

ULTRA SILVAM - AN ULTRA SATANIC POWER UNIT AMIDST THE DECLINING BLACK METAL SCENE

It was but March 2019 when Sweden's Ultra Silvam displayed the full furl of their powers through their debut full-length *"The Spearwound Salvation"*. In a mere 28 deadly minutes, the power-trio swiftly 'n' succinctly asserted their identity, proudly upholding their home country's history of melodic Black Metal during the glorious '90s, but also injecting some additional violence that seems to have disappeared in contemporary Black Metal. *"The Sanctity of Death"* is the natural follow-up to *"The Spearwound Salvation"*, brewing in the minds of Ultra Silvam ever since. The record contains multiple Heavy Metal moves that are turned into tornado-like torrents of Black Metal classicism. Time to let the band speak! (JOKKE)



Can you shed some light on the inception of Ultra Silvam? How did the band members meet and what are the vision and the reasons behind the creation of Ultra Silvam?

We met prior to forming the band, nothing interesting to mention in that regard. The initial goal behind creating Ultra Silvam is not more complicated than creating an ultra satanic power unit amidst the declining Black Metal scene, a band that incorporated all the elements we thought lacked among the contemporary acts and in hindsight, there was never any other option and that's what we still adhere to.

The earliest known reference to Transylvania appears in a Medieval Latin document of the Kingdom of Hungary in 1075 as ultra silvam, meaning "beyond the forest" (ultra meaning "beyond" or "on the far side of" and the accusative case of sylva (silvam) "woods, forest"). Why did you choose this name?

It stemmed out of O.R.'s mind out of pure instinct. The name fits the band like a glove in all possible aspects. The fundamental atmosphere that comes along with it, its cultural reputation and of course its meaning as a symbol for death, which is quite obvious in a Black Metal context.

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In between your two full lengths, the *“Live after Death”* live tape was released. Was this release initially planned or did the idea pop up during the pandemic as an alternative for the lack of live concerts?

We had an old rough soundboard recording so we decided to release it to the public as nothing exciting happened by then, and it did not hurt to do something to remind the world that we were still breathing.

What are some of your favourite live albums?

“World Wide Live” by Scorpions, *“Live Undead”* by Slayer and *“Live in Leipzig”* by Mayhem come to mind.

Are live shows the real strength of Ultra Silvam? What can we expect from your live shows and what is the difference between Ultra Silvam in the studio and on stage?

I want to believe that the intensity of our live shows gets carried over quite well in the studio, but of course it can never be the same thing. However, from what I’ve witnessed, there are few black metal bands who base their performance on pure energy and intensity throughout the whole show; that’s where we have the upper hand, I feel, so it’s definitely the real strength of Ultra Silvam in an external sense.

Blood seems to be an important element in the visualization of the band. What does the use of blood represent for you?

It’s there to eliminate all rational thought until only filthy, bestial, Belialistic, Satanic and primitive bloody instinct remains.



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For the aforementioned live tape, you returned to the small underground label Änglslakt Productions, that also released your self-titled demo in 2017. The tape version of *"The Sanctity of Death"*, however, has been released by Shadow Records. Will you continue working with Änglslakt Productions for future smaller releases?

It's our own amateur label where we release less important releases, such as the demo tape and this live tape. There's nothing rational about releasing our material there instead of through Shadow Records: we are, as stated, pure amateurs in that regard. It is rather built on passion than on the concept of reaching out to the masses and developing bands.

Shadow Records released some great works by leading Swedish acts as such as Marduk, Funeral Mist and Watain, but also relatively smaller bands or acts from the mid-00s orthodox current such as Sorhin, Triumphator, Lifvsleda, Ofermod and Mephorash. How was the bond made between Ultra Silvam and Shadow Records?

Mutual friends, they liked it and we did not see a problem with signing to Shadow Records, so here we are.

What is your view on the current state of Swedish Black Metal? Is there any new blood that you like? How is the scene in your hometown Malmö?

Completely sucks cock. When we started this band, in a sense it was shaped as an anti-reaction to the current trends but I dare say it's worse now. I think Atonement from Stockholm made the best hyper metal release in years recently, but apart from that, I can't think of any newly formed bands worth listening to. I don't know about Malmö really, we're not part of a scene and I barely attend any shows.

Soundwise, *"The Spearwound Salvation"* reminded me of the chainsaw guitar sound of Sorhin's *"Apokalypsens Ängel"* record. The new record, however, sounds a little bit more polished what, in my opinion, destroyed a bit of the own character of Ultra Silvam, making you sound very similar to a band like Watain. What do you think of this observation? Is it a comparison that you often hear?



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Yeah, that was a last minute solution since the recording of the main guitar was of inferior quality for some reason, so adding all that filth was the best way to solve that problem and yes, quite similar to Apokalypsens ängel. For mixing this album, there was actually a sort of strife between us and the producer who preferred a less necro guitar sound, so we met in the middle, which turned out great as I don't see our style limited to a certain guitar sound, it goes beyond that.

Regarding your question, nine times out of ten these types of comparisons are just tiring to hear. Seeing that the band comes from the same country, has similar visions and plays in the same base genre makes it easy for people to namedrop a certain popular band without having to really devote themselves to the band in question, and overall it's a clearly lazy and fundamental human behaviour. Anyhow, I don't know if musically speaking there are any more Watain-influences on "*The Sanctity of Death*" than the last one, perhaps, but I sincerely do not think that we sound like them. However, I can't deny that the three first Watain records have had a great impact on me, among many other bands.



Influences of Heavy Metal can surely be heard in the guitar work of the new album. Where do these influences come from?

I'd say there was more heavy metal on the last record, but of course it reeks of heavy metal because we listen to heavy metal, expect more of that in the future.

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Can the new record be considered a concept album related to death and the sanctity of it?

Not a concept album in the King Diamond sense, but there is definitely an underlying theme that connects all the songs.

The album cover, as well as the cover of your first demo, contain religious imagery. Does Ultra Silva draw influences from the orthodox Black Metal current?

I like the albums from when the movement was still fresh and not as watered down as it is today. Keeping a good balance between "Black" and "Metal" is ideal to us and the current bands seriously lack the "metal"-part I think, so there's nothing there that interests me really. The same can be said for the opposite: the hollow minded, beer drinking "Black Metal" that has no sense of the "Black" in Black metal and would be better off playing in a shitty Thrash Metal band.



On the album cover of "The Sanctity of Death", we see a religious figure with bleeding eyes. Since World War II, a relatively new phenomenon has begun to manifest in Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. Statues and pictures of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints have appeared to bleed, and they bleed in significant ways, from the hands or the brow, places where Christ was wounded during His last days on Earth, or from the eyes, as if weeping. While such phenomena had been reported since antiquity, in the twentieth century such reports have taken on added significance in light of the attack on supernatural occurrences in the contemporary secular world. The number of such incidents has increased decade by decade during the last half of the century. Many traditional religionists view such miraculous occurrences as bleeding statues and pictures in much the same way as Spiritualists view mediumistic phenomena, as a demonstration of a supernatural world. What meaning does the bleeding of this figure shown on the cover have in the Ultra Silva universe?

Samuel Thomas, who made the cover art, drew it based on some sketches we had and added all the little details that he deemed fitting, so this was no conscious move from our side. Even so, it does not contain any clever symbolism apart from obvious desecration of divine icons and good old macabre imagery that crowns the music.

"Förintelsens Andeväsen Del II: Den Deicidala Transsubstantiationens Mysterium" is a song-title that screams for some explanation, so please enlighten me.

The short answer would be "*The Spirit of Holocaust part 2: The Mystery of the Deicidal Eucharist*". The long answer, however, is that I think an explanation from me would not do it justice as that's one of O.R.s strange lyrical compositions. It is however the second part of a planned trilogy of songs, a concept we're really fond of.

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I read in a review that *“Of Molded Bread and Rotten Wine”* has a riff that sounds much like the Swedish folk song *“Vem Kan Segla Förutan Vind?”* (*Who Can Sail Without Wind?*). Is that a correct observation? Do you draw inspiration from Folk music? Also, the clean singing in *“Dies irae”* seems to be inspired by Folk music, no?



Yes that's correct. It's not consciously taken from there, but we all pointed it out early in the writing process. O.R. has a fucked up sense of melody and musicianship which can manifest in unorthodox expressions from time to time, so he might get it from any source that people would deem unexpected.

The choir in *“Dies Irae”* is taken directly from the gregorian chant and is not written by any of us.

The short instrumental track *“Tintinnabuli Diaboli”* seems to refer in one way or another to the term *“tintinnabula”*, a compositional style created by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, correct?

Yes, that's correct and is indeed where the idea originated from. It does also mean *“bell”* or *“chime”* in Latin though, so the title speaks for itself despite its doubtful grammar, *“black metal Latin”* you know.

You seem to switch between writing lyrics in English and Swedish. What factors decide on the language to be used to spread Ultra Silvam's message?

There are no set of rules I use to determine that, it just happens when it feels right. We like how certain Norwegian bands in the 90's featured songs in both English and Norwegian on the same album and feel that it's not too frequent, so why not?

You will be playing a Belgian show in May at Throne Fest. Will the cancelled tour with Revenge, Mistryming and Embrace of Thorns be rescheduled?

Yes correct. That tour however, has unfortunately been cancelled completely after a number of reschedules which never took place.

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