

Moonspell – Wolfheart (1995)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Wolfshade (A Werewolf Masquerade)* 7:43 2 *Love Crimes* 7:33 3 *...Of Dream And Drama (Midnight Ride)* 3:58 4 *Lua D'Inverno* 1:48 5 *Trebraruna* 3:29 6 *Vampiria* 5:35 7 *An Erotic Alchemy* 8:05 8 *Alma Mater* 5:37 Birgit Zacher – vocals Langsuyar – vocals Mantus – guitars Passionis – keyboards Ares – bass Mike – drums

Released at the height of the European goth metal craze, Moonspell's *Wolfheart* was a surprisingly accomplished effort by a band originating in the unlikeliest of places, heretofore relatively metal-free Portugal. Diligent students of their northern European neighbors, the bandmembers had yet to develop a wholly original voice, but quickly proved they'd done their homework by incorporating the genre's trademark elements (morbid lyrical schemes, dreary and melancholy riffs, ambient keyboards, demonic chorales) into the grandiloquent opener, "Wolfshade (A Werewolf Masquerade)." Singer and group instigator Fernando Ribeiro (here named Langsuyar for maximum crypt-defiling effect) alternates death grunts and a guttural baritone style obviously inspired by Type O Negative's Peter Steele as he leads his troops through multi-faceted but often overly ambitious compositions. You can't blame the boys for trying but, with the exception of "Love Crimes," which somehow manages to combine galloping drums, Iron Maiden-like guitar harmonies, and ethereal female vocals to great effect, the album's second half (introduced by the gypsy lute of "Lua d'Inverno" [Winter Moon]) soon collapses into a jumble of well-intentioned but not yet fully developed tracks. The strange chorus of "Trebaruna" never quite gels with the surrounding guitars, and the absurdly over the top gothic operetta "Vampiria" is a tad too much to stomach. Thankfully, the group pulls it together for a closing couplet featuring the easy-flowing epic "An Erotic Alchemy" (note the barely corrupted "Crazy Train" riff) and punchy closer "Alma Mater." All in all, *Wolfheart* was a strong launching pad, which would set the tone for Moonspell's accelerated artistic maturation in years to come. --- Eduardo Rivadavia, allmusic.com

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