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REVIEW

Music Review: Flotsam & Jetsam - *When the Storm Comes Down*

Written by [Chris Beaumont](#)

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In the 1980s, when it came to metal it was mostly about Metallica, Megadeth, Anthrax, and Slayer. Beyond them, there was Testament, Exodus, and Death Angel. However, after those bands, and probably a few others, there was one band I do not recall hearing anyone talk about. That band was Flotsam & Jetsam.

Granted, my exposure to people talking metal was low. With only one true metal fan that I could call friend, I was stuck in the hair metal scene cutting my teeth on music fandom. Still, it was not until 1993 and the release of *Cuatro* that I really heard of them (it was probably also around this time that I learned this is where Metallica's Jason Newsted had come from). Anyway, *When the Storm Comes Down* was the band's third album, arriving in 1990, and their debut with MCA Records after parting ways with Elektra.

Taking my exposure to Flotsam & Jetsam a step further, the only album I had ever heard from the band, prior to the recent arrival of this re-release, was *Cuatro*. Now there is a gem of an album, filled with excellent tunes that have aged well. Before they could release that underrated album, they gave us *When the Storm Comes Down*, an album that is not nearly as strong as what would follow, but not without its charms.

The first thing that is immediately noticeable about this set of music is that the production is not very strong. The overall sound is a little muddy, and the levels seem to be at odds with each other, with the vocals dominating the mix at times and the drums stuck too far to the back. Also, unrelated to the mix, the songs are not terribly catchy, they are all over the map with the riffs and lead breaks. It is hard to put my finger on it, but the writing just does not seem to be quite on point.

Among the bands considered at the top of the thrash genre, Flotsam & Jetsam does not seem to fit. There are definite thrash stylings to their music, but they have a stronger melodic element, and the clean vocals of Eric A.K. These elements help them stand out a bit from the crowd, or at least put them into comparison to Anthrax territory, so far as the vocal styles are concerned.

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Christopher Beaumont spends much of his time writing about entertainment when he isn't sitting in a movie theater. He is known around the office as the "Movie Guy" and is always ready to talk about his favorite form of entertainment and offer up recommendations. Interests include science fiction, horror, and metal music. His writings can be found at [Draven99's Musings](#), as well as [Film School Rejects](#).

Comments

#1 - May 28, 2008 @ 10:05AM - Brian aka Guppymaximus

In the 1980s, when it came to metal it was mostly about Metallica, Megadeth, Anthrax, and Slayer

Dude, you always point to the four popular Thrash bands as the only thing going on in Metal in the 80's. This is entirely inaccurate. For "Thrash" they were very popular & quite strong in their releases but they weren't the only ones putting out killer metal!

Annihilator
Sacred Reich
Grim Reaper
Kreator
Sodom
Sepultura
Pestilence
Atrophy
Believer
Devastation
Dark Angel
Carnivore
Defiance
S.O.D.
Forbidden
Laaz Rockit
Metal Church
Nuclear Assault
Sadus
Suicidal Tendencies
Armored Saint
Tourniquet
Watchtower

These were all sick bands for their time and I'm still fond of them. Seriously, I know you are trying to further your knowledge of this genre and that you started out late but you should really do some more research before throwing an entire decade "under the bus".

As for Flotsam & Jetsam, everyone knows that *No Place for Disgrace* was their only solid release as a genuine thrash/metal band.

As far as I can remember, production values weren't always the important focus in releasing material. A lot of these bands including Anthrax, were basically poor, trying to live their dream & showcase their talent. Unlike today's bands (especially in the US) that dump all their effort into studio magic & don't have a lick of talent!

#2 - May 28, 2008 @ 10:20AM - Triniman [\[URL\]](#)

Well, I think back in the early 80s, the big metal bands were still Maiden, Priest, Scorpions, AC/DC. The fastest rising bands in the genre of thrash were certainly Metallica, Anthrax, Slayer and Megadeth (and Helloween, IMHO.) Most of the bands in Brian's list may have been putting out killer metal, and several of them I still like, but they were secondary in terms of rising popularity compared to the four big thrash bands that Chris listed.

#3 - May 28, 2008 @ 10:43AM - Brian aka Guppymaximus

Thanks for restating the obvious...

Even so, my point was that for many like Chris, they were stuck on what was popular over here in the US and that does not define the genre in whole as I was also trying to showcase how little people really know of the relevant category of "Thrash". Those bands may be a point of reference for people who are new to this style of music but it doesn't show where the genre ultimately went after the "big four" started releasing weaker material.

AND, as far as I'm concerned the "big four" still only had one strong/pinnacle album apiece and really shouldn't outshine what other bands were doing for the scene at the same time!

#4 - May 28, 2008 @ 10:47AM - Brian aka Guppymaximus

*Again...Throwing the entire decade "under the bus".

#5 - May 28, 2008 @ 11:31AM - Brian aka Guppymaximus

Since when was AC/DC considered Metal?!

Even in the early 80's with releases from DIO, Maiden, Malmsteen, Armored Saint, Overkill, etc. I don't see how AC/DC could have ever been considered Metal. Once again, the popularity factor & peer pressure makes Metal

2.Pick up Watchtower *Energetic Disassembly*

3.Pick up DEATH *Spiritual Healing*

4.Examine not only how Metal Massacre showcases the heaviness that was slowly dominating the underground scene from 1982-1989 but how both Watchtower & Death would pioneer in the 80's & predict a revolution in the 90's as most of your audience controlled by the popular Metal culture would lose sight & wonder off into Glam hell!!

*Side note: Even by my mistake...Overkill gets Overlooked far too often.

Extra Credit: Pick up *Under the Influence*

#6 - May 29, 2008 @ 11:06AM - Sean Miller

About time someone mentioned OVERKILL!!

