

# Soundgarden: New Metal Crown - An In-Depth Exploration



## Soundgarden: New Metal Crown by Chris Nickson

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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In the annals of grunge and alternative metal, Soundgarden's "New Metal Crown" stands as a towering monolith, a potent fusion of heavy riffs, haunting melodies, and introspective lyrics. Released in 1999, nearly a decade after the band's breakout album "Superunknown," "New Metal Crown" showcased Soundgarden's evolution and maturity, solidifying their status as one of the most innovative and influential bands of the era.

## Musical Origins and Creative Process

The genesis of "New Metal Crown" can be traced back to the mid-1990s, when Soundgarden embarked on a hiatus following the intense touring cycle of their previous album, "Down on the Upside." During this break, frontman Chris Cornell pursued solo projects, while guitarist Kim Thayil and bassist Ben Shepherd explored various side ventures. Keyboardist Matt Cameron remained active, contributing to Pearl Jam's "Yield" album.

In 1998, the band reconvened in the secluded London Bridge Studio in Seattle, Washington. Armed with a wealth of new musical ideas, they began experimenting with heavier and more complex compositions. Drawing inspiration from classic metal bands like Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin, as well as the emerging nu metal sound, Soundgarden pushed their musical boundaries.

Cornell's lyrics on "New Metal Crown" reflected his personal struggles and introspective nature. Themes of alienation, isolation, and the search for meaning permeated the album, with songs such as "Rusty Cage," "Black Rain," and "Slaves and Bulldozers" delving into the complexities of the human condition.

### **Critical Reception and Commercial Success**

Upon its release on September 21, 1999, "New Metal Crown" received mixed reviews from critics but was embraced by fans worldwide. Some praised the album's ambitious scope and Cornell's raw and emotional vocals, while others criticized its darker and more introspective tone compared to the band's earlier work.

Despite the mixed critical reception, "New Metal Crown" achieved commercial success, reaching number 8 on the Billboard 200 chart. The album's lead single, "Burden in My Hand," became a minor hit, receiving airplay on both rock and alternative radio stations.

### **Legacy and Impact**

While "New Metal Crown" may not have garnered the same level of mainstream acclaim as Soundgarden's earlier albums, it has remained a cult classic among fans and critics alike. The album's influence can be

heard in the work of subsequent generations of metal and grunge musicians, including Mastodon, Stone Sour, and Alter Bridge.

"New Metal Crown" showcased Soundgarden's unwavering commitment to artistic exploration and their ability to seamlessly merge heavy metal with introspective lyrics. The album stands as a testament to their enduring legacy as one of the most groundbreaking and influential bands of the grunge and alternative metal era.

## **Track-by-Track Analysis**

Let's delve into each track on "New Metal Crown" and explore its unique qualities and lyrical depth:

### **1. Flower**

The album opens with a haunting instrumental piece, setting the tone for the introspective and brooding journey that lies ahead.

### **2. Burden in My Hand**

The lead single and album highlight features Cornell's signature introspective vocals and a driving, almost hypnotic rhythm section.

### **3. Tai Shan**

A slower and more atmospheric track, "Tai Shan" showcases the band's ability to create a sense of unease and tension.

### **4. Never Named**

A high-energy rocker with politically charged lyrics, "Never Named" reflects Cornell's concerns about the state of society.

## **5. Thou Shall Not Kill**

A blistering metal anthem that explores themes of religious hypocrisy and the dangers of fanaticism.

## **6. Black Rain**

A slower and more reflective track, "Black Rain" features Cornell's soaring vocals and poignant lyrics about loss and isolation.

## **7. Rusty Cage**

A powerful cover of Johnny Cash's classic, "Rusty Cage" showcases Soundgarden's ability to reinterpret traditional songs and make them their own.

## **8. Room a Thousand Years Wide**

A slower and atmospheric track, "Room a Thousand Years Wide" features ethereal vocals and experimental sound effects.

## **9. Slaves and Bulldozers**

A driving and intense rocker that explores themes of social and political oppression.

## **10. 7 Days**

A slow and introspective acoustic track, "7 Days" features Cornell's haunting vocals and lyrics about the passage of time and the search for meaning.

Soundgarden's "New Metal Crown" stands as a testament to the band's musical prowess and their unwavering commitment to artistic exploration.

While it may not have achieved the same level of mainstream success as their earlier albums, its impact on the grunge and metal scenes has been undeniable. The album remains a cult classic, showcasing the band's ability to merge heavy riffs, introspective lyrics, and experimental sounds into a cohesive and captivating musical experience.

"New Metal Crown" serves as a reminder of Soundgarden's enduring legacy as one of the most groundbreaking and influential bands of the grunge and alternative metal era. Their music continues to inspire and captivate fans worldwide, leaving an indelible mark on the history of rock music.

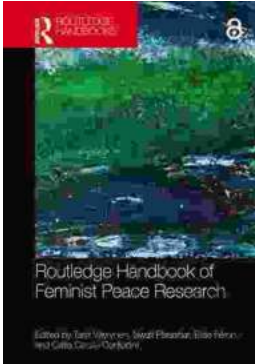


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