

Vintersorg - Naturbal (2014)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Ur aska och sot* 7:07 02. *Överallt och ingenstans* 5:06 03. *En blix från klar himmel* 5:47
04. *Lågornas rov* 5:48 05. *Rymdens brinnande öar* 6:00 06. *Natten visste vad skymningen såg*
5:23 07. *Elddraken* 5:56 08. *Urdarmåne* 7:44 09. *Själ i flamma* 4:31 Mr. V - Vocals,
Programming, Bass Mattias Marklund - Guitars

VINTERSORG, a Swedish Folk Metal duo, began on a venture to set to music the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. With “Jordpuls” being representative of earth, and “Orkan” marking the air element, this month sees the release of the third installation of this elemental tetralogy: “Naturbål”, which translates roughly to “Nature Bonfire”, and which is the audible personification of the element of fire. Renown for having a music style that changes from one album to the next, I was keen to see what VINTERSORG have come up with now, finding that “Naturbål” continues on in the trend in their return to their older musical style.

With a total play-time just shy of an hour, “Naturbål” balances right on the brink between Black Metal and Folk Metal, blending the two together without straying to either extreme, poising on the brink between light and dark. Starting off with “Ur Aska Och Sot”, the initially jovial melody is plunged into a ferocious black abyss that ravages everything before blooming into clean vocals. Admittedly, this transition can be a bit jarring at first, but this transformation soon becomes the golden standard adhered to throughout, wildly careening from frantic and dark to folky and light, from harsh to clean, through hairpin twists that have you at the edge of your seat; a real rollercoaster of a ride! However, some of the cleaner parts intertwined with female vocals can seem almost a bit Pop-like, which admittedly did put me off a bit, although this is somewhat counterbalanced by the harsher instrumental parts. Nevertheless, one can’t help but admire how VINTERSORG manage to mix so many different elements together without the songs losing coherency or becoming fragmented. This album is undeniably laced with pure emotionality, and even a precursory skim through the descriptions accompanying each song show how detailed and thought-out every track really is. The use of natural sounds such as rolling thunder and sheets of rain also add atmosphere and dimension to the soundscape

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woven by the melodies, whilst the inclusion of female vocals on two of the tracks was an unusual inclusion for VINTERSORG, but fits in with the very heavily vocal-based approach taken in the song-structures on this album. Perhaps one of my favourite tracks on the album is "Natten visste vad skymningen såg", a darker melody which has some stunningly beautiful passages woven into it. Using everything from grand orchestrations to complex song structures, VINTERSORG bring to life a myriad of facets in their music that keep the listener captivated throughout.

Overall, the musical aspects of the album were exceptionally well executed, although the clean vocals are somewhat strongly at the fore, and can get a bit taxing. Nevertheless, "Naturbål" is a good continuation from VINTERSORG's previous album "Orkan", and incorporates motifs from fiery and tempestuous to icy yet smouldering; it will undoubtedly be well received by new and old VINTERSORG fans alike, and really captures the flaring and dynamic features of the fire element. --- metal-temple.com

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