

Interview with Myrkur (Amalie Bruun)

Fabian here for Kvit Magazine for Poland, how are you? I wanted to start with something like "God after" (laugh).

Amalie, we are only days away from the premiere (September 15). I've already had the chance to listen to your latest release "Mareridt" and I must say that it struck me in a way only few records had. How have you achieved that?

Well, thank you. I don't know. It's kind of a conceptual record. Written about my nightmares. So the main ingredients are my nightmares. And from the musical perspective I was learning new instruments and trying new things.

I asked the first questions this way because I must admit that two years ago I reviewed your first full-length and I wasn't too much fond of it. It was a good record, but I had a feeling that there is much more of you to discover. With the new album "Mareridt" it's a totally different story. I think the album is much more intimate. Am I right?

I don't know. For the first one, all the songs, the riffs, the melodies and lyrics were written by me and then I hired guys that you speak of to play exactly what I told them to play...

How much did they contribute to the record?

Hopefully they gave all they had. That's what a musician should do and that's what I hired them from everyone I could have hired and they played what was on my demos that I played.

So it was all about you?

It's called a one woman project for that reason (laugh)

Because it had some controversy back in the day and people asked questions how much did Garm contribute to Myrkur How much was it his vision of black metal. But from what I understand it was 100% yours.

Of course. When you have the opportunity to work with the people you want you hire the people you want. And that's the whole purpose of getting a producer. And you do a collaboration. And who better to help with my vision than someone that I myself respect and look up to?

You said somewhere that the nightmares haunted you and they became the inspiration for the new album. You blended them with inspirations from Danish folklore. The album is much more spiritual than the debut. Is this what you wanted? The nyckelharpa wasn't only for showing of? :)

I'm certainly inspired by Scandinavian folk music and particular Norwegian and Swedish. And one of the songs on the record is a traditional folk song "De Tre Piker". And some instruments are like ancient folk instruments...

Like the nyckelharpa?

For example, yeah.

I was wondering about it. Was this instrument something that you wanted to use or a thing that you came by to by chance?

It's an instrument I've been very fascinated for many years and when I finally got the chance to have one I instantly started to teach myself how to play it and it became an inspiration for songwriting as well so here we are.

I've spoken with Einar Selvik of Wardruna last year and he told me that his music, his approach to the lore, the Scandinavian music is not a one of a reconstructor but of a man that uses old instruments to create new music. There are no notes from the old times. Is it the same with you?

Maybe, I don't know. I think. My roots are planted in the Nordic tradition and I think I'm making something new in where Einar is making something more traditional.

I'm asking about this because with the first record it was a kind of a different experience. But with the second one I'm still getting the idea that it's a kind of a spiritual experience. Was it the same for you as you wrote the music?

Yeah, absolutely.

The album is very complex and diverse. It's full of mysteries. Just like a mind of a woman :) I was always under the impression that Scandinavian women are strong and fierce warriors. Is that true? Is the album a kind of a manifesto of womanhood? I think that I can hear that in "Ulvinde"...

You can say that. Definitely. Like a female warrior spirit, I suppose. Mystic and kind of a more creating, nurturing side that is female all things giving. Mature nature. Creating.

I asked this because in one of the interviews you said about the beauty and brutality of a woman. And combining those two things together for me it resonates on this album. Not on the first one so much. Is it true?

You can say that. It's definitely reflecting that.

You're a kind of a tough one. You're not so easy to break person?

Depends, you know. Some things matter to me, some things don't...

Could you tell us more about your recording routine? You had everything planned upfront or did you do it as you go along. In the studio? I mean the songwriting and so on...

For this album I was pretty prepared and pretty set on exactly what I wanted to do and how. But of course it's always a room for being spontaneous, wild and creative. There is also a lot of this on this album so it's like 50/50 on this record.

How much time did you need in the studio? Was it a long session, short session?

That depends on how you see it but it was about a month for the whole thing. Today it's pretty long but 10 years ago it's very short.

Have you encountered some problems with the old instruments and samples that were used on the record?

How do you mean?

Some difficulties. I mean the craftsmanship of instruments is one thing but when it comes to some really old stuff it can be tricky.

No, we didn't had any problems with that. I did most of the folk recording in Denmark so I had all my stuff here and we could do the metal and riff and more "band oriented" stuff in America.

You didn't feel like it was a challenge with all this folkore stuff?

No, not at all.

Your music already divided the audience and yet it emerges with new strength and quality that is above the definitions of genre. Do you still seek for originality and your own style or do you think this is it. I know what I am, what I want?

I honestly think I will go somewhere after this but you know. When you look on the songs of this record they are all completely different. The only thing they have in common is the overall feeling and the fact that their based on nightmares but musically they just go wherever they want to go so I think it's the type of a person that I am and what I'm going to keep doing. But it's hard to say soundwise...

So you are a "seeker" you will seek for new opportunities, new sounds, new atmospheres?

Well, there is a sounding cliché. I'm not really seeking. It just finds me. I just go with my intuition and I just go really. That's how things happen. I don't actually look. But I do a lot of research, I study folk music, I study classical music I study psychology. And in terms when I create a song I really don't think about it. I just do it. And if it's good it's great and if it's bad I don't think about it again.

Do you have a commodity or an illness that you want to perfect the songs to the point that's everybody saying "forget it, it's ok we have it". And you say change it?

I do the opposite. I do it unfinished. That's how I prefer it.

How do you feel when you look to your tracks from 2 years, three years ago?

I feel great about it. I'm proud of my work with Myrkur and how far I've gotten with only two albums, you know?

It's quite impressive from my point of view...

Yeah (laugh)

For a one woman black metal band you surely know your ways on the stage. You played many shows supporting great bands. Subsequently bands will support you... Is touring and life on stage your natural habitat or do you prefer working in the studio?

Neither. I would say the forest is my natural habitat. I don't really feel at home on the stage or in studio but you know, you've got to do it.

But do you feel uncomfortable on the stage? Do you have a problem performing? With the touring life?

I don't like to tour but I do like to play live. That's how music is. You should be playing it. You should perform it. And I like to connect with people who are there and it's a very special feeling. It's a compromise you have to do.

The songwriting is all about the, let's use the latin word opus or you think about the songs how would they resonate live? A part of a performance? And the emotions... It's sadness, happiness, fury. It's like entering a woman's mind. You can only get lost.

That could be scary...

I think that in normal life it doesn't really matter if you paint yourself black and white and spit some pig's blood. That's not scary. Scary is the real emotion and the thing that in Myrkur you sing the clean parts, the tones that are more intimate, and where you are the most vulnerable.

It's something I had to make a choice when I started getting show offers. Because I knew I had a record deal with a metal label and all the press was calling it black metal. And everybody has a certain idea what is black metal and I just decided. I didn't want to go out on stage and act. Like a black metal play. I decided that, what I think, is more metal and more scary is being vulnerable. I'm not carrying the audience. They have to be on their toes so I think that is something I would like to see as an audience. And that's something I try to do. That makes it easier to be myself.

So you want to be vulnerable and that's the connection you are seeking out from the audience? You know with black metal bands it's all about "we're so tough, ugly, grim, we will kill everybody, hail Satan and so on".

Nobody believes that anymore. I like to go to a concert that's more like a roleplaying. You see a band that's like a horror movie play or something, right. It can be fun and cathartic but it doesn't scare me at all. And I do like to be scared. The last time I was scared from music it certainly wasn't a black metal band. Because the scene is pretty stagnant. With the bands that are doing a traditional like "let's be scary". So there's other ways now. I think that the screaming woman is something of the most scariest things you can do. So...

Do you think that black metal is so far over? I asked this question to Einar, since I'm a Gorgoroth fan myself and I couldn't help myself. They were so all over the top. So menacing. And he told me that the music (black metal) devoured itself fast and it had no more room, no possibilities to evolve... You started as a black metal act. You think that there's a possibility for this genre to discover something that wasn't discovered so far?

Yeah, I think I'm doing that (laugh). But I think that the only problem for potential bands and bands that already exist that they are too scared of the response. Because there's something about this genre that tells people that you are not allowed to develop or grow. If you look it that way you can

see the Scandinavian black metal, that had its scene in the early nineties, and that's done. Like for the history books. I still listen to it and I love it but everything after that is something else. And people must accept that music is music. And that's that.

So there's no more "black" in black metal?

It's just a word. Gaahl is a good example for true black metal. He is genuinely pretty scary. You know? He's doing an excellent job. He's an excellent front figure. So is Atilla. He's developing. He's his own thing. And they have, Mayhem, allowed themselves to grow, even their fans were weirdly conservative about it.

You are already transcending genres and you are already messing with the minds of the people. They thought the first was like "ok, let it be, we accept". And then happens the second album and it's totally different. And it's like "what the hell can I do with that". Is it a tease or perhaps you don't care about labels so much?

I don't care. I never did. People who gave me the label were never truly "me". I asked them not to do it. But it's fine. Again, like you said. I transcended over it. And that's because I didn't ever pay any attention to it. But I think it's ok if you do. You know, there's something to be said about the people want to be true about something. How are you going to grow and add something to it? And isn't it a responsibility as an artist for you to do that? Otherwise it's like a collectivism. It's like a fucking communism (laugh).

Do you feel the need, the urge to show off or to share? There are different approaches. And I think you seek something more...

For this album it became its own thing. I was so tormented by nightmares my whole life, and they were so bad this past two years, so I started going to a Jungian therapy. And I discovered this whole thing. I started Myrkur few years back because I was always interested in the Jungian addressing your shadow side kind of thing and so I decided to call it darkness. And I needed to go through my own darkness through this music and maybe overall became more of a whole person and an individualize myself. Become something real. And with this album I explored that further and I think that I had a goal, that wasn't a musical one, and was a kind of a psychological one, besides something that had to do with myself, is to inspire others to do the same. Because I think it's very important right now.

But Amalie to do what? To explore themselves, explore their fears, to overcome them?

The thing is that Jung talks about a persona. A superficial kind of version of your true self which most of the people go through life like that. Then they will be doing many things unconsciously like acting out, projecting, bringing all those "bad things" out because they haven't faced their dark shadow side. So when they do that and not just face it but also embrace it and nurture it that's the new awakening of yourself and you will know how to individualize yourself. That's the opposite of collectivism. You become kind of lonely also and everything becomes kind of shitty. But this is what prevents, for example, the political situation in the world is pretty bad. And one way of fighting that is people facing their evil shadow sides and awaking that in a sense of that.

Do you feel that you need people to inspire people to seek out that Jungian thing you told me about?

I think I do. It's maybe on a subconscious level that I... Yeah. I'm fortunate in my life. I had other mentors. I was inspired by brilliant minds around me. And I realized instead of running away from nightmares there's something constructive to come out from this dark thing that's a demon inside of me. I think everyone has it...

So you are just "letting the demon out"?

Not literally but facing itself and being honest with yourself. It's pretty hard when you realise that you can be pretty shitty as a human being...

Not to end this interview in a grim fashion, let me ask you something different. I think that not everyone is asking that but is Myrkur the pinnacle the thing that's driving you right now or is there any chance for you that you will be ever returning to the stuff you made with Ex-Cops or solo? Or it's a closed chapter?

I mean Myrkur is my solo project. And that's what I see that. I don't know what I'll do after this. This feels like my life's work now.

Let me know you that I listened to some earlier stuff and it was quite good. It was surprisingly good. With pop music it's not so easy easy to do something interesting..

Well I like everything that I've done..

So there's no chance for returning to that?

I don't know. I work with intuition. I don't have a plan at all.

Well, for a girl with no plan it's all working out pretty well I think for the last years.

Thank you.

Amalie, it was a pleasure. Thank you for your time and hope to see you in Cracow with Solstafir!

As you would say mange tak and god nat.

God nat (laugh). Thank you very much and bye bye!

Bye!

Author - [Moloch](#)

Interview for [KVLt magazine](#)

