

## Dark Fortress - Venereal Dawn (2014)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Venereal Dawn* 11:03    2. *Lloigor* 07:07    3. *Betrayal and Vengeance* 07:10    4. *Chrysalis* 06:29    5. *I Am the Jigsaw of a Mad God* 08:33    6. *The Deep* 03:09    7. *Odem* 06:29    8. *Luciform* 07:25    9. *On Fever's Wings* 11:12    10. *The Deep (Acoustic Version)* 02:58    Asvargr - Guitars V. Santura - Guitars, Vocals (backing) Morean - Vocals (lead) Seraph - Drums Draug - Bass Paymon – Keyboards

It's hard to believe metal bands these days and see the conviction and urgency behind all the aggressiveness, harshness and brutality they spit forth. With countless artists and labels emerging every single day a proper industry has been established and, as in any other mass-production industry, a product must look, smell and taste nice, but it doesn't necessarily need to be healthy and natural. Translated to rigid metal parameters, this means that many metal bands scream very loud without having any real trouble or itch urging them to do so, which, joined with lack of talent, seldom causes anything of worth.

Fortunately, something exceptional may lurk behind the carefully thought-through imagery from time to time, and Dark Fortress are the prime example of that the whole package principle – this band literally doesn't have a weak spot. Their visual presentation is impeccable (all their album covers are fine enough to end up on your bedroom wall, as well as their logo that is hands down one of the most mesmerizing out there) and their music has been constantly progressing over the last 15 years, perpetually getting deeper, more complex, more inspirational, more stimulating and more memorable.

Venereal Dawn is without doubt their brightest moment and strongest musical statement to date. It represents the wealth of good ideas (both in terms of music and the lyrical concept), intelligent arrangements and tight musicianship and, as such, embodies one of the most pleasurable extreme metal experiences this year offered so far. Album starts on a high note with

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the album-titled piece which clocks at over 11 minutes, immediately confronting the listener with its eclectic, brilliant flow and incredible sense of structure. The track is memorable all the way through, but the riff that starts at 7:06 and the solo that follows it are just beyond incredible. Lloigor is more streamlined and focused track, with the opening 90 seconds that sound as if they were borrowed from some of the lost tracks of the Opeth's Blackwater Park sessions, which is by no means a bad thing. Chorus that comes afterwards is one of those epic ones that crawl under your skin, refusing to leave you alone, and there is a big probability that, after the album turns to silence, you'll catch yourself humming that particular melody. Among other noteworthy tracks, it would be unfair not to mention Chrysalis with its powerful opening riff progression, furious and straight-forward I Am The Jigsaw Of A Mad God, mysterious Odem and monumental finale On Fever's Wings.

In this shallow era of the shortest attention span in the history of mankind, many will overlook the epic proportions of this musical offering. And it is a shame really, because this niche of metal music, that for years has been dominated by gigantic acts like Cradle Of Filth and Dimmu Borgir, hasn't witnessed an album of this quality for a very long time – the latest studio recordings by these two mentioned bands certainly fall short in comparison to this potent musical animal. --- metal-archives.com

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