

Good evening Sir – this is AIL and AIH of Arktau Eos speaking as one voice...

Can you tell us something more about yourself? Just tell us what you want to tell...

Outside the circle of our close companions and colleagues, giving out personal information serves only idle curiosity: Arktau Eos is not understood through our past deeds. You have to step into the Polar Pyramid yourself – and pose the right questions directly to the oracles of the sanctum; uncanny markings on tattered parchments can only give general directions!

Can you tell us something about the origin of the project Arktau Eos. How/when/where did Anti Ittna Haapapuro and Antti Litmanen meet each other and decide to work together?

We met through the auspices of a mutual friend in 2003, and the inevitable decision to work together followed next year after profound conversations, correspondence and meetings. The proto-form of Arktau Eos came into being in 2005 as a vehicle in our quest for knowledge and experience. Describing the genesis of Arktau Eos in more detail is beset with difficulties, for countless notebooks from the period would have to be consulted, and then it is unlikely the story pieced together would mean much to anyone who was not there.

Where does the name Arktau Eos come from?

It is a good question indeed! The name simply appeared heralded by many an auspicious omen on the very day we completed mixing the first album. Arktau Eos is like a prayer, leading to constant communication with the transpersonal reality surrounding us – the Void. It means giving up the illusory self, but also gaining something, helping us see, hear, and experience in purity. Obviously, many have pointed out that “Arktau” is close to “arctic”, and “Eos” is the personified dawn of the Greek mythology. While not consciously present at the baptism, these associations are deemed apposite to the essence of Arktau Eos.

What is behind the title “Mirrorion”? What does it mean?

Several initial sessions involved the constellation of Orion – and mirrors... But far from remaining at the level of simple wordplay, “Mirrorion” has proven itself a veritable word of power, a seal on the pact, having an even more intimate affinity with the collective name of its creators – i.e. Arktau Eos – than we were aware of at first. For independent proof of the matter, you may consult certain writings that will appear on our website when it is re-opened.

I wonder if it's possible to make music that is still darker than yours. It's really darker than dark. How do you explain this preference to make such dark, haunting and scary music?

There are many kinds of darkness – darkness arising from fear or ignorance, but also that of the supernal night. On another level, darkness is a powerful metaphor for grasping the seemingly unknowable: negative expressions may be useful where no statement in positive would be ‘true’. Some Eastern Orthodox theologians speak of ‘divine darkness’ referring to the incomprehensibility of God. Ultimately, the light-darkness dialectic itself has to be transcended.

“Mirrorion” offers a view beyond the veil – sparks of visionary fire for souls in spiritual draught. The ancient entities, unearthed, with life surging through them again after aeonic slumber, confront their perceiver through the symbolic contents of his or her consciousness; being scared is one possible reaction. “Scared” we may note is an anagram of “sacred”. Darkness is not a preference in itself, and we do not have time for any juvenile fantasies about it.

Where do you find your inspiration? Is there a relation between Scandinavian nature and climate and your music?

The need to give form to an idea is preceded by a momentary influx of elemental currents or collective visions and apparitions. Apart from these source-elements, which remain beyond our control (that is to say, in the way they are eternal, unchanging), there exists continuous rapport with ancestral spirits, animal totems etc. in a dynamic colloquium of myriad selves.

There are reasons for everything we do, most serving long term goals. The nature of the first impulses can be very weak, although perceptible in meditation for example. In some cases they have been powerful enough to produce instant visions or even physically point a way forwards.

All said and done, the parts of our work revealed to the public represent merely a glimpse of the entirety: only the serpentine head of Arktau Eos is revealed, while the body responsible for movement, growth and even shedding of skin, is and will remain out of sight.

As for your second question, undoubtedly several genius loci have affected the creative process, whether they be the inhabitants of a particular haunted house sensed in silence at dusk, or those of a lonesome spot in the woods. Nevertheless, we are not especially focused on nature and climate as such; they are parts of the environment we move in, and thus important to us as human beings, but not the goal – which is not a location on a map in any case.

Can you tell us something about the instruments you used for the “Mirrorion” album? Besides electronics and some guitar, you use also strange instruments as kanglings, windbones, singing bowls... It’s especially those instruments I’m interested in.

Anyone sufficiently interested in the historical or cultural background of the instruments

can find information in abundance, thus no need to go into that deeply here. We respect their traditional usage, but obviously we have overstepped a few cultural boundaries.

Self-made instruments, f. ex. those crafted out of human or animal bones, are particularly meaningful to us because they can be charged with precise qualities during their creation – for example, using certain mantras or by immersing them in herbs, oils, etc. When a particular instrument is prepared, it usually finds an appropriate place in the music very quickly and naturally. This does not necessarily imply a dominant place in the mix. But these instruments, whether used for atonal calls or in melodic sequences, function as triggers in the subliminal fields, greatly assisting in entification of unusual states of being not limited to aural channels only.

Much of the above is true of instruments acquired ready-made, but they can be more unpredictable – not, of course, always a bad thing. Excepting few special cases, discovering the characteristics of an instrument is a slow and gradual process.

The sacral dimensions of musical instruments as well as their psycho-physical properties have always fascinated us, deserving far more attention than empty walls of synthetically produced sound that only serve as the tapestry of the temple!

How deeply the listener is able to penetrate the core of Arktau Eos depends largely on the time one is willing to spend with the records, the sincerity of devotion: what one is ready to sacrifice for the experience. To become one with – or assimilate – our works the listener has to realize that the path is long and rocky. Unwavering attention is prerequisite, as is certain amount of intuition. For this, no apologies can be offered, for there are no shortcuts for us either.

The sounds from (what I call) moaning demons and whispering ghosts, whose voices did you use for that? Samples? Or do Anti and Antti moan and whisper themselves?

Maybe what you hear through us is the voice of your inner self? There are no samples used which we haven't sourced ourselves.

Between the dark ambient soundscapes with few or no melody, there is at once that beautiful, haunting 'folk' song, "A Banquet for Ghosts". In fact it is the only 'real song' on the album. Can you tell us something more about this song? Who is singing the lyrics?

We do not hold the song in question in any special regard; it is simply an integral piece of the album, precise in intent and placement. People seem to take notice because structurally and atmosphere-wise it is so distinct. The song serves as a bridge between parts of the album; a transition-point, if you will. And it is a love-song too... for the benefit of all beings! If, however, the song sticks out because one is stuck thinking that Arktau Eos should just stay nicely put in a single, neat musical category, the dissonance can become grating. There is nothing we can do about it.

In “A Banquet for Ghosts”, Arktau Eos whispers through the medium of AIH. In fact, this is one of the few places on the album where we can pinpoint the sound-source with any accuracy. All the original field recordings were destroyed as soon as we had the master-CD in our hands.

If I make comparisons between Arktau Eos and things as Lustmord, Gustav Hildebrand, Raison d’Être and Hexentanz (project with members from The Soil Bleeds Black and Psychonaut 75), do you agree?

Any attempt to connect us and the artists mentioned would be artificial. If any parallels, musical or otherwise, are perceived they are merely coincidental and not likely to reach below surface-level.

The fact that Arktau Eos is not concerned only with the musical dimension can not be stressed enough – taken to the extreme, one could even be justified in claiming that creating music is just an extension of hand from us towards a common context, in which “those in the know” may recognize each other – in silent understanding. Arktau Eos is – should be, will be – pure being, a stream flowing through us, even if by default coloured by our own predilections.

What’s your opinion about performing live? Dark ambient is not really ‘live’ music. Can you add something to the experience of listening to the music at home by performing it live? Do you use movies or images?

We are not averse to performing live, having just returned from a mini-tour of Finland and Russia. For the albums, solitary listening is definitely a recommendable course of action, so much is true. But although there exist an uncontrollable number of variables in performing live, spontaneity and directness can also become richness. In an ideal situation we can, along with the audience – our temporary congregation – transcend the forced separation, sadly the hallmark of so many ‘dark ambient’ shows, and experience something greater together.

And yes, we use movies and images; them being sent inside your mind through acts of mesmerism!

What are your future plans musically? Are you planning new releases from your own?

Work on album number three has proceeded sporadically for a year, and it is close to completion now. The direct, evocative charge of “Mirrorion” will be brought together with the meditative, calm moods of “Scorpion Milk”, while we reach ever deeper into organic and analogue realms sound-wise. Ideas exist for several albums – and other things as well, but it is open which of them merit further investigation.

We are not rushing anything, since we are not in the slightest interested in succumbing to the sickening and unnatural pace of today's society at large. It is a profound loss that the world today leads people to approach the numinous in the same manner they approach everything else, racing like headless chickens after meaningless, temporary gains. It is sad and laughable how nations at their technological prime want everything at once, leaving a gaping hole where deep, holistic understanding should arise. We are happy to stand aside.

[<http://www.helixes.org/arktau-eos>]

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