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REVIEW

Music Review: Gardenian - *Sindustries*

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In 1997 Gardenian made their debut with *Two Feet Stand*. Unhappy with the label, Listenable Records, the band left and attracted interest from Nuclear Blast. Nuclear Blast would go on to release 1999's *Soulburner*, followed by their final album, *Sindustries*, in 2000.

The former was a good example of the Gothenburg sound, pioneered by acts such as In Flames, while the latter proved to be a more straightforward metal release with a touch of industrial creeping in. This album was produced by Peter Tägtgren (*Hypocrisy*, *Pain*), where *Soulburner* had been produced by Gardenian themselves. His influence gave this release a much crisper sound than *Soulburner*, although it is overall a bit less distinctive.

Having experienced both *Soulburner* and *Sindustries*, I find that I like *Sindustries* a little bit more than *Soulburner*. It is odd as I feel this album gets away from the band's melodic death metal sound, and they are robbed of the elements that helped them stand out. Now, before you fans get all up in arms, I still think their best songs are on *Soulburner*. Weird, don't you think? There is a certain consistency in their sound here that did not exist on the prior release, and I am attracted to the production values and crispness of execution found here.

Unlike *Soulburner*, *Sindustries* finds vocalist Jim Kjell providing all of the clean vocals as well as his trademark growls. You see, the former featured Artch vocalist Eric Hawk supplying his considerable pipes to the cause, delivering the clean portions that Kjell did not feel he could pull off. I sort of wish that Hawk had returned to clean vocal duties, as Kjell does not quite have the vocal abilities to supply great clean sections. Still, his attempt is admirable and does add a quality that sets it apart. He is not bad by any stretch, and they do some interesting layered vocals using both clean and growled styles on songs such as "Doom & Gloom," providing another layer of interest.

The more I listen to *Sindustries*, I feel that the sound change is more than the just a change of producer. I do feel that Peter Tägtgren had a big influence on the outcome of the album; it is still the same band writing the songs. While there is still a lot of melody and little brutality in the mix, it appears that Gardenian was heading in a new direction. They seemed to be moving away from the Gothenburg sound. Where they were heading is anyone's guess, as this proved to be their final album. Still, the evidence is here. I wonder if the apparent directional shift had anything to do with their decision to call it quits? The world may never know.

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Christopher Beaumont spends much of his time writing about entertainment

Comments

