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Music: Flotsam and Jetsam: Drift

Our Take

Rounding out the three Flotsam and Jetsam reissues from Metal Metal Mind Productions is *Drift*, the group's fifth full length album and follow up to *Cuatro*. Whereas *Cuatro* saw the band starting to move away from some of their thrash roots and move more towards hard rock melodies, *Drift* fully completed this transformation and took it in an even darker direction than before. And while the material here isn't as heavy hitting on the release that preceded it, this is still a quality album that listeners will really be able to get into if they give it a chance.

The song structures on *Drift* aren't all that different from what the instrumentalists had written on their previous release, but there is an increased focus on melody and an overall darker tone when compared to before. There are still some moments where the band goes for speed, but for the most part the songs on this album are all mid-tempo and are focused on atmospheric melodies and a heavy edge. During this period of the band's career bass guitarist Jason Ward had suffered the loss of his brother, and it seems as though the anger and intensity from this experience rubbed off on the group's music. In terms of energy and overall style this release is certainly stronger than before, but unfortunately the songs themselves don't have quite as many hooks when compared to *Cuatro*. Both discs are worthy in their own right though, and the three extras that Metal Mind has added for the reissue does give *Drift* a bit more life for those who may have heard it before.

On almost every album vocalist Eric Knutson has had a different singing style, and this trend continues on *Drift*. Whereas his vocals had shifted to a much more melodic and slightly higher pitched style on *Cuatro*, here it is a lot more aggressive and has gone to a slightly lower pitch once again. It's almost as though Knutson was trying to keep some of the hard rock styles from *Cuatro* but add back some of the thrash ranges and pitches that he had early on, and this ends up working quite well. Although some of his previous vocal experimentations didn't work out quite so well (see my *When the Storm Comes Down* review for more details on that), for *Drift* the risk paid off quite nicely.

If you've only got money for one of these reissues and are either an established fan of Flotsam and Jetsam or a newcomer I would recommend *Cuatro*, but if you have a little more cash to spend pick up *Drift* as well. While it doesn't initially hook you as much as you might expect, give it a few spins and before you know it many of the tracks will be stuck in your head for quite some time. This part of the band's career was certainly one of their best, and it is great to see that Metal Mind is trying to get the material out to new listeners.

<http://www.metalmind.com.pl>

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