

1. International Blackjazz Society release was accompanied by promoting the page <http://blackjazzsociety.org> where International Blackjazz Society is presented as a movement uniting individuals who internalize idea of working "For Excellence". However on the page there is a section where we can see a motto and a mission statement I wonder if your newest album can be interpreted as an artistic manifesto being the center of this movement. Chorus from Last Day ("Don't fucking tell me what to play/I'll always disobey/Until my last day/I'll go my own way") and some lines which can be found in different songs (ex. Last Stand with line "Staying the same that's, that's what I fear") made me think that the main idea behind this album was for you guys to show what the Shining is really about. Am I over-interpreting this?

Jørgen: I feel Shining has always been about both going our own way, and also about working "For Excellence". This has been clearer and clearer for me as the years have gone by, especially when people start to let you know what they want you and your band to do. Some people want us to copy our Blackjazz album from 2010, some people want us to change again and again, and some people even want us to go back to what we did before Blackjazz. In the face of all this, I sometimes feel the need to confirm to myself and everyone around me that the only thing that matters is what we in the band wants to do musically. That is the only thing that is going to decide what our music is going to be like.

But with that being said, we also definitely love the idea of having an International Blackjazz Society with a lot of other great musicians and bands around the world who gathers to play Blackjazz and related music. I've recently started a website at jorgenmunkeby.com where I'm officially offering to play sax on other bands' records, and since that website came up just a few weeks ago, I've already played on about seven songs. It's a great way for me to meet other likeminded Blackjazz musicians, and I also think it contributes to making an International Blackjazz Society around the world.

2. Both on Spotify and Youtube there is a playlist with your previous release "One One One" with track by track commentary. Since there is none for International Blackjazz Society can you please tell us something about ideas behind songs on this album?

Jørgen: Yes, unfortunately I never got time to do these commentary tracks for our newest album International Blackjazz Society, so I'll go through the songs here with a little comment for each:

Admittance: The title suggests an opening or an entrance into something new, or being allowed into some new society. The music was recorded live in the studio with everybody playing at the same time, just as the old jazz records were recorded. The song is some chord changes and a semi written melody in the sax, while the rest of the band is somewhat free to play the chords how they want. I also liked the idea of having the new album open with a jazz track, to counter the more straightforward songs coming after.

The Last Stand: This was the first song written for the album. I remember that I wanted to write something that was in a more medium tempo, instead of being either in a frantic fast pace or totally rubato like most of our other songs. But we ended up pushing the tempo up a bit for this song after all, so it's a bit more pushy and aggressive now than the first demos were. The lyrics are about being comfortable being different than others, and maybe also being proud of it.

Burn It All: Again I wanted to make something that resembled the feeling and tempo of *Fisheye* from our album *Blackjazz*, so I wrote this drum groove that intentionally hinted towards *Fisheye*. But after that I just let ideas flow, and it turned out to be a song that's quite different than any of our previous tracks. I also think it's one of the most aggressive songs on the album, and it's proven to work extremely well in live settings

Last Day: Here's an uptempo industrial rocker, which also is going to be a favorite for our live shows for many, many years to come. Again the lyrics are about doing your own thing and going your own way. This is also the first song we released from our concert at Trolltunga in Norway.

Thousand Eyes: The main idea for this song was to have parts that had accentuated hits with silence between them, since I felt that our live shows could really use that kind of breathing room, even though the song is still super heavy. I think I wrote four completely different chorus versions for this song, and I might actually use one of the discarded versions for another song in the future. And the accentuated but slow verse stabs really works well in our live shows, just like we planned.

House Of Warship: The title refers to churches, religions, and sects, who goes to war in the name of their gods. It also refers to *House Of Control* which is the track that comes after this one. It was recorded live in the studio, and is a longer version of the opening track *Admittance*.

House Of Control: Our very first ballad! It felt like a big risk including such a song on our album, since we're known for being an aggressive, heavy and loud band. But I'm super happy that we did, as this has turned out to be one of my favorites on the album. It also works great live, something that I was even more unsure of than putting it on our album.

Church Of Endurance: A sci-fi type of instrumental transition track with some lyrics from *Thousand Eyes*, just to tie it all together a bit.

Need: A pretty punkish industrial track that was written and recorded in record speed. It was the last song written for the album, and was probably finished the day before we started recording. This one is also really fun to play live, and gets a whole new and different life in that setting.

3. *International Blackjazz Society* is the first album of *Shining* with blending transitions between tracks. Why did you decide to arrange it in that manner? Usually it is typical for concept albums and was the reason for my search of the concept in my first question.

Jørgen: I initially thought that I was going to write single tracks, and even that we were going to release the songs one by one. But very soon I found myself doing a 180 degrees turn, and started instead thinking about the album as a whole, more like a concept album. So all time during the writing of *International Blackjazz Society* I had the whole picture in my mind, which is why it felt natural to tie the tracks together with transitions and x-fades in the end too.

4. With release of International Blackjazz Society you changed your band logo. Why? Do you feel that the previous one was not reflecting the state in which band is right now?

Jørgen: I actually felt that our previous logo was the best logo that I had ever seen, and that we might not be able to make a better one. But I still wanted to try, even if we risked coming up with something that wasn't as good, or risk pissing off fans. I guess that's where my addiction to artistic change comes in again. But also really love the new one, and actually now prefers the new one over the old one. But who knows, maybe we'll one day go back to the logo we created with Blackjazz in 2010?

5. International Blackjazz Society is another record with change in style. Some say that this is the best album in your carrier, other say that it's too "accessible" and radio-friendly. I would just say that on this release you definitely wrote one of the best hooks in your discography. Was writing and recording music for International Blackjazz Society any different than for previous albums?

Jørgen: I pretty much worked on this album in just the same way as I've always done, so the practical circumstances didn't affect the musical change so much. The changes we've made has just been because I felt those made the music better and made it more interesting and fun for myself to listen to. I think IBS is the best album Shining have ever made, and I was very glad to confirm that the new songs also seem to be the ones in our whole catalog that works during our live shows!

6. Seeing you guys go crazy on cliff of Trolltunga must have been an unforgettable experience for all fans that were determined enough to climb there. The whole set was filmed, but you choose to release on Youtube only the live performance of Last Day – why did you chose this track? And what is your next goal – playing next to active volcano? :)

Jørgen: Yeah, that concert was the absolutely craziest thing I have ever done in my life! The reason we've only released one song is that it took quite some time for me to edit the video footage to make it look like I wanted it too, and I haven't had time to edit footage for any other songs yet. The audio is really just the recording from the concert just sent to mixing and mastering, so the music itself really didn't take much time. But I might have time soon to sit down and finalize videos for more of the songs recorded up there.

The reason we chose Last Day was just because I felt the music and lyrics fit the scenario well, and also that we had already planned another video for the track The Last Stand, which was the first single.

7. What happened that you started playing blackjazz? You already released few jazz albums (which were highly praised and even won awards for best jazz album of the year) and then you shocked both your fans and critics with drastic change in style. „Staying the same that's, that's what I fear”?

Jørgen: Yeah, definitely another good example of my addiction to artistic change! But I also grew up with metal music when I was a kid, so it almost felt like coming home again when we went from playing pure acoustic jazz music to incorporating heavier metal elements into our music.

8. Sudden change in style can lead to confusion and can be not fully understood by some critics. And change that occurred between Grindstone and Blackjazz definitely was unexpected for most of you

previous listeners. Were you criticized in the beginning for this new style? Called abomination or “unholy hybrid”?

Jørgen: We were definitely highly criticized when releasing Blackjazz. A lot of people loved it, but a lot of people also really hated it. It's just now, several years later, that that album is being praised as a classic, our “big breakthrough” that “everybody” seem to like. It definitely wasn't like that when it came out.

9. The release of Blackjazz brought not only change in musical style and confused critics. Apart from heavy riffs, roaring synthesizers and crazy saxophone there was another new thing – the amount of singing. In pre-Blackjazz period we could hear you singing here and there like in the In The Kingdom of Kitsch You Will Be The Monster from Grindstone, but on Blackjazz both your vocals and lyrics played important role in music. Was incorporating more vocals into your music a difficult process for you? Did you ever think of Shining staying instrumental band or was that never an option?

Jørgen: It was absolutely difficult for me to learn how to sing and find a way to incorporate that into our music! I knew I wanted to use more vocals and lyrics in our music, but I had very little experience with my own vocals, so I had to practice and experiment a whole lot to find my own way and my own voice. And I'm definitely still working on it!

Like mentioned before, I seem to have a big problem staying in one place musically for a long time, which is probably why I was so intent on not being an instrumental band anymore.

10. Melting metal and jazz together – how does those styles have an impact on the way you create music? In interviews you explain that name Blackjazz comes from black metal and free jazz. Do you create music in improvisation or do you run in forest in corpse paint singing about Satan? :)

Jørgen: I don't run around in the forest in corpse paint singing about Satan, that's for sure. But apart from that I make music in many different ways. Sometimes I just sit and write stuff in my head, then write it down on sheet music. Sometimes I record the ideas onto my phone or directly into my computer as a fully fleshed out demo. And other times I just sit down and improvise to see what comes out, and then choose the best ideas and just run with them as far as I can take them.

11. What inspires you while creating new songs? In commentary to One One One you mentioned both inner feelings and personal experiences and that for example intro from I Won't Forget was inspired by beginning of the movie Prometheus.

Jørgen: I think it's still the same. My inspirations can be from our own life, either physical stuff that happens or more mental processes going on. Or it can be movies, books, or often times also riffs or other ideas taken from other bands that I change and twist and turn into something new.

12. In interview with Pitchfork in 2005 shortly after the release of In The kingdom of Kitsch You Will Be The Monster you said that „My saxophone teacher suggested that I should play jazz, but I thought that jazz was for nerds and old people. It wasn't until several years later, when I discovered John Coltrane, that my interest for jazz was ignited.”. So we know how you found interest in jazz, but I'd like to know more about when and how did you become fan of metal and industrial music?

Jørgen: When I was a kid, all I listened to was metal bands like Pantera, Sepultura, Death and Entombed. But it wasn't until 2007 that I discovered industrial music like Nine Inch Nails and Marilyn Manson, which was a whole new type of production sound that I really loved, which also greatly shaped the overall sound of Blackjazz that came out in 2010.

13. In the same interview you were talking about program music and absolute music saying that Shining is definitely absolute music "made for listening and nothing else". To stress out this approach you quoted Leonard Bernstein "Music, of all arts stands in a special region, unlit by any star but it's own, and utterly without meaning." – do you still agree with that statement? Or did the change in style also had an impact on different aspects of your approach towards music?

Jørgen: I think I've changed my attitude towards this a bit since then. For instance our music has much more lyrics in it now, which I think is an important part. I also think it's fine if people want to use our music when doing other stuff, like running, training, doing math lessons, fucking or whatever you do when you listen to Blackjazz.

14. Earlier in 2016 you announced that you are going to release your pre-Blackjazz period records in an exclusive box set. Why did you decided to release it right know? And in limited number of copies? In one of the interviews you said that you would like listeners to focus on the band works starting from Blackjazz, but also the fact that you didn't change your band name after the change in style suggest that you would like listeners to not forget that Shining is band with specific history. With releasing those albums in limited number "everybody wins"?

Jørgen: Yeah, to tell you the truth I personally don't spend much time with our older music, as I'm too busy thinking about new music. But I've seen that a lot of people are very interested in what we were doing before Blackjazz. And since our very first two albums have been totally unavailable for more than seven years, I felt it could maybe be a good idea to re-release them again. But since we're doing it ourselves, I'm sure it's going to be a single batch or repressing in a limited amount, so we don't have to keep stuff in storage or have deals with distributors to keep in stores etc. The plan is to make the amount that is being preordered, ship it out to customers directly ourselves, and when that's done that's it.

15. Before preparing to this interview I was not aware that such thing as Armageddon concerto even exists. Was experience of playing live on the same stage with Enslaved in any way helpful later in finding your sound on Blackjazz? And why isn't Armageddon concerto released?

Jørgen: Yes, this big concert with Enslaved for sure helped turn us onto what was eventually to become Blackjazz. The reason it hasn't been released is that it was never really recorded properly as a multi track project, which I think would be necessary to be able to mix it properly for a release. We considered going into the studio to record the whole thing, but at that time Enslaved was too busy with an upcoming album. And when that was out, I was already in the process of making our Blackjazz album, so it never really fit any of our band schedules. But it would have been fun if it was out.

16. It may be a bit silly question but how do you came up with the idea of putting counting on some tracks from One One One? Was it only for rhythmical purpose?

Jørgen: It just felt right, and was a fun thing to do. I always enjoyed numbers, and I love counting!

17. I find your creative work in Shining to be very inspirational. I just can't come up with another band that could perform such a leap of faith and change their style so much (especially to become heavier than ever before). So it's quite justified to ask you what advice can you give to aspiring musicians or just people trying to achieve their goals?

Jørgen: Ooh, I'm not sure I'm the right one to ask, since I feel like I'm still working hard trying to achieve my goals. But maybe that's the answer; always keep working towards your goal, never quite, never give up!

18. I love seeing you guys live and I'm really happy that I had an opportunity to see Shining live twice last year in Warsaw. But I wonder if you know or even are a fan of any artist/band from Poland?

Jørgen: Very cool! That previous show in Warsaw was just insane! We really hope to be back soon!

Polish culture has created quite a lot of music that has inspired me. I've listened a lot to the classical composers Gorecki, Penderecki and Lutoslawski, for instance. I've also listened to free jazz trumpeter Tomasz Stańko and the popular metal band Behemoth. Poland is, just like Norway, known for exporting both free jazz and black metal, which is fun!