

Diamonds by Dio is a best of album, so you'd expect it to be pretty good, no? First up, where the HELL is 'I Speed at Night'?? That's a killer song! Whatever the reason it was neglected, Dio's singing style is certainly very theatrical, and I guess if I sped at night, I'd feel a bit larger than life, too. However, that argument doesn't work unless Dio ALWAYS sped at night. Unless maybe he did it just the once and it really effected his delivery. Either he was one of the country's most elusive and prolific criminals or he just got carried away once or twice in the heat of the moment. I know I've just accused another group - Slowdive - of being criminals, but this time there IS evidence. Very strong evidence, in fact. I mean who do Dio think they are? There's boasting about a crime and then there's singing a song about it. How do you think that would go down in court?

I think I'll move on from crime for the sake of variety. I suppose I can stick to the subject of the vocal style, though. I don't really dislike it, but assuming the band ARE law abiding, it's hard to imagine why someone would be so dramatic so constantly. Such enthusiasm very rarely happens in real life; I'm reminded of Brian Blessed, but that's pretty much all. I wonder if Dio knew the man. They probably were best friends if they met. I wonder what wild and eccentric activities they'd get up to together. Complete insanity, but a life lived to the fullest for sure. Not so much a serious life, far from Isaac Newton standard, but who cares? Makes me feel a little bit depressed, really, but still, Christmas is coming. I won't be celebrating it by buying a tank and driving it across London, or jumping from the International Space Station down to Earth with only a parachute, but you know what? That's fine. For a self-present, I bought a novelty beer called 'Tactical Nuclear Penguin' and it will be very interesting. Even though I've had one before.

Despite the fact the songs here are most likely from different releases (unless the greatest hits is just their finest album copied exactly), the production of all the tunes are in the same style. How about that? That makes the LP sound very consistent, making this a very good best of album. A best of best of, if you will. On the subject of mixing, I used to think mixers chose the order of songs in a record, and nothing else. I was eleven at the time and eleven year olds are simple. I literally thought mixers had the easiest and most pointless job on the planet. If mixers do in fact choose the order of songs and I was right back then, the order is first rate here. You get a nice combination of fast and slow numbers and you never know what to expect. Great! Would I employ someone to choose for me if I was a (successful and talented) musician? Probably not, but if someone is a fully trained mixer, who am I to say I know what's best?

Let's be intellectual and examine a song more in depth. Here are the lyrics of opening and therefore surely strong track, Holy Diver: 'Mmm hmm, yeah, yeah.' (A very ambiguous intro. The singer could be enjoying a nice meal or he could be very comfy. Let's continue). 'Holy diver. You've been down too long in the midnight sea.' (Very nice and poetic). 'Oh, what's becoming of me?' (No idea). 'Ride the tiger. You can see his stripes but you know he's clean. Oh don't you see what I mean?' (Nope. Can't say I do. An explanation would be nice). 'Gotta get away' (From what??) 'Holy diver. Shiny diamonds. Like the eyes of a cat in the black and blue. Something is coming for you'. (What??? Tell me, you're scaring me...) 'Race for the morning.' (Oh, here we go. Racing again). 'You can hide in the sun 'til you see the light (I don't what THAT'S supposed to mean).

'Oh, we will pray it's alright'. (What???? Dear God!) 'Gotta get away, get away. Between the velvet lies' (Oh ok. Velvet's lying). 'There's a truth that's hard as steel. The vision never dies. Life's a never ending wheel. Holy diver, you're the star of the masquerade. No need to look so afraid'. (I wasn't till you came along! I'll say it again: What do you think is coming fo me?) 'Jump, jump, jump on the tiger'. (\*\*\*\* off!) 'You can feel his heart but you know he's mean'. (Well... duh). 'Some light can never be seen'. (Dunno what that means, either). After those words, things get repeated, basically. In my opinion, the lyrics are far from first rate, but whatever. I'm more about the musicianship and songwriting. On a more positive note, I have to say the guitarist really does have a beautiful tone, especially in his solos. One of metal's most respected singers combined with great guitar skills? You can't ask for much more. (Apart from I Speed at Night). 8.5/10. Bye!