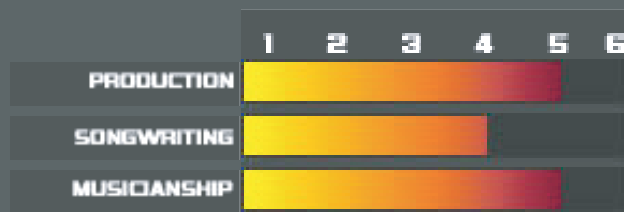




Quo Vadis

Defiant Imagination

Released on 11/4/2004 - Skyscraper Music



After four long years and a variety of line-up alterations, Quo Vadis have returned with a follow up to the outstanding Day Into Night. Those who have been eagerly awaiting new material from Canada's premiere technical death thrashers will find Defiant Imagination a mostly worthy offering which, despite a few minor annoyances, succeeds in many of the same ways as its predecessor.

Sporting a sound that fits comfortably in a circle of acts like Martyr and later era Death, the most tangible aspect of their their attack is hypersonic melodic fret work. Backed by a delightfully crisp production, the robust and noted trash is a real pleasure for fans of complex yet accessible riffing. For the most part, Quo Vadis play to this strength on Defiant Imagination, as there are whiplashing sections in most of the songs. "To The Bitter End" and "Fate's Decent" are probably the most vicious products of the Quo Vadis riff machine, and the most reminiscent of Day into Night.

However, interwoven into these mostly solid songs is an assortment of annoyances that prevent Defiant Imagination from being an entirely commendable release. The flies in the soup of Quo Vadis' sound come in a variety of forms, but they are all rooted in the band trying to sound too cerebral for their own good. Bass shogun Steve DiGiorgio handles the fretless bass as skilfully as you'd expect, but not quite as tactfully. While he fully utilizes the melodic capabilities of his instrument on songs like "In Contempt", there are more than a few instances where Steve gets a little overzealous and lends a progressive element to the songs that is not well suited to Quo Vadis' normally razor sharp assault. DiGiorgio isn't the heart of the problem, though, as songs like "Silence Calls the Storms" and "Break the Cycle" feature the band wandering into dangerous song writing territory by briefly forsaking their uber thrash assault for more contemplative meandering. There's also some filler on display here in the form of two choral pieces, "In Articulo Mortis" and "Ego Intuo et Servo". These two songs are almost completely removed from the rest of the material on Defiant Imagination, and suggest that Quo Vadis aren't quite able to resolve their progressive leanings with their current formula.

Quo Vadis fans will probably look back on Defiant Imagination as a bit of a transition album. The foundation of their sound is still strong, but there are scattered hints that this band is intent on slightly expanding their arsenal. It's hard to tell what the future holds for Quo Vadis, as they mostly stumble in their few tentative attempts to step outside the box. However, Quo Vadis' present is still pretty bright, as Defiant Imagination proves that when they stick to what they know best, they are still one of the more intriguing bands in the modern metal scene.

Dave Fonseca