

# GOLDMINE

# JUNE 20TH

## Magenta Metamorphosis

Laser's Edge (LE1052)  
Grade: ★★★

Not for those lacking long attention spans, *Metamorphosis* is a long climb through tricky melodic switchbacks, soaring, string-laden instrumentation and unpredictable dynamics that demand the assistance of a sherpa guide.

The weather of Magenta's fourth studio album is in constant flux, as its two 20-minute-plus epics go from dark and stormy to heavenly and

## MAGENTA

angelic in a matter of moments. Alternating between periods of sublime beauty and heavy drama, Magenta approaches disturbing, almost gothic subject matter with the pristine innocence of Christina Booth's vocals, the detailed intricacy and unbridled power of Chris Fry's virtuoso guitar playing and Rob Reed's expressive keyboards.

Following the twisting roads Magenta takes, as long as they may be, and witnessing the sonic artistry at work here makes for a lush — albeit a tad overblown and overly earnest — listening experience. Don't turn back, even if you're scared of *Metamorphosis*'s heights. — Peter Lindblad

## Kingfisher Sky Hallway of Dreams

The Laser's Edge (LE1051)  
Grade: ★★★★★

Female-fronted progressive-rock bands have become trendy and cliché, but the Dutch collective Kingfisher Sky seems determined to avoid. Founded by Ivar de Graaf (former drummer for the woman-led symphonic-metal band Within Temptation) and featuring the earthy, classically trained vocals of Judith Rijnveld, this snazzy sextet strives to move beyond the genre's tendencies toward classical-music references, operatic vocals and occasional male grunts.

Rijnveld lets loose on heavy, symphonic songs ("The Craving," "Brody" and "Sempre Fedele"), but the more subtle acoustic tracks ("Big Fish" and the Renaissance-style "Her White Dress") ultimately reveal this band's depth and refusal to be stereotyped, thus setting it apart from peers Nightwish, After Forever, Epica and, yes, Within Temptation. Kingfisher Sky's dreamy, layered blur of Clannad, Tori Amos, Pink Floyd, Peter Gabriel,

Kate Bush and Porcupine Tree doesn't easily slot into today's modern-prog landscape. But it proves that prog still can be as eclectic as it is accessible, both pretty and potent. — Michael Popke

## Zero Hour Dark Deceiver

Sensory (SR3042)  
Grade: ★★★★★

Zero Hour always has conveyed the urgency of its name via crushing and twisted prog-metal. *Dark Deceiver*, the fifth release from this San Francisco band led by brothers Ja-

(guitars) and Troy (bass) Tipton is no exception. Former Power of Ormens throat Chris S returns for the second straight album and injects *Dark Deceiver* with clean vocals and a keen sense of character and timing, channeling Queensrÿche's Geoff Tate and Evergrey's T. S. Englund. The brothers Tipton and drummer Mike Guy back Salinas with noisy, lethal and surprisingly melodic instrumentation. The shorter pieces are the most punishing, howling, including the aptly titled bass solo "Jendoni" and "Severed Angel," a soul-rattling barrage of guitar and percussion that would provide the ideal soundtrack to a gory horror film. And it's not even discussing the disturbing, bloody cover art.

The whole impressive thing is over in less than 45 minutes; any longer would simply have been too overwhelming. — lasersedgegroup.com

— Michael P.