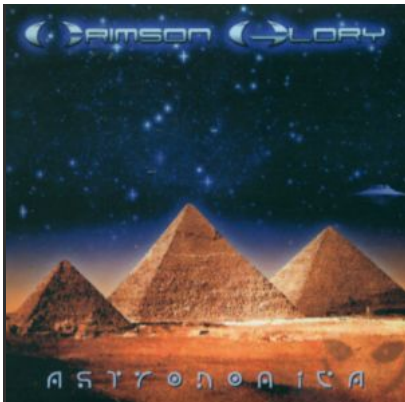


# Reviews : Albums : Crimson Glory, "Astronomica [reissue]"



Crimson Glory  
Astronomica [reissue]  
[Metal Mind Records](#)  
2007

#### BAND INFORMATION

[Official Website](#)

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This deluxe digi-pack is a limited edition, remastered reissue of Crimson Glory's 1999 "comeback" album that also includes a 50-minute long bonus disc of demo and live recordings. The band started off with two strong (some would say classic) Queensryche-influenced prog metal releases in '86 (self-titled) and '88 ("Transcendence"). Unfortunately they then put out a commercially-aimed clunker in '91 ("Strange and Beautiful") that left most everyone scratching their heads. After that debacle, Crimson Glory went on hiatus until '97 when Jon Drenning (guitars) and Jeff Lords (bass) decided to reform the band. Ben Jackson (guitar) signed on but original drummer Ravi Jakhotia and vocalist Midnight decided to forgo the reunion. Thus on "Astronomica" we have Savatage drummer Steve Wachholz (no stranger to over-the-top prog metal) and journeyman screamer Wade Black on vocals.

The album starts out with a cover of an Enya tune (yes - that Celtic new age chick). The song is dramatically altered into a militaristic march to coincide with album's concept (based on H.G. Wells' "War of the Worlds"). Between tracks we're treated to (or bedeviled by, depending on your point of view) samples of apocalyptic prophecy. The album covers a gamut of tempos and styles and features Black in all of his guises, from piercing skreecher to capable balladeer. The 12-page booklet has an introduction that

claims the addition of Wade Black brought more power and aggression to the music - I'll agree with the aggression, but I wouldn't fault Midnight for his power or range in comparison to Wade. Speaking of which, Black's voice is certainly the lynchpin here, as some love his versatility while others are totally annoyed by his screaming (which could easily be mistaken for a cat in heat at times). Personally, I dig the dude's efforts, but I'm an old fart that loves Halford and his hundreds of whinnying offspring - so caveat emptor. That said, Black is way less annoying to me than that kid in 3 Inches of Blood.

Musically there's little for me to criticize. The guitarists are deft players that compliment one another whether they're dabbling in Middle Eastern acoustics or harmonizing on two-handed hammer-on solos. Lords is a tasty bassist who wanders off on his own or solidifies Wachholz's pounding rhythms. The song structures ebb and flow creatively and never wander off too far into the netherrealms of prog masturbation. Tempos range from speedy metal assaults to hard rockin' stomps to mystical acoustics. As the album progresses there are a few tracks that drag, but overall I find it an interesting listen.

The bonus disc features a remake of "War of the Worlds" (it's about a minute longer), demo versions of "Astronomica" and "Touch the Sun" and five classic tracks recorded live in 1989. The remake and demos sound almost exactly like the final versions to these old ears, but the live stuff is appreciated. All in all a very worthy addition to anyone's prog metal collection, but I don't have the original release of this album, so I can't really say whether it's worth updating for those of you who do.

#### STANDOUT TRACKS

Astronomica  
New World Machine  
War of the Worlds  
Cydonia