

POWER

ROCK & METAL

GAZINE

ALICE COOPER

The king of shock rock returns to his childhood roots on latest album 'Detroit Stories'

HIGHWAY TO HELL

The tales of how the Powerplay writers found ourselves walking along the heavy metal road

SUZI QUATRO
LAMB OF GOD
PRIMAL FEAR
CANNIBAL CORPSE
TOUCH
RONNIE ATKINS
GARY HUGHES
SUNSTORM
GHOSTKID
HEART HEALER
ISSA
JUMP
IVY GOLD
CHEZ KANE

DEF LEPPARD

the albums ranked

Issue 239 - April 2021 - £5.95



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LIQUID TENSION EXPERIMENT: third outing for John Petrucci, Tony Levin, Mike Portnoy & Jordan Rudess

'New Rule'

Dirty Sleaze Rock
Golden Robot



THE MERCY KILLS

It has been just a few months since The Mercy Kills, a four-piece rock band from Melbourne, released 'X', a selection of their best work compiled to celebrate ten years of performing together. Hard on the heels of 'X' comes 'New Rule', a re-release of their 2010 debut EP (although, strictly speaking, it was never officially released, and was only available as a short run of CDs).

The Mercy Kills are Mark E (vocals/guitar), Jen X Costello (bass/vocals), Nathalie Gellé (guitar/vocals) and Josh Black (drums), and their sound mixes dirty sleaze rock with punk. 'New Rule' gives you an opportunity to hear some of their earliest output, and as you might expect, it sounds a little raw compared to their later work, but still contains the band's trademark energy and aggressive edge.

The five-track release opens with 'I Wanna' and its

brooding baseline, followed by the engaging riffs of title track 'New Rule'. The tempo goes up another notch with 'So Many Times', before we reach standout track 'Fall' – a favourite of the band themselves, and understandably so. The opening guitar work immediately captures your attention, followed by some exhilarating melodic shifts, in a song that's about trying to keep in control of your life while things feel like they are falling apart around you. 'Go' draws the EP to a conclusion with some Ramones-style punk. Unless you were fortunate enough to acquire one of the original handful of CDs released more than a decade ago, here's your chance to finally own a copy of 'New Rule'. Don't miss your opportunity this time around.

POWERPOINTS: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

ANDY HOUGHTON

performed only a handful of these tracks at gigs before the pandemic brought everything to a halt. Based upon the evidence of this album, I Destroy should be at the top of your list of bands to see as soon as live music returns.

POWERPOINTS: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

ANDY HOUGHTON

GRIMMREAPER

'The Tragedy of Being'
Metal
Independent



If you're in the mood for something a bit wacky, then solo artist Grimmreaper who comes complete with a split personality, might be right up your street. His debut album, 'The Tragedy of Being', was inspired by a clinical psychologist called

Jordan Peterson whose lecture series 'The Psychological Significance Of The Biblical Stories' relates stories from the Old Testament to modern psychology, evolution, mythology and human history. The one-man band recorded the material with a guitar, a bass, a very slow computer and a cheap recording equipment bundle in several different apartments, a house and even an RV, without ever stepping foot into a recording studio. Grimmreaper mixes the technical metal styles of the likes of Dragonforce and Meshuggah with the poppier metal sounds of the likes of Bullet For My Valentine and Five Finger Death Punch. The first track is almost completely instrumental, whilst the next, 'North Star', takes a more melodic turn and features some impressive guitar virtuoso widdling. 'Prison' is a real hit and lead single 'Resent' shows off Grimm's vocal range as he has the ability to sing clean and scream or growl as both lead and backing. But some tracks are over eight minutes long and the title track closer is almost ten, which seems exhaustive and

excessively long for this genre of music. Strangely, he throws a Baby Metal cover of 'Road To Resistance' in towards the tail end of the record as a quirky curve ball.

'The Tragedy of Being' might lack the heart of a conventional band set up and the sound of programmed drums isn't for everyone, but it utilises technology, as can be easily done in this digital age, for an interesting musical output.

POWERPOINTS: 1 2 3 4 5 6

CHELSEA SMILE

NECRONOMICON

'The Final Chapter'
Thrash Metal
Soulfood



Germany's Necronomicon started way back in 1985 and were a part of that initial German thrash onslaught that gave us Sodom, Kreator, and Destruction. While those bands went on to become internationally revered, Necronomicon, inexplicably, was left behind. 'The Final Chapter' is the group's tenth release and it ranks as their best to date. Admittedly, I've never been a huge fan of this band or German thrash in general, but this is really good stuff. The songs are fresh, fast, cleanly played/recorded, and intense.

A cool flanger effect ushers in the ultra-heavy 'I Am The Violence', and there is no let-up for the remainder of the album. Vocalist Freddy sounds like Destruction's Schmier with those patented snarling and gravelly vocal histrionics. The songs, as you'd imagine, aren't complex. Rather, they are mostly short and in-your-face with strong hooks and riffs. While every cut is made of the same cloth, those that stand out are 'Burning The Fury', 'Stormreaper', 'Justice', and 'Me Against You'.

Again, I can't really understand why Necronomicon isn't a household name in the same vein as the bands mentioned above. 'The Final Chapter' is brimming with some top-tier thrash!

POWERPOINTS: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

TONY PIJAR

VIDEO NASTY

'Video Nasty'
Thrash Metal
Petrichor



This Canadian act released this digitally at the back end of 2020 but it has been picked up by the Hammerheart subsidiary for a physical outing, which is very much deserved. From the opening seconds to the closing seconds this is a relentless old school thrash assault harnessing the likes of the genre's greatest acts but blending them into one vast pot of seething brutality. 'Nightmare Beach' and 'Castle Freak' quickly flay the listener into agony with their rampaging speed and high velocity riffing that surgically slices with every note. Indeed, the album rarely steps off the accelerator, preferring to blast you with a pitiless incendiary display that is typified by a track like 'Final Exam' which is laced with a cool double kick drenching, hurtling the song into denser realms.

This might only be a seven-track EP but I guarantee that when you hear it there will grievous bodily harm imposed on you.

POWERPOINTS: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

MARTIN HARRIS

GATE TO INFINITY

'Levaturium'
Progressive Metal
Independent



This is Gate of Infinity's sixth release, and is a twenty-five-minute, five song, digital-only project. OK, that's the details out of the way, now for the tricky bit. The music and songs on this release are actually quite good and remind me a bit of DGM. Both guitarist

Bernard Hamerle and drummer Martin Hermerle, who also contributes keyboards, deliver exceptionally crafted performances, but unfortunately vocalist Gabriel Harder is just not at the same level. In his defence he does have a passable range, but never seems to be in time with his band mates, and his vocal lines just don't work. It's a real shame, because if the band had a vocalist with the ability to enhance what is already interestingly tuneful prog metal, Gate To Infinity could really turn heads.

POWERPOINTS: 1 2 3 4 5

KEITH BRYANT

DOPELORD

'Reality Dagger'
Stoner/Doom
Green Plague



Polish stoner/doom legends Dope Lord have wasted no time in releasing this EP which comes hot on the heels of last year's 'Sign Of The Devil'. Three tracks clocking in at over twenty minutes gives value for money.

Opening with the epic title track, we get everything and the kitchen sink: down tuned riffs, Pawel's Ozzy like wail and Piotr's death like growls battle for supremacy over its ten minutes. The riffs come fast and come slow, occupying that space between stoner and doom. 'Dark Coils' brings some sludge and some fine guitar lines from Grzegorz