

KAT - Metal and Hell (1985)

Written by bluelover

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01. *Metal and Hell* - 02:43 02. *Killer* - 03:18 03. *Time of Revenge* - 04:50 04. *Devil's House Part I* - 04:47 05. *(You Got Me) Vampire* - 03:14 06. *Devil's Child* - 03:34 07. *Black Hosts* - 03:27 08. *Oracle* - 03:42 09. *Devil's House Part III* - 03:42 10. *666* - 03:29 Tomasz Jaguś - bass guitar, back vocal; Roman Kostrzewski - vocal; Ireneusz Loth - drums, back vocal; Piotr Luczyk - guitar; Wojciech Mrowiec - guitar, back vocal

The 70's came to an end and its music trends became obsolete and old-fashioned. Classic rock icons became clumsy uninventive dinosaurs, mostly unable to reinvent themselves, while British punk and the promising heavy metal wave revealed totally new and refreshing musical concepts which denied the old jurassic rock standards. The impact of the rich UK early 80's scene had worldwide was tremendous, beyond frontiers; it even inspired musicians behind the iron curtain like Kat, who are considered one of the pioneers of the underground Polish mid-80's metal movement, because after all who else did it like them by 1986 in their home country? (Apart from Turbo, naturally). *Metal And Hell* instantly became a cult record, inspiring most following Polish metal young bands, including a truly pioneer sound that contributed crucially to the consolidation of speed & heavy there, even adding thrashy elements, in conclusion an iconic release.

From the very beginning, these guys offer an intense discharge of vigorous heavy metal, truly fast and fierce on "Devil's Child" and the title-track, whose riffing is very loose and their tempos very hyperactive, obeying the classic speed metal standards, getting notably thrashy too. The music is constructed with simplicity, avoiding elaborated arrangements or overlong instrumental passages, riffs are straight and technically humble but plenty of energy and power, while the frantic velocity is completely controlled. Rhythms are remarkably precise and coherent, actually. The band certainly like playing it fast, other numbers like "Black Hosts" or that vibrant mid-sequence of raging speed and shred of "Oracle" make it clear. Like most punk and NWOBHM predecessors, they escape from the heavy tempos and complexity most 70's rock groups made an essential part of their methodology. Ireneusz Loth's drumming remains

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constantly vigorous, even during quieter titles as “Killer” or “(You Got Me) Vampire”, which put greater emphasis on Roman’s vivid vocals, including a touch of melody and an easier instrumental configuration, yet designed by competent solid riffing. “Time Of Revenge” is, however, the most surprising, starting peaceful, melodramatic and mellow, soon turning into more relentless heavy metal but adding more diversity and meticulousness, accurately played and consistent. Riffing is direct and repetitive as well on “Devil’s House, Part II”, featuring no versatile variations or progression either, though its clear simplicity is proved efficient again to provide the music of an adequate instrumental basis, not elaborated but decent for the concept of early Kat . And of course, the sinister lyrical issues and wicked imagery of these Poles made their music peculiar and explicit.

It’s absolutely unfair Roman & co. don’t get the recognition they deserve for their contribution to the whole genre and I don’t mean only in their home country. The speed and aggression displayed on Metal And Hell was unique and refreshing by those times when most heavy metal was getting accessible, commercial and comical, very few of their peers did it as fast and crude as it used to be, in the vein of early Venom, Raven, Blood Money and Accept. They seem to take notable influence from Udo & co. specially, that background obscure choir on “Killer” has certain reminiscence of the sign of victory chorus of “Balls To The Ball” and Loth’s energetic double bass-drum kicks certainly take inspiration from Stefan Kaufmann. Although Kat’s sound is darker, including some classy harmonies and tenuous melody among the omnipresent brutality on other hand, which make some cuts surprisingly rich and versatile. The outstanding guitar work of Mrowiec & Luczyk is very professional, as I said riffs ain’t advanced or complicated, simply developed with coherence and properly modified to obtain continuity and sense, while solos are remarkably talented, inspired and designed with splendid creativity, not a bunch of chaotic noise or vain shred, so even though the group’s schemes are far from ambitious, their potential as performers is admirable. Song-writing process is efficient, once again I must insist, for the nature of the music with no surprising diversity, just competent enough to keep the tunes from being excessively uniform and dumb with limited alternative structures and arrangements added. Their methodology is pretty similar to most early 80’s NWOBHM acts as Vardis, Paralex, Gaskin or Hollow Ground, putting greater attention on raw aggression and velocity, both more constant characteristics, more present and indispensable to define the music than most British stuff. Kostrzewski’s makes this material sound so extreme with his amazingly harsh, dirty voice, nearly guttural and growling vividly at times, a combination of Udo with Mille.

The legendary underground heavy metal scene started with this album and Turbo’s Smak Cizy in the mid-decade. Roman & co.’s made an exhibition of extreme music in particular, constructed with talent and passion. Metal And Hell is a timeless record that sound nowadays so fresh and innovative, even though when it was recorded, many underground iconic albums had been already released. No other metal group had that impact on their home country back in the mid-80’s, however, well only Iron Maiden or Metallica, which also influenced Kat, naturally (specially that galloping riffing on “Devil’s House, Part I” reminds me of Harris & co.). As you

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see, it's not an incredibly original album but it proved Poles could make stunning heavy metal too. --- Metal_Thrasher90, metal-archives.com

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