

Carnival Of Flesh - Stories From A Fallen World (2015)

Written by bluesever

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1. *The Beginning* (05:25) 2. *The Promise* (04:52) 3. *The Horror* (03:59) 4. *The Pact* (05:39)
5. *The Battle* (10:16) 6. *The Regret* (04:02) Dachaz — Vocals Jake O'Bayne — Guitars,
Bass Vojin Ratković -Drums Dam — Keyboards

My black metal career started in the early 1990s and I came to follow the international black metal scene from inside the scene itself and of course also from the outside. The rise of Cradle of Filth and Dimmu Borgir to become the biggest (black) metal bands in the world was something truly unique. To me it never mattered whether they were big or not, because their early albums (in CoF's case up to 'Midian') were awesome pieces of music. And especially the latter seems to have had a major impact on the sound of this quartet from Serbia. Is it a coincidence that Cradle's acronym is CoF while Carnival of Flesh has the same? Anyway, especially the symphonic 90s sound in general is the trademark of Carnival of Flesh and their debut record 'Stories From a Fallen World.' Actually, when I speak of 'sound' I also mean the actual sound, because although very symphonic in nature, 'Stories...' has a 'Midian'-like sound to it which gives the record a nice and cold feeling while providing some typical keyboard sounds that are like good ol' Cradle of Filth.

This is a 6-track record with almost 35 minutes of playing time, so I'm not quite sure what it qualifies as: an EP, a full-length? Anyway, the record starts off with 'The Beginning' in which Carnival of Flesh show great variety in their riffing and song structures. This is not really black metal, but rather I have the feeling that the music follows a storyline. So, although there is some blast beat to be found, the riffs are not necessarily dark, but rather tilt towards the symphonic edge. Yet, while certainly a solid song, I miss a little bit of the red thread here and all in all the song appears a little weak and I cannot really gain a real access to it. This may be because the riffs lack a little bit of recognition value.

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But then comes 'The Promise'. Here the massive Cradle of Filth influence rises to the surface with the typical spoken vocals, symphonic, yet rather simple riffing, keyboard strings that are followed by the guitars, whispers, etc. True, this IS Cradle of Filth, albeit not quite as precise and straight forward, but I have to say I like this song and I'm happy to hear that there are bands out there which are able to and dare to re-create this particular sound. Of course, if you hate Cradle of Filth in the first place, leave your hands off this one!

On to song no. 3, 'The Horror'. This is my favourite on the record, because the tempo has been tightened and the overall atmosphere in this song is darker than in its predecessors and the band pays slightly more tribute to its black metal influences. Of course, Cradle of Filth trademarks can still be found here, but all in all there is a bit of a development towards a more individual sound in this one, because towards the second half the double bass attacks invite for some serious headbanging and I can imagine how powerful this can be live.

'The Pact' is simply a great song, because here Dimmu Borgir meets Cradle of Filth meets Carnival of Flesh. While the main riff of the song is not necessarily a stand-out riff in terms of diversity, I nevertheless like the simplicity and 'straightforwardness' of this song. This being said, there are many small details to be heard here, reflecting the playfulness of the band in all instruments. I think this song would have qualified for more bass emphasis though which I find somewhat lacking on 'Stories...'

The longest song on the record is 'The Battle' with its 10 minutes. This is really not a song, this is a symphonic story. Carnival of Flesh present their own sound and their skills here. Only the rather sudden changes in riffs and parts are somewhat distracting sometimes. Yet, I especially like the fact that elements can be found here which are not present in the other songs. For example, the 'solo melodies' (they're not really solos) in the guitars and in the keyboards add nice diversity to the band's sound. But once again, I miss a little bit of recognition value here. This song is certainly very diverse. Maybe a little too much though.

The record concludes with 'The Regret' and leaves the listener with some decent heavy metal influences and a song located rather in the mid-tempo range of metal. After 'The Battle' this track seems a little... what could I call it... simple, actually. But nevertheless it is a good conclusion for this record which most definitely needs several spins before it unfolds. I think what takes a lot away though is indeed the production which robs the band of the epic atmosphere due to its rather flat sound. If a 'wider', more symphonic sound was to be used, I think the sound of the band would benefit a lot. Until then, Carnival of Flesh have released a record which is definitely noteworthy and I'm curious to see where the band take their sound.

---polaris, vendettametalmagazine.com

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