

## **NORDVARGR/DRAKH - Infinitas In Aeternum**

As with many Dark Ambient projects, simple verbal technical descriptions fail to convey the impact of the artistic work as a whole, or even in part most of the time. I find Dark Ambient music to be more of a 'feeling place' than most other genres of music. Perhaps that is why it took me nine or ten listenings of this CD to experience the full impact of what the artists were trying to achieve. Even then, the vision of the artists vs. the perception of the listener may only be casually coincidental. NORDVARGR/DRAKH (Henrik "Nordvargr" Björkk & Drakhon) is a duo from Sweden (where else would you expect?) who established a reputation in MZ.412, if that is any frame of reference for you. This is cold, bleak isolationist territory on "Infinitas In Aeternum" to be sure, but it wasn't until I experienced the CD under certain conditions that I realized the full impact of its aesthetic intent. Lately, there has been an abundance of snowfall in this Upstate New York terrain, and I decided to get the jump on the weather by setting out to shovel the white stuff at 1 AM one stormy night rather than join the neighbors in the morning pre-commute "shoveling party". I selected this CD to listen to via wireless headphones and experienced it without distraction or interruption for its entirety. From the start, I heard a distorted alien voice repeating an unintelligible phrase a few times over a public address system, then disappeared, only to return a little later even more garbled. Meanwhile, the bleak background ambience ebbed and swelled borne on an ill wind. Stray, distant whistling oscillations streaked the atmosphere. I felt like a prisoner on some cold planet galaxies away, without hope of release or reprieve. Very chilling indeed. The ambience becomes more "industrial" without being mechanical as I continue laboring at my task- shovel-full after shovel-full of cold wet snow. The atmosphere is static- only punctuated by intermittent stabs of electronic energy, still at some distance. It has gotten even colder, yet I'm sweating through exertion. I want this to end- I want to finish clearing the damn snow and get back into my nice warm house, yet there is no reprieve for me as the snow continues to fall. The longest track on the CD, "Black Oven Emitting" has a hint of a dirge while a feedback tone wails like a siren in the distance. No, there is no hope. This winter may never end. I am becoming tired. Now I hear a vocal

sonority like a Buddhist chant from somewhere- I must be hallucinating. The wailing continues. I grow even more despondent. Everything sounds fuzzy, and soon slow, sludgy distorted guitar chords arise (think: Morthound's "The Goddess Who Could Make the Ugly World Beautiful" ) I am beginning to feel ill, yet somehow sanctified. What if I die out here and they find my corpse buried under a mound of snow in the chilly light of morning? What if they don't find me until the snow thaws in spring? The sludge guitar is eventually absorbed in a rising miasmic tide of sonorous voices and tones, which is shortly punctured by sporadic electronic drilling. Some type of alien probing. I am grateful when it ceases. Now this inhospitable landscape seems vast and uncompromising. The gloom is impossible to describe. The foliage stares at me with icicle eyes- silent, unmoving, yet somehow sentient. I think I hear a whispered human voice, am I alone and hallucinating again? The atmosphere grows even heavier and darker, yet there is a burning light on the horizon as this "Scotopic Vision" envelops me. Snow-blind and impassive, I carry on my mindless task no longer anticipating its conclusion or outcome. A high piercing tone invades my audial senses followed by pattering and muttering. I no longer dread the alien influence. I am numb. I am assimilating to the otherworldliness of this environment. There is no turning back I find myself standing on the precipice of an abyss. The void of space is no longer silent. The tinkering of inhuman beings continue. Adjustments are made. I have been retrofitted with the equipment necessary for survival. I am imbued with knowledge that goes deeper than the intellect will allow verbal expression. The outlanders depart, leaving me on this brutal planet to continue my work. Again I am alone, but now with a gnosis of inexpressible profundity. There could be no other way. This release, in a black & white cardboard slipcase with a few pages negative image photography taken out of doors (yes, it does look like alien landscapes) is limited to only 1000. If Dark Ambient music interests you at all, you DEFINITELY want to pick this one up.

Review by: Steve Mecca / Chain DLK