

REVIEWS

ALICE IN CHAINS



The Devil Put Dinosaurs Here

[EMI]

“Hollow,” the opening track on AIC’s fifth album, is a fitting title for a band that conveys emptiness like no other. Though half the original lineup has succumbed to a shared demon—substance abuse—the enduring Seattle grunge group retains its distinctive sound. It’s almost as if late frontman Layne Staley has returned for the infectiously kinetic “Stone” and the title track’s foreboding harmony. While Alice goes unplugged in spots, guitarist Jerry Cantrell and company clearly haven’t mellowed with age. *Dinosaurs* comes loaded with dive-bombing guitar solos, demonic vocal climaxes and tempos that change at the crunch of a bar chord. “Phantom Limb” brings an almost Slayer-like heaviness, while “Lab Monkey” features some of the most distorted and guttural basslines perceivable to human ears. Lyrically, the album indulges those grunge leitmotifs of pain, entrapment and resignation. What makes it so enjoyable? After a quarter-century, AIC is entering a new prime. —Ray Cavanaugh

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