

# strange

ΕΞΕΡΕΥΝΗΣΤΕ ΤΟΝ ΚΟΣΜΟ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΡΑΞΕΝΟΥ



ΜΕΓΑΛΟ ΑΦΙΕΡΩΜΑ  
Η ΕΠΙΣΤΡΟΦΗ ΤΟΥ

# gothic

ΤΟ ΣΚΟΤΕΙΝΟ ΚΙΝΗΜΑ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΕΔΩ!

Η ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΤΟΥ GOTHIC ROCK  
ΣΥΝΕΝΤΕΥΞΗ DIARY OF DREAMS

Οι Τρόμοι του Ανθρώπινου Μυαλού

VARGO: Ο ΚΑΛΛΙΤΕΧΝΗΣ ΤΩΝ ΒΑΜΠΙΡ

Η ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΗΛΙΟΥ  
Ο Αρχαίος Πόλεμος κατά της Σκλαβιάς

Η ΣΥΝΩΜΟΣΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΗΜΑΤΟΣ

ΤΟ ΕΠΕΡΧΟΜΕΝΟ «ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΟ ΚΡΑΧ»  
ΘΑ ΚΑΤΑΡΡΕΥΣΕΙ Η ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΙΑ;

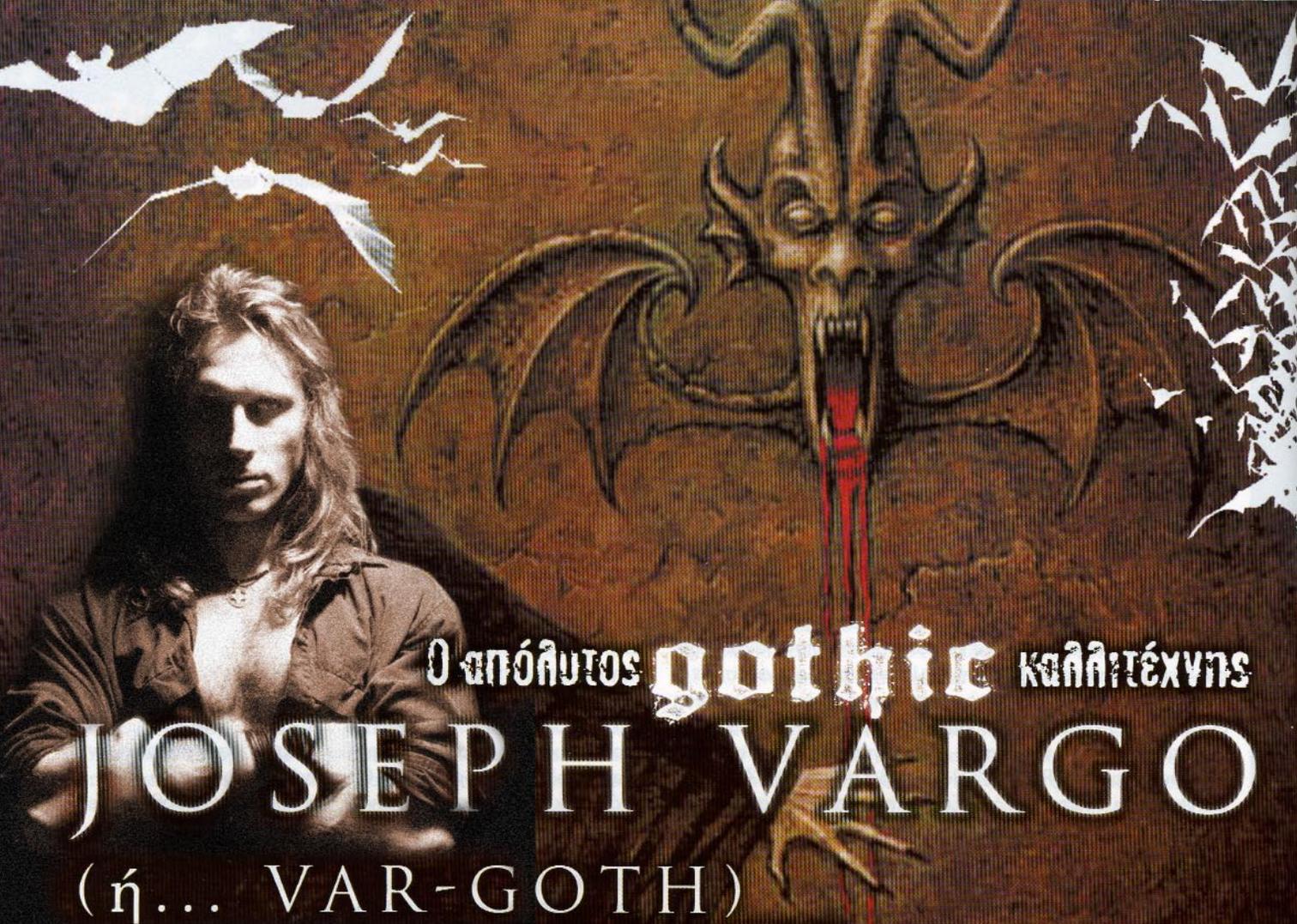
Η ΠΑΤΡΙΔΑ ΤΩΝ ΝΤΟΓΚΟΝ



ΕΡΧΟΝΤΑΙ ΤΑ  
ΒΑΛΑΣΣΙΑ ΤΕΡΑΤΑ!  
(Κι ο Κθούλου;)

Δρ. Χρίστος Γούδης  
Η ΝΕΑ ΠΑΡΑΞΕΝΗ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗ ΜΑΣ  
ΣΕ ΕΝΑΝ  
ΠΑΡΑΞΕΝΟ ΚΑΙ ΤΡΕΛΟ ΚΟΣΜΟ

ΑΠΟΚΛΕΙΣΤΙΚΗ ΣΥΝΕΝΤΕΥΞΗ  
Ο ΦΥΣΙΚΟΣ ΔΡ. PAUL LAVIOLETTE  
ΚΑΙ ΟΙ ΑΝΑΤΡΕΠΤΙΚΕΣ ΘΕΩΡΙΕΣ ΤΟΥ



Ο απόλυτος gothic καλλιτέχνης

# JOSEPH VARGO

(ή... VAR-GOTH)

## What is 'Gothic' to you?

Aside from the references to architecture, literature and the Gothic era in general, I see the term "gothic" as a mood or mindset. To me, it represents things that are dark mysterious and brooding. There is always an oppressive element of danger lurking in the shadows. I also feel that "gothic" always carries a certain Old World connotation and is closely associated with macabre lore. Most modern horror novels and films seem to lack true gothic elements. I refer to my artistic style as "gothic fantasy" because it utilizes various Gothic architectural elements like lanceted archways, ornate ironwork, and elaborately sculpted gargoyles and tombstones as background settings for supernatural beings such as ghosts and vampires.



*Do you perceive certain differences between the Gothic culture in America, and that in Europe? I mean, there certainly are many things in common, like the attraction to horror films (all the way back to the Hammer era, or even earlier, to the German expressionism) and literature (with Poe and Lovecraft, on top), the occult lore and the supernatural genre, but I feel that the revival of the 19th century Gothic movement has been achieved*

*rather through music. And there has been much conflict in the last few years over which kind of music may be considered as 'Gothic' and which not. Back in the '80s the term in Europe indicated a fan of the Sisters of Mercy, The Mission and Fields of the Nephilim, new rock bands that were not popular in the States. (no doubt that some scores of Jerry Goldsmith, Christopher*

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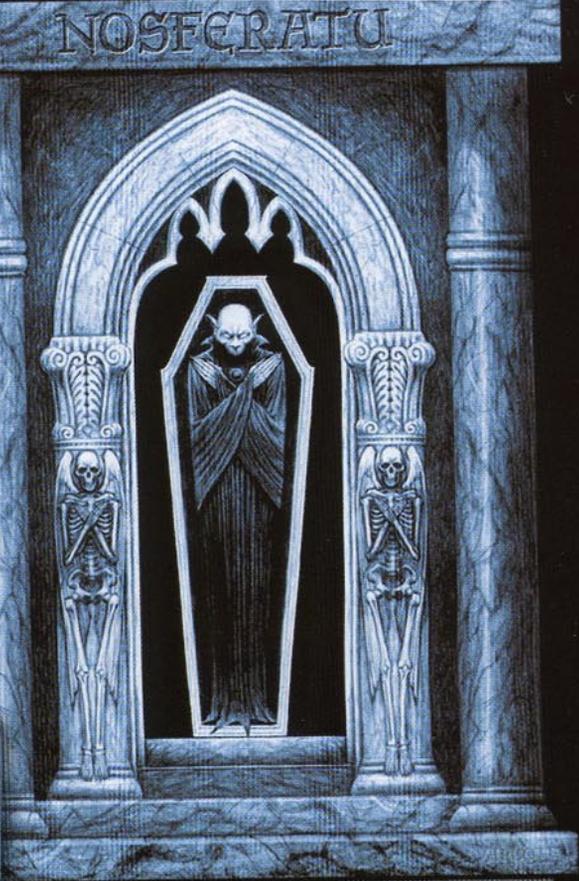
Young, W.Kilar, etc... were also to be found at the record shelves of many of these fans). Today, even in Europe, the Gothic music scene is rather chaotic, since it includes several different styles, i.e. Metal, Techno, EBM, each of them promoting a different dress-code (Victorian/Medieval, vampire-look, fetish). So what is the present state in America? Joseph Vargo and Nox Arcana, London After Midnight and Marilyn Manson, Tim Burton and Sam Raimi, are all equally considered gothic breed?

To me, there's a big difference between the terms "goth" and "gothic." In short, "gothic" represents a time period in European history and the architecture that derived from the era, as well as gothic literature, art and films that deal with dark, often supernatural subject matter. The term "goth" represents a modern lifestyle of people, usually young adults, with an interest in the macabre who want to embrace their inner darkness and rebel against the norm. In this regard, the term "gothic" has a more specific meaning, whereas "goth" has a much wider definition. The goth culture in America is primarily an underground movement, whereas in Europe, I see it as more of a part of the mainstream, although it seems to attract the same type of people.

Some of the bands that you mentioned such as Sisters of Mercy do not consider themselves "goth," although they have no problem capitalizing on the goth audiences that supported them. Musically speaking, the term "goth" encompasses a very wide spectrum, from dark ambient melodies and medieval minstrel music to punk rock, hard edged industrial dance music and bone-crunching metal. People who enjoy all things gothic in the broadest sense will appreciate everything beneath the gothic umbrella, but there are many purists who only enjoy one particular aspect of gothic music.

**You are a multi-talented artist, yet in all your artistic expressions a similar dark vision endures. Are different aspects of Vargo being satisfied by each sort of creation? I mean, do you get the same feelings while drawing an image, or composing a music theme?**

There's always a very

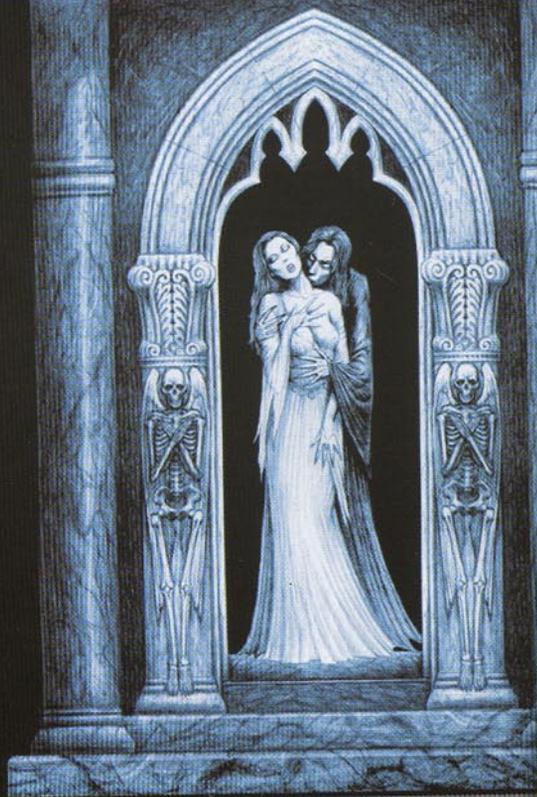


deep feeling of accomplishment whenever I create a new work, whether it be a painting, a story or a piece of music. Most of the time the creation process is very enjoyable and relaxing, but there are some times that I am under a tight deadline or I have to create something with

very stringent guidelines and work can become somewhat stressful. I always work alone when I am painting, so I have no one to bounce ideas off of, but the process allows me some meditative time for inner reflection. When I work on music, I come up with basic melodies

on my own, but then I work closely with my musical partner William Piotrowski to turn them into full compositions. The work environment for Nox Arcana is very fun with a lot of creative energy and ideas bouncing back and forth between the two of us. Other satisfaction comes later when fans tell us that they are inspired by our music or my art. One of the best compliments I get is

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when someone shows me that they've gotten my artwork tattooed on their body. That's a true honor.

**Over the last fifteen years, your artwork has been drawing from the Gothic genre. This has resulted in hundreds of awesome images and paintings, poems, short stories, and music themes, mainly dealing with vampires, werewolves, ghosts, devils and angels, gargoyles and other similar traditional entities. Do you believe that such creatures physically (or, almost physically) exist, or you see them only as inhabitants of the world of our subconscious?**

From a scientific point of view, I understand that there are many medical disorders that can imitate the symptoms of vampirism and lycanthropy. There have also been numerous cases of demonic possession that have been documented by the Catholic Church, even in modern times, but even these instances do not lend credence to the exis-



tence of monsters. I know several practicing witches and psychic vampires and I have a large collection of gargoyles, but these are not the supernatural creatures of folklore that I depict in my paintings and stories. My art deals with the ancient legends of vampires, witches, ghosts, werewolves, and other dark creatures of lore. Although there is no solid documented proof that such creatures truly exist, I believe that they dwell in the shadowy recesses of our subconscious and occasionally rise to the surface to haunt our nightmares and take hold of our personalities.

I see vampires as the ultimate seducer. They are very sensual and romantic and represent a dangerous surrender to your darkest temptations. Werewolves represent the primal, animalistic side of human nature, uninhibited and unrestricted by civilized laws. I usually depict witches as beautiful seductresses who can grant your deepest desires. But there is always a price to be paid when dealing with such creatures of darkness.

Great gothic writers such as Bram Stoker, H.P. Lovecraft and Edgar Allan Poe utilized many similar symbolic representations of evil in their stories. Whereas Stoker and Poe expounded upon ideas from existing folklore, Lovecraft looked into his own dark imagination to create a truly original realm of nightmarish horrors.

**Did you ever have any paranormal experiences involving such beings, or of any other sort?**

No, but I really wish I had. Some of my very close friends have had encounters with ghosts, dark entities and even UFOs, but I never get to witness anything cool. I am friends with two psychic vampires, occult author Michelle Belanger and gothic personality Don Henrie, but despite being creatures of the

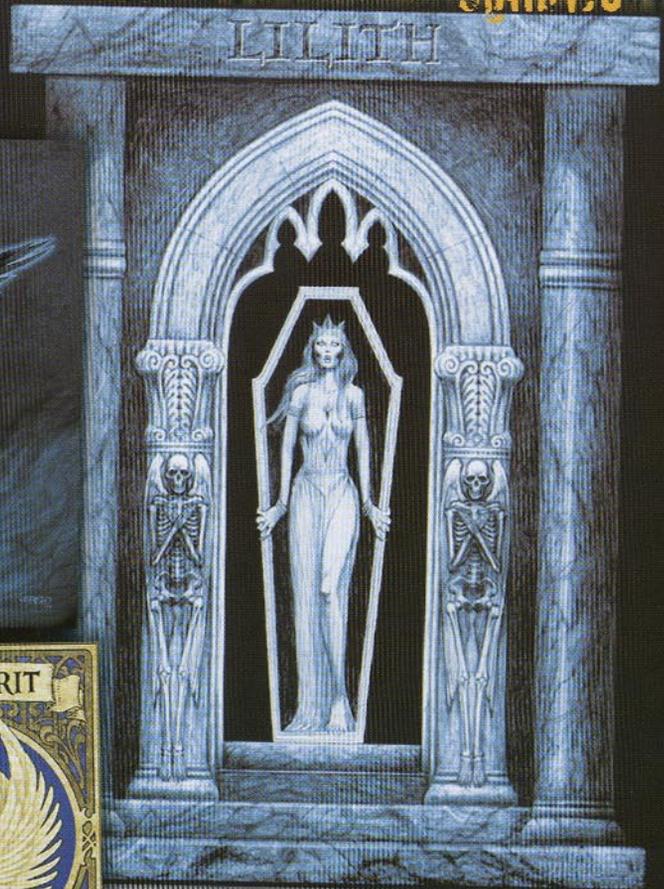
night, they are both actually very nice and intelligent people.

**As you may know, I am presently writing a research study on what you might call, 'the Dark Side of Nature' and its manifestations. Part of it deals with the Shadowy figure of the Black Monk that appears to be the theme of some of your creations. The detail in which it is being portrayed in some of your paintings is rather surprising. Have you ever really... met this figure?**

Not physically, but this shadow wraith seems to reside deep inside my mind. According to Freud, the shadow is the part of the subconscious that harbors all the darkest parts of our personality. The shadow monk is my own symbolic representation of the human darkside unleashed. In the story "Shadows" from *Tales from the Dark Tower*, the black wraith haunts a man all of his life, until he eventually comes to the realization that the shadows that plague him are born of his own evil deeds.

**I read in a psychiatric work about the 'Nightmare' that it is quite usual for people who suffer from nightmares, to become artists. As far as I can tell, this seems to be a correct observation. Do you have nightmares? Are they related directly, or indirectly to your artwork?**

I very rarely have nightmares. I did have this unforgettable dark dream once about a black coach that was drawn by two spectral black horses. The coach was flying through the sky over my childhood home as the ghostly horses wavered like black ribbons in the air. The carriage made an arc in the sky, then landed in the road in front of my parent's neighbor's house. I began walking toward the coach, but I woke up before I reached it. The next day, I was certain that the dream was prophesizing a death or some other bad



event, but nothing happened. It was just a dream, and although some people may consider it a nightmare, I thought it was very cool.

**Do you ever feel dry of inspiration? Do you ever think that this realm of shadows has certain strictly defined boundaries, (the types of creatures that we have listed before), thus there are limited objects of inspiration?**

There have been a few times that I felt that I was painting something that was too similar to something I had done before, so I was challenged to make the new work different. There are several characters that reoccur in my artwork and this actually worked to my advantage when we were writing *Tales From The Dark Tower* and compiling the images for the Gothic Tarot. I have always been drawn to things that lurk in the shadows. These things fascinate me. There are still many ancient myths from





score some major horror films. We may even produce some films ourselves in the future. I think the next step we may take is to create and score a gothic horror adventure game for the computer. I already have the story written and have even designed much of the game, which is set in a haunted gothic manor with a sinister history.

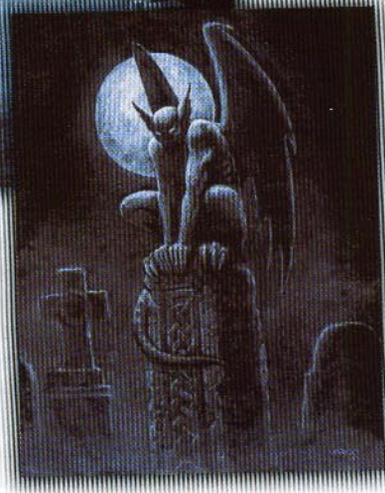
**Have you ever thought of extending these boundaries by creating new gothic myths? I don't mean, concepts, into which pre-existing myths may be formulated into fine stories, but rather something more extreme and complex. Like, H. P. Lovecraft's 'Cthulhu Mythos', for example—incidentally one of the subjects that you have explored...**

We have created the mythos for our Dark Tower series of stories. Although they deal with vampires, gargoyles, ghosts and dark angels, the stories explore many original concepts. As far as something completely original as you suggested, I think that two of the short stories that I've written, "Darkness Immortal," and "The Coroner" (co-written with Joseph Iorillo), both deal with ancient shadow creatures known as The Dark Gods.

various cultures that I haven't tapped into yet and there are still several legendary figures and creatures that I have yet to paint.

**Future plans? What may we expect as the next step, animation? I would love to see all those images coming to life, like gargoyles, in an animated film scored by Nox Arcana. Actually, I would love to see Nox Arcana scoring any major horror picture...**

I'm always so busy with my art, music and writing that I don't think I would ever have the time required to work on an animated project, but I agree, it would be cool to be able to bring my "pets" to life. We've had several independent filmmakers use our music in their movies and eventually we would like to



*"The Dark Gods were ancient beings that lived deep in the earth. They were terrible to behold and their desires were ravenous. They preyed upon mortal men and had an unquenchable thirst for human blood. As time passed, mankind grew to fear and shun them, and sought refuge from them. And the Dark Gods, their savage hungers denied, returned to the cavernous depths from which they came, to slumber and dwell in the shadows as darkness immortal." — an excerpt from "Darkness Immortal" by Joseph Vargo.*

I've also painted a portrait of four of these monstrous deities, so we could definitely expand upon the mythos with future stories.

**Thanks a lot and keep up the great work.**

You're very welcome Jonathan. Thank you for the opportunity.

Websites:

[www.MonolithGraphics.com](http://www.MonolithGraphics.com)

[www.NoxArcana.com](http://www.NoxArcana.com)

