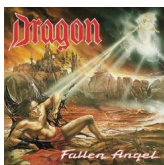


Dragon - Fallen Angel (1990/2008)

Written by bluelover

Thursday, 15 March 2018 14:16 -

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01. *Fallen Angel* - 05:43 02. *I Spit in Your Face* - 07:02 03. *Tears of Satan* - 07:23 04. *Deceived* - 04:55 05. *Simon Peter* - 07:04 06. *Destructor / Sewer of Graves* - 05:10 07. *Into the Dark* - 05:12 08. *Crying Woman* - 03:25 Bass, Backing Vocals – Demon Drums, Percussion – Gabryel Bomber Guitar – Spider Lead Guitar, Backing Vocals, Acoustic Guitar – Gronoss Vocals, Voice [Screams] – Freddy

Dragon powstał w Katowicach w 1984 roku. Od początku zamiarem zespołu było granie “najszybciej i najostrzej, jak to tylko możliwe”. Po początkowym okresie, gdy zespół budował swą popularność serią koncertów klubowych i szkolnych (wszyscy muzycy byli jeszcze nastolatkami) dużą popularność na scenie metalowej Dragon zdobył udanym występem na Metalmanii ‘86.

W konsekwencji świetnie przyjętego koncertu Dragon podpisał kontrakt menedżerski z Metal Mind Production. Wkrótce pojawiły się pierwsze nagrania - składanka “Metal Invasion” i split koncertowy z występu na kolejnej Metalmanii - 1987.

W 1989 roku wydana została debiutancka płyta - “Horda Goga”. Płyta cieszyła się ogromną popularnością, z biegiem lat osiągając status kultowej pozycji polskiego metalu. W tym okresie Dragon był, obok Kata, Turbo czy Vadera, jedną z najpopularniejszych formacji metalowych w Polsce.

W tym samym 1989 roku doszło w Dragonie do dużych zmian. Po zakończeniu służby wojskowej Jarek Gronowski musiał praktycznie reanimować zespół, z grupy odeszli bowiem, wyjeżdżając z Polski - charyzmatyczny wokalista Marek Wojcieszki i basista Krzysztof Nowak.

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Na ich miejsce Gronoss do zespołu dołączyli Adrian "Fred" Frelich i Grzegorz "Demon" Mroczek.

Wraz z nowym składem zmienił się nieco charakter muzyki Dragona - szybki, drapieżny thrash metal znany z "Hordy Goga" nabrał cech wczesnego death metalu - pojawił się growling, blast beat i brutalne, ciężkie brzmienie. Kolejną płytę - wydany w 1990 roku, concept album "Upadły Anioł" polski wydawca reklamował jako "first death thrash album in Poland". Płyta została wkrótce wydana również, w wersji anglojęzycznej, na Zachodzie. Dragon promował "Fallen Angel" wspólnymi koncertami z m.in. Death i Kreator. --muzol.com.pl

The major changes that tore up Dragon's membership after the debut's launch could've easily decimated this Polish thrash band. They split evenly as vocalist Wojcieszki and bassist Kszysztof Nowak walk off the set. The sky Dragon calls home grows grim, but when the edge of destruction seems only inches away, guitarist Leszek Jakubowski and drummer Krystian Bytom recruit three, redouble their strength, and crash like thunder with a din that hardly mirrors the band's former self.

The facelift this band endures could be considered frightening, intimidating, and bewildering all at once, but the now five-piece aren't just surgically smoothing out a few wrinkles and laugh lines. With Fallen Angel, the whole body sees the knife. Guitarist Jaroslaw Gronowski, bassist Grzegorz Mroczek, and most obtrusively, lung cannon Adrian "Fred" Frelich help the two co-founders commandeer the operating room. Everything gets worked over. Blood thinners are destroyed on the spot and the production thickens and clots. Intravenous steroids blast a deep sense of foreboding into Horda Goga's former razor-y guitar tone. Lungs are filled with hot roofing tar and respiratory disease, and the debut's Schmier-ish scratch is razed to a new level of death metal-crushed brutishness. The band's flesh and bone body heaves with violent contortions, and like limbs that are healed and rebroken a hundred different ways, rhythms shift, splice, and diverge almost as fast as they're created. And sturdy Music for Nations is picking up the bill.

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Alright, all dramatic writing aside, there's tons of stuff going on during these seven tracks. All of the melodic tendencies found on the debut have been captured and then cruelly rammed together here. Mostly it's like a world record multi-bus collision where rhythms corkscrew in from every direction no matter how unlikely, illogical, or daring and somehow find a landing zone amid the clutter. Once in a while things are calm and fluent like two low-tide rivers flowing together, but it's way more reliable to expect a song's life will be spent very hectically, drowning in awkward sequences and technicality, and by its final chords panting for any breath it can find. Really, the only thing you can do is sit back, wonder on what plane of consciousness it's all coming from, and reflect on how the five of them keep each barrage of progressive (and deadlier) Cynic-meets-Atheist-meets-Watchtower straight in their minds.

There's really only one track that doesn't explode in a kaleidoscope of structural annihilation. "Tears of Satan" is a 7+ minute droning, vibrating doomster that hits the gas to a speed mid-paced at best, and while most of it is fairly uninteresting, it's still the single tune that doesn't ricochet like ten simultaneous handball matches being played on the same court. Everything else is a free-for-all. The album's a home to every velocity. "Deceived", "Into the Dark", "Destructor/Sewer of Graves", the title cut – all a psychologist's worst nightmare. Civilized, logical minds flee.

Okay, we have enough rhythms and riffs to choke a zoo full of animals, but how does quantity compare to quality? That's a rough question. Many rhythms have a very short shelf life. I'm talking seconds. Aside from "Tears of Satan", for a riff to stick around for more than twenty seconds almost seems blasphemous to the band. Of the songs not named for a sad devil, "I Spit in Your Face", another seven-minute storm, is a few hairs less bombarding than its peers, and for that reason it's a track I tend to find refuge in. Regardless, more than two dozen rhythms burn rubber within. Some are so numbingly fast it's almost embarrassing while some are so soaked with intimidation that I want to glue them together in a constant loop, and all of them are given more airtime than usual.

Frelich is harrowingly vicious, alarmingly animated, sufficiently enunciated when bellowing somewhere near the speed limit, and more deathly vehement than most thrash spokesmen, especially in this song; I've heard a lot of thrash singers, but sometimes he can make Martin van Drunen and David Vincent sound like they're in church on their debut lps, and the production smartly does nothing to bury this uncommon talent (ed: disappointingly, the Metal Mind-released cd lightens the vocals with more treble, which also seem to lay superimposed on top of the mix instead of being buried seamlessly into it as on the lp version - pity). Are these guys good musicians? I'd say yeah, and with everything that's flying around they must've sharpened their memories with a diamond, but let's say for argument's sake that even if they're not all that hot playing solo, together they coagulate impressively into a living, schizophrenia-gusting hurricane.

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It seems the prominent acoustics that ornamented the debut have been frightened away, but it's hinted that some still lurk here. Unless they're here and gone with frog's tongue speed like most other rhythms on this lp, I'm not finding them (and I'm not counting the pseudo-acoustic intro, either).

Fallen Angel is unreasonable and preposterous. It's rare in its fluctuating levels of chaos. It's pretentious and impractical. To call this zesty is to call the Atlantic Ocean a trickle. It's also enigmatic from all kinds of distances and wildly accomplished in its own riotous world. It's one of the most musically outlandish albums I have, but it's a brave piece of work that I'm delighted to throw on now and then.

"...it's me who's flinging torches among you..." ---Gutterscream, metal-archives.com

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