

ENTHRONED – AN AUTOPSY AND A RESURRECTION

Three decades deep into their infernal journey, Enthroned remain one of Black Metal's most steadfast institutions. Emerging from the Belgian underground in the mid-nineties, the band has weathered countless transformations without ever compromising its core devotion to chaos, ritual, and spiritual rebellion. Now reduced to a trio led by frontman Nornagest, Enthroned return with *"Ashspawn"*, a record described as both "an autopsy and a resurrection," embodying the band's most uncompromising and transcendental work to date. In this conversation, Nornagest reflects on the departure of long-time member Neraath, the rebirth of Enthroned's creative core, and the disciplined metaphysics that shape *"Ashspawn"*. He discusses death as dismantlement, creation through destruction, and the uncompromising stance the band continues to hold within a scene he feels has strayed from its original essence. As ever, Enthroned stand apart, not as relics of the past, but as torchbearers of Black Metal's most demanding and ascetic spirit. (JOKKE)



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A lot has happened since the release of *"Cold Black Svns"* (2019). You and drummer Menthor are now the only remaining members of that line-up. Long-time member Neraath left the band quietly after more than two decades and having been one of the principal songwriters. Was it a shock when he decided to part ways with Enthroned?

It wasn't a shock at all. I felt that his motivations and interests had shifted towards more experimental and different horizons. After more than twenty years as part of Enthroned, he made the personal decision to step away from the band over a year ago. His departure was

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not at all the result of any conflict or disruption, but rather a natural evolution in his personal and creative life. Out of mutual respect and in full alignment with the band's ongoing direction, this transition was kept private until the release of the upcoming album. A new chapter in which he chose not to participate due to his shifting focus and other life priorities.

During that time, his creative energy began moving toward different endeavours outside of Enthroned. While his legacy within the band remains acknowledged and respected, he felt it appropriate to step aside and allow the band to continue forward with complete clarity and renewed strength. There was no discord or disagreement, simply the closing of one chapter and the continuation of another.



A new guitarist and bassist, Polish musician T. Kaos (known from Death Like Mass and Lvcifyre, among others), joined the fold. How did this new trio dynamic shape the compositions and creative process behind “Ashspawn”?

Bringing T. Kaos in was a deliberate choice rooted in alignment with the band's core vision. His presence as guitarist intensified the creative dynamic by sharpening Enthroned's sound. His technique, tonal sense and natural aggression allowed the compositions to articulate themselves more fully, giving “Ashspawn” a focus and cohesion that could only emerge from this trio.

The creative process became more immediate and organic; ideas crystallised faster, and the interplay between instruments reinforced the album's atmosphere rather than diluting it. It was not about adapting the band to a member but about equipping the existing vision with the precise force necessary to bring it into full expression.

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***“Ashspawn”* is a far more uncompromising record compared to *“Cold Black Svns”* that focused more on atmosphere and was more experimental. Can we consider the new records as a counterreaction to its predecessor?**

No, it is not. *“Cold Black Svns”* was always intended as a standalone album. *“Ashspawn”* is different: more brutal, more spiritual, and a truer reflection of what this core of Enthroned represents. While the band on *“Cold Black Svns”* expressed itself through complex planning, five minds interacting in controlled chaos, *“Ashspawn”* is a unity, a clenched fist channelling and summoning the essence of Edom Belial. Enthroned is like a prism, each album another facet of the same entity.



Up until *“Sovereigns”*, new Enthroned albums appeared roughly every two to three years. With *“Cold Black Svns”* and *“Ashspawn”*, however, there’s now a five-to-six-year gap between releases. Has it become more challenging to write or finalise material over time, or was the delay more a matter of intention, precision and line-up changes?

Life happened. In the period leading up to *“Cold Black Svns”*, several members relocated to different countries for personal reasons, which naturally demanded time and energy. Between *“Cold Black Svns”* and *“Ashspawn”*, I also moved abroad, and we experienced further line-up changes as some members chose to focus on private lives or pursue different paths.

This required substantial reorganisation. I used that time deliberately to recentre the band, select the right individuals, and rebuild on entirely new foundations. It was not a matter of difficulty or creative stagnation – quite the opposite. Once this new line-up was consolidated, things moved quickly. We wrote an album that reflects precisely who we are, not what others expect.

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The new record is described as both “an autopsy and a resurrection.” What kind of death does the album explore personal, spiritual, or artistic?

“Ashspawn” is not about a symbolic death; it is about the total dismantling of the self on every level. Everything that had become stagnant or



inherited was reduced to its primal components. The album documents that process of annihilation and reconstruction: breaking down identity, belief and creative impulse, and rebuilding them on the foundations of a higher, more disciplined state of being.

The lyrical framework is rooted in sublimation: the transformation that can only emerge through desolation. It confronts the listener with that moment when meaning decays and life becomes a shell. Yet it is from that same void that resurrection becomes possible. Through discipline, occult praxis and mental endurance, decay is transmuted into spirit.

Within this arc, Edom Belial functions as both the corruptive force and the catalyst of renewal, the embodiment of flawed human nature merging with absolute rebellion as a means toward transcendence. Each track is a stage in that ascent, encoded through Sethurian mapping and demonic calculus. This is not storytelling; it is a rite of negation and rebirth. The death explored is the death of illusion, so that something stronger and unbound may emerge.

You worked closely with occult author Gilles de Laval on this record. How did that collaboration influence the lyrical and metaphysical structure of “Ashspawn”?

The lyrical content was not influenced by Gilles whatsoever; the lyrics were already written when we began the collaboration. He did not contribute by dictating content, but rather as a force of alignment.

His metaphysical frameworks helped refine the architecture behind the lyrics, sharpening concepts that already existed within the album’s ethos. Certain correspondences and ritual diagrams he presented served as reference points when building the album’s internal cosmology, influencing not the emotion but the precision with which that emotion was articulated. He provided a set of tools, and through them the record found its most coherent and exacting form. But in the end, the album remained entirely our voice – only now spoken with a sharper tongue.

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The record represents transformation through fire and darkness. Once the ashes have settled, what remains?

Balance

Black Metal often wrestles with dualities such as death and rebirth, destruction and creation. Does *"Ashspawn"* mark a reconciliation of these forces or a deepening of their conflict?

It is not a reconciliation, nor a celebration of conflict for its own sake. It is the recognition that both forces are indispensable and inseparable. *"Ashspawn"* operates in the space where destruction is not merely an ending, but the necessary clearing of dead matter. Creation is not the birth of something new, but the emergence of what was already latent within the self.

These forces do not resolve; they intensify. On a deeply personal and subliminal level, the album charts that inner process where one must willingly undergo disintegration to reach a higher state of being. It is not a tale of peace between opposites, but an acceptance that transcendence is built upon the ashes of what once was.



A distinct shift in Enthroned's artistic vision was noticeable around *"Tetra Karcist"* (2007) and *"Pentagrammaton"* (2010), when the occult aspect became more overt and intellectually articulated. *"Ashspawn"* feels like the beginning of a third era for the band. Do you view it as a culmination of your spiritual evolution?

Yes, *"Ashspawn"* marks a significant point, but I see it not as an arrival, rather as the next necessary step. Spiritually, I have reached a state of inner equilibrium, yet there are still forces within me that must be articulated and channelled through precise intention.

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You described Enthroned's eras accurately. The first era was naïve but honest, fuelled by anger, confusion and sheer will. The second was more controlled, more introspective – a period of personal initiation. This new era is defined by clarity and self-possession. It is not about external validation or reaction; it is entirely self-directed. If there is wisdom to be found here, it is the kind earned through endurance. We no longer seek meaning, we impose it.



The “*Rviasamin*” video is a fascinating hybrid of hand-crafted and digital art. You mention the deliberate avoidance of AI or generative tools, an increasingly rare stance today. Was this choice a philosophical statement about authenticity and creation?

Chris from Eye of Saros put in months of relentless work on “*Rviasamin*” from dawn to dusk, every detail deliberate. What he created is monumental. That’s the kind of devotion you don’t get from an algorithm. I despise AI in art entirely because art isn’t code. It’s human emotion: messy, flawed, and beautiful in its imperfection, with all the nuance that only a sentient mind can produce.

Yet nowadays, any striking image is reflexively labelled “AI-generated,” as if the public’s default response to creativity is suspicion. It’s a symptom of something deeper: a declining attention span, a devaluation of cultural literacy, and a widening gap between effort and recognition.

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For the album cover, you collaborated with the immensely talented José Gabriel Alegría Sabogal, while previous artworks were created by you and Neraath. Did you give him complete creative freedom, or did you provide lyrical and conceptual guidance?

We provided José with the full lyrical text, the preface by Gilles de Laval, as well as the sigils and conceptual framework constructed specifically for this album. From there, he was given complete freedom. There was no need for control or correction.



José is not merely an illustrator, but a practitioner deeply immersed in the same esoteric currents that inform our work. We trusted that he would understand the spiritual architecture behind the music and he not only met our expectations, he surpassed them beyond measure.

After more than three decades, Enthroned stands as one of Black Metal's longest-running institutions. What compels you to keep forging forward rather than resting on legacy?

There is no question of resting on anything. As long as the fire is present, creation is not a choice, it is a necessity. We are not a nostalgia act; we are explorers and devotees of the dark arts, and the current demands expression. There are still facets to uncover, words that must be spoken, wounds that need to be opened, energies that insist on being released.

The day we have nothing left to say – when the voice of the spirit falls silent – then Enthroned will cease. But that day has not come. The flame is still burning, and as long as it burns, we forge forward.

You've endured countless line-up changes, yet Enthroned's identity remains unbroken. What core principle has anchored the band through all these transformations?

Madness, masochism, dedication, devotion and passion.

How do you see Enthroned's spiritual stance today within a Black Metal scene that has become increasingly secular, aesthetic, or politicised?

I don't see Enthroned in it at all. What we have today has nothing to do with the Black Metal scene we represent, stand for, and are a part of. That scene seems long gone to me. The actual scene is full of pussies with no education – trolls and people with the IQ of a wood plank, craving attention, disrespect and drama. They feed on idiocy or flattery.

They are busier scrolling on their phones, acting as advocates and judges, thinking they know it all after reading a Wikipedia page, rather than reading a book and stimulating their senses in an intelligible manner. It is sad, really.

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I recently saw a video of Sebastian Ramstedt (Necrophobic/Eldfödd) where he talks about this: “What the Hell happened to Black Metal?” It’s probably the most relevant, honest and spot-on thing I’ve seen in years when it comes to summarising what Black Metal has become.

Black Metal has become the antithesis of what it is supposed to be. Enthroned’s stance now doesn’t really matter – it is us. I’d rather say this than affiliate myself with that charade and circus, to be perfectly honest. Luckily, there are still some people and bands, old and new, who know what the genre stood – or rather stands – for, and these individuals have my utmost respect.



To conclude: what are some of your favourite Belgian Metal records?

There is a mix of records and demos as some of those are pure classics to me: Cyclone “*Brutal Destruction*”, Crossfire “*Second Attack*”, Black Shepherd “*United Evil Forces*”, Paragon Impure “*To Gaius!*”, Asphyxia “*Exit: Reality*” and “*Demo #2*”, Goat Torment “*Dominande Tenebrae*” and “*Forked Tongues*”, Possession “*His Best Deceit*” and of course Ancient Rites “*The Diabolical Serenades*”. There are a lot more, but these stands out to me.

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