

ANUBIS LIVE ALBUM REVIEWS

USA REVIEW

Anubis: Live

The 2010 Sonic Rock Solstice took place in Builth Wells, Wales in June and was 3 days filled with some of the most dynamic music that England has to offer. One of the most anticipated bands at this years gathering was this one who were making their second appearance there. With the release of their terrific album *Waking The Dead* not too long before this event their set promised to be one of the memorable moments of the festival. To their credit, Anubis did not disappoint. Mixing songs from that release and their first album *Sibuna* the band delivers a fiery live performance that really makes me mad that I could not get my passport in time to make it over there!

I have been saying this with every album that Anubis comes out with but once again I have to emphasize the fact that this band has one of the most underrated and magical musicians around. Simon Lees is not only an amazing guitar player, he also has a fine rock and roll voice and live he only reiterates what I have been telling everyone. From the amazing six string work on the instrumental "Chenevare" to the scorching solo in "Stalked By Sadness", and the amazing "Angry Dolphins" he is on fire throughout the disc until the very end where he leaves you out of breath with another instrumental called "The Pharaoh" Lees epitomizes heavy metal. Enough about Simon though, I don't want him to get too big of a head. There is more to this band than just his amazing work.

The yin to Simon's yang has to be vocalist and keyboardist Sarah Co'burn. Her wispy voice gives a haunting quality to the music and offsets the harder music in their repertoire. On songs like "Locked In" "Abandoned" and the hypnotizing "Masquerade" Sarah is the focal point that shines like a beacon. It is her abilities that help to make this band something special. She allows them to follow whatever path they care to go down. With the terrific rhythm section of Pete Williamson on bass and Kevin Bartlett on drums along with that guitar player Lees, this band covers all the bases. They can be melodic, symphonic or as hard as nails.

Listening to this live recording gives me mixed emotions. Hearing them in this setting is a particular treat that should be thought of as a gift to any music lover. At the same time in the back of my mind I keep thinking that it may be awhile before I am able to participate in one of their concerts. I certainly hope that they can make it across The Pond and bless the U.S.A. with their presence. I thought that their albums are some of the best music on the planet and now hearing how they deliver live it only emphasizes the fact that this is a band that can do it all. It is also a band that I am going to have to see live one way or another.

The bottom line is this is a terrific live disc. What you hear is what you get from the band on stage and that is worth the price of admission. I think of it as the stop gap that hopefully will continue to satisfy until I can be in the audience myself.

Track listing:

1. Til It Hurts 2. Locked In 3. Chenevare 4. In Your Mind 5. Magic Carpet 6. Angry Dolphin 7. Stalked By Sadness 8. Abandoned 9. Masquerade 10. The Pharaoh

Scott Ward

UK REVIEW

Anubis 'Live' - Album review

Earlier this year, I was privileged to be present for all three days of the Sonic Rock Solstice. The festival took place over the weekend of 18th-20th June at Penmaenau Farm, right next to the Royal Welsh Showground outside Builth Wells, Wales.

The weather was hot and sunny and the setting ideal. All that was needed now was some fine music from some of our favourite bands. We weren't to be disappointed as many a band put on shows that tempted us away from our sunbathing (and drinking!).

Anubis took to the main Sonic Rock Stage on the Saturday at 7pm. It was still brilliant sunshine outside as both the faithful and the simply curious assembled to hear their set. The event was filmed but only from one viewpoint, the sound desk. There are videos on YouTube, though ironically, the sound could be better. Fortunately, each part that makes up the music of Anubis was also recorded separately from the stage microphones and it is from these much better quality sources that this live album was mainly created.

The mixing of the album was done by Simon Lees and a great job he's made of it. Over to Simon for an insight into how it was done...

"The gig was recorded on multitrack from the stage mics and also on video from the front-of-house sound engineer's desk. Because the on-stage mics didn't pick up the crowd, I blended the soundtrack of the video to the overall sound, so you could hear the crowd and also to capture the 'feel' of the venue. This was tricky because the video ran ever so slightly fast compared to the multitrack. I had to cut the video soundtrack during songs at places where it wouldn't be noticed and move the audio forwards in time to match it back up to the multitrack audio. This had to be done about 15 times! It also explains why in some places you can hear a slight echo in the vocals but I quite like that as it sounds like the natural echo of the hall. I think we put on a good show and as Kev says just before 'Stalked' it was a 'beautiful day'".

So, what's the end result like? Well, it's very much like being there and I should know, having experienced the gig from in front of and pretty much centre stage.

The tracks are in the same order as that day's set list and the gig opens with Kozmik Ken announcing the band, followed by Kev's powerful drum intro to 'Til It Hurts'. This is a great opening track with superb power chords from Simon over a heavy rhythm from Pete's bass. Simon sings lead on this song with lovely, ethereal refrains and harmonising by Sarah. In fact, the process has allowed Simon to make Sarah's voice a little louder in the mix, allowing us to listen to Anubis as they should be heard (don't get me started on this, or Sarah herself, for that matter!). Having said that, I should mention that there are no overdubs here. This is a 'proper' live album, recorded 'raw' as it should be.

We then move straight into an Isis-penned and sung song, 'Locked In'. I love the lyrics to this song. Despite having now seen Anubis play live five times of their eight gigs so far, I'm still impressed by how professional their sound on stage is. Some bands experience difficulty reproducing some of their recorded work on stage, Anubis certainly don't have that problem. Sarah sings strongly with confidence and there are some very nice harmonies from Simon.

Track three, 'Chenevare', can now be performed live thanks to the addition of the newest member of Anubis, Simon Haycock, on rhythm guitar. A fine instrumental and played almost to perfection here. This was only Simon's second gig playing with Anubis and he's loving every minute of it!

We next come to Simon Lees' 'In Your Mind', a real rocker of a song with Simon responsible for lead guitar and vocals, with harmonies provided by Sarah and Kev, again performed really well. This was first released on the EP, 'Avatar'. I know I keep going on about it but I've always thought it's one of the signs of a good band, with talented musicians, that they can reproduce live, what they have recorded in the studio.

Another strong, rocking track follows, the Egyptian themed, 'Magic Carpet'. Simon (Lees) again sings on this song as it thunders along. Kev and Pete provide the rhythm whilst Sarah plays keyboard. A good time to mention the impressive percussion skills of Kevin Bartlett. Kev is an extremely talented drummer and his presence in Anubis has added a harder edge to their sound. This is very evident on their second studio album, 'Waking The Dead' and also on those tracks from 'Sibuna', like this one, that now have an added dimension when played live. In fact, this live album gives the listener an excellent opportunity to hear how those earlier tracks from 'Sibuna' have developed.

Speaking of 'Sibuna', Simon Haycock then comes back on stage for 'Angry Dolphins', an instrumental from that first album which, although something of a showcase for guitarist Simon Lees, would be difficult to perform without Simon Haycock's presence on the second guitar. There is also that wonderful rhythm from the bass of Pete Williamson and drums of Kevin Bartlett, whilst Sarah again plays keyboards, as she does on 'Stalked' and 'Pharaoh'. I'd always felt that Pete's contribution wasn't perhaps as obvious as it should have been when listening to 'Sibuna' but this was happily remedied on 'Waking The Dead' and of course, live performances such as this.

Staying with Pete, the seventh track on this album is his song, 'Stalked By Sadness'. This is a great favourite with Anubis fans and while the band members may perhaps think of it at times, as their 'albatross' (in more ways than one!), I don't think we'll see a live performance from them, any time soon, without this song. It has to be said that there's a quite remarkable atmosphere when 'Stalked' is performed and a look around at the audience was well worth it as they smiled and some gently mouthed the words.

Isis (Sarah) then has a brief chat with the audience before introducing one of her own songs 'Abandoned', originally to be found on her soon to be re-released solo EP, 'Wish'. Featuring vocals by Sarah, with harmonies from Simon Lees, 'Abandoned' displays another string to the Anubian bow. Very hard to pigeon-hole a band when their music is so varied!

Some brief guitar solo work from Simon Lees segues 'Abandoned' into 'Masquerade', another song penned by Sarah, with her vocals rising and falling across a pounding rhythm from Williamson & Bartlett as Lees' guitar adds to the haunting feeling of this song.

We then come to the tenth and last song of this live album, 'The Pharaoh'. Originally from 'Sibuna', this traditional set-closer, a Simon Lees instrumental, is performed brilliantly and serves, if any further proof were needed, to show how accomplished these musicians are.

So that's Anubis 'Live', an impressive showcase of their talents. Who will buy this album? Well, just about everyone who was there, will, I imagine, want this remarkable souvenir but it will also appeal, not only to Anubis completists but also those who want to hear the songs in the live arena, as it were. As mentioned earlier, this is a very well performed collection of tracks and those from 'Sibuna' have particularly developed, sounding fuller perhaps, than on that original first album.

ANUBIS are:

Sarah Co'burn (Isis) – lead vocals, keyboards, backing vocals

Simon Lees (The Pharaoh) – lead guitar, lead vocals, backing vocals

Pete Williamson (The Jackal) – bass guitar

Kevin Bartlett (Osiris) – drums and percussion

Simon Haycock (Horus) – rhythm guitar

'Live' will be available from October 23rd on iTunes and over fifty other outlets. The CD will be released at the end of January.

Track listing:

'Til It Hurts

Locked In

Chenevare

In Your Mind

Magic Carpet

Angry Dolphins

Stalked By Sadness

Abandoned

Masquerade

The Pharaoh