



Coven, or Evil Ways Instead of Love which is the full name of this album, stands for original, ambitious yet hard to understand music. Well, first off, what we get is a very complex conceptual album which is, no more no less, a sonic horror lasting for, yup, 100 minutes (and therefore put onto two disks).

Coven is, depicted in archaic English and lyrically deals with witches, devils and omnipotent aura of evil (and I won't say anything more, listen to it yourselves, ok?). This is archaic black metal, deeply rooted in the old school, Greek vein. The crux of this music is the atmosphere it creates. You can truly feel it is some sort of a theatrical, devilish spectacle based in some undefined dark past (I would say this sort of black metal would perfectly fit some b/w horror movie). Lyrics and music are equally important and won't be able to exist separately. These are one, solid entity. This is why this album is so absorbing and intriguing in my view. You need some time and have to pay heed to get the real meaning of this music. The only disadvantage I (and other people) see/hear is the running time of

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Sure, it is nice to see how bold and well executed this stuff is, but, despite its interesting, jet-black riffs, small tasty sonic elements and genial, diverse vocalizations done by

Mark of the Devil

(a whole spectrum of emotions is provided: whispers, yelling, murmuring, laughter, ghastly way of talking etc.) as well as its unique atmosphere, the music has the tendency to drag on a bit...and, in result, when facing an album like this one, it can be hard to comprehend as a whole. It seems a good idea to take a break halfway and get back to it a while later. Sadly, this (this break I mean) spoils all the atmosphere immediately and makes the comprehension even more difficult. Ok, this album might appear hard to comprehend when you listen to it for the first time, but this is how it should be done, I think. One ought to listen to it in its entirety. The sonic construction of the album would certainly help in such an approach. Well, I must also mention the layout and the general feel this album has. I should say this piece was perfectly manufactured – tailor-made almost I might add. The album cover as well as the drawings inside the booklet combined with lyrics from each act/song make this material alluring enough to give it a listen. It is sort of introduction to what one'll hear. The album itself is released as dcd. A solid digi-book all right. Couldn't be done better, the label can be proud of themselves. Well, that's it. This album comes very recommended however quite demanding and not to everyone's immediate liking. Give it a try as it will surely unfold itself to show what there is kept best for its listeners.

CULTES DES GHOULES Coven (Under the Sign of Garazel, 2016)

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