

Mark Slaughter, Halfway There

Jessica McKeown 2017-07-14

14Jul2017 [Jessica McKeown](#)



Mark Slaughter fans waited anxiously for his newest release, and with good reason. The rock frontman's second solo album "Halfway There" is a strong follow-up to 2015's "Reflections In a Rear View Mirror". "Halfway There" released on May 26 through David Ellifson's (Megadeth) EMP Label Group. With Mark Slaughter's songwriting and storytelling skills meshed together, the album is not only a strong representation of what EMP Label Group has to offer; it is also a true display of his talent outside of Slaughter.

"Hey You" opens up Mark Slaughter's story with the edge and groove Slaughter fans came to know over the years. Each section of the song from the verses to the chorus is catchy and gives off a genuine rock and roll attitude and rebellion. While the songwriting seems a bit more generalized from Mark Slaughter's usual style, it is also an understandable tactic. (It is also a bit more forgivable once the rest of the album kicks in.)

"Devoted", the second single, opens up just as strongly with a more modern take on a guitar riff. With a song title that sounds like a typical power ballad, Mark Slaughter comes out of left field with gritty vocals and power throughout the song. And it is hard to deny that the vocal and instrumental distortions also add an interesting dynamic to the song. (Come on now; who isn't a sucker for a good harmony-layered guitar solo?)

The next three tracks then veer away from the in-your-face attitude. "Supernatural" is monster ballad vocals and harmonies while still keeping an edge as well as a catchy chorus. "Halfway There" is where things start slowing down. Rather than just focusing on heartbreak or some cliché topic, Slaughter uses this track to tell a story of overcoming life's obstacles to experience its joys. The slowing in pace gives the listener a chance to truly connect with the song, which is the aim for any song. Musically, it is easy to tell the Slaughter ballad style, but in a pleasant way. "Forevermore" follows the same pattern while musically reminiscent of Journey's "Faithfully" or even Saigon Kick's "Love Is On the Way". (Again, these are pleasant

things to hear for fans both old and new.) The juxtaposition between sweet lyrics and harder choruses also keep the song interesting.

The three tracks after these then add more of an alternative style. And this proves how flexible Mark Slaughter is as a songwriter. The almost angsty sound suits "Conspiracy" well, as it criticizes the world we live in and questions our society's actions and motivations. "Reckless", instrumentally, strongly reminds me of a Soundgarden track. There is power and grit in the execution that match the theme and tone of the song, which is an enjoyable shift from the Slaughter many know. "Disposable" conveys the breakdown of a relationship not only in the instrumentals and effects, but also in the pain reflected in Mark Slaughter's voice. Some of the verse sound effects even remind me of old R.E.M. songs.

"Turn It" and "Not Here" are a jarring change to end the album. The musical styles match previous songs in the album, but the starkly opposite themes so close together make it jarring. "Turn It" is traction for gaining back power over your life after someone hurts you or life kicks you down; it is uplifting and also depicts the rise from the ashes, in a sense, well. However, "Not Here" is another proverbial kick in the nuts as Mark Slaughter sings about watching someone you love die and missing them. With its somber instrumentals and dark vocal inflections, the song becomes painfully relatable.

What is most interesting about "Halfway There", however, is the cycle Slaughter creates if one listens to the album multiple times. The composition of the songs, the songwriting and the tracklist sequencing emulate the patterns of life itself. A move like this is not only creative, but it is also difficult to execute successfully. But Mark Slaughter successfully executed not only a great album, but also an amazing narrative.



Tracklist:

1. *Hey You*
2. *Devoted*
3. *Supernatural*
4. *Halfway There*
5. *Forevermore*
6. *Conspiracy*
7. *Reckless*
8. *Disposable*
9. *Turn It*
10. *Not Here*

Share this:

- [Tweet](#)

Tags: [Album Review](#) [David Ellifson](#) [EMP Label Group](#) [Halfway There](#) [Mark Slaughter](#) [New album review](#) [slaughter](#) [Solo Album](#)