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Flashback Album Review: Helloween - Walls of Jericho



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Walls of Jericho is the debut studio album of the German power metal band, **Helloween**. Released November 18th, 1985 by **Noise Records**. They played so fast on this album, that they leaned more towards speed metal, with thrash elements.

Band members

- Kai Hansen – vocals, guitar
- Michael Weikath – guitar
- Markus Grosskopf – bass
- Ingo Schwichtenberg – drums

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Starlight is the first song of the album, and it starts with **Kai Hansen's** high-pitched scream. Power metal, a fast-paced song, a great guitar solo, and pounding drums. About a guy who doesn't know what to do with his life, so he spends his days consuming drugs. *Murderer*. Covers the story of an assassin who has to escape from justice to not get caught. Guitar duels. *Warrior*. Speaks about a soldier who goes to war, dies, and all to satisfy the commands of those who are in power.

Victim of Fate reminds me of **Iron Maiden's** *Wrathchild*. Fast, punky vibe song of someone who lives a criminal life, since they didn't have an adequate upbringing or good opportunities. The guitar solo changes the feeling of the song to an almost bluesy style, but then it returns to its initial energy and rapidness. *Cry for Freedom*. Starts as a ballad, concerning slaves who search for their freedom, and then it transforms into power metal.

Walls of Jericho is an instrumental track, followed by the fast and powerful *Ride the Sky* which is related to escape and creating your own destiny. *Reptile*, is about a Godzilla-type monster that terrorizes the city. *Guardians*. A happy speed metal song. That tells the story of this people that lives in a Utopia city. Where everyone is happy and free. Thanks to the guardians that protect the city.

Phantoms Of Death. Here they added keyboards to give it a creepy vibe to go along with the theme of the song about ghosts that bring death, destruction, and violence. *Metal Invaders*. Speed metal is about these Gods that bring heavy metal to the world. *Gorgar*, is a slower heavy metal song about the monster of a pinball machine, that eats the people who lose at the game.

Heavy Metal (Is The Law). Starts with **Kai Hansen's** scream. It's an anthem to celebrate the love for heavy metal. It's not a live version, the crowd noise was added later.

How Many Tears. Speed metal track about the violence and cruelty of war. A theme that is sadly still current these days. *Judas*. Fast-paced song about a betrayer, that cares more about the economy than the people living in this world.

This is a classic metal album, to get to know **Helloween's** history and metal history, in general. That features **Kai Hansen** on vocals and guitar. The twin guitar attack of **Michael Weikath** and **Kai Hansen** is a defining feature of the album, and their harmonized leads and lightning-fast riffs are a treat for any metal enthusiast. **Markus Grosskopf's** bass lines sound so clear in each song, that is so nice to hear his intricate compositions throughout the album. The talent of **Ingo Schwichtenberg** is also very present on this album, with superfast drums, keeping the rhythm high and persistent.

Helloween's lyrics touch on themes of mythology, fantasy, and introspection. This lyrical content would become a recurring theme in the band's future releases, setting them apart from other metal acts of the time. Even though **Walls of Jericho** is an iconic album and a must-listen for fans of classic metal and those interested in the roots of heavy metal, it fails on the production side, which is raw and unpolished. A characteristic of many early '80s metal albums. Some listeners may find this adds to the album's charm, while others might prefer the cleaner sound of the band's later works.

Rating: 9/10

Release Date: November 18th, 1985

Released By: Noise Records

FFO: Gamma Ray, Running Wild, Blind Guardian



Tracklist:

- 1) Starlight
- 2) Murderer
- 3) Warrior
- 4) Victim Of Fate
- 5) Cry For Freedom
- 6) Walls Of Jericho / Ride The Sky
- 7) Reptile
- 8) Guardians
- 9) Phantoms Of Death
- 10) Metal Invaders
- 11) Gorgar
- 12) Heavy Metal (Is The Law)
- 13) How Many Tears
- 14) Judas

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