



*By Eric Betts - GJD Contributor*

It was a warm April night in New York City and the line outside of the Nokia Theatre was filled with long hair and leather. Tonight the Lords of Symphonic Progressive Metal, Symphony X, returned home with opening acts Into Eternity and Epica.

Extreme Progressive Metal band Into Eternity from Canada opened the show with an amazing set but were cursed by the venues poor acoustics. They played a mix of material from 2004's "Buried in Oblivion" and 2006's "The Scattering of Ashes." They ended their set with the song from their latest video "Endless Winter" and their latest single "Diagnosis Terminal." The band is currently promoting their upcoming album *The Incurable Tragedy*. Dutch Symphonic Goth Metal band Epica's lead singer Simone Simons was replaced by Amanda Somerville for the US dates of this tour due to illness. Sadly, the crowd seemed to not notice or care. Amanda did a great job though leading the band through an epic set.

It's 10:30 pm and the Nokia Theatre house lights go down as "Oculus ex Inferni" comes over the PA system. Lead guitarist Michael Romeo, Drummer Jason Rullo, Bassist Michael Lepond, and Keyboardist Michael Pinnella walk on stage. This elicits the crowd to begin chanting "Symphony, Symphony, Symphony..." The band bursts into "Set the World on Fire" (the lie of lies) and singer Russell Allen joins the band onstage. They continue non-stop through "Domination" and "Serpents Kiss," all off their latest album *Paradise Lost*.

Symphony X returned home to New York City on the third night of their North American tour to play in front of friends, family and a large NYC crowd of about 2000 people. The band took a short break after just finishing up a month long tour in Europe and seemed pumped up and ready for the US dates promoting their latest album *Paradise Lost*. The band played an awesome set containing new material and many old fan favorites. The highlight of the show was when the band played an extended version of "Through the Looking Glass." They also played "Masquerade," which they seldom play live. The band played a flawless energetic set.

Even though I've seen Michael Romeo play live a bunch of times, his abilities never cease to amaze me. His technique is full of speed and extreme accuracy. His phrases are always very melodic. His high gain tones are to die for. I also love how he plays the classic solos from the CDs, note for note, but he also mixes it up with some improvised ideas as well.

For encores they did blistering versions of &quot;Eve of Seduction&quot; and &quot;Of Sins and Shadows&quot;. Oh, and I almost forgot to mention that earlier in the show they even busted out a Led Zeppelin cover, which was amazing.

All in all, it was an awesome show even though the sonic footprint of the venue seemed more fitting for a bass thumping rap show. All the bands did great jobs and I can't wait to see them the next time around. If you are a fan of metal or even a fan of great music, you need to go see Symphony X next time they come around. In my opinion, they are in a league of their own.