

Czech band Inferno are one of the most interesting current orthodox black metal bands. A couple of years ago, they blew me away with their previous album "*Omniabsence filled by his greatness*" but the brand new "*Gnosis kardias (of transcension and involution)*" record is even more impressive. Band leader Adramelech wanted to give some insights into the world of Inferno. (JOKKE)



Hail Adramelech and Inferno! I discovered your band with the splendid "*Omniabsence filled by his greatness*" record that saw the light on Agonia Records in 2013. This made me dive in your extended back catalogue, but to be honest I didn't go further back in time until "*Black devotion*" of 2009, an album I also liked, but the steps forward that were made with its successor were huge. Which of the older records should I definitely need check out?

Salutations, I think that if you really want to make a complex picture of the band, to understand certain steps that have been taken, see into origin of things and reveal our intents then you should hear them all. Such way is the best if you really want to know. The reason is that each record mirrors and captures the certain period of time when it was created. Our development during that time, emotions we felt, imprints of the individual members who were at that time in the band as well as the vibrations of possession that fuelled the creation. Only then, you will clearly see the chain of events which crystallized into contemporary form of the band and the music we present. The art can be volatile and

polymorphous, it is the vessel of expression that is vast and wide and therefore one cannot just single out a certain period. Everything is interconnected and reflects the contemporary reality.

Adramelech, you are the sole member who is still there since the inception of the band in 1996. Doesn't it take a lot of energy when band members leave and you have to search new people, who fit in both on a musical, personal and ideological level?

Yes, in some cases the personnel changes can be exhausting, as you need to rehearse the material from the start and it takes time and effort to really get to know the people you are playing with. On the other hand, it can be fulfilling too. Especially if it brings something fresh allowing you to feel again the vibrations of renewal and the passion brought. Personally, I like and accept new challenges and I always try to view them as the necessary next step to achieve certain goals we place before ourselves on the spiritual and artistic plane.

In the beginning Inferno was more about paganism, whereas in recent times the ideology shifted more towards occultism and Satanism. Are you the one who guides over the general band vision and lyrical themes? Do you also write music or does this part belong to other band members? (In case the others write the music: Isn't it strange that you have to rely on the others in terms of music whereas you operate as the main man and band leader)?

I do not think this statement about Inferno being more pagan-oriented in the beginnings is correct. If you read the lyrics of the demos and first Eps then you would see that two worlds collide in there and create something compact. Sure, we were 15-18 at those times and we lacked deeper, more refined opinions but that is normal for that age. But already back then, in the nineties, everything we did was founded upon discovery in the magical-thelemic way, it stayed with till this day. To listen to your true will and act in accordance with it and as such we support the healthy and real European traditionalism, which has certain anti-Christian elements in its background. And I do not see a problem in mixing these two things.

Our lyrical and visual presentation might be quite different today, as well as the sounding, the composition and dramaturgy of live performances, sure. But I consider this to be a natural part of one's evolution, as it is still based on the same foundation as always. It is our way how to capture and portray the natural path of development, our evolution during the

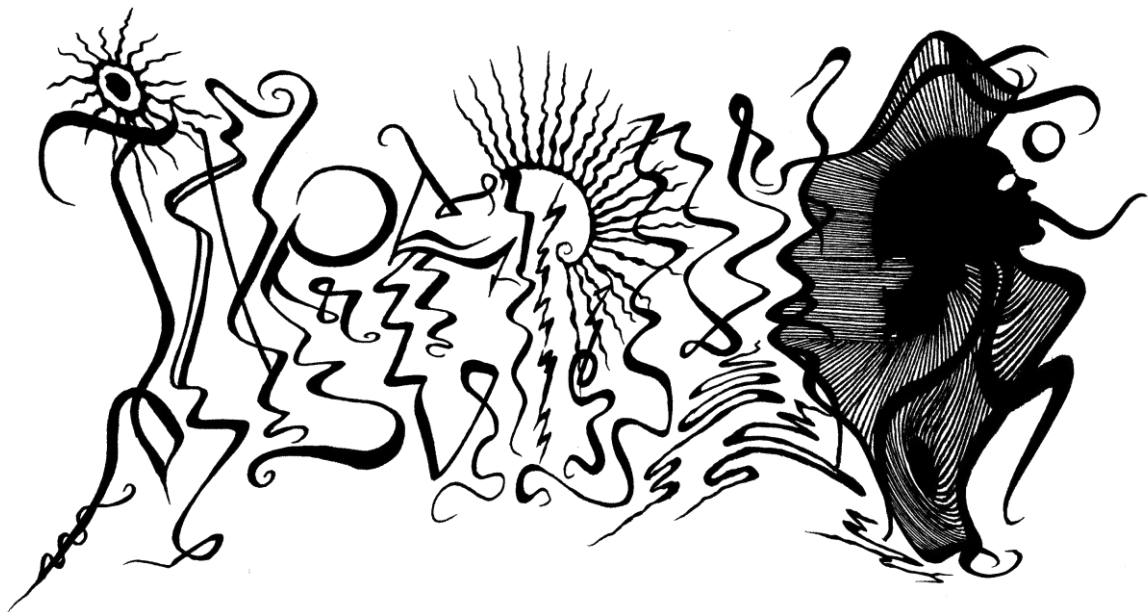
course of time when we improved on all fronts. And as you already know, lot of changes, including the line-up changes, have occurred in those many years. I do not see anything wrong with that. Inferno lives through us, it is our vessel and I do not think it should be otherwise. Many people would like to see us playing the same way as we did for example on the first "*Peklo na zemi*" demo. And nowadays Inferno might seem as a completely different band than at the beginning of a millennium. But I claim, if I look into myself, that I still hold the same or similar opinions as in the beginning. However, I walked a long path, saw new horizons, gained knowledge and improved myself in the (not only) occult practise, which I try to present in a deeper, more interesting and wider way than before. Who can say that he or she is the exactly same person as twenty years ago? Is that even possible?

I perceive that contemporary Inferno represents the return to the initial essence. We made a few steps back, only to start going forward anew. All the attributes which made Inferno what it has always been, were thoroughly evaluated and recreated into a new, more potent form which develops the previous creations, and also presents something new. We do not concentrate on the consequences but on our path towards them. If we feel that it is the right time to give things a different form, then we do so without a fear of straying from the path we have set before ourselves. This is an overstatement of course but I also think that it is better to be a laughingstock for others than to become a burnout pitiful mess unable to create something fresh.

And concerning the last part of the question. I do not think that I just rely on others what they bring forth as I influence the process fully, even though I do not play any instrument. That is not always needed in order to influence the creation and push it in a way you deem necessary at the moment. Also certain impartial opinion of someone who is not the author can be a plus. And we share the passion and view of music with Ska-Gul, who is the main composer, and thus we can understand and complement each other in what we want to achieve.

I noticed that around the time of "*Omniabsence filled by his greatness*" the old band logo including a pentagram was left for a new, intriguing one. What led to this decision and who was responsible for the new logo? Most bands who change their logo, choose one which is more legible. You on the other hand go for a more mysterious sigil which seems to be full of occult details. Why does it better fit with what Inferno stands for nowadays?

Yes, it is exactly as you write. The bands change their logos to make it more accessible and memorable for fans and we went a different path as the new logo is more illegible in comparison with the old one. But on the other hand, it is quite strange and different in comparison to other logos. And as such it is able to capture the attention of a beholder and make him/her to stop, think and perhaps ponder what led to the change. I was planning the logo change during the creation of *"Omniabsence filled by his greatness"* because I knew that the path we have taken needs a new seal that would be different from all other logos. The logo which could indicate a psychedelic face of the album, reflect the music, lyrics and give our art-form a certain uncommon sign. Because the music is actually like that. Chaotic, full of seemingly contradicting emotions and ideas, yet striving for the finality. It is really an imprint of what is portrayed in the lyrics. I think that the new logo is subtler, more figurative and offers many interpretations. Like the lyrics. We simply considered it to be good and it suits the topics of our lyrics – the abstract reflections, evaluations and experiencing. The logo was created by Sindre Foss Skancke who also did logos and various visuals for Dodsengel, Skullflower, Keres and many other bands.



On *"Gnosis kardias (of transcension and involution)"* the sound and concept of the previous album are being explored more into depth which results in an even stronger and more refined album. What does the album title mean and how is the record related to *"Omniabsence filled by his greatness"*?

Yes it elaborated the sound of the previous album and went further. It is its continuation of sorts. The new album is much more personal, meditative, subtler but also more violent, darker and chaotic. Many aspects of the album can be interpreted in various way, and if you take a certain aspect and confront it with another, it can create a completely different, new meaning. And something similar applies to the name of the album. The initial, working title was *“Involution of lucid existence”* and with it in mind the concepts were established and fleshed out. Later, in the final phases of creation, we chose a new title: *“Gnosis Kardias”*, translated as the knowledge of the heart. To cite the introduction of the album:

“All that is real is created and governed by things that are unreal and all that we perceive is a mere dream within a dream - a shallow existence we ostensibly control. Before we step further, searching, into the endless universe, take a look into yourselves. A proper and deep stare, until everything that surrounds you and especially you alone, loses its superfluous nature. The album is a profound introspection and consequent expansion beyond the ordinary perception. A glimpse of the end, with which everything starts anew, and glimpse of the beginning, in effort to descry what preceded the countless cycles of contractions and expansions. The encounter with darkness and light of the innermost essence of man, that originates elsewhere.”

The previous and the current title refer to all the above, the descent into yourself, finding the inner and outer essence. A deep understanding, the inner knowledge and illumination which transforms every fibre of your being. And there are many ways how to achieve that. Let us say, that there have been moments in the past few years, when we indeed perceived the insubstantiality of the things around us, timeless moments when all was completely lucid.

The new album displays a sound that goes way further than merely black metal. Elements from psychedelica, ambient and progressive rock are blended together, which makes the album really diverse. Is this something Inferno will develop more on future recordings? How far do you think experimenting with other genres can go within a band like Inferno?

We will see how far the creation is going to take us. We do not want to compose according to some given templates and who knows what inner and outer stimuli will have impact on us

during those moments of creation. Sure, we will always nourish the flame that burnt us in the nineties but we will not avoid discovering new paths. It will be a symbiosis.

I could not but notice a lot of symphonically and oriental music passages in the songs. Although no keyboard player is being credited on the album, I am quite sure that I hear some horns or trumpets in “Abysmal cacophony” or am I wrong?

Yes, you are wrong. All the soundscapes were created by guitars, however there are many layers, effects etc. used. No other instruments than drums, electric guitars, bass guitar and voices were used on “*Gnosis kardias*”.

Although not to the same extent as Cult Of Fire, oriental elements and influences from Eastern music seem to find their way to your sound. I also mentioned influences of the progressive metal band Sunset In The 12th House, the side project of some Dordeduh members, who are off course also incorporating a lot of native music elements in their sound. What attracts you in the folk music from your country?

To be frank, there was no intent to introduce the elements of eastern, oriental music into ours and I do not even hear them in our album. But I guess that some lines and the layers can give that impression, that is OK. I have heard from people that every listening session of the new album is somehow different, often influenced by one's mood or anticipations. One listen is not enough and it takes time to cut through the layers. Attentive approach is the best one. We do not really listen to the native folk music so there are hardly any influences.

Inferno is a band that also puts a lot of effort in the visual presentation like album covers, stage clothes etc. How important is the visual side of the music for you? Aren't you afraid that some people might consider the stage outfit and all the attributes a little bit clownesque and that it takes away the focus on the music?

It is obviously important. But only to a certain extent. It is a factor that accompanies the actual music and it is a small part in the whole mosaic, which helps us to cross into different levels of perception when we perform live. The visual side should obviously never outweigh the musical factors. In such case it becomes something without substance, and we can see many examples of that around us.

Also something which was considered shocking, radical, elitist and genuine at the turn of eighties and nineties can now be seen as awkward, theatrical and artificial. But what am I supposed to do with that? On one hand I am not surprised that it ended up like this. The problem is that everyone thinks that he or she can belong everywhere, that they have a right to have anything they want. Everything has been laughed away and made sterile, mundane. Black and Death metal were made a brand which everyone can (ab)use and certain detachment and individuality that characterised the nineties are gone. We have to recognize the bands and artists who really are genuine and approach their work with necessary seriousness and discriminate against the superficial ones who claim it is “fun” or just “music”. I am sure there is no doubt that there are bands like Watain, Acherontas, Mayhem, Nightbringer, Behexen, Mare and others where it is completely evident how it is supposed to be.

I cannot wait until I can hold the vinyl version of the new record in my hands. The cover artwork is simply amazing. Peruvian master Jose Gabriel Alegría Sabogal really did an outstanding job. I read somewhere that this must be one of his most complete and extended works to date. How is the album title reflected in the artwork?

Yes, he did and it is also true that this is the biggest and the most complete work he has done for a band so far. For Gnosis Kardias Jose did the front and back cover, as well as additional drawings for each song, according to the lyrics, concepts and some additional remarks about the things which should be included. On the album, the words, music and the visuals complement and develop each other. Notice for example the aspect of “duality” in the microcosmic and macrocosmic view which is crucial in the general lyrical/musical concept of the album. But you should make your own explanation.



Both “*Black devotion*” and “*Omniansence filled by his greatness*” were released on Agonia Records, whereas you are now working with World Terror Committee. Why did you choose to leave Agonia? Can W.T.C. offer more for the band? In any case it seems there are more likeminded bands on your new label.

We left Agonia Records for a simple reason. We were not satisfied with the way how the owner of the label worked and I honestly expected the cooperation with such a big label to be different. There were shortcomings in many aspects of the partnership, be it communication or fulfilling the promises given. For example, it took him three months to send us the cds and there were many messages ignored. Well, lots of words were said but not many of them were turned into action. And I could list more things, but who cares. A lot

of negative stuff has been already written about Agonia and for us this is a thing of the past. WTC are the complete opposite. The cooperation runs smoothly and I have reasons to believe it will remain like this.

We do not require any special treatment from labels, but we also do not want to be treated as unwanted fixture. The cooperation between a band and a label is always two-way. And I consider fulfilling the conditions agreed upon, as the matter of honour and integrity. Also, WTC release quality bands, they have great reputation and we are flattered to be the part of this. We will see what the future brings.

Acherontas mainman Acherontas V. Priest contributed to some songs. Why did you specifically ask him to participate?

I am a huge fan of Acherontas and his voice; certainly one of the best in Black Metal for me. I thought that his imprint and expression could suit the new album. When listening to Acherontas, I feel an incredible energy, all those nuances and emotions he is able to portray... I really wanted to have something as entrancing as this in Inferno. I worried a bit if he would really fit in, and I wanted him to try something different than what he does in Acherontas but in the end, he completely understood and pervaded the essence of our album. This speaks volumes about his approach to music and spirituality, I think.

If I'm not mistaken you played on Belgium's Throne Fest a couple of years ago. Do you remember this gig? How was the response? Any new tour dates in Belgium being planned with the release of the new album?

Sure, the concert itself and the organisation were perfect. No Belgian dates planned at this moment, but this might change of course.