

Hello, thank you so much for being with TNT Radio today.

Almost five years have passed between “Waldvolk” and “Aus uralter Zeit,” an intense period for everyone globally. How did you experience those years as a band? Did it have any impact on your vision or approach to the new album?

Uwe: Well, five years for a new album is pretty normal for us, so it's not that long for us. We got mostly positive reactions to the album “Waldvolk.” We played our gigs in the following years. In between performances, we tried out new things and, of course, wrote new songs. Some of those songs made it onto the album “Aus Uralter Zeit.” This time, the new album was actually composed differently than usual, but that has more to do with our long history as a band and our style up to now, but more on that later. We do our music on the side, so we all have normal jobs like our fans. Sometimes it's difficult to come home after a long day at work and pick up the guitar again. But it works anyway; we couldn't imagine our lives without making music. So it always takes us a little longer, but for us, that's the right way to go. I hope our fans like “Aus Uralter Zeit” as much as we do.

With several singles already released and the album getting closer, what kind of connection have you felt with your fans? Have the reactions surprised you or met your expectations?

Uwe: We are in direct contact with many fans, and that is very pleasant. So far, there have been almost exclusively positive reviews of the new album, which has surprised us. Normally, there are also different or negative opinions, but this time it was different. Of course, you can't please everyone. We didn't expect anything at first, we never do. But we're happy when the majority of listeners say they like the new album. Speaking of fans, you're Spanish, right? There's a really crazy and totally lovely couple from Spain who make the long journey from Spain to Germany several times a year to go to festivals here. I was really impressed by that. They always come to our concerts whenever they can. Maybe you could send our regards to Raquel Iñiguez from Barcelona and, of course, her family.

One of the first things you notice when you listen to Unendlichkeit, the first track after the intro, is that clear influence of classic, raw black metal, perhaps even more so than in your previous work. Did you want to open the album with a sharper statement of intent?

Uwe: We wanted to make an album with a new style. Of course, every band says that about themselves, that's obvious. After almost 28 years of development, we had to be careful not to constantly copy ourselves. Most of us grew up with the metal of the 80s and the black metal of the 90s. Actually, everyone wanted black metal to come more to the fore if we were going to try something different. And that's how the new album came about. On the other hand, we've also thought about returning to pure pagan metal at some point. We'll see what the future brings; nothing is certain yet. The only thing that is certain is that “Aus Uralter Zeit” is now finished and we are happy with it. To return to the question: yes, we wanted to start the album with a clear statement of intent.

I enjoyed songs like Aura der Dunkelheit or Das Portal, which at times reminded me of those majestic songs by Bathory or Falkenbach. What bands or sounds do you feel have influenced you most on this particular album?

Michel: Some of us grew up listening to Bathory, among others, and one day Tobalt brought in a riff and an idea that reminded us very much of the mighty Bathory. So we started working on it. As the song took shape, we thought, why not indulge in other old heroes as well, and so Unendlichkeit ended up with lots of influences similar to Dimmu Borgir, Enslaved, Immortal, etc. It was a lot of fun to consciously incorporate something like that into our own music. Otherwise, our songs are pretty unique, without consciously referencing any other songs or bands. And we personally are absolutely happy with the mix of songs!

“Waldvolk” set the bar high and was acclaimed as one of your most solid works. With “Aus uralter Zeit,” what aspects do you feel you have taken further, whether in sound, concept, or production? What elements of your identity did you want to reaffirm, and which did you leave behind?

Tobalt: We always strive to develop ourselves in as many aspects as possible. How successful we are in doing so, or rather how successful we were with the current album, is ultimately in the eye (ear) of the beholder. From our side, we worked hard on the composition process, came up with new sound ideas, and, after intensive discussions, also tackled the production process, which ultimately led to what we consider to be a very strong production. At least for this album, we have let go of our total focus on folk melodies and the thematic basis of Germanic/Norse paganism. However, this does not mean that these aspects are now permanently removed from our work. We always keep everything open for future productions. It was important to us to build a bridge to other musical styles on this album. A few examples: you can hear melodic death metal parts, classical pagan melodies, mystic black metal parts, classic old school black/pagan sounds, epic/experimental sounds. We want to show our diversity here and also make the influences on our music visible.

On this album, your approach blends folk melodies with more aggressive and icy structures at times. What role does folklore play on this album, compared to previous, more “epic” works?

Tobalt: Folklore takes a clear backseat on the current album, both musically and thematically. This was a conscious decision, but it helped us conceptually to push our musical boundaries. The result is the wonderful musical richness that can be heard on “Aus uralter Zeit.” It was important for us to simply think in other musical and thematic spheres in order to bring new impulses to our work on the music.

You have mentioned that this work is darker and more menacing than your previous ones. What led you to embrace this darker atmosphere?

Tobalt: The path for the Waldvolk successor was clear to us very early on after the release of “Waldvolk.” More black metal, a change in theme. We incorporated our musical roots much more strongly into the current album. As Uwe already said, we all grew up with the black metal

of the 90s. The heroes of that era, who still accompany us today, have provided a lot of inspiration for this music.

The album presents striking contrasts: from the raw intensity of tracks like “Unendlichkeit” or “Wo Flüche leis geflüstert,” to passages more connected to your folk roots, such as “Aus uralter Zeit” or “In kalten Hallen,” where a tone somewhere between epic and almost festive emerges. Do you feel that folk remains the emotional heart of the band, even as the sound becomes more extreme?

Tobalt: Of course, folk melodies are part of our popular repertoire and are also an absolute trademark of XIV Dark Centuries, and even if mysticism and rawness find their way into our music, there will always be room for an epic folk melody or a stomping pagan part.

“Nahab” has a hypnotic, almost ceremonial quality that sets it apart from the rest of the album. What emotions did you want to evoke in the listener by closing the album with this piece?

Tobalt: Nahab actually ended up in last place at my personal insistence, as I consider it one of the strongest pieces and felt it deserved a unique position where it could unfold its special effect. It is meant to leave an impression, which I believe it does best as a closer. I hope this impression stays with the listener.

The title “Aus uralter Zeit” refers to an almost forgotten era, predating even written history. What echoes or meanings does this “ancestral era” hold for you? What kind of memories or forces did you want to awaken with this title?

Michel: Unfortunately, everyday life today is often somewhat bleak, especially for creative people, due to work and other obligations. Sometimes you just have to break out of this mental spiral and create your own worlds so you don't succumb to madness (e.g., depression). We have always tried to tell old stories with our music. It's simply more fascinating than just dealing with the present. Now the stories have just gotten a little older. Fantastic tales, pagan rituals, witches, horror, and violence have always been firmly anchored in metal lyrics. That's probably why it's our way of creating a counterpoint to the straightforward, unimaginative present.

In “Aus uralter Zeit,” you partially move away from pure pagan metal and explore more mystical and dark territories, with references to ancient beliefs and horrors of past worlds. What led you to take this step toward a more enigmatic and cosmic narrative?

Michel: We have always been fascinated by paganism, and even in ancient civilizations there were always the white people, the all-knowing ones, who spoke in riddles and whom people tried to interpret. Even death was not final death, but only a transition to another dimension, which was Valhalla. In other religions, there were similar places, such as heaven, Elysium, etc. The earth and what we perceive as life there is not all there is in the vast universe. Infinity has more to offer than the brief moment of existence of a small human being. We seek a deeper meaning in our lives, a sense of belonging to something greater, something eternal. If we are also fans of fantasy literature or film, we are sometimes overcome by wild dreams or fantasies

that can be turned into excellent texts. And who knows what incredible things the future of our existence has in store for us and into which spheres we may ascend or transition.

What weighs more heavily when writing: fidelity to ancient events or the power of the narrative? Do you see your music more as a chronicle or as an artistic reinterpretation of the past?

Tobalt: It all plays an important role, because we are not only modern skalds who tell myths and legends, but also want to adapt old orphans for the modern age in order to preserve things.

Michel: However, a chronicle can never do complete justice to the past. You can see that in the present day, where historical events are interpreted according to beliefs, political leanings, or other factors. We can read or hear completely different stories about one and the same event in different books or traditions. We, too, therefore largely interpret only our ideas about this past, encouraging people to think and do their own research.

It's been over 25 years since you began this journey, and the core of the lineup has remained intact throughout this time. What keeps you motivated and true to your sound in such a rapidly changing musical landscape?

Tobi: We've been making music together since 1994, even though we performed under a different band name for the first four years. But there are also things beyond the band that really connect us. Whether it's hiking together, going to concerts, family celebrations, etc. That connects us and brings us closer together. Another point is that we listen to this kind of music ourselves. Basically, we write our songs the way we like them or would listen to them ourselves.

Looking back, is there any album you feel didn't receive the recognition it deserved at the time?

Tobi: We were satisfied with each album when it was finished. Of course, in hindsight, you always find things that could have been done better. But that always created potential for improvement on the next album.

You can't please everyone, but tastes vary. Overall, however, the feedback was mostly positive.

Each of our albums represents the history of our band, which we are very proud of.

With the release of "Aus uralter Zeit" scheduled for December of this year, what does 2026 hold for XIV Dark Centuries? I see you already have some dates booked.

Michel: Well, playing bigger festivals was definitely also a goal. Unfortunately, we couldn't get a foot in the door at such short notice. Often, bands are booked there as soon as the previous edition of the festival is over... so summer 2025. So for now, we're doing what we're good at in 2026, playing small festivals like Dark Troll, Wolfszeit, Hörnerfest, and the like. That's where our fans are too. And it's fun to play these festivals. Plus a few club gigs now in winter and next fall & winter.

A tour of our own is not feasible for us at the moment due to time constraints, we really have

to plan longer in advance because everyone has jobs and families. Of course, if other offers come along, we'll be happy to look at them, especially in Spain or Portugal, where we've unfortunately never performed before.

This new album could be the entry point for a new generation of listeners. What would you say to those unfamiliar with your work but starting with “Aus uralter Zeit”? What should they know before delving into your world?

Tobalt: Here's what you should know about us: We are veterans of Thuringian/German pagan metal. We've been making music together since 1994, and under the name XIV Dark Centuries since 1998. We originally came from dark metal and evolved into pagan metal in the early 2000s, which we helped shape with our early albums “...den Ahnen zum Gruße...” (2003), ‘Jul’ (2005), and “Skithingi” (2006). On our current album, you can hear both tried-and-tested elements from our traditional sound, but also a lot of new material, whereby we try to reproduce traditional sounds in a modern guise.

Thank you so much for your time.