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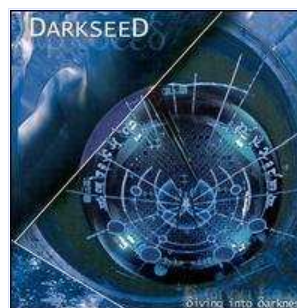
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Darkseed: Spellcraft/Give Me Light/Diving Into Darkness (Remasters)

Gothic metal for the masses? That appears to be what Germany's Darkseed were shooting for in the late Nineties and early 2000s. These three handsome reissues, remastered on golden discs using 24-bit processing and limited to 2,000 copies each, introduce a new generation of headbangers to the seminal albums Darkseed made for Nuclear Blast: 1997's *Spellcraft*, 1999's *Give Me Light*, and 2000's controversial *Diving Into Darkness* (pictured).



By combining melodic elements of doom, progressive and death metal wrapped in gothic atmospheres, Darkseed planted the best from all those genres into its thick music. Many songs on these three albums borrowed from the Seventies and Eighties, and the band's use of high-pitched male vocals that fell somewhere between Geddy Lee and Lita Ford provided a compelling complement to old-school death growls. What's more, the band's delicate and subtle use of female vocals set the standard for a whole wave of female-fronted bands. Darkseed offered something for nearly every degree of metalhead.

Parts of "Be Ever Heard" from *Spellcraft* sound like Ted Nugent, while the intro to *Give Me Light*'s "Fusion" could be an Alan Parsons Project track. But even those unexpected turns may not have prepared listeners for *Diving Into Darkness*. The album featured Darkseed pared to a clean-cut trio and invoking the electro-rock elements of Depeche Mode, thanks largely to a cold, modulated and echo-laden vocal treatment. But the band's fourth album also ranks among Darkseed's heaviest and most aggressive works — particularly album opener "Forever Darkness" and the razor-sharp "Can't Find You."

Darkseed would go on to record two more discs for Massacre Records before calling it quits in 2005. (The band's MySpace page, however, indicates a new album is slated for release in spring 2009.) Regardless of whether that happens, the group already has left a legacy that should be more obvious to more people. Over the course of these three musically diverse but inextricably linked albums, Darkseed managed to say more both lyrically and musically (and in less time) than many of the bands it inspired.