

REVIEW**CD Review: Behemoth - *And the Forests Dream Eternally***

August 10, 2006
Chris Beaumont

Wow. Where to begin with this.

Well, the band is Behemoth, and this was their debut release from way back in 1994. It is now unleashed upon a whole new unsuspecting public. This album is dark evil masked in a low budget production.

I admit, this album scares me. I don't know if I should be held in rapt attention, as I have been a few times, or calling a priest to perform an exorcism. The opening song, "Transylvanian Forest," opens with the cawing of crows. A rather appropriate start, as crows have long been associated with the coming of doom. As soon as the cawing stops, we are greeted with the blood curdling scream of Nergal, frontman for the Polish black metal band. The song moves at a breakneck pace, bringing with it fears that if it stopped, so would the hearts of anyone who dare listen to it. "Transylvanian Forest" is a concoction of that most evil of voices, fuzzy distorted guitars that are buried deep in the mix, and awkward drumming which always seems on the verge of flying off course, taking the song with it.



Nergal and company follow that with the downtempo

"Moonspell Rites." It retains that concentrated evil that we were initially presented with, but proves that the band is more than speed. "Moonspell Rites" shows that they can hold the speed back and still keep the same dark aura about the music. This track is better in that regard, I think the slowdown enhances the effects. I still do not know what Nergal is saying, but his voice may just be that of Satan himself, I do not recall ever hearing anything like this on a recording in my life.

The best — and I use that term in a looser way than I normally would — song is probably "Pure Evil and Hate." I know, lovely thing to call a song, but hey, if the show fits, right? If you listen closely to the muddy low-fi mix, you will hear what sounds like old-school thrash progressions, not something I expected to come across here. It is an interesting mix of American speed and Norwegian black through a Polish filter.

The recording and mix are primitive, and the performances are incredibly rough. The drums are sloppy and nearly run off the rails, and the guitars are muddy and hard to make out, making any real assessment impossible, although there does not appear to be anything particularly special there.

What makes this music step into the light of the impressive is Nergal's voice, evil incarnate, one of the most frightening voices I have yet heard, and to think he was 17 years old when this was released. Makes you wonder what his parents think.

Bottom line. I haven't really decided if I like this album or not. If like a little evil with your low budget metal, check this out, if you prefer a little more coherence, look elsewhere. The drawing points are Nergal's the gut driven, raw evil spewing from his mouth, and the ability to create an incredibly eerie atmosphere despite not being terribly adept at their instruments.

Mildly Recommended.



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