

POWERPLAY

ROCK & METAL MAGAZINE

The gang are back together for the second edition of...

MICHAEL SCHENKER FEST

VISIONS OF ATLANTIS

Oh my darlin' Clementine!



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BLACK STAR RIDERS THE DEAD DAISIES

ENTOMBED A.D. KILLSWITCH ENGAGE

LIV SIN LAURENCE JONES JIMI ANDERSON PISTON

RISE TWAIN ARDOURS DANNY BEARDSLEY ELECTUS

SINNER
FREEDOM CALL
UNRULY CHILD
SACRED REICH

better. I really don't understand why they have done the sparse sounding 'Alles Is Eén' and 'Nocturnal Lament'. Still, they pick it up by the end of the set and 'Dronewars' does the band more justice.

This isn't a bad album, and it does feature the whole of 'World Of Grey', but I have to say that the studio version was better.

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥

MARTIN HOWELL

VOKONIS

'Grasping Time'
Doom/Stoner Metal
The Sign



Since their 2015 conception, Sweden's Vokonis have worked endlessly by putting out something new every year whilst shaking Europe to the core with their bone-rattling herbal blend of doom and stoner. For Vokonis, 2019 is business as usual, as the trio deliver their third album 'Grasping Time'.

It would seem that a shift in style has occurred within the Vokonis camp, as 'Grasping Time' stretches out from the usual resin-soaked Sabbath groove of stoner. There is an air of confidence about the album as Vokonis strut forward through a haze of distortion by adding a large progressive element to their sound. This gives this album the sound of Sleep getting baked with Baroness, Mastodon and Elder, particularly during the sludgy crushing of 'Embers'. Furthermore, what wins hearts with 'Grasping Time' is that progressive tone; not only is there a running undercurrent of both Porcupine Tree and King Crimson as a weir of two progressive worlds meet, but even a nod to Pink Floyd during both 'Antler Queen' and 'Fading Lights' as slow descending ephemeral patterns intertwine with beautiful melodic parts, recalling parts of 'Comfortably Numb'.

For Vokonis, 'Grasping Time' has allowed the band to transcend the pitfalls of generic monotony within this genre, delivering an album that is equal parts heavy and groovy, yet delicate and intricate, and it is this which makes 'Grasping Time' ultimately enjoyable.

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥⑦

ADAM MCCANN

MINDSPEAK

'Eclipse Chaser'
Progressive Rock
Beamerhead



Mindspeak's influences read as... Spock's Beard, Transatlantic, King Crimson, Opeth, Leprous. Sounds tasty. So, for research purposes, we take a peek on YouTube and find an alarmingly young looking band delivering a live performance of 'Reawakening'; fortunately the recent promo shots now show a couple of them at least have some facial hair, which seems to be the go-to look these days. Fortunately, one isn't singer Viktoria Simon-Lukic who fronts this Vienna based five-piece, an outfit that seem to have immaculate taste in music, but how does their own version stand up against some of the giants who've trodden the earth? Essentially made up of three grand opuses (bit of trivia: classical music calls them opi, or you could opt for the Latin opera...), 'When Giants Cry' lulls us with a snapshot at just under ten minutes of joyous guitar and keyboard dueling, a mere aperitif for 'Tetrachrome', the introductory instrumental and vocal section finally ringing some bells and hinting at what bands like Magenta have done so well. Having clocked up almost half an hour between them, the similarly epic 'Human Element' adds another half hour across six parts, allowing the band to indulge (in the best possible taste) in linking a series of shorter passages that are built around strong and emotive piano and which develop into the majestic and uplifting with a nod to Holst before an ambient payout and chance to replay to delve

into the lyrical themes.

Not only fresh faced but definitely bringing a bout of breezy vitality to the prog cause

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥⑦⑧

MIKE AINSCOE

THE FALLEN

'Warpledge'
Heavy Metal
Independent Release



'Warpledge' is a four track EP that's massively influenced by Judas Priest and Black Sabbath with some Scandinavian battle metal style vocals periodically thrown in for good measure. The title track has the expected atmospheric slow start, wind effects and picked guitar with the vocals kicking in at around two minutes, followed by chunky riffing and a fair bit of noodling. 'Judgement Day' is much the same but with rather less melodic vocals, and 'Lost In Paradise' treats me to a minute of acoustic guitar work as it builds from slow to mid-tempo by way of another guitar noodle and a fair bit of chugging. 'Metal Land' doesn't bother with a slow intro but just gets on with it: nearly five minutes pass by without the song really registering.

This Brazilian band is in no way bad, what they do they do just fine, but sadly it is all heavily derivative, basic and unmemorable.

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤

TIM DELANY

DEVIL MADE ME DO IT

'Her Majesty's Pleasure'
Alternative Metal
Independent Release



Here we have Greek metalists Devil Made Me Do It with their debut album and it's a piece of work that's taken some time to get to us. Moving in metal/alternative paths, what started as a studio project in 2013 took three years to come together as a full line-up band and a further three years to record this album.

The gritty growls and ragged riffs of 'Butcher' set the scene - hard metal it is, but not without melody. The sinister stratosphere of 'Scream And Shout' has you gasping for air but it comes aplenty with the guitar breaks. 'Denial' spikes and scorches, as does 'This Time', but it's getting a little samey, and little changes with '45'. 'Second' has an interesting intro of jangling guitars but soon leaps into type, and so it continues to the end. If, like this band who cite their influences as Godsmack, Disturbed, Slipknot, Breaking Benjamin, Stone Sour, you like your metal rooted in the 00s then this is for you. But for me? Well, I've always gone for the devil you don't know.

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥

Ms D

BADHOVEN

'All The World's A Fake'
Melodic Rock
ATS



The Austrian rockers are back with their fourth album that delivers some decently crafted and produced melodic rock. Don't let the dodgy name or the thought that this has classical metal leanings (it doesn't) put you off. This drinks from the well of 80s hard rock, reminding you of all those bands that shook their stuff on MTV, without plagiarising any of them outright. Mario Pohn's guitars lead the charge, with some plinky keyboards from Gerhard Paar adding a dash of colour.

Kurt Christian's voice is fine and there are plenty of hooky choruses, but there's also a fair bit of cheesiness, such as the heavier 'Let's Be United' and 'Livin' In Rock' but sometimes a little cheese is good for you. 'Keep It On Rocking' is a confident number and is better than its dodgily phrased title suggests. 'Healing Hands' is pretty funky for a bunch of Austrians and 'The Power Of Love' could be a ballad by the Scorpions. At times it reminds me of fellow Austrian band (also with an iffy name) Loud At Least! Like them, it entertains, is likeable but isn't quite at the level of the bigger melodic rock labels hasn't picked them up. Nevertheless, if you like Euro hard rock, this is a solid example of the genre.

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥⑦

DUNCAN JAMIESON

JIMBO

'Where The Vultures Gather'
Doom
Independent Release



This is Jimbo's second EP and it's inspired by a punch up that occurred at a University after Professor Jordan Peterson gave a controversial speech. Peterson is a psychologist who has strong opinions on religion, ideology and self-improvement. Two of the band members, Alex Van Der Heyden and Joe Narducci, were at the seminar and were dismayed that a group of people promoting social justice tried to shut Peterson down before he had the opportunity to talk. There came a divide in the audience, which Van Der Heyden and Narducci saw as a greater divide in society. It's all heavy stuff, huh?

Kicking off with the politically charged single 'Mama Wawa', which is about the seminar and its riot, it has a shit ton of fuzz over a Cream like rhythmic vibe and clean vocals - it also grooves like a bastard! We get some dreamy guitar on 'Pyrethrin' but it's soon replaced by some fuzz, along with another huge groove, and then towards the end it comes down gently on that dreamy guitar again. The title track brings you back with a rude punch to the throat, because it is pure stoner - thick and heavy like school custard, but not a lump in sight!

I'm not a fan of politics in music, so I considered the songs to be stories of a dark time and a perfect fit for some heavy stoner grooves. This trio obviously know what they're doing. I'd like to see what a full album has to offer - soon!

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥⑦

SMUDGE

PLAGUE OF STARS

'Daedalus'
Death/Doom/Symphonic
Zerobudget



Plague Of Stars is the musical vehicle for ex-Visions Of Atlantis front woman Melissa Ferlaak, and 'Daedalus' is the band's second album. This nine-track release is a real mixed bag, since a lot of this album underwhelms and lacks originality, mainly because there are too many moments when it's just all too obvious, but as soon as the band change tack and go in a more metal direction, throwing off the doom death tag, and Ferlaak sings in her normal range, leaving the operatic high notes behind, Plague Of Stars turn into a completely different animal. This is best shown on 'Baby In A Light Bulb Bath' which is one of those songs that really makes you sit up and listen. It's a glorious, angst ridden, down turned opus. OK, there are instants when Ferlaak slips back into glass-breaking mode, but these are outweighed by the song's power and atmosphere. The other track that also bucks the album's genre limitations is 'Glass Glaze' which drives along with an almost rock swagger and includes the album's most memorable chorus.