

Scorpions – Face The Heat (1993)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 12 October 2009 20:28 - Last Updated Sunday, 06 January 2019 23:59

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01-Alien Nation 02-No Pain No Gain 03-Someone To Touch 04-Under The Same Sun 05-Unholy Alliance 06-Woman 07-Hate To Be Nice 08-Taxman Woman 09-Ship Of Fools 10-Nightmare Avenue 11-Lonely Nights 12-Kami O Shin Jiru 13-Daddy's Girl Backing Vocals – Mark LaFrance, Paul Laine Bass Guitar – Ralph Rieckermann Drums, Percussion – Herman Rarebell Keyboards – John Webster Lead Guitar, Rhythm Guitar, Acoustic Guitars, Talkbox, Fatbody Jazz Guitar, Slide Guitar – Matthias Jabs Management – Doc McGhee, McGhee Entertainment Rhythm Guitar, Lead Guitar, Acoustic Guitars, Sitar, Backing Vocals – Rudolf Schenker Vocals, Backing Vocals – Klaus Meine

So, it's 1993 and Scorpions release their "Face the Heat" album. In 1991 they had released the highly acclaimed "Crazy World" which was a fairly big mainstream success. Featuring power ballads "Send me an Angel" and of course, the huge hit "Wind of Change" which still gets listed in all power ballad listings. A mainstream success and critically acclaimed and also from a fans point of view a damn good album! Could they follow this up with this release? Well yes and no! The album had no real mainstream impact and received lukewarm reviews. However, from my point of view and the point of more long standing Scorpions fans, it was a great album suffering only from the success of it's predecessor! Because this is also a damn fine album, mixing up the more melodic hard rock orientated ballads, with straight up Hard Rockers to pure traditional heavy metal!

"Alien Nation" starts the album with a riff crunching and powerful enough to get you head banging straight away. Amongst the different styles of hard rock and metal this definitely comes up as one of the heavy metal tracks. In the form of the riff, lyrics and vocals, it's one of their heaviest songs and one of their best!

"No Pain no Gain" is another solid rocking track, and keeps the momentum going by the opener.

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A good track, but not mind blowing. “Someone to Touch” is a pure Hard Rock song. It’s slick, catchy and enjoyable. It picks the pace up once more and while it doesn’t make you want to mosh manically, it gets you going and singing along.

“Under the Same Sun” slows things down and is the first ballad on the album. One thing Scorpions do better than anyone else in rock or metal are ballads methinks. No AOR or Glam metal band comes close. This doesn’t come up to the standards of say “Still loving you” but it’s still a beautiful track. “Unholy Alliance” is a heavier track, though down tempo and gloomy, but it has a slow heaviness. It’s another good song and despite it’s speed or lack of it, the chorus is rather catchy.

“Woman” is not my favourite track though I appreciate it. Bluesy ballad is how I’d describe this, quite different to the rest of the album. You’ll either adore it or just appreciate it. “Hate to be Nice” takes us to some hard rock, another good song but not one of the better one’s on the album. “Taxman Woman” carries the trend of hard rock, fun hard rock at that. It’s slick and catchy and it’s pure hard rock.

“Ship of Fools” is a much quicker track and is heavier and here we enter into the realms of heavy metal again methinks. This is also a catchy, slick riffing, nice soloing and it’s a track you can really head bang too. However, “Nightmarre Avenue” is even heavier, (Only the opener is heavier) and this is one you can really headbang too. Good heavy metal track this one. It’s fast, aggressive and contains a nice shredding solo!

“Lonely Nights” is another ballad that we’re treated to, and we really are treated to. For me this is as good as any ballad they’ve done and Klaus Meine really shines. Of course he shines throughout the album (Especially on “Woman” to be fair) but here is him at his best. The power and emotion of his voice mixed with the atmospheric melodic guitars of Shenker/Jabs makes this a brilliant, if overlooked ballad.

And overlooked is a great way to describe this album. I mean there are no real weak tracks on it. Ok I’m not amazingly fond of “Woman” but I see it’s brilliance. And tracks like “No Pain No Game” “Hate to be Nice” and to some extent “Under the Same Sun” don’t stand out, but they’re still good. They’d stand out on a lesser album. On this album the real standout tracks are “Alien Nation” “Someone to Touch” “Ship of Fools” and “Lonely Nights” stand out for different reasons.

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It may not be mind-blowing, revolutionary or Scorpions “Magnum Opus” but it’s still a really good album. As the songs I mentioned specifically show, this album provides what a good hard rock/metal album needs to. Stomping anthems, slick and catchy tunes and a little bit of atmosphere and emotion, with or without schmaltz!

But all in all, it’s a really enjoyable piece of melodic heavy metal that I’d recommend to fans of this style! Don’t believe the... lack of hype! ---gazzoid, metal-archives.com

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