

ELECTRIC WIZARD: BIOGRAPHY 2014

There are only two types of people in this world, my friend. Those chosen ones who recognise Electric Wizard as the heaviest, most evil, most decimating, most exciting, most bad-ass heavy rock band of all time, and those unfortunate souls who are yet to receive enlightenment. Or *enheavymment*, as it should rightfully be called...

But fear ye not: those who are lost will soon be saved, those who are blind will soon have their third eye prised wide open, because The Wizard have returned with 'Time to Die', their first new album since 2010.

Their astounding eighth long player fizzles and crackles with the malevolent energy of a giant black sun blotting out the sky; this is their heaviest album since magnum opus 'Dope Throne' (2000), their most evil since fan favourite 'Come My Fanatics' (1997), and the most acidic and psychedelic of their career to date.

The longstanding colossal yin & yang twin guitar assault of Jus Oborn and Liz Buckingham has been augmented by the temporary return of an old face from the distant past: the original Leccy Wizard drummer, Mark Greening. Speaking about bringing Mark back to play on the album, Oborn says: *"Our relationship is still volatile and can blow up at any time, so the recording process has been about tapping that negative energy and making something primitive out of it."*

Balancing things out is relative youngster and now full-time bass player, Clayton Burgess, who has the role of being the new face in Hell. Oborn jokes: *"We brought Clayton in to be a good influence on us in lifestyle terms. But of course we will end up corrupting him with 1970s sadoporn, vintage doom, vicious in-fighting and endless touring."*

Speaking about their new 'Witchfinder Records' imprint, the result of a worldwide deal with Spinefarm Records, the frontman says: *"For us, Witchfinder means, 'We are the inquisition, we've come to burn poseurs and fakers; to sacrifice them to the gods of rock 'n' roll'."*

From the second you dive into 'Time to Die', it's clear that this line-up has found some kind of alchemist's sweet spot, enabling the musicians to combine all of the things the band has done so well in the past into one devastating whole. Instead of going for monolithic riffs built up out of multiple layers of crushing musical weight, this is an album of four lead instrumentalists battling it out and complementing one another by turns. The effect is more focussed, acidic and minimalist than anything they've done before.

Oborn agrees: *"'Time to Die' has a more hateful vibe than our last single, 'Legalise Drugs & Murder' (2012), and our last album, 'Black Masses' (2010). Those two are kinda tripped-out stoner epics, but this is way harsher and darker. This album is cursed... almost evil. All of our albums in the past have had a theme – revenge, drugs, black magick – and the theme of this one is death. Of course, death to us really*

means rebirth, so this album is a manifestation of a very primal occult belief in the final sacrifice. We have gone full circle – it was inevitable, but we had to do it. We had to kill the band so we could be reborn. It was the only way to ensure we could come back even stronger.”

The album art reflects this phoenix-like rise from the ashes. The stunning gatefold photography shows a corpse clad in classic biker gear and Electric Wizard jacket lying face down in some remote country river. Oborn explains: *“The album is really about the meditations of a dying man... or should that be dying band? Liz worked on this amazing shot for the gatefold, which set the scene for the whole album. We were in the river for a day trying to get the perfect photograph.”*

But if the artwork is meant to be metaphorical, at one point it nearly became terrifyingly literal. Oborn laughs: *“Yeah, I fell in a few times... but we had to get the right shot!”*

The album, which was mostly recorded with Liam Watson at Toe Rag studios, East London, but finished off at Skyhammer in deepest, darkest Cheshire by Chris Fielding, opens and closes with the sound of a gurgling river and a haunting organ – a return to their uncanny rural roots.

Oborn explains: *“We needed to get out into the country to finish it. We aren't an urban band, and I think East London influenced ‘Black Masses’ a bit too much negatively. The organ is a classic Hammond B3 played by Mark – we’re big fans of Italian giallo horror movies and really dig that Bruno Nicolai, Ennio Morricone sound. It’s always been a big influence on Electric Wizard.”*

Elsewhere, the title track, ‘Funeral of Your Mind’ and ‘We Love The Dead’ are destined to get live audiences banging their heads with classic doom riffology, while ‘I am Nothing’ harnesses the dark underground death metal spirit of 1984. As Oborn says: *“It was the year I became a metal-head. It was heavy shit for real – there was no way you were ever going to get a decent job. So I became a Satanist, I dug up a grave, I got into tape trading, I had a one-man noise/black/death metal band called Regurgitated Guts, and there were loads of documentaries on TV warning us not to listen to the devil's music...”*

After 21 years of being reality rupturing doom outliers, Electric Wizard are finally getting their dues as one of the all-time great British bands. Oborn agrees that the time is right and that their dark star is in the ascendancy...

“Obviously, we want everyone to listen to ‘Time to Die’ because we want to achieve total world domination through doom, drugs and heavy metal! We’ve always strived to be regarded as a classic British band, like Sabbath, Motörhead or Hawkwind, y’know? We have never fitted into any scene and have never really been embraced by a single genre, anyway. We’ve always had that wider appeal.

“Our gigs have consistently flown the flag for any kind of freak culture or

underground movement. We have punks, skaters, wasters, metal-heads as fans... which I guess is what has kept us going over the years. We are Electric Wizard, we don't really fit in anywhere. We are outsiders and freaks, just like you."

Let the *enheavymment* commence.

John Doran, London, June 2014