

Dark Fortress – Ylem (2010)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Ylem* 6:33 2 *As The World Keels Over* 6:36 3 *Osiris* 7:35 4 *Silence* 4:27 5 *Evenfall* 5:36 6 *Redivider* 7:08 7 *Satan Bled* 4:35 8 *Hirudineans* 4:56 9 *Nemesis* 6:35 10 *The Valley* 8:02 11 *Wraith* 8:20 12 *Sycamore Trees* 4:02 Bass – Draug Drums – Seraph Guitar – Asvargr, V. Santura Guitar [Solo] – Morean (tracks: 8) Guitar [Solos] – V. Santura (tracks: 1 to 7, 9 to 12) Keyboards – Paymon Vocals – Morean, Mortal (tracks: 11)

Did you know “Dark Fortress” is the English translation of “Dimmu Borgir”? Pretty funny, but I’d definitely say the former band is much more interesting today than the latter, and their new album, *Ylem*, is proof of that. You might even wonder why I bring up the comparison. Well, Dark Fortress has become a pretty polished sounding black metal band, one might even throw the word “modern” out to describe them. I wouldn’t dispute this, however I find them to be much more worthwhile than the vast majority of their over-produced, gimmicky contemporaries.

It seems that one thing the band focused on with *Ylem* was making a more diverse album than usual. This still sounds like what you’d expect from a Dark Fortress release, but there’s a few experiments and surprises thrown in this time. The title track opens things up in a fairly characteristic manner. It’s mostly fast paced, with a vicious vocal performance and some nice guitar leads. Even in this track, the slow, moody break about halfway through is a nice touch. *As the World Keels Over* also varies in pace, and the verses even seem to delve into some atmospheric area. *Osiris* follows suit, relying on a fairly straightforward, yet hard-hitting momentum. The first real scorcher is *Silence*, which does anything but live up to its name. This is one of the more chaotic tracks featured here, displaying fast riffs, great blastbeats, and once again, an impressive vocal performance. *Evenfall* is about where the album starts to branch off into unfamiliar territory. Morean utilizes some strange groaning clean vocals on this one, which I don’t find to be completely convincing. As a whole, the song doesn’t seem to develop as well as the other ones. *Satan Bled* is another fierce blazer in the vein of *Silence*, although still features some slower sections. Closing the album, is certainly the largest departure from Dark Fortress’ usual sound, and is a track that will doubtlessly divide fans. Morean showcases some fairly high

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pitched clean vocals over an otherwise crushingly heavy, slow paced doom-influenced track. It's a bit strange at first, but in the end is surprisingly convincing. The vocals take some getting used to, but the riffs are completely awesome.

I like the apocalyptic theme running through the album. Ylem is apparently the primordial matter from which all elements originated (before the Big Bang). To return to this state would mean the end of everything that exists now. Sure, it's not the most original idea for a black metal concept, but it makes for more interesting lyrics than most modern black metal bands churn out these days. Ultimately, the theme is well conveyed throughout the music, with some songs featuring atmospheric touches, such as my personal favourite, The Valley. There's almost an epic feel to many of the songs, which also makes for a more convincing listen.

If there's one thing I may critique, it is the length of the album. The songs are sharp and well polished, but in the end they don't justify the album being over seventy minutes long. It seems as though the band tried to please everybody rather than being concise with the material, and it made for a bit of a bloated result. Nevertheless, Ylem is a very worthy chapter in Dark Fortress' history, and one that I would strongly recommend. ---Razakel, metal-archives.com

Założony w Landshut w 1994 roku niemiecki black metalowy Dark Fortress zdołał wspiąć się na najwyższe stopnie gatunku, dzięki zapierającym dech w piersiach występom scenicznym oraz świetnym płytom, które spełniają standardy ustanowione na północy europejskiej blackowej sceny.

Ich pierwszym muzycznym znakiem życia było demo z 1996 roku "Rebirth Of The Dark Age", które stało się prodomem mrocznego i hipnotyzującego stylu zespołu. W 1997 roku do oryginalnego składu zespołu, w osobach: Asvargra (gitara), wokalisty Azathotha, basisty Njorda i Charona (perkusja) - dołączyli drugi gitarzysta o pseudonimie Crom i klawiszowc Thamuz, ustanawiając w ten sposób skład koncertowy. Debiutująca w lutym 1997 roku młoda horda szybko zaczęła współdzielić undergroundową scenę z takimi grupami, jak Lunar Aurora, Desaster i Nagelfar. Pierwszym wydawnictwem Dark Fortress, które ukazało się pod szyldem

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Fog Of The Apocalypse Records, był split z Barad Dür zatytułowany "Towards Immortaliy".
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