



REVIEW

Music Review: Behemoth - *Sventevith (Storming Near the Baltic)* Remaster

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My musical collection is divided into two groups. One is music that annoys the hell out of my wife; the other is music we can enjoy together. Needless to say, Behemoth's *Sventevith* (Storming Near the Baltic) would fall into the first category.

I have to admit black metal is not my preferred taste in music. My regular listening tends to fall along hardcore, death metal, and grindcore lines. I have been aware of many of the better-known black metal artists like Venom, Mayhem, Sodom, and Hellhammer, but this genre has not been a regular part of my listening.

Behemoth was one of the most influential bands in a flourishing Polish metal scene. Two other well-known metal bands from Poland are Vader and Decapitation. Behemoth consists of Nergal (guitars, voices), Baal (drums), and Les (bass). Single names are common among black metal bands and are often derived from occult or fantasy characters.

This release of *Sventevith* is a re-master of the seminal and now rare 1995 edition. It has many of the characteristics of most black metal: raspy, high-pitched vocals in contrast with the deep guttural vocals of death metal, as well as a style of production that cuts out much of the mid-range, resulting in a predominance of the treble and bass frequencies and an "underproduced" sound.

The album starts off with "Chant of the Eastern Lands", a mid-tempo piece with some choral vocals behind the raspy vocals of Nergal, which creates a very moody atmosphere. This is followed by "The Touch of Nya," a brooding acoustic guitar piece. "From the Pagan Vastlands" continues with the moody atmosphere and features some tasty drum work by Baal.

"Hidden in the Fog" slows the tempo down a bit and has some more of the choral vocals in the background that enhance but never detract from the mood of the song or Nergal's razor blade vocals. The rest of the tracks continue in this vein. My favorite track is "Forgotten Cult of Alderott," which opens with a crunchy guitar motif. Except for the bleeding throat vocals, this could almost be a straight-up death metal song.

This CD is a good introduction for someone unfamiliar with black metal and who wants a place to start exploring. It will also be a must-have for fans of Behemoth whether they have the original release or not.

Tracklist

1. Chant of the Eastern Lands
2. The Touch of Nya
3. From the Pagan Vastlands

4. Hidden in the Fog
5. Ancient
6. Entering the Faustian Soul
7. Forgotten Cult of Alderott
8. Wolves Guard My Coffin
9. Hell Dwells in Ice
10. Transylvanian Forest

Hardcore: It's a way of life. As long as you keep it real and do it from your heart, that's being hardcore. It's not a pair of jeans, baggy jeans and a band t-shirt don't make you hardcore. It's a family. I count on you, you count on me. I'm a husband to one remarkable, long-suffering wife & father to two sons and a daughter, I'm a network wizard in my spare time. Get too close and I will windmill kick you in the face.

Comments

