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REVIEW

Music Reviews: Baroness, High On Fire, Puddle of Mudd, Amen, Defiance, Quick Change, Znowite and More

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Part of [Marty's Musical Meltdown](#)



Well, I can finally see the bottom of my pile of review discs. I have also exhausted my review books thankfully, and can prepare for the pre-Christmas onslaught of material that is about to start.

I am heading to London, postal strike notwithstanding, to attend a few gigs, including one which will feature 5 bands and ostensibly be my 40th birthday party. Any of my readers wishing to attend who will be in London town on the 22nd of November and fancy a peek at the newest version of the Marquee club can email me for more info. Industry types can get on the guest-list of course.

CD Reviews

Baroness: *The Red Album*

I've been hearing about this lot for quite a while; but never managed a listen. I am glad their latest didn't pass me by. This type of Sabbath with a touch of Rush sieved through a touch of the modern metal mystique works rather well. Much of the modern metal scene rather bores me to be honest, trying to be too much for too many people, but not truly sticking to their roots. This, on the other hand, is heavy rock done right with oodles of class.

Given the choice between this and High On Fire I have been opting for this whether it's for a drive or just chilling out. It is timeless heavy music well played and the CD doesn't hang around too long at 10 tracks (one short hidden one). If you ever wondered what the hell the fuss was about with this lot; check it out. Another pleasant surprise for 2007.

High on Fire: *Death is the Communion*

This is another band everyone is going on about it metal circles. While the opening strains of "Fury Whip" bring to mind Sabbath drone, once the singing kicks in you call tell they are heavily modern. This certainly isn't a bad album by any means, but it just doesn't seem to be that special. A modern take on stoner metal is not exactly unique now, is it?

Why is the title track so bloody long for instance? It just gets dull along the way. I like the acoustic intro to "Cyclopien Scape" but then it just goes into something that sounds like the rest of the tracks. It is possible that this album is a bit of a grower. Colour me nonplussed on the HoF. Bet they are pretty awesome live though.

Puddle of Mudd: *Famous*

This bunch don't bother waiting around to nail you with a great track. The title track and opener is great and oozes LA sleaze of the 80s. It's the first single and there is no doubt why this track got picked. Co-written with Brian Howes of Hinder, everyone just knew this had hit written all over it. The rest of the album continues along the same vein, with hints of Nirvana creeping in as well as the modern pop rock sound. What this CD reminds me of is the last release from Buckcherry.

And that is no bad thing. PoM might have started out as alternative, but this is mainstream done very well. No navel-gazing on here. I can only see this album taking the band even higher "We Don't Need to Look Back Now" has got power ballad hit written all over it, an ever-so-slight hint of GooGooDolls will make sure this does well. Think "Iris" for the 00s. Great album from an impressive band.

Amen: *s/t*

Remastered and including the *Coma America* single tracks, this is an impressive package from Metal Mind. A band that plays angst punk with metal tinges. Frankly, this album leaves me bored shitless. This type of crap might work live but just comes across as lame

This is an impressive three disc set comprised of Defiance's first three album with oodles of bonus tracks in the form of live tracks and demos. There are extensive liner notes with the chaotic and sometimes daft history of the band. (They sent their demo off to Europe and didn't include any contact details on it). The band suffered from a terminal case of line-up changes and a bit of confusion of what to do with them. Their later singer Steev found his way into Skinlab.

For those that are not yet fans of the band, the last CD on this set is the most polished. Aptly called *Beyond Recognition* this is the band at the peak of their creative powers, sounding like Megadeth in their prime. It's Bay area thrash done with passion and talent. The other two albums are quite a good history of the band. In the end, this is an impressive tribute to the memory of their sadly dead lead guitarist Doug Harrington. If you like yer thrash done well, then have a listen to this lot. You won't be disappointed.

Quick Change: *Circus of Death*

Edgy cover and edgy music; this lot of 80s metallers play an odd blend of sludge power metal that got them lots of fans, but not much else. This CD has been remastered with a couple of bonus tracks. This is essential for those who loved the band but only have it on vinyl or tape, but not really interesting for the rest of us. Of its time, it was something interesting but now its nothing special.

Znowwhite: *Znowwhite*

This is the first three Znowwhite in a box set of sort. It's Metal Mind so you know it's remastered with extensive liner notes. Znowwhite were rather unusual in that the band was originally made up of four black guys, three of whom were related, fronted by a blond woman. This in addition the fact they were playing thrashy metal that got them signed to Metal Blade, the home at the time of all things metal. Oh yes and not tokens, they were actually bloody good.

Think a thrashier Girlschool and you would not be far off. These are some of the best nineteen tracks you have never heard if you are thrash fan. Like many such bands they were ultimately felled by musical differences and too many line-up changes. Quality stuff nonetheless and something that deserves a place in your collection.

Finally I have a collection of CDs by upcoming bands represented by JustRockPR. They are a mixed bag of modern metal types ranging from quite interesting to Gollum. No, they are not Tolkein obsessed proggers but jazz-metal purveyors whose forthcoming album, on the basis of this release *Lesser Travelled Waters*, should hold something of interest for many metalhead.

Crimson Orchid's *Chapter XIII* is a bit of wandering mish-mash of styles that never really seems to catch fire. These guys have quite a bit of passion, no doubt, but they need a bit more focus to raise themselves above the pile. Still a young band with a bunch of promise.

Of the batch of CDs I got, this is probably the least interesting. Then again, this is a single by the band Deimos. They seem to be trying to throw everything into the mix to show their potential. Unfortunately, it never really sparks. There is undoubtedly talent here; but they need to get themselves a bit more focused and try to be a bit more original. Said to be great live; lets hope they manage to translate it onto CD better next time, to be released in 2008.

Now Fall of Eden I have heard of before so it was interesting to hear what *Dawn of a New Age* sounded like. Yet another band with a cult following, this is their debut album. They aimed for being heavy, simple, and melodic, and achieve it quite well. Not a CD to really get the world a frothing, yet it shows lots of potential. A young band getting to grips with their talent.

Well there is your lot for this week. A nice selection of heavy music for you to ponder. Now I was supposed to review the pretty frock metal trio I have before me, but I have yet again postponed that review to allow me to listen to them on my journey across the pond. They all have their merits; even the new Nightwish is growing on me.

As always stay rocking and stay safe. Check out live music as often as you can.



Marty's band, Growing Old Disgracefully, can be found at: [Disgraceful Music](#). His Cthulhu tales can be found at [Temple of Dagon](#).

Comments

#1 — October 15, 2007 @ 11:37AM — Hilary

Thanks for the great review of Famous by PoM
 Couldn't agree more!!!

