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## Virgin Steele

The Marriage Of  
Heaven And Hell Part  
One & Part Two

★★★★★

SPV SPV308452 (2CD)

### Virgin on greatness

Virgin Steele fans have been well served by the band recently, and this reissue is no exception, thanks partly to the dedication of vocalist/lyricist/keyboardist David DeFeis, whose heartfelt vision these epic albums represent.

After entering the 90s with the not-bad *Life Among The Ruins* (strong on bluesy riffs, lacking in pomposity), the band defied expectations by returning, in 1994, with *The Marriage Of Heaven And Hell Part One*, an album that utterly ignored the contemporary metal landscape, bringing together the epic quality of Dio with the grandiosity (and virtuosity) of early Queen, as filtered through a baroque-romantic sensibility. It remains a thrilling, accessible and passionate collection of power metal songs, too subtle to be called anthems, too turned-up-to-11 to be anything else.

A year later, the even more classically influenced *Part Two* arrived. Often considered Virgin Steele's masterpiece, it remains hugely impressive, but slightly lacking the commercial edge of its predecessor; the pair are ideally best heard together. This attractively designed set has notes by DeFeis and Bryan Reesman, plus lyrics, photos and a few well-chosen bonus tracks. The right way to reissue epic metal albums. *William Pinfold*

www.recordcollectormag.com  
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