

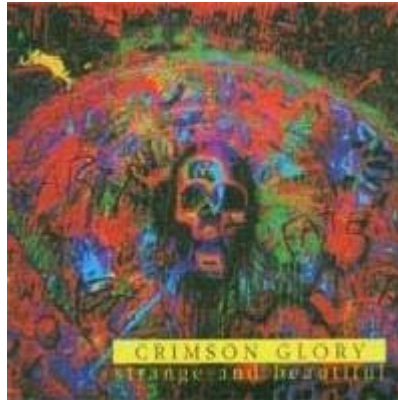
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Crimson Glory

Strange and Beautiful (reissue)

Metal Mind/Roadrunner

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Crimson Glory were one of the most talented bands in the late eighties/early nineties. Amidst a flurry of MTV hair bands, Crimson Glory stood out as a unique, often unmarketable voice in the wilderness. 1991's *Strange and Beautiful* was the band's third release and shortly thereafter vocalist Midnight would exit, causing them to call it a day until their reunion (sans Midnight who would be replaced by the amazing Wade Black) for 1999's *Astronomica*. In addition to the full album, this re-issued version of *Strange and Beautiful* contains a bonus track entitled "Far Away."

Where to start? *Strange and Beautiful* is exactly that. According to the liner notes (written by guitarist Jon Drenning and Midnight) the majority of these songs are "psycho-sexual." Midnight and Drenning appeared to be exploring their animalistic sexual fantasies, judging by this album it's safe to assume that it probably involved drugs in some fashion as well. This is a complete departure from the band's self-titled debut and sophomore records. Imagine Queensryche all of sudden playing like Badlands, or even Mother Love Bone, and you have a good idea of where this album went.

Perhaps the most surprising part of *Strange and Beautiful* is that some of it is not quite as ridiculous as it sounds like it is. There are a number of good solid funky hard rock songs on the album including "The Chant" (which was not written by the band), the title track, the ballad "Song For Angels," and the middle Eastern influenced sound of "In the Mood." That said there are a number of not so great songs as well so really you have a 50/50 shot at liking anything on this album. If you didn't like the early Crimson Glory albums you may want to give this reissue of *Strange and Beautiful* a try because it stands out like a sore thumb in their catalog.

Revisiting this album hasn't made me like it any more or less. The album stands up in a straightforward way, easy to decipher and easy to swallow down. Like I said, if this were a Badlands, Kick Axe, or even a Mother Love Bone album I'd probably love it. I love it when bands try new things but Crimson Glory obviously took a misstep here. The band still exhibits a ton of talent and, if nothing else proves that they could write songs as well as any of the early nineties Top 40 bands. All in all though this album simply creeps me out.

Reviewed by: **Mark Fisher**

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