

“FOR MIRCALLA” (CD Review)

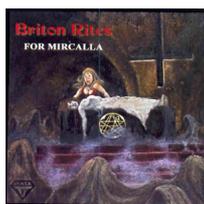
Written by Chris Alexander

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The last thing you'd link a rather elegant, softcore Hammer horror film with is bone-crunching heavy metal, but with their latest album FOR MIRCALLA that's exactly what doom metal band Briton Rites have done. Guitarist and lyricist Howie Bentley (pictured) doesn't mince words when it comes to his love for Hammer, nor the classic 1970 Ingrid Pitt/Peter Cushing lesbian bloodsucker film that the studio used to usher in its more erotic output of the 1970s.

Mircalla/Carmilla Karnstein was of course Pitt's character in the film and of course, the immortal Sheridan LeFanu story "Carmilla" on which it was based and it's the character that serves as muse for the crunchy concept platter.



There are seven tracks on FOR MIRCALLA and all of them are lean, monstrous, slow and heavier than a tank dropped from Big Ben. Further on that UK tip, this is pure, wicked, dark, lumbering heavy metal, the kind yer leather and studded British mother used to make, like early Sabbath blazed trails with and that speaks directly to cinema. Production values are minimal but their lack of flash and gloss adds to the menace and raw, organic feel of the disc. Bentley's guitars are like taloned meathooks around your neck, his melodramatic words of vampires and sexual supernatural menace interpreted by singer Phil Swanson chanting the story of Carmilla like shouted panels from an EC comic book and drummer Corbin King's skins pummeling and leading the dirge to its end-of-disc death.

Now, the average Hammer fan might not get the marriage of Roy Ward Baker and LeFanu to something as epic and ruthless as Briton Rites, but those metal fans who, like Bentley, used the UK studio's output as fuel for their melting steel mayhem might just see these guys as gods.

Oh, and try to look past the goofy cover art. It's grade school cheap but the sledgehammer Gothic assault inside is not to be dismissed. Go [here](#) for more information.

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