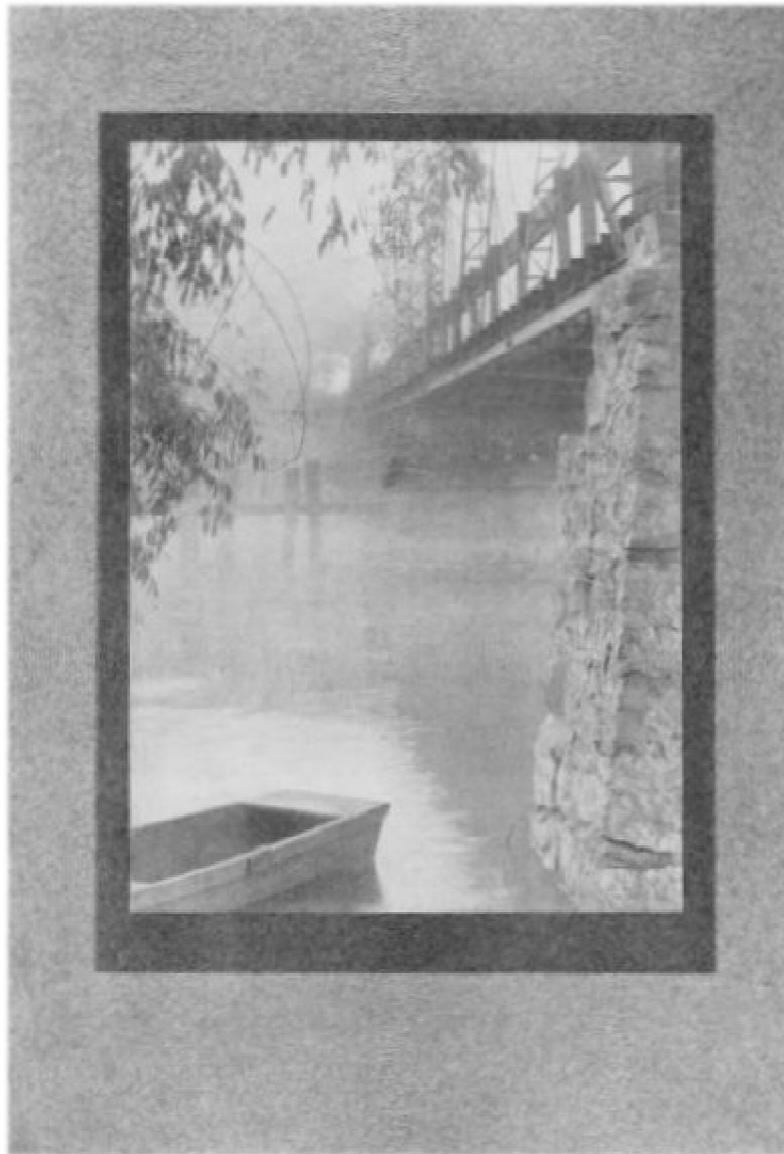


*XI*



*a dead spot of light...*

# Introduction

The eleventh edition marks a break with the earlier style of the magazine. Over the months I have come to realize how stupid reviews and interviews look without a clear connection of the two. This does not mean that future editions will have a sole focus on this 'combination', but the magazine will see a shift towards this kind of concept. With some obvious benefits – clearer structure, more information in a designated segment – the reader will be able to get a better impression of the band and their music, while I as a writer can use answers to the questions in the interview part, as a means to provide a better presentation of the music. As I do not have to bother with size and length, it seems natural to pursue this path.

Why are there so many interviews? Well ... MySpace is to blame. I posted one bulletin in which I inquired about interviews and whether someone would be interested in it. Well, aside from the ones I had in mind anyway, more and more were done and as I felt a bit reluctant to postpone their release to a later edition, all of these were added in this one. Accordingly, nine interviews have made it into this one, which created some problems in terms of the design and style; there are not so many books out there which I could use for this magazine and as such my pool of pictures is limited.

Another topic would be something I have in mind for some time now but always felt a bit uncertain about: advertisements.

The problem is the following: because of the license this magazine is released under, it is a bit tricky to add those neat flyers that are spread on a daily basis by countless bands and labels. As such, I am unable to add these in the 'normal' way. Nevertheless, the general style of the magazine still enables me to add the information and from the next edition onwards, such will actually be the case. An example on how this will (or might) look like is presented below:

CD X will be out on the date 000 through ###. Price: ?€ Contact: YYY.YYY.YYY Label X is searching for bands of genre Y. Contact: ----- New release by the band ZZZ will be out soon... etc.

Pure information. No pictures and such, but contact addresses and all the stuff that bands/labels can use to advertise their art. No fee from my side, nothing. In case someone is interested, then feel free to send the appropriate information to my e-mail address: **oneyoudontknow at yahoo dot de**

With a magazine of the size of this edition, at least one page should contain these.

## **On the Creative Commons things and contact information etc.:**

I have thought about uploading a '0' edition of the magazine in which all of these information are explained. Somehow, I am tired of adding this stuff in length to the opening part of the magazine. So, why not provide something more transparent and with a better explanation than currently? Well ... it will be done soon I think ... hopefully. Therefore, this edition will lack the CC-references, because it will be presented in a different light soon anyway.

## **Index summary**

There will also be an edition whose content will merely be a summary of all bands that were covered in one way or another. With each new edition it will be updated of course.

<http://www.archive.org/details/ADeadSpotOfLight...index>

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## **Contact:**

Oneyoudontknow at yahoo dot de

Cheers

oneyoudontknow

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## Interview & Review section

### Ouroboros

**The one question that tends to appear in every interview and generally as an opener: Would you mind introducing your band a bit?**

OUROBOROS musical project born in 2004, when i decides, after some years of esoteric and alchemic studies, to realize through music, the path of Great Opera of Alchemy, in his research for Phillosophical Stone. OUROBOROS tracks bring the listener in the ancients times, with his sad and restless mood, with vocals litany in Latin and dark ambient sounds mixed with classical melodies and subliminal sounds.

**Why did you choose this band name? What does it mean to you and what do you try to express through it?**

Ouroboros sounds very good for an esoteric project, and his concept fill perfectly in my music concept. Ouroboros represents self-reflexivity or cyclicity, especially in the sense of something constantly re-creating itself, the eternal return, and other things perceived as cycles that begin anew as soon as they end. It can also represent the idea of primordial unity related to something existing in or persisting from the beginning with such force or qualities it cannot be extinguished.

**Can something of the idea behind Ouroboros be found in the music? Do you try to bring something of this mythological concept into the art as well? Certain dynamics or patterns?**

In many tracks melodies and patterns are "circulars", like the serpent's image. The cyclic repeat of some subliminal sounds remember Ouroboros movement.

**How do you create your music? What kinds of instruments are/were used and how long does it take for you to get a recording done? Do you scrap a lot of ideas or do you try to evolve them no matter what?**

Well, i use two keyboards, that i play usually, plus some software to create drones and background sound textures. I record also vocals by myself, using a mixer and a microphone. For guest musicians parts i send the files to complete via email. Normally to record a track take me from 4 hours to a couple of days. I work on songs not all the year, but only in some periods of "inspiration". I have many tracks on my archive, some of 5 - 6 years ago, some new ones, but i use only the ones that fits in the album concept. I re arrange lot of old ones and i have also tracks backgrounds not complete but ready to work on. I try evolve in my style, but some tracks are too experimental for Ouroboros, so i use for other projects of mine. Ouroboros have a precise style and i move into it, with some adjustments.

**Down below your releases have been listed and would you mind writing a few lines on them. What kind of music can be found these?**

"Solve et Coagula" EP (4 tracks.) – 2004

My debut in the environment. EP a little immature, especially in the sounds, but important for me to begin to define my sound. Some songs are good, some a little naive.

"Nigredo" EP (4 tracks) – 2005

At the moment this is the work more dark, sinister and structured. Thanks to the contribution of Claudio Dondo of Runes Order here are the most beautiful pieces ever composed.

"Lunarya Fisica" – EP (3 tracks) – 2005

This EP is the more experimental ideas developed in a more unusual, there are space rock influences to Tangerine Dream from Popol Vuh.

"Lux Arcana" – CD (7 tracks) – 2007

The debut album, complex, diverse, very rich in different styles, mature and focused on the sounds. My favorite.

"Sigillum Solis" – EP (2 tracks) – 2008

This work is very meditative, at the boundaries of the soundtrack for relaxation and astral travel. A disc is not for everyone, because have the best occult subliminal sounds used in my records.

"Lumen et Umbra" – 3" EP (3 tracks) – 2008

Very individual-oriented atmosphere and drones, less musical structures, nice but not essential.

"Ars Regia" TAPE single (2 tracks) – 2008

Two tracks not used by previous sessions of the records, a gift for the fans.

"Compendium" – TAPE (split with Hietont) (6 tracks) – 2008

A collection of songs already released a brand new remix as a bonus. For collectors.

"Vanitas" – CD (7 tracks) – 2008

This album collects cover songs, remixes and tracks from the sessions of Lux Arcana and Nigredo. Sinistre, baroque, very operatic, in my opinion underrated but very nice.

"Primae Materiae" - CD (8 tracks) - 2010

Over the past five years I have participated in several on-line compilation with previously unreleased tracks. This CD collects them all. A nice rare tracks collection for those have already my cd's.

**Do some of follow a certain concept? Would it be possible to categorize some of them in certain distinct groups?**

I do not have a restrictive concept sequence, but the Alchemy and Hermeticism are the main themes. Sometimes I introduce topics such as Kabbalah and Numerology, in any case, the Occultism is the only theme of Ouroboros

**Vocals are generally of a strange kind in your music. It is often impossible to understand anything of the texts. Why is that so? What are the topics of the lyrics?**

Lyrics are at the 90% in latin, so it's difficult to understand for many people. The texts talks about alchemic phases, hermetic symbolism, magical invocations, or explanations of geometric and numerical mysteries. I prefer that listeners try search by himself the referencies, so they can enter in the hermetic feeling. Not all must be revealed, who wish understand about will seek to understand.

**How have the responses on them been so far? Was there one release that received particular praises?**

Each release have received worldwide media attention .... especially Lux Arcana and Nigredo, a little less attention has been paid in Vanitas and Sigillum Solis, two beautiful albums but not focused well by media. Often the radio have played some tracks from all the albums.

**Why did you release some of these in such low quantities? Only 33 copies at times.**

Well, my musical genre is not commercial, less than other non - commercial genres, so release a lot of copies means tons of dusted carton box in my garage. Usually my records are printed in 50 or 100 copies, a good quantity to be sold all. It's depends. Only Lunarya Fisica was in 33 copies.

**I have 'only' listened to three of them so far, but the Vanitas one was able to create some fascination. Why did you choose to cover Depeche Mode and Black Sabbath? Why did you pick these two particular tracks of them: Sound of Silence and Black Sabbath respectively?**

Well, these two tracks are two of the best songs i have heard in all these years. So i have dreamed to work on my "homage versions", a thank you to these great artists. Black Sabbath is a atmospheric track very good to arrange in dark ambient style. Enjoy The Silence was very difficult to release, but i love so much the complete new atmosphere, the original has a sad feeling that i wish re create again.

**What made you change the music in the way you did it? Should a cover version be close to the original, or should the band try to bring the music to such a level that it is basically (nearly) impossible to identify the 'source'? You have to admit that your Black Sabbath interpretation is quite difficult to make out as the one that it is supposed to be.**

I think that every artist must re arrange a cover in the best personal way, do a "copy and paste" version is useless. I think that the original idea or melody must be a little identified, but also a new version arrangement is very good way.

**Have the other releases cover versions as well or is this something limited to the Vanitas recording?**

No, in Lux Arcana there is a cover of Sting called "Russians", and in the forthcoming album "Somnium" another Black Sabbath cover of "Iron Man". I love covers, played in my style, so also in the future i will records some others.

**You have some guest musicians on these cover versions. Do you prefer to work alone or do you also have some 'real' collaboration with other artists?**

When it's possible I collaborate with other musicians and even opera singers. Sometimes I compose and record songs alone, but if you prefer to work with "more heads" on the trail of Ouroboros.

**A constant element of your recordings is the use of 'magickal' symbols. Why do you use them? What do you try to express through them and what books/sources do you use as an inspiration?**

The magic symbols transmit esoteric concepts associated with the music and the release concept. Those who find the study explores the similarities that I want to be associated with the tracks. Symbols, music, words and images are linked together to convey a specific message

**You also wrote papers of mysticism or magic or ...? At least I saw something of this sort being sold with your releases. Could elaborate this topic a bit? According to the biography that you sent me along the music files, you studied esoteric and alchemy.**

Yes, from the age of 14 years i'm studying the esoteric and practical activities related to it and write books. Often I am also dedicated to conferences, seminars and disciplines as the Tarot, Reiki, Astrology and Rune. I can't talk more than this about my practice, but I'm into a lot of esoteric activities.

**How do you see persons like LaVey or Aleister Crowley, two prominent people whose works are generally associated with the occult?**

Crowley interest me quite about his writings and his teachings, but I see that his doctrine has become a trend. 99% of "occult devoted" are into Thelema or Satanism, but there are most important disciples than these, that a very few people study. LaVey for me is a not interesting.

**Would you mind explaining the background of your logo a bit? The way the symbols were arranged might not be something everyone will understand.**

The background is the Rosicrucian Cross...I invite people to search for it in some books or Rosicrucian sites, because it's too complex explain it in few notes.

**I do not know how much you are in touch with the black metal scene and their way of using symbols/numbers, but what would your opinion on it be? Do you find them too shallow and used too inflationary? What would you stance on something like Satanism be?**

I was in the Black Metal when i was 18 years old, singing and playing bass in some bands. It was in the mid 80's /early 90. Now BM is mainly a trend full of poser bullshit. Teenagers that play to be "evil and blasphemous". The 90% use symbols only like a clichè, they don't know the real meanings of them.

**What bands (music) influenced/s you? Are the some releases to which you like to turn to again and again?**

I hear tons of music, especially Prog Rock, Metal, Classical, New Age, gothic, 80's, Ambient and some genres related. About my preferences goes to bands like Mercyful Fate, Rush, Police, Queen, Mission, Yes, Black Sabbath, and more and more.....

**How can people contact you and where can they buy your releases? Your debut ep has just sold out, might there be a repress in the future?**

Well, the people can contact me at my email, mannequin3@virgilio.it, or at Myspace page of Ouroboros, [www.myspace.com/marcogrosso](http://www.myspace.com/marcogrosso). About my first EP is now free download at Quartier 23 label, with an additional bonus track, at this link:

<http://www.quartier23.eu/?Rubrik=portal&Inhalt=downloads>

Enjoy it.

### **Any final words?**

Thank you for the space allowed. I invite readers to contact me for buy my records and have more information about Ouroboros project.

## **Reviews**

### **Ouroboros – Nigredo (2005)**

4 Tracks (CD – Self-released) - \_ \_ - (28:14)

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Four tracks ... such appear on this recording by the Italian band. A short description was already presented in the interview. In terms of the music the following can be found on this release: two times (dark) ambient, one time dark ambient with one voice and another time a strange combination of vocals with ambient/noise. Accordingly, Nigredo seems to consist of a variety of styles and approaches.

The music is generally dark and proceeds in a slow and calm manner. The opener for instance has a dominant keyboard pattern, which later progresses into some guitar-dominated motive. In terms of the atmosphere references to *Of the Wand and the Moon* can be given. More interesting though would be the second composition, due to its nicely crafted melody line; which is able to persist throughout the entire track, despite being interrupted now and then by samples and the sort. The last two compositions are different. *Terribilis est locus iste* has a dark murmuring type of vocals, whose sound was manipulated by reverb. Again, minimalist pattern of music accompany them and create a strange listening experience. *Hermaphroditus* closes this recording and the weird to and fro of vocals, along with some noisy facets are not something everyone will like.

Nigredo is a bit limited, because the focus of the music is generally set on one element. Some might see this as interesting, while it could bore others. Generally, I would like to have seen the music a bit more complex, with more layers and facets. So, while the music presented here is by no means bad, it lacks a bit of fascination and would not be something I could listen to on a daily basis.

### **Ouroboros – Primae Materiae**

8 Tracks (CD – Self-released) - \_ \_ - (47:15)

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*Primae Materiae* is a compilation of tracks from several other records. For more information, it would be best to consult the information which is presented along with the album. As such, the music swings to and fro between various styles and atmospheres. Some are more fascinating and haunting, while others appear in a rather minimalist fashion. Such a variety of concepts is always difficult to appreciate in its entirety and the overall idea of *Ouroboros* does not make matters easier.

Even though I have listened to *Primae Materiae* several times, it was never able to really grab my attention over a longer period of time. Everything is too random for my taste and I have difficulties in enjoying the music. The compositions are not bad and also not overtly annoying, there is just an absence of flow and consistency in the concept and this would be the reason giving me such a hard time. Other might think different.

# Feu Gregeois

## **Hey, how are you? How is the stress level, as the turn of the year draws nigh?**

Hi oneyoudontknow! Well, as I do not expect neither disaster nor celebrity for the New Year, I'm very relax... (Eh! Eh!)

## **Would you mind laying out the history of your band a bit? How did everything get started and what made you play this particular type of music? Were there certain bands that had an impact on you?**

The band exists since 5 years and until now there were no changes in the line-up. In 2005, I was already listening Black and Death Metal bands but most of the albums I bought at this time were boring. This is the main reason why I decided to compose my own music in order to satisfy my ears... Sounds a bit pretentious but that is the truth! The basic idea was to mix a medieval feeling with the brutality and darkness of extreme metal. Of course many bands have had an impact on our music: the entire Death Metal scene from the nineties (BOLT THROWER, GRAVE, CARCASS, SEPULTURA...) and a part of the Black Metal scene: MARDUK, BEHEMOTH, TSATTHOGGUA, DARKTHRONE, AMON (CZ), GORGON (early)...

## **Did you have had band experiences before Feu Gregeois? And in case such would be the true, what kind of projects/bands were these?**

Personally I've never played in another band before FEU GREGEOIS despite I'm fond of extreme metal since many years. Regarding Wüthan and Prophan they have had experiences in several rock, heavy and symphonic metal bands before.

## **Why did you take this band name and what would be the translation into English be?**

Our lyrics were firstly in French and I was looking for a French medieval sounding name. I thought FEU GREGEOIS was a suitable one. The English translation is "greek fire", it was an incendiary weapon used during naval battles. Its main advantage was that it could continue burning under water.

## **Your logo has some sort of complex symbol to it added and could you elaborate its meaning a bit? What is written in the 'outer' ring?**

Indeed, I created a seal inspired by a medieval seal some years ago. It has a strong meaning to me as each element of it has a link with our band. For example some drawings are alchemy's symbols of fire, blood etc. The outer ring is filled with our motto: "Per Ordinis Gratiam, Per Ordinis Gloriam, Ordinis Numine Cognati". An English translation could be: "For the Gratefulness of the Order, For the Glory of the Order, Linked by the Wish of the Order".

## **In 2006 the first of your two demos had seen the light of day. What does Guerres Franques refer to and what would be the broader background of this output? Judging from the titles, the Templar seem to play a crucial role here.**

"Guerres Franques" refers to the fights of the Frank armies in the Holy land between 1098 and 1291. It is a generic name to speak about Crusades. Templars were a component of the Frank armies actually, so I cannot say they played a crucial role in History and only one of our tracks deals with Templars in our last release. The first track "Chevauchée sur le plateau Anatolien" deals with the arrival of the Frank armies in Anatolia in the first weeks of 1098. The second one "Antioche Part. 2 : l'assaut Franc" is about the siege of Antioch in May/June 1098. "Kérak, 1183" describes a remarkable episode of the war in the Middle East when Saladin came to the fortress of Kerak and besieged it. Surprisingly Renald of Chatillon, his opponent, married his daughter and Saladin asked the servants of his mangonnels not to destroy the tower where the newlyweds were sleeping. It's a surrealistic history if you admit that Renald of Chatillon was the most hated person for Saladin... Finally "Le Siege" relates the siege of Jerusalem in July 1099.

## **In the re-release one track was spared out. Why was it dropped and what could the listener hear on it?**

The track was called "Introduction aux Croisades" and it consisted of an introductive text to the Crusades. It was a bad one, so we decided to spare it out for the re-release.

## **2007 was the year in which Francorum Regnum Hierolosymorum was spread. How do you see these two demos from today's perspective and how would you describe not only the music of Feu Gregeois but also the band's evolution over the years? What has changed and did the feedback from critics as well as fans play a (crucial?) role in shaping the art of your band? Why did it take you so long to get your debut album done?**

Well, first of all I have to tell you that before each new release we settle an objective to reach. "Guerres Franques" was an attempt: we only wanted to see what kind of sound we were able to produce. For

“Francorum Regnum Hierosolymorum” our aim was to improve the quality of our compositions. When we began to work on “Mortis Regnum” our first goal was to get a better sound for metal tracks. Now we've got new ambitious objectives for future: we want to obtain a more professional sound by improving the production process and we'd like to continue developing the epic aspects of our compositions notably by incorporating much more keyboards in the metal tracks. Of course we've got some interest in critics we received but we consider those corresponding to our view as we are our first critics!

To our view, every new release is better than the previous one and we have to admit that this is the most important thing for us!

About the huge delay to produce “Mortis Regnum”, there are various reasons: first, we all have jobs and we cannot spend all our time in creating new tracks. The second reason is that Wüthan is never satisfied with what we consider as “finished” and he always pushes us to modify tracks. That's a good point for our music but it is time consuming and source of tiredness and weariness...

**Let us talk about your latest release a bit: Why the two different titles? The limited edition is the 1<sup>st</sup> Circle, while the ‘normal’ jewelcase would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circle. Normally, one would expect that this number gives an indication on a longer and complex series of various records, in which a longer story will be explored. Yet, such does not seem to be the case here.**

Definitely, the names “1<sup>st</sup> Circle” and “2<sup>nd</sup> Circle” are linked to the Order. Basically, the idea is to associate our contacts to one of the two Circles according to their interest for the band; the “1<sup>st</sup> Circle” version being mainly destined to our long-time supports. Now everybody can find it illegally on the web... so I am realizing that this was not necessarily a good idea...

**As I have merely listened to your limited edition, I do not know how the regular one sounds, but from the entry at the Metal Archives I know that it comes with a different track list, less tracks and a different cover. Why did you change these and does this different kind of concept not disrupt the flow of the music?**

We wanted to create two different products and by consequence it was necessary to elaborate two artworks. We kept the better one for the “1<sup>st</sup> Circle”.

When the album was recorded we choose the tracks that should be leaved on the “2<sup>nd</sup> Circle” and as we wanted to keep a consistent album we had to reorganize the track list.

**In some sense it would be fair to state that you proceeded on the path you had laid out on your earlier outputs, but why this heavy reliance on instrumental/ambient interludes? What impact do they supposed to have on your music?**

The orchestral tracks shall create new sensations which are difficult to make feel with a classical metal music. I frequently read reviews of metal albums supposed to be epic. Most of the time I'm disappointed: this not what I call “epic”. I consider our orchestral tracks as epic! So, these interludes have the objective to deep the listener into medieval times, surrounded by knights on the battle field...

**What is the background of the track ‘Ashes of Dust’? What or who is/are this ‘Cantigas’ to which the liner notes refer to?**

The first part of the track “Ashes Of Dusk” is an extract from a medieval collection called “Cantigas de Santa Maria”. It is one of the first books of medieval songs collected by the king of Aragon at the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Wüthan re-arranged a bit this song and entirely composed the second part in a more “metal way”...

**Death as well as black metal make up the basic facets of your music. Yet, it becomes clear pretty fast that a limitation to these to genres would do your band an injustice. Folk and influences from Middle Eastern music can be found throughout the release, too. Where did you take these influences from? Did you have had a chance to listen to bands like Al-Namrood or Melechesh?**

My influences are actually Death, Black Metal and medieval music. Fortunately Wüthan is more open-minded than me (eh! eh!) and has more various influences including movies soundtrack. Prophan is a Heavy Metal fan and you can feel all these influences in our music.

I have never listened to AL-NAMROOD and MELECHESH but I will probably do so. I read good comments about MELECHESH these last months.

**A further aspect of your music seems to be avoidance of too fast blasts as well as the absence of clean ‘sung’ vocals. The compositions generally have a steady pace and you do not really ‘dare’ to break away from this. Do you like this controlled continuity? Will it be possible to have a clean voice on a future release, whose part will exceed the current role?**

We enjoy variety and it could be interesting to introduce faster parts sometimes but on the contrary we are not interested in playing a “full blasted” music. So don't expect us to play all the time at tempo 210 semi quaver... Eh! Eh!

About voices, I don't think we'll use numerous clean voices in our music. To be honest I appreciate clean voices like FALKENBACH uses in its music. I mean songs of "warriors gathered around the camp fire" and maybe we'll use a bit more in this vein but my preference goes to brutal voices, grunts and extreme vocals.

**Who is responsible for the beautiful cover artworks? Do you create them yourself or do you have some connections to certain artists, whose skills enable you to get the proper design? Are all done by the same or were several involved over the years? While composing or writing the music, do you already have the style in the back of the head or is this aspect done last or towards the end?**

The "1<sup>st</sup> Circle" artwork has been created by Alexandra of Ravendus Design. She already did the cover of our second demo "Francorum Regnum Hierosolymorum". We appreciate a lot her work, she has a great aesthetic sense and she is really professional. This cover was done a long time ago before we recorded "Mortis Regnum" and it had probably influenced us during the recording process. We let Alexandra totally free with the only instruction to create an artwork linked with medieval battles and she did a really good job!

The "2<sup>nd</sup> Circle" cover is the job of Luciferium War Graphics. We asked him to release a cover in a "Crusades way". The cover is what he proposed us. It is nice and corresponds to what we could expect...

**Some words on the song-writing process: How does one have to imagine for it to take place? Is it a combined effort of several members, is it a continuous process or in which way is the music composed?**

Wüthan is the only author of the orchestral tracks and the main FEU GREGEOIS's metal tracks composer. Most of the time he proposes us a pattern and we discuss together in order to improve its quality. It's a very long and tedious process. We'll probably change this in future as a new composer/musician will probably join the band...

**What about the lyrics? Do you write them before or after the song-writing is done? Or does this happen simultaneously? On a side-note: how do you see musical versions of poems; something in which the text exists before the music was written?**

I always write lyrics once the music is achieved. I start listening to the music and try to have a sight: this gives me the theme of the track. Then I read some books about this theme and start to write the lyrics.

I suppose we could do the contrary but it might be restrictive. Most of the time musical versions of poems are disappointing because you already have an image of the poem in your mind and the musical theme is never the one you imagine... So I'm not a big fan of that kind of work.

**Moreover, the ones used for Mortis Regnum give the impression of diary entries. Each of the texts deal with a different ancient battle. Were certain books a source for inspiration or were the texts being written? Do you attempt to stick close to the original events or is the approach done in a more 'free' way?**

I've got a large choice of books dealing with Crusades at home. Texts appearing in the booklet of the "1<sup>st</sup> Circle" were written after the lyrics. The aim was to create a story in a literary English language instead of using our lyrics which don't have a high interest for the reader actually. I try to stick close to the historical reality but sometimes I have to imagine a landscape or a battle scene because historians don't always have enough details. These texts are supposed to be the diary and the thoughts of an Occitan Crusader during the first Crusade after the creation of the Frank kingdom of Jerusalem. I wrote texts in French and asked to a friend of mine (Béa) to translate them in a literary English language. I'm really satisfied with the result.

**While your first release seems to have French texts, this language seems to have been abandoned by you in the later outputs, or? Why?**

Yes, we abandoned French lyrics to English/Latin. The aim was to improve the vocals sound. Indeed, English fits better with Death Metal vocals to my view. But maybe one day I'll come back to French.

**The Metal Archives vaguely refers to your music as being on 'medieval themes'. Would you mind elaborating the concept of your art a bit more in depth and why you choose it in the first place? Moreover, from today's perspective, how do you perceive the European past – Medieval and closely succeeding periods --? Is it romanticized over excess?**

Our concept deals with Middle Ages and war. Until now all our tracks have been about Crusades in Middle-East but this could change in future. For sure, we will remain on medieval themes but maybe nearest in time from us: probably Crusade against Cathars or maybe the hundred years war. I have a huge interest for History and a particular attraction for Crusades since many years and that's the main reason to our concept.

**To conclude my impressions in some respect: an aspect Feu Gregeois has some difficulties in dealing with is an issue which is not limited to them. Even though black metal bands make some brave attempts in creating concept-based recordings, these are generally of a kind that is impossible to understand without the lyrics at hand; I could name a score of examples. So, while the music is**

**generally well done, how the texts fit into this and how someone can 'enjoy' these without having them available directly in print is a point impossible to cross. What would your response to such a statement be? How do you see black metal concept albums and is it mandatory to understand the content by mere listening in order to appreciate the art?**

As I told you before, I do not consider the meaning of our lyrics as essential. Everybody doesn't speak French, English or Latin and thus most people will not be able to understand the entire concept-based of our lyrics. Here, texts are more important than lyrics if guys spent enough time to look into it... and buy our digipack... Eh! Eh!... Texts we wrote for the "1<sup>st</sup> Circle" narrate the history you can hear on our tracks. In other words texts and music are perfectly complementary. But in future, we could envision adding the lyrics in the booklet if we consider them as interesting enough for listeners... and readers!

**Feu Gregeois follows a rather modern attempt of black/death metal with quite pompous arrangements as well as sounds. How do you see the scene in general – its progression since the early days and the flood of one-man bands in particular – and are you able to express your personal music preferences through this band? What about the old-school branch? Does music from this section also find a place in your collection, too?**

Nowadays I've got more and more difficulties to have a strong interest for the metal scene. The main reason is the huge number of bands and labels appearing and disappearing in a small period of time. I receive frequently new demos from Black Metal bands which all have the same shitty sound, the same feeling (or no feeling at all...) and who bring nothing new. On the other hand if you listen to modern Metal bands their sound is usually great but compos sound all the same. As example I recently received a compilation of metal bands in various styles: they all have the same sound, the same mix and mastering and finally taking together they could come from the same album of the same band except that here there were more than 30 different bands...

One-man bands can have some interest actually but I don't know many people able to correctly play guitars, bass, drums, create good vocals and compose good keyboards parts. By consequence most one-man bands tried to copy their masters, with more or less success. Most of the interesting one-man bands have now a bigger line-up (AD HOMINEM, FALKENBACH...) because they understood that they cannot do everything best themselves.

The so named "old-school" branch is not my fave music. I enjoy listening old bands like MORBID ANGEL, DEICIDE, DEATH etc. but I don't like most of the modern all-school bands. An exception however with the great ZÖLDIER NOÏZZ...

**Why do you distribute the music yourself via your label Heume Productions? Do you prefer this kind of freedom or is it merely a temporary state until a larger label might knock on the door?**

We didn't have the choice actually: no label was interested in releasing "Mortis Regnum", so it was the only way. The good point is that we are the only owners of our music... but on the other way we will never keep back the money we invested in...

Following this question, what about the tendency to download music for free? From the perspective of someone who distributed the music by himself, how do you see the rise of the Internet and the challenge it poses to the 'established' ways of distributing music?

Well, as you can easily see on the web, "Mortis Regnum" can be uploaded on many sites (without our agreement of course). That's a fact. I cannot say I appreciate but I can't do anything to avoid this piracy. I don't have any alternative at this time: people don't buy CD's anymore; they prefer uploading mp3 for free. That's not my point of view but it seems this is the more widespread way nowadays. This evolution will probably mark the end of self-released professional CD's pressing. I don't know what will be the future for us but "Mortis Regnum" might be the first and last material release of FEU GREGEOIS. Maybe we'll do like many bands: spread our music on mp3 only...

**Is there any chance to see you hit the stage or is Feu Gregeois nothing but a studio band?**

Doing live shows is really a tempting project for us. We're now trying to complete our line-up with the aim to express our music in live. I hope the first live shows will take place before the end of 2011... Wait and see...

**What about the impact of Drakkar Production on the black metal scene? In an interview with a French band or so I read not very long ago some interesting praises for it, because it supposedly helped shape the scene as we know it. Would you share this sentiment and what made you decide to re-release your first demo?**

Noktu from Drakkar has always helped us and I think he is the biggest and the oldest support for a part of the French Black Metal scene. To be honest I don't appreciate all bands he produced, especially those on demo tapes but he is a true member of the French scene. Of course he doesn't hesitate to claim if he hates a band or a person and has some opinions I do not share but none can claim he is not supporting the French Black Metal scene since the beginning... He produced some great albums and discovered great bands.

**Are you able to enjoy films like Lord of the Rings? Or similar ones that have these massive battle scenes? In case you do like them, what would your opinion on the adaptation be? Was it done in the right way, or did they get it wrong?**

Definitely, I appreciate Lord Of The Rings. Firstly I enjoyed the book but I'm also a movie's fan. I think it corresponds pretty well to the book and was done in the right way. Thanks Mister Peter Jackson!

**Would you mind naming some releases that you perceive as essential or would recommend to readers for other reasons?**

I can recommend the young french Medieval/Black Metal band AORLHAC. Their music is really good! Of course there are numerous other great bands: Black Metal bands like HORNA, HYADNINGAR, PESTE NOIRE and CELESTIA, Funeral Doom Metal bands (GRIFTEGARD, SHAPE OF DESPAIR), Folk and/or Metal bands (STILLE VOLK and their side-projects HANTAOMA, GIBB...) and of course all the old Death Metal scene.

**How can people contact you and where could people buy your music?**

"Mortis Regnum" is only available in France as far as I know because only French labels were interested in distributing it. So, outside France, you can obtain it though my own label Heaume Productions ([heaume-productions@wanadoo.fr](mailto:heaume-productions@wanadoo.fr))

**Some final words, please ... if you like of course...**

We've just started to work on new tracks with a new guitarist. Let's hope all will be the best for our next release. Long life to your magazine "A Dead Spot Of Light", I think you're one of the true members of the scene. Thanks for your support!

Interview section

## Review

### Feu Gregeois – Mortis Regnum

(France; Black/Death Metal, Symphonic Ambient)

13 Tracks (CD – Heaume Productions) - - - (44:47)

The debut album of the French black/death metal band Feu Gregeois has seen the light of day and it comes in two different editions. To make these a little bit more obvious, a short comparison with some additional notes is presented below:

	Digipack edition	Jewelcase edition
1	Mortis Regnum (instrumental)	Mortis Regnum (instrumental)
2	Bloodshed	Bloodshed
3	Fragments of the Past	Fragments of the Past
4	Wind of War (instrumental)	Wind of War (instrumental)
5	The Warlord	The Warlord
6	Templars	Templars
7	Ashes of Dusk (instrumental)	Ashes of Dusk (instrumental)
8	Sentence of Death	Soldiers of Faith
9	Ager Sanguinis (instrumental)	The Pride of Twilight (instrumental)
10	Soldiers of Faith	Life of Sin
11	The Pride of Twilight (instrumental)	Redemption (instrumental)
12	Life of Sin	
13	Redemption (instrumental)	
Notes:	Digipack; 300 hand-numbered copies; 8-page booklet	Jewelcase; 4-page booklet.

This review and also the interview, is based on the impressions gained from the special edition (digipack) of this release.

A mere glance over the track lists presented above should make one aspect obvious right from the start: Both editions of the album have a large amount of instrumental interludes, which is an aspect pretty uncommon in the realms of the metal scene; actually, the only example I can come up with whose

conceptual approach followed a similar approach, is the one of the Australian band Avrigus and it should be noted that their early releases did not receive a lot of praises for this outré concept.

A similar impression was created after the first spin of Feu Gregeois' Mortis Regnum album. Those surprising interruptions of the black/death metal or the intrusion into the metal atmosphere are something the listener really needs to get used to. As such, it would be best to give the album more than one spin in order to be fully able to appreciate what is going on there. The background of this concept was laid out in the interview above, so it is possible to reader of this review to understand a bit of the ideas of the French band in terms of the arrangements. Whether or not the decision to craft music in this particular manner was a clever one, remains an open question and might differ from person to person; presumably are those with a negative attitude towards this art located in the traditional/old-school branch of the genre.

Anyway, in case someone is able to look beyond this aspect, then this person will have a chance to dig into a complex, well crafted, very symphonic and also intense piece of black/death metal. The attempt presented on this release is pretty broad and fascinates not only through the overall level on which it was executed – it should be noted as well as stressed that this band financed everything by themselves, including the printing of the releases –, but also in terms of the consistency in a variety of ways: production, song-writing, influences. On Mortis Regnum a modern approach of composing music has been combined with neat sounds of Middle Eastern instruments. Even though this by no means rare anymore and also bands actually from this region provide more than ample examples on how this can sound, the French band was able to web these facets neatly into the music and not as an appendix; take Sentence of Death for instance.

Compared with Melechesh the music is more symphonic and in terms of the riffs generally more Western oriented, but similarities in the non-metal parts can still be identified. In a lot of ways the French band tries to craft a piece of art, whose influence cover a lot of genres and styles. Solos appear, thrashy parts, combination of various types of vocals (too many to name them all), keyboard-guitar segments ... and so on and so forth. In some way Feu Gregeois continue with the music on their preceding release Francorum Regnum Hierolosymorum but present the music in a much broader context now. Some influences have been lain out in the interview part, so additional name dropping would be quite pointless. Nevertheless, the modern interpretation of the music should be emphasized. Even though the music is clear metal, the whole album cannot be reduced to this one term. Neat parts of folk have been woven into the compositions as well and along with those influences from the Middle East they create a nice counterbalance to the aggressiveness of the art.

Compared with their earlier outputs the band has taken quite a significant leap and this output has grown on me quite a lot over the last months.

#### To sum the impressions up:

The best aspect of this release might be the willingness to try something new. To state that the music has already become full circle would be misleading, but some very interesting ideas begin to unfold themselves on Mortis Regnum. Personally, I would like to see/hear more complex compositions, through which the band would be able to transport more emotions and atmospheres. The basics are there, the craft and the skill is there and even a general concept can be identified; what still needs to be done is to bring the song-writing on a more varied level. Those interludes between the tracks are something not many bands are willing to add and for some obvious reasons they are generally avoided. Feu Gregeois did not a bad job in combining these with the 'normal' compositions, but to be stunned about the outcome of this combination would also be a bit away from the truth. A combination of the two facets, a combination of aggressive as well as ambient/calm ones could be lead into the proper direction. Nevertheless, the modern type of black/death metal is already able to fascinate considerably and is something that is definitely recommended.

# Semilanceata

## **Would you mind introducing yourself a bit? Where are you from? What have your adventures in the musical realm been so far; in case there have been any?**

My name or nom de plume is not important here, but I'm from Sweden and I dwell in another project in the underground who also are unimportant here. The focus is on Semilanceata now, so I will stick to this consistency.

## **Could you elaborate the band name a bit? What is its meaning and where did you take it from? It has something to do with mushrooms or? How does your music fit into this?**

Yes. This psychedelic mushroom Semilanceata is also known as the Liberty Cap and has this psychoactive compounds psilocybin and baeocystin. The Latin name semi (half) and lanceata meaning spearshaped. I choosed it as I have experimented with this mushroom and due to the sombre and ritualistic sound I procreated before, I took the name and it resulted to be just perfect. I saw the distorted shapes of my subsonsciuous float into its consclusion and drugs has an important role here. Dope have, in some religious way, always fascinated me. Mostly historical and mythological. My first personal experience with drugs came, obviously with hashish in my early teenage, because it was the easiest way to get hold to. During these early days my subconscious slowly got distorted and I changed in some way. I moved on with the psychedelic mushrooms and have stayed here since. But please notice that I'm not a simple braindead pot-head. I'm exploring the mind-expanding substances in a way more deeper kind than just having fun or escape or..whatever.

## **Three releases have seen the light of day so far:**

- ❖ Dødhelighaz Grafwlijka Mund Ok Dess Vaggande Avgrundsbruus
- ❖ Kaleidoskopiskt Dualheruus
- ❖ Lifløse som stiærneþ hænge i rymdvalf

## **Would you mind translating the titles for us? I doubt that many will be familiar with Swedish.**

Hehe, I doubt that many who already is familiar with Swedish dont understand this either, as it is ancient Swedish. The translation would be something like this:

- ❖ The Death's yawning gap and its cradling murmur of the abyss.
- ❖ A caleidoscopic lethargy of intoxication.
- ❖ Lifeless, like the stars are dangle in spacevault.

My English may not be 100% correct but the translation is pretty close.

## **As these have all been released somewhat closely together, it would be interesting to know whether they surround some sort of concept. Something that binds them together somehow.**

They dont connect to each other in that conceptual way, but they have all some kind of a meditating, ritualistic and melancholic Deathworship ingredience. As many of the hymns were received and recorded back in 2004, I managed with many sounds from old cassettes and picked out the best I could find. You can hear the difference between those old and the more new arrangements. I decided to blend the old with the new, for a suiting mixture who would gain more variation. But the ingrediences are the same for all releases, irrespectively the order of time and circumstances.

## **Have there been bands that influenced you while writing/recording the music?**

A lot of bands has influenced my works. To mention a few, it would be Theatre of sheep, Jethro Tull, Earth, Black mountain transmitter, High Tide, Furze, Amebix, Mecki Mark Men, Deep magic, Black Sabbath, Åttestupa and Burzum. Also books is important here. I can recommend the book "Droger och poeter" (Drugs and poets) by Peter Linde. Unfortnely its written in swedish but those who understand, its an excellent oppurtunity to gain wisdom about the connection between dope and litterature. The book was printed in 1989 and will consistently bring the drug use in litterature from the very beginning, and into the present. Then he examines in detail the famous writers who tend to use and shows how drug use have affected their work. One of the interesting things I read was that in 1845 a haschischclub was formed. There was a group of poets and writers who met regularly to eat hashish and other substances to observe the effects together and many used the experience to their work. Three of the most prominent members of the Club was Theophile

Gautier, Gerard de Nerval and Alexandre Dumas. Although Charles Baudelaire sometimes participated in the secret club meetings. Other well-known poet and author of the book deals with are Thomas de Quincey, Samuel Coleridge, Edgar Allen Poe, Jean Cocteau, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Snyder, and William S. Burroughs. More to recommend is Victorian Drug Fiends and it's written in English. A very good book too! You must read it if you are interested in drugs and literature.

**From your MySpace site: "all titles are limited to 47 copies ONLY." Why? What is so special about the 47 that there will be no further copies of a release?**

That particular number is somewhat magick to me. Back in the early days when I explored the complex runes and which I still do today. I discovered the kins and the numbering of the runes, and I mean the old Germanic Futhark runes here. I picked a certain word, which I won't mention here and spelled that word with runes and calculated the numbers of the kins and it resulted in 47. When I started Semilanceata and planned to release it, this number came to me again and I think it's a sufficient number to limit these releases. Of course, this number can resemble to a lot of different things that has nothing to do with me or Semilanceata. For example in science, the atomic number of silver is 47 or in astronomy - plenty of Saros solar- and lunar eclipse-series had this duration and etcetera...

**As not many people might be able to lay hands on your music, it would be interesting to know how you see the increase in downloads of albums; without paying for them. Are those days in which someone was able to live from the art over?**

If artists feel that this is a good way to spread their message and music, that's fine with me. But I want a physical format, with great packaging, put it in a player or on a turntable and so on. I think that most of the real underground fanatics agree with me here. I can sometimes appreciate if someone offer to download their song or album for free, but in the meanwhile, I don't like it in the end. It feels like a shallow offer. Pointless. For Myspace and such it's a good channel to promote your music but not put out whole albums, just previews. Why not spend money on your work and release it physical and give it away for free instead? You will probably gain the same motivation to continue. Now I'm sounding like a profit fixated jerk, but what I'm saying here is that it's boring to release an album via a download link, even if they include it with accompanying artwork. What to do, print it at home and tape it by myself? The possibilities to live on your narrow art is almost impossible, especially if you releasing your albums in 47 copies each. I think music in some way grows if it is hard to find. Someday, some idiot is going to make my music available for download. But what to do? I could not care less...the nature of online sharing should be viewed as a welcome commodity to independent music, but I strongly indicate the importance of physical packaging. And by that, zines are also included, hehe...

**Is there any chance to see a future re-release? Maybe in a compilation or so?**

Maybe cd versions of the tapes would be a good idea, but a compilation is not in the progress. I prefer the cassette format, but I do know that not many people own a decent tape-player these horrible days, so they would maybe appreciate the cd versions. But it will then be presented with a very special packaging including some sort of intoxicating substance or seeds to grow your own decadence.

**Why do all of these have a rather 'earthen' look? Every cover looks rather dark and comes in a brown(ish) colour.**

I think it's really suiting my unearthly sounds and I'm also very influenced by the seventies and brown is a close colour to that period, I think. But also to the mushrooms colour, the rotten soil our shells someday are going to rest in and it simply looks ancient. Grayscale can work sometime, but it tends to look so boring, so I shooed it in color instead.

**Each of the releases comes neatly designed. The tapes are pro-printed and the CD 'hidden' in a 'canvas case'. Is it important for you to spread your music in a professional design? And what was this strange odour which came with the first demo tape you once sent to me?**

Yes, as I have mentioned before, the packaging is an art too and is very important together with the message and the music. It is the whole manifestation who completes the whole picture. Hehe, yes I did a scent experiment and it went wrong. I crumbled a scented candle, poured the crumbs over the tapes in a box and closed a lid over it and let the scent gnaw through its fibers for a month. But the result was that it smelled like, I don't know, bubblegum? I wanted it to smell mystic and mauve, but it smelled like a little girl. Failure!

**Why this emphasis on the tape? Do you have a certain fancy for this kind of format? What about vinyl?**

Yes, I do prefer tapes and also vinyl before the cd. The tape has this analogue fidelity who really can be something unique and different from any other formats. It's small, practical, pretty cheap, easy to release it by yourself and you can really make a beautiful and outstanding release of it. Vinyl is too expensive to produce

when you dont have a descent label to back you up. If I had afford, I would certainly release some Semilanceata sounds on that format.

**Kaleidoskopiskt Dualheruus has a chemical formula on the cover artwork along with a strange symbol. Would you mind shedding some light on this? And what is written on the back of the bag – did you craft it yourself? – in which you send it to me?**

That chemical formula is for Baeocystin and is a mushroom alkaloid. When I now reflect to it, I should probably have shoosed the Psilocybin formula instead, as it would be more correct. Will maybe change it soon. The "circle" is a Liberty cap seen from above and the symbol to the right is the S rune inverted as it represents the dying sun. What's written on the back is: "Entoniga liudh sum mæd ett surr vårt wisdoms bediande giuter." and would be translated as: "Monotonic sounds which with an drone, our wisdom pleading pours."

**From the booklet of Lifløse som stiærneþ hænge i rymdvalf:**

**För att bäst mottaga dessa ljudvågor fordras en stor mängd droger eljest att fördjupa sig i begrundande meditation.**

**Would you mind translating it?**

"To best receive these soundwaves, it demands you to carry a large amount of drugs or to deepen yourself in contemplative meditation."

**Who was responsible for the drawing below? This skull with the fungi growing out of looks pretty cool.**

I did it and I only used a ballpoint pen. It was really painful to do the shades as it took almost forever to finish it. I'm very pleased with it. I have done all the covers and layout, except for the cover on "Kaleidoskopiskt DualheRuus", which was done by the magnificent Chris Mitchell. You should support him. He makes outstanding art. Visit him at: <http://www.myspace.com/peskylittlesketches>

**Let us talk about your music a bit:**

**To take a quote from your MySpace site again: Acoustic Bjärton and Ibanez guitars, ESP electric bass, KORG micro-synthesizer, hand-drums, MAYA floor tom, tambourine, bells, mini-snare, flute, kazoo, Fostex X-18, BOSS-br8 etc. These would be your instruments. Pretty astounding actually. Judging from the equipment someone would suggest that you have been active in the music scene before. Is this assumption correct? In case it is, what earlier projects were you involved in?**

As I mentioned in the first question, Semilanceata is the main focus now and I will only discuss it here. I am the founder of one other project who started at the end of 1999 and who is still active today. The genre is drone, or doom-metal if you like. It has this same concept with intoxicating substances and other poisonous plants. The name of that group is unimportant... I think no one knows that I'm behind this and it feels good to move around incognito. I'm not afraid to let someone know that I'm behind this, but as I said, it feels good to float around unknown. You are also evasive, as you call yourself Theoneyoudontknow. So you know what I mean. The ego is not that important...

**The Lifløse som stiærneþ hænge i rymdvalf and the Dødhelighaz Grafwlijka Mund Ok Dess Vaggande Avgrundsbruus releases for instance date back to 2004; according to the booklet. Do you have more music that you have written but not recorded or spread so far; except for new music of course?**

I have a vast amount of decayed old tapes who contain this droning formula of acoustic guitars and chants. But I picked out the best so those who were left will remain unreleased and vanish forever. I have problems with my diurnal rhythm, so mechanical waves is received all the time, with or without shamanic methods or drugs.

**What prevented you from distributing it before? Did you wait for the 'right time to come'; a special mood or event? Or were the reasons more commonplace?**

These early sounds was meant to appear with my other project as gaps between the tracks to bring some variation in the distorted mass. Nothing really happened with that project at that time so I went bored and decided to release this by myself without no one would knowing this. So far, no one have reacted and connected me to this other band and I would like it to continue this way.

**You use field recordings for your music don't you? At least a track like Fælflyktogher um liusløg dagh suggests something and also in other compositions various samples of animals and the like can be found. In case this is true, what kind of equipment do you use? Do you post-process (change) the samples or do you try to maintain its original sound and atmosphere?**

Yes, that's true. I did that field recording a summernight in the village I'm living in by using two Røde microphones along with my crappy mixer and Fostex cassette "studio". Actually, I did the whole recording to extend the cables from my balcony down to that particular field. I'm living next to it, so I'm not talking about thousands of meters of cable here. With horses and other things around me I could feel the nameless spirits fill the fidelity. The hammering sound there is actually a gate to a hut, smashing by the gentle wind (or?) I kept the original sound and added only some reverb. Maybe not the best I have done, but I am satisfied.

**Why is your music generally instrumental? Is this something only characteristic for your recent releases or might forthcoming ones have some amount of vocals in them?**

Most of the songs are instrumental, yes and I think if I would add vocals to them, it could possibly ruin the meditating and ritualistic atmosphere. There are some chants in the new and even the old material you got, but no "singing" vocals. My voice is not good enough to try it out either. So, it will remain instrumental.

**In case you would use vocals, would you use lyrics in Swedish or in English as well? In case of the atmosphere, do you think there is a different between these and what would this be?**

No way! My use of ancient Swedish is to bring the whole manifestation to its primal core. As older the language is, the closer you get to the ancient magickal past. So, to use modern Swedish or English is excluded. It feels more right to me when I use the ancient tongue, both poetic, esoteric and in an historical way. It brings an whole lot different atmosphere when using this and I'm not concerned about the global international thing when almost none understands my poetry and message. The initiated can explore and make an understanding of it. It's not that hard. But if someone intend to be REALLY interested in what I'm writing about I could make a translation of everything and give to those people. I hardly believe that someone, except from you, would be so interested.

**Gangare sacht a fliugha has some chanting in it. Have you done this by yourself; was it taken from somewhere ... or how does one have to understand it?**

I mention in the booklet that I have stolen it from some radio-program. What it is and what it means, is an mystery...but it fits as an conclusion on that song.

**The style of the compositions meanders through intense to minimalist atmospheres; from multiple layers to nearly none. Why do you reach out for such extreme levels in terms of your art?**

Some sounds works alone, you know. Sometime I feel that some tracks would gain more feeling and depth if more layers were added. This has somewhat become a little bit of a problem when I'm writing this kind of music nowadays. It doesn't really work if I only have two droning guitars anymore, because it feels that I'm repeating myself and stagnating. So I must fill the whole soundscape with layers after layer to exceed past recordings. I have received some criticisms from close allies about this and before I releasing stuff today, I really must put an effort to not bore the listeners or myself too. But at the same time, my soundscapes is not really to maintain an wide group of people, but to sink them into dreams and inner-self. Maybe meditate or do some harm.

**An aspect of the song-writing seems to be a somewhat ritualistic atmosphere, while another one rather points towards a melancholic maybe even depressive atmosphere. Why is there such an emphasis on these two facets?**

When is a sound more ritualistic than melancholic? If it is more repetitive? Well, I want to progress and not to stagnate. So I must vary the pursuance or it gets too restricted and narrow. I like melancholic music so I want to combine this element with the other sounds. I think it's suiting.

**Interestingly, you do not solely rely on the aspects discussed above, but add some noisy and electronic facets to your music: crackling sounds, drone/ambient textures, short samples. Currently, these play a rather meagre role, so it would be interesting to know whether you want to explore these facets a bit more. How do you see a combination of noise/electronics – aside from dance, techno and such – together with folk?**

Yes, I have recorded one song who reaches for about 30 minutes and has a lot of snap, crackle and pop in its soundscape. It's not an entirely chamber of harsh noise, but has a large portion of industrial influences. The song is called "Spöstuga" and the translation would be like "Torturecabin" and is vague based on the legend about Beata von Yxkull who tormented her employees and nowadays she haunts the castle Ericberg in Sweden. I'm not listening to dance or techno so I can't really relate to that.

**With such a wide array of influences, it might be interesting to know how the actual sound writing takes place. Do you take a certain riff or motive and write the music around it or are even samples/field recordings the basis for your approach?**

I usually pick up my decayed old Bjärton and tune it in a random key and then I pick out unknown chords from it. That's why the guitars sounds so strange. Later on, I add different percussions, cymbals, bass,

mouthharp, flutes and so on... The latest recording I did was a sample from my radiator who babbled due to air had occurred in the heating system. Then I pitched it down so it sounds really eerie. It was the first time I made a song with a pre-recorded sound in the background.

**What kind of music do you listen to generally? Are you able to enjoy metal as well? Your MySpace site gives some indications in this respect; the Norwegian band Furze for instance.**

Furze, yes! The best thing that happened to this terrible world for years. His music has it all; occult eerie atmosphere, SONGS, disturbing vocals and the whole picture is totally genius and unique. Mostly, I listen to old seventies music and metal in general has a very few of those who I really enjoy. To namedrop bands is just boring...Furze is enough.

**How do you see bands like Garmarna, Triakel and other rather popular Swedish folk bands? Are you able to enjoy their art?**

Hehe, never heard of. I checked them out on Youtube. The music was quite good but I'm not interested. How do you know about these artists by the way?

(Note from the editor: Emma Härdelin is actually known in the metal scene and was mentioned now in then in magazines that I read a lot of years ago. This way I stumbled over her bands Garmarna and Triakel, as well as the associated project Hoven Droven. Personally, I really enjoy Emma's voice and the style of her music; one example: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skOD\\_jIA7Mo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skOD_jIA7Mo) (Triakel - Vacker vän, en))

**How do you see Paganism? Is this reorientation towards 'of the older days' something modern society can gain from? What about the hijacking of these 'values' by those on the right wing spectrum?**

Yes, the modern society could gain a lot of different forgotten ancient things. Things like I'm sitting in front of now for an example is the external, material "reality" that fills us constantly with impressions. We are constantly bombarded with familiar sights, sounds, smells, tastes, sensations and so on. It can be difficult to see through the illusion of our familiar environments. This is a shamanic approach to cushion the impressions from our everyday consciousness and connect with the old spirits. To practise what now is seen as ridiculous or maybe even weak, is somewhat more people should tend to do. When you are convinced, and that does not mean it has to be some extreme religious ecstasy to turn convinced, only a hint and you are able to see what the modern society has buried. I'm totally convinced that this "reality" is an illusion. When you mention paganism, I'm not into that common life-loving, love for the nature, Æsirs, inner balance or other worthless hippie shit you maybe are approaching. I'm into the shadowside of it. To explore the dark secrets of the runes, vision quests and so on. This is so far away from what a common paganist is. I dont know what to say about these hijacking national-socialists, but I do want to emphasize that my use of runes and my statement above have nothing to do with politics nor some right-wing sympathize.

**You have several forthcoming releases don't you? Would you mind elaborating this topic a bit?**

Yes, I have recorded the "Spöstuga" tape, the casset tape (soon to be buried) and now I'm working on a cassette with a opium theme. I'm also going to participate on two compilations with different ambient, noise, experimental bands this year. But I feel that this project runs to an end soon. The inspiration and motivation is fading. So I dont know what's next after these releases.

**Any final comments?**

Thank you so much for this interview. Hope my answers are fruitful. Paste this interview onto paper and all other material you are going to write in the future. I know what you are thinking, but the paperformat is not dead...

## Reviews

Well ... for me this would be the second round of writing on the music of the Swedish band; the first one would have been part of the previous edition of this magazine. As already outlined in the interview, those three releases differ only in small degrees from another, even though (or as?) they have seen the light of day simultaneously. Nevertheless, some discussion of the music will be presented below.

### **Semilanceata – Kaleidoskopiskt Dualheruus**

7 Tracks (CDr – Self-released) - \_ - \_ (44:48)

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The outstanding track of this release would be the last one: Sømnad. It has a meditative, calm melody line, which is followed by a neat bass-like tune in the background. Meditative and not monotonous, because there is rather a repetition of the segment and no endless playing of one riff, this way the music rather lures the listener into some sort of sedated state – drugs anyone; and even then Semilanceata did at least so much as to disrupt the flow of the music gently by such offensive samples as those of cowbells. Towards the end even a shift into a strange atmosphere can be experienced. Sounds – howling, crackling –, unnatural tunes, take over and everything seems to take place in a surreal distant world, something that has no bearing in ours. Over thirteen minutes in length and the longest of all compositions by this band up today. Here, the strange nature of art performance can be discovered in some of its facets.

What about the rest, then? The same, but somehow completely different. The guitars are generally the dominant facet, melodies are often played excessively, nice and charming additional facets appear as well and everything comes with quite a laid back atmosphere. Maybe the last phrase should be emphasized a bit. Brugmansia, the opener, has a slightly childish tune to it, while the succeeding Domning is much darker as well as minimalist. Kaleidoskop on the other hand some interesting and intense percussion parts. Having said this, all basic facets of this release were basically covered.

Another aspect of this recording would be a Black Sabbath cover; Embryo to be precise. In concept as well as sound it is pretty close to the original. An acoustic guitar plays the tunes, but on a slower tempo and accordingly, the entire track is thrice the length.

So, this should present the music on this recording in some respect.

### **Semilanceata – Lifløse som stjärneth hänge i rymdvalf.**

6 Tracks (Tape – Self-released) - \_ - \_ (43:30)

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Compared with Kaleidoskopiskt Dualheruus the music is slightly different here or to be more precise it offers another set of facets. Moreover, the general set of this recording is a bit darker and even more minimalist than on the other ones. Fælflyktogher um liuslös dagh for instance consists of nothing else but field recordings with only a few sounds and noises – the track is over seven minutes in length –, while Nær sig solen slukna comes with a neat interplay of percussion instruments with the guitar.

Aside from this, the band sticks to their way of crafting music. Calm, sedative melodies and rhythms make up most of the art, while aspects like vocals, drums and field recordings appear now and then as well. The sound of rain opens the tape and takes the listener on a strange kind of trip. In case someone associates Sweden and folk music with something cheering, often sarcastic and at times even drastic lyrics, then this band proves something utterly different. Here, this person is able to sit back, let the soft tunes fill the air and enjoy this stark contrast to the all too common hastiness of man.

#### Sum everything up a bit:

In order to understand the band a bit more, the interview might help a lot to clear matters up. What is the intention behind it, how was the music created and where does the name come from? Readers will find answers to these questions. Maybe a warning should be printed on each of the releases: not appropriate when in cheerful mood. Throughout the entire oeuvre of the Semilanceata several key aspects appear again and again. The calmness, the overall repetitive character of the art, the minimalist attempt, the dark atmosphere, those noises from nature, all those can be found on each of the three outputs by the band. While preparing the interview as well as the reviews, all of them were listened to succinctly, and they flow neatly into each other; maybe even putting the tracks on shuffle would not have made a difference as well.

Dark folk/ambient ... well crafted and really haunting ... and there is nothing more to say about this. Get them ... as long as they are available. Remember, only 47 copies!

# Interview section

## W.O.P. (Wail of Pain)

**Hey how are you? Thanks a lot for the opportunity to do interview with you on the band W.O.P.**

Hi I'm fine, thank you for your interest.

**As hardly any people will know this band, please lay out the history for the readers. Who is W.O.P. and where was the band founded? Who were the band members? When was the band started and what kind of music did they play?**

The project actually started in 1989, in Genoa, we were a bunch of school mates hungry for metal! :D

I was the founder, playing guitar, and then there were Fabrizio Stefano and Marco, drums voice and bass respectively.

This was the first notable line-up, originally Stefano was playing bass but when we found out he had a powerful voice, you know Dickinson or Kiske were the references, we asked him to sing.

We completed this line up in 1992 with the second guitar Davide.

When Fabrizio left, together with Stefano, Alessio and Yuri joined us, respectively on drums and voice.

Marco then left, he was not developing so much, Massimo then joined us.

**Why was it started actually? Were there certain bands you had as archetypes and whose music you wanted to play?**

I just wanted to thrash so I picked up a guitar and started!

80's thrash has always been our inspiration, if I have to name one band that I did not consider influential in that scene I would say something wrong: I ate thrash-metal back then!!!

**What was the musical background of you when the band was started? Did you do a lot of tape trading and dubbing?**

Yes, the 80s seem so far now.

No mp3, no cds, and most of all no money: Genoa was, maybe still is, a working class city, you know...

Many of the records I have were bought collectively and shared, dubbed many times...

It was fun, you really felt part of a large community, we were somehow 20/30 people sharing records.

**W.O.P. is an abbreviation for Wail of Pain. Why did you choose it and what is this meaning behind the name?**

WOP was originally Wail Of Pain. Well as an adolescent, I felt like some sort of poet, so I once started writing down a couple of verses, and was amused by the sound of wail of pain...

I was a big horror movies/comics fan so this fitted.

When we later found out the meaning of the term WOP as derogatory for us italians, well, we decided to keep it in both forms!

**Why did it take you five years to get the first recording done? Where did you record it and how long did it the session take? In the booklet it says: registrato al live Studio Genova. Was it recorded under professional circumstances?**

Well, 5 years because of the line-up: I was a student and had to raise money to buy my guitar, my amp and so the others, we simply waited to be stable and have the money. You know 5 years seem a very long time, back then, well, they just flew...

It was a professional studio belonging to a progressive rock band whose name I forgot.

I remember we went there with our social based lyrics, shouting our anger against repression.

We then found out they were some sort of christian progressive rock band!!!!

They wanted to record a two tracks voice, so you listen to a double Yuri, just because in their CDs they did it...

It was not the best of choices...

It took well, a couple of weeks to record the demo, maybe more.

**Did you do all the recording, mixing and mastering by yourself or how did it all take place?**

The guys at Live studio did that, according to our opinions, we were there...

**I wonder, how many tracks were used for Attacco al Cuore del Sistema; four or eight or ...?**

OK, well actually 16, at least.

We had two rhythm guitars, two solos guitars, two voices, one backing vocals (we shouted in the same mic :D ) and so on...

I don't really know how many tracks they used, but we used some.

Bass and drums were recorded together before everyone else...

**The band also had some line-up changes over the years of their activity. What impact did this have on the music and did the style of the band change over the years? You wrote in an e-mail that Alessio and Yuri added a different spirit to the band.**

With the original line-up we started playing some thrash-metal, I was a die-hard thrasher I was crazy for Reign in blood, though I never liked growling, which actually came later on the scene.

But as metal was starting to fade a little, we shifted a little bit, I remember playing Jane's Addiction cover "Whores" on gigs.

Fabrizio was the member who mostly started to look for something different, he began to play much slower and more funk-oriented drumming, me, well, I was still reigning in blood...

Soon this lead to a band who had two different leaders, but, since I was the only songwriter (lyrics too) we always argued on how to develop my ideas, sometimes It was pretty awful since Fabrizio was some sort of asshole in terms of referring to people.

We looked for a drummer and we found one, the 16 years old Alessio, who was playing with Davide's death project, named Deadness.

Bang!

Alessio was enthusiastic, had a positive attitude and was fucking fast!

We then looked for a singer, someone having a clean voice.

I remember that in 1993 everybody in Genoa wanted to growl, so it was not easy to find one singer for us.

Yuri joined us, he could turn my lyrics into songs whatever they were without asking any correction, he really could do the job! Beside it he was a true metal man, he had a deep knowledge of metal, meaning from Zeppelin to Carcass...

Now we were really thrashing, back then the demos and the eps.

I remember we played 14/15 tracks a gig, ending with Angel of Death by Slayer.

**Attacco al Cuore del Sistema (1994) is the title of your first demo, but as it is in Italian, I and many other people will most certainly have difficulties in translating it. Could you provide it, of the track titles as well and elaborate in some respect what the background of this release and the tracks is?**

OK "Attack to the heart of the system" is the literal translation.

1. Intro

2. Sangue

Blood (it's about the first gulf war)

3. Giura allo Stato

Pledge allegiance to the state. (It's about repression)

4. Inimou Ni Asivid

It ain't Italian It's some sort of subliminary message!

We had a friend, whose monicker was Virus, who can fluently speak backwards so we asked to say something to be used in our demo and he said "Uomini in divisa" which means "Men in uniform" and then continued with "ivres ied ivres ied ivres" which was "servi dei servi dei servi" in English "slaves to the slaves to the slaves"

5. 12/01/1994

Well It's a date linked to a political event in genoa back then... :D January, 12th 1994...

6. Sul Selciato

"On the pavement" (It was our antifascist anthem.)

7. Delirio Insano

Insane delirium (It was based on one of the very first riffs I wrote and I really don't know why we were still playing it, It's about alcohol abuse...)

**The music is dominated by the intense and high pitched (at times even falsetto-like) vocals of Yuri, while the style is rather fast traditional thrash metal with some rare slower moments. What is something you always had in mind when it comes to your music or did this evolve over time?**

Stefano had a powerful voice, pretty close to Kiske as style. Yuri was very very good in terms of melody making but had a natural falsetto voice, he wasn't singing like King Diamond just to make an example, that voice was his own!!!

Ok, maybe not that high pitched but back in those days it wasn't the most fancied voice, but for us, we really liked Yuri and we have always been proud of his ability.

The style of the music in the first demo is the bastard son of the Fabrizio era and the Alessio's approach. It was not our actual style, which is better represented by the promo.

**Fun Kool Autoproductions? Was that your own label or what was it? Aside from the name, no information can be found in the booklet. Do you know of more releases by them?**

Well, must I really explain???

It's, you know, embarrassing. :D

Well in Italian Fun Cool has the same sound as fuck off.

It was nothing but a joke.

**Who is Virus? In the booklet it says: Voce by Virus; track Sangve. Did he or she contribute more to the band?**

He's the bloke speaking backwards!

**Promised World is the second release of your band. Why was it only spread as a promo?**

Promised world was not to be released as a promo, neither a demo.

Those two tracks were intended to be recorded on vinyl, but the producer disappeared with our money and we had these two tracks, so we decided to release them.

**The music changed a bit compared with the Attacco al Cuore del Sistema output. One longer composition – the title track with nearly six minutes – can be found and also the style has shifted. The fast and straightforward thrash metal was replaced by something more balanced, complex and melodic. Was this the direction you wanted to progress towards?**

Yes this was our real style, the demo had been released late, since it was based on old songs, Sangue and Delirio Insano for instance were written at the beginning of WOP with the first line-up and only a little re-arranged.

It's a pity we only officially released two of our tracks of the Alessio/Massimo era, because we had plenty of stuff, enough for a CD (back then 50 mins).

**The promo has also lyrics in English. Why did you switch the language? Is it easier to reach out to fans in other countries, once you speak the so-called lingua franca aka English? Or what were the reasons?**

I've always been studying and loving English but in the same time I've always thought that you should have 100% control of what you say.

So I wanted the band to sing in Italian.

But I was no monarch we were a democratic combo and, since Yuri wanted to sing in English, we had also tried out some English.

He hadn't any RP, I guess his Italian accent sounds heavy... :)

**Aside from these two releases, do you have more music that never made it onto these records? In case this is true, what kind of music would it be?**

I still have a couple of tapes with interesting material, bad recordings though, done with our low cost mixer.

Same stuff like the promo, like I said, it's a pity not to have recorded anything else, but I must say we really hadn't the money.

I remember that you hardly get the cost covered after gigs...

**How have the responses on your music been during the years the band was active? Have you been able to reach out to fans and magazine outside of Italy?**

Yes, but they really did not like the vocals. growling was setting the standards and Yuri was way too clean and high-pitched.

**You wrote in an e-mail that you had the chance of playing live shows in the early stages of the band. What music did you choose for the stage? Only your own compositions or also some cover versions?**

A few covers, in the first periods we played "Whores" by Jane's Addiction, then "Daitarn Thrash" (thrash version of the italian Daitarn III anime version) "Angel of death" by Slayer, "Brucia di vita" by Negazione and nothing else, we preferred to play our compositions.

**What was the atmosphere on the concerts back then? How was the audience and were you able to play in 'crowded houses'? Did you happen to have a chance to play outside of Italy as well?**

Well, we had not played outside of Italy. The atmosphere was pretty different depending on where you were playing, one of our first gigs was in front of 1000 people in a mixed music genre festival, they couldn't care less!!!

I preferred playing for the die-hard genoa thrashers, I felt chill on my spine seeing them moshing in front of me and yelling our songs chorus, well I've always liked hardcore punk too so you know what I mean.

**How was the scene in Genoa anyway? Can you recall some bands from this era that were able to gather some attention? How is it today? What has changed?**

Detestor above all, they were the band.

They set the standard, they were nice, friendly, they belonged to us definitely.

You had Sadist too, but they had a cold professionalism look back then, maybe just because they were shy I don't know or care.

I know that Sadist now are changed, they are closer to the kids, but I actually don't follow the scene that much to make a good point.

**What has changed? Well, you can't get the 80/90 spirit back, something is dead forever!**

What has not changed is the bad side of Genoa: lack of spaces to play, just a few gigs, always the same old names, this city is old. Did you know the higher average age of Italy is Genoa's?

**Is there a chance to see the old music re-released at some point?**

No I don't think so, Alessio has become a professional, we still have not talked to each other and I don't think neither of the two has any wish to do that.

For him I'm sure this has got no relevance whatsoever since he's engaged in a much more serious project and for me, well, they're just memories.

I'm used to be looking onward!

**Why did the band split-up? Are you still in touch with some of the members of W.O.P.?**

No, I've been years without seeing one of them. I don't even know where they are, except from Alessio, Fabrizio and Stefano!

I've been abroad for a couple of years and this had meant cutting off a lot...

Dating back to when WOP split-up, well, Fear Factory did emerge, and we felt we wanted to play something like that, so WOP had to change or cease.

They ceased.

**What happened to the members of the band? Some did start new bands or joined others, didn't they?**

Yes notably Alessio, who is Sadist's drummer and Massimo who played in some nice bands, one covering commercials in the local dialect and more recently a stoner combo called Gandhi's Gunn or something like that, but I think he's retired now.

**After the split-up of W.O.P. you started a new band called Penthotal. Could you write a bit about this band? What was the style of the music? What was the meaning behind the name and how have the responses on your CD been? Why did you never made a second?**

Penthotal is the truth poison!

We were playing some sort of Fear Factory Strapping Young Lad stuff after WOP, me Alessio and a couple of blokes, then Alessio decided to left and dedicate only to Sadist.

We had no drummer, I started using the PC and we shifted a bit: some electronics, less metal more hardcore (we covered Bad Religion "You") and a glamorous approach, we had make-up during gigs.

We were fucking loud.

After the recording of the CD I was fed up, Marco and Pabli (second guitar and bass) did not prepare the tracks and made a lot of mistakes during the recording session, this costed us money (I'd already have the same job I have now) and most of all had a big impact on the product quality.

I just said goodbye and accepted a two years job in France.

We had many songs some of them were really really funny since we had a satirical/humoristic approach to the lyrics, but, well, I'd rather prefer thinking about WOP as my last band since Pentotal really pissed me off!

**Do you continue to play music or do you not have the time or interest in the arts anymore?**

Well, after Pentotal I had an experience as director of a short movie, and since it was self produced I also wrote and played the soundtrack.

Up to now though, I am waiting my second child to be born by end of March/beginning of April, I am crazy for my first son, I play in a Rugby team and like riding my Japanese bike! Has that any link with arts? :)

**Are you still in touch with metal or have the years left a mark upon you and moved you into the AOR region? ;)**

Please fuck AOR!

In terms of rock, generally speaking (metal/punk/hard rock and so on), I still listen and like the classics. I listen to tons of music, I am not into a metal only mentality any longer.

**When you take a look at the music scene today, then what would your opinion on it be? What do you think has changed and are these 'evolutions' something you perceive as positive?**

You know I'd skip this question since I hate to sound old, but, hey, music was better previously.

I am missing the product which could make an era, you know II by Led Zeppelin, Number of the Beast by the Irons, Master of Puppets by Metallica, Among the Living by Anthrax or Reign in Blood by Slayer, but you know maybe it's a fault of mine...

I think there's a lot of good stuff out there, but I find it hard to reach!

The internet era brought too much information, with too much information I find it hard to find the sensational band!

**Maybe you could list some releases that have left a deep impression upon you and which you like for certain reasons.**

There's plenty of them...

But back in the days they were at their top I really really still can do without : Queensryche, Faith no More and Jane's Addiction.

**Any final comments?**

A final comment?

When I was thrashing there was plenty of fan zine, I remember I used to include tons of flyers in an envelope, write by hand each letter and send it over.

I thought that internet swept this movement, well, I am trying to say that I really really appreciate your work, which is as vital as the music itself.

Cheers Andria



# DNA Collective

**Q: Please introduce yourself a bit. When did you start your own band and how did your taste in music evolve? Was there a certain progression in taste, which would be important to emphasize? Or had certain musicians a profound impact on you and these experiences made you decide to start your own band/label?**

A: Hi, I'm A. (I prefer not to reveal my real name) and I'm taking on this project called DNA Collective. This is the third year we are on the web with our work, passion, ideas. It is difficult to spot the attention on the aspects which DNA has in its core. Simply listing them: relationships between DNA, the artists who release something with us, the listeners of their work, the choice of freedom we made in the beginning of our experience and other things, which any of you could find in our work.

The progression in taste you mentioned could have this structure: I started listening to metal music at the age of 15 (before I know only few musical project, as the Italian singer-songwriter Giorgio Gaber or the Rondò Veneziano, a classical orchestra), listening to the more different waves of metal (power, black, death, heavy, etc), then I came across the electronic music and the noise genre (incarnated in two very important persons in my life, with their musical project: M7201 and Utat), which bring me on new level of growth. And this growth gave me also the need of enlarging my view on the music (and on the art more generally), not bounding it on one genre, always looking for the high quality of the music, which means not only the beauty of the work, but also the emotional affection it gives me. This process is going on also in this moment. Just to list some bands: Ulver, Fabrizio De André, Sigur Rós, Scott Walker (I discovered him few days ago and he impressed me a lot), Stillheten, and others (I forget them).

The need to start the DNA Collective project it is not easy to explain, it is not clear or maybe I don't want to explain it: I don't want to unveil my inner movements.

**Q: Why DNA netlabel? Music as an essential part of the human existence? Music as a deep rooted aspect man's history?**

A: First of all we have to say that DNA changed its name several times during its life: in 2008, when it was born, it was called DNA Record. Then it became DNA Experimental Net Label, and at the end of 2010, few months ago, changed its name in DNA Collective. Every step is an evolution to a better quality. But this under-the-spot steps are not sufficient to understand DNA.

DNA is a name which changes every single day also for me. It is an acronym which could have a lot of meanings. Everyone could find its own, and no one could guess the right one, because it is the sum of the whole meanings which creates the deep essence of DNA. Music is an essential part of human existence, as you said. I completely agree with this. It is rooted in the inner mind and body of every man and woman. I am not a philosopher nor a researcher in ethnic anthropology, but I can surely say that history shows us that the music is an important facet of our social, cultural, human life, in the past, in the present and for the future. A wider explanation it is not possible in this interview, because we will surely break the page with external topics!

**Q: Not many will know the bands your label has signed, left alone have ever listened to any of their releases. Some of these are available at the DNA-netlabel homepage for a free download. Why do you spread your music this way? From your perspective, what are the dis-/advantages of a netlabel?**

A: Spreading music through the internet, with the free download, is the cheaper way to share a work of art. Internet is changing our society and way of looking at the world everyday. There are a lot of chances to come across something new and interesting (but also useless). Selling music via internet is easy, with a lot of platforms which allow you to do that, but we decided to use a different approach: we want to give you the possibility to listen to very high quality music (yet undiscovered by the wide public and the standard labels) without spending any sort of money and with the chance to come in contact with the artists you like more, simply sending us, or them, an e-mail. This type of sharing is very respectful of the artists' work, for this reason it is a strong point in our line of thought. Another thing we want to notice in our work is that we are only a solid base on which the artists could start their relationships with the external world. We are not dictators, the judging heads, we are the soil, the ground, the humus.

The disadvantages of the free download are clear and we are not interested in hiding them: if you have some physical release on your side and some costs of production to bear, the free download it is not the better way to earn something. On the other side you have a world wide distribution with zero costs.

**Q: What are for you advantages of the Creative Commons licenses?**

A: Creative Common licenses are respectful of artists' works, without the annoying facet of the "all right reserved" licenses, which could give you legal problems, especially with the public diffusion. Maybe the conditions of CC licenses are not respected as the total licenses one, maybe because there is no control on them: everything has two faces, as a coin.

**Q: The conceptual breadth of your releases is somehow astounding; post-rock, black metal, ambient, noise, just to name four genres. Why this lack of focus? Or did you merely look for a place to spread music, you yourself have a certain fancy for?**

A: This way of working is not a lack in focusing. I focus my attention on high quality music, regardless of the genre it belongs to. Sometimes I'm not able to put a tag, a label, on some good musicians I listen to. Am I sure to want to cut them off from DNA just because of this reason? Well, it is clear I am not. I prefer to spread a wide range of genres, always looking to the high quality of the music.

**Q: I have had the lucky chance to get some of the physical releases of the Occulta Struttura / Nox Illunis / Cenere Muto split release and even though I have to praise the design, I wonder why you decided not to spread it in a larger number. On the one hand you have free releases, but here you stick to a very small circulation. Is there any chance to see it re-released in the future?**

A: I'm sorry, but this is a strictly limited release for some reason: first of all we decided, together with Occulta Struttura, Nox Illunis and Cenere Muto, to do only a first print of this split album. Also the number of copies it is a precise choice. On the other hand our production are completely handcrafted, so every single copy is unique and takes a lot of time to be crafted. For this reason you are not going to see any mass production of DNA Collective. Only strictly limited editions and high quality works, handcrafted or completely handmade.

**Q: Why did you choose the specific design and the way you crafted the releases? Did you use something as an inspirational source? Are there artists which influence you?**

A: We decided the artwork together with Occulta Struttura, Nox Illunis and Cenere Muto. This is a very collective's work. Our first and only source of inspiration are the ideas which stay behind the music and are strictly related to it. In the end the artwork is another facet of the music. We were not influenced by any particular artists in the creation of it.

**Q: What happened to Occulta Struttura? Your label had two of their demos available for download once and I liked their harsh and aggressive style of black metal. Do you know whether these will see the light of day in the future again?**

A: Occulta Struttura decided to stop the free download of their Vol. III and Vol. IV. As you could understand OS is a strictly underground band, with a strong idea of underground and limited things. Well, I think you won't see again Vol. III and Vol. IV on DNA Collective, but don't worry: Occulta Struttura is going to come back to us with its new work in a special digital edition only for DNA Collective.

## CENERE MUTO

**Q: Please introduce the band a bit. Give us some ideas on how the band sounds and what the idea behind this band is.**

A: Cenere Muto was born in 2008. We are two persons. It is very difficult to define a moment or a specific event which hit our mind and gave us the spark to start with the Cenere Muto's project. First of all we have to say that our musical approach is the free improvisation. This is the way we work. The music, the content is the form. The form is the content.

**Q: What are/were the influences and what would the current status of it be?**

A: Concerning the music, our influences are the jazz and blues rhythmic and way of playing, the post rock approach to melodies, the ambient care for sound engineering. The texts influences are the Italian literature and the contemporary theatre.

**Q: I find the logo somehow neat. Does it relate to the concept behind this band?**

A: The logo has two different versions. The first one is a leaf containing our name. The second one a bloom. Different facets of the same relationship with nature and ourselves. Cenere Muto is people, and relationships between people. Nature create a relationship with us, and we are related to everyone around us. Connections create the texture of reality. The leaf and the bloom are only facets of this world.

**Q: I like the idea of spoken poetry combined with music. What made you create such a concept? Was there an artist who gave you some sort of inspiration?**

A: We found natural to create music and to made the literature following it. As the music is improvised and came from our within to the external world, so the texts are external movements coming from other people to us. The poetry, the literature, are not in this moment, but in all the moments they communicate something to someone. The extemporary facets of music are connected with the eternal persistence of written words.

**Q: What are the texts about? Do you write them yourself or do you take them from a different source?**

A: The texts are taken from a public reading (for the intro and the outro) called "Prediche per il nuovo millennio" (Sermons for the new millennium), read by an Italian actor, from a poetry of Pier Paolo Pasolini, read by himself (in Fuga) and from a contemporary poet (in Dei Sepolcri), read by E. Their meanings are very different and the connection between the texts creates an added meaning to every single piece of writing. Explaining them it is not our responsibility.

**Q: It may sound a bit odd, but why do you use your native tongue? Normally, bands like to use the lingua franca; this would be English? Does language have a special tone or sound and can it help to promote the art?**

A: We are not the first to use our native tongue. This is not a breaking news. Every language has its different sound. However, every language is made for communication. And what is art? Creation and communication. Every kind of language (not only the word) could be used to create and communicate. Italian is one of these languages, way of communicating, the easier for us.

**Q: A bit astounding is that there seems to be no music for (free) download of this band. Why do you keep this kind of art a bit 'hidden' or even mysterious?**

A: This work was thought and was born to live in the split with Occulta Struttura and Nox Illunis. As they decided to release it only in a physical form, we automatically agree with them.

**Q: Do you make the music all by yourself or do you have some help? What about the production and mixing?**

A: Our music is completely ours. We play it, we record it, we mix and produce it. In particular, for creating this work, we used only real instruments (we don't use plug-ins and keyboards) filtered sometimes with reverbs and delays. Our music is a sound that floats in the place we play, not in silent circuits.

**Q: Any forthcoming releases (physical or MP3s) from your side?**

A: We are receiving very interesting requests of collaboration, but I don't want to show anything, until they will become official. For sure you can find our next releases on our website: in this moment we are looking for Zanetto (weird analogic music) and Gut Pot Fuss (noise and electronic cold music).

We are also working on some physical release, with our slow rhythm, as usual: Stillheten's collection of Requiem For A Loving God and I Ensamhetens Kapell (including some bonus stuff), called Frusen (cd in a very special handmade edition); San Miniato, the most mysterious noise - dark ambient project in Italy (in a special tape edition, strictly limited to few copies, maybe 10 or 17). We are planning a new two discs edition of the last two works of 44-86292 (the new Music For Children 2001 and the next work, to be released in 2011, The End).

**Opinions on the 5 pieces:**

**Paysage Industrielle - Locomotive Élecrique CC 6558 "maurienne" En Gare D'ambérieu (Ain), Le 24/06/06**

<http://www.archive.org/details/earS029>

1: This is a concrete piece, created using some common machineries. It is son of the futurist movement. In my opinion it is not very interesting, but someone could love the conceptual ideas behind it, maybe. Personally it doesn't give me much.

**Ze Pekeno - H1N1**

<http://www.myspace.com/zpekeno>

2: Harsh noise, without compromises, crashing cones and cracking ears. If you like the genre it could be interesting, but in these years I understood that the real dimension of the noise genre is in the live performance. The performance gives to the noise a new dimension, more deep, more related to the space and the time. The free sound, or noise if you prefer, needs a space in which it can flow, it needs walls to be reflected, bodies to alter the sound structure and ears to catch only some precise frequencies. Listening to noise music (a strange mix of words) in your earphones, sitting at home, is not the same thing: you have to listen to the frequencies the microphone of the recording gives you, you don't have a space perception. You can't go away and listen to the sound from a different place. The recorded noise, as you understand, it is not for me.

**Nadim Haque - Before the massacre**

<http://music.nadimhaque.com/album/revert>

3: An interesting piece created using piano loops with reverbs and delays. This piece is deep and I like it. It has good resonances and harmonics. Not much to add.

**Yasahi - Where am I**

[http://www.kahvi.org/releases.php?release\\_number=101](http://www.kahvi.org/releases.php?release_number=101)

4: Good electronic, with simple but efficient melodies, a good programming, the right rythm. Appreciable.

### **Luigi Russolo - Macchina Tipografica**

[http://www.ubu.com/sound/russolo\\_1.html](http://www.ubu.com/sound/russolo_1.html)

5: I know this piece. It one of the experiments with the "intonarumori" by Luigi Russolo. A piece which tries to describe in music the sound of the thypographic machines (the one which prints the newspapers). This recording was made not many years ago (I don't remember when) and the group which recreate this piece by Russolo was deutsch. Concerning the piece itself, this is the good work of a composer, and inventor, rooted in the cultural movements of his time. Nowadays it continue to seem a bit odd, but it is a good work, for sure. If the first piece of this compilation is the bad wing of the futurism and conceptual art, the last piece by Russolo is the good wing. I like this track, also because it has a strange sense of humor, I think.

### **Q: Would you mind to name five releases you like for some special reasons?**

A: Well, it is very difficult to choose between your children! The most important releases of DNA Collective are maybe its first release "Protocollo 37.24: Eloha" by 44.86292, the two works by Occulta Struttura (Vol. III and Vol. IV, not available now), the Stillheten's "Requiem For A Loving God" and the Split between Occulta Struttura, Nox Illunis and Cenere Muto (which is important because it is our first physical release). But also the other works are very important and beautiful in our eyes, because they enlarged our borders to other countries (we are from Italy but we host artists from Switzerland, Sweden, Ukrain, Hungary, Denmark, Scotland, Canada and also China!), because they are great collaborations between artists (we have to mention the Arte Nel RumorE project, or "The Dreamers"). In conclusion we trust in all the artists who works with us.

### **Q: Some final words, please.**

A: I want to thank you for your patience, your time and expecially for the attention you show since the beginning in our project. I hope this interview could help someone to understand what our work means for us and what should me for everyone.

## Methadol

### **Hi Methadol ... whoever I may be addressing. How are you folks? Would you mind introducing yourself a bit? Some words on your musical background would also be a nice thing.**

Manu: Fine, thanks. Concerning my musical background, I played in some little bands in Toulouse (different styles : death, black, and punk in which I played guitar, and also Heavy Metal) before starting METAL FIRE, a cover band of Hard Rock and Heavy Metal standards. Then by the end of 2005, I decided to create Methadol, and asked Mallo and Fred to play with me then after, Stef and Ghislaine. We could say that Metal Fire helped me to find musicians. After a lot of changes, I hope that the current line-up will allow us to release several albums ;-)

François: Well... I'm fine! I joined Methadol on April this year. I've been playing guitar for a few years, and I try to play various instruments, maintaining the priority on guitar.

### **Why this mixture between Heavy Metal and Hard Rock? The band name could have also been used for some Stoner project or? What makes this type of music so special for you?**

Manu: As I compose, the style takes a lot of my influences coming from the 80's. Concerning the lyrics, some of them are very personal and taken from my own world. Methadol is a way to make my negative feelings out loud.

### **What has changed since your debut release to your debut album? How would you compare Methadol back then to Methadol now?**

Manu: I thing that the universe is the same but the debut EP was only the first step to define the world, the context of the band. Now the 1st LP is more mature and we worked a lot to release a more accomplished project. The other difference is that I was playing guitar, but I think I did not have the expected level to play solos ;-)  
We also worked a lot on the mixing and arrangements.

**From my perspective: the music sounds denser, has more punch, comes with more power and the music is more interesting as it offers more ideas and neat arrangements. You can clearly hear the evolution of the music. Yet with three years in between the two releases, the question arises on how**

**the time was spent. Were a lot of ideas scrapped? Or was the song-writing process so slow? Or did the 'normal things of life' prevent a faster progression?**

Manu: The 1st EP was just a beginning, a 1st step to show the ambiance we would like. The problem was the quality of the recording. It was also my 1st experience of mixing. I took all the critics to improve my work. For the 1st LP, the composing was done like for the 1st EP, but it was played by better musicians (especially the guitarist who replaced me), and we had more time to record and mix. Most of the songs recorded in the 1st LP were composed before the 1st EP, but we took more time to work on them.

Actually the time was not spent for composing but for completing the songs. We also had several gigs, and the line-up has changed. In 2008 we began to record the 1st LP. A temporary version was released as a promotional CD in May 2009, to find labels. It took a few months. We got in touch with Sliptrick Records in September 2009, and the LP was released 1 year after. We are now working on our 2nd album.

**A bit of a surprise might be the balladic elements in your music. With 'Better off Dead' – by the way, why did you place it in the middle of the album? – a real ballad can be found, while 'Prophecy' opens in a rather calm way. Is it necessary for you to balance everything out a bit; heavy and peaceful moments if you like?**

Manu: Every song has its own emotion and meaning for me. In terms of music, coming down to slow tempo allows to appreciate the acceleration. For example, in the sad song "Better off Dead", the end allows to unleash the pressure accumulated during the beginning.

It is not "necessary" to alternate heavy and peaceful moments but it is linked to the diversity of the feelings we have in life. If I needed to express a lot of anger, the next album would be a black metal one ... just kidding ;-)

**How does the recording and writing take place actually? All a one man/woman show or is the entire band involved?**

Manu: I compose the basis of the songs, but every member of the band participates in the completion of the songs. I give the first idea but every song is improved by my friends. I use to compose the lyrics and the melody behind. Actually it depends on the person you are working with.

For "Anger in Me", I composed all the guitars, and also the solos I used to play in gig. Clement and John joined the band only 2 months before the beginning of the recording. All the songs were ready to be recorded (except some improvement on solos).

**How would you describe the music of Methadol? What makes up the sound of your band and to which bands would you refer to as influences? What about literature and the arts; is it possible to find references to these in your music as well?**

François: At first, I think that the music of Methadol is defined by the voice of Emmanuelle, and to me it's primarily a mixture between some punchy songs, and a good atmosphere within the band.

Manu: Iron Maiden, Megadeth, W.A.S.P., Warlock and a lot of 80's Metal bands are our influences. In terms of lyrics, I'd rather use my imagination than take stories from books. Nevertheless, I sometimes take feelings from stories or movies to develop a story. I also take examples in my own life.

**Is the cover artwork not a little bit drastic? From the looks one might assume that the 'Anger in Me' has resulted in some sort of "chestbuster" thing or maybe even something that was inspired by "Army of Darkness". From a philosophical point of view, the depiction might be interpreted as a psychosis that attempts to break out of the host body and into the real physical world. And I do not even want to start with a discussion of the implications that would arise from it being placed a bit deeper.**

Manu: I would like it to be the following of the 1st EP. The cover of the 1st EP was the beginning, it showed a tortured woman who cannot contain her anger, her pain. I think that the songs were also in this way, a sort of draft.

In «Anger in Me» there is more reflection, more mastery. The angry seems to be under control, well... perhaps not... Everybody tries to show a good image, but no matter what you show, your true nature will come out.

In this world, you often have to adapt. To have friends, to get a job, to exist, sometimes, you need to get a look which doesn't really correspond to you. If you keep your real personality chained inside, it can explode and be out of control.

I think that each of us tries to accept his nature, but first we must be aware of what we are... What is really inside us? Do we really want to know? :-)

**Interestingly, there is no track of the name 'Anger in Me', so the background of this 'anger' remains hidden. Would you mind exploring the background of this release a bit? How is this anger reflected throughout the release?**

Manu: I wouldn't like to name the album with the title of a song. All the songs mean something special for me. No More Words, Don't you think it's enough, Better Off Dead, and other songs reveal some bad feelings hidden inside....  
In a certain way, Anger keeps you alive...

**By glancing over the lyrics a variety of topics are dealt with: relationships, hate, religion. Yet 'Prophecy' comes with a surprisingly story-like telling. An exception or will this be sort of an approach you would like to explore on future releases even more?**

Manu: I use to compose lyrics in 2 ways. The first one is when I have feelings to evacuate and the second way is when I see what I would like to write.

**I mean that when I was writing Prophecy, The March, Haze of Hell, the Mirror, Redemption, I had a sort of movie in my head.**

No more Words, Don't tell me lies, Don't let me down, Better Off dead are more personal. «Don't you think it's enough» is special for me because this is a story developed from feelings I had. When I sing all these songs, I visualize the world I've created and I live the story the character is living. Most of the songs are already composed for the 2<sup>nd</sup> album, and I have followed the same way of working ;-)

**You are currently signed to Sliptrick Records, right? How did this contact with them was established and are they specialized on Heavy Metal bands?**

Manu: We get in touch thanks to internet :-). We discussed a lot before signing. We wanted to be signed with a label that gives us enough artistic freedom. For example, we worked together for the artwork of 'Anger in Me' until we thought that the artwork represents us well (and it is not so easy to specify what we want by email lol).  
They are not specialized on Heavy Metal, but my feeling is that they are very open and they respect the art of the bands they sign. That's the most important.

**Manu, why did you drop the guitar? Do you want to concentrate on the singing and let the guys handle the instruments? Woma/en in the front, men in the back?**

Manu: I have not the expected level to play guitar and to sing in gigs at the same time ... It was too difficult for me and my level was not enough clean to play Heavy Metal. Moreover I prefer to communicate with the crowd.

**I would like to have your opinion on these five tracks:**

**Hevius - Nous sommes des rois**

<http://www.jamendo.com/de/artist/hevius>

François: Too much piano and effects. I don't like that style

Manu: I don't like when there is too much piano. This style is too "happy" for me, but there are very catchy and they've got a lot of energy. I would listen to it on holidays :-)

**Conchadors - Dominate The World**

<http://www.jamendo.com/de/artist/conchadors>

François: Nice guitars but I don't like the voice. The main riff is really nice!

Manu: As I'm a singer, I focus on the voices, and if I don't feel something, it's difficult to appreciate. I think that the voice is not enough natural.

**Scavanger - Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea**

<http://www.scavanger.de/>

François: The voice is quite louder than the instruments but it's a good song. The rhythm just needs to be more punchy during the solos in my opinion.

Manu: I like the chorus, Grave Digger's influences :-)

**Sekshun 8 - Zombie Baby**

[http://www.jamendo.com/de/artist/Sekshun\\_8](http://www.jamendo.com/de/artist/Sekshun_8)

François: I love it!

Manu: I don't really like the style – it's really interesting, and well done, but not enough catchy for me.

**Tim Schellenbaum - El Baile de la Penitencia dolorosa**

[http://www.ubu.com/sound/tellus\\_10.html](http://www.ubu.com/sound/tellus_10.html)

François: Waoh huuu... Well I don't like it, too much effect, and it's the same thing during all the song...

Manu: too strange for me...

**Why do you think Heavy Metal receives such a small amount of attention; compared with black and death metal for instance?**

François: In my opinion, heavy metal mainly lived during the 80's. Now, the sound has changed, it is more powerful, lyrics have undergone an evolution. But heavy metal is not dead, many people still like to hear that kind of music. I think that's a good thing that some bands like Methadol perpetuate this style, by adding what has changed in the recent years (especially in tones). I personally don't classify the different (and so numerous) kind of Metal. I do not like all of them but Metal is Metal and that's all I need.

**How do you see the development of the metal music? What have your first steps in this genre been?**

François: I think I talked a lot about this just before! The development of the metal music has started with the Rock music, and it' always evolves, adding more bands each years, with a lot of variety. I personally started with the Black Album of Metallica, that was the start off. After discovering this album, I gave up the Dance and rap music... :-)

Manu: When I was a teenager, I was frustrated because I didn't know people who liked metal... I started with Scorpions, AC/DC, Guns n' Roses, Metallica, and after I turned to Thrash metal (Slayer, Kreator, Overkill, Testament, etc...) and Death Metal (Deicide, Death, Unleashed, Vader, etc...). I came back to Heavy Metal after...

**A good beer from France?**

François: I don't know if there are good beers in France, but I can give you the names of some good whiskey makers. One of my favorite is Eddu :)

Manu: Near Toulouse, you can find "La Biérataise", from a small village called Bérat. The special one with fig is delicious :-)

**You have also had some live concerts already. What can people expect on stage? How have the reaction been so far and what kind of people have been the audience so far? Were you able to reach out to the 'younger metal' fans as well?**

François: The first thing that people can expect when they come to see us is energy. I take my guitar just so that people spend a nice moment while listening our songs and to have a good time playing of course! I didn't talk to everyone who came to our live concerts, as I only participated in one of them, but I heard a lot of good opinions, within metal fans or even from people who do almost never listen that kind of music.

**And what about the feedback on your albums and how does this relate to your live audiences? Is there a similarity? (In terms of age for instance)**

François: Just the same as live concerts: "That's great!"

Manu: A lot of people who got our 1<sup>st</sup> EP are very happy for us concerning the quality of "Anger in Me". They support us a lot. They go to our gigs and like our energy. Some of them are not Metal fans but they appreciate what we do. They appreciate our shows and our albums. They also appreciate that we stay simple ;-)

**Do you react to fan feedback and try to improve your art accordingly?**

Manu: We improved the quality of the recording, the precision of our work but in terms of creation, I exactly know where I would like to go, and what I like.

In a general way, if you try to do something against your own feelings, of course, you could have success, but will you do what you like ? We are not "professionals", we have no pressure, except the one we put ourselves on.

**How can people contact you and where can people buy your album/s?**

contact : myspace (<http://www.myspace.com/methadol>), on facebook.

You can order the album on the Sliptrick Records website :<http://sliptrick.bigcartel.com/>

**Some final words if you like**

Manu: Thanks for all ! I wish you all the best !

# Dysphoric

## **Hey how are you? Would you mind introducing yourself a bit?**

C: Hi, doing okay I guess. I'm 21 years old and unemployed at the moment. So I'm passing the time with music, creating music and making radio every Tuesday.

M: Doing fine, thanks. 22 years old and studying to become an IT-supporter. Other than that, music and making radio with C, is what I spend my time on.

## **Were both of the members involved from the very beginning or did one of you join later? How did this band get started anyway? Do any of you have or had any further projects?**

C: We've been making music since 2006 where M and I started a metal band called Parasite. Then we broke up in 2008. 2009 we decided to create some death metal so we made blodlyst. Half a year later we decided to make something more personal and experimental. Thus creating Dysphoric. We are only two members in both blodlyst and Dysphoric. blodlyst is for death metal and to let off some steam once in a while Dysphoric is 100% personal.

## **Did you have something in mind when founding the band? Were there some bands you would refer to as archetypes?**

C: Personally I had some lyrics that were very personal reflecting my state of mind. Inspired by lots of depressive black metal bands like Hypothermia, Kyla, Life is Pain, Anti, Austere, Shining, Gris, Misere Luminis, Nyktalgia etc, we try to create a depressive and emotional atmosphere.

M: I wanted to make our music more personal apart from blodlyst, where the music is "generic" death metal.

## **Wikipedia refers to Dysphoria as unpleasant or uncomfortable mood, [...] and [e]tymologically, [as the] opposite of euphoria; (1). Why did you pick this name and what do you want to express through it? How does your music relate to this and where could a listener find this expressed?**

C: I chose the name because Dysphoric is all about depression, loneliness, despair, misanthropy. Right now I'm being treated for major depression and I spent my summer at a psychiatric hospital, so I use Dysphoric as my personal therapy. The listener will find it in the lyrics that are all about my depression and thoughts of suicide. As for the music, we strive for a depressive setting.

## **What were your reasons for not taking any pseudonyms? The current 'names' seem to be some sort of abbreviations.**

C: My first name starts with a C. It's easier for the listener to relate to the music when there's no person's name attached to it.

## **How does one have to imagine the song-writing? According to the MySpace site 'C' is responsible for the vocals, while 'M' plays guitar and bass. So, are both of you involved in the composition of the music?**

C: I do the artwork, lyrics and vocals.

M: Lately C has become more and more a part of the composition, giving ideas to how a guitar or drum riff could go.

## **Is there any chance to hear your music with a real drummer?**

C: As for now, no.

## **Mørke and Delusional Haze, those are the two recordings you have releases so far, but you did not spread them in this particular order. Why did you spread the older material last?**

C: I think we wanted the newer material out first because it was what Dysphoric was heading toward. Then we decided to release our older material because it still had some meaning to us.

## **How would you describe the differences between these two outputs?**

C: The two releases have nothing in common. Delusional Haze is a 'story' about a girl who is unreachable causing lots of pain toward the narrator. Mørke (Darkness in English) is more about depression and suicidal thoughts.

## **What music influenced you when it comes to these two releases?**

C: When we recorded Delusional Haze I was inspired by Opeth thus doing growls. As for concept and idea I was influenced by my state of being at that time. When we recorded Mørke I was inspired by my own feelings and emotions. M did the music so I can't tell what inspired him.

M: Delusional Haze were heavily inspired by Opeth and Gojira, then C introduced me to some black metal bands and I started drawing inspiration from them as well.

**Delusional Haze has a track called Dysphoric as an opener. Interestingly, it is merely a short instrumental. This comes as a bit of a surprise, because normally bands like to compose longer and more complex compositions, something the fans could point towards as a reference, when it comes to their 'track'; if you know what I mean. Why do you offer nothing more than this short piece? What do you want to express through it?**

C: The track Dysphoric is a paradox. You have the birds singing, the church bells in the background and this mental ill person screaming in the background. Life is all about paradoxes. I can laugh although I'm miserable inside.

**Let us talk a bit more about this release. Interestingly the two tracks JD1 and JD2 seem to point towards being related in some sense. Would you mind elaborating this topic a bit? How does the interlude play into this?**

C: As said earlier it's a 'story' about a girl 'JD' which the narrator is in love with. And it torments the narrator that his feelings make him obsessed of this girl. The interlude was made to reference to the last track. The riff is the same used in the song Delusional Haze. I guess we tried to make it all stick together.

**Your second release Mørke sounds different. Darker and more intense. Is this the path Dyphoric will progress on? Can you lay out the future evolution of your band a bit?**

C: Yes, Mørke is a blueprint of future releases. We have a bunch of new songs. Some of them sound like the ones on the Mørke and others have a completely new sound but still with a depressive atmosphere.

**Why do you choose to take the track 'In Infinite' on this release? Compared with everything you have spread officially, this one falls out of category. Rather dark rock inspired with some metal facets, it lacks the heaviness as well as the power of your 'normal' music.**

M: I think we both felt that we needed to make something different, but not something that wasn't Dysphoric. I tried to make the track all about a creepy atmosphere, something we didn't really have on any other track.

**How would you describe the topics of your lyrics? From the looks it seems like you try to write some short kind of stories, or? Who is responsible for them?**

C: I write all the lyrics from personal experiences. The topics are depression, suicide and loneliness. The lyrics for Delusional Haze were as said earlier about a girl. The lyrics for future Dysphoric songs will all be about depression, suicide, loneliness, despair and melancholy.

**What were your reasons for using Danish in one your compositions on the Mørke release? Do you prefer your native tongue over English when it comes to the lyrics?**

C: I wrote Mørke before Dysphoric existed. It's a very personal song to me and by using my native tongue it becomes even more personal. I write both Danish and English lyrics. I'm comfortable in both languages.

**Do you plan to get a more 'designed' logo in the future or are you satisfied with your current lettering?**

C: I chose a font which was stylish and easy to read and then edited a little bit to give it a personal touch. It's perfect for us. I hate when you can't read the band's name.

**Both of the releases were made available at Jamendo. Why did you choose this platform and what were your reasons for offering free downloads?**

C: Personally I fucking hate MySpace! Jamendo has a great philosophy where it's up to the artist whether you will make money off your music or just release it under Creative Commons license. Also the possibility to offer .ogg and FLAC downloads is a huge thumbs up. The reason why our music is free is that no one would ever give us money. We just want our music to be listened to. If someone wants to give us money that's totally cool. If they won't I couldn't care less.

**Originally, the Mørke output was spread as a tape. Do you have a certain fancy for this analogue way of distributing music?**

C: I love tapes. I think it's a charming format and I love when bands put out demo tapes. The reason we did it was to make it more personal than just creating a bunch of CD-r copies.

**Do you have any forthcoming releases?**

C: We have a full-length in the works. The songs from Mørke will be present on this release.

**How can people contact you and where can they buy or get your releases?**

C: They can contact us through MySpace, Jamendo and dysphoric.m@gmail.com.

**Any final words if you like.**

C: Thanks for the interest. It's great to get noticed out on the big world wide web.

## Deafheaven

**Hey ... how are you and [...]**

I'm doing well, thank you for asking.

**[...] WHO are you? Neither the entry at the Metal Archives, nor your MySpace and even not your blog give any indication on your line-up. Try to stay mysterious, ey?**

I don't know if it's necessarily an effort into being 'mysterious'. I don't mind people seeing us or knowing what we look like. We do play live, after all. The lack of information was only presented that way so that when we released the demo, listeners could focus solely on the music.

**Could you lay out the musical preferences of the band members? Are these all located in the metal realm or do you also have a certain fancy for music out of this genre?**

We're all very well rounded in our musical tastes, and work in a way that our personal influences compliment each other.

**Does the whole band contribute to the song-writing or is this limited to one or two members? How does one have to imagine this process?**

The demo was written and recorded by only two of our members, before we had a full band. After finding like minded players, the material has become a lot more collaborative, with the LP focused on refining our sound.

**What is the background of your name 'Deafheaven' and why is it spelled DFHVN in your logo?**

Deafheaven is just a name that I had in my head for awhile. There is no particular background. I just like the way it sounds, honestly. The DFHVN logo came out when a friend of ours, who helped with the art, suggested it. Not a lot of thought went into it - we did not expect the demo to be received in the way that it was.

**According to the Metal Archives, your demo tape was released limited to 100 copies with only 85 being made available to the public. Why? What happened to the other fifteen? And why 85?**

Initially, we had only planned on the demo being a digital release, but after demand for physical copy, opted to do a limited to release to see how they would sell. Because we had pressed 100 and enjoy having copies for ourselves and close friends, we took out 15 for giveaways, and sold the other 85.

**Strange is also the cover artwork. From the looks it seems to be a hand with frozen fingertips, while the forefinger comes in a strange pink colour. Was this idea behind it and who actually created it? How does it actually relate to the music?**

For this project, I didn't want to be typical. I wanted the artwork to reflect the open mindedness of the music.

**Well, as not much is known about your band, why don't you lay out some of its history? When was everything started? Have the members been active in other bands before or are currently involved in any; no, you do not have to name them ... in case it would expose the secrets behind Deafheaven.**

Deafheaven was started as nothing, but a studio project between two people that has evolved into what it is now. Some people have prodded at the idea that we are a 'super group', or comprised of members from other high profiled bands. That is not true.

**The music of your release comes as a mixture between fast/aggressive, atmospheric and depressive black metal with long and even slightly monotonous passages. What made you decide to play this particular type of music? What bands influenced you in the process of writing the compositions for your first demo?**

We play the music that we want to play. We're influenced by everyone from Slowdive to Orchid to Burzum.

**Libertine Dissolves is a real cool opener. Powerful from the beginning, with a lot of drive and with a blast from second one. Why do you start the demo in this extreme kind of fashion, without some sort of introduction and without a neat build-up? Is it important to make the listener aware of what will hit him or her on the recording?**

We wanted to get to the point and that's what we did.

**Then, why do you have with 'Bedrooms' an acoustic instrumental, whose sole instrument is a guitar. Somehow surprising, especially after such a furious opening? Is it not necessary to have some amount of flow and consistency in the music?**

This demo was never supposed to be as received as it was. Because of that mindset with the project, although each song displays a different mood, we are not going for one fluid piece. Bedrooms is just another mood presented.

**The calm and sedative melody, which makes up this track, could be associated with the general idea of such a place: to rest. On the other hand, though, it is also the one location in which romantic as well as sexual acts are 'performed', and from this perspective the music receives a rather ironic touch, don't you think?**

It's just a song that our guitarist wrote, interpret it as you will.

**The last track has the strange title Exit:Denied. So, you do not want the listener to stop here, do you? Are they supposed to remain immersed in your music with no chance of getting out?**

The title of the song has more to do with the lyrical content than any desire for people to listen to it.

**The other compositions follow a distinct pattern, while the last one comes with a rather surprising ending: dark and with a slow pace. So, even though three different compositional concepts can be found on this recording, it remains unclear on how the band will proceed. Will the forthcoming full-length consist of a similar variety of facets or will be art be more 'straight'? Compared with your demo, what can the listener expect on it and how will the music differ?**

The new album is far more developed, experimental, and aggressive than the demo.

**How have the responses on your demo been so far? You got a considerable amount of reviews, didn't you?**

The response has been exceptional, surpassing any idea of what we thought would happen with it. We were pleasantly surprised with the overwhelmingly positive reviews.

**You already had some live experiences with Deafheaven. What can people expect once you enter the stage? What kind of people attend your concerts; in terms of age and musical preferences?**

We have and will play any kind of show that is offered to us, and different shows attract different people.

**Folks can decide whether they want to download or buy your stuff. How do you see the Internet and availability of basically countless amounts of releases online?**

Music is for everyone - if they want to support us, great, if not, then we appreciate them listening anyway.

**Would you like someone to remix your album in a weird and fancy way? How do you see interpretations? Should they stay close to the original or try to bring the music to a new and different shore?**

People can do what they like.

**Some final words, if you are still motivated to share your thoughts.**

Thank you for the interview.

# Iron Void

## **Hi there, who am I addressing? How have you and your band doing?**

Steve (Guitar & Vocals), Sealey (Bass & Vocals) & Diz (Drums). We're very well, thank you.

## **Your band is not particularly young – not speaking of the age of the band members here – as its foundation dates back to 1998. Would you mind writing a bit on your early days? Why did it take you so long to get your first release – the live album 'Live 2008' – done? Why was this band resurrected after all?**

Steve: I went to two or three of the original Iron Void gigs, and I could still remember the songs almost ten years after hearing them, so I knew there was something good there to work on. Around summer 2007, I was trying to put together a new lineup of my previous band So Mortal Be and got Sealey to join on bass. We knew him from years back and knew he was into Doom. We tried a few different lineups and changed drummers a couple of times then Sealey suggested we use the name Iron Void as we now had him and Diz in the band and we tried some of the old songs and still use some of mine from So Mortal Be (Eye For An Eye, Suicide Sorcerer and Dead Planet). They've been reworked in places but are still basically the same songs.

Sealey: I formed the band originally back in November 1998 with Andy Whittaker (AKA Randy Reaper from The Lamp of Thoth) with the intention of forming an old-school Doom Metal band influenced primarily by Black Sabbath, Saint Vitus and Pentagram. Paul Whale (currently with Circulus and Beneath The Oak) joined on vocals not long after and then Diz joined on Drums. Diz didn't play any gigs with this original lineup because he went missing and i didn't see him again until 5 years later! I later found out he had suffered a mental breakdown and was homeless for a long time, which would be enough to test anyone's resolve, but here he is over 10 years later playing in the band again!

We found Russ Thompson through an advert in a local paper and Russ replaced Diz on Drums in late 1999 i think. This lineup played a total of 16 gigs with bands such as Blessed Realm and Khang (both RIP) and split up in early 2000 shortly before we were due to record our 1st demo which was to be entitled 'Spell of Ruin'. We split up due to internal differences and money problems, it wasn't very amicable at the time but we're all good friends again now!

I joined So Mortal Be on bass in 2007 and we started playing some of the old Iron Void songs as well as some Steve had written for So Mortal Be when Diz joined after several line-up changes. We also had Russ playing 2nd guitar during this period, but he left shortly after. We decided to change the name to Iron Void due to the band being made up of two thirds of the original lineup and also because we were playing some of the old songs as well. This is why it took so long for us to release our 1st CD, 'Live 2008'.

## **What have the members been doing in the meantime? Where there other projects ongoing?**

Sealey: When Iron Void disbanded i played in another Doom band called Tomb with Russ Thompson on Guitar/Vocals and Jamie 'Boggy' Sykes on Drums (GNAW, Thorr's Hammer, ex - Burning Witch). We never recorded anything professionally but we wrote some cool songs. I then played in a Sludge Doom band called Black Maria with Russ and a couple of my good friends from Doncaster, Kev and Olly before joining Black Metal band, Sermon of Hypocrisy. I played bass on 3 recordings by this band and then spent a couple of years playing in Death/Thrash band, Scion from Wakefield before i joined So Mortal Be in 2007. I grew up listening to old school Death Metal, so i really wanted to get that side out of my system but Doom is where my heart is, so it wasn't long before i felt the urge to play this style once more.

DIZ: I have been doing a band called biolab 666 which is a fast metal band and a rave band called dsn I still do biolab 666. I have had it going for 21 years.

## **There have been several line-up changes over the time. Did this have had an effect on the style of the band or was the song-writing always restricted to the 'inner circle'? How does one have to imagine the writing process anyway?**

Steve: When Simon left I was a bit nervous about going back to one guitar as he'd come up with some good harmony parts that gave us more of a Thin Lizzy / Iron Maiden sound. Obviously I'd struggle to recreate them live, specially tracks like Demon Drink, which Simon added quite a lot

to the middle section in the studio. But since 2007 it's been mostly us three, with the 2009-2010 period with Simon. So not too bad from my perspective.

DIZ: I don't think it has. We all play our own parts. Sealey comes up with bass and vocals and Steve does guitar and vocals and I do the drum parts.

Sealey: I don't think the lineup changes have affected the style of the band really because it's mainly me and Steve who write the music and the lyrics anyway. Simon did want to go in a more uptempo '70's Rock direction but i think our songs are all different but with the same kind of sound. That's what i aim for when i write, i don't want us to be a one dimensional sounding band, i want to incorporate different elements and styles, but keep it heavy and doomy. Either me or Steve will have an idea for a riff or sometimes a complete arrangement and we will bring it to rehearsal and just jam it out until we have something solid. Lyrics and vocal melodies usually follow and we rehearse the songs until they are ready to be played live.

**Why Iron Void? Is there a special meaning behind this name and does the genre of your preference, doom metal, play into this a bit?**

Sealey: I'm glad you asked this question because not many people realise the meaning behind the name. I was at my uncle's house in Birmingham years ago having a drink at Christmas. He'd had a few and started showing me his old Sabbath and Zeppelin vinyls and told me he'd been to the house where Ozzy Osbourne had grown up in Aston. He said on the wall outside was scrawled the name 'Iron Void'. I immediately thought not only was the name very dark and powerful sounding but also thought that it could have been possible that Black Sabbath may have ended up being called this under different circumstances, you never know! If you read Ozzy's autobiography, 'I Am Ozzy Osbourne' you can read his account of this incident on page 64.

**Why did you choose to play this type of music at all? Does it have a special vibe or atmosphere that has a certain fascination for you and that you try to recreate with your own band/s?**

Steve: It definitely has a special vibe about it for me. I only got into doom bands properly around the late '90's through Electric Wizard, Cathedral and old Black Sabbath albums. I was listening to lots of Sabbath and realising that there were all these other famous bands that cited them as an influence. How I got into playing this style is a coincidence really. I got a Spirit Caravan CD (I think it was Dreamwheel) and then chanced upon other people who just happened to like the same style and also wanted to play music. Pretty unlikely but it happened that way. I just like the way the vocals work together with just simple riffs and it's not overly aggressive but still very heavy and powerful. Wino and Victor Giffin mixed with Iron Man, Sabbath, and a subtle nod to Iron Maiden (in places) sums up my vocals. Judas Priest (70's and early 80's stuff more than anything) and Motorhead should go along with those too. There is a depth to doom that takes a long time to appreciate, but it means that bands sound better with time, specially new albums, which we may right off as being too different. Later when you get into them you realise they are very well done. The newer Pagan Altar stuff and Grand Magus have this effect with me. When I revisit albums after a few weeks break from listening to them I seem to 'get it' more easily, but rarely on first listen, for some odd reason.

Sealey: I got into Doom Metal in the early 90's via bands such as Sleep, Cathedral and Trouble then i heard Black Sabbath and they blew me away! Prior to this, i was listening to Jimi Hendrix, old Metallica and Death Metal bands like Death, Morbid Angel, etc. Doom is special because you have the heavy riffs and dark atmosphere but unlike Death or Black Metal, the clean vocals can convey a much broader range of emotions other than just hatred and anger. This is why i wanted to play this style in the first place because it struck a chord with me immediately. Also, originating from Birmingham it made me very proud to carry on the tradition that Black Sabbath started over 40 years ago.

**Following this question: what bands did and do influence you? Has this changed over the years and how do you see more recent trends in the metal scene? Are they something you are able to enjoy as well and maybe even use as a source of inspiration or is the doom genre too limited in this respect?**

Steve: The main influence for the band is really Pentagram, Saint Vitus and Black Sabbath, Judas Priest, Slayer and Motorhead. We all bring our own influences from there. I've put some early Iron Maiden and 80's Metallica sounding bits in there on Conflict Inside and Demon Drink but it's mainly Maryland Doom and '70's rock as far as the riffs go. Diz's playing is heavily influenced by Slayer and his Death/Grind/Black Metal background but he is into Reggae and Dubstep dunning too, so he can pretty much play anything!

DIZ: I played in Celt Islam Sound System, hip hop and rave to death metal and black metal.

Sealey: The main bands that are the primary influence for Iron Void are Black Sabbath, Saint Vitus and Pentagram as well as classic Heavy Metal such as Iron Maiden, Judas Priest and Thin Lizzy. For me personally i listen to loads of different bands, i love my old school Death Metal bands that i grew up with like Death, Morbid Angel, Autopsy, Slayer, Celtic Frost, Mercyful Fate and stuff like that but i also like a lot of 60's and 70's Rock and Psychedelic music like The Doors, Jefferson Airplane, stuff like that and Blues and Dub Reggae as well. I don't really follow any trends in the Metal scene, i'm just happy listening to the stuff i like. (Laughs). One of the newer bands that i have been really impressed with are Sabbath Assembly featuring Jex Thoth on vocals, i can't stop listening to them!

DIZ: I like all types of music- Killing Joke, Slayer Mayhem and Black Metal and Death Metal and Hawkwind and Can.

**When did you start doing music and did you had (professional) teaching of music or did you learn the instruments all by yourself?**

Steve: I started playing the guitar when I was 14 and I'm self-taught. I started off on a Metallica Ride The Lightning tab book that had only the riffs and clean guitar parts, no solos.. I remember buying it because I wasn't very good at reading music and quite rightly thought the complexity of the solos would put me off. This may be the cause of most of my music being based around riffs! I switched to bass for a couple of years when I was about 18 and I still play bass today sometimes. I did have about a years worth of professional lessons from 2007-2008 as I'd just joined Iron Void and I wanted to improve my playing for solos and also while doing vocals at the same time. I learned a lot of music theory and some simple tricks to improve my playing. I had a job that was shift work and it got hard to book the lessons around it from week to week. Then I lost my job and ran out of money. I might start them again one day but I'm happy as I am for now. I would like to learn more music theory as I don't sight read/write music that well. I haven't bothered so far though. The intuitive method of just jamming seems to work for us.

Sealey: I started playing music when i was about 11 years old at school. I used to play keyboards before i started playing a double bass and learned how to read sheet music. I lost interest when they asked me to play with a bow. I started to play music seriously in my mid teens, playing in several Metal bands on bass. I'm self taught, but i did have a couple of lessons when i started off intially playing 6 string guitar. I went to college to study when i was 18 and i achieved a HND in Music Technology.

DIZ: I have played in many bands and been at music collage for over 5 years to play drums. I like all types of stuff.

**Did anyone of you change the instrument or are you all true to the one with which you started?**

Steve: Russ rejoined on guitar. He was the drummer from when I remember the band. I don't think any others have changed.

**Speaking of your albums, why did you choose to start with a live album? Did you plan this or did it happen by chance?**

Steve: It was by chance. We didn't have a demo and we wanted something on disc to sell at gigs and put online. The sound engineer at a pub in my local town of Doncaster called The Leopard offered us a live recording and we decided to try it. It came out good enough to use and it was quite cheap, so we ended up using it. It was a home made CDR. I was amazed by the response it got online and how many new fans we made all over the world from putting some of the tracks on the Myspace page.

DIZ: We did a live cd because we had the chance to do it. We want to do more recording.

**How does your debut ep Spell of Ruin play into this? Three of the tracks from the live albums – roughly speaking the middle part – appear there as well, but why did you pick these in particular? Is there any chance to hear Fire Nerve or Own Worst Enemy on a forthcoming release again?**

Steve: Spell of Ruin is an old Iron Void song from their time with Andy (Randy Reaper) Whittaker on guitar. I think Sealey wrote the music (He can confirm that below) and original singer Paul Whale (Who has recently popped up as a member of Circulus, which is pretty cool) wrote the lyrics, which are unchanged from the original..

Sealey: We picked the songs we felt would go well together. I also think lyrically they cover similar subjects such as depression, loss and addiction. Also, i wanted to have a mix of old and new songs on the EP. Spell of Ruin is over 10 years old now, it's hard to believe! The other songs were written in the past 3 years. We don't really play Fire Nerve much anymore but Own Worst Enemy is one of Diz's favourite songs to play live so it might make it on to the 1st album.

**Speaking of new music, do you have composed/written/recorded some new stuff already? Are there any plans on another album?**

Steve: We've got 4 or 5 new ones written and we're finishing them off to add to the 2011 set. I would like to re-issue Spell of Ruin in a professional quality release, maybe as a digipak, so it can reach more people. That depends on money, as does releasing anything of course. At this stage the plan is to record and release a full debut album. Whether or not it ends up being another EP for this year just depends on what we can afford and put together. We have enough songs for two albums already. The plan for the album is to mix some brand new stuff with some of the mainstays from the set and a couple of old ones.

DIZ: We have lots of songs to record. The only thing holding us back is money.

**Are you satisfied with the overall sound of Spell of Ruin? Is this the type you have in mind for your band or might you want to progress into other realms; a bit rawer or a bit more powerful?**

Steve: We wanted Spell... to have the same sound musically as us playing live. We got that by recording Diz drumming to me and Sealey playing live. We kept his drum tracks then re-recorded everything else.. and added the vocals, leads, extra guitar, etc. In some ways it was over produced in that we layered quite a few guitar tracks and the vocals too, but overall I think it is the right sound for this EP. Conflict and Demon Drink came out exactly as they are live but with the benefit of being able to finetune the guitar parts and control the solos a lot more. We want to try a different drum sound next time and definitely bring the snare out more. I like the idea of doing a stripped down recording as a power-trio and hearing how that comes out, but we'll still strive for a warm sound with plenty of bass even if we do that.

Sealey: I'd agree with Steve, i'm pretty happy with the overall sound on Spell of Ruin, although there's always room for improvement in my opinion. I think in future we may incorporate more psychedelic elements into the overall sound and use more acoustic guitar on the recordings.

DIZ: I was happy with the recording but we will do better as we get more studio time.

**What makes up the style of your band? If you should describe your music in a few words, then how would you do this?**

Steve: Heavy, honest, spiritual heavy metal doom.

Sealey: We've been described as aggressive Doom before which I quite like, but if i'd have to describe us to someone who'd never heard us before I'd class it as Heavy Metal Doom.

**Currently you have three concerts announced on your MySpace page, any chance to see you outside the UK at any time soon?**

Steve: We're hoping to go overseas as soon as possible. We've been delayed by lack of money basically. And I have to get a passport at last. The three concerts we have on our Myspace are part of a UK mini-tour with Nomad Son from Malta, The Prophecy and Mortalicum. We will be playing Derby, then Doomsday IV festival at The Snooty Fox, Wakefield (tickets available now from Doomanoidrecords.com) and London. We are working on our first batch of T-shirts and hope to have them ready for these dates.

Sealey: I'd love us to start playing shows in Europe next year. We would like to play festivals such as Roadburn, Bloodstock, Hammer of Doom, Dutch Doomdays and Dublin Doom Day, etc. If anyone reading wants to make us an offer then please get in touch.

**What type of audience does show up at your shows anyway? Merely doom-fans or are you able to reach out to other genres as well? What about the average age or the persons?**

Steve: I'd say age range is anything from 18-60+. We've played to a very wide age range at The Snooty Fox, which has become our version of The Ruskin Arms, along with The Leopard before it. When we've played out of town we've mainly played to doom fans as we've booked gigs with bands in that style.. But we have done some shows with Black and Death Metal bands and

gone down great. We played an extreme metal all day in Bradford over the summer and Nightmare Visions the year before and got a good reception from both.

DIZ: Lots of metal heads who want to rock their bollocks off.

**While being in stage, is there a special song you prefer to play before the actual show starts; in the sense of getting in the right mood or when getting the sound right?**

Steve: We don't have one but I have lots of potential ideas. Film music would be good. The theme from Escape From New York, or maybe something by Suspira-era Goblin. Anything Black Sabbath from the Ozzy Osbourne era works well for going OFF stage. Or Utopian Blaster by Cathedral. We usually have the last song played on CD by the DJ/soundman, followed by silence. Then we play.

Sealey: We don't really have the luxury of warming up in a dressing room listening to songs before we go onstage at this stage. I usually make sure I have a couple of beers to drink onstage and have a smoke before we go on, that's my pre-gig ritual.

DIZ: I am the same as Sealey it's good to smoke and drink beer.

**Once in a year I make an update on graphs that reflect the evolution of the metal scene; based on the database of the Metal Archives (releases per genre per year). The last one looked like this:**

[http://c3.ac-images.myspacecdn.com/images02/142/1\\_8c12857c73854c5fb690c050852bb0ee.png](http://c3.ac-images.myspacecdn.com/images02/142/1_8c12857c73854c5fb690c050852bb0ee.png)

**Doom ranks fifth. Do you see this as an accurate depiction of the doom genre? How do you see the development of this type of music?**

Steve: It seems to be growing in all its forms from traditional Candlemass type doom to the more rock sounding side too. It might just be my perspective that has changed as I'm now surrounded with these bands and this sound from running the label. Electric Wizard in their new form are definitely growing in popularity. I would never have imagined in the old Bagshaw/Greening 'Fanatics' days that they'd been on the front cover of anything except maybe High Times.

Sealey: Doom is definitely more popular than it was when I first started listening to it back in the early 90's due to the success of bands like Cathedral and Electric Wizard and I think it has the potential to grow creatively over time. There's so many awesome bands from all over the world and it's the only Metal scene that still grabs my attention.

DIZ: I want it to get darker.

**As one of Iron Void's band members runs Doomanoid Records, it would also be interesting to hear something from his perspective. Are there a lot of young and interesting doom metal bands or is it rather limited to the established ones and do are they (still) able to dominate the scene? Are there any interesting new trends in sight? Would it be possible to present a few bands interesting with a couple of words?**

Steve: I don't think I've signed any band that would really be classified as Doom Metal by die hard fans but they are all Doom. Some are more what I'd call Doom Rock, such as Misty Morning. The closest thing I can see to a trend is the mix of stoner rock and doom styles and the rising stardom of Electric Wizard and bands like High on Fire who cross over styles must be influencing this. I have been in talks with a new instrumental Doom/Rock band from Leeds UK called WIHT (pronounced White). They tell me their music is inspired by the folklore and imagery of the Anglo-Saxon / Viking conflict and The Crusades. The band are recording their album early next year (Feb I think). The omission of vocals means they can forego traditional song arrangements and try whatever they want. I'll have more news on them later. Here is their Myspace URL for those who can get the new Myspace layout to work: <http://www.myspace.com/wihtleeds>. This is the first time I've mentioned them so this is an exclusive. Also, I have just signed a distribution deal with Code7/PHD to get releases into the shops, HMV, Amazon etc in the UK and some of Europe, which can only help. This will start in the new year.

**How do you see the tendency to download a lot of music? Has it changed the scene and how music is appreciated these days; in the sense that the 'free' availability of albums has led to a decrease in the way music is listened to or enjoyed?**

Steve: I have friends who download everything they want for free and hardly buy anything and others who say they hate downloading and want actual CD's and vinyl to collect. They also want to support the bands and labels involved so they can go on. Most of those people seem to be Iron

Void fans which is great. Spell of Ruin is on iTunes and AmazonMp3 right now but the CD is sold out. If you download it from there all the profits will go towards our next recording. Personally I have stopped downloading. Partly out of not wanting to get caught, and also just the cheapening of the whole experience. It feels better to open the CD case and read the booklet of a new album, look at the cover, etc and a well made vinyl pressing will stay with you a lifetime. I still have playable vinyl I bought 2nd hand when I was 16 that is older than me and it still sounds great. I don't see Mp3 downloads and listening via an iPod as a real alternative to the genuine experience of being a fan and opening up the gatefold double LP of your favourite band and finding a ltd edition patch, a poster, a free 7" vinyl and two 12" red vinyl discs inside. I have always wanted to produce vinyl releases and now it is just a question of funding them. I think they will continue for many years but we'll see more of the ltd 500 copy diehard editions and coloured vinyl purely aimed at fans and collectors. Casual listeners will download whether it's illegal or paid for I think, as younger music fans will not remember the 'old days' of our youth collecting music. Both Planet Doom compilation Cd's were an attempt to bridge this gap somehow, not necessarily make a lot of money. Volume Two has exclusive cover art by The Perverted Old Goatess and liner notes. There are that many free comps to download now I thought it might be cool to have a ltd edition CD as something a bit more collectible, but still not expensive. I'm undecided if there will be any more as I move on to larger pressings and the free compilations take over. They make sense as far as the music scene is concerned as they are all new bands. I would be happy to stop at two rather than trot out loads with the same tracks that bands are offering free from Doom Metal Alliance and many more. But the CD's are great cult collectors items and I'm proud of them both. I just think two might be enough.

Sealey: I've never downloaded any music personally, i've always bought CD's, tapes and vinyl. I think it has ruined the industry in a way cos loads of record shops have closed due to the decline in CD sales but then again it does mean you don't get over charged for buying music anymore. I also think some of the younger music fans will quite happily download music for free and not attend live shows like everyone used to which is a real shame. Maybe it's just my viewpoint though, i am getting on a bit these days! (Laughs)

#### **I would like to have your opinion on these five tracks:**

Steve: I managed to download the tracks and listen to them. I don't know if Sealey and Diz got hold of them though. It's like a blindfold test of random bands. Here goes.

#### **Solomon Kane - The Dread**

<http://www.myspace.com/solomondoom>

Steve: The first one sounds like a really old Electric Wizard live recording like the ones on SuperCoven, mixed with Sabbath. I like the raw production, is it just a tape recorder in the room?

#### **Thou - Lord of This World**

<http://noladiy.org/thou>; <http://www.myspace.com/thouband>

Steve: Black Sabbath! 'Lord of this world! Evil possessor! Lord of this world. He's your confessor now!' Only much heavier. Can't place the band covering them though. Sounds like GoatSnake with Khanate doing the vokills. This is what Sabbath would probably sound like if they were starting out today. It's a great cover.

#### **Queen Elephantine - To Tartarus**

<http://queenelephantine.cifrecords.com/music.html>

Steve: This makes me think of the pyramids. Is this Om?

#### **A Dream of Poe - Lady of Shalott (Short Version)**

<http://www.myspace.com/dreamofpoe>

Steve: Very slow melodic doom metal. Quite intense. The vocals got to me a bit in the middle. They create quite a morbid vibe that is very heavy indeed.

#### **L'Ira del Baccano - Don Bastiano**

<http://www.iradelbaccano.it/>

Steve: The first half of this song reminds me of Wooly Mammoth, who did the Night Letters split CD with The Hidden Hand a few years back. Then towards the end it sounds like a less melodic version of Valkyrie. Only instrumental. And live.

**How can people contact you and where can they buy your releases? Your debut ep has just sold out, might there be a repress in the future?**

Steve: The Ep sold out as it was one of my last 100 copy CDR pressings. A re-issue is planned for the new year at some point. If money remains tight we may decide to release a new one first instead but it will be out again soon either way. For now the mp3 is on iTunes and Amazon. All the other label releases are available. The online shop deals with PayPal and has a growing stock in the distro as well as the label releases. <http://www.doomanoidrecords.com>

**2010 seems to be a bad year for the metal scene. Peter Steele died and Ronnie James Dio is also no more ... just to name some prominent examples. It is a tragedy isn't it?**

Steve: It's not been great has it?

Sealey: It has been sad to see so many Metal legends pass away this year including our friend Jay Jay Winter from Asomvel, RIP. They will all be missed but never forgotten. As long as their music remains, they will live on forever.

**Any final words?**

Steve: Thanks for taking the time to do the interview. We're forging ahead with Iron Void and I am expanding Doomanoid Records in the new year. I hope you all enjoy the new songs when they are finished.

Sealey: Thank you for the interview, we'll see you on the road in 2011! Doom On!!!

DIZ: Thanks for the interview and bang your head and praise satan.



## Main Review section:

### Schrei aus Stein

(USA; Ambient, Black Metal, Noise)

<http://www.myspace.com/schreiausstein>; <http://www.starlighttemplesociety.com/>; <http://www.crucialblast.net/>

'Schrei aus Stein' is a young band from the USA and once you dare to listen to some of their compositions, you will discover music that comes in a strange and weird kind of way. This is even truer of their second output Tsisnaasjini; whatever this word refers to. Anyway, the band name was taken from German and can be translated to Scream of Stone; imagine something like a Gothic stature whose face or even gesture might give the impression of screaming. The actual phrasing is something rather uncommon in the German tongue but can be found as a metaphor in novels or the sort. So, something familiar with this tongue would be able to understand the meaning behind these words.

### Schrei aus Stein – Talos

5 Tracks (CDr – Starlight Temple Society) - \_ - \_ - (57:30)

A glance on the Metal Archives profile of the band and a short visit on the MySpace profile – to give the music of SaS a try – might lead to some sort of confusion. Black Metal/Ambient is the way this band was/is labelled, but this description falls short of what is actually going on here. Talos, either a giant or a bronze automaton or a bronze statue from the Greek mythology (1), is much more complex than these two terms might suggest.

First of all, the metal aspect should not be stretched over access here. Even though some such moments can be discovered on this album, the overall tendency points rather to the ambient/ noise region. This is of special importance in case someone takes a look at the track list. Even though nearly all of the compositions tend to break out of the normal scheme, two of them take it to extremier levels: Lenticulars with nearly sixteen minutes and Foehn with nearly nineteen. It is especially in these that the ambient and noise characteristics are able to unfold their potential – qualitatively as well as quantitatively – best.

'Schrei aus Stein' merge those three facets together in a very neat and consistent kind of way. Throughout the entire release some sort of flow and dense atmosphere is created, which is never ever really disturbed. Held in grey the cover depicts scenery in a mountainous area, with broke rocks in a barren landscape, surrounded by a thick mist. Desolation and loneliness are the first two impressions that would come to the mind, further would be the iciness and darkness. To expect life in such region is rather unlikely and even if some species are actually able to exist in such a barren or hostile environment, then these appear rather on a small scale or only in certain seasons of the year.

As only a small amount of tracks can be found on this recording and as these differ significantly from each other, it is best to discuss them separately:

Serac (2) opens Talus and as it begins with some repetitive play of the guitar, it later progresses into some ambient music, which has a guitar texture in the background. Further, some icy and distorted voice appears somewhere in the background as well and it helps to increase the atmosphere of the music a bit.

Lenticulars would be the second track and in style it offers an interesting combination of what has been laid out above. A metal-influenced part opens this track – guitars create a vague texture in the background, accompanied by a slow drum pattern – while a noisy guitar texture together with the whispering kind of vocals



work as some sort of a counterpoint; the gentle play of the keyboards fit into this as well.

Couloir's first segment comes with some guitar noises and opens in a rather slow manner. Later, the music switches towards something more metal inspired: a dense layer of the guitars in the background, ambient/drone textures, a monotonous drum-computer (whose play works actually pretty neat with the performance) and on top of it all are some vocals; a mixture between speaking and croaking. The whole composition combines a general monotonous attempt with a well crafted atmosphere.

Foehn (3) is more eclectic in style and combines black metal facets with longer ambient segments. So, while the first six minutes or so have guitars, vocals and all this stuff, the part thereafter is pretty minimalist with some vague noise textures, whose arrangement increases over time. After minute twelve ... vocals and melody appear again, but in an experimental fashion; especially the voice is great somehow, as it resembles the passing of wind and reminds in whisperings in the wind; see old horror movies for instance.

The last track of this album would be Crevasses (4). Even though the opening might suggest another voyage into the ambient realms, the music actually progresses into something metal-influenced. Fast drums, a guitar layer in the background with some additional play of the guitar (rather noise) on top of it.

It is a complex as well as weird release. Even though some constant elements can be found, those differing ones are apparent equally. SaS want the listener to take this trip through realms of metal, noise and ambient. It might not be an easy one, but it is a fascinating one nonetheless.

Note:

This release comes in a DVD box with one double-sided piece of paper, which has some basic information on it.

- (1) <http://www.theoi.com/Gigante/GiganteTalos.html>
- (2) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serac>
- (3) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foehn\\_wind](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foehn_wind)
- (4) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crevasse>

**Schrei aus Stein – Tsisnaasjini**

(3 Tracks – Crucial Blaze) -\_-\_- (39:38)

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Release number two of this band and compared with the debut output, a step in a different but not surprising direction was being taken. The music has taken a leap towards something more consistent and with more of a flow. Actually, would it not be for some small breaks at the beginning and the end of each track respectively; then the whole album could work as one long piece. Especially the Light on Wings and Like Arctic Moons work together nicely, not only through the way they lead up to each other, but also in terms of the atmospheres and facets.

Tsisnaasjini opens rather calm and gentle, with an ambient/drone track, one of whose main facets is a dense guitar structure, which, even though not in the background, creates nothing more than the basic setting for the art. Despite a rather minimalist opening, Light on Wings evolves in complexity and leaves those wind-like textures behind, moves on to something more metal oriented, but it never reaches this level, as laid out



above. Aside from this it is interesting to hear the unfolding of the melody. From some vaguely discernable or identifiable wind sounds, over a slightly oscillating (white?) noise texture to something with vocals the line was drawn and the listener is gently taken by the hand, lead through this desolate, eerie and barren musical sphere. Well, there appears a voice now and then in the composition, but its sound is nothing except an indiscernible noise, something that creates a distortion of the atmosphere, yet the message remains unknown.

Like Arctic Moons, the second track, takes on with the music gapless ... nearly gapless ... because there is a gap ... a small one... then two

drumbeats and off it goes. Here, the music resembles much more of a metal composition; not only because of the larger emphasis on the guitars as well as the riffs, but also through the way the music actually progresses. In style memories on depressive/ambient black metal are woken and even though the style is a bit too minimalist at times, along with a too large focus on repetitiveness, the composition itself remains quite interesting and atmospheric. In contrast to the opener of Tsisnaasjini the second track progresses in the inverse direction and become more minimalist and noisy towards the end. So, the listener is basically been taken back from where this person started.

Number three and this would also be the last composition on this album, stands a bit aside from the previous two. Not so much in the concept, but rather in the atmosphere with which the music is approached here. Nearly right from the start the metal parts take over and they take the listener even into some blast beat dominated regions. Nevertheless, the quieter and bleaker ambient facets appear also here on a larger scale. The mixture between these two elements appears with a considerable amount of contrast in Vague as Blown Smoke. Whether it is also the best, is something that would be hard to decide, because in style the music has shifted a bit. Aside from this, the general tendency to take back speed, metalness and aggressiveness are also persistent in this track and similar to the two preceding compositions, also this one closes rather calm and laid back.

The basic elements of this release are an ambient structure with drone and noise facets, whose part is accompanied by metal segments. It is a complex as well as impressive piece of art, whose atmospheres leave little to be desired. Compared with the first output everything sounds more coherent now, work together in a better and more profound way. This American band seems to have an idea on not only on how to approach the ambient genre, but also on how to put metal along with other facets together. A first glimpse can be listened to on this very album. Hopefully, something even better will be released in the future.

#### To sum the impressions up:

The description of the band at the Metal Archives point towards a different and misleading direction and this has to do with the breadth of Schrei aus Stein's art. Black metal and ambient – those are the two terms used for describing the music – reflects by no means what a listener will go through on the recordings. Not only do these fall short of even grasping the wide array of different approaches on both recordings, also in terms of the total amount of influences much more should be added to the description in order to account for what the listener is experiencing on both recordings.

Ambient and black metal – along with the depressive branch – is something that has received some attention lately and a lot of bands try to bring this facet into their way of composing music. Yet, all too often this leads to bland and pretty boring results. Schrei aus Stein are different ... they are different in a lot of respect. Here, a dense unity was established and it is more than a pleasure to enjoy the high level of music that was written and arranged here; especially on their second output. There is a flow, there is this wonderful merging of pieces into a convincing framework. Tsisnaasjini is a surreal piece of music, different by many standards and an album that will leave an impact on the listener.

#### Note:

Both releases come in a DVD case, while the second one has also a sticker and two pins in it.



## **Deathlike**

(Norway; Death Metal)

<http://www.myspace.com/deathlikeband>

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In the previous edition of this magazine some light on the Norwegian band The Black Gates had been shed, while this time Deathlike is moved into the focus. Both of them are related, because Aquilion(Ar) is the head behind both of them; yet in terms of the actually style of music they differ significantly. While the former plays – as outlined in edition number X – black metal, the latter sticks to a rather old-school-inspired form of death metal. A similarity can be identified in a general aversion towards modern sounds.

### **Deathlike (2007)**

10 Tracks (CDr – Self-released) -\_- - (31:56)

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The debut output of the Norwegian death metal band saw the light of day four years after The Black Gate's Anti Christian War Campaign Part I output. So, while the black metal seems to have been put to rest then, death metal was able to rise. Ten compositions appear on the self-titled demo and in length they are generally rather short (0:29-6:34; ø 3,19). Several months were spent on the recording – December 2006 to March 2007 – and you can hear this in the way the instruments are balanced and their overall sound.

One short intro and then the death metal is unleashed upon the listener. Fast, influenced by the old-school branch of the genre and with some nice solos now and then, Deathlike, similar to the aforementioned The Black Gate, play anything but modern music. Nocturnus without the keyboards, Autopsy, Cadaver come to the mind while listening to this first output of the Norwegians.

Three out of ten compositions are instrumental interludes without any metal part whatsoever, while the other ones vary in their level of intensity. Even though there is a clear emphasis on faster death metal, the band tends to take back the tempo a bit now and then; The 13<sup>th</sup> hour. Aside from this, barrage after barrage of riffs are thrown at the listener and the band seems to be unwilling to take any prisoner; the music here is a stark contrast to The Black Gate, whose art is more atmospheric and complex, even though similarities in the sound can be identified.

A slightly negative aspect of the music are the vocals. While some style of croaking might be expected, the slightly bloodless attempt fails a bit to create a certain amount of fascination as well as to be clearly distinguishable from the instruments; the latter have simply too much power and are too dominant ... with the obvious results. Accordingly, the listener might feel a bit bored with what the vocalist is attempting to perform.

Nevertheless, the music of the first demo is quite listenable, even though it has some slight weaknesses. Whether or not these might bother someone depends on personal preferences.

### **Enmity (2009)**

12 Tracks (CDr – Self-released) -\_- - (50:02)

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Some amount of time has been spend on Enmity, because when the recording session came closer to its end, the band was not entirely satisfied with the result and decided to nearly start from point zero again; three tracks remained while the other ones were scrapped. As in the booklet and also on their MySpace site no clues are given which of the original ones had been preserved, it is rather guesswork which compositions of Enmity are those that had been left intact. Yet, this is not really important when it comes to measure the quality of this release, but still worth to be noted because it reflects the attitude of the band towards their art.

An industrial influenced intro opens the release, but soon a barrage of death metal is unleashed upon the listener. No keyboards, no too technical or progressive elements can be found, this is death metal how it used to be. Somehow brutal and aggressive, sounds and feels like a bunch of heavy tanks that steamroll the botanic and nothing would be there to stop them; tree huggers are crushed or shot on sight of course. With the exception of the intro/outro/interlude (Tears of Eve) each composition is a merciless beast of death metal. The music is driven by the lead-guitars in the fast compositions, in the slower ones their impact is less, while the vocals fill the missing gap. Yes, two different styles offered here and even though the band seems to feel more comfortable in the faster regions, the slower ones do not sound being displaced, but are rather those in which the band can prove their ability to create a dense atmosphere. Plains Of Meggido for instance opens rather slow -- there is a good deal of doom in the way the riffs are played --, progresses in tempo in the solo-parts -- the lead-guitars in the foreground and the dense wall of guitars in the background is really cool and heavy as hell -- and slightly above the half of the length the doom path is abandoned and

the band proceeds towards their normal style again; towards the end of both facets join together in harmony. Together with the preceding track Tears Of Eve, an interlude with clean spoken vocals, and the succeeding one Extremum, the instrumental outro of the album, a neat trio, which comes with different atmosphere, tempi and styles, found its way on this release and creates an interesting unity.

Generally though, Deathlike tries to stick to death metal in vein of early Morbid Angel and focuses on rather fast played music, rather linear song-writing and a dense wall of guitars with some occasional solo interludes. The quality is on a high level and over the course of the album, the tension and atmosphere is kept up and this has to do with the attitude of the band to compose music. Again and again new ideas appear and they are not limited to basic aspects like the riff structure, but can also be examined in the timing of the vocals; these do not always follow the melody line but work in the sense of a counterpoint, which is fine and shifts the attention a bit. When it comes to the performance, then really little is left to be desired. Cool riffs, catchy melodies and the whole album or better said demo, sounds very coherent and no annoying aspects would overshadow positive ones; the problem lies elsewhere.

When there is one aspect that needs to be criticized than it is the drums or maybe even just the snare, but when it comes to this instrument then there is something wrong; at least Deathlike did not use a drum-computer, so my rant on the short-comings which can generally be associated with this instrument would lead in the wrong direction. Yet, some of the arguments that could be brought forth for this 'tool' also apply here, because the play is occasionally a little bit too monotonous and without dynamic. Further is the sound of the drums not optimal: the snare is too sterile, while the bass-drum got somehow lost; it simply disappeared and except for some blasts or rare moments in the slow compositions they are not clearly distinguishable from the rest. Even though this is a short-coming, there is nevertheless bass in the background and the music has a good deal of volume.

#### Final bits and bytes

It is good to see bands spending some amount of time on the process of writing and recording the music; which can lead to turn ideas and already finished songs down and maybe even to start all over again. Deathlike did it and the outcome is quite good, but I would like to see the music more varied and the whole approach better produced and mixed. Solos are nice; the song-writing is good and everything smells like having been put in a coffin for at least for a decade. Nevertheless, with a more balanced approach between fast and slower compositions, the release would be much better; *Plaines Of Meggido* has some really nice doomy parts, but music in such a style, such highly atmospheric pieces, is simply too rare on this demo. Well, others might think different and this is a really good release after all.

Combine the German Warhammer (sound of the vocals/growls) with music similar to that of Bolt Thrower and old Morbid Angel and you get Deathlike.

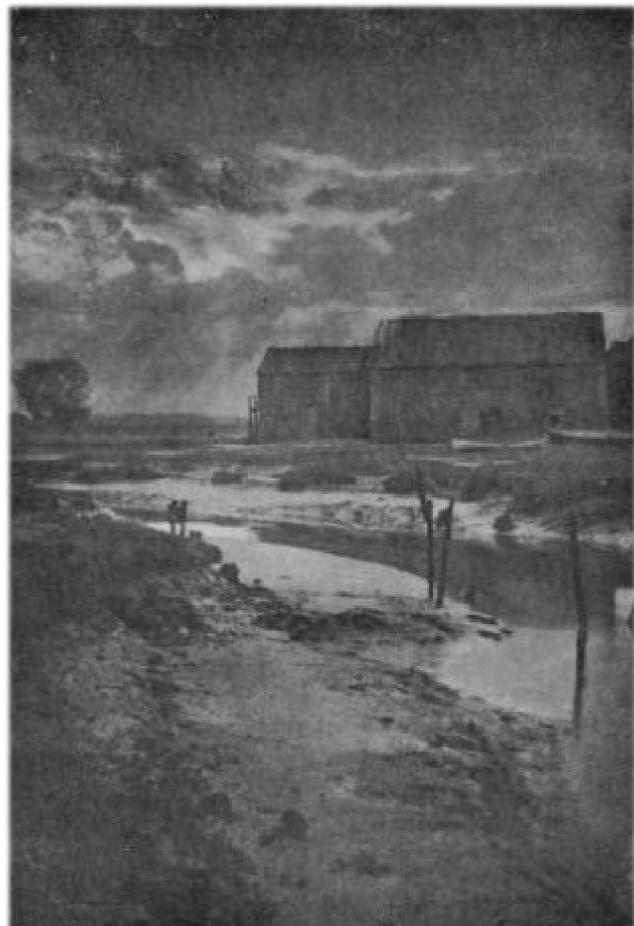
#### Recommended:

*Plaines of Meggido* (+ *Tears of Eve*), Coronarch, The Dark Art

(Polished version of the one posted at the Metal Archives)

#### To sum the impressions up a bit:

Both releases differ from each other and this is only natural, because several years lie between them. While Deathlike has more shorter and straightforward compositions, *Enmity* offers a bit more complex art. The second demo has also better vocals, but comes with a strange abrasive sound in the guitars. Furthermore, the music has become darker and more sinister. So, while the first output was basically some sort of straightforward death metal, the second one is much more complex and provides the listener with a larger variety of facets. Was Deathlike something like a tank that would steamroll the landscape, *Enmity* of much more of a



battleship; more powerful and with a larger range as well as potential. You can clearly hear the development of the music over the years ... in both bands. Hopefully, the band will be able to get a drummer soon, because those drum-computer noises always tend to give me a hard time. Aside from this, The Black Gate as well as Deathlike have created some music I can definitely enjoy. Sadly, they have received little attention outside smaller circles so far ... hopefully this will change in the future.

### Muhmood – 6200 miles of silence

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(Russia; Noise)

4 Tracks (MP3 – Netlabel: Noecho records) - \_ \_ \_ - (68:11)

<http://www.noechorecords.com/www/releases/muhmood-6200-miles-of-silence;>

The title alone leaves a lot of space open for discussion. 6200 Miles of Silence sound not only like a gigantic distance, but it further leaves open on how this silence can be interpret or even felt. Silence is a strange word, because 'pure' silence is something quite rare on this planet; I remember that I have read or heard that in certain parts of Argentina such can actually be experienced: on the high plateaus there are not only very few people, also animals are quite rare and in case no wind creates some vaguely discernable noises, the feeling of pure silence surrounds the person ... only to be broken by all that is emitted by oneself.

Muhmood is an artists whose works had been covered before; edition number 4 (under the name Alexei Biryukoff. Again, field recordings were used for creating this piece of art but unlike the other and earlier discussed release, here everything was merged together in four rather long compositions. The homepage provides the following insights on the art: *it is a journey of electricity through the huge power lines making its way across the rural Siberian territories.* (Source: <http://www.muhmood.net/sound/6200/6200.htm>). Some additional information is presented on the label site; link above. Furthermore, also pictures were made available along with the music, so it is possible to get at least some sense on how the scenery in this part of the world looks like.

What about the music, then? Noise meets drone would lay out the basic characteristics of this recording. Unlike other noise releases, here this strange kind of source of the 'sound' adds to it a surprisingly touch. The tracks have oscillating effects as well as in the level of their volume. So, while there are generally rather multiple layers of noises, they way these do actually appear tend to differ significantly. Sometimes there is an industrial touch, and then there is a mixture between dark ambient and noise, while the latter of these also like to play a dominant role at times. From the mere listening, the origin of these sounds cannot be



discerned, but the utter deprivation of anything that anyone could associate with nature or the environment, makes this release interesting in some respect. A general tendency is also the slowness with which the effects flow or progress. Steady and without much of haste the evolution of the music takes place. While the electrons shoot at high speed through the electric lines, the listener is left bedazzled about the strange contraptions man has created and what kind of sounds these can actually create.

Muhmood's art tends to be quite cold and distant. It is hard to get thoroughly immersed in the recording; because there are rarely facets to which to turn to and whose part would be some sort of a guiding line for the listener. Only vaguely everything can be discerned and man feels isolated and bereft of everything natural as well as familiar.

## **Smoke – Haze**

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(Netherlands; Raw Black Metal)

10 Tracks (Tape – Hair on My Food Records) -\_-\_- (46:57)

<http://myspace.com/haironmfoodtapesrecords>; <http://www.myspace.com/smokebm>

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This stuff is raw ... really raw ... excessively raw. It seems that any meaningful production or balancing was avoided like plague while recording this piece of dark and sinister art. So, what can you expect from music whose dominant facets are the drums and noisy guitars? Well, it depends on the song-writing and the balancing of all facets of the oeuvre. In case of the Dutch band Smoke these matters seem to be generally ignored.

And this becomes sort of a problem the longer the tape progresses. The violent style and emphasis of rawness distorts the perception of the music to a great deal. Everything you are able to experience are the pikes in the sound but rarely anything that lies beyond it all. There is nothing with a lasting impression, nothing to which one could point as a positive aspect. Haze is noisy but generally too bland and uninteresting to encourage the listener to take more than one spin. Such rehearsal room recordings are nothing uncommon in the black metal scene, but they are often quite an ambiguous experience ... like here. Despite all the attempts of Smoke to avoid anything modern and nice like plague, the band is simply unable to come up with something viable and listenable. This demo tape drowns in the band's self set pretentiousness.

## **Labolas Knights – Lost Between Thorns**

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(Germany; Black Metal)

10 Tracks (Tape – Der Neue Weg) -\_-\_- (50:32)

<http://www.myspace.com/labolasknights>; <http://www.myspace.com/derneueweg>

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Lost Between Thorns, ey? Is this the reason the musician behind this band tends to scream at times? Aside from this, the name is also a bit confusing. Glasya-Labolas seems to be the obvious reference and he would be a mighty president in Hell, whose ability would be to make man invisible; his power is not limited to this but this seems like the one worth mentioning. Labolas Knights refers therefore to one of the soldiers of the thirty-six legions that are under his command. So, instead of referring to some obscure and might deity, the person behind this German black metal band seems to be comfortable with the role of a cheap soldier.

Well, it is a one-man black metal band ... again. It seems hardly surprising when it comes to this genre, because bands of this type seem to pop-up every day anew. Luckily, this German one seems to be able to write some decent melodies and have spent more than three seconds on the song-writing. Even though not consistent in quality, the title track has some really nice melodies and is quite listenable. A similar impression is what obtrudes upon the listener throughout the whole release again and again.

In terms of the music one aspect is striking: the black metal sounds German. No, this has nothing to do with the lyrics, but rather the whole atmosphere and approach. Whether this is good or bad depends on the personal preferences. To me, though, this type of music tends to give me a slightly hard time. Lost Between Thorns was actually well produced, the guitars have a nice sound as well as a lot of power and also the vocals are able to add something positive to the whole approach. The band used a drum-computer, but it is also not able to disturb me a lot. What disturbs is the song-writing and the arrangements in some respect; also the rhythm in the vocals – yes, I am definitely not kidding here. Everything is simply a bit too nice and follows maybe not a predictable, but still a too common approach.

The music has a sound that is somehow icy but does not attempt to follow bands like Mystic Circle or similar embarrassing examples of the German black metal genre. Keyboards play a role, though on a scale that leaves much room for the rest of the instruments. Therefore, it is possible to avoid the whole thing from moving too much into the realm of cheesiness. As I generally have little interest in the German black metal scene, it is difficult to point to some well known examples. In a review the writer pointed towards Pagan influences and this is something that came to my mind as well. Further, fans of rather modern music with an old-school vibe, some death metal influences and a fancy for catchy tunes might want to give this demo release a try. It is not bad ... it is just too German for me.

### Note:

When I am informed correctly, the first edition of this release is already sold out. Nevertheless, a download link was provided by the band parallel to the selling of the tape and this one is still available. Whether or not a re-release is planned or even underway, lies beyond the knowledge of the reviewer.

## 11 As In Adversaries – The Full Intrepid Experience of Light

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(France; Various styles)

6 Tracks (CD – ATMF) - \_ \_ - (40:00)

<http://www.myspace.com/11asinadversaries>; <http://www.atmf.net/>

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A weird name ... I'd say. Well, at least the band provides some explanation on their MySpace page:

*The meaning of our name lies within a numerological context where 'ELEVEN' stands for what is beyond 'TEN', numbers from 1 to 10 are representative of the law/order and cosmic completion. 11 is a manifestation of freedom and rebellion for its magick can bring one to defy the limitations imposed by the Demiurge. There are actually eleven letters in the word 'adversaries', so: 11 As In A D V E R S A R I E S.*

(Source: <http://www.myspace.com/11asinadversaries>)

Guess what, the music is actually able to reflect some of the freaky stuff written above. Outside the ordinary, this is what the listener can find on this album. A strange arrangement of ideas and approaches, something definitely not normal and something that needs some time until it is able to unfold its fascination. While metal facets tend to dominate the release, punk, ambient and rock elements appear as well. The clean vocals have a striking resemblance to the ones of Draighean of Geasa but performed on a higher level and without those odd 'of the mark' parts; The Night Scalper Challenger for instance. Aside from these also punk/hardcore influenced ones, screams and some sort of croaking can be found on this album.

To describe the music is actually quite difficult and the reasons were laid out above. 11 As In Adversaries' art follows not a generic or predictable pattern, whose core essences can be identified throughout the entire release in one way or another. Each of the compositions has their own atmosphere and therefore it is difficult to find some sort of red line in the music. From ambient over rockish to black metal influenced ranges the breadth of the concept. Compared with a band like Civil Defiance their art is still 'ear-friendly' and limited, but the general idea might have been similar.

The French band wants a lot ... really a lot. Variety and the freedom to pursue a lot of different paths seem to have been a guiding line while composing this piece of art. Basically every new track has another set of ideas and attempts to take the listener in a new direction. Furthermore, the music is complex and generally well produced as well as interesting. Nonetheless, the goals the band might have set for them look like to have been a bit too challenging. The opener, a thirteen minutes bastard, is already difficult to swallow, but this is would not be the only exception. Throughout the rest of the album, the band loses the focus again and again. Concepts meander between fascination and boredom; something that leaves the listener a bit bewildered at times. Agitation in the Glorious Theme is a strange punk/hardcore/rock influenced piece, while the succeeding The Night Scalper Challenger is more in a metal fashion and comes much tighter as well as focussed. This is odd to listen to. There are some really cool moments on The Full Intrepid Experience of Light, but they are a bit drowned by the inability of the band to know what they actually want to play.



## Procession of Death – L'imbecile Beatitude

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(France; Black Metal)

5 Tracks (CDr – Self-released) - \_ \_ - (15:25)

<http://www.myspace.com/processionofdeath>

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Three times black metal and two times dark ambient. This is what can be found on the first demo release of the French band Procession of Death; they appear on a split album as well, but this would be their only independent output so far ... as far as I know. Anyway, the black metal part of this demo comes in a rather dark and raw sound. Nevertheless, balancing issues are not too graven in some of the compositions, which seem to have been recorded over several sessions; so, there are some changes in the sound: from good to ambivalent. It should be noted though that the bass has quite an impact on the music and was not drowned by the other instruments or the vocals.

The music is not actually bad. It follows the underground formula of avoiding anything modern, having rather simple composed rhythm patterns and a focus on rather melodic midtempo black metal; L'Antithese would be a bit faster though. Croaking vocals complete the impression and despite flaws in the production as well as an approach, whose concept is anything but new, the demo is actually quite listenable. Glimpses of some neat ideas in the melodies can be discovered in the black metal compositions and also the dark ambient parts (Intro & L'Enterrement) were crafted in a neat way. So, a solid first attempt for a first demo.

### **Josef Nadek – [Zak] (Uncut)**

(Austria; Noise, Ambient, Drone)

1 Track (CDr – Self-released) -\_-\_- (27:10)

<http://www.myspace.com/josefnadek>

The perhaps strangest aspect of this recording is the title: [Zak] (Uncut). What has been cut? The length? Some samples? Hard to say, because the releases comes merely as a paper hull and without a booklet or the sort to give an indication or explanation on this matter. Also the Internet remains silent in this respect and even though Discogs has both releases listed, no further insights on this matter can be gained whatsoever.

Aside this from this, who or what is [Zak]? A rather vague description is presented on the paper hull:

*When there's no more room in hell, [Zak] will walk the earth...*

Well, it does not help to clear up matters much, but at least a minor glimpse is presented.

Anyway, on this album nothing but one track can be found and with over twenty-seven minutes it is also pretty long. In style it is a mixture between various noise elements – crackling, samples, industrial ones –, which were placed into an ambient/drone environment. Over the whole length, there is little variation in the basic elements of the compositions and only those noisy facets tend to shift in intensity, appearance and combination. Through some strange beat-like elements a vague idea of dynamic is created and the listener has at least the chance to identify a certain steadiness or continuity. Everything is kept steady and slightly monotonous. Oscillation as well as reverb appear in some respect and create the impression of a certain process which is repeated endlessly in some way or another. There is a sterile and distant touch to this release, due to the arrangements of sounds and noises, whose identity can hardly be fathomed.

By the way, the ending has a bit of an ironic twist and as I do not want to spoil it, you have to listen to it by yourself.

The Lovecraft-inspired output was able to fascinate me more than this.



## Zajal – For the Throne

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(Egypt; Death Metal)

7 Tracks (MP3 – Netlabel: Torn Flesh Records; CD – Set Productions) -\_-\_- (25:03)

<http://setproductions.web.officelive.com/>; <http://www.myspace.com/zajalband>;

<http://www.archive.org/details/TFR153-Zajal-ForTheThrone>

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Well, well, well, another band from an Islamic country has been washed on the metal shores. Even though their music can be downloaded from the Torn Flesh Records entry at the Internet Archives, this first demo is also available on CD by the Egyptian label Set Productions. So, there are two possible ways to get it.

Zajal – see the Wikipedia link below for a longer explanation on the name – refers to a *traditional form of oral strophic poetry*, which can be found in several Mediterranean countries. How the band, the music and the lyrics fit into this is hard to figure out with not much information at hand – this review was written on the download –, but maybe this matter will be cleared up at some point in the future. Anyway, the music is death metal with some hints on the brutal subgenre. Oriental influences can be found in some keyboard parts as well, but as these appear in a slightly cheesy and cheap fashion it is not possible to thoroughly enjoy these; but this can be expected on the (first) demo of a band from a small scene.

The music itself is actually quite good and has a lot of power and drive. Especially the use of a drummer has a positive effect on how the art is perceived. In style the music switches between fast and Exhumed inspired death metal, while slower passages try to create the intensity Cannibal Corpse is able to once the tempo drops. Yet, the former of the styles dominate the music clearly and those twenty-five minutes are filled with merciless blasts. Also the cover version of a Death track was done quite well and as also the production is actually good, not much can be criticized here. A more than solid first demo.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zajal>

## Praetorian – To Dwell in Darkness

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(USA; Black Metal)

6 Tracks (MP3 – Netlabel: Torn Flesh Records) -\_-\_- (34:26)

<http://www.archive.org/details/TFR177-Praetorian-ToDwellInDarkness>; [www.myspace.com/praetorianny](http://www.myspace.com/praetorianny);

<http://praetorian.bandcamp.com>

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The name of the band creates some amount of confusion. 'The Praetorian' would be a conservative newspaper located at the University of California, Riverside, and it can seriously be called into question whether a black metal would use this as a concept for their band. Closer to the truth would be a reference to the Roman Empire or to be more precise the title of the person who was in charge of the army; the Praetor. Well, the Anglicisation of names or words looks a bit strange at times, but there you go.

In terms of the music, the band does not venture back too far in time and sticks to something more recent: modern black metal with influences from some other genres as well, a polished powerful production and an emphasis on ear-friendly art. After a short acoustic introduction, a venture into the dark realm takes off. Dimmu Borgir meets the Italian Graveworm, a bit of Old Man's Child thrown in and a good amount of the ingredients of this piece of art is complete. Keyboards play a crucial role in the music, as their play tends to dominate the rest of the music at times. Another aspect of the music is the guitars and their emphasis on melodic riffs and motives. Black Metal meets melodic death metal; short bursts and a bit of chugging seems as one natural element of the music along with vanishing now and then for no apparent reason.

The music is not particularly bad – in case you have a fancy for the modern interpretation of the black metal art –, it simply lacks a bit of convincing aspects. At times the music switches a bit for no apparent reason and fails to give an indication on the reasons why the abrupt change has taken place. In other words, some ideas sound a bit too artificial and lack the flow they would need in order to keep the attention of the listener. Aside from this, the song-writing is more than solid and the band is able to create some amount of fascination; even though the part of vocalist was too optimistic and fewer lyrics would have been better.

Well ... a more than solid start for the band, but one that comes with some minor flaws.

## Janaza – Burning Quran Ceremony

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(Iraq; Black Metal)

5 Tracks (CD -- Black Metal Rituals) - \_-\_- (12:34)

<http://www.thearabicantiislamiclegion.tk/>; <http://www.blackmetalrituals.byethost4.com/Main.html>

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It was 2010 and the frenzy or better said a certain rise in Islamophobia in the US reached a peak, as a public burning of the Qur'an was announced by Terry Jones, a senior pastor of the Dove World Outreach Center. After a spark of international outrage he stepped back from this intentions, contrary to evangelist David Grisham, director of Christian activist group Repent Amarillo. With a Qu'ran ready and doused with kerosene, he wanted to execute this burning, but was also finally unable to as Jacob Isom, an Amarillo resident, snatched it from the grill and flew with it. Afterwards he received some praises for his 'bravery' and this youtube video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HX5-ulcdXc>) presents the whole incident with a pretty sick beat.

So ... what about Janaza, then? The title of the release reminds a bit on Nile's outputs and the there presented textual references to old Egyptian burial ceremonies. Compared with the American band, the music of the Iraqi (!) one-female (!! ) black metal one is much more direct and outspoken; see the Iranian band Halla's first demo release for another example. You just need to take a look at the opener and its lyrics to get an idea of the approach this band follows. Disgust and hatred for the Islam pours out of every hole, while the whole concept reaches extreme levels NS bands only dare to dream of.

Black metal always had quite a peculiar love affair with religion, but the focus had generally been on Christianity; while a criticism of Judaism was generally – and rightfully – avoided out of fear of being labelled as being 'anti-Semite'; the introduction of politics as well as agendas into the spectrum of the black metal circus has shifted the focus as well as the conceptual environment a bit, with the outcome that the retard level has reached unprecedented heights. Anyway, similar to the early stages of the Western development of the genre, also the Eastern Islamic regions use this extreme kind of music for their purpose and it is thereby brought back to one of their core conceptual elements.

Also in another respect the approach takes a leap towards something a bit frowned upon today: raw and rather bedroom 'sounding' music. With not many musicians available and with general restrictions in recording the music, a rather primitive as well as limited sound comes along; several examples can be brought up without difficulties: Ayyur, Barbaros, Halla, Al-Namrood, Freezing Moon (Iran) etc. Janaza's music itself does not bring the music to a new level, but it is interesting nonetheless. Contrary to other Arabic bands, here samples do not work as something to give some hints on the cultural richness of the environment in which it was crafted; rather like a parody of the absurdity of the (hostile) social-cultural sphere is presented; similar to what is being done in the electronic genre. As translations are presented in the lyrics, even Westerners, whose language skills exclude Arabic, are able to understand the context of what the compositions deal with. Criticism, like it is expressed in films like Takva, turns to bitter hate ... something the black metal can provide the proper vehicle for.

Each of the compositions is rather shallow and leaves hardly any lasting impact on the listener. It can be doubted whether this was ever something the band had in mind in the first place. Similar to the punk scene, the intentions might have been to receive some attention as well as to create some (local?) stir. Neither the distorted vocals, nor the raw abrasive guitars are of a kind that alone would be able to make this demo remarkable. Also the riffs are not remarkably outstanding. It is the radicalness with which the idea of a band is pursued. Pursued in an environment that is openly hostile to anything, which would question the sacrosanctity of the doctrine.

What about the reactions to this release, then? Will they reach the same hysteric levels like they did in the last months? Similar to Blake, who also got away with his writings and escaped jail, this Iraqi band will hardly penetrate the attention of a broader audience unless it pushes hard to do so.

It is this wonderful thing about the black metal genre that music from exotic places of this world is generally looked upon with a somewhat complaisant eye. With a somewhat infantile attitude or perspective, the idea of music from such a sphere of these small scenes of the world is hold cherish, while all the flaws and shortcomings are downplayed and ignored. Janaza's radicalness, the vileness and violence of her music is what grabs us, as we sit in awe and watch the spectacle going on. Another trophy for our collection, another defloration of a scene, genre or band. We share words and thoughts whose final destiny is an inexistent oblivion.

**Sources of the pictures:**

<http://www.archive.org/details/libraryofamateu03amer>

<http://www.archive.org/details/photography00londrich>

<http://www.archive.org/details/practicalpictori00hintiala>

## Outlook

A lot of interviews again

Also a lot of reviews ...

More pictures (I just wanted to get this edition done)

And maybe ... I do not know ...

