

Astarte - Doomed Dark Year (1998)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Passage To Eternity (Prelude)* 2 *Voyage To Eternal Life* 3 *Thorns Of Charon (Pt1) - Astarte's Call* 4 *Doomed Dark Years* [play](#) 5 *Thorns Of Charon (Pt2) - (Emerge From Hades)* 6 *Thorns Of Charon (Pt3) - (Pathway To Unlight)* 7 *Empress Of The Shadow Land* 8 *The Rise Of Metropolis* 9 *Intro* 10 *The Offering*

[play](#)

11 *Empress of the Shadowland* 12 *Satisfaction of The Dead*

* Nemesis – guitar (1995–2003) * Kinthia – guitar, lead vocals (1995–2003) * Katharsis – keyboards (2003–2008) * Psychoslaughter aka Aithir – session drums (1995–1997)

In a scene that is primarily dominated by men, there have been a few notable all-female Metal bands. Whilst Heavy Metal bands like GIRLSCHOOL paved the way in the early days, there have nevertheless scarcely been any all-female bands who have made it out of the underground. This is even more so the case in the Black Metal scene. However, one exception here is the Greek band LLOTH, who became better known as ASTARTE, and are thought to be the very first all-female Black Metal band. Formed in 1995, LLOTH changed their name to ASTARTE shortly after the release of their first demo in 1997. From then until 2014, the band played under the moniker of ASTARTE, releasing five full-length albums, the last of which was unveiled in 2007. Following the death of founding member Tristessa in 2014 after a struggle with leukemia, ASTARTE split, only to be reformed that same year, albeit under the original name LLOTH. This year saw the reissue of ASTARTE's 1998 debut full-length album "Doomed Dark Years", including spice-up artwork as well as quite a bit of bonus material.

"Passage to Eternity" provides a sinister intro to the remaining 70 minutes of the reissue, setting a tableaux of a haunted castle on a stormy night, howling wolves, creaky floorboards and all.

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And with this backdrop, ASTARTE's unique style comes oozing out of the speakers. From the first few notes of "Voyage Of Eternal Life", it becomes immediately apparent that care has been taken to keep the music as true to the original as possible, albeit with a cleaner and clearer sound that really allows the more melodic parts to shine. I'm not going to get into a description of each song, as those who know ASTARTE's music will already be more than familiar with the album. But whilst there will undoubtedly be those who prefer the rawness of the original, the revamped reissue does take the harshness of the music up a notch, and does give the music a fuller sound. New on this reissue are five bonus tracks, the first of which is an excerpt from MAYHEM's famous song "Deathcrush". This as well as an unreleased track from a studio rehearsal provide a low-fi behind-the-scenes look at what went into this iconic Black Metal band. The organic melody of "The Rise of Metropolis" without vocals is even more spell-binding than the released version, and is an absolute must-hear for fans of this album. Ending things off is an extract of a radio interview Tristessa did back in 2000. Although not in English, one of the most striking things about this interview is how sweet and innocent her voice sounds; a stark contrast to the gravely snarl she used in later vocal lines.

I'm usually fairly skeptical about reissues; usually there's a lot of hype about basically the same album. However, the reissue of "Doomed Dark Years" is one of the few exceptions to this. The changes in the mastering have given the music more body, and the instrumental version of "The Rise of Metropolis" is simply stunning. With all the previously unreleased studio/rehearsal bonus material, this is definitely something for the collectors out there. And something else for fans to look forward to: Sleazy Rider will be reissuing the remaining four ASTARTE albums in the future. ---Erika Kuentler, metal-temple.com

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