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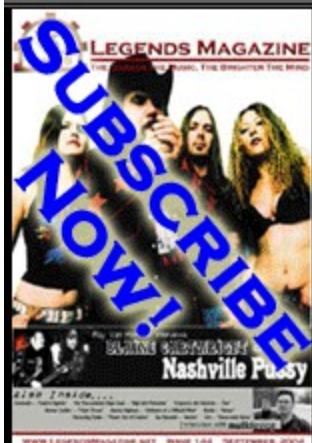
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CD Review

Nox Arcana – “Transylvania”

By Marcus Pan

It's difficult to take a subject that's been written, filmed, screened, put to music and put on stages worldwide and not come across as “yet another.” Taking Nox Arcana's latest project, **Transylvania**, we have the vampire scene coming to life with its morbidity, darkness and all that makes vampirism a fun subject. But it's been done so many times occasionally you have to wonder if eventually you're going to get to the point of it being “enough already.” But it's Halloween time (well, a couple days after it really) and we can forgive this sort of behavior if only for the fact that Nox Arcana are known to take their subject matter seriously and apply a level of professionalism that is unmatched since Bram Stoker created his neverending tale centuries ago.



As original as Bram's take on the matter was – it being what it is of course, the original in most people's minds – Nox Arcana's take on the subject in **Transylvania** stays truthfull and infuses the atmosphere with the perfect backing to any Victorian gothic horror. Though heavily clichéd by now, Joseph and Williams avoid the pitfalls by being as seemingly well read (and therefore sounding) on the subject. Instead of having the “enough already” feeling to this release you're instead transported back to the origins of the vampire myths – Transylvania of course – via their layering of classical strains, orchestral musings and a resounding resonance that remains true.

From the light spray of piano of *Gossamer Mist* to the deep resonating beats of *The Black Coach* as you dash through the misty mountains, Nox Arcana's treatment is deep, meaningful, frightening yet beautiful. The melding of a metallic tinged piano in *Brides to Darkness* is eerie. The trend continues into the waltz of the *Grande Masquerade*, both regal and sinful at the same time.

Transylvania gets further more eerie as the album progresses, *Gothic Sanctum* being one of the most chilling. *Gypsy Caravan* is sultry and really does infuse images of a dancing gypsy in my mind. Even though it's doubtful that the duo have been to Transylvania to see a gypsy caravan and hang at a late-night campfire session they sure as hell somehow captured the mood to such an extent that you swear they not only were there – but recorded it. Following a reading in *From Dusk Till Dawn*, *The Night Wolf* turns utterly horrific in its detail, chanting and dark ritual drums.

Nox Arcana has been cranking them out as of late. If my memory serves, this is their third this year(1) though I could be wrong because I sometimes mix them up with Midnight Syndicate(2). So far everything they've done is high grade, from the orchestral arrangements to the tribal rhythms. Even the jacket artwork is gorgeous. Great for reading horror, backgrounding a Halloween party(3) or infusing an atmosphere of dread and fear just to keep your psyche on its toes.

ISSUE 153
November, 2005



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