Nordic Spotlight, ”Svier” single review 22.05.2019

Finnish quartet Samoaja describes itself as an “alternative folk” band, but if its single “Svier” is any indication, this classification sells the group short. The despair and coldness that Samoaja cultivates across “Svier” are far more incisive and bitter than most alt-folk bands could dream up. Wanderlust, adventure, and drama pervade the band’s anxiously shuffling arrangements, which could have only been made in the wintry heart of Finland.

Only at the outset of “Svier” does Samoaja come off as an alternative folk band. The track opens with broad strokes of a guitar that’s been likely been tuned down three half-steps, and the studio effects applied to this guitar make it sound as though it’s slowly emerging from under the thin ice atop a frozen Finnish lake. When the band’s vocalist first appears about 15 seconds into the song, a percussive backbone begins to coalesce, and at the base of this drum pattern is a subtly, slowly swelling element that gradually drags Samoaja out of the folk space entirely.

The chorus of “Svier” is a swirling masterpiece of falsetto vocals and piercing electric guitar ambience. Throughout this refrain, Samoaja sounds both like it’s falling rapidly in a bottomless pit and as though it’s finally reached some zenith toward which it had been climbing in its intro and first verse. It’s as disorienting as it is intrepid.

‘‘Svier” often hinges on such dizzying melodrama. The song’s first two lines, “I finally got sick of it all/I woke up to a warning call,” immediately paint Samoaja as a unit capable of sensationalizing its emotions. After images of falls from great metaphorical heights, unfamiliar homes, and “shallow reflections concealed in fear,” the band peaks on lyrical affectation during the song’s chorus: “I rush through the mirrors/they shatter in my arms.” No wonder it sees itself as an alternative folk band even though it’s clearly so much more: It has no way to look at itself.

Kaaoszine, **concert review 03.10.2019**

The second act of the night, Samoaja, is currently working on their second full-length album, which is going to be released next year. Last spring the band did a massive tour in Europe and that is excactly what you see in their presence on stage – they were like at home. The band known for their atmospheric and ecstatic folk rock cherised their audience with their energetic and devoted performance. ”Mountain” was as robust as it's name and ”Spoke” was mesmerizing. Before playing ”Svier” the band let the crowd decide whether they would do a slower version or a more high tempo one, the crowd chose the latter, as one could guess in this atmosphere.

The previous Samoaja concert I witnessed was a great experience and this one achieved the very same. The fine compositions and strong professionalism weren't the only things that made an impact. The fact that they pour their soul into their performance and love what they do, can be seen to the audience.

Other mentions:

”Samoaja's popfolk sounds very familiar and new at the same time. The country vibes are just right in this kind of atmosphere.” **- Ylöjärven Uutiset 2017**

”Samoaja has international potential” **- Bassoradio 2016**

”Landscapes”, Album of the week 2/2018 – **Radio Dei 2018**

”Samoaja is a very unique band that I am very proud to host and invite them to play their amazing music” **- Cafe PitStop Idestup 2018**

”Check out 'Drifter', amazing tune by Samoaja” **- Indie Music Dimension 2018**

”Samoaja, awesome!” **- MiniPub, Kuopio**

”Melodic, easy and so natural. Samoaja's music will take you through stories, through memories, little nostalgic, little melanchollic, but so soulful and beautiful” **- FAQ Riga**