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POSTED BY MARTIJN ON OCTOBER - 13 - 2011



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Stemm – Crossroads CD (Catch 22/MVD Audio)

Remember when Machine Head were relevant? When they hit the metal community over the head with those two socks full of quarters that were their first 2 albums, full of bad-ass tracks like 'Ten Ton Hammer' and 'Davidian'? They sounded so much like Pantera (sooo much) but with just enough of an Alice In Chains element to make them kind of unique, they had killer riffs and bad-ass beats and all sorts of cool vocal things going on. Now there is Stemm, who have somehow created what would have been the perfect 3rd Machine Head album – which would have spared us all the horror of that one with the red cover and all the shameful things

that followed. Hell, these guys even repeat the line 'burn my eyes' a few dozen times in this album's opening track, with a full-on Robb Flynn approach to phrasing and melody. None of this is bad. (Well, I suppose I am pretty much bashing at least 70% of MH's recorded output but that's beside the point... although I do want to apologize to my friend and MM co-conspirator Martijn Welzen here, because I know he doesn't share my viewpoint on modern MH and is undoubtedly shaking his head in chagrin at all of this.) Machine Head's first 2 albums are AWESOME. And Stemm's 'Crossroads' is AWESOME. It really is. The vocals, the riffs, the rhythms, the melodies, the songs. All of it. AWESOME. I've been listening to this album all weekend, over and over and over. Can't get enough of it. I just can't help but think it is really Machine Head, finally putting out the logical successor to 'The More Things Change...' under a different name because they know that (almost) no one would take it seriously after all of that band's missteps over the past dozen years or so. I'm going to close this review by apologizing to the lads in Stemm as well – I mean no disrespect to you guys at all, and I seriously find 'Crossroads' to be an amazing record, so I hope you are not upset by the vintage MH comparisons, and can try to take them as the (admittedly backhanded) compliments that I intend them to be. Everyone else: just buy the damn record. It's really, really, really good. Seriously. **The Impaler**

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