

Deadwing Porcupine Tree



Deadwing (2005) – Eighth Studio Album

Porcupine Tree

Genres: Psychedelic, Progressive Rock/Metal

Review By Shane Atwal

About the Band



Picture of band members, from left to right: Gavin Harrison, Richard Barbieri, Steven Wilson, and Colin Edwin.

Porcupine Tree is an English Rock band, which was created in 1987. It was originally supposed to be a band that band member Steven Wilson, and his friend Malcolm Stocks, created as a joke. Stocks actually didn't do much in the band and gave occasional ideas towards the music. The majority of the music was written, played, and sung by Wilson. In 1990, Steven Wilson saw some of the music he was creating as something genuinely good. Instead he saw a bigger future for the band, instead of it being a joke. However, Stocks still saw the band as a joke, and moved onto other projects.

The band was created in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, England. Their early music fell in the genre of Psychedelic Rock and had a sound like that of Pink Floyd's. The first band members consisted of Steven Wilson (vocals, guitar, synthesizers, and tons more – he was a musical genius), Richard Barbieri (keyboards, synthesizers, piano, and sound processing), Chris Maitland (drums), and Colin Edwin (bass, double bass). The band had a Psychedelic sound only until 2002. Wilson got exposed to bands like Opeth, who were a Swedish Progressive Death Metal band at the time. He even later went to produce three consecutive albums for them. As a result of this newfound love for this genre of music, their sound slightly shifted into a more Progressive Rock/Metal sound, while still sticking to their roots.



Chris Maitland (drums)

The first small shift in sound was on their 6th studio album *Lightbulb Sun* (2000). It shifted completely in their 7th album *In Absentia* (2002), and has been their main sound ever since (until the time of their disbanding in 2011). *In Absentia* also introduces Gavin Harrison on drums, after Maitland was dismissed from the band.



Lightbulb Sun (2000) – 6th Studio Album
Porcupine Tree

In Absentia (2002) – 7th Studio Album
Porcupine Tree

About the Album

Was released on March 24th, 2005 as their 8th studio album, and was under the record label Lava/Atlantic. It instantly became their best-selling album at the time. The album contained songs that originally were to be part of a film soundtrack, but were instead added into this album. The album collaborates with King Crimson's Adrian Belew, and Opeth's Mikael Åkerfeldt. The two contributed on multiple songs with Belew implementing guitar solos, and Åkerfeldt with backing vocals, plus a guitar solo.

The album was recorded from March – October 2004 and had recorded 15 songs. Only 9 of those songs were added to the album. However, different versions of the album brings the total to 14 songs in total. The final song, which was supposed to be in this album, was added onto the album *Blackfield II* (2007) for the band Blackfield. It was Wilson's side project while still with

Porcupine Tree. Another song, which wasn't officially put onto any of the album versions, was called "Godfearing". Wilson, however, can't remember if the song was recorded in the previous album, or Deadwing.

This album was awarded "Best Made-For-Surround Title" at the 2005 Surround Music Awards. Also won "Album of the Year" for the 2005 Classic Rock magazine awards. Furthermore, the album was titled as one of Classic Rock's 10 essential progressive rock albums of this decade.

As mentioned earlier, these songs are part of what would be a soundtrack for a film Wilson was thinking of creating. Wilson stated that the album was a surreal "ghost story," and said that "the idea is ultimately that this album will form a kind of companion with the feature film." Due to being poorly funded, the film couldn't have been made. Instead, they released the songs for their next studio album – Deadwing.

(Click on song title to be redirected to that song)

Track Listing / Thoughts



Backside of Deadwing's LP Edition

★★★★★ 1. "Deadwing (9:46)"

This first song is a great way to start an album. A song less than 10 minutes long, but never loses its quality. The song starts off with something being heard in the background, it sounds almost as if it were in a train station. It then instantly transitions into the song with a very distinctive, but catchy bass sound. It catches your attention right away. It then heads into the first verse, followed by a spoken word verse. This seems to be repeated until it calms down a bit, and the intro of the song returns. It then heads into a guitar solo, which was helped by Belew. The whole song sets off the feeling and vibe of the album incredibly well. Backing vocals were also helped by Åkerfeldt.

2. "Shallow (4:47)" ★★★★★☆

Released as a single for the album, "Shallow" is heavier than the last one in sound. The vocals are slightly more intense as well, with Wilson adding a little more tension to his voice. The song would have been great as it was. However, the chorus lacks in how it's conveyed, and ruins the listening experience of the song. The song however goes into an instrumental section, where the guitar and drums go with each other very well. It then transitions back into the chorus. Also, something worth mentioning, is how each song transitions with each other extremely well. Sometimes you can't even tell you're listening to the next song until you see what you're listening to.



Shallow (2005) - Single Cover

3. "Lazarus (4:18)" ★★★★★★

Their 2nd single for the album. Compared to what the first few songs showcased; this song is quite soft. It's mainly a song that is played with a piano, drums, and bass. Occasionally will you hear a guitar (mainly in the chorus). The song is very melodic, and is actually what porcupine tree's earlier sound was like. The song ends with train tracks, which seems to be a common sound used throughout the album. It then seamlessly transitions into the next song.



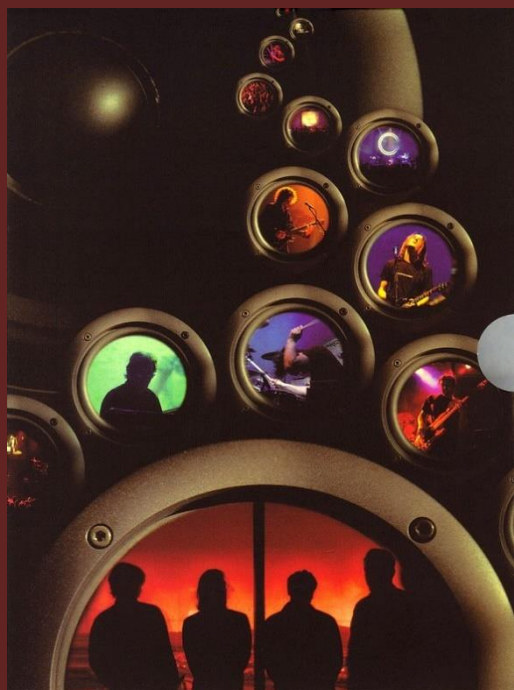
Lazarus (2005) – Single Cover



Halo's Live Projection (2006)

★★★★★ 4. "Halo (4:38)"

This song is simple, but sometimes that can be for the better. The bassline in this song is so catchy and groovy. The chorus was something I disliked at first, but after a while it grew on me. Definitely better than Shallow's chorus, and a better song in general. As mentioned earlier, the bass really drives the song, and the drums accent them very nicely. The chorus adds the guitar into the song, and eventually goes into a guitar solo, which was helped by Belew. The song then finishes with the chorus, and even adds in a piano, which was a nice addition to the song.



*Arriving Somewhere (2006) Live
DVD Cover*

5. "Arriving Somewhere But Not Here (12:02)"



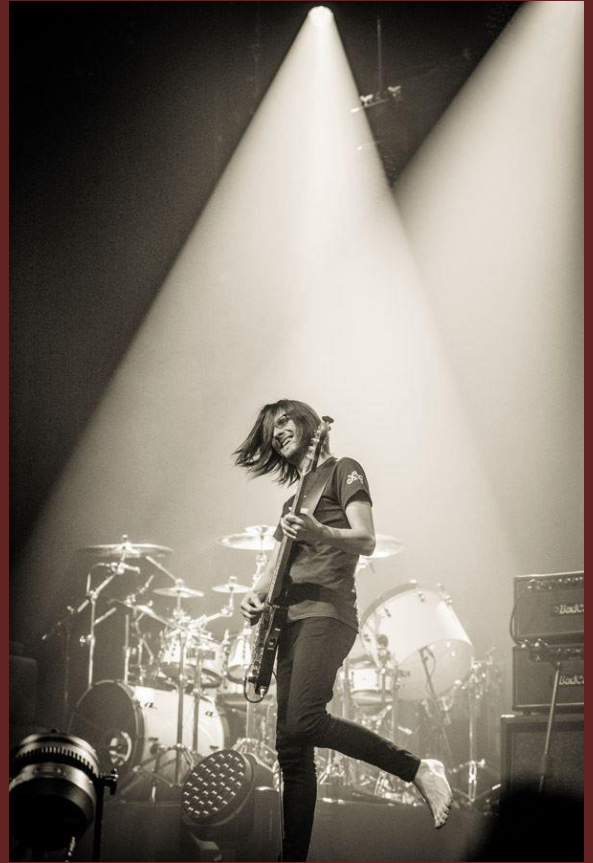
One of the longer songs on the album, it closes in on being one of the more beautiful ones throughout the album. It maintains a nice balance of heavy and melodic sound. The production quality of this band is also very well done, and you can definitely hear it in this song (if not evident in the previous songs). This song also features Mikael for vocal harmonies and contributes to a guitar solo as well. The middle portion of the song is probably the heaviest, but doesn't take away from the listening experience of it, as it goes right back into softer bit of the song. Also, something I think goes underrated, but in my opinion brings their sound to life is the keyboardist. I noticed that he can actually build up certain portions of the song very well, and I think it's a very nice addition to the band's sound.

6. "Mellotron Scratch (6:57)" ★★★★★☆

There's nothing too special about this song, but definitely has some quality to it. It just seems slightly out of place throughout the album. In my opinion, it somewhat ruins the vibe of the album and consistency of the entirety of it. The song itself isn't half bad though, but loses me near the end of the song. Which is why I only give it four stars instead of five. I will, however, say that the production of the drums never ceases to amaze me. They always sound great in every song.



Gavin Harrison



Steven Wilson

7. "Open Car (3:46)" ★★★★★★

This song is probably the best on the album, in my opinion. The song starts off with a very heavy guitar riff, followed by a spoken word bit by Wilson. This continues until it hits the pre-chorus. The chorus itself is very catchy as well, and is probably one of the few choruses by Porcupine Tree that I didn't consider to be terrible. In fact, it's probably one of my favourite choruses by any band I've listened to. This song also is what introduced me to the band. I was sleeping, and this song had come on after my playlist had ended. The song had me hooked, and I became a fan right away.

8. "The Start of Something Beautiful (7:39)"



This song is another great addition to the album. The way it's sung is very well done. It's very melodic in sound, and doesn't depend too much on being heavy. Wilson doesn't necessarily have the best voice, but he definitely has the right voice for soft and clean vocals which this band relies on heavily. A very soft, clean, but heavy when needed, sound. This album really was the start of something beautiful (I'll walk myself out after that one). The song then transitions into the final song called "Glass Arm Shattering".



Colin Edwin

9. "Glass Arm Shattering (6:12)"



This song is very melodic, and almost tranquil in sound. It honestly seems more of something put in the album just to end it. It's definitely not my favourite, but I like how it ends with kind of nothing playing on a gramophone. Almost as if the whole album is basically done and there's nothing left to be heard.



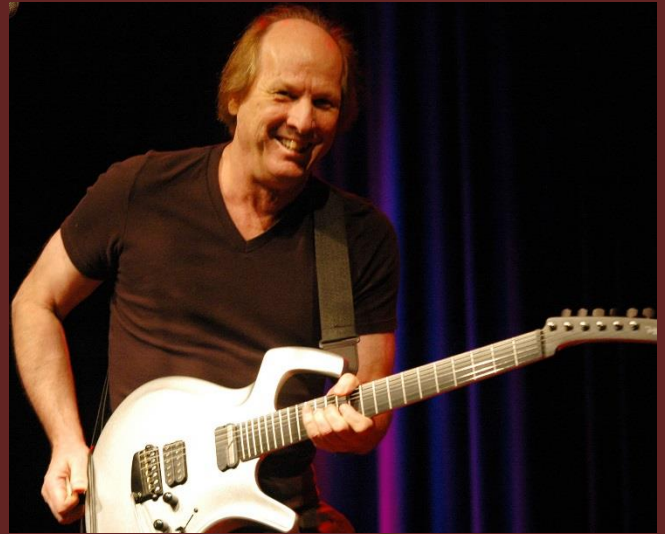
Richard Barbieri

American Edition

10. “Shesmovedon (4:59)” ★★★★★

This song is a re-recording of the 2000 version off the *Lightbulb Sun* album. The song is just as good as the first one, and I can’t decide which one is better. Mikael Åkerfeldt also did vocal harmonies for this version. The guitar solo near the end of the song is probably the most mentioned thing for this song. Is also an easter egg track in the DVD-A Edition. To see the difference between the two songs, here’s a link to the first version as well.

➤ “Shesmovedon (Lightbulb Sun)”



Adrian Belew of King Crimson

DVD-A Edition

10. “Revenant (3:04)” (Rating – It sounds cool, nothing too special)

The rating says enough. It’s just put in here for effect I think. It does sound cool though, but definitely isn’t anything too special.

11. “Mother and Child Divided (6:20)” ★★★★★

This song is an amazing instrumental piece that can only be obtained through this edition of the album. It might get a bit repetitive, however, after listening to it over and over again. But, it doesn’t take away from how great of a song it is. The drums and guitar go so well with each other. Compared to “Revenant” (which also is an instrumental piece), this literally is such a better song, and definitely worth a listen.

12. “*Half Light (6:20)*” ★★★★★☆

Sounds kind of like “Lazarus” and “Glass Arm Shattering” combined into one song. Very tranquil and soft. I actually enjoy the vocals quite a bit, but it’s just not as enjoyable as the other songs, so I took a star off. It’s also on the LP Edition.

LP Edition



Mikael Åkerfeldt of Opeth

★★★★★★ 10. “*So Called Friend (4:49)*”

This song blew me away the first time I listened to it. It’s probably my 2nd favourite on the album besides “*Open Car*”, which is 1st. The song comes out of nowhere and is very heavy, and probably is the heaviest song on the album with this song on it. The vocals are great too, with a soft and catchy chorus. That’s literally an achievement when listening to Porcupine Tree, because, in my opinion, they aren’t very good with choruses sometimes. I’d say the LP Edition would be the most worth getting, if you had the opportunity to do so.

Steven Wilson performing “So Called Friend” with Porcupine Tree



Final Thoughts



This album definitely is one of the best I've heard that has come out of the 2000's. One of my favourite albums of all time, as the instrumentation of the songs are something to be admired. The bassist brings a very nice groove to each song, and the bass plays amazingly with the drums. The keyboardist can build up songs very well, and can almost set up some sort of atmosphere to the song that I think is crucial for the band's sound. Steven Wilson is literally a genius when it comes to writing songs. He's produced albums for Opeth, has had multiple different bands, and is now having a solo career after Porcupine Tree's disbandment. Gavin Harrison is phenomenal on drums, and is now with King Crimson. Porcupine Tree brings back a classic rock sound, but with a very modern twist. Basically, they modernized Classic Prog Rock.

Overall Rating: 9.5/10 ★★★★★★★★★★

This album has great songs that literally blew my mind first time hearing, but some songs are somewhat lacking, and are mainly there just to transition into other songs. But would definitely recommend listening to.

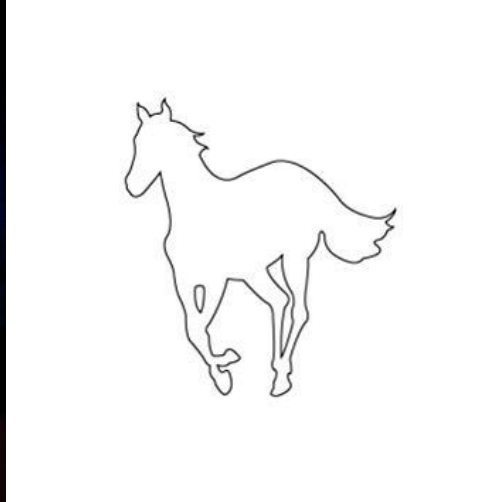
Suggestions If You Liked the Album

(Click on the picture to be redirected to that album)



Fear of a Blank Planet (2007)

Porcupine Tree
9th Studio Album



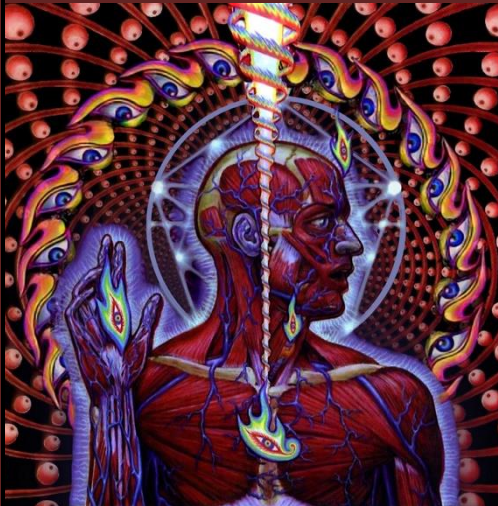
White Pony (2000)

Deftones
3rd Studio Album



Damnation (2003)

Opeth
7th Studio Album



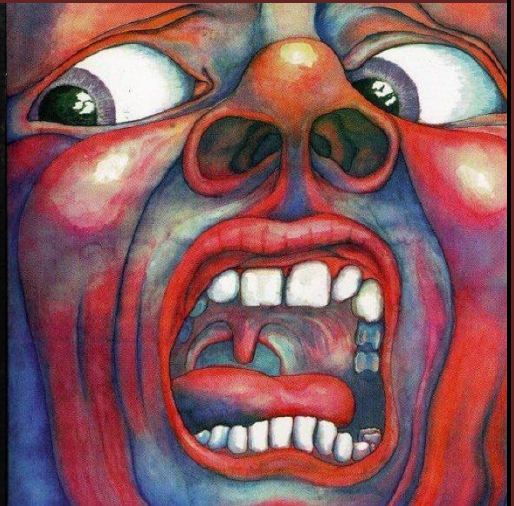
Lateralus (2001)

Tool
3rd Studio Album



Train of Thought (2003)

Dream Theater
7th Studio Album



In the Court of the Crimson King
(1969)

King Crimson
Debut Album