

# SKEPTICAL MINDS

## Khàrôn! REVIEW

I haven't had much time with a lot happening over the festive period to listen to bands, which I haven't come across before. Well, Skeptical Minds stumbled into my lap!

Here's a little history.

Skeptical Minds were formed in 2002 as a female fronted melodic, metal, electro, industrial band. I really don't like giving bands specific genres as I feel it can sometimes limit their appeal and stunt their growth to branch out and try new things. I do hear all the genres mentioned in the sound of the work they have produced.

As female lead vocalist we have Polish born Karolina, Benjamin on drums, Adrien on Bass and Michalis providing guitars and the electro sequencing.

I can find an impressive eight releases on their discography, with their first demo "First Experiment" released in 2004 to their new album "Khàrôn" which is the second release in their "Omega Thanatos" trilogy. Before we delve into a journey with Greek Ferryman it is also worth mentioning that this trilogy will have comic book accompaniment's and they do not disappoint.



### 1. The Awakening.

I start off the album with "The Awakening" this song is beautifully put together. The track opens with gentle strumming and a slow melody which increases in pace. Benjamin joins in with the drums, and then Karolina on vocals starts. There is a balanced ethereal feel to this track. The vocals remind me of a softer version of Floor Jansen from Nightwish. There is nothing over powering in this track and everything is balance from the instruments and vocals. We are hit with beautiful harmony, with the lyrics

"Wish I would know, where should I, Should I go" emphasising the feeling of being lost.

Around 2 minutes 40 seconds the track gets slightly heavier and incomes a forceful guitar rift. I listen to some albums and one instrument can over power vocals and other instruments. This track is perfectly balanced showcasing all the artists talents. "The Awakening" is so peaceful and serene, I can't wait to see the contrast between the other tracks in the album.

### 2. Desert

The open of this track has a distinctly different feel to "The Awakening" yet echo's the same sense of lost and dream like ethereal, feel as it. More talents are on display as the opening show cases some great electro vibes. The drums then kick in and the baseline is subtly in the background powering away, driving the song along. The vocals are spot on and the lyrics do progress the story from "The Awakening" with "Its is just me, who sees all, an illusion of faith". Around the 2 minute mark, there's a very pleasant instrumental section. This track is very easy to listen to and the four minutes plus of it fly's

by.



# SKEPTICAL MINDS

## KHARON REVIEW

### 3. The Old man

There was an echo of the opening of "Desert" in this track with the electro aspect and the drums. This track so far is the heaviest in terms of drums and guitar. I maybe only three tracks in but so far I am enjoying being able to listen to everything be synchronised and instruments not drowning out the vocals, everything can be equally appreciated.

The vocals are not as soft as the previous track but by no means are they harsh. Between the two verses there's an interesting sound I can't decide if its instrument made or vocal in nature. It adds a different dimension to the track, maybe its The old man? Throughout the lyrics and by the tone of the vocals you can sense a feeling of confusion.

### 4. Compass

The opening to this track has some distorted vocals and singular drums which give is a spooky feel. Then the drums and guitar starts up. The vocals in the beginning feel upbeat although the lyrics are quite dark, "Silence here, I feel I am near. Sun went down is dark around"! Although the track sounds very repetitive it's not in a bad way and feels a natural repetition and not forced. We come to an instrumental break with a prevalent guitar part that isn't too over powered by the drums. The whole track has a very cinematic feel to it. The vocals do tone down during the track and mid way through do appear less upbeat. "Compass" makes me imagine someone searching almost like a game of hide and seek.



### 5. Cocoon

Musically wise this was my favourite track so far. The opening was reminded me of Linkin Park with it's nü-metal feel. I felt the instruments did slightly overpower the vocals and there wasn't the balance which the other tracks had between all components. The vocals did work well in the several sections where they were distanced and let the instruments come to the forefront of the track. I did feel that the lyrics were repetitive on this track and it wasn't necessary. The tracks so far have all had repetitive lyrics but they haven't felt repetitive, maybe the repetitiveness is getting to me or it may have just stood out more, even with the different arrangement in the third verse and chorus (first verse repeated). I am still enjoying the album, these are just my thoughts and opinions.

# SKEPTICAL MINDS

## ~~KHARON~~ REVIEW

### 6. Reunion

This track starts with a nice slow pace of strumming building up the opening, when the other instruments come in. The ethereal feel comes back with the vocals and the arrangement is beautiful. There's a different feel to this track much like the earlier ones on this album. Through the track they are perfectly balanced instrumental breaks. "Reunion" does remind me of another song from a different band but I can't quite put my finger on it, if I do remember it but the time this is typed up I will add it. Without delving into the lyrics this does sound like a mournful love song, like someone who has been lead on. The chorus sounds slightly off key but I feel this works really well and does not sound odd. The instrumental ending does bring this track full circle with a great end.

### 7. The Key

This track opens with drums, then the guitars slowly come in. It feels like tension building in the instrumental parts. The lyrics and the vocals feel like a revelation. The full track is very dynamic, so much so I actually wrote this word thrice in my notes! The transitions between the verses and chorus are beautiful and kept me interested to hear more. Listening to the tracks in order this does sound very much like a major story progression piece. I am listening to the album for the first time, track by track, so I don't know if this is correct or not yet. The chorus is extremely catchy and I can imagine people singing along to it. The abrupt ending, fits perfectly with the vibe of the song.

### 8. Rebel

This track has a very different to the rest of the album so far. The opening gives me robotic, star ship vibes, showing an industrial edge. The track starts to have a progressive tempo, then bam drums and vocals come in together. The full track feels like a battle cry and a rally to arms with lyrics like, "Faith in justice we must have. If it falls, we're all dead". I do also like the EDM (electric dance music) metal feel to this track. I can imagine some gnarly remixes made of this track. The instrumental breaks were great and kept me engaged, I can imagine keeping any listener engaged. The vocals feel less classical than the other tracks but they are still beautifully mixed with the instruments in this track.

### 9. The Training

Oh wow the opening to this track is right in your face with an electro industrial feel. The guitars then decide to join and then comes some very cool rifts, simplicity is sometimes the best. I adore the use of the hi-hats in the next phase of the track. The vocals throughout the track were flawless, as they had been in all the previous tracks. The balance between the instruments and vocals are beautiful (becoming one word to describe the album) and all props to the production of the album, so far. The lyrics make me feel like vocalist is emerging as a new person or coming to some life affirming realisation. I do feel that the second verse could have had more pop if it had been spoken more than sung, then comes the end verse which is harshly whispered and it just feels so right to do that.

# SKEPTICAL MINDS

## KHÁRÔN! REVIEW

### 10. War is coming

The opening! It really feels like I'm beginning to listen to parts of "War of the Worlds". The drums are elegant, tribal and primal. The guitars come in heavy and strong with a really nice rift which will dance about your head. During the track the guitars subside and let the vocals shine through on their own which is a really nice touch. So far this is proving to be a great penultimate track to the album. The chorus really adds emphasis as it is spoken word. Then in-between, the vocalisation of the word "War" has an almost demonic feel. I do find the electronic elements between the verses and the chorus interesting and add dimension to an already great track. The album so far has had great storytelling. Some albums just show case the artists talents and some are a story to be followed, I feel this is the latter. There's a sense of urgency throughout the song especially with the fast pace of it. Sublime end with a little electronic rift.

### 11. The Path

"The Path's" opening is tranquil with guitars and, what sounds like gentle waves. This is very relaxing and very different to all the other tracks on the album. What a fantastic start to the last track. The drums crash in and the tempo is upped, then powerfully the guitars announce their presence. The second verse has a very darker feel with lower vocals. There is beautiful vocalisation between the verses which gives an extremely serene feeling, it has perfect harmonies. "The Path" has a cinematic feeling. This track reminds me of a song by Federal Empire. The end slowly fades out which is fitting and to me, signifies that more is to come.

Khárôn is a flawlessly produced album and well worth a listen as a stand alone or the second in the trilogy. You can get the album digitally at <https://skepticalminds.bandcamp.com/> with plans for a physical copy coming soon, so keep your eyes peeled on Skeptical Minds social media. The tags can be found below.



skepticalmindsband



skepticalminds

