

RED SEA RISING REVIEW !!!

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<https://www.redsearising.net>

By Zack Brenneman

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Like a phoenix rising in the first rays of a new rising sun, Red Sea Rising craft an album that breathes new life the genre of power metal.

The debut release from Red Sea Rising entitled "Eye of the Storm" offers a sound that is reminiscent of 80's power rock bands like Motley Crue, Scorpions, Extreme, and Def Leppard but modifies the sonic template by focusing more on chord structure and precise compositional arrangement as opposed to putting balls to the wall and following the almighty riff. In essence Red Sea Rising are able to say more with shorter song lengths through instrumental harmonies and melodies, than most other bands of the power metal ilk. That's not to say that they've sacrificed the ability to turn it up to 11 and rock out for being melody driven. "Eye of the Storm" showcases songs that tie the arrangement together through melodic hooks and keep instrumental over indulgence to the appropriate sections of the song. Understanding that every instrument has its part to play, both in the song and in the mix, is tricky, but in that respect "Eye of the Storm" proves that you can have a power metal arrangement in which the instruments don't have to fight for your attention all the time in the song and in the mix.

The musicians who joined together to create this tour de force were all active musicians in L.A. during a time in the mid to late 80's that saw many memorable bands of the time get their break into the main stream. Like many musicians of that special time and place, they found themselves usually working as session musicians in and around the sunset strip; the hired guns of the sunset strip. Jeffery Kerr (A.k.a. Jet Ryder) on lead vocals, Ken Pinkstaff on lead guitar, Jimmy Salazar on rhythm guitars and vocals, KC Anderson on bass, David Franklin (Lunchbox) on drums, and multi-talented, Steve Kapeller on keys. Throughout "Eye of the Storm" each instrument is showcased in it's own way, whether it be a scorching guitar solo, a clever accompaniment, a harmonized vocal phrase or a galloping bass drum and snare pattern, each instrument brings something to every song that helps to enforce the arrangement instead of dominating it. This is no easy feat, but Red Sea Rising seem to have the knack for writing accompanying melodies and harmonies that fill in the gaps in the background of the composition, and slot each instrument in it's own place in the mix.

The lead vocals are sung, very competently by Jeff Kerr, whose vocal tone and style fits naturally with the 80's power metal sound on "Eye of the Storm". At times Jeff has a touch of Sammy Hagar (Van Halen) and Joe Elliot (Def Leppard) in his vocal delivery on songs like "Break the Chains," "Just Bleed," "Sometimes" and "Walk Beside Me". Kerr's competent vocal delivery is complemented well when accompanied by rhythm guitarist Jimmy Salazar, harmonizing with a style of vocal that is soulful and fits the mood of the song perfectly. Jimmy Salazar also takes on lead vocal duties on tracks "Life on Hold," "Cold," and "The Night". His vocal performance at times can be reminiscent of Rob Halford (Judas Priest) as Jimmy has the impeccable talent to transcend octaves and sing in higher registers at the drop of a pin. Vocal duties are shared in "The Night" which has Jimmy harmonizing and echoing Jeff's lead part in a soulful performance that is guaranteed to raise the hairs on the back of your neck.

The lead guitar work is played Ken Pinkstaff, who has been honing his chops as a session guitarist on the sunset strip in L.A. since Joe Satriani had hair and Randy Rhoads began to make waves in the guitar world. While the rhythm guitars of Jimmy Salazar have practically the same tone throughout the album, they drive the song with solid rhythms that work as a platform for Ken's solos to take off into the stratosphere. "SGunner Slinger" (the album's sole instrumental track) will be any guitarists favourite track as it showcases the shreddability Ken possesses as he soars through the scales and nails pesky tremolo phrases with ease. His guitar tone is reminiscent of what you would come to expect from any stylistic soloist in the genre of power metal; overdriven with a touch of reverb and a lot of gain and boost in the midrange. But let's not hold traditional tone against him. When the guitar isn't ripping up the fretboard during the solos of "Life on Hold", "Pick Me Up" and "Break the Chains," it's pulling off clever accompanying melody hooks in the background that keep its tone intact even in a different spot in the mix.

KC Anderson plays the bass parts excellently, and his unique approach to the parts shines in songs like "Break The Chains", "The Night" and "The Storm". KC's approach to the bass parts gives the composition a sense of movement and is a welcome change of pace from other bass parts of the genre that would have the instrument tied to playing the root note for the whole song, and not exploring the melodic possibilities that are can shared with the other instruments.

Dave Franklin (Lunchbox) drums on "Eye of the Storm" and showcases his talent for bass drum triplets and melodic drumming, where appropriate in the song. "Let It Go" it a great example of the small things Dave does as a drummer to add a little zip to what is usually considered a typical rock and roll pattern. By adding a couple triplets on the snare or raising the high hat slightly when leading into a chorus, the effect his style of playing has on the listener is that there's perceived momentum in the song, and this gives the song a sense of progression. "Gunner Slinger" gives Dave a little more freedom to play around, and doing so, he uses triplet kicks to enhance a guitar heavy song with a rhythm that gallops along in time while the guitar soars through the clouds and into the stratosphere.

Following in traditional power metal footsteps, the songs on "Eye of the Storm" make use of the versatility of the keyboard. Steve Kapeller brings a unique feel to the instrument as his role in the arrangement changes from rhythm ("Standing in the Rain" and "Pick Me Up") to lead ("Sometimes" and "Cold"). Whichever role the keyboard plays in the arrangement, its tone works to enhance the mix of the song without fighting for dominance between the lead guitar and vocal. Two great examples of this mode of mixing are the last songs on the album "Look Me In The Eye", "The End" and "The Storm" in which the keys cover both lead and rhythm in the same song without taking away from the acoustic guitar and vocals.

Overall, considering that not one song on "Eye of the Storm" is over four minutes in length, each song has something to say, both lyrically, and sonically, and does so in a concise and effective way that has all the instruments working together to support one the song rather than fight for the spotlight like many other power metal bands that share that fatal flaw. The production values are great with most mixes placing the instruments right where they need to be at different times in the song. The songwriting structure is fairly traditional which can become highly predictable, and there's not a huge variety of different tones throughout the album. Where Red Sea Rising shines, however, is in their ability to write and produce, an album in which all instruments work together towards the greater cause; the song. While the spotlight drifts to shine upon different instruments from time to time, the way that they come together to support the song makes this album worth listening to, and shows great promise for future works from Red Sea Rising.

Red Sea Rising - Eye of the Storm

1. Walk Beside Me - 3:57

2. Life On Hold - 3:32
3. Just Bleed - 3:04
4. Gunner Slinger - 3:29
5. Sometimes - 3:29
6. Cold - 3:28
7. Standing In The Rain - 3:50
8. Pick Me Up - 3:50
9. Let It Go - 3:47
10. The Night - 3:29
11. Break The Chains - 3:36
12. Look Me In The Eye - 2:26
13. The End - 2:01

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