

Journey into the Occult: An In-Depth Analysis of Strange Hymn's "The Bargainer"

In the realm of experimental black metal, Strange Hymn stands out as a band that pushes the boundaries of the genre. Their music is a potent blend of atmospheric textures, dissonant guitars, and haunting vocals that explores themes of the occult, existentialism, and the human psyche. One of their most acclaimed works is the 2015 album "The Bargainer," a concept album that delves into the depths of human desire and the consequences of making deals with the devil.

The album opens with the track "The Summoning," a slow and brooding instrumental that sets the stage for the journey to come. The following track, "The Bargainer," introduces the central character of the album: a man who strikes a deal with a demonic entity to obtain his heart's desire. The song features a hypnotic and repetitive guitar riff that creates a sense of unease, while the vocals echo the protagonist's inner turmoil.



A Strange Hymn (The Bargainer Book 2) by Laura Thalassa

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 1216 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 385 pages
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As the album progresses, the music becomes increasingly intense and chaotic, reflecting the protagonist's descent into madness. The track "The Ritual" features a cacophony of distorted guitars and tortured screams, while "The Sacrifice" incorporates elements of traditional black metal to create a sense of foreboding and doom.

The lyrics of "The Bargainer" are as haunting and evocative as the music. The protagonist grapples with his own mortality and the consequences of his actions, ultimately realizing that his desire for power has come at a great cost. The album's climax, "The Reckoning," is a chilling and cathartic moment that brings the protagonist's journey to a close.

The Occult Influence

Strange Hymn's "The Bargainer" is heavily influenced by the occult and esoteric traditions. The album's lyrics and imagery draw upon themes of demonology, ritual magic, and the search for forbidden knowledge. The track "The Summoning" features invocations to ancient deities, while "The Ritual" references the use of blood and incantations in occult ceremonies.

The album's cover art also reflects the occult influence. It depicts a sinister figure with glowing eyes, surrounded by occult symbols and incantations. This imagery serves as a visual representation of the album's themes and sets the tone for the journey that lies ahead.

Existentialism and the Human Psyche

In addition to its occult themes, "The Bargainer" also explores existential questions about the nature of human desire and the consequences of our actions. The protagonist's quest for power and fulfillment mirrors the human condition of striving to transcend our limitations.

The album's lyrics often grapple with the darker aspects of the human psyche, such as fear, doubt, and despair. The track "The Shadow" explores the protagonist's inner demons, while "The Abyss" delves into the depths of nihilism and despair.

Musical Analysis

From a musical standpoint, "The Bargainer" is a masterclass in experimental black metal. The band's use of dissonant chords, distorted guitars, and haunting vocals creates a unique and unsettling atmosphere that perfectly captures the album's themes.

The album's complex and layered compositions showcase the band's musicianship and attention to detail. The track "The Ritual" features a hypnotic repetition that builds to a crescendo of intensity, while "The Sacrifice" incorporates elements of traditional black metal with a modern twist.

The vocals on "The Bargainer" are as compelling as the music. The vocalist's tortured screams and guttural growls convey the protagonist's inner turmoil and madness. The use of spoken word passages adds a further layer of depth and narrative to the album's story.

Strange Hymn's "The Bargainer" is a haunting and thought-provoking album that explores the depths of the occult, existentialism, and the human psyche. Through its evocative lyrics, unsettling atmosphere, and masterful musicianship, the album offers a unique and immersive experience that will resonate with fans of experimental black metal and beyond.

The album serves as a testament to the band's unique vision and talent, solidifying their status as one of the most innovative and forward-thinking bands in contemporary black metal.

Footnotes

1. Strange Hymn, "The Bargainer" (2015) album review, Pitchfork:
<https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/20018-the-bargainer/>
2. Interview with Strange Hymn, Decibel Magazine:
<https://www.decibelmagazine.com/2015/03/25/strange-hymn-bargainer/>

Image Credits

- "The Bargainer" album cover, Strange Hymn:
<https://strangehymn.bandcamp.com/album/the-bargainer>
- Strange Hymn performing live, courtesy of the band



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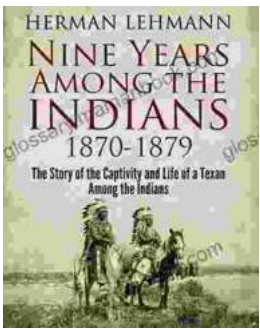
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