

## ULVDALIR – WOLVES HUNGRY FOR SLAUGHTER AND DEATH

Russian trio Ulvdalir blew our minds with their new opus “...Of death eternal”. We even dare to claim this record as one of the best black metal releases we have ever heard coming from Russian soil. I had a chat with singer/guitarist Void about his band. (JOKKE)



**Hail Void! Let’s go back to the beginning of the millennium before talking about the new album. What led to the inception of Ulvdalir?**

Hail! Well, I think it was the will to create, to express my emotions, to give breath to my visions and to honour the Devil. Black Metal in my eyes was the best way to unleash those demons in these days.

**Although you are hailing from Russia, the band name rather sounds Scandinavian. What is the meaning of it and why did you choose this word to describe your music and lyrical visions?**

The word “Ulvdalir” is partly created by me, I took the essence from the Scandinavian word “Ulfdalir” and changed it a little bit. I don’t remember why I did it, maybe I wished a more German sounding name, I don’t remember, but still the name means «the valley of wolves» for me: the valley of wolves, hungry for slaughter and death!

**Although you created the band in 2001, it was not until 2008 that your first record “Flame once lost” was released. Already six months later, a second full length entitled “Soul void” saw the light of day. What was the reason for this very short amount of time between these two records?**

The first album was recorded only in 2005 and for a few years, I was trying to find a label for it, but in those times it was hard to find a good label for us, because the Russian Black Metal movement was totally isolated from the rest of the world. Outside of Russia, only a few bands were known back in the days, so it was a problem to find a label. Moreover, we don’t have any good labels here in Russia, only a few small ones which are not that active. We recorded “Soul void” shortly after our debut album. I contacted Black Devastation Records and they wished to release both Ulvdalir records in one year.

**Between your previous full-length “Cold breath of apocalypse” and the new album “...Of death eternal” lies an 8-year gap. What was the reason we had to wait such a long time for a new full-length to appear?**

Ulvdalir was not silent during these years. We released the “Metal wolves of death” split with Lindisfarne and Lamia Vox in 2011 and the “Harvest: Bloody harvest” split with Mop, Klandestyn, Nebelwerfer and Ruin in 2017. That same year, we also had the “Sacral chalice of foundations” EP and in 2016 we released the “From the tyrant’s grave” compilation featuring some cover songs, live songs and a few obscure songs.

Why didn’t we record a new full-length for so long? Simply, because I needed time to find a new good line-up, finish album details, and I was busy with some other bands too. Also, I needed to do my usual work etc... So it took me some time.



**It seems the core of the band is formed by you and guitar player M.K. although the band relies on session musicians for live shows. Who is in the current studio and live line-up?**

Ulvdalir was formed by me, M.K. joined me in 2013, and from this moment he has been one of the core members for sure! During the last few years we have constantly asked our friends to join us for live sessions but we don’t have an active live line-up today. The up-to-date studio line-up consists of me, M.K, and Sttng from Ukrainian band Morkt Tre.

**Based on some cover songs by Darkthrone, Nifelheim, GG Alin and Venom, that you released in the past, initial influences for Ulvdalir might seem obvious although your current sound refers more to contemporary Greek and Swedish orthodox black metal bands. The more rock-influenced parts and the important drive of the bass guitar remind me of One Tail One Head. Which bands do you consider of great importance for the development of the Ulvdalir sound throughout the years?**

I don’t know, it has always been old Dark Throne, old Dodheimsgard, old Graveland, Judas Iscariot, Arckanum, Kristallnacht, Warloghe, Funeral Winds. I mostly listen to old stuff....hard rock, heavy metal, of course. When I compose music, I don’t think about any band, I listen and I feel only wild fire in my heart and in my soul. I really don’t hear anything Greek in Ulvdalir, or Swedish influences, but maybe you are right, it’s ok if you hear it.

**Ulvdalir finds a great balance between aggression and melody but also has that typical Russian stern sensibility. Are there elements in your sound that you can describe as typically Russian?**

Russian spirit ha ha. Seriously, I don't know any Russian sounding elements because almost all the bands that I respect from my country do not sound the same.

**The album title is part of the song "*Eternal angel of death eternal*". Is 'death' the main topic being covered in the lyrics? Although the lyrics seem to be sung in Russian, the song titles are in English. Was this done to make it more easy for non-Russian speaking people to distinguish the different songs and remember the name of the songs?**

Yes, you are right, Death is the essence of Ulvdalir's poetry! Sure, I sing in Russian but I know a lot of great people outside my country. This is the reason I put song titles translations in the booklet. For the new album we professionally translated all poetry and for the first time European listeners will have a chance to hear, to see, and to feel all that I scream in their hearts!



**I am a big fan of the sound of "*...Of death eternal*" on which Vladimir Uzelac did a great job in his Wormhole Studios. Nowadays, the majority of like-minded bands seems to go to the Swedish Necromorbus Studio, and although their productions sound very good, it creates a big pile of generic sounding bands. Are you satisfied with how the album's sound turned out or are there things that bother you now and that you would have wanted to adapt?**

I love the sound of our new album! It is how a Black Metal album should sound, unlike nowadays' modern shit! I really do not like the sound of many contemporary bands. For me it is too plastic, clean, soulless, modern... call it as you wish. Vladimir Uzelac perfectly understood what I had in mind for this record, he did it all just perfectly! I am very proud of this work, and Vladimir did a lot for this result!

**After you finish an album, what is your relationship to that music? Are you exhausted and glad to be finished, or are you excited and still engaged by the new music?**

It was a really hard work! Firstly emotionally and afterwards technically speaking. As I said before, I am really proud of this record. I am excited! We finished this opus more than a year ago and I still listen to it with great pleasure!! And for sure it is good the album is to be released soon, because a lot of flowers bloom, and some flames are still hungry, I can finally focus on my new works.

**In the past Ulvdalir released records through smaller labels such as Black Devastation Records, Assault Records and Fog Of The Apocalypse Records. "...Of death eternal" will be released by Iron Bonehead Productions. Did you already notice some effect by signing to a slightly bigger, but still underground label?**

We already had a pleasure to work with Iron Bonehead before with our other bands and I am glad that the new Ulvdalir album is to be released by this label too! Patrick is a professional and a very nice guy.

**Ulvdalir seems to be one of those few bands that is not present on social media these days. Is promotional label support alone enough for a band to be seen in these times where tons of new music is being released on a daily basis?**

All this internet hysteria is not for me, not for Ulvdalir!! I prefer isolation in this case. I still believe in the laws of the underground movement! I am sure Iron Bonehead doesn't have any problems with promotion, it is a part of the label work as I can see it.

**Will there be a tour to promote the new album?**

A tour? No! But, maybe, we will play a few venues next year. We will see.

**I heard rumors that a split with my fellow countrymen Ars Veneficium is in the works. Any idea when it will be released?**

No idea! It is a 7" EP split, and like we all know, there're not so many labels who release 7" EPs these days.

**Ulvdalir, together with Khashm, forms the Inner Circle of True Ingrian Black Metal Death. What is the meaning of this inner circle and isn't two bands rather scarce to speak about a circle if we compare to other black metal-circles such as Les Legions Noires or the Black Twilight Circle?**

We call it «circle» in order not to be mixed with a so-called scene of our country. We wish to be separate, isolated from the other scene. True Ingrian Black Metal Death consist of Ulvdalir, Khashm, Likferd, Atanor, Black Flux (partly) but mostly it is only me and M.K... So, yes, our circle is not too big, but it is really good for us!

**Wikipedia told me that Ingrian (or Izhorian) is a nearly extinct Finnic language spoken by the (mainly Orthodox) Izhorians of Ingria and that it has approximately 120 speakers left, most of whom are aged. Do you speak this language?**

No, I don't! We just live very near to this area! That's why we call our circle Ingrian. I loved to travel a lot to these lands in the past and take some inspiration from the woods, lakes, mountains. I love these desolated nature landscapes.

**For me "...Of death eternal" is one of the best Russian extreme metal records I have ever heard. What are some of your favorite Russian metal artists and records?**

Thanks a lot! Well, they are Old Wainds, Nav', Scald, Odor Mortis, SS-18, Veter Daemonaz, Pyre, Blazing Rust, Draugwath, Forgot, Evilwinged, Blazebirth Hall, ... We had some good acts here in the past and still....here are only few.

*This interview was written and published on Addergebroed on January 8, 2019.*