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Mortification

Blood World (reissue)

Metal Mind Productions/MVD
Audio

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Mortification are the standard bearers when it comes to Christian extreme metal. The band, alongside Vengeance Rising, Tourniquet, and Deliverance, made amazing records throughout the nineties, few of which are forgotten among fans but many of which are extremely hard to find these days. Tourniquet and Mortification each received worldwide critical acclaim and commercial success during an era when extreme metal, Christian oriented or otherwise, was barely alive. The Metal Mind Productions reissues finally make these classics (and some not so classics) available again.

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Blood World is the band's fifth studio album and follows their well-received live album Live Planetarium. This is one of the most significant albums in the band's catalog because it not only marks a new musical direction (incorporating hardcore and punk roots and shedding the death metal vocal that propelled the band to the top of the food chain on their previous albums) but also marks the first of many lineup changes for the band post their breakthrough self-titled album. For Blood World, Phil Gibson fills the drum stool, replacing early album mastermind Jayson Sherlock. By the end of the tour cycle for this album Steve Rowe alone would be Mortification and the band would never be the same.

This is one of the Mortification albums that you really liked when it came out originally but it has a hard time standing the test of time. Opening with the fast and furious "Clan of the Light," Gibson's drumming immediately proves lacking. It's hard to fill a guy like Sherlock's shoes and the revolving drum stool since 1994 is solid evidence of that. The title track fares better, bombarding the listener with the message in a way that hadn't been as noticeable on previous albums due to the fact that Rowe's vocals were harder to decipher. "Monks of the High Lord" is a Mortification classic and one of the best examples of their fusion of styles. A studio version of the song "Symbiosis" also destroys here. Originally appearing on the preceding live album, this is one of the few songs of this era that could have been on the first four albums. It's also one of the last times we'd here the classic

Rowe vocal (appearing sporadically throughout the song).

The bonus tracks here include the studio recordings "Altar of God," a groove oriented slab of metal, and "Entering the Eternal Dawn," a nearly grindcore beast that will have longtime fans hankering for the "old days." Also included are live recordings of the songs "Bloodworld" and "New Beginnings."

Overall, if you are unfamiliar with the band then this is not the place to start. That said, this album was a lot more commercially successful than many of the others. This came off of three exceptional studio albums though with one of the best extreme metal lineups in the history of the genre.

Bottom Line: Blood World certainly has it's moments in the sun but much of it is the sound of a band trying to find their feet again.

Key Tracks: "Bloodworld," "Your Life," "Monks of the High Lord"

Reviewed by: **Mark Fisher**

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