

- **Could you introduce Winter Solace Productions a little?**

I started Winter Solace productions in 2008 out of my mother's basement shortly after getting into Black Metal. In April of 2024 the label will be 16 years old. The original plan was to actually release Ambient/Electronic/Industrial music however I was encouraged by another label in the state of Minnesota named Northern Sky Productions (RIP) to start releasing Black Metal tapes. Much of my outlook on the Black Metal underground scene in general was mentored into me by LVTN/Vothana (who ran Vothan666 Distribution at the time) which is why I've basically become from an ideological perspective, the antithesis of modern underground Black Metal music.

Fast forward to today and now Winter Solace is actually a registered business in the United States (mostly because of how much money is taken in distributing vinyl records) with enough work to classify as a second job. Originally, I released Pagan Black Metal & Raw NSBM, with occasional forays into Atmospheric, Experimental music and a few other areas. The primary focus now is the releases/distribution Raw Ambient/Atmospheric Black Metal, Pagan/Ancstral Black Metal along with more experimental/psychedelic stuff (however this hasn't gotten over as much) and or anything that is good music. I'll still also press Raw Black Metal, Militant Black Metal, and Black/RAC, however in addition to the various legal issues that go with manufacturing/distribution of that type of black metal, I feel I've done enough to have the primary focus be something else. I also have a few other sublabels for post-Industrial/Electronic music, but that stuff doesn't pay the bills.

- **As an American company, you also have agreements with groups in other countries. What are your thoughts and the company's view on this issue?**

The American Black Metal scene is roughly the size of say Germany or Poland dispersed over a landmass that is the size of Europe, which paves the way for clusters/groups of bands or little scenes. Obviously, I give priority to American bands and would love to support people locally however the political divide here (especially in coastal areas) is extremely serious to an almost Civil War like mentality and there is also a very large amount of drama within the USA, so it's easier to just do deals with bands abroad. The language barriers and customs are making it harder to do the things I want to do with bands outside the USA, so the focus will likely shift back here in the future.

On USBM as a while, my older releases and mentally unstable/anxiety/alcohol induced behavior on the internet was too much for some people so ideally, I just isolate myself from everything here and let people discover my catalog/mail order in their own way. Where somebody is located really isn't an issue for me and I'm obviously motivated to take either Winter Solace or some of the ideologies we're associated with to places where there isn't anything, to see what new things can develop. Jugra in Malaysia for example, made mainstream news coverage in Hong Kong which is completely unfathomable to think for any Black Metal/RAC album.

- **Which albums produced by the company are your favorites?**

This is a very difficult question to answer as I've probably released over 500 titles. For the musical content I'd have to say the Mondsaaal "Symbol of Fire" mCD and the Z I Z "Evil Possessor" CD releases I made in 2023 along with the Sudwind half of the split with Blood Ritual. Sudwind/Blood Ritual as a project was cursed, with Blood Ritual being a substitute for a band sounding similar to Sudwind that failed to submit anything and the manufacturing took almost 2 years to finish due mostly to the

pandemic. Mondsaaal & Z I Z are in a very different style than a lot of the other releases, so they didn't sell as much, and those releases ended with me having to sell most of the surplus stock (especially Z I Z) to a vendor in South America for pennies with the entire venture being a complete loss. Hadak Ura "A sztyepp a mi örökségünk" really stood out after I paid to restore it, which I'm also grateful for but that wasn't solely a Winter Solace endeavor. There was another EP I released that I used to really enjoy, however I had a falling out with the guy who made it, so I'll never be able to listen to it again.

However, being responsible (either fully or partially) for helping launch the following bands is more of a highlight than say an actual release: Kaevum, Sunchariot, Jugra, Hadak Ura, Südwind/Thule-Jugend, Volhshebrik, Übermensch, the criminally underrated Nachtkrieger and several of the others (there is too many to list) who've gone on to become extremely successful. There are a few other people that I'm working with now that have the potential to become (Myrknetsferd & Swerthegan to name a few) very successful and I want to help mentor them, plus others I haven't met yet. I also think the various collaborative work I've done with Darker than Black/Hendrik Möbus bears mentioning.

- **What is the general opinion about the groups you have agreements with?**

I like all the people I work with despite all their flaws. I had somebody I worked with for several years that took advantage of my label and getting rid of him allowed me to learn how to set proper boundaries with everyone (I also no longer found any impulse to drink alcohol after he was terminated) here, so I generally have a positive outlook on everybody I work with. Owning a music label/being a music producer are actually two different things and primarily, I see myself mostly as a music producer (or like a sports coach) rather than just a guy who manages a label. Anybody can pay a factory to press something, however the input that goes into it from people outside the band always takes the project to the next level. Many bands/labels refuse to work with people or aren't very ambitious so the concept of music "production" in the sense that I'm talking about is a lost art that is either completely underappreciated or there is tremendous amount of resistance from bands that assume I'm trying to silence their vision. If people can't comprehend what I'm trying to do for them or are ungrateful I usually get rid of them, as I'm more looking for a certain mindset that I can work with to make a product everyone wants rather than something that a lot of people will buy. While this may sound somewhat arrogant, I've probably forgotten more high quality masterpieces (especially if one wades through the roughly 400 cassettes I originally released before switching to CDs/LPs) than certain labels ever release, as the bands can't realize their full potential which I always find frustrating.

- **We are entering a new year, how was the development of the company and does the company have new plans in 2024?**

2021 through 2023 was a complete disaster, the expansion into pressing vinyl records especially was wrought with problems. I spent most of 2023 being unable to operate (roughly 8 months of inactivity) as all the money taken in from the distro sales was used to cover almost \$3,000 USD in debts from a business partner I used to have in Brazil and another roughly \$1,200 USD in losses on one vinyl project here before it was even pressed as the guy who used to front the band was completely inept. 2024 will be interesting as it'll basically be like being a new company and I'm very hopeful to just be able to resume operating properly next year. I have several good new releases lined up next year that were produced using a newer production process (which yields a higher quality result, however, takes much longer) based off what I learned the past 3 years, along with new licensing deals and several of these

other projects that have been in the works for many years are due to finish in 2024. I'm also hoping to finally release and properly distribute my own experimental electronic works onto CD/Digital formats.

- **Is the company always open to signing new bands?**

Yes and no. Ideally, I tell people on the website that it'll take me up to a year to get people's stuff released as labels are consistently sent demo submissions regardless of what they post about not accepting submissions. Besides all the excessive work from the backlog I described above, I'm probably one of the few who companies that has a reputation for actually looking at whatever is sent in or who is willing to take a risk on bands who either have no previous releases or very few releases. I also try to be a vehicle for people who've either been treated very poorly or were never fully understood by their previous labels. I recently cut one of the biggest deals I ever made with the band Brahmastra in Australia who was ripped off by a Russian company on many of his earlier releases and who just got lost in the shuffle of the company he was at after that, were both hopeful that we can both help each other grow in some ways with the new agreement we have.

For 2024 I've had to impose a stricter set of guidelines and the process to get some of these releases done is more complex than before which has created a few interesting problems. Many of the people I've worked with for years are either going on hiatus or I'm finding are no longer a fit (including somebody who is returning 400 USD in royalties I paid him over the past 2 years so he just can cluelessly continue to manage his music like a running joke) for how I want to operate, so I can see new people showing up to fill the void. Unfortunately, I'm finding that many of these younger new bands are run by people with too much anxiety and no real desire to get through our process or to want what we can offer, despite what they make think. When I first started, I originally interviewed all the bands similar to a job application and I'll likely impose something similar, however there are too many backdated projects to finish first.

- **I see that you are having problems with some companies. What is causing this problem? To what extent is the company's growth rate affected by companies not paying their debts?**

The "business" side of Black Metal is extremely dysfunctional, as I said above, other people's mistakes have probably stolen 3+ years of my time. Much of these problems are the result of people not establishing proper boundaries for either keeping some of their bands/staff under control (if such a thing is required), a general lack of experience on one side, people biting off way more than they can chew, stubborn egos and people wanting to move too quickly. This year I'm ending all the collaboration releases with other labels after I fulfill the agreements I made as being tied into other people's affairs has usually been the biggest source of my problems. My entire roster is pretty much all in agreement that two specific South American countries are never to be dealt with again and I'm basically following their direction on that matter.

Black Metal in general has a problem with people (being bands or labels) being focused on simply releasing to many new things and never allowing stuff to resonate with everyone. Everyone has some circle or front online, and it becomes more about advancing that as an almost narcissistic sense of identity than making a quality work. I actually find this extremely prolific pace to be lazy because nobody respects the ideas they put out enough to actually get it out there to be understood by the consumers. This very bad work ethic has pretty much allowed for the method of trading physical products to be completely lost in favor of bad wholesale and international licensing deals which actually make less

money than just pressing 500 units on CD, promoting it and trading everything. Somebody had a meme one time which I honestly should make stickers for that said "we don't need more bands we need more support" which is probably the most accurate statement ever made about the Black Metal scene I've ever seen. The lack of adequate distribution, promotion and industry backbone is more of a hinderance to me than other companies making mistakes.

- **Are there any problems in your sales channels due to working with nationalist groups?**

Probably, I'm honestly not concerned with these things. My releases are generally blacklisted by Artificial Intelligence through the popular resale sites like discogs.com & eBay which is a big problem, as customers usually prefer to order from sites like that given how many distro's either rip people off, never go to the post office or otherwise aren't properly run. While I press 500 of some of the CDs, I've never looked at getting them into stores on a permanent basis and I think what I'm doing now isn't really something that can be massively suppressed any further given how isolated it is in how it's structured. I also pretty much require everything to be done legally now after being involved in a deal to produce 2 RAC albums with a very high demand that ended up as a total loss because the products can't be sold anywhere but private concerts. While people like to buy stuff with Swastikas on the cover and I think the suppression of that symbol is wrong, many of these products are not worth the hassle to manufacture anymore because you can't sell them or because they look like trash as they can only be made to lower quality manufacturing standards. One of my new challenges is digital distribution as people want to hear the entire thing before buying the physical editions. I've never looked into Bandcamp (despite that also being a problem) however I'm trying to figure out how to get some of the music onto Spotify so there will probably be issues there.

It's worth stating that I've never had any ties to nationalist groups, if people in the USA openly get mixed up in these things, I usually get rid of them, and all the Winter Solace bands are pretty much tired of being mixed up with the lifestyle that goes with some of these ideologies. People can take a dislike to this position, which is fine however I'm honestly bored pressing music that gets seized by the German authorities and having to collect letters from the BPJM (I think it's called the BPKZ now) written in German that I can't even read. The best way to avoid falling into the type of sewers some of these failed Nationalist groups inevitably end up (there was one group here whose name I refuse to mention that had one of their supposed White Nationalist soldiers just wake up one morning and kill the people he was with after randomly converting to Islam) in, is to just keep everything legal. Overall, I detest many of these nationalist groups either here or abroad as they are easily corrupted by infighting, get taken over by the authorities and overall serve no purpose. In the United States for example many Skinhead groups will just spend all this money to buy Alcohol or to build these massive compounds to just fight other skinheads over some trivial ideological drama which isn't productive. A leaderless, solitary mentality that unites around a common simple goal is much better compared to the tribal desires of human nature. The left wing will eventually have some version of this problem as I highly doubt many of these Muslim groups will want anything to do with the Homosexuals, Transsexuals and Pedophiles that make the other half of the left wing, however they still unite long enough to get stuff done, which the right is just terrible at. My positions on this subject likely differ from what you're expecting to hear, however my own spiritual/personal growth has transcended well beyond the conventional stereotypes of "National Socialism" and much of what goes with it, it's why I'm such a lightning rod for controversy.

- **Are your thoughts valid only for the company or is the company the embodiment of your thought movements?**

While I run the mail order/distro and am basically the driving force behind Winter Solace Productions as the executive content producer, I employ 2 other people for audio mastering, 1 other person besides myself for graphics (plus somebody else I'm in the process of hiring) along with a few other people I pay to work as translators or for other functions (this doesn't include all the other people who I commission other work/services from) so Winter Solace is more than just myself. A few of these bands/people I work with (they should know who they are, if not they can ask me) could just send me completed masters/layouts for either albums or splits with people I've never even met, and I'd put it into the production schedule without much thought. The signings of Brahmastra & Aesir (which I haven't been able to get anything pressed for yet) were suggested to me by customers, so I welcome the input of others if it is constructive and if whoever is making the suggestions has some solid ground to stand on.

The idea of a "self-made man" is a complete myth, as while yeah you may have built all of that other people usually have to consume it which means you're nothing without others. I've also tried unsuccessfully so far to delegate certain types of projects (be it production, layouts or finding bands) to others, which most people think is insane. With all of that being said, I still have input on everything I do as I'm not going to cluelessly just pay for something without knowing what is on it like several labels do, however my podcasts, electronic music/graphic art are more of a reflection of myself than the label.

- **What are your thoughts and ideas about the foreigner problem and other problems in our country? We are experiencing similar problems here.**

See, my views on this are somewhat different than what could be expected and I'm something of an ideological anomaly in this area. America is a very strange place in the sense that White Europeans founded this country after basically taking it from the natives, so we're the original displaced or weaponized population sent somewhere to destabilize the original population in order for an area to be conquered. One of the main people involved at the core of this label recently immigrated to the USA after being displaced from 3 countries so I fully support him being here, however the Muslims & Chinese spies coming across the border masquerading as Mexicans is obviously not supported.

America is basically having its infatuation with Marxism right now, similar to what is taking place in several other European countries; however, it won't work here. They can surrender in Canada if they want to, but you'll never get your average American to submit to the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" no matter how much you force feed it to them. They tried with the pandemic along with the recent elections and in order to accomplish what they wanted they had to expose themselves at a level never before seen in world history.

- **What do you think an individual should do to protect his nation? Some people try to do this by using music, some people try to do this by using violence. What do you think?**

People need to find non-violent methods to protect their respective nations, all it takes is one cutout false flag operation to mobilize and advance the opposing agenda. The 3<sup>rd</sup> world war is entirely metaphysical now, the currency is attention, the enemy feeds off your energy and the basic impulse to devolve into primitive violent behavior only suits the enemy. The Hidden Hand that manipulates these

things, wants confusion, wants division and above all wants to conquer through division. The best way to resolve the issues is to educate people and otherwise be an alternative to the current modern world of today. Another common failure of the modern right wing is to get dragged down to the level of fighting about what other consenting adults do in the privacy of their own bedrooms, as once you give even an ounce of your energy to some of these various social justice issues, it always feeds off of you.

Globalism (more specifically Transhumanist thought) is the enemy, nothing more and nothing less. A nation is a necessity, human beings are very tribal and certain cultures aren't compatible with others but overall, these problems are nothing compared to what is coming with The Singularity (when Artificial Intelligence will surpass Human Intelligence) in the next decades. The end goal of their agenda is a white ruling class overseeing a mixed race populace that exists only to subsidize the ruling class. While this may seem like an inversion of a common leftist talking point, it's actually something the Nationalist right wing needs to understand as the moral Abrahamic religious totalitarian order is simply changing into a more festive looking costume as it took over/bought off the original anti-establishment liberal political parties.

- **Do you think in the new year people will mobilize for foreigners and those who harm their nation?**

I think that is very safe to say that we are definitely in some transition period into another phase of the Kali-Yuga. Every massive change is usually two steps forwards and one step backward so I think that any victories next year should be celebrated, however people need to be far more cautious about what is going on. In 2020, the populist party was basically assuming that they'd get re-elected and didn't do anything to remove the rot from within, so they lost. It takes defeats like that to humble people, as nobody is invincible. While it's completely contradictory to the Aesthetic nature of Black Metal, I am extremely spiritual (it's why I generally avoid Satanism, even though there are select people who can use that as a positive vehicle for spirituality) and what were seeing right now (as depicted in the book of Revelation (the Bible is an Allegory) along with other Eschatological texts) is just how bad it could get if humanity doesn't wake up from the darkness.

In regard to people "Mobilizing for Foreigners" if you're talking about an expansion of NATO's stupid proxy war in Ukraine, I suspect that will happen as we won't get to an end with that until there is a very unpopular troop deployment. Some of what people are seeing play out in world affairs is a controlled collapse of a dying globalist system, known as The Grand Chessboard as many of the people propping that up are dying off and the new ruling class has a different objective. The media may try to water down Nationalist/Patriotic concepts, however as I said above it isn't going to work as people are not as stupid as people take them to be.

- **What would you like to say to people with nationalist thoughts and people who will read the magazine?**

Keep everything legal, advocate non-violence and the new enemy is Artificial Intelligence. Many of these various groups are just the old guard dying off and the new Populist/Nationalism is a solitary lone wolf type of affair that really can't be quantified on the political spectrum. In closing I want to thank you for interviewing me and giving me the opportunity to reach a newer audience and reviewing the year 2023 in another form. However, as I have no idea what the target audience for this publication is, I want to

remind everyone reading this that my primary focus is on music. I also want to state for the record of anybody reading this, that as I don't have any knowledge of the nature of the groups this is being circulated to that I advocate only a non-violent approach and see radicalism as just people cutting their ties to their reality as a means of escapism.

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