

Black Sabbath - 13 [Deluxe Edition] (2013)

Written by bluesever

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Disc 1: 01. *End Of The Beginning* 02. *God Is Dead?* 03. *Loner* 04. *Zeitgeist* 05. *Age Of Reason* 06. *Live Forever* 07. *Damaged Soul* 08. *Dear Father* Disc 2: 01. *Methademic* 02. *Peace Of Mind* 03. *Pariah*

Musicians: Tony Iommi – guitar Ozzy Osbourne – lead vocals, harmonica Geezer Butler – bass guitar + Brad Wilk – drums

Black Sabbath's birth is one remarkable event in heavy metal history. Their vision of doom, sludge and sometimes psychedelic created the soil on which many bands stand today. A few hits and several misses later, the juggernaut act led by Ozzy was shelved in the aftermath of "Forbidden", their most disappointing material to date. Decades later, the announcement of their reunion received some mixed criticism. Ozzy Osbourne was seen as washed out, done and dusted, bound to release average upon average hard rock albums until his inevitable retirement.

Shockingly, 13 is a monstrous journey full of doom, sludge, psychedelic and bluesy prog-rock. The album revisits and recaptures the glory days. Simply put, there is some real quality filth in here.

The second half of the album is its strong point. "God is Dead?" and the intro song are exaggeratingly long with less quality content to account for. All the rest are complete opposites. Juggernauts like "End of the Beginning" and "Age of Reason" enjoy various time shifts, enough to make them enjoyable as they pass the 7 minute mark. "Zeitgeist" unmistakably borrows from Planet Caravan with distorted vocals singing over the bluesy and trippy instrumentals after Iommi pulls out a jazzy solo.

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The production is rugged. Rick Rubin is hated by many, but he did a fine job with this record, showcasing a dry and meaty doom sound. Ozzy's vocals are sometimes irritating, and his lyrics are far from what they used to be, but the music makes up for that downside.

The circle is complete with "Dear Father" ending with the sound of rain pouring down, just like their very first album began. And looking past the lyrical hiccups and sometimes irritating vocals, 13 is Black Sabbath's closest thing to a damn good record in years. Some may argue this reunion was not necessary, but after the slump of "Forbidden", this album was a must. It's Sabbath's swan song and illustrates a modern take on the band's glorious legacy. --- Peter K. Mark, sputnikmusic.com

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