

# Reviews : Albums : Solitude Aeternus, "Beyond the Crimson Horizon [reissue]"



Solitude Aeternus  
Beyond the Crimson Horizon [reissue]  
[Metal Mind Records](#)  
2007

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Solitude Aeternus' second full length gets the deluxe digi-pack remaster treatment. Truth be told, the remastering comes across as little more than bumping up the levels, but the production on the original was solid. The guitars do have a bit more bite than they did on the original pressings and yet still maintain their grimy feel. The band is heralded for being flag-bearers of traditional doom metal and deservedly so - they rock the bowels of Hell with the best of 'em. The music is plodding, monolithic and - dare I say – epic. The wailing, high-pitched vocals of Robert Lowe deliver the emotional impact needed to create the proper desperate atmosphere.

While much of the record sulks in the slower tempos, the band also displayed their old school power metal chops when they shifted into overdrive and added driving rhythms. Black Sabbath and Candlemass are the obvious points of reference, but the double-bass boom of early Metal Church also served as inspiration. The band added color via use of bright acoustic guitars and morose, church-organ keyboards. The noodly, melodic guitar solos are tastefully done and help build momentum for the tracks and occasional forays into whammy-bar diving adds proper tension. The recording features a muscular bottom end and I really enjoy all of the accents that drummer John Covington provided.

I want to make it clear that I really enjoy this album, but like all doom, the riffs are familiar and repetitive, and while Lowe is a very capable vocalist, he does tend to reuse the same phrasing and cadences – so while there is plenty here for doom metal aficionados (like me) to sink their teeth into, I suspect it may be a bit too much of the same-ole-same-ole to appeal to the merely curious (which probably explains why the band is still an underground sensation after all these years rather than the high profile legends I believe they deserve to be).

The original instrumental outro "Beyond..." was an ominous four-minute march into the bleak night that served as the perfect ending for the record (with church bells and all). This version, however, features two bonus tracks. The first, "City of Armageddon", clocks in at nearly eight minutes and is an impressive, lurching tune that gives way to a rapid pummeling at its half-way point. Also included is an archaic rehearsal tape for "It Came Upon One Night" that was recorded on a boom box (and sounds like it) with the band's original line-up. This faster version is of mild interest if you're a musical archaeologist (I'm not, but it's fun to hear once).

I truly enjoy this album and think everyone should own it, but I've been into doom ever since I heard Black Sabbath's first album back in the '70s, so take my enthusiasm with a heavy grain of salt if muscular dirges ain't your bag. That said - this one's "Buy or die" for doom fans.

D.Berger