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STRYPER LIVE IN INDONESIA



In his Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music (2002, Hendrickson Publishers) Mark Allan Powell writes the following of the early days of Stryper: "They presented themselves in ways that practically begged treatment as a novelty act: heavy makeup, big hair, black and yellow spandex... and silly publicity stunts. They were, of course a Christian version of KISS-and the very idea of such an incarnation struck secular journalists as humorous and worthy of media coverage. There was a lot of mean-spirited criticism (mostly from the Christian side), but Stryper rolled with the punches and, by and large had fun with it." Stryper is Michael Sweet (lead vocals/lead guitar), Robert Sweet (drums), Oz Fox (guitar/vocals), and Timothy Gaines (bass/vocals). Their latest DVD is LIVE IN INDONESIA AT THE JAVA ROCKIN' LAND (2012, MVDvisual). Of it, Michael says: "This show was an unexpected, but welcomed, addition to our tour schedule. It was added last minute and we scrambled to make it happen, but I'm glad it worked out. It was an opportunity to go to a primarily Muslim country and share our faith."

The concert begins with one of seven songs from 1986. 'Sing-Along Song' is a happy song of gratitude: "In a land of freedom/God has sent His grace/We're proud to live in such a place/With the right to sing/Song after song/This song's for you to sing along!" 'Murder by Pride' is a modern rock gem from 2009. It speaks of improving one's spiritual state: "Seeds that were growing have been dried up by my flesh/I walk the walk and talk the talk but where's the rest?/I could have everything even what's behind the stars/But I built my prison without windows, without bars/Gotta fight, gotta stop living a lie/Gotta fall, gotta lay down and die/Gotta stand and run to the other side/Gotta live or it's murder by pride."

'Loud 'N' Clear' goes all the way back to 1984's THE YELLOW AND BLACK ATTACK. In the lyrics, Stryper takes on their critics: "The hair is long and the screams are loud and clear/The clothes are tight, earrings dangling from the ears/No matter how we look, we'll always praise His Name/And if you believe, you've got to do the same." 'The Rock that Makes Me Roll' from 1985 shares the band's motivation for what they do: "They say that rock and roll is strong/Check out the Rock that makes us roll/Don't need no drugs to help us push on/We've got His power in our souls/Stand up and fight for what you believe in."

'Reach Out' is a song that gives testimony: "I was looking for the answer all the time/Always looking, never finding/I was empty inside/Drowning in the darkness/Needing the light to see/Reaching out for shelter/Then He set me free." 'Calling on You' is one of my faves. It could be addressed to God or a romantic partner: "I can't explain just what you do to me/My love grows stronger every day/You give me love, you give me company/And when I have to face this rain/You bring sunshine into my life."

'Free' reflects on one of the greatest gifts God has given us: "Free to turn away, say goodbye/Free to walk away and deny/The gift waiting for you/Whispers the still small voice/It's your choice/You're free, free to do what you want to/Choose your own destiny/Free to do what you want to." 'More than a Man' finds the band determined: "God, I will follow You because You died for me/Gave to me Your life to set me free/Anyone who asks shall receive/Jesus in your heart/It's time for you to start/Giving God all the glory/More than a man, God Almighty/He created you."

'Honestly' is the first ballad and brought a tear to my eye. It is another song that could have spiritual meaning or be directed to a human love partner: "Call on me and I'll be there for you/I'm a friend who always will be true/And I love you can't you see/That I love you honestly?/I will never betray your trust in me/And I love you, can't you see?" 'Open Your Eyes' is the headbanging opener from 2005's REBORN. The song encourages listeners to reach their full spiritual potential: "Open your eyes/Loosen the vice that constrains you/Open your eyes/Break the unfaith that controls you/Open your eyes/The truth will be there."

'All for One' comes from the group's controversial 1990 album AGAINST THE LAW. The song is a melodic call for unity however: "Days are going by/It's up to you to make a start/Before this Earth of

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I live in the booming metropolis of Dundalk, Ontario. I have a beautiful wife and two wonderful young kids, Rachael and Joshua.

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► [December](#) (2)

▼ [November](#) (13)

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ours/Turns to dust and falls apart/Right now I know we can make a change/All for one and one for all/Isn't that the way that it should be?/Will we ever save this world?/United we will stand up tall/United we will never fall/If it's all for one and one for all/I know that we can save this world." 'The Way' is another testimony song: "I feel His strength come into me/Yes, I do/ Reading His Word helps me to see/I feel so new I want to sing/Feeling His joy in everything/Oh, what can I say?/Oh, Christ is the Way."

Two strong encores follow. 'Abyss/To Hell with the Devil' directly puts our adversary in his place: "Well, speak of the devil/He's no friend of mine/To turn from him/Is what we've got in mind/Just a liar and a thief/The Word tells us so/We'd like to let him know where he can go/To hell with the devil (2X)." This song, another one of my faves, ends with a good scream by Michael. The concert closes with 1985's 'Soldiers Under Command'. It rallies believers in one higher cause: "Are you a soldier under God's command?/Help fight the good fight, join us while you can/The battle that's waiting is fought so easily/Through Him, without sin, there is victory /And we're fighting all the sin/And the good book, it says we'll win/Soldiers, Soldiers under command/Soldiers, Soldiers, fighting the Lord's battle plan."

This concert was filmed in 2010. The guys are definitely looking older, as they should be. Michael Sweet makes mention of the fact that the days of tight spandex and loads of make-up are gone. Of this, he tells the crowd: "Thank God!" As with other aging Christian rock stars, like John Schlitt, Sweet now sings some of the classics in a lower key, but they are still quite well done. The picture quality of the DVD is quite clear, as is the sound. And of course the group still plays yellow and black instruments. There is good crowd interaction throughout the show. The musicianship and harmonies are still there. Several of these songs have been a part of the soundtrack of my faith journey over the years. Fans of Bloodgood and Whitecross should pick this one up. I'm rating LIVE IN INDONESIA AT THE JAVA ROCKIN' LAND 93%. For more info visit www.stryper.com and www.mvdb2b.com.

Posted by [Dave](#) at 11:13:00 AM

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- ▶ [September](#) (9)
- ▶ [August](#) (3)
- ▶ [June](#) (4)
- ▶ [May](#) (7)
- ▶ [April](#) (10)
- ▶ [March](#) (8)
- ▶ [February](#) (3)
- ▶ [January](#) (11)
- ▶ [2011](#) (56)
- ▶ [2010](#) (65)
- ▶ [2007](#) (26)
- ▶ [2006](#) (72)
- ▶ [2005](#) (57)
- ▶ [2004](#) (66)