



Lana Del Rabies prepares to shred your senses

LANA DEL RABIES

Strega Beata

GILGONGO

The next industrial evolution starts here

WHILE PREVIOUS LANA Del Rabies releases have impressed with their uncanny, claustrophobic moods, *Strega Beata* represents a thunderbolt moment: as though ancient secrets have been unlocked and, with them, passage to some mysterious new sanctum.

The brainchild of Arizona-based musician and producer Sam An, the project has never shied away from the human psyche's darker passage-ways. This sees Sam explore her own trauma and abuse – a process that has rippled outward to encompass an examination of the unceasing avalanche of grief, horror, loss and tragedy we are exposed to on a daily basis as a species. Attempting to give this swirling vortex of human misery narrative form is an ambitious endeavour, but *Strega Beata* is a resounding, chest-crumpling success.

Loops, drones, beats, strings and scorched electronics smother Sam's ghostly voice like a shroud, more often than not transforming her croons, wails, mutters and shrieks into wordless hymnals. Genres are smashed, spliced and mixed like the toxic ingredients

for flying ointment ground down in a witch's mortar and pestle, with gothic moodiness leeching into industrial churn, tape-decayed prettiness and coruscating noise-outs. Each track

– *Master, Mother and Forgive* in particular – is a mini epic unto itself worthy of careful dissection, one moment sounding like the louche misery of Depeche Mode colliding with Justin Broadrick's greyscale hostility, at others demanding parallels be drawn to Pharmakon, The

Body, AJA or Heilung if they'd been forced to witness the industrial revolution.

Despite everything weighing down upon it – sonically, conceptually, emotionally – *Strega Beata* never once threatens to buckle or crack. Instead, Sam channels the world-razing sorrow of her subject matter into something potent, terrifying and beautiful, fashioning a true sonic one-off that lives, breathes and perpetuates its own dark magic.

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FOR FANS OF: Uniform, Burial Hex, King Woman

ALEX DELLER



OMEGA INFINITY

The Anticurrent

SEASON OF MIST

Black metal meets black holes for an awe-inspiring voyage

Black holes have feelings too; at least according to Omega Infinity, who take their obsession with crushing anomalies to new void-depths of extremity on their second album. Massive in scope, their black metal explores our relative insignificance in the vastness of space-time. Combining rough-hewn cacophony with electronic, radioactive bursts, the music operates on two levels; opener *The Alpha* is cataclysmically intense with a mellifluous piano refrain drifting majestically underneath. The record features several guests, including Cradle alumni Lindsay Schoolcraft on *Death Rays* and Andrés Nagy of Sear Bliss, whose track *Night Journey* is covered, along with Emperor classic *Ye Entrancemperium*. *The Anticurrent's* inescapable event horizon proves all-consuming.

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FOR FANS OF: Deathspell Omega, Mysticum, Arcturus

TOM O'BOYLE



OTHERWISE

Gawdzillionaire

MASCOT

US arena-style rockers bring in a dash of the unexpected

These Las Vegas veterans' sixth album is full of beefy, melodic hooks and choruses. Doubling down on their strengths, there's no short supply of bangers here as the quartet

really know how to write super-catchy arena rock. But the formula is shaken up a tad as they experiment with contrasting tonal shifts, from the hip hop-laced title track, featuring rapper Ekoh, to the gothic *Exorcism* that infuses the record with a darker spirit. The album doesn't reinvent the wheel, but it does stand out from its counterparts in the heavy rock scene.

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FOR FANS OF: Shinedown, Black Stone Cherry, Like A Storm

HYWEL DAVIES



PIL & BUE

Special Agents

INDIE RECORDINGS

Genre-mashing Norwegians dial up the heaviness

Sometimes relentless genre-mashing can leave a band sounding characterless. Not so Norwegian duo Pil & Bue, who have been gleefully pulling prog rock, shoegaze, Mars Volta-like melodies and doomy riffs together into a cohesive sound since 2013. Their fourth album takes them into a heavier, more explosive dimension, adding more colours to their palette. Opener *Change Your Mind* is pitched somewhere between At The Drive-In and Royal Blood. Singer and guitarist Petter Carlsen howls like a wounded Thom Yorke over a lush, shimmering wall of sound on *End Credits*, later laying down catchy vocal lines on the Muse-esque *Slave Vs Master*. On a record that solidifies their sound more than ever, Pil & Bue are maddeningly difficult to pin down.

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FOR FANS OF: Coheed And Cambria, Mars Volta, The Fall Of Troy

DANNII LEIVERS