Bal-Sagoth – Battle Magic (1998)

1. Battle Magic 02:45 2. Naked Steel (The Warrior's Saga) 04:44 3. A Tale from the Deep Woods 05:36 4. Return to the Praesidium of Ys 06:29 5. Crystal Shards 02:17 6. The Dark Liege of Chaos Is Unleashed at the Ensorcelled Shrine of A'Zura Kai 04:14 7. When Rides the Scion of the Storms 06:16 8. Blood Slakes the Sand at the Circus Maximus 08:53 9. Thwarted by the Dark (Blade of the Vampyre Hunter) 06:18 10. And Atlantis Falls... 02:22 Byron Roberts - Vocals, Lyrics Chris Maudling - Guitars, Bass, Songwriting Jonny Maudling - Drums, Keyboards, Songwriting

Do you know what a special album is like? The ones that are so good that you listen to the entire disc with extremely high volume, following each track with all your senses while reading the lyrics; completely disabled from the rest of the world? If no, here's your chance. Because this is just as the title suggests, magic.

Bal-Sagoth is a band which hails from UK, playing black metal with huge symphonic influences... actually I'd rather say that they play symphonic metal with minor black metal influences since that's more how it sounds. Their texts are about fighting, warfare, blood, swords... etc, this might make you think "Oh crap, cheesy power metalish lyrics!" but this is not the case; since these lyrics are far more advanced than your usual glory anthems such as the likes of Rhapsody.

The tracks vary in shape, we have the instrumental interludes such as Battle Magic & Crystal Shards... epic pieces like A Tale From The Deep Woods (personal favorite!) and of course heavier stuff in the form of Return To The Praesidium Of Ys & Thwarted By The Dark (Blade Of The Vampyre Hunter). All these tracks also have a story, which makes it even more fantastic. The album has a "red thread", or undertone if you may, related to Atlantis... but each track is like a separate battle. For example, the pre-mentioned Thwarted By The Dark (Blade Of The

Vampyre Hunter) is about a vampire hunter who wants to get revenge at the undead. The Dark Liege Of Chaos Is Unleashed At The Ensorcelled Shrine Of A'Zura-Kai (The Splendour Of A Thousand Swords Gleaming Beneath The Blazon Of The Hyperborean Empire Part II) is probably a nominee for "longest title ever", and besides that it's a epic song about a full-scale war between rivalling forces. Album highlight Blood Slakes The Sand At The Circus Maximus which clocks in at 8:53 is about a gladiator fighting in the circus of emperor Nero during roman times.

As you can see, the album offers great variation and depth. But be aware, because this isn't to me an album where you can just grab a track and headbang to it... this album is really deep, and to enjoy it fully I recommend that you seal off the outside world and listen to the entire disc from beginning to end; only then will the true magic unfold. And believe me, it's worth every second of your time. It's like an enchantment, it's compelling... it's Bal-Sagoth! ---metalstorm.net

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