Dear Superstar – Damned Religion (2012)



01. Damned Religion 3:27 play *02. Change Yesterday 4:22 03. Last Rites 4:37 04. Our City Sleeps (feat. Stevie D of Buckcherry) 3:51 05. Anthem To My Life 3:52 06. Turn To Dust 3:26 07. Sirens 3:47* play *08. Tomorrow 3:48 09. Glitter Just Like Gold 4:33 10. Crystallized 5:0*
Micky Satiar – vocals Adam Smethurst – lead guitar Benj Ashmead - drums Stew Milton - rhythm guitar Ben Grimsley - bass

Dear Superstar are a rather awesome band, that deal in the sleaziest, dirtiest and heaviest hard rock, who deliver the sound of the rock n' roll sunset strip... from Lancashire. Yep, Hollywood hard rock from the county that invented the hotpot. Clearly, we are dealing with some classy stuff here, as their heavier more metallic take on glam rock, something we've seen achieved by the likes of Escape the Fate, Papa Roach and the groups most recent tour buddies, Glamour of the Kill, a group I like to think of as "the working man's Bullet for My Valentine." Make what you will of that. Third album Damned Religion hits listeners with force and proves that stepping down from all their Mancunian rock n' roll parties is not something that Dear Superstar are looking to do any time soon.

On their website, the band make the claim that what they like to do is "combine their love for classic hard rock with the power and bile of modern metal." And yes, they are successful in doing just that. Their endless pack of relentless breakdowns and punching hard riffs packs a gripping and adrenaline packed rush of violent and furious heavy metal with a similarity to more modern mainstream practitioners like Atreyu and All That Remains, as tracks like Damned Religion and Change Yesterday tear speakers apart with frenzied grooves and violent shredding from Adam Smelthurst and Ben Grimsley. But when, this furious metallic rush isn't the full focus, an influence from a number of hard rock groups is present, classic and more contemporary. With their hook filled rhythms and massive choruses, Turn to Dust and Last Rites have the fun hair metal qualities of Mötley Crüe about them, whilst the more pounding and rapid Our City Sleeps has a greater reminiscence of the definitive modern sleaze rock group

Buckcherry, which is obviously aided by the guest guitar solo from their Stevie D. to add to the mix. Meanwhile, tracks like Sirens and Tomorrow with a grungier vibe with the prominent rapid velocity contains much more a relation to many modern southern rock groups a la Black Stone Cherry and Shinedown. My final spotted similarity can be found in closer Crystallized which with it's surprisingly pretty shimmering lead guitar backdrops which reveal a talent within the group for creating textures made me think of some of the layers of various sounds and effects that were present on Bones, the latest album from High Wycombe's Young Guns. That's unlikely to have been viewed as influential though. Both albums were released on the same day y'know. However, the frenzied impassioned performance from Dear Superstar across the album reveals a clear attention paid to their fellow hard rock and heavy metal peers.

Of course, if you know of Dear Superstar, there's a good chance you'll know about all the bands I've just mentioned here as well and you'll realise that all these bands really do have their similarities, so Damned Religion is on the whole pretty low on variation and tracks can blend into one at times with a lack of stand out moments or moments of true astonishment. So, this album gives Dear Superstar a chance once more to reveal their talent for mixing classic sleazy hard rock with the juddering adrenaline and fury of modern heavy metal but it shows that the band still has room for improvement and shows that their next steps are to come back with a bigger sound that they can truly adapt upon and call their own. --- Andy Davidson, ramblingsofarockfan.blogspot.com

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