

Living Loud: *Living Loud* (Capitol Records)

When I was a kid and got my first guitar, the greatest guitar player on the planet to me was Randy Rhoads. I was a fanatic about his playing, and Ozzy, and the whole bit with the *Bizzard of Ozz* (Sony) and *Diary of a Madman* era. It was the wisdom of his words. Ozzy, like Plant, knew deep mysterious things about the world and was trying to tell us, to guide us through life. After Rhoads died, I was crushed; I worked hours to translate the hidden message on the *Speak of the Devil* (the live album Ozzy put out afterwards with Brad Gillis from Night Ranger on guitar - still some of my favorite versions of the classic Black Sabbath tunes). To show my devotion to Rhoads' memory, I wrote a letter scribed in ink in that ancient Celtic language on parchment wrapped in leather and handed it to Ozzy at the Peaches Records on Chippewa. . .

But there was no more wisdom to gain from Ozzy, no more hidden truths.

Well, come to find out, a lot of those ideas weren't coming from Ozzy in the first place. Actually, Bob Daisley had written 95% of the lyrics and the music was the result of collaboration of the group. There had been an ongoing legal battle between Ozzy and the original drummer Lee Kerslake and bassist Bob Daisley regarding unpaid royalties and credit omissions for the work that they did on Ozzy's first two successful albums of his solo career.

Out of spite, Ozzy and Sharon had *Blizzard of Ozz* and *Diary of a Madman* re-released with the drums and bass of the original recordings replaced by different studio musicians. So what you are hearing is the original tracks from Randy Rhoads, but the rhythm section tracks have been replaced with new performances. Those two albums were also re-mastered during the process of replacing the original drums and bass parts. Mastering is like the final EQ on a recording once all of the tracks are mixed, and in this case the re-mastering has significantly changed the tonal qualities of Rhoads' guitar parts. I remember reading about how Max Norman had gone through great lengths to get that sound out of Randy's white Marshall cabinets by recording them in a small concrete room. That character and grit that made his sound has been processed right out of the recordings.

The very fact that the new recordings have the bass and drums playing the exact same notes and parts as the original, reinforces the argument that the drums and bass of the original recording was intellectual property and constituted a major part of the work of art and therefore instrumental to the success of Ozzy's second wind after Sabbath. You tell me, is Ozzy famous because he bit the head off a bat, or because his first two albums were bad ass. He wouldn't be anybody now if the music wasn't solid. The creative work of Daisley, Kerslake and Rhoads laid the groundwork for Ozzy to become a billion dollar industry and remain a household name with little in return.

Bob Daisley and Lee Kerslake have since teamed up again, this time with legendary guitarist Steve Morse to reinterpret some of those classic tunes along with some new compositions with a new band and disc called *Living Loud*. Steve Barnes from Australia heads up the vocals and Don Airey does the keys. He's the one who played the piano on "Changes" by Sabbath and the pipe organ intro to "Mr. Crowley", plus he's done some great work with blues legend Gary Moore.

*Living Loud* is one of the greatest rock albums I've heard in a long, long time. They have breathed new life into the tunes that we have heard so many times. To me, it is the way that they were able to take the essence of the songs and adapt them to a new time

and a new viewpoint. In this case, where you have the same rhythm section as the original Ozzy recordings, but new front men, they were able to create something new and powerful from the same idea. To me, that is quantifiable as artistic interpretation, especially when compared with replacing the performance of a contributing writer with the exact same notes played by someone else just to get around a monetary argument.

Living Loud is more than just a re-hash of some old classic rock tunes. I know, you can go see Toothless Joe play “Crazy Train” in every bar in the ‘burbs, but we are talking about Steve Morse, currently with Deep Purple, previously with Kansas and the Dixie Dregs, plus a half dozen amazing instrumental solo albums. He respectfully follows the shapes and intensity of Rhoads’ solos, but plays them in his own style and in some cases, has written entirely new orchestrations, like for the second harmony solo section of “Mr. Crowley”.

However things were meant to be, some new music has come of it. I’m obsessive compulsive and I cannot stop listening to two songs on this disc over and over. They redid “Tonight” from *Diary*, but with an entirely different feel, much more rockin’ and heavy, but with the same bass lines and drum accents still there, and Morse wrapping some beautiful melodies around them. The other is “Every Moment a Lifetime” and I think every radio station in America should pick it up. It is this upbeat groove with a Hendrix feel. Steve Barnes’ lyrics and vocals pull at your heart and Morse’s guitar sings of the pain. You definitely need to hear this disc.

When you play a note on an instrument, it fades. Maybe someone heard it, maybe they didn’t. Now that recording is easy and everywhere, you can make people hear you play those notes. It could be an epic ripple in time, or maybe what you hear is just the wine. There are only twelve notes, so you have to ask, what makes the difference? At what point does the notes you play become a work of art, a piece of intellectual property that you can profit from and claim as your own.

Even if Daisley and Kerslake were hired on an hourly basis to record those first two legendary albums, the notes that they played have become a part of our culture. Ozzy may try to diminish their contribution, but if you change the notes or the tone, you change the song. If you truly own an idea, you are able to craft your art into something else.

By Derek Lauer