

Kawir Biography for Soulseller Records

-2023 Bio by Benek Babalon-

There are few joys greater in life than finding a band that makes music you love about a subject you're passionate about. Enter Kawir. The Athens based Pagan-Black Metal band has been exploring Greek mythology, literature, and mysteries for 30 years or thereabouts, and no other band really captures the essence of those stories and times the same way.

But we get ahead of ourselves. Kawir formed in the Greek black metal scene of the 90s and ,while the scene has always been very supportive, it was an extremely tough scene in which to stand out . In 1993 alone releases like Rotting Christ's "Thy Mighty Contract," Varathron's "His Majesty At The Swamp" and Necromantia's "Crossong The Fiery Path" were released. But Kawir buckled down and faced this challenge. First with 1994's "Eumenides" (from the Greek "Ευμενιδες ", an epithet of the Erinyes) and second with their seminal debut LP "Προς Κάβειρους (To Cavirs)" (from the Greek "Προς Κάβειρους" literally to or towards Cavirs) in 1997. "To Cavirs" and its 1999 followup, "Eoptia" (from the Greek "Εποπτεια," which translates roughly as "Providence") were early proofs of Kawir's strength in channelling the grandeur of Greek mythology into black metal. From those early days the band stressed an immersive authenticity that they still very much exemplify today. They stress it by remaining connected to it - that nature, those spirits are not just in the past.

For the all important third-fourth album period, Kawir punched out with two albums that were both different from their earlier works yet laid foundations for their future. Their third album, "Arai" (from the Greek "Αραι" meaning Curses) is perhaps the most stripped down and raw black metal sound the band ever engaged in, almost crossing into a very Mayhem-esque territory. It was also the last time the band would mess around with English and Latin on their full lengths. Three years later, "Arai" was followed by "Ophiolatreaia" (from the Greek " Οφιολατρεία," meaning "the worship/reverence of snakes and referring to the Ancient Greek association of snakes with healing and the gods.)"Ophiolatreaia" to me represents a key point in Kawir's history. This album shifted the band into the grander, more epic sound that the band is known for today. It saw the band find their tone and production looking forwards.

To me, "Arai" and "Ophiolatreaia" represent two halves that came together perfectly on "Ισόθευς" (Latinized Isotheos and means roughly "he who is like the gods" or "equal to the gods"). "Ισόθευς" saw the band put together everything they learned in almost two decades of existence into a pummeling, epic depiction of Greek pagan art that would strike the balance of being both

excellent pagan metal and excellent black metal. It's gritty and real in a way that many depictions of those stories shy away from the original. That didn't mean that the band would lose its epic edge - on the contrary, it would mean the epic vista that they painted would never sound forced or cartoonish. It gave their sound a due seriousness. From "Ισόθευς" onwards, the band would continue titling their albums in the original Greek with no latinization or translation. The follow up, "Πάτερ Ήλιε Μήτερ Σελάνα" (which is Latinized Pater Ilie, Miter Selana - Father Sun, Mother Moon) would not only see the band break new ground musically, but would see the band go on bigger tours and become a household name in the international metal scene.

While the band never lacked for attention internationally, seeing as their first ever split was with the Japanese kings Sigh all the way back in 1994, "Πάτερ Ήλιε Μήτερ Σελάνα" would see them collaborate with bigger labels and generally assume a bigger profile on the international stage. Therthonax, founding member and head composer remarked of the album " it was a huge step forwards for us. Musically it had songs like "Dionysus" and "Hail to the Three Shaped Goddess" which are staples of our live shows. It was also the first time we really engaged with music videos and a more visual representation of our music. When coming to do the followup, "Εξιλασμός," (Latinized as "Exilasmos," meaning Atonement) it helped us consider our music in a new way and stretch the boundaries of what we are doing."

As Therthonax mentioned, the followups to "Πάτερ Ήλιε Μήτερ Σελάνα," "Εξιλασμός" and "Αδραστεια" (Latinized as Adrasteia, who is the goddess of female revenge) would see the band seeing and creating differently . The albums are tied to one another thematically, both dealing conceptually with stories of revenge and atonement but both, in the grand tradition of Ancient Greece, not offering clear "bad guys" and "good guys." Delving into these classics always requires a more careful eye. It is very easy to look at the material these albums draw on and draw a simple "who's good Vs. who's bad" narrative" but that is contrary to what makes those materials so great. In their interpretations of works like The Oresteia (Aeschylus) or The Argonautica (Apollonius of Rhodes)," the band always aims to both tell these character's stories with passion and with the due complexity that they merit. The music and the texts are explorations into what is a very layered, very complex world of both myth and reality, Ancient Greece and the modern world.

Speaking of the modern world, 2023 finds the band ready to embark on their next chapter. Celebrating 30 years of making music a new album, Κυδοιμοσ (latinized Kydoimos, a deity representing the clang and chaos of war) is slated for a 2024 release via the venerable Soulseller Records (Gorgoroth, Ancient,

Khold.) it seems that Dissection said it best- the past is alive. Keep your eyes and ears open for more details in the near future.