

VERSATILE interview – TNT Radio by José A. Marroquí “Brujo”

WHO ANSWERED THE INTERVIEW:

Hi, before talking about your debut album and getting to know the band better, thank you for your time.

Versatile was born in 2019, but its sound seems the result of a long artistic maturation. What was the initial impetus for forming the band, and how did this very personal musical language take shape?

Hatred: The starting point was a desire to mix Metal with another genre of music, Aggrotech (mainly driven by my attraction to the band Psyclon Nine). But naturally, our usual influences took over and shaped Versatile's sound over the course of our compositions.

Famine : After a two-year musical break, I joined this project during the Covid period, in February 2020. It was a demo of the first track that really motivated me to join my new colleagues, as I felt that the balance between electronic, choral, and metal elements was very convincing. We also have a constant positive and creative synergy, with each of us contributing resources to move the project forward. Being part of a band with such cohesion has been very stimulating for me. We began composing and playing as a trio with Cinis & Hatred, integrating drums directly into the synthesizers. This allowed us to travel and perform at concerts that we really enjoyed, such as the Riedler Open Air Fest in Germany, Le Ferrailleur in France, and many more.

The addition of Morphée (drummer) was a natural evolution after that. After listening to feedback from our audience, we realized that sometimes the impact of a real drum kit was missing, and we all began to question this.

Beyond genres, what emotions, atmospheres, or ideas do you seek to capture with your music? What do you think is the essence of Versatile as a sonic entity?

Hatred: I would like to transport the listener into a fantastical and horrific universe. Mystery, fear

Famine : To me, the sound of Versatile must be grandiose — like a towering temple that invites you to take in every stone, one by one. What makes it truly exciting is that this vision can be expressed in many ways, whether through a fast, violent track or a slower, mid-tempo composition. It's all about evoking that same sense of awe, no matter the pace. But each one is built around a central theme — a character and his / her story — that shapes its entire atmosphere. That's what guides us.

Your work combines extreme and refined elements, violence and sophistication. How was this sonic alchemy defined? Was there a moment when you knew: “this is the Versatile sound”?

Hatred: I think we're getting closer to the identity of Versatile. But indeed, with so many different facets, it's not always easy to make them coexist in the best possible way. It's an ongoing challenge

Famine : I think it's a continuous exploration where we easily spend 7 to 8 hours a day composing and refining a single track, one after the other, with only very short breaks. When Hatred and I open ourselves up to composition, it's quite an emotional challenge sometimes. The idea has never been to put ourselves into an exclusive category, but rather to let our inspirations explode depending on the chosen theme. The main challenge is then putting together the different pieces of the puzzle to make them fit. That's why we really did in-depth work, keeping or discarding the parts that interested us the most. That's why the album takes a different direction, as it brings more maturity by presenting both novelty and more assertive Death Metal & Deathcore parts than in the EP. We are sincerely satisfied with the result.

What influences have most profoundly influenced the project?

Famine : I will probably sound presumptuous, but I can't really associate the influences of the bands I listen to with my composing work. Or at least, maybe I do it in a completely unconscious way. I work much more with my emotions and the inspiration of the moment rather than trying to find a specific style. What I'm listening to right now brings a contrast that always makes me laugh. At the moment, I'm discovering the new album "Ascension" from the band "MIRAR" while also listening to "MATAMIA" (Cyberfuturistic Techno) or calm atmospheres with Tibetan gongs.

Your work may be uncomfortable for more traditional black metal audiences. How has Versatile been received so far?

Hatred: Yes, that's true. It takes a bit of open-mindedness to appreciate our music which doesn't confine itself to a single genre. Expectations can be disappointed if one stops at the label "industrial black metal."

But so far, the feedback has been extremely positive.

Famine : In our experience, we've always had a curious and very supportive audience when it comes to our artistic vision. Highlighting various musical approaches also allows everyone to find something they can relate to, I imagine. Many people come to meet us after the show, where rich discussions are shared. I really enjoy these moments because, as a composer, I also need reassurance that our efforts in our work have been convincing. We try to make our performance theatrical and alive by embodying characters, not just playing music.

We don't hide the fact that we're different from traditional black metal — it's obvious. We've always had the desire to combine various sounds without trying to limit ourselves. Art will always be appreciated and criticized, no matter what. The most important thing is not to please, but to be as authentic as possible in our artistic vision. We are all very clear on this point. That's how the people who listen to us will decide whether or not to come to us, not the other way around. If some people don't appreciate us, that's okay. There are thousands of magnificent bands today, all accessible through platforms on social networks. For those who genuinely appreciate us, we will always welcome them with open arms into our world.

Your music sounds as if it responds to an intense, almost ritualistic need for expression. Would you say that Versatile is a form of exorcism, a provocation, or a way of making sense of chaos?

Famine : Many believe that beauty is the foundation of art. Yet, beauty is merely a byproduct among the many possible outcomes of the artistic process. I maintain the belief that, to reveal the beauty of being, one must get their hands dirty, much like a painter. Taking the brush as a blade to slice through the tender flesh of inspiration. Moving away from distractions tied to conventional ideas until the painting can burst onto the canvas like a messy hemorrhage. And when we've scratched enough at the nerve of an idea, like a pig rooting through its garbage, we begin to feel the vibrations of an honest emotion.

"Les Litanies du Vide" seems more like a manifesto than a simple debut. What did you want to communicate with this first album? What is the idea or emotion that sustains it from beginning to end?

Hatred: There's no message on our part. Of course, one can find a social or religious critique there, but we're not here to give lessons. It's all just a pretext to build an atmosphere and tell stories.

The album's structure is chaotic but precise. What was the composition process like for an album with so many layers, textures, and changes in intensity? Is there a central structure from which you start, or is chaos also part of the method?

Hatred: It was a construction that developed gradually over three years. The connections formed as we went along with our ideas and desires.

Famine : Thanks for the kind words ! Musically, our roots still being black metal and electronic music, we've expanded into several new sounds, highlighting genres like symphonic music, deathcore, death metal, and more. We also decided to increase the BPM to play more intense tracks during our shows, without wanting to make mid-tempo exclusively part of our approach. Everyone in the band felt the need to create more powerful compositions. Each track can be considered a single, as it also brings its own theme and unique sounds between cathedral bells, gas mask breaths, harpsichord & more.

The album constantly plays between the ceremonial and the apocalyptic. What place does ritual have in your music?

Hatred: In fact, it all depends on the story told by the track. For example, the track Ieshara is about Cinis, a religious character. In that case, the form of the piece matches the content, and the music takes on religious overtones.

Famine : The first two tracks of the album announce the collapse of an old world and the emergence of a new one called *L'Envers*. We are speaking about cycles of life and destruction—civilizations being born, and empires collapsing just after reaching the peak of their evolution. It feels natural to me that our sound leans toward an apocalyptic and ceremonial atmosphere. There is always something beautiful and noble in destruction—something that transcends our human understanding. Often, when faced with chaos, we place our trust in the invisible, the inevitable.

The album's atmospheres evoke both science fiction and classic horror. What kind of narratives or visual images inspire you when creating?

Hatred: A multitude of things, ranging from the writings of Lovecraft or Shelley, to Disney cartoons, to Arcane, or even role-playing games or HR Giger's paintings. I pick out details and transform them. But I'm a big fan of fantasy.

In songs like "Enfant Zéro" and "Alter Ego," electronic and symphonic arrangements are very present. What role do synthesizers play in the album's sonic narrative? What do they seek to generate emotionally?

Hatred: Synths are the greatest contradiction, since there's no technology in the world of Versatile. But they bring a dark, powerful, sometimes festive side, which can suit certain atmospheres. For example, for La Régente Blême, I imagined a BDSM vampire nightclub with an atmosphere inspired by the film Blade and the paintings of HR Giger. In that case, using synthesizers seemed particularly appropriate.

Otherwise, in general, we try to adapt the instruments used to the subject of the track

In contrast, tracks like "Cave Canem" and "Graisse" are more direct, more aggressive. Is this alternation between bombast and rawness a narrative choice or an expressive necessity?

Hatred: Both. Obviously, we wanted a bit of variation so we included a few more direct and aggressive tracks.

For example, for Graisse, I wanted a baroque touch (it talks about bourgeois characters), hence the choice of harpsichord, but also riffs as violent as its subject, which seems extremely harsh to me.

Famine : A funny story about "Cave Canem" : some of the guitar riffs were directly inspired by the movie "Jaws", meant to simulate a jaw opening and snapping shut, even accompanied by chewing noises in the mix. It ties directly to the feral essence of Famine, a character destined to devour everything in his path. The music becomes a landscape where hunger, violence, and transcendence are all coming together.

If you had to describe Les Litanies du Vide without using any metal-related words, how would you do it?

Hatred: A dark, powerful but varied music, with a gothic horror atmosphere.

Famine : I'd say a path with different layers of chaos. It's like walking in a corridor with ten doors leading to a different atmosphere with its unique theme.

There's a very marked theatricality in your sound. What role does the stage play in Versatile's identity, even beyond the music? To what extent do you feel the visual aspect (stage, costumes, design) is an integral part of the musical experience?

Hatred: I wouldn't say more, but equally important. I believe a concert is watched as much as it is listened to. All these elements help reinforce the immersion of the audience.

What role does live performance play in all of this? You say your shows are more rituals than performances. What do you seek to evoke in the audience at a Versatile live show?

Famine : More theatrical performances than rituals. We enjoy deepening the immersion through our characters, and this is reflected in the way we play and interact with our audience on stage. There are also moments when each character steps to the center of the stage with props or interactions that help the audience understand our universe. For example, I'm used to playing while constantly in a "squat" position, ready to charge, pounding my fists against my chest or stomping my feet into the ground, following the primal instinct of my character.

The visual show must be as striking as the music; it's not just a concert, but a spectacle, a performance, and an invitation to immerse oneself in our universe.

Finally, if Les Litanies du Vide were a gateway to a universe, how would you describe what lies beyond?

Hatred: All the lyrics describe precisely this universe. It's called l'Envers. It's a post-apocalyptic world that reflects all of humanity's flaws.

Famine : It's the psyche of new imagined characters, set within a world called "L'Envers." The Court of Miracles showcases beggars who fake illnesses or disabilities to soften the hearts of passersby and gain more alms. There were even "schools" where one could be taught to feign blindness, paralysis, or other afflictions. In our universe, what would happen if these "sick" individuals were to enter an honest world where their suffering was real, already embedded in their nature?
