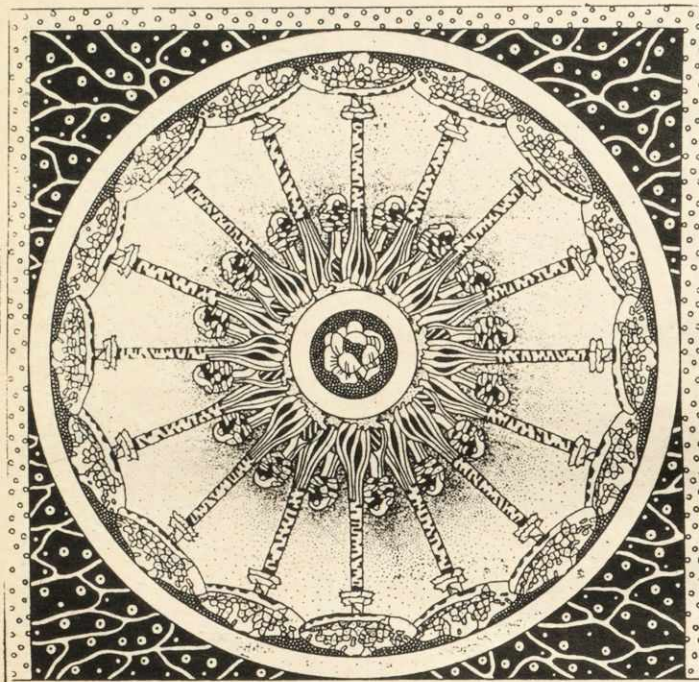


## ARTS



## Metallica still reigns

BY ROLAND STONE

METALLICA'S NEWEST, self-titled album is the band's sixth release and the third since the addition of bassist Jason Newsted. With this outing, they have charted new territory within their own distinctive musical mould and, in the process, have continued to break away from the thrash-metal genre which they initiated in 1983 with the release of their debut, "Kill 'em All".

MUSIC  
Metallica  
self-titled

With the aid of Canadian producer Bob Rock, who in the past has worked with Aerosmith and The Cult among others, Metallica have created a masterpiece. This LP is an extravaganza of structured, melodic songs flanked by heavy hitters, all brought together by a production that is the high point of the band's recorded career.

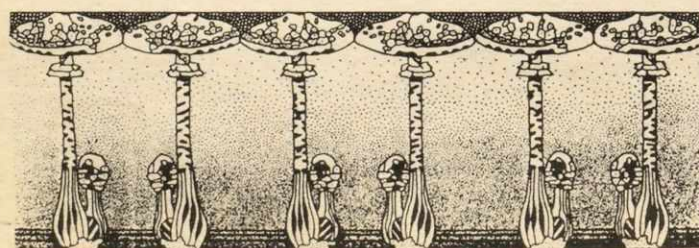
For those of you who are only familiar with the band via MuchMusic, and that meaning their only video, "One", you may have a narrow view of what Metallica offers.

True, they are a butt-kicking, guitar-crunching band. But unlike most of their peers, Metallica is not afraid to take chances in order to satisfy their own creativity rather than merely catering to a hard-core following.

"Metallica" features an array of distinctive guitar sounds and styles, and a focus on a simpler, more cohesive song structure than that of their last LP, "And Justice For All". Highpoints include "Enter Sandman", the first single and video release, "Holier than Thou" with its blasting attack on evangelical hypocrisy, and "Nothing Else Matters", a beautiful love ballad that will have thrashers cringing in disbelief. Though some may accuse the band of aiming for a more commercial audience, this song really represents nothing more than a musical and lyrical area that had not been previously tackled by the band.

Though this album totally rocks from beginning to end, the standout track for me is "My Friend of Misery", the only song with a writing contribution from bassist Newsted. Melodic and dynamic, this song is uncharacteristic of Metallica, and sounds more akin to Led Zeppelin or Rush.

This release, with its perfect marriage of simplicity and intricacy, showcases Metallica's creativity and artistic brilliance. Their approach is direct and uninhibited, their results numbing. No longer just a heavy metal band with a fringe audience, Metallica is truly a unique musical entity, shining out against a backdrop of industry-fabricated pabulum and second-rate imitators. Long may they reign.



MADÉLAINE SAT BY THE FRONT window, looking out at the bay with a blank check of stare she'd been writing all day. The sun was losing its drunken footing on horizon's hazy rail, and she could just make out Simon's form, working late in the last call of summer's light.

He'd been out on the boat since noon, fiddling with ropes and sipping the day like an overpriced wine. She knew he was planning to leave Pulma before the fall kicked in with its flurry of footballs and thanksgiving turkeys.

Simon hadn't wintered up north since the November he and George Carey split a bottle of bourbon and then bounced the green half-ton off Saulter's bridge.

George drowned quietly in the wreckage of that beautiful old truck. Simon managed to float free soon enough that they were able to squeeze the salty bay water out of his oily lungs.

The bland flat shock of George's death had nearly caused the implosion of Simon's thin social veneer. The two had been best of friends since just after the time they beat the lust out of each other over a sweet young girl named Sarah Elliston.

The fight had exploded when both George and Simon realized Pulma wasn't big enough for themselves and two fourteen year-old egos both. Simon emerged victorious, but by a margin thinner by any artist who lives by his artistry alone.

After the smashed ears and blue swollen lips healed, Sarah pulled-off the coup of the decade in Pulma's war of the sexes: she moved... Miss Elliston packed-up her golden brown locks, wicked green eyes, perfect skin and transported the damply mysterious smell of virgin desire to her aunt's riding school, nestled somewhere in the West Virginia pines.

With the clamp of Sarah's thighs, which had previously been squeezing their brains shut, loosened by her absence, a liquid-cement bond developed between the boys.

They sailed together in summer, painting houses for beer-money and chasing licentious young tennis junkies for sport. While rooming together in college, they developed a taste for an elegant mixture of tequila, cucumbers and philosophy.

At the late August funeral, Simon read one of George's old poem for the eulogy. Almost everyone cried (or at least made an honest attempt) then covered-up with tactfully handled handkerchiefs. Here's how it went:

Now the smell of rotting engines  
and rusting gardens  
is erased for the sweetgrass  
smoking quietly in the flames.

There are pounds of that herb cured in the cellar;  
there are tons of that weed growing long in the  
fields.

A new warmth rests with us tonight  
by the fire burning-soft  
in this long winter corridor.

Holding hands to the coals condemns arthritic Grey,  
an ancient and heroined thief,  
who crept slow through the chill of the rain.

And despite the damp  
and the freeze of the spring,  
it is more than a beautiful morning tonight.

He liked the poem because it left a clean smell in his nose; funerals can get so stuffy. He wanted George's friends to remember how it felt — to be alive, not to think about what it must be like to be dead.

Simon had stood tall at the lectern of the small wooden church, with its pews of sweaty acquaintances in their blackest of clothes, and wondered why George had died and left him alone. Hadn't he, Simon, the honest right to be gone from this place, to be somewhere other than this

BY J. CHERVO

ridiculous sauna of a shrine to an analgesic god? What was he supposed to do with a knapsack-load of regrets and a manila envelope full of a dead man's poetry about life? He felt less than alone without his best friend.

Afterwards, in a supreme effort to escape the cynicism of ill-luck, Simon threw a wake in whose wake there would be no others to compare. It was a package tour to escapism land. Heights of debauchery were peaked and new ones discovered; Simon performed mental crescendos of weeping and crested to mountain-tops of mourning at George's going-away festival.

He purged himself of the pain he felt and got good and drunk in the bargain. Something George would always understand, living or dead.

The next morning, which Madelaine calculated to be almost six years to the day now, Simon had sprung out of bed as if he'd had twenty, instead of three hours sleep.

He jumped in his car, sped to the real-estate office where, to the dismay of an irksome agent who had been plaguing him ruthlessly about selling his family's run-down country house and grounds to be transformed into a condo-development of mythic proportions, he sold his property for cash in the locally unprecedented time of one half hour.

Madelaine knows all these delicious little details because she had been George's fiancée. When she heard the news of his' death, the first and last person Madelaine turned to for solace was Simon. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately for the two of them, they realized and acted upon a distinct and spectacular molecular and mental attraction on that black night following the funeral. The bed Simon jumped out of bed on that post-mourning morning was Madelaine's. Something George would never understand, living or dead.

Simon dove into Madelaine's soothing pool of grief-relief that bleak night like it was one hundred degrees in the shade. Madelaine pulled Simon deep into her, lubricated with their big wet tears of sorrow; she was the last black hole in existence and he was the last voyage of the starship Enterprise.

Together — they fucked long and smooth through the troublesome vortex of time; together — they lathered the wet back of orgasmic travel; together — they stretched one million miles of sex into the universe and then folded it up again, just for fun; together — they surfed on a forbidden sexual paradigm like it was a private beach, just opened to the public;

together — not only did they make crazy love with both their hearts and their minds, but they screwed their best, dearest and dearest friend into an intimate and infinitely weird socket of the cosmos. Thus posing the delicate and tricky question: is cuckoldry still cuckoldry when the cuckold is dead but his' body is only two days cold? If George had believed in a hell, this would have been it.

Simon took the sizeable chunk of money he got for his parents' luncheon of a house and bought a beautiful new deep-water sloop. Her hull was dark blue, her sails a crisp white, her size the purist's definition of awesome and her name *Pandora*.

That same autumn, he prepared the boat to sail for Saint Somewhere, a tropical oasis lying thirty nautical miles due east of *Saints be Praised* and *Saints be Damned*. It was a place hanging in the celestial balance like a hammock full of ice in the hot entropic sun.

There, Simon spent the next three years of his life.

Like the  
Laughter  
of a  
Million  
Chimpanzees  
on Really  
Bad Acid

Occasionally he would make the voyage home for supplies or company. More often, he would place ridiculously expensive long-distance calls to Madelaine at odd hours of the night, asking her to come down and join him. She would of course, but only for short periods of time. Madelaine was trying to run the advertising agency George had left behind with his unexpected death and Simon had left behind with an unexpected second childhood. She was busy.

Simon would heft a small portion of the load via an undistinguished mail service whose motto was: *if it had a stamp on, it should probably get there before it rots, but don't come crying to us if it doesn't*. Madelaine didn't mind, however, she was both industrious and intelligent, and she didn't drink the profit margins like Simon and George had.

As far as Simon was concerned, her stock was priceless. She reminded him remotely of a song called *Up on Cripple Creek* and he used to sing it every time he went out to meet her on the small dirt runway. Madelaine would zoom in and out in a unique parallel (Simon decided) to their sexual encounters — melting rubber in friction with savage acceleration and deceleration.

With her authentic straw hats and luggage (unhealed scars from previous visits) and her pale face, she would look like tourist bait for all the local families to enjoy. But when she left Simon a month or two later, the radiance of her skin, the gold of her hair and the smell of Simon squishing-out between her legs would attract admiring stares from all sorts of weird and wonderful quarters at Miami International.

But for the past few years, she noticed Simon had been deserting his desert island for Pulma more and more often. He had even flown up twice last winter to help clinch a sure thing account Madelaine had known to be in the proverbial bag.

She thought this was good news, Madelaine did. It wasn't that she disliked Simon's wayward life, its just that she got a little lonely on cold winter nights curled up by herself like a well-fixed cat. Last night, Simon asked her to marry him... she accepted without a fight.

Now the sun had fallen in the picture framed by the window. She could see Simon rowing gracefully, trying not to disturb the slickness of the water as he came into her pier. He tied the small boat to a cleat and came strolling, half whimsical, half naughty, up the lawn to the house. His jeans were rolled-up lop-sided and his jersey looked like it had a new series of varnish stains. Through a crooked grin, he kissed her playfully on the cheek and continued through to the kitchen.

Snapping, finally, out of the trance that had been holding her tight all day, Madelaine followed him. They stuffed themselves, as if they were starving, on pasta and wine. Later, they made rocketship love of the galaxy of exhaustion, falling asleep in a tangled seaweed mess of substances.

As they slept, wild winds masturbated, whipping waves to a fully steeped frenzy inside the ocean's teapot. Through the front window, the *Pandora* could be seen (if anyone had been looking) bucking and slamming on the usually placid bay.

Neither watched the late news that evening. Neither Simon nor Madelaine knew anything about the burgeoning hurricane that was filling its expansive gut with hot trade wind air to make wolf bait out of any straw, stick or even brick houses that got in its way.

When the wind came, it was a giant cheese knife in the hands of a transcendental master chef, wreaking havoc on the gouda of the coastline. The sea made noises like the laughter of a million chimpanzees on really bad acid as it gobbled huge chunks of land mass; it wasn't very pretty. It wasn't meant to be.

In the wake of the destruction, rescue workers were puzzled to find the mangled bodies in possession of such smiles of ill-timed contentment, apparently, the storm hadn't even woken them; firemen were forced to resort to a heavyweight crowbar to separate the bodies. Life was stranger than fiction, Captain O'Connel of the VFD decided, as he drove home to his frigid wife, stopping for a long drink on the way.

On the late news in the barroom, he listened to the broadcaster describe the lousy-luck tragedy of two local deaths and the destruction of one beachside home and yacht by hurricane. He called hurricane *George* a freak of nature in an authoritative voice. The phenomenon was downgraded to a tropical storm three hours later, harmlessly blowing himself-out over the mid Atlantic in a satisfied, but sleepy end.

The Captain left his wife two weeks later for one of the bar's topless dancers. She took him for all he was and wasn't worth, and split town soon after that with her boyfriend — a local boxer.

O'Connel's wife had been sleeping with their unemployed neighbour for six months — she didn't care what her husband did with himself, as long as he took that damned cat with him when he left.

the  
SMELL  
of  
ROTTING ENGINES