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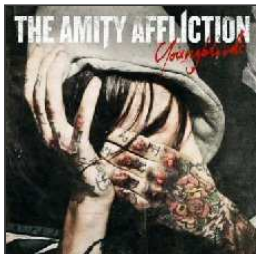
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## Negura Bunget - Virstele Pamintului



*With some new members, Negura Bunget are better than ever*

Negura Bunget have continued to evolve and progress with every album. With their sixth full length album, *Virstele Pamintului*, the band has reached their pinnacle in their folk inspired black metal. The music is epic, just pure epic. Part of this is thanks to the addition of a new vocalist and guitarist who each add their own

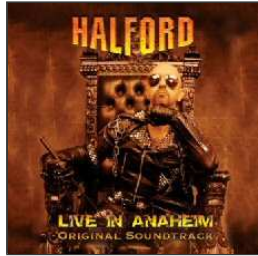


dynamics and help the band bring out some extremely atmospheric and traditional folk music while keeping up with their black metal aggressions. As always though, there's something new and exciting for each Negura Bunget fan who takes the time to listen to everything that the band has to offer.

The first thing fans will notice is atmosphere. Right from the opening track, "Pamint," the horns, chimes, and flutes mixed with percussive drums let listeners know right away this is a new kind of Negura Bunget. Eventually the music picks up due to some snarling, and a synth in the background makes things more frantic before leading into some familiar black metal hymns with the guitars, but for the most part, it is a beautiful, non metal track. Of course, this changes with "Dacia Hiperboreana" which features heavy drums and a mix between angry snarls and tortured moans. However, Negura Bunget keep the folk atmosphere intact by adding backing percussions, haunting keyboards, and the guitars aren't always razor sharp beasts. They are aggressive, yes, but there's a cold, whispering attitude to them that makes it more than just standard black metal. Certainly, compared to their last album, *Om*, everything sounds a lot cleaner and better produced. "Umbra" brings things back into folk territory by leading off with epic keyboards and thick, yet still percussive drums. "Ochuil Inimi" sounds a bit symphonic and haunting for a black metal track and injects more melody than some of the others. Taking on a formula similar to bands like Old Man's Child, Negura Bunget show that they aren't afraid to step into other territories but still keep their folk influences with the percussion and flutes.

"Chei De Roua" is a mix of brutality and melody with the guitars, but the vocals offer some clean, deep singing in Romanian along with the

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usual black metal snarls. Things don't slow down until the keyboard driven track, "Jar," which is extremely haunting and calming at the same time compared to the vibe of the other tracks. Those who love black metal for its intensity will enjoy "Arborele Lumii." This is pure black metal here with the speed of the guitars and drums and screaming all the way. It lacks the acoustic beauty that the other tracks have, but Negura Bunget couldn't just give up their black metal furies from previous albums altogether now, could they? However, it is clear that with *Virstele Pamintului* Negura Bunget has become something new. The closing track returns to the folk atmosphere of the first track, and acts a calming, refreshing breather before the album ends. Whatever these new members have brought to the table to mix with the original members, it is very good.

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So does this mean that Negura Bunget have gone soft? Never. The music is still black metal, and the band is still Negura Bunget. They still keep their epic track lengths and mix songs between English and Romanian languages. But, it is safe, and perhaps sad, to say that they may have softened up a little. Although *Virstele Pamintului* isn't as intense as some of their other albums, one could certainly compare this to Satyricon's fantastic *Dark Medieval Times*. While this album is much cleaner in production and doesn't have that raw, fuzzy feature a lot of black metal bands put out, the balance between electric and acoustic instruments add just as much atmospheric beauty as the former did ten years ago. For those that have been waiting for a masterpiece similar to that, this is it.

**(Code666 Records)**

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