

'The Number of the Beast', by Iron Maiden. This album is a classic. It's certainly a lot better than modern Maiden, which I kind of hate, to be honest. Personally, I would hand out one and two star reviews to their new stuff, like nobody's business. But I'm not reviewing those musical mistakes (yet). I'm reviewing an album that gives experimentation a kick in the balls, whilst at the same time, shaking its hand. Confused? Read on.

A quote that really stuck with me, many years ago, was something like 'Paranoid' by Black Sabbath popularised the chord progression 'i, VI, VII', but Iron Maiden seem to have made a career out of it.' That's funny (trust me, you just need to know some theory), because it's true; Iron Maiden are OBSESSED with that harmonic sequence. (In E minor, it would be Em, C, D, or most likely the power chord version). Let's see how much they use it, on this album... Ok, track one, 'Invaders' actually starts off with this progression! Lol. Track 2, 'Children of the Damned', yep, you'll hear that sequence within the first 7 seconds. Lmao. For track 3, 'The Prisoner', you have to wait for 49 seconds, but there it is. (Please bear in mind, there is quite a long non musical intro in this song. Really, you have to wait about 24 seconds).

Time for a little breather. Why not hear some of bassist and chief songwriter, Steve Harris's random conversations? Just for fun, that is. Alright, here goes... 'We all feel particularly helpless at this time (which time, I don't know), as all we can do is sit and wait for news. And use the i, VI, VII chord progression.' Yeah, I have no idea what news he's talking about, there, but it does give some insight into the bands' music, it seems. i.e., the super chords save the day. That was lucky, the quote was relevant to this entry. He also said 'I don't think this lake (again, which lake is a mystery) has ever seen this much pressure, ever... So let's just use the i, VI, VII chord progression.' Ok, I'm beginning to understand these guys more, now; 1, 6, 7 is omnipotent. One more... 'Shareholders are really prepared to stand up and believe (whatever it is) today. Imagine the good they could do, if they used the i, VI, VII chord progression'. Wow, what another coincidence; ALL those nonsensical extracts related to this review. Ok, back to work...

Track 4, '22 Acacia Avenue: It's 17 seconds in, this time, before you know what. Track 5, 'The Number of the Beast', 1, 6, 7 is back with a vengeance in the guitar solo backing. Track 6, 'Run to the Hills?' Ah, you got me. No i, VI, VII. However, there is a section after the guitar break, that comes pretty damn close to it. Track 7, 'Gangland'; yes, found you! Right before the solo! Unlike the other songs on this record, Steve Harris had no involvement with the composition, but clearly that doesn't matter. Track 8, 'Total Eclipse', yep, this time the favourite chord progression is actually used as the main riff. And lastly track 9, 'Hallowed be thy Name'... It's used in the clean intro section, it's used in the distorted instrumental section that follows it, it's used in the verses, it's used in the next instrumental section, and its used in the long instrumental, after the solo. But not during the solo. Well done.

So, yeah. In 9 songs, it's used in 8; and not just that, it's quite often the backbone of their music. 'Wow.... This album must be really monotonous'. Well, no, actually. Just because the same chords get abused and taken for granted, doesn't mean there's no creativity. You can do a lot with three chords, ask the Beatles. And it's not as if i, VI, VII are the ONLY chords used. Far from it. It's actually part of Iron Maiden's skill and unique style, that they can keep doing the same things over and over, and still

sound fresh. Here is a less harsh summary of the album's songs...

'Invaders'; what a fun rocker! Gotta love those classic rock pentatonic riffs and solos. ('Hey, what's a pentatonic scale? I've heard of that.' That's not surprising; it's musical gift of a device. If you use it, you can't go wrong. Go on try; that's a genuine challenge). 'Children of the Damned'; what a fun rocker! 'The Prisoner'; what a fun rocker! Etc., etc. 'But wait, all these descriptions are the same...' Yes, all the songs are fun r... Well you know, now. Fun, fun, fun. Which brings me to my next point - who can complain about fun? Oh, yes, silly me. Black metallers. That's who. Well, who cares? They hate EVERYTHING. Don't know why? That's for another review.

Now, in comparison, I will review a far more modern song by IM: 'The Book of Souls'. It starts off with a cliched descending melody. I'm already bored. Oh, that's nice a new instrument comes in and basically copies the thing. What's the point, it doesn't really add anything. Oh, out of nowhere, the whole band comes in, with no real intro, other than one hit of a hi-hat. What are the band playing? Scalic riffs that have been done millions of times, before, and this goes on for 10 minutes. Oh, and don't forget the 'i, VI, VII' chord progression. Hm. That's enough of that, the album is rarely any better. 'Speed of Light' is cool, though. Ok, so after that minor detour, let's go back to 'TNotB'. 10/10. Done. As I said, it's a classic, and I'm sure you'll be singing this stuff in your head, for years to come. Run to the hills, run for you lives!!! lml -_- lml