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CD Review: Ignitor - Year of the Metal Tiger

CD Review: Ignitor - Year of the Metal Tiger

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None of the major media outlets in this country ever picked up the story, which is surprising considering the omniscience of the 24-hour news cycle. Apparently, though, CNN and Fox News don't send war correspondents to hell to brave fire and brimstone in the pursuit of the truth as to what exactly happened when Ozzy Osbourne battled the devil for the soul of heavy metal and rock and roll. No, the only account of this epic duel is found on Ignitor's thundering new seven-song record, Year of the Metal Tiger. As he did in "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," Satan, who seemingly never tires of testing musicians' bravado, again gets his comeuppance, this time receiving a good thrashing in "Heavy Metal Holocaust," the rugged bulldozer of an opening track to Year of the Metal Tiger, a fiery album of traditional, hot-wired metal that's intensely passionate and utterly authentic. Spoiler alert: In subduing the beast, Ozzy is saved from certain doom by someone from his past. Any guesses as to who it is?



Ignitor - Year of the Metal Tiger 2012

So, what to make of Ignitor, these Texans who declare themselves to be, "... warriors and fighters united in metal" in "We are IGNITOR," the song that brings Year of the Metal Tiger to a smoldering conclusion. Formed by ex-Agony Column guitar shredder Stuart Laurence in 2003, Ignitor - now featuring Jason McMaster, known best as lead singer for '80s metal court jesters Dangerous Toys, on lead vocals - Ignitor flies the "true metal" flag as high and as proud as can be, positioning themselves as battle-tested Spartans defending the faith of their forefathers, namely Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Accept and others of their ilk. But, are they serious? Are they perhaps going a little overboard in their zeal for metal? Or is Ignitor's tongue firmly embedded in its cheek? It's hard to know for sure, what with the whole bizarre Ozzy vs. Satan thing - although what a legend to be passed down through generations of metal fans. What is unassailably true about Ignitor is that its burning, rampaging riffs - almost thrash-like in nature - are powerful and weighty, and as for Laurence's lyrics, delivered with such bravado and edginess by McMaster, they are tremendously entertaining.

Whoever "The Kaiser" is he makes Dos Equis' "most interesting man in the world" look like a milquetoast accountant who's never left the suburbs. And when McMaster, in no uncertain terms, states, "Give me a woman that loves the brew and I'll conquer the world" - "So sayeth the Kaiser/the hammer of truth" - there is little doubt that "The Kaiser, this face-melting backdraft of incendiary guitars and serrated vocals, will do exactly that. Wonderfully intertwined dual guitars wrap themselves around the intro to "The Kaiser" before a battery of ripping guitar riffs pounds away at ruined ramparts of melodic majesty. Enter "Beast in Black," riding cyclonic blast beats and turbo-charged guitars into the fray, while "Raiders from the Void" slams a battering ram of hard-hitting drums and meaty riffs into McMaster's Udo-like caterwaul.

That's Ignitor, always doing the unexpected. And they do it with speed, clutching hooks, dynamic tempo shifts, unrelenting heaviness and winning honesty. When McMaster's ragged screech can't quite hit those high notes, there's no fixing the mistakes, and that makes them all the more dangerous and almost reckless. They gladly leave those errors in if it adds an element of unpredictability, so rare in today's manufactured rock and roll, to Year of the

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Metal Tiger and their work is better for it.

- Peter Lindblad

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