

Black Sabbath – The Dio Years (2007)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Neon Knights* 2. *Lady Evil* 3. *Heaven And Hell* 4. *Die Young* 5. *Lonely Is The Word* 6. *The Mob Rules* 7. *Turn Up The Night* 8. *Voodoo* 9. *Falling Off The Edge Of The World* 10. *After All (The Dead)* 11. *TV Crimes* 12. *I* 13. *Children Of The Sea - Live* 14. *The Devil Cried* 15. *Shadow of the Wind* 16. *Ear in the Wall* Personnel Ronnie James Dio – vocals
Tony Iommi – guitar Geezer Butler – bass Bill Ward – drums (on tracks 1–5) Vinny
Appice – drums (on tracks 6–16) Geoff Nicholls – keyboards (on tracks 1–13)

The original lineup of Black Sabbath possesses such a mythic quality that it's easy to overlook how far they slid by the time Ozzy Osbourne up and left the band...or how far they rebounded after they hired Rainbow singer Ronnie James Dio as his replacement. Countless compilations over the years have preserved the initial part of the story line -- celebrating the innovations of the first four albums with a near fetishistic quality -- but there has never been a good retrospective concerning the Dio years until Rhino released the aptly titled *The Dio Years* in early 2007. True, the Dio years didn't last all that long -- the singer joined in 1980 for *Heaven & Hell*, then lasted through one more studio album, the following year's *Mob Rules*, before departing under a shroud of controversy after 1982's botched live album *Live Evil* -- but Dio had a powerful impact upon the band and its legacy; these were the last years that Sabbath exerted pull as an active band, and after his departure they stumbled through various singers over the next decade before intermittently reuniting with Ozzy in the '90s. *The Dio Years* proves that during his brief time with the band, Dio did help Sabbath make music that could hold its own with some of the classic lineup's finest moments. With Dio as a frontman, the band was harder, nastier, and a little faster than the slow sludge of the early Sabbath records, but it fit in nicely with the New Wave of British Heavy Metal at the beginning of the '80s and it's aged very well. Some of it can sound silly -- Dio's lyrical obsessions always do -- but this is harder, heavier, better music than either *Technical Ecstasy* or *Never Say Die!* Anybody who's refused to give this latter-day incarnation of the band the time of day might find this compilation revelatory. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, allmusic.com

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