

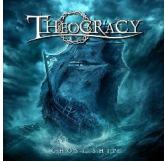
## Theocracy - Ghost Ship (2016)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 21 February 2019 13:23 -

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1 *Paper Tiger* 5:13 2 *Ghost Ship* 4:39 3 *The Wonder Of It All* 6:38 4 *Wishing Well* 5:01  
5 *Around The World And Back* 4:57 6 *Stir The Embers* 4:07 7 *A Call To Arms* 4:39 8  
*Currency In A Bankrupt World* 4:41 9 *Castaway* 4:43 10 *Easter* 9:53 Jonathan Hinds -  
Guitars, Vocals (backing) Matt Smith - Vocals, Guitars (additional), Keyboards, Orchestration  
Jared Oldham - Bass, Vocals (backing) Val Allen Wood - Guitars (lead) Shawn Benson -  
Drums

Straightforward, fun, genre album. Very, very fine power metal. How Theocracy succeeds at setting themselves apart from others deserving of those tags is the way they balance aggression and melody, crunchy guitars and smooth delivery, punishing drums and soaring melodies, etc, etc. There's no denying a slight thrash influence in this heavy power metal album, though it never strays a centimeter away from "melodic." This confident balance, without trying to be one or the other, is what gives Ghost Ship its own strong voice. (As if further celebrating this successful melding, Ghost Ship's cover art is done by Felipe Machado Franco, who designed for both Iced Earth and Rhapsody Of Fire, bands from both remote ends of the power metal spectrum.)

Something else that makes this work beautifully is that in contrast to the aggressive instruments are the silky and light vocals of band founder Matt Smith. He has natural middle and upper ranges, and an assured ease in his delivery; his voice calmly balances the hard-hitting metal.

I've noticed quite an uptick lately in power metal bands with lyrics featuring tales from Christian mythology. Some bands do this in such a way that is about as subtle as throwing a bowling ball through a window and thus, can be difficult to stomach; other bands employ a more poetic lyrical method and are welcoming to those of us who may not believe in fairy tales, yet still enjoy a good fantasy story from time to time. Rest assured, Theocracy sits comfortably on the latter

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side.

So enjoy those sing-a-long choruses, cheese lovers! They're not too numerous but they're all addictive; quality over quantity. Actually, while this is decidedly more "Euro power metal" so to speak, the cheese-level is not too over-the-top: fans of heartier thrash-based US power metal may still find a friend in Ghost Ship, as well as us fervent frommaggers.

Theocracy has been growing for well over a decade and it really seems like they've accomplished something special in their history with Ghost Ship. I'd like to see this band start to achieve more recognition and fame; they deserve it after this epic. ---metalstorm.net

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