

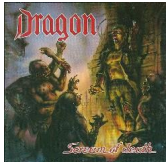
## Dragon [Poland] - Scream Of Death (1991)

Written by bluelover

Monday, 26 March 2018 13:03 -

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## Dragon [Poland] - Scream Of Death (1991)



1 *Mutant* 5:09 2 *Memory* 5:00 3 *Altars Of Doom* 3:32 4 *Gallery Of Void* 4:17 5 *Alley Of...* 1:00 6 *Forgotten By Death* 6:21 7 *Scream Of Death* 4:45 8 *Prisoner* 4:48 9 *Song Of Darkness* 4:54 10 *Final Introduction* 1:21 11 *Ashes Of A Generation* 3:39 12 *Demon Of War* 4:10 Bass – Demon Drums, Percussion – Bomber Guitar [Lead], Acoustic Guitar – Gronoss Vocals, Voice [Screams] – Freddy

Płyta „Scream Of Death” jest takim zwieńczeniem czasów świetności Dragon. Jest trzecim albumem wydanym kolejny rok z rzędu i chyba tym, który przyniósł zespołowi największy rozgłos. Dragon stał się cięższy i w swojej muzyce zaszczerpił wiele z death metalu. I choć doceniam ich wkład w polską scenę metalową to osobiście wcale nie przepadam za tą płytą.

Przede wszystkim jest to bardzo techniczna muzyka. Riffy są poplątane i szarpane, co powoduje, że utwory są kanciaste i nieharmonijne. Gitary nie chcą się rozwinąć i popłynąć, tylko wciąż skaczą i się urywają. Ciągłe są zmiany i takie to jest wszystko niemelodyjne. Dużo jest w tym basu, który jest dobrze słyszalny i aktywnie współtworzy te łamańce. Utwór tytułowy jawi mi się jako ten, w którym jest właśnie więcej takiego spójnego grania. Solówki są tam bardziej powyciągane. W „Ashes Of Generations” również tak jest i w ogóle to jest tu sporo takich energetyzujących gitarowych przeblysków, ale ogólne Dragon stawia na karkołomne wygibasy kosztem linii melodycznych.

To samo jest ze śpiewem. Na całej płycie nie ma ani jednej chwytliwej wokalizy. Ani jednego wpadającego w ucho, powodującego choćby podrygiwanie nogi, kawałka. Cały czas jest ta toporność, tak muzyki, jak i growlującego wokalu. Ostatni „Demon Of War” jest bardziej charakterystyczny, ale to wciąż nie jest nic szczególnego.

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Nie chce przez to wszystko powiedzieć, że Dragon jest zły muzycznie. Trzeba zaznaczyć, że na „Scream Of Death” cały czas coś się dzieje. Akcja jest szybka i skomplikowana, jest dużo krótkich solówek. Poziom gitarowy jest wysoki. Jak ktoś lubi, może się delectować. Mi jednak nie chce się to komponować i jest dla mnie męczące. ---WUJAS, darkplanet.pl

It's probably a small wonder that technical death metal peaked fairly early, in 1991, on the works of Death (“Human”), Pestilence (“Testimony of the Ancients”), Atheist (“Unquestionable Presence”)...and Dragon (the album reviewed here), and also traversed new, more complex fields to be explored by the “young guns” not far from then. If, with the first three bands, these albums were a natural evolution from their previous output, logically following the road up to the culmination of their career, in Dragon's case this effort came as a huge surprise, an almost supernatural occurrence which must have caught the fanbase with their pants (and panties) down...and for a very good reason. If, with the first three bands, one would nod in approval listening to these opuses, seeing the obvious improvement over the older works and also respecting those same older works for their significant contribution to the scene, with “Scream of Death” he/she must have gasped in wonder due to its utterly unexpected sheer brilliance...

In Dragon's case, this album nullifies everything the band had created before and after, making their entire discography unlistenable... literally. If “Scream of Death” was never made, one would perhaps still be appreciating the ambitious overdone mish-mash which “Fallen Angel” was, or would still be able to find more than a few interesting moments on the quirky post-death metal saga “Sacrifice”. Alas, this solitary “scream” of genius towers too high above the rest for one to grant those other albums anything more than just a condescending half-smile, the exact treatment which the Loudblast discography gets when compared to “Sublime Dementia”, or the Deathrow output when stood against “Deception Ignored”.

What annoyed quite a bit on “Fallen Angel” were the several overlong (7-min and above) compositions where aggressive thrash/proto-deathly rhythms were going on and on endlessly without producing anything truly memorable. An improvement was definitely heading this way, but not even the most vivid imagination could have foreseen its magnitude. Beating Vader's debut, “The Ultimate Incantation”, by a whole year, “Scream of Death” is proud to be considered the first genuine death metal album on Polish ground. And what a start for the Polish death metal scene that was: once the opening “Mutant” starts shredding with those deeply atmospheric, ultimately stylish technical riffs supported by the clearest sound quality around, one would be instantly caught in reverential seizure which may last till the end as every subsequent track pours more style and originality into the “furnace” - “Memory” with its steely,

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complex rhythms, "Altars of Doom" and "Gallery Of Void" with their fast, chaotic, and schizophrenic shreds, "Forgotten by Death" with its more elaborately progressive arrangements and great melodic hooks, a most unpredictable saga with amazing twists and turns which only accentuate the plot rather than losing it.

The approach takes a more brutal turn with the furious title track and the following "Prisoner" does little to alleviate the scenery by adding another raging portion of speedy vitriolic guitars with some of the most complicated riff patterns to ever come out of Europe. "Song of Darkness" is the only more linear piece here, being a creepy doomster without any flashy guitarisms followed by the ultimate exercise in chaotic, disheveled technicality, "Ashes of a Generation", an absolute masterpiece of calculated death metal brutality which even acts like Suffocation and Necrophagist at their best would find hard to match. Well, Dragon tried to match it on the closing "Demon of War" and would have almost succeeded if it wasn't for the more moderate shredding which is still mind-blowingly technical, but is more on the mid-paced side consequently undermining the guitarists' outstanding "duels" except at the end when they start moshing with the utmost intensity for the obligatory hard-hitting epitaph.

The death metal vocalist had already been handsomely introduced on the previous two efforts, more prominently on "Fallen Angel", of course, but the awful muddy sound quality took away most of his rending heroics which here are way more comprehensive and authoritative. The intricate rifforama which death metal started to explore more widely at the time was brought to its maximum here, and at this early stage it was only Atheist who were able to produce a similar accumulation of frantically hectic rhythms without turning it all into a hard-to-swallow, over-stylized bash.

To follow all the twists and turns throughout this album unerringly would be an engaging task, but fans of the genuinely complex and the progressive would be by all means delighted. The thrash metal fan would find very little to savour here as all the remnants from this genre were almost completely removed. To start a scene with such a technical effort was no mean feat, and it took quite a while for the Polish cohorts to match it in this trend - first were Violent Dirge whose strange, offbeat, and highly atmospheric debut "Elapse" (1993) unfortunately remained only an underground phenomenon. They spaced out quite a bit on their sophomore effort, "Craving" (1995), which is a really hallucinogenic listening experience not entirely belonging to death metal. Then came the one-album-wonder Catharsis with the truly inspired "Bitter Disdain" (1995), closely followed by Devilyn and their stylish, but scattered debut "Anger" (1996). And that was all before the advent of talent during the new millennium which brought Decapitated, Faeces, Sceptic, Never, Vedonist, Banisher, Redemptor, Atrophica Red Sun, etc.

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One was hardly expecting the band to ever top this colossal album, and the more relaxed, albeit still interesting, post-death metal delivery on "Sacrifice" (1994) was hardly a surprise, the band having eventually surrendered to the prevalent tastes. Whatever technical "flirtations" were still audible on it were irrevocably gone on the really weak "Twarze", a bland groovy charade which would hardly be granted even a single listen by the disinterested fan.

Reportedly the band are back in the game and may be cooking a second "scream of death" to scare the dragons away once again. However, the contemporary dragons have also been very well trained to endure all kinds of musical tribulations through the years and may have already heard all "horrible" and "atrocious" sounds possible. However, their first and most fundamental manual, with which every newborn dragon's training begins, is none other than the album reviewed here, and the Poles should be proud of laying the template for the mastery displayed by all the fire-breathing geniuses who try to "incinerate" the world at present. ---bayern, metal-archives.com

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