

Victorian Painting to Metal Imagery, by Eleonora Cavallini and Elisabetta Zoni
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Victorian painter **Herbert James Draper** is the author of this painting, *Ulysses and sirens* (1909), where, according to *Odyssey* 12.166-200, these charming and lethal creatures try to seduce Odysseus with their beautiful voices. The most remarkable difference between the Homeric tale and its visual interpretations (both ancient and modern) consists in the fact that in Homer the Sirens are *not* visible: therefore, painters felt free to represent them as they wanted, beginning from Greek pottery (where the Sirens are zoomorphic monsters), up to the self-controlled sensuality of J. W. Waterhouse (*The Siren*, 1900) and to Draper's more provocative retelling, where the Sirens are beautiful and aggressive *sex-symbols*. An undisputable nod to Draper's painting can be found in the cover of Symphony X's album *Odyssey* (2002), where Odysseus's ship is literally assaulted by a Siren endowed with bat wings: an extemporaneous syncretism between Greek Mythology and *horror*.

Although they were formed in 1994, Symphony X are a progressive, symphonic metal band whose sound and themes hark back to those of 80s projects by Queensryche and Iron Maiden, mostly dealing with mythological and fantasy subjects. Their album *The Odyssey* is named after the title track – a 24-minute long, condensed version of some of the main episodes from Homer's poem, and is characterized by elaborate, classical-style arrangements and melodies, and by conceptually dense lyrics.