

ZERO HOUR

Bay Area's progressive metallers Zero Hour have written their finest and definitely strongest record to date. With an abundance of strong vocal harmonies, stellar guitar arrangements with a solid rhythm section, "Dark Deceiver" only proves that Zero Hour has more substance than many metal heads have given them credit for. Lead guitarist Jasun Tipton shed some light on my curiosities about how this very impressive, new album came to be.

EI: What inspired the lyrical make up of your new album "Dark Deceiver" as this album seems a little darker musically and lyrically than your past efforts?

Jasun: "I think the biggest thing is Troy and I took control over 'Dark Deceiver'. That wasn't by choice but we knew we had to keep moving forward with the material and not let it come to a stand still. We had that happen before in the past with 'A Fragile Mind' and didn't want to fall into that same state of mind for 'Dark Deceiver'. For instance my brother and I wrote the lyrics and melodies to 'The Power to believe', 'Dark Deceiver', 'Resurrection' and 'Inner Spirit'. These were the last four songs written for the CD. We had the music written for 'Lies', 'The Passion Of Words' and all of the music and lyrics written for 'The Temple Within' before 'Specs of Pictures Burnt Beyond' was out to the public. Troy and I knew in order to get this CD done and out to the listeners that the both of us had to step up and finish the lyrics and melodies. 'The Power To Believe', 'Inner Spirit' and 'Resurrection' follow Parts 1, 2 and 3 storyline. 'Dark Deceiver' is more of a horror feel to it. Really the music is what inspires the lyrics. The landscape of in-

struments makes it pretty easy to create a storyline."

EI: Also, something new and interesting I noticed for Zero Hour on this record is the artwork as it is very chilling and horrific compared to the subtle moments found in your prior CD cover artwork, so how does this art tie in with the album's overall feel and direction?

Jasun: "Troy and I love the artwork and think Bjoern did an amazing job. It follows the storyline of the song 'Dark Deceiver' perfectly. This was a vision Troy had and told Bjoern the story behind the tune and just worked great."

EI: I could not help but notice the awesome Geoff Tate influences in Chris' singing, yet he successfully managed to inject his own style and variation into all of the vocal harmonies and melodic parts, so did you think that Zero Hour's heavy approach to the music here would bring out the best qualities in Chris' singing on this record?

Jasun: "Chris has a fantastic voice and a tone of range. Troy and I have a different approach at writing melodies and lyrics than Chris. Chris' lyrics and melody style are showcased best on 'Lies', 'The Passion of Words' and 'The Temple Within'. I think having the three members give a great balance of variation, which allows every song to have its own identity. Troy and I have completely different approaches in regards melody lines. I love showcasing multiple vocal lines layering and intertwining over the music. Troy has a more direct and haunting approach with his melodies. I can't speak for Chris on how he approaches things. I think he just listens to the music over and over and just gains ideas from there."

EI: On the musical aspect, this album has a lot of intricate twist and turns yet keeping the songs still listenable for the average listener, so was this intentionally written like this?

Jasun: "Troy and I just said we're going to make a better CD. Not we're going to try and make a better CD. We pushed each other to open up more with the material. By doing so it raised everybody's game in the end. We always think rhythmically when writing tunes instead of writing a part around a solo. Once we laid all the rhythmic ideas we added soloing from Troy and I to bring the material to another level."



E: I very much enjoyed the song "Inner Spirit" with its killer vocal effects, strong vocal harmonies and the very passionately played riffs and leads. What is this song about and where did all of this outpouring of emotion come from in your playing here?

Jasun: "Inner Spirit" is my favorite track. It was the first song Troy and I wrote to lyrically and when the music is that dynamic the lyrics and melodies have to be very expressive. The story is about a young Native American tribe leader who is risking his life by leading the enemy to uncertain territory so that his tribe is not exposed. When he feels he's pushed to his limit he looks to the sky for guidance. The spirit of his parents helps him clear his mind and find the answers. Musically speaking it's a dynamic chapter that is built with landscapes of movement. When I solo it creates tension to the visions and chapters to overcome the struggles on land and at sea."

E: Personally, what makes this album a highlight in the band's music career as I feel this record is very representative of Zero Hour as a band?

Jasun: "I'm very pleased in what we created with 'Dark Deceiver'. We are a very hard working band and this is a great representation of Zero Hour. I hope this furthers the band to more listeners."

E: Who's the kid talking on the intro and laughing away on the outro for the all-bass instrumental track "Tendonitis" as it sounds so tongue and cheek, especially for a Zero Hour record?

Jasun: "That's Cameron Alden...Dino's son. I sometimes call my brother Troy boy and Dino asked me 'What's with the Troy Boy name.' I told him that's what my Dad use to call him as a kid and

Cameron pipes up saying 'Hi I'm Troy boy may I take your order.' We all laughed so hard and I said I'm going to make my brother do a Bass solo and have Cam say that. Troy kept fighting me saying I don't want to do a solo but I said it has to be done for the CD. Troy goes in and knocks it out in one take and Dino and I couldn't help but to be impressed. Watching Troy's Bass session was very inspiring. He looks at me with all his icepacks on his Elbows and shoulders and says "Ok smart ass what are we going to call this?" I replied "Tendonitis". My brother has been struggling with very bad tendonitis since 1995. The laugh Cameron added at the end was unexpected but perfectly fitting."

E: Any words of wisdom for our readers?

Jasun: "Just that YOU RULE SARJOO for spreading the word about Zero Hour. raise the hands of METAL to our listeners and friends. We're playing some great festivals coming up BARfest as the supporting act to The Liquid Tension Experiment. We're also confirmed to play The South Texas Rock Festival, Progpower Europe and Prog power Scandinavia. For more info check out www.myspace.com/zerohourband and www.zerohourweb.com"



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