

A Retrospective Look at Every Ozzy Osbourne Album

Another Ozzfest, another album, and another year of the Ozz-Man is in the books. No one can argue with the fact that Ozzy Osbourne is an icon. I like to call him "The Johnny Cash of Heavy Metal."

Look at their careers and you will see where I draw some of the parallels. His successful career has now spanned over 30 years, starting off with his famed start in Black Sabbath and then moving onto an equally successful solo career. I will be reviewing his solo discography (ie. No Black Sabbath material).

1980 - Blizzard of Ozz

The first of the two Ozzy Osbourne/Randy Rhoades albums. Blizzard of Ozz is simply a masterpiece Ozzy had just left Black Sabbath signed a record deal, and this was released to compete with Black Sabbath's Dio debut Heaven & Hell.

"Crazy Train" is an anthem, now. "Goodbye to Romance" is an excellent ballad. "Suicide Solution" has a great lyrical theme, despite all its controversy. "Mr. Crowley" is an eerie song that also works great for a horror movie soundtrack, as I know from personal experience. I recommend this one to not just fans of metal. I recommend this to the casual listener. You will appreciate this album!

Strong Tracks - "Crazy Train," "Goodbye To Romance," "Suicide Solution," "Mr. Crowley," "Revelation (Mother Earth)," "Steal Away (The Night)," and "I Don't Know"

"Eh..." Tracks - "Dee," "No Bone Movies"

Weak Tracks - NONE

Rating: *****

1981 - Diary of a Madman

This is the second and last studio album to be released featuring Randy Rhoades before his tragic plane accident. This one generally is most hardcore fans of Ozzy's favorite solo album. Personally, I prefer Blizzard of Ozz, but that is just me.

To me, this one is all about "Flying High Again." I love that song. "Over the Mountain," in my opinion, is a bit overplayed. The rest is gold. The title track, "Diary of a Madman," is a bonafide classic!

If you are a casual listener of music and loved my first suggestion of Blizzard of Ozz, then you are going to love this one as well. If you are a metal fan of any kind... this belongs on your shelf / iPod.

Strong Tracks - "Flying High Again," "You Can't Kill Rock 'n' Roll," "Believer," "S.A.T.O.," "Diary of a Madman"

"Eh..." **Tracks** - "Over the Mountain," "Little Dolls," "Tonight"

Weak Tracks - NONE

Rating: *****

1982 - Speak of the Devil

This featured Ozzy performing all of the Black Sabbath hits live. This was done to mostly to compete with Black Sabbath's live album featuring Ronnie James Dio. This is the first album to not feature Randy Rhoades.

When I rate a live album, I look for a few things.

Song Selection - It's a concept live album featuring nothing but Black Sabbath songs. So, naturally, it gets a Grade A here.

Sound Quality - The sound on the album is very good. No real complaints.

Artist Performance - Ozzy's voice was off during these performances. To be blunt, he mostly sounds drunk throughout the set. The band's timing is also a bit off the

majority of the concert.

Bottom Line - If you want a live Black Sabbath album featuring Ozzy on vocals, get the 1998 Reunion album. You can pass this one up and your life would pretty much be the same.

Rating: ***

1983 - Bark at the Moon

This is the first post-Rhoades album, and about the only other one worth your time before Zakk Wylde came on board.

The album's title track, "Bark at the Moon" has one of the best opening riffs is one of Ozzy's best songs. The rest is pretty much hit or miss, and it seems like Ozzy was trying to capture the magic of the first two albums. A few tracks sound like they are trying to be sequels to previous favorites. For example, "So Tired" seems to be going for the "Goodbye To Romance" vibe, but totally bombing. Regardless, Bark at the Moon is worth your time if you are a fan of the genre.

STRONG>Strong Tracks - "Bark at the Moon," "Rock'n' Roll Rebel," "Now You See It,"

"Now You Don't"

"Eh..." Tracks - "You're No Different," "Slow Down"

Weak Tracks - "So Tired," "Waiting for Darkness," "Centre of Eternity"

Rating: ***1/2

1986 - The Ultimate Sin

This was Ozzy's attempt at hair metal. Now, I am not going to just give it one star because its hair band material. There is some hair band material that I like, and Bon Jovi's Slippery When Wet, this is not. "Shot in the Dark" is the "hit" on the album, but it doesn't match pretty many other Ozzy Osbourne single out there.

For completists ONLY. Otherwise, it is a sin to pay more than \$2 on The Ultimate Sin.

Strong Tracks - NONE

"Eh..." Tracks -

"Shot in the Dark," "The Ultimate Sin," "Never"

Weak Tracks - "Secret

Loser," "Never Know Why," "Thank God For The Bomb," "Lightning Strikes," "Fool

Like You"

Rating: *

1987 - Tribute

This album was released as a tribute to Randy Rhoades, one of the greatest guitarists to be

taken before his time. Out of all of the live Ozzy albums, this one is the best. When I rate a live album, I look for a few things.

Song Selection - The song selection here is awesome featuring the best tracks of Blizzard & Diary plus some classic Black Sabbath (you should hear Randy totally tear it up on "Paranoid").

Sound Quality - The sound quality is fantastic. It is crystal clear and Ozzy's vocals come out great.

Artist Performance - The performance is fantastic. Ozzy doesn't sound drunk and, of course, Randy's guitars are crazy awesome!

Bottom Line - This is Ozzy's best live album. If you love the Ozzman and/or live albums, GET IT!

Rating: *****

1988 - No Rest for the Wicked

No Rest for the Wicked features the debut of Zakk Wylde. Unfortunately this is another "hair band"-like album, and isn't very memorable. It isn't the steaming pile of cow dung that is Ultimate Sin, but it is the one album that pretty much Ozzy fans don't talk about too much. The only saving grace is Mr. Wylde. There are tracks that have potential, such as "Bloodbath in Paradise," but end up going nowhere.

Strong Tracks - "Miracle Man," "Fire in the Sky"

"Eh..." Tracks - "Devil's Daughter," "Crazy Babies," "Breaking all the Rules," "Bloodbath in Paradise," "Hero"

Weak Tracks - "Tattooed Dancer," "Demon Alcohol"

Rating: *1/4

1990 - Just Say Ozzy

A live album that is an EP? That is not exactly something I would be trying to sell.

When I rate a live album, I look for a few things.

Song Selection - Horrible! It features absolutely nothing from Ozzy's first

three studio solo albums, but it features "Sweet Leaf?" Don't get me wrong, it is one of my favorite Sabbath songs, but it seems like such a random selection when you have potential picks such as "Crazy Train" or even "Bark at the Moon."

Sound Quality - Not that great. The drums seem to dominate more than the guitars, and the vocals are a little on the tinny side.

Artist Performance - Not bad. Not a blow away performance.

Bottom Line - Not worth your time. Why couldn't they have just released a full concert?

Rating: *

1991 - No More Tears

This can essentially be considered Ozzy's comeback album. After entering rehab, Ozzy was off a lot of the drugs that was plaguing his life. After enlisting some outside professional songwriters, and finally utilizing Zakk Wylde to his full potential, Ozzy released this masterpiece and reinvented his sound.

For one, this is the first solo work where Ozzy learned the fine art of the "demo."

Zakk really shines on this album, especially in tracks like "S.I.N." and "Mister Tinkertrain." "Mama, I'm Coming Home" is a wonderful ballad and Ozzy's best since "Goodbye to Romance." Even the "Eh..." tracks are very good! Highly recommended for not just Ozzy and/or metal fans, but everybody!

Strong Tracks - "Mister Tinkertrain," "I Don't Want to Change the World," "Mama I'm Coming Home," "Desire," "No More Tears," "Hellraiser," "S.I.N.," "Time After Time," "Road To Nowhere"

"Eh..." Tracks - "Zombie Stomp," "AVH"

Weak Tracks - NONE

Rating: *****

1993 - Live and Loud

This is an excellent live album and is the first one to feature a slightly more sober Ozzy on stage.

Song Selection - It is a great retrospective of Ozzy's career with a nice healthy mix of solo material and Sabbath material. About the notably most absent track is Iron Man, but it isn't technically an Ozzy song, so I won't count that against the score.

Sound Quality - Perfect. Absolutely no complaints.

Artist Performance. The performance is fantastic. Zakk Wylde really shines here and always brings his "A-Game" to a concert. You can also feel the emotion from Ozzy during "Changes." We even get a Sabbath reunion on the track, ironically, "Black Sabbath." Above all else, the most memorable performance is "Mama, I'm Coming Home."

Bottom Line - The only reason why this doesn't get five stars is because Tribute just edges this one out. You should also get the video if you get a chance because it is excellent.

Rating: ****3/4

1995 - Ozzmosis

This is definitely the softest and most melodic Ozzy album ever released. It generally is hated by Ozz fans, but I personally enjoy it.

However, I like to keep an open mind. My favorite track on this one is Perry Mason. I will admit, there is something that just doesn't seem right about Ozzmosis. After thinking about it for awhile, I think it's the expensive production values that really save this album from going completely down the crapper. If it was more raw like Ozzy's earlier work, this would be a much worse album.

Trivia - Bad English AND Journey's Deen Castronovo does the drums on this album.

Strong Tracks - "Perry Mason," "I Just Want You," "See You on the Other Side," "Ghost Behind My Eyes," "Denial," "My Jekyll Doesn't Hide"

"Eh..." Tracks - "Thunder Underground," "Tomorrow," "My Little Man," "Old LA Tonight"

Weak Tracks - NONE

Rating: ***1/2

1997 - The Ozzman Cometh

This compilation is quite excellent, but, in the end, it's the horrible Sabbath demo tracks that hurt this album. That room could have been saved for the notably missing such as "Flying High Again," "Perry Mason," and "Suicide Solution." The new track, "Back on Earth," is a nice addition to the Ozzy catalog as well. If one is looking for a good introduction, you probably will want to opt for one of those unofficial The Essential releases.

Rating: ***

2001 - Down to Earth

Blah! This album was released around the start of The Osbournes. To me, it seems like "Ozzmosis 2," and you know how sequels can go sometimes. If nothing else, "Gets Me Through" is a memorable song because the lyrics pretty much sums up most of the career of Ozzy Osbourne. "Dreamer" is a great ballad, but it sounds like it belongs more on a Journey album rather than an Ozzy album.

Overall, this is a mediocre effort, at best.

Strong Tracks - "Gets Me Through," "Facing Hell," "Dreamer," "Black Illusion"

"Eh..." Tracks - "No Easy Way Out," "That I Never Had," "Alive," "Junkie"

Weak Tracks - "You Know," "Running Out of Time"

Rating: **1/2

2002 - Live at Budokan

This is a horrible live album. After Tribute and Live & Loud, this is a huge disappointment. It was obviously slapped together to take advantage of The Osbournes success.

Song Selection - Thirteen songs? Only thirteen fucking songs? Not only that, but not even a great selection. Outside of Down to Earth, which this tour was promoting, the songs that don't belong are "Believer," "Road to Nowhere," and "I Don't Want To Change the World." What notably is absent are "Goodbye to Romance," "Flying High Again," "Suicide Solution," "Miracle Man," and one of the hits on Ozzmosis should have been stuck on there.

Sound Quality - The biggest problem is the mixing on the album. I've heard amateur bootlegs better than this. Ozzy's vocals tends to echo like you were in the nose bleed section of an arena with shitty acoustics. Its only positive is that Zakk Wylde's guitar squeals sound great.

Artist Performance - It was okay, but I can attribute it possible exhaustion as Ozzy was a rather busy man at this point.

Bottom Line - Pass this piece of garbage up. Get Live & Loud or Tribute instead.

Rating: *1/2

2005 - Prince of Darkness

This is a box set of demos, rarities, b-sides, live performances, and covers. Overall, it is a good compilation for completists only.

Disc 1 - Demos, Live Performances, and the 2002 Remastered Versions of some of Ozzy's earlier hits.

Disc 2 - See Disc 1

Disc 3 - Collaborations. Best disc in the entire set! For one, you have Primus's fabulous

cover of "NIB," that I think is actually better than the original. Could have really done without the Miss Piggy collab, though. Instead, how about "Close

"My Eyes Forever" with Lita Ford? It was a pretty big hit at the time and should have been on this disc!

Disc 4 - Covers. Some good. Some

horrible.

I emphasize for completists only.

Rating: ***

2005 - Under Cover

This is basically 9 of the 10 covers from Disc 4 of Prince of Darkness with 4 more covers thrown on there.

I like cover albums, if they are done right. A good cover takes a great classic and reinterprets it for a whole new generation to listen to... giving it a fresh new sound without losing the magic and mystique of the original. Some of my favorite covers ever are Disturbed's versions of Genesis's "Land of Illusion," KoRn's version of Floyd's "Another Brick in the Wall", Johnny Cash's version of Nine Inch Nails' "Hurt" and Marilyn Manson's version of "Sweet Dreams."

Sadly, none of that magic is found here.

Some of these songs, I am a genuine fan on, but they are totally butchered in these covers. For example, "Sunshine of Your Love" is my favorite Cream song pretty much ever. Here, it doesn't even get close to matching up with the original. The production values here rival William Hung's debut album.

This is karaoke night with Ozzy. The only real positive here is Jerry Cantrell's guitars and that's about it. Stay away from this one at all costs... unless you're a

collector.

Strong Tracks - "Mississippi Queen"

"Eh..." Tracks - "Go Now," "Working Class Hero," "Sympathy For The Devil," "21st Century Schizoid Man"

Weak Tracks - "Woman," "In My Life," "For What It's Worth," "All The Young Dudes," "Sunshine Of Your Love," "Fire," "Rocky Mountain Way," "Good Times"

Rating: **1/2

2007 - [Black Rain](#)

This was Ozzy's first studio album with original material in over half a decade. It was also the first album that Ozzy Osbourne created while remaining completely sober. It turned out really well, too. It doesn't touch his three best albums, but its much better than many of his other efforts.

Strong Tracks - "I Don't Wanna Stop," "Trapdoor," "God Bless the Almighty Dollar," "Not Going Away," "Black Rain"

"Eh..." Tracks - "Countdown's Begun," "Silver"

Weak Tracks - "Lay Your World On Me," "Here For You"

Rating: ***3/4

In conclusion, there are no arguments that Ozzy is one of the greatest artists of our time. Some might say that he should retire. I more would like to quote Ozzy's latest hit, when it comes listening to the legend, "I don't wanna stop."

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