

Soundgarden - Telephantasm (2010)

Written by bluesever

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CD 1 01. *All Your Lies* (3:53) 02. *Hunted Down* (2:41) 03. *Fopp* (3:38) 04. *Beyond The Wheel* (4:23) 05. *Flower (BBC Session)* (3:28) [play](#) 06. *Hands All Over* (5:58) 07. *Big Dumb Sex* (4:11) 08. *Get On The Snake (Live)* (3:30)

[play](#)

09. *Room A Thousand Years Wide (Single Version)* (4:14) 10. *Rusty Cage* (4:27) 11. *Outshined* (5:11) 12. *Slaves & Bulldozers* (6:58)

CD 2

01. *Jesus Christ Pose (Live)* (7:13) 02. *Birth Ritual* (6:04) 03. *My Wave* (5:15) 04. *Superunknown* (5:09) 05. *Spoonman* (4:07)

[play](#)

06. *Black Hole Sun* (5:20) 07. *Fell on black Days (Video Version)* (4:46) 08. *Burden in my Hand* (4:49) 09. *Dusty* (4:36) 10. *Pretty Noose (Live on SNI.)* (4:25)

[play](#)

11. *Blow up the outside World (MTV Live 'N' Loud)* (5:32) 12. *Black Rain* (5:26)

Personnel: Chris Cornell - vocals, guitar Kim Thayil – lead guitar Ben Shepherd – bass guitar, backing vocals Matt Cameron - drums, backing vocals Hiro Yamamoto – bass Scott Sundquist – percussion.

With the Knights of the Soundtable riding once more after 13 years apart, the time is right for an in-depth retrospective of one of the grunge era's best-loved bands. Soundgarden, Seattle natives at the epicentre of the early 1990s' plaid-and-flannel rock scene, already have one best-of to their name, 1997's *A-Sides*. But *Telephantasm* goes further, spreading itself across 24 tracks and two discs, including excellent live performances alongside commercially released singles.

Favourites from these two-dozen numbers are sure to be selected according to listener age. As someone (just) in their early 30s, the *Badmotorfinger* and *Superunknown* cuts are instant reminders of my early explorations into what most parents would, at the time, have considered

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an unlistenable racket. These two long-players – the band's third and fourth, from 1991 and 1994 respectively – are widely acknowledged to be the band's best collections, and with good reason: plot a graph of their MTV-assisted mainstream fortunes and it'll peak between the pair, primarily due to the plethora of brilliant singles from the period. From Badmotorfinger, Outshined and Rusty Cage enjoyed minor success in the UK; from Superunknown, Black Hole Sun reached number 12 in the UK and topped the chart in the US, while Spoonman and Fell on Black Days were also stateside top ten hits.

This can be seen as something of a surprise, as while association with the scene that spawned the globe-conquering Nirvana didn't harm Soundgarden's chances of breaking through, their sound owed much more to Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath – battleship-sized basslines, belt-it-out vocals – than it did the scrappy punk outfits that appealed to Cobain and company. Soundgarden were old back when they were new, meaning that much of Telephantasm doesn't sound horribly dated. Its raw charms may have aged, but they're sharper than same-era cuts from fellow Seattleites Pearl Jam and Alice in Chains.

The earliest songs here, from 1988 debut Ultramega OK (Flower, Beyond the Wheel) and the following year's Louder Than Love (Big Dumb Sex, Hands All Over), lack the production punch of later fare. But the songwriting craft exhibited by frontman Chris Cornell and ex-bassist Hiro Yamamoto (replaced by Ben Shepherd in 1990) is already showing plenty of promise. Cornell would follow Soundgarden's final LP, 1996's thoroughly decent Down on the Upside (Burden in My Hand, Pretty Noose), with a string of less-appealing projects which culminated in a truly awful third solo LP, 2009's *Scream*. But his various lows can be forgiven by just a single listen to this compilation's numerous nose-bleeding highs, closed out by a previously unreleased and suitably low-end-centric treat, Black Rain, from the Badmotorfinger sessions. --- Mike Diver, BBC Review.

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