

Widely understood post-metal realm can be truly intriguing as long as the artists choose well-thought, genuinely creative means of expression and - to put it simply - have an idea for their music. The Swiss band **E-L-R** is definitely among this group, since their works don't really fit into the definition of certain musical style, escaping the genre labels. The enthralling sounds composed by the band have both eerie beauty and primal force to them.

Describing **E-L-R**'s music as post-metal or doomgaze/atmospheric doom would be a pretty serious simplification. The band proves it as early as on the album's opening track, **Opiate the Sun**, which is a monumental composition based on doom metal. The first track is synonymous with intense ambiance, which is masterfully built and gains intensity with each moment. Looped riffs are downright hypnotising while vocals are slightly hidden in the mix and their chanting fits the mysterious ambiance perfectly – it goes without saying that creating this atmosphere is another achievement which the band can be proud of.

Together with the first song, we're being introduced into the musical aesthetic consequently presented by **E-L-R** on their latest full-length. At the same time, the band is no stranger to faster pace. The opener **Opiate the Sun** seems to be the calm before the storm here, which is confirmed by the following, much heavier songs **Three Winds** and **Seeds**. **Three Winds** could even be described as a powerful, post-black banger striking with full force and at times bearing resemblance to **Alcest**'s discography.

Still, there can be no mention of copying or any lack of originality - on the contrary, the familiar-sounding parts simply coexist the band's unique musical style. Mesmerising vibe, which is even trance-inducing at times, can make the listener think also about **Messa**'s last year's release or even **Wolvennest**'s music. We're talking about a certain rituality here, a darker and more mystical side of music which **E-L-R** manage to make even heavier and more expressive.

In addition to all that, **Vexier** doesn't feature growling or screaming. Instead, the clean, spacious sound of the guitars is joined by the vocals, which, depending on the song, are distant or distorted in the soundscape.

Another important part of the newest release is the ritualistic side of **E-L-R**'s songs. While some lyrics resemble incantations, the drums set an entrancing rhythm and at times, the atmosphere becomes truly meditative. A perfect example of this would be **Forêt** with its half-folky, half-ritualistic intro. The sombre atmosphere of this track additionally enhances the mystical, dreamlike ambiance of the album.

E-L-R's newest release, even though it has a strong doomgaze/atmospheric doom feel to it, has no fillers or exaggeratedly slow parts. The best proof here is the album's length – just a bit over 45 minutes passes really fast, and together with the echoes of the final composition, eerily prolonged in the end, one can hardly believe that such a great album is already over.

If I had to choose one word to describe this release, I'd go for "atmosphere". **Vexier** is a multi-layered creation, which on one hand provides a pensive, meditation-like setting and on the other is more than sure to strike the listeners with both suspense and raw beauty.

Ritualistic, spellbinding vibe of **Forêt**, the mysticism-filled opener, **Three Winds** and the hypnotic **Fleurs of Decay** both representing the heavier, more metal side of the album – these tracks make sure to stay in one's mind. With each listen, **Vexier** absorbs and fascinates, which is another proof that **E-L-R** truly deserve to get big as a band.

Rating: 9/10