**SOULKEEPER – *HOLY DESIGN* BIO**

Following Soulkeeper’s recent signing to Pure Noise, the Minnesota band’s debut album—which was first self-released in May 2023—is getting a reissue, and for good reason. It’s now been a year and some change since *Holy Design* originally came out, and the intensity of its nine songs, as well as the twists and turns they take over their 25-minute run time, is just as potent, overwhelming and surprising as ever. Every time you listen to these songs, it feels like there’s something new to be discovered—so it’s only fitting that it now has the opportunity for more people to discover that fact than were able to when the band first put it out themselves.
“I’m very excited about it,” says guitarist (and primary songwriter) Scott Gilmore, “because we all put a ton of effort into the process of making it. I’m not saying I don’t think it got enough recognition, because I’m definitely grateful for how well it did, but we can only go so far by ourselves. So I’m glad it’ll get heard by a new audience. I think if people hear it and they’re familiar with the subgenre, they’re going to be a fan. We’re very excited for it to reach people it wouldn’t normally reach.”
Of course, in that time, the band’s relationship with the music has also changed.
“It feels old and new at the same time,” admits Gilmore. “Because although we’ve been focusing on newer stuff that’s scary, and trying to outdo this record, it also feels like it just came out and that it’s still just as fresh now.”
“I personally can’t wait to put it out for ten year anniversary edition!” quips bassist Edwin Melendez.

His tongue might be firmly in cheek, but *Holy Design* is an album that would absolutely warrant it. Though the roots of Soulkeeper go back to drummer Tom Jefson’s former band, which initially began with a different vocalist, it was when Eric Roberts joined as singer that the band became what it is today. *Holy Design* is the crystallization of their unfettered creative chemistry.
“Being the new face,” says Roberts, “I felt like there was lots of pressure for us to be something more than before, but I feel like it worked from the jump. Even just with “Gorgeous” there was a crazy jump, and then with *Holy Design* even more so.”
“As the founding members of the band,” says Jefson, “Scott and I agree that having Eric and Eddy step in was like a massive breath of fresh air. It was very revitalizing to not only work with other likeminded people, but people who share the same vision for the band.”
“I’ve been a huge fangirl of the band since day one,” says Melendez.
“And I was at the first Soulkeeper show as a fan,” adds Roberts.

That shared vision ultimately led to the creation of *Holy Design.* Experimental, chaotic and deliberately weird, the band’s math/metalcore hybrid is infused with unexpected musical left-turns and unlikely electronic and industrial flourishes, which combines with Roberts’ incredibly visceral—and often corporeal—imagery to devastating effect. The result is a series of songs that make you wonder if what you just heard is actually what you just heard, something that not only makes you want to play it again immediately but makes these songs powerful and unforgettable in equal measure. In fact, they shake the genre to its core. Yet while it all sounds incredibly effortless and cohesive, it was born out of careful and deliberate construction over a number of years.
“When I'm writing lyrics,” explains Roberts, “I like to make it like you can see it if you're reading along, and it tickles your senses outside of just listening to it. While I've been in bands before, I'd never been writing as much as I am with this band, and I wanted the first thing we put out to be the best that it could be. I think that's partly why it took so long—there are versions of those songs with completely different vocal structures and lyrics that we just completely abandoned. Anything artistic that we're putting out, I want it to feel like you're experiencing it through all the other senses that you have, and I want the lyrics to make you feel like you’re in the exact moment that the person writing it was in. With anything we put out, I want it to not just be a flash in the pan experience for someone, but something that really has the power to stick with them for as long as possible.”

And so, from the pummeling opener that is the title track through to the finale of the aforementioned “Gorgeous”, this is indeed an album that grabs you by the ears, heart and, aptly, soul, and shakes all of them relentless until it’s over. Whether that’s the frenetic, unhinged fury of “Time Out Of Mind” or the self-recrimination of “Heavy Glow”, the no-holds-barred sonic and lyrical extremes of “Hyperfine Transition” or the relentlessly punishing heaviness of “Sweet Vitriol”, this is a record that very deliberately seeks to break free of any preconceived notions of genre or expectation and just relish in the sheer delight (and, occasionally, abject terror) of creating without limits and outside of convention.
“There was kind of a switch,” says Gilmore, “between before I started writing this album and after. Before, I wanted to write songs that sounded like bands that had inspired me. But with this album, I wanted to write what I would personally listen to, not what I thought the community would want to listen to. That was a big motivation.”
“I feel like our music absolutely stands out compared to a lot of the bands out there doing it now,” says Jefson, “and I really want people to fall in love with the vision that we're sharing.”

Here's to that ten-year anniversary edition, then.