

Now. Before I review this album, I want to quote the lead singer, Joacim Cans. He once claimed he has the 'world record in faking injuries during... military service'. Just had to put that out there... Lol. Alright the album, then. Actually no, I think I want to hear more from this guy, first... So let's see... What have we got on my computer, in front of me?... He likes to make 'cunning plans'? Can you really call setting fire to a Jaguar and spending the night in jail, cunning? Because that's what he says he did. To top it all off, he apparently likes metal music because it is 'the most honest music form?' Cans... You can't be serious. You say some funny shit, but you're not honest! If this guy just listened to the music it wouldn't be such a weird thing to say, but he writes it, as well! What kind of demented self-contradictory shit does he come up with? Let's find out....

So, he sings 'silent screaming'. How does that work? That's no clever lyric, that's just an idea coming from someone who doesn't understand English. It's like saying 'lanky midget', there's no way it can make sense. Where does he sing that heavy burtation? In the song 'Hammerfall'; the song he presumably thinks sums the ensemble up the most, otherwise why call it that? In other words, this is the song he's most proud of. Want to know more of the lyrics, in this peculiarity? Here goes... 'you're on your own' (don't project on me, you are, and it's because you're an idiot)... 'Balancing on a blade between what's right and what is wrong' (it's you. You're wrong). 'Don't loose your faith, don't sit there in silence'.... (yeah, too late, etc, etc.)

If you think that's bad, check out their later stuff. For example, their song 'Hammer High' goes 'Hammer high, this is a freedom cry. Hammer high, no one should ask me why. It's my life, probably I will defy. Hammer high until I die.' Quite childish rhyming, right? Could you imagine the extended chorus, version? 'Hammer high, I will never say bad lies, hammer high, I looked in Satan's eyes. Hammer high, or was it his guise? Hammer high, I wish I was more wise.' That kind of stuff. I could go on, but that would be unfair; Hammerfall's lyrics may be the ramblings of someone not quite with it, but the fruitcake has a good voice, and sings some nice melodies.

So that's good. What's also good is the song writing and instrumentation. Who doesn't love that 80s style, neoclassical, chugging guitar? This album is filled with it, especially in songs such as 'The Dragon Lies Bleeding'. What's refreshing throughout the album is the lack of the genre associated, rehashed, epic guitar solo sessions; the kind of leads that claim to be different from each other, just because they go up and down the same scale a new amount of times, then bend two or three notes of varying pitches. Hammerfall don't indulge in this musical form of flipping someone off, partly because they don't suck, and partly because they are a little more thrashy and simplified than most Yngwie followers. Don't be fooled though, they are NOT boring. Amazingly, even the ballads on the LP are worth listening to. (Crazy, I know). They are neither fake, sugary or annoying. There is also a straight-up metal cover called 'Child of the Damned', and it has no romanticised Viking lyrics, or whatever. If you really like the idea of being a Viking, kill your next door neighbour and steal his gold, and see what happens. Still like it? No, you're in jail you fool.

Lastly, the production from start to finish, is just right; not at all raw, but far from over-polished and computerised. I could list endless modern metal artists, that screw everything up, by trying to sound like Mr. Perfect. What they actually sound like are Mr. Do The Same As Everyone Else, and Mr. Soulless. (The latter's a rather dark

cartoon character idea, that never made it past the brainstorming stages. :P). So. After all that, what's my score? 9/10! 'What?' Yep. I really ripped into the singer, didn't I? Perhaps way more than necessary. I'm sowwy. :(