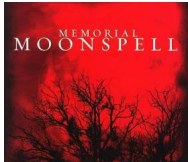


Moonspell - Memorial (2006)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 18 October 2014 16:03 - Last Updated Wednesday, 15 August 2018 20:47

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1 *In Memoriam* 1:25 2 *Finisterra* 4:08 3 *Memento Mori* 4:27 4 *Sons Of Earth* 1:51 5 *Blood Tells* 4:08 6 *Upon The Blood Of Men* 4:55 7 *At The Image Of Pain* 4:21 8 *Sanguine* 5:50 9 *Proliferation* 2:39 10 *Once It Was Ours!* 4:53 11 *Mare Nostrum* 1:56 12 *Luna* 4:42 13 *Best Forgotten* 6:47 14 *Atlantic* 12:43 Fernando Ribeiro – vocals Pedro Paixão, Ricardo Amorim – keyboards, guitar Mike Gaspar – drums Raimund Gitsels – violin (1, 3, 8, 10)

Once proclaimed poster boys for mid-'90s gothic metal -- European Union-style -- Portugal's Moonspell felt their popularity and influential relevance begin to wane when the movement's new millennium evolution saw female singers become de rigueur. Rudely pushed aside by the likes of Lacuna Coil, Nightwish, Lullacry, and, heck, why not, Evanescence, too, Moonspell finds itself in "rebuilding" mode come 2006; delivering their seventh full album and first in three years, *Memorial*, through new label SPV, following the end of a lifelong relationship with Century Media. Their successful working symbiosis with German producer Waldemar Sorychta remains intact, however, and the fact that *Memorial* is quite possibly the heaviest Moonspell album yet, proves they're all aware that going soft to compete with pretty young boys like HIM is not a viable option, so good for them! Uncompromising cuts like "Finisterra" and "Blood Tells!" are virtually unadorned death metal assaults, where band leader Fernando Ribeiro drives the point home by using old-time Cookie Monster growls almost exclusively. Yes, he does let his melodious baritone vampire alter ego out of the coffin now and then, and classic gothic literature (Oscar Wilde, Poe and Goethe) is still his favorite source material, but his newfound balance between the two voices helps do away with Moonspell's excessive late-'90s Type O Negative-isms. Likewise, tracks such as "Memento Mori," "Sanguine," "Once It Was Ours!" and "Luna" (the last featuring added female vocals), incorporate synth and string arrangements without being overwhelmed by them. Finally, there are several worthy instrumental interludes -- including the atmospheric "In Memoriam" and symphonic fanfares of "Proliferation" -- easing transitions between tracks, while imposing closer "Best Forgotten" carries on in the band's tradition of epic finales. No matter its overall high standards, it's unlikely that *Memorial* will return Moonspell to their former heights atop the goth metal scene; but it does prove they are still a force to be reckoned with while doing their legacy no harm. ---Eduardo Rivadavia, Rovi

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