



NUCLEAR BLAST

SONATA ARCTICA

„The Ninth Hour“

out: October 7th, 2016

Line up:

Tony Kakko | vocals, keyboards
Elias Viljanen | guitar
Pasi Kauppinen | bass
Henrik Klingenberg | keyboards
Tommy Portimo | drums

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“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying “My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” – Matthew 27:46

Humanity no longer needs a bible to know that we are quickly approaching the „ninth hour“ – the particular moment, when Jesus died on the cross. Our time has come to sacrifice and regret our sins, yet not in a religious way, but in a completely mundane context. We are standing on the edge of a nuclear war, inside a society where environmental pollution is a daily matter and people’s respect for Mother Nature seems barely existent. No wonder that even the good-humoured Finns from **SONATA ARCTICA** are slowly haunted by fear and doubt when it comes to the future of this planet. And although their sound is still dominated by fast guitar solos, catchy keyboard melodies and Tony Kakko’s unmistakable vocals - a gloomy sense of world-weariness is creeping through their ninth studio album »**The Ninth Hour**«.

*“I am not a very religious person at all,” admits front man and lyricist **Tony Kakko**. “So I actually had to study the background and different meanings, once I came up with the title »The Ninth Hour«, which was meant to underline the fact this is our 9th studio album. But it was a pleasant thing to find all these meanings and realise that they actually fit in really well with my idea about the cover and some of the lyrical themes.”*

Once again, the album was produced by **SONATA ARCTICA** themselves and mixed by **Pasi Kauppinen**, to create a typical yet refreshing sound that defines the spirit of the band in the year 2016. The recordings started in April in different home studios, before the band came together to unite their creative forces at Studio57 in **Alaveteli, Finland**.

After 17 years as a team, the wolf pack has moved from classic Power Metal to more progressive shores, but went back to their initial roots on the last release »**Pariah’s Child**«. Fans know that **SONATA ARCTICA** constantly deliver their high quality sound, but are also up

for a little surprise here and there, hence every one of the band's 8 full-length releases carried its own charm that always added a fresh new touch to the genre – not only in their homeland, but across the entire world, placing them on top of the melodic metal Olympus next to bands as **NIGHTWISH** or **STRATOVARIUS**.

Therefore the ever-active quintet rarely finds time to breathe and once again, it only took them less than two years to produce the follow-up to their last hit album **»Pariah's Child«** - their new brainchild **»The Ninth Hour«** will see the light of day on October 7th. But just like their last two releases, this album also gives the listener food for thought due to its thoughtful lyrical and visual content. After a North American tour with their friends from **NIGHTWISH** plus many headline shows around the globe, the band was able to take a close look at the entire world as it is at the moment – on the edge of a possible armageddon. And this spirit is reflected in the new artwork of **»The Ninth Hour«**, which was once again designed by **ToxicAngel (NIGHTWISH, TAROT)** and tells a story whose ending we need to decide for ourselves:

“The artwork of »The Ninth Hour« depicts a future utopian landscape on the background”, Tony explains. “Nature and human technologies are in balance. In the middle we have an hour glass contraption with a knob for us to meddle with. The right-hand side cup represents the nature side with no humans left, on the left we have the human dystopia after we have destroyed Nature. The idea I had was, that turning the knob will tilt the hour glass in one direction or another, and the other cup will slowly empty and that future will be erased. Biblically we are expected to repent and sacrifice on »The Ninth Hour«...to dive right back to a more mundane reality; it's a fact that we are currently living in critical, historical times. Our decisions will define the future. Not only ours as a race, but the future of this entire planet. We need to make sacrifices and in many cases we will repent our already made choices.”

But from a musical point of view, one won't risk falling into deep depression while listening to the new release, since the band once again concentrated on writing 11 epic hymns with energetic melodies and powerful impacts:

„The album itself is not particularly gloomy, I think. Our music has mostly been happy sing-a-long stuff, but the lyrics never really fit that mould. If you are familiar with my lyrics in the past, I'd say we swim in similar oceans. I deal with my worries about the state of this planet, human greed, love, relationships, tragedy, death, but also war and politics in semi-tongue in cheek fashion (I feel the US elections are an endless chest of unbelievable wonders...). Our 'murder-ballad-saga' continues AND an old, epic lighthouse related tragedy now has a second part...”

Especially these sequels to evergreen- classics such as **,Don't Say A Word'** or **,White Pearl, Black Oceans'** will be a great discovery for all the die-hard fans and their euphoria is just about to begin – since **SONATA ARCTICA** have massive long-term plans for their future:

“It's been a work-filled spring and summer for us so far. Working on the album, in the middle of it all a seven week long North-American tour supporting NIGHTWISH, summer festival shows while still in studio... it's has been a rough ride, but absolutely worth it! And after the festival season our “The Ninth Hour World Tour” will start around the time of the album

release and continue until... well, we'll see where the journey will lead us to! I can't wait to hit the road and play these new songs live - SEE YOU on tour!"