

Hallowed take a look at the year that past by writing the semi-traditional last day of the year text. So lets see what we thought on the last of December 2018...

Ayreon UNIVERSE



BEST OF AYREON
LIVE

Once again Ayreon holds the top spot in the best of the year list...

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Today 2018 comes to an end and in a few hours another year begins, I guess you can always call it an ending and a fresh start – or not, it depends on how you look at things. So lets do the yearly text, this year I am not riding a train and that is a good thing for the writing I think. 2018 was a year when we got to see more of people's stupidity here

at home in Sweden but also in many other places of the world. In Brazil an idiot was elected president, the Swedish election led to nothing and several months later there is still no clear government. And the same is true in many other parts of the world as well Trump keeps acting like a moron so it is good that I write about music and not about the state of things in the world even though things are improving overall even in a year like 2018. So what about the music of 2018? Was it worth taking notice of? Of

the 278 reviews I wrote during 2018 there were three albums with a rating of six and none with the rating of seven so maybe not the most noticeable year in music so far.

Chris Bay did his damndest to make 2018 a happier year and listening to his solo album "Chasing the Sun" always makes me slightly happier. And then the great Dutchman Arjen put out a new live album and video with some of the best Ayreon material performed on

the stage with great musicians, and did you know that he will be performing live again next year so congratulations to all who scored tickets to the shows that seem to be sold out now. The last of the six pointers was the ever-consistent W.E.T. that put out another magnificent album called "Earthrage", an album that probably could rival their excellent effort "Rise Up" that was awarded the highest score some years ago. Then there were some other memorable efforts throughout the year with Kino,

Galactic Empire, Crystal Ball, Devin Townsend, Temperance, Lurk, Prince Obi, my favourite Rockford Heroes, Somali Yacht Club, Stagma, Temperance, and Vega to name just a few examples. There were a little fewer albums that was rated below average but more two-pointers than six pointers. The good thing is that there were some surprises like the Yacht Club and the new album by Temperance, Lurk was also a great surprise, there were some more but these were probably the most noticeable.

On the Hallowed front there was a bit less content this year than last year with fewer reviews and articles, last year's chronicle will disappear from the latest window when this article is published some of the first days of 2019. There are some reasons for the lesser content but nothing important, perhaps 2019 will yield more content – or less, only time will tell. So what are the interesting things of 2019, the new Dream Theater album can be interesting, the Ayreon shows in September, I am still waiting



Major Parkinson from Norway made it to the top ten spot with their album Blackbox.



for that super special edition of "Into the Electric Castle" that I ordered long ago. I hope for a more interesting year than this latest one, a year with more fun and less depressing things. And it would be great with some excellent new albums as well, so lets see what the year has on offer and hopefully welcome a better and less depressing year than this one that is about to end. But

I guess political sanity and sanity amongst the public is too much to hope for so let's hope for a great year in music, movies and other things that I happen to enjoy and then the rest can be forgotten. And it would be great to forget 2018 as well.

Df course we here at Hallowed would also like to thank all you labels,

artists and promotion agencies who send us material to write about and trying to set us up for interviews and other things - even if we don't always enjoy your stuff it is always appreciated and we like to get the chance to hear your music. And another big thanks goes out to readers and other supporters who checks out what comes out of our computers and servers, hopefully you have

received some enjoyment out of what we wrote this year and I hope to be writing better this coming year. Right now I don't really know what will be coming from my pen and keys in the coming year but hopefully it will be an improvement on what has been written before. And there will be several 2018 albums reviewed in the first months of 2019 as I have this impossible backlog to

catch up with but some of those albums will still be written about. And please remember to not like us on the social media that never seems to be updated.

Before I get to the top albums of 2018 and welcome the new year I can conclude that the year wasn't the best, not for myself, not for the music, and probably not for

the world as I think this year has probably been a step back for an ever-improving world - the same will probably be true about 2019 as well but positive things happen, Trump might die, Putin and some other dictator and dictator wannabees might as well and be replaced by more sensible people. The musical year can probably not be much worse than this one so I think we can hope

Chris Bay did one of the best albums of the year



for a better year to come with some excellent music, snappy and witty writing and some other great things. And please let Marvel and their annoying crap movies go bankrupt so that the movie theatres won't be cluttered with poor superhero movies and that crap. And before we end this short end of the year text with a top ten list I just want to wish all of you a happy new year.

The best albums of 2018

10. Devin Townsend Project - *Ocean Machine - Live at The Ancient Roman Theatre Plovdiv...* A really strong live album by the great Devin Townsend makes the tenth spot on this list.

9. Vega - *Only Human...* another really strong AOR album by the strong band Vega.

8. Major Parkinson - *Blackbox...*

wasn't really released in 2018 but as I reviewed it then and the vinyl version was released this year it is eligible for this list.

7. Eldritch - *Cracksleep...* Whenever Eldritch release a new album it is a challenger for the top list of the year and their new one is no exception.

6. Lurk - *Fringe...* great, dark and exciting, I think Lurk from Finland has put together a massive album.

5. Somali Yacht Club - *The Sea...* The Yacht Club released a new album and rereleased their album *The Sun* in 2018 and they are both really impressive, top albums I think.

4. Kino - *Radio Voltaire...* It is more difficult to rate the places outside the top three but the great John Mitchell doesn't disappoint when he reinvigorates his old

band Kino with this excellent album.

3. Chris Bay - *Chasing the Sun...* The Freedom Call vocalist always amuses and his music tends to put a smile on the face of whoever listens to it. He has put together a warm and sunny album with some excellent songs for all of us, don't miss tracks like *Hollywood Dancer*.

2. W.E.T. - *Earthrage...* These guys always does well and their new album is no exception, it is an excellent display of great melodic hardrock music with excellent songs you want to hear many times over.

1. Ayreon - *Universe - The Best of Ayreon Live...* It is difficult to beat a long list of the great songs that Ayreon has in its history. I think this is by some margin, the best album of 2018.

