

If you're anything like me, there are some bands that you read about and think "yeah, they're why I got into heavy music", and Black Hole of Calcutta are one such band. A band that you can't pin down to any specific genre but a band that seem to embody everything you like about heavy music. So when I got asked to review their LP, I could hardly say no.

This is their latest LP, that was released in January, via Give Praise Records and I Feel Good Records.

Tracklist:-

- 1. Myth Of Progress*
- 2. Age of Extinction*
- 3. Truth is Never Told*
- 4. Total Collapse*
- 5. Cirrhosis*
- 6. Genetic Control*
- 7. No Turning Back*
- 8. Nightmares*
- 9. Educate*
- 10. No Regrets*
- 11. Arm The Hopeless*
- 12. Vultures*

BHOC start off with a sludge/Doom inspired track called Myth of Progress. It's a slow burn of an opening song, with bass heavy riffage and striking drum rhythms. It suddenly bursts into life about one and a half minutes in and spews forth, fast and angry grind/power-violence with crazily fast drumming, Punk-infused riffs and absolutely rabid screams. I love the slow riffs at both ends of this opener, purely for the atmosphere they give off.

From here of in, things get a lot faster. Age of Extinction is a sub two-minute punked-up blast that leaves no room for breath. Truth is Never Told follows in the same vein. Those screams are properly intense too. I've not heard any as angry as this for a long time. Total Collapse is forty seconds of grinding mayhem, bisected by sudden stops and brutal crusty doom riffs.

The riffs at the start of Cirrhosis are more akin to razor black metal riffs. There are so many elements to BHOC's music that you may as well forget about categorisation and just headbang! Genetic Control is another grinding mass of crazed screams and breakneck drumming. Thanks to the production here, the record sounds huge. The vocals are most prevalent, but when the other instruments are allowed space to breathe, the effect is huge. When all playing together, it's utterly mental!

No Turning Back is the fastest song on display, yet BHOC still manage to fill it with some brilliant, Mastodon inspired guitar. Nightmares starts off more mid-paced, with some more great punk elements, before unleashing more rip-roaring grind fuelled madness. It's actually quite amazing how many different elements BHOC can fit into their songs. The different genre styles and pace changes are infused into their music with ease.

Educate just blasts along with no histrionics and No Regrets fuses itself to your synapse with the help of caustic screams and subtle progressive riffs underneath. The sound of the drums and specifically the cymbals add elements of disorientating madness.

This brings you to the final two tracks, the fast Arm The Hopeless, over in the blink of an eye and Vultures, which displays more of their hardcore sensibilities and just smashes you into submission. When I say hardcore though, I mean more of your Integrity/Strife style hardcore and not your tough guy, slam dancing stuff. The song finishes off the album the way it started, with more epic doom riffs and slower paced dirge.

In summary, this record may only have a playing time of about twenty minutes, but my god is it worth it. Thanks to the variation and skill on show, it seems to last a lot longer and is thoroughly worth multiple listens. Black Hole of Calcutta add another element to the grind/power-violence blueprint and strive to write music their way. Definitely ones to watch, if you're not yet familiar with them.

<http://stayahead.blogspot.co.uk/> - June 2012

Blackened full force grinding melodic crust from Northern California. There are few breaks into BRAINOIL-esque sludge, and honestly the respites are welcome after getting your face melted by breakneck hardcore. They mix styles enough to keep things interesting ("Genetic Control" could be an IRON LUNG song, while "Nightmares" sounds like early '00s melodic crust on speed), but the attack is merciless regardless of its nature. Two dudes make this racket, and while a few of their previous releases have left me wondering whether to file or sell, they have come into their own on this slab, and it will be getting many repeated listens. Excellent stuff.

Maximun Rock'n'Roll #346 - March 2012

Fittingly named after the infamous dungeon-esque hellhole that consumed British prisoners of war, Black Hole of Calcutta is an excellent slice of blackened-y grind that should be surely checked out.

Upon hitting the play button for the first track, "Myth of Progress," and hearing the subsequent sludgy, doom and feedback laden riffs, amongst slow pounding drums, I thought to myself, well, here's to what is hopefully another good offering of doom/sludge that has popped up yet again – but about a minute after that thought, I was thrown into a vortex of grinding riffs, raging vocals, and a whole load of, uh, awesome, only slowing down towards the during the outro.

After listening to the first track, and viewing the following track's song times (ranging 37 seconds to a little over 2 minutes, asides from the longer, 5 minute first track), I knew I was in for something I wasn't expecting at all with my initial impression.

15 minutes later (the album runs 20 minutes in total, with the inclusion of track 1), I had been through a torrential burst of speeding riffs, energetic blastbeats, and black metal-esque, hate filled vocals, with some songs erring more grind like, and some more hardcore like, but all completely relentless in their execution.

Blackened crust/grind/powerviolence is something that doesn't really pop up often, which is unfortunate because, as one of my favorite grind bands ever (Watchmaker) has proven, and as Black Hole of Calcutta is now showing, it's damn good stuff, and I'm looking forward to more of it.

<http://www.theinarguable.com/> - February 2012

When a band mixes crust punk, black metal and grindcore it is almost always something spectacular. It's an anomaly that doesn't come about as often as it should. Bands like Grave Hill paved the way for bands like this although they may have done so with a little less crust influence. When the band Black Hole Of Calcutta crossed my radar, I was immediately interested. Before I had even heard a song, I knew by the description of the band and their name that they would be a monumental beast of blasting fury. I was one hundred percent correct.

When I sat down to listen to the bands self-titled LP, I went into it with an open mind because, as I stated, I was about to get my first dose of the band's sound. The opening track "Myth of Progress" is a driving, aggressive crust punk track topped off with black metal vocals. This is something that I can instantly get into as a fan of both genres. Traces of grind come through slightly on this track but not nearly as much as on the following track "Age Of Extinction." This track is chock-full of grinding fury including bombarding blastbeats, attention-grabbing riffing and those fantastic, shrill screams. This is a beautiful thing to behold.

The album only progresses from this point. Tracks like "Cirrhosis," "Genetic Control" and "No Turning Back" are amazingly-executed grinding entities in their own respect. Each one has its own mind and it's own distinct sound but they are all grind no matter how you look at it. On the other hand, tracks such as "Nightmares" and "No Regrets" have much more of a hardcore punk attitude to them. Of course, you cannot take the grind out of a band like this, so those elements are still very much in play.

The final track on the album is the real stand-apart track. Its vicious hardcore assault is a force to be reckoned with. Fast, charging riffs and face-bashing drumming perfectly accent those mind-numbing vocals. I am currently listening to a digital copy of this album but I have to say that the vinyl version sounds much, much better. It really catches the bands varying sound. All in all, this album is revolutionary in the genre it falls under. Although I don't think this band needs any further label than this one: "fucking aggressive." Black Hole Of Calcutta, you are a forceful, menacing band and you have put out one of my favorite releases this year thus far. Amazing work. Keep it up.

<http://americanaftermath.net/> - February 2012

Not much is noted of the aphotic and unforgiving terrain where the realms of black metal and crust punk blur into a singular and develop into a most frightful set of forms. It remains a very sparsely populated territory, briefly explored and inhabited by the more drab rag tags of the disputed "Stenchcore" misanthropes, and since then its population irregularly goes up a notch as a meagre handful of bands brave the barren depths of this bastard half blood of music genres.

One such band to have blossomed from this incurable and famished land of taint, blasphemy and mephistophelian desires would be California's vanguard of misery Black Hole of Calcutta.

Just to set the tone right, my introduction to this band came from a youtube video where the bands vocalist fulfills the part of an agitated unhinged doomsayer; discussing the need of home made hand grenades in a post war dystopian occupation of America, which is but a strain of the overwhelming chilling backlash and detestation they echo through their works both musically and lyrically.

Their methodology operates through violent switches between fast and aggressive crusty rhino charge passages to more teeth grinding reigned in slow but stern headlong hammering, all of which is polluted over with a thick lingering smog of black metal, that on occasion stumbles into grind territory. Despite the nebulous and hate spawned nature of the release their is an overwhelming sense of catchiness and refined melody as the guitars light up a foot to the metal speed ensemble of Deviated Instinct meets protogrinders Heresy. Aside from making good use of the Fast/Slow, Crust/Black differentiations they also conduct a balanced ratio of long and short songs, which

further strengthens their game plan of unconventionality, all of which is relayed through exceptionally clear and momentous production value.

A truely interesting collusion of versatility and ripe musicianship gilded with an impressioning jagged hardcore meets the frost bitten extremities of metal for some cruelly diabolical yet intriguing indulgence!

Darkness Rising!

<http://www.grindtodeath.com/> - February 2012

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