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interview by: [Roberto Martinelli](#)

Negura Bunget had been a totally passable band on their first two records. Then, the muse came to them. With the release of their third album, *Maiastru sfetenic*, the band was transformed. Dark and weird, the atypically packaged album showed that this Romanian black metal band had found a direction and concept. I knew Negura Bunget was worth giving another try when Christophe Szpajdel, the mad logo designer of black metal (interview issue #7) cited *Maiastru sfetenic* as an album that literally scared him.

Maiastru sfetenic reminded me a good deal of Weakling, which you may know is one the all-time favorites of many of us at Maelstrom. (For the record, Weakling has not been outdone.) So I was curious: where did all this inspiration come from? Had Negura Bunget heard Weakling? If so, was it that band that threw a switch in the Romanians' heads? Read on and find out. You'll also get a free lesson in Romanian from band leader Negru, as well as his tips on what to do when traveling through the Eastern European country.

Maelstrom: Hello, Negru. I guess it would be best to start off by asking you to tell us about Negura Bunget. Firstly, what is the meaning of your band name? What do the names of your albums mean?



Negru: Negură Bunget is a black fog coming from a deep dark dense forest. The name tries to picture somehow the kind of atmosphere, both musical and spiritual we'd want to create through our music. It has also a symbolical nature, standing for the inexpressible parts of our ideology. The two words are also from the Tracic substrate of the Romanian language (the oldest one, containing about 90 words) as the interest for our local history and spirituality is something of crucial importance and meanings for us as a band.

Zirnindu-sa is from Ancient Romanian meaning something like turning to black, dying... *Sala molksa* is even older than the Romanian language. Both words came from Indo-European language, the mother of all modern languages. Its semantic content is in close connection with our Dacic ancestors supreme

spiritual value: the immortality.

Maiastru sfetnic is probably the hardest one to put in English. Although is in a more up to date Romanian language the two words are really close to a Romanian point of view. Would be something like a spiritual advisor, magic protector or majestic counselor in English, though it's completely different in Romanian.

Maelstrom: Negura Bunget comes from Romania. While that may not be of much interest in terms of being a pop band, to a genre like black metal that thrives so much on the "cult" factor, it is very interesting. Could you talk to us a bit about what starting a black metal band in Romania was like and how it is continuing your musical careers in this fashion?

Negru: I'd first say it's quite a paradox situation here. While so many people both from inside and outside have a deep fascination for these lands and their inner spirituality, there are very few local bands dealing with such matters of their musical approach. But in the end I guess it's something like nobody should play with such powerful things...

For us starting a Black Metal band here was more like natural thing. We were only two members at the beginning, now we're three, so we see this Black Metal involvement as personal spiritual endeavor. It was like that from the very beginning and it will remain like this until the end. We first started under the name of Wiccan Rede, and used more like a general approach towards Black Metal, and we passed to Negură Bunget and to a more deep and spiritual thing when we felt we were ready for that.

Maelstrom: Your latest album, *Maiastru sfetnic*, marks a huge development in your band's sound. It is vastly superior to the two other albums that Negura Bunget has released. What do you think it was that caused this tremendous focusing of ideas and presentation?

Negru: I think it was more like a natural development. I mean we worked a lot on this album, more than two years, rehearsing all the time 4-5 times a week. We also worked as much on the spiritual background of the album, as well as on its graphical presentation (we even did all the digipaks by hand in the end).

Maelstrom: In fact, I am very much reminded of Weakling's *Dead as Dreams* when listening to *Maiastru sfetnic* (especially song #2). Am I correct that your improvement was inspired by this band?

Negru: I can't say I heard about Weakling... sorry! But now that you mentioned it, I'll try to get a hold on it if possible...

Maelstrom: Speaking of track 2, there is a very weird but totally interesting whistling noise present at the beginning and end of the song. What is the source of that whistle and what gave you the idea to include it?

Negru: Actually that sound is made on the guitar. It's quite a usual technique I think we invented there, but at the same time that's one of the best parts we composed so far... I can also say it sounds a lot more devastating listening to it live...

Maelstrom: And so now you will be releasing a new album. Will it be even more weird?

Negru: As for the new album... well I don't know what to say...

Sometimes it seems to me it's pretty strange, sometimes it's quite a more normal one... You'll have to listen to it on your own I guess... If you'll do that, let me know what you think about it...

Maelstrom: What is the name of your new album? If it's a Romanian name, what does that mean? When is it coming out and what label is it on?

Negru: Well, hopefully with the new album Code666 will arrange a European tour for us... They work with Metalyse Agency, so it could be a really good one in the end. So I'm confident we'll do such a tour soon...

The new album's name is: *N crugu bradului*. Unfortunately I'm not yet prepared on how this goes in English, but would be something like "deep down the heights of the fir trees spirituality"... It will be out on Code666, probably on October (we already recorded it, but we still have to do the mastering, the cover... we'll have again an even stranger cover).

Maelstrom: Let's talk about the drumming in Negura Bunget. You sure like your china cymbal, don't you? How long did it take you to build up the stamina to play double bass that fast for that long?

Negru: Yeah, I'm quite a big fan of china, though I'm aware I exaggerated a bit with it, especially on *Sala molksa*. I've been playing drums for almost 10 years now... and I started with the very beginning with a double pedal, and I never stopped using it... I plan now to get a brand new Axxis double pedal, which is one of the fastest ones.

Maelstrom: Negru, you also put out a publication called Negura Magazine. Please tell us a bit about that. Maybe you could tell us about the various non-metal centered articles that are featured. Those in particular sound very interesting.

Negru: Yes, we released three issues of it so far, one per year, starting with 2000. The last issue came out in March this year, in 40 A4 pro-printed pages, featuring interviews with Emperor, Lux Occulta, Avenger, Malevolence, Thyrfing, Cruachan, Petra - The Goddess of Desire, Blood Red Throne, Avrigus... as well as some articles on Plato and the Initiation Unto Truth, The Dacians, Fractals and Religions, Traditional Civilization. We're working on a new issue to be out later this year this time hopefully in 70 A4 pages, and with a deeper artistic touch. As the name says it (Negura - Central European Ideological Magazine) we have a lot to do with ideology. I've tried from the very beginning to explore the spiritual content that might generate a meaningful musical act. So far we had different articles on topics such as Comparative Religion, Mythology, History, Traditional Mentality. On each issue there were some quite extensive such articles, and I'll try to develop constantly this dimension of the magazine. We also made a new website for the magazine at www.negura.ro both in Romanian and English, so in the future we'll try to work on both versions of the magazine, trying not to make them redundant, but each with its own identity.

Maelstrom: I once read that Romania isn't the ideal place for tourists to visit. There were stories of increased prices for foreigners and dilapidated hotels. Where in Romania do you live? Is it a big city? How do you like living there? Is there any truth to these reports that I read?

Negru: We live in Timisoara, which is quite a big city, also one of

the most western ones Romania (both geographically and mentally). We enjoy living here, and I couldn't say there's such a big difference if compared with other European cities.

As for those reports, I'd say they are partially correct. Almost all the hotels here used to have different prices for locals and foreigners. But for a while I think this was forbidden by law! The quality of the hotels... well it depends. There are lots of poor quality cheap hotels the same way there are lots of big high class ones...

Anyway I'd encourage any metal fan interested in seeing some spectacular landscapes or imposing ruins to come here see for himself. There's always the option of using a more man to man kind of tourism here, to sleep in a small village in the mountains, eat some traditional menus... and see the real hospitality of the normal Romania inhabitants. This way you'll have better conditions at an incredibly lower price...



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