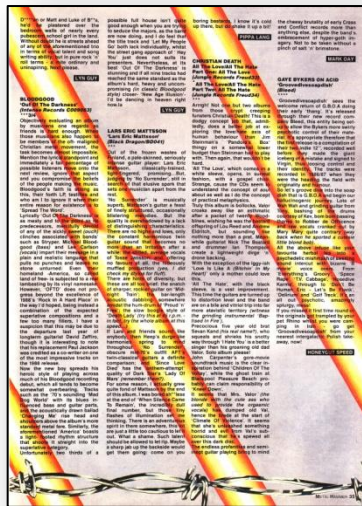


BLOODGOOD IN THE MEDIA



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Objectively evaluating an album by musicians one regards as friends is hard enough. When those musicians also happen to be members of the oft-maligned Christian metal movement, the task becomes almost impossible. Mention the lyrical standpoint and immediately a fair percentage of possible listeners move onto the next review, ignore that aspect and you compromise the beliefs of the people making the music. Bloodgood's faith is strong as this, their fourth LP, testifies and who am I to ignore it when their entire reason for existence is to 'Spread the Word'.



Lyrically 'Out of the Darkness' is as meaty and to the point as its predecessors, mercifully devoid of any of the sickly sweet (ouch) clinches associated with bands such as Stryper. Michael Bloodgood (bass) and Les Carlsen (vocals) impart their message in a plain and realistic language that pulls no punches and leaves no stone unturned. Even their homeland – America, so called land of free – is subjected to a real lambasting by its vinyl namesake. However, 'OFTD' does not progress beyond the excellence of 1988's 'Rock In A Hard Place' in the way I'd hoped, being instead a combination of the expected superlative compositions and a few too many fillers. I have a suspicion that this may be due to the departure last year of long term guitarist David Zaffiro, though it is interesting to note that his replacement Paul Jackson was credited as a co-writer on one of the most impressive tracks on the 1988 release.

Now the new boy spreads his heroic style of playing across much of his Bloodgood recording debut, which all tends to become somewhat overbearing. Tracks such as the '70's sounding 'Mad Dog World' with its blues influenced bass and guitar parts, and the acoustically drawn ballad 'Changing Me' rise head and shoulders above the album's more standard metal fare. Similarly, the aforementioned 'America' boasts a light – footed rhythm structure that shoots it straight into the superlative category.

Unfortunately two thirds of a possible full house isn't quite good enough when you are trying to seduce the majors, as the band are now doing and I do feel that the title track and 'Let My People Go' both lack individuality, whilst the street gang approach of 'Hey You' just does not suit its presenters. Nevertheless, at its best 'Out Of The Darkness' is stunning and if all nine tracks had reached the same standard as the album's hard, heavy and uncompromising (in classic Bloodgood style) closer – 'New Age Illusion' – I'd be dancing in heaven right now.