

## **Mastodon - Hushed and Grim**

by Cameron Greenway

It is no secret that the Atlanta, Georgia heavy metal beast known as Mastodon, has been on an absolute tear as of late. The quartet certainly isn't lacking any work ethic, that's for sure; producing consistently impressive studio albums alongside extensive touring. Like a fine, prog-rock psychedelic metal wine, the boys just keep getting better!

With their eighth studio album, Hushed and Grim, now out and ravaging the world, its gothic contents very well may be their most musically calculated and lyrically driven record to date.

Grinding out a lengthy 15 track double album that borders the 90 minute mark, Hushed and Grim stands as Mastodon's longest within their respective and versatile discography. Alongside its counterpart records, Hushed and Grim suitably fits into Masto's conceptually styled repertoire. Serving as a tribute to their former manager Nick John, who passed in 2018 due to cancer. What would be the loss of their friend would become the Atlanta collective's muse. Grief would be utilized as an artistic fuel for the mourning band...resulting in what may possibly be Mastodon's most significant and inspired release.

The album opens with a rapid drum succession and somewhat spacy introduction in "Pain with an Anchor". The shades of gray and gloom nuances are delivered immediately and subsequently rolls over into the second track. "The CruX" violently demands your attention with explosiveness across the board. With its aggressively charged vocals, partnered with meaty guitar riffage and impactful drum sequences. Lead by the room-filling, melodic balance of synthesizer and progressive yet sludge-like guitar, "More Than I Could Chew", administers an eerie and haunting number to an already established macabre album environment. Then there is "Pushing the Tides": the album's debut single release.

The controlled yet chaotic balance in which "Pushing the Tides" delivers is seemingly a merging of sounds. Mixing Mastodon's early sludge-like guitar and belligerent drums, with their presently refined progressive rock style. This track truly holds representative for the Mastodon tribe of old and tribe of new.

Hushed and Grim operates as an astoundingly skilled record as well as an immersive listening experience. Masterfully produced and composed with passion and storytelling in mind, Mastodon's melancholic masterpiece is the collective's new heart throb within their discography.