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Mortification

Primitive Rhythm Machine  
(reissue)

Metal Mind/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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Primitive Rhythm Machine is the follow up to the Mortification's most successful album, Blood World, and is also a testament to their most volatile time. At this point Mortification is basically an unintentional Steve Rowe solo venture. Utilizing hired guns Rowe presses on though, creating one of the band's finest albums in retrospect. My friends will attest to what a massive statement this is coming from my mouth as this is one of the few Mortification albums that I hated when it was initially released. Revisiting it after an absence though has convinced me my judgment in 1995 was not as solid as it is today.

The album boasts a number of great tracks and is probably their most diverse album overall. The title track is a tribally influenced slab of near post-hardcore hardness. "The True Essence of Power" and "Mephibosheth" are classically influenced, straight on hard rock tunes that show the band in a different light (something most fans rejected at the time). The latter also lays the ground work for the band's more epic material that would come out over the next few years. "Confused Belief" and "Gut Wrench" try hard to hang on to the "old" sound but at this point, without Sherlock and Carlisle it's evident that that's not possible. Still they are great songs in their own right; they just lack the spark of the band's earlier work. The centerpiece here is the amazing "40:31," a great piece of metal no matter what your particular extreme preferences are. It also boasts the drum sound that Metallica failed so miserably with on "Some Kind of Monster." I guess they should

have listened to this album before they headed into the studio. If so, they would have understood how to use it.

As with most Metal Mind releases, this one also includes bonus tracks in the form of live studio takes of the title track, "Mephibosheth," "The Majestic Infiltration of Order" (from their debut), "JGSH" (from Post Momentary Affliction), and "Killing Evil." In the grand scheme of this band's catalog *Primitive Rhythm Machine* is a must have. I suggest it even more so if you didn't like it in your younger days.

**Bottom Line:** Versatile, experimental, and embracing an unknown future, this is an important step in the evolution of Mortification.

**Key Tracks:** "Primitive Rhythm Machine" and "40:31"

Reviewed by: **Mark Fisher**

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