Brief history of metallica film studies essay

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Chapter 1: Introduction

An American heavy metal band from Los Angeles, California called Metallica emerges in the music scene in 1981. The aggressiveness, fast tempos and instrumentals showed them a place to the hall of fame and became one of the founding bands of the " Big Four" in thrash metal with Slayer, Anthrax and Megadeth. Metallica was formed after James Hetfield answered to an advertisement that was put up, by a drummer called Lars Ulrich, in a newspaper. From 2003 onwards though, except Hetfield and Ulrich, the line-up is structured by lead guitarist Kirk Hammett, who was called in the band in 1983 after Dave Mustaine left and Robert Trujillo in 2003, after the sudden leave of his substitute Jason Newsted who was a substitute of Cliff Burton after he died in a tragic accident. Metallica had also a long co-operation with Bob Rock who was their producer from 1990 to 2003 and also served as a

passing bassist since the parting of Newsted and the arrival of Trujillo. Metallica gained a huge amount of fans in the metal genre through their first four albums, with most important being the Master of Puppets (1986), which is still described as one of the most significant and heavy thrash metal albums ever made. The band also gained considerable commercial success after launching their fifth album as well, called Metallica (The Black Album) which was featured as number one on the Billboard 200. After the publication of that album, Metallica changed their musical direction and expanded their knowledge which led, as a result, to their next album that was directed to the more mainstream audience. Metallica was actively involved in the case against Napster, where in 2000; they were among the several artists that filed a lawsuit against it. Napster was sharing the artist's material, which was copyright protected, for free without the consent of any band or artist. This case came to an agreement, and now Napster is a pay-to-use service. Although Metallica's Black Album reached number one in the Billboards, in 2003, they released St. Anger, which alienated a lot of their fans because the album lacked depth. There were no guitar solos and the drums were annoying to hear as they produced a hollow, steel sound. Metallica, through its history, managed to release nine studio albums, five EPs (Extended Plays), four live albums, thirty seven singles and twenty five music videos. They also won nine Grammy Awards and five succeeding albums were featured as number one on the Billboard 200, making the first band to ever do that. The band has sold over 100 million albums worldwide, with the Metallica album selling over 15 million in the USA and 28 million copies worldwide, making it the 25th best-selling album in the country. In overall, Metallica sold a total of 52. 6 million albums in the USA alone as of

2009, making them the fourth best-selling artist. 2012 was the year that Metallica decided to form their own record label called Blackened Recordings in order to acquire all the rights of their studio albums. Metallica had many influences that formed their musical identity. They were mostly influenced by early heavy metal bands such as Led Zeppelin, Queen, AC/DC, Black Sabbath, Rush, Deep Purple and Aerosmith amongst others. Also, Iron Maiden, Diamond Head and Judas Priest, which were in the New Wave of British Heavy Metal made an impact on Metallica, as well as punk bands like the Sex Pistols, Ramones and the Misfits. At the beginning of Metallica, their music contained heavy riffs, fast tempos and consistent leads. In the words of Steve Huey (AllMusic), " Ride The Lightning" featured progressive and extensive epics which were tight and tight as they should be". He also states that Metallica managed to expand their technique and knowledge, and with the enormous range of the expression they have, they gave an even more aggressive approach in the following releases making them more epic. However, in 1991 and the addition of Bob Rock as the producer of Metallica, the band became more simplified in order to be more commercially acceptable so they can attract the mainstream audience. As Robert Palmer (Rolling Stone Magazine) said, " The band lost that aggressiveness, those fast, immense tempos, and their expression". But, this experiment proved to be rightful as Metallica’s album Metallica, reached number one in the Billboards. In Load, Metallica experimented with their music and focused more on blues and rock genres leaving any metal influences out as much as possible, thus changing their musical direction. This change can be also noticed through the lyrics. Hetfield now does not appeal on drugs and monsters but he focuses on retribution, on loss and on anger. As expected,

many fans and critics disliked the " new" Metallica music-wise but also their new look including the cover of Load and their haircuts! But Metallica released Re-Load which displayed even more blues and rock influences. Despite all the changes and problems in Metallica's life so far, they earned the respect of a lot of people and the majority of other bands. Jonathan Davis (Korn) says that Metallica is his favourite band and he comments that he loves the way that they changed things but keeping the Metallica core which is persevered over the years. Furthermore, Shannon Larkin said that Metallica was one of his biggest influences and as a band; Metallica changed his life (when he was 16 years old) as he never heard anything so heavy before. Trivium guitarists said that when they heard Metallica they wanted to start learning guitar. Avenged Sevenfold who toured with Metallica said that, that tour was the highlight of their careers. Many other artists have Metallica as an influence as Metallica was something different but yet so close to everyone.

Chapter 2: Metallica's debut: Master of Puppets (1986)

Master of Puppets was released in 1986, being the third album of Metallica. The first two albums, Kill ' Em All and Ride The Lightning were rock-solid thrash albums, which implied that Master of Puppets would not fall in a bell-curve. Master of Puppets has the essence of heavy metal and thrash at its peak. This is the last album where Cliff Burton was featured as he died later after a terrible bus accident. The album, which was about an hour long, was consisted of eight tracks, featuring immense riffs and unbelievable solos, making it a classic album. Battery is the first song in this album. It starts with an intro played by a classical guitar which, later on, is joined by another

guitar as the introduction continues. Several guitars join the intro and they all lead to the gist of the song. The intro is played once more but now the guitars are kicked in distortion. After the intro, one of those famous Metallica riffs comes into place and Ulrich steps up as well to move the song along. During this, a now much more improved James Heitfield, adds vocals to the song. As he sings the guitars pick up speed to enhance the meaning of the song. Suddenly, there is a break in which things start to slow down. A single guitar comes then, over the top, to play a bit. Then, Kirk does what he does best. He goes hard-core into the solo, shredding until the strings break in pain. Double bass from Ulrich is added now, when they enter the second riff until they go back to the verse. Again the guitar is speeding up and you can notice some final crashes and guitar strums which hint the end of the track. It is considered to be the best opening song for this album as it gives the audience and/ or listeners a taste of what potentials the other songs that follow may have. Master of Puppets is one of the classiest, thrash metal-of-all-time songs. Any metal fan can identify this song when the song starts. The great riff is played alone by a distorted guitar and it is consisted by the power chords of E, D, C# and C, and Lars adds some effects with the drums. After a few repetitions of the riff/intro, the guitar picks up the speed with another riff and the lyrics come in. It is reasonable to say that the lyrics of this song focus on the drugs being the " master" and people being the " puppets". After the verse, comes the chorus where intense lyrics are sung and the guitars are shredding the fret board. After that, the verse takes place with more riffs until all this leads to the first break of the song which is played by an acoustic guitar and it has some good melodic lines. Burton’s bass line adds a chilling effect to the whole essence. As the song heads to

the solo, Ulrich serves his purpose and deals with the upcoming greatness of a guitar solo. Despite, the solo is not a speedy one; one cannot argue that it is one of the catchiest and intense solos ever written. Ulrich then adds some toms, and at this moment James shouts out loud " Master! Master!" Chills go down your spine and the solo comes. A finger-blistering solo, with every member of the band giving their best to deliver one of the best solos ever written. After that intense solo, the verse comes back again and a final chorus follows, with some jamming among the band members, which leads to the end. James then adds some " evil" laughs and several voices as to emphasize the cruelty of the " Master". Welcome Home (Sanitarium). This song starts off with some of the most lingering and melancholy plucked strings, which, in turn, it leads to the main song. Ulrich introduces a rock beat when a small solo comes in place. Considering the lyrics, this song is about a Sanitarium as the title clearly implies. Heading to the chorus, the song picks up speed and power until they are well into the chorus where the heavy guitars do what they are meant to do. After the chorus ends, an interlude solo is played and it is so melodic that travels the mind of the listener. Another verse and chorus are played in the same fashion until a heavy riff is added and the song changes a lot. The guitar go faster and the drums heavier as James sings " Kill is such a friendly word…Seems the only way for reaching out again" which then leads to one of Kirk’s speedy solos, which is mainly consisted by the melodic line of the voice with some additions to it. Towards the end, is now noticeable the addition of dual riffs and double basses from Lars entering a second solo. Things then gradually get slow except Lars, who goes hard-mode for the end of the song. The Thing That Should Not Be is the next track in this album. Although this song is not

that bad, it cannot quite catch up to the other songs of this album. As an intro there is some deep, full of effects, notes and some hat notes from Lars. This leads to a stiff, down-tuned riff. With small variations this riff leads to the verse. This verse/ riff sequence goes almost all the way until the solo from Hammett is played. It is not one of the best he had done but it gives some " spiciness" to the song. There is then some more jamming and the song is back to the basic formula (verse/ riff). At the end of the song, there are some distorted fades which sound strange and uncomfortable. Next follows a war themed song named Disposable Heroes. It starts immediately with heavy riffing accompanied by tom hits and a lot of crashes by Ulrich. Carrying through, the song slows down a bit, but not for long, as the heave, speedy riff comes back again. This heads for the verse. Good lyrics are written which are complemented by fast guitar parts. A small solo comes which leads to the chorus. After this verse-chorus combo, the song comes into a slower break. After some vocal shouts by James, a solo goes for a while. Not too long, quite melodic and very heavy, giving extra credits to this song. Following the solo, there is the verse and chorus again with the same pattern as before. Several crashes by Ulrich and many repeated notes makes the listener believe that this song comes to an end but the band jam things out until they go to the riff for a short period of time and with some more crashes and a guitar melodic line they end the song. Leper Messiah is the name of the next song in this album. The track starts with a wandering bass not and through the countdown from five, of James; the band comes in in a dynamic way. The intro is repeated a few times and then the riff enters with Lars filling in with drums here and there. Right after the verses, the chorus comes with a bit of jamming from the band. Next, there is a break where

everything slows down and the guitar plays some high notes. Afterwards, the song picks up speed and Lars bursts into double bass and hammers everything in a real thrash fashion. There are some vocals here and then a remarkable solo. It is a quite short solo but after it is done, it leads to more jamming and quick riffs, again with Lars throwing double basses. Then after some jamming, you can here James shout and that is the point where the go back to the starting riff. Later on, someone says " That was it" notifying the others that this is the end of the song and after playing a few final notes they end the track. The instrumental track of this album follows. It is called Orion and it is considered to be the best instrumental ever played by Metallica. It carries a lot of musicality and the sound it outputs is phenomenal. The track starts with a fading in, distorted bass with Lars also fading in the sound of his drums. Then the guitars join with a powerful riff. Several riffs are played after that but they go back to the opening riff which is joined by a guitar which plays high-pitched notes. Soon a small solo takes place and then wails away. This leads to a slowing down and gradually getting quieter. There you can listen to a bass line emerging from the silence with a guitar accompanying it with some accents before the drums along with a long guitar note come. This combination is repeated several times without losing the interest of the listener. At this moment, the guitar picks up a steady rhythm alongside Cliff. Now the guitars start to build up until the solo. The solo is played on the bass by Cliff Burton. He kills it with a distorted bass making it the best part in this instrumental. After that, the track is back to the riffs over some quick drums until they all fade away into silence as they came in. Last but not least, the song titled Damage, Inc. Although it is more of a speed metal song, we can still categorise it as " thrash". The song begins with a fading in Wah effect

from Kirk. After the intro ends, guitar notes making up a riff, along with the snare, fade in. Lars starts to burst, picking up speed letting the other members of the band to jam a bit. Almost shouting James starts singing the verse. The speed is maintained as they enter the next verse. A whisper saying " Go" kicks Kirk into over-drive. Like a madman he abuses the strings with massive shredding. Then they return to another verse where Lars uses double bass and James still yells out the lyrics. The name of the song is then whispered, and with a few final notes from the guitar and some snare hits it all ends in complete silence. The main influence of the music in this album is none other than Cliff Burton himself. Ulrich quite often gives credits to Cliff who had an understanding of melody, time signature etc. that the others did not. He was, first of all, the only member of the band that took music lessons and studied theory which made an impact to the orchestrations of this album. This knowledge inspired the band and they progressed while Cliff was in the band. The fact that Cliff is considered an important contributor to the musical style of the band is not by chance. Each and every song in this album is amazing regarding its technique, progression and even the time signature in each song. Contrasting Kill ‘ Em All, Master of Puppets is not a meaningless beating. At the time Heitfield was battling with his insanity and addictions. " Welcome Home (Sanitarium)" delivers Metallica’s emerging flair for delicacy with the riffs rising into a marathon that Heitfield was struggling with. " Leper Messiah" and " The Thing That Should Not Be" gives a striking sturdiness, which is engaged by the agitated and burdened riffs so as to create a domineering but not overpowering atmosphere. Heitfield provides the album with the most perfect centrepiece, his ode to addiction, " Master of Puppets". The track alone stands for what the whole album represents; it

is daunting and brutal in every way, it has many layers as there are multiple changes to the texture and tone making the song overwhelmingly catchy. The title of this track sets the thematic scene of the song but of the album's as well. It can be shown through the lyrics that Heitfield is apparently a slave, a " puppet" to a disease called addiction, he seems powerless and incapable. The " puppet" though can be any one of the listeners, as the " master" emerges through the whole album. In " Disposable Heroes" there are those who possess high power and send men to their certain death, also there is the unknown creature in " The Thing That Should Not Be" that haunts us. Heitfield manages to capture the bitter vulnerability and put it into lyrics where Metallica did that through tones and music. By achieving this metaphor, Metallica gave the power and thoughts into the mind of their listeners as to find their own " Master". He may be your bass, a lover or a politician. This led the album to be one of the most emotional masterpieces and came to influence many metal albums that were made since. Yet it can be easily compared to Ride the Lightning album song for song and there are some similarities on the notes that they choose on each record. Although Master of Puppets is not as shocking as Ride the Lightning, it is certainly, musically and thematically, more unified. Every aspect of the album is magnified into epic proportions, not only the length of the songs but the whole message that Metallica want to deliver to us, and they seem to be more in control of how they are going to achieve that. The music in this album is unique and very much intense. All the riffs have some technical difficulties which it is noticed as I tried to play them. Metallica shows in this album that they are more mature musical-wise. A striking feature of this album is that all of the tracks are based on different tempos. To make it

more interesting, I compared Metallica with Dream Theatre on what tempo they choose to play each song in a specific album. Here we have Metallica's " Master of Puppets" in which the title track, " Battery", " Sanitarium" and " Orion" will be measured, where considering Dream Theatre we have the " A Change of Seasons" album which lasts as long as the " Master of Puppets", although only five songs are played here. The Master of Puppets song is measured to 215 BPM, Battery is played at 195 BPM, Sanitarium at 180 BPM and Orion at 126 BPM. Dream Theatre's Change of Season song is played at 88 BPM with most BPM peaking at 120, the Funeral for a Friend/ Love Lies Bleeding is averaged at 110 BPM with top speed being at 135 BPM, Perfect Strangers is at 110 BPM, the Led Zeppelin Medley is played at 138 BPM and lastly, The Big Medley is at least 60 BPM and at most 144 BPM. Comparing Metallica to Dream Theatre seems unfair not because they play different genres but their performing style is different as well. But, it is intentional why I chose these two bands. Dream Theatre is famous of making very long songs and they depend much of their songs to the instruments. Playing a long song, you have to make it interesting. Not only by inserting different themes and melodies, but altering the tempo as well. Dream Theatre does change their tempo a lot within a song. But taking into account the above numbers, (is the average speed of a song) DT seem to keep a " safe" tempo in their songs, between 90 to 120 BPM. Where Metallica are not afraid to play (fairly) slow songs at 120 BPM, but they are surely not scared of those high speed riffs and solos measuring the solo of Master of Puppets at 220 Bpm! Therefore, Metallica manage to keep this album intriguing and memorable. As for the solos, in this album Kirk keeps his virtuosity from the two previous albums, delivering us a very constructed and striking show of his skills. It is

noticeable that he uses the Wah pedal quite a lot, especially in " Disposable Heroes" and " Sanitarium". What is worth mentioning is that Kirk was influenced a lot by Gary Moore. The influence was so strong that Kirk inserted a variation of a lick that Gary Moore played, as the opening lick for the Master of Puppets' solo. " I remember the first time hearing his blues album and just getting totally blown away – not only by the playing but by the sound of it too, his tone. And I remember being so inspired that I wrote a couple riffs just based on his sound and his feel."

Chapter 3: Metallica as a heavy metal band: Load (1996)

In 1995, the band took over 30 demos into The Plant Studios where they would work on their next album for the next year. The producer was Bob Rock who first met the band during the recording process for Metallica (a. k. a The Black Album, 1990). After the Black Album, which was a huge success, this album arrived five years later. Load was so different than the pre-Black Album period. It was recognised and identified as more of a heavy metal album which was so different from Metallica's thrash roots. It all started in Ulrich's basement studio, nicknamed " The Dungeon", where Lars and Hetfield would write demos to make the fourteen songs that eventually would be added to the album. The song writing in this album is so different than all the other albums that they made so far as the sound and lyrics have evolved since the beginning. Instead of the famous staccato riffs, Hammett and Hetfield decide to experiment with different styles, based more from the blues genre, both the tones and style. There is a noticeable change to Ulrich's drums as well, as he preferred now a more minimalistic approach to his whole drum playing, giving up those speedy and complex patterns, e. g.

double bass, and made peace with much simpler styles and techniques. A change to the lyric writing is quite noticeable as Hetfield went through a lot of things in his life, which is demonstrated in some songs. For instance, the song " Until It Sleeps", it is dedicated to his mother after she lost the battle with cancer. Also, " Mama Said" gives us an inside of James' relationship with his mother. These lyrics are considered to be the personal and introspective lyrics of James Hetfield. Previous albums which exploit the social and political overtones are now a thing in the past. Load is the first album that all of the tracks were down tuned to E♭ tuning. Although Metallica did down-tune before in several tracks of their previous albums, such as " The Thing That Should Not Be" from Master of Puppets, the " The God That Failed" which was on The Black Album and the " Sad but True" which was further down-tuned to D, this album was the first that the band was told by Bob Rock to down-tune all of the songs. Metallica, through this sudden change of styles, lost a big percentage of their fans as Metallica are no longer a thrash band, which they loved from the very beginning. Metallica became somewhat mainstream. They shorten their hair, made a new " sparkly" logo and with the cold sound of the Black Album all this gave a destructive feeling towards their fans. Nonetheless, Load gives out a whole new sound between somewhat hard rock and heavy metal with some experimental features, which in the world of Metallica, is quite fresh and original. The first song, " Ain't my Bitch" has a good riff, appealing rhythm and very aggressive vocals, as Heitfield likes to sing. The second track though is a whole different story. Slower riffs are put into place and the lead guitars give a bluesy feeling, reminding the listener of Black Sabbath. The next track, " The House Jack Built", is quite original regarding Metallica's standards. It gives out a looming

atmosphere, frightening lyrics and possessed wah effects. Ain’t My Bitch is probably one of the heaviest song in this particular album, reminding us once again, why Metallica became famous through the thrash metal genre back in the 80’s, despite the fact that the previous album was far from thrash. This is the album that Metallica decided to just go with the flow, integrating a variety of styles, but keep as base a blues-rock genre. However, there is a more " metal" side to Ain’t My Bitch and Outlaw Torn which reaches an epic in this particular album. Although these two songs sends us back to the " old" Metallica, there comes Until It Sleeps which shows a display of a more commercially-oriented style that Metallica chose from the starts, and it is explore throughout the album. To justify, Metallica now play with a verse-chorus structure keeping music at a minimum level in order to allow the vocals to radiate at the front. While we are discussing the vocals, this is the transition point of Hetfield. In contrast, the Black Album contained portions of straightforward singing form James, for instance Nothing Else Matters, while keeping some of his old singing style, shouting, hard vocals, on a number of tracks such as the Enter Sandman which is considered to be the perfect example of this new style. Yet, on Load, James prefers to keep his voice at a normal range without any added effects from his part, keeping it clean. Thus, walking away from the three previous albums, that made Metallica famous. Instead, he prefers to fill the songs with a rather cheesy style of singing, making the album more radio-friendly instead of a live-smashing-mosh-pitting one. Despite that, there are some awesome features in this album. Until It Sleeps and Cure hold a decent singing within the context of the whole album, but 2x4, Outlaw Torn and Bleeding Me, with the Southern Rock style of the first, the roared vocals of

the second, and third, manage to steal all the credits and stand out from the vocal side of the album. To be more particular, the Outlaw Torn manages to bring some depth through its lyrics and vocals, verifying that this song is so emotionally charged that smashes the previous Nothing Else Matters and The Unforgiven, without the song being actually a ballad. Another solid enough song is The Cure, which has some nice bass line from the former band member Jason Newsted, and it is obvious that Ulrich managed to improve as time passed. To focus more on Ulrich, he chose in this album a quite simple playing style in this album by inputting a more blues-rock oriented style of drums, making it again a more radio-friendly album. Despite the fact that this is nothing special, it is actually not as bad as many critics made it and hence, degrading Lars Ulrich’s playing ability. Taking into account the style that Ulrich chose for this album and the style and contribution that he made in the previous albums, he is not that " poor" as a drummer. Really, how much creativity does one have to put in a genre like blues-rock which is a quite simple genre by itself? As the drumming, so the guitar style chooses the same path. It is simplistic in the same way, with Kirk effortlessly adopting with the new style, while still keeping the same imagination regarding the solos that he plays. Strong examples of the power that Kirk beholds are found in Bleeding Me, Cure and Poor Twisted Me. As the lyrics are concerned, James does not limit himself on writing very introspective lyrics which cover not only his mother and her battle with cancer, but also it can be noticed that this albums through the lyrics, one can feel regret and sorrow. Although they are special, they are very well written and they manage to carry all those feelings, which Hetfield holds, into the songs in an intimidating way. Much criticism was made on this album. The

most obvious one is the actual running time of the album as Metallica had to cut a whole minute from Outlaw Torn in order to keep the album in the time limit of a CD. But, Metallica still manage to keep the same feeling throughout the album. However, some songs are a bit overstretched in an unnecessary way. The lyrics of King Nothing are a bit overstrained, as is Mama Said which tries to imitate the Nothing Else Matters song. Mama Said may be the worst vocal performance of this album as it is a disastrous copy of Nothing Else Matters, dealing no new ideas as a ballad and no imagination as a song. But James wanted to do it, to honour his mother. Also, the end of Thorn Within goes on for a long time, in which this repetition is tiring to the ears and it is unnecessary. In overall, Load may be the most underrated album of Metallica and of albums in general. This is justified by the long songs without showing off the instrumental power that it was displayed on the previous albums. However, Metallica decided to do this a blues-rock album and they delivered it just fine. If a couple of sections of songs were cut a little and removed, at most, two tracks from the album which seem unneeded, this album would provide a top-notch performance as Metallica used to give to the audience. Unfortunately, the throw-outs from this album would later be released on the above-mentioned disaster that is Reload, which does little to transfer this album's disrepute, which was never earned in the first place. Metallica kicks off this album with a massive whamming from Kirk in the songs of Ain’t My Bitch and 2x4 we are somewhat reminded by what someone may describe, as a classic Metallica song. Although the thrash is lost, in The House That Jack Built and Until It Sleeps, we are provided with a more developed side to the songs with more melody and structure that bring the blues-rock feel. An interesting view on why Metallica chose to change their style is that, if they

did each and every album of theirs, as a recreation of Master of Puppets, it would have been great, but only for the first few listens as it would become quite boring afterwards. This same thing made AC/DC who they are. Throughout their albums there is the same vocal style, the same drumming, the same bass line. There are two sides on the coin by doing this. On the first hand, when a song is heard from the radio, you can instantly identify it as an AC/DC song. No doubt there. Alternatively, you can resist but to think, " Do AC/DC lack imagination?" Forty years now in the business, why they did not change their style. Are they incapable of doing this or are they just satisfied with their sound, which is loved by a large audience, which they do not want to change it? The same cannot be said with Metallica. Metallica found the original sound that the audience loved but they wanted more, they wanted to experiment. Many may argue that Metallica, with the Load album, is trying to play it safe. But, that is not the case. Metallica wanted to take us to a different ride on a different train just to show us their variety of musical knowledge. The Sandman of Load as the song King Nothing is often referred has almost the same structure as its predecessor. However, King is so much different than Sandman that it stands as a classic by its own. Furthermore, Hetfield has a new approach on how the lyrics must be performed. For example, Outlaw Torn, Hero of the Day and Mama Said amongst others have swelling melodies and very strong vocals that only Hetfield can deliver but yet so different that the vocals from the other albums. Heaviness in Hetfield’s mind has taken a different route. Something to sound heavy does not have to be fast (see Master of Puppets). If someone really listens to the album he will understand that the lyrics and the whole structure is already heavy with meaning and power that it is not necessary to speed it up. Kirk’s

solos hold a different stance and approach beside the solid rhythmical structure of the album. It can be easily said that, in this album, there are layers that Metallica just discovered and delivered. Those layers can be the harmonies of the voice, the addition of more guitar lines which all co-operate to create an extensive soundscape, which suck the listener in. The lyrics alone brings up the standard Hetfield way of thinking, the tortured individual that goes through rough physical and psychological times in order for him to be cleansed from evil and sin, and the music just goes along with his torment. Five years had gone by since Metallica's last album. This amount of time, in the music business, seems like an eternity. During that period of time, Metallica went through a lot. They were involved with a lawsuit with their record label, Hetfield's mother lost the battle with cancer, Hetfield himself was found addicted to alcohol. The world changed. The music world changed. Bands like Megadeth, who are considered to be the arch rivals of Metallica, thrashed themselves to the top, while new generation metals bands emerged, such as, Pantera who zealously gained reputation. Metallica was now considered to be veterans to the metal scene. They were considered as the classic rockers of heavy metal. Nonetheless, Metallica overcome their problems and begun to work on the Load album, which offers a few major alternations that were not taken into account by other bands. Metallica did not want to release an album like Rage Against the Machine, who made a hip-hop-thrash-like metal. Besides the new genre that Metallica introduced, blues-rock, one can feel the presence of alternative rock, which Metallica did not try that certain genre before. Again, there are clues that Metallica have, emotionally, grown, and it is shown in the songs in a very subtle way. An example of this growth, is in the song " Wasting My Hate", in

which as Hetfield shouts the lyrics as usual, there are some sentiments, like " Don't waste your breath/And I won't waste my hate on you", which for Hetfield are pacifying so he relaxes his throat and makes them more melodic and calm. Another example of Hetfield's maturity is the self-critical song " Poor Twisted Me" where he humours himself. Obviously, those speed-thrash-metal fans who loved previous masterpieces such as Master of Puppets will certainly not be thrilled with this album. Load does not heighten the band the way the previous albums did but they fall somewhere in the middle as this album tries to create that certain hard-rock sound that can touch the adults and the troubled teenagers. It is Metallica's task to touch people, it is their " load" to bear and, most likely, they would not try it in any other way.

Chapter 4: Metallica back to basics: Death Magnetic (2008)

After the St. Anger album in 2003, James Heitfield gives a hint that Metallica had been practicing on new material on their studio, but there was no intention of producing a ninth album which would include those songs at the time. In the words of Lars Ulrich, he and the band during the tour, would rehearse or warm-up before the live session.[1]In the sessions they were actually playing for thirty minutes more or less in a jam room that they have. Those jams were recorder. This leads to a variety of material like riffs and solos that are probably going to be used when they get back to the studio in January.[2]Considering this, by October 2004, Metallica has already compiled almost 50 hours of jamming, with a huge amount of riffs, chord progressions and bass lines.[3]James Heitfield revealed, on September 2004, that the band would return to the studio by spring of 2005 and begin recording for the new album for Warner Bros. Records.[4]On March 10th of 2006, there

was a report that Metallica was going to use the previous two month's material, and planned to use it for the next six months to write songs for the new album.[5]Six to seven songs where composed, as it was revealed on the 16th of April, from the tapes that were recorder during the Madly in Anger with the World Tour.[6]The crucial point that Ulrich says is that Metallica's new material is now going back to the " old" Metallica which is a lot different that the St. Anger album.[7]Death Magnetic manages to bounce back to the …And Justice For All album, where it was the original sound of Metallica. But with such a deliberate restoration of those glory days can be quite complex as the band could be forced to stuck in the past or even worse get some core elements wrong. However, through Death Magnetic, Metallica manages to get a grip of their core strengths and abilities, and with the experience they gained through the last years, they recognised in themselves that only they can make the sound that they do. This is what makes this album so appealing, hearing the " old" Metallica enforcing the " new" one. Metallica is not repeating moves and styles that they made back then, but they are only refreshed by the young spirit that they had in the 80's and adding the experience of the 90's they became once again the master of escalation and aggression. There is no doubt that Metallica got older and lost some of that hunger that they had back then, which made their albums so fascinating, but this does not mean, on this album, that getting older equals less powerful music. They remain as violent as they can be and they now enjoy being one of the greatest metal bands ever. In an interview on May, 2006, Kirk Hammett states that Metallica has now written fifteen songs and were keep on writing another two to three songs per week. Producer Rick Rubin is being praised by Heitfield due to his production style and giving the band some

space and keeping pressure at minimum levels which gave the band more freedom and less anxiety, although most of the sessions were sometimes being out of focus.[8],[9],[10]On May, 27, Metallica's website was updated with a video that informed the public about the new album. Lars Ulrich, who leads the video, gave his thoughts and facts about the video:" If you're in the studio, everybody presumes you're recording or making arecord. Last time there was no real separation between the writing processesand the recording processes. With St. Anger nobody brought in any pre-recordedstuff or ideas; it was just make it up on the spot, be in the moment. So this timewe are doing exactly what we did on all the other albums;— first we're writing, then we're recording. The only difference is that we're writing where we record. So we're writing here at HQ because this is our home, we're writing in the studio.[11]In many interviews that Heitfield took part in, he described this record as a glance to the past. Metallica took the essence of their earlier style (Kill ' Em All, Ride the Lightning, etc.) and combined it with their current skills. In his own words, " We had no regard for authority or the way that things were supposed to be. […] We tried to capture that attitude again." And obviously, as Heitfield's statement above show, Metallica chose Rick Rubin to produce the album. Rick has a sense where he captures the essence of the artists that he works with.[12]Another big change in Metallica's musical structure was the fact that, after they published St. Anger, and in preparation for the new album, they moved back to standard tuning, whilst the previous album was on drop C. All of the songs in the Death Magnetic album are in A-440[13]except two songs which are in drop D. This is the biggest contribution that Rick Rubin made to the band, as he always wanted them to play at the standard tuning, which lead to an

unexplored area in James's voice and a tonal quality in the music as well. Heitfield at first felt a little uncomfortable singing in this " high" range, but he was willing to go for it and the guitar playing was much easier. [14]Furthermore, Rick encouraged the band to find their " old" selves. Hence, during the whole creative process Metallica was being Metallica. They took the best aspects of themselves and with the combination of the new aspects that were formed through the years, they were able to create an album sounding the same as before but being an entire different thing also. Apart from the changes that Heitfield had to go through and the addition of a new drummer which will talk about later, Kirk Hammett has made a lot of modifications in his playing style. For instance, in the nineties, Kirk, after Load and Reload, started listening to Jazz. Jazz guitar players like Grant Green, Wes Montgomery, Kenny Burrell and Tal Farlow amongst others were on his playlist. The above mentioned musicians were incredible guitar players and Kirk was fascinated because a lot of his " Rock" influences, for instance Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton were actually influenced by these guitarists. Bearing this in mind, Kirk went back to being a metal guitarist, but the ideas he gathered from jazz stayed and changed his style in important ways. His improvisation skills have been enhanced, and furthermore he is relying more on his ability to be more spontaneous, whereas in the past he would first compose the solo.[15]

Chapter 5: Conclusion

To sum up, Metallica, despite all the changes and difficulties, was and still remains a huge influence in the metal, rock genre. One cannot simply refuse that this band did not make an impact on the music scene and business.

Regarding the three albums that were discussed above, several things may be discussed. It was intentional, on my part, on why I chose these three particular releases. Master of Puppets, Load and Death Magnetic, despite all their differences, they still are the product of the Four Horsemen (Metallica). Three decades that Metallica are active in the music business, are important on how the music scene has been modified. Master of Puppets gives the audience the first, the original, the raw Metallica. Through rage, anxiety and wrath, Metallica brought to our attention on how the world is functioning. Those riffs, the fast-paced songs, the powerful solos combined with the intense and forceful voice of James Heitfield, forces the listener to rebel against the tyrants, to stand up their ground. That decade was the time of long hair, of protest, of power to the people. This whole concept is perceived by Metallica and they deliver the most influential albums of that decade that even today have the same meaning as before. The 80’s was the golden time of Metallica that put them amongst the best artists ever. Metallica is the name, thrash metal is the game. Only they, deliver it so good. Then we come to face the 90’s and specifically the Load album. Here, after some events that occurred in Metallica’s life, and with Bob Rock as their producer, they changed completely their style, leaving only a few hints on their " old" self. Hair was cut, logos were sparkly and their attitude was somewhat peaceful. It was like a wild wolf being forced to eat from a plate. Although James Hetfield had some personal issues and wanted to write about them, the biggest mistake, in my opinion, was Bob Rock. As a producer that just joined the band, he cannot force his ideas into their music. Where were you Mr Bob Rock when Metallica released …And Justice For All and Master of Puppets? Where were you when Metallica was just a small band but with their

knowledge and imagination got themselves in the Hall of Fame? Bob Rock did none of those things. He arrived in the cast in the worst time to " destroy" the good name of Metallica. Many critics agree with these facts, and I agree with them. Although Load can never match the previous albums, it still cannot be left unnoticed. The lyrics are so well-written that the listener cannot help but put himself in the shoes of James and feel the sorrow. The solos and the bass lines, however being simple, they deliver perfectly the scene that the lyrics set. I cannot criticize the drums of Ulrich just because in the genre that Metallica chose for this album, blues-rock, Lars is not capable to expand or improvise on his playing style just because rock and blues are so simple and have standard timing which restricts any creativeness. Saying that, Lars did a nice work and the drums were blended beautifully with the other instruments. Nonetheless, Load was, as I consider it, the start of the end. Yet, Metallica manage to clear their name with the next-to-awesome album Death Magnetic. Fortunately, two things happened and brought Metallica back from the dead. Mr Rick Rubin took over as their producer, who saw the true potential on Metallica and he knew their true sound. Much respect must be paid for this man. Secondly, after having trouble with finding a sufficient bass player, Robert Trujillo makes his appearance and he delivers his best on each and every song, whether is in a live show or in the studio. Robert, who grew with Metallica, captured the essence and the train of thoughts that the other members of the band were on. It was an instant connection. Back to Mr Rubin; he suggested the band to abandon their new style and just go back to their old " thrashy" one. So they did. And as all can see, Death Magnetic became a huge success shutting the mouth of a lot of critics and fans that thought Metallica has lost it. In conclusion, Metallica has

a long history in music. They have many fans who follow them everywhere they go.