



Porcupine Tree: their metamorphosis from musicians into stars is now complete.

On a different Planet

'The first mandatory album purchase of 2007 has arrived.'

PORCUPINE TREE *Fear Of A Blank Planet*

Roadrunner

Last September, seven months ahead of release, Porcupine Tree introduced their British concert audiences to the six songs that comprise this, their eighth album. And boy did it pay off. After their London Astoria show, *Classic Rock's* review said the band had "metamorphosed from musicians into stars".

After 20 years of consistent artistic growth, *Fear Of A Blank Planet* makes the transition complete. A seamless complete piece of music, its 50-odd minutes can nevertheless be broken down into six smaller chunks. The title track is a mid-paced and hypnotic wall of sound. My *Ashes* begins slowly and mournful, overlaid with lavish orchestrations. Rush's Alex Lifeson adds a moving guitar motif to the 17-minute *Anesthetize*, the album's heaviest track.

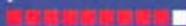
Continuing the dark mood *Sentimental* attempts to fill the shoes of somebody who wishes their life away; numbed by chemicals, apathetic and ambitionless. The theme of alienation continues with *Way Out Of Here*, punctuated by a swirling,



mesmerizing piece of guitar playing from King Crimson's Robert Fripp. *Sleep Together*, beautifully arranged as ever, seems to equate the finality of sexual congress with suicide, its ambiguity utterly beguiling.

With the release of *Fear Of*

A Blank Planet, the first mandatory album purchase of 2007 has arrived.



Dave Ling

Q&A with Steven Wilson

Would you be happy for *Fear Of A Blank Planet* to be described as an unashamed concept album?

That might have negative connotations for some, but not to me. It's a concept record in that it has a theme; but it doesn't tell a narrative-based story. In that sense it has more in common with [Pink Floyd's] *Dark Side Of The Moon* than it does *The Wall*.

Its title was loosely inspired by Public Enemy's *Fear Of A Black Planet*.

Back in the mid-80s, their title was a politically themed and pertinent statement. In the early 21st century, to my perspective at least, ours is also relevant. Because it's a play on words, some might think that I'm being flippant. But I'm not.

In a nutshell, what is the album about?

It's written from the perspective of a kid growing up with all the usual distractions - the internet, PlayStations, X-Boxes, iPods, mobile phones, prescription drugs. It's also about the way that the younger generation listens to, downloads and discards music, as a microcosm of modern life.