

## Manowar - The Lord Of Steel (2012)

Written by bluesever

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01. *The Lord Of Steel* 04:07 02. *Manowarriors* 04:46 03. *Born In A Grave* 05:47 04. *Righteous Glory* 06:10 05. *Touch The Sky* 03:49 06. *Black List* 06:58 07. *Expendable* 03:10 08. *El Gringo* 04:57 09. *Annihilation* 04:00 10. *Hail, Kill And Die* 03:56 11. *The Kingdom Of Steel* 07:20 Eric Adams - vocals Karl Logan - guitar, keyboards Joey DeMaio - bass, keyboards Donnie Hamzik – drums, percussion

Boy oh boy did Manowar ever shoot themselves in the foot with this one. They had some of the best songs they had written in 20 years and they ruined what could have amounted to a decent comeback album with appalling production.

I am quite conflicted about this album. On the strength of the songwriting alone *The Lord Of Steel* is easily the most successful effort Manowar has made since 1992's *The Triumph Of Steel*. While the second half slows down a tad, with "El Gringo" and "Expendable" sounding a bit too by-the-numbers heavy metal for my tastes, the first half is quite strong. "Manowarriors" and "Touch The Sky" are the energetic and powerful anthems that they would have written in the early days. That approach went stale over the last few albums but it makes a triumphant return here, and who are we to deny Manowar their self-indulgent chest-thumping?

The major problem with this album (and it is a major problem) is the production. Manowar has never had the greatest production but here it sounds like a disgruntled employee fiddled with the recording equipment and they somehow never found out. The guitar tone is blocky and tame. There is no edge, no bite; it doesn't cut through as well as it should and it dampens the power of the songs. If only it could dampen the power of the bass. Joey DeMaio has taken a lot of creative liberties with his bass over the years but this takes the cake without a doubt. That bass forces itself into each song and hangs over everything like a thick, heavy cloud made of static; it is easily the most standout characteristic of the album. It is the sound of a blown-out

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speaker slowly being smothered with a cat. I do hope that whoever replaced Joey's bass with all of Sunn O))) is happy, because they sure did a number on this album.

The Lord Of Steel will not be converting any unbelievers any time soon. If anything it seems to be scaring away old fans. It is certainly worth braving the slipshod production for the few strongest tracks and I can see myself returning to "Manowarriors" and "Righteous Glory." If you survive the most insalubrious bass known to man The Lord Of Steel is worth purchasing; after multiple listens I have gotten accustomed to it, though I still have the feeling that I am listening to demos and not the final album. Ultimately it is a tough call of sound vs. substance. ---  
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