Shakra - High Noon (2016)

1 Hello 2 High Noon 3 Into Your Heart 4 Around The World 5 Eye To Eye 6 Is It Real 7 Life's What You Need 8 The Storm 9 Raise Your Hands 10 Stand Tall 11 Watch Me Burn 12 Wild And Hungry Bass – Dominik Pfister Drums – Roger Tanner Lead Guitar – Thomas Blunier Rhythm Guitar – Thomas Muster Vocals – Mark Fox

Straight out of Switzerland we have Hard Rock piece SHAKRA. Formed way back in the late 90s they're certainly not new to the scene. "High Noon" is their twelfth studio album and it hit Number 2 in the Swiss music charts, which for any Rock band is quite the achievement. They're soon to share the stage with some of the most influential bands of the modern age, including Industrial Metal legends RAMMSTEIN and Thrash Metal veterans SLAYER and ANTHRAX at Sonisphere Metal Festival. So it's safe to say this band are definitely going places.

Right off the bat this album is insanely catchy. The guitar work is solid, amplified by the meticulously sharp production. But then the vocals kick in. I really see what he's trying to do; he's trying to go for that "husky" tone but ends up sounding like a 40-a-day chain smoker. Not that it doesn't work, sometimes it does. For example on the track "Wild & Hungry" his voice is slightly higher pitched which works in his favour. It's when the vocals adopt a deeper tone that they have a tendency to sound unappealing.

Where the vocals lack, the guitar and drums pick up the slack. While there is nothing spectacular about the drumming (a simple 4/4 most of the time) it is solid, there's not a point where I thought "this could be better"; sometimes the more simple the better and this album is a fine example of that. The guitar work is also relatively simple but effective, aside from a few guitar solos (which are phenomenal) there's simple chord progression and not much else.

As I said before, the production on this album is exceptionally good. Each instrument stands out without sounding messy and crowded, and each instrument has their time to shine. It's an easy mistake to make when producing an album, and a mistake that did not happen with this album.

All in all, this album is a solid effort. But I can't help but expect more from a band that are doing so well for themselves. Nothing truly stands out, as I said before everything is simple but solid. It's not exactly something one would expect for a band that have been together for almost twenty years. But, again, a solid effort from these Swiss Rockers. ---Laura Cosheril, metal-temple.com

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