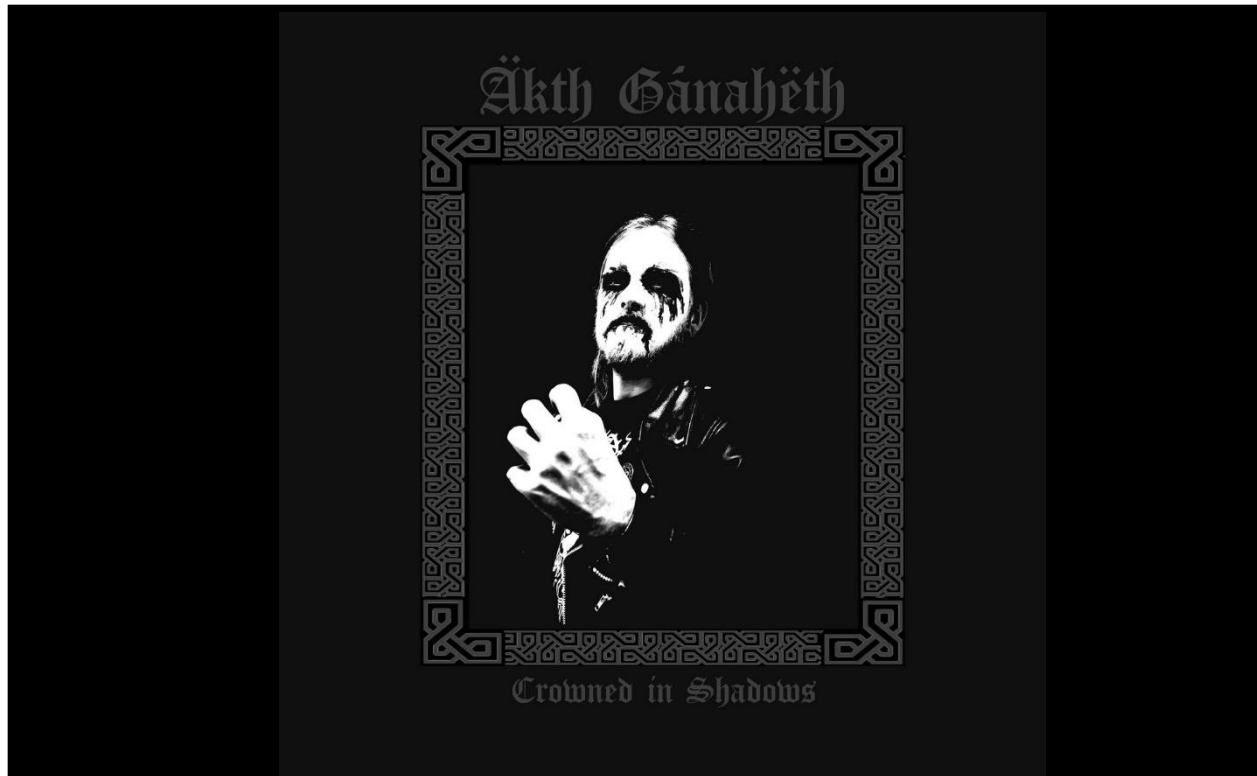


AKTH GANAETH – A FRIEND OF SOLITUDE AND SILENCE

Icelandic Black Metal is still hot as hell and almost every month we are treated with new music from the land of fire and ice. Äkth Gánahëth is one of these new bands, although A., the man behind this one-man raw Black Metal project, has his roots in Germany. Äkth Gánahëth recently released its first full-length *“Crowned in Shadows”*, showcasing a non-typical Icelandic sound and rather one familiar to that of French LLN and bands such as Moonblood and Akitsa. We had a chat with A. about the influences that life in the subarctic represents, being a dad and his interest in the works of Yukio Mishima. (JOKKE)



Äkth Gánahëth is a fairly new project that exists next to your other musical activities such as Níðstöng, Bálför, Fimbulpul, Spectral Full Moon, Úlfhéðinn and Vresëbeth. Was there a specific urge or desire that led you to creating this new musical project?

Äkth Gánahëth is basically the result of experimenting with my ambient projects Fimbulpul and Spectral Full Moon who both preceded Äkth Gánahëth. The reason that it exists in the form it is now, is more or less a coincidence and was not planned in any way.

The band name sounds very intriguing. What does it mean? It seems you are heavily inspired by the French Black Legions (Les Légions Noires) with acts like Belkètre, Vzaéurbtre, Brenoritvrezorkre, Dvnaèbkre, Bvrolarimnambde, and so on. Is it there that you found inspiration for this strange sounding and hard to pronounce name?

It does not translate to any language, but is rather a symbolic representation of the entity itself. Its only meaning is the music itself and the complex set of emotions that I transport through it. As you already recognized, it is inspired by the names of the LLN bands. I always had a big heart for their strange and otherworldly language.

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What sets LLN apart from the countless other Black Metal bands and circles?

Their raw and unpolished emotion. From a musical perspective most of the stuff would be considered horrible and amateurish but I think this is what makes it as raw and suffocating as it is.

You seem to have a history in Metalcore and Hardcore. What made you shift more towards Black Metal and how would compare the values and scene one to another?

Metalcore is such a dirty word these days, haha. I prefer to call it Metallic Hardcore but, I am heavily influenced by bands like Integrity, Cro-Mags, Poison Idea, GISM and countless others. I think what connects the both is the untamed display of negative emotions. When it comes to values and stuff, the two scenes are obviously very different and I have no emotional connection to the modern Hardcore scene and its internal competition about being the holiest, most politically correct and most marginalized individual on the planet.



You have the German nationality but currently reside in Iceland. A few months ago, I had a conversation with Josh Rood, the American frontman of Icelandic Black Metal band Nexus, who also lived in Iceland for several years due to his academic career. What led you to move to and live in this magical island?

Apart from my love for this country and its history and nature, I am married to a wonderful Icelandic woman and have an equally wonderful son with her so my stay here is a permanent one.

Although I found Iceland and its natural beauty very overwhelming when I visited the country a few years ago, I don't think I could ever live there, especially not outside the Reykjavik area. How is living in Iceland compared to Germany and do your new surroundings have an impact on your general state of mind and music?

Living here is quite different but mostly rather pleasant. This country's nature is inspiring and I enjoy being in the mountains from time to time. However, it also has its negative aspects such as being separated from important persons in my life, especially during these strange days, although I am generally a friend of solitude and silence. Sometimes it just gets a bit overwhelming. What can get to you over here are the winters, especially the one that we experienced earlier this year. I was basically locked in for 3 months due to the severe storms and the arrival of the pandemic on this island. It was quite heavy on my soul and Äkth Gánahëth was what would become an outlet for this.

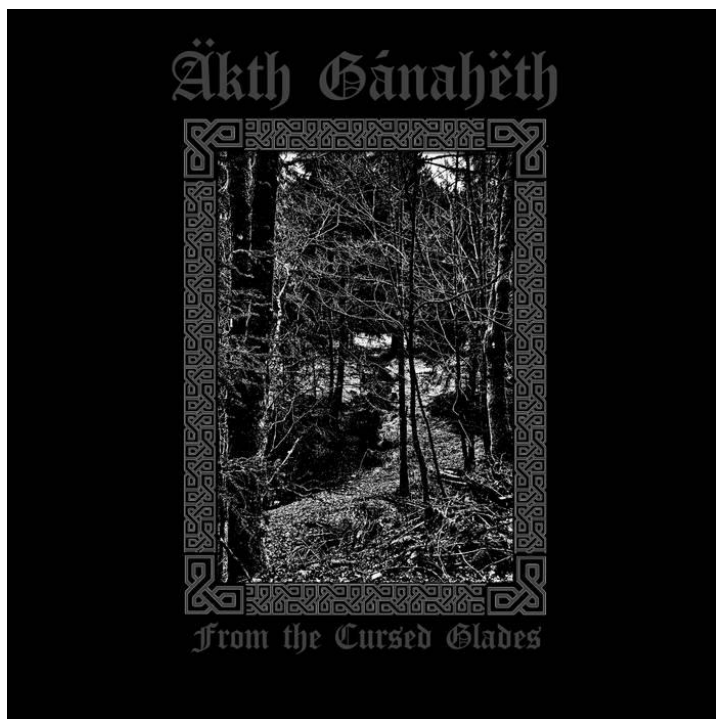
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Both Äkth Gánahëth and your Black Metal/Punk project Níðstöng are one-man bands. I don't know for your other musical endeavors, but do you always work on your own? Are there more pros than contras involved in operating as a solo-musician?

Everything that I have released currently are one-man projects that I have created entirely on my own but Bálför, which is being worked on right now, is an actual band. I definitely think there's more pros as you can work on your own tempo and realise your ideas in a way that you think is right. There are no deadlines, no stress and no limits. However, ideas from multiple heads can of course create more diverse results but I think you can achieve great things on your own if you give it the time it needs.

What musical styles can we expect from your other bands/projects such as the aforementioned Bálför, Fimbulþul, Spectral Full Moon, Úlfhéðinn and Vresëbeth?

Bálför is playing a rather experimental style of Black Metal that's probably more in line of what you'd expect from an Icelandic band. Fimbulþul and SFM are both Dark Ambient projects with slightly different approaches to the genre. There's also one Vresëbeth song on Bandcamp. Under that name I create really raw LLN worship without any experiments. I will continue working on it once I find the inspiration to do so.



After having digitally self-released the Äkth Gánahëth debut EP *"From the Cursed Glades"*, your full-length *"Crowned in Shadows"* will see the light of day through Death KvlT Productions. Will they also re-issue the EP in a physical format?

The EP was released on tape by Church of Eradication from Sweden/Germany. Chances are good there will be a vinyl release at some point.

***"Crowned in Shadows"* was – like many other titles released by the DKP – sold out in less than 30 minutes. Did you expect this kind of interest in your music, given the fact that you are a brand-new Black Metal act?**

I did not expect that at all but I am beyond happy and proud that it sold out that fast. The response before the sale was very positive but I definitely did not expect it to blow up like this.

On the other hand, by the time I got notice of its release, it was already sold out. I think 200 copies is way to less for their releases. Due to this small amount of copies, you also attract people that are not interested in the music, but merely in the fact of the album being limited, so they can put it on Discogs for ridiculous prices. Limited editions are a commercial trick that is often used in Metal these days, but I hate to see it happen in the underground (raw) Black Metal scene as it is opposed to its values in my opinion. What are your thoughts on this?

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I am in two minds about this issue. On one hand limited records and stuff has always been a part of Black Metal and I don't really have an issue with that but the flipper scam on Discogs really bothers me as a collector and a musician. I think it's mediocre to steal the record from someone who would love to own it because he or she likes the music and even more so to profit on the work of someone who worked hard to write this music. But like you mentioned, limited records basically invite those idiots to do that hence the only solution is pressing more records or repressing when there's demand but that's for the labels to decide.

***"Crowned in Shadows"* is dedicated to Ōstara, the German goddess of spring and new life where Easter is named after. The Ōstara is also a neopagan and Wiccan festival celebrated around spring equinox. Do you practice this modern pagan religion?**

I don't really practice it but I see Germanic mythology as an important part of the cultural heritage common to Germans, Scandinavians, Netherlands, the English and so on. It's a beautiful part of European history and sadly forgotten in the gutters of the modern world.

You have a new release coming up in terms of a split with Grógald. You already put the track *"Shadows Dance under the Crimson Moon"* up on Bandcamp, but it seems this will be not the final version. What will be different?



I re-recorded the vocals and mixed the whole thing a bit differently.

You let me hear the upcoming music in advance and I noticed a small shift towards more guitar riff-based compositions, whereas the keyboards and heroic clean choir chants used to be more dominant in your previous work. Was that a deliberate decision or rather an organic evolution?

It was a rather organic evolution! I used synths in the places where I think they fit and belong and that happened to be a bit less than on *"Crowned in Shadows"* and the demo.

I got to know Äkth Gánahëth through a friend who tipped me your music. The band was labelled as Icelandic, so I immediately expected to hear some Deathspell Omega influences, which is not the case at all. However, the funny thing is that your nickname on Instagram is Dadspell Omega, haha! So, you must love the band in one way or another, no?

I absolutely adore their work. It's musicianship beyond anything I will ever be able to do and a concept that's so sophisticated that most musicians, including myself of course, could not even dream of it. The Instagram name was more of a joke that I had to make after waiting for the chance to do so for 9 months haha.

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This nickname is off course also a link to you being a father. Can you agree with the vision of some (Satanic) Black Metal musicians who say that the genre cannot be rhymed with having kids or love somebody, as it is based on hate, misanthropy and nihilism?

No. I think it's a ridiculous thing to say. I would even dare to say that it does not even contradict the notion of misanthropy as I understand misanthropy as something aimed at humanity as a whole. Humanity is in many aspects a pile of crap but that doesn't mean that every individual that can be considered a part of it does as well. I hope that makes sense or is understandable. I wouldn't consider myself a misanthrope though and I would never even think about having to argue for having a son just because some fool said that I am not allowed to create Black Metal if I have one haha.



You seem to be very interested in the Japanese writer and political activist Yukio Mishima. Ideologically, Mishima was a right-wing nationalist who opposed the westernization of Japan, and formed the Tatenokai, an unarmed civilian militia, for the avowed purpose of restoring power to the Japanese Emperor. In 2019, Australian raw Black Metal band Kommodus dedicated their “An Imperial Sun Rises” EP to Mishima. What attracts you in this controversial figure and what books can you recommend to start with if you’re unfamiliar with Mishima?

I think “right-wing nationalist” often makes Mishima sound like someone he was not. Mishima was a man who loved his home and loved its traditions and culture that he saw threatened by the influence of the West. After all he was a man trying to defend what he loves with so much passion that he eventually gave his life for it. To me, Mishima himself was like a heroic character from a novel. You rarely find humans with such an impressive sense of dedication these days. Also, his style of writing is phenomenal and unmatched in many aspects. In fact, the Mishima artwork was what luckily got me interested in Kommodus which is one of my favourite projects these days.

If you want to get into Mishima I think that the “*Sea of Fertility*” tetralogy is a good way to start. I and many others consider the tetralogy his masterpiece.

Any last words to add?

Thank you for the interview. Keep an eye out for future releases and give Grógaldur an ear or two.

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