

'The Hell of Steel' is a best of album by Manowar. I'm not sure why it features a four minute track which is just an old man telling a story. Sure it sets a scene, but it's surprising it was considered a highlight of the band's career. Not only is it boring, it's as cheesy as hell. It ends on the extra-clinged words 'They... were the metal kings!!' Hm. In another song (not on THoS), the same band go 'Death to all those who play false metal!!' or whatever. Oh, you can't play 'false' music, whatever that is, but you CAN sound dumb. Manowar need to take a long hard look at themselves. Maybe the band wanted to sound hellish in their story telling, as hinted at in their choice of words in the album title at very least, but again, it's not hellish, it's stupid.

Interestingly the band once held the world record for playing the loudest gig. They played at over 120 decibels, which is louder than a thunder clap. A whole concert of thunder? That sounds pretty intense, but according to the chart in front of me, that's only twice as loud as an air conditioner. Seriously, they create noises of 60 decibels. Sounds unbelievable, doesn't it? Well, for whatever reason, 120 is much much more the double 60 in the world of decibels. It's probably more than 10 times as much. Why, I don't know. I tried to find the answer on google, and predictive text came up with the question 'why are decibels logarithmic?' Sadly, I don't know what that word means. I searched for the definition and it said 'relating to or expressed in terms of logarithms'. Not exactly helpful.

However, I didn't give up. I searched for the meaning of 'logarithm', and it said 'a quantity representing the power to which a fixed number (the base) must be raised to produce a given number.' Ok. And what the HELL does that mean? For one thing, aren't all numbers fixed? Have you ever seen a number move? I haven't, not even on scientific calculators. Moving numbers must be particularly advanced. And you thought algebra was bad? However, I STILL didn't give up. I searched for 'What is a logarithm in simple terms?' and it said pretty much the same thing as before. Then I gave up. Tbh, I actually think moving numbers and logarithms, and all that stuff has been made up. Possibly to confuse people and stop them trying to understand the decibels chart, which I suspect makes no actual sense. Someone screwed up with the chart, basically and they wanted its lack of meaning to be kept secret. According to another similar chart, 140 db is the 'bitter limit'. I googled that phrase and couldn't find a definition. It seems yet another thing has been completely made up.

Oh who cares about that? It's hurting my head too much. Moving on, track 'Black Wind, Fire and Steel' has to have the most over the top ending I've ever heard. The outro actually lasts about one and a half minutes. As the whole song only lasts about five, that is a very significant proportion. In contrast, there are many songs that just stop. I find it interesting the way the album has a track called 'Fighting the world' and another called 'Defender'. It's hard to figure out what the band's message is. Attack the world and defend it? Sounds like the thought processes of a complete nutter. Track 'Hail and Kill' is particularly baffling. Surely you should only do one, not both. I do have an image of someone being hailed then murdered, but it's somewhat comical and I don't think that's what the band were going for, judging by the serious tone.

In conclusion, a very strong effort. (Well it doesn't take much effort to select some tracks, but you know what I mean). Does it feature their best stuff? I wouldn't know as I only have one other album by the band, but Allmusic.com seems to feel pretty

strongly about it, as they only gave it two stars. Why that could be, I don't know as there were no actual words in the review, but MAYBE it's because of the reasons I've just given. Or maybe it's because the writer was confused about how the album was actually quieter than most others (well it is on my hifi), and that angered him. A bit extreme, but maybe he REALLY hated irony. I on the other hand, am giving it a solid 9 out of 10. Bye!