



Eve To Adam
Locked & Loaded
3For5/Fontana/Universal

Local boys Eve To Adam and I actually have some history. When I lived in Astoria, I actually auditioned for these guys when they were looking for a bass player. It seems every band has that one position that has a revolving door. For Eve To Adam, it's the bassist. Since I've auditioned, I've seen them burn through three bass players. Either way, their core remains the same with brothers Taki and Alex Sassaris and extremely talented guitarist Gaurav Bali. If I can be brutally honest, since I didn't get the gig, I really wanted to see these guys fail, so I didn't really pay much attention to their debut CD, *Banquet For A Starving Dog*. When the opportunity to review their new CD, *Locked & Loaded*, was thrown on my plate, my original reaction was to bash these guys, but I decided to give it a fair listen and I couldn't hate it.

Back when I was learning their songs for my audition, the one thing that stood out for me was singer Taki Sassaris' voice. I thought this guy was amazing! Well, that feeling still holds true after listening to *Locked & Loaded*. Taki's vocals were strong and passionate on every track, which to me was kind of refreshing to hear. Guitarist Gaurav Bali's riffage in songs like the title-track, "Bender" and my favorite track, "Fortune Teller," can make you a fan of his work real quick. Eve To Adam's lead single "Straitjacket Supermodel," which Taki says was inspired by the tv show *Dexter*, was a good choice to ramp up *Locked & Loaded's* release.

Although I really wanted to hate this CD, I actually enjoyed it. My only problem with it is that, while melodic and anthemic, I feel like it's all been done before. There is nothing here that separates them from bands like Pop Evil or Thousand Foot Krutch. If you listen to Sirius Octane, every band is starting to sound alike and this is just my opinion, but Eve To Adam are not doing anything differently with *Locked & Loaded*.

In A Word: Eh!
—by Tim Louie



more than twice. The second is a woody dream pop formula, marked by plodding drum machines and frail guitar accents that spin on and on into little loops. Thematically, SoKo constantly finds herself in relationships with men who care more for something else than for love, whether it's drugs ("For Marlon"), ideologies ("Treat Your Woman Right"), or just their own lives. It's perfectly fitted for a particular mood of disillusionment and frustration, but not much else.

This repetitiveness is accented by the individual songs' amorphous quality. My three favorites—"First Love Never Die," "Don't You Touch Me" and "Destruction Of The Disgusting Ugly Hate"—don't exactly make a break from the rest stylistically, but their foundations are more solid, as they stick with clear-cut structures and charming melodies. While many of the other songs feel trapped in one moment, these three manage to create spaces of their own.

The overall lack of lucidity doesn't lead directly to unpleasantness, but I'm left grasping any singular impression, and almost every descriptor I can come up with seems a bit too well-defined. What remains at the end is a feeling of uncertainty. As she expresses from the start, SoKo's songs don't lack heart or personal significance, but they may be difficult for outsiders to digest.

In A Word: Vague
—by Yve Lepkowski



Dark Sermon
In Tongues
eOne

Hailing from Tampa, Florida, Dark Sermon released their debut full-length, *In Tongues*, in March. This album really showcases the group's strengths, as it introduces them into the death metal scene. Two key songs on this record are the title-track and "The Tree Of New Life." These cuts provide the listeners with an array of playing styles, including the quick strumming of notes, melodic sustains, heavy riffs, and the picking of clean chords. "The Scales Of Justice" includes a solo that displays the technical ability of the band. This exceptional guitar work is also heard on "Forfeit I: The Crooked Quill," a four-minute track composed of various sections and speeds of playing. Speed seems to be a focal point on this album while numbers like "Shepherd's Staff" and "Carcass" are more in-your-face and played

rapidly. Others like "Forfeit II: Worn Thin" and "Imperfect Contrition" contain slow/melodic sections.

Along with "Forfeit II: Worn Thin," another one of my favorite songs on this LP is "Hounds." The fretwork on this song is very strong, ranging from sustains to fast riffs and rhythmic chords. "The Scales Of Justice" and "Testament" also feature this variation between rhythm and lead guitar approaches. Riffs played on these two tracks induce breakdowns that slow things down while maintaining that "heavy" feeling. This feeling is created by the various approaches embodied into their writing. Heavy breakdowns, slow interludes, exceptional fretwork and a variation of speeds and styles contribute to the unique sound. The inclusion of melodic and technical elements into their fast-paced melodies adds to the ability for fans of most genres to acknowledge and appreciate the music on this album.

In A Word: Diverse
—by Robert Gluck



Black Water Rising
Pissed And Driven
Metalville/eOne

If you love your rock driven by guitar riffs, then you will love Black Water Rising's sophomore effort, *Pissed And Driven*. These are the guys who brought you the internet hit turned mainstream song "Brother Go On." With the addition of new guitarist

Dennis Kimak, Black Water Rising are more riff-tastic than ever, and songs like the title-track, leadoff single "Show No Mercy," "Last Man Standing" and "Fire It Up" are all evident of the riffage.

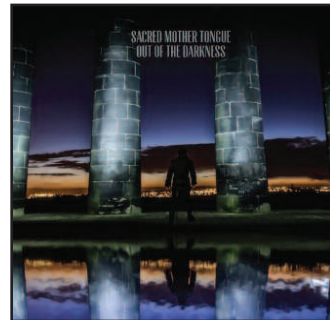
I've always been a fan of singer/guitarist Rob Traynor's songwriting, and I have to admit that he really outdid himself on these new songs. If you listen to the lyrics of "Dance With The Devil," "Broken Man" and "Along For The Ride," Rob is quite a storyteller. The production value on these tunes is pretty impressive too! The effect on the verses on "All Gone" was very reminiscent of Led Zeppelin. Rob's voice also rules on this album! I can't leave out one of my favorite rhythm sections in drummer Mike Meselsohn and bassist Oddie McLaughlin. Mikey's beats with Oddie's basslines really complement the riff attack on these tunes. In fact, it sounds like Oddie's actually playing more than I'm used to hearing him play.

The bottom line on Black Water Rising and their new CD, *Pissed And Driven*, is that they weren't trying to reinvent the wheel here. Did they step up their game? Hell yeah they did! Their songs actually have solos now! Thank you, Dennis Kimak! All in all, this is a well-rounded album with great melodies and as always, amazing guitar riffs! This is a must-have for those long car rides!

In A Word: Wow!
—by Tim Louie

Sacred Mother Tongue
Out Of The Darkness
Transcend

Sacred Mother Tongue are a London-based hard rock/metal band that has just released their sophomore album, *Out Of The Darkness*. Singer Darrin South has a melodic yet punk style of singing reminiscent of Nick Red from Stockholm outfit Blowsight. Album opener "Demons" has a tempo



that gradually increases in intensity, setting the stage for a mercurial collection of recordings. "Seven" has a steady chugging guitar sound with the drums in the background giving the vocals a very haunting impression on the listener. "Pawn" samples quotes quite heavily from the 1976 film *Network*, such as, "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this anymore" to pump up the sound. "Bleeding Out" has a doomy beginning with slowly strummed guitar chords, and moves forward into a moderate paced tempo. The guitar solos here are intricate and contain some of the brightest moments on the album. "Just A Ride" has a circling feel to it. The longer you listen in, the more you feel you must hear the end of it.

Songs like "Pawn," "The City Is Crying" and "Just A Ride" have a harrowing and relentless feeling. To balance that out, tracks like "Believe" and "Evolve/Become" have an ethereal and hypnotizing aura surrounding them. Key tracks to listen to are "Demons," "The City Is Crying," "Bleeding Out" and "Just A Ride." "Out Of The Darkness" should appeal to fans of hard rock acts such as Crashtest, The Last Vegas, Blowsight, and Hardcore Superstar. It is a heavy-hitting rock album but also has a lot of shades of dark gothic overtones in it to even make sway with King Diamond and Type O Negative fans.

In A Word: Tense
—by Nick Perkel

disc of the week

Queens Of The Stone Age ...Like Clockwork

Matador

We've waited six long years for Queens Of The Stone Age to release a follow-up to *Era Vulgaris*, but the band's return was delayed by guitarist/vocalist Josh Homme's side-projects, and also a brush with death—Homme's heart stopped temporarily during knee surgery. After months of recovery, Homme finally returned to the studio to deliver *...Like Clockwork*, a dark, bizarre, brooding record unlike anything else in the Queens repertoire. Opener "Keep Your Eyes Peeled" is driven by an ominous bassline, seductive drums and buzzing guitar squawks.

"Kalopsia" teases with a gentle melody, until punctured by a bruising chorus with riffs that recall '70s-era Bowie. Homme's near-death experience seems to inform the introspective nature of the new songs. On gentle piano ballad "The Vampyre Of Time And Memory," Homme sings "I want God to come/And take me home," fully sounding like a man coming to terms with his mortality. It's immediately evident that *...Like Clockwork* showcases a mellower QOTSA—many songs alternate between quiet passages and heavier choruses, and hard riffs are used more for accent than for constant barrage. "My God Is The Sun," the closest thing here to vintage Queens, hypnotizes with a snarling lick and jackhammer drums.



A slew of guests appear on *...Like Clockwork*, including Dave Grohl, Trent Reznor, wayward ex-bassist Nick Oliveri, Alex Turner and, surprisingly, Elton John. However, it's really Homme's show here, as he ups the ante for QOTSA in terms of songwriting and lyrical maturity, while still delivering brilliant guitar work. This is a dense record that may require several listens to fully appreciate. Though fans of the band's earlier material might be put off a bit by the significant detour from heavier rock, those willing to go along for the ride are bound to feel rewarded by Homme's experimentation.

In A Word: Ambitious
—by Gregg McQueen