

Quo Vadis Defiant Imagination

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Around a year and a half ago, I had serious doubts about the future of QUO VADIS. The band leader, Arie Itman, had left in late 2002. This already worried me, because Arie had written the better material on their last studio album, "Day Into Night". It was then announced that their bassist had left as well and I was in shock. QUO VADIS had a lot of momentum around that time and were possibly on the verge of breaking out and they were just disintegrating in front of my eyes. I was very sceptical about their future.

Then some good news: Bart Frydrychowicz and Yanic Bercier, the remaining members, managed to pick up the pieces and find new members. They also got help from Steve DiGiorgio (DEATH, TESTAMENT, SADUS, many more) to record bass tracks and that seemed like a start, but would the music be any good? A couple of samples put out on the 'net seemed to indicate so. So my faith in them was rejuvenated.

I picked this album, with great interest, to hear how the "new" QUO VADIS would approach music. Well, my fears of the album being similar to the tracks Bart wrote on "Day Into Night" were for naught (he had written the more brutal stuff. I enjoy them, yet a whole album of them would be a bit redundant, I believe) were immediately abolished. Yes, the material now is a bit heavier than before, but it wisely keeps the main element of QUO VADIS's appeal: Catchy melodies mixed with a tasteful amount of technicality. The first track, consequently available for downloading, showcases all of the band's talents: Amazing riffing, melodies, amazing drumming, powerful yet understandable Death vocals (like a more tame version of SUFFOCATION vocals), tasteful shredding solos and now, awesome bass playing, courtesy of Steve DiGiorgio!

Even though melody just oozes from this record, in no way is it anything similar to the Swedes (you know, IN FLAMES, AT THE GATES, DARK TRANQUILLITY). It is much more akin to CONTROL DENIED, finding that perfect balance between technique and catchiness, although the songs featured on this album, are a lot looser in structure than the aforementioned band, yet they still latch themselves to your head and will not let go. It can also be said it sounds a bit like TESTAMENT's "The Gathering", with tons of more melodic riffing and musical proficiency. The drumming is of very high calibre as well, playing these small fills that enhance the music and it's able to play at very high speeds without blasting. Dave Lombardo (SLAYER, FANTOMAS) on speed, that is what the drumming sounds like. The bass playing is from the legendary band whore himself, Steve DiGiorgio, and, well, if you're heard about his reputation, you'll know how good he is and the playing on this album lives up to his name. Also featured is a short song which has violin and Latin vocals, very similar to opera, in the form of "In Articulo Mortis".

My faith in QUO VADIS has been restored. Highly recommended for everybody. (Online March 3, 2005)

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