

VOLUME 2

NUMBER 1

# Prometheus Crusade

GRIP INC.  
EMPEROR  
PLATYPUS  
AMORPHIS  
THE CROWN  
EM SINFONIA  
GALACTIC COWBOYS

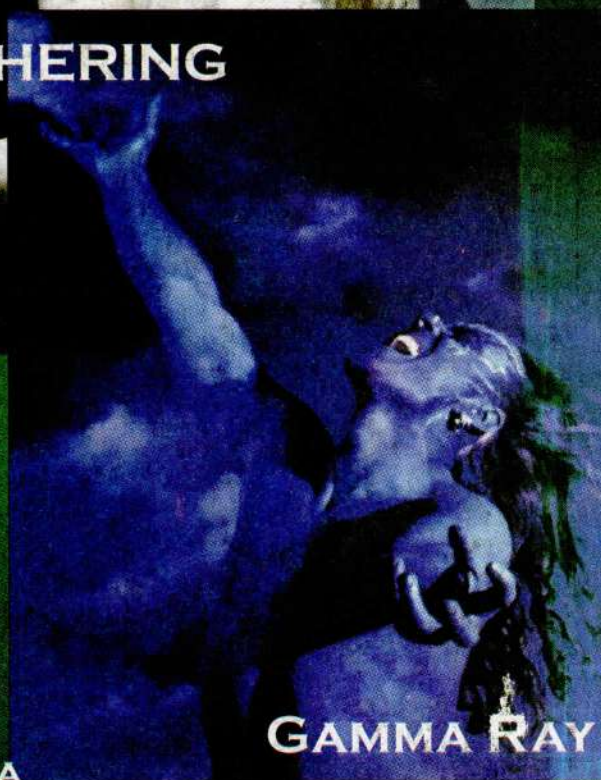
IRON MAIDEN  
MARIA ABRIL OF  
MARTYR MUSIC GROUP  
MALEVOLENT CREATION  
MARCH METAL MELTDOWN  
LIQUID TENSION EXPERIMENT



## THE GATHERING



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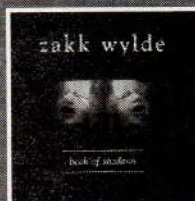
## ALCOHOL FUELED BREWTALITY

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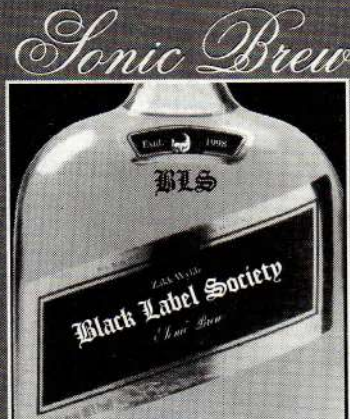
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These are Trumanistic Times...

My apologies, but there will be no mythic reference and its relation to Metal this issue. There is a more pressing message I feel I must address in its stead.

I recently viewed a popular film, *The Truman Show*, and it struck a very painful chord within me. It is a film about a man who spends his growing life within a controlled, man-made environment, which is monitored for the rest of the world as a television program. Everything this man, Truman, does has already been planned for him, in order to keep him within the confines of this all-to-perfect community. Everyone who lives in the town is an actor; they shape and mold Truman's psyche into believing that this 'world' is the only reality, and nothing dwells beyond the horizon. Anyone who tries to tell him otherwise is written out of the script, never to return to this 'utopia', and only remembered in nostalgic reruns.

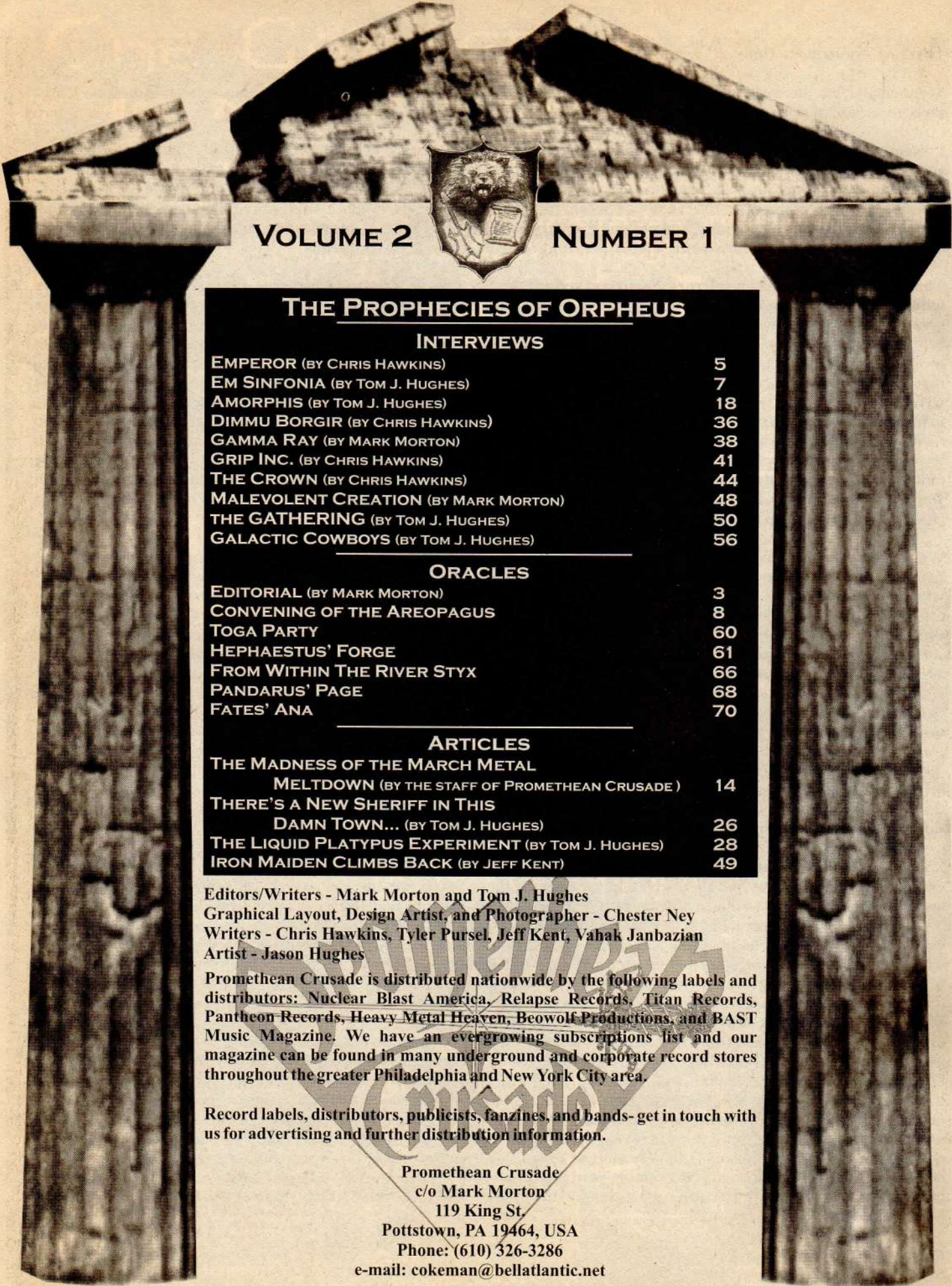
The plot of this film perfectly mirrors the current state of the U.S.'s music industry. Over time, the executives controlling the industry have, in a sense, created their own 'world', leaving little or no room for diversity. Yes, you may think you're hearing a great variety of songs on the radio, many of which you 'think' you like, but take a look at the bigger picture. Do you honestly believe that only those 40 or 50 'bands' you hear on the radio or see on music video channels in a year are the only ones that produce 'good' music? First of all, you may only believe that there are so few good bands out there, because you don't realize that anything else exists! It's fairly common knowledge, if you look into new releases, that out of every 20 groups that have a CD released on a major label, maybe three will get promoted. The major record companies feel that only certain groups can be marketed and exploited to the masses based on the trends they themselves create. How do they do this? That's the easy part, turn on the radio and your music video channels. If you're not blinded by the 'good' music, you'll realize that radio and television have the same basic format, and drill the same songs into your head day after day until you're trapped in the unknowing delusion that these songs are 'good music', so you won't mind rushing out and forking out \$20 for that one song that you hear everyday anyway, thus perpetuating and strengthening the corporate monstrosity! And how many different record labels are represented on these audio & video stations? Four, five, maybe six!

What exactly does this have to do with Heavy Metal? What is the point of this editorial? Quite simply this, how many Metal bands are given such favorable press and treatment by radio and video stations? The answer is obvious: zero! Since its inception, Heavy Metal has been blacklisted by the popular, mainstream media outlets and for what reason? It's not economically viable? What it boils down to is that Heavy Metal has fallen victim to what can be regarded as musical racism! If you're not following the current trends, then you are not allowed to exist in modern society. And the major labels have such a strong stranglehold on the mass media (due to the power of the almighty dollar), that even the greatest, most innovative Heavy Metal bands in the world cannot be publicized or even hope to have a platinum-selling record, because they're on a minor label. The mass media will only pay attention to bands they are told to market heavily, because the majors force them to believe that said band will become a big seller (blinding the stations with fancy promotional campaigns and promises of 'the next big thing'). Even music retailers have fallen victim to this as well. No retail outlet fully realizes the suggestive power they wield! Upper management forces their chain stores to prominently display 'popular' groups and play only hits and Top 40 'artists', because they feel it will boost their sales. Having been in such an environment, I can honestly tell you that Top 40 groups sell well regardless if you play them or not, and most people who shop in record stores actually prefer to listen to things they've never heard before while shopping. It's called 'ADD-ON' sales. They're going to buy the hits anyway, so if you play something a bit different that intrigues them, say METAL, they'll add that to their shopping list as well!

It's really sad, because back in the day, selling platinum was a great feat and meant something special. Nowadays, this happens every week, and the labels pat themselves on the back for their marketing ingenuity (no work actually being done by the bands), while many Heavy Metal bands can only hope to break 10,000 units sold. How does all this relate to *The Truman Show*? The major record labels created a little world in which only their bands will be seen and heard by you, so you are led to believe that that which you hear on the radio and see on TV is the best music that the world has to offer! We are living in a society where everyone is being force fed that which we 'should' be listening to. If anyone suggests or openly tries to promote Heavy Metal, they are looked upon as an outcast, an immature rebel who merely listens to Metal simply to spite major labels! The only things Metal-like allowed to exist are the cheese-ridden 80s Glam ballads that you see on infomercials hosted by relic VJs. Why can the industry not be more like *Star Wars* and allow you to do what is in your heart, remaining focused on the light side of the Force (Metal), even though the temptation and forces of the Dark Side (Mainstream Music) are far greater? What it's going to boil down to is Metal cutting Mainstream's hand off with a lightsaber, and the (now converted) Mainstream will throw Sony (The Emperor) into oblivion! Well, it's a nice thought anyway! Basically, what has to be done is you have to get everyone involved, build up your army (The Rebellion), take as many small victories as you can with successful concerts, turn over decent sales due to Internet publicity and favorable fanzine reviews (victories at The Battles Of Yavin and Endor), and ultimately reap the benefits of breaking through and directly competing with the majors proving that Metal is viable, thus shattering their 'Empire'. Your faith may soon be tested, however, as word has it that certain major labels are planning to rejuvenate Metal in their image in the coming year, beginning with a massive article in a world-renowned trade magazine, so be prepared! True Metal will never die as long as there are people who have hearts of Steel who proudly display their adoration for the genre as a culture!

Reinforcing Our Crusade...

~ Mark Morton



VOLUME 2

NUMBER 1

## THE PROPHECIES OF ORPHEUS

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*The wait is over. Emperor has returned with their finest offering to date. Many will be shocked upon first listen, to notice a sound that has matured to the point of including such varying styles as Death Metal and even classic Heavy Metal. Nonetheless, Emperor will not disappoint. IX Equilibrium, like the albums that preceded it, has been touched with Midas' hand. It appears that Emperor can simply do no wrong, and will forever be ten years ahead of what everyone else is doing. Samoth was a very well-spoken and intelligent person to talk to. His answers reveal much into the masterpiece that is IX Equilibrium, and also into the force of Emperor itself.*

**Promethan Crusade:** *IX Equilibrium* appears to be Emperor's defining moment.

**Emperor:** Yeah, we have progressed quite a bit from the last album. There are some new elements on this album- better production, and more complex and better performances.

**PC:** On every album, you are just building upon the brilliance of the one before.

**E:** We've never had a strict limit on our progression.

**PC:** Were you going for more diversity or did it just evolve?

**E:** It just kind of evolved. We don't sit down and say, "we're going to do it like this." We usually just write our material and wait for the end result.

**PC:** There seems to be less "atmosphere" while more of the music is "in your face" and aggressive.

**E:** Yeah, it's more direct and much more based around the guitars. The guitars are much more, as you said, "in your face." They are much clearer in the production, while in the past, the keyboards were much more dominating.

**PC:** It seems that for many Black Metal bands, the keyboards tend to lead everything while the guitar plays more of a secondary role.

**E:** Emperor has always been a guitar band. We have always made the keyboards after we've made the guitars. All of our

songs have always been composed from guitar, not from keyboards. On the other hand, you have bands like LIMBONIC ART who compose all the music on keyboards then make the guitar parts.

**PC:** So is the songwriting approached guitar riffs you have come up with, or do you approach it as one big musical idea?

**E:** For me, it's more based on riffs, while Ihsahn is more thinking music. He thinks of the riffs and the ideas in a bigger picture. He is more of the composer of the band.

**PC:** I notice a hint of MORBID ANGEL on the new album.

**E:** Yeah, sure. I guess you can sense that on a few tracks, and on "Anthems" as well. We're all really big fans of MORBID ANGEL. We don't want to be completely inspired by them, but I guess their influence shows.

**PC:** I also hear a MERCYFUL FATE / JUDAS PRIEST vibe at some points.

**E:** Yeah, and BATHORY as well.

**PC:** Do you feel you are taking these older influences to a new level?

**E:** Yeah, because I completely think that we have our own individual style so we are taking elements or inspirations from a variety of bands and making it our own thing.

**PC:** It seems to me, though I'm trying not to make a blanket statement, that Black Metal has its own niche in the grand scheme of things. The Death Metal and Heavy Metal influences do not appear as much in Black Metal as in other

genres, but, with this album, there's almost a uniting of basically everything that is great about Heavy Metal in general.

**E:** Yeah, thank you. People have said that, but a lot of people are asking, "are you still a Black Metal band?" because they hear some of the different elements...

**PC:** You just stole my next question...

# EMPEROR

## IMPERIAL EQUILIBRIUM

AN INTERVIEW WITH SAMOTH OF EMPEROR  
BY CHRIS HAWKINS



*Continued on next page*

Continued from previous page

E: Well, we've never thought that we have progressed too much to be called Black Metal. We've used this term many years. We will never run away from that, but our music may not be like the pure essence of Black Metal such as a band like DARKTHRONE. I think the scene today is getting a lot more individual instead of following a set standard. We are setting a new standard instead of following one.

PC: It does seem that things have tuned more individualistic in Black Metal. For example, your new album, the new IMMORTAL, and even the new DIMMU BORGIR...there's more identity as a band instead of being identified by the scene.

E: Well, of course a lot of people don't like that either, and they think the new album is way too progressive. To some extent, I can see that from a fan's point of view, if you get into a band and a certain album means a lot to you. On the other hand, there's a lot of people now getting into the band. I think in general, the album is well received.

PC: Would not a band, creatively want to refrain from repeatedly making the same album?

E: Yeah. Well also when we made *Into the Nightside Eclipse*, which I still think is a very good album, we were young at that time, so there was still lots of room for progression. Not only as musicians, but as persons because we were just teenagers.

PC: There is definitely a high level of complexity in Emperor's music. How much formal training have you had?

E: Well, I personally have not had formal training at all. I guess I had a lot of inspiration from Ihsahn because he's a very good musician.

PC: So the Classical influence comes more from Ihsahn?

E: Yeah, that's definitely Ihsahn. He's very into Classical music, and he hardly ever listens to Metal music. If he listens to music, it's either his own music or it's Classical music.

PC: How did Nocturnal Art Productions come about?

E: Well, that's just something I started as a very underground thing back in '93 and '94. I released a few seven inches, and I did ARCTURUS's *Constellations* mini-CD. At that point, it wasn't very serious, and it wasn't until '96 that it got really serious. I started to put my time and effort into it so today I have a proper office and work there on a full time basis.

PC: So you are completely involved in that?

E: Yeah, that's my job apart from the band. I spend a lot of time with the band, but also a lot of time managing the band.

PC: Do you see Black Metal, as its own isolated community, falling apart and becoming part of a larger Metal scene?

E: I think the original, '91 and '92 era Black Metal is falling apart. People are more individual instead of being part of one standard. I think the whole Metal thing is getting more united. It's just Extreme Metal.



GOthic  
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In case you've just arrived in this here town, we've got a new sheriff (yes, I'm gonna run the fucking cliché into the ground!), and he doesn't take kindly to you folk who merely listen to Metal for the droll reason that it sounds cool! He goes by the name of Martyr Music Group, the newest Metal label this side of the world, and he's got many deputies enforcing the new code of Metal. One of these brave souls with a heart of Steel is Brian Griffin. Most people know of Brian only through his stellar Death Metal band, BROKEN HOPE, but few know of (how shall I put this?) his more feminine side as viewed through his newest band, Em Sinfonia. Death Metalheads with a soft, romantic side! The mere thought! But alas, 'tis true, and who better to speak these brazen statements than the man himself.

"Basically, Em Sinfonia is my more artistic, romantic side and BROKEN HOPE is my rage side. With Em Sinfonia I've tried to bring out many different styles whereas with BROKEN HOPE, it's more like only one style."

Keyboards, violins, female vocals, and melodic experimentation permeate with artistic integrity all throughout Em Sinfonia's debut EP, *In Mournings Symphony*, and fans of old-school MY DYING BRIDE (before Aaron disbanded with the growling vocals), the GATHERING, WITHIN TEMPTATION, and THEATRE OF TRAGEDY should have no problem embracing the disc with open arms.

One of the goals of the band is "trying to find the beauty in darkness." Brian elaborates: "A lot of people are fascinated with those aspects of life that are darker. The songs that we write about are pretty much sad things and those are the things that hit people and strike them as fascinating. When you have these people writing songs or lyrics that are all happy-go-lucky, you can get that on the radio. If you want to feel a real feeling for mellow or sad music, you definitely have to go to the Metal. You can turn on the radio and everything is so damn happy. Even the sad songs, you can tell that they're trying to be sad on purpose. The stuff that we write comes from us. We don't have songwriters saying, 'Hey, do this. Now give me ten dollars and you can use my song,' like MADONNA or MICHAEL JACKSON. Everything we write is totally us and it's our feeling and it's a part of us.



The people in the band that write the material aren't trying to impress anyone or write a hit single. It's real." Preach it, Brother! "Well everyone wants to get that one hit," Brian continues, "and when they do, then they start to do what they want and usually by that point no one wants to hear what's coming from them, they just want to hear that one hit."

Has he been reading Mark's editorial... I wonder? While these words resonate with truth and validity throughout the halls of Metal and from within these pages, one must beckon the query, how does the average Metalhead stop this corporate monstrosity and concurrently support the extreme music scene, elevating it to higher planes of artistic and mainstream levels, while still staying true to one's self? "I guess just spread the word about his favorite band. A lot of times nowadays you have these people starting rumors and saying bad things about certain bands, but I hardly ever run into people where they have positive things to say. I think if you like a band and you're very positive about them, not necessarily having to go out and buy their record and having to get every release that they do and buy all their T-shirts... sure, that's great for the band, but I think it's more important to tell all your friends how great this band is. Verbally supporting the bands I think is something that is dying out nowadays because most of the fans are in bands themselves and everything is so competitive."

## Symphonies Recollected in Mourning's Tranquility

By Tom J. Hughes

Of course, all of this is just a natural occurrence because of the type of society we live in. Capitalism is the artist's number one enemy and has irreconcilably skewed all of our views on music and art; it has debased our minds so that we cannot separate the real artists from the sell outs. Our economic infrastructure has deified our "artists" and "musicians", giving them godlike status and cult followings, hence those who stay true to their art- the real artists- become the "starving" artists. Carefully read these and all of our editorial words throughout this magazine, and you shall be enlightened. I digress, I know, but the following must be said in closing: check into Em Sinfonia and Martyr Music Group, support all of the other independent labels saturating the underground Metal scene, and don't slander another Brother who proclaims the name of Metal! Follow your heart and heed the call, my friend. Our Crusade has just now begun.



BRIAN GRIFFIN



# The Dawn of Heavy Metal



## Angra Fireworks (Steamhammer)

Angra recently struck a licensing deal with Century Media and I did a few cartwheels when I found out about this. They are by far the best thing to come out of Brazil and I adore them with everything in me. Finally, the rest of the U.S., and not just a select few who are hardcore into the scene, will know what a monumental band Angra is. *Fireworks* is more akin to *Angel's Cry* (their debut album)

than *Holy Land* (their previous release), but elements of both are pretty prevalent. Though these similarities can be detected, *Fireworks* is somewhat of a departure from the earlier Angra sound. There's not as much Power Metal or Classical orchestration going on, yet those ambient factors certainly exist. While songs like "Metal Icarus" and "Paradise"

display Angra's Power Metal prowess, "Fireworks" shows a softer and sweeter side to the band. The anthemic "Wings of Reality", the melodious "Gentle Change", and the heavenly "Lisbon" are Angra at their absolute best and anyone into, Hard Rock, Ambient, Power, Classical, Melodic, or Symphonic Metal has got to check them out. Brazil's best kept secret will soon be unleashed here in North America- I hope you're prepared!

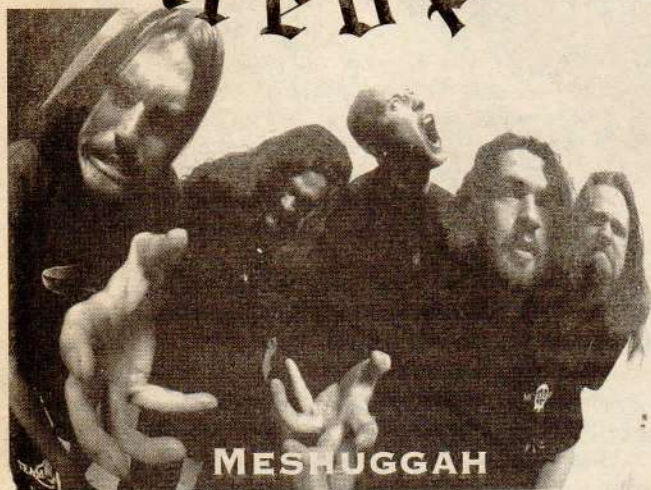
## Cryhavoc Sweetbriars (Nuclear Blast)

Combining the melodious vocal styles of SENTENCED and the raw power of IN FLAMES, Cryhavoc provide the listener with a delightfully tantalizing treat for the ears. The naked women pictured throughout the CD's cover



## Crush Efekt Real

With their self-released CD, *Crush Efekt* offers a lot of nothing new. There is not a song on here that could not have fit neatly onto a BIOHAZARD, MACHINE HEAD, or PRO-PAIN album. Like these bands and others like them, the sometimes over-done urban theme is ever-present and it seems that originality somehow got shot down in the ghetto somewhere. If this mediocrity catches your eye, you can contact them at: Crush Efekt, 1768 Little Ave, Columbus, Ohio 43223.



## Meshuggah Chaosphere (Nuclear Blast)

This is definitely some of the most chaotic, heaviest shit known to man! If you are not already familiar with Meshuggah, you have no idea what you're missing. Jens Kidman and Co. blast through heart ripping riffs pulsating with gut wrenching and blood curdling screams with such ferocity that they leave the listener wondering what the hell just happened in his pants! Syncopation and off time rhythms are the main thrust here, while melody and harmony take a back seat to orderly discord and coherent cacophony. They are one of the tightest bands in the world and can pull off some astounding shit. This is something you absolutely must hear to believe.



and booklet aren't too bad either! The funny thing about Cryhavoc is that their lyrics are quite despondent, but this despair is never reflected in the music. A piano and acoustic guitar bring in some sullen moods, but the overall effect (just like the girls on the cover) is quite uplifting (heh heh!). I highly recommend *Sweetbriars* because Cryhavoc really do deliver great music and provide for their fans much more than just another cool CD cover.





**Vader**  
*Live In Japan*  
 (Pavement)

Rivaling HYPOCRISY's *Hypocrisy Destroys Wacken* as the best live disc of the year to date, Poland's Vader issue a very accurate rendition of the live Vader experience. Drawing you in with intro music from one of my favorite horror flicks, *The Omen*, Vader sets the tone for the album and immediately pummel you into oblivion with "Sothis". Their terrorist abilities are relentless throughout the course of the disc and really come to a head with two covers, "Reign In Blood" and "Black Sabbath". Then you are soothed into deathless infinity with the savage encore classic from *The Ultimate Incantation*, "Dark Age". This recorded performance is second only to the actual live Vader experience- anyone who attended the March Metal Meltdown in New Jersey can attest to that! Vader is, and shall always be, a forthright icon in the world of brutal Death Metal!!

**Memory Garden**  
*Verdict Of Posterity*  
 (Metal Blade)

Uh oh, A Swedish Power Metal band, you know what that means? It means quite simply that Memory Garden is not a bad band. In fact, they're quite good!! More melody than you can shake a stick at with this disc. Memory Garden has assimilated all of the keystone qualities of many of Sweden's finest: CANDLEMASS, HEXENHAUS, MEMENTO MORI, MORGANA LEFAY, and TAD MOROSE. What I can't get past is why all the great Scandinavian bands possess an air of dark depression and sorrow. I mean, be happy, you guys kick ass!!! I don't get it. Anyway, Memory Garden is more heavily influenced by CANDLEMASS and MEMENTO MORI in that each song consists of a slow, steady driving tempo and Leif Eidling-style rhythms. This could possibly be due to MEMENTO MORI / MERCYFUL FATE / HEXENHAUS guitarist Mike Wead and ex-MEMENTO MORI / TAD MOROSE vocalist Kristian Andren, both of whom contributed their talents to this disc, albeit minimal. The only downside I really see to this disc is that the aforementioned influences play such a prevalent role in Memory Garden's sound that the band has no unique identity. But, as I had said earlier, they're a Swedish Power Metal band, so it is not subject to standard criticism.

**Dream Child**  
*Reaching the Golden Gates*  
 (Metal Blade)

Maybe it's just me, but I keep hearing the riff from IRON MAIDEN'S "Flash of the Blade" on this album. There is a definite MAIDEN/FATES WARNING influence and, except for the singer's penchant for occasionally screaming like KING DIAMOND, I like it. The album starts to get interesting on track four, an intro to "Alchemy" (there's "Flash..." again), and this keeps your attention with soaring lyrics and gymnastic guitar solos. My only other complaint is that the bass and drum backgrounds get a little repetitive behind the guitar solos. This is one of the firsts in a series that will give international bands a greater voice through a new deal with Metal Blade.



**Pro-Pain**  
*act of god*  
 (Nuclear Blast)

Since signing to Nuclear Blast, Pro-Pain has revamped its often-generic style. There is no drastic change here, but simply a polishing of rough edges. Hey, it's Nuclear Blast we're talking about! This is Pro-Pain's best-produced and most fluid release. The songs have a fresh intensity and groove to them. There seems to be an almost old-school Thrash flavor to some of the tracks, which blends well with their Metallic-Hardcore edge. Pro-Pain may have gotten the make-over that they needed for true success.



**Noctuary**  
*For Salvation*  
 (Lost Disciple)

With one listen, one might pass this band off as another Black Metal band with screeching vocals much in the vein of MAYHEM or DARK FUNERAL. That would be quite an injustice to Noctuary, for this band is so much more. These guys have a keen sense of melody and rhythm. What this CD does not contain is the blatant misplacement of harmonic progressions that many Black Metal bands seem to do. What this CD does contain are riffs played very fast, but that all point to a supreme tonal goal. Basically, unlike many of the less skilled Black Metal bands, Noctuary do not place notes randomly together without them making any sense. This release serves two important functions, the first of these being to show the unbelievers that Black Metal bands have talent, and the second to show the untalented how to play!

**Rotting Christ**  
*Sleep of Angels*  
 (Century Media)

I did not think I would like this release, but to my surprise I was... well, surprised! I think the first smart step was recruiting SAMAEL mastermind Xytras to handle the production. All the songs are very catchy and are quite easy on the ears. Ideas flow from this Greek quintet like water down a stream and they almost never resort to the blast beat. This is a very commendable release which is a big improvement from *A Dead Poem*, and I hope to hear more of this kind of music from this band in the near future.

**LEFAY**  
*The Seventh Seal*  
 (Noise)

Now I've been a devoted fan of MORGANA LEFAY since *The Secret Doctrine* release, and upon hearing of the band's split into two entities, I was disheartened and yet eager to find out where the magic, mirth and mayhem would surface. Well, now I have my answer. All the charm and Tolkien/Gygax mystical influence has surfaced in Lefay, which features MORGANA' alumni Charles Rytkonen (vocals) and Tony Eriksson (guitars). The sorrowful, yet urgent choruses; heavy, doom-laden CANDLEMASS-esque guitars enveloped in a style composed of an aire of class fused with good ol' Rock N' Roll; and the staple signature of classic MORGANA LEFAY are all ever prevalent within each song on this brilliant act of modern Power Metal. MORGANA LEFAY have been on the vanguard of the resurgence of Power



Metal long before the appearance of HAMMERFALL, and in their new incarnation, Lefay continues the tradition of graceful, yet aggressive Metal music. Now all they need is recognition as a force in the USA. They have the talent- Lefay simply requires productive press!! So sample the album on Noise's website ([www.hoiserecords.com](http://www.hoiserecords.com)) and demand to have *The Seventh Seal* issued in the States!!!

**Root-O-Evil Records**  
**Compilation**  
*ROOTS II (The Return)*  
 (Root-O-Evil)

This second in an ever-growing line of the *ROOTS* Compilation Series features 19 tracks of pure Metal mayhem alongside some of the stupidest shit I've ever heard recorded. It's all good, though, because the stupid shit keeps it real and I'm reminded that not every song has to be serious. While DOMINION's "Self-Inflicted" (a cross between Death Metal with a little Hardcore) and GROINCHURN's "Let's Put the Fun Back into Fundamentalism" (Grindcore/Thrash/Death) kick some serious ass, hilariously ridiculous covers of MOTORHEAD's "Ace of Spades" and CANNIBAL CORPSE's "Hammer Smashed Face" make me laugh my ass off. Man, that's a lot of ass talk! Now, to move on to a higher orifice, my ears are detecting some great stuff from Japan's SIGH and our very own SOMNUS and LE'RUE DELASHAY (Ohio and Minnesota, respectively). All three bands combine some Ambient, Doom, and Atmospheric Metal and I highly recommend all of them if you are into bands like DISMAL EUPHONY,

THEATRE OF TRAGEDY, and older MY DYING BRIDE. ASCENSION INDISCRETION plays around with some Native American, tribal music and pits it against high tech, synth sounds while NOTHING experiments with sounds within the Doom/Gothic genre. RIPSNOTER and IMPALER churn out some neo-Punk-type of stuff while 612 CREW's "Ron Jeremy"... well, with that song title you can just imagine! This is one of the most well-rounded comps to come my way in a long time and Earl Root would love you forever if you contacted him in any of the following ways: Root-O-Evil Records, c/o The Root of all Evil, 636 N. Snelling Ave., St. Paul-MN-55104. Phone: (651) 644-2070. <http://www.rootofallevil.com>. [Rootcellr1@aol.com](mailto:Rootcellr1@aol.com).



**The Crown**  
*Hell is Here*  
 (Metal Blade)

I knew this CD would be interesting just from the cover that displays a hand flashing the devil horns and a flaming pentagram. It was when I actually popped it in that I discovered the great things The Crown has to offer. There are elements of classic Heavy Metal, Thrash, Death Metal, and even a little Black Metal. The Crown has managed to uniquely blend all things great about Heavy Metal and its often segregated sub-genres into one sound that is all its own. Songs such as "Revolution 666" have the melody and riffage of MAIDEN, while maintaining the attitude of VENOM. That is not to say that this is another one of those bands regressing into the 1980's. Some of these riffs are a bit reminiscent of the aforementioned bands, but they are faster, louder, and unique only to The Crown. Perhaps the most exciting aspect of this band's sound is that they manage to blend aggression and brutality with melody and musical skill. Definitely pick up this CD, for this is Heavy Metal's new face.



**Auberon**  
*The Tale of Black*  
 (Black Mark Productions)

This is Progressive Death Metal which is both enchanting and extreme. Seems like an odd combination, but the manner in which Auberon presents it is quite commendable. *The Tale of Black* possesses a Black Metal quality about it as well, but not Black Metal in the sense of an under-produced, blasting earache. I suppose it stems from the dark, extremity that consumes and envelops each song. There is a very IN FLAMES / NIGHT IN GALES musical theme surrounding the album

while the musicians definitely let you know they play their instruments well. The progressive element comes into play with slow tempo, clean vocal interludes within each track, adding an epic quality not unlike OPETH. It's truly an interesting album for fans of classy yet brutal Metal.

**Ishtar**  
*Krieg*  
 (Hammerheart)

Bombastic Black Metal with soaring orchestral keyboards- what more could you ask for! This album is chock full of majestic music, much in the vein of the mighty EMPEROR with a touch of DIMMU BORGIR. This is the shit and all you BM heads don't want to miss it. Hammerheart never disappoint when it comes to Black Metal, so be sure to check out AETURNUS and THYRFING as well.

**Varathron**  
*The Lament of Gods*  
 (demo)

This I like. Varathron sound very much like early CREMATORY in their *Just Dreaming...* days, although their music does tend to get a bit prosaic and the songs sometimes lack emotion or motivation. The main quandary is that this tape lacks the production it needs to prosper in the orchestrated Metal scene. The keyboards are a bit too far up in the mix and the sounds get to be a bit silly at times. I think with good studio production this band would be superb, but maybe I'm wrong for expecting immaculate sound quality from a demo cassette. I'm interested to see where Varathron end up in the future. Unfortunately, no contact address was afforded us so keep your eyes peeled.

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**Soil**  
*El Chupacabra!*  
 (MIA)

Crunching riffs accompany Hard Rock, quasi-Blues oriented grooves as Soil's newest EP gives us a small dose of what to expect from their full-length debut which should be out by the time you read this. They have an ALICE IN CHAINS meets WHITE ZOMBIE meets SOUNDGARDEN type of sound that leaves the listener wanton of more after only five relatively short songs of super-charged Rock-N-Roll. They sound like they can put on a killer live show based on the fullness of the guitars and the smooth, roughness of the vocals. This is a good, solid effort from these Chicago upstarts and I wouldn't be surprised to hear these guys knifing through the airwaves someday.



# New from Cursed Productions



The Omegan Ruins is a diverse album, incorporating Traditional Metal, Thrash, and Black Metal into the established SEA OF TRANQUILLITY Death Metal style. This makes for a somewhat bizarre, experimental form of Extreme Metal, that is still brutal and very memorable.

The Omegan Ruins CD is available in a strictly limited edition of 1000. They will go fast, so do not miss out on this Death Metal masterpiece.

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## Blind Guardian *Nightfall In Middle-Earth* (Century Media)

Blind Guardian have released, what I believe to be, the absolute best Century Media Metal album of the year, and that's a bold statement since the year isn't even halfway over! One listen to *Nightfall In Middle-Earth* and you'll understand what I mean. Blind Guardian put a lot of time into recording this CD, and their toils paid off big!! For those of you unaware, Blind Guardian are a heavily classical-influenced Power Metal band hailing from Germany (where all the great Power Metal bands originate!), who shock the world with their abilities album after album. This time around, the band tackles a conceptual piece based on the J.R.R. Tolkien classic *The Silmarillion*, the saga of the Elves of Middle-Earth. Blind Guardian pull out all the stops and amalgamate every influence in their repertoire, combining elements of orchestral grandeur, Middle Ages folk



minstrelry, furiously exquisite Power, and a ballad-like delivery worthy of QUEEN. Spoken dialogue interludes (an Optimus Prime / Orson Welles type voice) and battle sounds are placed between tracks to

give it an epic-story sensibility. Key songs include "Blood Tears", "Mirror Mirror", "Noldor (Dead Winter Reigns)", and "Time Stands Still (At The Iron Hill)", simply because the choir-like choruses are hypnotically memorable and cause the album to become a majestic Titan of art!

## Dwole *A Requiem of Euphoric Nihilism* (Root-O-Evil)

This is very chilling, dark music which sounds to be from the depths of hell. Keyboardists who really wish to learn how to diversify their sound and take full advantage of the plethora of sounds a synth can produce should listen to Dwole. *A Requiem of Euphoric Nihilism* is a conglomeration of haunting soundscapes for the sick, twisted, and demented soul. This disc could be the soundtrack for a serial killer. When I listen to Dwole, I get (besides chills up my spine) a WUMPSCUT kind of feel, or maybe even a more grotesque version of ZOAR. I love Metal, but sometimes I'm in the mood for something a

little more frightening and music like that of Dwole's creates this atmosphere for me. This disc shows massive amounts of creativity and leaves me with an evil sort of satisfaction after every listen.



PETER TAGTGREN  
 OF HYPOCRISY

## Hypocrisy *Hypocrisy Destroys Wacken* (Nuclear Blast)

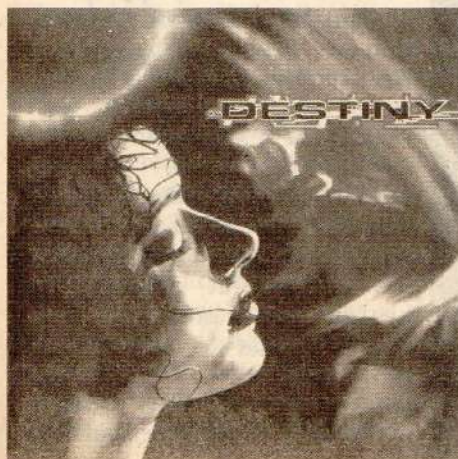
What more need be said other than Hypocrisy is a perfect band in an imperfect world (full of Aliens!). This live album is a perfect testament to that statement. Peter Tagtgren and company breeze flawlessly and effortlessly through an 11-song set of Hypocrisy classics spanning their entire career. And if that's not enough to make it necessary for you to run out and get this, there are 4 new, unreleased studio tracks tacked on to the end of the disc to entice you and hold you over until the upcoming release of their self-titled follow-up to *The Final Chapter*. Now go buy it or you'll be subjected to a living dissection, Roswell style!!

## Prophanity *Stronger than Steel* (Metal Blade)

Prophanity combine the majestic guitar attack of the 80's Power Metal scene with blast beats and screeching vocals. Black Power Metal? Could it be that this is another band stretching the boundaries and redefining the Metal genre?! Virtuous dual guitar leads permeate and power the majority of this disc. Metal Blade's roster (and this is the opinion of many) was pretty lacking there for a while, but now with bands like MITHOTYN, MANOWAR, KING DIAMOND, MERCYFUL FATE, KINGS X and the insane GALACTIC COWBOYS (all hail Monty!), things are definitely getting better, and Prophanity have earned themselves great notability in my opinion.

## Stratovarius *Destiny* (Noise)

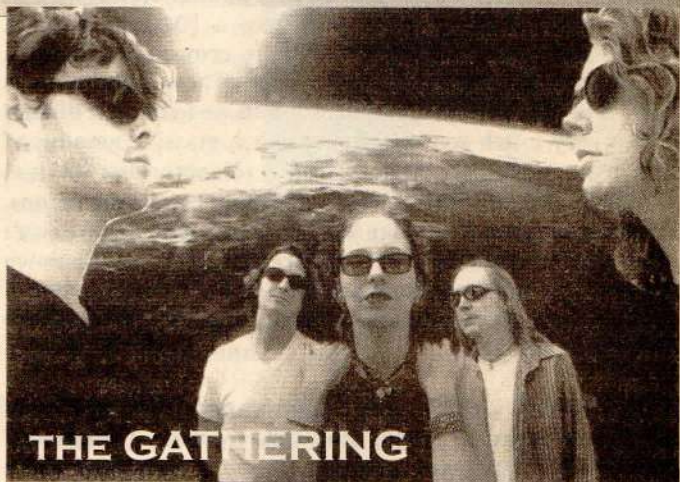
Pure, powerful, musical art! Why is it that I am completely floored by any and every European act Noise Records releases? Destiny combines the Power Metal guitar-anthem prowess of GAMMA RAY, the classical bard-like antics of YNGWIE MALMSTEEN, the melodramatic melancholy of QUEENSRYCHE, and the heavenly vocal empathy of CRIMSON GLORY. With a band that effectively fuses all of those qualities, how can you go wrong? Honestly, you can't! While the majority of the US music scene is preoccupied with creating that Number 1 Hit Single (you know, the only song most of today's bands are known for. Case in point: name a MARCY PLAYGROUND song other than "Sex



## the GATHERING *How to Measure a Planet?* (Century Media)

When you listen to this CD, you must have an open mind. I mean, you should be listening to *all* music with an open mind, but particularly albums like this. the GATHERING's latest is an almost complete departure from their earlier releases, and I would go so far as to say it is not Metal. But that doesn't mean it's bad; on the contrary, I would call it one of the best releases 1999 has given to us thus far. I will admit, however, that to finally like this CD, it has taken me a solid month-and-a-half of non-stop listening. I forced myself to listen to it all

and Candy", another song by THE CARDIGANS outside of "Lovefool", or a CHERRY POPPIN' DADDIES song besides "Zoot Suit Riot"), European Metal bands are perfecting their craft, honing their skills to "erect" the best complete albums you could ever hear. When you hear a Top 40 band's CD, you're only going to pay attention to that hit single and shut the CD off. That's how the big record companies are able to produce so much garbage, they make you spend \$20 for one song! Is there any logic in that?? No, but that's the way the US music industry works. Now you may argue and say, "Well I know a lot of song off of NO DOUBT's Tragic Kingdom!" My response would be, how many were you familiar with before they were plastered all over the radio and MTV?? I would guess ...hmmm 1??? This is why Metal bands, and European Metal bands in particular, work so hard to be the best at what they do, because the US is a jaded market, if there's no single, then the album doesn't sell. But, if you're introduced to a particular Metal band by any source, be it from a friend or intrigue from a truly heart-felt review in a fanzine, chances are, you may never return to the mainstream. Metal is more art than business, and Stratovarius are among the elite craftsmen in the field!



the way through almost every day for two weeks straight and now I am not ashamed to say that I really love it. The major dilemma was overcoming the lack of heavy distorted guitars and sheer amount of music encapsulated within the two-disc release. At first, all the songs sounded the same because they all, for the most part, are sullen and sincerely despondent. An uplifting spirit can be detected throughout, though, and this is much more than a pity-party, feel-sorry-for-me ANATHEMA or MY DYING BRIDE album. Spacey keyboards and atmospherically penetrating guitars surround Anneke's cherubic vocals and the songs just melt into one another with soft succession. After many encounters, though, the songs do become separate

entities unto themselves, and it was then that I realized that I was all wrong for not recommending it to people. I was taking my preconceived ideas of what the GATHERING should sound like based on past releases and not letting the band speak for themselves. They are professional musicians who are not concerned with falling into a certain musical category and are simply content to make beautiful music that escapes classification. A true connoisseur of music will appreciate *How to Measure a Planet?* and I am slowly becoming aware that all forms of music have something beneficial to offer a society. We simply have to break free from our limiting expectations and cultural boundaries and let the music speak for itself. Just because it's not what we want it to be does not make it inferior; it just means we're not very receptive and too closed-minded. We'd rather eat left-overs instead of tasting what has just been prepared for us. That defines a fool in his folly and it took this CD to make me realize how foolish I really was.

*Continued on page 20*

# THE MADNESS OF THE MARCH METAL MELTDOWN

BY MARK MORTON, TOM J. HUGHES, TYLER PURSEL, AND CHRIS HAWKINS  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHESTER NEY

Over 4500 people attended the March Metal Meltdown in Asbury Park, NJ on March 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Three stages showcased over 100 bands from just about every genre of Metal under the sun. Almost our entire staff was able to attend the two-day event. For the most part, we all thoroughly enjoyed this gathering all in the name of Metal, but we could not help but be disappointed with some of the bands' performances or production. The performances on stage ranged anywhere from earsplitting to ethereal, with almost every adjective one can conjure up in between! Unfortunately, it seemed that the first annual Meltdown was more of a "Hardcore" festival than a "Metal" festival. There were two distinctly different crowds there, each supporting their own style and culture. There definitely was a general tension that could be felt, and we felt that it did not make very much sense to have such a massive amount of Hardcore at this "Metal" show. Nonetheless, it was flabbergasting to finally have such a great convening of fans, bands, and promoters alike here on the East coast! We can't wait until next year's event and are already counting down the days! So, without further ado, here is a culmination of reviews for most of the bands we conglomerately were able to check out-enjoy!

GREY SKIES FALLEN put on the best performance out of all the "unknown" bands (big talk from an "unknown" magazine!). They are a great Doom Metal band from Maryland, and I purchased their CD afterwards which is also really good. Keep on the lookout for these guys!

SARCOPHAGUS played some pretty cool Melodic Black Metal. Let's call them the offspring of DISSECTION. They wore some cool spiked jewelry which, unfortunately, is the only highlight I can reminisce from their set.

BLOOD STORM sucked. Techno/Experimental Black Metal is a very bad combination. Then again, is Techno a good combination with anything?! Uuuggghhhh!!

VITAL REMAINS played a set where the music was very lacking, but the singer kicked major ass. On the other hand, HATEBREED played horribly and their entire sound quality sucked overall. I expected more from this band, but many of the bands were plagued with sound problems, so perhaps I'm being a bit harsh.

One band I must admit to being highly disappointed in was EARTH CRISIS. While some thought that they put on one of the best Hardcore performances (especially because their last song was a cover of BLACK SABBATH's

"War Pigs"), I have to say that it wasn't their music or sound that angered me. It was the fact that they put on the most sell-out performance I have ever seen. While most Hardcore bands preach proclamations of a sick society and that people need to change their attitudes regarding the current state of social reform, EARTH CRISIS were a walking, talking advertisement for ROADRUNNER Records! First of all, their vocalist, Karl Buechner, was prancing around the stage wearing an OBITUARY T-shirt (an obvious Roadrunner band), and I don't recall the band

ever being noted as fans of Death Metal. Maybe they're closet Death-heads who felt it only appropriate to come out at a "Metal" festival. Moreover, between each song, Karl urged the crowd to stick around on Saturday to check out SEPULTURA (another Roadrunner band) without mentioning the headliners on the night they were playing (Friday). I thought this was fairly common and apropos at concerts- to mention the bands you were supporting that day! It's kind of ironic that, after all that free publicity from EARTH CRISIS, SEPULTURA's set turned out to be a snoozer!

KARL BUECHNER,  
KING OF ALL SELL-OUTS



THE CONVENTION HALL

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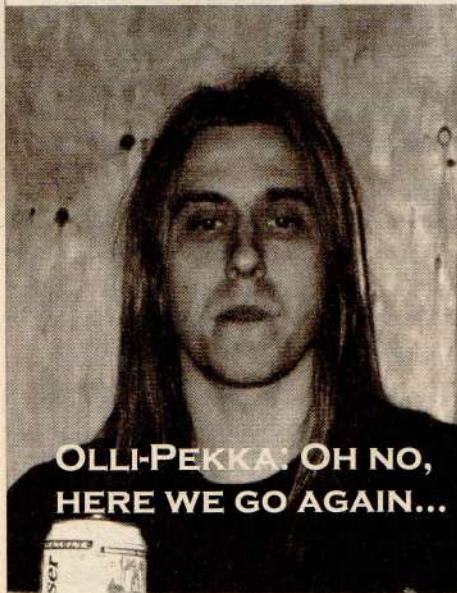
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**DYING FETUS** were a great way to start off the day! They were a great mosh band and definitely got my adrenaline flowing. Holy Shit!! Free stuff always lures me to a band, and **DYING BREED** is no exception. While playing through a blisteringly brutal Death set, this band graced their fans with T-shirts, hats, CDs and other such crap.

**SHANGO** played their hit, "Balls" and featured the vocals of two fat guys in double breasted suits smoking cigars. They weren't by any stretch of the imagination one of the greatest bands there, but they were thoroughly entertaining. These guys are just plain silly, so much so that it's impossible to dislike them!

Newcomers to Metal festivals are Puerto Rico's **PUYA**, a unique band that fuses Thrash / Hardcore with smooth, Latin Salsa music. This being their first festival outing, **PUYA** showed no sign of nervousness. The immediately perceivable audience embraced them wholeheartedly, moshing to the heavy parts and swaying to the sexy, ethnic rhythms. I was completely impressed to see the band receive such a warm response from an otherwise extreme audience.

**WYKKED WYTC** sucked so bad that after only two songs one smart crowd member Shouted, "you suck!"



**OLLI-PEKKA: OH NO, HERE WE GO AGAIN...**

Consequently, and to the enjoyment of many, they left! **CONVERSELY**, **DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN**, another Relapse band, were pretty damn good. They played very brutal music which rivaled that of label mates, **MORTICIAN**.

**LONG WINTER'S STARE** (not to be mistaken for the great **PANTHEON** Records band) sucked. They had one guitarist with a

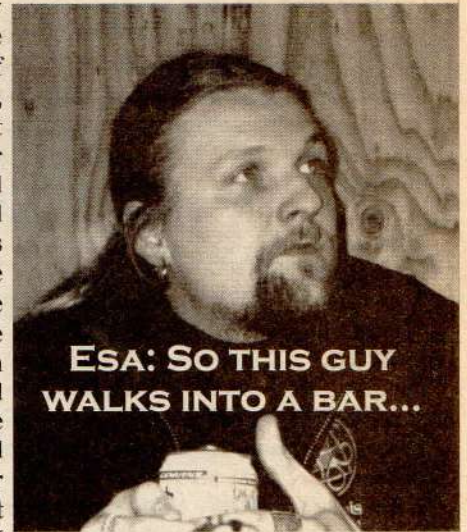
horrible sound, a singer who did nothing interesting, and an absolutely horrible drummer. Hearing the clattering of glass breaking is more appealing!

**AMORPHIS** made their first appearance on American soil in over five years, but unfortunately, the crowd did not show much enthusiasm when they finally hit the stage. Perhaps some thought that they were the biggest waste of time, but they were one of the very few bands who smiled during their performance, and they were obviously having a very good time, so I really do not understand why the crowd showed as little reaction to them as they did. I'm imagining this might be because they played a lot of their newer material from **TUONELA**, but they opened up with the killer "Better Unborn"! We here at the Crusade are split into two different camps when it comes to **AMORPHIS**, and maybe they weren't "Metal" or "Hardcore" enough for a lot of the

crowd, but I thought that they put on a fantastic performance and were definitely one of the highlights of the entire 'Fest! Personally, my only disappointment with them was that they did not play "My Kantele", but they did a fucking killer job with "Black Winter Day"!

When **HYPOCRISY** took the stage, all fell silent! It seemed that everyone at the 'Fest on Friday were there just to see them!

When they ripped into the opening chords of their first song, everyone went ballistic! Peter Tagtgren and company breezed through a set of songs spanning their entire career (including one from before even he was in the band) with fluid precision, and even though the songs were designed for 2 guitarists (their second being ill that day), **HYPOCRISY**

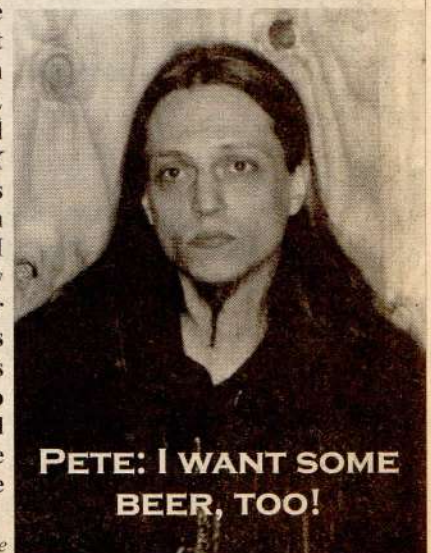


**ESA: SO THIS GUY WALKS INTO A BAR...**

had an impressive outing. They didn't play "Roswell 47" like I was expecting, but Peter's vocals were as brutal as **HYPOCRISY**'s studio releases displayed, and some of those sounds emanating from his vocal chords floored me! The man is fucking insane!!

**DIVINE EMPIRE** are no fucking joke! When they performed, I was completely blown away. Out of everyone who played in the Paramount Theater, **DIVINE EMPIRE** possessed the best sound quality, and one could not help but become enraptured by their sheer controlled aggression! They are definitely a band that you need to see to believe! One showing is not enough!

Old School, under-rated legends **BLOODFEAST** received a mediocre reception (although they were the main reason I attended!!), and it was really sad. Only about twenty people, including myself, really cared about what they had to offer. I was very glad to see them run through a set comprised of both classic albums, **KILL FOR PLEASURE** and **CHOPPING BLOCK BLUES** (more songs being performed from the former release). I was impressed that they managed to keep their cool despite the legions of Grind-happy fans that wanted them to pick up the pace. I'd really like to see the band again in a more intimate setting.



**PETE: I WANT SOME BEER, TOO!**

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Also in the Fest's old school expose was RIOT. They received the warmest reception of anyone who played in the Paramount Theater. Every song was proceeded with a standing ovation. Everyone loved them!! They danced their way through a lengthy set, largely composed of their classic early 80s albums with a couple recent *INISHMORE* tracks.

Canada's ANVIL just did not give a fuck! They came out, announced that the crowd knew who they were so introductions really weren't necessary, and proceeded to play their most un-politically correct songs, which happen to be the bands forte. The crowd loved it! ANVIL were really at home on the stage, joking with the audience and playing their most loved (or hated) songs in their arsenal, the anthems "Metal On Metal", and "Forged In Fire" being among them. By far, they were the most entertaining act present.

Also hailing from Canada, Century Media's CRYPTOPSY overcame the grand obstacle of poor sound on the Relapse Stage and literally tore shit up (you'd think ANAL BLAST would be the ones to do that, but their sound was bland and repetitious)! They played a devastating set of the most brutal and classy music existing in the extreme Death Metal genre today! It was hard to believe, but they actually sounded as good live as they do on disc. Their musicianship really shined through and they remain one of the most manic and graceful bands I've ever seen. CRYPTOPSY are definitely destined for greatness!

BIOHAZARD made their grand return to Metal/Hardcore crossover greatness, playing a tight set of their catchiest, groove-laden hymns of political unrest and urban crisis. Seeing BIOHAZARD run through such a set list reminded me of youthful innocence and the unbridled aggression that dwelled within. Apparently, I wasn't the only one, as the entire crowd were bouncing along to every song, including the new ones from *NEW WORLD DISORDER*, which hasn't even yet been released!!

ICED EARTH were absolutely phenomenal. They did not disappoint in the least, and every song was performed with both precision and accuracy. Unlike most of the other bands, they did not have extensive sound problems. They



performed flawlessly as a band, especially in their use of guitar harmony, and their music sounded much heavier live than recorded. They pleased their fans by performing songs off many of their albums, highlights being their opener, "Dark Saga", and the classic, "Night of the Stormrider". They were, without a doubt, the highlight of Friday evening.

**MATTHEW BARLOW  
OF ICED EARTH**

It was great seeing DIMMU BORGIR over here in the 'States, but it was also disappointing because they did not play very long. It took entirely too long for them to set up the stage and when they finally came on, their set was troubled with sound problems. At times, the guitar could not even be heard over the keyboards and drums. Though this was not their fault, it must be said that I was expecting more. The choice of songs for their set was bleak, for their entire set was composed of tracks from their new album, *SPIRITUAL BLACK DIMENSIONS* except for the last song, "Mourning Palace". Many people waited the whole day just to catch this band, and left disappointed after only a 35-minute set. Shagrath throwing down his mic stand like a little girl did not help matters, either.



**SHAGRATH OF  
DIMMU BORGIR**

It was great to catch THE DEATH KIDS, comprised of a 14 year old singer/guitarist, a 16 year old drummer, and their dad who played bass. It was amazing to see such young kids display that much ability. The weakest link was their dad whose bass playing was overly simplistic. THE DEATH KIDS might possibly be leaders of the scene in a few years.

VADER had an intensity about them that inspired one of the best crowd reactions at the 'Fest. From the opening chord, people went nuts! Though the sound could have been better, VADER successfully pulled off their unique brand of Death Metal.

SEPULTURA was one of the most disappointing bands I have ever seen. It is obvious that they have not chosen the right new singer. His vocal delivery was bland, and he lacked a commanding stage presence. SEPULTURA's biggest problem was the lack of a second guitarist. Because of this, their material sounded very weak. None of the old songs sounded right, but rather sounded thin.

ENSLAVED delivered one of the best performances at the show and if it wasn't for those losers, MADBALL, they could've played even longer! They had a superb and commanding stage presence, the best overall sound, the best vocal performance, and delivered nothing but pure and brutal Black Metal from the shores of Norway. Much of the material they played was from their latest album, but they also delivered older favorites. Those disappointed with DIMMU BORGIR were satisfied with ENSLAVED's powerful performance, for they definitely made Saturday worth the extra \$20.

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The fusing of Metal with so many Hardcore bands was not the best idea in the world, but bringing together the world of wrestling and Metal was something that was bound to happen eventually. Actually, this was one of the first events to spotlight pro wrestling. While the proceedings reeked of limburger cheese, it was

totally stupid and really were not even that attractive. I realize that Metal has as much testosterone running through it as SIX FEET UNDER has boring power chords and stolen OBITUARY riffs, but their presence was absolutely ridiculous. They made fools of themselves whenever they opened their mouths. I was almost embarrassed every time one of them introduced a band- they were so fucking fake and cheesy! Speaking in public and holding conversations is obviously not these girls' forte, and I think that they should stick to ooohhhhing and aaahhhhing for the money shot and open their mouths for other, more important and pleasurable reasons than talking!

The sound problems and overall unorganization (which forced many of the closing bands to rush through their set while some of the less stellar bands who played earlier got to play more songs than their scheduled time slot allotted) can, of course, be attributed to lack of preparation on the part of the 'Fest's promoters and producers. This event was the brainchild of Jack Koshick, the man behind The Milwaukee MetalFest, and he plans on expanding this event to make it even larger than Milwaukee! Those who skipped out missed a huge event that only has room to improve. We all had a blast (the aforementioned reservations still withstanding, of course) and are very much looking forward to the day when this event will rival and perhaps surpass Milwaukee (hey, it's expensive to drive all the way out there!). See you there next year!

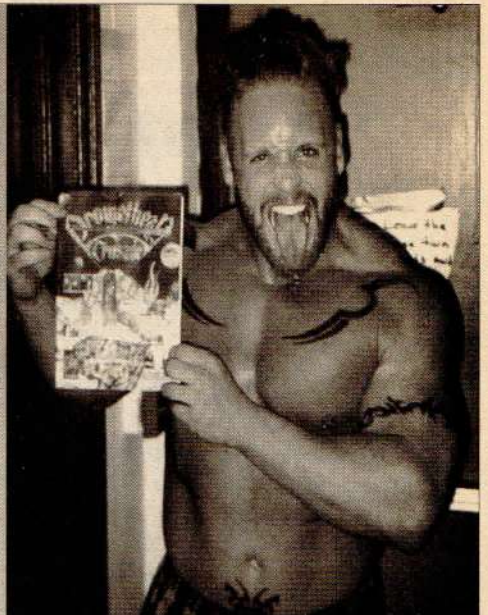
could become a more formidable draw, just as Heavy Metal is sneaking its way into the pro wrestling circuits. Furthermore, this fusion was well received by just about everyone in attendance and Koshick plans on bringing these elements to Milwaukee as well.

One other thing that must be said was that the Adult Film stars presenting the bands and signing autographs were out of place and fake. They were



**DROZ VISITS THE SMACKDOWN HOTEL!**

exactly this that was its charm! The ring was very small, and most of the wrestlers were local boys, but they did the best with the hand they were dealt. Their performances received as many laughs as they did "boos." The highlight of this part of the festival was definitely an appearance of WWF madman, Droz! While the wrestling aspect of the 'Meltdown came across as poor in quality, it was the perfect diversion to keep one from becoming too bored with the monotony of some of the music outside while waiting for the headlining bands. I believe that in the future, with some more thought and proper budgeting (and maybe a bit more cooperation and assistance from the larger wrestling organizations), professional wrestling events at Metal fests



**YOU TELL HIM HE'S A SHITTY WRESTLER!**



**LOOK LIVELY CAPTAIN!**



**OOWWW! WATCH MY NIPPLE!**

# Tuomercia: Wake up!

By Tom J. Hughes

I was lucky enough to speak with Esa Holopainen of Amorphis after their performance at the March Metal Meltdown in support of their latest release, *Tuonela*. After some small talk about the event, the conversation turned to a more overarching talk about the Metal scene in general and its effects on certain parts of the world. Esa told me that the scene here in the United States differs greatly from the scene overseas. "The market for Metal music in Europe is much bigger," he says, "and it's easier to do proper tours and to sell albums. It's getting better over here, but in Europe it is still work with playing all those shows and stuff." I asked him how things are improving over here and he said, "It's getting better over here, but it's so much work a lot of the time. We're very lucky to have a label doing a very good job for Amorphis, so we're surviving over here, but it really is so much work."

While major labels try to force their bands to produce bigger and better albums (complete, of course, with that number one hit), it stymies their creativity and produces mediocrity. It's this exact mediocrity that plagues our popular music scene today, but not Amorphis. When I asked Esa about pressure from Relapse to top the now immortal *Elegy*, he simply stated that, "I don't think there was that much pressure. We just cleared our heads and started to write music from the clear table. We didn't have any goals when we started writing, we just wrote music that we enjoyed to play just like we've done before and we didn't want any stress. We're very happy with how it turned out as well."

I, too, am very happy with the disc, but you can read about that elsewhere. The moral here, folks, is that we're all in this fight together. We all must band together to

support the scene, and it's going to take a collective effort on all of our parts to elevate it to its rightful status in American society. They are much more open minded over in Europe when it comes to art and culture, music and ethnicity. Unfortunately, our nation's economics and sociological constructs have plagued our minds and

instilled within us the idea that the only types of art that exist are those which protrude through our airwaves and television screens.

There is an entire body of music and art blossoming below these political and public abhorrences, and it is our call as Brothers of Metal to open the eyes of our fellow citizens and to get them to realize that there is more to life than what exists on the radio and the television! Bands like Amorphis talk of this dichotomy in the Metal scene all the time.

Of course, there is a flip side to this scenario. People can become so engrossed with a certain style of music or art that they lose sight of the good from the bad. Their sense of quality can become diminished, and such is the case with Amorphis. An excerpt from our conversation convincingly and jokingly portrays this demise in aesthetic judgement that folks too close to see the forest from the trees display:

Promethean Crusade: So you guys were pissed off when Relapse released *Privilege of Evil*?

Amorphis: It was just old shit that we did not want released, you know.

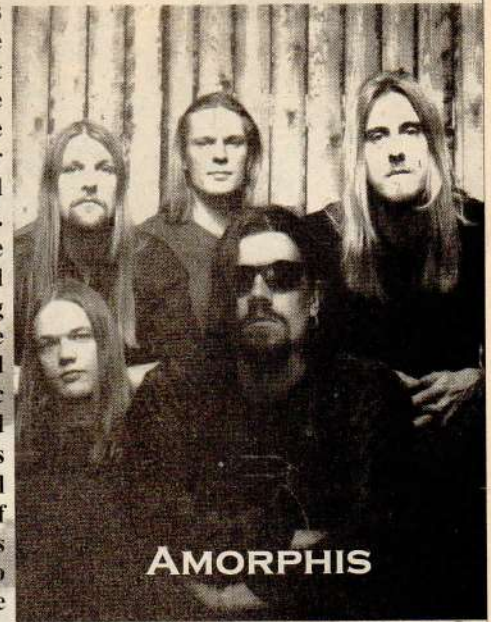
PC: Shit's a good adjective, too.

A: [very dejectedly] All right, all right.

PC: Well, I'm just saying, man... it's not the Amorphis I grew to love with *The Karelian Isthmus* and *Tales*....

A: Well, we still play some of the old stuff, but *Privilege of Evil* is too far back.

In our struggle to keep the underground Metal scene alive, we must be wary of the fact that our music is also besieged with poor quality and mediocrity. That cannot be helped, but with a greater expanse of knowledge, and with a proper portrayal and edification of the bands that make it all possible, together we can elevate our music to ever higher planes of pleasure and aestheticism. Amorphis have done so with their music, as well as many other bands, so now it's our turn. There is an art to critiquing, to listening, and to promoting a cause. Bands like Amorphis are doing their part, we're doing our part here at the Crusade, and it is our desire that you, our readers and fans, mark this call.



AMORPHIS



OLLI-PEKKA  
& ESA

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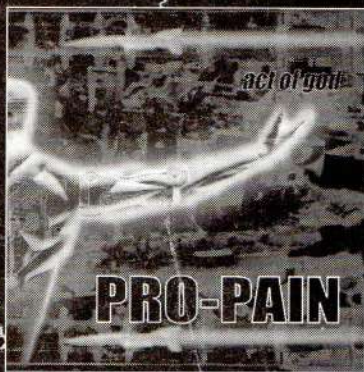


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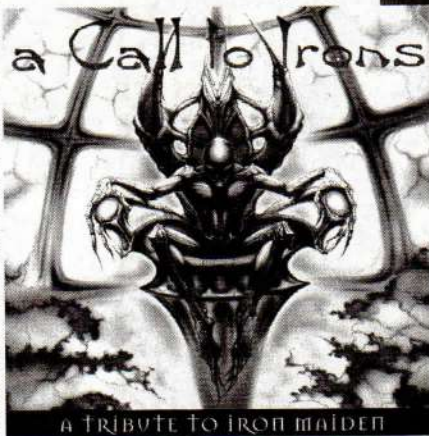
caroline dis

## Various Artists

### *A Call to Irons 1 & 2 (A Tribute To Iron Maiden)*

(Dwell)

Upon receiving these two discs, I was enthralled and relieved to find that, finally, homage was paid to a deserving band that had justifiably influenced a generation of Rock and Metal alike. When I popped them in to the disc player, however, my mood began to slightly sour. While select tracks possess decent sound quality and improvisation that enhanced songs (i.e. ANCIENT WISDOM's use of keyboards on "Powerslave", ANGEL CORPSE's beefed-up drumwork on "Genghis Khan", and ABATTOIR's street-rock faithfulness on "Sanctuary") I cannot help but feel disgusted when my ears are introduced to death-ized, extreme interpretations of classic 'Maiden tracks (like MORGION's horrid



bastardization of "To Tame A Land", OPERA IX's Black Metal degradation of "Rime Of the Ancient Mariner", POSSESSION's weak and sloppy "Revelations", and ENGRAVE's terribly stale "Strange World" & "Invaders"), which bring to mind the awful rendition of "Satan's Fall" that IMMOLATION had the guts to include on Listenable's MERCYFUL FATE Tribute Album. Ughh!!! In keeping a



positive note, however, exquisite reproductions (simply because the bands are just so damn good!)

include OPETH's "Remember Tomorrow", ABSU's "Transylvania" and DECEASED's "2 Minutes To Midnight". It's cool to see that nearly all of the covers (with the exception of "Public Enema Number One") were taken from 'Maiden's glory days as a driving force in the Metal community in the early 80s, because the 90s has been a very forgettable decade for the band. Due to its diversity, this is definitely an item for true fans of all Metal. Switching gears now, I think it's cool that Dwell Records spotlights many bands so knee-deep in the underground since most people may have never heard of them before

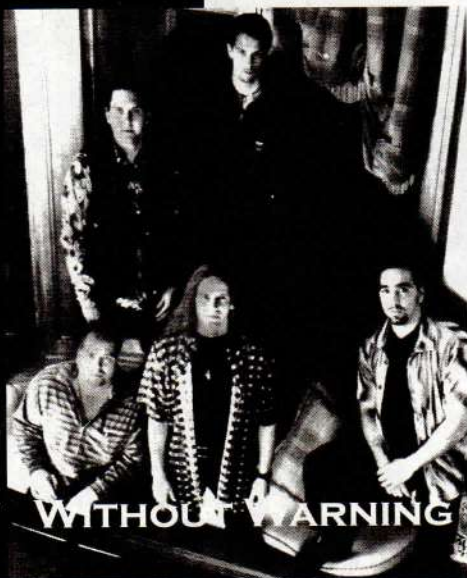
these releases. But wouldn't it be cool to see a tribute album (for any worthy band, besides BLACK SABBATH) featuring contributions from noteworthy bands who've already made a name for themselves and were directly influenced by said band's work?

## Without Warning

### *Step Beyond*

(Conquest Music Group)

These guys sound a little like DREAM THEATER. There, now that that's out of the way we can get on with the review. *Step Beyond* is the first US release from this upstate NY Progressive Rock quartet and it's nice to hear an album that isn't afraid to emphasize emotion over aggression. Jack Bielata's gravelly vocals give the songs a rougher edge than most operatic singers of this genre do. Repeated playing will reward the listener simply because there is so much going on here; the tempo changes alone require a couple of spins. I look forward to hearing more from this band, for they show a lot of potential.



## Lunar Womb

### *The Astral Grief*

(Meathook Productions)

This is a magnificent tape of Celtic/Medieval music much in the vein of the mighty MORTIIS (to which this writer is quite fond of). The tape features only 2 tracks. The first one is entitled "Through the Silver Caves" which clocks in at a whopping 11:08.

This is a great track with a beautiful harpsichord sound that sustains throughout the entire track. The other track, entitled "Ebon Ocean", isn't quite as good, but this demo by Lunar Womb (the project of Nepthunous) is one of the best I have ever received.

## Terminal Descent

### *Mortuary Lust and Abysmal Hate*

(Demos)

Terminal Descent is the project of one, Tony Mikkelson. *Mortuary Lust* is supposedly a concept album about having a love or lust for death. I don't really hear a concept being portrayed in the music, though, and it is hard to understand due to the fact that no lyrics were included. The drum work is a bit syncopated and some of the guitar work is a little boring, but the overall production is good for a demo. I enjoyed *Abysmal Hate* (which is entirely instrumental with the exception of one song) much better. I believe Tony's instrumental work is far better than his vocal attempts. This is not a disc I would normally listen to on a regular basis, but it was a tolerable listen when I gave it a real chance. Tony's about as underground as you can get and is a huge supporter of the scene; he's the real deal and he desires all kinds of feedback from everyone involved in all capacities of Metal. Contact him at 236 N. 11<sup>th</sup> St, Forest City, RI 05436-1516.

**Soulquake System**  
*A Firm Statement*  
 (Black Mark Productions)

The best way to describe this band is insane. They're one of the best Metal/Hardcore/Grind bands I've heard. Hailing out of Germany, this five piece tears and rips with a HELMET-like intensity, and their recent release, *A Firm Statement* continues this sonic ear bludgeoning. *A Firm Statement* is an insane, psychotic journey of rage with front man Fredrik Reinedahl as your tour guide. Their lyrics deal with such issues as personal downfall and politics. Some songs to mention are "Years Later" (a song about trying set your life straight despite the chaos and temptations around you), "Something Else" (a definite pit pleaser), and "Maranata" (an outright attack on white supremacy groups). Overall, Soulquake System will be, and should be, getting praise and good responses for a long time.

**Criminal**  
*Dead Soul*  
 (Metal Blade)

The latest release from this Death Metal band from Chile is a very brutal album from beginning to end. Their songs range from such topics as death, criticizing organized religion, and society. Unfortunately, as a Death Metal band, they are nothing special. That's not to say that they are a totally bad band. On the contrary, they are a very talented band, however, a lot of their songs lack the dynamics that other Death Metal bands have. The lead guitarist, Rodrigo Contreras, is phenomenal and he contributes great solos and riffs, but the big problem is the recording itself. It isn't that the sound quality is bad (because there are many low-fi



recordings of Death Metal bands that sound fine), it's just that the sound is dry and isn't proper for Death Metal. There are some good songs on the album, however. "Denial", "Terror", and "S.S.S." are all highlights worth your time to check out. Seeing as though Criminal is a newly formed band, and the members probably haven't seriously played with each other, they should surely grow as band and hopefully get progressively better.

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## **Encores, Legends and Paradox (Magna Carta)**

This tribute to the music of Emerson, Lake and Palmer makes me want to go out and hear what the original versions of these songs sound like. I must admit, I was born too late and I never got into ELP, though I distinctly remember they were all the rave back in the day. Older guys that I used to work with would praise them up and down and swore that if I gave them a chance I would like them. Foolish me never heeded their advice and now I am the lesser man for it. This stuff rocks! Granted, it's nowhere close to Metal, but who cares- this is phenomenally great music! When artists like THERION and SYMPHONY X take Classical elements and fuse them with Metal, they only have bands like ELP to thank, for it is they who originally fused Rock with the Classical in their songs. "Karn Evil 9 1" Impression", "Hoedown", "The Endless Enigma", and "Tarkus" all are masterpieces I (unfortunately) am just now experiencing. I'm sure long time ELP fans will embrace this tribute, for it's the ultimate in Progressive music played by the best in the business: Mike Portnoy, Derek Sherinian, John Novello, Mark Wood, Jordan Rudess, James LaBrie, Robert Berry, Trent Gardner, and many others all lend their musical expertise in the recording of this album. Don't be young, dumb, and full of- well let's just say that I was really stupid in my formative years and never gave this "old fogey" music a chance. Every generation of musicians has the former one to thank, and this tribute album is one of the best ways imaginable. Thank you.

ENCORES, LEGENDS & PARADOX



## **Platypus When Pus Comes to Shove (Velvet)**

Platypus is a side project comprised of John Myung, Derek Sherinian (both of DREAM THEATER fame), Rod Morgenstein (DIXIE DREGS), and Ty Tabor (KING'S X). With this all-star cast, you'd expect the musicianship and technical finesse to really shine through- and it does- but not in the way you'd expect. It's Progressive music, but not (how shall I put this?) technically dazzling or show-offy. It's more Rock oriented, with a BEATLES meets DEEP PURPLE on the corner of LED ZEPPELIN and GENESIS somewhere in between BOSTON and KANSAS. Yeah, it's got its flashy and glamorous moments (and what glorious moments they are, too!), but overall it's got more soul and groove than spirit and pizzazz. Of the ten songs, five of them are instrumentals; these are the more Progressively natured songs while the songs with vocal tracks groove sometimes fast and sometimes slow. Ty does all the singing, so there are some definite KING'S X overtones, but Sherinian's keyboards stand out, too, and I have to say DREAM THEATER is present at times as well. Some superior drum lead-ins and fills crop up here and there and a link to the DIXIE DREGS is necessitated. Overall, though, if you wouldn't inform me that it was these four particular men who were performing on this recording, the connections would not be so easily made. It's a testament to the diversity, creativity, and raw talent of these four individuals and it is just that that makes this album so great.

## **Trail of Tears Disclosure in Red (DSFA)**

Trail of Tears subscribe to many of the same beliefs as some of the best bands in the Euro-Metal scene... catchy melodic guitars, Death vocals, and haunting female vocals. This is not a bad debut, though there are some points that could be stronger. The female vocals are good on most tracks except for a few where they take on a more Pop resemblance, often sounding to me like a European version of Pat Benatar. It simply seems like the drama that is trying to be achieved within this CD sounds more



## **Overkill Necroshine (CMC International)**

Yeah, you might think, "Yeah, yeah, another Overkill album! Same old shit." Well, guess what? These guys are really pissed this time around. Killer production and brutal riffage makes for one of Overkill's potentially bitter releases in a long time. Lyrically, Overkill have worked out personal demons and let loose their poison-tongued Political Correctness assassin, Blitz, to spit forth a mouthful of disgust towards society and relationships, something that has become an Overkill standard. But what I'd really like to know, is how can that man constantly be that angry? I mean, sure it works well with the band's music, but how does Blitz live without learning to hate himself? This guy's been totally pissed off for the past 14 years and hasn't reached his breaking point yet! Although the album is loaded with ire, it still consists of some of the catchiest, foot-stomping, fist-banging Thrash you'll hear this year! Many thanks go to the band for remaining true to their style and not losing their edge in order to make a quick buck. I suppose that's why they have as many friends as enemies, for we live in a world riddled with trends, and only the pure of heart have the courage to stick to their guns and remain loyal to their fans!

forced than natural. There are some excellent tracks like "The Daughters of Innocence" and "The Burden", but the others seem to get lost in mediocrity. This is a good debut, though, especially when one ponders how good debuts generally are compared to subsequent releases. Trail of Tears is a band that, if given a chance to mature, could produce some truly monumental music.

## Skinlab

*Disembody... The New Flesh*  
(Century Media)

There must be something tainting the water that some of Century Media's bands are drinking these days, because Skinlab released an album that I don't care for. First, NEVERMORE disappoints me and now Skinlab? What is the world coming to? Normally, I can't get enough of their Madness (Oooh Yeeeah!!), but this time around, I fear their sound has too much of a commercial appeal for me to enjoy them. *Disembody... The New Flesh* comes across as trying so hard to mimic THE DEFTONES & VISION OF DISORDER that Skinlab really lose sight of their intended creative vision. Whatever happened to that brilliant NEUROSIS meets MACHINE HEAD style that was once loved by the extremists and despised



by KORNheads? It seems that Skinlab are trying to reverse that theory by embracing the more commercially acceptable sounds and doing away with raw experimentation. I really fear for their next release!!

## Morgion *Solinari* (Relapse)

There's nothing like a good Doom Metal band to accompany you when you're depressed and pissed off at the world, and Morgion unquestionably fits this bill. I'm serious, man. I was so downcast the other day, so I decided to give this disc a try and my sullen disposition was wonderfully consoled. This isn't music that you listen to when you're discouraged to make you that much more depressed, rather it

embraces your sadness and comforts you by letting you know that yours isn't the only sad state in the world. Immeasurably slow at times and atmospheric as the howling wind, this is the perfect CD to play with nothing but you, the candle, and the night.

## In The Woods... *Strange In Stereo* (Misanthropy)

Take the disparity of ANATHEMA or MY DYING BRIDE, turn it down a few notches, and you might begin to

scratch the surface of just how slow and depressing this music really is. A mournful violin coupled with female vocals is about as elegantly disheartening as you can get, but then some dude singing over a lonely guitar comes along and I'm ready to jump off a bridge somewhere! It does speed up occasionally,

## Solstice *New Dark Age* (Misanthropy)

While visiting Misanthropy's web page to find out some more info on Solstice, a caption beside the band's picture read, "This band is far too metal to have a web page." While the premise doesn't really justify the conclusion, these guys are Metal through and through: dark, heavy, slow, moody, passionate, creative, artistic, melodic, despondent, upset, atmospheric, and emotional- all of these characterize their music and spirit. The grotesquely beautiful artwork reflects the dark splendor of their music and this is a band whose discouraging impression actually uplifts me because a sense of oneness, integrity, empathy, and emotional understanding lurks throughout the music. Celtic folklore indigenous to their native homeland is prevalent and this just accentuates its earthiness and soulful affection. This is one CD that will spend a lot of time in my stereo, making all my other CDs green with envy!



though, but the languishment returns eventually. Towards the end, some keyboard-induced soundscapes paint an audible portrait of utter melancholy and I'm fully convinced that this is one of those CDs you pop in when you're just upset with the world and there's nothing you can do about it except sulk. Though *Strange In Stereo* is not as conceptual as ANATHEMA's *Eternity*, definite parallels can be drawn and I highly recommend it for the dejected and downtrodden. Just stay away from bridges, guns, knives, ropes, flame throwers, hairdryers in the shower, and nagging women when you're listening to it, OK?



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**Loudmouth**  
(Hollywood)

At the risk of turning people off, I feel that I have to mention that the guys in METALLICA love this band (to the point of covering one of their songs live), and so do I. There are several words that come to mind when describing Loudmouth and I think the most appropriate is "synthesis." They have perfected a blend of old school vibe and late 90's aggression that work really well together, and the best part is that I don't think any of their attitude is contrived; they're just a hard rockin' quartet from

Chicago doing their thing and doing it well. The sound is similar to COC or DOWN, a kind of greasy Blues with sharp edges that you can easily get hooked on. Influences seem to be pretty obvious: 'SABBATH, 'ZEPPELIN and METALLICA- a true hybrid of the classics with an ear towards the future. Some people will accuse them of ripping off their idols, but I don't think that's a conscious effort on their part and I doubt they really care. Of special note is the final track, "End of the Century," a slow grind that builds to an almost symphonic climax, a perfect way to end a great album.

**Morningstar**  
*Hell*  
(R.I.P)

Never before have I heard a band that sounds exactly like their album suggests. This is absolutely horrendous. Not only are their songs tedious, but the disc as a whole repeats itself. The material on this recording is very lacking in all areas and I can find no reason why the band felt the need to release it. I'm not even sure of what kind of music this is! It sounds a little like Punk at times mixed with some Power Metal... really bad Power Metal! Perhaps they might amount to something worth listening to if they dropped the Punk influence.

**Human Disorder**  
*Ugly Modern Aggression*  
(Ruptured Discs)

This disc will seriously kick your fucking ass!!! From the low-end, sewage-spewing bass to the razorwire guitar hooks, Human Disorder rape your mind and pillage your body with the pure rage and wrath of the inner-city streets. The bizarre thing about these guys is that they're from Canada and not from California, contrary to popular belief. But don't let their place of origin fool you. They combine the anger and animosity of the best Hardcore acts with the hailstorm, crunching guitars and rhythmic thunder of modern Thrash, which make Human Disorder a formidable yet deadly addition to the Metal community. Be warned!

**Shredded Corpse**  
*Human Obliteration*  
(Frozen Dawn)

These guys are the shit!! Mega-underground quality, maggot-ridden, sewer-slimed Death Metal is all you'll get from this Arkansas based monstrosity. Progressing through each track, you become more and more entrenched in the pungent filth only attainable by the most traditional bands within the genre. Old School style Death Metal with a heavy Thrash influence and a flair for obscenity is the brand of music in which Shredded Corpse specializes, and really, isn't that what Death Metal is supposed to be about anyway? The real unique feature of this disc, however, is the inclusion of all of Shredded Corpse's demo material, so when you buy this one disc, your getting 73 minutes worth of the band's entire recorded history! How many other bands out there are bold enough not to abandon their origins? This disc was made for the serious Death connoisseur! You can get accustomed to this fine piece of musical immorality by sending \$10.00 to: David Sroczynski, 809 Towering Oaks, Jacksonville, ARK 72076, USA, or e-mail him at [frozendawn@aristotle.net](mailto:frozendawn@aristotle.net)



**Sacred Steel**  
*Wargods of Metal*  
(Metal Blade)

There are thirteen tracks on this album and of those, seven have the word Metal or a type of metal in their title- you gotta love Power Metal! The singer sounds somewhat like a cross between Geoff Tate (QUEENSRYCHE) and Vince Neil (MOTLEY CRUE), which sometimes takes away from the powerful music churning behind him. Other than that minute, little detail, play it loud and say it proud: Heavy Metal to the end!



**Emperor**  
*IX Equilibrium*  
 (Century Media)

There are a few factions of the "Black Metal Scene" that will hate this album, so perhaps that is why I adore it so. Certain people are going to exclaim, "this isn't atmospheric enough," while others will complain that it is not sufficiently brutal. Well, to all of you who state such blasphemies, you've just proved your own ignorance and limited taste for comprehension with such statements. Is Emperor Black Metal still? That is indeed the question burning in the minds of all of you. Well, the answer is a resounding yes, and I shall follow it with a simple explanation. With their previous efforts, Emperor has always been a step ahead of everyone else. Emperor shaped, molded, and redefined Black Metal with every release. With this new album, Emperor has returned with a vision of

musical splendor that has certainly exceeded the preconceptions of any fan. The opening track, "Curse You All Men", leads the listener through a journey of dementia that could only have sprung forth from Ihsahn's mind. As the album progresses, the listener is introduced to a vast array of peaks and valleys that are created through the

Metal as MERCYFUL FATE. In fact, Ihsahn has developed an ability to scream much like The King without being overly pretentious. There remains a Neo-Classical element as well, but, unlike other bands, keyboards and atmospheric passages do not lead the songs, rather they serve as moments for accent. Emperor,

above all, have a taste and an ear for arrangement. While references have been made to other bands, keep in mind that in no way has Emperor stolen ideas or subscribed to the current trend of regressing into the riffs of days gone by. The bottom line is that Emperor has evolved into perhaps the most powerful force on the scene today by uniting "heaviness" with "brutality" and "atmosphere". After this

album, Black Metal shall no longer be its own small sect lacking in respect or progression. Emperor has put it on the map and transformed it into a genre that is more viable and creative than ever.

*Continued on page 30*



blending of varying styles. There is a hint of influence from the almighty MORBID ANGEL evidenced throughout while other tracks display passages that could owe their inspiration to such founding fathers of

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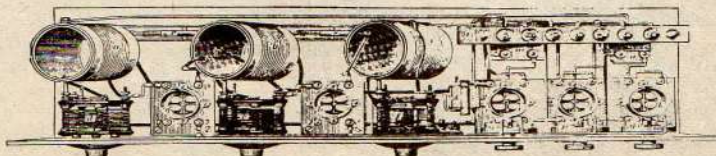
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# MARTYR MUSIC GROUP



OK. Premise. You've got this dream job working for one of the best record labels on the planet, Nuclear Blast, right? You're surrounded by talented artists and you've got access to the world's greatest music 24 / 7. You get to travel all over the world, hang out with bands you've been worshipping since high school, and get to know the movers and shakers within the underground Metal scene. You've come a long way from slaving for \$5000 a year, eating rice every day, and sleeping on your friend's couch, and you're pretty damn proud of all that you've accomplished in the past ten years (Shit! Has it been that long already!). So what do you do now that you've made it to the big time?

Quit, of course! Wait... what?! She must be mad! Yes, folks, Maria Abril is indeed the madwoman with her own business and she's out to tell the whole world that (drum roll please...), "not being in control sucks." How profound. Perhaps I should shut up now and let the queen speak. "People don't realize how fortunate they are to be able to do something as great as working with music full time and they have developed lousy attitudes. Standards have dropped, it seems, and I just can't fathom it. I also grew tired of working for other people when I know enough to be my own boss and I wanted a little more control over my own future- not wanting to worry when I might get laid off again when the label suffers financial setbacks."

These labels include Relativity, Metal Blade, Mayhem, and the aforementioned Nuclear Blast. All the experience she gained from working with these labels has culminated into her and Rob Smith's (her partner from *Spectrum* magazine and Management) new venture, Martyr Music Group. MMG is a close-knit, family oriented

record label in which Maria says "all the bands are active in the company and everyone lends a special talent to the mix, hence we all succeed or fail together as a family. It feels like it did to me 8-10 years ago when I first started out in the industry. That spirit of unity and perseverance is something I wanted to capture and I think we have been successful in doing so. It is the very heart of what Metal (or Hardcore) is all about and that is important because people need to know that you are for real. There are too many no-clue having, non-Metal listening yahoos running the bigger labels here in the U.S. and I think that shows now."

The first band to sign on with MMG was DRAINED. Following them shortly afterwards were BROKEN HOPE, NOVEMBER'S DOOM, and EM SINFONIA. Maria states that "both Rob and I have managed bands for years so we both feel the same way about how artists deserve to be treated. They are always the last in line for the benefits of THEIR creation and that's wrong, so our contracts really cater to them. All our bands can tell you it's the best set up they have ever had and they KNOW beyond a doubt that they would not be on MMG if Rob and I were not committed to them 150%."

The commitment that the bands have for their music coupled with Maria's and Rob's dedication to them together fuse a powerful conglomerate that should soon take the underground scene by storm. Raising the quality and standards of Metal is what Martyr Music Group is all about. "The industry keeps downsizing and people come and go as easily as the last one-hit-wonder. Only the strong survive, they always say, and we intend to be around for a very long time. The integrity and heart/soul that we all know as fans needs to be put back into the business end of this industry."

The mad queen has spoken. Heed her call or it's off with your head!

## There's a New Sheriff in This Damn Town...

By Tom J. Hughes



**THE MAD QUEEN  
A.K.A.  
MARIA ABRIL**

# MARTYR MUSIC GROUP

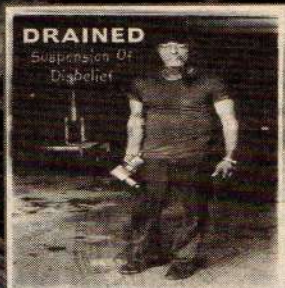
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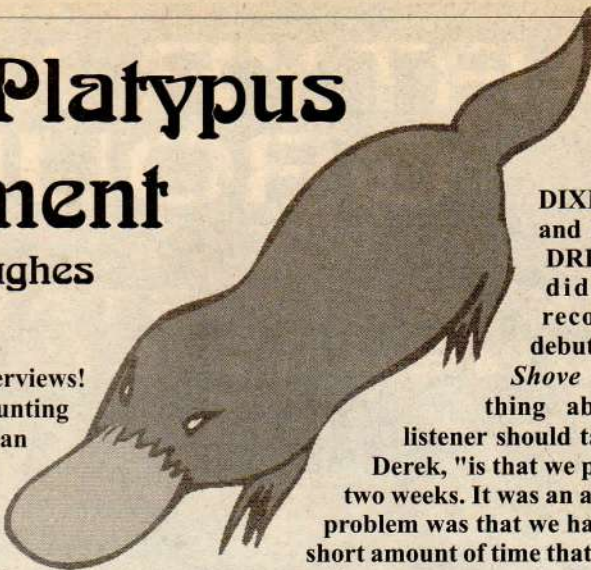
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# The Liquid Platypus Experiment

By Tom J. Hughes



Oh the woes of combining two separate interviews!

Just the title alone has proven to be a most daunting task indeed. Let's see... "The Tensions of an Experimental Platypus"? No, platypuses aren't neurotic animals- self conscious, maybe- but definitely not neurotic. "A Platypuses Liquid Dream"? Hey now! Too much Howard Stern for Tom- way too much!

Of course, I could call it "Celebrity Keyboardist Death Match: Jordan Rudess vs. Derek Sherinian!" Jordan could kick Derek's ass, and we wouldn't have to see Derek wearing those stupid sunglasses on his head anymore ("You know, it gets bright out sometimes and when you smoke too much pot, you gotta try and disguise it somehow," says our cheap sunglassed hero). But these two have nothing but kind words to say about one another! Where's the animosity? Where's the jealousy? Where's my story?!

But wait a minute- I'm getting way ahead of myself. Let's go back to the beginning, which is always a good place to start. Once upon a time, Mike Portnoy (DREAM

THEATER) received a call and was asked to put a "supergroup" together. Jordan Rudess, John Petrucci (both from DREAM THEATER as well), and Tony Levin (Mr. Side Project, himself) heard the call (Mike's a pretty loud guy) and Liquid Tension Experiment was

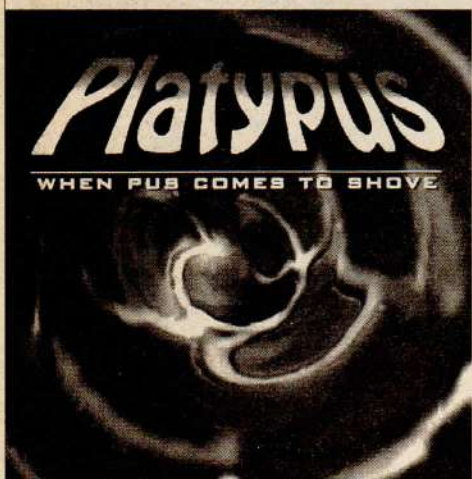
born. The band's explosive debut came out last year on Magna Carta Records and their follow-up, aptly dubbed *LTE II*, is out this May. For those who are worried that careful planning and a mini-tour across the U.S. has hampered their improvisational virtuosity, fear not! This second release will be a full-blown innovative extravaganza filled with fiery riffs and supersonic synths sure to please all Prog-heads! Jordan intimated that recording this second jam was just as hectic as the first. "This one was a little longer in the making, but not much! It was recorded in two periods of time. We stopped in the middle of the first go for the Petrucci baby to be born! Hence, one of the new songs is entitled 'When the Water Breaks!' We then resumed the sessions a few weeks later and finished up. While John was away, the remaining trio did some cool jamming that John finished later when he re-joined the team."

Speaking of chaotic recordings, Platypus (comprised of Ty Tabor from KING'S X, Rod Morgenstein of THE DIXIE DREGS, John Myung and Derek Sherinian, both of DREAM THEATER fame) didn't waste any time recording their stateside debut, *When Pus Comes to Shove* (Velvet). "The coolest

thing about Platypus that the listener should take into account," recalls Derek, "is that we put that record together in two weeks. It was an absolute blast, but the only problem was that we had so much to do in such a short amount of time that I didn't think we gave the creative process enough room to breathe. Sometimes you can write a riff and sit with it for a week and figure out ways to make it stronger or better. In that situation, we had no time to sit with anything. We wrote it and then it was in stone." There is something to be said for spontaneity in the creative process, though, and Derek was quick to concur. "There is sometimes, yes, but then sometimes a well thought out arrangement, or taking that spontaneous idea and tweaking it, gives you a polished stone."

One amazing aspect of both releases is their ability to stand on their own as separate works of art apart from the member's full time bands. Both Liquid Tension Experiment releases do not heavily rely on the music of DREAM THEATER. Jordan elaborates: "John Petrucci and I have a very flowing compositional chemistry together, so much of the final material is the merging together of our musical minds and techniques. Of course, when John is involved you are going to hear a little DREAM THEATER in the music! I think I bring a lot of the YES, ELP, GENESIS-classical element to the picture. As a keyboardist/composer, I have a very strong harmonic and timbral sense that can be incorporated into the music as well." Platypus, conversely, has a 70s, retro feel to it that is not very present in either DREAM THEATER, THE DIXIE DREGS, or KING'S X. "A lot of the riffs were stuff from the past," states Derek. "Ty brought in 'I'm With You' and I think might have been a potential KING'S X song. 'Chimes' was something that Rod had written prior as well, but a lot of the songs were put together on the fly. But any time you're working with other creative forces, you're compromising all the time."

*Continued on next page*



## NEGURA BUNGET

Zărindu-să

From the cold Carpathians comes Romania's NEGURA BUNGET, a band inspired by the ancient mysticism of their old world homeland. Freezing guitars and enchanting keyboards make this band one of the coldest black metal bands ever. This band, truly a child of Transylvanian forests, will enchant and darken your soul forever. Lyrics sung in archaic Romanian text.



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Continued from previous page

But how far does this compromising go? Too many bands are streamlining their sound to be more radio-friendly, simplifying their already mediocre songs which are plaguing our radios and televisions. Creative and highly stylized, complicated and artistically elaborate song-writing is being placed on the back burner because of the allure fifteen seconds has to offer. "Hey Look," Jordan interjects. "People will always be interested in making real music and hearing real music. It's a shame that the commercial scene is made up of pure mediocrity. It's a sad statement of where our society is going. Luckily, there are people who are passionate about music- both listeners and players alike. We will keep each other strong! I think it will get stronger again. I'm going to do my personal best to contribute to that goal as well." Derek's glass is half full, however and says that "there's some really good labels out there right now. Magna Carta Records is a very cool label that's doing a lot of good stuff and Velvel is doing a lot of good stuff and I think things are picking up. But I know what you mean. The American fans are more fickle than our friends over in Europe or Japan. Over here it's all fifteen second commercials and the latest fad or flavor of the month. In my experience with DREAM THEATER, I found that our fans over there were more loyal. The consistency of the draw was higher over there, too. Even the second time around here in the States the draw was a lot lower- big time! But hopefully it'll come around. I think eventually it will."

Let's hope so. The underground is currently swelling with great music that is dying to be heard. The masses are clueless as to just how much really good music is out there, and until the suits and ties wake up from the repetitive bore that throbs within their ear holes, our Crusade will continue.

## Exit Derek...

Derek Sherinian's recent departure from DREAM THEATER came as a complete shock to fans of the acclaimed Progressive Rock band- and to him! "Basically what happened was I was recording keyboard tracks for my new solo album in my home studio and I got a conference call from the other four guys and they basically said they wanted Jordan in the band. It was pretty plain and simple. I had no clue, and I was even ready to dedicate my solo album to the band. That's how out-of-the-blue it was."

While downplaying his future (and once past) role with ALICE COOPER, Derek was quick to talk about his new effort. "I finished up my solo record which is coming out on Magna Carta Records this summer called *Planet X* which I'm really excited about. It features bassist Tony Franklin, drummer Virgil Donati, and a guitarist named Brett Garsed. It's instrumental and heavy Prog. And no lyrics or vocals. It is scheduled for release this summer on July 13<sup>th</sup>." Fans of Derek can check up on all of his latest activities at [www.dereksherinian.com](http://www.dereksherinian.com).



## ...Enter Jordan!

While personal family and business commitments kept Jordan Rudess from joining DREAM THEATER four years ago when Kevin Moore left the band, his current experience with Liquid Tension Experiment has changed all that. "We have experience working together musically through Liquid Tension Experiment, and almost all the DREAM THEATER members have families so touring will be carefully planned. It will now be a great addition to my life instead of a complete replacement." So what does his replacement mean to the DREAM THEATER sound? "We are going to write the coolest music we can come up with. No holds barred. The idea behind this collaboration, and the timing of this recording are all leading towards a free creative experience in which commercialism takes a back seat and musicality and drive push the project forward. In other words, it's gonna rock!!" Visit Jordan on the Web at his homepage, [www.mediuvision.com/jordan](http://www.mediuvision.com/jordan).





**Hecate Enthroned**  
*Dark Requiems...*  
(Metal Blade)

It is quite apparent that Hecate Enthroned have a massive amount of talent, but I, like many others, just can't get past the fact that they sound exactly like

CRADLE OF FILTH. The drummer makes a striving attempt to copy hammergod, Nicolas Barker, but fails due to his sloppiness. The vocals lack the diversity that Dani Filth possesses, but I have to give them credit where it's due: that screeching sounds almost authentic. The "requiems" on this disc are indeed "dark", but about the only good thing about this disc that I can think of is its perfectibility as a mediocre holdover till CRADLE OF FILTH craft another masterpiece. If Hecate Enthroned becomes more original, I believe they will have a better chance at Metal stardom.

**Grip Inc.**  
*Solidify*  
(Metal Blade)

*Solidify* is a fitting name for this album. It seems that Grip Inc. have taken some bad blows from critics since their debut, *The Power of Inner Strength*. They return now with a powerful sound that has incorporated all their good points and added some new dimensions. The songwriting is superb in that there are moments of bruising, heavy riffs and rhythms, and also points of melodic satisfaction. Grip Inc. has also thrown in some interesting electronic effects such as samples, but these are done tastefully, and are not overpowering. The lead work by Waldemar Sorychta is fantastic, and is complemented nicely by monstrous bass lines. Of course, Lombardo must be commended for another example of Metal drumming at its best. Dave has a knack for knowing when to be in the forefront and knowing when to back off a bit. Gus Chambers' vocals are better than any other of their previous releases, too. With *Solidify*, Grip Inc. have firmly proven that they are not just a project of Dave Lombardo's, but are a legitimate band that can deliver memorable, heavy tunes.



**Embodiment**  
*Embrace the Eternal*  
(Solid State)

Embodiment is the musical enema for the depressed and the shot of adrenaline for the weak! It is an absolute sin and abomination to **not** listen to this disc at full volume, for fire and brimstone will rain down on your ass from heaven if you do not flagellate about while playing this album! They take the intensity and raw energy of MESHUGGAH and raise it a few notches. Embodiment is the physical equivalent of gargling salt water with the world's biggest cold soar in your mouth- it hurts like a bitch yet feels so friggin' good! To say that *Embrace the Eternal* is an intense CD would be the understatement of the century. Caffeine should be this jolting! Hell, Jolt should taste as good as these guys sound! Wait a second... screw caffeine, these guys are gonna oust caffeine one of these days. Try it some morning. I'm telling you, man, Embodiment will wake your ass up!

**Sculpture**  
(Nuclear Blast)

If SENTENCED keeps going down the less-than-impressive road they've seemed to be coasting down lately, Sculpture will be there to take the driver's seat. While they have some miles to travel before reaching such great destinations like SENTENCED's *Amok*, *Love and Death*, and *Down*, CREMATORY-esque vocals and keyboards (a little less prominent, thankfully. Perhaps this is why Lotte left his former band) will give them just the turbo-boost they need to propel them to the top of Mount Metal and beyond. Some beautiful orchestration is presented to the listener in songs like "Why" while tiny elements of Hardcore rear themselves in tunes like "Faithfull." The disc overall, though, is not very dynamic and can be slightly one-dimensional at times. Give them some time, however, and in the years that follow perhaps their ascension through the World of Metal will surprise you.



**Sleep**  
*Jerusalem*  
(The Music Cartel)

I cannot think of a more appropriate name for this band, for that's exactly what I feel like doing every time I pop this CD in. I mean, with 52 minutes of boring power chords and endlessly repetitive riffs, you'd have to be stoned off your ass to fully "appreciate" this shit. Oh, wait a second... is that the point? Stoner Rock, you say? I rest my case.

**Terra Firma**  
(The Music Cartel)

Terra Firma is what BLACK SABBATH would sound like if Ozzy and Co. donned Swedish accents and atmosphere into their music. The comparison is an immediate intimation, however, and after repeated listenings there are aspects of other bands like newer CATHEDRAL and MOTORHEAD. In fact, I'm thinking that this band really is a British band and they're pretending to be from Sweden just to see how many people they can fool!



**Root-O-Evil Records**  
**Compilation**  
*Roots III (A Trilogy)*  
(Root-O-Evil)

I'm not combining this review with my previous *Roots II* review because this compilation isn't worth it. I loved *Roots II*, but I was quite disappointed with this follow-up. Out of the 22 tracks listed, only a handful of them are worth mentioning. Remember the stupid, funny shit I loved on



**Narnia**  
*Long Live the King*  
(Nuclear Blast)

Christians in Scandinavia are a rare breed, and finding really good Christian bands in that area is even rarer! Perhaps that's why Narnia is a mere two-member band! In a flawless follow-up to their debut release, *The Awakening*, Christian Liljegren performs the main vocals while Carljohan Grimmark plays the guitar, bass, keyboards, drums, and performs some vocals as well. I am absolutely floored at the memorability of this CD. After only a few listens, I had songs memorized and could predict future tracks based on the previous song. Grimmark's guitar compositions have



a Malmsteen-esque quality about them and he sure can play a mean harpsichord- uh, I mean synthesizer! Narnia's overall sound has a Neo-Classical flare to it and some elements of Power Metal can be detected as well. The lyrics are heavily saturated with

spiritual connotations and the Christian spirit is very present in their music (as opposed to most Christian Metal acts where you wouldn't know of their spiritual convictions unless you read their lyrics or thank you lists). The operatic, classically trained

vocals of Liljegren propel Narnia's message and the music is quite powerful and highly stylized in its own right. Though I don't think he would be a Metalhead if he were alive today, C.S. Lewis would be proud of these guys, I'm sure.

the *Roots II* compilation? That was all good because it counter balanced the really cool shit on the recording. But this time around the bands' songs don't make up for the undulation of shit that makes up the rest of the CD. Too much stupid, off-the-wall crap and not enough good, hard Metal is a pretty good summary. It will provide the listener with a few good laughs, but overall there is a serious lack of substance. For a review on the few good things about this comp, refer to the *A4-Way Blockade* review, which is a better Root-O-Evil disc.

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**Hades**  
*SaviorSelf*  
 (Metal Blade)

No, Hades is not a new Black Metal band from Norway, but rather a straight-forward Metal band. *SaviorSelf* is an album concerned with the evils of greed in organized religion - a concept that has been beaten to death. Hades mixes some more established sounds of classic Metal with other more 90's riffs. The music is not bad, but certainly not groundbreaking.

It is the vocals that tarnish this disc the most. If anyone else remembers Joey Tempest of EUROPE, they will recognize that this guy sounds exactly like him! The different elements of Hades' sound do not mesh well, and the overall effect is a forgettable album.



*A 4-Way Blockade*  
 (Root-O-Evil Records and 1/2 Starved Productions)

Fuckin' 612 CREW kick so much ass! And their funny as balls, too! They rock hard, laying down some seriously fat grooves filled with more energy than the bomb we dropped on Hiroshima! Songs like "Ron Jeremy" and "Fuck the Spice Girls" are more than just funny quips poking fun at you-know-who, they're great songs in their own right. OPAQUE will be releasing a full length album on Root-O-Evil later this year, and I for one cannot wait to hear

it. They have some Progressive overtones (weird times and lots of syncopation akin to MESHUGGAH or EMBODYMENT - no keyboards or operatic vocals, silly!) that constantly keeps the listener on his toes, but this is pure Thrash/Death Metal that is heavy as hell, yet technically superior to most bands just starting out. Their drummer is amazing and he really stands out on the four songs afforded on this very impressive comp. K will appeal to our little MARILYN MANSON fans out there, but K's vocalist could kick Manson's ass blindfolded and limbless! He's just got to open his mouth and scream and the pathetic, sexless Marilyn will run away screaming in terror because his band could never be as heavy as the far superior K! LOWDOWN are PUYA wannabe's, but are respectable in their own right. Their blending of funky grooves with abrasive screams and guitars is a refreshing sound that

I'm hoping will not be too much copied and emulated in the future. Small doses, though, I can take. All four bands I highly recommend you keep your eyes peeled for in the future and all hail Earl Root!

**Creative Pain**  
*Scarred*  
 (Conquest Music)

More under-produced, repetitive Hardcore is what Creative Pain offers in this CD. The major problem here is that all of the ideas found in this CD were done many years ago by BIOHAZARD. This scene seems to be plagued by stagnancy. Every track is a mirror of the one that preceded it and contains basic guitar riffs that are down-tuned with a vocalist who is somewhere between BIOHAZARD and HATEBREED.



**Winters Bane**  
*Girth*  
 (DCA)

From the band that spawned JUDAS PRIEST's Ripper Owens comes a Heavy Metal tour de force. This band has everything going for it with a tight dual guitar front and a powerful rhythm section that's willing to take risks. Interesting song subjects here range from racism, to the X-Files, and then to the fine art of vomiting. One can't help but wonder what this band would sound like if they added a full time front man and let Lou St. Paul concentrate more on his guitar playing. His vocals are fine, even if his range is somewhat limited.

**Clawfinger**  
 (The Music Cartel)

The best thing that can be said of this album is that the production is amazing. The guitar sound is monstrous and thick. Clawfinger's music is interesting in that it combines this thick guitar sound with elements of Industrial and Hardcore music. There are many samples, weird sounds, dance beats, and other things Industrial within. It is the vocals that really spoiled this disc for me because they are rapped. I hate to say it, but this Swedish band comes across goofy when trying to rap in an American style. Perhaps the language barrier is a factor in that they need to use simple rhymes, but the technique is just weak overall. If they had a different vocal approach, Clawfinger would certainly be a band to check out. This album sold over a million copies in Sweden, but maybe that is because the Swedes have not heard the refined style of STUCK MOJO.

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**Pissing Razors**  
*Cast Down the Plague*  
 (Noise)

Fusing the intensity of PANTERA with the ferocity of post-Skolnick TESTAMENT and the melodic Thrashiness / Hardcore aspects of MACHINE HEAD, Pissing Razors offer a Tour de Force unrivaled by few. In your face grooves accompany fat breakdowns and riffs as the Razors offer the listener a smoother, polished, and more refined sound than last year's self-titled release. This is still heavy shit, though, and just because they smoothed over some raw edges doesn't mean that their sound has weakened at all. Conversely, they've improved immensely since their last effort, especially on the percussion end of things, and if you're into any of the aforementioned bands or genres, I promise that they will not disappoint you.

**Cutters**  
*Sonic Wave Love*  
 (CMC International)

Cutters are a nice blend between Progressive giants, SPOCK'S BEARD, and local Philadelphia favorites, SWOON. Their label is taking a big chance with Cutters, for they are not the Heavy Metal giants IRON MAIDEN, JUDAS PRIEST, or OVERKILL are, but CMC want to jump into the future, and signing new acts like Cutters might be a step in the right direction. The band has a popular appeal that I can hear being exploited all over the mainstream media, but that's where all the money is, so maybe that's what both the label and the band truly desire. I'm being highly speculative, I know, but that's what this music sounds like- a money magnet.

**Em Sinfonia**  
*In Mourning*  
*Symphony*  
 (Martyr Music Group)

Old-school MY DYING BRIDE (*I am the Bloody Earth* and *As the Flower Withers*) with female vocals!! I'm in fucking heaven! This is Doom-

laden Death Metal with ambience and musicianship rivaled only by the likes of older MOONSPELL, THEATRE OF TRAGEDY, the GATHERING, and THERION. I can't get enough of this music. It's so harsh, heavy, and abrasive, yet majestically beautiful and so splendidly sublime all at the same time... it just floors me how awe inspiring this type of art is! Eight musicians playing thirty minutes worth of music like this is not enough- I want more! All of the aforementioned bands have either cheated out or progressed beyond their Ambient / Doom / Death roots, leaving Em Sinfonia to carry the torch, and I am sooo looking forward to a full-length debut!

**Dog Faced Gods**  
*Random Chaos*  
*Theory in Action*  
 (Gothenburg Noiseworks)

I am not certain if the name of this band was taken directly from the TESTAMENT song, but judging from their sound, it is likely it was. Dog Faced Gods fit somewhere between TESTAMENT's *Demonic* and FEAR FACTORY's *Demanufacture*. Many other comparisons can be made, but the only problem is that, overall, the songs on this CD do not stand out. There are some amazing riffs going on here, and they will certainly impress with their syncopated off-time feel and heaviness. I just can't help but feel that the disc simply seems to be a conglomeration of riffs without any shared direction. It is a good buy, though, if you want to hear some great examples of insane time signatures and syncopation.

*Visions of the Macabre Vol. 1*  
 (Lost Disciple)

*Visions of the Macabre* is a compilation featuring many different Death, Doom and Black Metal bands. Some of the bands included are PESSIMIST, ACHERON, OPPRESSOR, CRYPTOPSY, and DECEMBER WOLVES among others. This compilation has something to offer for fans of varying styles of underground Metal and no one should walk away from this comp unhappy. Its only downfall is the lack of good production on some tracks, but this is to be expected in the underground scene. Some highlights include a track by SOMNUS and an offering from DUSK. If you are unfamiliar with these bands or the scene as a whole and want to check out some acts who really deserve to be heard, check this out. Lost Disciple Records, PO Box 340, Winthrop, MA 02152



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**Manowar**  
*Hell on Stage Live*  
 (Metal Blade)

How do you follow up a magnificent double-live album if you're the undisputed Kings Of Metal? Compile another one and get all the bases covered! That's what these warlords did, and I'm commending them for it! Yes, *Hell On Wheels* was great in every respect, and I am most appreciative of the set list that spanned their entire career, but I am even more pleased that they released another one, giving me a taste of more songs that I haven't heard in a live setting, with sharper sound production than the aforementioned album. Classics like "Guyana (Cult Of The Damned)", "Blood Of The Kings", and "Dark Avenger" (complete with dubbed Orson Welles narration) are just a few select gems on the second part of the greatest live album ever produced. Don't look at it as 'another live album', consider it as an extension of that same album. I didn't hear anyone moaning when 'the band that will remain nameless' issued *Reload* a mere year after *Load* was released, and all it contained was left over crap



from the *Load* sessions. Did you boycott that and say 'the band' was running short of ideas (which indeed is a fact, since they haven't actually done any work or written a song in over four years!!) No, you made the damn thing go multi-platinum, because you're blinded by mere marketing ploys!! *Hell On Stage Live* provides more proof (not that the band has to justify anything) that everything Manowar does, they do it for two reasons; 1) for the fans, and 2) because THEY CAN!!! I will always love this band as long as they never bow down to anyone or take anyone's shit. If anyone is frowning and bitching that Manowar issued 'another' live album, FUCK OFF AND DIE A HORRIBLY PAINFUL

DEATH!!!! Metal is all about the live experience anyway, so if you're bitching, you're not Metal, you're, dare I say it, a POSEUR!! Go and listen to you're damn KORN albums, because, if you're not into Manowar, you obviously don't know what Metal is! Manowar is the living embodiment of all that is, was, and ever will be Metal! To the Army Of Immortals (you know who you are!), I have but one message, HAIL AND KILL!!!

**Thyring**  
*Valdr Galga*  
 (Hammerheart/Rough Trade)

This disc is a mighty treat indeed! True Epic Viking Metal worthy of any battle-axe wielding Norseman is what Thyring delivers. They combine the elements of classic *Blood Fire Death*-era BATHORY with the modern Black Scandinavian Folk Metal of ENSLAVED and the keyboard-laden stylings of DIMMU BORGIR or COVENANT in order to present the purest Odinistic Metal with which to transcend to Valhalla! The lyrics pay homage to the triumph and tragedy that befell the Old Scandinavian ways, and the music acts as a perfect supplementary soundtrack to such a glorious, yet dark time! With but one listen, *Valdr Galga* invades your senses and memories and transports you to a frost-covered land where war was law and only the strongest survived. Is your heart of Steel? Do you have ice in your veins? Giving *Valdr Galga* a spin is the only way to know for sure!



**Anvil**  
*Speed Of Sound*  
 (Hypnotic)

I don't care how cheesy the rest of the world may think Anvil is, I will continue to love the band until my Metal heart rusts!! I truly feel that Anvil have more fun writing songs than any band on the planet, and the evidence really shows on *Speed Of Sound*, the bands' most recent endeavor. Songs like "Deadbeat Dad",



"Man Over Board", "Bullshit", and "Mattress Mambo" are completely loaded with social sarcasm and irony, but there is also a subtle message of seriousness that lies within the album. It's simply that life is too short to bog yourself into a depression and worry about all the bullshit of modern society! Have fun!! Do whatever it takes to be happy and never let 'the man' drag you down! Buy an Anvil CD and read *Promethean Crusade!*

**Season**  
*nocurenofeeeling*  
 (Wild Rags)

"No feeling" is exactly what I get from this CD by this worthless Goth band. I'm not biased, for I like some Goth music. SWITCHBLADE SYMPHONY are amazing, as well as GOTHIC SEX, but Season's disc will do nothing more than make a handy coaster for my Sprite! The vocals are so whiny and unlistenable while the guitar tone leaves much to be desired. The overall recording and production quality is great, so whoever engineered that stuff certainly got paid. That, regrettably, is the only positive thing I have to point out about Season.

**Talamasca**  
*Projection*  
(DCA)

Talamasca are very reminiscent of early, John Arch era FATES WARNING. These songs twist and turn, often taking unexpected leaps into the unknown, but they always maintain interest. Everyone here has obviously spent some time in the woodshed with their instruments, and no small amount of rehearsal time must have gone into this project. There seems to be something keeping them from the next level, though, and I think it may be their instrumental prowess. A little more band and a little less technique might do it.



**Blood Ritual**  
*At The Mountains of Madness*  
(Moribund)

This brand of Satanic Metal I will take any day over any given Black Metal band. Satanic Death Metal is always more extreme, brutal, aggressive, barbarous, and ferocious than any other sub-style within the Death Metal genre. Why, because the bands have more conviction and creativity than most others in that particular scene. Blood Ritual is no exception. They present the same elements typical to many Death Metal bands, the heavy crunch, the quick 16ths, etc., but what sets them apart? It could dwell within their use of overlaying guttural growls and banshee shrieks, it could be within the compositions themselves, developed with a very



**Lungbrush**  
*Old School New School*  
(Pavement)

Lungbrush play a style of music that I commonly refer to as Pseudo-Neo-Thrash. This is a style that incorporates the many elements of the Old School Thrash bands, but differs from them in that there is no complexity within the music. Basically, technicality is replaced for aggression. Lungbrush fits neatly into this category along with bands such as MACHINE HEAD and FEAR FACTORY, though they sound like MACHINE HEAD more than anyone else. They also fully use the urban theme within their lyrics. What Lungbrush and bands like them have done is they've taken Thrash and altered it into a style that is more acceptable to the masses. The focus is switched from the album to the live setting, and Lungbrush is a band that should certainly be able to deliver this aggression live.

dark aura, it could have something to do with the raw production, or it could be that the band truly possesses a knack for creating very evil music. Whatever the case, Blood Ritual do what they do well, and I shan't be one to get in their way. DEICIDE and MORBID ANGEL beware, a new age of darkness dawns, and Blood Ritual are its harbinger!! *Continued on page 42*

**sHeavy**  
*The Electric Sleep*  
(The Music Cartel)

It's impossible to not mention BLACK SABBATH in regards to sHeavy. The similarities are absolutely uncanny, but this is not a strike against them at all. If you're a Psychedelic Rock band and you're gonna sound like somebody, it might as well be one of the first bands to get the Heavy Metal ball rolling! Needless to say, if you're into 'SABBATH, these guys will not disappoint at all. Hell, I'm not a huge 'SABBATH fan, and I'm liking this a lot. Homegrown Rock 'n Roll from England is what these guys are all about and their spacey guitar and vocals sounds are totally groovy, man. You can pass me the bowl now, please.

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# Personal Black Dimensions

By Chris Hawkins

Many pass Dimmu Borgir off as yet another band trying to commercialize a scene (Black Metal), which for long was kept in the depths of the underground. What Dimmu Borgir have done, rather, is take Black Metal to another dimension by expanding its limits and setting new standards to the art. They cannot be blamed for signing to a large label, taking on large tours, and increasing the quality of their production... they should be commended. This interview was conducted with Astennu, guitar player for Dimmu Borgir, just hours before their live debut on American soil at the March Metal Meltdown in Asbury Park, NJ. Astennu proved to be quite a conversationalist and offered great insight into his music, culture, and all things BLACK METAL.

**Promethean Crusade:** How does it feel to be in the U.S. for the first time?

**Dimmu Borgir:** It's strange. Just going from the airport to the first gas station...everything's totally weird. We have American TV channels so everyone learns English. I'm just waiting to see what the gig will be like since we haven't played over here before. Like in Norway, a normal gig people just stand there.

**PC:** Not much of a crowd reaction?

**DB:** No, in Norway, everyone thinks they are a musician. They just watch for mistakes.

**PC:** Live music should be about having fun, though.

**DB:** Yeah. When we first go on stage here, we have to just explode.



**PC:** So what are the major differences in life in Norway?

**DB:** We pay like 36% tax. Over 1/3 of our money goes to the Christians. So you understand why people are burning down their places. Originally it was a place where everyone was cool and then these Christian crusades came in burning down all of our ritual places and put their churches on top. They took over the country.

**PC:** So that's where the general angst toward organized religion evident in many Norwegian bands comes from? You're basically saying they stole your homeland?

**DB:** They burned down our country. They just went through the towns, killing a few people, and saying, "this is what will happen if you don't believe." Of course there's a few people who don't like that and think you have to stand up.



**PC:** What is the current lineup of Dimmu Borgir?

**DB:** We've got Shagrath on vocals, me and Silenzo on guitars, Vortex on bass/clean vocals, Mystus on keyboards, and Tjodalv is still on drums [It should be noted that Dimmu's drummer, Tjodalv, was replaced by Nicholas from CRADLE OF FILTH upon their return to Norway. ~ed.]

**PC:** Vortex is Simen Hestnaes from ARCTURUS/BORKNAGAR/VED BUENS ENDE, right?

**DB:** Yeah.

**PC:** How did you hook up with Mystus? Is he from another band?

**DB:** No, he's a 19 year-old guy who has only played classical so he's had to learn how to follow the drums. He's just a brilliant keyboard player who plays 24 hours a day and is totally dedicated.

**PC:** How would you describe the evolution of the sound from the earlier material to *Spiritual Black Dimensions*?

**DB:** It's matured quick. It's got more Metal riffing. More guitar riffing has come back. I think we've just gotten into more Metal stuff and cleaning the sound up a lot helped too. Going to Abyss Studios helped. We had to get it to the point where everything was clear and all the melodies are heard.

**PC:** It's amazing what good production can do.

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DB: Yeah, so when we play the old songs now, they sound much better. It also helps that we haven't had to work for the last two years. We rehearse like five days a week, six hours a day.

PC: That's what it takes. Not only does *Spiritual Black Dimensions* seem to have a more Metal sound, but also quite a bit more atmosphere.

DB: Yeah, I think we've also learned how to get all our feelings on tape more.

PC: Were there any specific inspirations for *Spiritual Black Dimensions*?

DB: I suppose it's a bit of everything. For the last couple of years, we've seen a lot through the media or whatever. The album is saying don't let people force you into stuff. Don't let them brainwash you. Just do what you have to do to get where you want to get. Do it and don't sit there and have an idea. Actually get up and do it. All the lyrics are the most Satanic we've ever written, but they are in the Satanic way of "I am my own God."

PC: It's not like some young teenager killing pets for Satan.

DB: Yeah. That's just as stupid as Christianity.

PC: Exactly.

DB: For us it's just about basically getting where you want to get. *Spiritual Black Dimensions* is a way. It's about finding your own spiritual, black dimension, finding a place where you can go and get things worked out in your brain so no one can touch you.

PC: That's an interesting concept. Let's move on to the Black Metal scene. It seems like the Black Metal scene is divided between bands whose sound is really raw and under-produced, and others like Dimmu Borgir, ARCTURUS, LIMBONIC ART, and COVENANT who seem to push the boundaries. Do you feel the scene is segregated?

DB: Of course. That's cool because I think both respect each other. In Norway, most of the bands have a really good relationship because we have to. We understand what each other are doing so basically if you want to be a 4-track demo band, do it, and we'll support you. In the underground, you do get a lot of people who think it shouldn't be for everybody and I can understand that. The only thing is there's a lot of tension on this point because Black Metal is the most emotional Metal you can get.

PC: Definitely. It encompasses more than just playing music.

DB: It's a lifestyle. It's not just about playing. It's about your whole life. It's like this is my family. Everybody does different things.

PC: So everyone basically gets along having that mutual respect?

DB: Yeah. It's strange in Norway because we were the first ones to jump onto the more commercial scene, and a couple of bands were like, "you shouldn't be doing this." Well now they are on our same record label and doing the same things we were doing two years ago. I just see it as they needed somebody to go first, and they have done it slowly as in the new EMPEROR album and the new IMMORTAL album.

PC: I have not yet heard those, but I understand the production is supposed to be far better.

DB: Yeah, they've got good sound and they have gone back to playing the old Heavy Metal riffs, singing like KING DIAMOND. It's brilliant! It's not what they used to be, but it's got the atmosphere. I think right now IMMORTAL and EMPEROR are going to explode, and now our new album is out so it would be great to get those three bands and just kill America!

PC: That would be a Black Metal dream tour.

DB: In July, we're supposed to come here with EMPEROR.

PC: That's new to me.

DB: We're supposed to, and the promoters have worked it out. We just have to get everything final. I think it's good. It's taken time.

PC: So with all of this exposure, are you happy to see Black Metal coming out of the underground?

DB: If a band wants to keep it underground, that's fine. It's not selling out for everyone to be able to hear it. I think we should have our stuff out there with everything else. It's only fair.

PC: Plus, you are trying to make a living doing this.

DB: Of course. We just want it to be fair, and have our art out there as well.



# POWER PLANT OF THE HEAVY METAL UNIVERSE

An interview with Kai Hansen by Mark Morton

As we all know, Heavy Metal is an institution, something to be cherished and respected. Not only should the fans get involved in its promotion and upkeep, but the bands themselves need to take an active role, by putting out quality products that can act as a rapport which will unite fans of Heavy Metal music, as well as go down in history as a classic work of musical art. There are few bands who are aware of, let alone make a consistent effort in upholding and strengthening, the bond that links fans to said bands through music. One band that realizes and utilizes the importance of unity through Heavy Metal is none other than Germany's own purveyors of True Metal, Gamma Ray. They're belief in the strength and power of Metal is so strong that during a tour of Germany opening for MANOWAR, some fans actually held up a sign proclaiming, "GAMMA RAY, THE REAL KINGS OF METAL!" They're also firm believers that everyone should be granted access to their material, so in cooperation with their label, Noise Records, Gamma Ray have opened up their own internet 'Megastore' ([www.mega-musicstore.com](http://www.mega-musicstore.com)) where you can go online and purchase those elusive Gamma Ray-related items. Frontman and guitarist/vocalist, Kai Hansen, could not be happier with these developments. He's probably got the most positive outlook on a genre most view bleakly- Heavy Metal. In all actuality, he looks at everything in a light-hearted sense. He even favors Ewoks over any Star Wars character! Is that jovial or what? Nevertheless, his optimistic attitude towards Heavy Metal and life is no more apparent than on Gamma Ray's latest effort, Power Plant! He also sheds a cheery atmosphere into what is lyrically presented as dismal on IRON SAVIOR's Unification! How can one man contain such a free-spirited attitude towards everything, you might ask? Read on, Keepers Of The Faith, for as stated in the song "Wings Of Destiny", we are all "kings without a throne. If you believe in unity, believe 'cause you're not alone"!

**Promethean Crusade:** Congratulations on the new album. It's amazing how the band becomes progressively better with each release.

**Gamma Ray:** Thank you, that's how we feel, too. That's what we're very happy with.



**PC:** It's great! As one watches the progression of Gamma Ray's career, each album is distinctly better than the last. And I was almost positive that you couldn't top Somewhere Out In Space, but you accomplished it with flawless ease!

**GR:** Well, we really had no idea what way the album would go when we started recording, because only five songs were finished by that time, all of which I had written. While we were recording, things really started to come together. Daniel [Zimmermann, drums] contributed, I wrote a song with him, Henjo [Richter, guitars & keyboards] came up with two

cool songs, Dirk [Schlachter, bass] came up with a really cool song, and finally the whole picture began to grow and form, and it was then that we found out that this seems to be a really good album! We knew that we had something really cooking.

**PC:** Regarding Dirk, he used to play guitar beautifully, but now plays bass. How did you come to the decision to move Dirk to bass and get a new guitarist rather than simply find a new bassist?

**GR:** Well, Dirk originally was a bass player. At the time I got to know Dirk, it was before *Heading For Tomorrow*, at a music school in Hamburg, where I took a six-week crash course for vocals. Dirk was there taking a crash course for bass, and we got to know each other. He was a great bassist, you should see him slap, it's just fantastic! We began to get along really well, but Gamma Ray already had a bass player. But we needed a second guitarist for the tour, and I had found out that he did play guitar as well, so I asked him if he wanted to come out on the tour. So he switched to guitar and played it for a while, until he felt the urge to pick up the bass again; he was a lot better on the bass than he ever could be on the guitar, it was his instrument.

**PC:** Whatever instrument Dirk plays, Gamma Ray's style is still magnificent. You also have a diversity about you. You've been on the PRIMAL FEAR record, you do the IRON SAVIOR thing, and I've even been told that you've recorded some songs with HAMMERFALL for various tribute albums. How was it working with a bunch of younger guys for the tribute material?



GAMMA RAY

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GR: We went up to my studio, because they wanted to record some songs for tribute albums to HELLOWEEN, ACCEPT and DIO. It was a lot of fun, we did "Man On The Silver Mountain", "Head Over Heals" from ACCEPT and even had Udo come up to do some vocals; and we did a new version of "I Want Out" in which Joacim and I shared vocals, and I played some guitar. I am constantly doing music, outside of small vacations here and there, but making this kind of music is my life! I'm a workaholic when it comes to music.

PC: Does writer's block ever present a problem?

GR: Oh yeah. Sometimes I think that was it, the creative pool is empty, there's nothing more but to repeat yourself over and over again. But then, Bang Bang Bang, they ideas come flowing again and it's just great fun.

PC: That's the great thing about Gamma Ray. Some bands have a tendency to rewrite their own material and call it something else, but each Gamma Ray song has its own distinction. You never run into the problem of having "Heal Me, Part 2".

GR: That's a good thing to have. Sometimes you find yourself in a situation that has repeating elements, but that's what makes us Gamma Ray, you know? On the other hand, we are not afraid of making distinctions between songs or albums. Every album is really unique for Gamma Ray, and its not like Gamma Ray album #4 sounds exactly like Gamma Ray album #6 except that the song titles are different. I wouldn't want to end up there, there is still a lot of creativity and a great will to 'go for it' without leaving the red line, but making the red line even stronger. To me, the new album is near perfection, having a good variety of songs and styles without losing the red line.

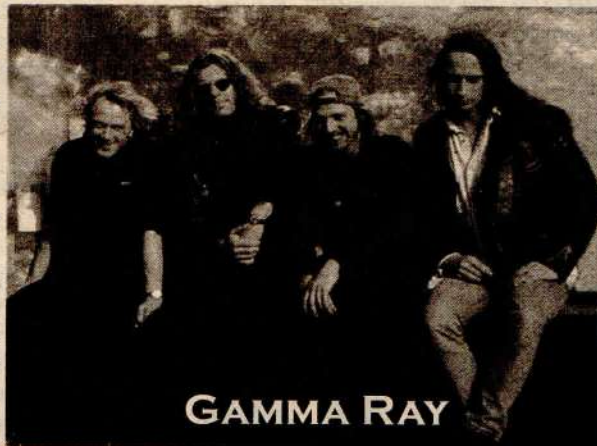
PC: That's another interesting aspect of *Power Plant*, you've incorporated ethnic flavors into some of the songs.

GR: It just came up, you know? When we recorded, we were open to ideas while painting the picture. The songs were basically done, but we had so many ideas yet to put in, so we decided to make it more interesting and add new aspects. That's the odd part of musicianship in Heavy Metal, not inventing new strange chords that sound stupid and nobody understands and claiming that it's art, it's taking a normal song and giving it new perspectives.

PC: How did you take to having a karaoke album released in your name? Did you view it as an honor to have one released?

GR: It was a cool idea, and that we gave such an impact in Japan. Three years ago, I spoke with the label manager of JVC Japan and pointed out that karaoke was so big in Japan, everybody was doing it, but there were no Heavy Metal karaoke albums. I asked him, 'why don't you think about releasing a Heavy Metal karaoke album, why not Gamma

Ray?' The cool thing is, sometimes when we do the mixing of songs, we mix versions without the vocals, just in case we wanted to change the vocals, fix vocal problems, or something else later on. So we already had enough material for a karaoke album, and two years later, they confronted us about releasing one. It went pretty well and was accepted greatly. It's very cool to listen to, because you can concentrate solely on the music, and you hear things that you didn't notice before. It really takes on a life of its own.



PC: Now normally when I make band comparisons, I usually compare bands to Gamma Ray, but on the song "Heavy Metal Universe", I have to tell you that that is definitely a MANOWAR song, with the pulsing gallop of the drums and everything.

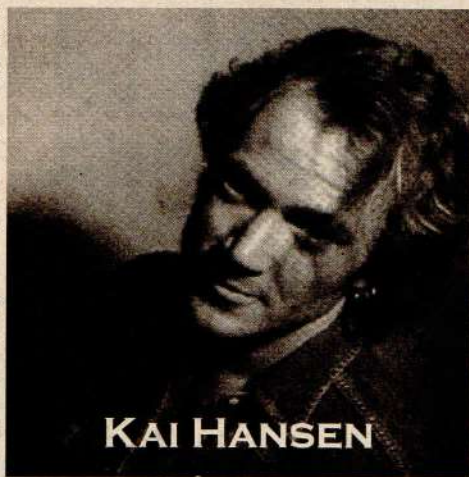
GR: Yeah, even the vocals sounded like they could have been on a MANOWAR album. Actually, the song is to be taken very tongue-in-cheek. It's filled with all the cliches that belong to Heavy Metal, it's like, 'How much more True Heavy Metal can you get?' It was a lot of fun. It's about the live Heavy Metal atmosphere, the union of the people listening to it, the 'Fuck you all' attitude that's behind it. It's definitely the 'If you're not into Metal, you are not my friend' thing!

When I wrote this song, I wasn't really thinking about it since I had written songs about the glory of Heavy Metal in the past, but when we recorded it, I started thinking, 'Well, here's where I better call Joey [DeMaio] to play the bass!'

PC: How much do you actually contribute to the IRON SAVIOR project?

GR: I wrote one song with Piet for the first album, I did some vocals, I did some advisory work, I produced his vocals and played guitar. On the most recent record, *Unification*, I wrote two songs for

it, played guitar, contributed some vocals on the two songs I wrote besides the HELLOWEEN revival song "Gorgar/Metal Invaders". So, I'm involved as much as I can, obviously I had to prioritize, because when you have two bands going, you cannot put equal attention into both. So, for IRON SAVIOR, I'm more like a freelancer, and my priority is Gamma Ray, of course. Piet understands this perfectly well, and in some cases, like when I'm busy with Gamma Ray and IRON SAVIOR wants to go on tour, they'll just go on without me or take another guitarist to replace me, which of course is not easy.



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PC: So have IRON SAVIOR and Gamma Ray ever been on the same bill?

GR: Oh yeah, we played two shows. I had to play it cool with IRON SAVIOR and pretty much stay in the back and keep calm, because I had to sing for Gamma Ray afterwards. If it happens again, it may end up being IRON SAVIOR without me and maybe I would join in for a couple of tunes later, and then Gamma Ray!

PC: Are Piet and yourself in constant contact?

GR: We are very, very close. We grew up together, we've known each other since we were eleven or twelve. And we formed our first band together, we were actually playing with Ingo [Schwichtenberg] and Markus [Grosskopf] under the name SECOND HELL before HELLOWEEN got to be HELLOWEEN. I have constant contact with Piet.

PC: Has he contributed to Gamma Ray much at all?

GR: He did some engineering, and was still learning the engineering process when he contributed to *Heading For*

*Tomorrow*, he was involved with *Sigh No More* as well, he contributed some choir vocals to that one. On *Somewhere Out In Space*, he did some choir work, and I believe he played some overdubs on that record as well. On the new album, he did some back-up vocals on "Hand of Fate".

PC: I've noticed from listening to your music that there aren't a lot of the negative vibes coursing through the music that are fairly commonplace in modern Heavy Metal music.

GR: Well, the anger is presented in the lyrics and sometimes in the vocal performance as well. But our expression on this is not that it will pull you down further, it will not depress you. I'd rather put topics, or get out negative feelings, into a positive power, that's my way of dealing with the shit! And that's what I want people to get from this album; if you've got something shitty going on, listen to *Power Plant*, and it will make you feel better, it's the cure! You should not take life too seriously, or you will end up sitting in the corner crying all day, what's the point? I think you should have some fun and don't take anything, especially yourself, too seriously. I'm basically a very positive person. Yeah, I have my doubts, fears and anger and sad moments, but I am a very positive person.



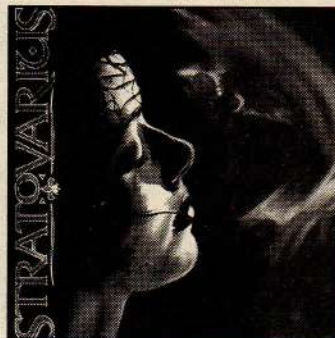
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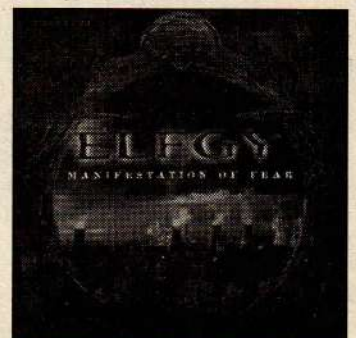
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# A Solidified Grip

By Chris Hawkins

*Grip Inc. have released Solidify, proving to those that question them that they are indeed a band to be reckoned with. In this interview, Gus Chambers, their singer, proved to be quite candid and sincere. His feelings on Pseudo Metal, touring, and other VERY interesting events are sure to spark your curiosity.*

PC: Would I be out in left field by saying I hear a bit of FEAR FACTORY in *Solidify*?

G: You mean the Industrial edge? Yeah, maybe. It's a pure coincidence if it does sound like that.

PC: I definitely didn't mean it in a copying way.

G: Oh no. It's a compliment. They're a great band. There's a lot of elements there. A lot of people tell me it sounds like KILLING JOKE. It's OK as long as we don't sound like the S-word, SLAYER. From the beginning, we didn't want to sound like that.

PC: Do you feel like you still live in that shadow?

G: We did in the beginning, yeah. A lot of people didn't like my singing because I'm not a traditional Heavy Metal singer. Why should you emulate someone? A lot of bands are doing that now. To mention KORN, a lot of bands go in the studio and say they want to sound like that.

PC: Yeah, I call it Mall Metal.

G: Yeah, but that's changing. There's an uprising of new, original metal bands coming out. I think in six months there's gonna be an explosion.



PC: Grip Inc. certainly seems to be solidified.

G: Exactly. Actually, I chose that name because we all come from different backgrounds. I'm English, Waldemar is German, Dave is American/Cuban, and Stuart is Canadian. We have all different cultures and tastes, which we pull together to solidify our sound. That's what hopefully gives it a little more originality than, you know, KORN.

PC: (laughs) Let's not get on that topic.

G: (laughs) KORN CHAMBER! Oops, I'm sorry.

PC: I heard there's a bit of tension between you and COAL CHAMBER.

G: Oh yeah, there was. They had me arrested. When we did the *Nemesis* tour of America, COAL CHAMBER was on the bill. Their album had been released, but it didn't start doing really well until about three weeks into the tour. They wanted to change their slot because the bill was Grip Inc. headlining, and they were lower down on the bill behind a band called CAUSE FOR ALARM. So they came to



us asking to open for us and change slots. We were fine with that, but a contract had been signed and we couldn't ditch the other bands. What happened was they got into it with our manager. I went backstage in NJ and they had backed our manager up in a corner, and the guitarist was about to smack him on the head with a bottle. I jumped in between and said, "Hey what's going on?" he turned around and spat in my face and said, "Fuck you bitch!" So I kicked his ass basically and they had me arrested. They actually said they would drop the charges if they could get the slot they wanted. I was really mad. But it all got sorted out. They got their slot. I went to them the next day and apologized, but explained to them that they can't do stuff like that.

PC: Any other favorite touring memories?

G: Definitely. You're familiar with THE CLASH, right?

PC: Yeah.

G: We did a tour with them in 1978. We thought it would be fun to do a version of one of their songs. Well, we did it better than them!

PC: (laughs) Oh no!

G: They kicked us off the tour!

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Continued from page 35

## Mass Psychosis *Necroporno* (Still Dead Productions)

I swear this album was released a couple years ago. Oh well, it's sick and nasty, so I'll review it anyway. These New Jersey natives really created a sound that I haven't heard since the days of RIPPING CORPSE. Mass Psychosis fuses Thrash and Death

Metal with slight hints of Punk and a little Jazz bass to create quite a disturbingly repulsive body of work. *Necroporno* sets new standards for the term "Extreme Metal"! Lots of improv going on throughout

the disc gives it a very chaotic, demented structure that is relentless and terrifying through and through. This disc surely rivals anything MACABRE and PUNGENT STENCH have ever released. What I am really impressed with about the disc is that the time changes are very controlled, causing a subtle groove that almost brings a tear to your festering eye. They are very accomplished musicians, but this disc is definitely not for those with a heart condition or those who think OFFSPRING is extreme!



## Solitude Aeternus *Adagio* (Pavement)

The sorrowful Doomsayers have returned with, what I believe to be their strongest release ever!! There aren't too many bands that can successfully fuse powerful, melodic Thrash with the morose melodrama of Doom Metal, but Solitude

Aeternus embrace it wholly! Taking some lessons from Doom Lords CANDLEMASS, Solitude Aeternus took their 'SABBATH-like end times vibe, added the ultra-heavy riffing of early CATHEDRAL, and smoothed the edges with the power and grace of MEMENTO MORI to create their

magnum opus, *Adagio*! The great thing about this is you'd normally expect this kind of sound to come from Bollnas, Sweden, where dark depression looms over many Metal bands from the region- but surprise surprise- they're American!! Yeah, we've got our problems, but these guys revel in theirs and actually draw strength from it! Bizarre, but true, Solitude Aeternus are not for those of you MORRISSEY worshipers who think that death is the only release, for *Adagio* may push you over that bleak edge!!

## Iron Savior *Unification* (Noise)

The follow-up to Iron Savior's 1997 self-titled masterwork of a debut has finally been unleashed to the world. *Unification* continues the saga of the 'Iron Savior', an indestructible spacecraft built by the Atlantians in a swansong effort to preserve their race. *Unification* sees the great vessel as a threat to the Earth and all its inhabitants, for the ship had been mistakenly programmed into believing that Man had destroyed Atlantis. This epic, sci-fi conceptual piece has been brilliantly and beautifully constructed by the talents of longtime Metal enthusiast friends Piet Sielck (soundman for BLIND GUARDIAN) and Lord Kai Hansen (GAMMA RAY and HELLOWEEN, like I really needed to remind you). And with such a prolific repertoire, you can imagine the magic created for this project. Each track is full of Power Metal perfection, and yet their sound is something indigenous to Iron Savior. Yeah, you may hear some GAMMA RAY guitarwork here and there, but the overall performance and unabashed creative unity is strictly Iron Savior. And for those of you who simply cannot get enough of Kai Hansen, they included a heavier, Savior-ized version of the *Walls Of Jericho* classic "Gorgar"! All this magnificence on one CD may seem a little unbelievable, but you've really got to hear it to make yourself a believer in the faith! Be prepared, for the Day of Unification is upon us!!

## Dimmu Borgir *Spiritual Black Dimensions* (Nuclear Blast)

The first thing I did after listening to this CD in its entirety was to listen to it again! To all of those who have labeled Dimmu Borgir as a band lacking in originality and stealing ideas from others, may you now eat your words! *Enthroned Darkness Triumphant* was indeed a superb CD, but this release has placed Dimmu Borgir on a level above many of its colleagues. From the opening riff to the last note, *Spiritual Black Dimensions* embraces the listener with a dark cloud of mystical beauty.

What Dimmu Borgir has managed to do is mold Black Metal and all things dark into one concept all its own. There are still the occasional blast beats and signature vocal styling, but there are also guitar riffs that could have found themselves on a classic SLAYER or MORBID ANGEL release.

This provides a diversity that has never been seen in this genre. The lead guitar work is simply amazing. Unlike a lot of bands, the guitar soars through melodies and ideas providing just as much atmosphere as the keyboards. The production allows for the listener to hear the genius involved in every instrument. Perhaps the most impressive element is the use of clean vocals by Simen Hestnaes (BORKNAGAR, ARCTURUS, VED BUENS ENDE). His eerie, operatic style is perhaps the greatest on "The Insight and the Catharsis", a track that alternates between a manic frenzy and haunting atmosphere accented by a truly commendable keyboard/piano performance. "Arcane Lifeforce Mysteria" is another example of atmosphere that is vaguely reminiscent of the soundtrack to *Legend*. Dimmu Borgir have proved that they can convert the images of darkness and beauty into a sonic landscape that is more pleasing after each listen. This is the most refined example of Black Metal to be heard as of this writing.

## Amorphis *Tuonela* (Relapse)

You wanna know why I like these guys so fucking much? They're not afraid to smile for the damn camera! It has recently occurred to me that every Metal band just seems pissed off during photo shoots and I don't understand why. I know that image has almost everything to do with this, but then you see them in concert and they're still scowling! But not these guys, man. They play music straight from their heart and have fun doing it, too. Their stage presence shows this

and their music reflects more than just the sullen and down-trodden aspects of life. They're the half-full glass of energy resuscitating those whose half-empty glass has been spilled on the floor. I know their music can sometimes have depressing overtones to it and

that a lot of their tunes are more about death than life, but it has never made me anything but happy, and *Tuonela* is simply a continuation of their progressive type of Rock oriented Metal. The death vocals are virtually extinct on this release, but the atmospheric guitars and synths are still there. *Tuonela* is a natural and not too-much-different progression from the now classic *Elegy*, just as *Elegy* was a step up from *Tales....* These guys refine their style with every album and are one of my favorite bands in the world, never putting out the same disc twice, yet still clinging to the same basic formula of melodic Metal that is both thunderous and soothing at those times when it needs to be.



## Magnitude 9 *Chaos To Control* (DCA Recordings)

Gotta love melodic Metal, especially when a U.S. band puts out an album on the same level as European Power Metal acts. Magnitude 9 take you to another plane of mental awareness by providing a hypnotic, harmonious soundscape in which you find yourself engulfed. Culminating their influential experiences from DAVID CHASTAIN, QUEENSRYCHE and YNGWIE MALMSTEEN, the band retains autonomy to their sound by adding their own elements of harmony, melody and intertwining a heavy Thrash-like vibe. It's a sound born of the 80s, and Magnitude 9 have evolved it into a style that will transcend the next millennium.

## Krabathor *Orthodox* (Pavement Music)

This is Brutal Death Metal in the vein of MORTICIAN or DEICIDE. This is very, very fast, and the guitar serves more as a compliment to the speed drumming than as a tool for melody. Of course, that is the way of Brutal Death. The lyrics are generally concerned with flesh-eating maggots and giving one's soul to the Prince of Evil. A funny diversion from that is the track, "Shit Comes Brown" which attacks Nazi punks. Overall, this is an album for those who like their Metal fast, low, and hate keyboards and pretty stuff!



## The Crown of Metal

*An interview with The Crown  
by Chris Hawkins*

Reviewing *Hell is Here* by The Crown was a pleasure for me, for it brought forth blatant images of what true Metal is and it proved to be quite refreshing. Their drummer, Janne, was glad to give some insight into their brand of Metal. The Crown started out called Crown of Thorns, but changed their name after learning that an "American-sorry-excuse-for-a-rock 'n roll band" had the same name. When asked how to classify their band, Janne quickly responds that "the main thing should just be if it's Metal or not, and if it's good or not!" One issue I was curious about was the scene here in the



U.S. versus the scene over in Europe. Janne explains that musicians in the U.S. "seem to be more educated, or at least be better musicians from the start and do really professional productions right from the beginning." He also states that Americans "seem to enjoy the sound on our album more than Europeans." As for those opposed, Janne believes that "we will have to unite our forces against all those weird fanatics who try to stop gigs from happening and those idiots who blame our music when their children freak out." It would certainly be a blessing for The Crown to venture to American shores, though there are not plans as of yet. Janne promises if allowed that "we will give 666% on stage." That's convincing enough!

## Necrophagia

*Hollacosto de la Morte  
(Red Stream)*

Well, besides having the worst singer on the face of the planet, Necrophagia do have some cool grooves, but their extremely cheesy use of sound effects is very displeasing. The first track on this disc is a rip-off of the last track on BETHELEHEM's new disc (putting music behind people's conversation) and the rest of the songs are pretty simplistic. I loved HIMINBJORG's new disc and BETHLEHEM's was alright, but unfortunately, I have few good words for Necrophagia.

## Manes

*Under Ein Blodraud Maane  
(Hammerheart)*

Aside from bad production, the song quality of the material contained on this album is very interesting. I would define it as a kind of experimental Black Metal that sounds very different from anything else I have ever heard. It is very atmospheric as well, but I personally can only handle small dosages. I recommend this for the open minded only. Don't expect it to be like anything you've ever heard before.

## MARBIL NEWS

Welcome to the first official "MARBIL NEWS"! MARBIL is a new independent music promotions company incorporating BACK TO FRONT RECORDS and HAPPY HAMSTER RECORDS. The first two MARBIL releases are the "13" compilation CD, which features 72 minutes from 13 of South Africa's top Death, Grind and Metal bands; and the debut GROINCHURN CD. Future plans include CD's by RETRIBUTION DENIED and GUTTED REMAINS, split releases of noisemongers GUADACANAL DAIRY, as well as a re-release, on one CD, of all the material put out by South African hardcore-punk gods, POWERAGE. A distribution service is also in the works, so all interested labels and bands please get in touch.

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## Shadows of Sunset

*Reflections From Afar  
(Fadeless)*

This Dutch band plays a style of Death Metal that can be hard to classify. The vocals are perhaps the weakest point in the mix, maintaining a raspy shout throughout the recording. The instrumental work, however, is quite diverse. Rhythmically, there is an alternation between slow, fast, and medium tempos. At times this band reminds me of many other Euro-Death Metal bands in that they employ a great deal of melody in their songwriting. There are points where dissonance is reached between the two guitars showing their true skill for constructing unique melodies. Just when you are ready to categorize them, though, they throw in excellent, low, stomping grooves. Shadows of Sunset know well how to blend their various influences/styles into one clear portrait that is unique only to them.

## Carnal Forge

*Who's Gonna Burn  
(War Music)*

This is certainly one of the most exciting albums I have heard in quite some time. As far as a pure, heavy album is concerned, this is one of the best so far this year! Carnal Forge is the sum of an important equation... add together the best aspects of Thrash, Death Metal, and Speed Metal and out comes the brutality that is Carnal Forge! On top of that, the album is excellently produced- even the bass can be heard through the mix. The important thing here is that, like the mighty AT THE GATES, fans of different styles can appreciate the music of Carnal Forge. There is pure speed, technicality, brutality, and moments of slow grinding precision. It's a relief to hear a band like Carnal Forge, for they refuse to be placed neatly into one corner of the scene. It's also a relief to obtain an album in which the novelty is not worn off after one or two spins. Each listen brings a new point of musical enjoyment; there is always something new to notice. Don't plan on trying to do something else when listening to this album for it will never let your attention leave. To sum it all up, BUY THIS ALBUM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**The Judas Factor**  
*Ballads in Blue China*  
 (Revelation)

This disc is a phenomenal contribution from the New York Hardcore world. *Ballads in Blue China* is an honest and poetic piece of work. The Judas Factor includes members from 108 and RESURRECTION, but this album's sound is very unique for Hardcore music. Their sound is very dissonant, experimental, raw, and noise-filled. This sound is very typical of bands in general from the New York area (i.e., SONIC YOUTH and HELMET), and it is good to see a Hardcore band experimenting and doing the same. *Ballads in Blue China's* first song, "Beauty Mark", opens with a mellow, dissonant bass and guitar intro, which builds into a mess of descending chords. The chorus is a very moving section of the song. There is a sudden quiet section as well, which is intruded by soft drumming slowly getting louder, setting up the band into a slower chorus filled with screams—definitely a good opening song for the album. This album does have a certain vibe through all the songs, but no two songs are alike. "Will You Wait Up For Me" is a soft, orchestral song laced with violins, and the entire album explores different moods and emotions. *Ballads in Blue China* is one of the best Hardcore albums of the year.

**Biohazard**  
*New World Disorder*  
 (Mercury)

It's been a long time since I've heard anything new from these guys, and let me tell you, this disc was worth the wait! Combining the clean production and musical growth displayed on *State Of The World Address* with the raw, street rage from their self-titled debut, Biohazard have carved their niche as the most influential (and listenable) crossover Metal/Hardcore band in the world. Their angry, streetwise prowess shines on every track of *New World Disorder*, and their violent, rhythmic pulses reawaken the once lost urge to tear shit up in the pit!! In a nation saturated with Alternacore, it's always pleasant to find bitter hostility where it counts! Granted, Biohazard may have made no musical progression, but they didn't need to, for they simply honed their raw edge to a razor point.

**Imperial Rage**  
*Fire In The Sky*  
 (Pulse)



Good ol' fashion Power & Glory Metal is what you get with this disc. The pride of 80s Metal magnificence found in RUNNING WILD and the majesty of MANOWAR are evident within the songwriting ability of Imperial Rage. They also wholeheartedly embrace the classical arrangements

suggestive of a MALMSTEEN or STRATOVARIUS influence. DEEP PURPLE seem to have also played a role in the conception of the band, who employ Jon Lord-like keyboard work. All in all, *Fire In The Sky* is a very dramatic, regal musical journey into the crux of Metal's origins and projection of the genre's future! By all means, check out their website ([www.impulsemusic.com](http://www.impulsemusic.com)) or contact Pulse Records at: 344 East Irving Park Road, Roselle, Illinois, 60172. Phone: (630) 529-3070. Fax: (630) 529-3089

**Sinergy**  
*Beware The Heavens*  
 (Nuclear Blast)

I am in total awe of this CD!! This is a very promising female-fronted Power Metal outfit, and guess who the female is? Kimberly friggin' Goss!!!! Yes, the lass who was booted from many a Black Metal band finally has her own gig and can be proud of it. Clean vocals are provided throughout with scattered angelic, Goth-like choirs accenting the choruses. Musically, it has a classic feel



akin to CRIMSON GLORY or ICED EARTH, but possesses an almost spacey, Black Metal extremeness reminiscent of DIMMU BORGIR or COVENANT. Be not afraid, Sinergy also exhibits the classical charm of BLIND GUARDIAN or ANGRA and utilizes it in a way I've never heard. *Beware the Heavens* is a resplendent debut release from a band that will surely rival the GATHERING or LACUNA COIL, that is, unless the woman from CRADLE OF FILTH and COVENANT releases an album!

**Steel Prophet**  
*Dark Hallucinations*  
 (Nuclear Blast)

Take the culminated abilities of both METAL CHURCH and ARTCH, give it a modern aggressive Juvy Driver, then a Torture Rack, finish with a Rock Bottom, and the hardened creature that will emerge is known as Steel Prophet. This band fuses the best of 80s Speed Metal with the flair of a 90s Power Metal outfit, thereby giving them the best of both worlds! There really isn't much to say beyond that. When you listen to this disc, you're experiencing a very eloquent, modern True Metal act very similar to SACRED STEEL. It must dwell within the use of the word "Steel" in the band name. If you put that word in your band name, you have to be True Metal, it's a law that has been passed down since the age of the Cimmerians. With Steel Thou Shalt Conquer!!!!

**Nevermore**  
*Dreaming Neon Black*  
(Century Media)

Nevermore have returned with their most experimentally progressive release to date. *Dreaming Neon Black* is a conceptual piece revolving around the torment of depression. While I adore Nevermore's music to no end, I cannot help but believe that they really tried too hard and pushed the musical and conceptual imagery a little too far, because as a whole, the album is not an easy listen. They push their abilities to the limit, but come across as almost pretentious. In parts, maybe rearranging the track order, the album would be yet another work of brilliance, but not as it presently is. This disc reminds me of *Poltergeist 2*, the elements that have the most startling effect on you are there, but the package really doesn't sell you. I mean no disrespect to the band, their first three releases were completely masterful and colorful. I suppose that *Neon Black* is a very withdrawing shade.

**Sermon**  
*From Death To Death*  
(Wild Rags)

Sermon are an interesting, if not unique, Death Metal band hailing from Russia (with love! I fly to you! Sorry, I just had to say it! Damn my adoration for James Bond movies!!!). As I was saying, Sermon have done something that not too many modern Death Metal bands have dared to attempt, and that's incorporate influences from late 80s Thrash bands. Throughout the entire disc, you can hear the flavors of *When The Storm Comes Down*-era FLOTSAM AND JETSAM and TESTAMENT from their *New Order / Practice What You Preach* days. It's a great mix when you add the contemporary elements of Death Metal: sophisticated and savage at the same time... very refreshing! It's no wonder Sermon are heralded among the elite Russian Metal bands and if they were American, they'd probably receive an equal amount of praise.

**Apophis**  
*Heliopolis*  
(Pavement)

Borrowing their lyrical inspiration and artistic designs from Egyptian myth and Apocryphal legends, one could make the quick jump to NILE and end there. But Apophis' Death Metal is more coherent and less agitating than NILE's. I'm thinking of a BLOODLET base with a James Murphy twist and some artistic de cor a la NILE. Amidst a swarm of Death Metal acts, Apophis has the potential to rise above the rest, and after ten years of searching for an identity, *Heliopolis* might lead them from the mires of obscurity.

**Neurosis**  
*Times of Grace*  
(Relapse)

Neurosis have crafted a masterwork of emotionally ambient Hardcore and create visions for the wandering mind through their majestic music. After the release of *Through Silver in Blood*, Neurosis expanded their style even more to create *Times of Grace*, which is literally a disc of perfection. I could speak forever about some of the ideas and representations behind Neurosis, but all one really needs to know that their music is not a force to be reckoned with. This music is absolutely beautiful in it's own strange way.



**Shadowcaster**  
*Temptation*  
(Wild Rags)

In no way, shape or form is this a Metal or even Rock band. It's got somewhat of a dark New Age sound, both atmospheric and eerie. Following in the footsteps of MORTIIS, Shadowcaster sculpts what can be referred to as the soundtrack to a surreal, black meditative journey, transcending all earthly experience and bodily pleasure. *Temptation* is an experiment, an abstract study into the dark corners of the soul, teasing your mind with hints of insanity and threats of abandonment. Relentless and unforgiving, this CD is reminiscent of a hybrid collaborative soundtrack to a Stanley Kubrick / early Ridley Scott film (*A Clockwork Orange* meets *Alien* or *Blade Runner*). Very bizarre and very frightening!

**Bethlehem**  
*Reflektionen auf's Sterben*  
(Red Stream)

Twisted, maniacal, demented... just a few words that can be used to describe this latest opus from Bethlehem. This is not a standard album which contains songs that fit neatly into one category. Instead, Bethlehem lead the listener down a path through the depths of paranoia and mental instability. This is very dark Metal. There are screams, buzzing guitars, samples, narratives, and other elements of dementia that add to the overall effect. Listening to this album is like listening to the sound heard in the head of someone strapped in a straight jacket. This is definitely not for everyone, but that indeed is the beauty of art. I love it!

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## World of Silence

*Mindscales*  
(Black Mark)

From the opening and atmospheric track, "Four Seasons", and onward to the dirge-like and powerful "Daze", this is not a release to be ignored by Progressive Rock fans. World of Silence play a brand of Progressive music that is not "show-off" or too technical for the average Rock or Metal fan to appreciate, rather they offer memorable tunes played with precision and grace. They can get downright mean and dirty, offering distorted vocals when the intensity of the song calls for them, but they can also be angelic and soft, giving us some female vocals to lighten up the mood. Keyboards are not overused, and the main thrust of the songs come from clean and distorted guitars backdropped by some excellent drumming. They offer a brand of Progressive music that will not lose you in technical virtuosity, but that will surprise you with their penchant for good song writing and masterful melody making.

## Divine Empire

*Redemption*  
(Olympic Recordings)

Now I know I slagged Jason Blachowicz a bit in the MALEVOLENT CREATION review, but let me tell you, leaving MC was the best thing that could have happened to him. His new act, Divine Empire, is no fucking joke!! Have you ever seen a Great White Shark maul a helpless diver, who can really do nothing but submit and take the beast's full wrath? Well, that's the closest metaphor I can make describing what *Redemption* will do to you with but one listen. The vocal monotony of the past is gone. In its stead are multiple vocals that seem to surge from the depths of the abyss, and with the musical accompaniment of powerful, potent, gut-splitting aggression, it will surely transcend your soul to a new realm of unearthly torment! If you've ever had the opportunity to see them live, you'll understand exactly what I mean, because, unlike many bands, they deliver this music live with the same contempt for humanity as experienced on the disc! "Evil" is not the word for this CD, I think "ravenous" or "rabid" is more appropriate!

## Dismal Euphony

*All Little Devils*  
(Nuclear Blast)

There isn't a band out there that can rival Dismal Euphony's ability to produce music as beautiful as the women singing and playing it! The lovely Keltziva and gorgeous Elin, former keyboardist and vocalist for the band, have both left, making room for the resplendent Anja. Her haunting and enchanting vocals are as enrapturing and alluring as the musical accompaniment surrounding her, and she is a very fitting replacement for Elin. The Black of their Metal has been lightened a bit to a more Goth or



Atmospheric shade, and make no mistake, the doleful, desolate, and discouraging allusions hinted at in their moniker are ever-present in the ghostly piano interludes and tranquil

string movements. This album is not permanently permeated with melancholy, though. The disc opens with a speedy intro highlighting both the screechy male and bewitching female vocals- a staple in the Dismal Euphony sound-

followed by another fast-paced song, which gives more play to the romantic and sensual aspects of their music. Cross THEATRE OF TRAGEDY with DIMMU Borgir and you have the splendor that is Dismal Euphony.

## Witchery

(Promo 1998)

No, this is not the Necropolis band! In light of the signed WITCHERY's recent success, these natives of Pottstown, Pennsylvania are in the process of changing their popular moniker, so we'll all just have to deal until then. Musically, Witchery is your

average Death Metal band, throwing in some minute tribal elements, clean guitars and vocals, and lots of groovy power chord action. The overall production is not bad at all, I just wish the vocals were a bit more fine tuned. If underground Death Metal is your thing, then these guys are worth your postage. Send all inquiries to: Joel/Justin Prange, 964 E. High St. Apt #3, Pottstown, PA 19464. *Continued on page 53*



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The end of the century seems to have spawned a new kind of trend, band reunions. Musicians reuniting has been highly publicized, and rather successful, with the likes of BLACK SABBATH and more recently IRON MAIDEN. But one band in the underground has recently experienced a

reunion of their own. Florida's Malevolent Creation has welcomed back into their ranks three members who were once ejected from the band, among them, the legendary Wampathroated vocalist, Bret Hoffmann. The band is currently reaping the rewards of a great Renaissance through fresh ideas and new sounds with their latest Pavement Records release, *The Fine Art Of Murder*. Founding member, guitarist, and avid golfer, Phil Fasciana, expresses his happiness with the unification in the following interview.

**Malevolent Creation:** Getting Dave, Rob and Bret back in the band is like a breath of fresh air.

**Promethean Crusade:** How did that come about anyway? I thought Bret was initially booted because he just wasn't into Malevolent anymore.

**MC:** Yeah, we were doing our third album [*Retribution*] and the whole band was pretty much fucked up, which didn't help him very much. He had problems, and everybody in the band had problems. It really wasn't much of a band. We were doing an album, and it wasn't really fun at all, it was really fucked up. But with Bret, we couldn't deal with it anymore, he wasn't going to get any better. Four years go by, he cleaned up his act, and once Jason was out of the picture, one of the first things Rob said was to call Bret. I never thought he would be coming back, but I'm really glad he did. He really got everybody sparked up again!

**PC:** Don't you have any fears that he might lapse back into the slump?

**MC:** No, that was one of the first things we brought up when we talked to him, it was either 100% or nothing. He's had his problems, but so has everybody. Getting him back was really great! I always used to get tons of mail from people asking

## dominion of terror

AN INTERVIEW WITH PHIL FASCIANA  
BY MARK MORTON

# MALEVOLENT CREATION

original style, he was never your typical growler.

**PC:** That's along the lines of what I was about to mention, *The Fine Art Of Murder* has a very different sound from the past couple records in that it's much more diverse in song structure. Did Bret's return bring forth the change?

**MC:** No, not really. We had a lot of ideas, and this is just how things turned out. We were really trying to get out of a rut of repeating ourselves after that. After *Stillborn*, we needed a better drummer, and we found one. The songs started to get more intense because we could do more, we could go faster and be more extreme. At the time all we were obsessed with was speed, and we had the drummer to do it. With *In Cold Blood*, it was the same thing, speed. Now that our heads are clean, there's a bit more that we have to offer than just blast beats. We're a Metal band and there's a lot of territory to explore.

**PC:** Is the band every happy about anything? The music and especially the lyrics have a very aggressive, negative tone.

**MC:** Well Bret is the kind of guy who is only smiling if he has a drink in his hand. He sits around and watches CNN a lot, and follows up on a lot of the crazy shit that goes on in the world, which is all usually negative. He feeds off that and he brings it to the band, because our music itself is aggressive and it calls for that. We don't promote murder, but it is there. I have to turn off the news sometimes and say to myself, 'Jesus God, what is this world coming to?'

**PC:** What do you like to do in your down time?

**MC:** Play a lot of golf! I've been golfing just as long as I've been playing guitar. Both require a lot of practice, they're like the never-ending challenge. It's not the typical answer you might expect from a guy in a band called Malevolent Creation, is it?

**PC:** How then did you come to the decision to play Metal music?



PHIL FASCIANA



Continued on next page



Continued from previous page

MC: When I was a little kid, like 12 or 13, I had this cousin who was three years older than me. He was like the bad kid of the family, with long hair, wearing the jean jacket, and always getting in trouble with the cops. My cousin, Mike, really turned me on to Metal with bands like BLACK SABBATH, and when I saw his buddies playing instruments, I thought they were the coolest dudes! From that day I was hooked! Metal rules! It does something to me that just gets my blood pumping!

## MALEVOLENT CREATION



their so diluted into Rock and Roll that they aren't really Metal anymore. It's going to take a lot.

PC: Another problem I see is that the popular culture view KORN, RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE, and RAMMSTEIN as today's Metal.

MC: That ain't Metal!! I don't even know what the description of it is, but it's definitely not Metal! When I think of Metal, I think of bands like JUDAS PRIEST and IRON MAIDEN. KORN, I don't really

PC: What do you think it will take for Metal to be as recognized in the States as it is in Europe?

MC: In Europe, all kinds of Metal are big, it's very interesting over there. But here in the States, we had one band that could have kept Metal on top, and that was METALLICA, but now

like them, but they are not Metal. I don't know if they consider themselves a Metal band, but they are very popular. And if that's what people think Metal is here in the States, I guess we're fucked!! People have got to start opening their ears and getting into real aggression, and they have to get away from that bubble-gum shit!

# IRON MAIDEN CLIMBS BACK

BY JEFF KENT

I saw Iron Maiden for the first time in 1985 when I was 14 years old and if you had told me then that one day I'd get the opportunity to sit down and talk to them I would've laughed in your face. Well it may have taken almost 15 years, but I finally got this opportunity last week. Our discussion touched upon topics ranging from the recent events in Littleton, CO to the status of the Iron Maiden soccer team and I hope to be able to present this interview in its entirety by the next issue. In the meantime, I hope that this update on the current status of Britain's Number One Heavy Metal Band will suffice.

In the highly informal setting of a stairwell in the Parker Meridian Hotel in Midtown Manhattan I spoke with both Janick Gers and the recently rejoined Bruce Dickinson to discuss the future of Iron Maiden. The Future- this is the common denominator by which all things are measured for the band these days, and how appropriate to hold the interview in a stairwell. It's almost prophetic, for the stairs can take you onward and upward or they can take you all the way back down to where you started.

Bruce and Janick are intently focused on what's to come: a CD-ROM release, a US tour, a European

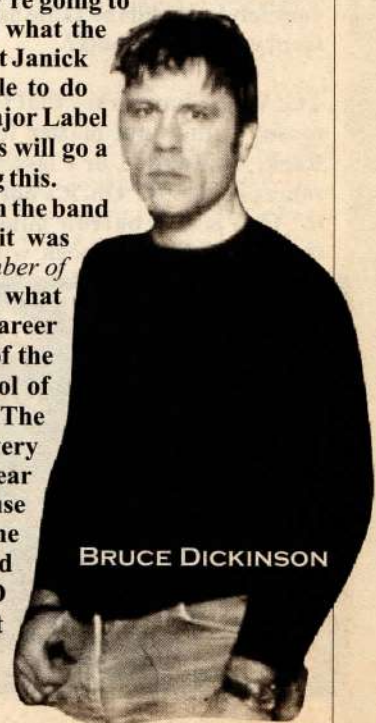
tour and the recording of a new album, all within the next six months. By the time you read this, you'll have already heard if 'Maiden will be playing near your town. If they're not, you'll more than likely be scheming with your parents or friends to figure out a way to travel the 500 miles to the nearest stop on their limited tour. If you manage to get that far, you'll see the newly reunited 'Maiden with Bruce back at the helm and a ferocious three-guitar frontline that's unrivaled in Metal. You'll witness 20 or so of the best Heavy Metal songs ever written and see one of the best live productions you're likely to see, until next year's World tour of course.

Despite the fact that the new lineup has yet to play together, Bruce's hopes for the new album are high. He wants not only to meet the expectations of fans, but also to blow them away by creating the "ultimate Iron Maiden album." In order to do this they're going to need to "capture the essence of what the band's all about," something that Janick doesn't believe they've been able to do yet. A Major Producer and a Major Label to be named in the coming weeks will go a long way in finally accomplishing this.

According to Bruce, the vibe in the band today is "exactly the same as it was during the recording of *The Number of The Beast*." Combine that with what Bruce has learned in his solo career and the songwriting firepower of the new lineup and you've got a pool of potential that's staggering. The stage is set for something very special to happen in the next year and feel free to dream, because those dreams just may become reality. Until then, pop in your Ed Hunter game, crank up the 2CD soundtrack that will come with it and look towards the future.



JANICK GERS



BRUCE DICKINSON

# A Cultural Gathering of Music

An interview with Hans Rutten

by Tom J. Hughes

The latest double-CD release from the GATHERING is a saga of soundscapes inundating the listener with sounds of soothing tranquility and atmospheric gracefulness. The GATHERING have always been on the cutting edge of Ambient Metal, but the sheer amount of keyboards and spaced-out guitar effects used on their latest, *How to Measure a Planet?*, has hitherto been unmatched on any of their previous releases. Native South American and Australian aboriginal instrumentation and influences have been incorporated into their sound as well, and Anneke's angelic vocals brilliantly shine as they never have before. The band is in the process of starting their own label and re-releasing some of their older material, so be sure to keep yourself abreast of all that they are up to by visiting [www.gathering.nl](http://www.gathering.nl).

**Promethean Crusade:** *How to Measure a Planet?* is very different than your previous releases.

the GATHERING: No, it's not!

PC: You don't think so?

TG: The only difference I can see from *Nighttime Birds* is that we lost one guitar player. Now, you don't hear that many distorted guitars, I agree. But the most important thing, I think, is that we changed production and that's why the sound is different, but the music is still the same.

PC: But a lot of people are saying it's not Metal anymore. Do you guys view yourselves as still the same or straying from your Metal roots?

TG: Well, I have to say that I don't care. If I like music, I like music. It does not matter for me if it is Metal, Jazz, Pop, Rock, Alternative, or Classical. For me, music is music and some people say, 'Oh, it's not Metal anymore and I don't like it.' That is very narrow minded. One person was telling me that we have to go back with old producer and record in

Woodhouse Studios- no way!

PC: I agree with you because you have to progress and change from album to album or else it gets boring.

TG: We're not like IRON MAIDEN and putting out the

same record and riffs every year. We've gotten more mature and it's a natural development for us.

PC: And the difference between what you were doing on *Always...* and *Almost a Dance* is quite considerable, too.

TG: Yeah, I like *Almost a Dance* and its production is way better than on *Always...* and the music is more Rock orientated as different from Metal. The problem was we had

a vocalist that was good, but not for the type of music we played. The music was very atmospheric, but the production was not there. So we had a new vocalist on *Almost a Dance*, but he was more of a singer/songwriter type of person who did not fit in well again with our music. So we quit him and, of course, on *Mandyliion* [pronounced Man-DEE-Lee-Un. We Americans butcher that pronouncement and Hans says it has nothing to do with a lion; it's not a Disney movie!], we got Anneke.

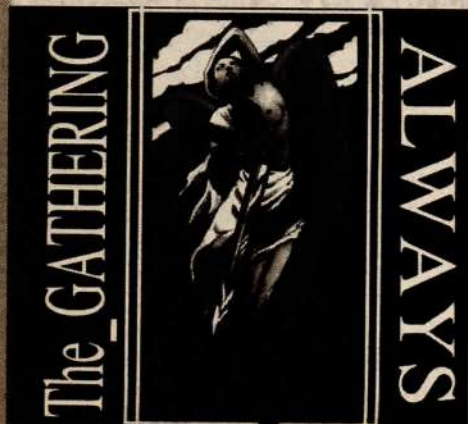
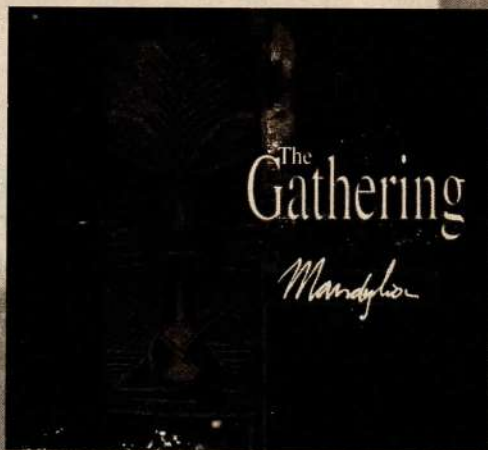
PC: So getting back to *How to Measure a Planet?*, you don't think you've gone too far with the keyboards, atmosphere, and experimentation?

TG: No, it's not that experimental. Maybe for some people, but we listen to many different musics like experimental Jazz. Now that's experimental music! But for our stuff, it has some psychedelic and experimental things to it so to call it experimental Rock or Alternative or even Metal- it's very difficult to label it.

PC: I don't want to label it.

TG: It's GATHERING music! We make our own style.

PC: So you guys consider yourselves pioneers in the music industry? I mean, no one else is doing what you're doing, and you have mentioned some of your early influences like PARADISE LOST and CELTIC FROST, but you've since transcended that style and are at the forefront of the scene, like the new MY DYING BRIDE.



*Nighttime Birds*

Continued on next page

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TG: Now those guys are doing highly experimental music, but our music is not that experimental. We are very humble, I guess. But we've got a normal voice; with Aaron [vocalist for MY DYING BRIDE] you can experiment a lot with his voice. He does a lot of things, but we have a very good vocalist and we experiment also with the vocals with distortion on songs like "Probably Built in the Fifties" and things like that, but not that much. I guess you could say that we are pioneers, but I won't say it. It's alright if someone else says it, though!

PC: Listening to *Mandyliion*, songs like "Mandyliion" and "Sand and Mercury" sound like the groundworkings or prelude to *How to Measure a Planet*?

TG: I guess that's because in America they sound like experimental songs already with a very strange bridge in it and a very long instrumental part. It also has a very dramatic end and "Sand and Mercury" is an epic song, like ten minutes long. And it does have something to do with *How to Measure...* because we also have a very long epic on there, too-

PC: Yeah, twenty-eight minutes!!!

TG: Don't take that too seriously! Everybody takes it that way. Of course the first twelve minutes or so has a sort of song structure to it, but then it just turns into a long soundscape and it's not a song anymore. It's a very ambient kind of thing that is transcendent. You can float away with a good glass of wine; it's got that dream-like nature to it and you can make up your own movie in your mind. Like a lullaby.

PC: That's how the whole CD sounds like to me, though. It's not melodic, just soothing and very relaxing. You think it's the best release you guys have put out to date?

TG: Yes, it's what I've always wanted to do since the beginning, I guess, but we didn't have the tools, the equipment, the producer, or the studio time. But with *How to Measure...*, we had 2½ months studio time, a very good producer, and ideas. We had so many ideas that we decided

to make it a double album. And why not? In the 70s, a lot of bands made double albums. Of course, that makes it a difficult album to take in, too, because there are so many songs and so much music. You have to pay attention to it. You can't be a casual listener. But it looks terrific to have a



double album- it feels good! Attie Bauw [The SCORPIONS and FIGHT] is a very good producer with some refreshing, new ideas and we recorded everything onto a hard disc with the help of a computer on a program called Protools and we could experiment with many different things and it was a learning process, really, with Attie as our guide. He guided us into a new world of recording and it is just the tip of the iceberg for us.

PC: So there will be more of this type of music from you guys in the future?

TG: Well, yeah, because now we know how to work. This recording was a big experiment for us but now we know how it works and we know what to do now to finish the songs and we are wiser now. So I'd say that, yeah, the next album will be leaning more toward this type of music.

PC: Over in Holland you guys are huge and selling out arenas, but over here the GATHERING is small time. How do you view the differences between the American and Dutch scene?

TG: Holland is a very small country with only 40 million inhabitants. We sold approximately 30,000 copies here which is a lot, but we're shy of the 50,000 needed for a Gold record. In Holland we are a kind of a mainstream band, so a much more diverse group of people know who we are-younger and older- like that. And it is this way for Germany, too. A little bit less, maybe, but Germany is still a very important market for us.

PC: And what about the American market?

TG: It's a very important market, but very difficult to get played in. I would love to play in America, but no one has approached us about it and I don't know if it's difficult because of the green card or something. But it would be superb to play in the middle, east, and west of America someday, but no one has offered us a proper tour. We could tour with TYPE O NEGATIVE, but it would cost us \$50 or \$60,000 which is way too much for us.

PC: Your fascination with space and astronauts and the like, has that been a life long passion, because it has come to full fruition on *How to Measure...*



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TG: Yes, it has been a big passion for myself, my brother, Rene, and Frank, the keyboard player, as well. As children we would take cans and turn them into space capsules and stuff like that. Our whole lives we've been fascinated with not only the Americans, but the Russians, too, with them building the Mier Space Station. It's a piece of garbage in space, it seems, but it works! And we already did this type of music on *Nighttime Birds* with "Kevin's Telescope". That dealt with the stars and this time around they deal with travelling. The song, "Travel", of course is about a composer, but "Great Ocean Road" is about the freedom in an airplane and we talk about that same freedom in a space with "Liberty Bell". And "How to Measure a Planet?" is one long trip where you're travelling into yourself, into your own mind, which is an enigma in itself. You can drown in it, yourself, just as you could in space, and that is another aspect of freedom. The travelling freedom is sort of the red line running throughout the whole CD. It's not a concept; it's not that heavy. Some songs are not dealing with travelling at all, but we've had this space ambition for quite a long time.

PC: So how much of an influence does music around the world have on you? A lot of European bands can't break away from their Western or classical tradition, which is naturally a part of all of our culture, but I hear Latin and South American Mestizo music in your songs, Australian aboriginal tunes, as well as African round music. And this is why I see you guys as pioneers.

TG: Yeah, we're influenced by a lot of world cultures as opposed to just the Wagner, Strauss, more classical, German bombastic music. And it is very natural for us and we have all these ideas and travelling ambitions. We travel to Africa, Turkey, Asia, wherever- and we buy these strange instruments which really can enrich your sound very, very much. It's also a lot of fun to learn how to play and the whole thing is a learning process for us. We're all huge fans of DEAD CAN DANCE and they have that whole world type of music on their albums. Especially the album *Spiritchaser*.

PC: That's great that you have so many influences and don't remain stagnant.

TG: It can only enrich your sound. Of course, I appreciate

Metal music, but we try to be as diverse as we can be in our music. I think that the Oriental music is something that not a lot of people are doing and that sounds like fun, to mix the Metal with the Oriental- why not? Especially the music from India, which is very interesting but difficult to play because it is so different. The sitar, now that is a stupid instrument with a strange sound, almost wicked, but you can grow so attached to it. There are so many cultures you can mingle with your own music. That's why we did three months of recording. There are so many layers to the songs, so many instruments, and a lot of hidden things as well. Headphones are very helpful on an album like this because of all the experimental things we do.

## ANNEKE VAN GIERSBERGEN



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## Mindset

*A Bullet for Cinderella*  
(Noise)

We've all seen this band before. You head down to the "big Rock show" and you're late so the first band is already on and they really suck. Just when you think you'll have to sit through four more bands like this, Mindset hits the stage and your ears perk up, you start stomping your foot and you're singing along to tunes you've never heard. Their set is over before you know it and for a while you forgot you were there to see the "big Rock show." You spend the next two sets hanging out with the bass player and you buy their self produced CD, bring it home and play it for your friends. Then you start to wonder whatever happened to them. Well, here they are, that local band done good. I like their attitude and as the notes point out, you can sing along to this, which alternately fuels your anger and makes you feel better. It's a sort of cleansing Metal.



## Malefaction

(demo)

If these guys can break away from their METALLICA crutch, they've got a lot of promise. They certainly know how to shred and lay down some fat riffs, sometimes opening things up and letting the drums and bass have a word in edgewise. Unfortunately, bands like D.R.I. and DISARRAY have done/are doing exactly what these guys are doing, so some identity needs to be developed. The excellent and melodic, sometimes blazing guitar solos and drum fills seem to be their strongest character trait and a fostering of these elements, coupled with perseverance and a continued support from the underground scene, should be enough to propel Malefaction forward. Time will tell if these guys have what it takes to make it in this industry and I'm eager to see how things develop. Write to: Ryan Beakley, 108 Quaker Dr, Bethlehem, PA 18017.

## Various Artists

*Black Mark Attack Vol. II*  
(Black Mark)

This is a collection of predominantly Swedish Death Metal bands from our friends at Black Mark. Not much new here, but if you're new to today's Metal scene, you may want to pick it up because it covers some Progressive and Loud elements also. The one track that I can't quite figure out is by QUORTHON, it is an Alt. Pop tune that just doesn't fit in at all. Every time I hear it, I have to check the CD player to make sure it's the same disc. LAKE OF TEARS contributes a slow brooding tune called "The Four Strings Of Mourning" that uses piano and keyboards to create a dark melancholic atmosphere to follow a cool bass intro. Most of the vocals are straight Death screamers with a few Death growlers, and I would have liked to have heard a couple more clean vocal songs, but all in all it's a worthwhile collection.

## Mangled

*Ancient Times*  
(Fadeless)

Mangled are a band that never ceases to amaze me. From their dark and morose *Perish* demo to now, their style and unique amalgamation of influences mutates and enraptures me with every release. Throughout *Ancient Times*, there seems to be an underlying theme displaying the perversion of society and the desire to return to the simpler, more primitive culture. Musically, the band plays a simple 80s Thrash-inspired Death Metal (i.e. DISMEMBER), but intertwine classic European folk elements and Doom throughout various song segments making Mangled an entity unto themselves. But what completely sells me on the disc is the collection of *Ben Hur* stills within the inlay booklet. Get in touch with Fadeless, for Mangled are a very impressive outfit: Fadeless Records, P.O. Box 1288, 6501 BG Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

## Ink & Dagger

*The Fine Art of Original Sin*  
(Initial)

I just cannot figure these guys out. Their bio displays them with corpse paint, but their music is far from anything vampiric, Gothic, or Black Metal. This is just weird. The music is somewhere between Punk, Hardcore, and Noise. Imagine a mix of 311, RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE, CLUTCH, and the worst Punk band you have ever heard. Annoyingly, the guitars remain out of tune throughout the entire album. Perhaps the band is trying to go for that effect, but this is an album that is just hard to listen to. Ink & Dagger are a living oxymoron, trying to convey two totally different images both musically and visually. Unfortunately, only those bands with extreme talent and a knack for artistic prowess can pull such accomplishments off, and Ink & Dagger just aren't up to the challenge.

## Suicide Culture

(Demo)

I love the cover of this disc with the three wise men presenting their gifts to Mary and Joseph as they all watch TV. You can almost hear their personal CD collections on this disc; the music is constantly shifting between influences. They try their hardest to keep an identity amongst the SABBATH and PANTERA riffs, and there are glimpses of truly original thought on almost every track. They also pull off some pleasantly surprising killer riffs, too, like the intro on the opening song, "Of Revenge". The song plods along normally enough, and just before the vocals start, there is this great chord that makes me smile every time I hear it. I love when you hear something that you never expected on a song, and Suicide Culture is constantly doing just that. Check them out for yourself at: Suicide Culture, C/O Joshua Hanenburg, P.O. Box 70566, Seattle, WA 98107



**Orange Goblin**  
*Time Travelling Blues*  
 (Rise Above)

Spaced out, Psychedelic, Grunge-mania meets Melodic Doom Metal and the world will never be the same again! Actually, the cover art and the goofy band name are

misleading. While the music is all-out Rock-N-Roll tinged with wacky weed sentience, the lyrics are well written and thought provoking. They have more depth to them than the average Stoner Rock band (like



it really takes that much effort!). Nevertheless, they are imaginative and stimulating- no bong required! The CATHEDRAL and BLACK-SABBATH references are almost a given, as this is Lee Dorrian's label we're talking about. *Time Travelling Blues* is an aptly titled second effort (after just one listen you actually feel like your stuck in the 70s and you can't get out!) from these natives of England and should not be overlooked by fans of this genre. It's groovy, baby!

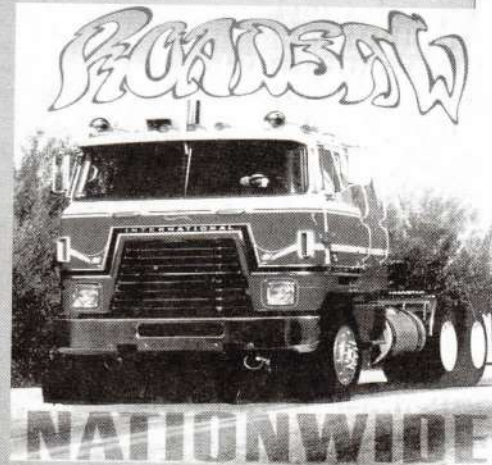
**Hedningarna**  
*Kaksi!*  
 (NorthSide)

While this music does not fall into the Metal category, it certainly is heavy and it's important to the development of today's Scandinavian Black and Death Metal scenes. Hedningarna are considered the leaders of the 90s Scandinavian roots revival. On *Kaksi!*, three Swedish musicians are joined by two Finnish female vocalists to interpret the traditional music of Scandinavia. The group blends ancient lyrics and instruments with today's technology and attitude to create something brand new and exciting to fans of all musical genres. The songs deal with the trials and tribulations of old Finland and Sweden such as drinking, mating, and... well maybe just drinking and mating! You

**Roadsaw**  
*Nationwide*  
 (MIA)

Grunge infested semi-slightly-Punk-at-times Sludge holy-riff-powered psychedelic Stoner Rock a mania! They almost remind me of the

OFFSPRING, but they are much more groove and Rock oriented. Spaced out guitar gadgets and weird-ass techniques and solos pierce through my speakers as the powerful riffs pummel me over and I'm wondering what an intense experience a live show must be! Anyone into real Rock music with grooves and riffs that just kick so



much ass should not overlook Roadsaw. And if they ever come to your town on tour (which is pretty likely based on their previous touring schedules), prepare to be konked over the head by a super sonic, ear-splitting (sorry, Liz) wave of Rock 'n Roll terror!

**The Maggies**  
*Homesick*  
 (Chickenman Records)

While this album is in no way Heavy Metal, I'm reviewing it here to prove a point. The number of great bands of all musical styles that remain unsigned is tragic. Case in point, The Maggies, a Pop band from Northampton, Massachusetts that cuts away all the tedium of music and goes straight for the heart. When I say Pop, I refer to the older definition that encompasses bands with a guitar, bass, a drum core, and catchy melodies. Songs like "Hit on the Head" and "Love Comes Inside", with their male/female vocal harmonies will

float around in your head anchored only by the airtight rhythm section until they become a part of you. There are no flashy guitar solos here, just well written songs played by artists who care about the art of music- not the business. As one listens to independently produced albums like this you forget that there is no big name producer or million-dollar video; those things don't matter. You love it and that's all that matters. Continue to support your local bands and their indie labels, they are where the real music is. Besides, doesn't it feel great to be the first one on your block to hear a new band and to be able to say, "I knew them when...." The Maggies, P.O. Box 60276, Florence, MA 01062. [www.themaggies.com](http://www.themaggies.com)

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**Shy**  
*Regeneration and Live in Europe*  
 (Neat Metal)

Whoa, what year is this? Is it time for 80's nostalgia already? Around since 1983 and coming back after a five year absence, Shy reminds us what the 80's Metal bands were all about: poppy hooks, cheesy keyboards, and songs about girls. *Regeneration* is actually a new album recorded last year, but you'd never know it because it fits all of the above criteria for being fifteen years old. Replete with staple power ballads like, "When You Need Someone", this CD will either bring you back to the good old days or make you sick. *Live in Europe* was actually recorded in the late 80s and early 90s in Europe so it has more of an excuse for sounding dated. Any band that namechecks POISON, MEATLOAF, ENUFF 'Z NUFF and SLEEZE BEES in it's bio is just asking to be pigeonholed as a novelty act.



**Puya**  
*Fundamental*  
 (MCA)

Mestizo Hardcore music in its most conglomerated and purest form is what Puya is all about. This music grooves and drives with such melodic intensity that I can't help but be drawn to it. This is great music... and I hate Hardcore! Puya incorporate Latin and South American influences with streetwise, urban riffs to construct from their ancestors an international music straight from their vast, yet local heritage. Horny horns, bouncing bongos, flamenco guitars, animated morocos, burly bass lines, and fat guitars all morph into a style of music that is both unique and totally original as far as Metal goes. Rapped, spoken, and sung lyrics (in both English and Spanish) are the vocal styles of choice, while the occasional shout of angst



cuts through you with a passion matched only by the worldly music (how ethnocentric a term unbecoming of such a cross-cultural album!) supporting said voice. This is Hardcore with melody and rhythm nonpareil to any other Hardcore band I've ever been exposed to. It's music that has a purpose beyond that of the typical urban, preachy theme and highly commendable. All fans of Hardcore will definitely appreciate this surprisingly refreshing work of art, as well as those encamped outside the Hardcore circle.

**Nonpoint**  
*Struggle*  
 (Conquest Music)

When did the powers that be decide that the guitar was no longer to be employed as melody maker, but rather as a substitute for a rapper's turntable? Like RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE and LIMP BIZKIT, Nonpoint believe in minimal musicianship as a substitute for catchy Rap-Metal. This is another example of the bastardization of "Metal" to produce a marketable "product."

(Kimberly after taking in one too many salamis downstairs?), RAGING SLAB, and the BAKERTON GROUP offer us some delightful grooves as well. Fat, sometimes distorted basses, 70s style distorted guitars with lots of wah wah effects, and all sorts of reverberated vocals characterize this comp. and I feel like I should be at some bar or local dive somewhere getting drunk, stoned, or both while listening to these tracks. It's music with soul and a lot of fun if you give it a chance. Get in touch with The Music Cartel at: 106 West 32<sup>nd</sup> St, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, New York, NY 10001. [Mail@music-cartel.com](mailto:Mail@music-cartel.com). [www.music-cartel.com](http://www.music-cartel.com)



**In The Groove**  
 (The Music Cartel)

This is the perfect compilation for anyone into Stoner/Psychedelic Rock who wants to explore new bands who are on the cutting edge of homegrown Rock music that hasn't been tainted by the popular media. The first three songs performed by ROACHPOWDER, NEBULA, and KARMA TO BURN all rock hard, and RED GIANT, DRIPPING GOSS

**Postmortem**  
*Repulsion*  
 (Pavement Music)

Postmortem has a definite old-school feel to their music. They largely employ a Thrash approach to their songwriting, sounding at times like old OVERKILL or EXODUS. What Postmortem lacks is something new. Their songs seem to be rehashed from ideas on their dusty vinyl recordings of older acts. Nothing stands out or sets them apart. Everyone must appreciate classic Metal, but it seems that if a band wants to take that approach, they would at least add a new twist.

## Gamma Ray

*Powerplant*

(Noise)

Consistently getting stronger with each release, Germany's Power Metal Lords Gamma Ray unleashed their most omnipotent release to date. Everything you'd expect from Kai Hansen and crew is fervently intact along with a few surprises! For one, there's an unusual but totally Metal-ized version of the PET SHOP BOYS' "It's A Sin". I never thought that Shitty Eighties Faggot Music could sound so gloriously Metal! There's also an interesting song called "Heavy Metal Universe", which is an obvious nod to the band responsible for turning Metal into a religious institution, the Kings Of Metal, MANOWAR. All in all, the songs on *Powerplant* are a bit longer than prior material but possess just as much (if not more) impact than previous efforts. Gamma Ray's innate ability to compose simple-sounding, yet immaculately textured complexity comes to a head on their sixth studio release (seventh if you include the live album, and I don't want to get into the EPs!). Each track is a True Metal masterpiece, flawless and eloquently executed in a manner only Kai can produce. From a certain perspective, every song is an anthem to the endurance, purity and underrated magnificence that dwells within the heart and soul of fans and members of every Heavy Metal band in existence! And with the rise in popularity of Power Metal in the USA, I'm positive that *Powerplant* will be welcomed with open arms.

## Skarhead

*Kings At Crime*

(Victory)

The first thing that popped in my head when I put this CD in was, "Please...make it stop!" This is Hardcore of the most unredeemable nature. They have a rapper and a Hardcore vocalist, which really is not a good concept. The music is under-produced, repetitive, generic, and obnoxious. The lyrics proclaim the fun of snorting coke, drinking 40's, gunning down gangstas, etc... grrrrrr! This CD is for you if you enjoy cruising your suburban town in a low-rider, talking on your fake cellular phone, and threatening 13 year olds to make yourself look tough!

# Wanted: Dead or Alive GALACTIC COWBOYS

By Tom J. Hughes

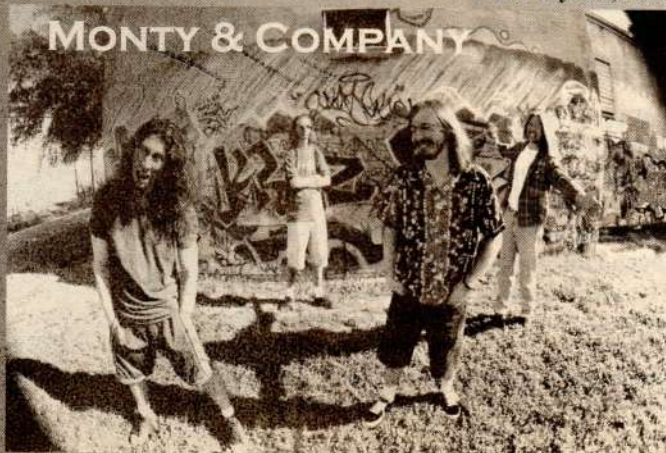
In support of their latest release *At the End of the Day*, the Galactic Cowboys have been touring with label mates King's X since the end of last year. Throughout the Cowboys' ten-year career, they've built up a strong, almost cult-like fan base who have supported them throughout their formative years at Geffen and their coming of age at Metal Blade. Through all of this, though, the Cowboys have not strayed from their roots. Harmonious, melodic vocal styles coupled with driving, forceful rhythms have been a staple in the Galactic Cowboys' sound, and *At the End of the Day* is a continuation of this alchemy; yet its contemplative and historical nature begs elaboration. Monty Colvin, bassist and vocalist for the band, states that this release "was very reflective, actually. I had a lot of songs I was working on and it just kind of occurred to me that they kind of had the same theme. So I put them all together and wrote some more songs and it ended up being that suite. Basically, this 'Machine Fish' concept

developed along with these paintings I've been doing for several albums, like the gas mask character and all that. They all tell kind of a story of some of the crap the band's been going through over the years."

This "crap" included over-bearing pressures and control issues that the label and their former manager placed on them early in their career. "We weren't making a lot of money which we should've. We could've been set for years and we were struggling to just make a living. So after a while we both got tired of it and we went our separate ways and it wasn't happy. But we survived." Sticking to their tried and true formula of powerful riffs fused with clean, harmonizing vocals, the Cowboys forged ahead, but found a new enemy awaiting them on another front- the critics who incessantly compare them to KING'S X. "It does bug me a little bit because I wish people would have more imagination than that. We've done so many things over our ten year career. Obviously the vocal harmonies are there and a couple other similarities, but there are a lot of differences, too. We got so many influences besides them and I wish people would recognize them in our music, too. For one thing, the BEATLES are a major influence for me, but over the years, things have changed. In our earlier years we were more influenced by the heavier stuff like METALLICA and MEGADETH, but over the years it's ranged anywhere from CHEAP TRICK to whatever we're listening to at the time."

With all of these major influences and an original sound that eludes categorization, one would think that the Galactic Cowboys would be a household name by now. "Every day I ask myself, 'Shoudn't we be a lot more

famous for being original?!" Actually, I'm beyond that now. Who knows, man. It all takes the right kind of push from record companies, and I've found over the years it's really got more to do with who's got the money, which is sad because we're not one of those bands. But we'll keep hanging in there."



*Continued on next page*



Continued from previous page

Unfortunately though, sometimes all of the pressures of surviving in this cut-throat music industry take their toll and some casualties emerge. Such was the case with Alan Doss, the Galactic Cowboys' original drummer and long-time producer. Continuing with the overall theme of *At the*



*End of the Day*, Monty bluntly states, "Yeah, it was kind of the end for him. He was going through some personal things in his life even while we were making the album. Then right before the first leg of the tour he came in and said that that was it, he was quitting. It was totally unexpected. He wanted out completely and he needed to make some changes in his life. We were so desperate and almost cancelled our part of the tour, but luckily, Eric Tatuaka was referred to us and he fits in well with our personalities."

And if anyone knows the personalities of these characters, then you know that this wasn't really too difficult of a task. Their off-the-wall sense of humor and slapstick candidness creates an aura of instant like-ability and happy-go-lucky fun which has drawn in many a fan over the years. The humor and fun is only part of the allure, though, and Monty is quick to point to the music. "I think what I hear mostly from our fans is the harmony in the vocals. Throw in some heaviness and you have that with the melodic- that's a lot of it. Hopefully, it's songs, though. Ultimately, you want them to like your songwriting and that's why they keep liking you."

And I thought it was the crazy and fat sounds he got out of that bass of his. How silly of me!



## Nocturnal Mortum

*To the Gates of  
Blasphemous Fire*

(The End Records)

Nocturnal Mortum offer haunting atmospheric Black Metal that is along the same lines as the mighty LIMBONIC ART, but not quite as polished. Four within are chilling riffs and clean interludes that are superbly complemented by keyboards that weave in and out of the melody, often creating momentous counter-melodies. There are also strong Occult overtones established throughout conjuring up images of ceremonial rites. Also, like EMPEROR, there is an underlying medieval theme present throughout which is aided by the use of majestic sounds from the keyboard and clean guitars. This release carries the torch of the New Wave of Black Metal alongside EMPEROR, LIMBONIC ART, DISMA EUPHONY, and others.

## Mystic Circle

*Drachenblut*  
(Pavement Music)

Hailing from Germany, Mystic Circle can be described as somewhat atmospheric Black Metal. The riffs are, for the most part, extremely fast and brutal, in the vein of SATYRICON, but there is melody present from the keyboards. The keyboard work is technically impressive and the keyboardist seems to find some melody that appears, at least sonically, to be in key with the almost indistinguishable guitar riffs.

## Morning Again

*As Tradition Dies Slowly*  
(Revelation Records)

Morning Again is definitely intense, and sure to be a favorite in the live setting. There is a SOILENT GREEN/BRUTAL TRUTH vibe here that will be sure to grab your attention. The vocals are not as diverse as those bands, though, in that they seem to stay on one level of constant shouting. But the instrumental work is interesting, with the guitar alternating between Grindcore stylings and grooves that seem to imitate the sound of putting your fist through glass. This is great intense music for driving or just breaking things!



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**Le'Rue Delashay**  
*The Court Composer*  
(Root-O-Evil)

Now I might catch hell for this review, since it's a classical album, but it's on a very eclectic record label, therefore it is included herein. Take all the best parts from any Black Metal band you've ever heard and collectively place them on one CD. Of course,

you'll end up with a very somber, yet frightening classical disc, almost like a soundtrack to a B-rate, 70s Victorian horror movie. There are no vocals presented, for surely it would take away from the dark beauty of the music. This is unlike what MORTIIS and ARCANA have done in the past in that each track progresses in many parts as a classical composition should, not simply building off of one base rhythm indigenous to the aforementioned artists. Every song is filled with the passion and grace of any well-known classical composer, with one exception- Le'rue is not dead! *The Court Composer* is definitely an interesting CD if you're open to new experiences.



**Damnation A.D.**  
*Kingdom of Lost Souls*  
(Revelation)

All this Hardcore nowadays is giving all of us here at the Crusade an earache. We (four out of the current five writers) exhaustingly tried to listen to this disc with an open mind and just could not come up with anything positive. We know good, moral Hardcore

when we hear it (VISION OF DISORDER, ANOTHER NOTHING, FURY OF FIVE, BIOHAZARD, and PRO-PAIN), but this is not even likeable. We don't understand how people can listen to Hardcore- all the bands sound pretty much alike to us! Damnation A.D. sound thrashy, preachy, and overall the same as everyone else within this genre. Someone please write to us and let us know what the redeemable qualities of this music are and we will gladly listen with open ears, because the bands just aren't doing it for us.

what I always knew these guys could produce live. *Act Seven* is the perfect blend of all that is good in the Gothic and Metal scene. The pulsating percussion and pounding bass lines support the shredding riffs and guttural vocals so well, that if the keyboards were taken away all together, their sound would virtually still be wholly complete. Nevertheless, they are present and it wouldn't be Crematory without them. I'm just glad that this time around the music doesn't revolve around them and am grateful for their added atmosphere and ambience, rather than disconcerted because of their dominance as in previous releases.

**Fredrik Thordendal's**  
**Special Defects**  
*Sol Niger Within (Version 3.33)*  
(Relapse)

Many of you may be taken aback by this since it is not as in-your-face and ferocious as a MESHUGGAH album, rather, it's magic lies within a complete listen. Frederik Thordendal (MESHUGGAH's guitar psycho-genius) has given life to what I believe to be a true experiment in progression. Utilizing trademark bizarre time signatures, he stretches the boundaries of experimentation by exploring new vocal tones, electronic malevolence fused with heavy guitar riffage, and ultimately creates a new musical world in which Progression, Metal, Noise and Ambience co-exist simultaneously. Expect to become entangled in the complex circuitry of Fredrik Thordendal's sonic Frankenstein's Monster!

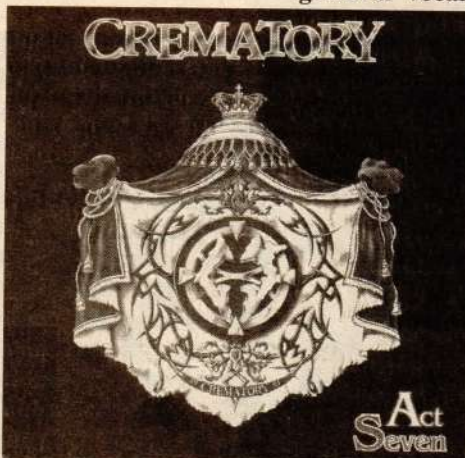


**Himinbjorg**  
*Where Ravens Fly*  
(Red Stream)

Holy Thor's hammer, Odin! These guys kick ass! Himinbjorg play astonishing Viking Metal with the occasional use of synth to create their unblemished song intros. The vocals range from grim screeches to soaring Viking chants. The band journeys through six overwhelming epic tracks of pure Metal mayhem (aside from the second track which is an all acoustic one) that makes you want to swing your sword and scream. As we venture toward the millenium when Metal will finally reign triumphant (well... hopefully), Himinbjorg will stand tall and undefeated.

**Crematory**  
*Act Seven*  
(Nuclear Blast)

Damn! These guys have improved immensely since their last offering, *Awake*. I thought they kinda were going soft on us for a while there, but changing guitarists and dampening the keyboards while beefing up their overall



production and sound has done wonders for my opinion of them. *Act Seven* captures in a studio recording

## Crack Up

*Heads Will Roll*  
(Nuclear Blast)

Crack Up are a band, much like ENTOMBED, who came from a Death Metal background and have now simplified things a bit. This simplification is not a bad thing, though. Just think of it as a return to the basics. Crack Up's sound is pretty much a straight-forward Rock 'N Roll approach with some Punk tendencies, which is all accented with some Death vocals. Imagine if CORROSION OF CONFORMITY had a Death Metal vocalist. If you are looking for technicality, this is not the place to look, but they do provide the scene with a new twist on Rock- and on Metal, in general.



## Malevolent Creation

*The Fine Art Of Murder*  
(Pavement)

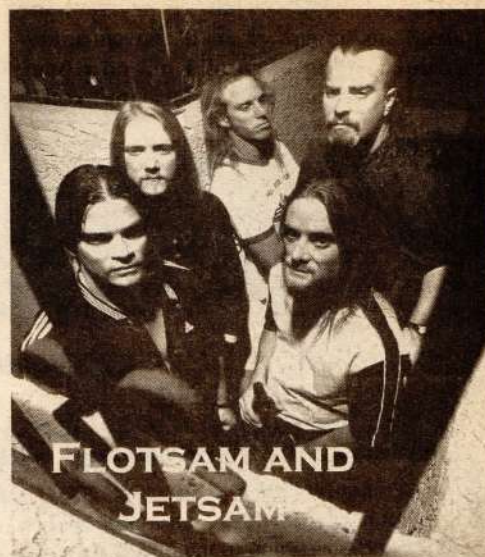
It's seemed like ages, but a real vocalist finally made his way into this band, and guess what! It's none other than Bret Hoffmann, the band's long-misplaced original vocalist, and the band honestly hasn't sounded this powerful and stringent since *Retribution*. As you can tell, I'm obviously ecstatic that Malevolent finally dumped Jason Blachowicz, because his monotonous belching grew stale on me all too quickly. MC's seventh release finds the band re-evaluating where they stand in the world of extreme music by experimenting with some slower tempos (but not so many as to disrupt the flow of the disc), presenting a morose atmosphere throughout the disc. Through the magic of guitarist Phil Fasciana and drummer Dave Culross, MC create some of their most teeth-grinding, memorable tracks yet! *The Fine Art of Murder*, believe it or not, musically picks up right where *Stillborn* left off- layering bone-splitting, hyperactive drumming over thick, beastly hooks proving to the world that Death Metal really is something to be abhorred! But lyrically, that is it's exact charm. Like a brutally and grisly multiple murder, you find yourself disgusted yet curious to find out first hand how truly horrifying the sight is, and that is the appeal of Malevolent Creation!

## Extol

*Burial* " "  
(Solid State)

I think these guys are the only Christians in Norway, and to top things off- they're a Black Metal band! Extol are definitely in a class by themselves. I mean, I thought Christian Death Metal was an

oxymoron, but Christian Black Metal?! And I think they've got, like, five vocalists. We've got high-pitched shrills, lower grunts and screams, guttural Death growls, clean vocals, and high operatic vocals! They're as diverse as they are an anomaly and tight as balls, fusing clean guitar parts and distorted effects with old school Death Metal and current Black Metal. They throw in some classical guitar progressions all over the place for added enjoyment and pleasure. Their technicality and progressive musicianship places them on a higher echelon than most bands of the aforementioned genres, displacing the all too mundane blast beats and grinds with melodies and vocal change-ups. Keyboards are used very, very sparingly and a violin even appears on two songs as well. Noise pollution and endless dissonance have, for far too long, supplanted the musicality of Death and Black Metal. Extol breathes new life into the genres and I, for one, am most appreciative.



## Flotsam and Jetsam

*Unnatural Selection*  
(Metal Blade)

Flotsam and Jetsam will forever be known to most people as the band that Jason left to join METALLICA. They're not really breaking any new ground here, and if you liked their past few albums, you'll probably like this one. Some of the songs take on a "if you can't lick 'em, join 'em" sound. On "Chemical Noose" (the first of two 'noose' songs), the refrain of 'spun vacation' sounds exactly like the bridge of METALLICA's "Blackened". I found myself missing entire songs and then stopping to see what was playing- very inconsistent. Props once again must go to Metal Blade, though, for continuing to pick up bands dropped by major labels.

## Shango

*Metal Mafia*  
(Back Room)

These guys are silly, man. I was almost going to give these guys a bad review, but they have so much fun doing their thing, that it's kind of hard to knock 'em. Anyone who is having as much fun as it sounds like they're having is doing something right. As a three piece, their sound is a bit thin, but tight musicianship and wacked-out lyrics make up for this. Their style is a semi Neo-punk meets Thrash meets old-school Rock 'n Roll with a funky, groove laden twist. They're definitely interesting, to say the least, and someone out there is diggin' on them, and who am I to tread on that spirit? Have fun. Listen to Shango.



**Scratching Post** *Destruction of the Universe* (Squirtgun)

A hybrid of GARBAGE and FOO FIGHTERS fronted by a chick



**Electric Frankenstein** *I'm Not Your (Nothing)* (Victory)

Hardcore influenced Punk Rock

# METAL



**dreck sau** *brecher* (Nuclear Blast)

Brooding, doomy, German Death Metal with a groove



**Spooked Horse** *The Creature from Two Mile Creek* (demo)

Simple, hard Garage Rock reminiscent of a combination of DEAD HORSE and MUCKY PUP with some STEVE KUBIT finesse (their comic books kick ass!)



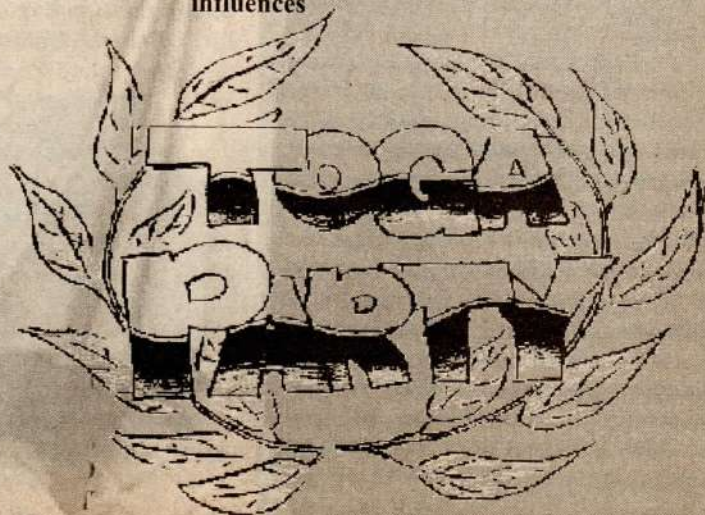
**New Eden** *Obscure Master Plan* (Nuclear Blast)

Progressive, melodic Power Metal with hints of NEVERMORE and various old school influences



**Shadowcaster** - *Psychoelectronic Experience* (Wild Rags!)

Moody, ambient synthesized soundscapes in the vein of TANGERINE DREAM's *Legend* soundtrack





## Nuclear Blast

CONTROL DENIED, Chuck Schuldiner's new band, are scheduled to release their debut album sometime in the early fall months. In DEATH related news, the band will resume touring shortly after recording. Plans include Australia, and Japan, while a possible return to both Europe and America. Sweden's DISMEMBER are ready to record their new album. This will be their ten year anniversary album. Both the band and Nuclear Blast plan something special for this achievement. The album will be recorded at Das Boot Studios and will be produced by drummer Fred Estby. After receiving a gold record for their single *Children of Bodom*, the band of the same name are set to release their new album, *Hatebreeder*. Look for the new album in early spring. IN FLAMES recently resigned to Nuclear Blast and are completing their new album, *Colony*. Their sound has expanded but continues to contain the band's signature trademarks. Once again, look for an early spring release. GORGOROTH are set to enter the studio in June to record their new album, tentatively titled *Incipit Sathanas*. For the recording the band will use Abbath from IMMORTAL on drums. The band also plan to include some synths, for which they've recruited ENSLAVED's Ivar. COVENANT, the winner of the Spellmannsprisen Award (that's how the Norwegian Grammy is called), the Norwegian band is set to release their long-awaited sophomore album, *Prophecies of Fire*. Recorded in Woodhouse Studios, the album finds the band making a lot of changes to their sound. Additional changes come in two of the members names- with Nagash now going under Lex Icon and Black Heart now Psy Coma.

## Enslain Magazine

Lady Enslain finally has a website up for Enslain Metal Magazine. Everyone go to <http://surf.to/enslain> and bookmark it. She's also working on a links page for the site. She'd like to have links to ALL of your pages, and she will also accept banners. All she asks is that you add a link to her site, or put my banner up, which you can find at <http://members.aol.com/enslainmag/links.html>. To add your link to her site- for ANYONE who would like their site listed on her links page, she NEEDS to you to fill out the following info: name of site, category (band page, label, etc.), and the address of site. Enslain #5 is also out now! It features interviews with FEAR FACTORY, MORBID ANGEL, CRADLE OF FILTH, SEPULTURA, MORTIFICATION,

and KILGORE. Only \$3 for a copy or \$10 for a subscription (4 issues) Issue #6 is currently in the works. It will feature interviews with DEATH, VADER, and about five others to be announced. It's also going to have tons of reviews, an in depth review of NJ's first March Metal Meltdown with lots of pictures, and much more! Get in touch for wholesale and ad rates! Enslain Magazine, c/o Lady Enslain (Chrissy Gulczynski), 425 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Atco, NJ 08004, phone: (609) 767-7952, [ENSLAINmag@aol.com](mailto:ENSLAINmag@aol.com)

## Black Mark Productions

Here are some of the activities for the spring-summer, 1999 season. LAKE OF TEARS recorded their album, "Forever Autumn" in the studio XTC. It's produced by Ulf Wahlberg (Secrets Service) which last year did several other top albums with different international acts. The style includes small taste from the "A Crimson Cosmos" album with an updated sound for the next millennium. It's a more PINK FLOYD, BLACK SABBATH inspired album. NECROPHOBIC, together with Thomas Skogsberg (Sunlight Studios) put their third full length album together entitled "The Third Antichrist". A sure, fast and brutal album for all of you carefree people. BATHORY, creators of Death and Viking Metal, went under pre-production with the album "Destroyer Of Worlds" and will be releasing that album shortly. OUT OF THE BOX VOL.III features unsigned bands from all over the world. This is a great way to support good, new bands which were found in the Demo Box of Black Mark. 12 new bands in the vein of Hardcore and Thrash include FLUSHED, ALL ZEROS, TON OF BRICKS, DIABLO BROTHERS, RATED, ARIZE, MANIC MOVEMENT, SHAFT, THE CRUSHING CASPARS, and QUILMESS. They are all from Scandinavia and Europe. AGRESSOR's *Jubileum* album is the perfect Death Metal compilation with a lot of new re-mixed tracks from all their albums. It gives you a hint of what French Death Metal really is all about. SID 'N THINGS are Black Mark's latest discovery, featuring Janet Simmonds, their female vocalist who will give you shudders. Keep your eyes open for this band as they will knock you to the ground. SOUTHFORK's *Space Revolution* will bring you back to late 70s, though with a slightly updated sound. All of these albums and more should be available to buy directly from Black Mark's web site at [www.blackmark.net](http://www.blackmark.net). BLACK MARK PRODUCTION / USA OFFICE. Phone: (212) 221 93 41. E-mail: [usa@blackmark.net](mailto:usa@blackmark.net).

## Metal Blade

SIX FEET UNDER has entered Criteria Studios in Miami on February 18th to record the highly anticipated follow up to the mega successful *Warpath* album. The record will be called *Maximum Violence* and will be once again produced by Brian Slagel and the band. It will contain the following songs: "Bonesaw", "Victim Of The Paranoid", "This graveyard Earth", "Torture Killer" and "Feasting On The Blood Of The Insane". The first 20,000 U.S. versions will contain an extra disc with the following cover tracks: KISS- "War Machine", NAZARETH- "Hair Of The Dog" and RUNNING WILD- "Black Demon". *Maximum Violence* will be out in June and marks the recording debut of guitarist Steve Swanson (ex-MASSACRE).

Look for a massive world tour to follow soon after. MERCYFUL FATE has entered Nomad Recording Studios in February with producer Sterling Winfield who once again is producing the follow up to last years critically acclaimed *Dead Again* opus. It's entitled *9* and scheduled for release sometime in June with a tour to follow. A full U.S. tour is planned. ANCIENT finally has their new lineup together. The new female vocalist is Deadly Kristin. Mainman, Aphazel, will handle lead vocals as well as guitars. Other members are Jesus Christ! on keyboards, Scorpios on bass, and Krigse on drums. They will soon begin recording their next release in Italy. The title of the new album will probably be *The Halls of Eternity*. A video is also planned to be made in Spring. GOD DETHRONED has finished recording the follow up to last years well accepted release *The Grand Grimoire*. Their new record is called *Bloody Blasphemies* and is said to be in the vein of old SLAYER and modern day Black Metal. AMON AMARTH hooked up with HYPOCRISY main man Peter Tagtgren and recorded *The Avenger*, which will be released in May or June. Martin Lopez (drums) has left the band to concentrate on his other band, OPETH. Fredde, from A CANOUROUS QUINTET, has replaced him. The new IMMOLATION is complete. Their latest masterpiece is called *Failures for Gods* and is by far the best record they have done in their careers. Look for a release sometime in the next few months. LABYRINTH have changed their singer. The new one is Morby. Some of you should know him from DOMINE, SABOTAGE, and HAMMERFALL. The band will release a Mini-CD in June including a new song, re-recorded songs of the demo and the first album, a cover song of SANCTUARY ("Die For My Sins") and some live tracks. Some new bands to the label are MASQUERADE (melodic Power Metal from Sweden), IN EXTREMO (Germany), JACOB'S DREAM (QUEENSRYCHE type band from the U.S.) and GODDESS OF DESIRE (Dutch Metal warriors whose second album, *Symbol Of Triumph*, will be released in April).

### Black Sun Records

SINS OF OMISSION has released their debut CD called *The Creation*. It's fast, technical, and melodic Swedish Death with lots of guitars and harmonies (but not the usual ones!). DIABOLIQUE has also released their second CD called *The Blackflower*. This new release is a driving, melancholic and sentimental Goth Rock album which shows an amazing development since their debut *Wedding the Grottesque*. EBONY TEARS is finishing up their recording to the follow up to their highly praised *Tortura Insomnie*. The CD is set for release late this month.

### GNW (Gothenburg Noisesworks)

EVERGREY will once again enter Andy La Roque's studio to record their follow up to their critically and highly acclaimed debut CD, *The Dark Discovery*. Expect a release sometime in August.

Contact BLACKSUN/GNW RECORDS at P.O.BOX 129, Drottninggatan 52, 3rd Floor, 401 22 GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN. E-mail: [blacksun@dolores.se](mailto:blacksun@dolores.se)  
[www.dolores.se/blacksun](http://www.dolores.se/blacksun)

### The French Connection

The new site has just been updated and is now online at <http://home.nordnet.fr/~lbocquet>. For this period, HEADLINE (Brennus Records), DREAM CHILD (Metal Blade), SEA OF DREAMS (Selfproduction) & KENZINER (Leviathan) have received an award for their fantastic albums.

There's literally hundreds of reviews, interviews, and new labels that just joined the site. ECLIPSE RECORDS (<http://www.eclipserecords.com>) is again the official partner of the site. Their banner is put on various pages of the site. There is absolutely WAY TOO much information contained on this absolutely fantastic website! You'll spend hours on it- we promise! THE FRENCH CONNECTION, BOCQUET Laurent, 32 Rue de Pologne, 59 800 Lille FRANCE

### Martyr Music Group

If you like quality Hardcore/Metal like SICK OF IT ALL, AF, PRO-PAIN, etc. then DRAINED's *Suspension of Disbelief* will put a smile on your face. NOVEMBER'S DOOM just finished *Of Sculptured Ivy & Stone Flowers*. The full length will be released in May. Early feedback from Andy of MY DYING BRIDE reads, "It sounds fucking brilliant, please send me a copy as soon as possible. Man... you guys are fucking amazing now, I loved the last CD you sent me but this new stuff sounds shit hot!!!" That pretty much says it all now doesn't it? BROKEN HOPE's *Grottesque Blessings* is the name of the game... Brian Griffin is producing their latest and the scheduled release date is sometime in June, followed by a US tour. A special early order discount will be offered to our e-news subscribers as a special bonus. More on that later... DRAINED, EM SINFONIA (whom you can read about elsewhere in this excellent publication!), NOVEMBER'S DOOM, and BROKEN HOPE CDs can all be purchased directly from Martyr Music via mailorder. If your local music store doesn't have a copy in stock, ask someone to order it for you. Stores can also order directly from Martyr Music, as well as Choke Distribution, Two Buds Distribution and holeinthewall.com. Mailorder costs only \$10 including postage and handling in the USA. Canada add \$2, the rest of the world add \$2.50. US currency only-send check or money orders. They are not responsible for lost cash sent through the mail!!!! Maria has drastically updated the web site. Please stop by. She's looking for enthusiastic and reliable fans to be part of her street team. Either stop by the web page and sign up or just send back e-mail with your questions. Her team is very active in their areas spreading the word and gathering information that will help promote their artists. They are building the links page for their site right now and any suggestions for cool sites you would like to endorse are welcome. Any zines, national mags, webzines, etc. please send them your link information so they can help spread the word. Radio stations online are urged to do the same. There's a new sheriff in town folks. Take a look... MARTYR MUSIC! Write to Maria Abril, Martyr Music Group, Inc., 532 LaGuardia Place, #544, New York, NY 10012, (212) 529-6266 f o n / f a x . <http://members.aol.com/mrtyrmusic/index.html>

## Century Media

SAMAEL have recorded their yet untitled album at the famous Swiss Montain Studios (DEEP PURPLE and AC/DC recorded there already). The album will be produced by David Richards (Queen, David Bowie) and will probably be released in summer. OPETH's new stuff is along the lines of a mellower *Morningrise* to a heavier *My Arms, Your Hearse* with "fever sick blistering" leads as part of many riffs. Imagine the most mellow music you've heard, and then the most insane, yet controlled outburst in the metal pattern. Some song titles are (these are not 100% yet): "Serenity Painted Death", "Face Of Melinda" and "Absinthe". The band is recording in Gothenburg's Studio Fredman. Here are some release dates to look out for:

- 6/8- LACUNA COIL- *In A Reverie*
- 6/8- ANGRA- *Angels Cry and Holy Land*
- 6/22- MERAUDER- *The Five Deadly Venoms*
- 7/13- ARCHENEMY- *Burning Bridges*
- 7/13- RYKERS- *Life's A Gamble...*
- 7/13- KAMPFAR- *Mellom Skogkledde*
- 7/13- AURANOIR- *Black Thrash Attack*
- 7/27- ICED EARTH- *Live In Athens*

For more information on all of these bands, including BLIND GUARDIAN, BORKNAGAR, CRYPTOPSY, DARK TRANQUILITY, EMPEROR, HASTE, NEVERMORE, OLD MAN'S CHILD, and many others, plus updates on the BAD BRAINS tribute, check out Century Media on line at [www.centurymedia.com](http://www.centurymedia.com).

## Earache Records

MORTIIS has signed a deal with Earache! The extreme and the outrageous have joined forces! The deal will reap immediate dividends with the release of not one, but two albums during 1999. The deal sees MORTIIS raise the stakes in a move that is sure to heighten his already cult status which has seen him release numerous albums and singles of what has been described as "dark dungeon music." Mixing lush keyboard orchestrations amongst a background of fantastical, imagined other-worlds, MORTIIS' striking image and stage shows have earned him a reputation for diverse, highly original recordings. His former life as a member of EMPEROR has garnered further cult following. The first fruits of the deal will come in the form of the new MORTIIS album titled *The Stargate*. Expected to be released in the summer, this is easily his most ambitious project to date. In addition to this, later in the year the MORTIIS limited edition twelve-inch series will be re-issued on CD by Earache, titled *Crypt of the Wizard*. [www.earache.com](http://www.earache.com)

## Displeased Records

HOUWITSER's *Death But Not Buried* (pure, fast Death by Mike, Aad, and Michel from SINISTER and Theo of JUDGEMENT DAY) and EVEN SONG's *Path of the Angels* (Melodic Doom with atmosphere by melancholic violins) are both now in stock. Also out now Out now is *Smells Like Team Spirit III*, which is a budget label sampler with 75% unreleased tracks. It features ALTAR, CONSOLATION, CRYPTOPSY, EVEN SONG, HOUWITSER, KUNTAUTCULT, M&NEGARM, NEMBRIONIC,

ONTARIO BLUE, PESTILENCE, SADIST, UNLORD, VESPERIAN SORROW, and WHIPLASH. Displeased also pressed the CD, *Dreamhunter*, for the Dutch Gothic Electro band, MALOCHIA. Also just released are the following: WHIPLASH- *Insult to Injury* + live CBGBs '86. Yet another re-release which includes unreleased and live material! PESTILENCE- *Malleys Malificarvm*, a re-release of this cult Dutch Death album with bonus tracks! CONSOLATION- *Stahlplaat*, over the top, fast Death Black Grind. This is fast and brutal shit! NEMBRIONIC- *Incomplete*, fast brutal Death Thrash album, topping their successful *Psycho 100*. MANEGARM- *Nordstjarnans Tidsalder*, brilliant mix of Swedish Goteborg Metal and Norwegian Black! ALTAR- *Provoke*, catchy atheistic Death/Thrash Metal. Coming soon are new releases from UNLORD-GLADIATOR, VESPERIAN SORROW, ONTARIO BLUE, and KUNTAUTCULT. Contact info: Displeased Records, Ronde Tocht 7d, NL-1507 CC Zaandam, HOLLAND. E-mail: [displeas@xs4all.nl](mailto:displeas@xs4all.nl). Website: <http://come.to/displeased>

## Cursed Productions

SEA OF TRANQUILLITY's *The Omegan Ruins* CD is \$13 (USA) - \$15 (Air Mail anywhere else) After a very successful split 7" with the legendary NUM SKULL, and 1997's monumental split CD with PAX MORTIS, the unstoppable SEA OF TRANQUILLITY have returned with nearly 70 minutes of extreme Metal. *The Omegan Ruins* is a diverse release, incorporating some Traditional Metal, Thrash, and Black Metal into the established SEA OF TRANQUILLITY Death Metal style. This makes for a somewhat experimental album that is still extremely brutal and very memorable. ADVERSARY's *We Must Be In Hell* mCD is \$5 (USA) - \$7 (Air Mail anywhere else). Without the keyboards and drum machine that were a big part of their sound on their debut album, *The Winter's Harvest*, ADVERSARY has boldly returned at last to deliver four new tracks of demonically heavy, memorable Death Metal the way it should be done. There can be no escape from this unstoppable audio onslaught. ADVERSARY will fuck you up for life. Trades are welcome! Distributors contact them for wholesale prices on their releases. Cursed Productions - Metal Curse zine ADVERSARY, P.O. Box 302, Elkhart, IN 46515-0302. Phone: 219 294 6610, email: [cursed@sbinet.com](mailto:cursed@sbinet.com). web site: <http://tahoe.sbinet.com/~cursed>

## Noise

LEFAY are still in the studio for the re-recording their first album, *Symphony Of The Damned*. The "re-Symphonised" version of this classic will be available in Autumn '99 on Noise. Go to <http://www.noiserecords.com/Ourbands/metal/lefay/index.htm> for more info. SUBSTANCE D, who re-released their debut album *Black* for Noise Records USA, are releasing their second album, entitled *Addictions* in Europe, this September. You want to know more about this talented band? Follow the link: <http://www.noiserecords.com/newbands/band5.htm> If the ordinary barbecue bores you, go and visit Noise. They are open 24 hours a day! [Http://www.noiserec.com](http://www.noiserec.com)

## Leviathan Records

MICHAEL HARRIS has just released his new instrumental CD, *Distorted Views*. This new disc showcases Michael's amazing guitar playing and compositions. A must for every guitar fan worldwide. Michael is currently playing dates throughout the southwest and is gaining a very strong following. <http://www.leviathanrecords.com/distv.htm>. SOUTHERN GENTLEMEN have just finished recording their debut CD, *Exotic Dancer Blues*. <http://www.leviathanrecords.com/sg.htm> Very heavy Blues Rock. You can check out a MP3 sample of the band for a short sample of this hot new sound. <http://www.leviathanrecords.com/bds.htm>. ZANISTER is a new group featuring Michael Harris and David T. Chastain on guitars, Brian Sarvela on vocals, Brian Harris on drums and James Martin on bass. Check it out for more details on the band and their new recording, *Symphonica Millennia*. <http://www.leviathanrecords.com/zanister.htm>. JARNO KESKINEN and his band, KENZINER, have released their debut release, *Timescape*. This release showcases some of the most intense and intricate music ever recorded. Produced by David T. Chastain, imagine old DREAM THEATER playing classical influenced music. Dennis Lesh (CHASTAIN, TROUBLE) is playing drums and Stephen Fredrick (ex MCA recording artists, BILLY THE KID, SPIKE) is handling the vocals. This CD is now available worldwide! Incredible reviews! The band is also working on their follow up CD planned for a release date of fall 99. The tentative title of the CD is *The Prophecies*. <http://www.leviathanrecords.com/kenziner.htm>. JOE STUMP has released his fourth instrumental, *Rapid Fire Rondo*. The new instrumental CD continues Joe's relentless assault on the senses. Joe's most extreme release yet! Joe just did a tour of Europe and all reports were that Joe was incredible!! Joe is currently working on a new *Reign of Terror* CD with a new vocalist. A late 99 release is planned. <http://www.leviathanrecords.com/rfr.htm> And speaking of Joe, Leviathan is also happy to announce they finally have available the long rumored SHOOTING HEMLOCK disc, *Clockwatcher*. This CD (with vocals) features the amazing guitar work of Joe Stump. The band's material varies from standard Metal, Hard Rock, Punk, Industrial and everything in between. A must for Stump fans. DAVID T. CHASTAIN's newest release is *Acoustic Visions*. This CD is an all solo acoustic Heavy Metal, Classical and Progressive Metal release. *In Dementia* is the most recent release from the band CHASTAIN! This heavy Progressive Metal masterpiece features David T., Kate French, Dennis Lesh, and new member, Kevin Kekes. A must have for any and all lovers of serious music! <http://www.leviathanrecords.com/chaslist1.htm>

## Oz Records

DIES IRAE's *Ethereal* is a disc with acoustic passages and gloomy atmospheres. This band just created a master piece of Doom Metal. THE CHASM released *Deathcult for Eternity: The Triumph* and it's the third CD from one of the most important bands in the Mexican underground and a must for fans of real molten Metal. There are no words to

describe their deadly attack in the last Metal Mania XII (Milwaukee Metal Fest) where the band was pointed as a highlight show. CENOTAPH's *Gloomy Reflections of our Hidden Sorrows* is a disc that just kicks ass and is the most important release in the Mexican Metal scene. Also contains their 7" ep's as bonus tracks. This CD just kills! UNDER MOONLIGHT SADNESS's *After the Cosmic Gate* is the debut CD for this Doom combo. A strange mixture in all their songs to offer a new style for the new millennium. Coming out this summer is CENOTAPH's *Riding Our Black Oceans!* It's one of the most important things that ever happened for the Mexican Metal scene. Oz Records, Oscar Reyes Torres, Apdo. Postal M-7697, Admón de Correos No.1, Palacio Postal, México 1, D.F., C.P. 06002, MEXICO. [oscarreyes@hotmail.com](mailto:oscarreyes@hotmail.com). [www.ozproductions.com.promo@ozproductions.com](http://www.ozproductions.com.promo@ozproductions.com)

## Solid State

The Second Annual Solid State Showcase will be at The Showcase Theatre in Corona, CA on June 11th!! See Solid State favorites such as TRAINING FOR UTOPIA, EMBODYMENT, LIVING SACRIFICE, BLINDSIDE, and much much more!! *Solid State Sampler Vol. 1* is at a store near you!! Check out all 16 tracks to see what bands, such as FOCUSED, OVERCOME, LIVING SACRIFICE, ZAO, SPITFIRE and STRETCH ARM STRONG (to name a few) have to offer. Solid State will also be re-releasing all of the LIVING SACRIFICE back catalog albums: *Living Sacrifice*, *Inhabit* and *Non-Existent*. The first one, *Non-Existent*, will be on the streets June 29th!! ZAO is (at this very minute) in the studio recording their third album. Barry Poynter, who did their last record, *Where Blood and Fire Bring Rest*, will be heading up this project as well. Why change a good thing, eh? Stay tuned for more details on this summer release. [www.solidstaterrecords.com](http://www.solidstaterrecords.com)

## Prophecy Productions

The following new Prophecy releases are ready now in their pre-order campaign: SUN OF THE SLEEPLESS's Mcd, *Poems to the wretches hearts*, is a grim, yet dirgelike Black Metal disc. The Black Metal project of EMPYRIUM member, Ulf Theodor Schwadorf, is comparable to early ULVER and DARK THRONE at *Transilvanian Hunger*. NOX MORTIS's Digipak CD, *7 lies*, is atmospheric, gloomy Metal which offers more than your typical Gloom Metal effort. Some limited Digipak CDs with band signatures are being exclusively offered, so act soon before they run out! EMPYRIUM's *Where at night the wood grouse plays* is an acoustic album that brings Wagnerian bombast to mind yet at times displays tranquil, pastoral moods. This is all held in a concept of tragic and dark folkloristic themes. The last EMPYRIUM pre-order campaign limited CD (signed & in a leather digipak, *Songs of moors & misty fields*, has become a collector's item, so hurry up and use this fine opportunity now! Contact Prophecy for specific prices and ordering info. Martin Koller, Geschäftsführer, Prophecy Productions, Kurfürstenstr. 5, 54492, Zeltingen-Rachtig, Deutschland. e-mail: [info@prophecyproductions.de](mailto:info@prophecyproductions.de)



## Spitfire Records

Spitfire Records has announced that they will be releasing the latest effort from mythic Metal giants DIO, entitled *Magica*. The album will be recorded at Rumbo Studios and produced by Ronnie James Dio himself. Studio reports say that *Magica* embraces the very heavy, classic DIO sound, akin to the now legendary *Holy Diver* album. Look for it to hit stores sometime in October! Spitfire will also be reissuing the well-received *Angry Machines* and *Inferno: Last In Live* to coincide with the release of *Magica* this October.

## Evil Horde Records

POSTHUMOUS's debut CD *My Eyes, They Bleed* is out now! The album was recorded during December '98, mixed by Martinez (PANIC) and will feature ten tracks plus a cover version SARCOFAGO's "Christ Death". The CD will come with a great production that includes a 16-page booklet with photos, lyrics and information. Send \$17 to the address below and check out all of the other Evil Horde releases including the following:

OCULTAN- *Belicus Profanus*

GRAND BBELIAL's KEY- *Mocking the Philanthropist* (new cover, new photos, and bonus track)

GOAT PENIS- *Trotz Verbot - Nicht Tot*

MURDER RAPE- *...and Evil Returns* (sold out - back in June)

MIASTHENIA / SONGS D'ENFER- *Visions of Nocturnal Tragedies* split CD

Evil Horde Records, P.O. Box 4912, Curitiba - PR 82530-970, Brazil, e-mail: [blacklegion@vrs.com.br](mailto:blacklegion@vrs.com.br)

## Season of Mist

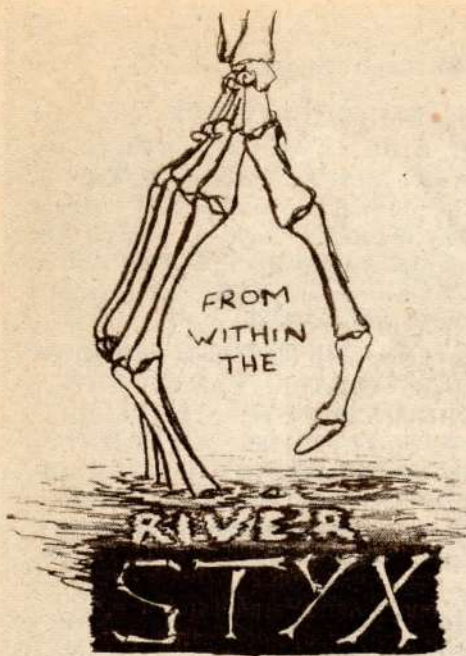
FURIOUS TRAUMA's *Roll the Dice* is now in stock. Labeled as Trash N' Roll, it features ex- MERCYFUL FATE, ex-KONKHRA members and Andy Laroque as guest guitarist. GEASA's *Angel Cry* is a limited edition digipack CD that can be described as Celtic Black Metal. For a full catalogue and more information, contact Season of Mist at: Season of Mist (Soundworks), 24 rue Brandis, 13005 Marseille, France.

## Legion Magazine

The leading extreme music magazine from Russia is happy to inform that they have just launched their Internet web site, that will include interviews, reviews, hot news, competitions and many other interesting stuff. But what they are really looking for, though, is to create a site that YOU, the Metal music fan, will like! They are just constructing the site, and they invite YOU to take part in its creation, development and organization. Their site is made for YOU and you have the right to get what YOU want to get. Thus they would greatly appreciate if you send them your comments and suggest what you want a Metal site to be like. In the near future they are going to create a message board and YOU will have an opportunity to place your comments and recommendations right there. They would be happy to meet all your requirements and make everything possible to create a site that YOU will like. Dmitry Basik, the assistant editor, is the guy to talk to, and you'll find him at <http://nestor.minsk.by/emn/>

## Milwaukee Metalfest

Tickets for the 13th Annual MILWAUKEE METALFEST are now on sale!! MACHINE HEAD, MORBID ANGEL, and CRADLE OF FILTH are slated to headline the festival's international lineup. The Milwaukee Metalfest XIII is set for Friday and Saturday, July 30 and 31 at Eagles Auditorium/The Rave nightclub complex. The shows will run 4 p.m.-1 a.m. on Friday and 11 a.m.-1 a.m. Saturday. More than 120 of today's top bands from throughout the world will perform on three stages. Other bands confirmed for the festival include: the MISFITS, MARDUK, MADBALL, EARTH CRISIS, MENTAL HOME, GORGUTS, MONSTROSITY, DEFILED, DIVINE EMPIRE, SOLITUDE AETURNUS, IMMOLATION, ROTTING CHRIST, NILE, HATEBREED, ANAL BLAST, INCANTATION, PISSING RAZORS, CANDIRIA, MORTICIAN, TWIN OBSCENITY, KRISIUN, CENTURIAN, FLOTSAM & JETSAM, NASUM, MORGION, CHASM, WITCHERY, JUNGLE ROT, ONE KING DOWN, E TOWN CONCRETE, SHUTDOWN, LIVING SACRIFICE, INDECISION, INTERNAL BLEEDING, DYING FETUS, and a RELAPSE RECORDS showcase. The Metalfest XIII will also incorporate professional wrestling, with WWF, WCW, and ECW superstars, including Jim Cornette and a special appearance by the legendary former AWA tag team champions Mad Dog & Butcher Vachon. Others will be announced shortly. The outrageous Jasmin St. Claire will be among the leading adult film stars who will make appearances at the festival. Additionally, Metalfest XIII will feature "Vendorville," a marketplace with CDs, tapes, t-shirts, clothing, magazines, jewelry, tattoo artists, posters, and more; autograph and interview sessions with top bands; a collector's limited edition Metalfest XIII sampler CD featuring bands performing at Metalfest XIII distributed free to attendants; and free grab bags. The following bands have also been confirmed: INFUSION (AZ), SOLUS (Toronto), MIDIAN (Milwaukee), IMMORTAL CRINGE (CO), MONSTER X (NY), STRETCHER (CA), ENTORTUREMENT (NY), NATIVE BLOOD (AZ), WYKKED WYTCH (PA), AVERSE SEFERIA (NY), ST. MADNESS (AZ), ROGUE (CO), INCARRION (SC), RARE FORM (ME), BLUDGEON TO DEATH (AZ), MYSELF AM HELL (NY), VORE (AR), DYSPHORIA (PA), SOMNUS (OH), JESUS RIDES A RIKSHA (UT), WITCHMOON (NJ), SHERE KHAN (PA), ANONYMOUS (Montreal, QUE), LEAD (NE), EMBER (IL), WOLFTHORNE (MN), PESSIMIST (MD), NOCTUARY (CA), WIZARD EARTH (NY), AT ANY COST, FALL (SD), GREY SKIES FALLEN (NY), DEADEN (IL), C4 (MN), IMPALER (MN), OPAQUE (MN), and LORDE OF ALL DESIRES (MN). Tickets for Metalfest XIII are \$50 for a two-day pass or \$30 for single-day admission. Tickets can be purchased through TicketMaster; Rave Box Office; TicketMaster Online <[www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com)>; Charge By Phone (414) 276-4545; Relapse Records (800) 303-0606, <[www.relapse.com](http://www.relapse.com)>; Night Fall Records in Minneapolis (612) 724-8166 and Chicago (773) 725-3530; or by sending a check or money order to payable to "Jack Koshick Presents" and a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Metalfest XIII, 1626 N. Prospect Ave., Suite 1801, Milwaukee, WI 53202. Bands and exhibitors interested in being a part of the event should contact: Jack Koshick Presents, 1626 N. Prospect Avenue, Suite 1801, Milwaukee, Wis. 53202 Tel: (414) 225-9026 Fax: (414) 225-9025. All appearances are subject to change.



**Def Leppard**  
*Pyromania*  
 (PolyGram), 1983

There is not a single time I have listened to this album and not thought of Frogger! My neighbors had an Atari 2600 back in the day and I would venture up there many a night to play it- and to listen to *Pyromania*, of course! This was a breakthrough



and being pessimistic, but overall I believe this to be true. But what goes around comes around, and fun and amusement will return to Metal once again- though I hope without the big hair and makeup. That is one thing I certainly won't miss in round two!

**Vio-lence**  
*Oppressing the Masses*  
 (Megaforce/Atlantic), 1990

In the times when Atlantic Metal reigned supreme with bands like TESTAMENT, OVERKILL, SAVATAGE, PANTERA (in their recently restructured "heavy" sound), and lest we not forget MANOWAR (who still reign supreme to this day!!!), Bay Area Thrashmeisters Vio-lence were never as well-received by national press, and I am in total shock as I still do not know why! I only ever saw their video for "World In A World" once on MTV's Headbanger's Ball (which, incidentally was my introduction to this band), and I am still convinced that they shredded as much shit as the best in the genre, but why were they not noticed? Catchy riff-hooks, memorable choruses, and that bitter EXODUS-like, hostile delivery sparked my youthful angst/rage with every listen, even more so than their debut *Eternal Nightmare*, which is also a classic in its own right. I feel I must pay homage to Vio-lence within these pages now, as I still feel as strongly about this band today as I did when I bought the album nine years ago! Better late than never, I suppose. If you ever find a Vio-lence CD, snatch it up, because eternal ignorance to greatness really pisses me off, especially when a band that was never respected is involved!!

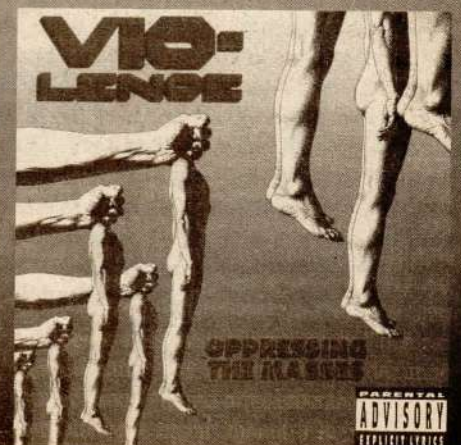
**Carcass**  
*Symphonies of Sickness*  
 (Earache), 1989

And thus began the era of vicious Gore Metal! Heralding from the vicinity of Great Britain that spawned many of the renowned Grindcore acts of the late 80s (i.e. EXTREME NOISE TERROR and NAPALM DEATH), Carcass single-handedly redefined the genre by adding the elements of controlled but violent movements, brutal, gory lyrics (which stemmed from medical journals) and the nearly repulsive but somehow charming three-vocalist rampage. Originating as a NAPALM DEATH side project, Carcass became a fulltime phenomenon when they felt the need to focus more on musical ability rather than make blasting, noise-ridden political statements as exhibited by their mother-band.

Their efforts paid off well with *Symphonies of Sickness*, their second full-length release. They've composed ten 3-5 minute tracks that possess more gut-wrenching appeal than did their 22 track debut, blasting grindfeast, *Reek Of Putrefaction* (Earache, 1988). Retaining the vocal and lyrical approach of their debut, not to mention the collages of human & bovine body parts and mutations they used as album covers (in a vegan testimony that humans are meat, too!), Carcass added



many tempo changes, groove parts and tear-jerking guitar solos to their repertoire, which thereby influenced many Death/Grind acts in later years (BRUTAL TRUTH, EXHUMED and GENERAL SURGERY to name a few). Although the band no longer exists, *Symphonies of Sickness* remains an absolute classic among Death Metal purists the world over. May they rot in purulent, festering peace!





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c/o Jeff Rappaport

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**King Diamond**

*Them*

(Roadrunner), 1988

"Look, the old bitch is back!" Ooh, listening to *Them* to this very day gives me the chills. King and company always had a knack for writing the most atmospherically frightening Metal I've ever heard. *Them* is the first part of a two-album story revolving around a dysfunctional family and a house possessed by demons in a similar fashion to *The Amityville Horror* without the evil houseflies. King always manages to compose terrifying musical stories with more substance than any given Stephen King novel (boring, long-winded, overrated bastard), and thus I dub him The Black Minstrel. Every song contained on *Them* is so chock-full of metallic, gothy-progressive complexity, that I am in complete awe as to how the songs are so involved and memorable at the same time. Hypnotic vocal ranges and soothing guitar solos laced with classically ornate keyboardwork and underlying acoustic guitars are plastered



**Candlemass**

*Epicus Doomicus Metallicus*  
(Black Dragon), 1986

Setting the stage for modern Doom Metal (being heavily influenced by BLACK SABBATH, of course) as well as writing the rulebook for Sweden's cold and gloomy Power Metal movement (and quite possibly attributing to modern Gothic music), Candlemass are still regarded by many as one of the best Metal imports from Scandinavia! Hints of their melancholic genius can be heard in every Doom Metal band from CATHEDRAL to SOLITUDE AETURNUS to BOLT THROWER to PARADISE LOST; the list is virtually endless. Yes, BLACK SABBATH can be credited for creating the most somber and heavy riffs known to man, but Candlemass were among the first to harness that sound in a truly dark, dismal Gothic Metal fashion. Originally a three-piece, the band actually used a session vocalist and session guitar soloist for their debut album! Do not let that fool you, however, as Candlemass crafted some

**Candlemass**



throughout the disc, making it virtually impossible for me to listen to but one song on the disc without becoming enraptured, and before I realize it, I've listened to the entire disc. This is the appeal of a perfect Metal album, one that subconsciously forces you to listen to it in its entirety! *Them*, along with its predecessors *Abigail* (godly!) and *Fatal Portrait*, has truly earned its way into Metal history as the most creatively intense dark Metal ever written!! I shit you not, King Diamond's compositions are without equal!!!

of finest Metal compositions ever heard, and it surprises me that no tribute album has ever been issued in their honor. Their somber, pulsating rhythms coupled with near mystically classical compositions etch their way into your mind, causing your heart to grow cold and darken your soul. The elation you feel when listening to Candlemass is emanated from your own brooding depression, which is brought forth through the epic-length sorrow that dwells within each song! Candlemass is Metal for those who appreciate cold and gloomy melancholy!!

**Carnivore**

*Retaliation*

(Roadrunner), 1987

For those of you who don't know, Carnivore is the former band of Type O Negative singer/bassist Peter Steele. On that note, let it also be known that Carnivore is nothing like Type O Negative! Carnivore came onto the scene in the late 80s, and *Retaliation* is their second and final recording. *Retaliation* is the most clear representation of their sound. Carnivore made extreme music with extreme lyrics, all the while keeping their tongues firmly planted in their cheeks. This is not music for the Politically Correct crowd. Songs such as "Jesus Hitler" contain lyrics like "Jesus Hitler, Adolf Christ, is this the second-coming or the Fourth Reich?" Other song titles include "Race War," "Angry Neurotic Catholics," and "Sex and Violence" which is an ode to Kubrick's masterpiece film, *A Clockwork Orange*. The music plods through high-speed riffs and angry vocals, but at times contains slow, Sabbath-esque parts. Listening to Carnivore is like taking a glimpse through a dark portal into a world that is completely deranged. The key word for Carnivore is "primal." This album is a classic in that it will satisfy every primal instinct that the animal inside the human has, and it will, at times, make you laugh.

Dear Editor(s),

I got the second issue of Promethean Crusade when I placed an order with Relapse for a couple horror movie soundtracks. They didn't send me another order form, but they did send me three fanzines. I immediately threw away the Death Metal and Punk fanzines, but I kept P.C. lying around to read later. Why did I save your 'zine? Because, unlike the others, you had photos of bands on the cover that I have music from on CD (SADUS, KING'S X) and at least I've heard of the other bands. I wanted to tell you that I enjoyed most of the articles and reviews in P.C., especially the KING'S X interview. Other than a couple of typos I spotted my biggest complaints about the issue were the reviews. Because the reviewer's names or initials weren't printed after the reviews, I don't know who to blame, but I couldn't relate to some of the descriptions. Part of this is because I'm an old school Thrash / Doom Metal fan. I don't listen to many modern Metal bands because a.) there aren't any Metal radio or TV shows in my area and b.) I don't like modern music trends. When a reviewer says a new band's CD is like a combination of two or more other bands, and I've never listened to music by said bands, then the reviewer is telling me nothing. And pardon me for being an old fart (I'm 28) and not being "hip" to modern slang; when a reviewer states, "this is the shit," it doesn't sound very positive to me. The word "shit" to me has always meant a.) the disgusting stuff that comes out of my anus, b.) anything my brother likes, and c.) the latest *Halloween* sequel. Even though I'm not fond of modern Metal, I'm sure I could write more intellectual reviews than some of P.C.'s reviewers. As for what music I live for and love, here are some of my favorite bands... DEEP PURPLE, RAINBOW, AC/DC, BLACK SABBATH, IRON MAIDEN, JUDAS PRIEST, old MEGADETH, TESTAMENT, EXODUS, OVERKILL, CATHEDRAL, HELLOWEEN, SLAYER, KISS/ACE FREHLEY'S solo stuff, TED NUGENT, etc. I also like Classic Rock such as PINK FLOYD, NEIL YOUNG, ERIC CLAPTON, TOM PETTY, ASIA, etc. I also like (horror) film scores and even some Classical music. I think I'll hold off subscribing to P.C. until your "green" status wears off....

James A. Reed  
Upper Sadusky, OH

Please send the first issue and the next three. Saw KING'S X in Philly and got your mag- good work! Very informative and inspiring stuff. I have a band (NOT JAZZ!) that "touches upon" Metal. If we decide to promote as such I'd like to be sure to think of Promethean Crusade as our "ally" Rock On! Without Metal I would feel like a fool!

Mike Rewa  
Newark, DE

Metal Greetings once again! The second issue was worth the wait. There are a few things that I really enjoy about P.C. One is definitely your love of the true Metal gods, MANOWAR! Anyone who loves MANOWAR is a friend of mine! Also, I've got two words for you: PRO WRESTLING! Wrestling and Metal will always be

intertwined. Another thing I thought was cool was your obvious disgust with this horrible KORN, LIMP WRISTED (BIZKIT) trend. It is a disgrace to Metal and it is our duties as Warriors of Steel to demolish their impudence! As far as favorite columns go, I enjoy "From Within the River Styx" quite a bit. I thought it was great that you recognized the godliness of QUEENSRYCHE's *Operation: Mindcrime*. That CD has influenced me quite a bit. "Hephaestus' Forge" is also a cool idea and very helpful. I am enclosing a MO for the next three issues. I'm looking forward to them. Thanks for reading this and best of luck with Promethean Crusade, truly the "People's Magazine!" HAIL FUCKING METAL! HAIL AND KILL!

George Pacheco  
South Dartmouth, MA



*This is a good time to illuminate for our new readers the reason our reviews are written anonymously. Anonymity was chosen for the simple fact that, in some cases, more than one person's opinion is expressed or conveyed within the review. It was also chosen to relinquish all preconceived ideas and feelings. If a reader completely disagrees with a certain writer's review on a certain band and conversely writes him off as a fool or horrible critic, the rest of his reviews, thusly, will be viewed with prejudice and be tainted with unfair bias. We want our readers to approach each individual review with an open mind and have his preconceived ideas of the band clouded with as little umbrage and partiality as possible.*  
~ed.

Dear Purveyor of True Metal,

I have heard many good things about your 'zine. Just as Prometheus brought fire to the world in a time of dark, you bring a new light to the 'zine scene. There hasn't been many new Metal 'zines coming out and that is a shame because 'zines are the lifeline of the scene. I'm a huge Power Metal fan and I'm glad to see you did an interview with ANGRA. They are a great band and "Angel's Cry" is a stellar record. Take care and stay true... A Metal Heart Is Hard To Tear Apart.

Jeffrey Hayes  
Bellevue, WA

Thanks for the mag! Let me tell you that I am still "digesting" P.C. issues 1 and 2. As I expected, issue no. 2 is a lot better and I am pretty sure it is going to get better with each new one. The whole idea and conception of the mag is absolutely brilliant! The mythological adventure, old Greek empire titans and heroes of legends, lots and lots of reviews, interviews and articles, the helpful "Toga Party", the oracles, fun with the last page's "Odes" and the cover page picture, **A FIRST QUALITY MAG!** Inside Promethean Crusade mags, I find versatility, important information and originality spread all over them. I am glad I have found Promethean Crusade mag. You are doing an **EXCELLENT JOB!** Thanks and congratulations to all the P.C. staff.

Juan Lli-Albert  
Miami, FL

*We received this e-mail from an anonymous neighbor of ours. We tried to get in touch with him to discuss some of his concerns, but his e-mail address turned out to be as faulty as his command of the English language! ~ed.*

what's up? i reside in pottstown and i'm sorry to say but i was dissappointed in your narrow views in your reviews section of your July/december98 fanzine. I play in a local band and i'm sorry to say but i now cannot send anything to you since I now see that the only music you seem to review positivly is death metal (black metal, whatever you wanna call it). I'm not trying to down you (even though you did call my band's style of music "crapcore"), i'm just trying to give you some constructive critsicism, so if you want your fanzine to make something all metalheads can read, you need to open your mind a little bit!!!!

Hail. I am writing to you because I would like to receive your first issue. I have the second, and I "had" the first—that is until some unknown forces took it from me. And so, with great pleasure, I have enclosed two dollars to purchase (once again) your amazing magazine. You know what I like most about your mag... it's that, unlike most "commercial" mags, you guys aren't afraid to speak the truth. If a band truly sucks or just hasn't been living up to their abilities, you guys let 'em know- hard! (And you also give recognition to those who have imprinted their names firmly on the great wall of Metal.) And for this, I salute you all. For a "Metal-reviews" magazine just starting out, you guys truly rule the headlines. I am also proud to see the true art of Black Metal emerging from its buried coffin. I will be subscribing for the next three issues. --Yours in Flames--

Jay  
Coral Springs, FL



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# Fates' Ana

## Tyler Pursel:

1. ENSLAVED- *Vikingr Veldi*
2. BORKNAGAR- *Archaic Course*
3. IN THE WOODS- *Heart of the Ages*
4. EMPEROR- *In The Nightside Eclipse*
5. CRADLE OF FILTH- *Vempire*
6. WITHIN TEMPTATION- *Enter*
7. KORN- *Follow the leader (Hellz yeah)*
8. RAVENSTORM- *Angelfall/Black Sands Crystal Lakes*
9. BURZUM- *Filosofem*
10. DIMMU BORGIR- *Stormblast*
11. MITHOTYN- *King of the Distant Forest*
12. ULVER- *Kveldsfanger*
13. MORTIIS- *fodt til a herske*
14. AETURNIS- *and so the night became....*
15. COVENANT- *In times before the light*

## Chris Hawkins:

1. EMPEROR- *IX Equilibrium*
2. DEVIL DOLL- *Dies Irae*
3. ARCTURUS- *La Masquerade Infernale*
4. PECCATUM- *Stragling From Within*
5. RICHARD STRAUSS- *Death & Transfiguration*
6. BEETHOVEN- *Symphony No. 9*
7. LIMBONIC ART- *In Abhorrence Dementia*
8. BORKNAGAR- *The Archaic Course*
9. DIMMU BORGIR- *Spiritual Black Dimensions*
10. IRON MAIDEN- *Seventh Son of a Seventh Son*
11. DISSECTION- *Storm of the Light's Bane*
12. CHILDREN OF BODOM- *Something Wild*
13. SERAPHIM SHOCK- *Red Silk Vow*
14. OZZY OSBOURNE- *Diary of a Madman*
15. DANZIG- *Lucifuge*
16. MOONSPELL- *Wolfheart*

## Mark Morton:

MANOWAR - How dare anyone resort to mere numerical value when describing omniscience!!

1. GAMMA RAY- *Power Plant*
2. BLIND GUARDIAN- *Nightfall On Middle Earth*
3. *The Empire Strikes Back* (Soundtrack)
4. KING DIAMOND- *Abigail*
5. IRON SAVIOR- *Unification*
6. CRYPTOPSY- *Whisper Supremacy*
7. SODOM- *Persecution Mania*
8. GARY HOEY- *Endless Summer II* (Soundtrack)
9. *Moonraker* (Soundtrack)
10. DEEDS OF FLESH- *Gradually Melted*

## Chester Ney:

1. THE BEETEM- *Shit on a Stick*
2. GERMINATE- *Quarry Moon*
3. JASMINE- *Celtic Box*
4. EIGHT BALL- *Dance Blindly*
5. CHOCOLATE DIRT- *Sittin' on the Roof*
6. SELF- *Mirrored Description*
7. RIKA- *Green Monopoly*

## Tom J. Hughes:

1. DREAM THEATER- *Awake*
2. STEVE EARLE- *El Corazon*
3. LACRIMOSA- *Elodia*
4. KING'S X- *Tapehead*
5. EM SINFONIA- *In Mournings Symphony*
6. RAGNAROK- *Domgeorn*
7. RHAPSODY- *Symphony of Enchanted Lands*
8. EXTREME- *III Sides to Every Story*
9. AMORPHIS- *Tuonela*
10. ZZ TOP- *Rhythmeen*
11. WORLD OF SILENCE- *Mindscales*
12. the GATHERING- *How to Measure a Planet?*
13. BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN- *Greatest Hits*

## Vahak Janbazian:

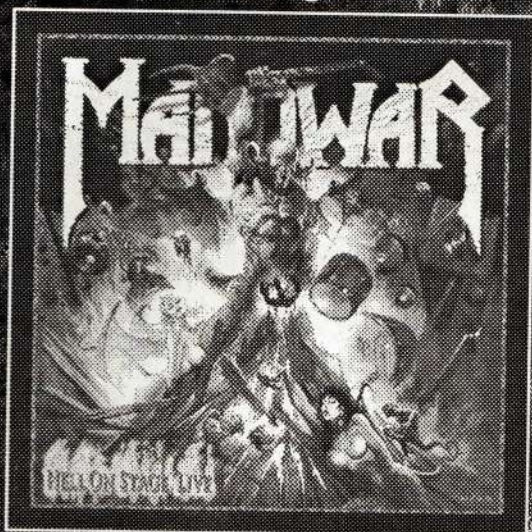
1. VISION OF DISORDER- (self titled)
2. MEDESKI, MARTIN & WOOD- *It's A Jungle In Here*
3. MEGADETH- *Rust in Peace*
4. FAILURE- *Fantastic Planet*
5. JULIANA HATFIELD- *Bed*
6. E-TOWN CONCRETE- *Time to Shine*
7. HELMET- *Strap It On*
8. RADIOHEAD- *OK Computer*
9. SYSTEM OF A DOWN- (self titled)
10. ROLLINS BAND- *Come in and Burn*

## Jeff Kent:

1. BRUCE DICKINSON- *The Chemical Wedding*
2. IRON MAIDEN- *The Number Of The Beast*
3. TRIAKEL- *Triakel*
4. CHRIS SPEED- *Deviantics*
5. THE MAGGIES- *Homesick*
6. DUKE ELLINGTON- *The Far East Suite*
7. DJANGO BATES- *Quiet Nights*
8. METALLICA- *Ride The Lightning*
9. SOUNDGARDEN- *Superunknown*
10. TORTOISE- *TNT*

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