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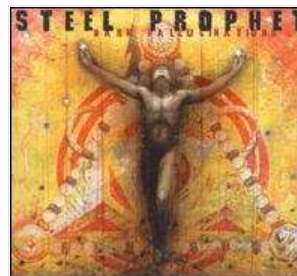
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Steel Prophet: *Dark Hallucinations/Genesis/Book of the Dead (Remasters)*

One of power metal's most underrated (dare I say forgotten) bands, America's Steel Prophet has managed to mix aggressive, borderline-thrash and/or progressive metal with some supremely melodic arrangements. These three well-packaged reissues — 1999's *Dark Hallucinations* (pictured), 2000's *Genesis* and 2001's *Book of the Dead*, complete with the original detailed liner notes from the band — represent most of Steel Prophet's tenure at Nuclear Blast Records and now are available in limited-edition golden discs that have been remastered using 24-bit processing.



Although released in 2000, *Genesis* included Steel Prophet's 1989 demo tape, *Inner Ascendance*, which featured the band playing as fast as it could and Rick Mythiasin singing as high as he could, and there's not much to set the band apart from early Fates Warning, one of the Steel Prophet's greatest influences. Mixed by Bill Metoyer, who apparently at the time had to go by the pseudonym Gordon Shumway (named after a character in the television sit-com *A/I*), the demo lyrically presented six philosophical essays by founding guitarist Steve Kachinsky. The second half of *Genesis* was more musically and lyrically compelling, with Steel Prophet sounding like a well-oiled machine taking on six covers — five by bands it frequently cites as influences (Iron Maiden, Metallica, Judas Priest, Dio-era Black Sabbath and Accept), and one by pop-rock band Simple Minds. But it is that latter tune, a significantly altered version of "Don't You Forget About Me," that proved Steel Prophet had both the chops and the confidence to move forward.

Dark Hallucinations, released after two full-length LPs and an EP that came in the wake of *Inner Ascendance*, is essentially a metal album about — get ready for it — the importance of books in modern society! The concept album based on Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* showed off the band's knack for twin-guitar leads and its ability to craft memorable songs and solos. In fact, so complete is this record that a faithful cover of Fates Warning's "The Apparition" seems tacked on at the end.

A pair of albums in 2000 (the *Genesis* compilation and *Messiah*) built up to *Book of the Dead*, released the following year. It