

My favourite speed metal album of all time is 'Street Lethal' by Racer X. But is it perfect? No. Things don't exactly get off to a good start with the aptly named 'Frenzy'. The lone guitar playing in it is so over the top it's a little bit torturous. However, it is common for shred guitarists and sometimes keyboardists to put mindless noodling without bass and drums in their releases, I guess because Van Halen popularised the idea and lots of people rightly thought it was super cool. However, Racer X and others far from lived up to the legacy of 'Eruption'. As I said though, it's a bit of a tradition and maybe that should be respected, just because traditions are fun. In comparison I don't like Brussel sprouts, though I might eat them if offered, just to feel Christmassy. Sure, it would be nice if they tasted better, but not everything in life can be desirable. No pain no gain, right? Whilst that is true, to be fair, it would take very clever marketing to convince people that phrase also applies to music.

Track number two then, 'Street Lethal'. A song about street racing, with very exciting adrenaline fuelled vocals? Now we're talking. The solo in it isn't much better than Frenzy's, but at the risk of contradicting myself, I guess it is kind of fun. Kind of. No. 3 is even about bombing people in a jet fighter with infrared vision! :O The opening track is now at least partly forgotten as hints of melodies appear in the leads. Soon after all that, 'Blowing up the Radio' starts with an awesome riff with funky chordal vibrato. Very 80s. But THEN the vocals come in. The singer is about as pleasing and as noisy to listen to as a rusty siren. Ouch. He claims to have been influenced by Judas Priest's Rob Halford, which isn't technically a lie though it is misleading. I'm influenced by Steve Vai, I'm but not quite as good at guitar as him as that sentence could imply. Similarly, RX's mic wielder is nowhere near as skilled as the legend on this track, and arguably in general. That is particularly disappointing as blowing up radio stations is such a cool idea. Not in a terrorist way, of course not, but in a harmless 'if I hear another pop song, I'm getting my dynamite' kind of way.

'Hotter than Fire' follows, but that's kind of boring. Hotter than fire my bum. Luke warm, maybe. The same goes for 'On the Loose'. You'd think it would be faster as what kind of person flees from someone at the fast walking pace of the song's tempo? It obviously has to be a lot quicker or it needs to be clear that the person being sung about doesn't care about being caught. Next however is the awesome 'Loud and Clear'. It's back to good old speeding and even the singing on it is pretty good. The solo is relatively imaginative and some notes even get held for over a second. Not a lot, but it's nice to hear vibrato for at least a little bit. 'Y.R.O.' is up next, which apparently stands for 'Yngwie Rip Off'. I can't say I agree with that title, but there's nothing wrong with modesty, I guess. Ok, the solo section is somewhat Yngwie-ish, but who cares? Millions of people solo like him. You don't hear Tony Macalpine, Vinnie Moore or even Joe Stump calling their songs 'Malmsteen Wannabe', do you? (Though the latter really should).

'Dangerous Love' carries on from 'LaC' in that it's another killer track. Again, guitar solo notes go well into second long territory on a few occasions and on the whole the lead is pretty swish. However, like no exciting metal masterpieces should do, the song just fades out. Talk about an anticlimax, right? The singer might as well go '*** it, that'll do' at the end. The biggest disappointment however, is the song that follows. It's called 'Getaway', it's dull and again the tempo is ironically plodding, just like 'On the Loose'. And how does the LP end? Fortunately with the far more lively 'Rock It'.

It's not true speed metal but at least it doesn't nervously disappear whilst claiming to be hardcore. Far from it, in the outro you get all sorts of musical fireworks from the drums and guitars. Super swish. Fortunately not from the vocals though, as it's easy to get tired of him singing 'you gotta rock it, come on let's rock it' all the time.

Ok then, that was the last song and therefore the review is now over! I gave this album lots of negative feedback but don't be concerned, there is lots of great stuff to be heard on it. Sure, a fair bit of it's borderline deafening stuff, but if there's a better album of this sort, I haven't heard it... 9/10. Hang on, I didn't go off topic like I usually do. We can't have that. Hear comes some semi-randomness!... So, if you read my Soundgarden review shortly after it was posted, you may have noticed that I foolishly said 'Spoonman' was in three bars of 4/4 and one bar of 2/4. Needless to say I tried to work out the beat in a hurry, and like Racer X effectively said '**** it' I really did say **** it, and didn't bother to check if I was right until too late. Whoops. To be clear, Spoonman is in 7/4 and the article has been corrected. I feel quite the fool. Ok, now..... B..... y.....e.