

ANCIENT NORTH –SATANIC, HIGH SPEED AND FIERCE

Ancient North is the work of one Forlorn, who also numbers the band Necroseer, who've released a couple albums and a handful of singles. As Ancient North, the band made its public debut with the digital-only album *"The gates"* during the spring of 2022, soon to be followed by *"The berzerker"* EP and *"The nine realms"* album. Those loving trilogy-era Darkthrone or Malicious Records-era Gorgoroth should check out Ancient North, especially the debut record. (JOKKE)



Hail Forlorn, is Ancient North a project that has been lurking long-time in the shadows or was it a rather spontaneous and more recent decision to form Ancient North? Is Ancient North the result of music that was written but didn't suit your other Black Metal band Necroseer?

Ancient North was a project that started because I wanted a fresh, mysterious and fierce project no one heard about. My musical skills have been sharpened since my previous project Necroseer, having a fresh field to lay the chaos onto, so I made Ancient North. I started Ancient North with an organized and pre-emptive approach, take my time with it. It will be good, I will take my time with it.

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Wherein lie the main differences between Ancient North and Necroseer for you?

Well, they are both dark and fierce. I prefer the sound Ancient North has been going with. It's better, more grim and cold, more speed, more hate!

Initially, your debut *"The Gates"* was published digital only on Bandcamp, but luckily for you, Iron Bonehead Productions decided to also release it on CD and vinyl. They should be out by now, which seems like a miracle with today's crazy lead-times for vinyl. I also find it quite remarkable that a label like Iron Bonehead, who are probably receiving dozens of demos and release requests per week, is still looking themselves into the vast wilderness of Bandcamp for music they can release digitally. How difficult is it these days to get noticed into the endless flood of releases and are you surprised about how fast it all went for Ancient North?

I have been waiting for a physical release like this for a long time. I was very persistent with emails to multiple labels to get a deal. One email to one label is not enough for a guaranteed release, I had to contact a whole board of labels I liked and only 3 responded, but I chose Iron Bonehead because this is a true dedicated label with an epic roster, true Black Metal! It is not easy to get a label to release your stuff, it takes time and passion, professionalism. IBP got back to me quite quickly and they were serious about releasing my music, I heard back from IBP in a day or two. It is indeed not easy to get recognized into the flood of releases, but it's a worthy mountain to climb and this was perfect for me considering this release went pretty quickly, an epic milestone for Ancient North, this shows the power and speed of the music. Persistence.



The sparse album cover artwork of *"The Gates"* is quite reminiscent of Gorgoroth's iconic *"Antichrist"* cover. Do you consider the album or Ancient North in general as some kind of tribute to this Norwegian band? Also, the band name suggest your fascination and adoration for the Scandinavian scene, no?

Yes, I have heard countless times my album cover for *"The Gates"* looked identical to Gorgoroth's *"Antichrist"*, and yes it really does. It was unintentional but I do say I was really inspired by their album art of *"Pentagram"* and *"Antichrist"*. Simple and effective, mysterious, old... So, I would say this album is a tribute to Gorgoroth's albums *"Pentagram"* and *"Antichrist"*. The white border design is important, they are ancient looking, like the carvings of a

nordic longhouse, or pillars of ancient pagan worship, or tribal knots of some kind.

And within those borders are a field of darkness with the band logo and the title. It's effective, truly, it's authentic. I will also want to keep this technique for designing new album covers.

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Another obvious reference is Darkthrone whose *“Graven Tåkeheimens Saler”* you cover, a less obvious choice taken from the legendary *“Transilvanian Hunger”* record. Is recording covers something that you’re planning to do more in the future?

I do like to do covers, I honestly would do some Gorgoroth covers if they had lyrics for their older albums, but they are hiding those lyrics away. I will see about it, I think of course I will make some more covers in the future at some point, they are refreshing in an album because it is usually familiar to the listeners.

With references to Gorgoroth and Darkthrone, it may seem obvious that Ancient North is obsessed with mid ‘90s Black Metal. The majority of Black Metal bands claim that this was the golden age for the genre and that they cannot relate to Black Metal anno 2022. This seems to result to me in some sort of contradiction with all these bands trying to reproduce or recreate this peculiar sound from back in the day, but still, everybody seems to listen mainly to the classics. What’s your view on this? Are there any newer bands that you enjoy?

Oh yes, and that is heard quite a lot, and it is very understandable, I also listen to the classics and 90s Black Metal a lot. I have been trying to broaden my musical influence by listening to bands I have never heard of, but they are always from the 90s. I will still listen to some modern Black

Metal bands, or bands from the 2000 era, there's just so much out there and I am picky. As for newer bands I listen to, well I like when bands play fast close to 200 beats per minute, I like descent studio quality sound, not lo fidelity raw unless its pulled off well enough, take for example Darkthrone’s *“Transilvanian Hunger”*, it’s really hard to replicate that sound and it’s raw but it sounds really good, but that's because they are using lo-fi equipment (not making it sound lo-fi in studio edit or mastering). Make it interesting, make it satanic, make it fierce, it’s Black Metal.

I think newer Black Metal bands are doing a fine job at keeping it sound how it should, but like I said, high tempo, darkness, make it interesting.



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Why did you choose Black Metal as music genre to express yourself with? What defines Black Metal for you?

I could probably write a whole essay answering this question, but I'll try to keep this one brief.

There are many factors that weigh out why I even chose this style of music Black Metal. I guess I was always listening to Metal ever since I was a baby, but I listened to different styles of music throughout my childhood. I started really becoming a metalhead again after picking up a Slayer CD in the library when I was probably 13 or so. I knew



about them but I never had my own CD before, so it was really cool to have this pure evil power feeling in my hands, I put it in the CD player, and I just was surprised how awesome it sounded through the speakers. It was so radical and unlike anything I heard at the time, after that point my choice of music has always been Rock and Heavy Metal, (keep in mind this is right just before I picked up guitar ever since I was a little child, yes, I was playing heavy metal even at 6 years old)

But why I got into Black Metal, I felt it needed to be heavier, darker, so eventually I stub my way into music like Burzum and Mayhem, and I never ever ever heard anything like it, so I was like so awed about it, the atmosphere.

When someone hears the word Black Metal, they might not even know what it is, or they might just think it's extreme Metal and nothing else.

When I hear the word Black Metal, I think of all the magic it contains, all the hymns of old, the winter snow, the frostbitten pine woods of the northern hemisphere, surrounded by the dark of the night, carrying torches through the forest with your brethren draped in black, all sharing similar sorrows and hopes, giving meaning to this corporeal existence. Lighting the churches aflame, letting nature rule. The true feeling is vague and deep like a memory from old, a powerful nostalgia.

That's what I know is Black Metal because that's what I feel when I listen and make the music, you know if you know.

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Ancient North's music is quite linear in songwriting. How long do you think you can stretch this formula and what is your opinion on some of the subgenres of Black Metal such as DSBM, NSBM or post-Black Metal?

Yes, it's quite linear songwriting, I am always writing about things that are of a dark and old nature I guess I would say. "*The Gates*" is about a Forbidden plane of existence where only the most cursed wretched beings will wander into where they are on constant war against the gods, and the civilizations that roam there are still using swords, using magic and the wars are quite brutal and ancient.

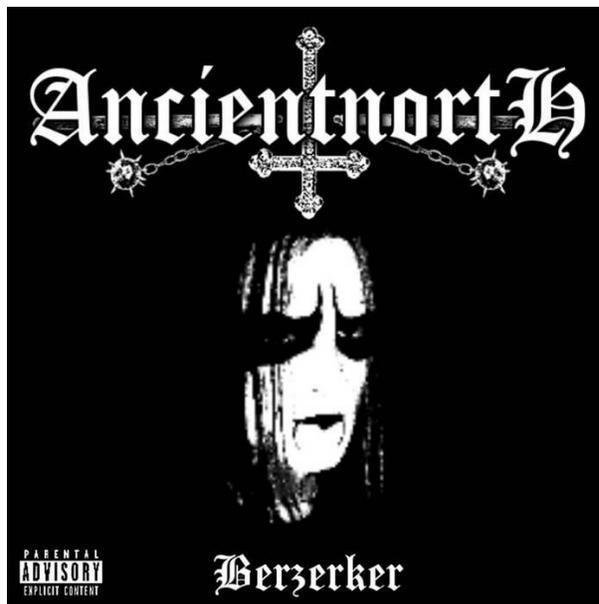
As you can see my songwriting structure is not exactly conventional like modern pop you would hear on the radio where they sing about the most mundane lovey dovey bubblegum acts of our existence, but that is the point.

My songs are way different in comparison, my style of music called black metal takes a harsh view on reality, we praise the mystical fantasy roots from JRR Tolkien's "*The Lord of the Rings*" and anything that is ancient and evil. It kind of intertwines once in a while with other story tellers. We are bards, we are not bar musicians that play honkey tonk.

Sometimes you will see that Black Metal will make subgenres of black metal such as NSBM or DSBM or post-Black Metal, these I have only shown very little interest in and only for the music, not the ideology behind the music. Suicidal emotion is not expressed through modern radio music, and if they try to sing about it, it is really not that authentic. That's what makes DSBM make some sense because they actually depict perfect feeling of depression and suicidal thoughts. As for NSBM they have a political motive and they want to gain a following from that, these people believe they have found their enemy and they are rocking against it, same with RABM, they are extreme and trying to fight their enemy. But as you can see here these genres are very close to the reality we live in, and that's not what I go for, I am more imaginative. But I do have a problem with some issues in our society and sometimes it feels when I go outside that I hate everyone. But I will not make DSBM or NSBM because of it. I am more imaginative and creative with this songwriting process and done in an extreme fashion.

In any case, inspiration doesn't seem to run dry with 2 new releases that have been made public in the past couple of months: the "*Berzerker*" EP in May and your second full-length "*The nine realms*" in July. Will they also be made physically available courtesy of Iron Bonehead Productions?

Yes, those are getting a release, not from IBP, I was contacted by a private label, and he is getting on that as I know of its called evil flames records and he will be getting all those done on Vinyl and CD. Death eternal is also making some cassettes for me recently.



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Where is the “KILL!” intro on the “Berzerker” EP taken from?

That is taken from a short bit from a movie called “Conan the Barbarian”. What is best in life.

The “The Nine Realms” album features a song called “Motshamtok”. What is this intriguingly entitled song about?

The land of ancient time

Forsaken and forgotten

In the edge of this realm

In the corner of the ocean...

It's about a cursed place in the 9 realms, massive land of volcanic ash and permafrost.

Not only Ancient North but also Necroseer are one-man bands. Was it initially the plan to do everything by yourself or was it due to circumstances that it ended up being like this?

Oh yes, it is circumstance, I mean I recently just turned 20, no car yet. I am staying with my girlfriend for some months in Denmark then I will soon have to go back to the US with a relative and start working for my dreams (like a car).

The people I tried to play locally with either not enough experience or ambition, or they are too busy to do anything. I know eventually I can and will join a full piece black metal band. I'm young, fresh and just making my way. Learning new things all the time.

In my opinion, adding a drummer of flesh and bones could be beneficial for Ancient North, no? Especially on “The Nine Realms”, the drum sound is quite fake, boring and artificial sounding, whereas “The gates” had a more organic sound.

Yes, indeed and for that reason I know I use Garageband for the drums on “The Gates”, here in Denmark I have used Cubase with Groove Agent for “The Nine Realms”, and Hell yeah, a real drummer would make it awesome.

Noted for the future when I have a studio to play at and a drummer to go and record. I tell you drums make a huge difference. Just hope they can play 180 to 200 bpm in 3/4. Otherwise, I guess I could record some slow and true style of Black Metal.



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Overall, I'm not that impressed by the more industrial and mechanical cold feeling of "The Nine Realms" and I definitely prefer the debut. With 3 releases that came out in 2022 and the fact that you do everything by yourself, I think it can be dangerous to fall into the trap of "quantity over quality" that often happens with one-man bands. Do you have an external soundboard who gets to listen to your musical creations or are you your own master and critic throughout the whole song writing process?

UH exactly, I often get into that danger zone as well, I must tell myself again like earlier I said, take my time with it, it will be good. I don't need another release this soon, but at the same time the community is saying MORE MORE, so it's like I feel I need to make more, but they need to wait! And yes, this "The Nine Realms" you can tell is not as good as the debut, the guitars are scooped as fuck and there is no bass on this album. I tell you Ancient North will learn from mistakes like Necroseer did and conquer from them. I do not have an external soundboard honestly that's fucking genius, where can I find someone to do that.

Do you consider both bands pure as studio projects meaning that you will never enter the stage to perform live with them?

Not exactly, I still have great memory of the riffs from both albums in case I gig someday, especially "The Gates". But as for now, yes, they are just studio projects.

What are the plans with Necroseer in the near future and is there more Ancient North music to be revealed?

Necroseer is a lot of my experimental stuff that I don't want on Ancient North, say for instance I make some Dungeon Synth that sounds out of the ordinary, I upload it to Youtube as Necroseer, but Necroseer is not really the big picture like Ancient North. I want Ancient North to be my main project, but there are people that still love Necroseer and the rawness I have produced for it. Eventually Necroseer will be in history, Ancient North will take over the big albums that people want on vinyl. I am passionate about making it sound better all the time. I know Necroseer has been an epic journey. But it gets better now with Ancient North!

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