

SLEEP OF MONSTERS

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'II: Poison Garden'
Occult Rock
Svart



Finnish band Sleep Of Monsters, from inspecting their Facebook page, deliver music that straddles some of the more obscure sub-genres known to man (or beast). However, having listened to their new album, *'Poison Garden'*, I have to admit that while I may struggle to associate the sound with

'Victorian post-punk' or 'Fin-de-Siècle proto-metal' or even the wonderfully whacky 'Pre-Raphaelite psychedelia' they do have an overriding experimental/new wave/gothic ambience and fall into the somewhat easier to define category of 'occult rock'.

Formed by ex-Babylon Whores vocalist Ike Vil, and following on from the impressive debut album *'Produces Reason'*, SOM have created an outstanding collection of radio-friendly tunes that offer more than your standard fare, thanks to deep lyrics sung in snarling Idol tones accompanied by Floydian siren wails amidst gothic flourishes, culminating in ten tracks that swirl and coalesce, crawling under your skin and demanding attention thanks to the intensity built within each song.

Picking individual tracks as standouts is superfluous when every song is magnificent, such as *'Poison King'* which ends on an almost mystical Jim Steinman high, such is its overblown brilliance, or fast-paced *'The Art of Passau'* with its incantations and sublime melody. *'Beyond The Fields We Know'* begins life in gloomy mood against an orchestral backdrop, but the pay-off comes amidst glorious vocal interplay and a close you wish could last forever, which frankly sums up every song on the album, from *'As It Is, So Be It'* to the highly charged *'Foreign Armies East'*, with the wonderful *'The Devil And All His Works'*, while I'm no occultist, delivering one almighty finale complete with a screaming guitar solo, stabbing horn section and goosebumps down the arm. It is, quite honestly, the best thing I've heard in a long time.

I don't throw full marks around, as I believe they should be reserved for albums that demand your attention and leave a lasting impression – this is one such occasion. Genres aside, this album never fails to impress and despite its occult themes, it delivers songs that leave you salivating for more. There is no

way in this world (or the next) that occult rock should sound this triumphant – perhaps the devil really *does* have the best tunes after all. Simply outstanding.

POWERPOINTS: 12345678910

DAVID THROWER

Powerplay (UK)

(Metal Hammer [UK] #264, Nov 2014)

THE GOSPEL



Sleep Of Monsters:
bolt from the blue

SLEEP OF MONSTERS

PRODUCES REASON

(SVART)

Finnish rock's dark overlord in glorious return

It is one of the great tragedies of modern heavy music that Finland's death rock mystics Babylon Whores never received adequate recognition for their sublime contribution to the evolution of shadowy bombast. But hope springs eternal, and vocalist Ike Vil's new band look likely to reawaken interest in his pioneering alma mater, without whom there would almost certainly be no HIM, not to mention countless other worthy, morbid curiosities. Pleasingly, *Produces Reason* bears the Whores' aesthetic imprint throughout, with only a smattering of sonic enhancements setting these songs apart from their grotesque forebears. In simpler terms, this is a wildly charismatic carnival of muscular gothic rock, Ike's powerhouse baritone dominating proceedings with great authority as dark melodies twinkle menacingly in the foreground. If anyone else were to declare themselves to be "bold as brass" and "deft as death", as Ike does in thunderous opener *Nihil Nihil Nihil*, it could easily come across as empty bravado, but these haunting anti-hymns pulsate around a core of authentic grimness and despondency that makes even *Magick Without Tears'* opening gambit of *'All life is pain... champagne and cocaine'* resonate with truth and terror. Forget the empty-headed, Kohl-eyed pretenders: these monsters are as real as the dark is undying.



DOM LAWSON

Metal Hammer (UK)

SLEEP OF MONSTERS

The Sleep of Monsters – or SOM for short – kick-started their career by opening for HIM on New Year’s Eve of 2012/2013 at the Helldone Festival, Helsinki. They were signed to the Finnish Suomen Musiikki label in 2013 and released their debut album *Produces Reason* in Finland in November 2013, shortly entering the Top 50. Svart Records picked the album for international release, putting out the digipak and gatefold vinyl version of the album, complete with a bonus track, in November 2014.



SOM marks the return of vocalist and lyricist Ike Vil, the morose mastermind behind the lauded death rockers and occult rock pioneers Babylon Whores (with two subsequent “Album of the Month” titles in e.g. *Terrorizer* magazine), who teamed up with guitarist and main songwriter Sami Hassinen, formerly the guitarist of Blake (featured e.g. in Bam Margera’s *Viva La Spring Break* TV show), drummer Pätkä Rantala, who played on HIM’s million-selling debut, and keyboardist Janne Immonen, who has toured extensively with Waltari and Ajattara. The sound of SOM is completed by the trippy guitar of Uula Korhonen and the thumping bass of Mäihä, who also handles backing vocals, and last but not least, by the witchy voices of their own “Furies”: Hanna Wendelin, Nelli Saarikoski and Tarja Leskinen.

In 2016, SOM released their second album *Poison Garden* on Svart Records. A video was shot for “The Golden Bough”, the band’s tribute to the dark duets of Lee Hazlewood and Nancy Sinatra.

In 2017, the band will do a small Finnish tour in the spring, a couple of festivals in the summer, including Tuska 2017 in Helsinki, and are planning some shows in Continental Europe for the fall, after which they will start writing their third album.

Booking (Finland) <http://www.pyramidibooking.com> // Olli Vartiainen

Label: <http://www.svartrecords.com> //

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sleepofmonsters

WWW: www.sleepofmonsters.com

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<https://onedrive.live.com/redir?resid=765COD337BA0643F%21102>

Praise for II: Poison Garden:

"Open minded fans of all rock music should not miss a stroll through this garden of wonders and oddities"

(10/10, Powermetal, DE)

"Simply outstanding"

(10/10 Powerplay, UK)

"Sleep of Monsters have stumbled on a near-perfect formula here, and practice their art in irresistible fashion. Goth Rock in Excelsis."

(Sentinel Daily, AU)

"Gratuitously overblown, spectacularly crafted melancholy."

(Angry Metal Guy, US)

"Sleep Of Monsters are the dissolute lovers, the heavy lidded prince tired; wasted but eyes and mind and lips full of the smouldering fire of life and of the shadow world. Simply it is, again, beautiful."

(Ave Noctum, UK)

"This is one of the most addictive Gothic Metal/ Rock albums I've heard in a long time."

(AZM Magazine, US)

"Poison Garden" may be overblown, produced to within an inch of it's life and have more drama than the BBC, but it's a hell of a rock record as well. IS IT ANY GOOD? Yes, yes and yes."

(Unpeeled, UK)

"Truly remarkable and unique."

(Iyezine, IT)

"This is a record that is compelling and infectious and makes you want to listen over and over again. If you are a fan of occult rock or just good rock in general, this is the album for you."

(Cadaver Garden, UK)

Praise for Produces Reason:

(...) wildly charismatic carnival of muscular gothic rock, Ike's powerhouse baritone dominating proceedings with great authority as dark melodies twinkle menacingly in the foreground. (...) Forget the empty-headed, kohl-eyed pretenders, these monsters are as real as the dark is undying.

Metal Hammer (UK)

Rarely has such a complex engine and exemplary arrangement created something so easy to grasp; this is so radio friendly and yet so much more that it truly deserves the word 'subversive'. Imagine The Devil's Blood having penned a four minute chart breaker rooted to this world, with integrity intact, and you're drinking in the same bar as Sleep Of Monsters (...) Meetings like this don't come every year. This one is special. <http://www.avenoctum.com/2014/11/sleep-of-monsters-produces-reason-svart/>

Ave Noctum (UK)

(...) bona fide goth rock classics in waiting, near-perfect slabs of hysteria-inducing absinthe-soaked triumph (...) there are only so many ways of saying 'this is bloody brilliant and you need to get out and buy it quick smart!' <http://metalasdfuck.net/zine/reviews/2014/sleep-monsters-produces-reason-svart-records>

Metal as Fuck (AU)

Regal goth rock in the vein of The Cult with varied songs. Mr. Valo has dreamt of making such a solid album for years.

Rock Hard (DE)

Glam-goth debut of the year (...) Dammit, goth can be fun!

http://powermetal.de/review/review-Sleep_Of_Monsters/Produces_Reason.25186.25093.html

Power Metal (DE)

The dark, smoky vocal croon supported by powerful guitars creates an unique sonic tapestry (...) Occult rock of the highest order (...) Warmly recommended for those who like their music serene, varied and dark. <http://www.the-pit.de/review/sleep-of-monsters-produces-reason/>

The Pit (DE)

Ike Vil puts himself and Sleep Of Monsters at a level that is only achieved by the greatest artists on earth. Think of Scott Walker, Richard Hawley and Peter Steele.

<http://www.lordsofmetal.nl/en/reviews/view/id/28299>

Lords of Metal (NL)

(...) this album is a winner (...) SOM have crafted a very polished record with a unique style that contains plenty of emotional depth without ever becoming mawkish. The excellent lyrics (...) are the icing on the red velvet cake. <http://www.angrymetalguys.com/sleep-monsters-produces-reason-review/>

Angry Metal Guy (US)

It's always a breath of fresh air when somebody comes in and says 'fuck you... I'm writing good melodic songs and don't care what you think'. This is the case with Sleep of Monsters (...) The best elements of 69 Eyes, Beastmilk, HIM (...) along with Peter Murphy, Pink Floyd and Pulp. Just good solid songs you can sing along to. Remember those?

<http://www.occultrock.com/2014/09/review-sleep-of-monsters-produces-reason.html>

Occult Rock (UK)

Produces Reason is a rather special release – you can't just listen to it once and walk away. You'll want to come back to this one time and time again.

<http://www.soundscapemagazine.com/sleepofmonstersproducesreason/>

Soundscape (UK)

Are Sleep of Monsters ready to conquer the world with their special blend of different genres then? A loud and clear "yes"! It's a great album; even better, a hugely good album (...) that will certainly end up high in my year end list. <http://ashladan.be/metal-reviews/sleep-of-monsters-produces-reason>

Ashladan (BE)