

EAST COAST ROMPER

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STEMM--CROSSROADS CD REVIEW 2011

STEMM—CROSSROADS

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Catch 22 Records

REVIEW BY: STEPHANIE STEVENS

RATING: 8.5/10

Sophomore records are very tricky ones to tackle especially when a band like STEMM comes out with a explosive debut disc in BLOOD SCENT, but these guys took a challenge and made some good decisions musically and songwriting wise and made a 2nd disc that is pretty close to as killer or can I say better, although BLOOD SCENT will have a close place in my heart, I think CROSSROADS has a special place in my soul.

Musically this band shows off a hard edge style but supplies enough melody to make it borderline mainstream but still keeping the appeal to someone into the heavier side of rock. I don't see any considerable difference musically from this album and the past one (although some reviews I did read seems to portray them as going soft or not knowing the style they want or leaping into the mainstream) the only leap I see these NY natives doing is making better quality songs and keeping true to the sound they have always had, one listen to something like MONSTER which harasses you with in your face screams to wake you up and start your day big eyed and bushy tailed tells me that these guys havent wussed out into the light rock sounds, but as any STEMM song may do it then easily transcends into this melodic gritty verse and a chorus that sky rockets to massive melody driven ability to make radio stations not stop spinning this very obvious single. A catchy guitar riff revs you up for FLEUR DE LIS, a bold chorus and a tasty bit of rock n roll rounds out this track.

LEFT BEHIND is the bands newest single n video, I would say if you want to call anything mainstream then yea lets throw this one out there but although "mainstream", the guys have the angles covered; it's a catchy riff, the vocals are rough and rugged and displays a storyline that captivates. I just think on a whole the song has a solid grasp of what radio should be tracking and letting the public hear, a little bit of solid rock n roll, more grit and some melody shimmer will attract a rock fan far and wide.

Then as we blast further into the album we get tangled up with some driving gutsy attitude in the song PULLING TEETH which has a down n gritty hard edge rock feel with a killer chorus that willl having you singing it for days on end and some attitude that always makes a song unforgettable, plus Joe's vocals just make it exude in aggressive n gutsy appeal.

Although the whole album keeps you craving for the next song, the one song that made me stop n repeat over n over was SUPERNAUT the song blasts out with a southern upbeat tempo, its driving with melody and that raspy singing appeal just gives it a homegrown feel. Attach some smokin guitar solos and a breakdown of extra groove and funk this song is set apart from the rest of the disc and for me I love a bit of different and the band made a distinct point when they intertwined this with the rest of the disc. I can just imagine the fun the boys had with this one in the studio.

Lastly, we get to the sofest track on the album and also ends the disc AFTER THE TIDE, to be honest this song made me sad but in a good way the emotions I felt throughtout, really moved me and if anything that is what music should do spark a emotion!!!! And STEMM knocked it out of the park for me on this track. The sentimental tone of the song lays ground to a amazing vocal performance, it displays different tones and a fresh take on rock beauty.

Overall STEMM is giving you that hard edge we have grown to love and is keeping with the melodic overtones but they have progressed leaps and bounds and what they create is happiness for ones ears. CROSSROADS should push STEMM into rockstar status for sure!!

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A page to display the world of rock through my eyes and my hands. I am a journalist and I do cd reviews and interviews with up n coming bands in the metal, alternative and rock genre. Look forward to chats with solid bands and my opinions of the music of today

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