

In Extremo - Sterneneisen (2011)

Written by bluesever

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1. Zigeunerskat 2. Gold 3. Viva La Vida 4. Siehst du das Licht 5. Stalker 6. Hol die Sterne
7. Sterneneisen 8. Zauberspruch No. VII 9. Auge um Auge 10. Schau zum Mond 11.
Unsichtbar 12. Vermiss Dich Vocals – Das Letzte Einhorn Guitar – Van Lange Bass Guitar
– Die Lutter Harp, Bagpipes – Dr. Pymonte Hurdy Gurdy [Nyckelharpa], Bagpipes – Yellow
Pfeiffer Drums – Specki T.D.

OK, so there's really no faulting a band for sticking to a formula if it is a winner. Sterneneisen is not really different from In Extremo's previous record -- or, indeed, the one before that -- but the guys continue to hone their songwriting skills, delivering a set of scorching heavy rock hits with the best of them. The bagpipes ensure the tunes are never going to make it to a modern rock radio, but it's the radio's loss -- Sterneneisen may not be hip, but it's dead catchy. It's not kitschy, too, at least not embarrassingly so: love of the Middle Ages is stereotyped as a nerdy pastime, but the guys are just too powerful -- and maybe too mature to care about cheap gimmicks anymore (unlike Rammstein). They've streamlined their sound, too -- they've even stopped showing off by singing in half a dozen languages (except "Zauberspruch No. VII"), and the folk element is also mostly limited to said bagpipes, leaving the quasi-industrial guitars to carry the songs by barraging the audience with simple but killer riffs (some Sisters of Mercy synths pop up in the background, too). There is less filler than ever, and through the band mostly romps at one speed, the songs are focused and hook-laden enough to ensure that dynamics are not a problem. Even the slower numbers don't drag this time (and are less in number), and the optimistic and larger-than-life "Hol die Sterne" sounds like almost like a minor experiment, and a successful one. The terrific Teutonic singing helps, too: Das Letzte Einhorn is, despite the silly alias ("The Last Unicorn"), one of strongest vocalists in contemporary rock, and his bandmates don't fail him on gang choruses. In Extremo may be on the road to becoming the folk-metal AC/DC with Sterneneisen, but as long as they keep up with their own standards, they just might get away with it. --- Alexey Eremenko, allmusic.com

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