

= Systematic Chaos =

Systematic Chaos is the ninth studio album by American progressive metal / rock band Dream Theater . Released on June 4 , 2007 in the United Kingdom and June 5 , 2007 in the United States , Systematic Chaos was the band 's first release through Roadrunner Records , which was sold to their previous label Atlantic Records , through which the band had released their previous studio album Octavarium (2005) . The album was recorded from September 2006 to February 2007 at Avatar Studios in New York City , after the band 's first break from summer touring in ten years . The lyrics of the album were written by John Petrucci , James LaBrie , and Mike Portnoy about fictional , political , and personal topics , respectively .

The album peaked in the top twenty in eight countries ' sales charts ; in addition , the album peaked at the nineteenth position on the Billboard 200 , making it the highest peaking Dream Theater album in the United States until the release of Black Clouds & Silver Linings (2009) , which debuted at the sixth position . Critical reception of the album was generally positive ; Jon Eardley from MetalReview.com called the band , " arguably the most consistent band throughout the entire progressive rock / metal industry " .

Dream Theater promoted the album on their Chaos in Motion world tour , which lasted a year and spanned thirty @-@ five countries . The album was released in regular and special edition formats ; the special edition included a 5 @.@ 1 surround sound mix of the album , in addition to a ninety @-@ minute " making of " documentary about the album .

= = Background = =

After recording their twentieth anniversary concert , Score , on April 1 , 2006 , Dream Theater rested for its first summer in ten years . The band would reconvene at Avatar Studios , in New York City , in September 2006 . Mike Portnoy stated that the relationship between band members was " the best it 's ever been " . The band hired Paul Northfield , who had previously worked with bands that had inspired Dream Theater , including Rush and Queensrÿche , to engineer the album . As with previous albums , Dream Theater simultaneously wrote and recorded Systematic Chaos . Mike Portnoy and John Petrucci co @-@ produced the album ; Portnoy said that the band hires an engineer and a mixer to act as an " objective outside ear " , but the members ultimately " call their own shots " . Previous Dream Theater albums shared planned themes throughout , such as Metropolis Pt . 2 : Scenes from a Memory (1999) as a concept album or Train of Thought (2003) as a heavy , " balls to the wall " album . Though Portnoy had some preconceived ideas for Systematic Chaos , he decided not to tell the rest of the band ; leaving them to start with a " completely open palate " . However , Portnoy did want to retain a " cutting , aggressive , modern " mood throughout , " It had to have balls , " he added , " it had to be cool " .

The album was titled Systematic Chaos after Portnoy and Petrucci picked phrases from song lyrics that they felt would be a fitting title , in similar fashion to previous albums like Images and Words (1992) or Awake (1994) . The pair selected the word " chaos " , which appears in " The Dark Eternal Night " . Petrucci and Portnoy were also attracted to the phrase " Random thoughts of neat disorder " which appears in " Constant Motion " . Inspired by the " duality " of the phrase , opposites of the word " chaos " were discussed , resulting in the word " systematic " . Portnoy said that in addition to the album , " systematic chaos " is also a " fitting description of the band in general " .

= = Songs = =

John Petrucci wrote the lyrics for five of the eight songs on the album , telling a fictional story through each one .

= = = In the Presence of Enemies = = =

The first piece recorded , the twenty @-@ five @-@ minute epic " In the Presence of Enemies , "

was described by Petrucci as the " epitome of a Dream Theater creation " . He went on to describe the composition as " very progressive , very long " ; also noting that it set a good tone for writing and recording the rest of the album . Their longest recording since " Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence " , it was split into two parts , due to it having a good open and close for the album at the same time . According to Portnoy , the band felt it was too long to open the album , but did not want to close the album with a long song , as they had with the twenty @-@ four @-@ minute title track of their last album Octavarium (2005) . The songs are normally played together in their entirety in live shows . During recording , the work was titled , " The Pumpkin King , " and in the album 's booklet , the song is given a subtitle , " The Heretic and the Dark Master . "

The story of " In the Presence of Enemies " was inspired by a Korean manhwa named Priest , as Petrucci explains that not being a manga fan , precisely , " [...] I like it though . This one , I just stumbled upon and I really liked the content . It inspired me to take a different approach lyrically . You have to keep things interesting for yourself when writing new material so I just took this and ran with it . [...] Those types of lyrics are fun to write , you know ? The dark subject matter , the dark master stuff . It 's another way of writing , a fresh one to me . " He also summarizes the lyrics : " It 's a story about somebody who loses himself and end struggles with the darkness , symbolized by the Dark Master . And the story ends up really being the darkness within and goes through the different phases where he has to fight demons and things like that .

= = = Forsaken = = =

Petrucci said " Forsaken " is a story told through a " short song structure " . The song tells of a person who is visited at night by a vampiress . While the man thinks he is being taken away and being shown " wonderful things " , he doesn 't realize that the whole time he is getting his blood sucked , and is eventually taken , in the end , by the vampiress . An animated music video of " Forsaken " , produced by Gonzo and directed by Yasufumi Soejima , was released on January 26 , 2008 . The band allowed Soejima artistic freedom with the design of the video , which was set in a science fiction future instead of the present day . During the production of the album , the working title for this song was " Jet Lag " , and it was the sixth song to be written .

= = = Constant Motion = = =

" Constant Motion " was released as the first single from the album on April 27 , 2007 . It was first made available as a free download the same day by Roadrunner Records ; it could be found at Roadrunner Records ' Dream Theater sub @-@ website for a limited time . This song was also made available to download for the music video game Rock Band . The song is considered as one of the hardest songs available for the game on both Guitar and Drums . Its working title was " Korma Chameleon " , and was the second piece written .

Mike Portnoy said that since it was one of the more aggressive , more driving songs on the album , that the lyrics were very much a metaphor for his Obsessive Compulsive Disorder . With everything he does for Dream Theater as well as his life in general , that his " wheels are always in constant motion " , and that he 's always juggling many different projects or responsibilities for the band at the same time . So the lyrics are a representation for whats going on in his head on any given day .

The song was also accompanied by a music video , the first the band had produced in over a decade . The video clip premiered on July 13 , 2007 and was released as a free download , in two different formats , also for a limited time . The band had not produced a music video since " Hollow Years " from Falling into Infinity (1997) , citing lack of interest and lack of rotation on music channels for the latter . The video received considerable airplay on MTV2 's Headbangers Ball and was voted as the second best music video of 2007 by the same ; it is arguably Dream Theater 's most popular video since " Pull Me Under " in 1992 .

= = = The Dark Eternal Night = = =

Petrucci wrote the lyrics to " The Dark Eternal Night " about a pharaoh who has returned after dormancy as a monster to haunt a town . The lyrics are heavily influenced by the short story Nyarlathotep by American horror fiction writer H.P. Lovecraft , even borrowing a lot of specific phrases from this story . The song contains an improvised continuum solo , performed by Rudess while the drum tracks were being recorded ; the band members liked the solo enough to keep in the final recording . In the October 2010 issue of Total Guitar Magazine , its readers voted the main riff of " The Dark Eternal Night " as the fourth greatest riff of the decade . During the making of the song , the title was , " N.A.D.S. " (" North American Dream Squad ") and it was the fifth song to be written .

The sprawling , progressive midsection was not featured in the song 's original edit , but is based around a riff that Rudess came up with in the control room , when listening to the original , more conservative instrumental section . " I was debating whether or not I should even bring it up , but then I got brave and said ' You know , I 've got this weird idea . ' "

The Dark Eternal Night was the second of two songs released to the general public in advance of the album 's release , with an @-@ studio video being released to YouTube in May 2007 .

= = = Repentance = = =

Portnoy wrote " Repentance " as the fourth part of his Twelve @-@ step Suite , a collection of songs from various Dream Theater albums which revolve around his journey through Alcoholics Anonymous . The song discusses steps eight and nine of the process , which deal with making a list of people whom one has wronged and , if possible , making direct amends with them . Portnoy , who as of 2007 had been sober for 7 ½ years , invited friends and fellow musicians Mikael Åkerfeldt , Jon Anderson , David Ellefson , Daniel Gildenlöw , Steve Hogarth , Chris Jericho , Neal Morse , Joe Satriani , Corey Taylor , Steve Vai , and Steven Wilson to record spoken apologies , regrets , and sorrows of their own , which were featured throughout the song . Portnoy dedicated " Repentance " , " to Bill W. and all of his friends " . During recording , the title of the track was , " Fisheye " and it was the seventh and final song to be written . This saga is concluded in the band 's tenth studio album Black Clouds & Silver Linings with " The Shattered Fortress " .

= = = Prophets of War = = =

" Prophets of War " was written by James LaBrie , who based the lyrics loosely on Joseph C. Wilson 's book The Politics of Truth . The lyrics talk about possible ulterior motives behind the Iraq War , while remaining " middle of the road " . The title is a play on words , where the " prophets " of the war , could also be gaining a " profit " from the War . During the recording of the song , Portnoy suggested fans could voice certain lyrical chants . In response to a message posted on the band 's website four hundred fans gathered outside the recording studio to record the chanting , however only sixty could fit into the studio . The title of the track during recording was , " Carpet Babies " and it was the third song to be written .

= = = The Ministry of Lost Souls = = =

At 14 : 57 , " The Ministry of Lost Souls " is the album 's second longest track . Throughout the song 's lyrics , Petrucci tells of a person who dies in the process of saving a woman from drowning . However , the woman who is saved is filled with " regret and sorrow " until she is able to re @-@ unite with her rescuer . The title for the track during recording was , " Schindler 's Lisp " and it was the fourth song to be written .

= = Release and promotion = =

Both the regular and special editions of Systematic Chaos were released on June 4 , 2007 in the UK and June 5 , 2007 in the US . Over their seven album relationship with Warner Music Group ,

Dream Theater became disappointed at the lack of coverage they gave the band . " [...] Our previous label basically relied on our fanbase to do everything . [They would] put the money up for the record and put the CD in the shops , " said Portnoy . On February 8 , 2007 , Dream Theater reached an agreement with Roadrunner Records to release their new album . Systematic Chaos had nearly been written and recorded at the time of the signing . Ironically , Warner purchased Roadrunner Records a week after the band signed with them . According to LaBrie , Roadrunner followed through on all of its promises to the band concerning the promotion of the album .

Portnoy spent a month directing and editing a documentary titled Chaos in Progress : The Making of Systematic Chaos , which was released on the two disc special edition of the album . The bonus disc of the special edition also included 5 @. @ 1 surround sound mix of the entire album . Dream Theater supported the album by touring on the Chaos in Motion Tour from June 3 , 2007 to June 4 , 2008 . The world tour comprised 115 shows throughout thirty @- @ five countries . Multiple concerts were filmed for the band 's fifth DVD , titled Chaos in Motion 2007 ? 2008 . The compilation of concerts was released on September 30 , 2008 .

= = Reception = =

Critical reception for Systematic Chaos was generally positive . Writing for MetalReview.com , Jon Eardley called the album , " another solid outing " . He complimented Petrucci for " Constant Motion " , writing that it contains " some of the best riffs Petrucci has brought to the table " . In addition , he called the latter part of " The Dark Eternal Night " " the most brutal part in any song to date " . Reviewing for Metal Invader , Nikos Patelis called the album , " energetic , sharp ? edged , full of beautiful melodies and heavy riffs , long epic compositions " . He called Dream Theater 's instrumentalists " four masters of music that use their instruments as if they were their limbs " , in addition to stating , " James LaBrie sounds more mature than ever " . In conclusion , Patelis called Systematic Chaos , " an excellent album that needs many times to be listened in order to be digested " . Greg Prato , of AllMusic , wrote " [...] ' Forsaken ' proves wrong those who say that Dream Theater is all about instrumental gymnastics and not songwriting " . He also compared riffs in " The Dark Eternal Night " to the band Pantera . Overall , he states " [...] the quintet sticks to the prog metal game plan that they 've followed since their inception " . Reviewer Chad Bowar of About.com , wrote that " In the Presence of Enemies - Part I " is " an effective way to set the tone for the rest of the songs " . Overall , Bowar gave the album four out of five stars , calling it , " one of the best Dream Theater releases in quite a while " .

The album peaked in the top twenty @- @ five in the United Kingdom and Australia , where the band had never previously charted . In the United States , the album peaked at the nineteenth position on the Billboard 200 , making it the highest peaking Dream Theater album in the United States at the time of its release . Overall , Systematic Chaos peaked in the top twenty for album sales in eight countries . In the US , the album sold 35 @, @ 689 copies the first week it was released .

In 2014 , readers of Rhythm magazine voted Systematic Chaos the second greatest drumming album in the history of progressive rock .

= = Track listing = =

All music composed by Dream Theater .

= = = Special edition bonus DVD = = =

Complete album in 5 @. @ 1 surround sound
Chaos in Progress : the making of Systematic Chaos

= = Chart positions = =

= = Personnel = =