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Ignitor - "Year Of The Metal Tiger" (CD)



"Year Of The Metal Tiger" track listing:

1. Heavy Metal Holocaust
2. Beast in Black
3. Raiders from the void
4. Shadow of the Needle
5. Island of the Damned
6. The Kaiser
7. We are IGNITOR

Reviewed by Rex_84 on May 25, 2012

"Powerful and tightly-composed, 'Year of the Metal Tiger' will stand as one of the better power/heavy metal albums of 2012."

"Year of the Metal Tiger" marks the second Ignitor release featuring metal legend Jason McMaster. His resume includes three decades of fronting a diverse cast of bands including Dangerous Toys, Broken Teeth, Watchtower and, most recently, Evil United. Readers may recognize the name Stuart Laurence, as well. As early as 1985, the guitarist provided grit to southern metallers Agony Column. In addition to playing guitar on "Year of the Metal Tiger," Laurence conceived all fantastic scenarios (some lyrics were based on true characters), wrote most of the music, recorded and mixed the album at his own Raging Steel Fury studio (he recorded the Metalunderground.com premiere of Nokturnel's "Shadows Alive").

One would expect a killer product, which the group delivers handily, considering the 60-plus years of experience accumulated between McMaster and Laurence. Rather than endless guitar wanking, Laurence and

Beverly Barrington focus on riffs. Just like the cassette tape days when one could read the lyric sheet and see a couple of carefully placed solo attributions, the riff is king and solos provide an instrumental bridge. "Shadow of the Needle" thrives on classic galloping guitar rhythms, but also includes melodic notes in the beginning and end, as well as a solo in the middle.

One of the best composed tracks on the album due to the interplay between the guitars and drums, "Island of the Damned," ends with distant whammy bar noise and tribal drumming, which perfectly captures the song's voodoo concept. Drummer Pat Doyle's alternating kick drums adds a ton of might to "We are IGNITOR." I'm always a bit leery about bands who praise their metalness in song, but this song is as hard as diamonds and as gritty as rust. One of the faster songs on the album, the group must have kept a fire extinguisher handy to put out the fire caused by Laurence's smoking solo near the track's end.

"Heavy Metal Holocaust" is another title that borders on outdated, '80s metal clichés. However, the song is solid both conceptually and sonically. Laurence culls Ozzy Osbourne lyrics and song titles to create a dialog between Osbourne and the Devil. He bets Lucifer his soul (he sold his soul for rock and roll) that metal will last forever (you can't kill rock-n-roll). The Devil takes that bet, destroys metal and is set to release hell upon the earth until Randy Rhoads leaps from the grave and uses his guitar to break the curse.

McMaster energizes and animates Laurence's tales of magic and conquest without the ball-dropping effects possessed by lesser power metal singers. His voice will put hair on your chest. McMaster's singing style has an opera-like dynamic, while his shrieks relate a wicked aggressiveness akin to Warrel Dane, Jon Oliva and Rob Halford. His voice is a double-edged sword, deadly on both sides, alternating pitch. His screams help realize the doom-filled choral breaks on "Heavy Metal Holocaust." "Beast in Black" shows a more epic side to McMaster's voice. The tempo changes between verse stanzas really allow McMaster to narrate this dramatic tale of a virgin Knight of Templar. Multiple layers of growling voices bring to life warning sirens on "Raiders from the Void."

Ignitor's "Year of the Metal Tiger" is a solid effort, but not perfect. The drums are too high in the mix, while the guitars could use a volume boost. Also, the album is short; only seven tracks. That being said, it still towers above most classic heavy metal and power metal albums of today. Powerful and tightly-composed, "Year of the Metal Tiger" will stand as one of the better power/heavy metal albums of 2012.

Highs: "Year of the Metal Tiger" is well-composed, precise and metal to the bone.

Lows: The album could use a better mix and more songs.

Bottom line: If you like classic heavy metal with melody and high-pitch vocals, then you'll love "Year of the Metal Tiger."










4.0 out of 5 skulls

23
people
like

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Get more info including news, reviews, interviews, links, etc. on our [Ignitor band page](#).

Rating**Description**

-  Perfection. (No discernable flaws; one of the reviewer's all-time favorites)
-  Near Perfection. (An instant classic with some minor imperfections)
-  Excellent. (An excellent effort worth picking up)
-  Good. (A good effort, worth checking out or picking up)
-  Decent. (A decent effort worth checking out if the style fits your tastes)
-  Average. (Nothing special; worth checking out if the style fits your taste)
-  Fair. (There is better metal out there)
- < 2 skulls Pretty Bad. (Don't bother)

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