



DRAKKAR



Artist: [Drakkar \(/artist/drakkar\)](/artist/drakkar)

Album Title: Once Upon A Time... In Hell!

Release Date: Friday, October 3, 2014

Label: [Spinal Records \(/label/spinal-records\)](/label/spinal-records)

Distribution: [Spinal Records \(/distro/spinal-records\)](/distro/spinal-records)

Review Type: [CD \(/review_type/cd\)](/review_type/cd)

One of the many bands called **Drakkar** is the one this review deals with (evidently; otherwise it would be way too stupid to have such intro and not to deal with the matter...). This Belgian act started more than three decades ago, and in 1988 they came up with a first full length, *X-Rated*, released via France's *New Musidisc*. Shortly after, the band underwent a first break, followed by a short resurrection at the end of last century. In 2012 the band reformed once more, with the re-release of the 1988-album as first official fact (this time via *Ultimhate Records* from the French-speaking part of Belgium). That re-release included previously unreleased stuff as bonus, and it came with professional re-mastering and new artwork. It was meant to be a teaser for a new album, and eventually **Drakkar** release their second studio full length in history, *Once Upon A Time... In Hell!* The stuff was mixed and mastered at *Ear We Go Studio* with **François Dediste**, and the whole experience lasts for fifty four minutes.

I have to admit that this album starts very promising, by means of the introduction *Enter The Darkness*. And then, as from the title track on, there is no reason to not be blown away completely! What a surprise, what a nice observation! **Drakkar** return with even more persuasion and elegance than ever before, as if they are a bunch of youngsters on anabolic steroids; and then I am referring to the energy and drive of the whole album. That title track, for example, isn't but a monument-to-be, consisting of all ingredients that are necessary to be able to get defined as 'top-notch'! The highly melodious Speed / Thrash-edged Heavy / Power Metal breathes the purity of the *virgin years* (aka 'old school'), yet deconstructed and reconstructed in a mostly actual package. However, that modern approach does not equal -and that's a good thing- any form of fake identity, as if trying to do what many modern bands do lately (in order to sicken the scene).

There are a couple of moments that can't interest me that much, but skip it; the majority is extremely convincing. Don't expect anything renewing, because you will be disappointed. But if you're waiting for honest and essential Eighties Rock / Metal with truly great compositions and a sublime performance, then you are at the right address. And on top of it: the sound. I haven't heard such a rich and, at the same time, fine-tuned production for quite some time.

[Ivan Tibos. \(/journalist/ivan-tibos\)](#)

87/100