

unhold “Here Is The Blood”

English Reviews «Here Is The Blood»

METAL HAMMER UK | STEPHEN HILL

The nation of Switzerland has an underrated pedigree when it comes to crushing yet unique music. From Knut to Bölzer, Favez to Kruger and, of course, Celtic Frost, there's clearly something in the alpine water. Unhold have been making similarly twisted and beautiful compositions for over 25 years, and this is a record of brilliantly diverse moods and soundscapes. From the sombre, ploddingly, achingly melodic drag of *Curse Of The Dime* to the seven-plus-minute grinding nightmare of *Altar*, it's a wonderful trip for anyone looking for music full of depth and layers. Unhold have the weight of a rich underground history on their broad shoulders, and *Here Is The Blood* carries it with consummate ease.

REVOLVERMAG.COM | FRED PESSARO

Established in 1992, Swiss band Unhold have logged more than a quarter century of riff-laden mayhem on the earth, all of it presented in the form of four LPs, a demo and an EP. Now the post-metal band have a new effort to celebrate, *Here is the Blood*, their first longplayer in three years. Stream it below for the first time (order yours via *Czar of Bullets*).

Unhold can best be classified as post-metal, though the band's scope is much larger than just regarding the last *Isis* LP as a textbook. Over the course of eight new tracks on *Here is the Blood*, the band delves into atmospheric, harmonic vocals, indie and even lean heavily on their vocalist Miriam Wolf's smoky, Chrissie Hynde-esque delivery to create new textures and directions. Sure there are moments of chugga-chugga where the band excels and draws comparisons to Neurosis, *Cult of Luna* and more, but it's the contrast of the styles that make Unhold so unique and compelling, and not just another “Neur-Isis” casualty.

GBHBL.COM | THE DISC

Darkness reigns across a hellish landscape. A post-apocalyptic world where winds blow across the dust and bones of death and destruction. The soundtrack? Unhold's *Here is the Blood*.

There is a twisted kind of beauty to the post-metal effort of *Attaining the Light*. Sombre as hell, when it kicks it up a notch the rough vocals deliver a sludgy kind of roughness. Something that continues into *Convoy*, a track that dares to show off a bit more rhythm in its aggression.

It's not the first time female vocals appear on the album but they are particularly haunting on *Deeper In* before *Curse of the Dime* puts many of 2018's post-metal tracks to shame. An absolutely gorgeous track, the melody blended with soaring vocals and an ever-increasing heavy beat is spectacular. One for the record books, one to stick with you. After such a momentous track, *Hunter* takes things down to a moody and atmospheric level. *Pale* brings chunkiness in the riffs and *Altar* is filled with a vibe that just fills the souls with despair. The depressive beauty and harsh post-metal sound is perfectly mixed together to ensure *Here is the Blood* will go down as one of the best releases this year. *Altar* is fuelled on ritualistic darkness while *The Chronic Return* pulls hard at the emotions. The final pair of tracks leave one final deep impression.

LORDSOFMETAL.NL | BART M. | 91/100

Unhold is a very interesting band in several, different ways. The three vocalists. The very agreeable combination of post metal and hardcore. And the fact that their fifth opus ‘*Here Is The Blood*’ will literally freeze the blood in your veins. Not because this Swiss quintet plays poignantly, quite the contrary, because they play the kind of music that will immobilize you in whatever you are doing and makes you think about...well, a lot of things actually. Opening track *Attaining The Light* is really good at that. The sung part at the beginning reminds me of some other, beautiful song that I can not quite remember the title of, but it gives me very positive shivers. We hear quiet, enchanting vocals and the promise of a heavy storm to come, using rasping guitar sounds that eventually explode into destructive riffs and the characteristic but oh so pleasant post metal guitar sound. Characteristic in that it is very much present in the background while it easily and gruesomely probes your hearing system on its way to your very soul. Sometimes painlessly and with finesse, other times rudely and crudely. The vocals scream, yell, whisper and beckon and during the song ‘*Curse Of The Dime*’ the mastery with which this band crafts its tunes becomes especially evident: in sludgy post metal terms it might as well be considered a ballad, in which we hear hauntingly beautiful dual singing, making the gravity of the lyrics that much more grave. The slow, appealing riffs that accompany it create a suiting, formidable atmosphere. In fact, I could do a write-up like that for each of the eight songs on this record, simply because we are dealing with an album that has no fillers and only killers. The heavy sound of Unhold dances, darts, weaves and distorts, constantly showing interesting plot twists, making this album rank high in creativity. But make no mistake, there is no experimentation here just for the heck of it. No. Every piece of every song is excellently well thought out and sounds both flowing and solid. Occasionally Amenra-like scenes unfold before your eyes...ears! But Unhold treads very different pathways, making this comparison superficial at best. The brief addition of keyboards and piano makes sure the sound is complete. I am very much impressed with everything that is going on on ‘*Here Is The Blood*’.

WONDERBOXMETAL.COM

2015's *Towering* lived up to its name, and was a monolithic and notable record. I said that *Towering* offered a complete listening experience, with each song having its own place and identity. *Here Is the Blood* is much the same in this regard, even if the places it takes the listener and the identity it adopts is different and belongs to itself. The musical framework of the latest Unhold album consists of post-metal, doom, and sludge, all laced with an experimental and exploratory progressive edge. Comparisons with bands such as Neurosis, *Isis*, and *Cult of Luna* are appropriate, but misleading, as Unhold imbue the music with far too much of their own personalities to be mere copycats.

Multiple vocal styles are used across the album, both male and female, all of which are strikingly delivered and impressively performed. The quality of the vocals is matched by the quality of the rest of the music, but is an important part of the Unhold sound nonetheless. Synths further enhance the rich music, adding to the diversity of material that can be found across *Here Is the Blood*'s 49 minutes of playing time.

The music here is dense and frequently complex – structurally and emotionally – but not impenetrable. Indeed, there's an openness to Unhold's material despite how involved it can sometimes be. It's accessible, yet intricate, with hooks and memorability baked into the expansive music, while simultaneously crafting enough depth and substance to result in a substantial and satisfying piece of work.

The songs make strong use of dynamics, and are primarily concerned with conveying the relevant feelings and moods, no matter what style of music is currently being favoured in any given track. Emotive and atmospheric, this is well-written music that speaks of a band that know their art and purpose well. There's a lot for the listener to absorb and digest on *Here Is the Blood*, and repeated spins are strongly recommended. Unhold have returned with a powerful and affecting new album, and I suggest you give it some time.