



A record that appeared more than four months ago only now seeing a review? On our platform, such a thing is indeed possible, as evidenced by this regrettably late tribute to the Austrian one-man band, Ara. *"Mutterseelenallein und aus eigener Kraft"* is already the fifth accomplishment from Michael Schneeberger, or Schnee – a project that managed to garner significant interest right from its first demo, thanks to a very idiosyncratic sound, equally distinctive album covers, and moreover, ironclad live shows (supported by members of, among others, Parasite Dreams and Gates of Londra). Why it took so much time to commit a few words about this album to paper I shall leave entirely aside, but one thing is certain: this full-length was initially met with a mixed feeling, yet has since managed to linger endlessly in my playlist. We find that delightful; those records that dare to completely reshape your opinion over time.

The slow, drawn-out, and undeniably raw chaos that Schnee manages to compose across these eight tracks overflows with diverse influences from all corners, treating us to black metal and post-punk alike, as well as unadulterated doom, all seamlessly assisted by magical-realist dungeon synth. An album that groans under the many layers of Alpinist melancholy, unfeigned emotions, and a profound longing for a world that seems just not quite ours. Opener *"Tief und laut"* immediately manages to create an atmosphere you will hear on few black metal records this year, steeped in a lingering but justifiably triumphant echo and surprisingly exhilarating in nature. Tracks like the instrumental *"Sexhexen"* form the icing on the cake, not least due to Schnee's highly memorable riffs.

Vocals alternate between a spellbinding clean voice, loud, seemingly clerical chants, and desolate shrieks—all of which fit perfectly with the auditory magic that Ara once again manages to deliver with this latest full-length. *"Mutterseelenallein"* is nevertheless a different beast than what we heard on *"Gurre"* or *"Blutroter Mond"*, but even fans of more traditional black metal who are willing to grant this record the time to grow will undoubtedly have to agree that unforgettable music has been written here.

JULES: 90/100

Ara – *Mutterseelenallein und aus eigener Kraft* (Into Endless Chaos 2025)

1. Tief und Laut
2. Voller Last
3. Sexhexen
4. Leben
5. Ara
6. Bei meinem Blut
7. Vollgesogen mit Blut
8. Mutterseelenallein

