



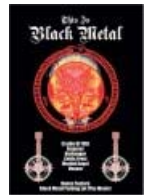
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REVIEW

Music Reviews: Pink Floyd, Vital Remains, Of Hearts & Shadows, Rick Wakeman, Black Metal and More

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This will be another bumper batch of reviews, not the paltry five reviews column, so you might need a liquid refreshment to get through this lot. We have everything from the blackest of metal to pretty frock metal to the dulcet tones of Jon Anderson.

DVD Reviews

Various: *This is Black Metal*

As the name implies this is a feature length movie on DVD about the black metal scene. There are interviews with such bands as Celtic Frost, Morbid Angel and Satyricon. Videos are included as well with everything from Cradle of Filth camping it up to live video of the mighty Emperor. As with many DVD's there is a documentary called Black Metal Parking Lot (The Movie). All in all one of those videos to put in your collection to make yer friends wonder about you.

Warped, heavy and dirge, this is black metal in all its glory. It is a good intro for those interested in the genre as well. This is an enjoyable 100 minutes whether or not you have a truly black heart, however, as you can imagine it is not the DVD to have on when your mum comes round for Sunday dinner.

Vital Remains: *Evil-Death-Live*

Yet another live release from Metal Mind covering an extreme metal band as they play to frothing Polish metal fans. This time it's the turn of Long Island black metal stalwarts Vital Remains. In addition to the March 2007 gig you get an interview with main men Tony Lazaro, who does most of the talking, and Dave Suzuki. There is also a couple of tracks filmed at a Polish club. There are the normal goodies we see on all these releases; yet again Metal Mind excels with their packaging and presentation. 130 minutes of Vital Remains, no region locking, and a decent length interview to boot. Damn near essential for VR and American black metal fans; a good introduction to those unfamiliar with this lot of extreme metal survivors.

Darzamat: *Live Profanity*

I have to confess I never heard of this lot of Polish extreme metal purveyors. Think Cradle of Filth but more serious and less black metal jesters. Layered keyboards and female vocals add an extra level of texture to the normal grunt of extreme metal. Think of the heaviest pretty frock metal and multiply exponentially. This stuff is heavy and intense; but at the same time is a bit more accessible than a lot of extreme metal.

I rather enjoyed the 11 tracks including a performance of cult Polish act Kat, not terribly widely known outside of Poland, doing "Diabelski Dom." As with all these releases there is the bonus of live material, this time filmed at a German festival, as well as an interview with Nera & Flauros, unreleased audio, and several videos. A good introduction to an interesting band that I suspect we will hear more from soon.

Alright now to something a bit more psychedelic.

The Pink Floyd and Syd Barrett Story

This is a limited edition two CD set, the second CD being made up of completely unedited interview with members of Pink Floyd and others. You bizarrely get Robyn Hitchcock and Graham Coxon both interviewed about Syd Barrett and playing his songs acoustically. It's a bittersweet tale of the rise and fall of Barrett, a man clearly unable to handle stardom. His descent into madness and self-imposed exile is both amazing in the fact he did not die of his excess and sad in the fact it all happened. Music on here is from

Shelter: Mantra & Beyond Planet Earth

Straightedge Krishnacore (as in Hari Krishna) is not exactly what George Harrison had in mind when he introduced Krishna consciousness to a whole new generation of people. This is a re-release of two of their bigger albums complete with a video clip (1 each) and extra tracks (2 each). Not really sure what there is for a metal head here but it will be fun for those who were ever into the band to listen to the tracks remastered and re-released in all their glory.

Optimum Would Profile: Silver or Lead & Lowest Common Denominator

Phil Vane of Napalm Death turned his hand to industrial in the early 90s and boy was it heavy. Think of a combination of crusty punk metal combined with the layering of industrial. Remastered and repackaged with liner notes, these releases are probably not the most generous in extras but the content is still there. It's heavy enough for the metalheads and bodes well for the direction industrial was heading. You'll love it or hate it; but it sure has an impact.

Attrition: The Attrition of Reason & Esoteria

Avant guard gothy mixture of neo-classical and ambient, these two are released in perfect time for Halloween. You could do worse than have either one of these CDs on during your All Hallow's Eve party. It's a bit Munsters and Adams Family but intriguing nonetheless. Atmospheric and odd, not exactly the type of music you put on to relax. There is a certain mood that suits this kind of music... you know it when you get it.

Gentle Giant: Santa Monica 1975

The title says it all really. These veteran proggers cited as influence to many heavy rock and prog bands in all their glory live in 1975. The recording isn't the greatest and the acoustics are rubbish, but it is a live testament to an influential band that still has relevance. This is an EP of six songs plus two bonus tracks recorded live two years later: "For Nobody 1" and "For Nobody 2". Far more successful in the US and in Europe than in the UK; they still managed impact. However, this release is probably just for completists only.

Rick Wakeman: Out of the Blue & Fields of Green

Two more releases from the great man; one with his son and the New English Rock Assemble. OfTB is a quite impressive seven track affair. Okay, there are several songs in several of the tracks, as is his norm, with all the pomp so hated by the punks but done so well by Rick. This is a live recording from 2006 and really shows Wakeman in a good light. This is pretty spectacular stuff and a great listen.

I would even suggest that anyone interested in Wakeman's solo stuff might want to start here first. Fields of Green on the other hand is a re-release and includes music composed by Wakeman for Election Night 1997. Considering Wakeman is a long-standing conservative, who got creamed that night, it must have been bittersweet. None the less a good release of Wakeman music, done in the studio and showing all his talents. A couple more great releases from the talented man's huge history of recording.

Jon Anderson: Searching for the Songs

Jon contributes an interesting short blurb to this CD where he admits some of the fourteen tracks on here don't stand the test of time. As the title suggests they are songs written and recorded by Jon as demos in search for the perfect pop song. This content was done in the 80s and clearly sounds like it. It is a fascinating insight into the prolific Anderson; then again even some of his naff misses are better than much of what constituted music in the 80s. Not essential but fascinating nonetheless.

Of Hearts and Shadows: Touching Base with a Chainsaw

I love the title of this CD; unfortunately the contents not so much. This is prime 100% screamo metal. The singer just screams in that sub-death metal way of doing things which some people seem to like, but I find a wee bit dull. This music smacks of "music to piss your parents off" and nothing much else. Then again, the lead singer Bixby can actually sing when he wants to. The band isn't exactly untalented either; there is talent there to be sure. If you are over 20 this CD will bore you stiff, but I am sure it's going to sell oodles to the rebellious youth of the land.

On that screamed note I am away to hit the next lot of my pile. Fans of pretty frock metal, like me, will want to be around for the next instalment as I have the new Nightwish, Visions of Atlantis, and Epica to review. I was going to review them this week, but I am enjoying them too much; including the even less than perfect new Nightwish. As always stay safe and rocking as we wind our way into another autumn.



Marty's band, Growing Old Disgracefully, can be found at: [Disgraceful Music](#). His Cthulhu tales can be found at [Temple of Dagon](#).

Comments

