

GIGAWATTS OF STEEL AND FLAME



A POWER METAL HISTORY

CIRITH UNGOL

I'm Alive - Frost & Fire (1981)

I shiver when I remember
The things that I have seen
I know the light, I know the Night
I have walked with things unseen
I have been a king invincible
I've been the poorest of the poor
I've pulled the mighty from their thrones
And laughed at Death's own door

Cause I'm alive, I'm alive
I'm alive, I'm alive

I roamed the world in search of life
Death followed in my wake
I searched for truth, I want the truth
And learned more than I could take
I've walked the roads of mystery
And it's aged me much too soon
I've paid the piper and I've paid him well
But he still calls the tune

I'm alive [Repeat x4]

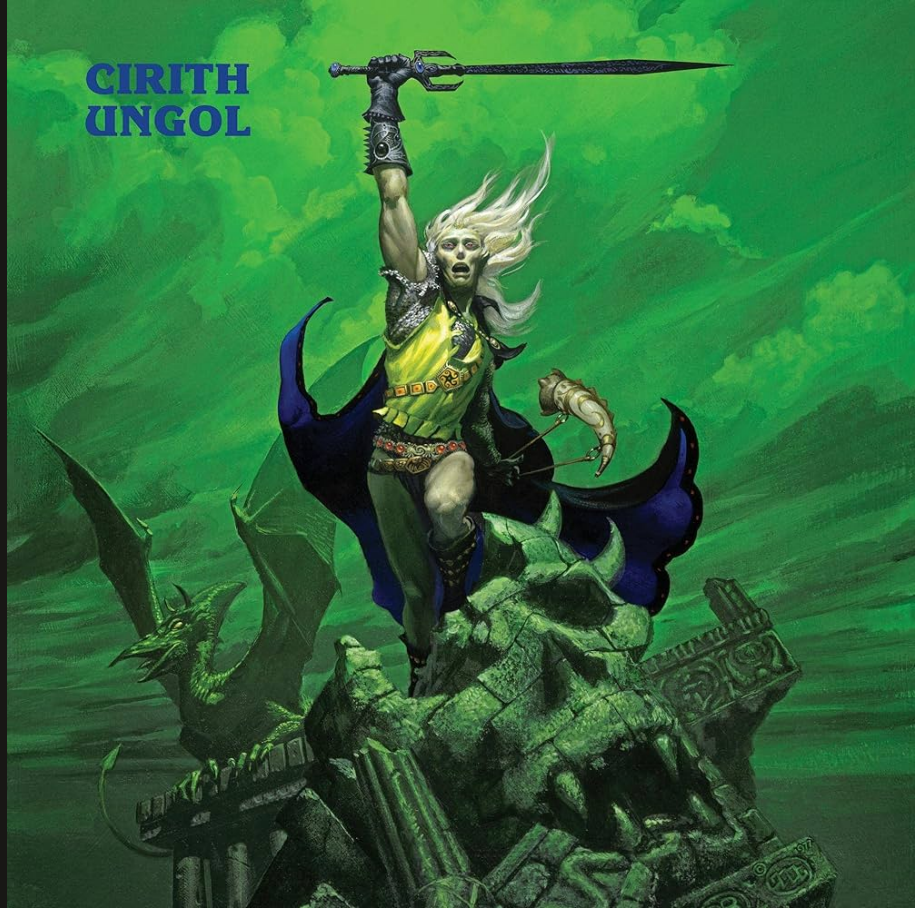
I shiver when I remember
The shadow of the past
The lonely ways, the lonely days
When every breath might be my last

I lost my heart, I lost my soul
By every hand betrayed
But I've still got strength, I've still got
life
And that will never change
Cause I'm alive, I'm alive
I'm alive, I'm alive

I'm alive [Repeat x5]

Founded in Ventura, California in 1971, Cirith Ungol's early music falls into categories of heavy and psychedelic rock, cleaving closely to the tenets of the New Wave of British Heavy Metal (NWOBHM). With their release of Frost & Fire in 1981, a darker, more fantastic sound the world got what may have been the first glimpses of what would become American power metal.

CIRITH UNGOL



IRON MAIDEN

Sun and Steel Peace of Mind (1983)

You killed your first man at 13
Killer instinct, animal supreme
By 16 you had learned to fight
The way of the warrior, you took it as
your right

[Sunlight, falling on your steel
Death in life is your ideal
Life is like a wheel]

[Chorus]

Through earth and water, fire and wind
You came at last
Nothing was the end
Make a cut by fire and stone
Take you and your blade and break you
both in two
Break you both in two

[Chorus 2x]

Rolling on and on

[Chorus 3x]

And it's rolling still

Iron Maiden hails from East London, founded in 1975. Maiden was one of the bearers of the NWOBHM standard, alongside the likes of Judas Priest and Motorhead. By the mid-80s they had begun to experiment with elements we now associate with power metal. The term "Power Metal" was actually first used as the title of Metallica's third demo tape, though some members disliked it as connotations of "power ballads" and "power pop".

IRON MAIDEN

Peace of Mind



SATAN

Trial by Fire - Court in the Act (1983)

In 1945 the year it came to be
 Their fate decided
 Many miles across the sea
 They told them not to fear
 They couldn't be prepared
 Then came the day
 That not a single soul was spared

[Too late there's no escape
 The Trial has begun
 Down they fly
 From out of the sky
 Feel the radiation burn]

The men of power
 Had nothing to fear
 When the finger hits the switch
 They're far away from here
 Down in their sanctuary
 Hiding in their lair
 The sorcerers of justice
 Will be waiting for them there

[Chorus]

Through all my dreams
 I heard the soldiers crying

Mother Nature screams
 I saw destruction falling
 From out of the sky
 I heard the Wise Man calling... Why?
 In 1945 the year it came to be
 Their fate decided
 Many miles across the sea
 They told them not to fear
 They couldn't be prepared
 Then came the day
 That not a single soul was spared

[Chorus]

Satan, another British group, was a prime contributor to the NWOBHM. This track, from their influential debut album, features both elements associated with NWOBHM (soaring vocals) and power metal (an extended dramatic narrative with apocalyptic elements).



HELLOWEEN

Starlight - Walls of Jericho (1984)

[Intro: Radio Tuning, Halloween III sample]

You're hangin' around and got nothin' to do
 You wanna get out some pills in front of you
 You fly on invisible wings
 Be careful, my friend, for too many can kill
 You say that the meaning of life's in those pills
 You forget all earthly things

You swallow your pill; you wanna feel free
 A trip to a world made of games
 You do it again, yet it's never the same
 But a junkie's not something to be

[Starlight fallin' in deep through your eyes
 Starlight shinin' down for your soul to rise]

Now there's a needle lying in front of you
 I'm frightened of those things
 But I know what you'll do
 You need it to escape from the night, ha-ha
 You ride on through heaven; you don't feel no pain
 You ride on and ride on again and again
 On the needle that brings you the light
 You feel the mind-blowin' stuff
 Flow through your veins

You take off and fly to the sun
 But when you get to near, your wings will be burnt
 You'll die in the flames and you'll fall

[Chorus]

You feel the mind-blowin' stuff
 Flow through your veins
 You take off and fly to the sun
 But when you get to near, your wings will be burnt
 You'll die in the flames and you'll fall

[Chorus]

It's difficult to overstate the importance of Halloween on the formation of power metal, they're often called the "Fathers of Power Metal". Founded in 1984 in Hamburg, Germany, they kicked off the first wave of European power metal. This track comes from their second album, Walls of Jericho and shows the clear influence of early speed metal.



RUNNING WILD

Mordor - Branded and Exiled (1985)

In the centre of the empire of darkness
 Black fortress stands might and proud
 The shelter for the traced and tortured
 For the one who's damned
 A dragon is watching for fortress
 Black knights are controlling the land
 To save their proteges from torment
 They fight to defend

[Rancour, against all raiders
 Beware, if you're renegade's hunter
 Watch out in slough's haze
 Vigilance, 'cause death waits
 Recourse, to the traced
 Be calm, they'll give you shelter
 Restless, they fight for freedom
 Never, they don't let you fall
 Mordor]

A shoal of the knights of torture
 Are hunting a witch to the dell
 Sullen shades are raiding their squad
 Church's minions fell
 A black knight leads through the mire
 And in mordor she finds a new life
 A life without pain and torment
 No murder, no lies

[Chorus]

Often grouped along side Helloween in the "big 4" of early European power metal (with Rage and Grave Digger rounding out the quartet), Running Wild was founded earlier, in 1976. Their early work leaned into satanic themes and a more traditional heavy metal sound. Their pivot in the 80s toward a more pirate-centric theme coincided with their power metal evolution.

Running Wild



Branded and Exiled

BLIND GUARDIAN

Guardian of the Blind -
Battalions of Fear (1988)

Extermination thunder the strange one is back again
Lost by our only power it's aura will grind us out forever
Fall into a dark dream that we got once
The part it's real you won't believe

We're watching our own agony many years ago
Seven little children stand against the ghost
Believing is the answer but you've lost before
Find back to your infancy it's time to die

I've been the herdsman you've been my sheep
I find taste on lambskin everything's alright
Killing for the thirst for small children sweat
I give them illusions to raise their fear

Hear the crying dying child it's music to my ears
Feel the sweetness of it's death everything's alright
But there's a new feeling I've never known
There must be a third one a mighty guardian

Refrain:
Guardian, Guardian, Guardian of the Blind
Now it feel the curse of heaven
Guardian, Guardian, Guardian of the Blind
Now it feel the curse of the child

Originally founded as "Lucifer's Heritage" in 1984 Germany, they switched to their more recognized name for their first studio album in 1988. Blind Guardian is by most measures the longest-lived and most prolific power metal band. This track, from their debut album, is inspired by Stephen King's "It".



SCANNER

Terrion - Hypertrace (1988)

I see a time
 A time without hatred and riots
 Sunrising cities where people can live without
 fear
 This is why we have come right from the stars
 Searching for answers that show
 Show the way to stay alive
 Listen, now we make you see
 How you can survive

It's a place called Terrion
 In a time of love and freedom
 Such a place that we call Terrion
 Can be real when mission is done

There's a price for the world so we told
 You must climb over the wall of hate
 Is it so hard to keep your anger down
 Answer yourselves it will show
 Show the way to stay alive
 Listen so that you can see
 How you will survive

It's a place called Terrion
 In a time of love and freedom
 Such a place that we call Terrion
 Can be real when mission is done

Another German band, formed in 1986 as "Lions Breed", pivoted to the name Scanner and a focus on futuristic power metal. They helped pushed the power metal formula into more varied subject matter. While Scanner has produced comparatively few albums, it is miraculously still active as of 2024.



JAG PANZER

Reign of Tyrants -
Ample Destruction (1988)

Neon lights are flashing
As the tyrants raise their swords
Sounds of metal crashing the avenue overlords
Kings of black leather with words made of steel
Lock all your doors very soon you will feel

Under the knife. Feel the revenge
Under the knife. You'll get it in the end
Under the knife. You'd better run for your life
'Cause you're under the knife!

Bishops of the street, authors of corruption, leaders
In the night just waiting for an eruption
A rider dressed in black screams out
"You fuckin' clowns! Bring your best you fools and
I will tear him to the ground!"

[Chorus]

Hear the rumble around you,
it's a blood curdling sound
Blood stained heads and bodies all are breaking on
the ground
A .45 caliber flashing life's ending with a bang
Tyrants rule the king is dead! We are the gang that
reigns!

An American band named for the German "hunter tank", the Jagdpanzer, but modified to "Jag Panzer" when the band members couldn't pronounce the "d". Their primary influence on their founding in 1981 were the NWOBHM bands, but by 1984 they were experimenting with elements that pushed them into the vanguard of early American power metal.

JAG PANZER



AMPLE DESTRUCTION

OMEN

Die by the Blade - Battle Cry (1984)

All through the night, steel by your side
 Journey into the darkness beyond southern lights
 A mission of vengeance and terror, we are the reign
 You live by the sword, you'll die, die by the blade

You stand in my way, a fatal mistake
 The path of destruction lies, lies in your way
 Nowhere to run, the nightmare is real
 There's no way escaping the wrath, the wrath of my steel

[You live by the sword, you'll die by the blade
 Stand for the fight
 Your life I will take
 You'll die by the blade
 Die by the blade]

On into the night, steel by your side
 Journey into the darkness beyond southern lights
 A mission of vengeance and terror, we are the reign
 You live by the sword, you'll die, die by the blade

[Chorus]

Founded in LA in 1983, Omen similarly pushed the NWOBHM formula into the realm of sword-and-sorcery fantasy across several albums, cementing it's place in early American power metal.



Battle Cry

RAINBOW

Kill the King -
Long Live Rock'n'Roll (1987)

Danger, danger the Queen's about to kill
There's a stranger, stranger life about to spill
Oh no, move away from harm
I need a spell and a charm
Fly like the wind
I'm no pawn, so be gone, speed on and on
Kill the king
Tear him down

Kill the king, yeah
Strike him down

Power, power it happens every day
Power, devour all along the way
Oh no, move me out of harm
I need a spell and a charm
And fly like the wind
I'm no pawn, so be gone, speed on and on
Kill the king

Treason, treason, the specter looms again
Treason, reason, the realm is safe and then
Oh no, move away from harm
I need a spell and a charm
Fly like the rainbow
I'm no pawn, so be gone, speed on and on

Kill the king
Tear him down
Kill the king, yeah
Got to take his crown
Crown
Kill the king
He'll rule no more
Strike him dead
The people roar
Kill the king, yeah
Take his head
Down, down, down, down
Oh, kill
Oh, kill
Oh, oh

A joint London/Los Angeles venture, originally branded as "Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow", featured members from earlier influential acts, such as Ronnie James Dio, Jimmy Bain, and Tony Carey, with Ritchie Blackmore being an alum of Deep Purple. While their earlier work could be classed with the antecedents to power metal, by 1987 they had joined the American power metal movement.

Rainbow

Long Live Rock 'n' Roll



SAVATAGE

In the Hall of the Mountain King -
EP (1987)

Far away
In a land caught between
Time and space
Where the books of life lay
We fear
This castle of stone
The mountain king roams
All alone in here
But he's not the only one
Lost inside
Forever hidden from the sun

[Madness reigns
In the Hall of the Mountain King
Oh yeah]

His deep
Dark eyes
Keep watch on his kingdom
And the mysteries that sleeps safe inside
His hall
His towers of stone
Shall not be overthrown
For eternity
It is guarded by the king
Insanity and the power that it brings

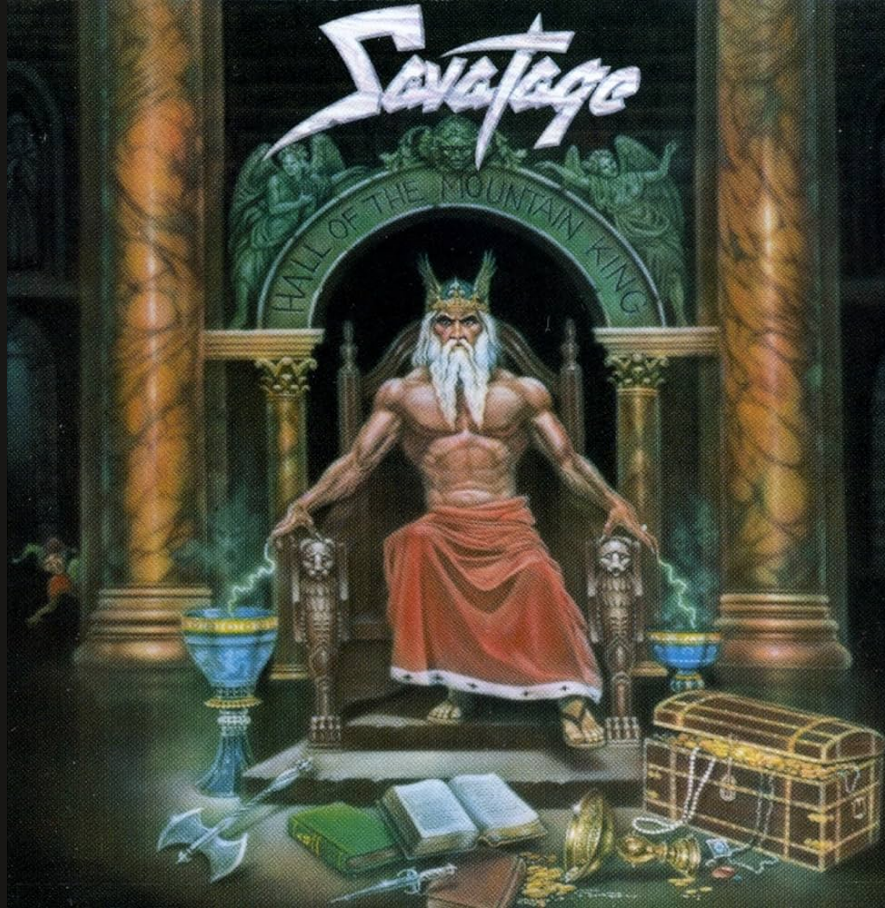
[Chorus 2x]

Come with me
Stay close by my side
As the darkness of night closes in
Don't fear
In the thunder, it roars
When the Mountain King calls all his children
home
To where I hid him we must run
Refuge here but I was forever on the run

Madness reigns
(my friends)

[Chorus]

Originally named "Avatar" in 1979 before they realized numerous other bands had already used that name, Savatage was founded by two brothers in Tarpon Springs, Florida. Pushing a theatrical and story-centric style, while technically an American band, their sound cleaves closer to what one expects from European power metal of this time.



JUDAS PRIEST

Metal Meltdown - Painkiller (1990) [Chorus]

Something's calling
In the night
Electric madness
Roars in sight

Heat is rising
Blazing fast
Hot and evil
Feel the blast

[Out of control
About to explode
It's coming at ya

Here comes the metal meltdown
Run for your lives
Can't stop the metal meltdown
No one survives]

Raging fury
Wired for sound
Nitro bombshell
Shakes the ground

High and mighty
Rips the air
Piercing laser
Burning flare

Temperature is boiling
Magnifying might
Feeding like a virus
Flashing light

Imminent collision
Shockwaves all around
Generating energy
Screams so loud

Judas Priest was big name in the NWOBHM, and their earlier work leaned into the screaming vocals and heavy metal elements that entails. After a few rather disappointing albums in the 1980s, the release of Painkiller in 1990 revitalized the Judas Priest sound with elements cribbed from the power metal scene. There's no denying the album cover.



GAMMA RAY

Fairytale - Land of the Free (1996)

Now, my friend, it's time for you
To break the spell

Your heart was torn in two
And somebody revealed the wall...

Now we stand together
Our fight is to be free
We never will surrender
We ride across the fields

Now it's time to break the silence
And the truth shall be revealed
Take the question mark from your head...
Let the fairytale be real
Let the fairytale be real!

Founded by Kai Hansen, previously a guitarist for Helloween, after a brief stint playing with Blind Guardian, with his friend Ralf Scheepers, Gamma ray was one of the few new and influential power metal groups of the 90s. Also this track just barely fit, but it would've been a shame to neglect such an important group.



14 HAMMERS OF MISFORTUNE

Tyrant Dies - The Bastard (2001)

Behold I've come Ax in hand
To lay claim to this your land
Face me now I stand alone
Rightful heir to yonder throne

Fool! How dare you come here
With your insults and delusions
Guards! Behead this wretch
And fetch his ax for my collection

Good it is to taste this wine again
And fall upon the necks of mortal men
Drunk I am upon the blood of slaves
Kingly blood I deign to taste

(dies)

Villagers:
"When the Ax is freed from hell
A single stroke shall break the spell
When the Ax is free again
A brutal reign shall meet its end"

Fronted by Mike Scalzi, better known for California's Slough Feg, Hammers of Misfortune was founded in the mid-90s.



15 THREE INCHES OF BLOOD

Wykdtron
Advance and Vanquish (2001)

In the year 4055
Wykydtron came to life
Born of scientific design to serve all human kind
Artificial intelligence bred for future war

When galaxies will crumble and fall to their knees
It breaks free from its hold taking military control
A fate seen all across the world
It takes hold of the earth, breeding legions to his control

Soon to seize all power in the sky
Programmed to crush
Programmed to destroy
Its brainwaves only wired for death

Its wired to kill
All on the earth
Nuclear bound
You'll fear his name

Hey its the wykydtron
Its the wykydtron
Hey its the wykydtron
Whoa-oh!

An army's formed to crush the earth
Our creation, the master of our demise
Humanity is doomer

15 years since creations time, the war has
turned to space

Human kind has once chance left to turn the
tides of fate
Warheads are the only way to stop The
Wykydtron
Millions die, radiation blast from hell
Flesh, it peels away as all the people die

This is the end of the human race
Our creation becomes the master of our own
demise
We are drones
We fooled ourselves

We finally sealed our fate
Hey its the wykydtron
Its the wykydtron
Hey its the wykydtron
Whoa-oh!



16 ETERNAL CHAMPION

The Cold Sword -
The Armor of Ire (2016)

A name is called and I'm thrown
Into a world draped in ice.
The Frozen Keep is my dominion?
The Champion's fate, to wake in worlds anew

The Southern Ice, the white unbroken.
The cardinal red sun is dying.
To Rowenarc, the obsidian citadel

["The hilt of the sword
and the hand are as one."
The chalice screams,
and demands of me what I loathe
"The blade of the sword
has the blood of the Sun."
Pawn of Fate, your glory and doom are one]

A maddened king will lead his men to ruin,
the warriors of silver are caught.
For their queen, they'll battle,
but they've no hope from The Black Sword

Always a price, always a burden.
The balance right, the chalice now full.
Many names, Fate's Soldier, I will find
Tanelorn!

[Chorus]

From the fallen Moon they will ride.
Under the blade the queen she will die
From the Scarlet Fjord they will ride.
Under the blade the queen she will die
The fief of the sword is your life



SABATON

The Last Stand - EP (2016)

In the heart of holy see
In the home of Christianity
The seat of power is in danger

There's a foe of a thousand swords
They've been abandoned by their lords
Their fall from grace will pave their path,
to damnation

[Then the 189
In the service of heaven
They're protecting the holy line
It was 1527
Gave their lives on the steps to heaven
Thy will be done!]

For the grace, for the might of our lord
For the home of the holy
For the faith, for the way of the sword
Gave their lives so boldly

For the grace, for the might of our lord
In the name of his glory
For the faith, for the way of the sword
Come and tell their story again]

Under guard of 42
Along a secret avenue
Castle saint Angelo is waiting

They're the guard of the holy see
They're the guards of Christianity
Their path to history is paved with salvation

[Repeat]

Dying for salvation with dedication
No capitulation, annihilation
Papal commendation, reincarnation
Heaven is your destination

[Repeat]

In the name of god
For the grace, for the might of our lord
For the home of the holy
For the faith, for the way of the sword
Gave their lives so boldly

[Repeat]

Come and tell the Swiss Guards' story again



FELLOWSHIP

The Saint Beyond the River
The Saberlight Chronicles (2022)

[For the saint beyond the river
I will take another step
For to see the final thread of life
Will sow my soul again

For the saint beyond the river
I will see the face of God
For the saint beyond the river
Carry on]

Memories are brittle at their best
Preserve me through my sword and all the
songs within my chest
If I have any voice that carries through
I hope it keeps the words I use
Emblazoned on the winds to carry on

[Chorus]

The eyes of time have stared at me for years
With half a life to go, I pray that patience
conquers fear
Before the dark becomes a part of me
Please take the light that I can leave
And use it as your strength to carry on

[Chorus]

I gaze to the stars
That shine beyond the river down below
These saints shine against me
As they always seem to do
For who am I if not the son of those I look up
to
I gaze through my past beyond the pale and
dark of night
I hope the light that comes before
Will save these earthbound eyes, but
If it won't, I'll still try

[Chorus]



GLORYHAMMER

Keeper of the Celestial Flame of Abernethy
Return to the Kingdom of Fife (2023)

Zargothrax, master of nightmares
Keeper of celestial flame

Travel back 1000 years
To a time before Dundee
There lived a simple peasant
Weaving baskets in a field

But when a prince destroyed his home
To build a kingdom new
He forged a pact with chaos
Swore to bring him to his doom

A wizard did arise
(concealed a clone beneath Dundee)
The prince of Fife must die

[He's a sorcerer, nefarious
With eyes that burn like fire
Slaying those who dare oppose
The power of his evil desires, oh yeah

He wields the laserblaster
Dark lord of Dundee
He's a sorcerer, nefarious
And he will bring the kingdom to its knees]

Zargothrax, master of nightmares
Keeper of celestial flame
Sorcerer, bound to the darkness
Evil lies in his brain

Dark lord Zargothrax, master of nightmares
Keeper of celestial flame
Wizard king, chaos incarnate
Zargothrax is his name

Laser goblin, Power sword, Ultra warfare
The dawn of double wizard shall reveal his fate

So we must ride, far away
To the fortress of Crail
To revive the frozen wizard
From the tomb of liquid ice

We will fight to destroy
And to vanquish the name
Of the scion of the kingdom
And unleash the celestial flame

[Repeat]

[Chorus]

He is the keeper of the celestial flame
Yeah, yeah



GLORYHAMMER
RETURN TO THE KINGDOM OF FIFE