

SCHATTENVALD – Interview with TNT Radio, by Brujo

First of all, thank you Nachtsturm for your time and for speaking with TNT Radio Rock.

Actually, “Alle Hernach,” your next chapter, is SCHATTENVALD's first album, “I,” along with Im Nachtschein, from the 2002 demo Nachtvolk. Why did you decide to revisit compositions from that early period now?

Hello Brujo! When it comes to the previous Schattenvald recordings, I prefer to speak of demos, including the numbered releases I - VI, because in my opinion everything was always recorded amateurishly and intuitively. Even though Schattenvald has been around for almost 30 years and some of it has even been released on vinyl. After switching to Solistitium Records, the desire arose to release the old, mostly out-of-print demos on vinyl again. So I listened to the old stuff again and just didn't feel good about putting the old stuff out again in such an unedited way. Unfortunately, the original recordings fell victim to a fire, but a remix or master probably wouldn't have worked due to the quality. So I decided to record the material again - or rather, record it properly for the first time ever. The song “Im Nachtschein” is from this time (2002-2006), but wasn't on “I” – I don't even know why. But I had it on another cassette demo that was also made at the time. So I took it with me to the new recording sessions.

What has changed in “Alle Hernach” compared to its original 2007 version? (Arrangements, structure, vocal approach)

Almost nothing musically! I played the re-recording as faithfully as I remember it. But lyrically a lot has evolved. Because back then, over 20 years ago, I simply didn't put a lot of energy into the lyrics - that only started when Iskharian joined as a singer. Since the existing texts represented a fantastic basis for the idea of the forest prophet Mühlhiasl, the existing text was slightly adapted and supplemented.

When revisiting these songs, were you trying to preserve their original essence or reinterpret them with the perspective and maturity that time has given you?

Yes, as much of the old spirit as possible should be preserved. But now the whole thing gets its final atmosphere with the text concept, which was always missing before. As I said, in my opinion the old recording “I” is just a demo...

Would you say that these songs already contained the conceptual and sonic seeds that define SCHATTENVALD today?

Yes definitely. However, the song structures were of course a lot more primitive. But even today it still has a character that is of course more adult, and it was incredibly instructive for me to consciously return to this early style. It really felt like a trip back in time.

After almost a decade of demos, “I” marked the first step into album format. Was it the natural culmination of a stage or the true beginning of the band's identity? Did you feel that SCHATTENVALD already had a consolidated artistic vision or was it still in the process of being defined?

So it's about the time from the founding in 1998 until the release of the demo “I” on CD in 2006. I have to say that Schattenvald was a one-man project back then and I played in my main bands CRYPTIC WINTERMOON and ANGELUS MORTIS. “Schattenvald” had more of an experimental status at the time and I didn't actually think about making these releases available to a wider audience. That's why there were initially only a hundred hand-made copies

of "I". To be honest I was quite surprised that it sold so quickly and so well. But back then I recorded songs on a 4-track recorder every free minute and, to be honest, I don't have a good overview of the old cassettes anymore. Even today I find self-recorded cassettes in my drawer that I can no longer remember. Some are really not good, but others are exciting - maybe I'll work on them if I have some time and someone is even interested.

How does Nachtsturm feel when listening today to those songs they composed during a much more solitary period of the project?

On the one hand, I'm amazed at how good this stuff actually is - now with the new sound you can actually hear it. I've always had strong feelings about the songs, but now I think they can be conveyed much better to the listener. Songs like "Dämmertage" simply sounded like noise in the original because of the poor sound, but now it comes out really well. On the other hand, you learn a lot about the way he composed songs at the time and thus about the development of his own way of thinking. I don't think it would have been that bad if I had played the songs live - but in fact I haven't played the material since 2006. Like I said, it was very exciting.

If you had to describe the emotional difference between the 2002 version and the 2026 version, what would it be?

I was really afraid of that. I definitely didn't want my old feelings about the songs to be "overwritten" by the 2026 version. So I thought for a very, very long time about whether I should even do it. In the end I just said to myself: open a few beers, pack up the guitar without much preparation and then play as freely as possible and in one go. And that's how it was 95% of the time. And what can I say - I don't regret it.

The truth is that songs like "Auf Allen Pfaden" or the first single "Der Nachtwanderer" have gained strength and character. Your sound has always remained true to classic black metal, but in this new album, a more aggressive, rawer, and more direct approach is perceived, even more so than on the previous VI. Was it a conscious decision to harden the tone?

In terms of craftsmanship, not much has changed - not even the pace. I think a lot of it is the drums, because the old version "I" was played on very cheap equipment. But "Alle Hernach" only used devices that were already available in the 90s. So no modern crap, and to my ears many modern devices simply sound smooth and rounded. Of course, this makes the recording more complicated and difficult in many ways - but fortunately the producer Florian Dammasch understood very well what I wanted and also had the know-how to produce it this way. It's also worth driving to this studio, 500 km away.

Do you think this greater aggression is a natural evolution or the concept of the album itself?

I think the aggression was always there - but just not so audible. You would have missed all of this if I hadn't re-recorded it... I think in terms of aggressiveness, the demo "II" was much harder. The concept of the album is rather atmospheric, but there are very hard, aggressive parts, such as "Der Nachtwanderer", which is a pure hate tirade...

The album revolves around the figure of the forest prophet Mühlhiasl. How has your view of Mühlhiasl's figure evolved from that initial encounter to today?

"Mühlhiasl" is actually better known in Eastern Bavaria. You basically get it with your breast milk. The topic is treated in a very harmless way: there is a hiking trail, small cuddly toys to hang on to, painted beer mugs - although the predictions of Hiasl (which is a short form of

Matthias) are actually pretty terrible. Amazingly, in many places there are old people who still claim to have someone in their family who knew Hiasl. The Forest Prophet has traveled so far and burned himself so deeply into people's memories.

What attracts you to Bavarian folklore and local traditions as a source of inspiration within black metal?

Compared to German folklore, Bavarian folklore is much coarser and more mystical. Maybe it's because the Catholic Church has a much stronger grip on life today. When you come to Altötting, for example, you notice this very clearly. Even today, people still feel much more connected to the church than I experience in the rest of Germany. From the outside, Bavaria probably looks bright, blue and white and like a doll's house. But a little away from the tourist attractions there is a lot of darkness and human abysses. Many places have a very dark history and that fascinates me.

After almost three decades since your founding in 1998, what does it mean to continue releasing new material in a scene where many historic bands are no longer active?

It's been a shockingly long time. Because Schattenvald is my project, it worked for so long and didn't fail due to interpersonal difficulties, as is the case with many bands. There are phases in which I have more and sometimes fewer ideas, but so far the flame continues to burn. Luckily, my band members also give me complete freedom and don't try to interfere with the musical process. I'm simply convinced that bands don't function democratically because a single person can best implement their idea if they have the necessary musical skills. Too many different creative minds usually only lowers the overall level of a band, I don't want to say that it's not possible at all. But most of the time it becomes a gray mishmash - and I prefer clear visions of lone wolves rather than a ragtag band of mates with lots of different influences.

Nachtsturm began SCHATTENVALD as a solo project. Looking back, what has changed more: the artistic vision or the way you work?

Neither nor. Actually everything is the same as before, except that I no longer sing myself - I never liked that and luckily Iskharian took over the part in 2011. I still work as always: preferably alone.

Since the addition of Iskharian in 2010 and now Tyrann in 2025, how has the current lineup influenced the composition of this album?

No, the album was already composed. Iskharian merely wrote the lyrics, and Tyrann is a loyal accomplice of evil.

The album was recorded, mixed, and mastered at Nightside Audio in 2025. What were you aiming for in terms of production? More rawness? More immediacy?

Above all, I was able to bring my old equipment without getting kicked out. I deliberately wanted to work with this old equipment and achieve a 90s sound, and I know that sound engineer Florian likes exactly the same sound as I do. That's why he enjoyed recording there. Of course, everything could have been recorded with modern technology in studios much closer to where I live and in a much more comfortable setting. But I'm sure that this deliberately retro-inspired sound only truly comes to life there.

How do you balance that raw production with the atmospheric depth that has always characterized your sound? In an era where the underground scene is constantly being

renewed with new names and projects, how do you keep the essence alive without falling into repetition?

I actually believe that the raw, handcrafted quality of the '90s allows for a much greater sonic diversity than all the pre-made, interchangeable sounds of today. These days, you plug in your guitar, click through the default settings, which all sound pretty boring and over-compressed, and record the album. Everything sounds like cardboard or, at best, plastic, but not metal, which frustrates me about most modern releases. Ice crystals should shoot out of the speakers when the guitar riff kicks in.

This is your first release resulting from your long-term collaboration with Solistitium Records. What convinced you to embark on this new phase with the label?

Of course, Adam from Schattepfade has already done some great things for Schattensvald. But when Carsten asked me, my acceptance was a no-brainer, as I've been enjoying releases from this label for 30 years and it's an honor. He's currently gathering promising bands, each with that certain something that sets them apart. So far, I'm simply blown away by their extreme professionalism; after thirty years as a very small underground band, this is a huge boost of motivation for me.

After seven albums and numerous demos, EPs, and splits, do you consider "Alle Hernach" a point of consolidation or transformation?

Honestly, I don't really think about it that way. I constantly have new ideas, develop them further, and after a while, EPs, demos, or now albums emerge. The only difference is that we want to present all of this live, and that's a lot of work. But the way music is created always remains the same. Otherwise, it might be the beginning of a new band—but ultimately the end of Schattensvald.

After looking back and reinterpreting your own past in "Alle Hernach," the time has inevitably come to bring that work to the stage. You have confirmed your participation in the Schattenfest Festival in October 2026. How does SCHATTEINVALD approach this series of concerts after an album that speaks so directly to your history?

We're trying to cover the highlights from Schattensvald's long history. It's an enormous amount of material, and we first need to figure out what works live. Some songs simply aren't suited for a straightforward live performance. Fortunately, I already have professional support, and we're currently working very hard on our presentation. However, there will only be test concerts at the end of 2026; further performances are planned for 2027.

Will these performances be conceived as a celebration of almost three decades of your career, as a reaffirmation of your identity... or as the rawest and most direct manifestation of this new phase? And finally, when the listener finishes the 46 minutes of "Alle Hernach," what should they be left with: a feeling of devastation, of reflection...?

We'll see. The listener should primarily feel reminded of the good old days by "Alle Hernach," because the wheel hasn't been reinvented here. But it keeps turning. I'm very curious to see how the transition to professional studio recordings will shape the future. We are definitely no longer a demo band/project.

To wrap up, if someone were to discover SCHATTENVALD for the first time through “Alle Hernach,” what do you think they would immediately understand about the essence of the band?

An older listener will hopefully recognize our homage to the old days. A younger listener will hopefully notice a particular beauty of coldness that might otherwise be unknown to them.

Thank you so much for your time!

I also thank you for the interview. Stay hungry!