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reach 'Anon

their new album is a 'Revelation'



becalming Euro Metal flavour to proceedings as they do.

The rest of the line-up consists of Lasse Strand on bass and Ludwig Tornemalm on drums, but with Dennis Forsberg handling four-string duties on two of the thirteen songs and Mattias Bergstedt banging the tubs on four, you do have to wonder how fluid this situation is. The important thing is that the "musical chairs" approach doesn't send this release crashing to its doom with the constant instrument shuffling never becoming apparent.

Possibly that's down to the singular attack chosen on 'Damnation', razor-sharp riffs always the order of the day as mighty beats continually hammer down to provide the backdrop to Carlsson's considered voice of aggression. He's definitely from the school of Udo Dirkschneider with a dash of lower-end King Diamond thrown in for good measure. However, I feel he doesn't quite have the military precision of the former or the jaw-dropping counterpoint of the latter, thus making for a much more workmanlike expulsion. It's a trait found throughout, and while I can't fault 'Black Widow', 'Sweet Cherie', 'Spellbound' or the supremely catchy 'Black Moon', neither can I get truly excited by them.

On this evidence, Fretless are a rock-solid band that simply don't put a foot wrong but neither do they take risks. In a setting that should sound dangerous and threatening, 'Damnation' feels just too controlled and regulated.

Steven Reid

**FRIED GOAT**  
**'ROCK N ROLL SAVES LIVES'**  
(Outhouse)  
SOUTHERN/COUNTRY/FOLK

The next item we present for your aural delectation is Fried Goat's third studio album and it's an absolute belter! Yes, they are Southern Rock, but not as you know it. Their music has undertones of New Country, Pop Rock, Americana and even ragged Blues which are all mixed together into one delicious blend. I have been constantly blasting it out on one of

my radio shows and absolutely revelling in its sonic brilliance.

Hailing from Augusta, Georgia, this ass-kicking quintet infuse their rocking music with both wonderful Pop sensibilities and soulful delicacy, and this is a release that simply demands repeated listens as it ingeniously inserts itself into your willing subconscious with sinful ease. Who do they particularly sound like? In all honesty, they don't sound like any other act – they sound like Fried Goat – and the band deserve some loud and resounding applause for that!

The group describe themselves as "Southern Rock with a conscience", and curiously they almost sound like The Georgia Satellites thrown into a musical blender with early R.E.M., Collective Soul and Counting Crows. It's actually very strange and yet it really works. The vocal harmonies are beautiful, the musicianship is wonderful and the songs are immediately catchy, while the production is warm and very organic – it's a superbly completed package!

Creating a Southern Rock album that is both "old" yet completely "new" is not easily done, but Fried Goat have done just that with 'Rock N Roll Saves Lives'. It is a release that will satisfy existing hardcore fans of the genre but will also entice in new fans too. It just has a certain magic about it that marks it out as something truly special. It honestly crosses genres with charming ease and beguiling heartfelt passion.

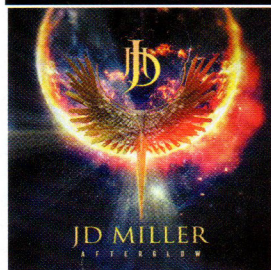
Serenading you with no less than sixteen tracks, Rusty Yeargain (bass/vocals), Westy Bowen (vocals/guitar), Deke Wiggins (lead guitars/vocals), Brian Heinbaugh (vocals/guitar/mandolin) and Brian Brittingham (drums) have created something unique and deeply engaging. Adding a haunting and beautiful semi-acoustic cover of Bruce Springsteen's 'Light Of Day' is a brave and ultimately brilliant move that closes the record with elegant style.

I really think this album deserves all the plaudits that I'm certain will be lauded upon it!

Chris O'Connor

**JD MILLER – 'AFTERGLOW' (Mighty)**

**HARD ROCK**



Something from another time and place must have infiltrated the water supply because Sweden is (and always has been) one hell of a breeding ground for bands/artists who have defined and continuously re-imagine the modern Melodic Rock landscape. When it comes to JD Miller, they're one such Swedish group that, until now, have failed to enter my purview. With interest acutely piqued, my first taste of the band came in the form of 'The Desire' (the first single from their latest album 'Afterglow') and from the moment the song began, it was immediately clear that another winner was

in my clutches. After a bit of research I was surprised to learn that the group's origins date back as far as 2011, and 'Afterglow' represents the third release in their discography which also includes 'World War X' and 'Grand Intentions'.

JD Miller are a gorgeous representation of being able to deliver within the paradigm of a musical genre, but they're also able to stand out from their contemporaries. They seamlessly blend heavy Symphonic Metal with AOR to ostensibly create an entirely new subgenre of Melodic Hard Rock. The album is an endless supply of fantastic material spread across eleven tracks where the music is heavy yet never over-the-top. The songs also have atmosphere but they aren't melodramatic, while the elements of AOR are sincere and yet they never become cloying. Peter Hallden's vocals are nothing short of magnificent, and they are beautifully contrasted by Elias Fröjd's heavy guitars, Chris David's pulsating bass and Emil Eriksson's declamatory drumming. The record closes out with 'Auburn Skies', a delicious slice of AOR genius which (in a more favourable Rock-friendly era) could easily find regular rotation on terrestrial radio.

JD Miller exemplify what it is to carve out a musical identity that's equally familiar and unique. This is a brilliant and ambitious album that already has me seeking out their previous releases. There is absolutely no need to highlight individual tracks since every one of them easily makes the cut. What's more, you can even catch these guys on tour opening for SOTO during the month of September – for those who are able, I encourage you to make the effort to go out and see these guys perform live. In the meantime, I implore anyone who is attracted to the music of Eclipse, One Desire or Pretty Maids to immediately acquire this album and prepare to bask in the 'Afterglow'.

Brent Rusche

**FUTURE NOW**  
**'UTOPIA AWAITS'**  
(Independent)  
PROGRESSIVE

This is an ambitious debut from Cambridgeshire's Future Now. It's a concept Prog Metal release and the band have even gone as far as creating a graphic novel for it that follows the same story. Their music nods to present premier purveyors of the Prog Metal scene such as Dream Theater, Transatlantic, Neal Morse and even Symphony X with its combination of over-the-top metallic power and more time changes than Southern Rail.

There are fourteen tracks on offer that weigh in at over eighty minutes with many songs having an album's worth of ideas in just one track. With so much going on musically and lyrically, this won't get filed under the "easy listening" banner. There's a whole heap of musical ideas throughout the release, but a song like 'From Legend To Myth' is downright abrasive, almost anti-melodic; however, it has enough twists and turns to keep you hooked.

This is a record that yields something new with each listen. Riko Burrows' voice works well with the various tracks; it's not hugely Metal sounding so his style gives everything a slightly different, more Alt Rock feel that helps separate them from the herd. There are often close harmonies that add more melody too. 'Pillars Of Creation Pt. 1' has a different feel from much of the material on the album; it's jaunty in an early It Bites way with an eighties-era Marillion-esque midsection. Jaz Hunter's guitar solos often scythe their way through a song, and they can't help but make you sit up and take notice whenever they appear.

There's an almost Arkham's Razor crunch to the guitars, especially on the likes of 'Wisdom Of Harmony'. Richard Nejman's keyboards offer a wide variety of soundscapes too, from a piano type style through to a strings-like approach. On the instrumental numbers like the title-track and 'Time And Time Again', the group show they have the dexterity to keep you gripped. The lyrical aspect takes a while to digest, and due to not having the liner notes with lyrics or the graphic novel to hand (because it was a digital promo), the theme and its deeper meaning come in fits and starts.

There's clearly a lot of work, time, effort and craft that's gone into the concept and music found on this release. If you like Prog Metal with bite, then you will find this outfit a welcome addition to the genre.

Duncan Jamieson

**GALLOWS POLE**  
**'THIS IS ROCK'**  
(Pure Rock)  
HARD ROCK

This is a difficult one to review because this is one band who do not believe in updating their own social media so it was difficult finding any current information about them. What I can tell you is that Gallows Pole are an Austrian five-piece group who formed back in 1977, although they didn't release their first album until 1982. 'This Is Rock' is their ninth body of work and it's masterminded by Alois Martin Binder (vocals/guitar/bass). The band also use a female vocalist called Dina Hoblinger on some of the songs to augment the ambience.

It's very hard to define their sound and I feel they will certainly split opinion with our readers. I found them to be odd and quirky yet strangely familiar at times. The full album is relatively mid-paced, and it's punctuated on tracks like 'Point Of No Return', 'Daylight' and 'When I Sleep' by some excellent lead guitar solos from Binder. Musically, they are a hybrid of sixties and seventies Rock Psychedelia and Classic Rock/Metal, but they also have a penchant for the occasional down-tuned distorted guitar sound associated with groups

like Uncle Acid And The Deadbeats.

This is evidenced on the rather enjoyable opening number 'Summerdays' and not-so-enjoyable third track 'Midnight Gambler' as both songs contain dreamy, atmospheric choruses. Then you have the Tony Iommi-type riffs on 'Point Of No Return' which very much reminded me of his work on 'The Writ' and 'Megalomania' from 'Sabotage'.

Binder has a vocal style which is an acquired taste. At times, he sounds like a cross between Bruce Springsteen and Tom Petty, and his voice slides between something like a moan and a whine yet it also carries more than a little melancholy as he sings. Hoblinger has a good voice and I feel she should have been used more often to add further variety. In saying that, closing track 'When You Love' initially has more than a hint of Country And Western before reverting to the band's normal style.

Overall, despite being rather one-dimensional at times, I found Gallows Pole slightly enjoyable. However, I can understand why they are regarded as a "cult act" and have not become a more familiar outfit.

Robin McGhie

**GLASYA**  
**'HEAVEN'S DEMISE'**  
(Pride And Joy)  
SYMPHONIC

'Heaven's Demise' is the debut album from Portuguese Symphonic Metal band Glasya. They were formed in 2016 by guitarist Hugo Esteves, who brought in Bruno Ramos on drums, Davon van Dave on keyboards, Eduarda Soeiro on vocals, Bruno Prates on lead guitar and Manuel Pinta on bass. Interestingly enough, Soeiro was recruited from the Nightwish tribute band Nightdream so there is no major surprise that her vocal style is very similar to Floor Jansen.

The release contains ten well-crafted tracks which flow from start to finish without you feeling the need to skip certain songs. The opening title-track kicks off at a fair old pace, but if I didn't already know what album was playing, I would have sworn it was a new Nightwish song. 'Ignis Sanctus' plods along in a pseudo-Operatic style and comes complete with a voice-over; I couldn't really get into this one at all and I thought it was a bit turgid. However, 'Coronation Of A Beggar' improves things immensely; the track begins with a female vocal over a string backing and there is also a pleasant melody that reprises through the song – it's definitely a vastly better number.

'Glasya' is an interesting song which introduces a male vocal into the mix with both alternating male/female vocals and combined duets. 'Eternal Winter' is fast-paced and continues the dual-vocal theme, whereas 'Birth Of An Angel' is a ballad with soft verses before the intensity builds up for the chorus. 'The Last Dying Sun' is the heaviest cut on the release where the different stages of the track are telling their part of the story. 'Neverland' could almost be a film theme, while 'No Exit From Myself' is very Operatic and the song structure comprises several very different sections. The instrumental track 'A Thought Of You' brings matters to a conclusion.

This is a decent debut, but the group stray very close to some of their influences on a number of occasions. The production aspect is excellent with a big, expansive and layered sound. Soeiro's vocals are impressive throughout, and she's obviously a strong singer with a wide range. Alternatively, I felt that the guitar parts were somewhat subdued; they were good when actually present, but they were clearly under-utilised throughout the album and also too far at the back of the mix.

My highlights from this release were 'Coronation Of A Beggar' and 'Glasya'.

Chris Mee