

= Octavarium ( album ) =

Octavarium is the eighth studio album by American progressive metal / rock band Dream Theater . Released on June 7 , 2005 , it was the band 's final release with Atlantic Records . Recorded between September 2004 and February 2005 , the album holds the distinction of being the last album ever recorded at The Hit Factory in New York City . With Octavarium , the band decided to create " a classic Dream Theater album " , drawing upon their various stylistic influences while trying to make the music less complex . The album takes as its creative concept the musical octave .

Octavarium peaked in the top five in the Finnish , Italian , and Swedish charts , and in the top ten in the Dutch , Japanese , and Norwegian charts . Critical reception of the album was generally positive ; the diversity of the music was praised , although critics found some of the songwriting to be inconsistent . Dream Theater promoted the album on a year @-@ long world tour , with the majority of concerts lasting almost three hours and featuring a different setlist each night . The tour finished at Radio City Music Hall accompanied by an orchestra ; this performance was recorded and released as a live album and concert video entitled Score . They co @-@ headlined the 2005 North American Gigantour with Megadeth .

= = Background = =

After completing a North American tour supporting one of their main influences , Yes , in summer 2004 , Dream Theater took a two @-@ month break . The band reconvened at The Hit Factory in New York City in November 2004 to begin work on their eighth studio album . The Hit Factory , a studio in which artists such as Michael Jackson , Madonna , Stevie Wonder , U2 and John Lennon had recorded , was earmarked for closure . Dream Theater was the last band to record there before it was permanently closed .

After writing the concept album Metropolis Pt . 2 : Scenes from a Memory , the double album Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence and the metal @-@ focused Train of Thought , the band decided to create " a classic Dream Theater album " . Keyboardist Jordan Rudess described it as " really going back to creating a real band effort , as well as drawing upon all our various stylistic influences . " On Octavarium , the band wanted to make the music less complex , featuring songs which Rudess regards as " quicker to appreciate " , although noted that the twenty @-@ four @-@ minute " Octavarium " was not as accessible . Guitarist John Petrucci noted that they wanted to focus on writing strong songs . To achieve this , the band stripped the sound down to piano , guitar and vocals when writing , focusing on the melodies and song structures .

Drummer Mike Portnoy dismissed claims that Octavarium was an attempt to write a more commercial album , stating that the band simply " [ has ] that side to [ them ] . We love bands like U2 or Coldplay , as well as liking shorter songs as well . " Portnoy noted that , after writing Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence and Train of Thought , they had not written an album of shorter songs for some time . He said that the band had found writing longer songs easier than writing shorter ones , and that the band was not trying to write a radio hit as " the label wouldn 't have done crap with it anyway . "

The band had previously written an orchestral @-@ style piece in the form of " Overture " on Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence , but recorded it using keyboards . The tracks " The Answer Lies Within " , " Sacrificed Sons " and " Octavarium " marked the first time Dream Theater worked with an orchestra , conducted by Jamshied Sharifi ( who studied at Berklee College of Music at the same time as Portnoy , Petrucci and bassist John Myung ) . The orchestra was selected based on their sight reading ability , allowing all their parts to be recorded in a maximum of two takes , even though they had never seen or played the music before .

Sharifi would later go on to conduct the Octavarium Orchestra on Dream Theater 's Score album .

= = Concept = =

When starting to work on what would become Octavarium , Portnoy noted that it would be their

eighth studio album and that they had recently released their fifth live album , Live at Budokan . This sequence mirrored the octave on a musical keyboard : each octave contains eight naturals and five accidentals . Portnoy suggested that they use that concept for the entire album . When writing , the band delegated each song a different key . Sound effects were placed between songs to connect them : for example , " The Root of All Evil " , written in F , and the following track , " The Answer Lies Within " , written in G , were connected by a sound effect in the key of F # . The album 's lyrics and song titles featured references to this concept . Portnoy cited the titles " The Root of all Evil " ( referring to the musical term " root " ) and " Octavarium " ( " the octave of the octave " ) as two examples of this .

Octavarium begins " The Root of All Evil " with the final note of the band 's previous album , Train of Thought with " In the Name of God " . Train of Thought started " As I Am " with the last note from Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence with the title track , which in turn started with the noise that ended Scenes from a Memory at the end of " Finally Free " . Portnoy was inspired to do this thanks to the Van Halen album Women and Children First ; the outro of the album 's final song ended with a new riff being played which faded out . Portnoy recalled that he expected Van Halen 's next album to start with that ending riff , but was disappointed when it did not . He later realized he had " dug a hole where we 're expected to do it every time " . He solved this problem on Octavarium , where the final track ends with the beginning of the first one . This made the album a cycle in itself , allowing the band to have a clean start with their next album . At 04 : 52 ? 5 : 17 , there is a lyrical and musical reference to the chorus of " This Dying Soul " from Train of Thought .

= = = Content = = =

" The Root of All Evil " is the third part of Portnoy 's Twelve @-@ step Suite , a set of songs from various Dream Theater albums which describe his journey through Alcoholics Anonymous . The song contains parts six and seven of the suite : " Ready " and " Remove " . " The Answer Lies Within " and " I Walk Beside You " are the two shortest tracks on the album . Rudess regards them as radio @-@ friendly songs which still maintain Dream Theater 's style .

Portnoy wrote the lyrics to " Never Enough " as a response to fans who Portnoy perceived to complain about every thing that Dream Theater did . Portnoy stated that while he appreciated the devotion of Dream Theater 's fans , he was frustrated because he was " constantly tearing [ himself ] away from [ his ] family " to give more to the fans . He found it discouraging that , even though he spent " countless nights " writing special setlists and the band spent days rehearsing , some fans would still complain that they went to a show and did not hear " Pull Me Under " . " It 's discouraging and makes me crazy sometimes , " he said .

" Sacrificed Sons " , at just over ten minutes long , is the second @-@ longest song on the album . Its lyrics , written by vocalist James LaBrie , deal with the September 11 attacks . Rudess noted that the band enjoyed writing about more serious topics instead of love songs . When working on the lyrics , LaBrie said that there was " a lot of discussion " about the song 's wording and how direct it should be .

The title track " Octavarium " is the longest track on the album , at 24 : 00 . Petrucci stated that the band wanted to write an epic song that thematically developed and would use an orchestra . The band was heavily influenced by the progressive rock sound of Genesis , Yes and Pink Floyd . The instrumental introduction , heavily influenced by Pink Floyd 's " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " , was performed by Rudess using a lap steel guitar and Continuum . Additionally , there are many references to other progressive rock songs in the lyrics .

= = = Artwork = = =

Hugh Syme provided the artwork for Octavarium . The idea of depicting a giant Newton 's cradle was born out of discussions between Syme and Portnoy . The two talked about how " for everything you do in music you create either a cluster or triad " , according to Syme . " And then it became evident that for every action there is an opposite reaction . So I thought we could do something

based on the Newton 's cradle . " There are numerous references to the numbers five and eight throughout the artwork , alluding to the album 's concept . For example , the Newton 's cradle has eight suspended balls , and there are five birds on the cover . The album booklet features an octagonal maze , spider and octopus , among other references . The landscape on the cover is made up of a sky and grass from Indiana , and a background from the Lake District .

= = Release = =

A week before the scheduled release of Octavarium , Portnoy shut down the official Dream Theater and Mike Portnoy forums . Blabbermouth.net reported that this was in response to the album being leaked . Portnoy stated that " [ he ] chose to do this mainly [ emphasis removed ] to build anticipation for the big ' official ' unveiling next week " , although noted that " the repeated requests to refrain from spoilers and links for the new album against the band 's wishes were frustrating " .

Octavarium was released on June 7 , 2005 . It was their final album with Atlantic Records , ending a contract which had lasted fourteen years . Although in recent years the band had been allowed creative freedom , they were dissatisfied by the lack of promotion the label offered them . Portnoy released a DVD entitled Drumavarium in 2005 , containing footage of his drum performance from the Octavarium recording sessions . Rudess released a solo piano version of " The Answer Lies Within " on his 2009 album Notes on a Dream . " Panic Attack " is featured as a playable song in Rock Band 2 , where it is listed as the hardest song for both bass and drums .

= = = Reception = = =

Octavarium reached the top five in the Finnish , Italian , and Swedish charts , as well as the top ten in the Dutch , Japanese , and Norwegian charts . Critical reception of the album was generally positive . Writing for Blistering , Justin Donnelly praised the album as " diverse , melodic and hard hitting all at the same time " , ranking it as one of Dream Theater 's best releases . He particularly praised the title track , considering it to be " another Dream Theater classic " . Billboard considered the results of the band 's attempt to write shorter songs and use warmer instrumental textures to be " excellent " , particularly praising " The Root of All Evil " , " These Walls " and " I Walk Beside You " .

Harley Carlson of MetalReview.com regarded Octavarium as " successfully [ showcasing ] the band 's ability to craft emotive music , " although noted that it is " unquestionably Dream Theater , yet there is something missing . " Vik Bansal of musicOMH praised " Never Enough " , " Panic Attack " and " Sacrificed Sons " , but dismissed " The Root of All Evil " as " Dream Theater by the numbers " . He criticized " Octavarium " as " bloated " , although noted that fans of the band 's A Change of Seasons would enjoy it . He said that " there 's enough on the remainder of Octavarium to keep the rest of us interested and the prog rock haters whining dismissively " . Writing for Exclaim ! , Greg Pratt praised the album 's artwork and production , but said that " there ? s nothing that blows any minds here , or even gives a mild bend ; hell , a good chunk of this disc feels like basic radio rock from the local old @-@ guy bar band " . He noted that although there were some longer songs on the album , " this just feels like 76 minutes of overdramatic rock , too heavy on the light and weak , and not enough time spent on just showing off " .

Donnelly considered Octavarium to be " somewhere between Images and Words , Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence and Train of Thought " . Carlson stated that the album " draws closest comparison to Falling into Infinity and Metropolis II : Scenes from a Memory , but with far less complexity and edge . " Tammy La Gorce of AllMusic noted that " a post @-@ hardcore edge - call it a leap into 2005 - has invaded [ the band 's ] pledge of allegiance to theatrical heavy rock ... What 's changed is Dream Theater 's commitment to carrying on their reputation as underground progressive rock 's classicists , and it seems well @-@ timed . " Critics noted a strong Muse influence on some tracks , on some cases generating negative reviews .

= = Touring = =

Dream Theater began the Octavarium Tour in support of Octavarium in Europe on June 10 , 2005 , beginning at the Sweden Rock Festival in Sölvesborg . The band co @-@ headlined the Gigantour with Megadeth across North America from July 21 to September 3 . The Montreal concert was recorded and released as a live album and concert video on August 22 , 2006 and September 5 , 2006 respectively , titled Gigantour . The main Octavarium world tour began in September in Finland , and saw the band continue with their " An Evening With Dream Theater " concert format . This meant the band would play for almost three hours , with a different setlist each evening . Many of the shows would center around a tour of the band 's history to that point , featuring a song ( or part of a longer song ) for each album before wrapping up the regular set with several from Octavarium Combined with interviews , rehearsals during soundcheck and meet @-@ and @-@ greet sessions with fans , the band became physically and mentally drained .

Dream Theater performed two shows on consecutive nights both in Amsterdam and London . On the second night in both cities , the band covered the entirety of Pink Floyd 's The Dark Side of the Moon album . Theresa Thomason , who had previously performed on Scenes From a Memory , was flown in to perform vocals on " The Great Gig in the Sky " . The London performance was released as a live album and concert video in 2006 by Portnoy 's YtseJam Records . The band covered all of Deep Purple 's Made in Japan at concerts in Tokyo and Osaka ; a recording of which was also released as a live album by YtseJam Records in 2007 .

To celebrate the band 's twentieth anniversary , the final concert on the tour was performed at Radio City Music Hall in New York on April 1 , 2006 . For the second half of the concert , the band was accompanied by a thirty @-@ piece orchestra conducted by Jamshied Sharifi . The concert was filmed and released as a live album and concert video named Score on August 29 , 2006 by Rhino Records .

= = Track listing = =

All music composed by Dream Theater .

= = Chart positions = =

= = Personnel = =

Additional personnel