1349 – Liberation (2003)



1. Manifest 4:03
2. I Breathe Spears 4:25
3. Riders Of The Apocalypse 4:35
4. Deathmarch 1:05
5. Pitch Black 3:20
6. Satanic Propaganda 3:45
7. Legion 4:56
8. Evil Oath 3:49
9. Liberation 5:22
10. Chants Of Grief 1:53
Ravn - Vocals Archaon - Guitars Tjalve - Guitars Seidemann - Bass Frost - Drums

1349's first studio effort, Liberation, is beyond words. There is no possible way for me to sum up the near perfection of this album but I'll give it a shot.

The album must be listened to all the way through upon first listen. There is no other way to fully experience the awesome power of 1349. From the opening jackhammer of Manifest to the closing cover of Mayhem's Buried by Time and Dust, 1349 are unrelenting. They never slow down, they never stop. They are a black metal force to be reckoned with. This is the album that no only hails the arrival of the future kings of black metal, it defines the sound and direction black metal will eventually head towards. Mark my words, dear reader: black metal will return to its furious and vicious roots and stray away from symphonic mainstream posers like Cradle of Filth and Dimmu Borgir and 1349 will stand proudly at the top of the heap as reigning kings of black metal.

Well now that that's all done with, on to the review. Let's start with the vocals shall we. This is Ravn's best vocal performance throughout 1349's three full length studio albums. On Beyond the Apocalypse and Hellfire, he sounds more harsh than grim. On Liberation he is as grim as he's ever been while still being as harsh as ever. He reminds me of Nocturno Culto on the first few Darkthrone albums. All in all, this is one of the best vocal performances I have heard in "modern" black metal. Very unsettling.

The guitars are amazing; a constant wall of buzzing noise that never lets up. If you listen through the wall of sound you can hear some really interesting and intense riffs. This CD creates a bulldozer of noise with fantastic guitar work underneath. The riffs are incredibly brutal and unrelenting, but at the same time they create an ominous atmosphere with some very wicked and evil overtones. Don't expect much in the way of solos though.

The bass is… well the bass is there. It's mostly inaudible. Its main purpose is to add a deeper, heavier overall sound underneath the treble-boosted guitars. If you listen, you can make it out though, and Seidmann does a good job of keeping up with Archaon and Tjalve's guitars.

Now we get to the drums. One of the highlights to the album, the drums are incredibly intense and accurate. Frost (of Satyricon fame) is, for my money, the best drummer in heavy metal. If you don't believe me, just pick any song on this album. Most of the drums are blast beats, but Frost does offer some interesting fills here and there. I am astonished by his accuracy. The man's a fucking human metronome! I didn't know a person could be so fast, yet be perfectly in time throughout the entire album. Listen to the end of I Breathe Spears. You'll understand.

This is a black metal album, so no review would be complete without a discussion of the lyrics. They are pretty standard for black metal. Blasphemy, anti-Christian sentiments, and individualism run rampant. The lyrics seem more empowering and creative than a lot of other low-tier, generic black metal, and they fit the music very well, so I can't complain.

In conclusion, 1349's Liberation is the place to start if you're interested in 1349 or black metal in general. If you're already a fan, it's time to buy this album and hear the future of the genre for yourself. It doesn't disappoint. ---blackblood666, metal-archives.com

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