

Album of the Week: Yamantaka // Sonic Titan - *Dirt*



Dirt by Yamantaka // Sonic Titan

Very few bands these days have a way of taking the senses to another world. Both visually and musically, Yamantaka // Sonic Titan from Toronto have the ability to do that while becoming one of the most inventive acts of the decade. They refer to their style as “Noh Wave,” which is a pun on Japanese Noh theatre and New York City’s No Wave scene of the early ‘80s. Their third studio album, *Dirt*, came out on Mar 23 via the Canadian indie label Paper Bag Records, and it consistently brings out thunderous riffs and beats. It also marks a transition for the band in terms of membership as well.

In June 2015, founding member and lead vocalist Ruby Kato Attwood left along with guitarist John Ancheta. With their departure, Yamantaka // Sonic Titan brought into the fold vocalist Joanna Delos Reyes and guitarist Hiroki Tanaka. The change made them into a dynamic entity of aural excellence. Reyes’ voice is magnificently powerful while Tanaka, bass guitarist Brandon Lim, drummer Alaska B, backing singer Ange Loft and keyboardist Brendan Swanson come together to form a battalion of sound. Their complex rhythms and structures make the new album into a gem that excites and energizes.

To say Yamantaka // Sonic Titan is unique is a vast understatement. They all wear facepaint and, along with being a touring rock band, are also a theatre group that specializes in performance art. It’s an amazing amount of artistic versatility that’s absolutely impressive. This band is doing things that no one else is conceiving and the originality is refreshing. For an in-depth look, check out my top tracks off of the Album of the Week:

An excellent representation of the complex rhythms and structures is “Beast” – Tanaka’s guitar techniques dominate and the electricity is contagious. Alaska B’s machine gun drumming is evident while listening to “Yandere,” a fast-paced introduction into a forceful jam that’ll invade the eardrums. “Hungry Ghost” will put you in a trance with the harmonies from Reyes and Loft.

This incredible act will be performing a sold-out hometown show at The Garrison in Toronto on Mar 29, but their only New England appearance on this tour was a few days ago at the Middle East in Cambridge, MA, on Mar 25, so you missed it if you weren't there. Let's hope they roll through the region soon because, with their visuals and sounds, Yamantaka // Sonic Titan must be incredible live. Until then, grab a copy of *Dirt*. It's not your typical kind of rock music, but that's what makes it so great.

Bandcamp: ytst.bandcamp.com/album/dirt

Facebook: facebook.com/ytstlabs