



METALGATE RECORDS PROUDLY PRESENTS: HEAVY MUSIC ARTWORK – MASTERPIECES 2018

MetalGate returns to the world of literature! After the trilogy of *Knihy kovu*, which mapped the history of the Czech metal subgenres, and the Czech translation of the biography of the Hellenic black metal legend Rotting Christ entitled *Non Serviam*, we are back with the Czech release of *MASTERPIECES 2018* by the British publishing house HEAVY MUSIC ARTWORK. First, let us preface that this piece is not an ordinary one by a long shot, but a unique work, and though it does not document the history of any band or does not provide an encyclopedic probe into a particular metal style, it is still a mandatory read for many a metal fan. A riddle it seems? Well, read on. *MASTERPIECES* is all about the frontcovers of metal albums. This specific component has always been the first to captivate the attention of the potential listener, determining whether he or she will perceive the record with sight as well as hearing. Surely even you were at one point or another in a situation, wherein the album cover artwork caught your eye at the first glance, thus prompting you to give the piece a listen, even though you perhaps never heard about the band in question before. A well-made frontcover may have thus been at the beginning of the love between you and your favorite act. And such excellent artworks are precisely the core of *MASTERPIECES*. This artbook presents a myriad of covers, the conceptual side or artistic technique of which have a particular esthetic value, which then merits closer attention. And you can sure that there is indeed plenty to look at.

On the pages of this book, you can feast your eyes on exactly 143 stellar artworks, each one sporting beautiful details and vivid colors. Given their high resolution, these creations will quickly enchant you and you may easily lose track of time. Even more so that this is not just a catalogue of images! For the individual cover artworks are accompanied by commentaries, either by the artists themselves or by the bands in question, that give insight not only to the plot of the art piece, but also to the creation process of the given artist. There is thus fascinating information to be had about what the symbolism of the painting is, as well as where its inspiration comes from. The proverbial icing on the cake is the format of the book as such, an exquisite A4 paperback with fullcolor print on glossy coated paper. All that makes *MASTERPIECES* something truly special right away

The book is divided into eight chapters, or more aptly, galleries. One by one, these showcase the best cover of 2018 (that being the “Firepower” album of the UK’s very own legendary Judas Priest), the master artist of the year, the influential artist of the year, the honorary artist of the year (meaning the one, whose talent deserves a special recognition), the highlight artist of the year and the boxset of the year. Then there is the seventh gallery, the core of the book, which features a hundred frontcover by a hundred artists for a hundred bands. The final gallery, the returning artists, then backtracks to artists

from the previous issue of *MASTERPIECES*, namely to those, who again created excellent artworks in the year that followed.

The 143 artworks are indeed a solid sample, notable also by including bands from all over the metal spectrum. As the selection criteria revolved around the technique and/or subject matter, and not what metal style a band plays, there can thus be little surprise that the outfits featured within *MASTERPIECES* are a diverse bunch that includes for example the aforementioned Judas Priests, Amaranthe, Opeth, Naglfar, Therion, Bleeding Gods, Master's Hammer (yes, even the Czech scene has its representation there), Evergrey, Gorod, Axel Rudi Pell, Behemoth, Stryper, Dark Buddha Rising, At The Gates or Powerwolf. Such musical diversity then of course goes hand in hand with the visual diversity of the pieces included. Since every metal subgenre has its own specific esthetic canon, you will come across in *MASTERPIECES* both the traditional motifs of epic scenes, mighty heroes, violence, monsters, hellscapes or beautiful women, as well as the truly singular ones, such as in case of the album "II" by Dunbarrow, the "New Gods" by Cauldron or the "Science Fiction" by the Church of the Cosmic Skull. Of course, this is but a fraction of the original motifs to be found in the book.

MASTERPIECES 2018 is an exquisite artbook that deserves your undivided attention. It is a book not only for all metal fans, but also for all visual art aficionados, who can study in it all the varied techniques and motifs of the metal esthetics. If thus you belong to either group (or to both), and can look past the genre categories to absorb this beauty with an open mind, then *MASTERPIECES* is not only a must for you, but true feast for the eye and the soul.

The Czech edition of *MASTERPIECES 2018* is published by MetalGate Records in A4 paperback format and is available on MetalGate e-shop. For the English original, please visit the publisher Heavy Music Artwork.

www.metalgate.cz

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