

Mp3 Menchen - Red Rock

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Masterful melodic hard rock/metal featuring Bill Menchen on guitars (TITANIC, FINAL AXE, SEVENTH POWER), Robert Sweet on drums (STRYPER), Ken Redding on vocals (HIS WITNESS) and Tony Franklin on bass (WHITESNAKE, THE FIRM, QUIET RIOT). 10 MP3 Songs in this album (37:51) !

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Style: Hard Rock/Metal Songs: 10 tracks Booklet: 6 panel full color insert with lyrics ABOUT THE ALBUM

The album is truly a collaboration of the most talented players in the metal scene. Bill Menchen (Titanic, The Seventh Power, Final Axe) dominates as a master on guitar, Robert Sweet (Stryper) handles drums, Tony Franklin (Whitesnake, Quiet Riot, The Firm) is one of the world's most sought after and recognizable bassists, and vocals by the ultra-talented His Witness lead singer, Ken Redding all work together to create this stunning masterpiece! RED ROCK does a great job of building off the influences and former bands of these great players, while coming up with something inventive. "MENCHEN has its own unique sound so I find it difficult to nail down direct comparisons" (AngelicWarlord. com). With stunning artwork by Finland's Jan Yrlund, complex yet melodic hooks, and soaring vocals this new masterpiece is sure to delight fans of Dio, Sacred Warrior, Barren Cross, and Rush. "Red Rock" features some of the finest work from Bill Menchen to date and should challenge for album of the year" (AngelicWarlord. com). Key Selling Points - All the fans of players already in this band poised to buy a new release - Full Radio / Magazine Promotion - Featured on new Headbanger's 201 CD sampler - Featured on Heaven's Metal CD sampler fall 2008 Tracks: train crossing noon sun a salt mine ashes and dust forty shifting sand time to ride snowy plain wild wind blows desert rain ANGELIC WARLORD . COM It was the fall of 2007 and Retroactive Records owner Matt Hunt asked guitarist Bill Menchen to record a second The Seventh Power album. And while you are at it, Matt added, Why dont you also put together an instrumental CD with Robert Sweet. Unduly inspired, Bill proceeded to throw together some new material and, once Robert had finished tracking the drums, recruited Tony Franklin (Whitesnake, Blue Murder) to handle bass guitar

duties. After Matt heard what the three had come up with in the studio, he could not help but say This is too good not to have vocals. So the search began for a singer with the end result being Ken Redding (His Witness). With its final line up in place, the new four piece unit decided upon the moniker Menchen at the suggestion of Matt before putting the finishing touches on its fall of 2008 full length Retroactive debut Red Rock. What we have in Menchen is straightforward hard rock with the occasional groove, blues, metal and funk overtone. No, this might not be as consistently heavy as the artists recent efforts with The Seventh Power (Dominion Power) and Titanic (Full Steam Ahead), but if you enjoy early 90s Bride, Die Happy, Red Sea and the V-Rats then Red Rock is certain to appeal to you. Those into the various projects in which Bill Menchen has participated and by no means am I inviting a direct comparison should find a lot to like here as well. Red Rock, for a lack of better words, features some of the finest compositions from Bill Menchen to date. And nowhere is this better evident than on mid-paced pieces Noon Sun, Forty and Time To Ride (great hooks on these three) along with the equally tempered groove of Shifting Sands and ploddingly creative Snowy Plain. An upbeat direction is taken on Train Crossing (catchy hook here as well) and Wild Wind Blow (nice use of organ made on this one) while Desert Rain delivers a refreshing touch of the progressive. When taking into consideration the talent at hand - Ken Redding, Bill Menchen, Robert Sweet and Tony Franklin Menchen can best be described as an all star project. Lets start with Redding. Red Rock finds him singing in a lower register when compared to his work on His Witness debut Kingdom Come (recorded in 1988). No, he has not lost any range over the years but, rather, brings a higher level of maturity, as demonstrated in the command and control he exhibits throughout the project. If anything, Redding sounds like a cross between Jimmy Brown (Deliverance) and Eric Clayton (Saviour Machine) but with a touch of Geoff Tate thrown in. Yes, the guy is that good. Menchen makes his presence felt as well, particularly his penchant for delivering biting guitar riffs again, Red Rock has more of a hard rock feel as opposed to metal but certainly is not without its share of muscle while occasionally interweaving things with touches of quietly played guitar. He displays his blinding lead work as well (such as on Train Crossing and Noon Sun) while even showcasing a bluesy side to his playing (Time To Ride). Is there a more talented rhythm section than Robert Sweet and Tony Franklin? Sweet remains on top of things with the type of tight but technical showing one would expect of him, laying down a solid foundation of precision for the band to rest its sound upon. But it is Franklin who takes things to the next level. His playing, at times punchy and others jazzy, is always creative in cleanly

rising above the mix (which is testament to the album's crystal clear production values). To get an understanding of what Franklin brings to the table, imagine Ez Gomer (Jet Circus), Jim LaVerde (Barren Cross) and Pete Emms (V-Rats) rolled into one. Train Crossing gets things going with a bang, an energetic rocker highlighting a razor edged rhythm guitar sound and perfectly placed rumbling bass line. With its tasteful changes in tempo ranging from low key verse portions to an animated chorus as catchy as they get and sublime vocal presence of Redding, the song rates with the album's finest. Train Crossing touches upon the second coming: Clouds roll back and the sun shines down The old freight train is glory bound The Earth rumbles and the train arrives Those who believe it save their lives Hallelujah the train is coming The mid-tempo muscle of Noon Sun proves every bit as able. The song slowly fades in before charging ahead to a driving guitar riff bordering on the militant. Maintaining the steadfast momentum throughout its first verse, Noon Sun decelerates upon acquiring an ambient chorus in which the rhythm guitar fades to a backseat in the mix. The lyrics here are as every bit creative as the music: I need a drink, an everlasting drink Can someone save a dying man? Ive lost my way, I walk day after day Im wondering in the burning sand I walk along but I dont walk alone Cross every valley filled with sand Walk in the bright light See His star at night Can almost touch the guiding hand A Salt Mine delivers some of the album's heaviest moments. The song finds an edgy rhythm guitar at the forefront of the mix, creating an atmosphere that borders on the dominant in capacity. The rhythm guitar does not give way, however, until a plodding chorus underlined by an acoustic guitar is acquired. Menchen stands out with his bluesy work on lead guitar. Ashes And Dust heads in a straightforward hard rock direction. Featuring a brief but flowing chorus which immediately gets things going the song is driven from front to back by a powering guitar riff (backed by Robert Sweets technical presence on drums). Initiative does not taper until the song obtains a quieter passage, which soon gives way to an instrumental section featuring a blistering guitar solo. Job is the subject matter at hand: Shall we receive good and not evil? We shall receive from the hand of the Lord? Though He slay me Yet shall I praise Him What is man that God is mindful of Him? Who can counsel Him who laid The foundation down Where were you when all the stars Sang out loud? The dark and weighty Forty plods its full length to a pronounced low end. Redding adds a complementary low key touch to his delivery, best highlighting the swarthy environs with the deep harmonizing he adds to the song's first several seconds. The chorus, of course, is superlative in featuring just the right amount of gripping almost anthem-like appeal. Forty deals with Christ's temptation in the

wilderness: Forty days tempted in the wilderness Forty days going hungry Satan tempts make bread from stone Jesus says live by Gods word alone Tell me people whats your forty? Time of testing time of trial? Shifting Sand comes across in the form of a groove laden hard rocker. Stalwart would be the best way to describe the song as it muscles through its verse portions in establishing a contrasting lyrical environment: Last years political answer turns out to be a disaster Health food thats good for me turns out to give me cancer Movie stars who have the life end up being divorced in strife Turns out the home run king was doing that steroid thing A purposeful chorus, on the other hand, focuses on the One Rock to stand upon: One God who made us all One Lord saves us from the fall One Rock on which to stand In this world of shifting sand Franklins pronounced bass lines are really happening here as well. Time To Ride, with its tasteful changes in tempo, showcases some of the albums more creative moments. The song kicks in at once to an energetic guitar riff, spiritedly advancing through its first verse only to taper in a guttural manner for its bridge and near crawl for a catchy chorus sustained by a quietly played guitar. Beautiful. Menchen steps to the plate with a brief but bluesy stretch of lead guitar. Plodding, intense and just plain heavy, Snowy Plain proves four minutes of heavy duty metal with its snarling rhythm guitar sound. The song begins slow and driving only to gradually build momentum, peaking to a crescendo of hard hitting riffs before abruptly tapering to a near doom-ish crawl as pummeling drums decorate the backdrop. Inspired would be the best way to describe not only the music here but lyrics as well: I had to put on my shades This blinding light snowy plain so white Transfigured before my eyes Glorious white shining so bright And as the moon hung in the sky I stopped and stared should I say all night? The up-tempo Wild Wind Blows delivers a ton of groove. A touch of organ accents the song as it races its distance in establishing a frenetic scene, only briefly decelerating for a stylish chorus before regaining the lost initiative in unrelenting fashion. Menchen adds a run of bluesy lead guitar to a song based around John 3:8: Right now Im living way out in the desert But Im waiting for the wind to blow to make things better Up in the mountains down by the ocean Any way the wind blows thats where Im going Any where I go any where I go Any where I go is where the wind blows Desert Rain brings an inviting touch of the progressive. The song opens to a thunderstorm interwoven with a piano, calmly drifting until impetus abruptly builds as a hard rocking rhythm guitar takes over. Desert Rain proceeds to drive ahead with a ton of class the melody here is huge while Menchen wails away on guitar in the background. Things close in the way they began to a thunderstorm. The best way to sum up would be to state that Bill

Menchen, Robert Sweet, Ken Redding and Tony Franklin prove an unbeatable combination. When further factoring in the inspired songwriting and adept production values, Red Rock is certain to challenge for album of the year. A highly recommended first class work of art. Review by: Andrew Rockwell Track Listing: Train Crossing (4:12), Moon Sun (3:50), A Salt Mine (4:04), Ashes And Dust (3:34), Forty (3:50), Shifting Sand (3:41), Time To Ride (3:51), Snowy Plain (3:45), Wild Wind Blows (3:44), Desert Rain (3:24) Musicians Ken Redding Lead Vocals Bill Menchen Guitars Tony Franklin Bass Robert Sweet Drums SHAWN PELATA REVIEW Retroactive Records is getting a lot of mileage out of master guitarist Bill Menchen. What with Titanic and The Seventh Power releases already in circulation, both of which are headed up by Menchen, we are now treated to a new project under his own name. As stated, Bill Menchen is a fantastic guitarist and Classic Metal riff writer. This time around he enlisted fretless bass monster Tony Franklin (Blue Murder, The Firm) and former His Witness vocalist Ken Redding along with long time cohort Robert Sweet (Stryper) on drums. On a musical level, Menchen (the band) plays Classic Melodic Metal along the lines of early Dokken (albeit without the pop gloss) and Armored Saint. The performances turned in by the musicians are top shelf solid and skillful. Franklin makes his presence known with lots of tasty bass fills and runs. The soloing is, as always, impressive and just flashy enough. Sweet proves his mettle as well by showing off a little more than he normally does in his own band (opening cut Train Coming has some cool double kick work). Snowy Plain, Time To Ride, Noon Sun and Wild Wind Blows all sport driving, head-banging riffs with the latter even adding a little Deep Purple styled organ for atmosphere. The nimble riffing groove on Ashes And Dust is also quite cool. For his part, Redding is a good singer. Hes got a nice low-mid range tone and strong delivery. That said, though, he can be a little stiff at times and tends to overemphasize the posturing and vibrato here and there. But overall, he does a fine job. As with all of Menchens projects, the lyrics take on a strong Christian slant. Admittedly, its a little overbearing at times. I feel like a little more creativity could come in here stylistically as they come off a little too basic and sterile. But, again, the songs and the playing here are all quite good and make for a fine Metal release. If youre into 80s Metal, and the Christian message is either welcomed or not an issue, youd do well to dig into it. Shawn Pelata

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