

Shakra - Powerplay (2013)

Written by bluesever

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01 – *Life Is Now* 02 – *The Mask* 03 – *Higher* 04 – *Wonderful Life* 05 – *Dear Enemy* 06 – *Save You from Yourself* 07 – *Don't Keep Me Hanging* 08 – *Dream of Mankind* 09 – *Stevie* 10 – *Because of You* 11 – *Secret Hideaway* 12 – *Too Good to Be True* Line Up: John Prakesh – Vocals Thom Blunier- Guitars Thomas Muster- Guitars Dominik Pfister- Bass Roger Tanner– Drums

The Switzerland based Melodic Hard Rock ace Shakra is back with their now 9th studio album titled “Power Play“. Blink for a minute and you may have missed the band’s entire discography. Sure doesn’t feel like they have been around that long, but in looking back at their history you are bound to find explosive riffs, melodic and catchy lyrics and solid musicianship alongside their extensive catalog. Although the line up changes throughout the years might have been enough for any other band to call it quits, that has not happened with Shakra. Regardless of the quality material they have dished out for years, they are not as a known commodity in the popular hard rock category with other two greats the likes of Gotthard and Krokus hailing from Swiss country, but why? I don’t know with a back catalog as strong as these guys I can’t see anything wrong with or fault them with sticking with a primary common formula, if it works why change it?

Well early reviews online has some people complaining about the same old sound, sounding more main stream etc blah blah. You know what; sure fair assessment but is a musical preference that the band has continued to work with and since their steady last record of “Back on Track” in 2011 they have returned with a similar formula and consistency fluidity that makes this album one of their better ones. Returning is lead vocalist John Prakesh again with his traditional Hard Rock pipes and adding a strong back bone are guitar players Thom Blunier and Thomas Muster who provide the listener with more tight riffing and keen spot solos throughout the albums playback.

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The band has decided to go with the rock ballad "Wonderful Life" as their first single and video, don't judge a book by its cover; yes is slow but is not indicative of the rest of the record. Songs like "Life is Now" and "Higher" are both hard rocking numbers with oomph and crisp drumming and the guitar dominates sharply. Some really tight songs continues to resonate through your senses with the more catchy hook of "Save You From Yourself" sounding a bit like a melodic Jorn Lande and his recent material. One of the premier prime cuts comes via the spicy guitar maddening tricks of "Don't Keep Me Waiting" melodic meets intensity heavy riffing, blast it loud and proud and bang your head!!!

Upon multiple listens my suspicions are confirmed, yes Shakra still kicks ass no matter how many times you say they sound the same or have driven their sound in spots towards a more commercial sound. Bottom line is that they still rock hard and yes while Powerplay may bit a diverse in spots, the overall feel still tickles my tummy with Melodic/Hard Rock riffing and good times vibes. While it is perfectly clear that Shakra has evolved from just plain rocking tunes to in some tracks a more modern commercial sound, the overall feel of the record is still distinctively theirs and their sound in bulk has not changed. That may be a good thing or perhaps we can just hold serve on their new record that would be the eventual decision by the listener. Again at the end of the day this album still holds more water with consistency then most bands trying to break ground. Forget about that Shakra rocks and you know it and this record does nothing to disavow that opinion in my case. ---Denys, myglobalmind.com

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