

= Blood (OSI album) =

Blood is the third studio album by American progressive rock band OSI , released by InsideOut Music on April 27 , 2009 in Europe and May 19 , 2009 in North America .

Guitarist Jim Matheos and keyboardist and vocalist Kevin Moore started work on the album in 2008 , collaborating by email . Matheos would send Moore a song idea which Moore would edit and send back to Matheos . Mike Portnoy of Dream Theater , who performed drums on Office of Strategic Influence and Free , was replaced by Porcupine Tree drummer Gavin Harrison on Blood . Matheos played bass guitar on the album , having hired guest musicians to perform bass duties on the first two OSI albums . Mikael Åkerfeldt of Opeth and Tim Bowness of No @-@ Man wrote lyrics and performed vocals on one track each .

Critical reception of Blood was generally positive . The more atmospheric and ambient tracks were praised ; the more metal @-@ oriented tracks received mixed reactions . Moore 's lyrics and Harrison 's drumming , in particular , were met with acclaim .

= = Background = =

On September 4 , 2008 , keyboardist and vocalist Kevin Moore posted a news update to the official Chroma Key website . In it , he stated that he had been working with guitarist Jim Matheos on a third OSI album " for several months now , slowly but surely . " Moore later stated that with OSI , he and Matheos " usually play it by ear . We never really know if we 're going to do another OSI , we never agree on it . I don 't remember ever agreeing to start a new one , really . But Jim will send me an idea or something and we just start talking about it . "

Blood was written and recorded in the same way as the first two OSI albums . Matheos and Moore worked together on the album long @-@ distance , mainly by emailing each other files . Matheos would send Moore song ideas , " from just a guitar riff to elaborate , almost completed songs , " Moore said . " Then I ask what I can do , and I mess around , complete a verse and add a chorus , do editing , add some vocals , and send it back to him . "

Moore considered the writing of Blood to be harder compared to previous OSI albums . Previously , Matheos would send Moore guitar parts to work with , allowing Moore to " work with editing them , pitching them , and fucking about them different ways , and then programming drums and keyboards . " When working on Blood , Matheos also provided programming , keyboard and drum parts . " If he sent me stuff that already had drums and keyboard parts , and it wasn 't a complete idea , I had to figure out a way to elaborate on it without having that same equipment that he has there , " Moore said . Overall , he considered the writing process to be " smoother because we got on a roll and we 're more fluid together " .

Mike Portnoy of Dream Theater played drums on Office of Strategic Influence and Free , but found the experience frustrating . Moore regarded Portnoy 's contributions to the first two albums as " great " , but he and Matheos decided to recruit a different drummer for Blood . " We were continuing to try to get new voices involved with the album " , he explained . Matheos , a fan of Porcupine Tree , was in control of personnel on Blood and asked Porcupine Tree drummer Gavin Harrison to perform drums on the album . Harrison had a schedule gap in the fourth quarter of 2008 , so agreed to work on the album . He never met Matheos and Moore , recording his drums parts in his recording studio in England and exchanging files with them over the Internet . Most songs were sent to Harrison with programmed drums . " For the most part , we usually told him to try to stay away from the programmed drums and come up with his own parts , and he did . So much of that is his taking it in a different direction , " Moore said . " There was probably at least one song , maybe two , where we said ' We 'd like you to keep closer to the programmed drums , ' but he had a lot of say in what went on . " Matheos and Moore were " very happy " with Harrison 's work on Blood , and hoped to work with him on the fourth OSI album . Blood marked the first time Matheos played bass on an OSI album instead of recruiting an outside bassist .

Matheos asked Opeth vocalist and guitarist Mikael Åkerfeldt to write lyrics and perform vocals on one track , which would become " Stockholm " . Matheos and Moore sent him the track they wanted

him to work on , and he sent back a rough mix of his vocals . " We were really happy with it , " Moore said . " We didn 't do any revisions or ask for any changes , like we were expecting to ... It was a different approach than I would have taken , and that 's what was refreshing about it . That 's why we wanted to get somebody else to do some vocals on the album . " Tim Bowness of No @-@ Man wrote lyrics and performed vocals on " No Celebrations " , a bonus track .

= = Music = =

Moore regarded Blood as " [distilling] the OSI vibe that we 've been going for all along with this album " . He noted that there was " conflict " due to his and Matheos ' different musical tastes , " but it 's not a personality conflict . It 's a musical conflict where we want different things to happen and have to work it musically . " Moore considered this conflict to be " pretty much the only thing that makes OSI relatively original . If it was just one way or the other , like the singer @-@ songwriter stuff , electronic music or progressive metal , there 's a lot of people doing those things already . "

Moore stated that he found writing songs which combined progressive metal and electronic music easier than writing songs confined to one genre . " There 's people who do that better . Working with the two genres , they 're different enough from each other ? almost natural enemies ? that it keeps it interesting , " he said . " It doesn 't feel like being in conquered territory , it feels like there 's still room to explore . There 's always conflicts between the two writing elements that keeps it interesting . "

When writing lyrics for previous releases , Moore would " start mumbling and I try to figure out what I 'm saying and then try to make it make sense " . With Blood , he " really wrote them down and tried to make them coherent . I didn 't want it to be like ' Oh , you get your own impression of the lyrics . Everybody has their own idea ! ' I wanted to have an idea that I wanted to communicate , and something communicable . " Moore noted that he did occasionally use his " mumbling " method as it " puts you in the right direction as far as sounds , vowel sounds , and stresses on certain syllables . And if you can write some words and lyrics that match that , sometimes it flows really well . " He described all the songs as based on " personal experiences " . " I 'll start writing a song that has a little bit of a world view or political view or something , " he said , " but then by the time I 'm finished the lyrics it 'll be about a relationship or something like that . "

Matheos recorded his parts in Pro Tools using a FocusRite Saffire PRO 40 preamp . Matheos primarily used PRS guitars and Mesa Boogie amplifiers . Moore used Ableton Live to write music and record his vocals . The only keyboard he used was a Minimoog Voyager .

= = Release and promotion = =

Blood was released by InsideOut Music on April 27 , 2009 in Europe and May 19 in North America . Matheos and Moore unsuccessfully tried to organise a tour in support of Free . " We sort of disappointed people by saying that we were trying to making [a tour] happen and we wanted to make it happen , " Moore said , " so this time we 're not going to say that stuff . " Moore stated that OSI would remain a studio @-@ only project " until further notice " .

The special edition of Blood came with a bonus disc featuring three extra tracks . Tim Bowness (of No @-@ Man) wrote lyrics and performed vocals on the first song , " No Celebrations " . The second track is a cover of " Christian Brothers " by Elliott Smith . The third track is " Terminal (Endless) " , an extended version of the regular CD track " Terminal " . " It still has something interesting drum stuff where Gavin just plays steady beats with variations on it , " Moore said . " We had some mercy on the album version , but on the bonus CD , we don 't have any mercy and we just let it go . "

= = Reception = =

Critical reception of Blood was generally positive . Writing for Blogcritics , Marty Dodge praised the album as " jaw droppingly impressive " , considering it to " [have] the potential to be up there in top

albums of the year " . Andrew Reilly of MadeLoud lauded Blood as OSI 's best album , although considered other individual songs from the band 's catalog to be stronger than those on the album . Alex Henderson of Allmusic regarded Blood as " an album that falls short of earth @-@ shattering but is still solid and worthwhile " .

Reilly described Blood as " fully mastering the techno @-@ informed brand of progressive metal so many others have pursued to no avail ... with Blood the two have finally found the stylistic fusion their first two discs hinted at " . Henderson described the sound of the album as " Pink Floyd and King Crimson by way of Radiohead , Nirvana , grunge , alt @-@ metal and alt rock . "

Reilly lauded Moore 's lyrics , describing them as closer to his work in Dream Theater and Chroma Key than on the first two OSI albums . " Moore turns conventional phrases ... into thinly @-@ veiled warnings to some unknown subject , " Reilly commented . " OSI has long been Moore 's avenue for exploring the political as the personal , but here those two subjects fully cannibalize each other which , given this group 's past efforts and considerable talents , would not at all be an impossible intention or unforeseen consequence . " He praised Gavin Harrison 's drum performance , describing it as " phenomenal " . He considered " Stockholm " and " Blood " to be the highlights of the album . Dodge praised " Radiologue " as " stunning " .

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics written by Kevin Moore , except where noted , all music composed by Jim Matheos and Kevin Moore , except where noted .

Special edition bonus disc

= = Personnel = =

Jim Matheos ? guitar , bass , keyboards , programming

Kevin Moore ? vocals , keyboards , programming

Gavin Harrison ? drums

Mikael Åkerfeldt ? vocals on " Stockholm "

Tim Bowness ? vocals on " No Celebrations "

Produced by Jim Matheos and Kevin Moore

Mixed by Phil Magnotti , Jim Matheos and Kevin Moore