

DRAKKAR - ONCE UPON A TIME... IN HELL (Spinal Records)



Speed metal from Belgium! Why not? Drakkar stood at the cradle of Belgian Speed Metal in 1983 but were put on ice after the release of their debut album 'X-Rated' in 1988. They managed to play supporting slots of bands like Metallica, Slayer, Overkill just to name a few, but contractual obligations forced the members to get the band on hold. Around 1998 they teamed up again and recorded an EP which contained 5 new songs. The spirit was present, the band was anxious to hit the road once again but first, they re-released the debut album with 2 bonus songs ('Alone' and 'The Undertaker') as a re-mastered version, including new artwork.

Last year, the original singer Leny rejoined Drakkar, and they succeeded in playing the PPM festival with bands like Divided Multitude, DGM and Max Pie. By the way, I wonder if this festival still exists? Video footage of this appearance can be found by clicking this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGA0fkeN-4I>

The band is now ready to unleash their new album, for some the third album, others will skip the re-release and announce it as their second album. Anyway, 'Once Upon A Time...In Hell' will put this band on the metal map again, as the songs and material are fizzing and bubbling, ready to take the world by storm! Drakkar hits you harder than ever before with 12 tracks that will appeal to those that are into general Heavy Metal with Speed Metal elements .

After a short intro 'Enter the Darkness', the first song and title track opens the new Drakkar album and immediately, you will get the clue. This band waited a long time to enter the studio again, but all pent-up emotion, all ills of the past and any frustration is packed into this 4 minute song. Guitars are furious, the rhythm section is infusing menacing harmonies with discordant rhythms, while conjuring a lump of affection. This is a band that has a message to spread, with much dedication and fidelity to the mighty 80s! The vocals of Leny fit as a glove to the structure of the song and while he's chanting out loud, I have a few bands in mind: Hell meets Accept.

Drakkar has three guitar players in their lineup, and besides Dyscordia and Iron Maiden, it's rather unique. But at the same time, three guitar players also means a lot of breaks and twists in the songs. While Richard Tiborcz duels with Thierry Delcane, the remaining heaviness is brought to you by Pat Thayse. They all have their own spot in the band, and I'm sure that this will result in catchy scenes at live gigs! Thierry Dupont is the bass player and he's responsible for a heavy layer in the songs while drums are pounding at maximum weight by Jonas Sanders (who's a member of Pro-Pain, Resistance, Age Of Torment and Emptiness as well and ex-member of The End Of All Reason and ex-Bloody Hands). Seems to be a busy guy!

The first single of the new album is called 'Lost', and this track has a very cool chorus line and outstanding vocals! Rightly elected as the representative of the entire CD! 'Angels Of Stone' opens very heavy again and while the pace is a little slower, the song has a very good impact as well! If you want a preview of an uptempo speed track, check the song 'War' at this location.

Drakkar succeeded to stand the test of time, and they are stronger than ever before! This band was signed by Spinal Records and if they are supported the right way, I'm sure that this album and band can take a leading position in Belgian metal! The band toured recently with FireForce and they are going to open for Lizzy Borden erelong. Be sure to check some of the links above and if you are able to see this band live, don't hesitate, as they are going to bring you the fairytale that opens like: Once upon a time.. in Hell !!!

My rating: 84 / 100

95+ : Outstanding, high valued albums & Classic Ones... a direct purchase is advisable !
 Between 90 and 95: Surpasses the style of music, must be heard/ordered by every Metal fan
 Between 80 and 89: Good in its own genre, recommended for those hooked on it
 Between 70 and 79: Decent but best previewing
 Between 60 and 69: Rather moderate
 Between 50 and 59: Bad, substandard
 50- : Rubbish

