

SIGH (Jap) – SCORN DEFEAT (1993) – Tape reissue by Equilibrium of Noise (Pol)

Wpisany przez Oldchool Metal Maniac

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It's a huge responsibility to write about such an important band like Sigh and much more reviewing its celebrated masterpiece "Scorn Defeat", first released by Deathlike Productions in 1993 and brilliantly reissued now in Poland, by Equilibrium of Noise, in a wonderful tape format. By the way, I think this format is awesome for Sigh, since the first time I've heard them was on their second demo tape, "Tragedies". At that point, around 1990, Sigh was already a band totally ahead of its time, using a crazy piano in almost all songs, something unimaginable when most of us were all under the influence of orthodox death and black metal and tons of anti-musical grind/noisecore. So, in this widely influential album, they have just broadened their conception of extreme metal and were hugely successful in creating a real masterpiece in "Scorn Defeat", whose classic weight has proved stronger on each reissue (almost 20 so far!).

Well, all this context makes it difficult to say something that has not been said until today about Sigh's superb work for avantgarde metal, showing the music we love can be hugely creative and rich and keep its underground accent intact at the same time! Yes, I think this is one of their most relevant achievements, i. e., to expand the boundaries of metal without losing its outcast/outsider essence, being one of the most experimental bands from the scene, but simultaneously keeping its underground aura, what makes them being wholeheartedly admired even by the die-hard metalheads all over the world. Anyway, let me try to add something interesting about this special release, a must to every serious underground metal fan.

All songs are long and full of different parts which seem to be telling a story with all its ups and downs, its mood changes, stressing the effects the composer wants to obtain with each distinct part. "A Victory of Dakini", for instance, has even some jazz elements and some grindcore/punkish riffs which could fit much more an Exit-13 album than a black metal one. Add to this crazy jazzy insertion some classical music influences, the use of beautifully melancholic choirs, dark keyboards, tons of doom/gothic atmosphere and vocalizations, everything cooked inside a black metal pan and maybe you can taste the flavor of Sigh...I only can say "maybe", because I'm not sure everyone can really figure out what Sigh is about without literally trying it by him/herself. It's something you have to put in loud volume in your bedroom and simply let your mind go.

This classical influence is noticed in the harpsichord intro of "The Knell", but not for too long, since it soon falls into a totally Bathory atmosphere, with such a simplicity that could be found in the first albums of the Swedish icons or even in Sodom's first ep, for example. In other words, Sigh comes from the most complex and clean-sounding music to the rawest black metal in seconds with an ability rarely seen in the music scene, and I'm not talking only about metal here. Ok, you could say that lots of bands tried this formula in the mid-90's or 00's, but remember that Sigh did this way before that, when no one could even think about defying the structures of metal. So, this avantgarde attitude surely shows why they are such a respected band in our scene and never really cared about the limits imposed by tradionalists. Following this philosophy of freedom, "At my Funeral" keeps the high level of experimentation and Sigh's paradoxical nature, preserving the inconstancy that makes their music so appealing and exhilarating so far, even 23 years later its first release. The next song, "Gundali" is another groundbreaking track, for being a metal song made only by percussion and powerful keyboards, concluding with a vibrating, although calm, piano solo...wonderful!

The next track, "Ready for the Final War", despite all the use of keyboards and the slow start, is a fucking black metal song that brings that Bathory feel, but with Sigh's personality. By the way,

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this (their personality) is the element that makes all the difference here and gives us the reason that something else is gonna happen in the course of the song and it really happens: its end is made by a doom metal approach and an excellent obscure piano that leaves the impression we are inside a movie. Certainly, this is the perfect soundtrack of trip to hell, especially when the speed and raw "Weakness Within" starts, the shortest song from "Scorn Defeat", but equally original. So, at the end of the album, we still have "Taste Defeat", a true epic hymn against all religions and the false idea of god and salvation of humanity played with the unorthodox originality of Sigh.

At the end of this masterpiece of obscurity, all I can say is that their place in the museum of metal oddities is surely guaranteed forever, because Sigh really deserves an outstanding position in the scene, a not only for their persistence, but mainly because they were never afraid to fight against the models and put the possibilities of artistic creation above the limits of the scene police. Only this courage would be enough to give them a good place in the gallery of metal arts, but regarding their perfect music, they surely got one of the best places in our pantheon!

Cristiano Passos