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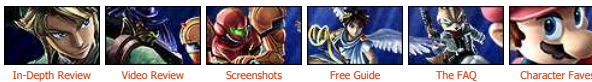
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Lillian Axe - Love + War Review

'80s pomp rockers get resurrected with new reissues
by [Jim Kaz](#)

February 29, 2008 - It's a good day for lost metal and hard rock. Metal Mind Productions is cranking out some of the most sought-after metal reissues imaginable. Although fans of this stuff will be elated, the Russians are gonna be pissed. Our comrades to the East have a monopoly on bootlegs—mostly highly inferior ones. And thus far, that's probably been your best bet in tracking down anything from this band on CD. But no matter, 'cuz now lost melodic rockers Lillian Axe are one of the latest off-the-radar outfits to get proper reissues, which happen to be of the band's first two albums: the self-titled debut and Love + War.



Centered around guitarist Steve Blaze and vocalist Ron Taylor, the band came together in New Orleans during the early '80s, but failed to capitalize on the first pop-metal boom of the decade. Eventually they caught the attention of Ratt's management and scored a deal with MCA. Produced by Ratt guitarist Robb Crosby, the self-titled debut is a surprisingly solid pop-metal offering, save for a few corny party-rock moments. But, there are enough infectious hooks and slick licks to make it a standout among the morass of hair farmers of the day.



In spite of its campy cover, second album Love + War (1989) adds sufficient grit to the formula with louder guitars and far more attitude. Opener "All's Fair In Love and War" is an epic number with a twisted symphonic feel and a sweeping chorus. There's more to the sprite "She Likes It On Top" than the title implies, and major hooks take shape in the pseudo power ballad "Diana." The single "Show A Little Love" exemplifies the more solid side of the genre with an addictive groove and distinctive melodies. There are also some hilariously goofy Spinal Tap moments, as in the absolutely horrendous cover of "My Number" by NWOBHM legends Girl—quite possibly the greatest band you've never heard. Stripping away the seamy, back-alley deviancy of the original, Lillian Axe turns it into an ultra-hokey party anthem, complete with a dimwitted female voice at the onset asking Taylor if he'd like to have her number. Yeah, it's that bad. Another weak spot are the overbearing keyboards, but that was part of the band's shtick; they were obviously big fans of '70s pomp rockers Angel and Starz.

What ultimately separates this band and album from others of the era is its undeniable personality. Taylor's vocals just stand out; it's as if he's sitting right across from you, with an air of sincerity that was all but devoid in the scene at the time. And his deft sense of melody exceeds that of many of his contemporaries. Blaze shreds with the best of 'em, but does so with taste and a strong melodic foundation.

Lillian Axe will probably always be a footnote in hard-rock history. But now they've transcended their unintentional cult status with a pair of legit reissues, and a sound that still wears well, some 20 years after the fact.

Download Worthy:

1. "All's Fair In Love and War"
2. "World Stopped Turning"
3. "Ghost of Winter"
4. "She Likes It On Top"
5. "Show A Little Love"

Details for Love + War



Artist:
Lillian Axe
Release Date:
CD: February 12, 2008
Label:
Metal Mind Productions



Ratings for Love + War

7.9 **NR**
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The Art Of Love & War

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7.9 OVERALL

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