

ALBUM REVIEWS

Album Review: Caligula's Horse - Charcoal Grace



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Caligula's Horse is an Australian progressive metal band, formed in 2011. They have released their sixth studio album on January 26th, 2024, **Charcoal Grace**. This album is a cathartic record driven by the effects of the pandemic leaving behind anger, resentment and all those negative feelings. The band started working on it in 2022, as a slow process. It's not a traditional concept album, but a full experience.

Band Members:

- Jim Grey – lead vocals
- Sam Vallen – lead guitar
- Josh Griffin – drums
- Dale Prinsse – bass



The album starts with *The World Breathes With Me*. A song with a beautiful beginning, and harmonics. Then it transforms into a heavier track, with djenty virtuous guitar. For me, it's about the environment and all the bad situations we're experiencing as mankind, but with a hopeful message at the end. We are all connected and connected with the earth. It's one of the singles on the album.

Golem. Groovy song, with emphasis on drums, guitar, and bass. It's about the expectations throughout the pandemic, specifically for musicians to work on a new album and not knowing when they would be able to play live again and in general, to return to a normal life. Golem is also a Jewish mythical creature that takes revenge and protects its people. This was the first single they released.

CALIGULA'S HORSE - Golem (OFFICIAL VIDEO)



Now it's time for the masterpiece, *Charcoal Grace*. The title track, is divided into four parts. It's a mini-conceptual album with dark lyrics. It represents the story of a man who caused much pain to his son and wife. He dies, and they don't have the chance to resolve their issues and work things out. Emotional and full of anger.

Charcoal Grace I: Prey. Rage, resentment. The whole story is told from the son's point of view, he is almost happy that this monster dies. Musically, this wrath shows. Heavy, and chaotic within its melody.

Charcoal Grace II: A World Without. It starts sweet and melodic. This man asks for forgiveness to his son and wife.

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Charcoal Grace III: Vigil. Soft and mellow, beautiful, despite the meaning. The voice and guitar stand out. The son says he is not forgiving him, he is not giving him that satisfaction.

Charcoal Grace IV: Give Me Hell. This song initiates majestically, leaving nothing behind. The son tells his father that he sees all his hatred reflected in himself, and that's a burden that he will have to carry in his own life.

Sails. A sweet guitar and vocals open the song. Then enter the rest of the instruments. It remains peaceful during the whole track. Lovely keyboards and a great guitar solo. Ends with only the initial guitar.

The Stormchaser. Another single. Catchy, hard rock song, with a beautiful guitar solo. I like that the singles are the first two songs, and then after the masterpiece of *Charcoal Grace* comes this third single. The song is about the divide we experienced in the pandemic, which led so many to become more individualist, instead of caring about the community.

CALIGULA'S HORSE – The Stormchaser (OFFICIAL VIDEO)



Mute. Starts with like singing from a mountain, and then the instruments enter. Sweet at first, heavy afterward. A flute has a great role in this track. Love song.

I loved the album. The undeniable virtuosity of the musicians, delightful lyrics, and the ethereal exquisite vocals made me travel through different emotions as I listened to it. I think this will be one of my favorite albums of this year, a progressive rock gem.



Rating: 9/10

Release Date: January 26th, 2024

Released By: Inside Out Music

FFO: Tesseract, Periphery, Dream Theater



Tracklist

1. The World Breathes With Me
2. Golem
3. Charcoal Grace I: Prey
4. Charcoal Grace II: A World Without
5. Charcoal Grace III: Vigil
6. Charcoal Grace IV: Give Me Hell
7. Sails
8. The Stormchaser
9. Mute