

= Omen (Antestor album) =

Omen is the fourth studio album by the Norwegian Christian extreme metal band Antestor , released by Bombworks Records on November 16 , 2012 . Recording began in 2010 , and was mostly conducted at the home of vocalist Ronny Hansen . The album cover is a painting by Polish artist Zdzisław Beksiński , and depicts a deformed , many @-@ fingered humanoid creature playing a trumpet . Antestor met with critical praise for its musicianship and the progressive sound on the recording . Critics described the sound as primarily black metal , though the band prefers the more general term " extreme metal " to describe the sound on Omen .

To promote the album , the band went on tour in Brazil in January 2013 , but encountered difficulties . The venue at Belém was cancelled due to a banking error , and while at Belo Horizonte Antestor was stormed by violent protestors antagonistic to the Christian beliefs of the band members , and police had to usher the band to safety . Despite these setbacks , Antestor considered the tour a success , and wished no ill will on its attackers . On February 18 , 2013 , a music video was released for the song " Unchained " .

= = Background = =

Antestor was founded in 1990 by Lars Stokstad , Kjetil Molnes , Øyvind Hope and Erling Jørgensen , under the name Crush Evil . After recording two demos and undergoing a lineup change which left Stokstad and Molnes as sole founding members , the band renamed itself as Antestor in 1993 . Shunned by the early Norwegian black metal scene due to the band members ' staunch Christian faith , Antestor struggled retaining a record deal . Its first album , Martyrium , was recorded in 1994 and had a few bootleg copies illegally distributed , but did not see legitimate release until 2000 . Antestor 's second album , The Return of the Black Death , was released in 1998 through Cacophonous Records , but the band claims that the label never paid Antestor any royalties for that album . In 2004 and 2005 , respectively , the band released , under Endtime Productions , the EP Det tapte liv and the studio album The Forsaken , both of which featured session drum work by drummer Jan Axel Blomberg , known as Hellhammer , who has played in strongly anti @-@ Christian bands such as Mayhem and Immortal . Despite a positive reception to the album , after 2007 Antestor consisted only of Stokstad and vocalist Ronny Hansen , and the band went into hiatus .

Several new members joined the band in 2010 : Thor Georg Buer on bass , Jo Henning Børven on drums , Robert Bordevik on guitar , and Nickolas Main Henriksen on keyboard . Rehearsals began in June , and Antestor performed at Nordic Fest in Oslo on October 28 through October 30 . On November 4 , Antestor announced that it signed a record deal with Bombworks Records .

= = Recording = =

Except for drums and the folk music instrumental " Tilflukt " , the album was entirely recorded at Hansen 's home in Norway . Drums were recorded by Børven at his home , while " Tilflukt " was recorded and mixed by Erik Normann Aanonsen and James William Makepeace at Salvation Room studios . In an interview with HM , Antestor explained that it had trouble finding a studio that it liked , as well as finding time when all members were available to record . Since Buer and Børven had the necessary equipment to record , the band decided it would take on recording itself . The band stated that Buer " really took the brunt of the workload and singlehandedly made it possible for us to record the album ourselves . " Recording began in 2010 , and Antestor uploaded a video clip from its recording sessions on September 4 . During recording , bassist Thor Georg Buer left Antestor in May 2011 due to commitments to his other band , Grave Declaration , and Aanonsen was recruited as his replacement . A few months later , Buer rejoined , this time on guitar , to replace Robert Bordevik , who had temporarily left the band . On June 23 , the Christian music website Indie Vision Music noted a video uploaded by Antestor that contained footage of the band recording . The recording process finished on July 31 , 2012 . On August 25 , Buer announced that he was leaving

Antestor again , this time due to upcoming college studies . In September , Erik Tordsson completed the mixing and mastering for Omen at Solid Mix Studios , Teleborg Castle , Växjö , Sweden .

= = Music and lyrics = =

The album is primarily black metal in sound , though still retains the thrash metal , doom metal , and folk music influences of previous releases by the band . On Omen , Antestor took a more brutal and experimental approach . Most of the vocals are screamed and growled , except "Unchained " , which features a passage with sung vocals , which Andy Synn of No Clean Signing described as having a " strong Pink Floyd feel to them " . Synn considered the album as a mixture of the aggressive assault of Dark Funeral with the more technical and atmospheric playing of Dark Fortress . Scott Waters , writing for HM , described the album as " progressive , post @-@ black / extreme metal that paints a dark , sullen landscape with lyrics that offer hope . " Victimer , editor @-@ in @-@ chief for the Czech webzine Echoes , described Omen as black metal with influences from thrash metal . Antestor itself does not consider the album black metal , preferring instead the term " extreme metal " . It explained to HM that

Black metal is dead . The progressive development has stalled and has lost its edge in the genre . We don't consider ourselves black metal , but extreme metal . Other people feel that they have a claim on the name and concept of black metal , and we don't want to keep ourselves within any box or confines . We just want to write the music we like .

" Treacherous Domain " contains slow , doom @-@ inspired riffing , while " In Solitude , " " The Kindling , " and " Benighted " feature a more progressive , technical style of black metal . " Tilflukt " is a short folk instrumental which segues into the double @-@ bass drumming of " Benighted " . Synn described " Remnants " as developing " a harsh , angular pounding rhythm that would sit well on any Gorgoroth album " ; " Tilflukt " as similar to the output of Windir , and " Mørket 's Grøde " as containing echoes of early Satyricon .

Apart from the final track , " Mørket 's Grøde " , and the instrumental " Tilflukt " , all song lyrics are written in English . Zuza Steck of the Polish magazine Musick Magazine noted the " unblack " - Christian - message of the lyrics and how Antestor demonstrates that a band can maintain an extreme atmosphere but take a different lyrical approach . Antestor expounded on the lyrical themes that " at the same time that we are Christians , we are also humans . I think almost everyone can relate to parts of our music and lyrics , for absolutely everyone ? Christians and non @-@ believers alike ? experience hard and terrible times . The Lord does not say we will not meet hard times as Christians , but that He will be with us and carry us through it , and that is a big part of the Antestor message . "

= = = Artwork = = =

The album features a painting by Polish surrealist artist Zdzisław Beksiński . The painting depicts a deformed , humanoid creature with many fingers , playing a trumpet . The band explained that it decided on this picture because " Our music represents the more broken and monster @-@ like feelings of our humanity , like the apparition in this picture . It seemed a very fitting cover for our return after seven years of silence . "

= = Promotion and touring = =

To promote the album , a music video for " Unchained " was released on February 18 , 2013 . Directed by Alexandre Spiacci , it was the band 's first music video . Antestor played numerous concerts during and after the recording of Omen . On March 5 , 2011 , the band performed at Elements of Rock in Uster , Switzerland . Though this performance was plagued by very poor sound , the band considered it a success . Throughout 2011 and 2012 , Antestor performed at several venues in Norway , Netherlands , and Germany . On January 30 , 2013 , after Antestor 's completion of its Brazilian tour , it announced that its keyboardist , Nickolas Main Henriksen , had

left the group due to health reasons , but that no replacement would be recruited . On June 15 , 2013 , the band performed in Pieksämäki , Finland .

= = = Brazilian tour = = =

In January 2013 , Antestor embarked on a tour of Brazil to promote the album . Seven venues were scheduled - Jundiaí , São Paulo , Curitiba , Belém , Vitória , Belo Horizonte , and Rio de Janeiro . However , the show at Belém was cancelled due to a banking error which led to the band 's plane ticket being revoked .

While Antestor was playing at Belo Horizonte , the venue was mobbed by Satanist black metal fans who protested against the band members ' Christian beliefs . The band had received over three hundred threats , including death threats , since its announcement of the tour in October 2012 . At Belo Horizonte , approximately one hundred protestors gathered outside the venue , holding up banners , shouting " fuck Antestor ! " , and threatening kill both the band members and concert attendees . About thirty guards stood outside the venue , but the situation escalated and the protestors tried to storm the building . Brodevik , the guitarist , reported that he and his fellow band members were kicked , beaten , and spat upon by protestors . As the protestors tried to tear down the door , the band waited for police to arrive , and then were escorted outside by two officers who were armed and wearing bulletproof vests . The minibus waiting outside the back door had had its tires punctured , so the band was instead escorted out the main entrance . The police fired warning shots and formed a defensive ring , allowing the band to escape in a waiting taxi .

After the incident , Brodevik described his and the other band member 's situation as " trapped like rats . " While he said that the band is used to hatred from the extreme metal community toward the Bible and Christianity , nothing like this had ever happened to the band before . Aanonsen , the bassist and a father of three , explained that while he understood that the tour could have ended in death for him and the other band members , when violence finally broke out a Belo Horizonte he remained completely , unexpectedly calm . In retrospect he remarked that while it scared him , the concert in Belo Horizonte was the best he has ever experienced , as all attendees " defied so much " to get to it . He also noted that because of the attack , the band is now " twice as big " in Brazil as it had been before the incident . In a summary of the concert posted on Facebook , Antestor stated that

We could write in details about all the drama that happened after the show . But not on this page . We do not hate the angry mob who came to hurt us . In fact , our message in our shows is to love your enemy . So God bless everybody who stood outside chanting : Fuck Antestor ! Hope we can talk like reasonable people someday over a fresh squeezed juice . Extra special hails to our fans who had the balls to come although they knew it could be dangerous . Antestor salutes you and be blessed .

= = Critical reception = =

Released on November 16 , 2012 , Omen was well received by music critics . They highlighted the drumming on the album , remarking on how Børven was able to match the skill and intensity of Blomberg . Steven Ecott of Cross Rhythms praised the drumming , guitar work , and harsh vocals . He concluded that " ' Omen ' is a breath of fresh air in the rather stale and stuffy room that black metal finds itself resting . " Scott Waters of HM wrote that " the musicianship is beyond reproach . To simply play that fast and accurate , even for four @-@ minute spurts , requires more than just talent . It requires skill and endurance . Much of the music on Omen display that skill and endurance and definitely accomplishes what it set out to do . "

Victimer , of Echoes , extolled Antestor 's expansive , unorthodox approach . Andy Synn of No Clean Singing , after a lengthy , track @-@ by @-@ track review , concluded that " It 's clear that Antestor have poured their all into this record , physically and emotionally , learning from their past successes and failures , in order to craft an album of impressive depth and detail , with a volcanic core of molten metal passion . "

Eric Strother of the website Untombed stated that " this band is as strong as ever . Omen is highly recommended not only to (un) black metal fans , but also to anyone with a tolerance for extreme vocals who is a fan of well @-@ crafted , creative metal . " However , Strother did note that he personally felt that the bass guitar was buried in the mix , and that this detracted from an otherwise near @-@ perfect album . Musick Magazine 's Zuza Steckla opined that the album is sure to satisfy the seven @-@ year wait after Antestor 's last release and that the skills in recording the album should not be underestimated . Steckla noted , however , that the guitar solos were not that impressive , and at times sounded as though they were forced , recorded only because the band felt obligated to do so .

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

Antestor

Lars Stokstad ? guitars , backing vocals , additional acoustic guitar on " Mørkets Grøde "

Thor Georg Buer ? bass , guitars

Erik Normann Aanonsen ? electric bass , acoustic guitar , double bass , EBow , additional electric guitars on " All Towers Must Fall "

Nickolas Main Henriksen ? keyboard

Robert Bordevik ? lead guitars , backing vocals

Jo Henning Børven ? drums

Ronny Hansen ? vocals

Guest musicians

Jo Einar Sterten Jansen ? Hardanger fiddle

Morten Sigmund Magerøy ? sung vocals on " Benighted "

Production

Antestor ? recording

Erik Normann Aanonsen ? recording and mixing on " Tilflukt "

James William Makepeace ? recording and mixing on " Tilflukt "

Erik Tordsson ? mixing and mastering

Album artwork

Zdzisław Beksiński ? cover art

Vegar Bakken ? design

In Anett Husom Larsen ? band photo