

Dead Eyes Opened



Believe EP Dead Eyes Opened

Goths eh? Flour covered mystics singing about out of body experiences and shamanistic ritual, or grubby Germans with voices like the Honey Monster chewing a wasp. The whiff of decay and the grip of disease, the everlasting hereafter and the welcoming jaws of hell - I'd place bets that these perceptions still hold true for the majority of music fans - that Goth is little more than an insular, black, enclosed, elitist club. The Goth community itself is split between EBM, early Goth, Teutonic, industrial and no doubt many others and one can imagine the fetid whispering behind black finger-nailed hands about the superiority of their sub-club over another, as horizons lessen, dogma becomes more entrenched and the libertarian expressionism of the early movement becomes a meaningless hippy ideal.

Welcome then, Edinburgh's Dead Eyes Opened - "radio friendly Goth Metal" according to singer Spooks - and their new 4-track EP Believe. An EP that refuses categorisation - a clutch of songs reveling in a whole slew of influences both disparate and daring, and proof incontrovertible that regardless of easy pigeonholing, it is the song that is ultimately king. Can the postman whistle it whilst delivering the mail? Is there a melodic pull and a grasping push of what makes music work? Yes and indeed yee-haw my brethren and sistren - get down on your knees and raise your hands in supplication that finally there is a "Goth" group who actually care about what they sound like first and foremost, leaving the labeling to those incapable of thinking for themselves.

Take opening track 'Believe' - a wisp of a trance-y swirl at the start, before the guitars of Dunsy cut through with a Love-era Cult swagger and the measured arpeggios of The Edge providing a soaring dynamic that lifts and swoops effortlessly, the chorus once it arrives offering a solution to "dreams that lie in tatters".

'My Sanity' on the other hand ushers itself in on a four-to-the-floor kick drum, sounding like Vision Thing era Sisters Of Mercy. There's none of the reverb-drenched vocal affectations here though - Spooks' voice has a crystalline quality that can deftly pick a route through the colours painted by Dunsy, both singer and guitarist ably backed by Gash's rumbling bass. "Stop staring at me" goes the lyric - yes, it's rude to stare, but not as rude as turning off your ears too.

The Goth-Techno-Metal (there's a new category, babies) of 'Polar' has a dancefloor sensibility sewn into it's lapels, the picked guitar lines counter-balanced by a heavy riff-fest - imagine dance bods Way Out West or Orbital inviting James Hetfield to add another dimension to the mix whilst Pete Murphy tries to resurrect Ziggy Stardust. Admittedly on paper it sound unpalatable, but tuck in and you'll go back for more, thanking DEO for having the courage to espouse such a magpie philosophy. It's the song that perfectly encapsulates the DEO mission statement - to take elements of Goth, metal, dance and pop and weld them seamlessly together.

However, it's the last track that seals the deal. "Day Of Judgment" is six-and-a-half minutes of pure unparalleled vindication. It is the song that further exemplifies DEO's schizophrenic vision of taking influence from wherever it comes and forging something new, something precious, something worthwhile from it. The quiet/loud convention adds a dynamism and space that allows the layers to build, the rolling drums the very heart of the beast, as the guitarist shows off all his prime moves whilst the lyrics ask the listener to 'dive down deep' and experience the undertow of the synths as they call to you, like sirens on the shore. It's properly epic and put together with such craft that you'll wonder how you ever managed before.

Ultimately, this EP shows what can be achieved if you keep an open mind and approach your calling with a maverick intensity. There's invention aplenty on show here, and it would be a criminal offence if this release doesn't give Dead Eyes Opened the exposure they so richly deserve.

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Approx 700 words*

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