

HALLOWED

**Summary of
the year 2017**

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The year 2017 is on its final day, a day I will in part spend travelling through the lengthy landscapes of Sweden. From the bare ground in the more southern part of the country, northwards towards the snow covered grounds of my home region in the middle of the nation. Of course I am listening to hard rocking music on my journey, it starts with Millenium that I am playing right now after departing Stockholm.

Then we will see what will follow as the journey progresses, and if I will be home in time to buy something to eat on this New Year's Eve. But this is of course not a travel journal but a summary of the year that has passed, 2017 that will be replaced with 2018 in a few hours and has already been as you read these words.

Many things happened in 2017, like it does any other year. Trump was crowned as president of the US, a sad day for common sense I think. None

of my wishes that he or the other dictators/dictator-wannabees met their death, Mugabe in Congo was forced to leave the throne but it isn't really sure that will lead to an improvement for the inhabitants of that nation. War ranges on in the Middle East of course and improvements of life in general continues around the world - fewer than ever are extremely poor nowadays, that is a great thing and would be enough to give some hope. But there are always doomsayers claiming that it was better in the past or many other things that isn't exactly true. But of course there is

room for improvements and seen in terms of the highest quality I think this has been a really poor year for music with only four albums reaching a rating of six or better this year.

The year started well with strong albums from old favourites like Lonely Robot, like Rockford Heroes, like Ayreon and Leprous and the peak was better than last year but in the end this year only yielded four albums with a rating of six or better. That means that it will be difficult to put together the top-ten list. But

there are some candidates like the relatively recently released Egonaut album, The Birthday Massacre's new purple album, Steve Hackett's new gem, Ten had a good album as did JD Miller, Område's album "Nåde" was really good and there were some more, surprises like Era 9, Vhaldemar and perhaps one or two more. There were quite a number of good albums but there were few real highlights, which I think is a bit unfortunate. Then again there is of course big room for more highlights hidden away in the snow amongst the album I have not have the time to listen

to and that is quite a few of the year's releases.

I didn't really surpass my number of reviews or interviews this year, just under 300 reviews in the year, in two languages mounting up to almost 600 written reviews in 365 days. But there were very few articles, time constraints have felt bigger this year which is a shame as I like to write as much as possible. Nevertheless, I think I have managed quite a bit anyway and hopefully more is to come in the upcoming year. There will be some changes to the site



layout and so during the year, nothing major but small things and we have joined the social media platforms where everyone but we have been active for a long time. Don't ask me why and especially not on the facebook site as I am not the administrator of that site and I don't even look at it so anything said there will probably not reach me, I do write some tweets on twitter though. Now, I am not imagining that anyone will look there anyway but if you do these sites will be updated with the recent info from the

main site, and perhaps with some other stuff as well.

What else then? With two hours to go on the trip, having watched through some episodes of a television show on the computer it feels like a dreary ride that has now reached Ljusdal, a pointless place somewhere in the middle of nowhere. There is still long way to go, many kilometres through nothing until we end up in my snow covered home town (villa-

ge is probably more accurate), or almost - there is a bit to go by car until I am there. And when I get home there aren't many hours to go before getting there and the soundtrack is Squeler and their album "Behind Closed Doors" that will be released in February so I guess it will be a while before I review that one. And finally we move again, to the sound of Squeler - a decent album I would say. A good way to keep going in the dark December night, towards the cold and the snow - lots of snow but fortunately it

wasn't too cold when I finally arrived. The car started well and the store was still open for me to buy food.

And with that written I think there isn't really too much else to write about the year 2017, it has been a mostly unremarkable year for Hallowed and the world of music. But still, lets muster up a top ten list. Something that is always easier said than done where we have honourable mentions to

bands like Tigerclaw, Arallu, All But One, Dog in the Snow, The Tangent, Can't Swim, Zornheym and a few more that has been very appealing. But here comes the best in reverse order:

10. Era 9 - Gravity... in May I reviewed this great and fresh thinking Nu-Metal album that gravitates towards the top of the pile, just above another Nu-Metallic album by Hollywood Undead. It is a really great album and one of this year's most positive surprises.

9. Demonic Resurrection - Das-

havatar... not only does the Indian band's sixth album look great, it sounds about as great and has to be considered the death metal highlight of the year in competition with great albums from Arallu and Zornheym as well. That is one more positive surprise on this list.

8. JD Miller - World War X... nine excellent war hymns from this Swedish band gives them a place on the top-ten list. They show that you can walk down well-threaded paths and still make interesting music.



Press photo of the Område band

7. Egonaut - The Omega... the Swedes mix and match genres a little bit and they do it really well. Well enough to earn a place in the record collection and a top-ten spot in the Hallowed end of the year edition.

6. The Birthday Massacre - Under Your Spell... the opener gives a wow sensation and the title track is one of the best they have

ever made. Good but not their best is enough for The Massacre to find themselves on this year's list of highlights.

5. Område - Näde... French duo Område once again delivers a real musical highlight, enough for a spot amongst out five best albums of the year.

4. The Rockford Heroes - Ghostlights - A Matter of Belief... the

heroes returned with a vengeance, their new album "Ghostlights" is a great concept album and one of only four albums to receive a rating of six or more.

3. Lonely Robot - The Big Sleep... another musical triumph for genius John Mitchell, the second of his Lonely Robot albums is at least as good as the excellent debut. That means it is a very

excellent album and the bronze medalist.

2. Leprous - Malina... one of my favourite bands delivered their best album to date, Norwegian progressive heroes Leprous really showed their hand this year and only someone less intelligent would miss this one...

1. Ayreon - The Source... simply the best album of 2017 - great

stuff by the Dutchman who likes to fly his rocketship. The best new album reviewed by me since "The Theory of Everything" that was released in 2013.

*W*ith all that we round off 2017, and we do that by saying thanks to all of you who read this and other

things I write and to all the labels, promotion agencies, distributors and bands who send us material to write about - you are all great and I hope we will have our dealing again in the coming year. The goal for 2018 is to write as many reviews as possible, hopefully more than in 2017.

Happy New Year!