

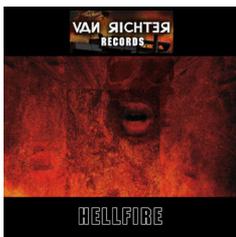
“HELLFIRE” (CD Review)

Written by Dave O'Dell

Thursday, 28 October 2010 14:01



Any great horror film with a foundation built on suspense from the ground up can make viewers cringe before the great reveal. The fear of the unknown is always much scarier than actually seeing what lurks in the depths of the black, and the anticipation of something bigger than we imagined is what we fear—and also look forward to. The same can be said about haunting melodies, especially in the industrial vein. Yet while Van Richter Records' HELLFIRE compilation CD starts with an ambient buildup that piqued this writer's interest from the get-go and promises so much more, it immediately falls flat.



As this is a compilation, the songs obviously don't align as they would on an album based on a primary sound and design. But even when working that into your expectations, the structure from song to song varies, and too often in a flat and predictable way. HELLFIRE's opener, Testify's "Future Lust," puts listeners' ears into an epic industrial sound mash with a mad scientist's crooning, with promises of cruelty to come. Unfortunately, the remainder of the album fails to deliver—especially on tracks like Sielwolf's "The Gun's Eye," which becomes all too familiar too fast with bland synth beats and monotonous keys.

Even given its inconsistencies, the album delivers a few tracks worth mentioning, such as Underwater Pilots' "Every Day Is Halloween," one of the more upbeat, catchier tunes and one that actually had this writer nodding along. The group immediately switches pace with tracks "I Prepare" and "Flood," which are extremely ambient and well-honed, standing as the true redeemers of this compilation, which here at least isn't stuck on one type of sound.

Overall, though, Van Richter's HELLFIRE compilation comes off very mediocre, which fails to deliver on the madness and sonic journey one hopes to experience, and that its opener portends. Even with its decent set of those three Pilots songs, it leaves the listener feeling unsatisfied and used.

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