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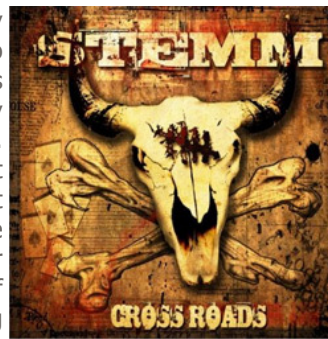
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Stemm: Cross Roads

Publisher: **MVD Entertainment Group**

I am a metal chick and I am very particular as to what I consider to be the perfect sound. Some bands I listen to because I like the way the instruments sound together. Those songs might as well not have lyrics because I can't understand the screams, but I like the way they sound. With other bands, I really like the theme of the song or maybe the song writing, but usually the instrumentals are a bit weak. With **Stemm**, I don't run into either of these problems. **Stemm** demonstrates the perfect combination of hard hitting instruments combined with a clean vocalist and lyrics that have meaning.



Stemm starts off **Cross Roads** with a song called "Salvation" which is a very solid, very heavy track that will get your heart pumping and sets the stage perfectly for the rest of the album. The second song, "Fleur de Lis," continues just as heavily. Next up is "Dead Inside," which is a bit more melodic. It's still not slow, but is just a bit slower. I really like "Dead Inside." Like on their previous album, *Blood Scent*, **Stemm** manages to take songs about emotional things and still make them fit in the metal genre perfectly. I think that my favorite thing about "Dead Inside" is that while it is angry and expresses that anger and frustration that we all feel after a break up, it still manages to make you feel better in that near the end, the lyrics change from "I don't think that I can love again" to "I know someday I'll learn to live again... But not till you walk out that door." I really like that confidence to move on. It helps you feel like you can do the same thing. I think that "Dead Inside" is one of my all-time favorite songs now, simply for the powerful yet still emotional quality that it portrays. Of course, the next song is a very close second for my favorite. "Monster" has lines like "I try every waking moment of my life to hide the monster that is building up inside." The concept speaks to me once again. It's like they have managed to put into words all the things that I can't manage to express myself.

While I don't have space here to go into such detail, I can tell you that I love them all. "Left Behind" is a loss of love song where he just doesn't know what is going on with the relationship and wants

to know. I know we've all been in that situation and the music that goes along with the lyrics manage to punch the concept home even better. "Before the Storm" is a purely instrumental song that showcases **Stemm's** talents quite well. Once again "Smile & Wave" is a heavy song, but uplifting in that it's about persevering no matter what happens. Life isn't always nice and people can be horrible, but we need to just keep pushing on through. Closing out the CD is a slower song called "After the Tide" that must have sparked the title of the album from one of the lines. It reminds me a bit of *Black Label Society* but I couldn't tell you exactly why or how, sorry. Microsoft Nintendo Windows Apple Mobile Media Archives


Just like their previous album, there is not a single song on **Cross Roads** that I don't like. They follow old school metal and actually have heavy guitar solos and strong bass and drums that really show the talent of the entire band. Given that this is **Stemm's** third CD that totally rocks, I believe that they have proved that they have the staying power to continually create wonderful albums and I'm just hoping that it's not 3 more years until the next one. Of course, given that they come out with masterpieces, I believe that it is worth the wait! You can listen to their music on their website if you want to hear it before buying, but I will bet that once you hear them, you will want to own everything. I recommend that any metal fans go check out **Stemm's Cross Roads** today as they are a perfect example of what a great metal band should sound like.

-Cyn, GameVortex Communications
AKA Sara Earl

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