future enterprises... No more Satanachia or alike – we alone would have made a better job.

How do you look at 'Brandishing Damnation Sword' now? Is the style still more or less representative of what you are doing nowadays? If not, which main changes have occurred in the process? Have there been, for instance, changes in what comes to the band's concept / lyrical approach, etc.?

Absolutely not. That is – you'll clearly sense an evolution – but we still sound like ourselves... The demo is outdated. There are changes in what comes to those factors you refer, but not in a way that one can say we evolved. We approached things a different way.

For 'Brandishing Damnation Sword' you recorded a cover version of Mayhem's 'Freezing Moon' and though this track must have been covered for at least a million times by now, I must say your version is definitely one of the most, if not the most convincing one I have heard so far. Still it's not a very original

choice I would say. Why this track? Are you still satisfied with your version? Should it be interpreted as a homage to Mayhem?

That was the last song we decided to get on the demo – you know – we just got the idea one day at a rehearsal, and the riffs we're so basic, yet so powerful, we just had to make our little homage to Mayhem. I especially enjoy the vocals on this one – as if Dead himself was back from his early grave. The solo is also terrific I think – sounding clearer than on 'De Mysteriis...'. Our version is also shorter than Mayhem's, a fact that some people don't usually notice.

Also, if you were to cover another song from some other band(s), which one(s) would you choose and why? Do you really think there is a particular song you could point out as 'the song of your lives'? What do you think of the possibility of recording an album consisting solely of cover versions? What is your opinion concerning tributes in general?

The very first version we thought of was Bathory's 'Enter the Eternal Fire', right in our beginning. Later we thought about doing 'A Blaze in the Northern Sky'. Lately Destruction's 'Mad Butcher' or Celtic Frost's revamped 'Journey into Fear'... Who knows? It's almost certain that we won't record any version anytime soon. The song of our lives? Humm... I don't embark on that way of thought – all in life is mutable: one thing means much on one day, one the other it doesn't. 'It's Human!!!' (make it sound like the Celtic Frost's intro...). The idea of recording an album of non originals doesn't appeal to us. Tributes are getting boring – every more or less successful band has a legion of followers who release at least a hundred tributes a year – much is too much.

In the interview for 'Whispers from Darkness' you said that you thought the underground would benefit if there would exist more individuals like Eurononymous. Why do you think so? Your statement somewhat surprised me, because Eurononymous is one of the initiators of the church-burnings and made statements like 'We do not need anymore musicians here in Norway, we need terrorists!' I have the impression this is not really like your ideal view for the underground. Your comments on the church-burnings in the various interviews you have done are not consistent in the sense that in one you approve of them and in another you reject them... how come?

You certainly got me with this one... Well, church burning – I don't approve of the destruction of world patrimony (and I mean the wood churches in Norway) – Metal suffered from an excess of ideologies in the 90's – everybody was trying to fit in some way of thinking, or some way of acting. We can say that music was forgotten – that led to ridiculous actions, affirmations – utterly it led almost to the Metal extinction...

Have you read 'The Lords of Chaos'? What is your opinion? – the book more or less shows a demystified figure of Eurononymous, who had succeeded in creating a myth around him. What kind of picture do you have of Eurononymous?

I haven't read this book yet, but I guess

that detailed accounts of one's lives are always prone to demystification. I always thought of Eurononymous as a kind of Thomas Fischer of the Black Metal scene. Individuals who never ever are where one expects them to be (concerning musicals issues of course), always one step beyond. That's also the reason I disliked the idea of the new Mayhem face – I just thought they would re-use the formulae of 'De Mysteriis...' thereby destroying the band's imagery. Fortunately it wasn't like that – and I must say that 'A Grand...' truly rules.

For a band whose members dislike keyboards in black metal you used a rather lot of them on 'Brandishing Damnation's Sword'..... (comments please!)

Hahaha – you aren't the first to say that – perhaps we exaggerate in our criticisms towards keyboards. Let's clear this thing up then: we enjoy keyboard/synth in it's right proportion – as a mean of support, of creating a deeper level of sound. We don't enjoy it when it substitutes the guitar in being the first element in a band. But you end up being right – we did 'abuse of keyboard' on the demo – or perhaps we just didn't mask it quite well – it sounds far too high.

During the beginning of this summer you recorded your second effort 'Imperishable Flame'... however you won't release this recording. Why not and what happened? Was it supposed to be a full length private release on CD or another demo? Has there been any interest from labels for the release of this recording?

We were in studio, yes, but we recorded almost nothing. Things didn't work out as we expected the first time so we should return there in late September. The release will be a MCD with approximately half an hour of music. There isn't any label interested in our work as of today, so in a first phase, we'll distribute it ourselves – perhaps after hearing the stuff labels will be interested... It's difficult to get attention when you only released a demo albeit one with potential. All the contacts we had, or the grand majority of them told us to keep in touch – let's wait and see. We still haven't figured out were exactly we'll find the 1500 EUR we believe will be needed...

I heard a rumour that there was going to be a 'Serpent Lore 7"'... and as a collector I would obviously be very much looking forward to that!! What happened to the idea? Are the tracks already recorded? (Which ones?) How about vinyl? How important would say it is (or is not) to preserve vinyl these days? Which advantage(s) or disadvantages would you point out when it comes to vinyl (I know you are a collector too!)?

By this time our main concern now is to get 'Imperishable Flame' recorded and released. You know – after recording the demo we wanted to record a 7" – but since then we added more music and that initial project has grown into a MCD. Later on the opportunity came to record a split 7" with Decayed side project Alastor – but that also has been left aside since they'll record an album soon I believe. The track we would record is 'For thy Triumph, my King'. Vinyl is cool for collectors, though strictly from the financial point of view a CD is cheaper to release and has certainly a bigger mass of potential listeners. There's a

vinyl trend these days too – everybody says he's buying vinyl, but who truly does? Vinyl LP's are just beautiful in what comes to space for cover designs and stuff alike. I just love the sound of the needle biting the vinyl – and I believe they sound clearer than their digital counterparts!! The big negative point is that if one doesn't take care with them they'll get easily ruined – others are that they are prone to dust and that they occupy lots of space on one's shelves.

How is the division of tasks within Serpent Lore? Who does the composing and who writes the lyrics? Please tell some more about the whole process. Do you think there is a special atmosphere able to provide you with further inspiration? Do you work better under lots of pressure and with adrenaline flowing, or do you prefer smoother atmospheres?

Well, often Valfar lays the basic riffs of a song – we all later add to it in rehearsals until we're satisfied. Lyrics are inserted later in the music, and until today they are made to fit the song,, not otherwise. There is one special atmosphere we enjoy specially, which is the one full of hemp smoke – Hahaha. We work well in both cases I guess – but a smoother mood is always better.

In a previous interview you mentioned you are often inspired by old legends and tales. In actual fact, the band's name, Serpent Lore, indicates a sort of interest of yours concerning the abovementioned. Does Portugal have a rich folkloric history when it comes to tales and legends? What's the most beautiful/impressing Portuguese tale you know of? (please with a brief summary of the story!). Please also tell a little about the non-Portuguese folklore in which you are particularly interested in.

Yes, indeed Portugal has a rich folklore albeit we never really used any concept solely from our country. We enjoy for instance, the Celtic myths, which are deeply rooted in Portugal, especially in the northern portion of the country. There are many tales worth mentioning – but I really can't recall one right now. Like I said we are interested specially in Celtic mythology, from countries of the so-called Atlantic Axis. We are obviously interested in many other cultures, but at the time we explore this universe.

You decided to start out with Serpent Lore, because you thought the Portuguese underground scene was lacking something. What was/is lacking? Have you partially succeeded in filling up the gap? What's your ideal picture for the Portuguese underground? From your words I can derive you think there's still a very long way to go in order to get there – what would be the most important thing that needs change?

Well, I'll be able to answer that perhaps in ten years... We succeeded in getting people interested in what we do and we have a reasonable amount of listeners in Portugal, but especially in other European countries. It's hard to say... We really didn't have a really good Black Metal band, who people knew outside our borders (except the wimpy Moonspell of course...). People here seem to make a lot of fuss about bands that are truly laughable, and that is and was our main

mistake. The Very Good for us equals a Mediocre in other countries – we need to improve our musical tastes, that's for sure.

What have you benefited from your experience as a band / individual in a band? How much have your views changed before and after having become part of the scene as a whole? What is your definition of what is / should be 'Underground' anyway?

Well, I don't know – I've been into bands since my early teens, so I grew up amidst the scene. It comes really difficult to know what's maturity or the effects of being into the Metal scene. People come to us sometimes and say 'You're really a true underground band – you don't have a label but still you strive, you have lousy instruments, you always play in the worst shit holes, etc, etc' - perhaps in a way this is it.

Not many bands from Portugal are that well established in the underground scene – just every once in while a major entity arises, like it was the case with Moonspell and more recently with Sirius. Which factor do you hold responsible for the success of these particular bands? What do you think is the reason that generally Portuguese bands do not get that much attention in comparison to bands from other countries? (I daren't say talent and potential are lacking!)

I believe I answered this one somewhere above... The Portuguese standards of quality are different from the rest of the scene in general. People in here worship some bands, that outside our borders are shunned by everyone for being so crappy. I would dare say that in many cases talent and potential ARE indeed lacking!

Also, the few bands known abroad have now taken a rather commercial approach. What do you think of that? Do you think there is a risk factor involving bands who may be successful abroad?

Absolutely not! Just because you're know abroad doesn't mean you'll have to take a mainstream approach, does it? What naturally happens is that when you reach a certain step the next one translates itself into bigger campaign to get more fans. That's a step eventually all bands have to take – it doesn't mean you have sold your soul to the system!

While answering interviews, Carl Draconiis (from Sirius) never made a secret of it that he likes Serpent Lore's music quite well. Have his recommendations been beneficial to you in anyway? Are you (good) friends? What was it like opening up for Sirius? What do you think of the band? How affected do you think they have been (musical-wise and personally) by the fact that they were signed to Nocturnal Art Productions?

Hehehe – his recommendations have not affected us yet I believe – but their interviews reach a lot of people these days, so who knows? We are colleagues, I can't really say we're friends – we only meet up at gigs... It's cool to open up for Sirius, the gig is sure to have lots of crowd! Personally the kind of BM they play doesn't appeal to me - but I respect them very much. They are good musicians and honest guys. Well, I met Draconiis before Sirius existed and I think he's more reserved these days – the other guys I met on gigs so I really

don't have an opinion about them, other that they are sympathetic fellows.

Let's talk about the band name now. Do you have a concrete view on what the serpent lore is?

The view is not exactly concrete – it's more general since 'serpent lore' could be related to thousands of serpent cults in the world. The serpent is worshipped in many ways in every culture around the globe. We are fascinated by this multitude of references and by the myths themselves.

What do you know about the Celtic 'serpent's egg'? As you will know 'The Serpent's Egg' is also an album by Dead Can Dance – now I have heard you like their music quite well. Why do you think such music appeals to many metal fans, though it has very little to do with metal from a musical point of view (no distorted guitars, etc)? Why do you like it?

It's simply (or not so simply) a badge of distinction that Druids had. Yes, I do indeed enjoy DCD. I do believe many of their fans came from the Metal horde. It's kind of funny because people always include DCD in their tape trading lists... They certainly were a 'one of a kind' project. Why do I like it? Difficult to say...

The serpent is a dualistic creature representing both good (e.g. Aesclepios-myth) and bad (e.g. the seducing snake in paradise) or even both (the 'ourobouros') Is there a particular 'side' of the serpent you feel most related to?

Humm, I feel related to both sides at the same time. It's the same old story: one day you laugh – one day you cry. The middle path is the correct one I think.

Do you believe in the concepts of 'good' and 'evil'? One might say they are rather reductive, because they are dualistic (and incredibly relative), and most of the answers are to be found in pluralism (which is often a matter of perspective, where subjective reality plays an important role). Would you agree, or do you think it suffices to analyse something by using only 2 of its most obvious extremities (good/evil)?

I believe in those concepts because that's all we do, 100% of the time, in our daily routine; putting either the 'correct' or 'non correct' label on things. When I say I believe them, I don't mean they're correct – that concept of good/evil is absolutely faulty.

What do you think is the reason you find the serpent in mythology throughout the world? Have you noticed any resemblances in the symbolism/ role of the serpent in the various mythologies?

That's for sure – in one way or the other all symbolism of the snake in the world lies around the Indostanic Kundalini concept. Folklore then tells things in a different way – but the basis is exactly the same.

What do you know about the meaning of the serpent in gnosis and alchemy? Have you ever heard of the snake worshipping Gnostics 'the Ophytes' and 'the Naässenes'? They stated that the snake is a divine being, because it wanted to enlighten man with knowledge of good and evil and

wanted to give him life eternal, while God was Nemesis, who wanted to keep man earthbound and ignorant. What do you think of this view? What's your view on the role of the serpent in the book Genesis?

I'll just say that all true Religions or Philosophies are and must be serpent worshippers. The role of the serpent in Genesis is the same as the secret enemy, who standing amidst the crowd shouted for the first time the name of the Bad Thief.

In what way do you portray the Serpent in your lyrics? Since 'Brandishing...' came out with no lyrics anyway, what did you intend to convey only with the sound? Grimness of the soul (ha!)? How does the cover of the demo convey the message you wanted to put out at the time?

We didn't mention the serpent in the demo songs' lyrics, or at least, not directly. We didn't include the lyrics because it's better to imagine the lyric for yourself – When you don't have the lyrics, a song gains a special meaning. We rather let people wander and get their own interpretation. We have been criticised for having designed such a simple layout for the demo. We believe that the best way to convey a first demo message was to use the classic BM design – consisting of black & white pictures/designs and little or no info about the band. Who cares about the band members faces, their pseudonyms or whatever more with a first release?

I also know you are to release (or were supposed to) quite some minutes of music with a very interesting lyrical accompaniment ('For Thy Triumph, my King'), consisting of some hymns based upon J. R. R. Tolkien's works, namely 'Unfinished Tales' and so on, even dedicating one track to the great sailor Voronwë. What is it that fascinates you so much about his works? Do you like fantasy literature in general? Which authors would you then recommend? How about non-fantasy authors? Do you really think it is possible to compose (the equivalent to) a soundtrack of any of Tolkien' works? Do you think it is possible to assume one is able to transpose the emotion of the reading into music?

I'm a big fan of fantasy literature – from Gene Wolfe to Frank Herbert, passing through S. Lawhead, among others... I guess the first real book I ever read about sheer fantasy was from J.R.R. Tolkien – and what a fortunate introduction it was! He's really a master in literature and there isn't a single person who would deny that. By doing some titles under his influence we're paying him our little tribute – for the hours we passed in his company and for the knowledge we extracted therein. It's just as simple as that. Well it is possible to do any soundtrack from any book – but it'll end up being just another point a view. I would say that emotion IS music.

You seem to have an interest in pioneer bands that are ahead of their time. I know you are a huge admirer of Celtic Frost's 'Into the Pandemonium' and you are also quite fond of Master's Hammer for example. Where does this fascination come from? Is it something you aim to do with Serpent Lore – to wander untrodden path?

Certainly! There is no point in doing the same old thing again and again like many bands do. It's quite a challenge to wander those paths. Listeners aren't usually very forgiving... But who cares? Our satisfaction lies in the discovery of new ways inside Metal. We aren't exactly 'pioneers' right now, but who knows what the future will hold?

You mentioned in a previous interview (Whispers from Darkness) that Mercyful Fate/King Diamond are your absolute number 1. Do you like both the old and the new Mercyful Fate? Are they the founders of black metal in your opinion (maybe together with Venom?) Don't you think the band should better quit in order to preserve the magic of the early days? King Diamond really is a fascinating figure and there seems to be no middle way – either you love him or you hate him – why do you think that is? Why do you like his work so much? I certainly enjoy a lot more the earlier phase of both bands. Yes, **Mercyful Fate** are founders of the BM movement altogether with others such as Venom, Hellhammer and Bathory. I think yes, they should quit by now – too many crap albums – and always saying they're coming back to the old sound... Well, King is another one of those Metal big ones, isn't he? He really was, and in many ways still is, precursor to many things we have today in metal. I think that even today in his 40s he really stands out from the rest. (... isn't he already in his 50s...? –ed) It's just a pity that his voice can't reach as high as it did in the earlier days.

Is it some kind of inner desire of yours, to once become as 'charismatic' as King Diamond? Is success one of your inner desires? Knowing yourself as you do (or not), how do you think you would cope with success? Would you prefer Serpent Lore to be part of an Underground 'cult' or would you like the idea of having Serpent Lore's name spread throughout all the big (and small) magazines?

The idea of an Underground 'cult' is certainly more appealing to me. It's hard to say how I would react... I have my normal life outside Metal you know – so I guess the impact wouldn't be that big. I like the thought of the Serpent Lore name well spread throughout the world.

The lyrics to King Diamond's albums, especially the conceptual ones, are perfect examples of gothic horror – however I believe you have some mixed emotions concerning gothic (horror), especially when it comes music... please explain.

Well, apart from King's first album which is partially a concept, all others are full concept albums! (I dare to disagree-ed) Well, one might say they are good examples of horror, gothic or not. You know, in '88 meetings started to make 'Them' a movie. That certainly would have been cool. I don't enjoy the 'sexy vampires' stuff that was made into a Metal trend after the Coppola's movie Dracula – based as you know in the Victorian Bram Stoker's novel.

Indeed, the demo flyer clearly stated: 'Free of gothic piss'. If given the chance, what would you do with some astray gothic who would piss you off? Do you think it is anyhow reasonable not to tolerate any kind of 'group identity'? What about the 'Anti-Goth Brigade'?

58

Yes, we indeed stated that. The truth is that we meant generally the ones who

stray from the Heavy Metal basic way of creating things – you see nowadays (and particularly in '98) mainstream groups such as Marilyn Manson and others alike used the Metal image/sound to their purposes. We are completely against merging styles like Rap and Metal or Goth and Metal. The enigma for me lies in the fact that bands that do this abound... I truly don't have anything against Gothics – or the ones who listen to gothic music. In fact their union should be an example for us Metallers.

You have a rather intriguing pseudonym. What's the origin of Jabar LaFey and what meaning does it hold for you? Wasn't the family in the 'Abigail'-story by King Diamond called LaFey as well? I have heard that most people call you Jaba or LaFey in daily life instead of the name that was given to you a birth – is that true? Isn't that strange? Did you want it this way yourself or what? (... not satisfied with your actual name maybe?)

Yes, it's true – in fact if I was walking down the street and you would call me by my birth name I wouldn't even look. It's not strange – actually it's something people have to get used to. Nowadays on the Internet everyone uses/handles different names than their actual one – I believe these nicks will be commonly used one day in real life – wouldn't it be cool if you have a bank card with your handle on it? LaFey comes from the '87 KD album 'Abigail'. Count LaFey was the owner of the mansion where the action set in. I'm satisfied with my birth name, only the everyday habit is stronger.

Could you also enlighten us about the other band members' pseudonyms? There have been some changes, for what I have heard. In what have they consisted and how do you think they can (or cannot) affect the band as a whole (in terms of message, etc.)?

Ok: Valfar the guitarist, Crusher on vocals and Yrskall on drums (+ myself on bass). Three of us kept our handles through the years – only Valfar changes once in a while. I guess he uses 'Valfar' these days because we are doing a Tolkien concept. Perhaps one day in the future we'll use our real names. I nowadays see it as a petty problem – using or not using pseudonyms. Enlightened fans will understand that nothing changes with that.

Will FC Porto win the UEFA-cup this year? What do you think keeps people tied to football anyway? What can it possibly be that people see in a game where 22 people are just running to reach a ball and score? Do you think victory is the only satisfaction in a ball game?

I hope they do! I can't believe we're kicked out of the Champions League by Anderlecht... It may prove to be a good thing after all, just look at Galatasaray last season. I honestly don't know what people see in this game anyway – I know I just love it. Well, if you practice any sport you'll know that the only true satisfaction is only attained with victory – when one loses, he likes to pretend he's happy anyway...

Speaking of FC Porto, whose emblematic animal is the dragon... Dragon is also a very versatile and meaningful animal, also very much appreciated by a number of people earth-wide. Do you have a particular interest in the creature too? What would you say it symbolizes? Bearing in mind your definition of dragon (and if you also put it on a metaphorical level), would you

say dragons are extinct?

I make no distinction between a dragon and a serpent – the meaning is the same. There are winged Dragons, and winged Serpents – and the contrary is valid too. Perhaps the format of the Dragon was created to release a bit the negative charge the serpent has to many men. Dragons are extinct? Humm, who knows?

How do you deal with the possibility of exploring the mind unto unexplored territories? Bearing in mind how few humans take advantage of their brain capacities, do you believe in the Power of the Mind and in things like telepathy, telekinesis, etc.? Do you prefer 'peace of mind', ever-growing mental disturbance or simply a 'normal' (for the standards) mental activity?

We only use 3% of our brain capabilities, so I believe the mind has many planes she can evolve to. The mind can be a little tricky though – she can put us in a big mess... you see, the brain always puts questions in labyrinths of Good and Bad, always see things in only two colours – Black or White. She can be a good counsellor if enslaved by the heart – heart above mind. But, enough of mental masturbation!

What do you think 'madness' is? To what extent would you agree with the existence of mental institutions? How thick do you think the line is between what 'authorised people' think it is/is not madness and what madness really is? How would you define 'madness'? Would you comment on: 'Insanity is one way to Knowledge'?

Knowledge is certainly one way to insanity. If you're an educated fellow you'll have twice the chance of getting mad – you realise things others don't see, and you desperately try to make others understand. I know people who suffered a lot in life because they were simply more intelligent than others... If you're an uneducated man you'll just keep smiling while society eats soup on your head, and you keep believing in good/bad luck. This reminds me of the Tarot card 'The Fool'. Meditate about her and you'll see what I mean.

What can we expect from Serpent Lore in the future?

Expect us to be true to our principles – and expect us to be here. As for releases – who knows? First we got to release this MCD, then we'll see. You may want to keep an eye at our homepage (<http://come.to/serpentlore>) - if any of you readers have any questions please feel free to contact us (always better by email).

So, you finally reached the end of my seemingly endless scroll of inquisitorial questioning – now it's your time to execute the bloody thing! (Final words)

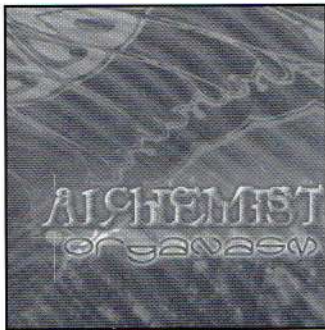
Pheew - my fingers ache by this time! Thanks for doing this in depth interview - I've certainly had a good time answering your questions. We'll see each others out there - in one way or the other. 'The coven is gathered to conquer again thy usurped crown...'

(Rahab)

Discography:

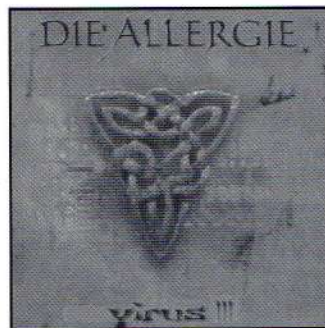
1998 BRANDISHING DAMNATION SWORD D (SATANACHIA/HADES PROD.)
2001 IMPERISHABLE FLAME

CD Reviews



Alchemist (AUS) - Organasm
Displeased Records 2000
10 tracks (50:41)

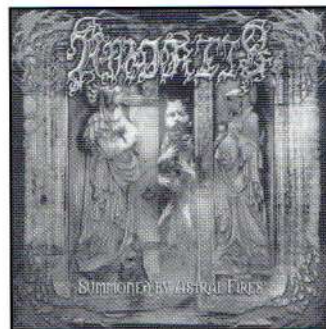
Actually Displeased just licensed it from the band's Australian label Shock Records, who don't seem to have too many distribution channels outside of down-under. So this is actually the band's fourth full-length effort. The band's origin is clear from the digge samples that the album opens with. The bio consists of a confusing mixture of influences as well as record label problems. Progressive metal is a word that returns every so often. I'm not sure I agree. I mean, the music's certainly not extreme and it features lengthy instrumental intermezzos. But no high pitched clean vocals. If that's not necessary in your opinion, then let's call it progressive metal. I'm sure they thought about every note that's on the album, if that's what you mean. As a whole the album is truly well-composed and executed, but somehow leaves me cold. I need to feel something with the music that I listen to, and that feeling seems to be missing. Anyway, I hope for them that this album will signal their European breakthrough. I guess after 13 years of perseverance they've deserved it.
(Joris)



Die Allergie (D) - Virus III
Rise Up Records 2000
9 tracks (39:12)

My first impression: How fucking German can you get? The answer is being Die Allergie. Hayfever and Company produce that same industrial type of emotionless music that made Rammstein famous. But whereas the latter's tracks are at least memorable, due to the odd bit of melodic singing, the dance beats and so on, Die Allergie are too German to do even that. And

translating all the song titles loosely into Spanish is not gonna do anything about that. Track 4 finally offers something of a change, a hint of melody overlaid over an dance beat, followed by the same cold industrial metal-core. The best track so far. Track 5 is somewhat more laid back, so the variation is there after all. I'm forced to revise my opinion a little. If you don't mind German singing, German industrial music and so on, you can check them out. Remember that at one time they were signed to EMI, so they're not a bunch of nobodies! (Joris)



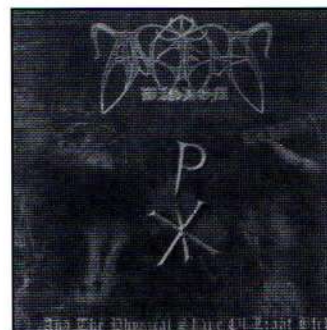
Amortis (A) - Summoned by Astral Fires
Last Episode 2000
9 tracks

Founded under the name of Penetratia in 1994, the band changed their name as well as their musical style after a couple of years. The first became Amortis, the second mid tempo metal of the kind generally known as gothic metal for some reason. That means vocals higher pitched than in average death metal, but not quite as intense and evil as in black metal. That means the black metal interest in darker things in life with its limited vocabulary (as far I can judge from the song titles). And of course lots of keyboards. After the 1997 and 1998 demos, this is their debut album, which was in fact already recorded in the summer of 1998 and mixed during the subsequent year. With the finished product they attracted the attention of Last Episode, which released the album in the spring of 2000. As compositions go, the album is certainly not bad, lots of musical changes, breaks at the right moments, acoustic bits and all that. But to my liking, just a little too many cliché frills, like samples of rain showers and ravens and so on. Not too many surprises musically either. Just solid well executed work. So it depends on what you are looking for in music if you should buy this one or not. One final thing: Having to skip from song nine to twenty six to hear some sleepy keyboard music is not funny. (Joris)

Ancient Wisdom (S) - ... And the Physical Shape of the Light Bled
Avantgarde 2000
8 tracks (44:46)

Ancient Wisdom is the solo project of Bewitched vocalist/guitarist Vargher (Marcus Norman) and "...And the Physical Shape of the Light Bled" is already Ancient Wisdom's third release. The history of the "band" goes back to 1992, when Ancient Wisdom had a

complete line up. This continued up until the first album "For the Snow covered the Northland". After that Vargher decided to do everything himself, which at first resulted in "The Calling". The only song I had heard from this project was the "Powerslave" cover featured on the Songs of Decay sampler, so I had no idea what to expect from this release. Well, Ancient Wisdom plays a slow and atmospheric type of black metal with a number of excellent melodies and a lot of instrumental, especially keyboard passages (though not always very interesting) in the songs. Sometimes it reminds me a little of In the Woods or Dissection played on 20 rpm. The first couple of songs on the album was already recorded in 1998, and was initially intended to be released as a MCD back then. However due to a change of plans some new material was composed in late '99 and the whole was released as a full length. Personally I prefer the part of the album that should have been the MCD as the newer tracks sound very much based on the same formula as the old ones, but don't seem to have that little something special. The newer songs seem a little less inspired. The album includes a cover by Demon, namely "The Spell". Though I don't know the original I have the impression it should be quite different from this version. Maybe the result of covering the song could be called original, still I don't really like it. Except for this cover track the album seems to have a conceptual touch. All songs somehow deal with Lucifer, who fell from the heavens and subsequently caused the fall of man. The production of the album is really good and "And the physical Shape..." is quite an enjoyable release, but not one that will be frequently found in my CD player, I guess. (Rahab)



Antropofagus (I) - No Waste of the Flesh
Beyond... Productions 2000
11 tracks (41:00)

The mutilated corpse on the cover gives the right impression, that of a seriously sick gore/grind/death metal band. The slightly surprising factor is that these man-eaters hail from the land of pasta. I'm sure the lyrics are aptly sick, certainly the vocals sound like the singer's just consumed lasagne and are backing up with vengeance. The drummer (Rigel, ex-Detector) is certainly fit for the job, happily blasting away through the gore. The guitars are fast, but unimaginative. Apart from that there's no real difference between the

tracks, a slow bit here and there, a short guitar half-hearted semi-solo thing, the odd sampled screaming woman and the like. But, no doubt song titles like 'Thick Putrefaction Stink' appeal to someone out there. As a bonus the album is supposed to contain a cover version of Slayer's 'Necrophobic'.
(Joris)



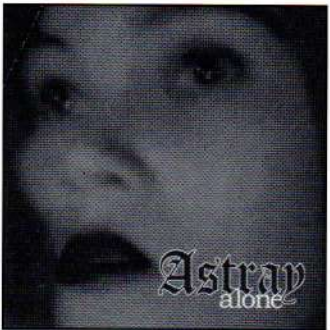
Arcana (S) - ...The Last Embrace
Cold Meat Industry 2000
10 tracks (44:04)

Most people with an interest in Gothic music will know Arcana. They released 2 albums and 2 singles before this one. Not much has changed in their music since their first album and let me tell you that this is the major letdown for this album. Don't get me wrong, because Arcana still performs truly beautiful music. Bombastic, neoclassical, gothic, atmospheric, medieval sounds with male and female vocals and impressive choirs. The only problem is, that this one sounds exactly the same as the previous albums. And now we mention that, the first album was in my opinion so inspired by Dead Can Dance's album "Within the realm of a dying sun" that one could almost speak of plagiarism. Not that there's anything wrong with that, because that DCD album is one of my all-time favourite albums. Also, it seems Arcana are lacking a bit of inspiration, because certain melodies sound really like some of the melodies on their other albums. So, if you still can't get enough of their first albums, you'll love this one as well. Because of the similarity with them, I don't think this is an essential purchase though. And one final tip for Arcana lovers: go get the Dead Can Dance album!
(Nervengeist)



As Divine Grace (SF) - Supremature
Avantgarde Records 2000
10 tracks (45:25)

Finnish As Divine Grace have already released a mini-CD ("Romantic Beautitude of Faded Dawn") and a debut album ("Lomu"). Supposedly the style on those releases was doom metal but I'm not familiar with their metal at that time, so I'll stick to this album. What they deliver on this album is doomy emotional rock with female vocals which sounds quite poppy at times. Some tracks remind me a bit of Anathema's latest efforts and also In The Woods... and Beyond Dawn spring to mind. So I guess fans of mentioned bands should try this one out. Good melodies, which really linger in your head. A slight letdown of this CD is the production, which sounds a little thin, with a slight garage-rock sound. I'm not sure if this is intentional, but I think a better production would do wonders. There is some good use of a Moog keyboard and Hanna Kalske's vocals are quite good. Not outstanding or anything, but at least not out of tune. Sometimes she reminds me a little of Synne Diana from In The Woods... and sometimes a little bit like Anouk(!) or is it just me? So if emotional rock is really your cup of tea, check it out. Also, I think doom metal fans should really try this one. My personal favourite track is "Andre". (Nervengeist)



Astray (SF) - Alone
Beyond... Productions 2000
4 tracks (22:51)

This is the band's second offering, after their self-financed mini-CD 'Until I'm cold enough', that I must confess, I've never heard. Riding the New Wave of Finnish Melodic Black Metal, Astray do their bit with this mini. At an average of over 5 minutes per track, it's clear that they're not into short songs. So what sets them apart from other Suomi bands like Children of Bodom? I would say, the emphasis is less on guitar fireworks. That's in spite of the fact that front man Markku Pääkönen is lead guitarist. Apparently his ego is less inflated than that of the other guy. By the way Markku is the drummer too. Which makes performing live a bit difficult. There's a bit more of keyboard basis layer and intermezzos involved which gives the outcome a somewhat symphonic feel. I'm not having the same associations with galloping horses like in the case of some of their colleagues. Not bad. (Joris)

Atrax (N) - Contentum
Season Of Mist 2000
11 tracks (65:04)

I had to listen to this album a lot of times to get used to it, but it's totally stuck in my mind now. The main reason for this is that the vocals of singer Monika Edvardsen (Ann-Mari of The 3rd and the Mortal's sister) are quite weird, to say the least. Well, weird for metal standards anyway. She sounds like a mix between Lisa Gerard, Diamanda Galas, Kate Bush, Loreena McKennitt and Kari. I know, that's quite some references, but hopefully it gives you an idea what she sounds like. Atrax name their music "Schizo Metal" and well, that's what Monika sounds like. Sometimes almost hysterical and crazy, but always very impressive. Her range is very big, from high to low, and there's a big diversity in the vocals. The music is equally very diverse. It's hard to describe it, and I guess calling it doom metal wouldn't do them justice. Perhaps the basis of the music is doom metal, but it's got influences of all kinds of other music. For example, the song "Ignoramus" has a stoner rock feel. Sometimes they sound like early Arcturus or The 3rd and the Mortal as well. At other moments, the songs have a progressive rock or psychedelica feeling. And at other times it's really dreamy (like in the incredibly beautiful "Unsummoned", goosebumps guaranteed). Now I know why they call it Schizo Metal... I guess the best way to get an idea of the sound is to go and listen to it for yourself. It's definitely worth it. The Tico Tico Studios production is very good and it really fits the music. Clear but heavy and with attention to detail. Lovely artwork as well, also made by Monika. Go listen to the album, if you want something different, or if you're fed up with the opera vocals of gothic metal bands. (Nervengeist)



Bal-Sagoth (UK) - The Power Cosmic
Nuclear Blast 1999
8 tracks (40:26)

I was incredibly anxious to listen to this new album. Their album "Battle magic" is for me still the best Fantasy metal album ever (not that there's much competition but what the hey), so hopes were high for this one. The album starts off typical B-S style. A majestic keyboard intro from keyboard wizard Jonny Maudling. The first song "The voyagers beneath the Mare Imbrium" (isn't that somewhere on the moon?) is Bal-Sagoth all the way: epic, majestic, great guitar melodies and wonderful vocals from Byron Roberts. The band seems to have a full line-up now, with a drummer and bass player performing the duties the Maudling brothers would normally do. Although musically nothing has changed, the production sounds a lot heavier, especially the guitars. Well,

that's that then, truly a wonderful album... Butt... there are also some major let-downs. Like other people I was really curious for the lyrics. Byron already did some "to be continued" lyrics and I was looking forward for the next episode of "Blood slakes the sand at the Circus Maximus" from "Battle magic". Tough luck, because this time there are no lyrics at all! Only the lyrical concept is sort of like explained. Not surprisingly I was really disappointed by this. Maybe it's a consequence of their shift from Cacophonous to Nuclear Blast or maybe the booklet was a bit of a hurryhurry job. The other thing is that, no matter how good it is, the music tends to bore a little bit in the long run. This is the 3rd album already in the exact same style. What they do, they do fantastic, so die-hard fans can buy this album right away. Shame about the negative aspects though... By the way, check out the hilarious group picture. It's really silly! (Nervengeist)



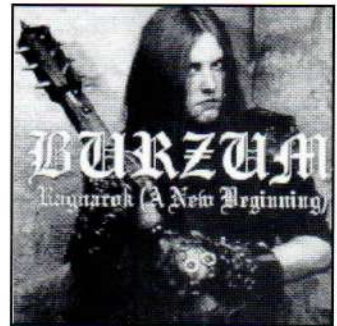
Borknagar (N) - Quintessence
Century Media 2000
10 tracks (43:23)

Wow, this is definitely a lot more aggressive than it's predecessor "The Archaic Course"! Still very recognisable as Borknagar though, with their epic sound somewhat between viking metal and black metal. Some line-up changes have occurred since "The Archaic Course". Asgeir Mickelson from Spiral Architect is on the drum seat (and not Nick Barker, as some rumours told) and Lars Nedland, better known as Lazare from Solefald, is the new keyboardplayer, replacing Enslaved's Ivar Bjornson. Jens Ryland, Oystein Brun and I.C.S. Vortex (Simen Hestnaes) are still present. I easily dare to say that Simen is one of the best black metal vocalists ever, his range is just incredible! From rasping black metal voice to a wonderfully clear singing, high and low, he masters it all. Those who heard him also on the Arcturus and Dimmu Borgir albums know what I mean. It's a shame he doesn't use the clear voice as much as on "The Archaic Course" because that is what makes Borknagar so special I think. Well, you can't have it all. Whereas "The Archaic Course" was mainly relatively soft, this one has become a real killer with the help from Abyss studios. The sound is brilliant, heavy, clear and full of details. This is best heard in some of the multi-layered vocal structures. Overall a very good album. I wouldn't call it an essential must-have purchase, but there's definitely a lot of far, far worse bands around. (Nervengeist)



Broken Hope (USA) - Grottesque Blessings
The Plague 2000

9 tracks (39:08)
Broken Hope are obviously no newcomers to the death metal scene. Yet somehow they were dropped by Metal Blade, presumably due to less than satisfactory sales. Fortunately The Plague picked them up. Fortunately because this is not a bad album. I must say that I lost track of them after Bowels of Repugnance which definitely is the ultimate in sick lyrics, which the accompanying bio agrees with. The years seem to have mellowed them a little, but what they lost in sickness, they gained in musical skills. Apart from the stops in the music, which I really hate, the tracks breathe experience. Especially the riffing rises far above average, as well as the rhythmical variety that keeps the whole thing interesting. Whereas much of today's death metal is to experience, to test your adrenaline tolerance, this album stands a close listening session as well. (Joris)



Burzum (N) - Ragnarok (A New Beginning)
Aske Records
8 tracks (47:44)

No, this isn't the new official Burzum album, but still an interesting one. On this CD you'll find old demo tracks most of which are previously unreleased. The first song is entitled 'Et Hvit Lys Over Skogen' and can be considered as a great piece of work in the typical Burzum style. The following 4 tracks are taken from the now highly sought-after instrumental demo, which was released back in 1991. The soundquality isn't all that great, but still they are some excellent Burzum songs. Then we get to a duet with another famous - and nowadays very crappy - Norwegian band, called Mayhem. Varg sings a Cliff Richard cover with these guys in the rehearsal room. Of course this is done in their own "creative" way. This also appeared on the Deathcrush album in a different version. The concluding song 'Havamal' is composed by using the music from the 'Han Det Reiste' song which is accompanied by the vocals of a guy named Sveinbjörn Beinteinsson. The result of this combination is one very irritating piece of music. I really can't stand the voice of this man, let alone for 12 minutes. It sounds as if he's saying a prayer with his head in a toilet. Time to flush I'd say. Except for the last track I think this album is surely worth the investment for every Burzum fan. If you want to obtain this cd, be quick, because it's limited to 1.000 handnumbered copies only. (Berry)

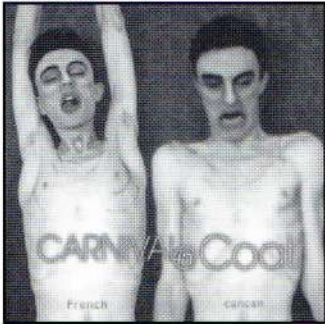


Cannibal Corpse (USA) - Live Cannibalism
Metal Blade Records 2000

14 tracks (48:04)

Allegedly recorded without overdubs (then again, which band would admit to overdubs), this is a well produced live album. It clearly shows how able these people are as musicians.

Of course the info that the label sent with the promo is completely over the top, rambling on about a Cannibal Corpse live show being 'an event known for the majestic beauty of unleashed adrenaline and brutality'. Puke. The mention of 18 tracks being on the album is just for the release outside of Germany. Our promo is the censored version, which leaves out all the old classics. So rather than an overview over their career, this promo focusses on Cannibal's last few albums. Add this together with the fact that telling us to go buy the new album is about as close as they get to interaction with the public, you might wonder what the fucking use is of such an album. It can't be the two cover tunes that close off the album, can it? Outside of Germany you are slightly luckier, but not much. (Joris)



Carniv In Coal (F) - French Cancan Kodiak / Season Of Mist 2000 9 tracks (40:54)

I first heard a song by this band on a French sampler CD. It was the cover "Maniac" from Michael Sembello from the movie Flashdance. They finally made it live up to its name and I was really impressed by it. This is their second album and I've never heard their first one, so I don't know if it's as interesting as this one. "French Cancan" contains 7 covers and 2 compositions of their own. They are, however, not nearly as good as the covers although "Out of misery" is a good song. So hold on, here's the covers: Ozzy Osbourne's "Bark at the moon", "Piranha" from Afric Simone, Gerry Rafferty's "Baker street", Morbid Angel's "Fall from grace", Genesis' "Mama" and "Fucking hostile" from Pantera. "Fall from grace" and "Fucking hostile" get a humouristic treatment with Morbid Angel's song sounding like a fanfare / carnival / grindcore hybrid. Pantera's song is reduced to an Easy-tune / Samba version. Very funny in my opinion but I'm sure not everyone agrees with me on that. Most impressive track however is "Baker Street", which sounds really special in this new, heavy form. They covered it with respect for the original and they've succeeded to make it sound tasteful. Same goes for "Mama". Their music is a mix between grindcore and some Fear Factory influences, especially in the guitars. They use a drumcomputer as well. Their label calls it "Crazy Disco Grindcore" and I guess it's true in a way. There's only 2 people involved in Carniv In Coal, apart from some guest musicians. Axel, who does the music and Arnaud, who does the vocals. Both very capable men, that's for sure. The production is really heavy although the drums could've been mixed in a bit louder. The vocals are outstanding, ranging from deep grunts, to good clear vocals and there's some female background choirs as well. It has turned out to be an interesting concept and I hope they will continue this on later albums. Just imagine which 70s and

80s songs would sound great with a metal treatment! (Nervengeist)



Carpathian Forest (N) - Strange Old Brew Avantgarde Music 2000 12 tracks (40:11)

Black Metal doesn't really interest me anymore nowadays, EXCEPT when it sounds like Carpathian Forest! Most black metal addicts must've heard of them and "Strange old brew" is their second full-length, in the same vein as its predecessor "Black shining leather". That means, Darkthrone-style black metal with rock 'n roll and punk influences. There's also room for some slower songs with some keyboard, but the majority of the songs are fast and groovy. The album kicks off with the great song "Bloodcleansing", which is definitely my favourite, along with the bonus track "He's turning blue". It's too bad I missed them on tour, because I think the songs would do great at a live gig. It's really hard to keep still because of the intensity and the drive of the songs. For people who still don't have an idea what to expect, it's comparable in many ways to bands like Urgehal and Aura Noir, or a mix between Darkthrone and Venom. The lyrics are about typical black metal subjects, like darkness and death, but also about mainman R. Nattefrost's interests in suicide and SM. As for the artwork... hey, it's black metal! Typical but functional, although not quite the quality I expected from an Avantgarde Music release. Doesn't really matter though, it's the music that counts. And that's great, no doubt about that! (Nervengeist)



Catamenia (SF) - Eternal Winter's Prophecy Massacre Records 2000 11 tracks (42:59)

This is the band's third album in as many years. Tico-tico (so well-) produced, tightly played, well composed. Is there no end to Finnish talent? Massacre did some serious promoting for this band, with full page adverts in 21 magazines. Compared to fellow countrymen, Catamenia concentrate a bit more on mid-tempo parts, which gives some tracks a certain grooviness combined with a cold Nordic atmosphere. Other tracks are virtually indistinguishable from other bands from the Finnish scene. Which is another way of saying that they're good. I think I like this album the best of all the Finnish stuff that I've reviewed for this issue. As the label seems serious in supporting them, they have some chance of going for the top melodic metal position in

Finland. I guess CoB is the band to beat. (Joris)



Coffin Texts - Gods of Creation, Death & Afterlife Dwell Records 2000 8 tracks (38:11)

Los Angeles, where this band with a slightly unusual name are from, is not exactly the centre of the death metal universe. Still brutal American death metal is their thing. Contrary to what the Egyptian sarcophagus on the cover suggests, these guys are not on the Nile Middle East tour. A keyboard instrumental is as far as they get in the frills department. Just brutal death metal, with the odd doomy slower parts. Until suddenly at the last track but one, they turn thrashy. I guess it's hard to escape the Slayer influences coming from LA. On the last track they "Disturb the priest" and maybe some listeners by closing off with a death rock track. Although not frightfully innovative, the music on this debut album is varied enough to keep it interesting. Not that any track in particular will stick in your head. So whether this CD will conquer the death metal throne, as the label claims, remains to be seen. Dwell Records really believe in this band, judging from their promotional efforts, so why don't you check them out?! (Joris)



The Crown (S) - Deathrace King Metal Blade 2000 11 tracks (49:05)

Andreas of Metal Blade has been pushing this band a bit, and hearing the promo I know why. This is energetic stuff, folks! It's new school thrash, or whatever musical category you want to put it in. All the tracks follow basically the same pattern: fast and aggressive drums, fast and aggressive guitars and fast and aggressive vocals. The used song structures including solos already proved their worth in the 80s, so no possibility for failure there. Yet somehow The Crown manage to make their music sound thoroughly modern. This is an album that rages from start to end with only the scantiest of slower bits. Such as the ultra heavy beginning of 'Vengeance'. One track later, they almost start to sound like Maiden in their DiAnno era. Some of the song titles are really brilliant, like 'Blitzkrieg Witchcraft' and 'Total Satan'. Listening to that latter track I suddenly wonder what would have happened if this album had come out, say in 1985? Hmm... I guess I don't know the answer. An album to look out for. (Joris)



Cruachan (IRL) - The Middle Kingdom Hammerheart 2000 11 tracks (48:33)

Finally Irish folk metallers Cruachan are back after a silence of almost 5 years. Returning to the scene with their new album "The Middle Kingdom", they have abandoned all the black metal influences that were still present on their highly acclaimed debut album "Tuatha Na Gael". As I was very impressed by the band's debut, after receiving this promo, I immediately put it in my CD-player and the sad tones of Uillian pipes drove me to sit close to the box, telling me to stay there for the next three quarters of an hour. Now I must admit that the album wasn't exactly what I had expected of it, since it's way more accessible than its predecessor. Cruachan still are all about Irish folklore and they still play Celtic metal with all kinds of traditional instruments - there are so many flutes on this album that I bet every rat-catcher is dying to get ahold of his/her copy! - but the overall atmosphere isn't as aggressive as on "Tuatha Na Gael". I wouldn't be surprised one bit if I was to hear some pieces of music from "The Middle Kingdom" in cinema some day, because songs like "The Butterfly", "A Druid's Passing" or "Celtic Mourning" would suit perfectly for the purpose of soundtrack music for a movie about King Arthur for instance. Some heavier more up-tempo tracks sound a little like The Pogues go metal and if the rumour is correct, one or more members of The Pogues should contribute to the next Cruachan album (as well as Brendan Perry - ex-Dead Can Dance). Very suitable to the folk atmosphere of the album and the album title is the cover - a colourful drawing depicting all kinds of faery-species. Apart from myths and legends I have the impression that the lyrics also deal with social issues in Ireland. Not really my kind of thing, though I can understand this may have great relevance for the band. During the many times I listened to the album, many points of criticism crossed my mind. Even though the female vocals are not excellent, some of the keyboard sounds sound rather artificially, the guitar work on some of the songs sounds almost punk-like and a lot of the mystic atmosphere of the first album is lost, the album does fascinate me. Right away with the first hearing, the faery-magic of all these traditional instruments captured me. Roaming over the vast Irish landscapes I imagine myself, while listening to this "The Middle Kingdom". You know, sometimes a release is special mainly for sentimental reasons. Those who



comprehend how Bacon is connected to Piglet will understand, I guess. (Rahab)

Dark Tranquillity (S) - Haven
Century Media 2000
11 tracks (43:11)

Dark Tranquillity are the band that I was so impressed with live even before I knew their albums, that I rushed out to the shop the next day to buy whatever was in stock. That happened to be 'Skydancer', the bands unforgettable debut. The following EP and 'The Gallery' album brought them to the high point of their career in my opinion. 'The Mind's I' was an OK album, with some nice riffing, but none of the brilliant melody lines that characterized their previous album. The follow-up was a little uninspired, so with something of fear I picked up their new album in the shop. To start with the conclusion, I think they're back on the right track. Surely they have changed their musical style. The high-speed-Iron-Maiden-with-a-Scandinavian-flavour sound has definitely gone. In fact the opening track of the album somehow reminds me a bit of 'Wolfheart' or something similar, an impression that will return a few more times during the album. It must have something to do with the slow, groovish chords I think. 'Not Built to Last' goes back to 'The Mind's I' at least riff-wise, but this time round they've added keyboard layers and other electronic effects. Actually, a new guy, Martin Brändström, is presented as a full-time electronics person. He gets to show his stuff during the many laid-back atmospheric, whispered passages featured on the album. These are the ingredients that define this album, all of them return in various proportions in all the tracks. I think Dark Tranquillity are on their way defining their new style, which has surely lost the nervous edge of old. It seems they feel more at ease with their music on this album than on the previous ones. The compositions seem more natural, less forced, than before. Like I said, they're on the right track again. To me, the closing track, 'At Loss for Words' represents the best mix of all the mentioned ingredients. At least so far. (Joris)



Dawn of Dreams (D) - Darklight Awakening
Last Episode Records 2000
9 tracks (40:26)

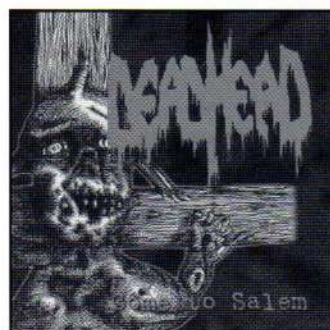
The band's melodic death/black metal style is more something you'd expect coming from a Scandinavian outfit than a German one. For instance the basic melodic riff of the opening track could have been thought up by In Flames (and that's a compliment). Actually, this band also have a long history dating back to 1993, in spite of this being their first full-length. It's the follow-up to 1997's mini-CD 'Silent Endless Nothing'. In the beginning of 2000 they were signed by Last Episode, under whose flag this album is being released. The strong point of the band is that once in a while they've come up with a guitar riff that is memorable. And that's certainly worth something in today's oversaturated metal market. In addition, the vocalist has a strong voice. I really enjoyed this one. (Joris)

Dead Head (NL) - Come to Salem
Hammerheart /Unveiling the Wicked
13 tracks (52:19)

Though Dead Head has never been any of my particular favourites, I can't deny a

certain feel of nostalgia. Why? Because this album mainly consists of old recordings from Dead Head's early days, like their "The Festering" demo ('90), their contribution to the Dutch "Metal in Rocks II" compilation ('89), and some more demo recordings. I actually think this stuff appeals to me more now than it did at the time it came out. Dead Head is one. Dead Head's brutal and fast thrash metal might not be the most original you have ever heard, but it's pretty well played and kicks ass. Like the info sheet says their style was distilled from the music from bands like Kreator, Sadus and Dark Angel, and I think I may add Slayer here as well. As a matter of fact, in the form of "Die by the Sword" there is also a Slayer cover track featured on this album. The newer tracks, recorded in '95, are not as brutal and not as exciting as the other stuff on the album. You can clearly hear that Dead Head liked what Carcass was doing in those, in the riffing (lots of bends!), in the drumming, in song structure, and in the vocals as well, especially in "Sunshine". The sound quality of the recordings has been improved especially for this CD release, and for demo recordings it's really very good. I can say nothing but good words about the professionalism of the band in their early days, and just to state that Dead Head was quite a phenomenon in the Dutch underground scene. ("The Festering" has sold over 1300 copies!) It seems that Dead Head have returned to the scene - a new album should have been already recorded by Robby Woning (also an editor for the Dutch Aardschok magazine, and doing some engineering these days too) and his fellow band members last summer.

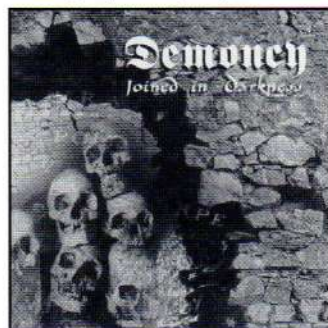
The only thing I really dislike about this album/info sheet is the pretentious crap, stating how fantastic this band is. Modesty surely isn't one of their stronger points, and it's not like they are that outstanding that they can afford that! The band seems to have only one slogan: "Fuck Commercialism, Fuck Fashion (where did those sudden Carcass influences come from?), Fuck You!" Well Fuck Dead Head then..... (Rahab)



Depression (D) - Chronische Depression
Deadly Art Production 2000
21 tracks (52:26)

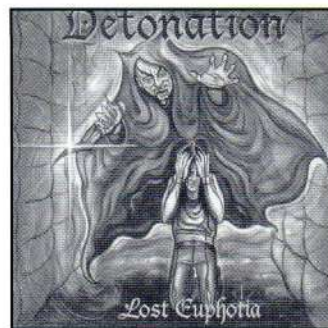
Kai from Deadly Art sent us a promo of this album, in a white cardboard sleeve. Basically this band has been in existence for over a decade and released a bunch of demos, EPs and the odd split album at a frequency of about once a year. Actually this is their first full length. The nice bonus is that they've included one track off each of their past releases. Since I'd never heard of the band, that gives me a chance to follow their musical evolution. But let's first have a listen to the new tracks. It's like being plummeted back, say 10 years in time. I have a strong feeling that Depression record stuff, just for the fun of it, without being overly ambitious. It's like listening to old Autopsy stuff again. It has that same type of vocals, you know, the ones that sound as if the kitchen sink is starting to clog up. It has that very raw guitar sound, that filthy sounding distorted bass. Since there are 21 tracks in 52 minutes, you can guess that the average duration of the tracks is not very long, like grindcore length. But it's

not as fast as all that for most of the time. In fact it's a perfect headbang speed. And I find that I have trouble keeping my head still. Another CD that's really a trip down Memory Lane. In the meantime we have reached track 11 ('Depressionen') which is a clean sung early 90s type doom track, which even features something organ-y. Maybe Depression own a whole block of houses there. In Memory Lane, I mean. Tracks 12 to 21 show that over the years nothing much has changed, apart from the recording quality which has definitely improved. (Joris)



Demoney (USA) - Joined in Darkness
Hammerheart Records (licenced from Baphomet Records) 2000
11 tracks (36:54)

Demoney is a very obscure one-man black metal project from Ixithra, who used to be a member of one of the few American cult black metal bands, namely Profanatica. And Demoney's music is equally primitive and evil as Profanatica's, though not as aggressive or expressive, yet more obscure and delecting. In the accompanying letter from the label, Demoney is compared with Darkthrone and Carpathian Forest and I can hardly believe that Ixithra will be very happy with this comparison since it's just simply nonsense. I'd say that similarities to bands like Beherit, Blasphemy and to a lesser extent Profanatica and Treblinka (up until and including Tiamat's first album) are much more evident. And it does feel good to experience music with this overwhelming atmosphere after such a long while. I have always kept a special place in heart for these manifestations of evil put to music. Of course this album doesn't have a crystal clear production with the perfect Abyss studio guitar sound (although I must say that all instruments are separately traceable in the mix.) But I wish that all the CD releases recorded in the Abyss studio had such an impact as "Joined in Darkness"--just listen to these incredible demonic whispering vocals and the hypnotizing guitar riffing--brilliant in their simplicity. Wander around in Ixithra's realms of utter darkness and learn all its occult secrets. If you like black metal with the feeling it held during the late 80's and the very early 90's, this album is an absolute treasure. But if you think Cradle of Filth invented the genre, don't bother, as you wouldn't understand. Don't be surprised if the next edition of Mandrake contains an interview with Ixithra! (Rahab)



Detonation (NL) - Lost Euphoria
Skull Crusher Records 2000
4 tracks (20:51)

Another great band from the Dutch scene. As you could read in our previous issue, they started out as Infernal Dream, but were forced to change their name and it ended up to be 'Detonation'. They never really released any demo, so apart from 2 sampler tracks that are actually on this mini, we can view this as their first recording. Their music is deeply rooted in the Gothenburg sound. And as with so many bands in that genre, their musical skills are beyond doubt excellent. The riffing is tight and varied. The drums are at times fast and just as tight. No complaints about the singing either. The lyrics, however, don't make much sense to me. At times the music reeks of true brilliance, at times it needs a bit of polishing, but that at their respective ages and the level they have already reached, it seems the sky's the limit for Detonation. Write to the label to get this mini. (Joris)



Disgorge (MEX) - Forensick
Repulse Records 2000
10 tracks (36:59)

Yeah! 'Haemorph Enderarteriectomized Punzed Eozinophille'. Wow! And you thought that medical grindcore was dead. Well, actually it is. It's been rotting ever since Carcass' first offering or should I say offal? The cover shows a dead child, but whether it's a cesarean gone wrong, or just stillborn offspring I cannot tell you. Needless to say, it's been banned etcetera. The recording seems a bit distorted, or maybe it's just my stereo. In any case, it's the image that counts and not the music. Even though that's not too bad and even has some variation. Whatever. For the true putrophiles out there! (Joris)



Drastic (PL/I) - Thieves of Kisses
Beyond... Prod. 1998
8 tracks (47:56)

...Hey what have we got here; another project by Dreamlord from Golden Dawn? No, but considering the music it might have been. Drastic is a Polish/Italian alliance. The main character behind this project is Chris Buchman, who composed all the music and handles all the instruments. He is assisted on vocals by Chiara and Alessia. Experimentalism is the key-concept on "Thieves of Kisses"; with dreamy synth-melodies, sweet female vocals (not always completely in tune though), experimental percussion, house beats and heavy guitars almost surrealistic atmospheres are created - making the experiencing of this album like some kind of dream-trip,... and I believe that's exactly what it is intended to be. Drastic was initiated in '95 with

the ambitious and slightly pretentious aim to start off "an uncompromised voyage through our deepest feeling and strongest emotions, flying on the enchanted wings of art, among dying planets and supernovas, but above all, over the mediocrity and the trends of the 20th century". I must honestly admit that Drastic is quite original in its approach and that I think the album is enjoyable – not a complete revelation but still definitely not ordinary or mediocre. The best reference I am able to give is the second half of "The Art of Dreaming"-CD by Golden Dawn (... and personally I prefer the first half). The artistic aspect of the songs is clearly highly valued and the lyrics are in Polish, Italian and English. The CD comes in a good-looking digipack. (Rahab)

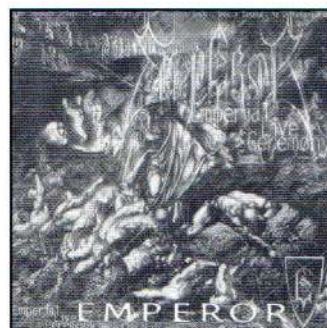


Eclipse (PL) - Venomous Colours
Blackend 2000
5 tracks (26:29)

I'm not too fond of labels releasing demos – either you believe in a band and give them the opportunity to make a new recording or you don't and you don't offer them a record deal at all... Apparently Blackend thought they would be able to make some easy money with this Polish black metal band Eclipse. And considering the qualities of both Eclipse's compositions and the recording itself I am afraid I even hope they will succeed. Nevertheless two thumbs down for Blackend for their cheap, repulsive money-making attitude. Eclipse play a kind of symphonic, classically inspired black metal which appeals to me very much. Their music is not as orchestrated as for example Sirius' and Bal Sagoth's and not as complex as for example Obtained Enslavement's tunes. Obviously keyboards are present and the guitar lines are very well matched. Like with Obtained Enslavement the classical influences also show through the guitar parts, which vary from good to outstanding! Another comparison that comes to mind is Mephistopheles debut album... fortunately the production of this album is more powerful, although there's still space for improvement in that field. Some female vocals here and there, not too dominant, not too special either but OK. The songs are rather catchy with a quite a lot of repetitive themes; maybe they are a little too much spun out. Nevertheless Eclipse's symphonies contain many brilliant ideas leaving me astonished each time I listen to them. I can imagine that the songs turn a little longwinded after a couple of hearings due to the long repetition of some ideas, but it needs no comment that this band is an enormous promise in the symphonic black genre – If I would consider this release as a demo, than it would be in league with "The Eclipse..." (what a coincidence, eh??) by Sirius, "Tämä..." by Moonsorrow or "Opera" by Ephel Duath... And I'm already very curious what the band's debut full length will sound like. If the band succeeds in getting a stable line up, I'm confident that a bright future awaits. People who like the bands mentioned in this review should definitely check out Eclipse! (Rahab)

Ektomorf (H) - Kalyi Jag
Rise Up Records 2000
17 tracks (64:45)

I'm not sure if Rise Up Records is the same as Last Episode Records, or a sub-label or what. Fact is they're from the same German town of Schwäbisch Gmünd and the promo-person has the same name. This is the third and heaviest (at least according to the fact sheet, which is usually not that reliable in that sort of sense) album of these Hungarians. This effort is especially aimed at focussing people's attention to the nasty Hungarian attitude towards the Roma people in that country. Apart from that, at first glance the music also bears more than a passing resemblance to Sepultura, with respect to the vocals, the speed, the guitar sound and so on. Then on the second track the singer suddenly breaks into some (not badly done) traditional singing. The equivalent to Sepultura's tribal drums? But then it's back to pure metal again. I've never been much of a fan of this phase of Sepultura's life, so I cannot say I'm overly excited by this part of Ektomorf's music either. The other part consists of sparse acoustic folk interludes and the odd bit of real singing. Which are not bad really. However, the combination seems a bit forced. For instance, track 7 is completely acoustic and has nothing to do with metal whatsoever, while the following is more of the Sepultura stuff. No complaints about the number of tracks or the playing time, but on the whole I don't particularly like the album. If you liked Roots, then I suggest you to check them out, otherwise leave them be. (Joris)



Emperor (N) - Imperial live ceremony
Candlelight Records 2000
10 tracks (60:29)

Imperial live ceremony – or all the things you ever wanted to know about what Emperor are actually playing but were afraid of asking. This is one hell of a well recorded live album. If there are no overdubs, then these guys are playing really well live. Of course when you're actually there, it's always hard to notice these things. 'In the night side' eclipse is one of the greatest black metal albums of all time. Unfortunately, in this time decent productions were not done. I believe it was very important if something was 'true' or not. Now most seem to have grown up, and we can actually hear how the tracks are composed. Another untrue thing is the inclusion of a mpeg video. I don't know if it was Ihriel holding the camera or what, but the whole thing seems just a bit Ihsahn-oriented. What can I say, all the classics are there and the CD is excellently recorded. That should send even those that don't consider themselves particular Emperor fans running to the shop. (Joris)



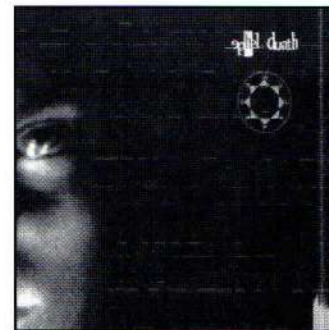
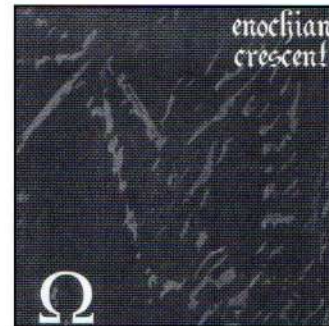
Enid (D) - Abschiedsreigen
CCP 2000
8 tracks (51:51)

Another "band" that we had featured with an interview in our debut issue of Mandrake – an interview with a lot of impact so it turned out. Now Martin Wiese returns with a CD full of magnificent compositions, once more creating a fantastic link between classical music, folk and metal. Though all compositorial work and arrangement activities are still done by Martin himself, he is assisted by two guest musicians on this album, (and not the worst as you might imagine!), namely Moritz (ex-Korova, Dornreich & Abigor) and Maria Dorn (Stardust). Especially Moritz's drumming is incredible. I know that Martin is used to working with drum computers and uses all kinds of complex rhythms. I had actually heard a recording of the songs featured on "Abschiedsreigen" with a drum computer, but except for the much more lively sound of the drums, one hardly hears the difference, which is just incredible. The vocals are just unbelievable, of a level not heard in the (black) metal scene – especially the Gregorianesque choirs are unique. The only point of criticism I have as far as the music is concerned is that (as a guitarist) I would have liked real guitars on the album, instead of the keyboard module that is used now; it already sounds better than on "Nachtgedanken", but it can hardly be compared to a real guitar. But I have heard that this is something that's being worked on. And with this minor flaw out of the way, I can hardly imagine how splendid the upcoming album will sound. The compositions are the best ones I have heard from Enid, and where there used to be some resemblance to Summoning, this comparison can no longer hold up. Enid has created it's own distinguishable sound and style. "Abschiedsreigen" is a conceptual album, about a man looking back on the important stages of his life when his end is drawing near. Martin, obviously also responsible for the lyrics, shows also to have talents in the lyrical field. He has a poetic way of writing and his lyrics are accompanied by a brief elucidation in both English and German. I could not name an actual highlight on the album since all the songs are good, but maybe the opening track, "Erinnerungen", has something extra. Final track "Whispering of Good-bye" is a little too sweet and poppy for my taste (get your cigarette lighters ready!!) , though I must admit that the bloody tune keeps popping up in my mind! All in all an outstanding album that really deserves to be checked out. (Rahab)

Enochian Crescent (SF) - Omega Telocovvim
Avantgarde Music 1999
9 tracks (40:16)

Although presented as a black metal band, it's only the vocals that remind me of that musical genre. The opening riff for instance, could have come from any Slayer album and the rest of the track is quite thrashy indeed. The second track, which goes by the cryptic name 'Abaiouim' (I guess it makes sense in Finnish) starts off as something black metal-ish. But soon it becomes obvious that the band often makes excursions into the thrashing 80s. This sets them apart musically speaking from the wave of melodic Finnish black metal bands that has been emerging of late. I like the

fact that every once in a while they use a riff, or have a compositional turn that you wouldn't expect. I wouldn't be surprised if that's what Avantgarde sees as their positive point, too. Because, let's face it, as a modern thrash metal band they cannot come close to others like The Crown. I must admit that I find the production less than perfect too, especially for being recorded in the renowned Tico-Tico studios. It sounds a bit muffled, this album. Like I said, it's the originality which pops up now and then, which makes this a positive review. (Joris)



Ephel Duath (I) - Phormula
Code666 2000
8 tracks (42:36)

Ephel Duath's "Phormula" is the second release on the ambitious Italian label Code666, and like their first release (Rakoth's "Planeshift") this is a smasher once more. I would even say I prefer this album. Since I had heard some quite flattering words about this band, I made sure to get a copy of their successful demo "Opera" (over 1300 copies sold), even before the release of "Phormula". I'm very appreciative of the style of music this band plays, which you might label sophisticated black metal. There are indeed a number of resemblances to Emperor's two latest studio albums, though Ephel Duath has chosen a less conventional, and more avantgarde approach. The technical skill of the band is definitely not inferior to those of Ihsahn and Samoth, and I guess that really should say something. The band only consists of two members, Davide and Giuliano, who handle all the instruments except for the drums, which are programmed, but fortunately don't sound that artificial except for the parts where it is supposed to sound like it's coming from a computer, I guess. The material offered on "Phormula" is no easy listening music; I actually imagine that it might get on the nerves of some people due to the many changes in atmosphere and rhythm. I have heard the album now for quite a number of times, and with each new turn I keep discovering new elements and details. Personally I am quite fond of "Phormula", and I admire the band for their groundbreaking, uncompromising attitude as far as their compositions are concerned. No musical restrictions are taken into account and a lot of music is created by intuition, not caring whether the elements fit in with a particular musical genre. "Phormula" is stuffed with countless exciting guitar lines, often in a splendid contrast to each other, with interesting, experimental rhythms, and both strange and atmospheric

synth-melodies. The synthesizers are less dominant compared to "Opera". The only song that didn't appeal to me in any way was the small acoustic interlude "Myriad" which was much too trivial and winded for this innovative band. The last track on the album, "Elapsed", is a song that goes back to the "Opera" period. My only minor point of criticism on this sublime piece of music might be that the songs sometimes are a little fragmentary. This CD comes in stylish digi-pack, with all lyrics printed. I predict a very bright future for this highly talented band. Everybody should at least check the album out! Elsewhere in this issue you can read the interview I did with guitarist Davide. (Rahab)



Esoteric (GB) - Metamorphogenesis
Eibon Records 1999
3 tracks (44:13)

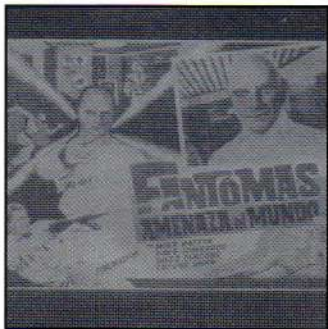
I don't know whether to call this a mini-CD or a full album. By Esoteric's standards it surely is a mini, but with its playtime of almost 45 minutes it surpasses a lot of full albums by other bands. Anyway, those of you who know Esoteric's previous outlets ("Epistemological despondency" and "The pernicious enigma", both double albums) know what to expect: tortuous, slow-motion doom with distorted vocals, strange effects and not a single trace of happiness. The opening song "Dissident" starts off real slow, with a massive, thick wall of sound. Greg Chandler's immensely deep grunt sounds really distorted and there's all kinds of sound effects. Later in the song, things start to accelerate a bit (for doom standards anyway) and the song ends with 4 minutes of strange effects, creating a bit of a grim ambient atmosphere. This continues throughout the album and so the other two songs are in the same vein, and both very good. Concerning the lyrics, it surprises me that vocalist Greg is still alive after the previous albums. Not surprisingly, the songs are about death, suicide, misery and other rather unpleasant things... So, another quality release from these British doomsters. A massive, if sometimes a bit blurred sound, great melodies that really get stuck in your head and, as always with Eibon Records, some really good artwork. By the way, the album is mastered by Tom Kvaisvoll of Paradigma (from Norway) and he does some guest vocals as well. Great eh? Mini-CD, that leaves me wanting for another full album. (Nervengeist)

Even Song (H) - Of Man's First Disobedience (Expulsion from the Divine Abode)
Displeased 2000
6 tracks (43:49)

This is the second release from this Hungarian band, and not a bad one at all. Their debut was released in March 1999 and is called "Path of the Angels", though I am not familiar with it. I would describe their music on "Of Man's..." as a mix between Arcturus and early Theatre of Tragedy (with a touch of Septic Flesh maybe), however awkward this combination may sound. The album was recorded in the Dutch Harrow studios. Though the music on this album is definitely not without merit, the band doesn't meet the standards nor match the impact of the

mentioned bands. I'm not too impressed with the female vocals by Agnes-- they aren't disastrous or anything, but hardly as good as Liv's. The keyboard player and lead guitarist really are quite good and it wouldn't surprise me one bit if they had received some education at a school of music. However, the lead guitarist especially has a very strong tendency to show what he is capable of resulting in too many licks and melodies per song, so that none of them really sticks to one's mind (except for this divine theme "From the Flames of Eternal Fury", that is)--a little too much guitar masturbation for my taste. On the other hand, I wish I could play like this fellow, Gabor Olah. But I noticed that I like the parts best where he moderates his guitar capers. Like the bands I mentioned already, the music contains elements from both the doom metal and the symphonic, progressive metal genre. I wouldn't really call Even Song's music avantgarde; the influences are too clear for that. No grunts on this album but the alternation between the male and female vocals creates an interesting contrast.

"Of Man's first Disobedience" is a conceptual album, dealing with the biblical theme of the Fall of Man (which band was it again, which had a track named like this?) All in all, the album offers quite some exciting moments and there's more than enough to be enjoyed, especially for those who are into the guitar virtuoso type of thing. (Rahab)



Fantômas (USA) - Fantômas Ipecac 2000
30 tracks (42:51)

Hmm.. 30 tracks, 43 minutes... Must be grindcore then?? Well, not exactly. Fantômas, consisting of Mike Patton (ex-Faith no More, Mr. Bungle) on vocals, Dave Lombardo (Slayer, Grip Inc.) on drums, Buzz Osbourne (Melvins) on guitar and Trevor Dunn (Mr. Bungle) on bass, deliver a totally new experience in music. Fragmentary, hysterical, bizarre, insane comic-book music. The best way to describe it would be a mix of speedjazz, grindcore, experimental music, punk, soundtrack music, along with some other music influences, even some black metal. The talent of the musicians is without doubt very big. Especially Mike Patton is very impressive. Don't expect anything like Faith no More, because he doesn't sing at all. It's more like a collection of screams, raps and weird noises. It reminds me sometimes of a vocal style known as Scat. The other guys are equally impressive, with Dave Lombardo performing insane rhythms. I could go on for ages praising Fantômas, but I guess you just have to listen for yourself. And if you ever have the chance to see them live, go for it! I still regard it as the best live performance I have ever seen. (Nervengeist)

Fleurety (N) - Last-minute lies
Supernal Music 1999
4 tracks (20:16)

Finally something new from Fleurety. This mini is supposed to be out for a while, but was quite hard to get. No thanks to Supernal Music, who are known for their constant changing of release dates and bad distribution. Their debut album "Min tid skall komme" is a bloody marvellous avant-

garde black metal album and still one of my all-time favourites. What they display here is far from black metal though. No screams and no icy black riffs. Instead we get a mixture of strange metal and jazz with weird effects, accompanied with (good) female vocals and strange male vocals. Also drummer S.E. Hatlevik (aka mr. Magic-Logic from Dødheimsgard) performs some really weird drum rhythms. All of this reminds me a bit of Ved Buens Ende and I'm sure fans of VBE will like this a lot. The lyrics are written phonetically in the booklet and there's some weird artwork and photographs in it. Needless to say, the lyrics are totally strange, if you can translate phonetics that is... The last track "Vortex" even introduces a jazzy saxophone in Fleurety's music. There really is nothing more to say for this album. Personally I think it's fantastic, but I've heard and read some totally different opinions. Definitely a try before you buy, unless you get off on Ved Buens Ende. In that case it's hurry to the recordstore! (Nervengeist)



Fleurety (N) - Department of Apocalyptic Affairs
Supernal Music 2000
8 tracks (49:57)

What can I say about this album?? I've been waiting ages for it and I was willing to beg, steal or even kill to get it. It was recorded in 1998, but due to label problems it's released just recently. I can tell you though that even if I'd had to wait another 5 years for it, it would still be worth the wait. Alexander Nordgaren and Svein Egil Hatlevik have managed to gather a very impressive list of guest musicians and when you read the names, you get a pretty good idea of which direction of music we're talking about. Take a deep breath: Maniac and Hellhammer from Mayhem; Garm and Knut Magne Valle from Ulver/Arcturus; Tore Ylvisaker from Ulver; Carl-Michael from Ved Buens Ende/Dødheimsgard/Aura Noir; Einar from Beyond Dawn; Sverd from Arcturus/Covenant; Carl August Tidemann from Arcturus/Tritonus; Vilde Lockert from Magenta and James Morgan from Snap Ant. Impressive eh?? Also some guest musicians and vocalists who were present on the mini CD "Last minute lies". A description of the music is incredibly difficult to give, but a look at the guest list gives you a good idea what it sounds like. Imagine a mix between modern-day Ulver and Arcturus, Ved Buens Ende, Massive Attack and Dødheimsgard's "666 International". Throw in some great female vocals, jazz (saxophone), progrock and some techno and you get Fleurety. Combine it with some of the most original artwork I've ever seen and

you have post-metal at it's best, very intelligent and very, very addictive. It's like a worm crawling through you're brain... I've always had a soft spot for weird metal (the weirder, the better) and this album ranks at the top of my list at the moment. I bow down deep in admiration and loudly applaud this daring album... I can die as a happy man now... (Nervengeist)



Furthest Shore (SF) - Chronicles of Hethense Book I
Skaldic Art Productions 2000
10 tracks (49:20)

Furthest Shore is the new band of Teemu, founding member of Nattvindens Gråt and Darkwoods my Betrothed. I must shamefully admit, I am not too familiar with his former bands, though I have heard Darkwoods' first album a couple of times. It clearly didn't make a very strong impression on me and to be entirely honest neither does "Chronicles...". The album offers 9 tracks (and an intro) of decent epic metal dedicated to the glorious "early nineties Bathory-era". Most of the elements required to make a really good album out of Furthest Shore's debut seem to be present; the musicians are clearly experienced and skilled, the album has an appropriate concept story, even the songs contain some quite impressive parts. Still I have the feeling that things might have been so much better! I don't like the production of the album too much - it's not broad, not majestic enough for my taste. The guitars should have had more attack in my view and especially the dissonant narrative way of singing on this album is not my thing. It's not necessary to be a brilliant vocalist in order to get the feeling across - Quorthon has proven that more than once, but Nattasett's interpretation doesn't appeal to me at all. There are quite some nice guitar parts, but most of the time they don't show to full advantage. Good exception is "The Blade", which I'd call the absolute highlight of the album; the song is built up very well and has this brilliant change in atmosphere from modest to very open with this fantastic guitar line! More songs like this please!!! For the fans of epic metal there should be enough to be enjoyed to justify the purchase of this album - I figure that in the epic-genre, the band has its own style, which is a more technical one than for example bands like Falkenbach or Bathory have. I'd say the potential is there, the result isn't completely (yet). (Rahab)



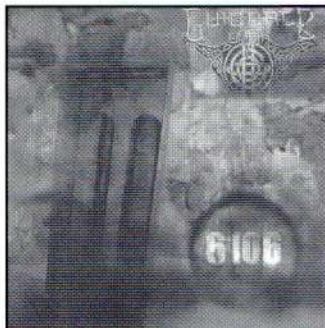
Gaahlskagg (N) - Erotic Funeral No Colours 2000
13 tracks (38:52)

Gaahlskagg is a project band of Gaahl from Trelldom and Gorgoroth. The band had released a split CD before the release of "Erotic Funeral" if I remember correctly, but this should be the band's first full length. Gaahlskagg offers traditional Norwegian black metal in the style of early Gorgoroth and early Mayhem, and along the way they experiment some with samples and strange sound effects. The vocals on this album are really totally over-the-top sick and very intense. The album has been recorded in the acclaimed Grieghallen studios with Pytten and it's not like I wouldn't have guessed if the info sheet hadn't said so. The production is kept sober in the typically Norwegian style (lots of treble, more than my ears can stand at the moment). In my opinion the sound effect parts/songs like "Whipper" and "Moralens Hammer" are rather unnecessary and quite boring – really not my cup of tea. Songs like "I am Sin", "Erotic Funeral" and the super intense "Skullfuck" are more than worth listening to if you're into grim Norwegian black metal. A decent album, nothing more, nothing less. (Rahab)



Grave Flowers (S) - Solace Me
Serenades Records 2000
7 tracks (38:25)

It's the side project of Godgory main guy Matte Andersson, it's called Grave Flowers and it's being marketed as Gothic Metal. If ever a term was applied arbitrarily it must be 'gothic metal'. Admittedly, forcing yourself too sing at the bottom part of your reach (track 2), making it more talking than singing gives it a slight resemblance to gothic, but it's not more than superficial. I would reassign most of it to classic epic doom metal. Remember Candlemass? No fat monk here though, and a bit more romantic/sentimental. It reminds me more of Dutch band Whispering Gallery, but with them being less than well-known, I'm not sure that's a useful reference for you. C'mon guys, here's your chance to show your girlfriend that you have a sensitive and romantic side. The singing is not too bad, especially in the higher reaches. That pleases me. Too often clean vocals ruin a song or an album for me, because of the lack of vocal qualities of the singer. If you're into lots of acoustic and undistorted stuff, you know what to do... For me it's a bit too wanky. (Joris)



Guidance of Sin (S) - 6106
Mighty Music 2000
10 tracks (33:10)

I haven't seen a four digit album title since... I don't know, Van Halen or

something similar. Well, it's a way to remember your PIN code. The album starts off with a sample ("You think that when you die, you go to heaven") that was used before by Entombed. That's not the only thing they have in common. As soon as I put the disk in my CD player, somehow the guitar sound was familiar. And yes, the album was recorded in the Sunlight Studios. But going back to the album title, there is also a track that bears the same name. The lyrics go '6106/The day I'm gonna die'. What? 6 January '06? It's beyond my knowledge of numerology. Anyway, musically it's a kind of death rock featuring the odd Scandinavian riff, that's OK to listen to, but nothing shocking. The album closes with a cover of 'Killed by death'. Another track is dedicated to Jack Daniels, so I think you can guess what kind of people you're dealing with. (Joris)

Gurkkhas (F) - Engraved in Blood/Flesh and Souls
Massacre Records 2000
10 tracks (about 40-45 minutes)

Due to their promo stock being exhausted, we got a tape copy of the album instead of a proper CD. I can't imagine the cost being that different, but anyway. The tape reached the editorial offices in a somewhat garbled state, but after some effort I got it straight and could start the listening/judging thing. The album starts with some chirping crickets crossfading into sounds of war. This doesn't take too long, fortunately, and then we're really all set to start with the music. The music is described by the band as brutal death, where I would prefer the adjective 'basic' rather than 'brutal'. The construction of the songs is very simple, you know, riff A-stop-riff B-stop-riff A, that sort of thing. I mean it all sounds OK, it kinda reminds you of your childhood, when you started listening to death metal, which is supposed to be comforting. But in the year 2000, I guess this album is less than shockingly innovative. I've reached track 3 or thereabouts at this point, I'm not in the mood to listen to the complete album, in search of some compositional spark of brilliance. As skipping tracks is a bit difficult on a tape desk, and fast forwarding a few tracks doesn't change the picture: mid- to up-tempo (but definitely not fast) death metal, basic riffing and so on, I guess Massacre could have done better than sign this band. (Joris)



Hatred (USA) - The Offering
Demolition Records 2000
10 tracks (38:50)

Introduced as brutal death/thrash outfit, Hatred's 'Offering' is quite up-tempo and at times even a bit aggressive. However in a completely different league as brutal death metal gods like Krisiun, Cryptopsy, Vader and so on. The riffing is a lot thrasher but on the average good, as indeed is the soloing. The vocals are less pleasing at least to my ears. Mostly thrash screams, with the occasional death growl or clean (but off-key) singing. I must say they sound rather weak. I guess with a stronger vocalist and perhaps a stronger production these guys could go a lot further. Because aggression or lack of it, is

what makes or breaks this kind of music. It has to get those adrenaline glands going. (Joris)



Havayoth (S) - His creation reversed
Hammerheart 2000
9 tracks (44:36)

Havayoth is a good example of the different musical interests of some musicians. While their own bands are mostly in the black metal genre, Andreas Hedlund (Vintersorg), Marcus Norman (Ancient Wisdom, Bewitched) and Morgan Hansson (Naglfar) deliver with Havayoth an entirely different piece of music. It's best described as gothic rock, very poppy and catchy. The label draws parallels to bands like Paradise Lost and Fields of the Nephilim and I agree to a certain point. Andreas Hedlund has a very distinct voice, which you'll easily recognise from Vintersorg and Otyg. The music is slick, polished and it has good melodies. It all sounds very romantic and sometimes even happy. Good music for romantic nights with your loved one I guess. But absolutely not for die-hard metalheads. It's just too soft for them. So, if you're into poppy gothrock, get it. I'm still not sure what to think of it. I like it, but I think it will tend to get boring in the long run. (Nervengeist)



Hegemon (F) - Chaos Supreme
Sacral Productions 2000
9 tracks (41:30)

As you might have read in our debut issue in the interview I did with Nico, vocalist of Your Shapeless Beauty, he also handles the vocals in the extreme black metal quintet Hegemon. After two demo tapes (I believe the second one was a live one, but I'm not really sure). I must say the band has improved quite a lot since their first demo "Raping the Banner", which was OK, but didn't leave too big an impression. Hegemon play black metal in the well-known Scandinavian style, no keyboards, no female vocals or any other twiddle bits, but with a pleasant dose of melody and some clean guitar parts. The music alternates between mid and up tempo, but doesn't reach ludicrous speed. Sometimes the band reminds me a little of Enslaved, Lord Belial and Gorgoroth in their early days as well as of Cirith Gorgor. The band has more than sufficient interesting ideas, lots of good riffs and the rhythms of the songs are not so commonly straight forward. The bass-playing on the album is more than impressive, but unfortunately the bass is a little too up-front in the mix for my taste. The production in general is good and offers the recording a clear sound. The little duet on acoustic guitar

"Interlude" deserves special mention, a nice experiment that hopefully will find a sequel on the next album! All in all, the young Sacral Productions label can be more than satisfied with their debut release, for this is for certain one of the best black metal releases to come from France so far. (Rahab)



Heresiarih (LT) - Mythical Beast and Mediaeval Warfare
Demolition 2000
11 tracks (61:38)

Finally it's out!! I have been listening to this album (the advance) for the last one and a half years for so many times and now finally it's out! As you could have read in the interview I did with Heresiarih's vocalist/keyboard player Morgueldear, the band had so much bad luck with their previous label Invasion, which died a quiet death shortly after Heresiarih had signed to them. And even on their current label, Demolition, there have been some delays with the release – but like I already jubilated: "Finally, it's out!" This album is a compulsory purchase for all the fans of epic melodic fantasy black metal in general and for admirers of dragon metal alchemy in particular. "Mythical Beasts ..." is the first chapter in Heresiarih's dragon metal trilogy; the second chapter is already being announced and will bear the title "The Winged Constellation". "Mythical Beasts..." offers 11 fantastic tracks with many enchanting guitar melodies, and the beautiful fragile sounds of female vocalist Rasa in strong contrast to Morgueldear's cold dragonshrieks and trollhowls. Narrative speech, epic keyboard parts, pulsing bass and rhythm guitar, and cleverly implemented samples – it's simply all there! Wander yourself on the battlefield fighting the great wars of Middle Earth, with trolls and orcs going berserk all around you or drinking some Elvenwine in the autumn forests. The lyrics to the songs are of outstanding quality and come from Morgueldear's feather – especially the "Saga of the Shield Maid", in two parts, deserves my admiration! About half of the material on the album was already featured on the band's demo "Dragons of War", but the versions on the album are way more powerful. OK, one small point of criticism then: there is still space for some improvement as far as the production goes. But I guess the guys from Heresiarih know that as well and I can't wait for "The Winged Constellation", being absolutely confident that this point will also improve. Until then, see to it you get a hold of this album! (Rahab)

Hin Onde - Songs Of Battle

Grab your axes! Hin Onde strikes with their first full-length 'Songs Of Battle' and I can't think of a better title to describe the music. Put on your chainmail, open another beer and fight with a big smile on your face! Let's take all boring viking metal bands as the enemy and join Hin Onde in their crusade for more quality in this genre. Prior to this album the band already released a 7" entitled 'Fiery September Fire' which contained the same sort of compositions. Two of the four songs, which appeared on this piece of vinyl, can now also be found on the cd in slightly different versions.

'Paganheart' still remains one of my favorite hymns, but also the titlesong should awaken the happy warrior in all of us. Parental advisory: Buying this cd may result in a completely trashed house. (Berry)

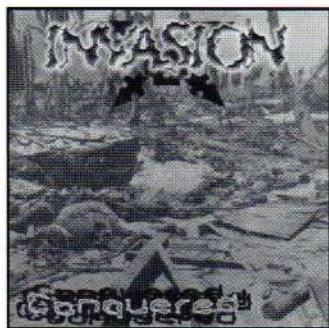
**Holocaust (S) - Hellfire holocaust
Sound Riot 2000
7 tracks (20:51).**

The 7 tracks that comprise this mini are to be considered predictable, average death metal, mainly American style, but with the odd Scandinavian influence. I mean, the whole thing is not bad, as in bad playing, bad composition and so on. It's just that nothing happens that hasn't been done a thousand time before. Excellent as background to parties, not bad for as a live concert, but not something I'd run out to the shop for. (Joris)



**In The Woods... (N) - Three Times Seven on a Pilgrimage
Prophecy Productions 2000
10 tracks (64:48)**

Finally the new In The Woods...! I've waited ages for this one since their last album "Strange in Stereo". So I was a little disappointed when I got this one to see that it includes songs that had been on 7's before. Actually 4 out of 10 songs have been on previous releases. They have, however been re-recorded to fit into ITW...s new sound. Also, 4 out of 10 songs are covers, which are "Epitaph" from King Crimson (extremely beautiful), "Let there be more light" by Pink Floyd, Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit" and "If it's in you" by Syd Barrett, founder of Pink Floyd. All of them with the typical ITW... touch. Their own songs sound like you'd expect from ITW... after "Omnia" and "Strange in Stereo", progressive, emotional, doomy, psychedelic and really atmospheric. There isn't a single trace of their black metal roots anymore. What's also different from previous albums is the better production and the much better male vocals, which were quite good already. ITW... remind a little like Anathema only more progressive and in my opinion much better. Fans of the latest Anathema efforts really should check this one out, if they haven't already. Another quality release by ITW... topped by some lovely artwork. Hope we don't have to wait this long for the next release... (Nervengeist)



**Invasion (USA) - Conquered
Hammerheart Records 2000
(licensed from Baphomet Records)
8 tracks (29:34)**

long for my endurance... "Invasion is also a band that has been licensed from Baphomet Records, and features members of a well-known heavy metal band who made this album under a different name, but their names must stay silent...", thus said the info sheet. If I remember correctly, Baphomet Records is the label owned by Necrophagia's Killjoy. Just a wild guess, but Killjoy also plays in Eibon amongst others with Phil Anselmo from Pantera. Well, some Pantera members must have had an afternoon off or something to come up with this boring uninspired death metal, somewhat in the style that used to be popular in Sweden at the beginning of the 90s. "Let's add some bad quality war-movie samples, then we have to come up with even less music. And don't forget the shocking pictures of war victims for the inlay"... "Conquered"???? Well, not me!! (Rahab)

Judas Iscariot (USA) - Heaven in Flames



**Red Stream 2000
7 tracks (39:08)**

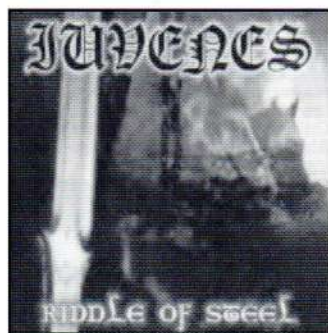
Akhenaten's primitive interpretation of black metal has met quite some support throughout the extreme black metal underground scene. Clearly inspired by the Scandinavian examples and driven by his uncompromising underground ideals and diabolic ideology, this is already Judas Iscariot's fifth full-length. The songs are somewhat in the vein of Ancient during their Svartalvheim period, but also influences from early Bathory and Burzum are unmistakable. In some parts the vocals remind me of Atilla's on "De Mysteris...". Like the info sheet already states "Judas Iscariot comes from a small yet elite element of the black metal underground, that puts ideology and Anti-Christian philosophy before anything else" Well "anything" definitely also includes playing skills and tightness. The mistakes in playing are clearly noticeable and though on the one hand one might say they give a certain feeling of purity to the recording, on the other hand they simply annoy me. It's not like it happens once or twice; a little more practice and it could have been solved. The whole thing sounds like a "professional" one-take bedroom recording. The production is very open, simple and honest, but doesn't add to a particularly evil atmosphere or anything. Listening to this album was my first acquaintance with this renowned underground project, and taking into account all the things I had heard about Judas Iscariot I had expected something that would appeal to me more, something more special. Let me just put on Demony's album once more! (Rahab)

**Juvenes (P) - Riddle of steel
No Colours 2000
5 tracks (40:30)**

"The Polish answer to Bathory and Falkenbach!", the bio tells us. Well, it takes a lot more to be of the same quality as those two bands. The comparisons with Bathory and Falkenbach are fair, but especially Falkenbach blows Juvenes away easily. The things I don't like about this album are the vocals and the drums. The black metal vocals sound pretty okay, but the clean viking parts sound off tune and silly. As for the drums, I don't think it's a problem when you're using a drumcomputer, but only if it's done properly. They sound almost the same,

throughout the whole album. This is also the case with the rest of the music. Very little variation in the songs, although I wouldn't call it really bad. Just too boring. It would certainly help if Juvenes would put some more variation in it the next time. Productionwise it sounds pretty good, although I feel the vocals and drums should've been so prominent in it. The keyboard sound and the guitars sound okay, but it's the same problem as with the rest of the music... That's right, too little variation.. Total vikingmetal freaks might like it, but the rest of us should leave this in the stores. (Nervengeist)

Keep Of Kalessin - Agnen (a Journey



**through the Dark)
Avantgarde Records 1999
8 tracks (50:53)**

A bit old, but what the fuck. Here's the review. The music's fast and aggressive, the playing competent, the compositions OK, the production so-so, there are 8 tracks and the playing time is just under 51 minutes. That's quite a long time for 8 tracks, but it's mainly because the last track takes forever to finish. Excellent stuff, if you're in for uncompromising black metal, without getting too true. Don't expect too many subtleties and you can't go wrong acquiring this release. (Joris)

**The Kovenant (N) - Animatronic
Nuclear Blast 1999**



10 tracks (51:06)

Formerly known as Covenant, Nagash & Co. are back with another space metal album. Pushing the space concept even further than on "Nexus Polaris", their previous album. A few line-up changes were made: keyboardplayer Sverd and also guitarplayer Astennu are gone. Although you can clearly hear that the guitarsolo's are done by Astennu! Why he's not stated in the booklet is a mystery. Maybe some hard feelings

from the departure?? The keyboard parts are now done by Nagash and Blackheart (or Lex Icon and Psy Coma as they're called now), both very capable keyboard players. The album sounds really catchy, sort of like a "black metal goes Rammstein" and it sounds extremely poppy and groovy sometimes. Also some samples and weird effects. Don't worry, because it's still metal though and sometimes quite aggressive as well. The production is really good, as you would expect from Woodhouse Studios and the sound is really massive. Personally I feel that the guitars could've been a bit rawer. A lot of people (especially the conservative Black metal fans) will be surprised by the fact that Hellhammer is still the drummer. What he does here is, needless to say, totally different from what he does in Mayhem. But he's still tight as a teenager's ass! Female vocals are also prominent in the music, although I don't know who the singer is because it's not stated in the booklet. It's not Sarah Jezebel, that's for sure. Lyrical wise they've stuck to the concept from "Nexus Polaris", dark spacy futuristic lyrics. Imagewise they borrowed a lot from Marilyn Manson, and especially Nagash looks like Mrs. Manson's ehhh sister. The album is finished off by some really good artwork from Union design, the same as Satyricon's. "So, should I buy this?" you ask. Well, if you liked "Nexus Polaris" you'll like this one as well. Conservative Black metal fans should definitely try it before they spend their money. By the way, the album contains a brilliant cover from Babylon Zoo's "Spaceman"! Hell yeah! (Nervengeist)

Krisiun (BRA) - Conquerors of



**Armageddon
Century Media 2000
9 tracks (41:35)**

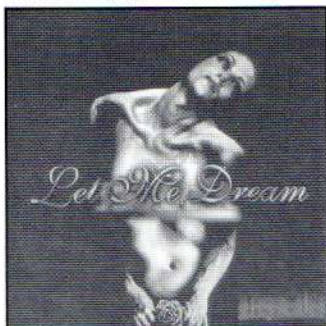
Once there was a band called Sepultura, who made it out of the Brazilian jungle, into the world's attention. Many others tried to follow, but never really succeeded. Now another band seems to have made it: Krisiun. It took them a bit longer to be picked up by a decent metal label. First Gun records licensed their first two full length efforts, until Century Media took over. Their support was already growing, especially in the Americas. After this introduction, it's time to allow the silvery disc its first spins in my CD player. Whraa! That's quite brutal. A quick skip to the next track... yup, same thing. Let's up the volume a bit. A bit more... Whraa!! Blood from my ears... This kicks ass!!! It makes me wanna... kill... kill... destroy!!! Phew! Just in time to hit the pause button. Let's think... what did I just hear? No subtlety, that's for sure. Supersonics from A to Z. Be prepared when you go and listen to this one. Please make sure there are no breakable objects near! But seriously, the completely interchangeable tracks just breathe aggression. Perfect stuff after a frustrating day at work! (Joris)

**Let Me Dream (SF) - Greyscales
Nocturnal Music 2000
10 tracks (38:46)**

More melodic Finnish stuff. This time with clean if untrained vocals. Later the growls kick back in. Which is a good thing. The keyboards are very in the front in the mix, at the expense of the guitars. I was going to say that there

must be more melodic metal bands in Finland than inhabitants, by now. But these guys have been around for a while. At least they thank people for supporting them during the first decade. Maybe in advance. No, but seriously, they've been around since 1989 and it's not their first release, so we cannot accuse them of coasting along with the others. In spite of this, I find the album too predictable. I want to be surprised. I want to think, 'Hey, I didn't expect this change'. I want to hear changes, riffs, keyboard parts, drum rhythms, that somehow raise an album above the level of other albums. Like the beginning of track 8, that unfortunately quickly sinks back into nothingness again. It's like they know how a song should be composed, but have no inspiration. That leaves it all a little flat. There's just so many of these albums. I know, because I have a big pile of them, that I probably will never listen to again. I'm afraid this is one of them. I'm sorry but I cannot help but think that 'Greyscales' is a suitable album title. Especially for the 'grey' part. (Joris)

Lord Wind (PL) – Heralds of fight



**No Colours 2000
9 tracks (62:39)**

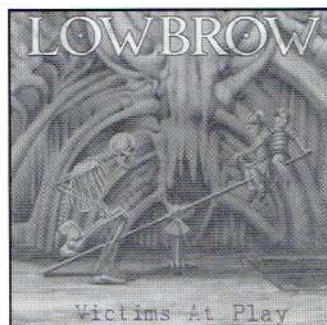
Listening a couple of times to this album wasn't an easy task. I enjoy folk-, (neo)classical- and medieval music a lot but only if the artist in question manages to grasp my attention with an exciting and imaginative album. Well, this is not. Rob Darken (from Graveland) produced his second album with his project Lord Wind. I'm not familiar with his first release, but assuming that artists improve musically speaking after their first efforts, I'm not bothering to check it out. Not that it's shitty music, it's just incredibly booooooring. Almost every song on the album sounds the same and it just makes me fall asleep. Which, in fact, I did one time... The music in itself is not so bad; keyboards, bombastic war drums and (synthetic) choirs try to create a medieval atmosphere and Rob partly succeeds in this. Partly, because it all sounds kind of cheap. Especially the choirs would sound much better if they were performed by real people. In all, it's not the production itself that ruins this album, it's just the complete lack of inspiration. I guess some people would find this mildly entertaining, but I think that those interested in this kind of music would be much better off with Sepiroth's album (on Cold Meat Industry) for instance. This is just too tedious and dull. (Nervengeist)

Love History (CZ) - Gallileo, Figaro - Magnifico

**Shindy Productions 1999 (tape)
10 tracks (about 50 minutes)**

This tape by Czech metallers Love History reached the Mandrake offices some time ago. The story of this release and indeed of the band is one of many troubles. Formed in 1992 or thereabouts, they released a demo in 1993 and a mini in '95. The cassette album that I'm listening to was actually recorded late 1996, so it's had time to age, so to say. Finally Shindy Productions released it in 1999 and Northern Darkness as a CD in 2000. The latter is a label that the band are less than pleased with according to the bio. The album consists of a demo quality recording of atmospheric grunt based metal, that is not bad, but not spectacular. In the mean time they have been signed to The End Records for a new album, called 'Anasazi'. The band included some tracks off this one on the tape, but I'm not sure where the one changes to the other. If I hear the change from one to the other correctly, a bit has changed. It's slightly avant-garde now. The grunt's still there, interchanged by all sorts of vocals styles, flutes and whatever. The third promo track is instrumental, with all different kinds of instruments and being very relaxed has little to do with metal. The production is still rather poor, which is not too good for this music. I'm sure I'll get a picture if I hear the album, as for now I can't get a grip on it. (Joris)

Lowbrow (USA) - Victims at Play



**The Plague 2000
11 tracks (58:21)**

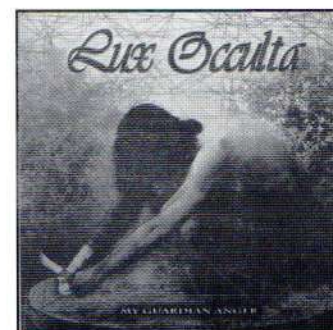
There's a complicated story on the accompanying (glossy as always from Hammerheart and sub-labels) fact sheet about how the band got to be. It's too highbrow for me... In the USA the album was released by the small Crook'd Records, licensed in Europe by The Plague. Several of the band members have impressive CVs and lots of ex-this and ex-that behind their names. Not the least of which is Allen West. His leaving Six Feet Under was a loss for that band in my opinion, but not his, since he just found a new band to do his thing. Musicians are not hard to come by in Tampa (FL) so that must have been no problem. And indeed, Lowbrow's mid-tempo death metal has that trademark groovy Allen West sound. I don't like the vocals that much. They seem to be manipulated a lot in the studio, which could mean they guy's vocal chords are not especially suited to this brand of singing. Lyrically the subjects range from Chris Barnes-type slashing up women, to even a spot of socio-criticism. But most tracks deal with serial killers, with the phrase 'I love to watch you die' turning up more than once. A real instant classic, such as 'Lycanthropy' on Six Feet Under's first offering seems to be missing. That's a pity, because as a whole the album is a solid piece of work. (Joris)

**Lux Occulta (POL) – My Guardian Anger
Pagan Records 1999
8 tracks (45:57)**

For me this album is the revelation of 2000, despite the fact that "My guardian Anger" was officially released in September 1999! I was totally blown away by the occult death/black metal from this Polish band and I haven't been this impressed by a band,

unknown to me, since I listened to Obtained Enslavement's "Soulblight" for the first time. "My Guardian Anger" is already the third full-length from this quintet that started out in late '94. The music on the album is complex and technical, but still accessible and above all, dark and atmospheric. Sometimes it reminds me a little of Therion, mainly because of the atmosphere, but there are no choirs or heavy metal riffs to be found here. I wouldn't be able to offer any sound comparison; it's much too unique what these guys are doing. The keyboards play an important role in the songs on "My Guardian Anger" and are dominant in comparison to their previous album "Dionysos", (which I bought immediately after listening to this one). Comparing both albums, it's simply incredible how big the evolution of the band is. "Dionysos" already captured a particular atmosphere that made Lux Occulta stand out a little, but it doesn't even come close to the pure art on "My Guardian Anger". I guess the line up changes between the two albums have left their marks. There has been a shift from black to death metal, and normally that wouldn't have been an improvement, but for Lux Occulta it worked out well. It seems that bands like Nile and Lux Occulta have succeeded in reaching new dimensions in the death metal genre. Just listen to songs like "The Opening of Eleventh Sephirah", "Kiss my Sword", or "Nude Sophia", and be overwhelmed by their splendour and the inventiveness of the compositions. I really can't come up with any negative aspect related to this release; the production is outstanding, the layout of the booklet is magnificent (especially the incorporation of the Tarot-cards is just brilliant), and the musical skills of the band members make my mouth fall open. The CD also contains a PC-video clip for the track "Kiss my Sword"; maybe that was the only thing that didn't impress me too much, but for the moment I'll stick to blaming my poor computer. Pagan Records seems to be heading into the elite regions with releases like Varathron's "Lament of the Gods" MCD and this one. What more do I need to say, it should be clear by now what my opinion is on this album, but for all those who didn't fully comprehend: Just buy this pure manifestation of utter brilliance! (Rahab)

**Macabre (USA) - Dahmer
Hammerheart Records 2000**

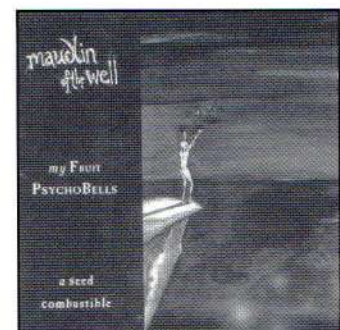


26 tracks (52:12)

If you have any knowledge of Macabre, you'll know what this album is about. Combining a love for serial killers with a sick sense of humour, this album is Macabre's first full length offering since 1993. Not unexpectedly, the album

deals with Milwaukee serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer. The fact that they've been around for over 15 years explains the ease with which they handle all the musical genres on the album, which range from extreme metal to punk to nursery rhymes, all tongue in cheek. Take for instance 'In the Army Now', which goes to the melody of 'When Jeffrey (or was that Johnny) comes marching home again'. Or 'Jeffrey Dahmer and the Chocolate Factory'. Those of you who've seen the children's movie about a certain Charlie will know the tune to that one. On the other hand many of the tracks are pretty fast, like 'Drill Bit Lobotomy'. All in all, the album describes the whole of Jeffrey Dahmer's life from his childhood up to and including his death. Uncategorizable, this band is pure cult, people. Either you dig the sense of humour, or I'd advise you to buy something else. (Joris)

Maudlin of the Well (USA) – My Fruit



**Psychobells...a Seed Combustible
Dark Symphonies 2000
7 tracks (58:24)**

Very interesting release this one... Just when you thought doom metal got stuck in it's own clichés there's Maudlin Of The Well with their debut album to prove otherwise. This classically trained 6-headed ensemble mix different music styles into doom metal and with success. The basis of their music is doom which reminds a lot of early My Dying Bride. They've mixed it with some progressive rock, jazz, a little bit of death metal and some slight ambient touches. Apart from this, they've also included instruments like trumpet and clarinet in it. This may seem like a strange combination but it works really well. The variety in the vocals is big as well. Good female vocals and clean male vocals take turns with death grunts although the clean vocals are dominant. Production-wise it sounds really good and at times ("Pondering a wall") it's really heavy. Lovely weird artwork and somewhat strange lyrics as well. So, concluding, a very good debut album and definitely one of my favourites for this year. (Nervengeist)

Mayhem (N) – A Grand Declaration of War

**Season of Mist 2000
13 tracks (45:58)**

Finally I am more or less reaching the end of the enormous pile of CD's that needed to be reviewed for issue 2... and I kept postponing reviewing this one each time I went through the pile... for what is left unsaid about this album? Both reviewers and metal heads with common sense seem to be divided into two camps: one camp claims that the album is one of the best extreme metal releases so far, typically Mayhem, always setting new standards. The other camp refers to the sentiment that Mayhem as such should no longer be existent without Euronymous and Dead and claims that the technical and neurotic music has absolutely nothing to do with the essence of "the true Mayhem". After a large number of hearings I think I can say that I can relate more to the first camp than to the second. In my view "A Grand Declaration of War" is beyond doubt an innovative black metal album – still containing Mayhem's characteristic venomous brutality, yet considering the

production, the technical skills of the band members and the complexity of the compositions the album is way beyond "De Mysteriis Dom Satanus". The album is divided into 2 parts (part 2 and part 3 – the mini album "Wolf's Lair Abyss" is supposed to part 1) and especially the armageddonic atmosphere of part 2 fascinates me a lot: Maniac's Goering-alike speeches, Hellhammer's ultra-fast and hyper technical drumming (a lot of march rhythms on the album!), Blasphemers fast and wicked riffs, structured like a musical collage. I haven't seen the band live since their first gig in the Netherlands, but I wonder how on earth Blasphemer is going to do this live... I remember that he was very sloppy in his playing, and even if he would play tightly, I couldn't imagine how he should play two or three guitar parts at the same time. Part 3 deals with "the reconstruction" and is much slower and doomier and reminds me a little of Revenant's "Prophecies of dying World", where the overall "progressive" approach reminds a little of Thorns' material. The artwork accompanying the album is absolute brilliant – the dead white pigeon, the baby in the womb, they just fit perfectly into the concept. Though this Mayhem has nothing to do anymore with the inner circle, the churchburings and a group of satanic youngsters, they still are controversial, innovative and in my view, after "Deathcrush" and "De Mysteriis..." they have delivered another milestone in the genre. (Rahab)

always been common. With the popularity of middle age metal soaring ever higher, Napalm must have wanted to secure their piece of that pie. Morgenstern are even getting some serious promotional backup from the label. Although I must say I like the genre, this effort fails to convince completely. Flutes, horns, German lyrics... in possession of all the same ingredients, this album is not more than mediocre in comparison with fellow countrymen In Extremo. For people that are more die-hard fans of the genre than I am. (Joris)



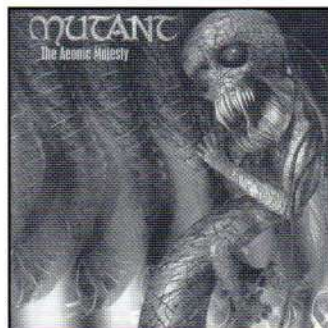
Mustan Kuun Lapset (SF) - Prologi



Nocturnal Music 1999
6 tracks (29:52)

With such a silly name they can only be Finnish. I makes you wonder what it means. I hope they didn't say anything bad about my mother. Musically, it's your average melodic black metal. A good guitarist, muffled drums and ye olde standard black metal screams. The meagre production doesn't do anything to help. I mean the riffs are definitely OK, but the thing as whole is just a little on the poor side. And this is just the prologi. Makes you fear for the epilogi. Actually, the last two tracks were recorded in 1996, a sort of pro-prologi, a little more basic but not too different. A whatever mini-CD. (Joris)

Mutant (S) - The Aeonic Majesty



Listenable Records 2000
9 tracks (39:19)

Formed by Theory in Practice members, the aim was to create an outlet for these gentlemen's darker and more aggressive feelings. The result is still a melodic affair, but yes, a lot faster than said band. Aggressive black metal with a melodic edge, keyboards included. It's very clear that the two band members do not hail from black metal circles, both musically and in their aversion against 'silly make-up'. Their

musical skills leave nothing to be desired as expected. But it's a little too clean for my liking. It's a bit boring in its perfection. Although the opening riff of track four is a killer one, which immediately woke me from the slumber I was sinking into. I'm not sure what's so 'mind-disturbing' about track 9. It's just slower, to my mind. A decent effort, but nothing shocking. (Joris)



Myrkskog (N) - Deathmachine
Candlelight Records 2000
9 tracks (43:55)

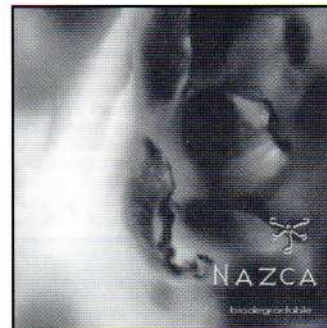
Dark Forest is not an average name for a brutal death metal band, but it might be a remnant from early days, since the band have been around since 1993. The guy in the back on the picture is even wearing some paint. Somewhere along the way something must have gone right, because the end result is clearly a killer album. It can meet with the greatest in the modern brutal death metal genre without having to bow. The drumming is fast and tight, which is all the more surprising if you realise that the guy's originally a guitarist. The guitar playing is varied and competent. The occasional sample or keyboard detail adds to the future machine universe image they want to get across. There's not so much too say about these albums. The genre is well known and particularly popular these days. This is a very well executed effort in that genre, it has to be said. With that I guess everybody knows enough. Apart from the last track that is, a remix of track 5. Yawn. Another of those remixes that are really just mangled versions of the original, which are completely unenjoyable. (Joris)



MZ 412 (S) - Nordik Battle Signs
Cold Meat Industry 1999
8 tracks (46:57)

Another attack from these Swedish black industrialists. Starting out as Maschinezimmer 412 back in 1989, they released the "Malfeitor" LP. There came a long pause and in 1995 the band arose again, this time under the moniker MZ 412. Signed to Cold Meat Industry they released "In nomine dei nostri Satanus Luciferi excelsi" and "Burning the temple of god". Labelling themselves as True Swedish Black Industrial, they're back now with this effort. Musically speaking, not much has changed since "Burning..." although the few black metal influences that album had, are gone now. All that is left is harsh industrial noise with a slight ambient touch. The black metal screams do show up now and then, for example in the song "Algiz – Konvergence of life and death". This

song also has a guest performance by fellow Swedes Ordo Equilibrio. Lyrically they still hold on to the Satanic concept and the destruction of Christianity. But they gave it a new, kind of fascist swirl to it (for example "Satan Jugend" or "Der Kampf geht weiter"). Also in the artwork this shows a little. I really don't think that was necessary and I'm not fond of fascism in music, but in the end it's the music that counts. Well, noise lovers can strike immediately and also fans of their previous albums need not hesitate. Also for gossip fans among us: very reliable sources say that MZ 412 contains members of Marduk! Makes you think doesn't it? (Nervengeist)



Nazca (N) - Biodegradable
Eibon 2000
11 tracks (45:08)

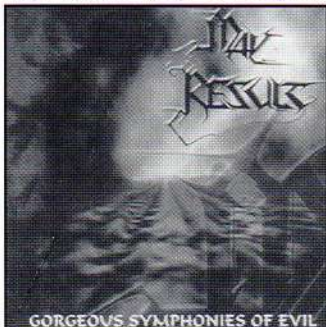
This record hardly has anything to do with metal and I must honestly admit that I feel rather incompetent to write a review about it. It's not that I listen to metal exclusively, but I am not really familiar with the genre Nazca is playing. I must say that the music isn't that bad at all, and I guess it might appeal to a number of metal fans too. It's some kind of depressive pop music, leaning towards gothic rock and new wave. Especially early 80's wave bands like the Talking Heads (the vocalist sounds a little like David Byrne, I think), Killing Joke and The Cure seem to have left their marks on the band's music. Certain parts even remind me of REM and the Eurythmics (in Microsong #1 it's just like "Sweet Dreams" is passing by). In the metal field, Nazca's music has some resemblance to the recent Katatonia stuff and to some Sadness' material. The lyrics are just like the music, depressive in tone, dealing with subjects as cancer and depression, and they made an impression on me. The CD comes in a tasteful packaging. Label boss Mauro knows how to create something decent, as can be seen from the Code666 digi-packs as well. Of course it's clear that this album will not be every metal head's cup of tea, but if you like atmospheric, depressive pop/rock/wave, I suggest you check this release out. (Rahab)



Necromicon (SWE) - Peccata Mundi
Hammerheart 2000
8 tracks (41:46)

"Peccata Mundi" is already Necromicon's third album, yet the first one to be heard by me. After the release of their previous album "Sightveiler" quite a number of line-up changes have occurred. (compliments to the promotional department of Hammerheart for making a biography this confusing !! People seem to be

May Result (Yu) - Gorgeous



Symphonies of Evil
CCP Records 2000
10 tracks (44:08)

The roots of this band lie in Yugoslavia or whatever is left of it. They formed back in 1995 and recorded a demo in the same year, which was eventually released as a split tape with Belgium's In Quest in 1997. After that thing grew eerily quiet around May Result, until they were picked up by CCP on the basis of some new material and 2000 finally saw the release of their debut record. I must confess I'm impressed by the symphonic tracks, which have something of a tense and brooding atmosphere. All the more so, since Yugoslavia or any of its former republics are known for their long-standing metal tradition. What I like in particular is that a lot is happening in the music. What I mean is that whenever there is a strong guitar melody line, that doesn't mean that the rest of the instruments are playing strictly rhythm. For instance the keyboards might play an intricate melody all its own, the two somehow reinforcing each other. Add to that the tight, fill laced drums, and you get the dense (in the true sense of the word) music that I was talking about. The strong voice and the odd use of female vocals combined with everything said before make this a surprisingly strong album. None of the 10 tracks stand out over the others in particular. Which leaves us to wonder what May Result from this album. (Joris)

Morgenstern (D) - Feuertaufe
Napalm Records 2000
13 tracks (51:50)

leaving the band without even having entered) On this album the drums are handled by Alzazmon, the former drummer of Dark Funeral, who is supposed to be one of the fastest drummers around. I think it's quite difficult to describe Necromicon's music or the atmosphere it brings forth. The sales-points say that it is "the perfect combination between old-school Swedish death metal and new styled Göteborg death-metal" – though the description doesn't sound entirely adequate to me, I am not able to come up with anything better. Some Unanimated and At The Gates-influences (especially in "Firebreeze") yet over-all the songs are thrasher with a lot of short pointy riffs. It's probably this last aspect that I don't dig too well. Really fast and brutal parts are alternated with slow melodic parts in the Opeth/Katatonia-vein. Main point of criticism are the annoying keyboard sounds that don't match with the rest of the music (the church organ sound!!!). Somehow I have the impression that I do not really comprehend the essence of this album.... Which kind of frustrates me, I can tell you! Maybe this just ain't my thing.... (Rahab)

Night" from Deep Purple, which is amusing (especially the authentic 70's keyboard sound), but in my opinion again not really special. People interested can order the CD at P.O. Box 352, NL-1440 AJ Purmerend, The Netherlands. (Rahab)



Nokturnal Mortum (UKR) - NeChrist Last Episode (licensed from The End Records) 2000
10 tracks (72:00 min)

I was very much impressed by Nokturnal Mortum's previous album "To the Gates of Blasphemous Fire" and if it had been up to me, they would have been featured with an interview on some of these pages. However, the band didn't respond to my requests, unfortunately. The history of this outstanding extreme, yet symphonic Ukrainian black metal band (with two keyboard players!) goes back to the last days of the year '91. Operating under the moniker Suppuration at the time, the band did two releases, then changed the name to Crystalline Darkness, before finally changing it to Nokturnal Mortum. So far the band recorded 2 demos, an EP, and three albums, including "NeChrist" (meaning "Antichrist"). So far I liked each next release better (well I must admit I missed out on the first demo and the Marble Moon EP; however, the latter contains only one track that I haven't heard) and my expectations for "NeChrist" were set pretty high. Especially with the first hearing of the new album I was a little disappointed. After a couple of listening sessions I found out that the production was the main reason for that. The production is less clear and the guitar sound is more down-tuned. Since Nokturnal Mortum's music is quite complex the overall sound didn't really benefit from this. "NeChrist" is definitely more aggressive than its predecessor is and the influences from traditional Ukrainian/Slavic music have grown stronger and are more woven into the songs. The biography states that for the recording of the album there have been instruments used with their origin lying over a thousand years in the past. An entire folk orchestra contributed to the album. The symphonic parts are more dosed, but still present. After quite a number of turns I can say that my first impressions of disappointment were not completely justified – there is a lot to be enjoyed on this album! But due to the increased complexity and rawer sound my ears needed some training to become accustomed. I still prefer "To the Gates of Blasphemous Fire", but tracks like "The Funeral Wind born in Oriana", "Night before the Fight" and quite a few more, which I can't write down since the Cyrillic letters of Nokturnal Mortum's native language are lacking on my computer, are quite brilliant in their balance of complexity and aggression. One element I dislike is the aura of right extremism surrounding the album. Apart from a guy wearing corpse paint (probably Kniaz Vargoth, the band's leading figure), the CD cover depicts a white power symbol, and I guess it is not a complete coincidence that despite the album featuring only 10 real tracks, the CD player indicates there are 88 tracks, 88 being the right wing code for "Hail Hitler" – a rather unpleasant blot on the album. The other tracks are filled with the sounds of nature, by the way. If it should prevent

you from checking out the album, you should decide for yourself, but I think the music is great! (Rahab)

Nocturnal Winds (SF) - Nocturnal winds
Aftermath Music 1999
7 tracks (45:04)

What do you do when you run a label that has a fraction of the size of, say, Nuclear Blast, but you still want to make a decent promotional effort for your bands? You xerox the front of the inlay, glue the tracklisting to the back, kick a copy of the album out of the good old CD writer and with some stamps to go and there you are. Well money is just money. An eye for talent is something different altogether. Just when you thought that the last word in the Gothenburg department had been uttered, Nocturnal Winds come to your attention. Starting out in 1992, they took six years to record two demos, one in 1997 and one in 1998. It's that last one, which landed them a deal with Aftermath music. Musically, the clearly produced melodic metal is perhaps slightly less varied and less virtuosic than Dark Tranquillity in their hey-day, but not even that much. The real surprise is contained in the last track but one, My angel. For this one, they used a part of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" and fully integrated it into the track. An instant classic! It's been out for some time now, and very worthwhile getting your hands on!! (Joris)

Obsidian Gate (D) - The



Nightspectral Voyage
Skaldic Art Productions 2000
6 tracks (59:47)

From what I have seen, read and heard, the circumstances for Obsidian Gate's debut have been pretty close to perfect: recording in the established Blue House Studios (a.o. Falkenbach), a cover-drawing by Swan Art Productions, a CD-booklet that's looked after perfectly with logo's, frames and texts printed in silver. Now the question is, did all these circumstances lead to the perfect debut album, if there exists any such thing. Well of course there are a couple things more that are decisive in matters of the quality of an album, like the music itself for instance. Now Obsidian Gate play a kind of symphonic black metal I happen to be particularly fond of! You might compare their style to those of bands like Limbonic Art and Sirius, though Obsidian Gate do have a different approach and an identity of their own. Their compositions are more complex and I think less "accessible", and not as catchy as those of the aforementioned bands. I think this is a field where there is space for improvement; I don't mean that the band should lose their Cyrillic identity, it's just that some less impressive parts are quite long sometimes and a couple of real killer parts are over before you know it without returning further on in the song. A share of excellent and creative ideas is already present, that's for sure. The band has a very playful, I would almost say innovative, way of composing which makes it a pleasure to listen to the album. The production of the album is not entirely to my taste as I would prefer a more dominant guitar sound; sometimes the guitar nearly completely vanishes under the dozens of keyboard layers. Like Limbonic Art, Obsidian Gate also uses a drum computer

instead of an actual drummer. The band consists of three members: one on keyboards only, one on keyboards and guitar, and one on guitar and vocals. My personal favourite track would be "The Obsidian Eternity and Anguish". In my opinion this song has the best structure with a specific returning theme, making it a great musical journey of nearly twenty minutes with a red thread to guide you through. I wonder what their second effort will be like as I understood there has been some interesting experimenting with the vocals and the whole thing sounded really promising. Read all about what guitarist Marcus had to say elsewhere in this issue. (Rahab)

Obtest (LT) - Tukstantmetis



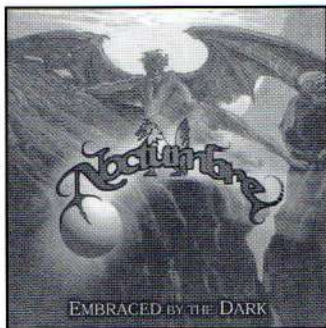
Wolf Musik 1999
7 tracks (36:34)

Obtest hails from Lithuania and should be the first black metal band from that country being founded in '92. The band has released two demos, some live recordings, a 7" with three tracks that are all featured on this album, and this album, which was already released in cassette format in '97. Until late '99 these recordings had only been available in Lithuania and Latvia... and maybe it should have better stayed that way. This release through the German Wolf Musik label doesn't make a very strong impression. I have heard much more interesting stuff coming from the Baltic States, like Zpoan Vtenz and Heresiarrh for example. Obtest's music is not complex, most of the time it's up-tempo and often rather predictable. It's inspired by Norwegian bands, but influences from 80's metal also left their marks. The playing skills of the band aren't that bad. Most striking element in the music are the plural clean vocals – sometimes this turns out good, sometimes it doesn't. The production is of a kind that doesn't really exceed the demo level. The 4-page full colour CD-booklet only offered space for two lyrics – both are written in English. I have the impression that at least a share of the other lyrics is written in Obtest's native tongue. No release that makes my heart tick any faster and I suppose you might expect a band already existing for years to come up with something more enervating. (Rahab)



Old Man's Child (N) - Revelation 666 (The Curse of Damnation)
Century Media 2000
8 tracks (40:12)

This is already Old Man's Child's fourth full-length album, and between the albums usually a lot of changes occur. This was also the case between "Ill-



Noctumbre (NL) - Embraced by the Dark
Steelworks 2000
10 tracks (49:45)

I always have a lot of respect for underground bands that realise that if you want something to happen, you should make it happen yourself. That obviously takes a lot of hard work, sending around promo packages, spreading flyers, etc., etc. In this respect the band Noctumbre made a pretty good impression on me, sending me a promo package that's well looked after and a decent accompanying letter with the request to review their debut CD. The band has a worldwide distribution deal with Steelwork, but for Holland the negotiations were still going on at the moment they sent me their CD. Noctumbre was formed in '96 as a kind of side-project/hobby band, but due to the good response to their demo they decided to make a more permanent band out of Noctumbre. For some band members this led to problems and they had to quit. It was only in '99 that Noctumbre found their up-to-date line up. The band plays a kind of dark metal with influences from sympho rock – some parts sound a little spacy/psychedelic and 70's-influenced. Most striking element are the vocals which are handled by Roy Veenstra (who also plays the flute in Noctumbre) and guitarist Leon Noë. Because both vocalists use their voice in a very different way, this creates an interesting versatility. Noctumbre's music is not really my cup of tea, the music certainly has its (original) moments, but nothing really captures me. In my view, the compositions are somehow not really leading anywhere – a little like a brick wall without cement. The production of the album is not outstanding, but acceptable. The presentation of the CD itself is OK, though I think that including the lyrics in the actual inlay instead of printing them on a separate xeroxed sheet would have been better. By the way, the CD includes a cover of the track "Black

Natured Spiritual Invasion" and this one. Where bandleader Galder "was" Old Man's Child on the previous album, relying on session members (like the famous Gene Hoglan on drums), he has returned with a complete band line up on "Revelation 666". And the line-up includes some former members—even original ones, if I'm not mistaken—like Jardar and Tjodalv (the last mentioned on only four tracks). Though Galder is the only one responsible for the music, I would say that together with a change in line up, the music has also changed. Though there are still a number of thrashy parts, the overall feel is hardly as thrashy as its predecessor; maybe you might even say it's more into the direction of the earlier albums. Throughout the entire album Galder shows that he knows more than one trick when it comes to guitar playing; he and Jardar's skills really are quite good. The compositions are solid, well thought through, not incredibly surprising, and sometimes a little (too) sweet ("Hominis Nocturna's" opening tune for example). Influences from death metal are becoming clearer compared to what I remember from their previous material – Morbid Angel especially came to my mind a couple of times while listening to the album. Also Emperor (is that "Thus Spoke the Night Spirit" I am hearing in "Hominis Nocturna"?), Immortal (in some riffing and the vocals) and Dimmu Borgir (keyboard work) are either influences or suitable resemblances. The production was handled by Peter Tägtgren and is excellent as always. No doubt this album will be a big step forward in the band's career once more, not in the least since, though the parts are quite technical sometimes, the music on "Revelation 666" could be described as "easy-listening black metal". Now that Galder has taken Astennu's seat in Dimmu Borgir it remains to be seen how much time he will have for Old Man's Child, but as he announced, he will continue with the band. (Rahab)



Candlelight Records 2000
3 tracks (19:09)

More pretentious over the top stuff from Peccatum. What's the bloody use of releasing two new tracks and a cover? Was it something like Ihriel: 'Ihsahn, release some new Peccatum stuff, or else I'm not gonna have sex with you?'. Again the music is completely messy and incoherent with some good musical ideas nonetheless. Even Mrs. Ihsahn's singing is almost bearable. It beats their first full length, in my opinion. I like the Priest cover. They've really worked with it, which is something that rarely happens with covers. After listening to the little monster there is but one conclusion: This is narcissism in action, being avant garde for the sake of being avant garde. It's so funny listening to the male voice trying to come across as a practised singer, and at the same time being unable to keep the note for its duration. Something Ihriel is at least capable of, even though she doesn't always. All for the sake of being avant garde I suppose. Her problem is the unnatural, forced vibrato in the voice. Yuck! If they could deflate their respective egos a little, they could actually make some first class avant garde metal. I'm looking forward to that time. (Joris)

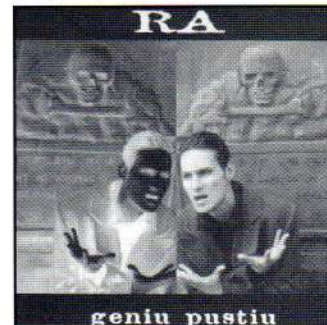


Wounded Love Records 1999
8 tracks (52:00)

Best known for that Björk creature, Iceland has more to offer, fortunately. I've always wondered what it must be like to live there. Judging from Potentiam's music, it must be a dark experience. They started out in 1996 and it took them until 1998 before they released anything. Their home-recorded 10-track demo was distributed in the staggering number of... 50. A year later we're faced with this, their debut album. As far as I can make out, the band are a duo at this moment and the effort is again home recorded. This gives the album a sort of natural feel, but the production is clear enough and not bad in general. The music itself is that kind of dark metal with long instrumental passages, that's an experience as a whole, more than being mere songs. For instance it takes about eleven minutes to reach the end of track 1. It's not particularly fast or grim, but more melodic without an overdose of keyboards. But... wait... is it the fact that I have a cold, or is the acoustic guitar on track 2 seriously out of tune? But the rest of the track is OK. The same goes for track 3 and 4. Track 5 is a bit different with samplified trumpet sounds, and an altogether un-metal-like rhythm base. Fortunately four and a half minutes into the track, it's the familiar black metal screams and music again with some added clean vocals. Track 6 is another keyboard thing. Somehow, I see in my mind's eye some Icelandic guy playing with his keyboard all through the darkness of winter for lack of anything better to do. Could we conclude the absence of a girlfriend from this? The same goes for the closer, 'Flames of Potentiam'. An album to sit down, listen to and experience and not a bad experience it will be. Not something for in between activities. (Joris)

hearing live when in a slightly melancholic mood. Take for instance the lengthy four-minute instrumental, 'The cruel sea'. Once in a while (e.g. track 4) the tempo goes up a little, and combined with the type of riffing, you could say there's a significant amount of black metal in there too. So much for the characterization. Do I like it? The answer is a definite yes! (Joris)

RA (ROM) - Geniu Pustiu



A Codex Gigas Records 2000
11 tracks (36:45)

RA is the side project of Agathodaimon vocalist Vlad (Andrei Rusu) and can be considered as the sequel to his previous project Drusus, which released a 7" through the German Sombre Records. As can be read elsewhere in this edition, I had the pleasant opportunity to meet this charismatic personality and have a chat with him. It was then that he gave me the "Geniu Pustiu" CD. Though the metal content of the album are very low, I must say I really like it a lot and the CD has already made an impressive amount of turns in my CD-player. What does "Geniu Pustiu" have to offer then? I wouldn't dare labelling the music on this CD – it's much too diverse for that. There is one thing that all songs have in common, though – a strong expression of emotion, a wide spectrum ranging from melancholy and love to fear, confusion and obscurity. With each song Vlad and Byron, who also handles the clear vocals on Agathodaimon's latest album "Higher Art of Rebellion" succeed in touching my senses and in my opinion that is exactly what music is all about! Both Andrei and Byron are multi-instrumentalists and listening to the album, you will hear guitar, flute, piano, synths and Byron's very impressive vocals passing by (and he can do it live too!). There's a lot of experimenting on the album – quite a lot of samples and effects, but always used in a way that it suits the songs. It's clear that Andrei and Byron dislike conformity; for example the reprise to the song "La Steaua" is put before the actual song. As already was the case with Drusus, Andrei borrowed a couple of lyrics (which are printed) from the famous Rumanian poet/lyricist Eminescu. Although my Rumanian really is not very good – the way it is used, the metre and melody lines really sound beautiful! An interesting detail is that the song "Inger diform" refers to the same poem ("Lucifer") as the phrase "nemuritor si rece", which is written on the back of "Blacken the Angel" (Agathodaimon's debut). I would really recommend this CD to people whose musical taste isn't restricted to metal exclusively. Unfortunately, I am not able to give a proper reference since I hadn't heard anything quite like this before. Some elements/atmospheres lean towards gothic and darkwave, some other moments it feels like you are watching a theatrical play. A personal favourite of mine is the opening track "Romance's Romance". What more can I say? Just check out this great album!! (Rahab)

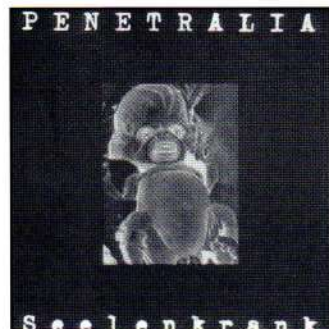
The Ravenous (USA) - Assembled in Blasphemy
Hammerheart Records 2000
10 tracks (31:47)

It takes more than famous people to make a good record. That becomes painfully clear. Although being famous surely helps getting your stuff released.



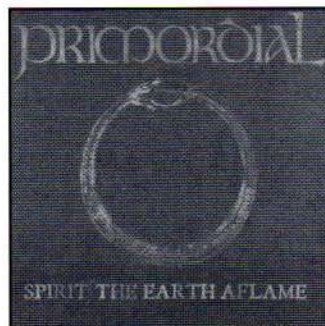
Opera IX - The Black Opera
Avantgarde Music
7 tracks (51:08)

This is already the third Opera IX chapter. It became a concept album about a magic and ritualistic journey into the secrets of occultism. The spiritual warrior taking this trip experiences different feelings on his way, which are expressed in six Acts and the concluding 'Bela Lugosi's Dead'. The music is dominated by powerful guitars that are supported by keys most of the time. The male vocals are kind of standard, but the female singer is awesome! Not the type with the crystal clear throat, but she has this cute Italian accent. Those who are familiar with Evol may understand what I mean. It's too bad she's on the background for the greater part. Except for the last track, which is different (more heavy) from the others, where she screams her lungs out. All together I'd say this is a vigorous yet atmospheric album by these Southern Europeans with some very cool details. Give it a try. *Blessed be the one who dares, if you don't dare you will die in the suffocating void.* (Berry)



Penetralia (D) - Seelenkrank
Last Episode Records 2000
9 tracks (39:59)

'Der Doktor ist bereit für seine Operation'. At least according to the intro. Although we haven't been supplied with lyrics, I have a feeling that this album, is a sort of tongue-in-cheek metal affair. Basic metal riffing, lots of 'my first keyboard' sounds, growly vocals, that's what it seems to be about. The nearly constant headbang speed is a bit in contradiction with the ever present keyboards. Speaking of which, I guess this music is best for jumping around on, or seeing live for that matter. The rest of the album is really more of the same, with the odd sampled bit of German speech intermingled with the music. I'm not sure what the band's intention with the album is, at times they seem to be seriously interested in making music, at other times I think they want to be funny. Why else would you name a track 'Total eclipse of the mind'. But you can never be sure with Germans. For instance, the dance beat in track 8, what's that good for? Same for the 'hidden' drunk noises. The album closes with the 'Dead Girls Boogie', which is really a metal-boogie mixture, I guess. It's a bit weird, this album. (Joris).

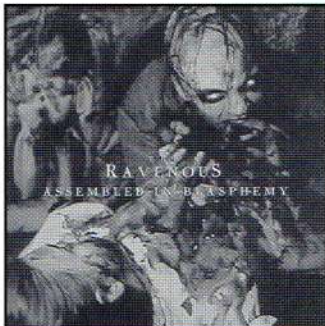


Primordial (IRL) - Spirit the Earth A Flame
Hammerheart Records 2000
8 tracks (51:22)

Without being wanker metal, this album has a doomy feel to it, due in part to the long echoing guitar chords and the use of clean-ish half-spoken vocals now and again. Fortunately, the album features ample growly stuff to keep me happy. So what kind of music is this? In my opinion, it's a kind of pagan/doom metal, without going too folkly or viking. At some points it reminds me of Anathema somewhere in their middle period (say 'The Silent Enigma'), conveying the same type of sad feelings. I reckon it's most suitable for

Potentiam (IS) - Bálsyn

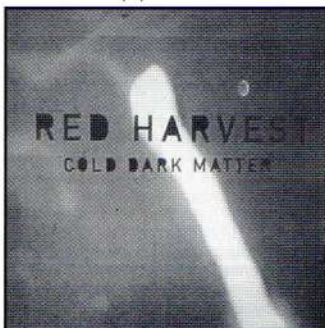
As to the identities of the musicians involved in the making of this album: First off, it's Chris Reifert of Autopsy fame, then there's Dan Lilker of S.O.D. and finally we have Necrophagia's Killjoy who's in everything these days. Helped by two guitarists formerly of Autopsy, they assembled an album full of primitive metal, larded with spoken samples, and gory lyrics. Personally I can't be bothered to listen to the entire album. At half an hour's playing time, that's saying something. Complete and utter yawn. (Joris)



Rebaelliun (BRA) - Bringer of War
Hammerheart Records 2000
4 tracks (16:15)

Brutal death metal is the thing these days. So why not cash in, if the band is slightly slow writing songs, and release a mini. Comprising just three new tracks and a Morbid Angel cover, we, the fans, are not displeased, though. Blasting through track one, which apparently deals with large scale killing, we haven't passed any slow part. The track does contain that high, ear piercing, squeaky guitar work, that seems to be the trade mark of modern day brutal death metal. Track two is more of the same. Still we're not complaining. It deals with more large scale killing, if you're interested. There's nothing much to say about track three, except that it's fast and brutal death metal and deals with large scale killing. Maybe it's just as well that at that point Rebaelliun's contribution to the mini stops, since variety is not the strong point, and at a certain point blood can just not take up any more adrenaline. 'Day of Suffering' is a competently if nothing more executed cover track. That's the mini-review of the mini-CD. (Joris)

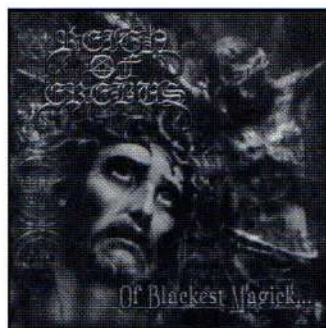
Red Harvest (N) - Cold Dark Matter



Nocturnal Art Productions 2000
9 tracks (38:29)

It is known that not all music that hails from Norway can be described as grim black metal. Here is one example. They've been doing what they do best for eight-odd years now, securing a loyal fan-base. The only trouble is describing what they've been doing. Grim and cold the music surely is. But industrial rather than black metal. Repetitive riffs create a horrifying wall of sound, summoning visions of a bleak post-apocalyptic world. Until track 3 that is. Suddenly we find ourselves back in the 90s with the track's opening fast-riffed black metal, albeit with an industrial edge to it. Of course this could not last. After one minute we're back to the slower industrial bits, already. But it's not the worst track, track 3 is. The following track 'Cold Dark Matter' is again relatively devoid of metal, but nevertheless quite enjoyable, because it does get to you in a way that many of the other tracks don't. 'Fix, Hammer, Fix' is again quite fast-paced, but can't awake any real interest in me. Somehow it's just not my music. So I'm not the most suitable of reviewers perhaps. Fans of the genre should look for a second opinion. (Joris)

Damn, it's the European football championships at the time I write this on TV. And since I hate football, what better to do than put on some music to feed your hatred? Imagine an extremely violent cross-breed between Mysticum and Fear Factory, and it'll probably sound like Red Harvest. I'm not familiar with their previous albums, but you bet I will check them out soon! This album is so very nihilistic, cold and heavy it really surprised me. These Norwegians mix intense black metal with hammering industrial and crunching spookycore, creating a very unique album with a very good production. They make bands like Fear Factory and other "industrial" acts sound like pussies in my opinion. Great album, get this if you're into industrial metal and Mysticum because you'll love it. Fitting artwork as well, which has a very funny surprise. Check it out thoroughly and you'll see what I mean.... (Nervengeist)



Reign of Erebus - Of Blackest Magick...
Blackend 2000
5 tracks (17:20)

Keyboardy black metal is what these people unleash onto us, every so often vaguely reminiscent of a lower voiced Cradle of Filth. Although they portray themselves in the band pics as thoroughly aggressive and evil muthafuckas, including the pointing of guns at the camera, the music is not particularly terrifying. At times takes traditional, aggression enhancing, turns, but the presence of so many female aaahs and keyboard layers, results in something that is mostly harmless. Somehow it's how I think aliens would make earth music. Assuming that their emotional responses are different from ours, all they could do is listen and copy. But without understanding what you are doing, the result will be found lacking. And that's precisely what is wrong with this album. That in turn makes you wonder what kind of Martian bugs hide behind the corpse paint. It's not that there something completely wrong with the ingredients (except maybe the female vocals), it's just the whole that

doesn't impress me. (Joris)

Rivendell (AUS) - The Ancient Glory
Skaldic Art 2000
8 tracks (43:02)

Rivendell is a one-man project from Falagar, who used to operate under the name Fangorn prior to changing the name into Rivendell. The music on 'The Ancient Glory' might be described by the term "folk inspired epic metal" and could be situated somewhere between Summoning and Falkenbach. Though I don't think the music is as ripened yet as the music from the two reference bands, Rivendell definitely is a promising band and a name to watch out for. Simply by considering the age of Falagar (he's not even in his twenties yet!) and the big achievement of composing a complete album, entering the studio and handling all the instruments except for the drums (who are handled by Empyrium's Syre Wolf) himself should give some indication of what we might expect for future times when he's (even) more experienced. And don't get me wrong, we're not dealing with some average release here to start with!

For inspiration Falagar enters the realm of Middle Earth, which should be evidently clear from song titles like "Durin's Halls" and "Aragorn, Son of Arathorn". I wonder what Tolkien would have thought if he would have had the opportunity to listen to bands like Rivendell and Summoning—probably would have wished he had never written the Lord of the Rings at all—to me, however, the epic songs on "The Ancient Pride" and Tolkien's epic stories make quite a good match. Beautiful atmospheres are created by a tasteful pick of keyboard sounds (flutes, choirs, etc) together with the nice acoustic parts. Falagar shows skill in handling both the melodious, narrative, clean vocals and the growls. The album doesn't succeed in keeping my full attention for the entire playing time—a little more variety of riffs would be good for my taste, or simply more songs with the impact of "Durin's Halls"! Then again, I am sure that the real appreciators of epic metal will find everything their heart is longing for on "The Ancient Glory". (Rahab)

Sacriversum (PL) - Beckettia



Serenades Records 2000
10 tracks (41:47)

This one is allegedly the second album of these Polish gothic metallers, although I'm completely ignorant when it comes to their first offering ('Soteria').

It took them 3 years and some line-up changes, but finally here it is, the new album! As part of said line-up changes, they acquired a new female vocalist as well as a new drummer, the latter of which goes by the slightly ridiculous name of Zombie Attack. The album even has a concept, each track being based on of the writings of Samuel Beckett. As for the music, it's mainly up-tempo 'gothic' metal. Which means that they sound a bit like, say, Crematory, including the bone-basic keyboard tunes. Every so often they come up with a nice guitar melody, but that's about as far as it gets. Vocalist's Kate's abilities are quite limited, at least as far as singing is concerned. The keyboards are predictable. And so on. You know what it is, when this genre started it out, it was very new and exciting to add female vocals and keyboards to grunt based metal. However in the last ten years or so, many excellent albums have been released, featuring far greater music than Sacriversum achieve at this point in time. Which makes it all a tad superfluous. This is basically album number thirteen of the dozen, as the saying goes. (Joris)



Satarial (RUS) - The Queen of the Elves' Land
Beyond... Productions 1999
11 tracks (38:39)

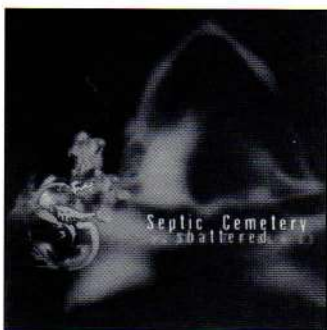
Although already recorded at the end of 1997, it took until 1999 for this album to be released. Hailing from Moscow, the band are clearly very interested in the Middle Ages, either to create an image for themselves or for real. Weaponry, clothes, chain mail: everything is present. Having some exhibitionist female band members and a liking for theatrics makes for some interesting visual bonuses in the booklet. The added CD-ROM track is also quite explicit. Due to the low resolution, this video to the title track has a bit of an impressionist feeling. Recording it, they didn't put any hold on their fantasies, depicting scenes of sword battles, sacrifices, running naked women, castle ruins and more running naked women. But it's time to pay attention to the actual music. That's what albums are really for. The 6 real tracks on the album are intermingled with short keyboard supported Russian sung vocal bits (odes) by Morana. Apart from the last ode, which features some slightly distorted spoken words. Russian sounds quite evil! Based on unpolished single guitar lines, the songs are crammed with all frills known to metalking, violins, flutes and keyboards (the last come courtesy of keyboard player Angel Bust - no, really that's her name!). Completed by mixed death and black metal vocal uttering, the result is a melodic mix which is pleasing to the ear. I didn't know the vikings ever visited Russia?! The music is not too complex, but really enjoyable! (Joris)

Sanctus (USA) - Aeon sky
Metal Blade 2000
8 tracks (51:29)

The fact that Dark Tranquillity's Niklas Sundin was responsible for the art work could give you some clue as to the musical genre. Well not really anyway. I mean the music is melodic, the vocals are high-ish and distorted, but clearly Gothenburg is on the other side of the ocean. The melodies are definitely un-Swedish, there's more

keyboards than we'd ever expect from said Swedish band. At least comparing to the way they used be. The almost ever present keyboard lines in fact remind me of some melodic black metal bands. The guitars are definitely different from that particular style of music, though, but certainly played competently and with apparent confident ease. That's the problem when Americans start to make music along European lines, they mix up the influences. Well, at least in this case, the end result is definitely worthwhile: varied well-wrought melodic extreme metal, all frills such as keyboards, lengthy intros and the unavoidable female aahhs included. There's even some compositional surprises. That gains them at least a hundred points. Even though the record took some time to record, that is to say three months, and two recording studios, the production is not too bad. The funny thing is that in spite of this the band have opted for non-triggered drums, and slightly underproduced guitars for whatever reasons. Two of the tracks ('Odyssey' and 'Thought I saw your wings') are subdivided with spoken blah bits, which suggests they spent some time on the story behind the songs. Unfortunately lyrics like 'I am the god of gods' (now where did I hear that before) don't... eeh... impress me much, as the saying goes. But that might be my fault, since I tend to listen to music for the music and read books for words. The album concludes with a piano-synthesizer extro for which they pressed the 'creaky old vinyl' button on the mixing desk. Oh, how I hate these wanky, useless, instrumental bits. (Joris)

members are related: thrash metal with the necessary touches of heavy metal, manifesting in the beautiful melodic solos, the backing vocals and some of the riffing. Here and there I believe I hear some influences from bands like In Flames and Therion and even some Fear Factory. Although it's not particularly my cup tea, it's OK to listen to a release like this for a change, not in the least since the musicians handle their instruments very well and the production is good too. The lyrics aren't printed in the promo copy I received, but song titles like "Sister", "The Bad Man" and "Cruisin'" make me fear for the worst. The band should be touring Europe during the winter of 2000, so I guess it won't be too long before we'll be able to witness the band live. In the meantime, people who are interested can check out the album. (Rahab)



Septic Cemetary (A) - Shattered
CCP Records 2000
9 tracks (36:15)

These Austrians are in the business of making melodic death metal, but without the great guitar melodies and rhythmic intricacies that the average Scandinavian manages. They have been operating for five or so years, but they have some way to go. Musically it's not un-pleasing, but just not very interesting, a bit superfluous in this oversaturated part of the metal genre. There are no lyrics, but description of the songs in English of an unbelievably appalling quality. The same goes for the label info, where I really have to read the German version in order to be able to understand what is meant. (Joris)

Shape of Despair (SF) - Shades of... Spikefarm 2000
5 tracks (57:00)

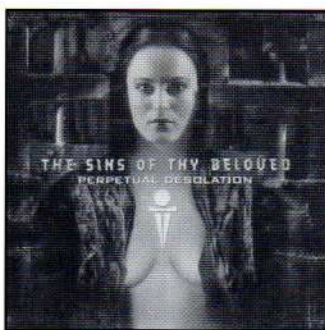
This is my first acquaintance with this Finnish, depressive doom metal band. In their early days the band used to be called Raven (this doesn't ring any bell either) and they used to play death metal. The recording line-up for "Shades of..." contains a number of session members from established underground acts such as Thy Serpent and Barathrum. Four of the long tracks (the shortest one is 8.20 min) are already more or less older material and only one new track is featured on this album. The music played on "Shades of..." is above all slow and atmospheric, and according to the selling points it should appeal to fans of Esoteric and Skepticism... I am not too familiar with those bands, though this album is a whole lot better than what I have heard from Skepticism. It's a kind of musical wall paper—perfect to listen to while doing something else. And I think it's quite relaxing, like new age put to metal or something. Listening to this music, I just have to close my eyes and I imagine myself in vast, desolate landscapes, overwhelmed by nature and the insignificance of daily existence. Personally, the music on this CD reminds me of bands like Norwegian cult, Strid (their EP), Aeternus, to a lesser extent Dimmu Borgir even in their very early days, and Unholy. Expect no musical virtuosity from these guys; everything stays subordinate to the dreamy atmosphere, which is just perfect for the music they play. Next the deep and growling vocals of Azhemin the female vocals of N S, who only sings in sounds (no words), are a dominant factor in determining the atmosphere. If I would have to play this kind of music myself, I would probably fall asleep half way through or lose count (have I played this riff 24 or 25 times now?), but listening to it is much more agreeable. I quite like the album as a matter of fact. Highly recommendable for metal heads who are looking for appropriate music for meditation and for people suffering from insomnia... (and that's not meant in a negative way!) (Rahab)

dramatic, and I think that the use of the violin gives their music something quite special (though I have a kind of a weakness for this instrument—when it is handled properly that is), a kind of folksy touch or something. But I must admit I really like the violin on this album, as it's handled quite well, with a lot of expression in the playing! "Perpetual Desolation" offers 9 long tracks of slurring gothic doom metal and I am one hundred percent sure that no fan of the genre will be disappointed by this release. It's not that innovative to create a risk of estrangement from the genre, but it's not like you will actually have heard this a dozen of times before. My personal favourite is "Nebula Queen", with it's violin solo at the end of the song. Also quite amusing is the very good Metallica cover of "The Thing that Shouldn't Be". The Sins succeeded in making an atmospheric and obscure piece out of this one (again with a violin solo). I think I even prefer this version over the original. By the way, the female vocalist may quit her "sensual" moaning in a number of the tracks as it's only annoying. I guess it will turn more CD players off than metal fans on (I should hope so at least!) (Rahab)



Sirius (P) - Aeons Of Magick
Nocturnal Art Productions 2000
7 tracks (47:07)

After the release of their magnificent demo 'The Eclipse' two years ago, my expectations for the full-length were very high. A few months before the official release of the album 'Aeons Of Magick' I heard part of a track and this didn't get me enthusiastic at all. On the contrary! I didn't like what I heard and I was afraid another good band was not able to make a complete album which was of the same quality as the demo. How wrong could I be... Although the first impression wasn't that positive I decided to buy the CD anyway. And I'm very glad I did! Over 45 minutes of black art is to be found here. The keyboards are an extremely important part of the music and I must say that the man behind this instrument is a gifted person. Lots of bombastic and complex melodies are combined with fast black metal riffs and screaming vocals. The band which would come closest to making this kind of music is probably older Emperor, only this album is much better produced. Not at all a disappointment to me and surely one of the better black metal releases of this year so far. (Berry)



The Sins of Thy Beloved (N) - Perpetual Desolation
Napalm Records 2000
9 tracks (62:12)

Napalm Records seems to have set out a new promotional campaign entitled "Quest for Breasts" or something, for which the bands who are currently releasing an album have to come up with an appropriate CD cover. Not all covers are equally revealing, but "Perpetual Desolation" can certainly be considered part of the circus as it sells, apparently. This is the second album of The Sins of Thy Beloved and their first has sold the incredible amount of over thirty five thousand copies! I have heard it and for what I remember I can't say I was too impressed, but gothic metal was being hyped big time the moment it was released. "Perpetual Desolation" is quite a lot better—still the comparisons to (early) Theatre of Tragedy, Trial of Tears, Within Temptation and other girlriffed metal bands are clear, yet less obvious than before. I actually daresay that The Sins... are heading in a more individual direction. The music is not as sweet as from the other bands I mentioned, though not as over-the-top

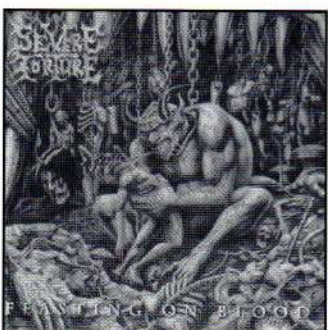
Source of Tide (N) - Ruins of Beauty Candlelight 2000
8 tracks (46:35)

A train usually consists of several parts. The first part is called the locomotive and does the actual work. The rest is just being pulled along. Source of Tide belongs to this rest and not even to the first coach. The locomotive in this train is called Emperor. Singer/guitarist Ihsahn found himself a wife, Ihriel. Ihriel now, had musical aspirations of her own. Presumably after some trouble she convinced dear husband to help a bit and Peccatum was born. Pulled along by Emperor's fame this led to Candlelight releasing a Peccatum album. Filled with pretentious music, this album received mixed reactions. On the album Ihriel's brother Lord PZ is also enjoying the ride. Lord PZ now, has



Scarriot (N) - Deathforlorn Demolition 2000
8 tracks (36:26)

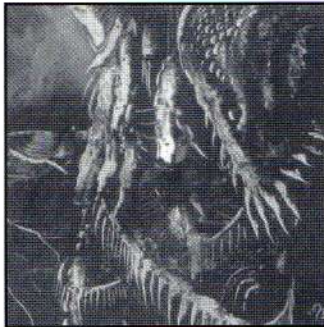
Scarriot are a band consisting of members with quite an impressive Curriculum Vitae. Guitarist Olaisen, who seems to be the mastermind of the band since he is credited for the songwriting, also plays in the band Blood Red Throne. (which is unknown to me), but he also used to be the live guitarist in Satyricon. Drummer Anders Kobro also handles the drums in In The Woods and in Carpathian Forest. Vocalist Ronni Thorsen is not an unfamiliar face in the metal scene either, also handling the vocals in Trail of Tears. In this album he uses both a deep grunt as well as a clear voice. The band more or less started out in late '97, but only has the recording line up since 1999. The music Scarriot plays doesn't have that much in common with the music from the bands to which the band



Severe Torture (NL) - Feasting on Blood The Plague 2000
10 tracks (33:51)

Featuring half the Centurian line-up, Severe Torture epitomise their intentions in their band name. If you like wearing velvety/lacy/gothic clothes and play with your little sister's make-up box, when not with yourself, I guess you'd better skip this album. Only three years old, Severe Torture play brutal death metal in the best of Cannibal Corpse veins. Melody: none. Subtlety: none. Wanker coefficient: zero. Vocals: lower than low. Aggression: maximum. It's good to see the Dutch death metal scene thriving so well. Centurian and Virulent being other names to watch out for. The track-to-track difference is minimal, but who gives a fuck. Who cares if the track is called Feces for Jesus or Butchery of the Soul? It's brutal, it's well played, that's what counts. (Joris)

a band of his own: the second coach, a.k.a. Source of Tide. Mind you, the album is not bad. It's just rather... mediocre. Especially because of the vocals it sounds like Arcturus on a particularly uninspired day. Lord PZ's vocals are not particularly stunning, which also goes for the performances of the rest of the band. It makes you think how band signings work. There is so much talent out there. Bands that maybe don't happen to know the right people, but just play excellent, innovative music. And don't get signed. What a cruel world this is. I'll say it once more, it's not a bad album, just uninspired and saltless. I guess they think much more highly of themselves, radiating an amount of pretentiousness just short of Peccatum. (Joris)



Thalarion (SLO) - Four elements mysterium
Mighty Music 2000
9 tracks (46:12)

Let me start by saying that I absolutely don't like the so-called gothic metal like Within Temptation, After Forever, The Sins of thy Beloved, Tristania and countless other bands. And having said this, I named the most important musical references. Slovakian Thalarion release with "Four elements mysterium" their second album. I'm not familiar with their earlier work, but since I don't really like this one, I'm not bothering to find out. Maybe it's a bit unfair to slack this off, but it's just that the gothic metal scene is so full of bands right now, that I really don't see what Thalarion has to offer to it. The music isn't bad, it's quite well executed, but it's just incredibly boring. Maybe it's just me and my prejudice against gothic metal, but still I think that for gothic metal lovers there's so much more interesting bands around. There's very little variation between the songs. You have your keyboardmelodies, female vocals (although not outstanding, they're quite okay) deathgrunts, screams and romantic melodies and that's about it. They use some exotic instruments like an "old Slovak pipe" and "Chinese wind" (whatever that may be, maybe it's what you get when you had too much spicy Oriental food...) but it's all of no avail. They might be one of the leading bands of the Slovakian scene, like it says in the bio, but there's a lot more needed to be a leading band in the gothic metal scene as a whole. Something positive to end with: I really like the cover artwork. Too bad for Thalarion it doesn't help them.... (Nervengeist)



Thanatos (NL) - Realm of Ecstasy
Hammerheart 2000
13 tracks (52:34)

Originally released in 1992, our friends at Hammerheart have decided the time was right for the rebirth of this classic Dutch metal band, starting with the rerelease of their 'Realm of Ecstasy' album enhanced by the tracks from their 1989 'Omnicoitor' demo. It's funny how you can hear the album being on the borderline between thrash and death metal. Fast paced thrash riffing, as opposed to the more low frequency rumblings of death metal. But growling vocals all the same. It seems that with modern day brutal death metal things have come full circle. Not that I want to compare this album to the modern day Cryptosies and Kriptions of this world. It's just that the riffing seems to go up a little in frequency again nowadays. But it's surprising how well this album has stood the test of time. It doesn't seem that old fashioned, as opposed to true Norwegian black metal (say 8 years old) and Swedish death metal (say 10 years) old. The lifetime of a musical genre is something intriguing in itself. Here I am calling music dating from less than a decade ago 'old-fashioned'. Just imagine talking about the fifth symphony ten years after Beethoven composed it, and saying, 'Ah well, that old shit, that's not exactly true anymore, now is it?'. Anyway, I'm straying from the track. As to this album, I guess good riffing is good riffing and therefore timeless. The demo on the other hand sounds much more dated, especially due to the thrash vocals. So this is a good opportunity to check this Dutch band out, if you missed them the first time around. (Joris)



Theory in Practice (S) - The Armageddon Theories
Listenable Records 2000
8 tracks (38:02)

This album's recording dates back to the autumn of 1998 already, but hey, we're not too lazy to review everything we receive if not too much off-topic. That, this CD is surely not. Able melodic metal is the appropriate sub category. But not of the overly sweet and happy kind. The drummer is also vocalist. Apart from being a trifle difficult live, in my view a better voice wouldn't harm a bit. The CD is centered around the middle part with the same title as the entire album, consisting of five tracks. I guess there's a story involved. As far as I can find out from the lyrics not a particularly exciting one. Anyway, I tend to prefer a good book if I want to hear stories. At certain moments these guys have really understood it. It being the making of truly good music. The sparing but functional use of keyboards, the unexpected musical changes, more

than competent guitar work, rhythmically interesting riffs, all adds to a pleasurable and refreshing listening experience. However, at certain times they fail to convince a little, so a bit of consistency and reliability is missing. I don't have the band's history available at the moment of writing, but I wouldn't be surprised if this is their first full-length effort. Certainly, the band holds a promise for the future (Joris)

Thou Shalt Suffer (N) - Somnium
Candlelight 2000

For those who have been hitherto unfamiliar with Thou Shalt Suffer, I shall give a brief introduction by glancing briefly at the band's history. Previous to the founding of Emperor in 1991, Ihsahn and Samoth were involved in the dark death/black band Thou Shalt Suffer, which also featured Ildjarn, Thorbjørn and Ronny. They produced one demo-tape, 'Into the Woods of Belial', and a 7" ep, 'Open the Mysteries to Your Creation'. Because these releases are hard to get, Samoth's label Nocturnal Art has compressed them on the format of one cd, along with some previously unreleased material (actually dredged up 4-track recordings). An amusing detail to add is that, since the mastertape of the 7" ep had mysteriously disappeared from the face of this earth, the recordings for this release are taken directly from vinyl. Well, as you all know, Emperor became Ihsahn and Samoth's principal activity, but Ihsahn reserved Thou Shalt Suffer for his other ambitions. And what they are exactly is demonstrated by Somnium. Aside from a few incidental vocals, which I suppose are samples, Somnium has the synthesizer as its sole instrument. Ihsahn has availed himself especially of the sounds of the string and the horn sections. As the label notifies, the music should not be labelled as classical music, mainly on account of its many divergences from conventional rules, and the use of modern technology (i.e. synthesizers and computers). Rather it derives structures from it. The forte of Somnium, however, is not to what extent Ihsahn is able to come within reach of classical music or anything, but rather his personal approach of translating emotions through this medium of music. I do think we can actually hear Ihsahn's mind has been at work, which could be worthy of note for those who are interested in the dark and complex dimensions of Ihsahn's other hobbies such as Emperor and Peccatum. But beware: although some structures would not have been out of place in a metal composition, mainly owing to menacing repetitions, Ihsahn prefers to achieve this effect by restraining them, (and to use a far-fetched simile: as though Cerberus' roaring rage is prevented only by his fetters). Do not expect too much gothic pomp. For me the most intriguing parts are the more byzantine parts, where they are rich of dark struggling emotions. The best instance is to be found in Somnium no.3: the succession of these moments accumulates into magnificent counteractions and attempts to reconcile them. And the strongly evocative piano of Somnium no.4, which haunting quality is deepened by a brief intermittence of ethereal vocals, reminding the listener how delicate, subtle and graceful death can be. What a shame though the piano's sound is not produced by an authentic grand piano but synthesised by modern technology. And, in general, a real-life orchestra would greatly contribute to the dynamic quality, and the authenticity of the set of colours, but unfortunately that has been no option. Now then, I would be greatly surprised if Somnium turned out to be a roaring success and enter the disco hit charts, but I warrant. Unlike junk-food music, this unique piece has to grow on you in order to be most rewarding (Midhir).

Throes of Dawn (SF) - Binding of the Spirit
Wounded Love Records 2000
8 tracks (46:04)

If I should believe the info sheet that came with the promo of Throes of Dawn's latest album, this band has had some excellent response in a number of major magazines and I really wonder why. Not that it's incredibly bad what these Fins are doing here, but in my opinion it's just nothing special, nothing I haven't heard a million times before. The songs are rather repetitive and not that complex. Throes of Dawn play a slow kind of dark metal with black metal vocals and some dreamy acoustic parts, leaving no big impression, neither positive nor negative, and I guess that's one of the deadliest things that can be said about a record. Easy listening music without much impact. The songs have something epic and remind me a little of Borknagar, while never reaching the level of that band though, and sometimes Primordial as well. The production of this album is good and the musicians aren't bad either. It seems like most of the ingredients are there, but in my opinion, the final result isn't. (Rahab)



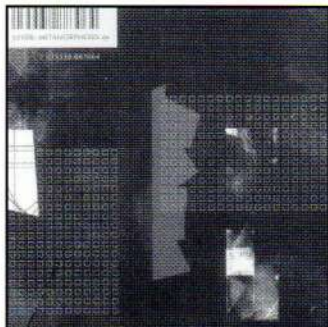
Throne of Chaos (SF) - Menace and Prayer
Spikefarm Records 2000
8 tracks (38:42)

Happy Happy Joy Joy! Galloping high speed heavy metal also known as melodic death. Due to Scandinavia's extensive high school musical education, coupled with the lack of sunshine, the region has spawned many a technically competent metal band. And Throne of Chaos are no exception. Maybe their guitar player is slightly less excellent than Children of Bodom's Alexei Laiho, but he's not at all bad. Speaking of which, Throne of Chaos' music bears more than a passing resemblance to CoB's. Up-tempo to outright fast, very melodic, somehow recognisably Finnish, it's got it all. Having said all this, I cannot help noticing that somewhere there's a bit of inspiration missing to make this truly good. To my taste everything is just a little too sweet and polished. The lyrics are nothing out of the ordinary, but the cover is a nice drawing featuring a three-eyed guy getting his throat and wrists slit as a centerpiece. Anyway, I don't think Spikefarm's sublabel made a bad choice picking up the band. If they let go a bit more next time, and don't play safe, they might ascend to further heights. (Joris)

Thyrifing (N) - Urkraft
Hammerheart 2000
12 tracks (60:06)

Viking metallers Thyrifing are back with yet another album, Urkraft. Although I'm convinced that this album is

not the epitome of primordial powers, once again it's not bad. This time around, they've even introduced some clean sung vocals, which adds to the strong melody lines if not to power and aggression. Especially in the title track this gives the music something of a classic heavy metal feel. Perhaps that's why they included "Over the hills and far away" as a bonus. In a sense it's not obvious why a musical genre that associates with berzerking Vikings and Nordic battles, is so melodic and sweet, rather than harsh and chilly. But that aside, this is again a fine album, especially in the more melodic and up-tempo parts. Actually it's pretty much in the vein of Thyrfing's previous offerings. Even though at least to me they haven't reached that virtually unreachable pinnacle of utter greatness, it does look like they're here to stay. (Joris)



technotrack which has nothing to do with metal. After that is "Gnosis", the highlight of the CD. Strange effects, semi-acoustic guitar and a triphop rhythm accompany Garm's outstanding vocals. With "Limbo central" Ulver reveal what the upcoming album will be like. Drum 'n bass influences and weird ambient parts. The last track is "Of wolves & withdrawal", a dark ambient soundscape. All this didn't come as a surprise to me, knowing a little bit what to expect. I must say it all turned out really good, even though it has nothing to do with metal. Personally I don't really see that as a negative thing, but people who only dig their old material and strictly-metalheads should steer clear of this one. Broadminded people with an interest for the weird and artistic, hesitate no further! (Nervengeist)



Vader (PL) - Litany
Metal Blade Records 2000
11 tracks (30:52)

Talking about long-running death metal bands, Vader is one name that cannot be overlooked. Since the release of their first demo back in 1989, Vader have pleased the fans' ears for over a decade now. A history which has not been without trouble: Originally signed to Earache, the guys from Poland were dropped in 1994. Since then many people have released Vader stuff, among which Repulse and System Shock. Until the almighty Metal Blade picked them up in 1998. One year later this led to the recording of yet another Vader offering.

The album is one true to their trademark: tight riffing, even tighter drumming and gallons of aggression. Where other bands grow soft with years, Vader still help to define the word brutality. The funny thing about this album is that in the beginning the drums sound slightly weird. A bit Fear Factor-esque. Gradually over the album the drum sound is turned back a bit and at the end it sounds quite normal again. Changing your sound during the album is not something you'd expect of such an experienced band. Not that it matters much. This album guarantees a 30 minute adrenaline kick. It's just a pity that it has to end so soon. As usual the album will be backed up by insane amounts of live gigs, so catch them if you can. (Joris)

Various Artists - Deathophobia Vol. II
Earth A.D. Records 2000
17 tracks (75:37) + 17 tracks (75:28) + 17 tracks (75:24)

How about that for value for money (USD 13 incl. P&P)! Three CDs packed to the brim with tracks, in book format. Fiftyone tracks in total by bands from 17 different countries, this seems to be about as good as it gets if you want a flavour of the current state of affairs in the underground. The package includes a booklet, giving details of all the bands featured and their labels. The only thing they omitted is the track titles. So this review will have to do without. I'll give a short-short review for each track. Here we go: Bonehouse: tight up-tempo neo-thrash track with some hardcore screams. The follower (Fatal Embrace from Germany) is thrash in a more classical way, suitable to head back to the 80s. Italy's Glacial Fear do more of the thrash slash middle period Sepultura thing, with some melodic stuff

thrown in for good measure, and a modern production. Demolition didn't quite make it out of the 80s either, although they sound more like Bay Area stuff with a tea spoon of Annihilator than like Kreator. Cruention from France sound more modern, if only a little, thrash meets black metal, with a bit of keyboard in the background. The first band that manages to get my attention is Karkadan from Germany. They call their music black heavy metal, which seems an apt description to me, although there's none of the tight trouser stuff. Just varied if not very complicated melodic black metal. Worth checking out! Impacto Fecal (Spain) is a bit odd, they have a grindcore logo, a grind core production, but the track is much longer than the usual two odd grindcore minutes and much more varied. A sort of Necroticism Carcass meets Autopsy. Nomad combine death metal vocals and song structure with buzzing black metal guitars. Not too bad. Eadwulf from the Netherlands start out melodically, but continue with basic early 90s black metal, Countess being the name that comes to mind. About a decade too late I'd say. Tonka plays some basic metal too, which doesn't impress me. Fairlight say they are on a US Megadeth compilation. The unreleased track has some Dream Theatery keys and cymbal-frilly drums, but distorted vocals and fairly uninspired guitars. Could be on their way to being good. Shaark on the other hand play full speed ahead thrash and bore me to death. Aeneas from Slovakia, play something a bit symphonic, but quite weak. As is the production. Dispatched play Swedish neo thrash, but include a keyboard layer. Quite up-tempo, but a bit unpolished. Gutted play brutal American style death metal, but hail from Hungary. Evil Omen play something too basic and unfinished for me. Germany's Wotanskrieger make some true viking stuff about brave heroes and the like. Whatever. That's it for CD 1. CD 2 starts strongly, with the German band Endart. The track featured is a well-produced melodic death thrash one with a clean part in the middle. The subsequent track is more or less in the same vein, but with a more Scandinavian feel to it, which is not too surprising if you consider the fact that Embittered are from Denmark. Platanus have played avantgarde thrash metal since '92 according to themselves. I think even then this was not too avant garde. Another old band is Agathocles from Belgium and also their grindcore sounds slightly dated. Sometimes the order of tracks is very odd. For instance at this moment I am presented with a pure German heavy metal track by Wizzard. Casket claim to be superior to all. I beg to differ, since their death metal track is not particularly impressive in the year 2000. After which we return to heavy metal regions, this time courtesy of Holland's Battle Heart and including high pitched clean vocals, guaranteed for success in Germany and Japan. E605 presents us with an almost but not quite completely uninteresting death metal/rock track. Although hailing from Poland, Ethelyn play decent Norwegian style grim black metal. Antimonium, again from France, fail to please me with their unsophisticated hardcore/thrash track. I am slowly falling asleep at this point... only to be awakened by a little black gem of purest brilliance by Dutch top symphonic black metallers Ordo Draconis. It's taken from the 'In Speculis Noctis' CDemo, which counts as a self financed miniCD rather than a mere demo in my book. Folkly sounds introduce Czech Forgotten Silence's death-with-an-avant-garde-twist contribution. What is it with these Eastern Europeans, that makes them assume stupid nicknames? Which self-respecting guitarist would name himself after Biggles, the pilot hero of a series of children's books? It's drowsing time again with the death metal track by Hagridden. Exmortem prove that fast brutal death metal can come out of Denmark too, while a decent melodic black metal track is offered by Poland's Lithianian. A long spoken intro leads to a slightly rambling death metal track by Naissant. A Little Beauty is one of those one-man-plus-drum-machine bands,

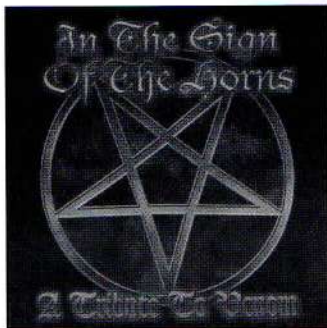
which in this case fail to convince. Thus ends the second CD. Devastation have the honour of opening the last CD and do so with a mid tempo death metal track. Entrails from the Czech republic give us a death metal track with a melodic edge and an odd but not bad guitar sound. Not bad. Once more we head back for the good ole 80s with Blood Red Angel's thrash metal track. German accent included. Under the strange moniker of Ysyssy comes the next track, this time with a French accent. It features some good riffs, but is somewhat incoherent in its entirety. In Quest's track features some guitar melody line carried bits as well as thrasher parts. Hellfire have released three demos so far and will continue to be a demo band for some time, judging from this track. My patience is running out a little by this time. Blackend is has clearly sung thrashy track. At least Inhumate from France have the decency to have fast parts. Simple music is always better when it's played fast. One genre we missed so far is that of Finnish melodic metal. This is overcome by Midnight Sun, who take their heavy metal influence a bit further than usual, which makes comparisons with German heavy metal inevitable. Nenia C is a one woman thing from Sweden, vocally reminiscent of Crisis, but utterly uninteresting. Slow heavy doom metal is what NPC do, again eliciting memories of former times. Next is an up-tempo thrashy groovy metal track courtesy of Psychotron. A formerly one man project by the name of 4chambers presents a track with vocals that are more spoken than sung. More brutal death/grind, this time from Belgium by Aborted and from Germany by Autumn Nostrum. More fast thrash on the next track by Caress with horrible vocals this time. Atargatis end this lengthy compilation with a sentimentalist melodic metal track that's not particularly good, especially in the vocal section.

That's all folks. I tried to give every track at least something of a review. I must say that my enthusiasm has chilled somewhat. This compilation focusses too much on old music in my opinion. Most of the bands have either failed to evolve or are retroing. I'm sure there is a lot of innovative talent or at least talent out there, but somehow that failed to reach this compilation. It has its moments, but taking all the decent tracks, one CD would have been ample to fit them all. I'm a bit disappointed. (Joris)

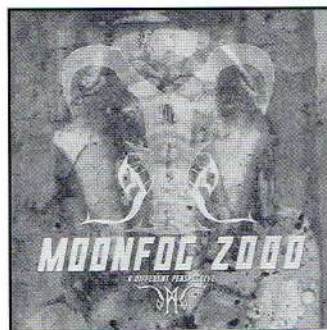


Various Artists - In the Sign of the Horns, a Tribute to Venom
Dwell Records 2000
15 tracks (53:58)

This is, what, the one thousandth Venom tribute CD? In fact the selling points of this album almost all relate to the masters themselves rather than the featured bands. Some of them are actually quite well-known, like Mörk Gryning or Ritual Carnage. The



problem is that none of the bands seems to have been particularly inspired on the day they recorded the cover. In fact, in my opinion the best tracks are those that stay closest to the original. Although I know a number of excellent Venom covers (Sentenced's 'The Trooper', Hypocrisy's 'Black Metal' and Kreator's 'Witching Hour' to name a few), these bands fail miserably. (Joris)



Various Artists - Moonfog 2000 A different perspective (2CD)
Moonfog Productions 2000
8 tracks (29:36) + 8 tracks (49:30)

The first of this 2CD consists of new and unreleased material accompanied by some liner notes while the second is compiled by the fans. Apart from being nice to the fans, it's also a good marketing trick. OK, let's start with the first CD, opened by the 'Electric Renaissance' intro by Satyricon on which Satyr displays his love for industrial music. The combination of such names as Pantera's Phil Anselmo and Darkthrone's Fenriz seems quite strange, but has become reality in Eibon. The track featured on the album was partly recorded in the US, partly in Oslo and is sortof thrashy with a spoonful of industrial and clearly recorded for the love of playing. Thorns' leading man Krupp was put back on the music-making track by Satyr (see the Satyricon interview in this issue). And his influence seems obvious on the seriously modernized sound. A forthcoming full-length is said to feature Hellhammer on drums. I'm curious! Gehenna seem to diverge further and further from their semi-melodic black metal roots. This new track is more death metal influenced than ever. It's guaranteed to get your head moving. Darkthrone is as true as ever. Their muddy sound comes courtesy of Necrohell studios this time. It is a new track though, so fans whip out the wallet! Thorns get another go at displaying their talents on track 6. 'You that mingle may' is an old track, recorded with the help of Fenriz and Satyr and deals with some kind of weird recipe. Don't try this at home. Dance beats and strange noises dominate Dødheimsgard's offering. Hopefully, they speak true when claiming that future material will not sound like this. It's terrible to my metal ears. The closer of the first CD is very far from the metal genre indeed. It's a minimalistic contribution by Satyr Wongraven and Espen Enger from Pårønsoda. The booklet says I'm not to judge this track if I don't have the knowledge to do so. They state they learned by making it, so let's be happy for them. And hope they got it over with and out of their system. On to the second CD. Rather than a Moonfog greatest hits, most tracks are from the bands' latest offerings. A good way to bring some recent albums to the attention again for those that might have missed them the first time around.

I guess I don't have to do much in the sense of reviewing. No really unexpected choices here. Just maybe the fact that there's two tracks by Dødheimsgard and two off the Thorns vs. Emperor album. The oldest track and a true classic is 'Mother North'. (Joris)

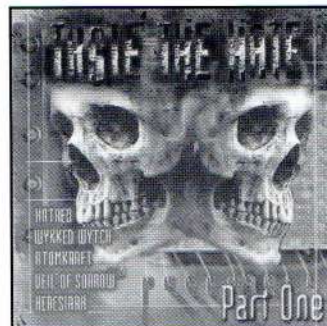


Various Artists - Scream Forth Blasphemy, a Tribute to Morbid Angel
Dwell Records 2000
15 tracks (58:04)

This 'Tribute to...' fad shows no signs of fading yet. Some bands indeed have several tribute albums dedicated to them. Now it's the turn of one of the longest lasting and most influential death metal bands that ever existed. In other words: Morbid Angel. The bands performing include Centurian, Angel Corpse and Coffin Texts and a dozen more. As most of the featured bands are death metal bands, I guess M.A. have been a big influence on their musical development especially for those that actually hail from Tampa. Which immediately brings us to the question of why to release such albums. I mean cover tunes are very nice to play live. And of course they are more than that if they reinterpret the original or add something new. Although many of the tracks on the album are extremely well executed, they are just death metal covers of death metal songs. I mean there is no creative effort involved on the part of the bands. All that was done long ago by a certain Trey Azagthoth and his fellow band members. In conclusion, in my opinion, these albums are nothing but some easy cash for label and bands alike. (Joris)

Various Artists - The Silent Shining Moongleam 2000
14 tracks (70:35)

The Silent Shining is an initiative of my fellow band member Arco, who runs the quality underground distribution service Moongleam. Underground compilation tapes are numerous, but this is the first time I see an underground compilation CD-R. Note that this is not any official label release! The Silent Shining offers the opportunity to 14 promising underground acts to spread their word/music. Some of the bands featured on the compilation CD have received a record deal in the meantime, like Meads of Asphodel (Supernal Music), Astray (Beyond... Prod), Anthropolatri (Chanteloup Creations), Immemorial (Blackend) and Ordo Draconis (Skaldic Art Productions). I guess that for most of the other bands it will only be a matter of time before they receive a decent record deal. I mean I can hardly imagine that excellent bands like Immemorial, Secrets of the Moon, Ophidian and Dweorgsblood will stay unsigned much longer. The quality of the recordings is generally good even though some of the tracks at the end of the CD have a production that is not so good, but nothing that should prevent you from listening to the CD. The CD-R comes with a pro-printed booklet and I have seen many official releases with booklets looking less good! There are some small mistakes in the finish, just small things, but all in all I think it's a good initiative, that deserves following. (When can we expect part 2?) You can order your copy at: Gloriantplantsoen 30, NL-2805 XB Gouda, The Netherlands. I guess 7 US\$ (8 US\$ outside Europe) should do the trick. (Rahab)



Various Artists - Taste the Hate, part I Demolition Records 2000
10 tracks (50:47)

Demolition present their bands on this 10 track sampler. At 2 songs per band, this means 5 of them are on the album. First off, a track (no track listing), by Hatred (see review of their album above). Even though I wouldn't dub this track brutal thrash/death, it's up-tempo and therefore alright even if that's all it is. Their other offering (track 6) features off-key singing and some black metal screams as well as growly death vocals. In both tracks the neoclassical guitar bits stand out over the rest of the music, in terms of playmanship. Although, since it's a tad more up-tempo, I like it more than the album. The next track is the opener of the first full-length album by Wykked Wytch, while track 7 is track 9 on said album. I guess the review of the album says enough. Since track three (and also 8) sound like hopelessly outdated mediocre heavy metal, I'm guessing we're dealing with Atomkraft, the English band that at one time supplied a replacement for Venom's Cronos, in the shape of Tony Dolan. In my eyes just as hopeless is track 4, probably by Veil of Sorrow. It's that overly dramatic kind of overly dramatic melodic sentimental music, that is henceforth to be known as wanker metal. Even though at times I like emotional music quite a bit, I prefer say early 90s doom metal over this retro-Floyd nonsense. Their other track (#9) features more up-tempo bits. Even in the genre of wanker metal Anathema are the better choice. At least they understand true emotion. Demolition are not very consistent in their signings. This is obvious for instance from track 5 and 10. Not only are Heresiarch from Latvia, their music is well-wrought, folky, elven voiced melodic black metal which I find rather brilliant. (Joris)



Vesperian Sorrow (USA) - Beyond The Cursed Eclipse Displeased Records 2000
9 tracks (57:24)

Finally! It's been a long time since I was really impressed by a band's debut, but this one surely makes me shiver! Completely unprepared I put this cd in my stereo, not knowing that within minutes my heart will pound a lot faster. After listening to the whole album I just have to play it again, and again... Extreme black metal combined with beautiful keyboards, excellent guitarwork and great mean vocals. This is not the simple, standard stuff, but real music that will show you new elements each time you listen to it. I've heard this band being compared to the old Dimmu Borgir a few times and that may be true atmospherically speaking, but Vesperian Sorrow definitely have their own original style. What surprised me

even more about this band is that they are from Texas. Not really a place known for it's supreme black art, now is it?

This album topped my list of 1999 favourites. So, if you are into fast, aggressive, yet atmospheric and emotional black metal, you should not live a day longer without this release. (Berry)



Viking Crown (USA) - Unorthodox steps of ritual Baphomet Records / Hammerheart 1999
8 tracks (24:50)

Oh dear... what's this then?? Anton Crowley (aka Phil Anselmo from Pantera) from Necrophagia digging up some old demo recordings from 1994. Performing black metal some people say black metal should be like. Raw, extremely unpolished, fast, dirty with a disgusting sound. Sounding almost worse than Darkthrone's ugliest albums. It does contain some functional keyboards, but they drown in the sound. The (artificial) drums hammer like crazy, Phil eh sorry Anton screams his guts out and the string section is truly maniacal with some great riffs. Sometimes it reminds me a bit of Mysticum with retro-thrash influences. You'll never guess what the song titles are....that's right! Here are some: "Satan ruler of earth", "Blaspheme" and "The Judas goat". Well, if all this is what you're looking for then go ahead! Don't say I didn't warn you, because it truly is very, very dirty and raw. (Nervengeist)



Vilkates - Apocalyptic Millennium Last Episode Productions 2000
8 tracks (36:04)

Their label hasn't been particularly helpful in supplying us with useful information: The package we received consisted solely of the actual CD and one inlay leaf with a track listing on the back and a picture of a misty valley, a castle and some bolts of lightning. So let's concentrate on the music, since there is not much more to tell. It starts out quite doomy, only to break suddenly into characteristic Scandinavian black metal. Some supporting keyboards are featured as well, but nothing out of the ordinary. The drums sound a bit strange, a bit muffled. Clear and sharp would be far more suited, since the music is clearly composed to get the adrenaline going. Track 3, 'Transitoriness' starts again a bit slower, and more keyboardy. So I guess the variation is there. The only disadvantage is that rarely ever anything happens that is not predictable. I don't pretend to be the world's biggest expert on black metal, but I remember hearing these

compositional variations before. 'Nuclear death' starts with a spoken bit, reminiscent of the first Mörk Gyrning album, but with keys instead of acoustic guitar. The next track is called 'Vilkates - part II', which suggests there was a part I as well, from which I can deduce that this is not their first album. But enough for the Sherlock Holmes imitation... In fact the track features a mixture of clean guitar parts with clean vocals and more half-spoken words mixed with parts which feature distorted guitars and vocals. Which in itself is quite OK. But after 4 minutes nothing more has happened, which is a shame. The remaining three tracks offer more of the same; well performed but unimaginative melodic black metal. (Joris)



Vindsval (L) – Imperium Grottesque
Skaldic Art Productions 2000
10 tracks (39:13)

It doesn't happen that often that I am as impressed by a debut album as was the case with Vindsval's 'Imperium Grottesque'. I even daresay that in general, I am hardly ever as impressed by an album as by this one. Though the band had released this CD themselves before signing to Skaldic Art, they came entirely out of the blue for me. It's just incredible what these guys succeeded in doing with only three days of studio time – I can't even imagine what they will come up with when they enter again for a decent amount of days. It only happens every one or two years that I hear a debut band with a style entirely of their own, as was the case with Limbonic Art for example. Of course you might recognise elements from other bands; they use distorted guitars and keyboards, like most bands with their roots in the symphonic dark/black metal genre, but the integrated whole is quite unique! They call their music 'grottesque metal', and I guess this is quite an adequate description for the music, which has something psychotic – maybe a little alike (Charmand Grimloch's) Tartaros—but not quite to that extent. Next to that, the music holds some majestic moments and is generally mid-paced. The true definition of 'grottesque metal' will be delivered with the next album, as Tyrann mentioned in the interview featured elsewhere in this issue, and I am already looking forward to that as the potential this band holds is just incredible. But 'Imperium Grottesque' definitely has its grottesque moments as in the title track for example, where a sweet melody from a music box turns into a very sinister piece with a freezing shriek where keyboard and guitar more or less continue the melody from the musical box... incredible! This deceiving contrast is what makes their music so unique, so morbid – like Macabre using tunes from childhood songs in their tracks about serial killers. A funny thing about this album is that it contains only four songs with lyrics, which are by far the lengthiest ones, by the way, while the other six songs are instrumentals. My personal favourites in both categories should be the title track, which is in my opinion the composition that is best worked out with a brilliant twist in the middle of the song, and 'Nativity of Revenge', simply because it's so impressive.

Together with Ephe Duath's 'Phormula', this already is the debut of the year and I sincerely doubt any other debut will top this! Just get a

copy of this CD as soon as you can! (Rahab)



Virulent (NL) – Under the Hex of Amdusias
Skull Crusher Records 2000
5 tracks (21:46)

It gives me great pleasure to be able to write something about this up and coming band from the Netherlands. After having seen them perform live, I was sure of their capabilities and fortunately they have been able to capture some of that energy on this mini. It's not hard to guess that the band's main influence is Morbid Angel. But rather than being a weak clone, these youngsters are nicely carving out their own niche in the current brutal death metal scene. To be able to do that, you need your be able to play your instruments. I'm happy to say that this is certainly true for them. The drumming is fast and tight as drumming should be. The riffing is good and varied and moreover, the guitarists seem to be able soloists as well. Which leaves vocalist Jorre who seems to have no problems changing from death metal grunts to black screams in the middle of a sentence! The lyrics are deeply rooted in occultism, which is not my particular strong point. For instance, who the fuck is Amdusias? Anyway, I'll leave you with the label's address and the suggestion to check them out: Skull Crusher Records, Corn. Roobolstraat 42, NL-3554 BT Utrecht, The Netherlands. Electronically, the band can be reached at Virulent_@hotmail.com. (Joris)

Vordven (SF) – Woodland Passage
No Colours 2000
6 tracks (19:00)

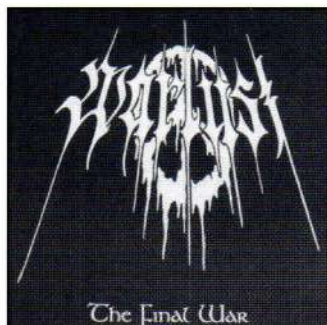
Somehow I was a little surprised to hear a No Colours release starting off with a song with Cradle-like female vocals. "What is this world coming to?" I wondered. Not that I mind really; Vordven's music is quite enjoyable, nothing really new or special in my opinion, just good melodic black metal with an epic/viking metal touch. Some parts remind me of Enslaved's 'Frost' and In the Woods' 'Heart of the Ages'. There's not really that much I can tell about the album. I wasn't familiar with the band's music before receiving this promo; No Colours sent their promos without booklets and the additional info is negligible. The band comes from Finland and they seem to have released something prior to this recording. The production of 'Woodland Passage' is quite good. A personal favourite is 'Journey into the Realms above', an instrumental track with some nice guitar lines which could have been a soundtrack for some hero's movie. I think that for me, personally, a MCD is just the perfect length to listen to Vordven's music, as I doubt they would succeed in keeping my attention for an entire album—but who knows? (Rahab)

Warlust (NL) – The Final War
Happy Holocaust 1999
5 tracks (26:05)

Here's an infernal black metal attack from my native country – good black metal bands in general are pretty rare in Holland and ones playing music this extreme are hardly to be found at all (only Cirith Gorgor comes to my mind). This was reason enough to have them featured with an interview, to be found elsewhere in this issue. Risen from the

ashes of Denethor and completed by Lord Charagnanna, the vocalist of Sabbatical Goat, Warlust recorded these 5 symphonies of war. (In the mean time bass-player Troll, also member of Sabbatical Goat, has joined forces with Warlust. On this recording the bass was handled by guitarist Furor) Back then I wasn't too convinced of Denethor's capacities, but Warlust definitely succeeded in making an impression on me. An atmosphere of utter aggression and hatred is unleashed with tracks as 'Haat', 'Zyklon' and 'Murder of God', enhanced by the accompanying samples taken from war movies. Don't expect any melodic parts on 'The Final War'. The complexity of the songs is kept subordinate to the aggression, though it needs to be said that there is nothing wrong with the playing skills of these guys and they succeeded in composing a number of real killer riffs. The speed of the songs varies from pretty fast to mid-tempo, and some of the tracks contain riffs with a slightly folksy touch. The presentation of the CD is a bit poor: a four page booklet, printed in black and white with just the band logo, a war picture and some band photos depicted. However I am sure this will improve with the next release, which should be recorded in the not too distant future, and I have a lot of confidence that this band will find a bigger label to release it. 'The Final War' had been recorded in Franky's Recording Kitchen, a recording studio with a good reputation in the metal scene in Holland, and the production is more than decent! If you're into extreme black metal and you happen to like bands like Enthroned and Marduk, you shouldn't miss out on this one! (Rahab)

Winds Of Sirius – Beyond All Temples



And Myths

Ah, a gothic metal band which emphasizes the metal part of this style. It's about time, since I didn't hear that for quite a while. A lot of gothic bands have this urge to use all sorts of influences that can get seriously on my nerves. Fortunately that's not the case with Winds Of Sirius. The band is around for 4 years now and was founded by 3 ex-members of Amayon. After recruiting two more musicians the time is ripe for their album 'Beyond All Temples And Myths'. The music is midtempo metal with a great dark, ambient and even exotic atmosphere. On one side this is pretty accessible, yet on the other complex and well-thought out. Several intensive listening sessions were needed to really get into this album. Best songs according to me are 'Alchemist / Layman Temptation' and 'Wise Man Kept Silent'. If these tracks appeal to you in the record store, I'm sure you'll have another very nice cd for your

collection. (Berry)

Wykked Wytch (USA) – Something Wykked this Way Comes
Demolition Records 2000
12 tracks (56:46)

Fronted by the German-Turkish born 'Demoness' Ipek, who I'm sure you wouldn't want to get into an argument with, Wykked Wytch bring us their debut full-length effort. Running the risk of summoning Ms. Demoness' wrath over me, I'll say that singing is surely not her thing. 'Tuneless growls and screams' seems to me to be a fitting description of her vocal emanations. Surely Mr. Warlock, the guitar player spent many



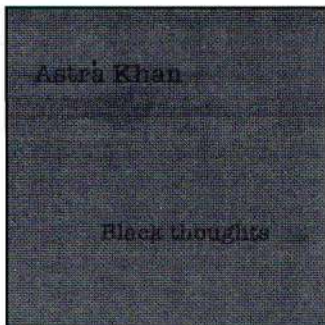
an hour perfecting his neo-classical guitar soloing, no bad word about his technical abilities. But the combination with unimaginative mid tempo death/thrash riffs does not exactly give rise to excellent music. I'm sorry, but I'm not impressed. (Joris)

Yattering (PL) – Murder's concept
Season of Mist 2000
10 tracks (41:48)

According to the accompanying informations sheet the band's history dates back to the early nineties, but things became serious only in the latter half of that decade. This ultimately resulted in the album under review, which is their second. The album is filled to the brim with that kind of brutal and technical death metal that fellow countrymen Vader are so famous for. Indeed all the tracks are composed along similar lines, based on a couple of strong and technically sound riffs and strong drumming laced with ample cymbal and hi-hat frills. It comes as no surprise that Yattering's drummer helped Vader out on their European tour, when Doc was unavailable. The vocals are rather standard death metal growls, with the odd scream included. The album seems to have been recorded at several occasions, or maybe they changed the guitar sound every once in a while on purpose. Apart from that, the tracks follow each other quite seamlessly, that is to say, you have to pay attention to hear the change of one track into the next. The last track 'Rescue' a lengthy intro which ends in a five (!) minute fade-out, just to get the playing time over the 40 minute mark. That's cheating in my book. Anyway, if you like Vader and their music, you could do worse than check this band out. (Joris)

Astra Khan (NL) – Black Thoughts

Demos, Magazines & 7 inches



Demo CD 1999
5 tracks (19:56)

This is really the least amount of effort you can put into a demo CD: A CD-ROM with pictureless cover xeroxed on red paper. At least the drums are tight. You get that with computers. They support some basic riffing and the grunted vocals, performed by someone to who it clearly doesn't come naturally. Part of the lyrics are in Dutch, the rest in English. Don't worry, you can't understand them in either language. One of the guitar players at least doesn't fail completely in his soloing attempts. Nice to give to your friends when you just started out playing in a band, but not to be taken seriously. I'll give the contact address anyway. On the internet at <http://www.phys.uu.nl/~duine/astrakhan/astrakhan.html> or by email at astrakhan@freemail.nl. (Joris)



Blodav - Murder in the Name of Satan
Demo CD 1999

Blodav is a solo project of Hugin (from the bands Skjold, Aranruth, Sansager). All instruments and vocals were recorded by Hugin August-October 1999

This is a very atmospheric and varied demo, not in the sense that I am used to from all the keyboard blackmetal bands: this is bitter and haunting, using many industrial effects instead of the sweet keyboards, also the vocals aren't exactly "black", but the more distorted industrial type of thing. Atmospheric doesn't mean it's always slow. The second and the fourth song are quite fast and aggressive, simple and haunting in style, industrial as well as blackmetal. "Thousand wounds on my body" is with wolf-howls and with a

piano piece by Prokoviev. The vocals here are whispers and the atmosphere is quite midnight-ish. At the end of the song it gets to a climax where the whispers become very loud and the music becomes dramatic. "Six feet below..." is also an atmospheric song, a demon tells about how he buries a young lady deep in the ground. His voice sounds tortured and torturing at the same time - I find this a very good song, because of its atmosphere. "This universe is mine" is a short song, very industrial and noisy. The last song is again with a piano (Bach), some sick voice and many effects.

I really like the way the different styles are used in the music, the industrial and classic music. It's something fresh and different, also in the two "metal" songs. And the sound is good and clear. Indeed this is the most interesting and also the best release of Hugin that I have heard up till now! This demo-CD is available for 60 DKK or 10 US\$ from: Stafa Distribution, c/o M. Dyrby, Rødovrevej 200 stmf, 2610 Rødovre, Denmark (Elessar)



Cerberus (NL) - A journey must begin...
Demo CD 2000
4 tracks (25:39)

Making a CD is not expensive these days. At least not the low end type, that we're dealing with here. Gadgets to check your guitar tuning cost a great deal more it seems. The graphic quality of the layout is definitely sub-standard as well, with resolution dipping just below readability. This is just not something that you can seriously present to the world nowadays. Since keyboard player Nathalia is the spokesperson for the band, it's not surprising that the band's brand of less-than-shocking basic melodic black metal is quite keyboardy. Inquisitive souls without anything better to do can transport their sorry selves to www.angelfire.com/mt/cerberus to check them out, or use the contact address: Medemblikhof 55, NL-6843 BW, Arnhem, The Netherlands. (Joris)

Cromlech (S) - Promo 1999
Demo tape 1999
3 tracks

Not bad... not bad at all. The playing on this promo is certainly of a high standard. Which is not surprising, since the band features members from Eucharist. The music sounds very Swedish with more than one reference

to the now almost legendary At The Gates. Not nearly as polished as most of the currently active Gothenburg disciples, Cromlech seem to operate at the slightly rawer side of the genre. The opener "Vanity and Flesh" contains some drumming subtleties which bring modern Death material to mind. But without the operating room clinicality. 'Bleed until I Burn' is the somewhat cryptic title of the next track, which is the one that would be most fitting on an At The Gates album. The closing track 'Midst these Pestilenced Ornaments' is one hell of a varied composition which features the much wanted marriage of melody and aggression. Maybe the lyrics would have clarified the rather obscure song titles. As these are not included in the kind of minimalistic packaging, we are left to wonder. Anyway, I'm not sure that the lyrics would have helped very much. Most Scandinavian lyrics seem to be either poetic or suffering from a language barrier. Either way, they are quite incomprehensible to me. The music's excellent though, so I suggest you check them out at: Gasellgatan 10, S-432 37 Varberg, Sweden (Joris)

Gospel Of The Horns (AUS) - Eve Of



The Conqueror
Damnation Records
4 tracks (about 20 minutes)

After playing this Mini-LP only a few seconds I'm running my record player to turn it off. All I hear is a lot of white noise and scratches! For a moment I think that this 12" just screwed up my needle. Already worrying about the amount of money this is going to cost me, I start my second attempt. Fortunately I find out this time that it must be some kind of australian humour and that it's supposed to be there. That's right, Australia. Not really a country known for it's supreme metalbands, but perhaps Gospel Of The Horns is about to change this. The band has already been active since 1993 and some may be familiar with their first cult demo 'The Satanists Dream' (1995). Due to some problems with a record label and the line-up of the band it took more than 3 years before Gospel Of The Horns released another demo. Again, the reactions were very positive and this got them signed to the Dutch label Damnation Records. The first result of this co-operation is the mini-lp Eve Of

The Conqueror. The four quality songs on this record are trash oriented with a touch of black metal. Great material for the ones who are into metal which still contains the 'ancient feeling'. The production is very well done, making the tracks even more intense. By the time this magazine is released it should also be available on CD, which will include 1 bonustrack. (Berry)



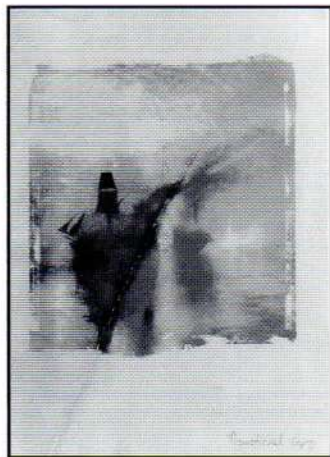
Icontomb Magazine (P)
Issue 1 (Spring 2000)
48 B/W pro-printed pages
18 interviews, 180 reviews. Includes a short Czech scene report and a piece about the Knights Templar.

The editors of this English language zine from Portugal have been busy in the scene for at least 6 or 7 years, this magazine being a joint venture of Icon Productions and Hectombe Productions. So it will come as no surprise that in spite of it being a first issue, it looks quite decent. The use of many different fonts, diagonal text boxes and pictures makes it a little too messy for my taste, but I guess that depends on your personal likings. Every once in a while there is a resolution problem, probably due to the use of low-res downloaded pictures from the internet. Bands featured in the interviews hail from all corners of the metal world, ranging from Trail of Tears to Krabathor with a slight preference for the Czech republic and of course Portugal. They are usually one or two pages long and not always that informative, but certainly not crappy. I like the fact that the interviewed bands are not always the obvious choice. The price is not known to me, but you can check them out at www.icontomb.cjb.net. Or alternatively you can reach them for instance at the Hecatombe address: Hernani A.F., Rua Dr. Oliveira Salazar 23, 2425-044 Monte Real, Portugal. (Joris)

Imhotep Magazine (N)
Issue 5 (1999)
42+4 B/W Xeroxed pages
10 interviews, 180 reviews

In spite of the xeroxed-ness of the magazine, it looks quite OK, due to the use of light colours only. The interviews

are mainly Scandinavian, including the very odd choice of Björk. Yuck! Apart from this strange slip, the interviews are very good and partly written as a story, rather than the usual question and answer. At times they are lengthy, which we like very much here, yes (what do you think for instance of interviewing Timo from Moondance Magazine for five pages). As long as your eyes are good, you won't have any problems with the reviews section. Due to computer problems, the layout is a sterile black on white. Layout is definitely not their strong point, it helps for example to make you questions bold, to have your reviews in alphabetical order, to actually print the name of the magazine on the front and so on. There's also some book reviews in there, of books just barely related to metal but nice anyway. I must say that the guy's fluent command of English is really refreshing to my eyes. Although it must mean 0 out of 10 on the trueness scale, I guess. But who really gives a fuck about that. He's a bit weird (read it and you'll agree) but Roy Kristensen (that's his name) writes good stuff. Contact him at: Fagerhøyvn. 27, N-1369 Stabekk, Norway. (Joris)



Imhotep Magazine (N)
Issue 6 (2000)
76 B/W pro-printed pages
12 Interviews, a few hundred reviews

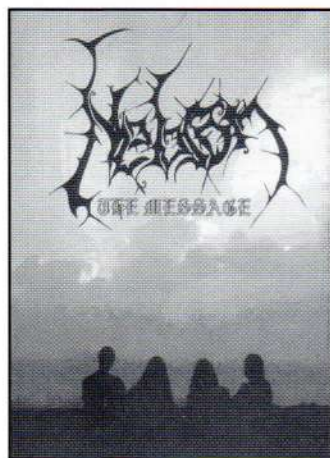
That's it! What was failing in the previous issue has been done well for this one. Finally, a decently printed Imhotep issue. It contains interviews with the likes of Marduk, Obsidian Gate, Satyricon and Sirius and a whole shitload of reviews. He's tried to make the layout a bit artistic, so that it comes across as torn pieces of white paper glued to a black background. A bit too forcedly underground. The interviews are very good, very fluently written and very readable. The number of reviews is spectacular, and many are well-written though on the short side. It's available for \$5 at Roy's new address: Roy Kristensen, Berglyveien 9, N-1262 Oslo, Norway. (Joris)

Kerberos (D/NL) - War Against Mankind/Spreading the Plague Demos 1999 and 2000

Damnation sent us these tapes with the accompanying message that they were not doing any promotion or distribution for them, but wanted us to review it anyway. As we rarely refuse to review anything that's not too off-topic, here goes. It's bone-basic extreme black metal, and apart from that complete crap and utter waste of tape. I hope I'm not stepping on the wrong guy's toes here, but I cannot imagine why, as a musician, you would want to release this to the outside world. (Joris)

Mortal 'Zine (SF)
Issue 3 (March 1999)
42 B/W Xeroxed pages
13 Interviews, 120 reviews

Led by main editor Eero Pihala and helped, also layout-wise by Juha Siitola, the (badly) xeroxed layout makes it barely readable at times, but that's the last thing I'll say about that, since it's the content that counts. The interviews are sound, ranging from local new talent such as 'Nomicon' to dinosaurs such as Krabathor. One minor objection is the reuse of interviews from the preceding issue. At least they're honest enough to admit it in the editorial. The interviews seem well-informed, even though the questions don't always rise above the 'what are the future plans' etc. Unfortunately, their knowledge of the English language seems to be lacking somewhat at times. It took me a while to decipher what 'Can all the death metal fans except as good second album than your debut was or are planning to even improve and do it better' means. The reviews are well thought through and definitely not a regurgitation of the accompanying bio. Clearly, the magazine was written by two (death metal) fans, a fact which makes it worthy of our support. I particularly like the idea to interview a fellow fanzine writer, in this case Rafaella Guerrini of Headfucker Magazine. Contact: Mortal Productions, c/o Eero Pihala, Poste Restante, SF-32810 Peipohja, Finland, eeropihala@hotmail.com. (Joris)



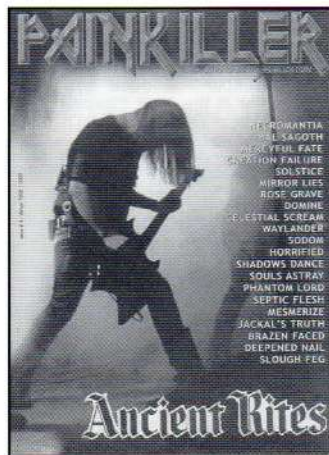
Nebron (H) - The Message
Demo 1997
7 tracks

Our previous issue already featured some bands from the land of gulash. The frustration of communist rule seems to be focused into the making of decent metal of late. That's only once you've made it past the intro, though. I mean there you are, in your darkened room, torches lit and all. Basically ready for some good music. And then you have to wait a couple minutes more until this quasi dramatic keyboard stuff has finally come to an end. If your attention span was long enough, the prize awaits you. Six tracks of decent, at times keyboard supported, black metal long. Sounding more Norwegian than Swedish, these guys score above average on the variedness scale, but nothing spectacular. The recording quality is not bad, surely not perfect, but adequate. The goal of a demo is to showcase your talent and not to let the

people know that your daddy's rich after all. The packaging, colour on the outside, b/w on the inside, is sufficient but not more. No lyrics are included, judging-from the song titles they deal with forests and the night. I guess we all heard that before. Writing down the address takes some effort, due to the impronounceable Hungarian language. Try to get this right in one go. In the end, it's worth the trouble: Lévai Balázs, H-6800, Hódmezővásárhely, Somogyi B. U. 62, Hungary (Joris)

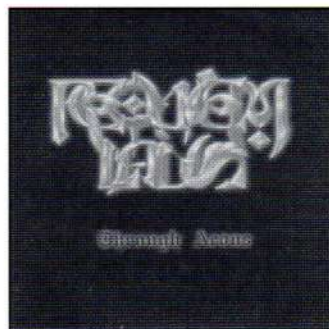
Opus Forgotten (N) - Demon Of Destruction 7"

Sometimes I wonder how it's possible that there are still new bands coming from Norway. Is every Norwegian in a black metal band? Or are there just a few, extremely productive people? The best quality is (of course) found in the early 90s, but even today there are still a few innovative bands hailing from the land of Thor. This 7" shows that not all inspiration is lost and that it's still possible to come up with a few high-quality compositions. This vinyl contains 2 tracks and is - little less original - limited to 666 copies. There's enough variation to keep you focussed all the time and an excellent production. Check it out if you're looking for some familiar, yet different black metal. (Berry)



Painkiller Magazine
Issue 4 (2000)
68 B/W pro-printed pages
21 interviews, 130 reviews

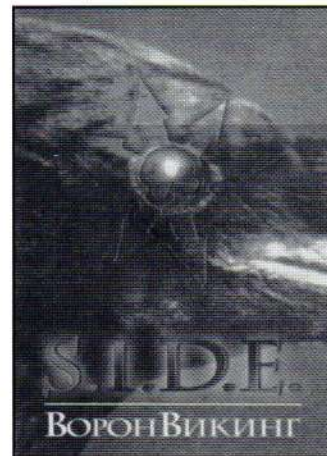
The first thing to notice about this Greek zine is the fucking professional layout. They really did their best on that one. The number of interviews is not too bad either. Even though there's a bit too much of the 'tell me about the new album' type of questions. Other added joys include articles on Edgar Allan Poe and the history of black metal. You can do worse than check them out at Painkiller Fanzine, Akti Themistokleous 240, Piraeus, 18539, Greece, www.geocities.com/Paris/Opera/2801, a-nar@geocities.com (Joris)



Requiem Laus (P) - Through Aeons - Promo
Private release 2000
6 tracks (27:09)

I received this demoCD from former keyboard player Jorge, not long before he left the band with the request to give it an honest review. My expectations were very high as I am the proud owner of the band's excellent "... for the ones who died" demo. The melancholic doom metal in the early Paradise Lost ("Shades of God"-period)/Katatonia vein had made a huge impression on me. I had heard that the recording session hadn't actually gone flawless, with a producer coming in late, without any apparent, sincere care for the product. This resulted in the fact that Requiem Laus decided to put the recording out as a promo instead of an official MCD. About "Through Aeons" itself, I must say that it didn't really meet my high expectations. The band underwent a style-change since "... for the ones who died" into a melodic black-metalish direction (with an Anathema touch), and at first instance I thought I only had to grow accustom to that... Unfortunately it wasn't so. In my opinion Requiem Laus doesn't reach the level of their previous demo except for the beautiful track "Unborn Seed", which is build up just splendidly. It's not like we're dealing with utter crap here or anything, not at all, but I had hoped the band could do better than this. The overall atmosphere of the songs is still melancholic, but somehow not as intense - of course this is partly a result of the sub-optimal production (f.e. keyboards are mixed in much to soft). Of course a band has artistic freedom and should always do whatever they feel like, but it's my opinion that the change of style hasn't done the band much good. Most annoying aspect about the music is the apparent fascination of one of the guitarists for his wah-wah-effect that he uses to such an extent that even Kirk Hammett would tell the guy to cut the crap! After the release of their previous demo, I didn't understand that there was no label interested in releasing the band's debut - now I think the band might still learn a couple of things in the underground! This promo can be ordered for 12 EURO/15 US\$ (overseas) at: Requiem Laus/ c/o Miguel Freitas/ Calçada Di Pico, 104/ 9000/ Funchal-Madeira/Portugal. By the way, apart from the 6 songs featured, this promo also contains an interactive part with photos, a bio and live tracks! (Rahab)

S.I.D.E. (RUS) -Voron Viking



Shara Records 2000
7 tracks

All the text in the inlay as well as the lyrics are in cyrillic, so don't expect any in-depth lyrical analyses from me. I get as far as that the second word of the demo title means viking and that there's a song called Odin and one called Sado Maso. The inlay is actually in full colour on thick glossy paper. So nothing wrong with that. The production is adequate. The music is a bit thrashy, a bit Gothenburg, something like that. Not bad, not revolutionary. The contact is something like: A. Serov, 183053, Russia, Murmansk, Krupskoi, 10-57. (Joris)

Elven Witchcraft

Out now:

The underground watchtower for Fantasy, medieval, legend, and myth-inspired darkmusic



NORTHCROWN

(Finland)

Ancient Battles, Part One

EPIC NORTHERN WAR METAL

an 8-part concept demo set after the legend of Beowulf and Grendel

Each pro demo: 55/DM 10/NI G 10 (well hidden cash)

Coming soon: NARGOTHROND (Portugal) - Some Ores Never Yield - RIMMERSGARD (Germany) - A Venturer's Mind

URUK-HAI

(Austria)

Elbenwald

AMBIENT MEDIEVAL BATTLE METAL

a ghostly 74-minute ride over the landscapes of Middle-earth and the Undying Lands...

For full mailorderlist with over 200 titles and a special emphasis on Slavonic and Baltic pagan and black musics please visit.

<http://www.vikings.lv/~witchcraft/elven>

or write to:

Jānis Balodis, Zemītes 2, Rīga, LV-1002, Latvija Lettland Lettonia

Layout: Elven Witchcraft



Under The Banner Of Skaldic Art

Vindsval - Imperium Grotesque



Melody and power, hate and romance, darkness and aggression, combined to an atmospheric and outstanding artwork.

Rivendell - The ancient Glory



Flutes, acoustic guitars, choirs and clean vocals are the basis of this unique piece of art. The severity of Black Metal, combined with beauty and strength of ancient melodies.

Obsidian Gate
The Nightspectral Voyage



Melodic Black Metal, combined with the impact of classical and romantic epochs. Fast and drakonian, symphonic and orchestral.

Furthest Shore
Chronicles Of Hethenesse
Book 1: The Shadow Descends

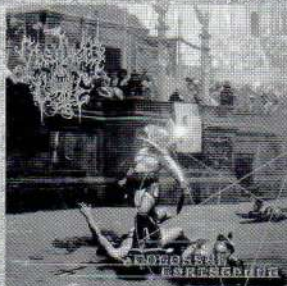


Epic metal in the vein of Bathorys "Hammerheart" & "Twilight Of The Gods" or Falkenbachs "Magni Blandinn...". Created by members of bands such as "Darkwoods My Betrothed", "Nightwish" and "Nattvindens Graat".

Ordo Draconis
In Speculis Noctis



Recorded at Excess Studio (a.o. Sinister). A very impressive work full of idealism and devotion to art.



*Colossal Christhunt
The new Obsidian Gate
album.
Release March 2001*



*SAP 001 CD Furthest Shore - The Shadow Descends 19,90 DM
SAP 002 CD Obsidian Gate - The Nightspectral Voyage 19,90 DM
SAP 003 CD Rivendell - The Ancient Glory 19,90 DM
SAP 004 CD Vindsval - Imperium Grotesque 19,90 DM
MCD Ordo Draconis - In Speculis Noctis 12,90 DM
Split-EP Secrets Of The Moon / Lunar Aurora 9,90 DM
Obsidian Gate Logo-Shirt 19,90 DM*

Prices excluding postage and package!



*The Wing & the Burden
The Ordo Draconis
debut album.
Release March 2001*