

Warlock - Hellbound (1985/2011)

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01. *Hellbound* [play](#) 02. *All Night* 03. *Earthshaker Rock* [play](#) 04. *Wrathchild* 05. *Down And Out* 06. *Out Of Control* 07. *Time To Die* 08. *Shout It Out* 09. *Catch My Heart* 10. *Hellraiser (Bonus Track)* 11. *Hellbound (Live) (Bonus Track)*

Line-up : Doro Pesch (vocals) Rudy Graf (lead guitar) Peter Szigetti (lead guitar) Frank Rittel (bass) Micheal Eurich (drums)

Sometimes it is remarkable how much better bands can get in surprisingly little time. There was only slightly over a year between the recordings of Warlock's debut album 'Burning The Witches' and its follow-up 'Hellbound', but the German quintet made immense progress in that period. Where the former is an enjoyable heavy metal record with the occasional noteworthy song, 'Hellbound' is one of the greatest metal records of the mid-eighties. 'Hellbound' sees Warlock enhancing their NWOBHM leanings, which lends the album a classy edge without ending up sounding too polished. In fact, 'Hellbound' is highly energetic. At times even aggressive.

Back when 'Burning The Witches' was released, Warlock gained some attention for having a female singer. Quite understandably; female metal musicians were rare at the time and Doro Pesch's voice was in deed what lifted the album above mediocrity. Her extremely passionate performance is still one of the highlights on 'Hellbound', but the album is full of fantastic guitar work by both Peter Szigeti and Rudy Graf. The band's biggest improvement is certainly made in the guitar department; while the riffs and solos are not that much different in character than before, one can hear that more thought went into the arrangements.

Probably the best example of that growth is the incredibly elegant 'Out Of Control'. In essence a beautiful melodic heavy metal track with likely Pesch's best performance on the record, but its acoustic intro and some strategically placed bright overtones throughout the song give it even

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more sheen than it would have had without those subtle touches. Definitely one of the best European power metal songs of the eighties. 'Wrathchild' also is a hidden gem, with its melancholic dramaticism and climactic time feel changes truly enhancing the raw power of the simple, yet effective riff work.

It's not all sophistication characterizing 'Hellbound' though. 'Earthshaker Rock' and the awesome title track are uncomplicated uptempo rockers that were obviously designed for the live situation. 'Time To Die' is as aggressive as pre-thrash NWOBHM gets, with Pesch's sounding at her angriest at least until 'A Touch Of Evil' would be recorded. The title 'Shout It Out' suggests a simple sing-along anthem, but it is in fact relatively epic and a masterclass in building towards a climax; the whole song seems to imply some subdued anger or rebellion that culminates in a fantastic "prepare for battle" type feel in the final minute.

'Hellbound' was, in a way, the pinnacle of Warlock's original line-up. Graf left the band not long after its release and by the time Pesch's magnum opus 'Triumph And Agony' was released, Szigeti and bassist Frank Rittel had left as well. Many of these songs are still played at Doro live shows to this day and it is not hard to understand why. Even though 'Hellbound' is clearly a product of the mid-eighties, the songs themselves are timeless. That is why over half of these songs still give yours truly goosebumps after knowing them for so long. 'Hellbound' is simply a near-flawless slab of European heavy metal. ---Agonymph, metal-archives.com

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