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### Negură Bunget - *Vîrstele Pămîntului* (*Code666*)



By: *Darren Cowan*

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**[7/10]** Negura Bunget hails from a country rooted in the old ways, Romania. From the superstitions to their infamous leader Prince Vlad Dracula to the beautiful-yet-harsh landscapes of the Carpathian Mountains—Romania is a country steeped in a mysterious and majestic history. Negura Bunget's latest release *Vîrstele Pămîntului* is an album overflowing with Romanian culture. Their instrumentation owes much to their ethnic background; the group has its ear to the earth, so much that a special, limited edition of *Vîrstele Pămîntului* comes packaged in a handmade wood box, tied with rope and filled with earth from their native country. Talk about living up to their country's vampire legends!

Because *Vîrstele Pămîntului* contains Romanian lyrics, I can't say one way or another if this album is about vampires. Due to a large intake of Dracula films that have persisted ever since Hollywood's Silver Screen days, America may have a skewed perception of Negura Bunget's country. If not full of vampire lore, the album definitely gives its listeners, American or otherwise, a true look into Romanian culture.

Here, one will not find the typical beer-swinging, table [dancing](#) rhythms of today's typical folk metal band. *Vîrstele Pămîntului* is one of those mood-based albums of slow paces and awe-inspiring atmosphere. It is the kind of album perfect for sleeping (not a bad thing). Various instruments such as Xylophone, Pan Flute, Kaval, Frula, acoustic guitar and multiple percussion conjure visions of medieval bonfires burning on Eastern European country sides. The flute sections even bring to mind Native American instrumentation. Inia Dinia's keyboards envelop all of these sounds in an early-morning, foggy mystique.

Few black metal groups compare to Negura Bunget when it comes to atmosphere, but part of the problem with *Vîrstele Pămîntului* is one has to look hard to find the black metal. Sure, tracks such as "Țara de Dincolo de Negură" and "Arborele Lumii" are black metal cuts, all the way, characterized by traditional metal instrumentation, clean and rough vocals (stereotyping or not, his clean voice sounds vampiric) and the ever-apparent melodies. The album comes across as being too ethnic and not enough metal, and the songs simply

drag on far too long. *Vîrstele Pămîntului* is more authentic and original than a lot of the pagan/folk metal bands of today, but I would rather listen to early Ulver or In the Wood's classic opus, *The Heart of Ages*.

[www.myspace.com/negurabunget](http://www.myspace.com/negurabunget)

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