



GRAND MAGUS

Sunraven

Release Date: 18 October 2024

Gatefold LP, CD, Digital Album

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|---------------------------|-------|
| 1. Skybound | 03:28 |
| 2. The Wheel of Pain | 03:23 |
| 3. Sunraven | 03:37 |
| 4. Winter Storms | 05:15 |
| 5. The Black Lake | 05:33 |
| 6. Hour of the Wolf | 04:02 |
| 7. Grendel | 03:32 |
| 8. To Heorot | 03:00 |
| 9. The End Belongs to You | 03:22 |

TOTAL RUNTIME: 35:12 MIN

Not every band can be 100 percent authentic and true. Not every band has the necessary cojones to summon the spirit of heavy metal. But **GRAND MAGUS** are not every band. A trio of windswept warriors, driven by belief in the power of this ageless music that so many of us consider a real world lifeline, they return in 2024 with glad tidings of heroism and valour.

Over the course of 25 years, the Swedish trio have established themselves as stoic standard bearers for heavy metal in its purest, most triumphant form. From their early years as honorary combatants in the doom scene, **GRAND MAGUS** have grown in confidence and stature with every passing year. Initially signed to legendary UK imprint Rise Above Records, they released acclaimed albums like 2003's *Monument* and 2005's fiery breakthrough opus *Wolf's Return*, and garnered effusive plaudits for live shows that always resounded with the thump of metal's beating heart.

Later signed to first Roadrunner and then Nuclear Blast Records, **GRAND MAGUS** have marched on through the decades with their now trademark sign a continual benchmark for red-blooded heaviness. Bulging with fresh anthems, albums like *Triumph & Power* (2014) and *Sword Songs* (2016) took the band to new heights, as their status as a thunderous, rabble-rousing live band continued to grow. In 2019, ninth studio album *Wolf God* put the seal on a second decade of active service, and **GRAND MAGUS** set off on tour as 2020 dawned; only to be confronted with a worldwide Covid shutdown that might have even spelled the end for Stockholm's finest.

"We recorded 'Wolf God' in November 2018, and released it in 2019," says singer/guitarist JB. "We went on tour in early 2020, and then the pandemic hit us. We were on tour when it happened. For me, a lot of things just ground to a halt. The whole heavy metal music business thing was like a wheel and we were in it. We did albums, we toured, we played festivals and then every two years we made a new album. That whole thing just stopped, so I dropped out! I went back to listening to AC/DC! [Laughs] It wasn't the case that we started writing new music. We thought that maybe that was it, you know? I wasn't interested in doing streamed concerts from our rehearsal space, because that's not the reason I started playing heavy metal or listening to it!"

Prevented from doing the thing they love the most, **GRAND MAGUS** retreated into the shadows for a while. Inevitably, the call of the heavy metal heartbeat soon brought JB back into the fold.

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“Last year, 2023, we just said that, hey, we wanted to make a new album and to just concentrate on writing music, and then to record it” he says. “So that’s what we did. I guess by then the inspiration and the hunger had returned!”

When work finally began on the tenth **GRAND MAGUS** album, JB made tentative steps towards something bigger and better than past achievements. With a final deadline waiting at the end of 2023, he began to piece together some ideas in January, slowly forming the backbone of what would become the new **GRAND MAGUS** album, *Sunraven*. After reconvening with bassist Fox and drummer Ludwig Witt in Halmstad, Sweden, the new songs swiftly came to life.

“We’d get together over weekends and jam,” recalls JB. “I’d present my ideas and we’d try out different things. We maybe did that six or seven times, and by September or October we had some pretty advanced sketches of the whole record. As soon as I have a few proper skeletons or ideas that get me excited, the rest is easier to write. It takes a long time to get to that point but when I finally have that, it’s all systems go. You need a dagger to punch a hole into the idea of what an album is supposed to be.”

Not just the tenth **GRAND MAGUS** full-length, but their first bona fide concept album, *Sunraven* is a full-bore return to the heavy metal might of *Wolf God* and *Sword Songs*, but with an underlying story that adds greater depth to the Swedes’ earthy bombast. Made manifest via a gritty but grandiose production courtesy of the band and co-producer Staffan Karlsson, *Sunraven* was inspired by the revered Old English epic poem of Beowulf. In true heavy metal style, these nine new songs dive deep into heroic fantasy, but with the same real world resonances that are scorched into the genre’s calloused skin.

“The album is about Beowulf and Grendel. In essence, Sunraven is Beowulf, and that’s my own invention,” JB explains. “But some of the songs are written about and from the perspective of Beowulf, and some of the songs are written about and from the perspective of Grendel, the monster he faces in Denmark. That kind of steered me and carried me through the lyrical process this time. I’ve never done anything like this before. I’ve always been fascinated by that tale. These myths and legends are about all the basic things that we sing about – life, death, glory, dishonour, love, hate, overcoming difficulties, facing impossible opposition and so on.”

As showcased on album-opener ‘Skybound’, **GRAND MAGUS** return with more fire in their collective belly than ever before. An album with great diversity and sizzling dynamics, *Sunraven* is also a testament to the unpretentious power of a balls-out heavy metal band, with nothing but passion for the cause in their hearts. Meanwhile, nothing beats a great story, particularly when it has such a kick-ass soundtrack.

“‘Skybound’ is obviously a song about death, and going to Valhalla,” JB intones. “That’s where Beowulf ended up in the end, because after he defeated Grendel and Grendel’s mother, he was king for 50 years! Then his lands were plagued by a dragon, and by this time Beowulf is fucking ancient, but he’s still mean as a snake. He goes against the dragon and he manages to kill the dragon, but he’s mortally wounded in the process. He’s sky-bound, you know? These are all my own ideas about this. I used the myth as starting point for my own ideas and imagination.”

Itching to return to the road, to further spread the metal gospel, **GRAND MAGUS** have ensured that their comeback will be an explosive one. *Sunraven* takes the band’s music to a new level of cinematic boldness and heroic abandon, with numerous new anthems that the faithful are destined to embrace with enthusiasm. Still flying the flag for purity of intent in a cynical world, **GRAND MAGUS** are weather-beaten veterans on the hard road to heavy metal glory. Dragons beware. Judgement is coming.

“Since we never did this fully professionally, as our sole source of income, we’ve never been forced to do anything and so everything we’ve done has been out of passion,” JB concludes. “So I think it has been easier for us to retain the excitement of doing it, with the bonus that it seems that there are a few other people who like

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it as well! The ultimate goal is to be able to project the joy and sense of power that heavy metal has always meant to me. That's the real aim of what we've been doing all these years."

GRAND MAGUS - Discography:

Grand Magus (2001)
Monument (2003)
Wolf's Return (2005)
Iron Will (2008)
Hammer Of The North (2010)
The Hunt (2012)
Triumph And Power (2014)
Sword Songs (2016)
Wolf God (2019)
Sunraven (2024)

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