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LACUNA COIL POP EVIL ROBIN MCAULEY SUNBOMB SEVENTH CRYSTAL MIDNITE CITY

SPECIAL FEATURES: YOU HAD TO BE THERE! PLUS THE BEST OF THE NEW BREED OF SOUTHERN ROCK

FROST* GO AHEAD AND DIE RHABSTALLION LEVARA QUINN SULLIVAN THE DAMN TRUTH ANGSTSKRIG THE QUILTS

mainly influenced by the styles of Slipknot and Korn, and 'HeadTrip' has classic Korn intro riffage and drum timings, and features an abundance of growly vocals and ultra-catchy notes. 'Glassjaw' has a faster tempo with Joey Jordison styled drumming and intro build-up that carries idiosyncrasies of old-school Slipknot. 'Nu-Breed' has Pantera's heaviness and manner, and 'Animo\$ity' has reverberations of Slipknot's 'Disaster Pieces'. Almost like a bridge in the album, is the beautifully haunting 'Haunted' – a minute long instrumental that is a palate cleanser before the next round of brutality. Final cut, the title track has Paul Gray/Fieldy styled bass heaviness; a homage to these greats that the band can imitate, with their own take.

This is an album that has been well worth waiting for: savage, highly charged and electrifying, these highly skilled musicians will cause the ultimate HeadTrip and side effects in the most exhilarating way.

POWERPOINTS: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

CLAIRE BANNISTER

PAT REILLY

'Path To Transcendence'
Metal
Independent



Pat Reilly is an American guitarist and martial arts instructor, so obviously I'm going to be nice about his debut album. He's also the guitarist for Tengger Cavalry and has toured with the likes of Vajra and Through the Discipline.

'Path To Transcendence' is a mostly instrumental album, and opens in excellent style with the shredding 'Between Two Worlds' and the slower, more emotional 'Emergence'. On the former you can hear the Marty Friedman influence, the latter is more Satch. The quality continues with the next few tracks, but then we hit a snag.

You know how you listen to some albums and you notice a dip in quality? Well, with 'Path To Transcendence' it's not so much a dip as a faceplant. The problem is that Pat added a few tracks with vocals, although I have to stress that he doesn't sing them himself, he sticks to guitar, but the vocal led songs do not fit with the rest of this album. The rest of the album is great, but the three 'songs' in question are not even close. To be fair, 'Winter Sunrise' isn't too bad, but listening to 'Vitality', you have to wonder what went wrong, it is just awful.

Currently Pat is letting you download the album for free at his website, so head over and grab a download; just remember that the first six songs are excellent; the rest, you may want to avoid.

POWERPOINTS: 1 2 3 4 5

MARTIN HOWELL

TUPLE

'Welcome To Hell'
Melodic Rock
AOR Heaven



You realise the pandemic's being going for some time when an artist releases a second album since the first lockdown. That's exactly the case with Tuple. Tommi 'Tuple' Salmela is a Finnish singer who has sung with Lazy Boney and Tarot. Last year he surrounded himself with other Finnish talent on an assured debut of hard rock and AOR. Although the songs were written by his guitarist and keyboard player Riitis, the lyrics told the story of Tuple's life and fight against addiction, so they had more character than the usual generic AOR tosh. This time out he's gone for more universal themes of love, loss, lies and eh... the Wild West. Again though, the lyrics, thanks to Riitis, give it an original bent; a respite from the usual generic melodic rock tropes. Bet it's the first time you've heard lines like "The creature on the telly is morally jelly" as he sings on the title track. The tunes are generally positive

and upbeat but there's some aggression, too, aimed at the media, politicians and love gone wrong. Songs like '1-2-3-4-Go!', 'Pride' and 'Stay' are catchy and perky in that way their Scandinavian neighbours excel at. The pompous 'Not Enough To Love Me' has the kind of bounce that Tuple does well. Noora Louhimo guests on the duet 'Survive' that has an AOR feel, quite different from her day job in Battle Beast. The heavier 'Hiding In Plain Sight' has Tuple sounding a touch like Biff Byford and the seven minute long piano ballad 'Silver', with cheesy seagull sound effects, is saved three minutes in when it bursts into bombast.

If you dug his debut, then there's no reason you wouldn't like this, too, as his quirky songs are a welcome addition to the melodic rock scene.

POWERPOINTS: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

DUNCAN JAMIESON

NEMOPHILA

'Oiran'
Metal
JPU



Nemophila are a rather interesting proposition as metal bands go. In their home nation of Japan they're seen as something of a supergroup, as most of the members have previously been in other bands before; however it is the feisty metal sound of Nemophila which represents the music that they really want to make. They're certainly good at it, this album roars off the starting blocks absolutely furiously with the opening title track, and the frenetic pace and finger-bleedingly fast power metal riffs just keep going from there.

This is something of a muso's album, and anyone who delights in the more technical side of power metal will adore decoding the many intricate solos and appreciating the duelling guitars that are deployed throughout. Indeed, the instrumentalists in the band are very obviously talented, and this makes it something of a shame that the vocals let the side down a bit. Singer Mayu isn't lacking in vocal prowess or power, but her voice really has to strain for the classic rock sound she's pushing it to achieve, and it's pretty obvious she'd be more comfortable singing in a poppier style most of the time. She's pushing for a gravelly Lzzy Hale-style vocal, but it comes out more like Bonnie Tyler after an unfortunate encounter with some helium, which is just a bit odd really. It's particularly obvious on big power ballad 'Life' but is a problem throughout the album's runtime, unfortunately.

'Oiran' ultimately functions more as an interesting curio than an album that one will revisit time and time again, but there are certainly elements here that I imagine will get fans of a particular type of fast powerful metal hooked, if they can look past the somewhat strained vocal performance.

POWERPOINTS: 1 2 3 4 5 6

ELINOR DAY

TSL

'Irreverent'
Hard Rock
Curtain Call



Alicea and bassist Adam Kury (ex Candlebox) joined the band.

Already a highly requested band on American radio, with the release of this EP they hope to set their sights on the rest of the world. The four tracks here are really varied in styles, from 'Resurrect Me' which could easily fit on a Bon Jovi album to the harder style of

'Wicked Kiss'. I can't quite put a finger on it but something about this band is a little bit special; the songs are really good and it makes you want to put the disc on a constant repeat. This really solid EP has something on it for everyone's taste and with the right push behind them they could find themselves on most radio shows, both here in the UK and across Europe, as the variation in tracks fits most genres.

This is well worth investing in and when you do get it, follow the instructions: wind the windows down and play it really loud. I think we will be hearing a lot more about TSL very soon.

POWERPOINTS: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

WELSH GENE

I WILL TAKE YOU HUNTING

'I Will Take you Hunting'
Alt Rock
Independent



A little history: once upon a time there was a Scottish band called Hed Swim. They recorded two very good, critically acclaimed albums. Then they split. Now, Steve Simms and Dave Martin are back, with a little direction change, in I Will

Take You Hunting. This, their self-titled debut, is proper angry, ragey, pissed-off alt-rock, and it's really very good. There are obvious comparisons to old Therapy? and early Kerbdog, Idles, maybe a little of Biffy Clyro in the overly-distorted guitars and effects; there are touches of Slaves, old grunge like the Pixies or Superfuzz-era Mudhoney throughout, mixed with a gentle edge of Crank-era Ricky Warwick's Newtownards/Strathaven growl, but there's a lot going on here, and most of it's pretty damn annoyed at the state of the world. But there are definitely songs here too – they've got choruses and woo-hoos and bits to get your teeth stuck into. It's a full-scale ferocious onslaught, choleric and melodic all at once. Anyone with a liking for fuzzy, gritty guitars and snarly, ill-tempered vocals could do a lot worse than to give this a listen.

POWERPOINTS: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ALEX HOLMES

NERGARD

'Eternal White'
Power Metal
Pride & Joy Music



Formed in 2010 by Norwegian musician Andreas Nergård, the Nergard project was always meant to be a studio exercise where Andreas could call upon friends and acquaintances to create some epic, melodic metal tapestries. Two albums to date have seen that dream realised with contributions from Elize Ryd, Ralf Scheepers, Göran Edman, Mike Vescera, Michelle Luppi, Tony Mills, David Reece, Michael Eriksen, Nils K. Rue and many others. If you know your power and symphonic metal acts then you're already salivating at the thought of material featuring the people listed above.

Although the music was received very well and saw Nergard opening for the likes of Stratovarius at the Trondheim Metal Fest in 2015, there hasn't been an album number three until now!

They do say periods of inactivity dull the senses and it often takes something like a death in the family to trigger a response and reaction. In the summer of 2020 Andreas and Nergard released a tribute single for the late, great Tony Mills (Shy) who left a huge hole in the rock scene with his premature passing. The light to come from this is that the single inspired Andreas to start working on new music. Having crafted a more permanent line-up, the band and album is now fronted by a multinational trio of Stefani Keogh (UK), Andi Kravljaca (Sweden) and Mathias Molund Indergård (Norway).

Like Amaranthe, the three-way vocalist approach