

## Greta van fleet- The Battle at Garden's Gate

Reviewed by Alistar Dhaul



Formed in 2012, Greta van fleet is a blues/hard rock band from Frankenmuth Michigan. Their name comes from a Frankenmuth local of the same name. The band is formed of four members: three brothers, twins

Josh and Jake and younger brother Sam Kiszka, plus drummer friend Danny Wagner. Signed to Lava Records, they have produced three albums released as recently as 2020, as well as a Spotify singles release. In 2019, their album "From the Fires" won a Grammy for best rock album as well as three other nominations.

Although often compared to Led Zeppelin, even with member Robert Plant going as far to call them "Led Zeppelin I", they have a distinctive style. Its vocalist, Josh, has a very high vocal range as well as a distinctive gravelly scream-style. He has a powerful voice and extreme control over said voice. Jake, the guitarist, uses creative riffs and melodies to perfectly accompany his twin's powerful voice. The music occasionally has gospel and classical inspirations sprinkled here and there adding variety and diversity to their sound. Style wise, the band also dresses eccentrically, with bright colors, open shirts and tight bell bottom pants, (by the suggestion of Elton John.) All members have long hair, apart from Josh, who has curly hair. Personally, I do see differences and similarities between GVF and Led Zeppelin, but it's not really my or others place to say. The more recent albums of GVF have diverged from their Led Zeppelin "Inspiration," and are closer to a hard-rock/blues sound.

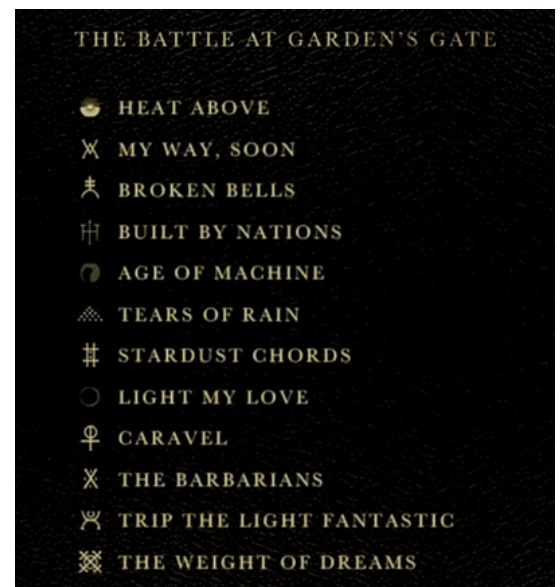
Their album "The Battle at Garden's Gate" released in 2020, and has a variety of styles, ranging from hard rock to love ballads. The album overall has the central idea of exploring



human experience, a common idea in Rock. The album began recording in 2019, right after the release of their 2018 album; “Anthem of the Peaceful Army,” with the goal of expanding on their style and to move away from the negativity related to being “Led Zeppelin Intimidators.” The album has succeeded in said goal, as this album is starkly different from their last, using a more “worldly” sound. My personal Favorites on the album are *Stardust Chords*, *Heat Above*, *Tears of Rain*, and *Light my Love*. The album is just over an hour to listen to, which I enjoy as I have a short attention span and can listen to the whole album in one sitting and be able to enjoy it fully.

### Album breakdown

|                    |      |                            |      |
|--------------------|------|----------------------------|------|
| “Heat Above”       | 5:40 | “Stardust Chords”          | 4:58 |
| “My way, soon”     | 4:15 | “Light my Love”            | 4:30 |
| “Broken Bells”     | 5:50 | “Caravel”                  | 4:55 |
| “Built by Nations” | 3:58 | “The Barbarians”           | 5:20 |
| “Age of Machine”   | 6:53 | “Trip the Light Fantastic” | 4:33 |
| “Tears of Rain”    | 3:50 | “The Weight of Dreams”     | 8:50 |



**Total album length: 63:52**

Heat Above      4/5 ★

Heat Above is a powerful rock ballad about love, unity and challenging human existence. The song features organ synth heavily, a non-traditional instrument, as well as classical strings. It's not heavy on guitar, going for a

more acoustic sound. The song is very 70's hippie, reflected in the music video, and the lyrical message. Josh's vocals are as always, strong and powerful. He goes up high in his register and brings a gospel-like sound with his vocal riffs and screams. It's a great introduction of GVF, and a kicker of an opening track. It's perfect to listen to if you've never heard of Greta van fleet.

*"Can you feel my love?  
Rising with the heat above  
Life's the story of  
Ascending to the stars as one"*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrWFu5k1Jpg>

Stardust chords 4/5 ★

Stardust Chords begins with Josh's vocals, in a more soft style, and once again organ synth. The song then crashes into powerful drums and a catchy guitar riff. The song is more of a classic hard rock sound compared to the rest of the album. It uses catchy guitar riffs to be recognizable to anyone who has heard the song before. There are also wonderful melodic bass parts lying beneath the melody that accompany the guitar. In the beginning of the song, drums use mallets with felt on the ends, instead of normal sticks, changing the sound and effect of the drums. The lyrics mention the garden's gate, a reference to the album's title. The song itself is theorized to be about the garden of Eden, although Greta van Fleet are not a religious band. It's a great track to add to the middle of the album, as it provides a transition to "Light my Love."

*"It has been said  
By the likes of the living and the dead  
Make your bed  
Even sinners go to drink the wine, break the bread  
Ah, ohh"*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRLHxpi6\\_iQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRLHxpi6_iQ)

Tears of rain 5/5 ★



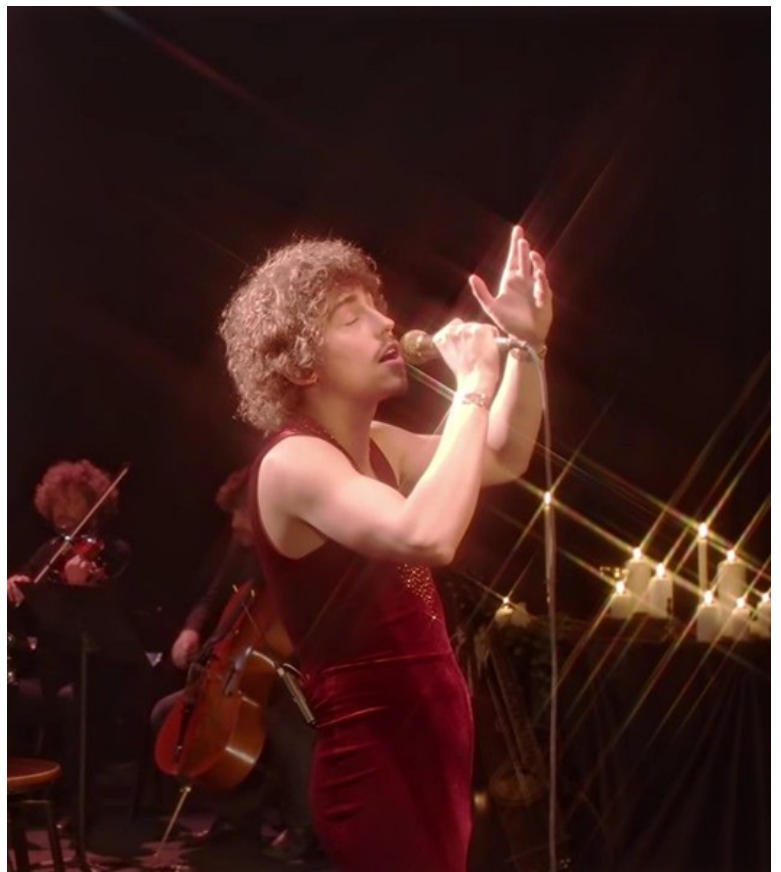
Tears of rain is very different from the rest of the album. Using minor scales and acoustic guitar, it gains an “exotic” sound. The song uses a simple melody for the first two minutes of the song, when it suddenly crescendos into a climax of Josh’s screaming vocals instead of the quieter, calmer vocals from before. The song is cleverly written, as it constantly mentions waiting for water, or for the rains to come. At the end of the song, you can hear quiet thunder, a sign the rains are coming. This song also features guitar riffs in the climax that compliment the vocals as well as the theme itself. Tears of rain is my personal favorite on the album, and one of my favorite songs Greta van Fleet has written.

*“And the planet is still turning  
And the faces are still burning  
And the mothers with their children  
Search for the rain”*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPQO6J-EU08>

I give this album a solid 4/5 stars (★★★★☆) as I can listen in one sitting, I enjoy all the songs on the album thoroughly, and it displays a high level of artistry and musicianship.

The Battle at Gardens Gate is an album that showcases the creativity of Greta van Fleet, and the creative potential of the band. It is a step in the right direction away from the Led Zeppelin sound they had. GVF is still a relatively new band and I look forward to seeing their future growth. Although some fans of



classic hard rock don't like Greta van Fleet I think they truly are the future of rock as a genre. This album brings new music and ideas while still respecting those who inspired them.

Some honorable mentions of other aspects of the album are:

- The extensive guitar solo in *The Weight of Dreams*
- The guitar work and lyrics in *Caravel*
- *Light my Love* for having a beautiful message and gospel blues sound.
- Drum work overall
- Usage of piano and synthesizers

Overall, The Battle at Gardens Gate is a great album to listen to if you're getting tired of listening to 80's rock albums over and over and want to try something new. You'll be surprised by the artistry and talent of all band members, and you will be blown away by Josh Kiszka's Voice. The band is currently teasing a new album and touring, with a stop in Vancouver's Rogers arena, so I highly suggest listening to their discography, which is easily accessible on their Spotify and all other streaming platforms.

