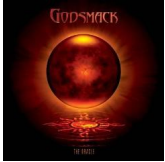


Godsmack - The Oracle [Deluxe Edition] (2010)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 07 April 2011 08:49 - Last Updated Tuesday, 20 March 2018 21:24

Godsmack - The Oracle [Deluxe Edition] (2010)



01. *Cryin' Like A Bitch!* [play](#)
02. *Saints And Sinners*
03. *War And Peace*
04. *Love-Hate-Sex-Pain*
05. *What If?*
06. *Devil's Swing*
07. *Good Day To Die*
08. *Forever Shamed*
09. *Shadow Of A Soul*
10. *The Oracle*
11. *Whiskey Hangover*
12. *I Blame You* [play](#)
13. *The Departed*

Musicians:

- * Sully Erna - vocals, rhythm guitar, harmonica, producer
- * Tony Rombola - lead guitar, backing vocals
- * Robbie Merrill - bass, backing vocals
- * Shannon Larkin - drums, backing vocals
- * Irina Chirkova - Cello on "The Oracle"
- * Lisa Guyer - backing vocals on "The Departed"

Four long years after IV, Godsmack's last effort, fans perhaps had some reason for trepidation about the release of The Oracle. After all, since their 1998 debut, they had moved further afield of the songwriting and recording formula that made it eventually a triple platinum success. Godsmack had taken their post-grunge brand of heavy metal and brandished it into a sound that fluctuated between straight-up riff-heavy plodding and more dramatic sonic ambiances that thundered on Awake and Faceless (the former of these won a Grammy), then mutated on

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2004's *The Other Side*, which showcased them playing acoustically. Finally, on IV, they employed sound effects to such a degree that they used a vocoder. Each album had diminishing returns of fortune and enthusiasm from listeners. *The Oracle* is, if nothing else, a return to the band's signature sound of yore. It was produced by Dave Fortman, who has helmed sessions for Evanescence, Simple Plan, Slipknot, Mudvayne, and Otep. The album's pre-release single, the aggressively roiling "Cryin' Like a Bitch" -- aided by its video -- pushed it to the top of the metal chart. (The controversy surrounding it, rumored to be about Mötley Crüe bassist Nikki Sixx and events of the Crüe Fest 2 tour, didn't hurt either.) "What If?" and "Love-Hate-Sex-Pain" followed it, creating greater anticipation for the final product. Listening through the album, it seems as if Godsmack heard the cry of their dedicated hoard and went back to making the kind of record that defined them. Check tracks like "Forever Shamed," with monstrous beats -- real and sampled -- by Shannon Larkin against Tony Rombola's churning, syncopated riffs and that timekeeping bass charge by Robbie Merrill. Frontman Sully Erna's vocals are right up front, half singing, half shouting, and channeling the late Layne Staley more than he ever has before -- and that's saying something. Interestingly, singles aside, the album picks up steam as it reaches its nadir. "Shadow of a Soul," with its military cadences and distorted guitars and basslines, propels one of the hardest-rocking tracks here. The title cut closes the album out, and at 6:23 clocks in as its longest. It begins slowly and melodically, but begins to pick up real steam at around the one-minute mark. Basically, it's an instrumental suite with sampled vocals from a number of sources asking "What is reality?" as it moves through various stages and phases before whispering to a finish. Those fans seeking a return to Godsmack's roots will not be disappointed; for others, the sound may be a retrenchment because there was no place else for them to go. The only undebatable thing is that *The Oracle* is the most aggressive disc Godsmack have issued since their debut. ---Thom Jurek, AllMusic Review

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