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FLOTSAM AND JETSAM
Cuatro [Remastered]
Metal Mind Productions 2008
www.flotsam-and-jetsam.com

Genre

Thrash metal / hard rock / heavy metal

The Good

You may only know the band as the one Metallica's Jason Newsted used to be in, but these underground thrash metal legends had everything their mainstream counterparts had. Monster riffage, killer solos, pissed off lyrics, and fist pumping anthems. The group started in 1982 but didn't get their major label break until 1990 (you know where the story goes from there). For their fourth album the group decided to tread the same ground as those thrashers that came before them; they went commercial. Say what you want, but it worked for Metallica and Megadeth, and Flotsam and Jetsam were no different. Well, except for the platinum records. Hey, it was 1990.

Thumping bass lines mixed with chugga-chugga fury set the pace for the album's opener "Natural Enemy." Pounding drums and melodic, yet edgy vocals take you the rest of the way. "Swatting at Flies" is all about the riffage and guitar licks. "The Message" almost sounds like early Queensryche as vocalist Eric AK treads falsetto territory. "Wading Through the Darkness" [sample] is an epic track that is almost movie soundtrack-like with it's multi-emotional sections. "Double Zero" is about how it's getting harder and harder to trust anyone. "Never Reveal" is a pure thrash assault with all guitars blazing and drums firing on all cylinders.

"Are You Willing" has one of those bass line intros that you won't forget. Much like Megadeth's "Peace Sells." "(Ain't Nothing Gonna) Save This World" experiments with sound bites. Five bonus cuts are included on this re-release. "Date With Hate" is the only fresh track as the rest are remixes (and one's a video). "Wading Through the Darkness" returns as a radio edit and a decent industrial mix. You can watch the video too. "Cradle Me Now" is also presented as a radio edit. Get your copy now, only 2000 are being pressed.

The Bad

Nothing

The Verdict

Growing up as a metalhead in the eighties, the thrash metal scene was what I craved. Once the bigger acts got a bit repetitive for my liking, I sought out the underground stuff. I actually discovered Flotsam and Jetsam's fifth album first, Drift, and was blown away by the musicianship. Cuatro is no different. In fact, the group finds a perfect balance between underground thrash and commercial thrash without selling out their sound. Cuatro is an undiscovered metal classic. If you look hard enough, you'll find the group is still out there making noise.

Did You Know?

Flotsam and Jetsam were once known as Dredlox and Dogz.

Rating:  out of 5

--George Dionne

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