

Boy do Tool like 5/4. (Five beats in a bar, that is - tap your foot five times to the pulse in a constant rhythm before repeating yourself). They always have loved the metre, most likely always will and they certainly do in their album 'Lateralus'. In it, it's almost as common as their use of the standard 4/4, if not more so. Who knows? (I have better things to do than spend an hour or so counting. If that's what you're into, you can watch someone on Youtube count to 1 million. Why would a presenter go so far? My guess is he's either obsessive compulsive or a robotic schizoid. However, I assume he makes a lot of money from his videos and that really does show the positive side of mental illness, doesn't it? I digress - even more than I usually do). More interestingly, the depressing hit song 'schism' alternates between 5/8 and 7/8 much of the time, as well as 6/8 and 7/8. (The 8s are twice as fast as the 4s, in the second of the two numbers). Try 'big box little boxing' to that one. The package would be pretty weird looking, I know that much. Either that, or you'll just plain fuck up.

Excellent percussion ideas then, but what about the guitars? They're certainly not bad, but Tool aren't known for their flashy axe solos. I guess they don't need them, but it would be nice to hear some Gary Moore/Paul Gilbert/Van Halen style wigouts, or whatever you're (or more accurately I'm) into. I guess it wasn't to be. Let's move on from the perfect condition, unshredded guitars then, they're clearly not as important as the vocals from Maynard James Keenan. Attention seeking narcissist. :S Good man. I'm sure the wines he makes and sells are delicious, too. Back to my review, Mr. Keenan certainly does sing some decent melodies, with his trademark hypnotic, Deftones-worthy voice. (He also sang on the 'Tones song 'Passenger'). Most bands could only dream of coming up with his creative yet catchy lines. To be fair though, there is one instance where he simply doesn't bother conjuring up anything melodic, and he just goes 'AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARGGGH!!!!!!' for about half a minute. Over some 5/4. (With some cheeky bars of 6/4 thrown in, that is). And why not? Let it all out.

What are the songs about? Here's one lyric: 'Unable to forgive your scarlet lettermen'. I don't even know what they are, so don't think I'm going to bother analysing any of the broader themes. All I can assume is that scarlet lettermen are very nasty people, as the person singing about them is known for being a nice and therefore a forgiving man (in theory). Hang on, maybe I can find something a little easier to comprehend... Here's another lyric: 'Terrified of being wrong' - Great! I know what that means as does everyone else, but how long will that relief go on for? The song continues... 'ultimatum prison cell'. Ah, just as I thought - the relief didn't last long. Well, the feeling was nice while it lasted. It's time to throw in the towel and talk about something else. Bass guitars! No, no one cares. Well sometimes people do, but the bass isn't really emphasised too much in this album, it just kind of follows the six-strings a lot of the time. Oh, I know, I could talk about the album cover. The front of it simply says 'Tool' and 'Lateralus' on it, though the weird font probably has its own special meaning. The back of the LP on the other hand, features some kind of circuit board. I don't have the education to make sense of it, so it could mean anything. Evidently making wine and singing well isn't enough for Keenan, he has to dabble in electronics as well. Or, in a stretch of the imagination, maybe he works with robotics or possibly even wine making robotics? Who knows? Artificial intelligence is already feared for being too advanced and malevolent, can you imagine AI drunk?? Absolutely terrifying.

Finally, I move on to the overall goodness of the album. To sum up, it's a great piece of work, especially if you have a neurotic need to count to five over and over again. The first half in particular is epic. If you're like me, you can listen carefully to it at night, as you tactically make your hi-fi turn off after an hour. (Ahhh, 'sleep mode'). If you do that, you can snooze through the hypnotic, though slightly tedious ending, without being woken up when the CD changes. The music is kind of depressing throughout, (which is another pro) but it's not exactly doom metal. That is perhaps another positive trait, as that genre is really quite grim. As one might expect with all the weird rhythms, the drumming is very good. However, I never really pointed out how flashy it is (whoops), so there you go... It is flashy-(ish). Not over-the-top, though. No, just right. Again, maybe the guitars aren't technical enough, but that might just be me. I like my shred metal. And that's all from me! 9/10!

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