

ONDFØDT – THE DARKNESS WILL ALWAYS BE AROUND US

Two years after the release of *“Dödsrikets Kallelse”*, Finnish Black Metal duo Ondfødtd return with their third full-length album called *“Norden”*, crafted during 2019. With *“Norden”*, the band has managed to develop and enrich their sound, but still delivers without compromise whatsoever and is a must have for every Black Metal fan. Vocalist, drummer, bassist, songwriter, and producer Owe Inborr talks about all the different aspects of running a Black Metal band in these modern times. (JOKKE)



Not much information about Ondfødtd can be found, at least online. Is there a specific reason for staying in the shadows with the band?

Well, when we started the band back in 2013, we had a full line-up and something big going on, or so it felt. Later in 2014, one of the former members wanted to quit and close down the band as well, and meanwhile our drummer was going to a mental hospital. There were a lot of things that made everything hard for us to continue, and it took all the way until 2019 for our next album to come out. This was because, first of all, I wanted to see if some of the issues we had would get better after a while, but they didn't.

Me and Juuso decided to continue with Ondfødtd together in 2017, but we did not want to rush into anything too quickly or to focus on gigs. We never chose to "stay in the shadows" by ourselves really, it kind of just happened and it has been pretty relaxing for us to not have too much attention. Now with the third album it feels like the attention is coming back more and more, and people seem to like the new sound we came up with for this new album *“Norden”*.

How difficult is it nowadays to stand out from the shitload of records that is being released every week?

I think that we stand out in a way because we are stubborn fuckers when it comes to keeping the traditional Black Metal spirit, both in the sound and in the song writing. We all grew up listening to the Norwegian Black Metal bands and bands like Dissection, Watain and the Hardcore Punk scene. Therefore, we are not interested in becoming a modern sounding Black Metal band, we want the rawness and the danger that our sound provides.

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Nowadays, Ondfødtd operates as a duo, although the line-up was bigger in the past. What made you decide to continue as a duo after the release of your second album?

As I mentioned, it kind of just happened and we have felt it was also needed for us to continue to have it this way, at least up 'til now. We have started to prepare for the stage again, and we have big names from other bands that are very much interested in playing in Ondfødtd for potential future live shows. No names can at this point be mentioned, since we are still very much in the planning stage for this to happen. But I can promise that, when we start playing live again, we will do it properly and will be very well prepared. Since we haven't played live since 2014 and our sound has improved a lot since then, we want to take our live shows to at least the same level of quality.

We will see if the band will remain the same when it comes to song writing and studio. Me and Juuso have enjoyed doing the material for Ondfødtd as a duo since 2017, maybe we will keep it that way.



(c) Sandra Björse

The band name is Norse, even though the band is hailing from Finland. I noted that your second full-length's album title "*Dödsrikets Kallelse*" is Swedish and means something like "The calling from the realm of the dead". Lyrics are also written in Swedish. Why this decision not to sing in your native language?

Our native language is Swedish actually. This seems to confuse a lot of people, but in Finland we have two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. "Ondfødtd" is old Swedish and means that you "were born evil".

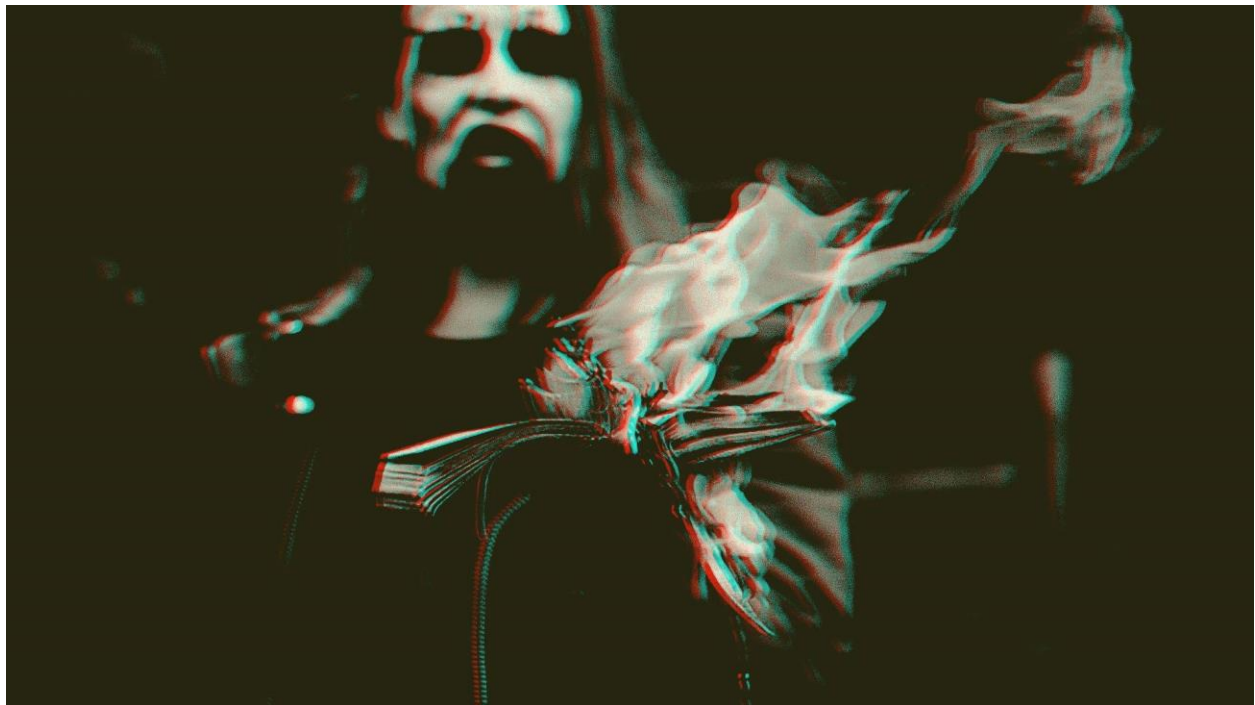
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To me at least, it feels the best to write in your mother-tongue so that you can truly express yourself. Singing in English has never been on the table and will probably never happen.

We come from a part of Finland where we have a very old and preserved way of speaking Swedish and no one else around here has ever done this before. Even in Sweden, they have a hard time understanding our way of speaking even though we speak the same language.

Sometimes, Google Translate is your best friend when you want to know what bands are singing about, although I don't have any clue what "*Gifti Från Tadjin*" is about?

We have always been writing and singing in our preserved Swedish. And the new album "*Norden*" is based on old stories and urban legends that have been told for centuries in the area that we come from. "*Gifti Från Tadjin*" means something like "Poison from a tine". The song is about a dark figure, something that symbolizes the snake. It's from an ancient time people forgot about, but the snake is still around in the shadows. When he will be released from the depths, no one will be ready for what is to come. It's not the easiest to describe since it's a metaphor.



(c) Ondfødt

Ondfødt's lyrical themes seem to handle about topics such as occultism, spiritualism and satanism, whereas on the new record "*Norden*", inspiration seems to be drawn more from nature. Is that a correct observation? How much of an impact do your natural surroundings have on Ondfødt's sound?

Yes, that is correct, like many people in the Black Metal scene becoming older and much more self-aware, you start to appreciate the smaller things in life, and you become more down to earth.

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Ondfødtd has always been influenced by the surroundings where we come from. From album to album, we have just picked up different aspects of nature and translated it into a sound. We have never wanted to categorize us in any way because we always change. We don't want to be stuck with some specific label; we write about topics that are relevant in our lives at the moment.

We do have and will always have the old Black Metal spirit with us, and the danger of it. We will always keep the fire alive, both sonically and visually.

And what's your take on occultism, esoterism and satanism? Many Black Metal fans have an interest in satanic imagery without really believing in it or practicing rituals. For Black Metal musicians, however, it seems far more important to walk the talk instead of playing around with the image and being accused of being "not true". What's your view on this?

I like to see some bands do this seriously. Rituals can take place in many ways and forms. I have not much to say about this because those terms mean different things to everyone you ask. I can enjoy sitting by myself for days alone, walking in the Finnish forests and smelling the nature around me and get tons of inspiration for Ondfødtd.

When you are by yourself for long enough you have to become your best friend and understand yourself and from that you can start expressing yourself more truly. So, the term "not true" means not so much to me as long as you are true to your band and to yourself.

Musically speaking, Ondfødtd could best be described as a blend of Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian Black Metal, with influences from Rock n' Roll and Thrash. The description on the band page of Immortal Frost Production's website speaks about raw Black Metal, but given your modern sound I don't agree with this description at all, especially since, nowadays, there's a shitload of really raw sounding underground black metal bands where atmosphere seems to be more important than audio quality. What's your opinion on this Owe, knowing that you're also working as a producer?

The description is very correct as you mentioned. We came from a very RAW Black Metal background with the first album, but we have changed throughout the years. As you become better at what you do and at playing your instruments, it also becomes much clearer in what direction you want to go, because you can finally express your music the way you want without any limitations of your skill level on the instruments.

I think we still have, and always will have, the Rock n' Roll spirit and the rawness. For "*Norden*", we needed to have more leads and a different sound to achieve the right feeling for the lyrics and the whole picture to make sense. We are also very happy that we could achieve this sound with the level I have reached as a producer too.



(c) Ondfødtd

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Both “*Han Bor I Skuggona*” and “*Gifti från Tadjin*” feature a guitar lead played by Swedish musician Jakob Björnfot. How did this collaboration come into being?

I have known Jacob for many years, and I think he is the best guitarist I have ever met. I have produced all of his work with Kvaen, a solo project by him. So, we have been in touch constantly throughout the years. I have never heard anyone to get the music so well as he does. He always finds the right notes to put in a solo, or a lead in a song, to boost the experience. We talked about it, long before the album was even made, that I wanted his input in Ondfødt. I’m happy that he wanted to do this because if you ask me, those songs will be remembered because of his input and those epic solos that are only adding to the experience we wanted to achieve with those songs.



(c) Sandra Björse

The songs on the new record seem to be a little bit more epic and have a slightly lengthier average playing time. Was it a deliberate decision to take the songs into this “new” direction or was this simply the music that came out of you when you were composing?

When I wrote those songs back in 2018, I was in a very different mindset compared to “*Dödsrikets Kallelse*”. Because of the lyrics, I wanted every song to actually feel like it was taking you on a journey instead of just being another song. I wasn't thinking about the length of the songs at all when writing them, they just needed to feel right before I was happy with them.

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I believe that if you have a good song or album, you should not react to the time you spent listening to it. What you should feel is that it took you through a journey and you could feel what the band felt while making it.

The “Dödsrikets kallelse” record featured a cover song of Finnish Black Metal band Hämyn. Whereas most bands go for well-known songs by “bigger” bands, you decided to go for a lesser-known song and act. Why did you decide to cover their song “Kun Minä Kuolen”?

It was Juuso that found their album in a record shop, and he showed me the music and we both got inspired by it. They had some raw tones even though it was very simple stuff, but the spirit was there. We listened to the song "Kun Minä Kuolen" at least 50 times one night in the studio and we decided to contact the band and ask them for their permission to make a cover of that song.

I also think it's a little bit boring to make a cover of a well-known song and the risk of not making the song unique or good enough are big. I think it was good to make a cover of a small underground band that has good music, and you can promote their music through your band.

Both of you are also active in blackened Crustpunk band Dispyt, with whom you released your second album “Under Tiden Jag Sålde Min Själ Till Satan” last year. Satisfied with how this record turned out?



We're more than happy with the result of that album. As I mentioned before, we grew up with HC punk as well, and we wanted to take it to the next level sonically with this album, and I think we succeeded.

Dispyt has been very active since the start back in 2016. Mathias Lillmåns (...And oceans, Finntroll, ...) wanted to join the band as soon as it was started, and he was full of ideas and also very good at promoting the band. We got booked for our first mini tour in Finland 2 days after the band was formed and we only had 3 songs.

We have toured Europe once, we've had many mini tours in Finland, and played the biggest punk festivals here. We also had our first mini tour in

Sweden right before the pandemic started. Our future with Dispyt looks very bright, we have lots of material and gigs coming up.

Many Finnish Black Metal musicians are active in several acts, although your band activities are quite limited with both Dispyt and Ondfødt. Can we say that you're some kind of loners compared to the rest of your country' scene, or is there simply no interest/time to have several bands up and running?

For me personally, I work as a studio and live engineer, do music videos and film live events, so I am booked pretty much all the time. I have become more of a "behind the scenes" guy instead of the rock star. The interest of having lots of bands is of course present, but it's hard to find time for everything going

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on. I rather put all the energy in Ondfødte and Dispyt to become the best they possibly can, instead of having too many projects, because I can't devote the time and energy it needs.

For the third time in a row, Ondfødte is working with the Belgian label Immortal Frost Productions, and Dispyt's latest effort was also released by them. How is the collaboration going with IFP and do you notice any differences between the release of your debut and "Norden" in terms of support and reach?

It has worked out great so far. IFP have become so much better at promotion over the years, and generally more people who write reviews have noticed IFP more and more every year, so after each release we received more reviews, and the feedback has always been overwhelmingly positive.

IFP has also managed to strike a partnership with Season of Mist for official distribution in Europe and in the US. Before Covid hit, IFP also organized tours under the name "IFP Bookings & Tour Management" for their signed bands and booked shows and festivals all around in Europe for those signed under their agency.



And as for "Norden", a very talented artwork painter, Ronarg from the band Ars Veneficium, was introduced to us by the label's manager Surtur to paint all the landscape paintings used in the album artwork. We are very stunned by the result and thankful for the outstanding work he did.

The booklet looks absolutely amazing and is very well designed by WrathDesign. The IFP-crew really put a lot of effort into designing it and it paid off for sure. As for the vinyl, "Norden" gets released in 3 different versions, the rarest of those versions was almost sold out in the first weekend after the album was released and that is pretty cool to see, I must admit. The vinyl contains a booklet and an A2 sized poster of

the band, and again it looks just so good, and the colours are perfectly graded.

Ever since we released our debut with IFP, Surtur, the guy who owns the record label, has had me mix and produce a lot of other bands at Wolfthrone Studios that are signed with Immortal Frost Productions. I have noticed that over the years, we're both becoming better at what we're doing, and the quality of IFP's releases is increasing every year.

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Your relationship with IFP goes indeed much further than just one between label and band. How did your collaboration start off, and why is IFP your ideal long-time partner in crime?

It just happened I guess, haha. He liked the production of the debut and he found out that I had just started my studio, and he wanted me to work with other bands he had signed. It kept going on until this very day, and we are both happy to help each other out.

For "Mörkri", a professionally shot video was released. Is this kind of promotion also being financially supported by the label?

The music video was sponsored by my own company Wolfthrone Studios, and I paid all the money that it has cost to make it from my own pocket. Of course, it would be nice to have someone to finance those kinds of videos in the future, but I thought it would be a good timing to promote my company too, to show that I'm able to shoot these kinds of videos.

How important are music videos compared to having just the music as a YouTube video?

Sometimes you have to keep up with how the rest of the world is moving forward within the music scene, no matter what genre you play. Bands have started to make music videos again to promote their new albums, and the same goes for Ondfødtd and Dispyt. So many bands release new music every day and if you want to stand out, you have to put some money into good videos to get some attention.

It was fun to write the story for the video we made, and to plan the shooting days too. We planned to make another video before the release, with Jacob Björnfot from Sweden, but he hasn't been able to get into Finland yet. So, the video will be shot at a later time. It sucks because it would have been good for us to have that video ready before the release of "Norden", but what can you do in these times? We will make it when it is possible.

Why did you specifically choose for this song to promote it with a video?

I think the song "Mörkri" represents all aspects of the album in one song: it has these slow atmospheric parts, and it goes over to the traditional Ondfødtd with some thrashy riffs and brutality in the second half of the song. You get a good idea of what the album will contain.

It was also easier for us to make a story based on the lyrics. The song "Mörkri" means "Darkness" and we represent the darkness in the form of a dark figure named "him". It's based on the fact that in Finland, we have 8 months of darkness every year and "he", the darkness, will always be around us.



(c) Sandra Björse

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Where did you shoot the amazing nature shots? Was the “storyline” that alternates between nature and band shots your idea or did the producer came up with this?

It was my company "Wolfthrone Studios" that came up with the story for it, they shot everything. The planning took a while to prepare, and we had to wait until spring before we could finally shoot it. All those nice forests you see are basically shot just outside the door where we live. We are in the middle of nowhere and I think that in the video, you can see exactly where all our inspiration is coming from. It's empty with no houses and endless forests.

We will probably continue with these kinds of videos for Ondfødte in the future, because we don't have to go a long way to find these places to shoot this kind of material if we want to show the listeners where our inspiration is coming from.

Any last words you want to add?

Interesting questions to answer in this interview. You made me analyse Ondfødte in a deeper aspect, and that is something I enjoyed.

I would like to thank Jacob Bjørnfot for the awesome work with the solos he came up with for this record, as well as Peter "Peppe" Rosvik for the inspirational photo he took of those mountains on Svalbard. That was the main inspiration for this album "Norden".

Thanks to all the supporters over the years, and to those who have helped us out with everything.

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ONDFØDT
NORDEN

OUT ON
30/07/2021

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IFP VOISCB
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BLUE SWIRL WITH BLACK
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IFP 060
JEWEL CASE CD