

ORKO MAGAZINE

Number:003

Date: 25.07.2025

Interview with Golgothan Remains / Matthieu Van den Brande(Vocals)



ORKO MAGAZINE: Your Bearer of Light, Matriarch of Death EP dropped late 2024, following the 2022 album Adorned in Ruin. How has life been since then, and can you share any news about a potential full-length on the horizon?

Matthieu/GM(Vocals): Hey Oytun, thanks for inviting us and for having this conversation! You're doing a great job with Orko Productions, we have been following your work for a while, and congrats with the new magazine!

We have definitely been busy since the EP was released, it's been quite the whirlwind. We changed our live setlist and unleashed the fury of the EP, playing it in full at each performance, across the Eastern seaboard. Since January 2025, we have ripped through Brisbane, Hobart, Melbourne, and Sydney, inundating live audiences with the EP's ferocious sound. Later this year, we are venturing to Canberra to play the reasonably new but already notorious Essence Festival.

In between all that, we have been working hard in the studio crafting the sonic apocalypse which will be our third full-length album. We endeavour to have the recordings finalised before the year comes to an end.



OM: Speaking of your EP, it felt like a return to the primal intensity of your debut. Many reviewers have remarked that it pulls back towards the raw, mythic aggression of *Perverse Offerings to the Void*, while keeping the atmospheric depth you explored in *Adorned in Ruin*. Would you say that's accurate, and was it intentional?

Matthieu/GM: It's always great when listeners have noticed the intention we initially had when composing the music. The EP was crafted to be a singular, cohesive experience, both musically and lyrically. Spanning 20 minutes and ferocious in nature, both on the tempo and riff fronts, it embodies a more primal and vehement nature than *Adorned in Ruin*. We explored the fringes of the genre on that album, whilst we chose for a more visceral sound on the EP.

It was exhilarating to compose, record, and perform this piece, which, in many ways, harkens back to the intensity of our debut. We wanted to unleash something that resonates deeply with listeners, and it feels fantastic to see that vision come to life on stage.

OM: The 90s death metal scene was fuelled by visceral anger and uncompromising fury. Do you think many bands have lost that edge

(drifting towards mainstream sounds) or is it simply evolving?
Where do you see Golgothan Remains in that spectrum?

Matthieu/GM: Music is perennially evolving, and metal music is certainly no exception to that rule. Despite the rather young age of the genre, numerous different genres and subgenres have sprouted from the original "founding father" bands. Most of those genres then experienced several waves within itself, with each wave defining the sound, optics and visualisation of what a handful of leading bands considered metal should be. It's a fascinating history, but in the end, there is no right or wrong, and every band should do what they consider metal should be and sound like. Their listeners may decide they do not like it, which is ultimately not important from a band's perspective. The metal crowds tend to be quite critical and, I say this diplomatically, rather conservative, especially when their favourite band(s) slightly changes its sound or moves away from the trodden path. We have personally seen this with Adorned in Ruin, which was disliked by some because of the small differences (I like to call it creative evolutions) compared to our debut LP.

We definitely shape our sound and compose and play the music we ourselves want to hear and play, and we do not attempt to sound like a specific band or genre. The early days are never coming back, and recording equipment and record formats have evolved. Trying to sound like an obscure band from 1992 who recorded their demo on a 4-track in a dusty basement, releasing it on a cassette to then trade it with a handful of fans across the globe is not something we aspire to replicate. But then again, if that is something that a band wants to do, by all means.



OM: Your lyrics and themes often explore ancient, cosmic, or even romantic despair. How do philosophy or intellectual concepts feed into your lyrics? Are you drawing from any thinkers, mythologies, or metaphysical ideas?

Matthieu/GM: Writing lyrics is an often complex and labyrinthine process for me. Things evolve a lot between the time when we start puzzling together the music and when the entire record is composed and finalised. During the writing process, I more often than not discard lyrics to an entire song, or songs, to then start all over again. My lyrical content is rarely monolithic, instead, it emerges as a collage of ideas and creations in symbiose with the music, thus creating their own theme.

I sometimes write lyrics for a song based on a book or movie which made an impact on me, or I research topics and concepts I find intriguing and interesting. I did the latter on the EP, whilst *Adorned in Ruin* was more an amalgamation of individual concepts gathered over a longer period of time which were centralised around a certain theme. The EP's cohesion, musically, leant itself better for a "start-to-end" story and lyrical theme.

I am an avid reader and have a keen interest in literature (think the classics but also "modern" novels), the human inner conflict, anti-religious and anti-humanitarian concepts and texts, as well as their presence throughout history.

OM: What's next for the band? Do you have concrete goals; touring, concept-albums, collaborations? Any upcoming shows or festivals where your listeners should come witness you live?

Matthieu/GM: A rather busy year with several shows across the East Coast is slowly drawing to an end, with our next performance at Essence Festival in Canberra and a not yet announced ritual in our hometown Sydney later in the year. Further to that we will finalise recording our third full-length album, which will hopefully be released sometime next year.

We are definitely keen to broaden our horizons and play in places we have never played before in Australia (Perth, you come to mind!) as well as overseas. We are working hard on making that happen in the near future.



OM: Australia's heavy music scene is rich but often overshadowed by the northern hemisphere. Do you feel the local death metal & black metal community gets enough attention internationally? How would you describe the current state of the Aussie metal underground?

Matthieu/GM: We find that the scene in Sydney and Australia in general is quite thriving. There are a lot of amazing local bands performing gigs and, since the pandemic dissipated, international bands visiting and playing again on a regular basis. It's of course a rather small scene compared to e.g. Europe or America, but it's very much alive with heaps of passionate and talented musicians and dedicated crowds.

The distance between our southern land and the rest the globe has virtually disappeared thanks to the internet, which has given a lot of bands, us included, the opportunity to promote and sell their music in regions few would have thought had an interest in metal music 25 years ago. Of course that physical distance remains problematic when talking about touring, which is a convoluted and expensive undertaking for Australian bands.

That being said, there are many Australian bands that have an almost cult following overseas. I think about Austere who only recently started playing live and have toured several times since then and Psycroptic who have been around the globe more than they have played back in Hobart in the last decade. Australian bands are definitely not overlooked, it is just harder for us to get in the spotlights and stay there.

OM: Beyond riffs and vocals, do you ever find yourselves discussing films, books, or other art between rehearsals or tours? Are there cinematic or literary works you'd recommend to your fans; especially those that resonate with your music's mood?

Matthieu/GM: I can tell you something about a comic book which has become somewhat of a running joke since our last trip to Brisbane, but it won't be funny when I have to explain it. Look, we definitely do share and discuss the literature we like, movies we have watched and artworks that have impressed us when being on the road or hanging out. They do not always align with the band's theme or concepts though, it can't always be death and despair!



OM: Finally, in the grand arc of your journey who in the global death metal realm inspires you most, sound-wise or ideologically? Bands you look up to, and how do they shape your path forward?

Matthieu/GM: The four of us share some bands we idolise, which shapes our sound and brings a coherence to us being band members and making music together. A few that come to mind are Dead Congregation, Blood Incantation, Dismember, Incantation, Abramelin, Ulcerate, At the Gates and many others. And then there are our personal favourites, each of us having their own range of styles and bands they like, within and outside the metal scene. I, for example, have, a deep love for opera music, whilst another not named band member (hint: four strings) likes to torture the rest of us with one of the worst things that ever happened to mankind, dubstep, when we're on the road. Our own idols influence how we compose, what and why we do it, and to a certain extent also our live performances.



Further Exploration

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