

GORGON – TNT RADIO ROCK – By Brujo

Hi Chris, first of all, thank you for your time.

Gorgon was one of the first French bands to emerge in the second wave of Black Metal. After so many years, what aspects of your vision of black metal remain exactly the same and which have changed over time?

Hello, and thank you for having us here so that those who don't know us can discover the band. Indeed, we emerged at the very beginning of the nineties, exactly the same year as the creation of our current label, Osmose Productions, namely 1991. After all these years, what has changed for me in the scene is that musicians have a higher level of technical skill than those of the 90s. Before, it was much more raw, more primal, which wasn't necessarily a bad thing, because what matters in this style is what you feel, not demonstrating what you can do with an instrument. There was also a bit more carefree spirit because everything had to be created from scratch, and it happened naturally, without calculation. Of course, there was no "Internet" aspect, so everything had to be done by handmail for contact between bands, zines, and distributors, which meant it took much longer. There was also a bit more mystery surrounding this underground scene and its members because we didn't have access to all the information (photos, bios, etc.) that anyone can now find. There was also more genuine support because the financial aspect wasn't as prominent as it is now. Finally, politics were practically absent; we were there for the music, not to judge the musicians' associations.

After a decade active, the band was on hiatus between approximately 2001 and 2017. When you decided to reactivate Gorgon, did you feel like you were picking up an interrupted story or starting a completely new chapter?

In fact, when the band returned at the end of 2017, and then again on stage at the end of 2019, a new chapter began because the lineup was entirely new. New album, new members, new label—in short, we were starting from scratch, but with a past that we had nothing to be ashamed of, especially in terms of live performances. So, you could see it as a mix of both: the continuation of Gorgon with its legacy, but with fresh blood to face the future.

You've said on several occasions that Gorgon returned because you missed energy, hatred, and intensity in live performances. Looking at the scene today, do you still feel that lack, or do you think you've found exceptions that have restored some of your faith?

I don't think so; it hasn't really changed, and there's still a real lack of passion and energy in the bands we see live. Most performances are relatively static, and that's what brought us back, as I said before. We're always looking for bands that could make us feel freer, on stage, but it's true that despite the various opportunities we have to see bands, we struggle to find individuals on stage who can convey that feeling. Watain and a few others are the rare exceptions that come to mind.

As we were saying, Gorgon was there from the early years of French black metal, but it doesn't always appear at the center of the historical narrative. When you see other bands often cited as foundational to the French scene, while Gorgon is relegated to the background, what do you think is being misunderstood about those early years?

I have no jealousy, no regrets about what's said regarding the creation of the French scene, so it doesn't matter to me whether we're mentioned or not. We know we were there, and most of the people who were there at the time knows it too. Sometimes, as they say, it's often historians who write history, so if it's young people who didn't experience that era, they base their opinions on what they've read or heard since, and therefore, they can't be aware of everything, nor feel what we felt back then. Also, we prefer to look to the future rather than constantly dwelling on the past, even though we do return to it regularly, either for interview questions or, of course, for live performances of our older repertoire.

Do you think the history of French black metal has been told too much from a single narrative, leaving out bands that didn't fit into certain circles or discourses?

Yes, there are obviously some groups that have been left out, but that doesn't change the fact that they were there at the time. It's understandable that, due to personal taste, some groups might not be highlighted or are more popular today, but I don't attach any particular importance to it. I remember an interview with the directors of a documentary about the beginnings of the genre in France, who said they simply included the groups they liked in

their film. This selective choice is their artistic vision, but it doesn't reflect the diversity of the original figures, and they don't hide that fact.

Do you feel that being somewhat on the fringes of that dominant narrative ended up hurting Gorgon or helping them preserve a more distinct identity?

It's true that being outside the "official narrative" didn't help the group return to familiar territory, so it's through our music and our integrity that we continue to move forward without dwelling on what could have been or should have been. This interview is also the purpose of this: to introduce ourselves to those who, due to their age or lack of information, might discover us and perhaps support us later.

For you, what truly makes a band black metal, beyond sound, image, or technique?

Black Metal is something you experience, something that's inside you. But I completely understand that for some it's just a style of music, and that's what it is for the majority of the audience. The masses who listen to Black Metal only perceive it as music played by people who are mostly made up and wear outlandish outfits. And for a good number of bands, that's also the case. Beyond the elements you mentioned, to be credible in my eyes, bands need a spiritual element.

Do you think the term "black metal" has become too broad to be useful, or is it still worth fighting for its meaning?

No, the term "Black Metal" is sufficient for me and shouldn't be distorted as we so often see with ridiculous labels that are frequently put forward. Back then, as I often say, Necromantia, Blasphemy, Samaël, Abruptum, and Bestial Summoning all played Black Metal. A completely different kind of Black Metal in their approaches, with their own particularities, but that's what made them so appealing. There was only one label, and it didn't bother anyone; on the contrary, it brought us together. We were far removed from atmospheric Black Metal, Melodic Black Metal, Red Anarchist Black Metal, and other grotesque terms. You either play Black Metal or you don't. This style can be melodic, brutal, fast, slow, primal, with or without keyboards—it remains the same style. There's nothing more to add.

You often speak of black metal as something that should convey an inner truth, not just an aesthetic. Do you think there are too many bands today that master the genre's language but have nothing real to say?

So yes, there are far too many bands (and releases) nowadays. It's impossible to listen to, discover, support, or appreciate everything that comes out. In conclusion, I don't particularly pay attention to bands' lyrics because I don't have the time to read them. Gorgon takes up a lot of my time, and I prefer to dedicate it to composing and searching for new ideas. So I miss out on bands that would certainly have captivated me, but it's a choice I stand by.

You've also been very critical of the instant access the internet has given to the scene. Would you say that this ease of access has weakened the audience's commitment, or has it simply changed the way that commitment is demonstrated?

The internet can be a great way to discover the music of past bands (old, hard-to-find demos) or current ones (getting a feel for a band before going to a concert or buying an album), to learn about a discography, and to stay up-to-date on live performances and festival lineups. For bands, it makes it easier to connect with potential gig promoters or people who want to order merch. But on the other hand, the internet provides access to a whole bunch of people who, in my opinion, have no business being there. Back when the underground scene was much less accessible, when you needed to know someone who was part of it to get addresses for zines, distro lists, and so on, all these people swarming online wouldn't have existed. Between those who try to cancel Marduk or Impaled Nazarene concerts, those who always seek to politicize the style, those you never see in concert but who speak as if they were specialists, ... there is a whole range of virtual beings who are harmful to the style.

You tend to defend a view of black metal closely tied to darkness, death, blasphemy, and a certain gravity. Does it bother you that today many listeners identify as black metal works focused on historical, natural, or introspective themes?

I've gotten used to it over time, and we know there are many bands that focus on the natural aspect, like Immortal a long time ago, by glorifying the nature of the North, and also Bathory, who, by dealing with Vikings, brought a historical aspect, as did Marduk with their work on World War II. I have a preference for the "darker" aspects, but these niches they've chosen suit them well.

Your lyrics seem to increasingly stem from death, absence, exclusion, and memory, not just from Satanism in its most overt form. Does this shift reflect a personal evolution or a literary necessity within Gorgon?

No, we have to vary our lyrics and explore the different paths of the dark side, so it's normal that the themes you mention appear in our lyrics. They're a mix of lived experiences and invented stories, and this allows us to avoid getting stuck on just one subject that we would endlessly overuse.

Breton folklore, medieval witchcraft, and certain ancient tales are also sources of inspiration. What do you find in these materials that you don't find in more contemporary themes?

Inspiration comes primarily from what I read and analyze, from what I watch, but above all from what I appreciate and what I want to express through the group's themes. More contemporary subjects like computers, spaceships, or automobiles don't have a place in our work. I'm interested in certain topics, and it's these that I develop in a personalized way so that the group can make them their own.

Over the years, has your understanding of Satanism become more flexible, deeper, or simply more personal? If you could go back to the 90s with your current experience, what would you do differently within Gorgon, and what would you leave exactly the same?

Yes, there's been an evolution in my view of Satanism, which was perhaps more prominent in the earlier albums, whereas now it's more diluted with death in general. If I went back to the '90s, I don't know if I would change anything. The lyrics perfectly reflected what we wanted to say. Those elements shaped who we were and were expressed exactly as we felt them.

You've said that the current Gorgon sounds more direct, more powerful, and more aggressive. Do you think that also reflects a personal transformation of yours outside of music?

This power, this aggression, and this more direct, unadorned approach stem from both what we wanted to offer and the new lineup and the studio where we recorded. It's a combination that suits us and a path I can see us continuing down. The studio takes captured our stage energy and brought out our raw intensity in the final product. It's a coherent artistic vision that we embrace and that works for us. We all know that this style has a cliché of needing a bad sound to sound "real," but many tracks have been ruined by this perception. When a good track suffers from mediocre sound, it loses intensity and misses its mark. A more powerful sound, in my opinion, better highlights the work you've put in beforehand and the hours spent composing your piece. Of course, many bands don't have access to professional studios due to budgetary reasons, or can't find the skilled personnel to record their style, and their music shouldn't be denigrated for that. It's just that, in my opinion, with different conditions, they would be better positioned to compete with the multitude of bands that exist. In the 90s, we did the best we could with what we had, so there wasn't a personal transformation that would lead us to what we're aiming for now. The sound we had reflected the sound of the time, and even if we can always do better, it suited us given our technical and financial limitations.

With the current lineup now stable, do you feel that Gorgon is experiencing one of its strongest periods as a band?

Yes, on stage we have one of the best lineups we've ever had. Hellesylt, the drummer, has been with the band since our "comeback" in 2019, while A. on guitar and Nia Vile on bass, have been with us for three and a half years. This stability is truly essential for moving forward and brings a stage presence we didn't quite have before. There's a great rapport between the members, both in rehearsals and during concerts (transportation, the performance itself, etc.). We've also progressed technically as individuals, and we're all moving towards the same goal: cohesion in service of Gorgon. This lineup has played the most concerts in the band's history, and before Poland, which we'll be visiting in October, we've performed in Sweden, Germany, Spain, Italy, Canada, Romania, France of course, Luxembourg, and Switzerland.

Looking at the present honestly, where is Gorgon today: continuity, fulfillment, reconstruction, or a new stage that you're still discovering?

Of the choices you're suggesting, fulfillment is the most suitable, because we're truly happy with the band's current situation, both in terms of the label and the stability we just discussed, as well as the concert opportunities. Of course, there's also continuity; we're not going to deny what we've done. The band continues as it is, but we want, once again, to move forward and try to surprise both our listeners and ourselves with future inspirations for our compositions.

After so many obstacles, lineup changes, reissues, hiatuses, and comebacks, what continues to drive you to keep going with Gorgon at this stage of your life?

Indeed, we've had quite a few lineup changes, like many other bands, and a very long hiatus. Other groups before us, like Archgoat or Beherit, for example, which come to mind, have experienced the same thing. What motivates us to continue? Primarily, it's the sheer joy of doing this, as the financial aspect isn't a factor for us. We know it won't last for decades, but the pleasure we currently get from performing, composing, and being together is a whole that suits and motivates us. This comeback also allows us, curiously enough, to meet people we never met in the nineties, whether they're fellow musicians or people who followed us back then, and at every concert, it's always new encounters and wonderful memories that unfold offstage.

"For Those Who Stay" (2024) is your most recent work. Where is the band creatively at now? Are you already working on new material or still exploring what that album left behind?

I'm currently working on the composition for the next album, and most of the tracks are 80% complete musically, so we might go back into the studio before the end of the year, for a release in 2027. Besides our album "For Those Who Stay," which we've been promoting for months, we also have an EP that came out in 2025, "In Deepest Penumbra," from which we currently play two tracks in concert. This has helped our die-hard fans wait patiently, as it mainly consists of recent versions of older songs.

On June 19th in Tarragona, you'll be sharing the stage with Corpus Diabolis. How are you preparing for this concert, and what approach do you want to take to the live performance?

We played with this band from the South of France twice a few years ago, and they recently came to see us at a concert in their city, so we know each other personally, which always helps when we're playing together. It's a pleasure to see them again; there will be a great atmosphere, no competition, and the setlist we're going to play is already prepared. Furthermore, since we have several concerts a few weeks beforehand, both in France and Italy, we'll be well-rehearsed and it will truly be a performance that should live up to what the audience expects from us. Energy, raw power, intensity, and mastery will be the key words for this evening.

What does playing here mean to you, and what kind of experience do you want to leave with the audience?

Spain is a country where we've only played once, in the North of the country, two years ago at the Necesses Mori fest, so it's always a pleasure to try and win over a new audience and show them what we're capable of. While we can be judged on our visuals online with our official music videos, live performances videos, or our albums, here we'll be judged live, and we want to share our vision of Black Metal with them. Playing means revealing ourselves in a new light and seeing whether or not they connect with what we have to offer.

You'll be sharing the stage with Corpus Diabolis, a band with affinities within the French black metal scene. Is this concert being conceived as a dialogue between different styles or simply as two distinct visions in the same space?

Having already shared the stage with them, I think that evening will offer distinct visions. This is a good thing, as the audience won't feel like they're seeing the same concert twice or listening to overly similar music. They'll also get to experience two different approaches from two French bands, each offering elements unique to their own style.

To wrap up: when you can no longer, or no longer wish to, continue with Gorgon, how would you like its entire journey to be understood, beyond labels, rankings, or official narratives?

I would like people to remember us as a group that, above all, was honest and pure in what we offered. We tried things to avoid following trends, we were always content to do what we enjoyed, even if it wasn't what was popular at the time, we were always true to ourselves in our music and our approach, and respectful of those who supported us. It was a beautiful adventure.

Thank you very much for your time.