

Majestica - A Christmas Carol (2020)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)
Saturday, 26 December 2020 16:00 -

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1 *A Christmas Carol* 1:44 2 *A Christmas Story* 5:02 3 *Ghost Of Marley* 4:39 4 *Ghost Of Christmas Past* 5:09 5 *The Joy Of Christmas* 5:35 6 *Ghost Of Christmas Present* 4:41 7 *Ghost Of Christmas To Come* 4:26 8 *A Christmas Has Come* 4:51 9 *A Majestic Christmas Theme* 4:59 Bass, Vocals, Other [Sleigh Bells] – Chris David Choir – The Majestic Christmas Choir Drums, Vocals – Joel Kollberg Guitar, Vocals – Alex Oriz Guitar, Vocals, Piano, Other [Sleigh Bells] – Tommy Johansson

It surely seems like an eternity has passed since the beginning of 2020 and we're already almost at the end of what has been an eventful year. With December here at last, the holiday season is among us and how better to celebrate with some music that will spread joy and brighten up your days? Christmas may not be the same this year, but Swedish power metal act MAJESTICA made sure that everyone will be able to sense that little bit of Christmas spirit, regardless of whether you will be able to celebrate it with your usual traditions! The band released their album "A Christmas Carol," based on Charles Dickens' classic, on December 4th, 2020, through Nuclear Blast Records.

If you are not familiar with the story of "A Christmas Carol," let's shortly dive into what the novel is about... "A Christmas Carol" recounts the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, an elderly pinchpenny who is visited by the ghost of his former business partner Jacob Marley and the spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet To Come. He is shown the error of his ways by these ghosts and they confront him with his future. After their visits, Scrooge changed his ways and transformed into a kinder, gentler man.

Listening to the first couple of tracks, made it immediately clear that first and foremost, "A Christmas Carol" has a similar flow and structure to a musical. The epic instrumental opening title track introduces the main Christmas motifs and grabs your attention and makes sure you

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are part of the storytelling experience. It flows nicely into “A Christmas Story,” which marks the real start of the adventure.

Singer Tommy Johansson transforms into Scrooge and sings from his perspective, while other bandmates crawl into the skin of other characters in this story – all four members of MAJESTICA share lead vocals on this album. It turns out that Johansson is not the only one blessed with a golden set of lungs and vocal cords. Altogether, perhaps the best part of this album is the vocal deliveries, the dialogues, the guest performances, choirs, voice-overs... everything is top-notch. The atmosphere is built by the beautiful orchestrations, that have a Christmassy sound, accompanied by sleigh-bells, glockenspiel, and many more instruments that have that sense of Christmas spirit. This is clear in the more dramatic “The Ghost of Marley,” where the story takes a dark turn. Surprisingly, “Ghost of the Christmas to Come” feels a little bit more Disney as the dialogues are slightly reminiscent of “The Mob Song” from “Beauty and the Beast,” making me wonder if that soundtrack was also inspired by traditional folk songs; since the story is also set in the winter, it makes sense.

What makes this a unique Christmas album, is that the band decided not to cover Christmas songs in a power metal way but instead, created unique, original songs that integrate traditional Christmas melodies that feel nostalgic and known – you might recognize, “Tis the Season to Be Jolly,” “Jingle Bells,” “Carol of the Bells,” and more. The best part is that the band also plays around with these tracks – they re-arrange them, transform them from major to minor, combine them with one another, creating an interesting play on these well-known songs. This is so perfectly executed that you can only be impressed at the end of the right. Additionally, this adds another dimension, where you get sucked into the story because it feels like something is familiar to you. Altogether, “A Christmas Carol” is a perfectly executed musical and we can’t wait for the actual musical to hit the stages of the world.

With Christmas music, there are usually two camps of people: those who love them and blast them loudly whenever it gets wintry and those who can’t stand them and cringe whenever they hear “Last Christmas.” However, this is an album that both parties can enjoy. Those who love Christmas music and metal will be surprised by its refreshing nature and the fact that MAJESTICA has made something that hasn’t been done before. It’s not just about turning existing Christmas songs into power metal anthems, no, this album is a prime example of storytelling done right. For the Scrooges among us who don’t enjoy Christmas music, I’m happy to tell you that this album contains enough creative power metal elements to get you excited about the holiday season. Foremost, this is still a power metal albums and it contains incredible orchestrations, as well as brilliant guitar wizardry, epic vocals, and much more.

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Tis the season to be jolly and with “A Christmas Carol,” you will surely get to that mindset in time before the holiday season starts, so get your glögi and, while transforming your house into a light festival and decorating your tree, listen to “A Christmas Carol”: the perfect soundtrack, making even 2020 a bearable year. --- Laureline Tilkin, tuonelamagazine.com

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