



Quo Vadis

Defiant Imagination

Skyscraper Music

9/10: Heavy melodic technical death, without being too techy to get into

9 Tracks, 39:22 - METAL!

Opening with an incredibly long extended growl, courtesy of new vocalist Stéphane Paré, and those unique trademark Quo Vadis guitars, Defiant Imagination rips into a frenzied but extremely well thought out barrage of pure death! *Silence Calls The Storm* immediately hits you with masterfully catchy riffs, and I could easily imagine this doing well as a single for this album.

Reigning in the foreground of the album is Bart Frydrychowicz's classically harmonious guitar sound, which refuses to compromise the sheer brutality that drives this album forward. New recruit, Will Seghers, compliments Bart's solos perfectly by throwing in a bunch of his own. And as always, Yanic Bercier delivers intricately tight double-bass and blasts on tracks like *Break The Cycle* and *In Contempt*, that manage to surpass all expectations (again!) and pack in that extra punch that will have you gasping for air. This time around, the band has also ventured into previously uncharted territory, bringing in some big-name U.S. influences, namely Steve Di Giorgio with his distinctive bass lines, as well as Jim Morris, who mixed the album.

Just in time for the anniversary of Chuck Schuldiner's death, *In Articulo Mortis* makes for an extremely thoughtful and fitting tribute. Roxanne Constantin displays a magnificently haunting keyboard piece here, backed by male Latin chanting and female choirs. Easily one of the strongest tracks, *Dead Man's Diary*, hooks you in with the opening bars and then breaks off into an exotically strange Arabic sound, similar to something Melechesh would be capable of. Finally, a short return to the realm of eerie keyboards and Latin chants brings this masterpiece to a close.

What distinguishes Defiant Imagination from the copious number of other death metal bands out there is the emotion and technicality in the music. This is smart metal. It is inspiring to hear the intensity to which these guys have perfected their music. My only cribs are minor personal opinions. While *Tunnel Effect* is just thrashtastic, the shouted group vocals sound a bit too punk-ish and don't quite fit on this album. I also wish that they'd done more with either of the two Latin titled tracks - they're a bit of a tease, since they're each only about a minute long. Despite this though, Defiant Imagination is one hell of a solid album - another brilliant release from the Quebec scene that has muscled it's way onto my Top Ten of 2004!

Tina Sequeira

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