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ALBUM REVIEW – NINETAIL – HALF TRUTHS AND HAND GRENADES

January 23rd, 2010

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This six piece Metal act from York, Pennsylvania have quite a unique and powerful thing going on. They just need to wait until their budget, and thus their production values, catches up to their ideas so it can do them justice.

Almost every riff, groove and vocal line on this record works. Indeed, singer J. William Heitman has been blessed with some pretty scary lungs and an ultra pissed-off attitude, and his vocals are absolutely dead on the money. Ninetail attempt to take their slightly industrial Death Metal sounds to some different places, avoiding most of the cliched trappings of the genre, and on the most part do it rather well. Their musicianship is fairly basic, purely by today's intense and intricate Metal standards, but what they do play is played with confidence and strength. They infuse their sound with some tasteful yet eerie and atmospheric keyboard/programming effects (especially on 'God Willing' and 'Trials of a Madman') that give the ear something slightly different to focus on amid the barrage of heavily overdriven guitars and pounding drums. I admire a band that is willing to do this in the face of the negative and conservative attitudes of a lot of Metalheads towards this type of thing.

In a nutshell, they're a band that shows great promise, it's just that 'Half Truths and Hand Grenades' sounds like it was recorded on an extremely tight time and money budget, and this unfortunately shows out, holding the album back from being quite a devastating Metal listening experience. The drums especially, and the sound overall, lacks the punch and depth that modern Metal albums have in spades. Give them a greater budget, get them in the studio with someone like Andy Sneap, and the results could be seismic.

I'm very much interested in hearing their next recording. This gets ***1/2.

Rod Whitfield

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