

Buckethead – It's Alive (2011)

Written by bluesever

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01 – Lebrontron 02 – Tonka [play](#) 03 – Peeling Out 04 – Barnyard Banties [play](#) 05 – Crack The Sky 06 – The Hatch 07 – Brooding Peeps 08 – Picking The Feathers
Buckethead - Feathers and Bass Dan "Brewer" Monti - Producer, Programming, and Bass
Albert - Producer

Once upon a time there was a dude called BUCKETHEAD and he released albums ever now and again but something strange happened one day and no one is quite sure what it was for all of a sudden he got a wild hair up his ass and decided that releasing an album or two a year just wasn't sufficient. Granted he had always been prolific but beginning on the innocent little date of May 15, 2011, Buck-Buck-Buck-BUCKETHEAD launched the very first of his PIKE series. PIKE 1 - IT'S ALIVE is the beginning of the seemingly endless releases of this series. The title says it all. IT IS ALIVE and it is growing exponentially every passing year. PIKE 1 is not only the first issue in the series but it is also his first album of 2011 when he released a mere five albums. At this point BUCKETHEAD wasn't doing the one man show yet. He had Dan Monti on board as bassist and producer.

"Lebrontron" (6:24) begins like many of the following PIKES. It has a nice echoey guitar intro and then breaks into distorted hard rock. The track alternates between faster more rocking parts and slower riffs that incorporate solos. Nice and melodic and at this stage there is a bit more spunk in the delivery. The riffs are memorable and it changes things up often enough that it doesn't get boring. Nice thrashy guitar march outro. Cool track.

"Tonka" (3:18) starts out with a totally tripped out electronic noise going up and down the scale with accompanying rock guitar. As it drops out the guitar charges into full fledged metal mode with classic 80s Randy Rhoads type riffing and more remnant of BUCKETHEAD's earliest metal oriented releases. After the metal assault it trades off with slower passages that bring back the

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electronic effects. Another cool track.

"Peeling Out" (:15) is a short but sweet virtuosic guitar solo that rips at a million miles an hour.

"Barnyard Banties" (2:29) basically bleeds into the solo and starts with an unaccompanied funky bass line and then trades off with a hard drivin' metal guitar riff. These two styles dance with other taking turns and then other guitar weirdness occurs as the funky melody stays the same while the riffs change it up on guitars but the two styles still trade off. Pretty cool as well.

"Crack The Sky" (5:08) starts out with arpeggiated grungy guitar but quickly turns into a galloping metal rocker. After it jumps around like a chicken with its head cut-off it turns into a clean guitar flow for a while before jumping into the metal cauldron again. It continues to alternate the two and then adds solos.

"The Hatch" (4:01) begins with a strange guitar effect and a monotonous marching rhythm with strange electronic embellishments and then all drops out except a funky bass line. It all starts trading off with each other delivering quirky time signatures and brief appearances of metal guitar. It then sounds like a battle between Squarepusher IDM and Van Halen inspired metal riffage. Weird indeed.

"Brooding Peeps" (4:54) starts out with a brooding backing ambient effect with staccato guitar chords that have long pauses in between. It eventually becomes a guitar riff with steady drum and bass. This one displays some fine neoclassical guitar shredding and a bountiful style of changing things up but themes recur only with variations. Another cool track.

"Picking The Feathers" (4:40) is very strange. It starts out with a downtempo type electronic drum and then has intermittent power chords and then little tinklings on the higher register of the guitar. The time sigs and tempo changes are all over the map making it impossible to follow but soon it gets joined in by a steady metal guitar / bass / drumbeat for a while before it reverts back to the avant-garde scene. These two styles trade off with variations each time.

This first PIKE is pretty damn good and shows BUCKETHEAD in a mode where he was clearly

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passionate about the material. The melodies are strong, the delivery even stronger and the album is varied and nicely produced. This is clearly before he was pumping these out on automatic pilot. IT'S ALIVE is mostly rooted in 80s classic metal but has lots of experimental approaches lurking around every corner. The ratio of accessible to avant-garde leads more towards the accessible but when it gets weird there's no holding back. I should've started listening to these from the beginning because this is a keeper. ---siLLy puPPy,
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