

Collected reviews:
KRENG – "Grimoire"
(2011, Miasmah records)



Title: **REVIEW: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **Playground Magazine**
<http://www.playgroundmag.net/disco/22448-grimoire>

Author: *David Broc*

Publication date: 8. June 2011

To those of us who live near the dark, music has given more than ever over the past four or five years. A flood of releases in black, a never-ending string of pessimist and opaque sounding records, and in such a wide range of styles, too (neo-classical, new ambient, hauntology and everything containing the word doom), that has left us breathless. Saturated with all that activity and, most of all, quality, we now have to stretch the filter even more and mark the difference between excellence and the sublime. A recent example: "**Grimoire**", the second album by **Kreng**, the project led by Belgian Pepijn Caudron.

If you're still asking yourself when was the last time you felt fear when listening to a record, you can stop looking, because whenever it was, this is the next time. **Of the records released in 2011 so**

far, few will sound more tense, disturbing, evocative, gloomy and sombre than this radical trip to the heart of darkness, on which, moreover, the precision, wideness and deepness of the sound is overwhelming, a huge step ahead in the short but impressive career of the composer. Caudron uses every weapon he's got to reach a goal that seemed complex (to make his sound even darker, if possible, than on his debut, the highly recommendable "*L'Autopsie Phénoménale De Dieu*"), and he does it with a meticulousness and rigor that sets him apart from many other artists with similar ideas but lesser talents.

On "Grimoire", dark ambient, isolationism, soundtrack music, noir, concrete music, neo-classical, free jazz and even opera come together, perfectly organised and integrated in one roadmap, treated discreetly, with restraint and an organic sense, one of the most solid and convincing examples of expressive cleansing of recent times. The formal sound leaves no room for doubt and consolidates itself on the scene as a landmark master class. But even more astonishing is its evocative ability and its sensory and emotional impact. **It's impossible to name all the images, visions, ideas and suggestions the record generates: Europe between wars, a new cine noir, epidemics, apocalyptic viruses, abandoned cities, psychiatric hospitals without control, illegal cabarets, pagan rituals, death marches, strange and unrecognisable cult.** "Grimoire" **exceeds all expectations**, not only because of the translation of fear to music but also because of the way he manages to reflect and capture our fascination for the dark side in all its splendour.

8.9/10

Title: *Double review :*

KABOOM KARAVAN: Barra Barra + KRENG: Grimoire

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **The Milk Factory**
<http://www.themilkfactory.co.uk/st/2011/05/kaboom-karavan-barra-barra-kreng-grimoire-miasmah-recordings/>

Author: *The Milkman*

Publication date: 25. May 2011

This may just be a coincidence, but Miasmah are releasing almost simultaneously the albums of two Belgian collectives with activities reaching far beyond music to encompass other art forms, and each with a very unique and intriguing vision. While the two records are radically different in many ways, they feed from a shared aesthetic, and both show a similar taste for surrealist and enigmatic settings.

A collective activities ranging from theatre and film to dance and music, Kaboom Karavan are somewhat difficult to pin down. That they ended up on Miasmah is hardly a surprise though considering the dramatic nature of *Barra Barra*. Their debut on Miasmah, this album follows a first digital-only release, *Short Walk With Olaf*, published in 2007.

On *Barra Barra*, Kaboom Karavan distill generous portions of poetry and horror, weaving them tightly into the fabric of each track until they become almost indiscernible from one another. Their soundscapes, built from acoustic instruments, found sounds and electronics, are twisted little formations, often fairly minimal, yet extremely complex and intricate. Out of distorted instrumentation and broken sound collages occasionally escapes fragments of melody, but they are swallowed back into the flow of sonic debris which populate the backdrop of these tracks as quickly as they appeared, leaving virtually not trace of their existence behind. This intensity in the execution contributes greatly to the feeling of oppression which taints the whole record, and while KK occasionally temper this with delicate touches, these remain too isolated to make lasting marks on the overall work. As they are, they only appears as no more than small clearings in an otherwise extremely thick jungle of noise.

Through the distorted lens of their approach, KK create a universe half way between cataclysmic post industrial chaos and enchanted fantasy world. The journey they embark on is quite simply breathtaking and full of surprises. From the unsettling humming (or is it a growl?) of opening track *Lentetooi* and the pressing flow of violins on *Nuit Nadar* to the textural *Parka* or *Thyres*, the suspiciously playful *Wälzer* to the plain disturbing assemblage of the title track, KK conscientiously deflect the course of the record at every opportunity. *Barra Barra* is a maze of sounds, noises and atmospheres which never settles, and in which it is impossible not to get irremediably lost. One can only let the flow carry the mood and admire the foolish ambition of such an undertaking.

If Kaboom Karavan's focus is firmly set on creating stark atmospheric soundscapes, compatriots Kreng favour an approach very much based on the music itself and on developing cinematic compositions using a fairly vast orchestral lexicon. Authors of an impressive debut album with [L'Autopsie Phénoménale De Dieu](#) almost two years ago, Kreng went back into their laboratory and devised an equally as fascinating follow up.

Far from being straightforward and linear, the band's vision is equally as distorted and grotesque than that of KK, the many components of their tracks appearing at times extruded and grossly deformed, or at others so far in the distance that they are barely noticeable. This happens under cover of respectability in many cases, with Kreng weaving strange noises, muffled caustic animal breath or fragments of conversations, possibly extracted from films or played for the sole purpose of tilting the mood toward discomfort, into theatrical orchestrations, at times inflated with operatic flourishes. The mood is suitable bleak and oppressive, with a constant emphasis on the dramatic, but Kreng temper this by retaining a strong cinematic element to their music, at times punctuated by percussions (*Le Bateleur*, *La Poule Noire*), at others crystalised into rich and evocative themes (*Wrak*) or haunting sound placements (*Le Petit Grimoire*, *Girl In A Fishtank*). Remains the totally surreal and dreamy aspect of the overall work, each track perfectly set into a much wider narrative. While nowhere near as intricate and intense as those of Kaboom Karavan, Kreng's soundscapes remain extremely dense and pertinent, and appear to spill over the whole record. While there are undeniably distinct features on each of the tracks presented, some being more atmospheric than others for instance, the collective purposely blur the transitions between each section to create a superbly consistent soundtrack.

While different, these two albums stem from a same fascination for ambiances and flair for mise en scene. Both Kaboom Karavan and Kreng tread very refined and complex grounds, and it takes all the understanding of space and context for the collectives to retain control of their work. Ultimately though, it is impossible to find that one has the edge over the other so perfect is their respective execution.

Title: **Vinyl of the week: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **Fluid Radio**
<http://www.fluid-radio.co.uk/2011/06/kreng-%E2%80%93-grimoire>

Author: *Mohammed Ashraf*

Publication date: *19. June 2011*

Many are perhaps familiar with the concept of dark restaurants. The concept is simple: you walk in utter darkness, wait a bit, eat whatever is served on the plates and leave. Those who have tried it firsthand would tell you of how different the whole thing is; how a simple meal is changed from ordering something one's already tried and tested over and over again to an event that has its own sense of mystery, how the taste buds become more perceptive, the sense of smell heightened and in the end, apart from a few misplaced forks and knives every now and then, an amazing experience all in all. But what does that have to do with anything?

Oddly enough, my experience with this album doesn't stray too far from that concept. It is very rare these days that a reviewer receives an album without a press release that was probably written by the artist/band's second cousin, glorifying every single note on the album, making the act of skipping it seem like the worst thing that could ever happen to anyone and giving the listener all sorts of expectations heading into hearing said piece of art. What's even rarer though, is to get an album without even track titles. Here is where it gets interesting. Listening to an album you know nothing about, by an artist you've never heard, no prejudice, subjectivity thrown against the wall. The restaurant thing makes sense now, right?

The album's start leads the listener on, not giving away much at any point in time, revealing its elements and teasing the listeners' ears one step at a time. It lures the listener in; the vagueness in what would lie ahead is exhilarating. Then almost half way through the second track we start getting an idea of what to expect. Improvised jazzy beats come and go, heavy string chords add tension and leave it to dissipate, then out of nowhere the song coalesces and approaches something not too distant from The Kilimanjaro Darkjazz Ensemble's more minimalistic tracks on From the Stairwell only to disappear into the next track. **Field recordings, a spine tingling female yelp, more scattered drums, everything meshes together and more importantly flows into each other with such grace that it becomes almost impossible for the listener to remove the headphones for a second and miss any of what's going on.**

With every passing track, Pepijn Caudron (Kreng) sheds a new layer of skin to reveal even more of his talent. The fifth track takes us to through the most nerve wrecking journey of them all. The violin samples, which would have been perfect on Miasmah label mate Marcus Fjellström's Schattenspieler, the background sounds are high pitched, metallic, rough edged and create a wretched path for these violins to walk through. The song goes back and forth until an explosion of industrial percussion

destroys everything, an explosion of sound and emotion that would leave even the most cold hearted person standing in silence trying to fathom where this came from, how unprepared he was for this, and it's breathtaking.

There is music here for the classically inclined, for those who like their jazz slow and doom like, the drone fans, film noir buffs and yet it all sounds so coherent, so natural, with the dimension of time contracting and expanding to fit the moods of the songs. There are always moments of light to break the darkness, always a beat after a long percussion barren section. The guy's work in theater has definitely done him good, and we are all the luckier for it.

In his description of Marcus Fjellström's "Schattenspieler", fellow The Silent Ballet reviewer Richard Allen mentioned a "Miasmah sound", a certain blend of modern classical sounds and thick drones and soundscapes that have come to set the label apart from others and give fans of that sound a consistent flow of records for them to cherish. **Kreng adds a new element to the label's almost flawless roster, the more theatrical, the jazzier, sexier sound. It is bleak but with swagger, it's the friction between the elements that give us a look into the magnificent. Each track holds a new surprise, it's an album you can put on forever and never mind pressing that repeat button once it's done, no singles or standouts and skip button shall never be touched. I walked into this album knowing nothing, and came out with might as well be my most played album in the past month or so and definitely the one that had the most significant effect.**

Vinyl Artowrk is silkscreened silver on black cardboard. limited, handnumbered edition including download code available through [Stashed Goods](#)

Title: **Een vacuum van niets: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **NEDERLANDS (DUTCH)**

Source: **Cutting Edge**
<http://www.cuttingedge.be/music/reviews/314920-kreng-grimoire>

Author: *Katrien Schuermans*

Publication date: 29 juni 2011

Pepijn Caudron vertoeft als Kreng in een volledig in duisternis gehulde wereld van onheilspellende, zwart geblakerde visioenen. Hij is ook de geluidssculpturist van het Abattoir Fermé-collectief, de stille geluidsmen in 'Monster' en hoofdzakelijk acteur van beroep.

Op zijn zolderkamer in een leeggelopen Vlaamse stad bewaart hij 78-toeren platen, bakelieten schijven waar onze betovergrootouders op dansten. De gotische sfeer die dat verleden oproept is de toonzetter van Krengs muzikale wereld. Hij luistert en absorbeert. Hij renoveert oude geluiden tot een nieuwe klank die bij de luisteraar bewondering en verwondering oproept. Het is een wereld waarin pret al lang verloren is. Eén waarin weemoed het wint van de lach en regen de zuurtegraad tempert. Net zoals dat de visuele wereld van Abattoir Fermé niet makkelijk grijpbaar is en in een korrelige, wazige duisternis is gehuld, zo zit ook Kreng in die wereld van wegglijdende vage zwart-wittinten. Dit

is het vervolg op 'Arcanum', de barokke Oud-Europese geschifte zwanenzang van opeengestapelde nachtmerries waarmee het theatergezelschap vorig jaar zijn trilogie afsloot.

Ook 'Grimoire' is een nachtmerrie. Het woord is ontleend aan 'boek der voorspellingen'. De heksenjacht is geopend met 'Karcist' en 'Le bateleur' als inwoners van deze occulte wereld met ambient drones, neoklassieke elementen, veldopnames en samples als prominenten. Het is een ongemakkelijke trip waarin je het continu besterft. Het is er angstaanjagend. Net zoals in de donkerste schaduwen van een film noir-klassieker, speelt Kreng met het angstgevoel bij zijn luisteraars. **Op zijn debuut 'L'Autopsie phénoménale de dieu' (2009) hield hij nog stevig vast aan zijn beeldcultuurverleden. Op 'Grimoire' gaat hij verder dan menig geluidskomponist en slaagt hij erin een wereld vol verschrikking te zaaien met juist geplaatste samples en een weergaloos gevoel voor drama. 'Petit grimoire' en 'Wrak' zijn nu al kleine meesterwerken.** Het begin van een groots avontuur dat Kreng op 'Grimoire' in eentonige verf zet. Terugkerend ingrediënt: drones die met hun laagzinderende basgeluiden doorheen je aders razen en plunderen. 'Konker' als (nieuw) hoogtepunt.

Kreng schuift definitief aan bij de groten der neoklassieke met popelementen gefuseerde componisten met als enig verschil dat Kreng niet creëert vanuit een niets. Hij creëert een niets aan de hand van zijn immens groot geluidsarchief. **Het resultaat is simpelweg fenomenaal.**

☆☆☆☆☆

Title: **Review: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **FRENCH**

Source: **Autres Directions**
<http://autresdirections.net/spip.php?article1969>

Author: *Janf*

Publication date: vendredi 17 juin 2011

Il est 5h43. Dehors, se devine une lumière qui n'appartient plus à la nuit et pas encore au jour. Une empreinte gris neutre, jumelle de son négatif. Moment choisi pour ouvrir le Grimoire d'un Kreng que Miasmah, en inestimable explorateur de frissons et d'abîmes, accueille pour la seconde fois. *L'Autopsie Phénoménale de Dieu* avait planté le décor aride et oppressant d'un théâtre surréaliste et noir.

Grimoire le réanime et y déroule un nouvel acte, à la chute glaçante. En ces lieux et à cette heure, les voix ne sonnent plus que comme des pleurs ou des cris. Les cœurs trébuchent au moindre faux pas, le sang s'affole au premier frottement, au premier chuchotement. Le souffle est court. **Complice du théâtre expérimental d'Abattoir Fermé, Pepijn Caudron sait installer ces tensions et instiller ces pointes d'angoisses. Son univers musical, pavé de bribes de jazz et de dialogues étouffés de séries Z, étire jusqu'à l'aube un noir bleu marine.** Au cœur de cette presque-plus-

nuit et de ce pas-encore-jour, le piano hésite, le violoncelle rampe. Caisse claire et percussions, agiles et sèches, créatures nocturnes, glissent entre les ombres. Il est 6h39. Un coup de hachoir final, un cri, vient de trancher les derniers fils de la nuit. Laissant comme seule pulsation, celle d'un cœur bancal, surpris et orphelin de cette peur amère qui l'avait accompagné.

Title: **BOOMKAT review: Album of the week: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **Boomkat**
<http://boomkat.com/cds/414574-kreng-grimoire>

Author: Boomkat

Publication date: June 2011

Having first entered our lives in 2009 with an album so singularly terrifying that it still gives us nightmares, Pepijn Caudron - the elusive mastermind behind Kreng - plunges even deeper into the heart of darkness with a new full-length offering for Miasmah. **The results are just phenomenal, combining a palpably European antique grandeur with cutting edge sound design and a pervasive occult charge** (a 'grimoire' is a book of spells, don'tcha know). 'Karcist' is the curtain-raiser, wherein ambiguous midnight ambience soon gives way to hands-around-the-throat dread; 'Le Bateleur' is a zombie waltz of baleful clarinet, muted horns and snares flapping like bat's wings. On 'Opkropper', Kreng's neo-classical ambitions swell to the fore, plangent cello lavishly swelling amid Ligeti-style piano jabs and snatches of soprano opera singing that sound like Edith Piaf trapped down a well. 'Petit Grimoire' is the album's seductive highlight, impish strings hanging off a muffled techno pulse, and 'Wrak' is a veritable symphony of things that go bump in the night: shrill violins and discordant woodwind scrapping and scraping over a steadily iterated, Morricone-esque motif. The stately orchestral vibe returns for 'Ballet Van De Bloedhoeren' only to dissolve into a fetid swamp of the sickest drone; 'Girl In A Fishtank' sounds like one of Leyland Kirby and Philip Jeck's clammiest nightmares, a real Death In Venice dirge, its 1920s pomp racked by the threat of cholera, drowning, forbidden lust and war. 'La Poule Noire' is a grimm tale with an almost industrial momentum, its reverbed percussion rolling horribly, unstopably onwards like a steam train to the death factory. **Has gothic minimalism ever sounded this vivid, this all-consuming and three-dimensional? Not to our knowledge.**

Title: **KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **Igloo Magazine**
<http://igloomag.com/reviews/miasmah-3view-2011-7>

Author: James Knapman

Publication date: 9. June 2011

***Grimoire** achieves levels of spine-chilling dread exceeding even his debut offering, with a sparse, exacting use of samples and restrained approach to composition to create a soundtrack that needs no movie, all without resorting to cartoonish or cliché'd tropes.*

Sleep, on the other hand, is most definitely not recommended whilst listening to this sonic Nosferatu. Kreng's debut album **L'autopsie Phenomenale de Dieu** was widely lauded by critics as one of Miasmah's finest, most disturbing and affecting releases, taking the label to new levels of hellish theatrical gloom. Violent and highly charged eroticism, occult cabals, black magickal rituals – all in all it was enough to give you the screaming willies. Constructed entirely of sampled materials, Belgian producer Pepin Caudron created an intricately woven mix of samples from classical sources and treated film samples. **His sophomore album, *Grimoire*, furthers Miasmah's descent into madness, and though surprisingly more musical than his debut, it is a far more focused, concise and narratively constructed tome of nightmares and demonic horrors. Caudron's origins in theatre and in particular his association with the otherworldly, dadaist, guerrilla theatre troupe Abbatoir Fermé extend into every facet of the production.**

Grimoire – a manual of (black) magic spells and invocations that teach ways to charm or divine, to create magical trinkets, to summon angels, spirits or demons. Can you guess what we might be doing today boys and girls?

An exorcism? The "Karcist" consults the Grand Grimoire. There are terrified, rasping inhalations of breath, sinister ambience and skull-resonating sub-bass drones. "You know you've left the earth behind... when you died. Do you remember that?" The voice tells us to let go of the earth and go towards the light. It begins as we watch a performance by "Le Bateluer" ("The Magician," also the name a particular card in the mystic Tarot) on the blackened stage of an old Victorian theatre. The tension is palpable, the orchestra pit is drumming out a metronomic clunk, drum rolls, Dudley Simpson-esque clarinet and horns that penetrate the smoky gloom as this mysterious figure performs his arcane trickery. Figures are levitated, suffer the death of a thousand cuts, vanish in ornate cabinets. Monastic vocal drones, a operatic vibrato soprano, the whistling of the wind through underground passages... this is all packed into a single track.

Classical elements seep through the cracks and into Kreng's disturbing alternate reality on "Opkropper," a diva has gone rogue, the pianist demented. A repeated bass string refrain and unsettling piano heralds the opening of a "Petit Grimoire," and soon the pounding thump of a heartbeat is heard as dread entity rises from the pages in curls of black smoke. The slow waltz of "Wrak" begins, but something is terribly wrong. The plaintive strings mutate, a squawking siren like a malfunctioning fairground ride, atonal noise, the hideous gulping of some alien creature, until the full nature of the insanity that lives in the heart of this *grimoire* is revealed: jabbering, flailing, convulsing, phasing. The chaos ends almost as quickly as it began. The pianist continues, but a spectral figure cowers, translucent, in the corner of your eye, at the edge of hearing.

If the baroque strings at the "Ballet Van De Bloedhoeren" herald a thankful return to normality then why does time appear to be slowing to a crawl, stretching out in front of us to near breaking point, nothing remaining but a stretched and viscera-streaked smear? There's a singing "Girl In A Fishtank," but the voice has gone bizarre... it quivers and ascends into the ether, changing pitch, grinning maniacally, ready to explode.

Suddenly we're in Egypt consulting The Black Pullet ("La Poule Noire"), raising an army of the undead, once-entombed mummies pressing forward in a shambling march, then in the beatific heart of Siberia, the air thin with strings and hypnotic Tuvan throat singing. Throw an acute case of "Satyriasis" into the mix and the horror has even reached a horrendous, psycho-sexual level. "Konker." Too late for the exorcism, that diva's voice again, this time utterly twisted and insane, a vibrating, quivering abomination rising in whorls of acrid, acidic vapour. This thing has to be contained. "Watch the light. Keep watching it." A whimper and a sob... a snarling voice... "Can you hear me?" An inverted scream, walls of fed back noise, space and time implodes.

*The **Grimoire** slams shut.*

Caudron has creating something in *Grimoire* that achieves levels of spine-chilling dread exceeding even his debut offering, with a sparse, exacting use of samples and restrained approach to composition to create a soundtrack that needs no movie, all without resorting to cartoonish or cliché'd tropes. Listen at your peril.

Confirming Miasmah's clear love for all things Kreng, **Grimoire** receives the premium vinyl treatment with a limited run of four hundred individually numbered LPs housed in a heavyweight black cardboard sleeve with silver silk-screened artwork depicting what could be a corpse, a face without eyes.

Sweet dreams, ladies and gentlemen.

Title: **Review: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **Foxy Digitalis**
<http://www.foxydigitalis.com/foxyd/?p=12383>

Author: *Jan Arne Sohns*

Publication date: 16. June 2011

Belgium's Pepijn Caudron, under his Kreng moniker, has created an album that deserves all the praise that is heaped on the recent all-too complacent Caretaker release. "Grimoire", a collection of eleven acousmatic pieces, is a big step forward from Kreng's Miasmah debut, "L'autopsie phénoménale de Dieu": Rather than accompany theatre productions, these tracks appear to be composed to speak for themselves, and they definitely do. Caudron arranges snippets of dialogue, aeruginous samples in intricate layers, aged strings, and the occasional jazzy percussion. The dynamic range is such that it's impossible to listen to this cd in high volume as the sub-bass drones or a shrill outburst will render listening unbearable.

Of an album replete with haunting atmospheres and micro-narratives, "Petit Grimoire" is the standout track. It is, I would argue, the best piece Caudron has created thus far. There's a signature string motif, enhanced in effect by the most minimal of piano lines, an indistinct buzz and, maybe, samples of female voice. "Ballet van de Bloedhoeren" follows a similar direction, heavy on the strings, but with an even more traditional touch as it resembles a minuet. Elsewhere, a track occasionally explodes, causing the speakers to bleed waves of tar.

Obviously, surrealism, performing arts and a general sense of pre-WWII Europe are still crucial to Kreng's sound and overall concept. What started as an experiment on his debut, has now been honed into a full-fledged artistic stance: **a distinct and highly original voice in an overcrowded segment of dark cinematics, and yet another heavyweight in the label's impressive discography. An album that forces all other dark music to pale.**

8/10

Title: **Hipster Friday: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **The number of the blog**
<http://thenumberoftheblog.com/2011/06/24/hipster-friday-kreng-grimoire>

Author: *Sophus*

Publication date: 24. June 2011

This week features one of the more interesting electronic albums I have heard in a good while, the latest offering by a Belgian purveyor of dark ambient going by the name of Kreng. His general sound is a combination of melodramatic gothic minimalism with elements of jazz and neoclassical music. Comparisons can be drawn to Demdike Stare and Bohren & Der Club of Gore, the latter of which I have yet to listen to but from what I've read they must sound similar. The juxtaposition of very traditional instrumentation and a dark ambient finish makes for a very occult atmosphere (hence the title *Grimoire*). There's a great deal of variation to be found here, the kind of variation that is necessary to keep the attention of listeners unaccustomed to repetitive and minimalistic music. Standout tracks include 'Le Bataleur', an arrangement of chamber music samples overlain on a beat that is more a series of sickening thuds than a propulsive rhythm. Then there's 'Wrak', a discordant symphony submerged in a suffocating fog of constant keening dissonance, like the neoclassical equivalent of power electronics. My personal favorite track is 'Ballet Van de Bloedhoeren', a melancholy dirge that over time drags the classical instrumentation down into a pit of drone. I highly recommend *Grimoire* to fans of Demdike Stare and dark, occult electronic music in general. The whole album can actually be streamed over on Kreng's soundcloud page, so [there you go](#).

Title: **New: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **Crack in the Road**
<http://www.crackintheroad.com/music/8550-new-kreng-grimoire>

Author: *Crack in the Road*

Publication date: June 2011

Grimoire, by composer/producer [Kreng](#) is a record that crawls under your skin and refuses to leave. Built up of mournful yet seductive strings, ambient and foreboding soundscapes, and perhaps most

interestingly, otherworldly ripples and blemishes; the record stands as a cinematic ride for the senses. As [Miasmah](#) records state in their own press release, it would be very easy to pass of the LP as soundtrack music and little else, but there's a whole multi-faceted plot current that's explored, with little need for visual aids. It's confident in sonic expression.

It's varied as well, always keeping the listener on their toes, taking influences from opera and yes, musical scores, it manages transports in a way that is just as exciting as it is ambitious.

Title: **REVIEW: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **Incendiary Mag.com**
<http://incendiarymag.com/node/2340>

Author: *Richard Foster*

Publication date: 9. June 2011

You do feel you are walking the fog-laden streets, going to a meeting of The Golden Dawn or some such...

My goodness. This record is immensely appealing, but very dark: if you like the idea of hearing the aural equivalent to Victorian London's slums and docks, well, you need to hear Kreng's Grimoire, simple as that. There's a luminous, nauseous acid streak to the record, especially the first track *Karcist*, with its sinister voice inviting the listener to "let go of the earth and go towards the light..." You do feel you are walking the fog-laden streets, going to a meeting of The Golden Dawn or some such...

This feeling of walking through a nightscape runs through the record; *Balkop* sounds like a midnight plod through the docks, whilst a track like *Petit Grimoire* - where the combination of sudden piano stabs and energetic but sinister strings conjures up scenes of scurried think of late night walks, constantly looking over your shoulder...

Grimoire is mostly an instrumental LP, there are bits of vocals, we have a creepy voice on the opener *Karcist* and at the end, on *Konker*, and a cod-operatic warblings on *Opkropper*: what sounds like an aborted run through of some scales gives this particular track a feel of one of Mahler's *Kindertot Lieder*, or a morbid take from *Mac the Knife*. I make it all sound very mournful but it's an engaging record; rather like the thrill you get when reading a Saki short story about teenage werewolves... You can get enveloped in and start to sympathise with its gothic atmosphere.

There's a lot of musical invention (well, there has to be if you have the prospect of 11 mid tempo, gloom-laden tracks ahead of you)... Some great switches occur mid-piece; take *Wrak* for instance. Some easy listening, Mantovani style strings, warped to slightly nauseous effect do battle with increasingly dissonant synth & brass blurps and squeaks, it's the most powerful (and most difficult) track on here. The whole thing builds up to a cacophonous jumble of noise only to peter out to an increasingly wearisome plod, then a ghostly whisper. Brilliant, but easy listening it ain't. The contrast

with *Ballet Van De Bloedhoeren* is stark; suddenly we are plunged into an 18th century court recital of sorts; though you begin to realise this whole pretence of being a string quartet by Haydn will last about a minute: and yes, soon things begin to get more distorted with lots of feedback and delay. It could be early Kraftwerk by the end. *Girl in a Fishtank* sounds exactly like the title, dreamy, floaty and a bit disorientated. *Satyriasis* can't make its mind up whether it's an avant garde jazz piece or a horror film score or a Studio G recording. But it revels in its indecision quite brilliantly.

Marvellous, but creepy.

Title: **REVIEW: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **Include me out**
<http://includemeout2.blogspot.com/2011/06/grimoire-kreng-miasmah.html>

Author: *Include me out*

Publication date: June 2011

Pepijn Caudron's second album for Miasmah cracks your skull wide open and casts a spell, especially if you listen with plugs in – a spell so devilishly seductive, so dark, it makes Demdike Stare sound like...Pop – yes, it's that good. If Pop Sounds and Happy Music in general are godly gifts to lift the hearts of listeners, **this extraordinary album is the work of the anti-Christ, and as you know, the Devil has all the best tunes.** Not to suggest that Pepijn is a wicked person (I'm sure he's a nice fellow), but that this record absolutely represents the very best in sinister, mysterious modes of music-making, without resorting to brutalism, ie Noise. There is a remarkable passage in the 9-minute 'Wrak', however, in which a skronking sax and electronic maelstrom combine to blow your brain. It's all the more effective for being sandwiched between plaintive piano, and strings reminiscent of Herrmann's work for Hitch. 'Ballet Van de Bloedhoeren' demonstrates another side of the multi-faceted Caudron in a beautifully melancholic chamber (of horrors) quartet mode made more grisly by a low-end electronic undertow. 'Satyriasis' is one of the most intriguing pieces, a subtle exercise in creeping horror sketched out by jazzy brushwork, strings, piano and restrained electro-ambience. **This is not an album you can skip through and hope to understand what's going on, so don't bother. It demands, and requires close attention because, as in all great horror or Film Noir flicks, the substance and true meaning lurks deep in the shadows. Amazing work.**

Title: **REVIEW: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **Killed in cars**
<http://killedincars.com/post/5872983867/kreng>

Author: *Tomasslaninka*

Publication date: 26. May 2011

Miasmah proves to be the greatest home for the darkest, but still pure art once again. Oppressive, gloomy and mysterious music always finds its way to this Norwegian imprint lead by **Erik K Skodvin**. The latest contribution to its fascinating collection is the second release of **Kreng**, Belgian master of creative oddity. **Grimoire** contains varying bricolage of moods and motives, but the strongest and most resonant experience comes in its centerpiece, **Wrak** (Wreck).

Pepijn Caudron initializes the airless atmosphere with a claustrophobic harmony played by crying violin as if played from old vinyl. Its dramatic melody is accompanied by wonderfully simple, but similarly miserable piano. This depressive, but calm idyll can't stay for long: sounds of processed woodwinds come to disrupt melancholy and break it into pieces of epileptic hysteria. Dissonant harmonies of noise together with ringing percussion catalyze something between painful schizophrenia and stunning agony. It's the noise that purifies and it's the ever-present loop of violin that preserves Wrak to collapse into unnecessary chaos. And certainly, it's Caudron's talent for balance - not to be too grotesque - retain the drama on its elegant level. Wrak is a work about and within tragedy: appealing and inspiring. **Clearly, Grimoire is one of the strongest artistic adventures this year.** (You can pre-order Grimoire in [Sonic Pieces e-shop](#).)

Title: **REVIEW: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **NEDERLANDS (Dutch)**

Source: **De Subjectivisten**
<http://www.subjectivisten.nl/caleidoscoop/2011/06/kreng-grimoire.html>

Author: *Jan Willem Broek*

Publication date: 9. Juni 2011

Het fantastisch Noorse label Miasmah heeft al 15 maal op rij hoogwaardige releases uitgebracht van onder meer Encre, Rafael Anton Irisarri, Greg Haines en Elegi. Er zit gewoonweg geen zwak of zelfs iets minder album tussen. Allen opereren meestal aan de duistere en droefgeestige kant van de neoklassiek met elektronica, zonder dat ze op elkaar lijken. Labelbaas Erik Skodvin, zelf ook een begenadigd muzikant in Deaf Center en Svarte Greiner, heeft een uitstekende neus om nieuw talent aan te boren uit Europa en de VS (Irisarri). Twee jaar geleden heeft hij ook de Belgische artiest **Kreng** geïntroduceerd middels het fenomenale debuut *L'Autospie Phénoménale De Dieu*. Dit project van Pepijn Caudron maakt dan al jaren muziek voor uiteenlopende producties. Hij heeft zich ontwikkeld van een ruwe samplearties pur sang, waar freejazz, improvisaties, elektronica, modern klassiek en veldopnames elkaar ontmoeten, tot een meer filmische variant daarvan. Het resultaat omvat een beklemmende, tot de verbeelding sprekende en steeds variërende mix van jazz, veldopnames, drones, dark ambient, modern klassiek en elektronica. Van spookhuis tot balletzaal. Op zijn nieuwe cd *Grimoire* trekt hij deze donkere lijn door. Hij werkt het recept alleen nog beter en donkerder uit; daarvoor heeft hij nu dan ook zijn magisch, occulte boek erbij gepakt natuurlijk. In feite maakt Kreng ook een soort gothic, maar dan omgetoverd tot ambientachtige klanklandschappen. Hij brengt weer spookachtige sferen, waarbij de muziek een combinatie is van dark ambient, drones en neoklassieke muziek gelardeerd met veldopnames, (stem)samples, sopraanzang en piano- en cellopartijen. Op elk van de diverse genres wordt op wisselende wijze de nadruk gelegd. De track "Ballet Van De Bloedhoeren" begint bijvoorbeeld uiterst klassiek om vervolgens te eindigen met zieke drones. De muziek zorgt voor vele bloedstollende momenten, soms door angstaanjagende en uiterst

intrigerende creaties en in andere stukken door de onaardse, nauwelijks te beschrijven schoonheid. Hij is ergens tussen Shinjuku Thief, The Caretaker, Amon Tobin, György Ligeti, Henryk Górecki, Xela, Jasper TX, Human Greed, Omala, Bohren & Der Club Of Gore, Greg Haines, Deathprod en Svarte Greiner uitgekomen. Ook zijn tweede cd is simpelweg subliem!

Title: **REVIEW: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **Textura.org**
http://www.textura.org/reviews/kreng_grimoire.htm

Author: *Textura.org*

Publication date: June 2011

If there is such a thing as a Miasmah sound, then Kreng's *Grimoire*, a black forest of film noir gestures, orchestral passages, and slowcore jazz, is as good a candidate as any to represent it. The eleven gothic chapters constituting Pepijn Caudron's Miasmah follow-up to his *L'autopsie phenomenale de dieu* are, if anything, even more macabre and cinematic than those on the Belgian sound sculptor's 2009 debut collection. *Grimoire* (the term, appropriately enough, refers to a black magic text used for invoking spirits and demons) is a relentlessly gloomy soundtrack in search of a film, though one would be hard pressed to locate one as claustrophobic and oppressive as Kreng's offering. The album moves from one setting to the next without interruption, with death marches, the moan of a soprano, nightmarish string glissandis, and the dust-coated plink of a piano as one's guides.

During "Karcist," a dying creature drags itself across scorched terrain, with clanking noises audible in the background and speaking voices drifting through the air like hallucinations. Martial snares and the lonely honk of a bass clarinet add to the gloom of "Le Bateleur," while some settings, such as "La poule noire," move into a purer classical realm, the most extreme example of which is "Ballet van de bloedhoeren," which features elegant Baroque music performed by a string quartet. Caudron exercises restraint in supplementing the piano with but a few atmospheric elements in sculpting the mood of dread, even threat, that permeates "Petit Grimoire." One naturally thinks of Angelo Badalementi of *Twin Peaks* renown when the neo-noir jazz stylings of "Satyriasis" appear, in particular when its muted horn seems to vanish amidst the track's creeping flourishes of brushed drums, strings, and noise clusters. The album's noisiest moments emerge during the disease-laden waltz "Wrak," where the dissonant shriek and wail of a saxophone is almost obliterated by crushing convulsions of noise. That the album ends in "Konker" with a violent gesture seems entirely in keeping with the mood of this deliberately disturbing work.

Title: **REVIEW: KRENG / Grimoire**

Language: **ENGLISH**

Source: **The Silent Ballet**
<http://www.thesilentballet.com/dnn/Home/tabid/36/ctl/Details/mid/384/ItemID/4200/Default.aspx>

Author: David Murietta

Publication date: 26. May 2011

How does one capture the unknown through music? The question is difficult to answer. **Kreng** uses the hermetic method of analogies and the formula of "so above, so below" to explore the issue, and his results are compelling. The *Grimoire* is his own manuscript, one which approaches the world and its ultimate equivalence with mystery. The new work is a fine successor to the elegant juxtapositions and samples of 2009's fantastic *L'autopsie phénoménale de Dieu*. It grows from a deep understanding of musique concrète and its ability to rendering the unexpected like no other music can, uncovering the awkward force of musical stereotypes. The previous album blended the sounds of a beautiful Chopin sample and a woman crying; the first made the other beautiful, the second made the other profoundly powerful, and vice versa. This album contains many such moments as well.

The element of the unexpected can aid in this cautious look into the essence of the real. In a realm where knowledge and reason fail to fill the void, the unexpected can prod the imagination toward a primal state of creativity; for if anything can happen, one must remain open to the coming deluge. In this sense, Kreng is a master at the surrealist art of provoking constant ruptures with common sense. In so doing, he finds a type of illumination characterized by its looming shadows. His ideas may be ancient, but his resources are entirely contemporary. They range from the ominous overtones of the word 'mystery' (detective novels, film noir) to the darkjazz base of his sound: loose, yet structured, more ambient than defined. Kreng's use of pop culture is far from traditional, which requires the listener to both understand the 'creepy' references and to distance him or herself from them. Only in this instability can the listener find the unknown, the uncertain, and the unthinkable.

Grimoire makes numerous references to mages and other heretical explorers. In the book *The Grand Grimoire*, the term "Karcist" refers to the practitioner of the rituals contained within. After the album's droning, breathy, introduction, a Karcist intones, "Let go of here! Understand? You don't belong here. Look up, upwards, go towards the light." One of the rituals in that book is for summoning Lucifer, "the light-bearer". Hence, we are to trespass into the dark, into the realm of God.

The "Karcist" is the mage himself, but "Le Bateleur" (the French tarot card for the Magus) is his representation, depicted here by a collection of slow, quiet hisses and cinematic noir sound effects. While the Karcist speaks, the Bateleur can communicate only through silence. His role is to symbolize the Pythagorean principle of knowledge, the all-encompassing presence of the divine. This ambience remains for the rest of the album, establishing a single certainty amongst the shifting images of the prohibited. The subjects include suppression ("Opkropper" is possibly Dutch for suppressor) and decay ("Wrak"). The latter piece is one of the album's most dramatic; the sound becomes corrupted with noise, like a sudden invasion or an industrial paradise powered by free jazz. The noir vibe reaches its climax on the tragically moving "Ballet Van de Bloedhoeren" (if things are still Dutch, 'bloed' is blood and 'hoeren' is whore). By the end it twists into a damaged recording, as if fed through an amp blasted at maximum volume, then finally evolves into a low-pitched drone.

From then on, the feeling keeps going 'down'. The descent is filled with found sounds, echo chambers and metals, silences and subtle vinyl scratches. Heavy percussions lead perfectly into the nowhere of a sustained violin chord. Even throat singing makes it into the bowels of "Balkop", like an ancient

interaction with nature deviated by recordings, a form of magic perverted and perfected by its isolation and de-contextualization.

If a Grimoire is meant to provide an understanding of the great mystery ("the common soul of religion, science and art") by virtue of analogy, this one gets dangerously close to being fully realized, like one of its ancient literary predecessors. It has a deep and rare complexity that's open to multiple interpretations; it's a commentary on music, style, and conception. Fittingly, it ends with a second voice clip, whispering "Watch the light... keep watching it...", which is interrupted by a desperate woman crying "Can you hear me?!" The effect hearkens back to those typical movie endings in which it was all a dream, except that the reading can go both ways: are we awakening into a newly scarred world, divinely tainted with knowledge? Or are we awakening into the woman's nightmare, forever trapped into the awe-inspiring darkness of the mystery? If only we could break the Grimoire's spell, we'd know.

"Every quest for the truth, be it mystical, gnostic, philosophical, or scientific, presupposes its existence, meaning the basic unity of the multiplicity of the phenomena of the world. Without that unity, nothing would be cognizable. As if, effectively, one could proceed from the unknown to that which is known –precisely what constitutes the method of progress in knowledge- if the former didn't have anything to do with the latter, if the unknown had no kinship to the known and was absolutely and essentially alien to it?" – Anonymous, from Los arcanos mayores del Tarot.