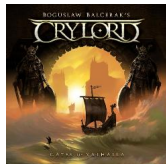


Boguslaw Balcerak's Crylord - Gates of Valhalla (2014)

Written by bluesever

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01. Passage to the Other Side 02. Gates of Valhalla 03. We Came to Rock 04. Mirrored Eyes 05. Judgment Day 06. Lost Again 07. Deadnight Serenade 08. House of Pain 09. Pompeii 10. War Memorial Boguslaw Balcerak (Guitars) Carsten "Lizard" Schulz (Vocals) Göran Edman (Vocals) Mark Boals (Vocals) Rick Altzi (Vocals) Ricky Wychowaniec (Vocals) Marcin "Kanclerz" Kwasny (Drums) Kamil Wyzinski (Bass) Federico Cordera (Keyboard solos) Lukasz Dybalski (Keyboard solos)

Born in 1972, Boguslaw picked up the guitar at age 16 and over the years he was in several bands based in his home city of Warsaw, Poland. CRYLORDS's formation came about in late 2007 but finding a suitable vocalist in his native homeland proved difficult for Balcerak. So he set about recording the instrumental parts for the first planned full length album whilst continuing the search for the right vocalists. Once the songs were complete, Boguslaw took the chance to invited three of his favourite vocalists to perform on the album - Mark Boals, Göran Edman and Carsten 'Lizard' Schulz - who all accepted their participation after hearing the quality of the music on offer. Some time later everything was in the box and with "Blood On The Prophets" (released via Lion Music) an extraordinary debut was presented in 2011.

For album No. 2, BOGUSLAW BALCERAK has gathered again a real Metal vocal elite around him, especially the well-known singing artists Carsten "Lizard" Schulz (Evidence One, Book Of Reflections, ex Domain), Rick Altzi (Masterplan, At Vance, Epysode) and Neo-Classical legends Mark Boals (ex Malmsteen, ex Royal Hunt, Ring Of Fire, Iron Mask) and Göran Edman (ex Malmsteen, Karmakanic, Brazen Abbot) are particularly worthy of mention. The result is an impressive Neo-Classical Metal masterpiece that shines with fantastic and song matching vocals, the exceptional and stunning guitar work of the master himself, lots of fastidious progressive elements and structures and melodies that will dig into the ear canals. Three years after his much-publicized debut, BOGUSLAW BALCERAK'S CRYLORD are back with their second blast "Gates Of Valhalla" and are definitively a real contender for the current Neo-Classical Metal throne. --- powerprog.net

The project type album is now within grasp given the tight nature of studio budgets and the wide talent pool available through the internet. Polish guitarist Boguslaw Balcerak started this Power Metal outfit BOGUSLAW BALCERAK'S CRYLORD 5 years ago in 2009, releasing the first album "Blood of the Prophets" in 2011 to a decent response in terms of written reviews. The follow up "Gates of Valhalla" contains many of the same guest vocals that appeared on the previous effort, along with MASTERPLAN/ AT VANCE vocalist Rick Altzi and TEMPLE OF SIN singer Ricky Wychowaniec offering two more melodic perspectives.

Ultimately the material is in the neo-classical power metal mold, certainly favoring those who love SYMPHONY X and especially anything related to YNGWIE MALMSTEEN. This means high octane screams, thunderous chops, and of course shredding that can transpose the best of Bach, Beethoven, and Paganini in one. Göran handles the vocals through charm and grace on the ballad "Lost Again" – a 7:35 epic that should have many hearts racing as Fererico and Boguslaw trade off beautiful, emotional-oriented keyboard/ guitar breaks.

Carsten handles a lot of the mid-tempo to slightly faster arrangements, coming out the gate swinging on the cruising opener "Passage to the Other Side" and reaching killer high sustaining notes for that chorus, while also captivating in that darker, mystical mode for another favorite "Deadnight Serenade". For a change of pace it is refreshing to hear former YNGWIE singer Marc Boals handle a more straightforward, melodic metal piece like "We Came to Rock" – as I think this song is just addictive in a good time way, the riff and groove melding as one in that late 80's / early 90's manner while Boguslaw again delivers through smoldering finger tricks and licks the passion and fury of this style.

These 10 songs are not mere exercises in show-off Power Metal – Boguslaw and his compatriots perform in a solid songwriting format where harmonies, melodies, hooks, and a slight 'groove/tempo' factor matter – but you will get the chance to hear fantastic drumming, bass work, and keyboard displays. The Rick Altzi sung "Judgment Day" and "Pompeii" are two numbers to really key on musically, both impressive in terms of pacing, technique, and comfortable transitions and instrumental expertise that show these players know their neo-classical power metal through and through.

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A dramatic improvement to my ears, "Gates of Valhalla" should ensure neo-classical oriented Power Metal mavens another record to champion in 2014. ---Matt Coe, metal-temple.com

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