

HIGHWAY CHILE - KEEPER OF THE EARTH



MAUSOLEUM RECORDS

METAL TO INFINITY

Highway Chile is one of those bands that reminds me to an era which still lies narrow to my heart. Reminding those years gives me a great feeling deep down inside my heart – I've mentioned it several times before, years which I will never forget. No Metal like 80s Metal, every country had his own pioneers of Heavy Metal music. Highway Chile was one of Holland's leaders of their own Metal culture. Along with other greats like Vengeance, Vandenberg, Bodine, Picture, Vortex, Helloise, ... they ruled the Dutch legions of Metal successfully!

After the release of a demo (1981), EP called "Fever" (1983) and a single entitled "Endless Trail", they appeared bright fully with their debut album, "Storybook Heroes" (1983). It is as if was yesterday, this 'legendary' effort still lingers on in my head. Songs like: 'Jesse James', 'Highway Chile' and of course 'Headbangers' still belong to my faves of all time! Highway Chile's pathways to success went on and on, shared numerous stages with famous bands like: Accept, Whitesnake, Motorhead, MSG,... also a few other releases were brought out. "Rockorama" was the band's second, full length effort and unfortunately – their last one too before the curtain fell down (1985) over the existence of Highway Chile.

The loss of a band with class was hard to handle but... in 2002, the band reformed, toured over The Netherlands to promote their live album "On The Road Again", a very appropriate title. With a new line up and due to the great response to their live concerts, Highway Chile found back the energy and courage to continue as a full band, in mind the creation of a brand new album. It took a while but finally, I'm really honoured reviewing Highway Chile's new effort entitled "Keeper Of The Earth" through legendary Mausoleum Records.

The only one remaining, original band member is drummer Ernst Van EE (also Vengeance, Helloise, Threnody,...). Now present in the HC camp are: singer Stan Verbraak (Van EE, Helloise), guitarist Martin Mens (Ear Danger), second guitar player Gert Nijboer and bassist Edwin Den Haag (Blind Justice). All musicians knowing very well what they are busy with. Everyone in the band takes his task seriously to the bone, the musicianship is outstanding – it all results in a great, new album "Keeper Of The Earth". With all respect for these guys but I never thought their new album should be this awesome. With a lot of admiration, I was listening to the entire album and my opinion is very, very positive! What they did for the 80s Metal scene is unforgettable – now where so many years later on and Highway Chile is back with a vengeance, a blast – I really like their new songs like I worship their older songs.

Ex Helloise singer Stan Verbraak sings outstanding – loud and clear, just fantastic.

Keyboard use is mentioned on the band's info sheet but fortunately (to me at least), they reduced the use of this instrument to the minimum. Both guitar players in good condition, power loaded riffs and an excellent form of 'guitar shred' comes your way out! Smashing drums and the sound of a roaring bass to make this work even more heavier.

To me, "Keeper Of The Earth" is a brilliant Power / Heavy Metal album played by great musicians with a heart for Classic Metal, you can hear that while listening. Hard to compare with their older songs, this is the new Highway Chile – a band I still admire with full force. Besides the new songs, also two cover tracks appear. First there is the reworked version of the legendary, sing along song 'Headbangers' – also a song from mighty Rainbow is covered, 'Long Live Rock 'N Roll' is played by HC in style. There is many other great stuff to enjoy on this new album – I'd like to leave it all up to those checking this review out. One thing is for sure, if you like Metal music with a traditional, 80s feel – don't hesitate to order right away at: www.mausoleum-records.com

"...We are headbangers – we'll never let you down..." MY POINTS: 95 / 100

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