

Reviews : Albums : Realm, "Endless War [reissue]"

You know, I'm hard pressed to say anything bad about Realm, and their album Endless War. These guys were talented as all hell, they were good songwriters, and they worked hard at what they did. They made some A-class thrash/speed metal, just on the whole it wasn't all that groundbreaking.

Don't let that get in the way of a quality release, though.

Realm's vocalist Mark Antoni is AWESOME. Let me get that out there. This guy had a set of pipes and he's the driving force behind this band, and the largest factor setting them apart from a second-tier Testament or Forbidden clone - which, let's get that off the floor, is what to expect comparison-wise with the riffs and song structures. Definite Bay Area thrash/speed sound along the lines of the aforementioned bands, and maybe some Coroner and even Savatage. Imagine Testament (and believe me, the opening title track sounds like it's straight off The Legacy) with upped musicianship and a powerful set of singing pipes (no offense to the immortal Chuck Billy!), although not quite as memorable on most tracks, despite their catchiness... I think they just didn't have the songwriting that some of the legends did. Realm often falls more to the speed metal side, having the speed and intensity of thrash but trading crunch and brutality for tech skill and melody. Their solos are made for air guitar.

I want to add that Track 6 is an excellent cover of The Beatles' Eleanor Rigby, and the best song on the album. I didn't think I'd care, but they turn it around on its heels into a glam/power metal masterpiece. When bands do better covers than their songs, that tells me that the band they're covering wrote better songs (obviously!), and that the band doing the covering has potential for better songs themselves.

I actually started out not having much care for this release, and I was ready to write something quick and pass them off as another decent 80's thrash band, but having 2 subsequent long drives with this album in the car really gave me time to analyze how solid this band was and how unfortunate it is that they've been overlooked by bigger bands, a lot of which weren't even as good as them. It's sad to think that there are millions who have probably only in their lifetime heard Slayer, Metallica, Pantera, Sepultura, maybe Megadeth or Anthrax or Testament, for their entire thrash experience... and none of them will even hear this band as a whisper in their ears.

I've written way too much, and anyone who's read all of this probably likes thrash and wants to check this band out. Well, Metal Mind has remastered and reissued it with fancy packaging, Realm's got their chance to make some heads bang again and you should look for Endless War

<http://www.deadtide.com/reviews/albums/page.php?id=3805>

