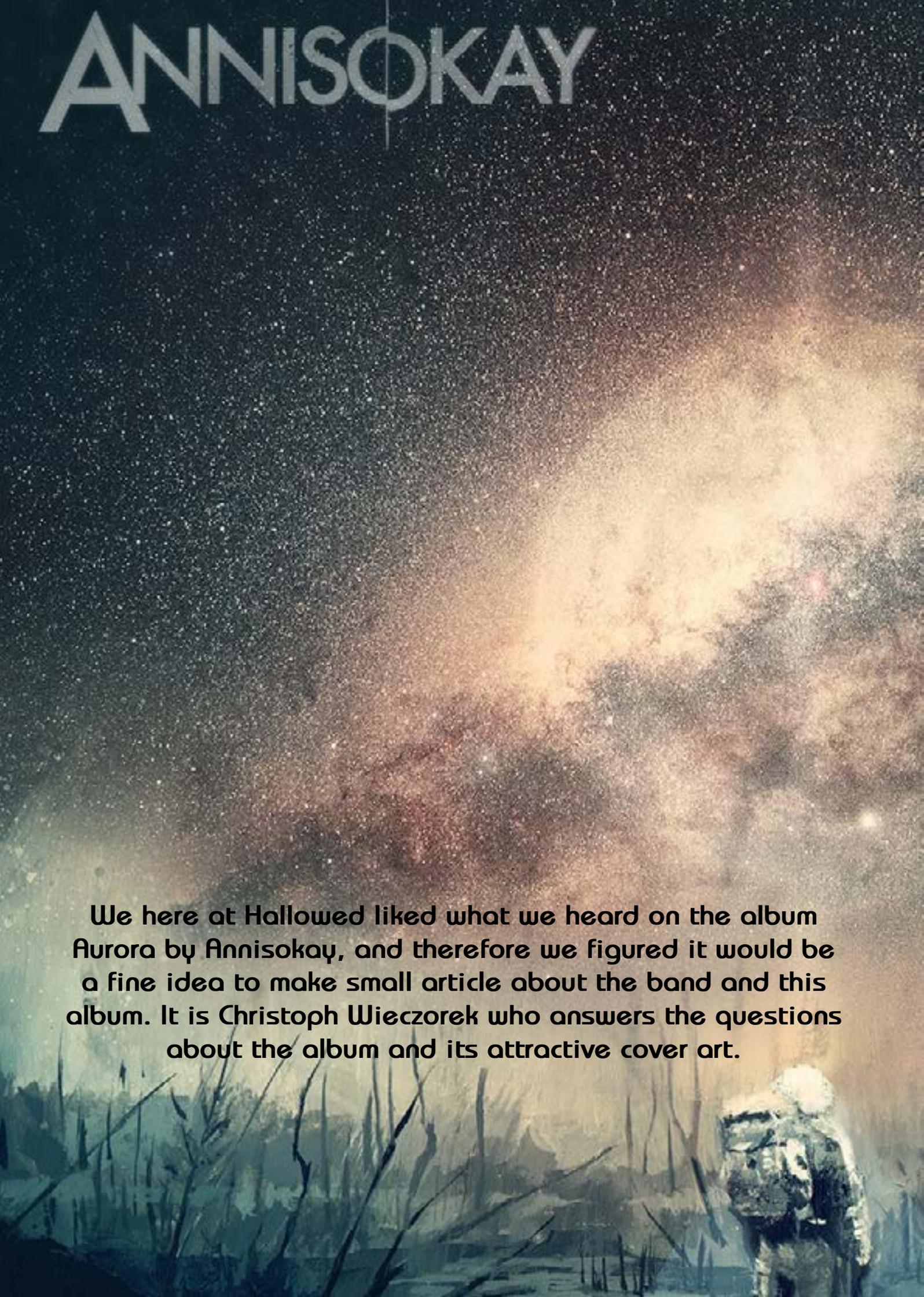


# ANNISOKAY



We here at Hallowed liked what we heard on the album *Aurora* by Annisokay, and therefore we figured it would be a fine idea to make small article about the band and this album. It is Christoph Wiczorek who answers the questions about the album and its attractive cover art.



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The first thing we noticed about this album was the artwork, it is such that we just had to review the album after seeing that. It proves that it is a blend of painting and photography, a slightly different direction from earlier. The last album had a photograph for cover and the previous were made by artist Chris Valentine from South Africa. So, for this album the question was whether they would continue with photographs or do

something completely different, and they did the latter.

- There was the idea for a video that shows an astronaut returning to earth in the future, only to find it uninhabitable and wrecked by climate change. He wants to find out what's left. It sounds like a depressing scene that we brighten by giving him a "light at the end of the tunnel". So, we asked Chris to paint this scenario. Matt Aust, another friend of ours and an astrophotographer, provided the photograph of the night sky and the milky way. Combining the two then created this beautiful

artwork.

Of course this artwork didn't come before the ideas for the album that was a process that started out pretty normally for the band but then changed due to the Corona-situation.

- With every album, there's a point where we think, "Time to make a new record!" Then we just get going with recording two to three songs. That's usually when we realize where we're headed with the concept. But developing an actual central theme takes much longer, and only once we've completed seven or eight demos,

the big picture starts to emerge. During this songwriting process, in particular, Corona started to creep up on us, and the world became this depressing place. We just sat there, quarantined, wondering where this was all going to end.

- However, we also realized that it was a chance to bring a little light into this situation. That's what "Aurora" means to us - not "northern lights", but a light at the end of the tunnel. This idea then became central to our storyline: Let's paint a gloomy picture of the future, one that

has made the earth uninhabitable through climate change and the likes. Let's imagine someone coming back to earth to see what's left and ending up in this dystopian place. All hope seems lost until he looks up to see the stars and a light that provides him with some courage. This scenario then became the setting of our video for *Bonfire Of The Millenials* as well as the basis for the artwork.

### Changes

For "Aurora" the band has gotten a new shouter Rudi Schwarzer, a

guy they have known for about a decade. He has been part of projects the guys in Annisokay found to be quite rad (to use Christoph's words), he checks the right boxes for a band member.

- His voice and the emotion in his shouts complement our music really well. What's new is that thanks to his musicianship, he can add to the songwriting process, which wasn't the case before Rudi joined the band. Now, there's lots of cool ideas and a certain level of aggression that we really like. That translates to our live shows, too: The vast majority of our



fans were genuinely pleasantly surprised.

The addition of Rudi also changed the song-writing slightly.

- Our song-writing is usually done by one person, and that's me, Christoph. This has shifted slightly since Rudi came along, whose phrasing and emotions have given new impulse to the process. With "Aurora", our goal was mostly to make a killer record that eclipses the previous one. That can be quite the challenge, as your demos for the new material will never sound as sophisticated as the finished songs on an old album. The global pandemic didn't exactly help, either. On the other hand, quarantine meant lots of studio time for us, since

I couldn't rent out my studio Sawdust Recordings. And what better way to write depressing songs than during a depressing time?

And perhaps Rudi, as well as the Covid situation was needed as Christoph experienced quite a writer's block in the early stages of the writing process.

- I wrote the first demo in May 2019, and after that, I couldn't come up with anything. That was a bit of a tough time for me, so I just sat back for a while. At some point, however, we needed a new album; we had a lot of time on our hands due to Covid-19, and we added Rudi to the band. Under these circumstances, I was able to rediscover my motivation and push myself. In the end, we

think the album turned out really bomb.

As it seems like touring is a way away still, but they have several dates planned according to their website, it might be interesting to reflect on how touring the world has influenced the song-writing of the band.

- Our songwriting depends on how we feel about the state of the world, rather than what we've actually experienced. Sure, there are songs like *Escalators* from our last record where we process our touring experiences. As an artist, it's incredible to play a show on the other side of the world in Vladivostok, to sneak a peak of North Korea from our hotel room window, but playing a club that is packed with people who can

sing along to every song. Stuff like that excites us, and we've played shows in America, Japan, Russia, and all over Europe. It creates a lot of motivation to keep giving all your time, money and energy to this cause. The songs themselves haven't changed much with these experiences, but for us, as a band, it's the sort of validation that you keep coming back to.

So what about the tours and plans for 2021?

- You have to practice patience. As of right now, your touring plans for March and April haven't changed: We'll be playing mostly German venues, but also shows in Austria, Switzerland, and the Czech Republic. Our initial plans also included France and the UK,

and we're aching to return to the Netherlands and Belgium. But that's still written in the stars. If all else fails, there's a plan B, and 2022 will surely come. Besides, "Aurora" will be available on vinyl and we're planning a limited edition merch box. You really have to learn how to be patient, even though it's a tough time for us as well. Despite those negative prospects, we'll keep our heads high, stay positive, and try to spread some hope. Like on "Aurora".

### Singles

What I notice about "Aurora", and some other albums in general, there are many singles released. We stream six of them in our review at Hallowed and

these have received a fair bit of stream according to Christoph, and it is a strategy they have to be more noticed in the streaming services.

- The dynamic throughout the music industry has shifted dramatically. We've started to put out more singles since the individual songs of an album run the risk of getting lost in the shuffle on all the streaming platforms. Our singles, on the other hand, have been added to some of Spotify's bigger playlists, which means we're now reaching more fans and listeners, which is precisely what you want as a band. So now there are more singles than before. The "Aurora" singles we've released so far have racked up more than five million



streams already. But in the end, the album has 13 songs and a lot more to discover than what we've put out so far.

One of those singles is *STFU* that has gathered a fair deal of attention among the fans, and it seems to resonate well with the band's fans – so what is the idea behind that song?

- *STFU* was our first single off of "Aurora". On one hand, we wanted to put out a major banger as Rudi's debut with the band. On the other hand, we wrote the song shortly after

a right-wing terror attack on a synagogue in our hometown Halle. Metaphorically speaking, it happened right next door, but shortly after, social media was filled with conspiracy theories. At that point we thought, "Enough is enough." Then, when we released *STFU*, we were in the throes of the first wave of the Corona pandemic, which meant even more fake news and dangerous half-truths. The song essentially tells everyone who spreads lies for likes and validation to kindly shut up. A lot of people seem to

relate to that.

And *STFU* isn't the only song that seems to have a message to address injustices and things the band sees as wrong.

- There are things that simply have to be said, as in *STFU*. As an artist, you can't just sit and watch as the world slowly crumbles, you have to draw attention to it. Therein lies our contribution to change. The same goes for *Bonfire Of The Millennials*, where we address climate change and sustainability. Things can't go on like this. We may not be a huge

act, but we continue to reach more and more people now, and I would feel useless as an artist if I didn't voice my emotions and opinions. Sure, you wouldn't hear these songs from us if *Annisokay* were a Party-Metal band. But we write serious songs with emotional, personal lyrics that resonate with many people. And whenever you turn on the news, the urge to write songs gets quite strong.

The author of the article just wants to end with pointing out that we all interpret truths

in different way so how you see the news depends on your perspectives and where in the world you happen to be. But it is great with bands that want to use their platform to write more meaningful songs.

"Aurora" is out now, and the vinyl looks really good with that artwork, the album was quite praised by our reviewer. With that we thank Christoph for his answers, check out their website for more information on touring and other news.

#### Some Links

The Hallowed review of Aurora  
[Annisokay website](#)  
[Annisokay youtube](#)  
[Label Arising Empire](#)