Bonfire - Branded (2011)

01. Deadly Contradiction
02. Just Follow The Rainbow
03. Save Me play
04. Let It Grow
05. Better Days
06. Do Or Die
07. Close To The Edge
08. Crazy play
09. Loser's Lane
10. Hold Me Now
11. I Need You (bonus track)
12. Rivers Of Glory (bonus track)

Musicians:
* Claus Lessmann - lead vocals, backing vocals, acoustic guitars, bass, rhythm guitars
* Hans Ziller - lead guitar, rhythm guitar, talkbox, acoustic guitar, sitar, slide guitar
* Chris Limburg - guitars
* Uwe Köhler - bass, backing vocals
* Dominik Huelshorst - drums

Bonfire (originally Cacumen) is a German heavy metal band, founded in Ingolstadt, Germany in 1972. Bonfire started 1986 from Cacumen where the members just changed the name into Bonfire because of the advice of the Record Company and the Management. The original founders Hans Ziller and Claus Lessmann are still with the Band Bonfire and are the only ones who have the rights on the name Bonfire. ---wikipedia

Should you find yourself lucky enough to release an album that everyone lauds as a classic, once the dust has settled you'll discover that it can be a bit of a double edged sword … especially if it happens fairly early on in your career. On the one hand it undoubtedly opens doors, bringing with it the much needed media focus essential in establishing your band as major players on the international scene, but the flipside is that you set yourself up for almost surefire failure by making it damn near impossible to follow. In some respects that's exactly what happened to Bonfire after unleashed the mighty 'Fire Works' back in late '87.

Heralded by everyone and his dog as a near perfect slab of svelte designer pop metal; 'Fire Works' blazed a trail across the firmament that was damn near impossible to miss or resist, and to be frank the band have been playing catch up ever since. Now, that's not to say that they haven't had some great releases in the years that followed – I've plenty of time for the likes of 'Point Blank', 'Rebel Soul', 'Fuel To The Flames' and the excellent 'The Räuber' for example – but if you find yourself with a sudden Bonfire craving, chances are that you'll automatically reach for 'Fire Works' as if preprogrammed to do so.

Proclaimed on the Bonfire website as their first 'regular' effort since 2006's pumping 'Double X' set – as I said earlier, 2008's admirable 'The Räuber' sounded pretty good to me as a 'regular' Bonfire album, but there ya go – 'Branded' has by default then been a long time coming. Swaggering opener 'Deadly Contradiction' kicks things off quite nicely (no, make that very nicely!) – all brooding riffs, menacing undercurrents and hypnotic harmonies – whilst following cut 'Just Follow The Rainbow' ratchets up the pace a notch or two, yet still retains the trademark strong melodies and raucous joie de vivre we've come to expect from the band. --- Dave Cockett, rocktopia.co.uk

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