

**Raven Soul – 100 Bleeding Hearts
(Arctic Music)**

★★



Wow. It's a Portuguese goth-metal band who cop more than a view moves from Finnish icons H.I.M.. In fact, this *Twilight*-ready group are just as melodramatic and love-obsessed as their dark spiritual "fathers." Musically, Raven Soul's melodic goth-metal is light and easy on the ears, replete with plenty of synths, pianos, and guitars that are tuneful and clean. Their production is crystalline and deep, so it all sounds good. However, it would sound better if I hadn't heard H.I.M. first. Vocalist Mac Caetano manages to channel both Peter Murphy and Ville Vallo on the opener, "End Of The World." From there, it's a strong album, but far too derivative to these ears, merely shadowing their H.I.M. heroes. I'll cut them some slack as it's their debut, but I'd expect something more individual next time.

--Todd Zachritz ●