

[Sonic Abuse \(/\)](#) Mayhem, metal, underground noise and a whirlwind of sonic abuse

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[Negura Bunget – ‘Virstele Pamintului’ Album Review \(/2010/06/negura-bunget-virstele-pamintului-album-review/\)](#)

By
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Romania may not initially strike you as the most obvious home for a progressive, black metal band, but when you consider the deep and troubled history of the country, the turmoil that has often engulfed the region and the huge expanses of sombre scenery that dominate the country, it begins to make sense. Like many countries in Eastern Europe, the struggle of this ancient people has been, more often than not, one of survival against tyranny and a fight for self-determination. It is in this wellspring of culture and history that Negura Bunget find the inspiration for their strikingly unconventional explorations and if in the past it has garnered them critical success then 'Virstele Pamintului' looks set (and deservedly so) to continue this trend. Now signed to Italian label Code 666, Negura Bunget should reach a wider audience with their darkly hypnotic take on black metal.

Virstele Pamintului is not an album that can be fully appreciated on the first listen. As I write this article I am listening to the record for the fifth or sixth time and still I am only beginning to unearth its myriad charms. Opening with eerie pipe music that lurks somewhere between a darkened, snow filled forest and the world of Sergio Leone, it is immediately clear that this isn't the slickly orchestral black metal to be found in bands such as Dimmu Borgir, rather it is the sound of an ambitious and original band exploring their heritage and culture in order to create something quite unique. As the song builds, adding atmospheric vocals and guitar there is a real feeling of expectation for the storm that is about to come, but Negura Bunget are patient and happy to let the music take its course rather than rush to an instant fix of metal as some might. As the music reaches its peak and the vocals become tortured screams the band open up a barrage of guitar and drums in a well-produced and precise assault that will leave the listener breathless. Having set the scene thus, second track 'Dacia Hiperboreana' enters on a warm bed of synth music that opens up into a beautiful, reverb-drenched guitar part that is more Pink Floyd than Darkthrone while the vocals ache with raw emotion. It is a stunning track laden with melody as much as power and there is a real beauty contained within the brutality that set Negura Bunget apart as a truly special band.

'Umbra' is a dark track that contains more than a hint of Vangelis' soundtracks in the mid-nineties (1492 springs to mind), with complex and tribal drum patterns underpinning the synth elements. 'Ochiul inimii' is a powerful song that sees acoustic guitars duelling with the increasingly agitated drumming, before the electric guitars tear in, burning a hole in your speakers in the process. Folk elements and metal collide here to stunning effect, while the guitar solos are satisfyingly high in the mix allowing you to appreciate the talent of these musicians as well as their commitment. 'Che de Roua' sees the shimmering guitars return to usher in the track, building rapidly into a mountain of noise as the band launch a stinging attack that features clean singing and acoustic elements to offset the ferocity of the band. 'Tara de dincolo de negura' is just astonishing, as neo-classical elements and brutal metal collide in a track so brutal it could sear the flesh from your face. 'Jar' is a mood piece, all atmospheric synth and eerie sound effects, although it provides welcome breathing space following the claustrophobic maelstrom of the previous track. 'Arborele Lumii' takes the opportunity following so icy a track to smash the vibe to pieces with churning guitar and guttural vocals and then 'Intoarcerea amurgului' closes the album with huge, throbbing swathes of earthen bass, acoustic guitar and spoken vocals.

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