

When Venom released 'Black Metal', in 1982, little did they realise the can of worms they would open, in the following years. It's lyrics such as 'Black is the night, metal we fight. Power amps set to explode. Energy screams, magic and dreams, Satan records the first note', may have been (and largely were) taken as harmless cheese, at the time. However, unfortunately for many, they weren't interpreted this way, by angry musicians/fucknuts such as Euronymous, and co. They took things way too far, and church burnings and a few murders followed their own band's formations. Why? Because they actually wanted Venom's lyrics to come true.

Yes, some of the craziest musicians in the world, have to be black metal musicians. However, what's interesting, is that Venom's first albums, 'At War with Satan', and 'Black Metal', didn't actually pioneer black metal, but thrash metal. Yes, that makes Metallica, a bunch of imposters. :O Venom's lame, pretend ideology, their speedy riffs, and their ultra lo-fi production were new, and eventually became cool. If it wasn't for them, early Emperor albums and others such like it, may have come across as almost slightly palatable. (Their lo-fidelity, tinny gobshite was all the rage, in the early 90s. Recording albums, using headphones as speakers, no longer was seen as the actions of a mental person, but a huge innovator).

So if this music isn't black metal, why is it called black metal, and what is its connection to true black metal? A: That's a coincidence, and B: Remember the lyrics in the opening paragraph? Here's a fictional, though realistic BM comparison... 'I love Satan, ho, ho, ho. I love Satan, don't you know? I like it where hot storms blow, Hell is where I want to go. I love Satan. I only sing about Satan. Ever.' See? Not so different. The ridiculously fast drumming, and harsh chord progressions in BM are major differences, however.

So, now your curiosity is finally satisfied, let's go back and describe 'Black Metal', in more detail! (Yes, I sacrificed typical review structure, just for you. My little article is all over the place? How dare you). I don't think thrash metal would be thrash metal, without tremolo picked, palm muted guitar. You can also expect the iconic double bass drumming, and half-shouted vocals. The guitar solos kind of suck, but the songwriting is pretty good. The music here, isn't just made of lyrics over riffs, there are chord progressions with proper functions, that build and release tension in a musical way. Yes, like real songs!

... Perhaps even like opera? 'Excuse me?' Perhaps like opera... A strange thing to say? No, no, because for this kind of music, you have to 'train the ears', because it sounds so awful. At least to some. Therefore, it's like opera.... You're still not with me? Well, some hear the connection. I certainly do. Blast out 'Raise the Dead', and only a fool would not immediately think of Luciano Pavarotti singing 'Nessun Dorma', with all his soul. And despite Black Metals dark lyrics such as 'we will raise the dead, we will raise the dead, we will raise the dead', a tear can't help but fall from my eye, as I get reminded of some sentimental classics, about lost loves or whatever the hell opera singers sing about. Weird, right? But logical.

Ok, so what we have with Venom, are thrash metal ideas mixed with opera influences. This raises an interesting question; what are these people's live shows like? On the one hand, one would expect Venom to do all the associated headbanging, and jumping round the stage, and they do this. They even spin round

the stage. All very metal. But how do the opera theatrics manifest? Are there fat ladies singing, with ballet dancers twirling around them? Nope. Nothing like that, so kind of disappointing, really. Is anyone wearing a posh tuxedo? No. Does the stage feature any kind of wooden barrels, as found on the youtube video, I looked at, for this special research? No. Nothing. Hm. Well, if your reading this, Chronos, you know what you need to do, to sort yourself out.

So, what's my score for 'Black Metal?' Hmm.... 7/10. It is a classic, and hugely important, but it just doesn't compete with other trailblazers, such as 'Master of Puppets', or... well it does compete with 'Scum'.... But with 'MoP', the songwriting and musicianship is miles ahead. So, yeah. 7/10. A very generous score, considering how many headaches this band were directly and indirectly responsible for.