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ROCK & METAL

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KING ZEBRA - 'WILD! WILD! WILD!' (Pretty Good Lookin') HARD ROCK



As Switzerland's answer to Steel Panther, King Zebra had the chutzpah to call their first album 'Greatest Hits' (although that has proven true for more than one Glam band). However, they don't need to hide behind the joke as this second album is full of catchy, bubble-gum Pop/Hard Rock beloved of bands like Poison and Pretty Boy Floyd. References to the Sunset Strip and Hollywood trash queens float freely and, for those who love Glam, the album is a fine hark back to a much loved and successful genre.

'Wild Animals' is a high energy start to proceedings. Of course, Glam demands a party lifestyle attitude and eighties Poison-like Rock 'n' Roll riffs are performed with gusto! 'Never Stop Trying' continues the "take no prisoners" attitude, coming directly from the days when you could have one single with a memorable chorus and be a household name. Of course, those days are pretty much gone, but what's the harm in a little suspension of belief? The result is a highly enjoyable sing-along - don't think too hard stuff - that arguably could benefit the post-nineties era.

'Penny Hollywood' takes us back to when it was all about the fallen angels of Hollywood and full of colourful nostalgia from days when nothing was boring. 'Welcome To Longstreet' is all about the all-night Babylonian lifestyle where freedom reigned and nothing was off limits. 'One By One' and 'Whiskey' remind you of the time when maximum impact was all that could be contemplated from a Rock 'n' Roll show and I don't think anyone can say they don't miss that when at a dreary post-nineties "cool" gig.

'Too Many Rules' is about the rebellion against conventional society that Glam encapsulated, whilst 'Purple Roses' is the perennial eighties ballad about the Hollywood lust affair; it's self-conscious and intentionally so (has the nineties damaged the love song that much? I guess so). However, it is nevertheless not a bad effort considering it's meant to be a joke... guaranteed to feed the mythology of the Sunset Strip and frankly, where's the harm? Fun is in short supply these days, why not mainline on KZ?

These guys can play their instruments. They also manage to go a whole album without ripping off songs that have gone before. VH1 say Glam is coming back... King Zebra are poised to catch the wave.

Dawn Osborne

tracks that explore Catholic prayer (the intriguing and uplifting 'Regina Coeli') and the parable of prodigal son.

Hand on heart, this is possibly the best Christian Metal album I've ever heard - not that "White Metal" is a sub-genre with which I'm intimately acquainted. It's clearly an album in the European tradition of classically-inspired Metal. To that extent it's rawer, more aggressive but also more cultured than, say, the more American music of Stryper. Considerable thought and effort have gone into the song-writing and arrangements and the album's rich and varied influences keep it interesting. In Black vs White Metal terms, the devil's probably still up on the scorecard. But clearly he doesn't have all the good songs. I've enjoyed listening to Metatrone doing their bit to redress the balance!

Michael Anthony

**MOLLUST**  
**'IN DEEP WATERS'**  
(Metal Message)  
SYMPHONIC

Now, this is a brand new sonic experience for me! 'In Deep Waters' is Mollust's latest offering, and one that should bring these Classically-steeped musicians worldwide attention!

Their own description is "the heart is Classic, Metal the pulse"; a very suitable way to describe the group's music. Multiple vocals, guitar, piano, violin, cello and various bass instruments and - of course - percussion, bring forth an eclectic but harmonious ocean of voice and sound. Each of the members of Mollust fashion their contributions boldly, the result being just that; bold musical excursions that draw one in and holds you.

Mollust is an eight-member group with both male and female musicians, combining Classical movements with the power of Progressive Metal. Overlaying everything with an Operatic vocalisation gives us a deep, ever-changing ocean of sonic luminosity. '... Waters' should be taken in as a whole work. The group reveals an epic story that runs the breadth of all the musical movements; a

most ambitious musical work, wrought with emotion and passion.

This release is a brilliant, fluid musical creation combined with power and crunching Rock Sonics that will move the innermost corners of a music lover's soul! Yes! It is so! It's also a work of love, from the performances to the actual recording techniques and production. It's full of passion and above all exquisite.

'...Waters' gives us it all - Metal, Classical, Opera and more! Mollust takes us on a journey that is certainly born 'In Deep Waters' - and one that is inspiring!

Bruce E.J. Atkinson

**MONSTER TRUCK**  
**'SITTIN' HEAVY'**  
(Mascot)  
HARD ROCK

Hailing from Hamilton, Ontario, this Canadian four-piece have certainly made great strides in just under seven years of them being an active concern. With big tours supporting the like of Alice In Chains, Buckcherry, Rival Sons and Vista Chino, they've certainly done the leg work to hone their raw, organic, down 'n' dirty Groove Rock sound and, with a sparkling endorsement from none other than Slash himself describing them as hard, soulful and heavy, their star appears to be on the rise.

Coming to the attention of UK fans with their appearance on the second stage at Download 2013 right on the release of their debut album 'Furiosity' (that was nominated for Canadian Album Of The Year at the Juno Awards the ensuing year), followed by a UK tour with the afore-mentioned VC, Monster Truck have positioned themselves in a favourable manner to allow their sophomore release to hit the ground running.

And what a huge slice of Canadian Rock 'n' Groove it is. Keeping the core sound and gritty style evidenced on their debut, this is as much a continuation of their philosophy as it is an evolution. It doesn't get more raucous than opener 'Why Are You Not Rocking?' - a song aimed at gig goers that choose to chat and play with their mobile phones instead of watching/listening. The

heavy, powerful driving riffs of first single 'Don't Tell Me How To Live' is again another statement to those that choose to dictate to the band (allegedly inspired by singer/bassist Jon Harvey's girlfriend hassling him over the amount of time he spent on his guitar).

Elsewhere there's the soulful sing-along Southern/Country-tinged 'For The People', the epic electric piano of keys man Brandon Bliss displayed on the mellow 'Black Forest', as well as the almost Honky-Tonk-ish 'Things Get Better' which, allied with the stabbing guitar style of Jeremy Widerman, is infectious catchiness in a curious way. Plenty of heaviness abounds the bombastic 'She's A Witch' (which sounds every bit as fierce as the title) and the intense 'Another Man's Shoes'. Drummer Steve Kiely, in tandem with Harvey's bass, gives the slower, groove-laden 'To The Flame' a Black Sabbath feel, 'Enjoy The Time' has a cool, breezy Black Crowes/The Answer vibe whilst pre-sale bonus song 'The Enforcer' gives a nod to fellow leading Canucks Nickelback.

Expect to be hearing a lot more from these guys in the years to come!

Carl Buxton

**MÖRDWÖLF**  
**'MACHINE OF WAR'**  
(Independent)  
HEAVY METAL

Generally, I find that if a band has umlauts in its name you're in for some heavy shit. Just remember kids, that in the Metal world it doesn't mean you have to pronounce the band name like you've just had a stroke - 'Moweredwoelf', anyone? - they're just there to look cruel. Don't blame me, blame Mötley Crüe.

Anyway, brand new American band Mördwölf has just unleashed their debut album, umlauts and all, and as I anticipated it's rather "in-your-face". The impressively named Karl Von Heilman (the third, no less) and his two compadres have taken a leaf out of the book written by the likes of The Misfits and underlined the part that says "ballads are for idiots".

'Machine Of War' certainly grabs hold of the listener, opening with the speedy and shouty 'Lilith', which is wonderfully melodic and macabre. Von Heilman hasn't got the best voice in the world, but his rasping tone suits what the band are doing and he has pitch control that doesn't make him a chore to listen to. There's plenty of "woah!" and the like, and I can really imagine having a great time with Mördwölf live.

'Love Is A Fire' starts like a fuel-injected 'Johnny B. Goode' and continues with a great Rock and Roll vibe for its three minute duration. Unexpectedly, five of the twelve tracks are over five minutes, and whilst they are fine and dandy, the shorter songs seem more suited to what Mördwölf are doing - this sort of music always goes down better as a short, sharp shock else the listener can get distracted.

So what we have here is a pretty solid album of Punky, aggressive and Melodic Metal that is fun to listen to but unlikely to make it to any "Best Of" lists come the end of the year. This is three guys having a good time with big riffs and some rather smart guitar work, mixed in with a decent sense of melody and songs themes that would have Wednesday 13 wetting themselves and cuddling a teddy. Worth a punt if down and dirty Horror Punk floats your funeral barge.

Alan Holloway

**MOTHER FEATHER**  
**'MOTHER FEATHER'**  
(Metal Blade)  
MODERN/ALTERNATIVE

Now here's a decidedly off the wall proposition, as New York underground rabble rousers Mother Feather peddle what they unashamedly call "Pop Cock Rock", and

you can make of that what you will. Garishly dressed and possessed of two sexy front ladies, MF seem to want to throw together The Runaways, Marc Bolan and David Bowie to see what comes out, complete with a rather OTT press release.

Taken at face value, MF are a Punky/Retro Pop outfit, oozing attitude and sparkling like fairies on top of a seventies plastic Christmas tree. The album is certainly a bit of a mixed bag, as the musical style veers about a bit; from electric, attacking songs to bland, forgettable ones. When they get it right, MF work very well as an opener 'Living, Breathing', the raucously catchy 'Trampoline' or the eponymous 'Mother Feather'.

Other tracks like 'Mirror' are nearly there, and the bass heavy 'Natural Disaster' is an effective slower track with a big riff. 'Beach House' is a light, fluffy Pop track that seems at odds with the band's image, and if I'm honest is part of four final tracks that don't do much for me, although final track 'Egyptology' livens up a bit.

Ann Courtney is the main woman who will no doubt get all the press because she is pretty, can sing well and spouts soundbites like 'I want catharsis and I want it now' - in fairness the vocals that she and Elizabeth Carena supply suit the music well. The album isn't full of guitar heroics, despite axe-man Chris Foley being described as a "one-man guitar army", but anyone who thinks that a cross between Paramore and The Runaways would be cool should get some enjoyment here.

Ultimately Mother Feather have entertained me, and they are one of those bands that you just know will be three times more fun in the flesh. There's nothing on the album that makes me want to shout their name from the rooftops, but it is fun and often worth the time. I don't think I'll be joining the army of "Mfers" anytime soon, but they may be worth keeping an eye on.

Alan Holloway

**NEVERWORLD**  
**'DREAMSNATCHER'**  
(Dream Demon)  
HEAVY METAL

The debut album, 'Visions Of Another World', from Bedfordshire's Neverworld did a great job of bringing together all the classic elements that go into making a traditional UK Heavy Metal album. It may have been a little naive in places and doubtless a bigger budget would have reaped even richer rewards, however album number two ('Dreamsnatcher') not only irons out most of these slight niggles, it also presents an even stronger set of songs.

Tight rhythms eagerly lay the foundations from which a serious cannonade of explosive riffs and blistering guitar solos burst forth, revealing an album of real depth and force. Neverworld also bring a classy helping of keyboards to their classic-era Iron Maiden meets Judas Priest concoction, and that adds a slightly Progressive edge and ensures that while there's no denying where this band draw their inspiration, they don't waste time being mere copyists.

Running at nearly nine minutes, 'Into The Mouth Of Madness' is an ambitious opener and yet, after its patient introduction, it suddenly powers into a confident, strident beast. With 'Passion Killers' utilising numerous tempo shifts, the maturity in the song-writing begins to really shine through, while 'The Awakening' demonstrates that Neverworld can also impress with a more straightforward assault. 'Dream Snatcher' proves to be the album's centre piece; a clever use of keys gives way to a glorious riff that makes serious inroads into your mind as Ben Colton gives a towering vocal performance. The singer's balance between full on belter and theatrical storyteller adds real bite and focus, while