

METAL 2000 TO 2009 – 10 YEARS IN 800 WORDS

By 1999 I was admittedly so disconnected with Metal it was downright embarrassing. However, the only thing more embarrassing was the state of Metal itself. During the 90's, The Jesus Lizard, Kyuss, The Blues Explosion, Shellac, Rollins Band, The Unsane, The Melvins, Helmet, and The Boredoms satiated my need for all things heavy and rocked harder than anything Metallica's "Load", Megadeth's "Risk" or Iron Maiden's "X-Factor" could muster. Add the forgettable and very 90's "Nu-Metal" rap scene and I was just about done with all things masquerading as metal.

Nevertheless, throughout this metallic drought I never extinguished the flame. I still listened, almost religiously, to my Sabbath, Slayer, and all the other metal bands from back when I was 16, but I did desire some new variations on half-step chord progressions and songs praising Satan. It was only when I stumbled upon The Haunted's 2000 album, "Made Me Do It", that I started to prick up my ears and realize that there was something special happening all over again. What proceeded to unfold for the next decade was not just a personal homecoming back into the Metal Militia for me but for just about every other metalhead who had hung up their studded wristbands and hi-top sneakers after hearing metal's death knell via the strained sounds of Limp Bizkit and Korn.

There are two recurring themes that dominate the last ten years in Metal - reunification and full disclosure. Firstly, returns, revivals, reunions and resurgence had a marked effect on the scene. Every metal band you thought were lost and forgotten were thawed out, like some frozen Han Solo, and put back together stronger than ever (Death Angel, Forbidden, Carcass, Celtic Frost, Sacred Reich, Hrax, Sacrifice etc.) Every metal band that had managed to somehow stick it out, albeit quivering shadows of their former selves, magically rejuvenated overnight, stronger than ever (original Slayer line-up, Spreading The Disease Anthrax, Ronnie James jamming with Tony and Geezer again, Bruce and Adrian back in Maiden, and Halford's return to Priest). Revivals such as 80's thrash reared its ugly head in the form of bands like Municipal Waste, Toxic Holocaust and Evile. And glorifying metal returns for Nicke Andersson with his "Death Breath" project and Dave Grohl's "Probot" indicated that it wasn't only me that had felt a shift towards heavy.

Secondly, with the advent of reality television rendering nothing sacred, Metal received dressing downs that weren't always solicited. Watching Ozzy emasculated by his bratty children in the "Osbournes" weekly television show on MTV was initially amusing but in the end disillusioning. Metallica airing dirty laundry in their critically acclaimed documentary, "Some Kind Of Monster", unveiled a band that seemed stronger cloaked in mystery. However, watching Glen Danzig get punched out by The Northside Kings was a final straw that I never wanted to see happen. I like my heroes standing up, peering down, and always ready to rock.

As of this writing I stand on the edge of the decade's precipice. Watching Metal recoup critical reclamation with a new generation of kids enthralled by its power has been encouraging. However, we close out this decade with two events that threaten its newfound favor. The release from imprisonment of Varg Vikernes a.k.a Count Grishnach of Burzem/Mayhem this past year is somewhat poignant and eerily dramatic, but it seems apt since this is metal. And

the unexpected rise of Canada's Anvil through their docudrama, "The Story Of Anvil", sadly does nothing but reinforce knucklehead stereotypes of metalheads. Despite all the headway, it's a frustrating way to close out the decade.

Still, there is hope - hope in the form of the exciting crop of bands and sub-genres sprouted in the last ten years that include Sunn0))) , Baroness, High On Fire, Arch Enemy w/ Angela Gossow, 3 Inches Of Blood, Cult Of Luna, Om, The Sword, Dragonforce, Jesu, Gojira, Trivium, Cauldron, Evile, Nachtmystium, Capricorns, and about two dozen more.

In ten years, I went from almost giving up on the genre to being in awe of it all over again. Things have definitely come full circle for me and I now ingest and consume more metal than I did when I was 16. I wait with frothing breath to see what the next ten years will unfold. To the rest of the world, this might be a music that's meant for only bottom-feeders and cretins, but in my experience, Metal is a highbrow art form. I might play Rock 'n' Roll but I'm a metalhead through and through.

Danko Jones