

Unearth - "DARKNESS IN THE LIGHT" (CD Review)

Written by Sean Smithson
Saturday, 11 June 2011 07:01



Massachusetts crushers Uneath have unveiled their new album, DARKNESS IN THE LIGHT, the fifth in their discography and a return to the more pummeling style of their seminal release thus far, 2004's THE ONCOMING STORM. Shedding some of the metalcore trappings that characterized the band in the past, they have stripped things down, and with the help of Killswitch Engage's Adam Dutkiewicz producing, as well as Killswitch's skins pounder Justin Foley filling in on drums, Uneath have delivered what may be their strongest release to date.



Songs like opener "Watch It Burn," "Ruin of the Lost" and "Arise the War Cry" all mine the social and political territory that Uneath is known for. It's all angst here, boys and girls, which is to be expected; face-melting riffs and freight-train velocity don't give way to singing about makin' love in da club. Uneath throw in some unexpected musical twists on occasion here, incorporating stoner-sounding riffs in "Eyes of Black" and a the Who/"Baba O'Riley"-esque keyboard intro to "Equinox." Don't worry, though; Uneath haven't grown shaggy beards and started acting like hippies, nor have they become a New Wave band. Guitarists Buz McGrath and Ken Susi still enjoy assaulting you with fiery fretboard acrobatics, and the odd sludgy riff or brittle keyboard intro be damned—DARKNESS IN THE LIGHT is a full-on metal album. It's absolutely for fans of stuff like Machine Head, At the Gates, Arch Enemy and the aforementioned Killswitch Engage.

Tight riffing, varying from technical pedal-style patterns to twin-harmony Maiden/At the Gates worship, plus all the brutally chugging breakdowns, will surely serve to inspire many a karate kick in the pits come tour time. This is definitely music to move by, alternating rhythmically from chaotic mayhem to ground-shaking, gut-walking grooves. Vocalist Trevor Phipps brings the pain and brutality with his banshee-like screams, and guitarist Ken Susi balances things out with the occasional clean vocal. While it is an obvious holdover from the metalcore thing, Susi is pretty good about not overdoing it. It doesn't come off as a cash-grab attempt at charting a pop song, like so many other bands that employ the same technique and style.

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Commercially, DARKNESS IN THE LIGHT could elevate Unearth to the next level. Here's hoping the boys have a face-smashing success on their clenched-fisted hands. You can catch Unearth in the Rockstar Mayhem Festival as it burns a path of destruction across the U.S., starting July 9 in San Bernardino. Check out the official site here.
<http://rockstarmayhemfest.com/>

{youtube}kvmW3s-qIVM{/youtube}

