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CD Reviews

News

Book Reviews

Concerts

Interviews

Staff

Archives

Contact

Home

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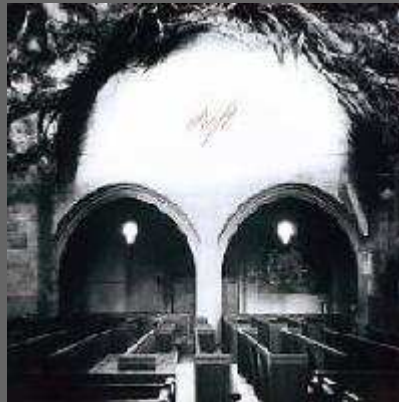
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Flotsam and Jetsam

Drift (reissue)

Universal/Metal Mind

www.musicvideodistributors.com

Flotsam and Jetsam are the best band you've never heard of. Touring and recording almost relentlessly since the early 1980's the band are well-known among die-hard fans of heavy music (although they are better known as "the band Jason Newsted was in before he joined Metallica" which has likely helped and hurt them over the years). The band even appeared on a major label for a trio of albums in the early nineties. "Drift" is the third of those albums and a longtime fan favorite, in addition to being easily the most personal of the band's recordings in regards to the lyrics.

"Drift" was the band's fifth album and was written in large part by bassist Jason Ward, who had joined in 1990. Flotsam and Jetsam really depart from their thrash roots here for most of the album, choosing to really center the dynamics of the music around Ward's heartfelt lyrics, most of which relate to the suicide of his brother Jeff Ward, a well-known drummer who had worked with Revolting Cocks, Nine Inch Nails, Lard, and Ministry, and was well-established in his own right. Anyone who has lost someone close to them to such a selfish act can certainly relate to nearly every lyric on this album. From the opening boogie drive of "Me," declaring "I feel guilty for being alive/ I've been hiding out in the basement of my mind..." to the heavy groove of the menacing "Pick a Window" to the more familiar sound of the album's semi-hit "Smoked Out," this is a much more diverse Flotsam and Jetsam than we have seen before or since.

Personally, I have always loved this album and still do. I think it's easily their best and proves without a doubt that they were the premier band of

their generation. Unfortunately this album is also plagued by it's diversity in the eyes of many heavy music fans and critics. The diversity can be argued as a last ditch attempt to maintain their deal with a major label (which I'm sure paid better than Metal Blade). For my money though, this is the best place in the band's wholly excellent catalog to start. The reissue version also contains radio edits of "Smoked Out" and "Destructive Signs" as well as a cover of Black Sabbath's "Fairies Where Boots."

Bottom Line: If you own one album by these guys, make it this one. Screw the naysayers.

Key Tracks: "Me," "Pick a Window"

Reviewed by: **Mark Fisher**

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