

If you are a youngster, who is familiar with only modern extreme metal, and not early 80s classic metal, such as what I'm going to review, now, you may have very warped views on what 'Blizzard of Ozz' (1980) is about. This is because you probably have heard of Ozzy Osbourne's unusual (to say the least) antics, that includes licking up piss (not his own), snorting ants (not his own), and biting heads off bats, (that were apparent gifts) etc. You would be forgiven for thinking this band write some pretty out-there music, that resembles ultra-freakish goregrind bands, and their titles such as 'Dick Hemorrhage', and stuff like that. (Yes, goregrind is the style, where the bands not only don't sing or shout their lyrics, but fart them). Well, the connection there would be impossible, as that particular sub-genre of heavy metal didn't emerge, until at least five years after 'Blizzard'.

So what's in Ozzy's debut, then? I think it's most famous for it's 6 string playing. You don't get improvised guitar solos, that all sound alike, here. All the specially composed, extra effort really pays off; the timeless breaks in 'Crazy Train', 'Goodbye to Romance', 'Mr. Crowley', 'Revelation (Mother Earth)', are all, well... Timeless. They have tapping, arpeggios, classic rock licks, you name it. In comparison, check out 'O.F.R.' by Nitro, and you'll hear soloing at its most deranged. (Well, if you exclude some God awful punk music, that is, i.e. some GG Allin. That artist is responsible for two note guitar solos, that are either played with absolutely no clear musical rhythm, or rhythms so complex, not even Steve Vai could replicate them). The riffs are cool, in 'Blizzard', too. The intro instrumental in 'Crazy Train', is a pedal tone idea, written before the time pedal tones became so overused, they became the musical equivalent of mangy water.

An often over-looked feature of this album, is the intelligent bass guitar writing. Most rock bassists just play in unison with the guitar, or even make do with a single note pedal. (Oh, that terminology, again. If you don't know what it means, and ever need it to impress, just wing it, it'll be fine. As long as you don't say it to your music teacher, that is. Unless you like a gamble, in that case it really would be death or glory). Anyway, Mr. Daisley, however, plays lines, that work well, and (at least partly) counterpoint with the rest of the band. He clearly knows his theory; counterpoint's a bitch. 'Steal Away (The Night)', in particular has some, good intricate low-end lines.

The only downside with this trademark elaborated composition approach, is that its performer has little opportunity to do the classic 'point at the audience, whilst playing open strings' move. But now that I think of it, that may be stealing the show from Ozzy, who needs no encouragement to be any more ostentatious. Let's not imagine what ways the two band members could get into a battle of one upmanship. Would you like to go to a concert, where the performers start peeing all over the place?

What's the drumming like? Do you care? Probably not, so let's not go there. It's nothing too flashy, but it's not dull either. What's the singing like? Clean! Yes, this album was made a while before things got all shouty! There may be some who are reading this, (the superhardcore) who don't even know what a vocal melody sounds like, which is a strange thought. If so, think a of a heavily distorted riff, and try and apply it to voice. Strange, right?

Ok, now I think I'll wrap things up, with some Ozzy quotes; just to make the record's personality and mission clearer - if it has any, that is. (Any mission, I mean). First of all, we have 'I'm dyslexic, I have attention-deficit disorder, and I've got something like a hereditary tremor.' Hereditary? Are you sure it's hereditary? Before we continue, let's examine the evidence; he also said 'I am a raging alcoholic and a raging addict'. Personally, I think the tremor is down to alcohol abuse, and I THINK he knows that. It makes you wonder if one can trust what he says.... Ah, we have a problem; using quotes seems to be pointless. However, he also once said 'to be a liar, you've got to have a great memory, and I don't have a memory.' Hm... This is a puzzle... What I do think we learn in the following least, is that Mr. Osbourne is kind of crazy; 'when you're young, you're stupid. You do silly things.' Can't argue with that. His music is equally mental, so it's good that his lifestyle and his work match up. He truly lives his art. 10/10!