

## KVELERTAK 2019 BIO

Like a jolt of lightning, a new beginning electrifies everything.

In 2020, Kvelertak energize their next chapter with a series of significant changes. The band—Vidar Landa [guitar], Bjarte Lund Rolland [guitar], Marvin Nygaard [bass], Håvard Takle Ohr [drums], and Maciek Ofsad [guitar, vocals]—welcome an old friend, Ivar Nikolaisen, as frontman following the departure of Erlend Hjelvik. They also join forces with Rise Records for the release of their fourth full-length, *Splid*.

As they say though, “*the song remains the same*” across these eleven tracks...

The new blood only amplifies the group’s manic maelstrom of rock ‘n’ roll, black metal, and punk.

“This part of our story started when Ivar joined the band in the summer of 2018,” exclaims Vidar. “After Erlend left, the rest of us didn’t feel finished at all. We felt like we still hadn’t made our best album, so we were determined to continue. We knew Ivar from way back. He even did guest vocals on our first album. He was the one. Once we began working together, there was a renewed energy to the band. I felt that was needed.”

“I knew my life would change completely if I made this choice,” adds Ivar. “I was a carpenter at the time, but I’m a better singer than a carpenter,” he laughs. “I was nervous, because these guys are the best band in Norway—but they’re also nice dudes. We all put everything we could into this.”

Such extreme vitality has defined Kvelertak since their self-titled 2010 debut. It also transferred to a growing cult of fans. *Meir* crashed *Rolling Stone’s* “20 Best Metal Albums of 2013” at #2. The 2016 follow-up, *Nattesferd*, represented a critical high watermark, garnering a rating of 8-out-of-10 from *Pitchfork*, B+ from *The A.V. Club*, 4-out-of-5 from *Metal Hammer*, 8-out-of-10 from *Spin*, and 4.5-out-of-5 from *MetalSucks*. Not to mention, *Stereogum* touted it on “The 50 Best Albums of 2016.” In addition to racking up over 50 million career streams thus far, rock icon Dave Grohl personally presented them a gold plaque for *Kvelertak*, and they took home two Spellemannprisen Awards (Norway’s equivalent of the GRAMMYS®), including “Best Newcomer” and “Best Rock Band.” Everyone from Metallica, Slayer, and Anthrax to Ghost and Gojira handpicked them for tours.

With Ivar on the microphone, 2019 saw the boys return to Salem, MA to record what would become *Splid* with original producer Kurt Ballou [Converge]. This time around, ideas crystallized prior to recording.

“This album is more focused, but it pushes in every direction,” remarks Vidar. “We were all very open to seeing where the music would take us. It feels like the most inspired body of work

we've put out in a while. Every song and riff mean something to us. There was a clear direction from the get-go. We had something to prove."

They prove it on the first single "Bråtebrann." Rollicking riffs jumpstart the verses with a thrashed-out intensity before rolling under a sweeping chant on the refrain. The track nimbly dips in and out of intense punk-y catharsis and rock 'n' roll spirit.

Vidar explains, "It introduces some new aspects. Each one of us recorded different voices on the chorus like Queen. It takes some of the elements we really enjoyed from previous albums with more of a groovy thrash beat."

"In Norway, we have a tradition where we burn stuff every spring," Ivar elaborates. "We'll burn things like leaves in the garden, and it ends with crazy fires. That's 'Bråtebrann'."

The follow-up single "Crack of Doom" [feat. Troy Sanders of Mastodon] gallops on a hummable guitar into a catchy call-and-response. Sanders' soulful croon gives way to vicious shredding as Ivar captivates with caustic clarity.

"It's like classic rock and punk blended together," states Vidar. "It's the party song on the record. We do always like to have fun!"

Stretching past the eight-minute mark, "Delerium Tremens" harks back to those "*epics by Iron Maiden and Metallica*" with its own swaggering attitude. "Rogaland" punches relentlessly as "Ved bredden av Nihil" begins with airy acoustic guitar and builds towards another explosion of distorted power. The title *Splid*, which translates to "*Discord*," holds a special thematic significance.

"It describes the feeling of what the lyrical content is about, the way we see the world today, and the way things are changing," states Vidar. "It's getting more polarized. *Splid* sums it up."

In the end, *Splid* encapsulates everything Kvelertak was, is, and will be.

"We want people to be blown away by the music," Vidar leaves off. "It's an album you can bring to a party but also put on your headphones out in the woods in the Norwegian winter. It's Kvelertak."