

MYRKUR - MARERIDT  
TITLE: BIOGRAPHY

Since inception, Danish artist, Myrkur, has been in a class of her own. The one-woman, classically trained, multi-instrumentalist is known for combining the raw, masculine energy of second-wave black metal, with an ethereal, sophisticated virtue. Myrkur composes in epic proportions.

Her stunning debut, *M*, (co-produced by Ulver, with collaborations from members of Mayhem, Nidingr and Arch Enemy), earned Myrkur “Best Hard Rock Album” at the 2015 Gaffa Awards, as well as “Band of the Year” and “Metal Album of the Year” at the High Voltage Awards. She was recognized by Steppeulven (Association of Danish Music Critics), and toured with iconic acts such as Behemoth and Opeth, and played Hellfest, Graspop and Wacken Open Air Festival. But after taking her music around the world, Myrkur returned to Denmark successful, yet drained.

“It was like I had too much of myself or something,” she remembers.

At home, Myrkur could barely stay awake. She soon found herself plagued by insufferable nightmares and sleep paralysis. “I was in one of the worst times of my life,” she recalls. “I was afraid to sleep.” Myrkur reluctantly lived in her subconscious. She tried all the things that would normally center her: being out in nature, swimming, sitting outside and carving some wood, but nothing changed.

“You know how they say that when you have been through trauma or abuse, you tend to recreate the situation in an attempt to take ownership of it?” she says. “I think I was doing that. I was trying to solve things [in my nightmares] that I could not solve in real life. Things I couldn’t run away from.”

Myrkur knew she had to start listening. She stopped trying to shove the nightmares away, and embraced them. She kept a notebook by her bed and documented everything from the recurring symbols, archetypes and animals that crawled around her head. She obsessed over Nordic fairy tales, mythology and folklore. She pulled meaning from Hans Christian Andersen’s *Little Mermaid* to verses from the Bible, and connected these stories to the spiritual solace she found outside her house. Once the songs started coming, they didn’t stop. Myrkur would bring a small, string instrument into the forest to write. “It’s very giving,” she says. “Your environment becomes part of the song, and the songwriting. I just love that. Nature changed this record.” She mastered the Swedish tradition of “kulning” (an ancient cow herding call). She was manic, writing any moment she was awake, expelling the subliminal material like an exorcism.

“This record is very connected to my true self, without an ego or persona,” Myrkur says. “I am interested in human spirit, when it goes beyond the layers. When I get to that place, I feel invincible.”

When it came time to record *Mareridt*, Bruun had cut more songs than she could count. Recorded between Copenhagen and Seattle with producer, Randall Dunn (Earth, Marissa Nadler, Sun O))), Boris), *Mareridt* is a rich juxtaposition of the dark and the light; the moon and the mother earth; the witch and the saint. The album progresses Myrkur's visionary blend of metal with haunting melodies, dark folk passages, choral arrangements and horrific beauty. She implemented an array of instrumentation including violin, mandola, folk drums and nyckelharpa (an ancient Swedish key harp), as well as a collaboration with Chelsea Wolfe.

"I wanted to make an album that I always needed to exist but never did," says Bruun. "So, I wrote it myself."

Like a marriage of King Diamond's 'Them' with Tchaikovsky's 'Swan Lake', *Mareridt* is a carefully composed concept freed from genre. It flows between English and Danish, from guttural growls charged with testosterone, to emotive feminine hymns and kulning. The eleven-tracks sweep into one another like a soundtrack designed to guide the listener through emotional turmoil. One minute the songs are fighting back, the next lulling you to submission. Lyrically, Myrkur hatches open the folklore of her Nordic heritage, applying the ancient fables to her personal piety. *Mareridt* toys with juxtaposition and finds life between theoretical opposites. Triumphant, powerful and hypnotic, *Mareridt* is a sonic nightmare that you never want to escape.