

Review of: Biomechanical - The Empires of the Worlds



As far as surprises of the year are concerned, the new disc from England's 'Biomechanical' will take some beating. Talk about stepping up to another level; fucking hell, these guys have jumped about another three since their 2003 Revolver Records debut 'Eight Moons'. Don't worry if you missed that one folks, because the presence of 'The Empires of the Worlds' makes that little effort virtually obsolete. This is your classic definition of a 'breakthrough album'. You want a modern metal album that doesn't straddle some sort of American Metal/Euro Metalcore song writing ethic? Yep, this is it. And it fucking rips.

'Biomechanical' are far from being any sort of groundbreaking metal act. They do have a familiar vibe and sound. Conversely, they could never be accused of riding the coattails of all that has gone before them. Like all good metal bands that have a recognizable sound, the best thing about Biomechanical's take is they do it so very well - the essential components being a dynamic freshness and vitality. Believe me, 'Empires...' jarring metallic crunch has class stamped all over it.

The initial impact of 'Empires..' is actually somewhat overwhelming. For all of its familiarity, there is a complexity, a progressiveness and a real RUSH of influences that leaves the listener reeling. Noting this, it takes two or three concentrated listening sessions to grasp the full gist of what has been captured here. Still, even after listening to this disc twenty times, Biomechanical never actually let you get comfortable with their approach. And perhaps this is its only major flaw - its impulsiveness. The band is so intent on enveloping the listener in dense layers of riffs and cinematic orchestration that they never actually lock into a riff or groove long enough to really truly connect.

Impulsiveness aside, there is no doubt that 'Empires..' major strength is its familiarity. Let me mention a few names for you: Pantera; Nevermore; Judas Priest, Queensryche and Strapping Young Lad. Good enough for you? With a complex, chaotic pacing infused into their sound, the combination of these metal luminaries is exactly what 'Biomechanical' sound like. Furthermore, they pull it off without favouring one influence over another. 'Empires..' is equally Pantera/Nevermore riff inspired as it is vocally (Jon K moving between Anselmo like tones and high pitch Warrel Dane with incredible ease). It is as chaotically spectacular (SYL) as it is progressively inventive (Queensryche circa Operation: Mindcrime). The classic metal feel, the modern thrash approach and its whole orchestration work together seamlessly, providing the listener with one of the more savagely dynamic and musically intelligent releases of the year. If only they'd sit on that riff though...

'The Empires of the Worlds' is going to be one of the surprises of the year. Almost out of nowhere, this English quintet has arrived with their own brand of metallic metal that perfectly straddles the divide between classic and modern styling. It is a complex and challenging album that some may find a little convoluted at times. That aside, there is no doubting its superb musicianship and flawless production. As good as this is, it is clear that further developments can be made in their song writing and once they allow themselves to 'lock' into a groove and ride with it they'll become an even more potent act. 'Empires..' is a fantastic metal album. I'm betting their next one will be even better.

- Krozza