

Issue #9  
free

# Transcending the MUNDANE

Features a plethora of metal styles



- AGRESSOR
- allan
- Armored Saint
- ASKA
- BALANCE OF POWER
- COFFIN TESTS
- cold colours
- CONSCIOUSNESS
- D.C. COOPER
- DARKSEED
- DECEMBER
- Demons & Wizards
- DIGITAL BURN
- earthtone
- eyes of the storm
- Gorgoroth
- Kamelot
- KILL II THIS KRISIN
- MALEFICENT
- murder in the wall
- MR. BIG
- NIACIN
- Light in Shades
- PAIN OF SALVATION
- SCULPTURED
- SHADOWS FALL
- SOILWORK
- Shrine in the Shadows
- Stratovarius
- SUMMONING
- TOURNIQUET
- TRANSATLANTIC

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IN STORES MAY 9TH 2000



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"Revelation"



**CRADLE OF FILTH**  
"From The Cradle To Enslave"



**THE QUIET ROOM**  
"Reconcieve"



**FLESHCRAWL**  
"As Blood Runs From The Sky"



**DOMINE**  
"Dragonlord"



**LOBOTOMY**  
"Born In Hell"



**INSANIA**  
"World Of Ice"



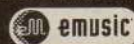
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Welcome to Issue #9 of *Transcending the Mundane*. This is the first issue which begins our status as a monthly magazine. I don't think I will be able to maintain one hundred plus pages of content per issue, but I will continue to pack in as much information as possible. I would like to thank John Ales and Jay Ruggierre for helping me make my dream a reality. We will continue to grow and evolve without forsaking the underground metal bands who deserve attention other publications ignore.

This is a free publication and it is essential that people advertise to establish income. Some labels who have been supporting me since the beginning are Century Media, Metal Blade, Noise, Full Moon, Nuclear Blast, Red Stream, Crook'd, Marshall, M.I.A., Sensory, and Majestic Entertainment. I really appreciate your help and support. Hats of to Matt Bower, Marco Barbieri, Steve Joh, Michael Kovins, Jon from Full Moon, Liz Ciavarella, Pat from Red Stream, Dave Harman, Ken Golden, and Janice from Majestic in particular.

New advertisers supporting *Transcending the Mundane* for the first time include Napalm, Cho'sin, Inside Out, Da'core, Relapse, Dark Symphonies, Martyr, and Necropolis. Welcome aboard. I truly thank you all for your help and support. I hope that our mutual arrangement will create success for us all.

Thank you for all who have made my c.d. compilation a success. I have been forced to raise my rates to \$50 per minute so I can keep up with the expansion of the magazine. This is the best form of advertising for upcoming bands and it enables your music to be heard by thousands, including hundreds of record labels. I offer free advertising space to these bands as well. Get in touch if you are interested.

To all the distributors, especially Antithesis, I appreciate your willingness to spread my magazine everywhere. Thank you to Paul Laplaca for your hard work as well. Jeff Brown, Y.Y.P., and Keith Oswald also help with their contributions, and, of course Brett Clarin, Rich Black, and Don Howell at Aidemedia for making this possible. Thank you to Samantha Mabl for all your help. I would also like to welcome Leslie Knipping into my life.

Cover artwork is by Ted from Dark Symphonies. Layout is by Don Howell.

*Transcending the Mundane*: 5 Hudson Avenue, Bohemia, NY 11716

## News in the World of Heavy Metal

- With sad news I report the break up of the great progressive metal band **Soundscape**.
- The new **Negativehate** e.p., *Fuck You and Your Pink Mood*, is out now.
- Look for some new releases on Brainticket Records this spring, including **Oversoul's** *Seven Days in November*, the self titled album from **Smoke In Sunshine**, the second album from **Datura**, and a new record from **Last Chapter** titled *Paths to Always*.
- Here are some new albums coming from Holland's Hammerheart Records: **Viking Crown** (raw black metal), **Thanatos** (reunion record), **Thyrffing** (viking metal), **Aura Noir** (thrash), **Cruachan** (folk), **Hypnosia** (thrash), and **Hekate** (ambient goth).
- Look for a new, more guitar oriented **Fates Warning** record this July titled *Disconnected*.
- Guitarist Al Pitrelli and drummer Jimmy DeGrasso have replaced Marty Friedman and Nick Menza, respectively, in **Megadeth**.
- **Speed**, **Seven Witches**, **Bronx Casket Company**, and ex-**Frost Bite** (and probably six other bands I don't know about) guitarist Jack Frost has replaced Chris Caffery in **Metalium**. The new record will be out soon.
- **Brainstorm** will have a new record out any day with vocalist Andy from **Symphorce**, ex-**Ivanhoe**.
- **In Flames'** new record, *Safe Handling Instruction*, is out this summer.
- **Hateplow** are ready to release their second record, *The Only Law is Survival*.
- **Terror 2000** is a new band featuring members of **Darkane** and **Soilwork**.
- Look for **Stuck Mojo's** new record, *Declaration of a Headhunter* soon.
- **Labyrinth's** *Sons of Thunder* will be out this summer.
- Crook'd Records are releasing an **Angel Witch** c.d. titled *Resurrection* which features old demos.
- There are rumors that ex-**Atheist** guitarist Rand Burkey is jamming with ex-**Crimson Glory** vocalist Midnight. If they are true, expect a feature next issue.
- **Vital Remains** have replaced vocalist Thorns with their original singer Jeff Gruslin.
- Rumor has it that either **Love/Hate** vocalist Jizzy Pearl or **Bang Tango** vocalist Joe LeSte will be the one to replace Stephen Pearcy in **Ratt**.
- **Anthrax** have joined **Megadeth** and **Motley Crue** for a summer tour.
- Kip Winger will soon have a new record out called *Songs from the Ocean Floor*.
- **Skid Row** have reformed with a new vocalist named Johnny Solinger.
- **Vicious Rumors** will have a new record called *Sadistic Symphony* with new singer Morgan Thorn.
- **Braindance** are currently finishing up their third record titled *Redemption*.

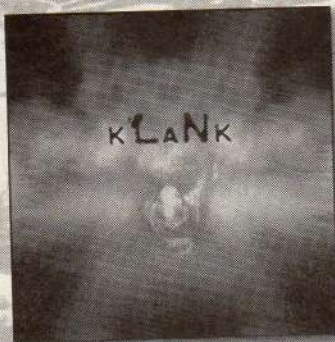
**Ion Vein** are looking for a new bassist. They released their debut album last year. Interested parties should get in contact with Majesphere Records at 847-759-1847. Website is [www.ionvein.com](http://www.ionvein.com), e-mail them at [mail@ionvein.com](mailto:mail@ionvein.com). P.O. Box 7911, Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60195-7911. This band plays progressive power metal and is outstanding. Only professional musicians need apply.

The PrAggressive metal band **October Thorns** are looking for a flashy keyboardist who can match the talent of the other musicians in this upcoming New York based band. Interested people should contact Paul Laplaca at 718-726-3903 or you can e-mail him at [paull@korgusa.com](mailto:paull@korgusa.com). If you are wondering what October Thorns sound like you can check out their track, "Exhausted Minds" on this issue's compilation.

Pennsylvania's **Krypton** are looking for a drummer who would fit in with this aggressive, techno/ industrial band. This drummer must be willing to use electronic drums or triggers. They must be dedicated and reliable. We want to take this band as far as we can- we are not hobbyists who do this because we are bored or need to pick up chicks. We are into black metal, industrial, gothic, and bands like **Voivod**, **Pink Floyd**, **Beyond Dawn**, etc. We are versatile and into experimenting and fusing different styles. We have rehearsal space/ studio in Hatboro, PA which is 10 miles north of downtown Philadelphia and just a few miles from N.E. Hatboro is on the border of Bucks and Montgomery counties. We practice 2-3 times a week right now. Phone- 215-956-7154 and ask for Jay.

## Gathering The Strength Of The Underground

### K'LANK



"Numb"

New York's Klank are back and more lethal than ever. "Numb" is an absolute must have for fans of heavy, industrialized metal. Featuring Daren "Klank" DiIosia (ex-Circle Of Dust) and John "JMF" Zafetel (ex-Great Kat)

### NO RETREAT



"Rise Of The Underdog"

Pittsburgh's No Retreat create the heaviest Death Stomp Hardcore beatdown known to man. Recorded by Eric Klinger from Pro-Pain with guest vocal appearances by Chris Hensel from Mushroom and Karl Weinbrecht from Krutch.

### allan



"...About Five Seconds"

Moody experimental hardcore filled with emotional interludes of noisy heaviness. If you yearn for intense heavy music and soul stirring lyrics, then you need this talented band's debut release.



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## IN STORES NOW!

## Top Albums for the month of May:



**Cold Colours:**  
Somnium XIII  
Root of all Evil



**Digital Ruin:**  
Dwelling in the Out  
Inside Out Music



**Gorgoroth:**  
Incipit Satan  
Nuclear Blast



**Holy Mother:**  
My World War  
Shark



**Mayhem:** Grand  
Declaration of War  
Necropolis



**Neck:**  
Should My Fist Eye  
Cho'Sin



**Rain Fell Within**  
Believe  
Dark Symphonies



**Spiral Architect:**  
A Sceptics Universe  
Sensory



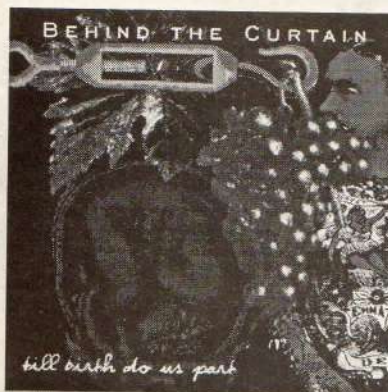
**Tristania:**  
Beyond The Veil  
Napalm



**Uranium 235:**  
Cultural Minority  
Mystic Music

The above records are reviewed in this issue. There you will get an adequate description of what these bands sound like. These bands are really doing something special with their music and are worthy of anyone's collection.

## THINKING MAN'S METAL



**BEHIND THE CURTAIN** ▶ *'Til Birth Do Us Part*  
Denmark's Behind The Curtain create their own avant garde vision of metal for the next millenium. "Til Birth Do Us Part" is a concept album filled with dynamic contrasts of crushing guitar riffs, symphonic keyboards, and original vocals. Although complex in nature, BTC's music is often subtle and filled with powerful emotion.



**SPIRAL ARCHITECT** ▶ *A Sceptic's Universe*  
Spiral Architect goes beyond progressive, exploring the realms of complexity and intensity that pushes the nature of technical metal further than ever before. Not for the fainthearted, "A Sceptic's Universe" has quickly set the new standard for the scene and may cause serious damage to your mental health.



**WUTHERING HEIGHTS** ▶ *Within*  
Danish guitarist Erik Ravn unites with vocalist Kristian Andrén (Tad Morose, Memento Mori) to create a conceptual tour-de-force of symphonic speed metal infused with folk and classical elements. Fans of Rhapsody, Angra, and Blind Guardian will not want to miss out on this epic musical adventure!

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**SENSORY**  
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# AGRESSOR

Interview with vocalist and guitarist Alexandre Colin Tocquaine

I was pleasantly surprised to receive a copy of *Medieval Rites* in the mail. I had become familiar with **Agressor** via three records released on Noise and Black Mark, *Neverending Destiny*, *Towards Beyond*, and *Symposium of Rebirth* and since the last record appeared back in 1994 I had assumed that they no longer existed. Well, five years later Alex Tocquaine has put together another **Agressor** album and it is easily the best of their career. *Medieval Rites* is a great metal record with heavy thrashing guitars, dynamic songwriting, and even a medieval flavor. Alex called upon some friends to help him out, including members from **Bloodthorn**, **Enochian Crescent**, and **Mercyful Fate**. Among the instruments used on *Medieval Rites* for an authentic effect were flutes, violins, trumpets, and a female opera singer. Here is Alex to tell us about what's been happening in the French metal band's career lately.

## Are you happy with *Medieval Rites*?

Yeah, it's quite good. The band hadn't recorded for a long time, it's new songs and new guys playing with me. We took the time to record and invited guests to play other instruments. I think it's the best record we have recorded so far. Some of the songs are old, some are brand new. The old songs are "The Sorcerer", "Medieval Rites", and "Tribal Dance" but the arrangements are new.

## Why was there a delay between *Symposium of Rebirth* and *Medieval Rites*?

The last one was in 1994. We only did one or two songs for compilations after this. The last tour was in June of 1996 with **Cradle Of Filth** in the U.K. It was our last tour and then the band split up and I was working for Black Mark as a promoter in France. I was giving some guitar lessons because I have an endorsement deal with Ibanez in France. During this time I didn't do anything with **Agressor** because I had enough. Too many line-up changes, the record company didn't push us enough, and I did everything by myself. The songs on this album were supposed to be released the next year on Black Mark but they didn't do nothing. Season Of Mist asked us to sign a contract and we did last year. They are not far from my place and they were always after me asking to sign. We recorded all the songs and it is all going good now.

## This record is a great metal record, it's not all death metal.

That's what we wanted. At first we were in the first wave of thrash, speed metal and then we turned this into death metal. You can feel on the album that this is all different styles of metal. We've got something to say. I don't like when bands break up for a long time and then reform and do exactly what they used to do. Sometimes it's okay but you need to bring something more. We have some fast songs, some thrash metal, black metal, death metal, heavy metal- we know how to play it all. We never released albums regularly.

## When was **Agressor** formed?

The band was formed in 1986. We had a contract with a small label in France. They released an e.p. with another French band called **Loudblast**. It was the first extreme metal released in France. We had the chance to be in the right place at the right time. We had the deal with Noise and then Black Mark. We released *Neverending Destiny* on Noise Records. Two years later we had trouble with the line-up and I released *Towards Beyond* in 1992 and *Symposium of Rebirth* in 1994. In between we did tours with **Messiah**, **Sinister**, **Wargasm** and we did festivals with **Morbid Angel**, **Sodom**, **Obituary**, **Pestilence**, **Samael**.

## Was there many death metal bands in France at that time?

There was not so much. We were three; **Agressor**, **Loudblast**, **Massacra**, and then came all the other bands not so long after. It was not so nationalized. We don't have the same scene as Germany. We don't expect to play in front of ten thousand people in France, it's impossible. We have a strong scene but not so big. There's something missing in France, I've liked to change it for a long time. We're the only one left. All the old bands keep disappearing. All the new bands are mixing rap and metal, they're into **Korn** and **Fear Factory**.

## Are things better for the band on Season Of Mist?

It was one of the reasons why I worked at Black Mark, they weren't good at promotions. I haven't done so many interviews but they have been with the right persons. I'm gonna see the sales of the record and how it's been received. People who like old thrash and death like it. People who are into newer metal probably won't like it. I don't know, I'll wait to see the reaction. In France it's not a

problem. We've got a name and people have known us for a long time. Outside, like in Europe and the U.S., people may know *Neverending Destiny* which was our first album on Noise. Lots of people have this album but don't know about the other ones. I hope people will remember us.

## What are your plans?

We have played a tour in France, Belgium, Spain, and Holland. It was in October, November, and December of 1999. It was with **Bloodthorn** and **And Oceans**. I also play in **Bloodthorn** so I did two gigs every night. That's why I'm in Norway. I rehearse with the guys in **Bloodthorn**. We played a show with **Satyricon**. I play in different bands as a session guitar player. If someone needs a player to tour or record I go. I played on the album and did a tour with **Immortal**. I go to Norway, then back to France, back to Norway. I try to find a band where I don't sing, I only play guitar and I can play a different kind of metal. In Norway, the music is really different compared to France.

## Do we have to wait five more years before the next album?

No. We're already working on it. The album was supposed to have James Murphy on second guitar but he couldn't do it on time. We've got the material with him and we're gonna remix it. There's gonna be one cover. There's three songs with James Murphy. I'm gonna rerecord "Spirit of Evil" because it's too short. The riff on there was for my students so they can learn how to build a song. I don't think it will be the same but a mix of everything. I like old stuff but also atmospheric stuff with keyboard arrangements, I like black metal, industrial. There's lots of stuff you can do with this music so it doesn't always sound the same. You have to keep the spirit of the band.

## Discography:

- 1999... *Medieval Rites* (Season Of Mist)
- 1994... *Symposium Of Rebirth* (Black Mark)
- 1992... *Towards Beyond* (Black Mark)
- 1990... *Neverending Destiny* (Noise)
- 1987.. *Satans Sodomy* (Noise)

## Current line-up:

- Alex Tocquaine... vocals and guitars
- Joel Guigou... bass
- Morten Nielson... drums

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# allan

Interview with drummer Lee Fisher and guitarist Matt Sabbath

One new band that has recently caught my attention comes from Pennsylvania, **Allan**. They play an aggressive form of music that sounds neither hardcore nor metal but somehow falls in between the two. The music is very intense and emotional but never over dramatic. Other elements can be heard in **Allan's** sound, one can never pigeonhole what they are doing. They have their debut, *About Five Seconds*, getting a wide distribution in America, and **Allan** are actually in the process of getting ready to record its follow up. I spoke to drummer Lee Fisher about this exciting band.

**Are you happy with how this record has come out?**

Lee: This record has been out for awhile now so it's not as fresh but we're absolutely happy with it. We expressed ourselves exactly how we wanted to at the time. Things have changed dramatically since then, including members.

**When was this actually released and how's the response been?**

Lee: It was released about ten months ago. There's been a good response. We didn't release a demo so it was our first official release. A lot of people can't describe our sound which we are really happy about.

**What's up with the band now?**

Lee: Our live set consists of one song, maybe two at the most from that album. Our last show before the line-up change was October 31st. We had difficulties with the guitar player, he had to resolve some things. We got rid of him and auditioned a couple of people. We got a guy who was a bass player, he's been a friend of a band since we started. We got him in the band. He's added a larger spectrum to our sound. Most of the first record, Brian was into the feedback- which was great. Now, with Matt Sabbath, he's more compressed, tighter, and more technical. Our sound is not as raw and loose, it's compressed and tighter. We always wanted to go into a more technical direction. If you know which song on the album that we wrote first and last you could see the advancement.

**Are you recording now?**

Lee: We went in to record a three or four song demo. We were all excited and we went in to record it but it didn't meet our expectations at all. We're gonna re-record over the course of three days. We're gonna go with a different approach. We've all had minor experiences prior to **Allan** but it was mainly a learning experience. Now we know more of what we want to do this time. Hopefully this will go a lot smoother. We feel that our new material pushes the envelope. All the material on the album has a lot of verse, chorus, verse, chorus- stuff that you can go back to. Now we're trying to adapt our writing style to where the songs have a reading a book, novel type of feel. The songs grow and evolve. The length of the songs has decreased a little bit. We're trying to find that balance between not being too technical to where it's unlistenable but it's still catchy. Since we've written the new material with Matt in the band we've played four or six shows and we've gotten a great response. It's great to know that it's having the result that we expected to have.

**Unlike many other bands of this style, I find Allan to be a band that you don't get sick of because there's enough variety and energy throughout the record with the vocals.**

Lee: I think Scott's grown so much since that album. Everything that we did was necessary. He's down with a lot more sound effects. He's really utilizing different sound effects that are still extreme. We have a couple of tracks that he actually uses a bullhorn. We don't want too much singing. We need the aggression and the best way is to have Scott screaming his balls off. He does it creatively.

**Would you care to speak about your drumming on *About Five Seconds*?**

Lee: I listen to a lot of stuff. I started playing when I was fifteen so it's been eleven years. My strongest influence when I was growing up was death metal. I loved **Napalm**, **Carcass**, and one of my all time favorite records was *Left Hand Path* from **Entombed**. Somewhere around '90, '91 I stumbled on a compilation and there was a band called **Cynic** on there. Sean Reinhart, early **Atheist** albums, and a jazz guy named David Weckel, they changed it for me. Up until then it was Dave Lombardo all the way. I was self taught. Lombardo so inspired me. The later **Death** and **Cynic** proved that you could still have extreme music and still have that diverse background. The percussion stuff, I was studying with a teacher for awhile. When we started recording this album I wanted to do everything.

**Where did the name Allan come from?**

Lee: I work at a bagel place and I cut dough on a huge table. This guy throws between three and four hundred pounds worth of dough and then I put it into these two machines and it just came to me. We found one name a long time ago and we went on the internet and we found out there were three different bands with the same name but different spellings. We came up with a bunch of names but most of them were taken. I have no idea why **Allan** came out. We wanted to have a name that didn't describe the music. If I saw the name **Allan** for a band I would have no idea what it would sound like. It means absolutely nothing. When they think about the name **Allan** they would think about music.

**How did you hook up with Allan?**

Matt: I played bass in a number of bands before I played guitar with these guys. One day I jammed with them and it worked out good. They kept me.

**How do you approach the new songs?**

Matt: I approach from a bassist's point of view. Lee is the sickest drummer that I know. I vibe off what he does. It's weird getting used to because the guitar's so small.

**What are your tour plans?**

Lee: We've concentrated on certain areas but that's because we've booked our own shows. We're working on setting a week or two around the Baltimore area with bands who want to do the same thing. We doing the circuit thing like New York, Ohio, Weest Virginia. We starting to get back into it now.

**Discography:**

1999... *About Five Seconds*

**Current line-up:**

Scott Evans... vocals  
Matt Sabbath... guitars  
Bobby Spell... bass  
Lee Fisher... drums

## THE LASER'S EDGE

The Laser's Edge offers a wide range of intense progressive sounds from around the world. From symphonic rock to technical metal and anything in between, we stock all the best bands of yesterday and today: White Willow, Ayreon, PFM, Scott McGill, Digital Ruin, NeBeLNeST, Univers Zero, Spiral Architect, Anekdoten, Blind Guardian, Meshuggah & more!

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# Armored Saint

Interview with bassist Joey Vera

Bands continue to reform. One of the latest to join the trend is California's **Armored Saint**. The band formed in the early eighties and signed a major label deal which led to a succession of albums; *March of the Saint*, *Delirious Nomad*, and *Raising Fear*. Then tragedy struck as guitarist Dave Pritchard was diagnosed with leukemia. After Dave's death guitarist Phil Sandoval rejoined with touring guitarist Jeff Duncan and **Armored Saint** finished recording *Symbol of Salvation* which was written mostly by Pritchard. The album was critically acclaimed and videos for "Reign of Fire" and "Last Train Home" became M.T.V. staples. The elusive success that seemed inevitable for the band never came to fruition and vocalist John Bush accepted a gig with **Anthrax**. Bassist Joey Vera released a solo record before joining **Fates Warning** in the mid nineties. Now they're all back again for a new record titled *Revelation*. I spoke to Joey about his lengthy career.

## Why did this reformation take place?

We always knew we would do something together again. We would get a lot of inquiries about the band all over the place. They would bring **Armored Saint** records to **Fates Warning** shows and **Anthrax** shows. In the last five years it was just a matter of finding time. Once we decided we could do it we started writing.

## Did you keep the past in mind when you wrote these new songs?

From the beginning I wanted to do something that people were going to be expecting. We have to remember where we came from. We're an old school metal band. Let's just write songs that are gonna completely kick your ass and have a really high energy level. This went across the board; it went with the production, the concept- or the lack thereof, keep things simple, and make it really high energy. This was plotted out in the beginning. We wanted it like a live record.

## People always considered **Armored Saint** to be an underrated band.

I think that's accurate. It's a weird topic. There's so many reasons why it never went to the level that everybody thought it was going to be. This time we're not gonna be concerned with it. It was self damaging. We already spent ten years trying to conquer the world. It never happened. The thing that we missed being together was not the pursuit of this brass ring, it was being able to make the type of music we like making and performing live. When we first started we didn't care about that brass ring. I was more concerned with smoking pot and playing metal. There's something to be said for being young and innocent in that way. You do it because you love it. Several years after being in the business you lose sight of that. You make weird compromises and changes in your attitude in order to attain this illusion. You lose sight of the whole love of the music.

## How would you describe the time period when *March of the Saint* was written and recorded?

It was our first record so we were pretty naive and still only concerned with having a blast. We were in this really expensive studio. Barbra Streisand and **Supertramp** were in the other rooms. It was our first contact with the business. We felt it was over produced and it took away the raw, innocent energy that we thought we had when we played live. So much got lost in the translation. The producer, the label, and our manager allowed the project to spend an excess of three hundred thousand dollars to make that record. It would be the equivalence of six or seven hundred thousand dollars now. There was that naive innocence that was so much fun and on the other side of it was an ugly reality. *Chrysalis* was the wrong label to be on. Instead of making a record with Michael James Jackson, we wanted to make a record with Martin Birch of **Iron Maiden** and **Black Sabbath** fame. That's the difference in our mentality. We were thinking power metal from Europe and *Chrysalis* was thinking Billy Idol. That was the dichotomy of that experience.

## How was the transition from that to *Raising Fear* and *Delirious Nomad*?

After *March of the Saint* we became very rebellious, maybe to the point of self damaging. They wanted us to be the next **Def Leppard**. We wanted to be dark and heavy so we made *Delirious Nomad* to be that. We felt pretty good about that record. We got along with Max Norman, he was British so we had this connection with England. He had worked with **Ozzy Osbourne**, **Loudness**, and **Savatage**.

*Raising Fear* was a problem record. *Delirious* was our answer to *March*. We said fuck you we want to do this, however the success of *Delirious* wasn't as good as *March*. When we did *Raising Fear* we got a lot of pressure from the label as far as song writing goes. For me personally, that was a rather confused record.

## I imagine *Symbol of Salvation* must have been a dark time.

It was a very emotional one to make. Obviously there was the fact of losing our friend and the record was done in his dedication. There was a lot of sweat, blood, and tears in that. We were really satisfied with it. It has a good continuity. It represents the end of an era for us.

## Following that you must have recorded your solo album.

I had an opportunity to use a studio to record some songs I was writing at the time. When **Armored Saint** broke up it was like I took off this heavy jacket and my arms were light. I was writing for no apparent reason, influenced by what I was into at the time: **Nine Inch Nails**, **Lenny Kravitz**. It was a lot of fun. It was an accomplishment for me that I could actually pull it off. I don't think I was very good on it, but some of it was pretty cool. I was playing it for Brian Slagel at **Metal Blade**, and he said let's put this out as a record. I'm working on another one too. It won't be as eclectic, and a lot more focused.

## When did you start working as a producer?

I started doing more engineering and producing a couple of years ago. I did a bunch of tribute songs for **Steel Prophet**. I did something for **Fates Warning** for the **Dio** tribute, then I did Ray Alder's **Engine** record. I just got back from Italy, I did a record in Milan for a band called **Power Symphony**. It helps me communicate when I work with someone else. I've always been fascinated by the whole process and the merging of technical with the creative side.

## How did you hook up with **Fates Warning**?

I met them in '84 and we've been friends ever since. The opportunity came to me when their bass player couldn't be involved anymore. We're in the middle of pre production for the new record. It's amazing because I get to be several things. I'm the hired guy so my job is very easy. I show up and do my job. Afterwards we're all friends. Musically it requires a different part of my brain. It requires the thinking part and I get to exercise a lot more theory.

## What's next for **Armored Saint**?

We want to do some touring. We're trying to work something out for the U.S. and Europe. We have some festivals in

July and August in Europe. Next year there's a record of unreleased material and a live video. There's not much planned after that. As long as we can have fun we'll most likely make a new record if the schedules let us.

## Did Jeff, Phil, or Gonzo do anything in the intervening years?

Gonzo had a band called **Life After Death**. They put out a c.d. in Europe in '97. They broke up after that. Phil never was really involved with anything. Jeff was in several bands. One was called **Bird Of Prey**, another **Human Nature**. Now he has his own group called **DC4**.

## Discography:

2000... *Revelation* (Metal Blade)  
1991... *Symbol Of Salvation* (Metal Blade)  
1987... *Raising Fear* (Chrysalis)  
1985... *Delirious Nomad* (Chrysalis)  
1984... *March Of The Saint* (Chrysalis)

## Current line-up:

John Bush... vocals  
Phil Sandoval... guitars  
Jeff Duncan... guitars  
Joey Vera... bass  
Gonzo... drums





# ASKA

Interview with vocalist and guitarist George Call

True metal is often a cursed word for an American band. Throughout the nineties, Texas metallers *Aska* have persevered. They've released their own records and have done their own publicity since they released their self titled debut record in 1992. While their first two records, *Aska* and *Immortal*, owed as much to eighties hard rock as it did to true metal, the subsequent follow ups, *Nine Tongues* and the newly issued *Avenger* have proven that *Aska* is a band that demands attention. The songwriting and the power on these two records sets them apart and proves that they are a band to be reckoned with. It is just a matter of time before labels will be offering this band some great incentives to join their roster. It will take a lot because *Aska* have the ability to do things on their own better than what most labels could offer them. Here is vocalist/ guitarist George Call to update us.

## How's the response been for *Avenger*?

The response has been phenomenal. I'm extremely pleased. For me, this is a culmination of what we've been shooting for. We did it with this one. The zines, radio shows, magazines; it's been pretty typical to get four or more out of five. When you write a record and you hear these songs hundred of times, to this day I'm not sick of hearing anything on that record. We set a goal and surpassed it. There isn't a weak moment on the whole thing. That's unusual for any band out there. I love *Manowar*, *Virgin Steele*; and album by album there's always tracks you can pick out and say that's not so hot. With *Avenger*, every song can stand on its own.

## What would be your suggestion to bands who are trying to make a career without label support?

Our goal has always been, this is what we listen to and we make the kind of music we want to listen to. After our first album we were young and naive and we thought someone would give us a record deal. After we didn't get signed from the first one, we thought we learned from our mistakes and let's do another one. That didn't happen. We'd like to get a major record deal, but metal went out of fashion. The wave passed us by, but this is still the music we're into. No corporate America is going to dictate to me what kind of music I'm gonna like. We've had a lot of success doing it. We've had a lot of respect, support, nominations, and fans of this genre help us and that keeps us going. Mainstream America could give a damn. It's a shame that a suit can dictate what people will like this year. If radio decided to do nothing but sneezing-track one would be fast sneezing, track two would be muffled sneezing; this would be the musical range. People would say- "did you get your new sneezing yet?!"

## The first *Aska* album came out during the peak of grunge.

We caught a lot of flak for that. Locally, nobody in the media takes you seriously. You're in that scene and they see you. They say metal sucks. It's an unpopular decision we made but we stand by it. As much as some of these local media outlets criticize us they still nominate us for metal band of the year. At least they acknowledge the fact we're doing something in our genre that is special.

## How has your touring situation been?

With the new record we got to the Mediterranean- Spain, Italy, France, Greece, Turkey, and Portugal. That was in November of '99, for about a month. It was our initial overseas jaunt in support of *Avenger*. Since then we've just been playing here in the South. We're probably not gonna go out on the road until sometime in the fall. We'd love to do a U.S. tour. If we came out even we'd be on it today, but the metal scene here is poor- even for established metal bands with great distribution. I love *Manowar*. I saw them in Oklahoma City. They've been around for twenty years, I was so disappointed to walk in there and see one hundred and fifty people. What's wrong with America? It makes us harder for bands like us.

## You've been able to do this with most of your line-up intact.

Recently we under went a change. My brother, Damon, had been our drummer since the first c.d. He met a girl on tour and got married. He decided that being on the road would be stressful on a new relationship. We replaced him with Jason Sweatt who played on *Avenger*. The first time we went to Europe, Damon was involved in a car accident and he shattered his elbow, so Jason did that first tour with us. Things have gone full circle. Darren, myself, and Keith have been together forever. It's like a big metal family. I don't see defections from this band.

## This record contains your best songwriting yet.

I'm glad that people have noticed. We put our heart and soul into this record and it would be a shame if everybody misses it. Everything that we did was intentional. On the earlier records everyone would take their turn on the lead vocals. Our hometown crowd loved that stuff, but the fans who had never seen the show they wondered why everyone else would sing. They felt my voice was more of the power metal style. We were a happy go lucky metal band. We used to have a party, cock rock thing but we mixed it up with songs like "Stalker", "Blood of the Wolf", which were the heavy power metal songs. We'd mix it up with songs like "Liquid Courage" and "Little Sister". The fans who came to the live shows loved that but the reviewers wondered what direction we wanted. It wasn't that, it's just that we had the ability to play this way and that way. It's all metal. The opinions were, don't do this and your band will be awesome. We gave it a shot and decided that I would do almost all of the vocals on the album. The only song where we split the vocals was on



"Valkyries" where me and Darren sing. He sings the part of Magnus and I sing the part of Thorsen. It's about the two vikings going to war. We decided that one of the things that's keeping us from getting a deal, was the direction. So, on *Avenger* we gave them one direction. The songs that really fired us up on *Nine Tongues*, we made a whole album of those on *Avenger*. It's selling more than any of our previous records. At one time on amazon.com it was

outselling the new *Virgin Steele* and *Primal Fear* records.

## What was the most difficult thing for *Aska* to overcome?

In my eyes, the most difficult thing has been putting out a record on *Avenger's* quality. To put out a record that good, and then not have anybody knocking on our door trying to sign us is difficult. How much better can you make a record. Everybody likes it and it's selling like hotcakes. Somebody's buying them. It blows my mind that the labels aren't looking for us. I don't even pretend that a major label is gonna come.

## Discography:

1999... *Avenger*  
1997... *Nine Tongues*  
1994... *Immortal*  
1992... *Aska*

## Current line-up:

George Call... vocals and guitars  
Darren Knapp... guitars  
Keith Knight... bass  
Jason Sweatt... drums

## Website:

[www.askaband.com](http://www.askaband.com)

# NAPALM RECORDS AMERICA PRESENTS:

## TRISTANIA



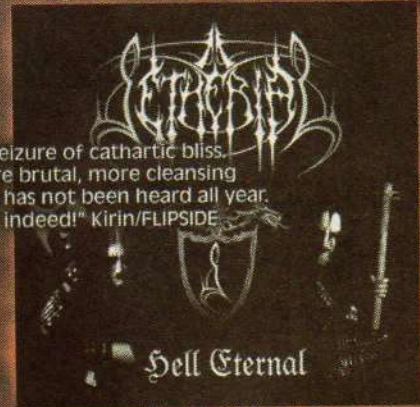
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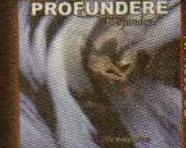
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# BALANCE OF POWER

Interview with vocalist Lance King

One of progressive metal's best kept secrets is **Balance Of Power**. This progressive metal band has released three records of superior music with great melodic vocals and an all around professional attitude. **Balance Of Power** released their debut, *When the World Falls Down*, in 1996 and it received major praise in Europe but had next no effect in the States. The following release, *Book of Secrets*, saw a new vocalist (Lance King) and a new guitarist (Pete Southern) come into the picture and a change in style came into action. This record showed the band becoming more heavy and even more progressive in style. Now comes *Ten More Tales*. This record is full of energy and excitement. Unlike many of the other progressive metal bands out there, **Balance Of Power** take the time to write great melodies and catchy vocal lines. The music is often upbeat and moves well without limiting their musicianship. Opening track "Day Breaker" is a good example of how powerful and beautiful **Balance Of Power** can be, and still give a feeling of energy and liveliness. I guess you could say they are aptly named. Here is Lance to tell us about the new record.

**Are you happy with how the new record came out?**

Oh yeah, we got exactly what we were after. We worked on it real hard to get what we wanted.

**What are your goals for the record?**

To get it out to as many people as possible. Distribution is spotty in the U.S. but it's selling real well. I'm hoping we can hook up with a larger label for the next step. We've had offers but the problem is we have overseas labels already in place, because America is a soft place. The labels we're looking at want the world territory. They can make money in Japan and the Europe markets. The next album we may decide to go with one label for the world.

**How was it coming to a band that was already established with one album and have such an intense impact on them?**

I hooked up with the band through mutual contacts. The keyboardist has a small company like myself, mine being a record label and his being more of a management/ small label thing. He was helping sign bands as an independent A&R company. He called me when they had Pete in and they had written a new album that was all finished. They didn't think that the singer had enough oomph for the new stuff. They needed to look for someone and I mentioned some people that I knew of and said that I might be interested. I heard the new direction of the group and it was right up my alley. He'd known of some of the singers I was referring to because I had been working some shopping deals with those groups. It was a super smooth transition. The chemistry was there and we worked very well. I was allowed to do whatever I wanted to do melodically. All the lyrics were already written. We pulled it over there in London when I came over to record the vocal tracks. I did all the vocals on *Book of Secrets* in about a week.

**What bands were you involved with before that?**

I had my own group from '93 to '98, and we actually still do some regional stuff in Minnesota. Before that I was in a group called **Gemini** and we released a couple of albums. **Gemini** was a band that wanted to be about the power but didn't know how yet. It was like **Queensryche** meets **Van Halen**. We would either write in a hard rock vein or a progressive melodic style. We couldn't bridge the gap and bring it together. We ended up with two different styles. It fits the name. It was tough to bridge the gap.

**How would you compare *Book of Secrets* to *Ten More Tales*?**

I'd say that they are very similar. I like *Ten More Tales*' production better. The writing has evolved more, it's a little more powerful, more progressive, but still remaining just as melodic. We're accessible to A&R even. In every group I was in before I was trying to make the band heavier, singing a lot harder, and now with **Balance Of Power** it's already there. I can just sing and not have it sound wimpy.

**Will you do anything live in the States?**

We've got a show scheduled in Las Vegas for the Ultrasound 2000. It's some kind of a conference. It's industry and fans in Las Vegas on the 27th and the 28th of May. We're playing Saturday the 27th from, approximately eight to nine p.m. We're trying to get some shows around that. We are getting some airplay and we'd like to get in front of some people. We're on my label in the States and it's grassroots. We're growing quickly but all the connections are not made yet.

**Do you have any interest in the Power Mad Festival?**

I'd love to play there. All the prog metal things are good. I haven't heard anything on it yet this year. I'd love to see Keith Menser's band, **Mystic Force**, play.

**It seems *Balance Of Power* is in this game for the long haul.**

Yeah, we've endured the eighties fall from grace. We kept making music through the grunge time. I think it's starting to grow again.

**What would you say *Ten More Tales* has to offer that's different**

**than your average Dream Theater sound alike band?**

I think we're songwriters. These are accessible tunes that you'll remember. We have choruses that you can hear and sing along to. There's massive amounts of melody and a wall of sound with the guitars crunching in your face. It's like if **Dream Theater** wrote songs rather than constructing epic pieces. We have some of that in there but we don't over do it. We're more accessible. We limit our self indulgence. We don't overplay or over do things. We go from the gut rather than over reaching everybody. Our name does fit the music. We grew into it.

**Would you say there is a strong literary aspect to *Balance Of Power*?**

Absolutely. The lyrics and the content are intentional. We want people to have something to sink their teeth into. Tony, the former singer, writes the lyrics and they're really good. I'm playing more of a role in that recently, but he's still very much a part of the band. Perhaps he'll become an active member again at some point.

**Tell me about Nightmare Records.**

Nightmare Records and Distribution is a melodic progressive label. We have about eight bands on it. There's **Conditioned Response**, **Gemini**, **Visionary**, **Malicious**, which are some of the bands on the label. We also have hundreds of bands that we distribute through out the world. We have a mail order as well with thousands of albums.

**Discography:**

1999... *Ten More Tales* (Nightmare)  
1998... *Book Of Secrets*  
1996... *When The World Falls Down*

**Current line-up:**

Lance King... vocals  
Pete Southern... guitars  
Bill Yates... guitars  
Chris Dale... bass  
Lionel Hicks... drums

**Website:**

[www.nightmare-records.com](http://www.nightmare-records.com)





Interview with guitarist Brian Griffin

One of the most overlooked albums of the year comes to us in the form of **Broken Hope's** Martyr Music debut, *Grotesque Blessings*. **Broken Hope's** fifth full length is an incredibly technical, almost melodic death metal album that still features their grinding speed and Joe Ptacek's recognizable growl. After a brief departure Joe is back in **Broken Hope**. When listening to this album several times I realize that not only will your average **Cannibal Corpse** fan love this record but also all you technical death metal heads who worship bands like **Atheist, Cynic, Death, and Pestilence**. I corresponded with guitarist/ producer Brian Griffin via e-mail right before he went out as **Satyricon's** sound man on their American tour.

**Are you happy with the new record?**

I am pretty happy with it. The recording process was a bit trying but once it was finished it was great. It was worth taking the time to put it together right.

**How did the tour go?**

The shows were good but the tour as a whole was planned and promoted poorly. Hopefully the next time we go out things will get taken care of a little better. We did everything on our end that we could but a lot of people dropped the ball on us and we were left out on the road twisting in the wind wondering if the next show was actually going to happen. The shows that we were able to do were pretty amazing so it was all worth it I guess. We stuck it out as long as we could until the money ran out and we were forced to return home. We probably should have waited on touring until the album was out for a little while.

**What are you up to at the moment?**

Right now I am doing the new **Em Sinfonia** record. It is called *Intimate Portrait* and will be out this fall. We have added a stronger female vocalist to the line-up and things are definitely looking up. **Broken Hope** will write a new record later this summer.

**Are you recording any new bands?**

Right now I will be hitting the road to work with **Satyricon** for a few weeks and when I return I will be recording the new **Novembers Doom** record as well.

**What's the story with Joe, is he back in the band again?**

He is back now. He was unable to do the tour and that is all.

**How did the singer from Numb Skull work out for you?**

Scott was amazing and he helped us out a great deal. As if I am not busy enough I am also doing another project with him as well. It is another death metal band but far different than **Broken Hope** with some fresh musicians to work with.

**There's some great bass playing, despite having several guests, do you plan to have a full time bass player next time?**

We have a bassist right now. His name is Sean Baxter. He is the violinist for **Em Sinfonia** and he also plays guitar and bass. He worked out great on the last tour.

**The music is so technical and well produced that Broken Hope sounds like they could appeal to fans of bands like Cynic and Pestilence, I hope**

**people take notice of the supreme musicianship. Care to comment?**

Thanks for the compliment. We try to improve as players with every release without compromising what **Broken Hope** is all about. You can hear the improvement as well as the older style. Every album we do will be an experiment in something new but we will never stop doing what we have done in the past.

**How is the new Em Sinfonia record coming along?**

We have twelve new songs near completion and will hit the studio in May. There will be some cover songs we will have on special release. We plan to hit radio with one of them this summer before the album is released. The cover art will be done by James Barnhard who did the **Broken Hope** cover so you know it will be a nice package. We have really fine tuned our songwriting and with our new vocalist, who we will name in a press release soon, they come out much stronger. She has a very powerful voice and a lot more experience.

**Is there any bands that you would like to work with that you have not been able to yet?**

Not really. I take them as they come. I am up to working with anyone and I really don't chase after certain bands.

**What are your future plans for Broken Hope?**

We have been taking some time off but we hope to do a local show this summer and begin writing the new album. If we are offered any tours we will go out but I guess we will see what happens.

**When do you see a new record being recorded?**

Most likely this fall provided **Em Sinfonia** is not on the road. We will

start writing around August.

**Any final comments?**

Thanks for the interview and thanks to everyone that has purchased and supported *Grotesque Blessings*. All current info and merchandise can be found on [BrokenHope.com](http://BrokenHope.com) so don't believe any rumors that are being so read about a break up.

**Discography:**

1999... *Grotesque Blessings* (Martyr)  
1997... *Loathing* (Metal Blade)  
1995... *Repulsive Conception* (Metal Blade)  
1993... *The Bowels Of Repugnance* (Metal Blade)  
1991... *Swamped In Gore* (Metal Blade)

**Current line-up:**

Joe Ptacek... vocals  
Brian Griffin... guitars  
Jeremy Wagner... guitars  
Sean Baxter... bass  
Larry DeMumbrum... drums

**Website:**

[www.brokenhope.com](http://www.brokenhope.com)



# CELTIC FROST

Interview with vocalist/ guitarist Thomas Fischer and drummer Reed St. Mark

Without Celtic Frost, who would know what many of today's avantgarde, experimental bands would be. Would Therion, Usurper, or even Dark Throne exist? Their influence is so important that many people may have taken early classics like *Morbid Tales* or even their crowning achievement, the greatly experimental and risk taking *Into the Pandemonium* and developed those ideas into their own bands. Recently Noise decided to properly reissue all of the Celtic Frost catalogue, with the exception of the universally disappointing *Cold Lake*. Thomas Fischer flew in to New York to do some interviews about his past band while getting ready to release a new album with his new band *Apollyon Sun*. I had the pleasure of drummer Reed St. Mark also in attendance as he and Thomas met face to face for the first time in years.

## How do you feel about the reissues?

**Thomas:** I feel really good because we did them. I'm very happy because this is how the band always wanted it and it's been a long time coming. It's been fifteen years. For the first time we have the right artwork and the photos are appropriate for each era. The lyrics are on there as opposed to what the label did. We put photos that were in our archives that weren't on the originals. We put the entire recording sessions on these albums. It's much more comprehensive.

## What was your original vision with Hellhammer?

**Thomas:** There was no vision in *Hellhammer*, all we did was copy *Venom*. We realized we became proficient enough as musicians to convey our own ideas. We left *Hellhammer* and started *Celtic Frost*. We wanted to expand existing borders and make the kind of music that wasn't necessarily played before.

## What's your opinion of *Into the Pandemonium*?

**Reed:** Groundbreaking. It was so risky because it wasn't commercially viable. Artistically it was ambitious. It was such a cool album but nobody was ready for it. We had opera singers singing in French over violinists.

**Thomas:** I was conducting by the way. It took many months before it got anywhere. We had to tour first to prove that despite all the experiments there was still a lot of power in the band. The fans were very skeptical. We were pretty sure it was gonna fail.

## There must have been a lot of time put into that album.

**Thomas:** It was fucking hell doing that album. There was six months of extremely boring rehearsals. We drove each other insane.

**Reed:** If you take a chance like that on our level with the industry it's really hard because we have to produce a viable product and it wasn't metal. "Inner Sanctum" is heavy. Every song on that album I think is true Frost.

## Was *Cold Lake* a result of the time and frustration put into *Into the Pandemonium*?

**Thomas:** *Cold Lake* is a polaroid picture of the frame of mind that I was in. Thirteen months of legal procedures with Noise left me with the frame of mind that I didn't want to do anything dark or heavy. I always describe it as a release. It was a mistake to do this in public. It was the one mistake we made as a band and I can live with that. We were always an experimental band and we always knew when an experiment failed. Even though we couldn't harvest it because we were in legal proceedings against the record company, but by the end of '87 *Pandemonium* was our break through album. We were very proud of that album at the time.

**Reed:** Maybe the readers would like to hear but Tom and I had great discourse for many years. There was a lot in the press and I'm glad this has all come to pass because it was embarrassing to me.

**Thomas:** Then there's Martin. Anything bad about Martin- let's print it!

**Reed:** We were in this red neck diner, in Mississippi or Alabama- shirt and shoes required. Martin borrowed a pair of flower, lacy trunks that I used for swimming. Big black boots with pointy ends, tiny racing shorts, and a leather jacket with fringes- nothing else. Someone in the diner says "we don't wear pants like that down here boy." Martin sat at his own table, he wouldn't even sit with us. Then we go to a 7-11 in Texas. The tour bus tears off up the interstate and there's Martin standing in the parking lot. We came back and he's sitting there reading his

magazines, calmly turning pages.

**Thomas:** I love Martin Ain. You can put the recorder on pause now!

## *Vanity/ Nemesis* is a greatly underrated album.

**Thomas:** There's a lot of experiments on there that weren't used for shock value, we did it in an accomplished way. It was integrated into the music. The cornerstones to our career were *Into the Pandemonium* and *Vanity/ Nemesis*.

## That was one of the first songs I learned how to play on guitar.

**Thomas:** So I messed up your life in other words.

## How do you feel about everyone pronouncing your band's name wrong all these years?

**Thomas:** You can pronounce it any way you want. There's no way around it, people just always pronounced the Celtic ("Keltic") with a "s" sound. It's the way people say it.



## Is there any possibility of you guys working together again?

**Thomas:** Why do you think Reed is sitting here? I've been trying to get him into *Apollyon Sun* for two years. He might take my offer eventually. I definitely want to work with him again. He's my brother.

## How about Martin?

**Thomas:** Are you crazy?! If we do a Celtic Frost album it, of course, it couldn't be without Martin but no way. There's a sign on my doorway that says "Martin Out!". I couldn't

get rid of the stench from the last time he was there. Stephen had the chance to be Celtic Frost's full time drummer but he just wanted to work in the studio.

**Reed:** I didn't play on that first album but it's the best album ever.

## What happened after *Vanity/ Nemesis*?

**Thomas:** We started working on the successor to *Into the Pandemonium*. We were working on a double album. It was gonna be a lot more experimental than *Pandemonium*. We got contract offers for it but people wanted it to be a single album or that we drop the most radical experiments but at the time I was so self confident and we felt we were the only ones who knew what a Celtic Frost song was supposed to be and we weren't gonna compromise. They didn't want to accept the album that we wanted. We ended the band on a high note. Not only did we end it with *Vanity/ Nemesis* but we didn't sell out and stuck to our principles. Celtic Frost was a major part of our lives for ten years and it was hard to end it. The power and simplicity was the basis for everything.

## Is there any chance of the unreleased album seeing a release?

**Thomas:** No. A lot of that material has been used for *Apollyon Sun* in modernized versions. In one form or another you will see it.

## How would you compare what you're doing with *Apollyon Sun* to Celtic Frost?

**Thomas:** It's very similar. It's more textured. The approach is exactly the same. There's no barriers or boundaries.

## Will there be a new Celtic Frost album sometime in the future?

**Reed:** Definitely.

**Thomas:** I would be into doing one, wouldn't you Reed?

**Reed:** All three of us?

**Thomas:** Yes, even Martin!

## Discography:

- 1992... Parched With Thirst Am I And Dying (Noise)
- 1990... *Vanity/ Nemesis* (Noise)
- 1988... *Cold Lake* (Noise)
- 1987... *Into The Pandemonium* (Noise)
- 1986... *To Mega Therion* (Noise)
- 1984... *Morbid Tales* (Noise)



Interview with vocalist and guitarist Daniel Corchado

One band that has really grabbed my attention has located from their native Mexico to the United States and have signed a deal with Dwell Records who officially release their first American record, *Procession to the Infraworld*. **The Chasm** had released three records but not until 1998's, *Deathcult for Eternity*, did they gain attention in America. **The Chasm** play a style of death metal that is long on atmosphere and guitar work, with a dark and sometimes experimental edge. There is no band out there that one can compare to **The Chasm** because they have worked hard to develop their sound and they do not follow any trends or previous bands. While they maintain an underground vibe to their music, they also have a fresh sound that is energetic and exciting. I spoke to the friendly Daniel Corchado about his move to the U.S. and the deal he signed with Dwell Records.

#### Are you satisfied with the recording?

Yes, we are. This is our first release in America. Some things can be better with the production but we are very satisfied. Dwell is really supportive. They're doing a great job and they believe in the music.

#### What is important to The Chasm?

We have created a unique style. You can't compare the band to anyone else. The music comes from our hearts. We're passionate about our death metal roots. We're living in modern times. We're playing what we feel. We don't care about anything that's hard or trendy. We only care about ourselves. Our passion for our music has gotten us to this point. We moved to America to get a better label and better opportunities for the band. Our music has to be dark and extreme. It should be extremely slow or bizarre. I'm surprised that people understood what we are doing with our music. I don't think we've got a commercial style so I don't think we're gonna sell a lot of albums. I don't care, we could sell ten copies. We have respect the true rules of heavy metal. We don't need keyboards, we don't need female vocals. I don't care about those bands. They can do whatever is good for them, especially if it's what they believe in. Your mind has no limits. As long as you know how to use your guitar and you have feeling in your music, you will create an atmosphere.

#### How was the scene in Mexico?

The scene is very good. When you're a local band you don't get the same support as American or European bands. We moved here and everything is better. When we played in Milwaukee in 1998, it was a great response.

#### Opening the album with an instrumental shows that you have confidence in your music.

Yeah, exactly. It's something we like to do since the last album. Taking something from albums like *Hell Awaits*, it's that you have to prepare people for what they are going to hear. That instrumental is the a brilliant example of the title of the album, *The Procession*. It's a journey. We know what we are doing and we believe in that instrumental starting the chaos. If we don't believe in what we are doing there's no point. People with good metal tastes will understand what we are doing. When we play that song it's so powerful. Every single note we feel. These days you have intros with cheesy keyboards. There's so many bands out there and the quality is getting lower. To release an album these days you have to have something that is really fresh but you have to respect the essence of metal.

#### How do you like living in Chicago?

It's pretty good. The worst thing in Chicago is the weather. We're not used to the really cold temperatures. We want to take the band to a higher level and we have to bite the bullet. I really like the scene. There's a lot of good bands like **Cianide** and **Impaled**. We're in the right place.

#### How was your experience with Incantation?

I joined as a session member and after the record I was supposed to be a permanent member. My time with them was enough and it was time for me to move on and continue the legacy of **The Chasm**. When I left Mexico, a lot of shit happened for that last album. We had problems with the production and the mixing without me in Mexico. Some people were spreading the rumor that **The Chasm** was done. Antonio, the drummer, has stuck with me. We have a lot of potential and we can do better here, in the States. We got some help from some people from Ceno-

taph who came to Chicago to play the Milwaukee Metalfest with us. Things didn't work out with **Cenotaph** when they were here. The main brain, decided to stay with us for good. We composed *Procession* between him and I. He's an excellent guitar player and he's got great ideas. We knew we could work out together but he was in **Cenotaph**. Antonio and I have been the only original members but Julio has been in this for years. We have the same feelings for the music.

#### What are your tour plans?

We're working on that. It's tough, you need money, you need support. We're gonna wait a couple of months and see how the album is doing. We have a few bands that we'd like to tour with, but it depends on how the album goes. It's a business and you need money to survive on the road. When we signed with Dwell, they were just doing tributes. People don't believe in that, you've got to step up to the plate. They're doing excellent promotion. They're gonna release the album on a digi-pack. It makes you feel good. They're happy with the music and the production. They are doing a great job. They're releasing **Coffin Texts** and us and Dwell is putting a lot of money into their promotion. Right now we are priorities.

#### Tell me about your other albums.

Our debut, *Procreation of the Inner Temple*, was released in 1994. It suffered from a really weak production. The music is more progressive and weird. I'm proud of every record we've done. In '95 we released *The Lost Years*. They are slower albums and more experimental and darker. They are really good albums. The first one is available through Relapse. They pressed fifteen hundred of the first one and we sold twenty five hundred of the second one. The studios and producers are a big problem in Mexico. This record was recorded in Indiana. My only complaint is that it's digital, I would want analogue.

#### Have you written new material?

We have six or seven new songs. Other than work, we just do music. I don't know when we are gonna record, maybe at the end of the year. We have to relax. We compose very quick. We have ideas and we have to put them in songs.

#### How was the New Jersey Metalfest?

It was fucking killer. One of the best responses we've ever had. I'm used to a lot of disappointments but I have high hopes for the band. People in America aren't familiar with us, we've been around for eight years. It took almost ten years to get here and this is what we've been fighting for. We want to take our band to different people and record the music the way it was meant to be. We want to take **The Chasm** to a higher level. We left everything in Mexico. I'm here with my long time girlfriend. She's so supportive. I've been with her for eight years. I've been able to survive through hard times because of my metal and my girl. We are so pleased with everything. People have been really supportive.

#### Discography:

2000... *Procession To The Infraworld* (Dwell)  
1998... *Deathcult For Eternity* (Oz)  
1995... *The Lost Years* (Art/ Reborn)  
1994... *Procreation Of The Inner Temple* (Art/ Reborn)



# Coffin Texts

Interview with vocalist and bassist Bobby Cardenas

I was first introduced to California's **Coffin Texts** via Dwell Records many tribute records. Because each song was a cover I was unable to tell what **Coffin Texts** would sound like. Now Dwell Records has issued their debut, *Gods of Creation Death and Afterlife*, and many fans of death metal will not be disappointed with this great new band. Rarely does a debut sound this accomplished. **Coffin Texts** play straight ahead death metal with an emphasis on heaviness and riffs. In addition to that, this band takes great pride in their presentation as the logo and cover art obviously exhibits. **Coffin Texts** have developed a theme that makes *Gods of Creation Death and Afterlife* sound like a cohesive record and one that is filled with passion. Here is Bobby to tell us more about it.

**Are you happy with how everything's come out?**  
We're happy with the whole layout and everything.

**When did the band first get together?**

In 1994, I was in a band called **Entity** and we had some problems with our singer. He had stabbed our guitarist. That's the guy who plays in **Infamy** now. Me and



Richard was in **Entity** and we split and formed **Coffin Texts** and the other two guys went on and formed **Infamy**.

**It appears that you take a lot of care with the visual presentation of the band.**

I do all the graphics. I spend a lot of time on that. It's evolved into what it is now.

**Is there a concept going on?**

I got the name **Coffin Texts** from a friend of mine who played in **Demolition**. **Entity** was still going so I saved the name in my head. I did research on the name and we came up with the whole concept of the *Gods of Creation Death and Afterlife*. It's an Egyptian theme. We had this whole since '95. Some people think we're copying Nile but we've been around since 1994. The layout has been like that the whole time. "Coffin Texts" and "Ethereal Conjunction", those songs are Egyptian but the other ones are more spiritual. The whole thing has to deal with

dying and having their spirit going somewhere. Nile talks about when the Egyptians were alive, we talk about them after they're dead.

**What's your tour situation?**

We did one small tour in 1996 with **Infamy**. We did a couple in Texas, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. That was the last time we went on the road. We're trying to get on the road right now, we're just waiting for good offers.

**How would you describe the sound of Coffin Texts?**

It's grinding, fast, and very, very heavy. Vocal wise, it's just growling. We wanted the heavy type of sound. Most of the bands that we were into have the early nineties Earache sound, like *Realm of Chaos (Bolt Thrower)*, *Carcass' Symphonies of Sickness*. I like a lot of the bands coming out now but there's nothing that's really awesome.

**Where will the sound go in the future?**

On the next album we're gonna change the context a little bit. We're gonna try to record by the end of the year and put out another eight songs. These are kind of old. We've got three songs now. The new songs still have the heaviness, they're just a little faster. Our drummer wants to go off. We're keeping the pace upbeat and quick.

**How many tribute songs did Coffin Texts end up doing?**

There's been a few. The only reason why I like doing them is because of the bands that we're doing them for is stuff that I liked as a kid. I don't even bother to count. I just like doing them. The last two songs are from the tributes but the first five songs on the record are our babies. When it came down to writing one song it would take us like a month to a month and a half. Every riff we had to make sure was brutal or catchy. When we went in the studio we knew how we wanted the harmonies. We knew what we wanted we just didn't know how it would sound when we did it. Our guitarist is not into any of the new death metal bands but he writes phenomenal riffs. I'm amazed everytime I watch him play.

**What do you hope to achieve with this record?**

We just want to put out something that we're happy with but everytime somebody goes in to the studio they think of what they could have done differently. I can look at something and know when it's time to leave it alone. I think we'll be more comfortable in the studio this time. We want to get a cleaner sound. We were rushed through this one so we want to take our time.

**I love your cover of "Disturbing the Priest".**

That's one of my favorite songs growing up. A lot of people don't even know that Ian Gillan sang for **Black Sabbath**.

**Final comments?**

Keep the death metal scene alive. People need to start going out there and supporting those gigs.

**Discography:**

2000... *Gods Of Creation Death And Afterlife* (Dwell)

**Current line-up:**

Robert Cardenas... vocals and bass  
Richard Gonzalez... guitars  
Marco Castro... drums



# cold colours

Interview with vocalist, keyboardist, and guitarist Brian Huebner

**Cold Colours** is a band that absolutely floored me. Their debut, *Somnium XIII*, is an unusual blend of progressive metal, gothic atmospheres, an industrial touch, blended with some death metal for good measure. Some may feel that **Cold Colours** are too diverse and haven't decided on a direction but I find this record to be fresh and exciting. It's a modern mix of atmosphere and aggression but with an open minded attitude and a willingness to experiment without sounded pretentious or contrived. Each song on their debut stands on its own as a single entity. I spoke with main man, Brian Huebner, who is currently looking for some musicians to complete **Cold Colours'** line-up.

## Are you happy with how this album has come out?

Not completely. In the thanks list I wrote thanks for the following people for making my vision come as close as possible, we didn't have enough money for recording. The first mix was the last mix because we didn't have the money to go back. You hear all these flaws. In the first song the keyboards are completely off to the left and the rough vocals are on the right channel. There are a lot of things that are really bad when you hear them now. The newer stuff is progressing a lot differently. Listening to that is like listening to an album that I did five years ago.

## Does the album represent a culmination of writing through out the years?

Yeah. I started the project under the name **Wolfthorn** in 1995. I had demo versions of a lot of the songs on there and they were horrible. I wanted to get a real recording of those old songs.

## How has the response been so far?

It's only been out for two weeks. They're telling me at the store that they're selling quite a few of them. The main focus on the album was trying to bring all my influences into one and keep people interested because there are a lot of cool albums out there that start out really good and by the fifth song it's the same song over and over. I understand that a lot of people are gonna listen to it and be into certain tracks and not others. That's fine because if they like those tracks it'll get to a certain audience.



## Why did you change the name to Cold Colours?

I had the name **Wolfthorn** and I didn't want people to be misled and think that it was a black metal band. The name **Cold Colours** came as a scramble. We were in the studio when I decided to change the name. Me and drummer were looking through c.d.'s trying to look for a name and we picked up the last **Rotting Christ** album and there's a song called "Cold Colours" and I liked that. We liked that because when you hear the name **Cold Colours** you don't think one kind of band. A lot of bands progress like **Moonspell** did. When they did *Sin* I think a lot of that

didn't catch on with a different crowd because they were still called **Moonspell**. Then the black metal people pick it up and they hate it. You have to get a universal name or else you aren't gonna go further than where you first started.

## What is your music gonna progress into?

I'm finding my sound more now. With the first c.d. I was exploring many different options. I've been listening to newer albums from **Anathema** and **Katatonia** and that stuff is blowing my mind. It's got the progressiveness and the ethereal feel of **Pink Floyd** but it still has the heaviness. The drummer is a big prog rock guy, he's into **King Crimson**, **Gentle Giant**, and **Genesis** so it's got a little of that into it. Right now it's just me and him. We're playing our first live show in a month but unfortunately I don't have a band right now so it's difficult to play live shows and promote it. I've just got to keep hiring people. The guy who plays in **Nothing** and **Agalloch** played keyboards for us last year. I go to the Milwaukee Metalfest and it's all the same. The sixteen year old **Mortician** fan must have a heyday. I'm bringing in a lot of influences. I'm never gonna keep myself in one frame of mind for writing music. I don't want to be stuck in the metal scene completely. I'm thinking a lot further than getting on Earache Records or getting on the cover of

*Pit* magazine. A lot of bands get close minded and they only play metal shows and metal festivals. I want to be able to quit my job and play in my band. I want to be able to take three months off and tour.



## What are your goals for this album?

I definitely need a new label because of my parting with the **Root of All Evil** label. The label was actually started by me and **Earl Root**. **Left Alone Creations** was my division of the label. We had a parting because I wanted to go back to school and I didn't want to concen-

trate all my efforts on the label. I really started having a difference of opinion with what he was releasing on the label. I wasn't one hundred percent committed to it. To be fair, I felt I had to step out before it got too big. He took it the wrong way and thought I was stabbing him in the back. He disowned me. I just want to get my music out.

## Tell me about the lyrical content.

Half of the lyrics are derived from dreams. The album is called *Somnium XIII* and *somnium* is the Latin word for dream. When you combine the depression and dream with the unlucky number, thirteen, the name is what the album title means. It has to do with my dream world because I get so depressed in the real world. I can do anything there. A lot of it deals with personal feelings. There's a song called "Awake" that's my ode to every woman I've been involved with and screwed over by. You're killing me now but I'm gonna have the last laugh. The lyrics for "Misguided Entity" is about this friend of mine who was a total die hard Christian but you knew that she was only doing it because she had to. You could see the sinner inside of her. Two of the new songs, the drummer wrote the lyrics for. I usually write the majority of the lyrics. I'm a depressed guy so that's what usually comes forth. The lyrics are not a fantasy, they deal with what I'm feeling at the time.

## What is your source of your depression?

Day to day life. I've had horrible luck with women in my life, money problems, band problems. It took me five years to get a release out. With the band that I was involved before that we recorded an album four years ago and it still hasn't been released. I've been playing music for thirteen years and now I finally get a release out. It breaks you down.

## What is Dwole like?

I still do that as a side project. I do that as a dark ambient experimental thing. I put that c.d. out in late '98. It's still something that I do but it's a side thing. It's not something that I could play live if I tried. I'm concentrating my efforts on **Cold Colours**.

## When you have a stable line-up will they all contribute?

I can see that to a point. It's my outlet for what I'm doing but I want to find the right people to work with. I like the idea of having the band voting on things.

## Who did the vocals on *Somnium XIII*?

I did all the vocals and David helped out on a couple of songs. He's got the alto voice. I had a female singer on two of the songs. She was nervous in the studio and you can tell on one of the songs.

## Final comments?

If you know anybody who wants to join, I need a band. The second album is written but I have no label support.

## Discography:

1999... *Somnium XIII* (**Root Of All Evil**)

## Current line-up:

Brian Huebner... vocals, guitars, and keyboards  
David Richardson... drums

# Ian Parry's Consortium Project

Interview with vocalist Ian Parry

Ian Parry's **Consortium Project** is an all star project that showcases a variety of power metal talent. Parry has been performing in metal bands since the early eighties. Among the bands he has recorded albums with are **Hammerhead**, **Perfect Strangers**, and **Vengeance**. He began his solo career in the mid ninties and the **Consortium Project** is his fourth solo record to date. Ian is perhaps best known for his work on the last three **Elegy** albums. Like Roy Khan has done with Ian's buddies in **Kamelot**, Ian brought a sense of maturity to **Elegy's** recent output. We last spoke to Ian about a eight months ago when he was in Florida recording songs with **Kamelot** guitarist Thom Youngblood and bassist Casey Grillo. Here is Ian to tell us about the **Consortium Project**.

## How do you feel about the new record?

I'm incredibly pleased with the results. I never expected it to do so well. I'm proud of the musicians who joined me on the project. I was surprised how easy it was to work with them, especially producing the album myself. I'm also overwhelmed with how the songs came out. When you start out with a basic riff and you play it on the keyboards it's hard to anticipate how it's gonna sound with the guitars but fortunately for me everything's turned out better than I had hoped for.

## It must be difficult working with so many different musicians.

I was conscious about the style of each musician. "The Entity" I specifically wrote that for Patrick Rondat. He does instrumental albums. When I first started writing the songs, Patrick played "House of Cards" and I realized afterwards that I arranged the song so compact that the solo is very short. Patrick is very well known by fans so I thought it would be a nice compliment for him if I came up with an instrumental piece he can solo over.

## Did you get everybody that you wanted to work with on this record?

No, there was one person who unfortunately couldn't make the album- that was Adrian Vandenberg. I've known Adrian since 1983 when I joined **Hammerhead** and our direct competition in Holland was **Vandenberg**. They had a hit single called "Burning Heart" in America. We kept in contact over the years. I almost joined **Vandenberg** in '86 but I had moved back to London. In '88 I formed a band called **Perfect Strangers** with the drummer from **Vandenberg**, Jos Zoomer. I always wanted to do something with Adrian and when I phoned him up last year his girlfriend was about to give birth to their new child, and he was still under contract with the old management. He had to wait until the contract expired before he could do anything else.

## What can you say about the lyrical content of the Consortium Project?

I'm very conscious of what I do with the lyrical content. I like to discover new words. With the English language we have the tendency to be able to fit our language very easily to music as far as vocal melody is concerned. It's nice to take words and twist the word out of its context in an abstract form. The lyrics are very important to me, for one being a singer but also I've improved in my use of vocabulary. I spend a lot of time on the lyrics. First and foremost for the fans is the music. If they like the music, then they'll listen to what the vocalist is doing. At the end they read the lyrics. It makes it extra special. I realized there were a lot of bands writing in a fantasy direction, using adventures and stories in a medieval theme. The most natural thing to write about was things that I came in contact with in my life. It's not a concept record, it's a reflection of life. When I was a kid growing up in Liverpool I was taught to abide by the rules, then I saw a report on the B.B.C. news about the police breaking the same laws they're supposed to be policing. I used a phrase in the lyrics "a parallax view". I wanted to express the situation of the police in Scotland Yard being the criminal and a parallax view is when you look at something from one position, then you change your position and view it again- it creates a completely different impression. On the face of it, it looks like the police are the good guys but if you look closer there's also criminal in the police force. "Criminals and Kings" is a term I used as a reflection of how is that people work all their lives and they don't achieve much. Other people don't do much and achieve anything they want. People don't get the same opportunities in life. The only F.M. rock song on the album, "Chain of Fear", I wrote that song as a song of hope for Japan because they are having problems with unemployment and recession. It's a song that is appropriate for anybody. It's a song of hope, a song of courage. Since I did the **Consortium Project** debut, there's such a demand that it would be nice for me to do a three album project. I have already recorded a new track in Tampa, Florida with Thom Youngblood. That's gonna be for the **Consortium Project II** record. Hopefully that will be out towards the end of this year. I'm now busy with the new **Elegy**

album. We're all writing now and picking the best selection of songs. I've written four **Consortium** songs myself, but now I'm asking people to write some for me. It can give the fans something extra, rather than just me write all the material. It was a challenge for me as a singer to write all the songs myself. I've done that now and it's out of my system. I now want to give the musicians that I work with the opportunity to contribute their ideas and influences in the album.

## Was this the first time handling the production?

I did three solo albums in the past. The **Consortium Project** is a band project, I've been trying to bring that message across to everybody. I use my name in the same way the Richie Blackmore did with **Rainbow**. On the second album I'm gonna drop my name. **Consortium** was a gamble for me. I didn't have any idea how it would turn out. I produced the second and third solo albums myself. I've taken more interest in the technical side of recording albums. This is the first time that I discovered the best technique for recording guitars. I must admit I'm becoming more and more interested in going into producing records. At the end of the day it's still all about songs. You can have a good production and fantastic songs and an album will still sell, you can have a mediocre songs and a great production and it won't sell. I've learned how to arrange songs a lot better these days. You can never stop learning with music. You can never stop experimenting with new ideas and new directions. If you can pick up an acoustic guitar and strum four chords and you can recognize the song then it's a good song. As long as the fans appreciate what I'm doing and I can sell enough records to cover the recording budget then I'll keep on going. I'm starting to realize that the interaction between the fans helps us. It's easy to underestimate the power of the fans. If you listen to what **Queensryche** has done with the last couple of albums, you realize that they have underestimated the opinion of the fans. An artist makes their biggest mistake when they don't listen to the fans. I self financed this album with a partner in Europe. I licensed the album from my own label, Non Stop Productions, to Japan, America, and South America. My business partner licensed it to Europe. I was afraid when I joined **Elegy**. I had to prove myself to the guys. With the old singer of **Elegy**, I have a lot of admiration for him. He has excitement in his voice. I would love to do an album where Edward sings with me. It would be so special for the fans. His voice is high range, I have more of a traditional bluesy/ power voice. I was so happy that the fans have accepted me. With **Queensryche**, when you change your style you should change your name. **Vengeance** made that classic mistake. If we dropped the name and came up with a new name I believe I would still be working with the same musicians. We should always be conscious of our original style and why fans bought the albums from the beginning.

## Tell me about the first three solo albums you released.

After **Vengeance** split up in 1992 we did a farewell tour in Holland and we had a compilation album out through Sony with a lot of new material. The first album is a cross between A.O.R. and R & B. The budget was very limited. To my amazement I sold four and half thousand albums in Europe. With the money that I earned from the first record I decided to make a better production and get better musicians. The second album is more a rock album with a tendency to go for ballads. I realized it wasn't just about the production and writing better songs, it was also about the marketing. I had a tendency to spend too much money on the production and I had no money towards the promotion. The third album was a more hard rock/ progressive album. I released that album in Japan and they bought my back catalogue. I loved recording the albums but it was a tough time selling them to the distributors in the Netherlands. I think the best thing for a band to do is what I did- raise the finance if you can, record the album with a producer if you can afford it, and then license the product to other companies.

## Discography:

- 1999... Consortium Project (Inside Out)
- 1995... Through The Looking Glass (Non Stop Productions)
- 1994... Artistic License (Non Stop Productions)
- 1993... Symphony Of Dreams (Non Stop Productions)

## Websites:

- [www.gatewaytorondat.force9.co.uk/consortium.html](http://www.gatewaytorondat.force9.co.uk/consortium.html)
- [www.herion.nl/ian\\_parry](http://www.herion.nl/ian_parry)

# D.C. COOPER

Interview with vocalist D.C. Cooper

One of the most pleasant surprises in recent months has been the self titled debut of ex-Royal Hunt vocalist D.C. Cooper. D.C. recruited such artists as **Pink Cream 69** members, Alfred Koffler (guitars), Dennis Ward (Bass), and Kosta Zafiriou (drums), **Ark**, ex-**Conception** guitarist Tore Ostby, and **Vanden Plas** keyboardist Guenter Werno. This Alliance pulls together musicians from the American, German, and Norwegian markets. Many thought that D.C. would come out with an album that would spotlight his acrobatic vocals and perhaps consist of many ballads, however, D.C. has written an album of songs with an emphasis on power as well as melody. People familiar with the grossly underrated **Pink Cream 69** should not be surprised by the quality of the music represented here. Album closer, "The Union" is perhaps one of the most exciting and exhilarating songs ever written. Here is the vocalist behind the Alliance, D.C. Cooper to explain.

## How did you get this band together?

At the end of the '97 *Paradox* tour with **Royal Hunt** they had decided to take a break. That's when I seized the opportunity to put this package together. I didn't want to wait and do nothing, waiting for the leader of that band to get the new album together. I always wanted to get a group of guys together who I enjoyed and respected over the years. That happened with these guys. Putting it together wasn't so difficult. The biggest problem was the schedules. It went beyond my expectations. It ended up being a team not just a project. It's hard to call it a solo album. The label in Germany and in Japan wanted to keep it D.C. Cooper so it was to their advantage, that's why we went that route. We really jelled well together.

## Did you write all the material on your own?

I worked with Tore and Koffler. We did all the music together and I did all the lyrics and the melody arrangements. It was great to see how Tore and Koffler accented each other. I always wanted to use two lead guitarists and get back to the days of **Maiden** and **Priest**. With these two guys there was no attitude whatsoever. There was a very healthy competition. When we do this live they're fantastic on stage. Those guys are definitely underrated. Koffler is a straight ahead metal guitar player. Tore is very free with his playing and his writing. He writes without anybody else in mind, no trends, no categories. I did have to curve him into a particular range with what I wanted to do on this album. The **Ark** album is a musicians album.

## What's your take on your departure from Royal Hunt?

I was fired. I didn't get a call directly, I found out over the internet. Their comments in return was that it was my fault because I wasn't calling them and I was using my attorneys. The situation was brewing for a long time. At first they didn't have a problem with me going solo, then they did, then they didn't, then they did. Even after I was fired I tried to stay politically correct. I don't think that it's good to trash anybody in the press. I had a great five and a half year run with those guys. I enjoyed it. It's time to move on. I had every intention of doing the next album but my contract was up and we were negotiating. We were close to having everything finalized but then out of the clear blue I got nailed. Andre does what Andre wants. Steen stuck up for me for the longest time and he continues to do so, which is great. He's one of the ones that I miss the most. I know J.K. doesn't miss me at all. With Andre and I it was hard to see eye to eye, politically and creatively. That should be called the Andre Andersen solo project.

## Did you have any writing input with Royal Hunt?

I had some but I didn't get credit for publishing. Especially with the *Paradox* album having to do with religion, my views were completely different. There were a lot of things that I won't sing. Whenever you're making a political or a religious statement you better be ready to back up what you say. I tried to tone it done and keep it safe but we still got a lot of criticism about it. Other than Andre I had the most freedom in the band. He couldn't write for me, as far as singing is concerned. On good thing about it was that I could concentrate on my style, but I enjoyed working on the solo album better. I can sing with passion. I write the lyrics, I write the melodies. There's more conviction. That couldn't happen with **Royal Hunt**. I look at Andre as more than a songwriter, he's also a composer. That's something I was never able to do, that's why I like working with a team much more. Steen has been with Andre since the beginning. It took eleven years before Steen could write with **Royal Hunt**. It was a song called "Silver Child". We played it was and it only made it on a b-side. Imagine Steen being with Andre for that long and not have any publishing. I feel for Steen. Steen's a great guy. I want to say he's a better man for putting up with it. Obviously I couldn't, that's why we had some rough negotiations.

It's got to be difficult with one person being the only American and everyone else comes from another part of the world.

It's very difficult. When I first joined, I flew the day after Christmas and I had never been off the continent. I got off the airplane and met the band for the first time. We did twelve rehearsals and three days after that I found myself on stage in front of a couple thousand people in Japan. I was hired for a purpose and I knew that. I wanted the challenge. The language barrier was very tough. I was sitting there on the bus and you can't speak Danish. I'm sitting at the same table and they're talking about me. I didn't realize it at first. I was more concerned with performing. I had a couple crew members that started telling me things.

## Will you continue to work with the same musicians?

The biggest hurdle is scheduling. We just went to South America and Gunter couldn't be with us. We used the keyboardist from Superior. Gunter was out on tour with Ian Parry. It came down to the wire and he had to make the decision who to go with. He always wanted to go to South America but he already made a commitment to Ian. I understand and respect that. I would love to work with everybody exactly the same. I asked for as much from everybody as they can give and they give me much, much more. They didn't hold back. Everybody had one hundred percent free will.

## I had to touch upon "The Union" because that is one of my favorite songs ever.

The idea has to do with the angels, which is a big subject of the album. "The Union" was the last piece. The working title was "The Epic". We tried to keep everything in a time frame but on "The Union" we decided to cut loose on. Tore and I worked the hardest on it. There's a lot of people who feel that is their favorite tune on there. There was so much heart that went into it. The beginning is very sombre, Tore's crying guitar, then you have the choir part. Then it goes into the aggressive part, we went for that great build and then the final choir is like a sigh. I wanted all the emotions. I had each section on separate sheets. I'm not getting any younger. I've learned how to take what I've learned and apply it on an album. You never know how long your career is gonna hang. I feel bad for these young artists who don't pay their dues. All of a sudden it's over for them. I'm one of the most impatient people in the world but it all happens in time.

## Discography:

1999... D.C. Cooper (Inside Out)

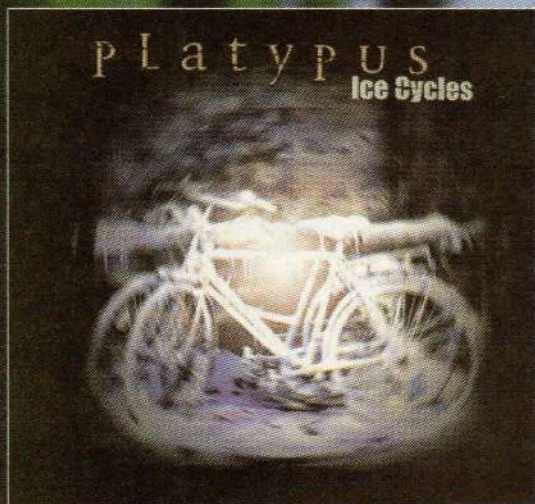
## Current line-up:

D.C. Cooper... vocals  
Alfred Koffler... guitars  
Tore Ostby... guitars  
Dennis Ward... bass  
Kosta Zafiriou... drums  
Guenter Werno... keyboards



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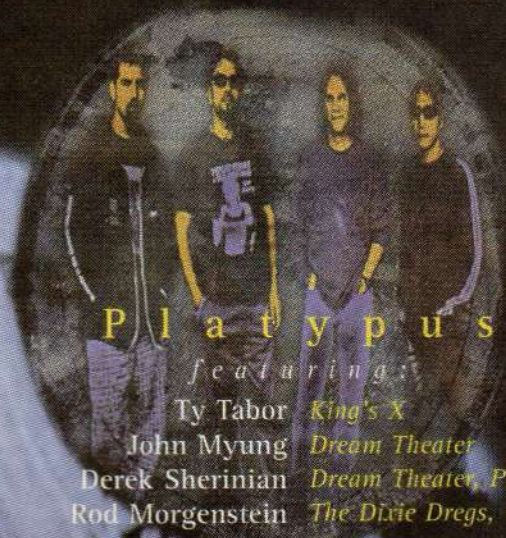


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# DARKSEED

Interview with vocalist Stefan

**Darkseed's** fourth full length, *Diving into Darkness*, has been a much talked about record. The growth that this band displayed on this new record is astounding. Their previous records pale in comparison to this well executed and produced album of progressive/ electronic/ gothic metal. *Diving into Darkness* sees **Darkseed** now incorporating electronic influences which gives the band a new dimension. In some ways, **Darkseed** have developed into a band that can rival **Moonspell** when it comes to sound and production. While the vocals are not as rough as they used to be, Stefan now utilizes a style that properly fits with the modern sound the music presents. I spoke to Stefan about how *Diving into Darkness* has shocked so many people.

## Are you happy with the new record?

I was very happy with the songs and the sound quality but the problem is that the promotional is very bad. Nuclear Blast Germany has about seventy bands and every month they release four or five albums. There is always two or three bands that do not get promoted. The reviews in the big magazines for us here has been really good with really big interviews but Nuclear Blast doesn't make any advertising and nobody understands why. I hope that Nuclear Blast America does better and I think they will. We really thought Nuclear Blast would do something because these have been the best reviews we've ever had, and they did nothing. There wasn't any advertising. There are people here in Germany that know Nuclear Blast doesn't do anything so they support us.

## I didn't even know that *Give Me Light* existed.

You're not the only one. I don't think *Give Me Light* was released in the U.S., I think *Diving into Darkness* is the first album being released in the U.S. We had some problems with Nuclear Blast when we recorded *Give Me Light* because I had a side project with some guys from **Crematory** and we cancelled a tour for this project. Nuclear Blast was angry and perhaps they didn't do anything.

## What project was that?

**Sculpture**. I left the band to concentrate on **Darkseed**.

## This album is such an improvement over past efforts, what happened?

We improved in every direction. The vocals are more varied. I use grunting vocals, I use clean vocals. The production is not the best, but it is better. The songs have better structure and are easier to get into than *Give Me Light*. There are more hook lines. Now we have choruses that you can sing. We've included more electronic sounds. I think we were very successful at mixing electronic parts and aggression. **Paradise Lost** did this very good with *One Second*. *Host* was not really cool. It's possible to combine guitars and electronics. I think we are the right band for people who are disappointed in **Paradise Lost**.

## How do you like it in Germany?

We have mountains here in the south of Germany. We have countrysides and many cows. We see New York in every t.v. show. For me, that is perhaps too big. I have ten minutes to Munich but it's not as big as New York. I would like to come over and visit New York.

## Hopefully with your band mates on a tour.

Maybe, we'll have to see how the album sales are. We are not touring through Germany. It's always the same. You see the same people and the same holes. I want to tour outside of Germany. I don't have a chance to go there. I have to admit that I wouldn't spend my holiday there. There's a really big music market here. German people don't listen to German bands, Japanese people don't listen

to Japanese bands. This is a big problem for us because we're a German band.

## How would you describe the sound on *Midnight Solemnly Dance* and *Romantic Tales*?

*Romantic Tales* was pure gothic death metal. It was cool in 1994, only grunting vocals and deep guitars, violins, and female vocals. It was cliché and typical. Many people like *Midnight Solemnly Dance*. It's very melodic and fast. The vocals are brutal and melodic. It's faster than *Diving into Darkness*. It's very unique and a lot of people liked it. We were on a very small label.

## So once again, you got no promotion.

It's okay because I also make computer game music and this brings in more money. Metal is a hobby. Computer game music is for a living. I have twenty five companies interested in my music.

## Will you do any touring?

We would like touring. It depends on the people offering us. If anyone wants to organize a few shows for us in the United States they can feel free to contact us. This person should consult our homepage and send us e-mail and we would come at once.

## How does the future look for **Darkseed**?

The more electronic, the better. We also have to regard the fans. The fans are more conservative. As a musician you are more easily bored so we always want to try something new. Some fans think *Diving into Darkness* is commercial and trendy. The opinion varies from country to country. The people in Eastern Europe say "go back into death metal", people from your country say "electronics are great". There's always typical **Darkseed** harmonies. It like bands like **Depeche Mode** and **Tangerine**

**Dream**, so more electronics would be cool.

## Final comments?

Send an e-mail. Go to our website and get in touch with us if you want to see us play live.

## Discography:

2000... *Diving Into Darkness* (Nuclear Blast)  
1999... *Give Me Light* (Nuclear Blast)  
1997... *Spellcraft* (Nuclear Blast)  
1996... *Midnight Solemnly Dance* (Serenades)  
1994... *Romantic Tales* (Invasion)

## Current line-up:

Stefan... vocals  
Tommy... guitars  
Tom... guitars

## Website:

[www.darkseed.com](http://www.darkseed.com)



# DECEMBER

Interview with vocalist Mark Moots

**December** is band that really caught my attention. They play a harsh form of metal that contains elements of grind, hardcore, even death metal and combines them into their own style that is extreme and passionate. In some respects, **December** belong to the same late 90's class of bands like **Breach**, **Spite**, and **Cardio Vascular Sub Hypothermia**. It is a scene that takes extreme emotions and aggression but focuses more on a heavy bottom end and tries to emphasize diversity within the songs to make each element seem intense. **December** come from Nevada and had previously released their debut, *Rise of the Fall* a few years ago. They initially released *Hoping Praying Nothing* on their own as well but after signing with Inzane Records they decided to rerelease it with a couple of new tracks. **December** have been creating a buzz in the extreme metal press and trust me, every word is true. I spoke to vocalist Mark Moots about **December**.

## How long has December been together?

Since September of '94. The only thing that changed after a year and a half or so, was that we added Julian on second guitar. No line-up changes, nobody quit- which is rare. We've all been friends for a long time.

## How would you describe your sound?

It's probably a mixture of the different stuff we listen to. We all listen to extreme music but we also listen to bands like **Kings X**, Julian is a big **Beatles** buff, and I'm into Jeff Buckley and Devin Townsend. I like songs. I get off on the aggression and extremity of things but I also like to have something stuck in your head, something you can hum along with. We're trying to write songs instead of a riff fest with screams over them.

## Are you happy with your vocal style?

It's been a lot of experimentation. I'm trying to keep it different. I see a lot of bands with a guy who can do one thing, even if he does it well. I'm trying to change it up. I'm not doing anything overtly melodic so I have to give some sense of dynamics with the pitches and the styles. I'm not opposed to doing any melodic vocals but we haven't found a part where it would fit in our style. I do what the part calls for. Sometimes a low voice works and sometimes screaming my bloody head off works. This is my instrument in the band so I try to play it with as much conviction as everybody else.

## It's funny that you mention Devin Townsend, the guy is a genius.

The **Ocean Machine** record is an amazing, melodic record that will take you to the waves. **Infinity** is schizophrenic as hell, Devin has totally lost his mind. One minute it's total lunacy and then the next minute it's this amazing hook that you won't get out of your head for a week. The guy is a genius. He is my favorite songwriter. It took me about ten listens for **Infinity** and it just clicked.

## Tell me about *Rise of the Fall*.

We put out a c.d. in '96 on our own. We did one pressing of it and sold them all. We were getting ready to record the next one and we ended up running out of money which is a very d.i.y. thing to do. A buddy of ours that used to live in Reno that moved to Florida and he ended up putting out a version of *Praying Hoping Nothing*. Once the thing with Inzane happened we recorded three new songs, remastered it, and repackaged it. It's how we wanted ti to be.

## How was the sound on that debut?

It was different. The **Crowbar** influence was probably a lot more obvious. We weren't doing any grind beats. There isn't as much screaming because I hadn't figured out how to do it without killing myself. There's copies still floating around occasionally, I don't have any copies of it myself. It was a good starting point. We evolved and passed that quickly. It was good learning.

## It must be frustrating recording and having to stop due to finances.

That was no fun. We were almost done. We just didn't have it. Things clicked

because our buddy called and said he was starting a label and wanted to know what we were doing. He sent us a check.

## How did the deal come about with Inzane?

I've known a friend who works for a label for a few years and he was associated with Inzane so he brought us along. It's about friends helping out friends.

## Are you playing on any tours?

We're doing a few shows out here with **S.O.D.** After that I'm sure regional shows will follow. We'll slowly build up to bigger things. We wish we could get overseas. It hasn't worked out at this point. It's a goal for us.

## Have you written any new material?

We finished one brand new song and we've got ideas for about four others that we've started fleshing out. It takes time to get our c.d.'s together because of the odd timed stuff that we do and some of the layering. We have a split c.d. out in the U.K. It's got one new song, some old stuff, and a cover with a band called **Unite**. You can find that on our website.

## What are things like in Reno, Nevada?

It's a cool place. We've all lived there for awhile. The area is so focused on the twenty one and over gambling and drinking crowd that it's hard to get shows going. These kids don't drink and they don't gamble because they don't have money on them. We've been able to work things out with clubs and halls. There's a lot of good bands here. We're all happy there. It's a good place to be.

## Is *Praying Hoping Nothing* a negative record?

It could be. I think a lot of the stuff that I'm saying is put forth with a lot of frustration and a lot of anger but I try to make somebody see that's not how I think it should be. It's got a little bit of hope. I'm trying

to accentuate the positives. We're not a bunch of miserable bastards. When we're playing we're going nuts but we're also smiling and having a good time. This music is about getting the aggression out and not building upon it. It's not healthy to keep that shit bottled up.

## It must have been great doing the cover with Travis Smith.

It was a great pleasure working with him. He is one of the best artists working now. He captured what it was all about. We gave him a general idea and he and I worked closely together on it. Our guitar player Julian worked with us too. The **Katonia** artwork is unbelievable. That album looks how it sounds. The cover says it all before you hear it. I'll still buy albums based on the artwork. That's why it's important to me that our album looks the way it does. The lyric sheet isn't all that legible. I like things to be open for people. I'd rather let people get their own thing out of the lyrics.

## Discography:

2000... *Praying Hoping Nothing* (Inzane)  
1996... *Rise Of The Fall* (self)

## Current line-up:

Mark Moots... vocals  
Julian Peach... guitars  
Jason Rickman... guitars  
Kyle Brewer... bass  
Jason Thomas... drums

## Website:

[www.clutchmove.com](http://www.clutchmove.com)



# Demons & Wizards

Interview with guitarist Jon Schaeffer

The ultimate metal alliance has taken place. Imagine if Steve Harris and Rob Halford got together to do an album, that is the equivalent of nineties metal masters Jon Schaeffer (**Iced Earth**) and Hansi Kursch (**Blind Guardian**) who got together to write and record an album under the name **Demons And Wizards**. After their respective bands toured together they decided a future working relationship in a new band was necessary. The end result is the self titled released of **Demons And Wizards**. There really was no surprises when listening to this new band. It basically sounded like **Iced Earth** musically with **Blind Guardian** vocals. For Jon Schaeffer it opened up a new realm of possibilities as his compositions took on a more complex emotion due to Hansi's different vocal approach. Fans of either band will surely enjoy this collaboration. Here is Jon to enlighten us.

## How did this band come together?

Our friendship goes back ten years now. The first time I met Hansi was in 1990 in Germany. In early '91 we did our first European tour opening for **Blind Guardian**. Both bands got along and became great friends. We toured again on our *Stormrider* album which was during their *Somewhere Far Beyond* '92, '93. We did another tour together and we stayed in touch through the years. In 1997 I was doing promotion for *Days of Purgatory*, I picked up a guitar and he started singing and within a couple hours we wrote and recorded the song that became "My Last Sunrise". That was the beginnings. We found out that we had writing chemistry together. We talked about maybe using the song for **Iced Earth** or **Blind Guardian**. We then headlined our tour for *Something Wicked* and opened for **Blind Guardian** in Spain for five shows. Hansi and I decided to do our own album together. In early '99 I started writing music and he started working on his vocal melodies.

## Who else participated in Demons And Wizards?

Mark Prater played the drums and Jim Morris played some lead guitars. He played the solos that are on the album and some of the lead melodies, I played the rhythm guitars and bass, and Hansi did all the vocals.

## How would you describe the results?

I'm really excited about the future. We are gonna do another album. We were just feeling each other out. We knew it was gonna be cool. The vocal melodies that Hansi comes up with are different than what I would come up with. I wrote the music in between two American tours and mixing a live album. It was a real pleasure working with Hansi and it was a lot less pressure for both of us. There wasn't that added pressure because there were no expectations. Matt and Hansi have totally different styles. Hansi is more orchestrated with big choir parts, all kinds of harmony parts. He's like a Freddie Mercury of metal. I'm excited now that I know how easy he is to work with. I don't know when we're gonna do a new one. It could be in another year or two. In the meantime we have to do a **Blind Guardian** and an **Iced Earth** record first. In **Iced Earth**, the songs I write I do the vocal melodies. The way I approach things and the way Hansi approached things are totally different so it's interesting to see what he does with my music. I know we can go a lot further with it next time.

## What's up with Iced Earth?

I'm writing now. I haven't really taken any time off in a long time. I just got back from Europe. Before Christmas we did a two week promo tour and over two hundred interviews. I had to do a Florida trip and visit family for Christmas. I got new recording equipment. It's a hard disc and I'm learning the program. We want to be in the studio in April. It depends on the writing. The rest of the guys have had a lot of time off. They've been off for about six months now. They're rested and ready to go but I'm not. I think we'll mix in Morrisound. I don't want to go to Florida and stay there. I lived there for fifteen years. I don't like the state. It's crowded, there's so many people, it's too hot. There's a pretty decent studio here in Indy and we may do the tracking here. We may upgrade the equipment I have here in my basement. Jim wants to mix it at Morrisound but I don't know about the tracking yet.

## Have you found a new drummer yet?

We've been reviewing tapes. There's a couple people we have in mind. There's one guy in particular that's in an established band and he's interested. The guy we're looking at is incredible. It's not a problem.

## It seems the band has been stable lately.

When I started the band I started with the sole purpose of being a writer and my music will get heard. I'm not willing to compromise and I might not be the easiest guy in the world to work with but I'm a very honest person. You can't let some knucklehead fuck up your dream and that's why there's been a lot of line-up changes. There's been problems with abuse or somebody is not maturing with the band. Every reason that you can think of, it's happened. People sometimes think that if you've got a record deal you're gonna be rich but that's a fucking joke. I'm not gonna stop what I do for anybody. We're gonna survive and get through.

## It's amazing, the artist is often the last person that gets paid.

I know. Whether you're a writer, a painter, or a musician. You have to pay your dues before anything becomes ideal. We're not in that situation yet, but we'll keep trying.

## Who wrote the lyrics?

I wrote one song, "Path of Glory", the lyrics by myself. Hansi did the story line ideas and most of the lyrics. I would help him translate his story to English and help make more sense grammar wise. One of the things that made it less stressful for me was that I didn't have to do the lyrics or the vocal melodies. The lyrics are a small part of it. The most important part of it is the melodies and the hooks. The main thing that he works on are the melody lines. We finalized all the lyrics when we were recording in Florida.

## Will you play live?



We're doing some of the big European festivals. To do a tour would be next to impossible. Because of our schedules with our main bands it is very unlikely that a tour would be possible. If this got big and there was a demand for it, Hansi and I are not gonna deny success. We've worked hard for years and years so we'll take it as it comes. It wouldn't make sense for us to headline in Europe because we only have one album out. We could do **Iced Earth** and **Blind Guardian** songs but the only bands we'd fit in as a support act would be **Maiden** and **Metallica**.

There's not many bands we could open for because **Iced Earth** and **Blind Guardian** are the biggest bands over there besides the big guys. We want to do it eventually but right now we're sticking to festivals.

## Did you approach the writing for Demons And Wizards differently than you would with Iced Earth?

I always do what's going on with me at the time. The only thing I did differently was that I went through some tapes and brought out some old stuff and sent it to Hansi. "Tear Down the Walls" and "Winter of Souls" were written in 1985. There's one or two new parts but other than that they are basically the same. Our old sound man who was around until *Burnt Offerings* came to the studio while we were recording and he recognized him. I've written so many songs. Even before we were signed I had fifty or sixty originals. There's a chance that some of that will appear in later albums. The writing I do will be the best for **Demons And Wizards** just like it will be for **Iced Earth**.

## Discography:

2000... **Demons And Wizards** (S.P.V.)

## Current line-up:

Hansi Kursch... vocals  
Jon Schaeffer... guitars and bass  
Mark Prater... drums

# DIGITAL RUIN

Interview with vocalist Matt Pacheco

One of the most exciting bands coming from the U.S. in the field of modern progressive metal is Rhode Island's **Digital Ruin**. This band has captured a dark, forboding sound that is heavy yet progressive in nature. Vocalist Matt Pacheco sings in a passionate voice but is full of melody. One listen to songs like "Adrift" and "Darkest Day" reveal a hidden hopeful outlook despite the grim lyrical matter. The music is heavy and dark, but often contains some complex moments to appease even your most ardent progressive fan. With their debut, *Listen*, and the newly released Inside Out debut, *Dwelling in the Out*, **Digital Ruin** have harnessed their own unique style that makes it impossible to compare them to anyone else. I spoke to the intelligent and passionate vocalist Matt about this new, dark record.

## How would you describe Digital Ruin?

If you take **Queen**, mix them with **Pantera**, and take some **Dream Theater** or **Queensryche**- maybe that's close. It's dark, it's heavy. I don't like to use the word industrial, but it has a weird keyboard approach. A lot of people feel we're different and fresh. That's the key to making this a success. We didn't even try to do it that way. This has been eight years in the making. We listen to a lot of different shit. We write as a band. No one comes down and writes a song. We sit in a room and write songs. Every riff and drum beat has to sift through all four of us. Once it finally gets through the siphon it sounds like **Digital Ruin**. Not all of us listen to dark music, it just comes out that way. The newer album that we plan on releasing in January is going to be even darker. We're starting to cross the point where we're not gonna sell out. We're adding a modern heaviness to the sound but I'm still singing, I'm not screaming. I loved the *Power Metal* album that **Pantera** put out, it had great singing, I was actually disappointed in *Cowboys from Hell* because he was singing so rough. It's all about emotion for me. Our songs come right from the heart.



## The name is excellent.

The name is very important. You have a ton of bands that have great music but with a crappy name it loses its magic. Look at **Dream Theater**. That's the best name, it totally describes what that band is doing.

## Where does the dark element come into play?

I don't know how that happened. I'm a dark guy. You don't want to meet me in an alley! The whole band comes up with that. If somebody played something too happy we shoot it down. I grew up listening to **Manowar**, heavy, powerful dark stuff. What happened to metal? It's supposed to be dark. Nobody does that anymore. What happened to **Dream Theater** and that **Pink Floyd** happy shit? They don't have that metal flair that they once had. I can't wait to do a solo album. It would be heavy, dark none of that happy shit.

## How do things look for touring?

Right now we're doing local shows. We're trying to get Rhode Island jumping. We were thinking about moving to New York or L.A. but for now we're gonna try to build a scene here in Rhode Island. I went out to a **W.A.S.P.** show today to promote the band. If the album starts selling real good I'm sure Jim's gonna want to get us on the road. It's hard because we're a brand new band just starting out.

## How do you feel about *Dwelling in the Out*?

I hope our music moves people. It took a long time to get that album done. People don't understand how much work went into that. We had to secure a deal and there were a lot of sleepless nights. I work a day job and then I'd come home and put in hours that you wouldn't believe. I was going through a tough time personally. It actually worked to my advantage because it captured some shit that was on my mind. It's an etching in time. That c.d. means a lot more to me than anyone else

because that's my soul on there. It's about things that happened in my life.

## What songs mean the most to you?

There's a few. "Darkest Day", that was me sitting home in my studio apartment and I was contemplating suicide. I'm sure a lot of people do. I whipped that out in fifteen minutes and got the feeling out. I'm feeling much better these days. "Dwelling in the Out" is a real personal song. I don't think there's any secret when you listen to the album that I went through some relationship problems. That song has a good message. "Letting Go" means a lot of me. "Along the Way" is my personal message to people. Even though all this happened to me, everyone goes through this shit. I hope people hear "Darkest Day" and see that it's true. They're all so true to me and I hope that runs over when people hear. "Adrift" is the story of my life. I've always followed through with the things I said I would do. As dark as the album is, I hope that people get something uplifting from it. There is a sense of hope on the album. People are always thinking that the grass is greener on the other side, but the answer is within yourself.

## Why was there such a long delay in between records?

After we did *Listen* we shopped it to a lot of labels. Nobody wanted to sign. We didn't want to go through the process of recording another album ourselves so we demoed some songs and sent it out to a bunch of labels. We took out a loan for the band. We're gonna go with it or we're going under. We bought a little studio, recorded four songs, burnt about a hundred c.d.'s, and sent them to all these people. Thomas from Inside Out was very interested in *Listen*. He felt it was too progressive though. While we were demoing the new songs, he felt *Listen*

was close to what he would like. I always wanted to be on Inside Out. We went in to record it and we missed the deadline and we had to wait another four months before it could be released. It was tough.

## How are the new songs coming along?

We have fifteen songs. We have different phases of writing. We have a new song that's killer, it's heavy, riffy, melodic and we actually wrote that song in about ten minutes. We've been together for so long that I just have to look at Dave and he knows where to go with it. We jell like that. Some songs take a few weeks but others just happen. We record them all, and keyboards and then vocals and splicing and editing. Then we'll be able to book studio time. We then go into a big studio and hammer it out. We want to release it the same time next year, in January. We want to get this ball rolling.

## Final comments?

I want to thank people for paying attention to us and listening to the band.

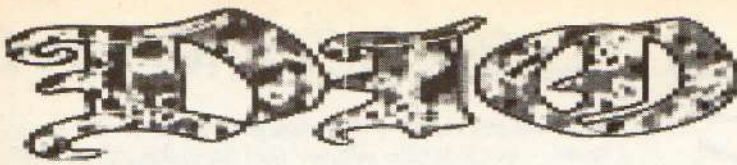
## Discography:

2000... *Dwelling In The Out* (Inside Out)  
1997... *Listen* (Siegen)

## Current line-up:

Matthew Pacheco... vocals  
Dave Souza... guitars  
Mike Keegan... bass  
Tim Hart... drums





Interview with vocalist Ronnie James Dio

It seems as though **Dio** has come full circle. Rejoining the legendary vocalist are guitarist Craig Goldy, bassist Jimmy Bain, and drummer Simon Wright. They have released their eighth studio record and it is by far their most ambitious. In many ways, *Magica* has more in common with Ronnie James Dio's seventies band, **Rainbow** than *Angry Machines* or *Strange Highways*. There is almost and old fashioned progressive edge to this concept record and it is certainly his most atmospheric record to date. Only the shout along chorus of "Feed My Head" comes close to the anthemic songs **Dio** has become known for. This new, more complex approach may leave fans of recent, more aggressive **Dio** material surprised but true to his roots, Dio gives it his all and presents his package with full professionalism. I spoke to Ronnie at a manhattan hotel a couple of weeks before the release of *Magica*.

**How did this concept album come together?**

I thought about nine or ten months ago that this was going to have to be a concept album. I think the music on the last two albums, especially *Angry Machines*, was a little too confusing to people because they were so straight forward and aggressive. We went a lot more modern than we should have been. It gave us a scope away from what we had done. I needed a concept because it gave me a reason to go back to the old style again. Without a reason I would've felt that I had failed. I would go out the door and sign autographs and people would give me a tape. What's that for? *A guitar player.* I don't need a guitar player. *I know.* People didn't like Tracy. Once you've played with Richie Blackmore, Vivian Campbell, Craig Goldy, they expect that. Tracy was not true to the solos and I didn't realize how that concerned people. It became important to get back to what we were before. I didn't just tell Tracy, you're fired. I believed in Tracy. I called Craig Goldy because I intended to have two guitar players. Craig said he'd love to do that. Tracy said he couldn't play with another guitar player. It's not an ego thing, it's just that's how it's always been for him. I tried to share that loyalty that I always felt, but Tracy left. I had written three of the songs and most of the story by the time Craig came on. We had no bass player and I got a call from Jimmy. He said he had been rehabilitated. Jimmy was a free spirit. It got to the point where it was either death, prison, or rehab for him. He went through a real difficult rehab where he had to shave his head and conform to a lot of things. He's been clean and sober for two years now. Part of the program is for them to call people you've had problems with and apologize for being an asshole. I said thank you, I accept your apology but the important thing is that you've straightened your life out. At the same time we needed and bass player and who would be better to play than Jimmy? Everything worked perfectly down the line. There was never a hump in the road. It was meant to be.

**What inspired the spoken word at the end of *Magica*?**

I wanted to take that extra step and have a spoken word passage that explained the story. I didn't think that it would take twenty minutes. When you're talking it doesn't take that long. It was fifteen minutes but I talk so damn fast that you couldn't understand it. They made this a limited edition with the story. The story will be gone in written form but the monologue will remain. I put it at the end so if you don't want to hear it you can press stop.

**Are you somebody who is into literature?**

I'm a voracious reader. I had to bring ten books with me when I came here. I don't sleep a lot. I have a library of about ten thousand books. I read all the time. Words are the first thing that destroys a country when dictators take over. I've always been fascinated by the written word. I've been reading so much that it set me on the right course to write. I was a university graduate and a history major so it's the perfect time to put together something like this. With fantasy writing there's always a chance that it will be too childish. It brings out the child in all of us, which is a good thing. I said screw it, and I did it. I left the end of the story open so I can do what I want with it next time. Everyone thinks there is gonna be a *Magica 2*. It's not. I'm gonna write a literary trilogy. The next one will be flushed out a little better than this one was. It's something I'm looking forward to. I've already written half of an autobiography. Anyone who writes knows that you have to be

focused to do it. I have to wait until my time is free because my primary interest right now is music. I read everything. I love biographies. I love historical things because then I learn how people succeed and how they fail. It's a good lesson in life. I don't like romance novels.

**You went to college as a history major?**

I went to college as a pharmacy major. I studied four years of pharmacy. I went to Buffalo. I had my last class at ten o'clock in the morning on Friday and after that I'd hop on a bus and travel two hundred and fifty miles home to Cortland. I decided the best thing for me to do was to go to school in my hometown at Cortland State. I transferred in as a history major. I did what my folks wanted. They wanted me to have an education.

**Did you feel that you could make a career as a musician?**

I don't think anyone feels they can make a career of this. It was a lot of fun at that time. I never thought about anything being a career. I just happen to be good at what I do. Eventually, people along the way will discover you. If you're smart enough you'll take advantage of it and you'll know what to do with it.

**I grew up about two hours west of Cortland, in Livingston Manor.**

Yeah, we used to always stop at the Robin Hood Diner. I used to come to New York with my manager and we would go to publishing houses with songs. There were famous songwriters who would always be playing on the piano there. This guy who wrote "Hang on Sloopy", "I Want Candy", "My Boyfriend's Back". I was about fourteen years old and I would see these guys writing songs. While my manager went in I got to know the receptionist. I never got any of the songs because they would go to the better known people. It was a great learning experience though. We used to stay at this all black hotel around the corner from Penn Station. We all stayed in the same room. It cost six dollars a night. We got to know all the hookers who lived there, they were nice and caring people. I remember standing in that office while my manager was getting all the attention and I said to myself someday I'm gonna come back to this city and you guys are all gonna go fuck yourselves. When I first got with **Rainbow** and we started to have some success I came back and said "I told you".



**I admire your career because you've never embarrassed yourself and you're a true professional all the way.**

Professionalism was something that always mattered to me. I never abused myself with drugs. There are people who are an embarrassment to the profession. Now anybody can do it with this technology. You can go into a music store and make an album better than we ever could back then. I discovered the people that I really liked were unique and different but I didn't want to be like them. I wanted to develop my own style. I was smart enough to take some of the things that they did, that they didn't even realize they were doing, and I made it my own. There are people out there without a brain in their head and they succeed, but they usually don't last long. I'm lucky too. I've worked with such great people. There have been some great musicians and people who have helped me along the way like Roger Glover and Richie Blackmore. I've never considered myself a solo artist. I had the name **Dio** and people were more familiar with my work with **Black Sabbath** and **Rainbow**. It made more sense to call it that than Smith or Campbell. I always just wanted to be the guy from Cortland who sang some good metal songs.

**Discography:**

- 2000... *Magica* (Spitfire)
- 1996... *Angry Machines*
- 1993... *Strange Highways*
- 1990... *Lock Up The Wolves*
- 1987... *Dream Evil*
- 1985... *Sacred Heart*
- 1984... *Last In Line*
- 1983... *Holy Diver*

# earthtone<sup>9</sup>

Interview with vocalist Karl

The English metal scene has been rather weak in recent memory. With the exception of the industrial scene (*Cubanate*, *Primary Slave*), *Kill II This* is about the only other band to create some noise. I had a chance to check out *Earthtone 9*'s second release, *Off Kilter Enhancement* and was blown away. This record has no boundaries when it comes to modern metal/hardcore. The music is sometimes in your face and aggressive, sometimes subtle and introspective. One never knows what to expect from *Earthtone 9*. Their best song is "...0...0...0...", a sombre, minimalistic, but deep and meaningful. Many people bring up names like *Helmet*, *Tool*, *Sepultura*, and *Machine Head* when they think about *Earthtone 9*, I'd rather not have people coming in with those expectations because these bands pale in comparison to them. What I'm trying to say is you have to check these guys out for yourself because there's something for everybody here.

**Are you happy with *Off Kilter Enhancement*?**

It came out last August, I don't know when it reached America. We're really pleased with it. It's been seven months so with the benefit of hindsight, there are bits on it we would like to improve.

**What are you doing right now?**

We just recorded a four track e.p. that's gonna be put out in the U.K. to coincide with a co-headline tour we're doing with *Kill II This*. It'll last about a month and then we go to Europe for a months, and then we come back and record the new album.

**How long does it usually take to record an album for *Earthtone 9*?**

Somewhere between a fortnight and three weeks to record and mix. I think with this sort of music, that's all it takes. If you give yourself two months, whoever you're recording with is gonna take three weeks trying to find a decent drum sound, then a guitar sound. We like to limit ourselves with the amount of time that we spend, otherwise we lose the spontaneity of it. Sometimes we think it would be nice to have the luxury of spending longer, just to experiment. The idea of being a musician is to experiment with what you do. We don't want to dilute what we do. We feel that we're a raw band and we want to sound as such.

**How would you describe what your band sounds like?**

It's always a difficult thing to describe. I can think of it by what inspires us. It's not necessarily who we want to emulate with our own sound. There's bands like *Jane's Addiction* and the *Doors*, and bands that were experimental and cerebral outside of music as well. A band like *Nirvana*, who has a rawness too. We like listening to *Tool*, *Neurosis*, *Clutch*. We all listen to different things so you can't pull bands out of a hat that we listen to. The notion of what we want to sound like is not the same as what we actually sound like. There's one or two bands every decade that have an aura about them. A band that was doing interesting things, I don't think we sound like them, but there's *Pink Floyd* from the seventies. Every band thinks they're individual, but because you're so close to it, it's hard to be objective about it. You try to explain yourself the best you can, but sometimes it seems like your just paying lip service to what the record company says in the bio.

**Where did the name come from?**

It's a lyric from *Helmet*, it's the one band that all of us without exception, enjoy listening to. We were looking for a cool, interesting word with an interesting connotation but didn't mean anything specific. We were listening to *Meantime*, in the first words are "earthtone suits you", we thought that's a really interesting

word. The 9 part, was like something taken to its maximum magnification. It's *Earthtone* to the power of 9.

**How would you explain your lyrical approach?**

I try not to be too specific. There's lots of things that interest me but I try not to approach it from a specific area. I'll have a simple refrain or notion that I'll repeat over the course of the song. Sometimes I don't worry about lyrics and it's just the sound of words. In some instances they're nonsensical words. It's whatever fits the music. I've always felt that bands make too much out of their lyrics. It sways the balance of music. Music is made up of several very important components. That's why the lyrics aren't published anyway. The band's about drums, guitars, bass, vocals- for us, not necessarily for other bands. Some bands use lyrics as a crutch for sub standard music. You shouldn't pull out individual components and scrutinize it because you ruin the whole thing. Sometimes it's difficult because there are people who are genuinely interested. They should have the right to see what it's about. We are gonna start putting the lyrics on the website. You need to use mediums to reach people. People are gonna be interested in what you have to say for yourself. Those get used as marketing tools and I'd like to avoid that. At the same time you have to play the game. Bands like *Slipknot* have this incredible visual appearance and that's what turns people on to the band. People see it and think that's amazing. We come from something more obscure so people can't get their hooks into us. People ask what about our lyrics? We want people to hear the whole package. We need to get into places and play. That's the best way to communicate. The problem is that there is so many places to play and so much money in the bank.



**What does the new music sound like?**

It's definitely us. The are no stellar leaps into different areas. What we are trying to do is expand. We dissect what we have done and what are the strongest elements and what do we enjoy doing the most and we try to put a greater emphasis on those parts. We've got two new songs on this e.p. and they are slightly more melodic. The choruses

are better. It still has the trademark components. It's *Nirvana* inspired in structure; loud verses, quiet choruses. It's hard to describe because it's the same structure and the same ideas as before it's just done even better this time.

**My favorite song was "...0...0...0...".**

We like to do things like that because it works in two ways for us. It gives a vehicle to do things that are interesting. It still keeps in with what we do because it's still basic and it's quite emotive. We've turned the metaphorical volume down a bit. It still physically sounds like us, it's just got a different feel to it. It also makes the heavy stuff that we do sound that much more heavy. It gives it good dynamics.

**Discography:**

1999... *Off Kilter Enhancement* (Copro)  
1997... *Lo Def Discord* (Copro)

**Current line-up:**

Karl... vocals  
Oz... guitars  
Gray... bass  
Si... drums

# eye of the storm

Interview with vocalist Paul Sportelli

One of the surprises that I have received in recent months comes from the Tri-State area band **Eye Of The Storm**. Thanks to Alan and Dan from **Hades** for sending this excellent band my way. Their sophomore effort, *F2*, is an outstanding album that is full of passion. Reminding me of the equally passionate **Last Crack**, one can not label **Eye Of The Storm** any particular style or genre. Rather they transcend the limitations of metal and alternative to create a heavy sound that is moody and intelligent. They are destined to be overlooked by industry types because they do not follow any trends and write songs from the heart. I witnessed their energetic live show opening up for **Hades** at the Wreck Room in New Jersey, and then phoned vocalist Paul Sportelli the next day to discuss why **Eye Of The Storm** is a band everyone must check out.

## Tell me about the origins of Eye Of The Storm.

It's been about ten years that we've been together. Craig and I were friends from grade school. We learned our instruments together. Within a short span of time we hooked up with Tony and then later on Tom, our bass player. **Eye Of The Storm** as we know it as always been the four of us. We've gone through two keyboardists in that time but it always included the four of us. Nothing has come easy, we've never been on a major label throughout all this time. We have paid our dues. We all know each other well and we love to play. A lot of musicians will say it's a really special thing when you know what the guy next to you is thinking when you're on stage. We have that bond. It's always been that way.

## Describe this sound that you have.

As we begin our search for label interest we have tons of material and to pick what we wanted to do for this c.d. was no easy challenge. I am very honest when I say that we could've gone in about three different directions when we did this c.d. We have plenty of songs similar to "Hate Media" or fun songs like "One World", or heavy tunes like "One Good Reason". We figured that we wanted to show some diversity. The band is diverse and at times in the past it's a curse because nobody knows what to do with it. When we find label interest it'll be a label that is willing to step aside and take a risk. When we put the songs together for this album luckily enough no particular track offends any certain audience. These ten years have been comfortable for us. In the beginning if we had gotten strapped down to something we would have to continue playing that. We show up for practice and I want to sing a really heavy metal tune but Craig's head is not there and all of a sudden you have something different. Tony may want to play a jazz tune, Tom is thinking of the **Allman Brothers**, and Craig is thinking about **Rush**. You've got this conglomerate but it works. My favorite bands are ones that were allowed to be flexible. I listen to WSOU and all the bands sound the same. I went to a show the other night and both **Powerman 5000** and **Static X** were doing something special.

## What was the first record like?

We had keyboards on it. It was prior to the whole grunge scene. Things changed quickly. It was very progressive metal. Everything fit in a realm of **Rush** maybe early **Queensryche**. The vocals stood apart. I was very into a rock oriented style. I listened a lot to the **Cult** and **Cheap Trick** at the time so these were the influences. We were a little concerned with punching out in one direction. We were in the beginning of searching out things that we like. It was pretty consistent in the progressive metal direction and not nearly as diverse as we are now.

## How has the club scene been for Eye Of The Storm?

Eighty percent of it is cover bands. It's difficult, when we put out that first album we were left out there floundering. New Jersey is just intense and has been. There was a stronger metal scene around the area in the mid to late eighties. We just missed that scene. When we came around people were being entertained by cover bands which are basically like live juke boxes. We have a show upcoming with

**Power Windows** that I'm looking forward to the last Friday, the twenty eighth of April at the Wreck Room. With **Eye Of The Storm** we got the first album out and we played around and got on the tail end of L'Amours before they closed. All of a sudden there were no clubs to play at anymore. The scene was hurting and you weren't making any money. It was harder to get people to come. We really love to do this. We aren't gonna be rock stars tomorrow. It's not as important to us as it was when we were kids. We just love to play music. When you come off the stage and a complete stranger comes up to you and says "that was great", that is really cool. He doesn't owe you a compliment. To compete with what was going on and to survive we formed a cover band. We formed **Mr. Personality**. We used to joke around, my mother would call someone who was in a bad mood "Mr. Personality". The same group of guys in **Eye Of The Storm** became **Mr. Personality**. We played intense metal to alternative. We did **Nine Inch Nails**, **Black Sabbath**, **Pearl Jam**, and **Stone Temple Pilots**, but we didn't do the popular singles. We built up a sizeable fanbase and got jobs. Every now and then we would sneak in a new **Eye Of The Storm** song. We developed our own set. We made some bread which allowed us to get **Eye Of The Storm** up and moving again, and we got the funds to record the new album. It paid for itself. Best of all, we got much better as a band. When we went back to writing for **Eye Of The Storm**, everything sounded really good. There was no more keyboards anymore. We didn't need it then. Now the original scene has picked up a bit. It makes you feel good that people tell us they like what we're doing.

**It's amazing that you guys have been around for so long.**

It doesn't seem like ten years. We've been friends for ten years. The **Eye Of The Storm** name has been there but we haven't been doing the original music for all of those years. I write the lyrics for everything and they all have a story for me. They are emotional, even if they aren't my personal experience. The time we spent together and experience has helped us.

**How did "Hate Media" come about?**

I spent time listening to stories about kids being affected by negative things. How can a kid grow up hating things. It has to be learned in the house or passed on. The news is so thick and negative. We need to know what's going on but sad things sell. They know it and they weave it in. When something bad happens to a family and that reporter has to wave a microphone in front of their face- you can picture them saying "do me a favor, cry a little bit when we put you on." There's so much to say. I find it a wicked thing and it doesn't have to be that way. It's not like that all the time but it's too much. People's opinions are formed because of this bullshit that they see on the t.v. It's not too much of a mystery in that song, it's pretty straight forward. It's an intense subject.

## Discography:

1999... *F2*  
1991... *Eye Of The Storm*

## Current line-up:

Paul Sportelli... vocals  
Craig Marcus... guitars  
Tom McNeill... bass  
Tony Bienert... drums

## Website:

[www.eyeofthestorm.com](http://www.eyeofthestorm.com)



# Gorgoroth

Interview with guitarist Tormentor

What a shock! **Gorgoroth** have long been considered one of the elite Norwegian black metal bands, one which I didn't exactly agree with... until I heard *Incipit Satan*. This new record sets a new standard in Norwegian black metal, and I don't mean in the same sense as recent efforts from electronic infused bands like **Mayhem**, **Thorns**, and the **Kovenant**. *Incipit Satan* is one of the most brutal albums I've ever come across. The guitar sound is raw, dirty, and heavier than anything out there. The riffs are well constructed and memorable, somehow **Gorgoroth** have come out with an album to rival death metal's brutality. That isn't the only good thing about *Incipit Satan*. **Gorgoroth** make a concentrated effort to have each song stand on its own. There are slow, gothic tunes; fast no holds barred aggression; mid paced riff oriented slammers- it's all here. I spoke to guitarist Tormentor about this improved version of **Gorgoroth**.

**Are you pleased with the new record?**

Yeah, it's great. We were quite lucky with the sound. We've always had this noisy Norwegian sound, but we wanted to make it sound a little more brutal. I think it fits perfectly to **Gorgoroth**. People like it, even the old **Gorgoroth** fans. I'm personally happy for that because they are quite faithful to **Gorgoroth**.

**Was it intentional having so much variety?**

Yes, it was. The last two albums were different. The *Destroyer* album didn't work well. We were having a lot of line-up problems. It was just me and Infernus left. He did the drums and the vocals on a song. I was changing all the time. This time we had a more stable line-up. We like a lot of different music, but you can tell all the songs sound like **Gorgoroth**. The tempo of the songs is quite different. I like the mid paced stuff, with the **Slayer** kind of groove. That works perfect. The cool thing about when you make an album with different songs you have all these different contrasts. If you have an album with blast beats all the time it becomes boring. It gives more dynamics and movement.

**Is the line-up steady?**

We have a new drummer who is working very well. He fits in with us socially as well so I think he'll be the man. We have changed drummers two times since we've recorded the album. Me and Infernus have been here for some time. He's the only original member. I've been here for three years. Gaahl has also been here for almost three years. We've always had problems with bass players and drummers. Our new drummer isn't involved with any other bands. He's totally into **Gorgoroth** and we can spend a lot of time rehearsing.

**Are you, Gaahl, and Infernus involved with any other bands?**

We've been in some bands the same time as **Gorgoroth**. Gaahl is also doing his main band, **Trelldom**. It's a very good black metal band. The last album they released was terrific. Infernus and I are concentrating on **Gorgoroth**.

**How did you get that heavy guitar sound?**

We've always changed the sound on each album. We thought it was time to make the sound more brutal and so you can hear what was happening. Years ago we had this really ugly guitar sound, like **Dark Throne**. We wanted a much better sound, but not as smooth. A lot of black metal bands don't have any brutality. I had death metal bands in mind. I had to make it sharper, more attack like black metal bands

but with the heaviness of American death metal bands and thrash bands like **Slayer**. I've always been into the old American scene; **Slayer**, **Possessed**, **Sadus**, and of course **Morbid Angel**. There's too many bands with melody lines and keyboards. It's okay if you like this type of thing, I've just always appreciated the rawness and the brutality. That's why we recorded this at Sunlight Studio. I think it's just **Dismember** that records there. They had some time available. Now there's just rock 'n roll bands like the **Hellacopters**. Sunlight gave us the right guitar sound. Thomas Skosberg is a genius when it comes to getting a guitar sound. There's a sound that I want to be faithful too. It's hard to match the aggression of *Reign in Blood*, but we tried to get the same heaviness.

**What are your tour plans?**

We're gonna tour in May. We're going on a European tour, headlining with **Old Mans Child**, **Soul Reaper**, and **Krisiun**. I'm very much into **Krisiun**, **Hate Eternal**, and **Angel Corpse**. Before Christmas we were on tour with **Morbid Angel**. It was great because they have their death metal fans and we had our black metal fans. The music is quite different but it's the same message. It was a successful tour and **Morbid Angel** are great guys.

**Is there any talk of Gorgoroth coming to the States?**

We would love to go to the U.S. It's very important to get a big tour.

It would be perfect to play before **Morbid Angel** or **Decide**. We know a lot of bands from Norway who were headlining in the States and it was very difficult. I hope we can go there in late summer, early autumn. I've been in contact with **Angel Corpse** and I hope we can go out with them.

**Are you fearful that fans of your early albums would not be open minded enough to accept *Incipit Sa-***

**tan?**

I was wondering myself, but we've got some old fans who are totally into this album. I think the album sounds like **Gorgoroth**. It's easier to because of the sound and the tempos are different. The old **Gorgoroth** fans say they like to hear an old Norwegian black metal band change but still has the old atmosphere. Before I joined **Gorgoroth** I was a very big fan of **Gorgoroth** and it's very important to me that we had the same atmosphere. I think everybody who has been in **Gorgoroth** knows what it's all about. It's a rough sound and not very technical. It brings a lot of energy and the sound is rough. The music is very easy to reproduce live.

**Discography:**

2000... *Incipit Satan* (Nuclear Blast)  
1998... *Destroyer* (Nuclear Blast)  
1997... *Under The Sign Of Hell* (Century Media)  
1996... *Antichrist* (Century Media)  
1995... *Pentagram* (Century Media)

**Current line-up:**

Gaahl... vocals  
Tormentor... guitars  
Infernus... guitars



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## Album Reviews:

**ALLAN... *About Five Seconds...* 87...** That's all it takes to figure out that this band is damn good. The American hardcore scene continues to grow and evolve. This month it has been bands like **R22** and **Allan** who have been impressive. Coming from the Pennsylvania hardcore scene, **Allan** play a style that is revolutionary. They refuse to put any limitations on their aggressive style. Many contrasts appear throughout this disc. For example, Scott Evans uses near black metal screaming on "Anything" only to have the band follow that up with the laidback jazz of "Show No Caress", which soon exploits into a metal groove. Lee Fisher is one of the few drummers to distinguish himself. He is unafraid to use tribal percussion and his swing style allows a focus for even the most insane parts. The bass playing is my favorite part of **Korn** and I hate to bring up the comparison, but Bobby Spell has a heavy bass tuning and sound comparable to Fieldy but when providing a backbone to some insane tracks like "Grief" Spell provides a confrontational groove. In a genre that has become stagnant and lame, it is bands like **Allan** that have rejuvenated hardcore and made it exciting again. **DA' CORE.**

**ANCIENT WISDOM... *And The Physical Shape Of Light Bled...* 85...** Marcus Norman is back with a new album of depressive metal. **Ancient Wisdom** began as a complete band and released their critically acclaimed debut, *For Snow Covered the Northland* back in 1995. Soon Norman was the only remaining member and he recorded *The Calling* in 1997. Three years later Norman presents us with his most sophisticated album yet. Haunting keyboards dominate this disc. **Ancient Wisdom** have the ability to create epic atmospheres but never forsake the heavy guitars to complement the melancholic yet beautiful keyboard textures. His vocals are appropriately raw with a rough edge to them. *And the Physical Shape of Light Bled* contains that dark, beautiful dichotomy without sounding contrived. With so many bands using female vocals and adding electronic elements it's nice to see someone keep the traditional values of dark atmospheric black metal without any gimmicks. **AVANTGARDE.**

**APOLLYON SUN... *Sub...* 74...** Apollyon Sun is a band led by Celtic Frost's Thomas Fischer and even though the bio promises more guitars than Apollyon Sun's debut e.p., *God Leaves*, *Sub* is unsatisfying. The first couple of tunes are promising enough. "Dweller" is catchy, the remix of "Reefer Boy" embeds itself in your mind with Fischer's groaning vocals, and "Feeder" is certainly a highlight with its energetic percussion and aggressive guitars. It is one of the best combinations of metal and industrial I have heard since the final days of **Coroner**. Former **Coroner** drummer Marky Edelman gives this track his experimental touch. "Messiah" and "Naked Underground" are mildly interesting but too sedated. "Slender" may be the track that Thomas is most proud of but it sounds like he should pay royalties to **Pink Floyd**. Those David Bowie and **Roxy Music** influences shine through on "Human III". The energy level indicated by the first three tracks doesn't return until closing number "Concrete Satan". I don't mind the electronic sound, I would just like to see the same creative mind that spawned *Into the Pandemonium* to shine through on more than just a track or two. "Feeder" is an instant classic, the rest of *Sub* will not last. **MAYAN.**

**ARMORED SAINT... *Revelation...* 83...** Look who's back. It's been nine years since their excellent fourth disc, *Symbol of Salvation*; sixteen since their debut, *March of the Saint*. After several listens I think *Revelation* is probably their best album. The twelve songs are loaded with kick ass energy. John Bush slips right back into his groove and returning members, Jeff Duncan and Phil Sandoval (guitars), Joey Vera (bass), and Gonzo Sandoval (drums) pick up where they left off following the sad death of Dave Pritchard. As usual there is enough variety to please all metal fans. "Damaged" has some raw psychedelia, "Control Issues" opens with Brazilian percussion and "No Me Digas" is sung in Spanish with acoustic flavorings. There is hardly a weak track to be found. Fortunately, there is hardly a 90's influence present and people who have become disappointed in **Anthrax's** output with Bush will be pleased with his pure metal stance in **Armored Saint**. This is a band that never received its proper due. Critical acclaim was abundant, commercial success elusive. **METAL BLADE.**

**ARTILLERY... *B.A.C.K...* 83...** One of the pioneers of the popular eighties thrash scene has reformed for their first record since 1990's *By Inheritance*. Original members Flemming Ronsdorf (vocals), Morten Stutzer (guitars and bass), and Michael Stutzer (guitars) return with **Konkhra** drummer Per Jensen doing session drums. For the most part, the music is similar to what made *Fear of Tomorrow* and *Terror Squad* highly acclaimed records. To update their sound, **Artillery** employed Andy Sneap to mix the album. The key to making this reunion work was the return of Ronsdorf whose one in a million vocal style automatically makes **Artillery** unique. Almost like a cross of the vocalist from **Cirith Ungol** and David Wayne (**Metal Church**), Ronsdorf has an instantly recognizable set of pipes. With *B.A.C.K.*, **Artillery** have managed to update their classic sound without adding modern influences. Whether this reunion will continue for another release or not is yet to be seen. **DIE HARD.**

**ASKA... *Avenger...* 84...** The Texas metal band is back with their fourth album and a worthy successor to *Nine Tongues*. **Aska** play power metal with a keen ear for quality songwriting. **Aska** is a band playing with confidence on *Avenger*. George Call's vocals are powerful and dauntless. With each album he has come more and more into his own. **Aska's** collective talents peak on "Imperial Rome". A catchy, epic rocker that shows they have the potential to put on a **Maiden**-esque performance next time around. *Avenger* represents **Aska's** best lyrics to date. The album centers around a true metal concept involving the title character. "Against the Gods" is a rumbling, foot stomping anthem that surely will become imbedded in anyone's head. "Valkyries" is total old school and should please fans of *Nine Tongues*. Even in today's power metal society **Aska** is a rarity. A strong refusal to follow any trends they manage to create a nostalgic metal feel without sounding like anyone in particular. Very detailed booklet is a plus. E.M.A. www.askaband.com P.O. Box 181144, Dallas, TX 76096-1144

**ATOMIC OPERA... *Gospel Cola...* 80...** Frank Hart finally returns with a new release from **Atomic Opera**. You may remember this band from their 1994 debut, *For Madmen Only*, their tour with **Dio**, or their similarities to Texas mates **Kings X** and **Galactic Cowboys**. I'm unsure of why **Atomic Opera** has been absent for so long and I believe they have at least one self released disc, *Alpha Oranges*, during the interim. This time around they have a fellow by the name of Kemper Crabb who contributes weird instrumentation like mandolin, dulcimer, bozouki, ocarina, and harmonica. *Gospel Cola* takes time to grow on you. After a few listens the slow, seductive grind of "Jesus Junk", the percussive "The Circle is Closed", the bass heavy groove of "Stop My Heart", and the excellent ballad, "Love is as Strong as Death" all remain creative and catchy. At times this Christian band appears to have a doomy, **Alice In Chains** vibe, and common characteristics on *Gospel Cola* include catchy vocal harmonies and intricate time signatures that give the album strong progressive overtones. Like their brethren in Houston, **Kings X** and **Galactic Cowboys**, you are best inclined to listen to a few times to allow the harmonies to sink in. **METAL BLADE.**

**ATROX... *Contentum...* 82...** What a cool logo and weird album cover. This is one weird, experimental band. While the music has a certain bizarre, experimental quality to it but it's not nearly as odd as Monica's vocals. To be sure, Monica is an acquired taste. Upon first listen her style is alienated and even annoying. She often screeches, squeals, and lets her vocals go out of control. Her high pitched, emphatic wails of "Unsummed" and her chaotic yelps at the end of "Gatehr in Me No More" tests the listeners resolve. When she tones down and allows some of her beauty shine through she is at her best. Even when Monica uses her voice conservatively she is decidedly unorthodox. Musically, *Contentum* is adventurous. "Torture" is doomy and lets some heavy guitar and psychedelic influences to shine through. For those familiar with **The 3rd And The Mortal**, Monica is Ann Mari's sister, thus the similarities between these two bands are obvious. In some respects I can visualize Monica as a female Mike Patton. Despite Monica's dominance, the music is quite enjoyable and weird yet, listenable. Perhaps fans of bands like **Arcturus** or **Ved Buens Ende** will find something appealing from **Atrox's** second record. **SEASON OF MIST.**

**BALANCE OF POWER... *Ten More Tales...* 88...** I've seen ads for this band in the European press and had visions of a straight ahead hard rock band. I was wrong. The debut is more rock but as soon as vocalist Lance King and guitarist Pete Southern joined, **Balance Of Power** tunred into something special. "Day Breaker" begins with fast, energetic, guitar crunch and extremely melodic choral arrangements. Even a ballad like "Savage Tears" doesn't test my patience. Much like the last **Vanden Plas** disc, *Ten More Tales* is easy on the ears but deceptively deep, energetic, and heavy. This is mainly due to Lance's amazing vocals. Melody comes with ease for this guy. He presents a direct contrast to the heavy crunch. At times Lance reminds me of Rob Thorne (**Soundscape**) at his upper register moments. Songs like "Blind Man" and "Ten More Tales of Grand Illusion" allows progressive tendencies and keyboards to take over, effectively allowing **Balance Of Power** to crossover. "The Darker Side" is a bit tedious in its mellow side, but represents the only weak link for this listener. "About to Burn" and "Sins of the World" combine all the best aspects of this great band; melody, intense crunch, technical yet catchy arrangements, and Lance's melodic hooks. **NIGHTMARE.**

**THE BERZERKER... *The Berzerker...* 86...** What do you know, Earache is suddenly becoming a cutting edge label ahead of their time again. Not since the early days of **Godflesh**, **Brutal Truth**, **Pitch Shifter**, and **Entombed** have the English based label put out something this daring. In simple terms, **The Berzerker**

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is a combination of techno and grindcore. If you look beyond that you will find a band pushing the boundaries of extreme music. The music on songs like "Burnt" and "Deform" are so fast they make Ministry's "T.V. II" appear lethargic. **The Berzerker's** self titled effort is sample laden with conversely screamed vocals and a deep unintelligible gargle. What the vocals lack in creativity is made up for by the innovative techno beats and dominant percussion. At times a death metal influence rears its ugly head. Unlike **Ultraviolence**, **The Berzerker** incorporates plenty of ripping guitars. It will take some time to get used to but the grind/ techno sound is brutal and will hopefully be embraced by fans. It can be too fast and extreme for techno/ industrial audiences, but also too electronic for your death/ grind fans. **EARACHE.**

**BLACK WITCHERY/ CONQUEROR... Hellstorm Of Evil Vengeance... 79...** This split between these two underground extreme metal bands is sure to have old school black metal fan salivating. Both bands are represented by five songs, the first five tracks are from Florida's **Black Witchery**, the next five via **Conqueror**. The **Black Witchery** tunes are absurdly extreme. The drums are a cacophony of noise with raw, throat bleeding black metal screaming over top. The production is poor and you can barely hear the guitars. **Conqueror** shows a little more open mindedness. The recently disbanded group will occasionally slow things down and wallow in the brutal heaviness, just check out the beginning of "Domitor Invictus". *Hellstorm of Evil Vengeance* is a must for die hard, underground black metal fans. It harkens back to the late eighties, early nineties when this style was born. Today's popular black metal band sounds like the **Backstreet Boys** compared to **Black Witchery** and **Conqueror**. I'm sure that's exactly how these two bands like it. **DARK HORIZON.**

**BREACH... Venom... 87...** I'm sure you remember yours truly raved about **Breach's** Prosthetic Records debut and sophomore effort, *It's Me God*, last year. What you get is more of the same and that is not a bad thing. Like *It's Me God*, *Venom* is an album with a myriad of styles converging into a cohesive, individual sound that can draw fans of **Tool**, **Neurosis**, and **Helmet** musically but maintain intense hardcore like vocals. They achieve this without sacrificing their credibility. While the more uptempo songs are more listenable, it's tunes like "Heroine", "Game in Vein", the instrumental "Black Sabbath" (not a cover), and the creepy "Penetration" where **Breach** show their experimental side and their depth. New drummer Per proves to be quite a find, especially on the unusual percussion dominated and damn catchy tune, "Diablo". Bands like **Breach** would normally tend to test ones patience, the intense vocals in particular, but with music this good any flaws are easily overlooked. Foreign bands like **Breach** and **Earthtone 9** are eclipsing their U.S. luminaries. **RELAPSE.**

**CANVAS... Canvas... 87...** This self titled disc was a pleasant surprise. *Canvas* appears to be a compilation of their early recordings, many of which took place two to three years ago. **Canvas** are often compared to other British bands like **Extreme Noise Terror** and **Iron Monkey**, but luckily they have already amassed better recordings than those critically acclaimed bands. With two bassists, **Canvas** possess a thick sounding bottom end and Andy Sutcliffe's guitar riffs are heavy and even his grind parts can be heard with clarity. Andy's brother, John, sings in an intense screaming style reminiscent of **Iron Monkey**, but when complemented by riffs like this they are surprisingly listenable. **Canvas** members are young and the potential here is scary. This transcends grindcore's unlistenable stigma. Very few bands write songs this heavy yet still extreme and catchy. Look for a new record by the end of this year. **METAL BLADE.**

**KEITH CAPUTO... Died Laughing... 81...** This is ex-**Life Of Agony** vocalist Keith Caputo's debut solo album. Much like Chris Cornell did with his first post-**Soundgarden** debut, Keith has produced a quiet, emotional, and heartfelt effort. Titles like "Honeycomb", "Upsy Daisy", "Lollipop", and "The Girl I Love" may scare metal listeners away, but overall many should not be surprised by Keith's direction. The best tracks tend to come early. Opener "Honeycomb" sounds like it could have been on **Life Of Agony's** swansong, *Soul Searching Sun*. "Razzberry Mockery" is the best tune. Keith shows his full repertoire as a vocalist who was ultimately held back by **Life Of Agony**. "Brandy Duval" and "The Girl I Love" are deceptively dark songs and tracks like "Selfish" and "Home" tend to quickly grow on you. Most of the tracks are on the mellow side with lots acoustics. A brutally honest record that Roadrunner will most likely avoid putting out in trendy America. You will probably have to find this on import. **ROADRUNNER.**

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**CARNIVAL IN COAL... *French Cancan... 77...*** Now this isn't something you hear every day. **Carnival In Coal** cover popular tunes and twist them into their own chaotic, crazy, twisted mess. Among the songs that the insane French combo cover are Ozzy Osbourne's "Bark at the Moon", **Morbid Angel's** "Fall From Grace", and **Pantera's** "Fucking Hostile". Even more bizarre choices are **Genesis'** "Mama", Michael Sambello's "Maniac", and Afric Simon's "Piranha", and the popular seventies hit "Baker Street". I assume that "Out of Misery" and "My Favourite Armchair" are originals. The drum machine is often pounding out ultra fast rhythmic and chaotic structures. They offer some surprises, their poppy version of "Fucking Hostile" was brilliant. I'm not sure if **Carnival In Coal** are anything more than a novelty. I know fans of the wacky **Mr. Bungle** will appreciate their humor and weirdness but I would like to see what these guys can do with original material. The drum machine work sometimes but at others gives *French Cancan* a cheesy sound. **SEASON OF MIST.**

**CATCH THE RAINBOW... *A Tribute To Rainbow... 80...*** This is an interesting idea. **Helloween's** Uli Kusch (drums) and Gamma Ray's Henjo Richter (guitars) decided to put together a tribute band dedicated to the underrated **Rainbow**. Joining them are bassist Jens Becker (**Grave Digger**, **Kingdom Come**), keyboardist Axel Mattenrock, and vocalist Henne Basse (**Metalium**). All members of **Helloween** and **Primal Fear**, ex-**Gamma Ray** vocalist Ralf Scheepers all guest as well. Basse fronts versions of "Kill the King", "Sixteenth Century Greensleeves", "Stargazer", "Lost in Hollywood", "I Surrender", "Spotlight Kid", "Man on the Silver Mountain", and "Rainbow Eyes"; Andi Deris (**Helloween**) sings "Catch the Rainbow", Scheepers fronts "Still I'm Sad", and Kusch sings "Eyes of the World". There is no doubt that **Rainbow** created a great legacy. Songs like "Stargazer" and "Man on the Silver Mountain" still sound fresh today. You'd do well to seek out the original **Rainbow** albums, otherwise these German metal all stars do a capable job with their interpretations. **SANCTUARY.**

**THE CHAPTER... *The Chapter... 83...*** This four song e.p. was a surprise. **The Chapter** specialize in old school metal. There is obviously a strong Blackmore/**Rainbow** influence to Marc Espinoza's guitar playing. Andrew Sample, like the bio proudly states, truly does sound like a combination of Bruce Dickinson and Ronnie James Dio. In this day and age, the only band that comes to mind that are still playing this style of metal is **Riot**. Ex-**Evil Dead** drummer Joe Monelongo pounds away on opening track, "Underdog", creating a death metal, powerful technique that makes the tune sound intense. "True Self Revealed" is a more adventurous affair as Sample gets to show his range and Espinoza unleashes some classic solos. This dynamic tune is a pleasant change of pace compared to the rocking "Underdog" and "Grey Old Day". **The Chapter** also cover **Rainbow's** "Tarot Woman". This California band has some massive potential and will surely appeal to fans of **Rainbow**, **Dio**, **Deep Purple**, **Riot**, **Iron Maiden**; in other words this is true metal. I'd like to hear what the extremely talented Espinoza and powerful, recognizable vocals of Sample will do with a proper budget. **STARK.** P.O. Box 1631, Montebello, CA 90640

**THE CHASM... *Procession To The Infraworld... 87...*** Once again **The Chasm** has recorded something special. The fourth release and first for Dwell Records, *Procession to the Infraworld*, picks up where *Deathcult for Eternity* left off. For those who are unfamiliar with **The Chasm**, this band embodies all that is exciting in death metal. Crushing true metal riffs with esoteric atmosphere and a touch of doom. Daniel Corchado uses a rough voice that is comprehensible and lends itself well to the riff fest. Recently relocated to the States from Mexico, **The Chasm** appear poised to make a name for themselves. There are not many bands that have developed such a mature sound without forsaking the ideals and primitive origins of the underground, but somehow **The Chasm** have managed to modernize death metal while keeping their roots firmly planted in the past. Each song on *Procession to the Infraworld* is a twisting journey with satisfying results. **The Chasm** won't shock you but they will impress with their intelligent songwriting. Name another band with the confidence to open a death metal album with a song oriented instrumental. **DWELL.**

**COFFIN TEXTS... *Gods Of Creation Death And Afterlife... 83...*** **Coffin Texts** always intrigued me. I remember their cool name and logo on many of those Dwell tribute records and longed to hear the Los Angeles based death metal band play some original material. Finally, here is their debut, *Gods of Creation Death and Afterlife*. My favorite aspect of **Coffin Texts** is their heavy, slow to mid paced riffage and deep, expressive vocals. There are times when they pick up the pace but for the most part those heavy riffs are a trademark for **Coffin Texts** on their debut. Occasionally using harmonics and an early **Morbid Angel** influence, *Gods of Creation Death and Afterlife* has an old school feel to the music contrary to their modern image and graphics. They also perform an excellent cover of **Black Sabbath's** "Disturbing the Priest". I quite enjoyed the old school death thrash riff fest on "Crypts of Eternity". Keep an eye on **Coffin Texts**, I think this is the foundation for a band that will become a household name in death metal. **DWELL.**

**COLD COLOURS... *Somnium XIII... 93...*** I glanced at the bio which states "Cold Colours play heavy dark rock that incorporates elements of death metal, gothic, industrial, and prog rock", and I say- what a mess this is gonna be. You know what? The bio was correct. **Cold Colours** is the mastermind of Brian Huebner, who recently changed the band's name from the original moniker **Wolfthorn**. Each of the ten songs sound different. Opening track "Agony" is indescribable yet memorable with the keyboards provided catchy melodies. "Suicidal Somnium" and "Autumn Reign" have a European flavor kind of like **Moonspell**. "A Misguided Entity" is heavy with aggressive vocals and a touch of industrial. Then comes "A Red Rose in a Blackened World" with some progressive tendencies; some clear vocals, some esoteric black metal vocals and perhaps a tinge of **In The Woods** weirdness. A song like "Lost" sounds like it could have fit on **Sculptured's** brilliant *Apollo Ends*. My favorite track is next, "Wolfthorn" with its industrial noises and aggressive vocals, complementing keyboards and gothic influences. "The Last Regret", "Awake Pt. 2", both excellent tunes, a reprise of "Autumnal Reign" and an unusual cover of **Dokken's** "Into the Fire" round out *Somnium XIII*. This is definitely worth the risk. **ROOT OF ALL EVIL.**

**CORPORATION 187... *Subliminal Fear... 73...*** There are people who will love **Corporation 187** so my review may not, as often is the case, reflect popular opinion. **Corporation 187** used to be a **Slayer** cover band but eventually they became bored and decided to concentrate on new material. **Corporation 187** are not too far removed from what labelmates **The Haunted** did on their debut but in my opinion the former lacks something. Hell, they both feature ex-members of **Seance**; **The Haunted** with guitarist Jensen, **Corporation 187** with bassist Johan Ekstrom. What these Swedish metallers create is a sound that takes the aggression of death metal and combines it with strong doses of **Slayer**. The end result is upbeat death thrash with little variation and few hooks. Even at a short thirty two minute running time *Subliminal Fear* is too long. Again, there will be people who like this. I just got bored. **WICKED WORLD.**

**CRADLE OF FILTH... *From The Cradle To Enslave... 75...*** This is a six song e.p. from the band who plays the most musical chairs. I can not keep track of their line-up. Dani Filth and his trademark screech is the constant. This e.p. of course, features the title track which was most recently seen on the *PanDaemonAeon* home video. "From the Cradle to Enslave" and "Of Dark Blood and Fucking" are two of their best tracks in their storied career. They also perform lame covers of "Death Comes Ripping" (the **Misfits**) and "Sleepless" (**Anathema**). A speeded up version of "Funeral in Carpathia" and a manic "Dawn of Eternity" finish the e.p. This is a band that is greatly overrated. Half of the six songs here are quite enjoyable but there is too much filler. Dani's vocals are unique but I find his screechy voice to be a nuisance. **METAL BLADE.**

**CROWBAR... *Equilibrium... 83...*** Very few bands have matured the same way **Crowbar** has over the course of a half dozen albums without losing most of their original characteristics. Somehow **Crowbar** has evolved without ever betraying their roots from 92's *Obedience Thru Suffering* debut. Only they can pull off a cover like "Dream Weaver" and not sound cheesy. Listening to the sludgy doom of *Equilibrium* and the slow, meaty riffs will surprisingly find listeners comparing **Crowbar** to masters like **Trouble** or even early **Cathedral**. Some surprises are Kirk Windstein's use of a talk box on "Command of Myself" and the sombre psychedelia of the dark and depressive "To Touch the Hand of God". This song is as important to **Crowbar** as "Spirit Caravan" was to **Black Sabbath**. There are no holes on *Equilibrium*. The title lives up to its promise. It's a rock solid album with memorable songs that are very dark and even more heavy. They may never match the brilliance of "Scattered Pieces Lay" and the depressive psychedelia of the title track from *Odd Fellows Rest* but they are always a joy to listen to. Pun intended. **SPITFIRE.**

**DANGER DANGER... *The Return Of The Great Gildersleeves... 80...*** **Danger Danger's** fifth official release effectively combines the pop structures of their self titled debut and *Screw It* and the mature, heavy rock of *Dawn* and *Four the Hard Way*. Of course, the songs that sound like the latter two albums are the strongest. Among these are the heavy groove and perhaps their best song ever, "Grind", the punk rock of "Dead Drunk and Wasted", the **Zeppelin** groove of "Dead Dog", and the energetic "Get in the Ring". Songs like "When She's Good She's Good", "Cherry Cherry", and the ballad "She's Gone" reeks of eighties cheesiness. "Six Million Dollar Man" and "I Do" prove that **Danger Danger** show heartfelt songwriting without betraying their roots. The band continues to show their family like atmosphere, joining full time members; vocalist Paul Laine, guitarist and Bruno Ravel, and drummer Steve West, are lead guitarists

Andy Timmons and Tony Bruno, and keyboardist Lance Quinn, who also produced their first record. They will probably never become a respected entity, except for their die hard fans, everyone seems to conjure "Naughty Naughty" but **Danger Danger** has evolved into a respectable, mature, song oriented band led by the talented vocalist Laine. **LOW DICE.**

**DARK ANGEL... We Have Arrived... 81...** Many people utter the name **Dark Angel** in the same breath as **Possessed** and **Slayer** and one listen to this reissue of their 1985 debut, *We Have Arrived*, will prove why. Although later albums like *Leave Scars* and *Time Heals Nothing*, were drawn out and despite the excellent lyrical topics, contained dull vocals, *We Have Arrived* is a classic thrash masterpiece. This reissue contains the original, old school artwork and should satisfy people who missed out on the original Azra Records version. The vocals were quite exceptional and "Merciless Death" is perhaps their best tune making *We Have Arrived* **Dark Angel's** exciting introduction to the metal world. All seven tracks are here and it may sound dated but this disc exposes the roots of what many popular metal bands are doing today. **DARK REALM.**

**DARK FUNERAL... Teach Children To Worship Satan... 78...** You've got to love that title. This is a five song e.p. which contains one new track; "An Apprentice of Satan", and four covers; **King Diamond's** "The Trial", **Slayer's** "Dead Skin Mask", **Sodom's** "Remember the Fallen", and **Mayhem's** "Pagan Fears". The new track is typical **Dark Funeral** and shows that they are continuing growth without losing their traditional rawness. "The Trial" and "Dead Skin Mask" are two of the creepiest songs ever recorded and **Dark Funeral** keep the original vibe while adding their touch. The **Sodom** and **Mayhem** covers are not their best material to represent the respective bands but **Dark Funeral** do a good job with the songs. Three good tracks from a band that is solid but unspectacular. **NO FASHION.**

**DARKSEED... Diving Into Darkness... 89...** This has an interesting album cover. *Diving Into Darkness* is a quick follow up to last year's *Give Me Light*. Their early work, *Romantic Tales* e.p., *Midnight Solemnly Dance*, and *Spellcraft* showed a band with lots of potential to build upon their raw, yet melodic goth/ death sound. With *Diving Into Darkness* it appears that **Darkseed** reminds me of *Sin/ Pecado* era **Moonspell**, only with more power. The vocals are often melodic and powerful, and even the gothic overtones fail to limit **Darkseed**. The strong death metal influence of their early work has been left behind and some hints of electronica are becoming more apparent. **Darkseed** have developed into an entity that defies categorization. Even an atmospheric number like "Rain" is offset by heavy guitar work. This is the type of band I've been waiting for. They do not lean toward one genre more than another but capably balance power metal gothic, electronica, and aggression. Great vocals too. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

**DEADBODIESEVERYWHERE... Deadbodiesthere... 67...** This California band is probably quite a sight live but on this self titled debut *Deadbodiesthere* sounds horrible. The production is poor and the recording sounds flat. This is surprising considering *Deadbodiesthere* was recorded at House Of Faith Studio by Bart Thurber (**Benumb**, **Spazz**, **Neurosis**). This is the first release from Necropolis imprint Death Vomit Records. Unfortunately, it's a huge disappointment. I think *Deadbodiesthere* would sound better with a clearer production because they do have all the right ingredients to make a quality grind band. They have elements, like **Brutal Truth** before, that could appeal to fans of other extreme genres. Their samples are intense and the album fades out with a memorable whistled tune. **DEATH VOMIT.**

**DECAPITATED... Winds Of Change... 86...** Now this is good, very good. Death metal is starting to make a strong comeback a decade after initially bursting on the scene. *Winds of Change* opens in a flourish, the drums instantly jump out at you. Throughout this record the drumming is quick, precise, and in the forefront. Rarely is a record heard with drumming that is more memorable and good. There is more to **Decapitated** than the percussion, the music is heavy on the riffage with an emphasis on making each song memorable. Riffs are a plenty, **Decapitated** aren't afraid to show their chops- this band can get technical and stop on a dime. If there is any strong influence it would probably be *Covenant* or *Blessed are the Sick* era of **Morbid Angel**. **Decapitated** aren't content on rehashing past glories as *Winds of Change* possesses an updated sound courtesy of **Vader's** Peter. The vocals are a little on the weak side and you can't understand the lyrics but when you have music this good does it really matter? They close with a cover of **Slayer's** "Mandatory Suicide". Great cover artwork. **WICKED WORLD.**

# DANGER DANGER



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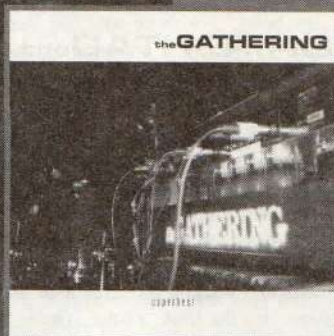



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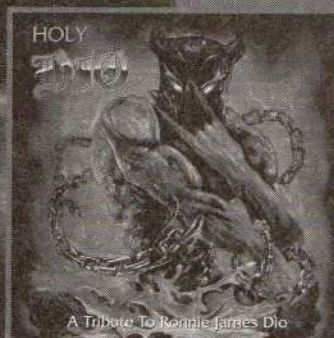


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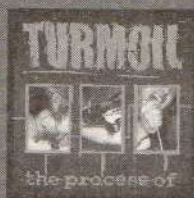
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**DECEASED... *Supernatural Addiction*... 82...** After a three year absence **Deceased** finally return. After going the death metal route initially, King Fowley and crew started to evolve into a more pure metal band on 1997's *Fearless Undead Machines*. *Supernatural Addiction* picks up where *Fearless Undead Machines* left off. Loaded with metal anthems, **Deceased** embody the traditional values of classic metal rather than embrace the extremes that many of today's acts flaunt. After listening to opening track, "The Premonition", I realize that **Deceased** had been one of the first metal bands to incorporate the guitar harmonies prevalent in the Swedish scene that is so popular nowadays. With songs like "Dark Chilling Heartbeat", "Frozen Screams", and "The Doll with the Hideous Spirit", **Deceased** further enhance their haunting supernatural trademark. Handling production this time is famed English producer Simon Efemey. I liken **Deceased** to working class America. They will never shock you or even think about gimmicks, yet their place in metal society is necessary. **RELAPSE**.

**DECEMBER... *Praying Hoping Nothing*... 88...** This is intense. *Praying Hoping Nothing* kicks in with a grindcore beat and just when you thought **December** could be labeled, a thick, massive groove fills in and **December** evolve into a new beast. For those who call **December** prosaic, *Praying Hoping Nothing* is a remastered version of their second album with three new tracks added. The result is a half hour of extreme emotion that allows a memorable groove to shine through the aggressiveness. Kyle Brewer's vocals are appropriately harsh and at times **December** attain an industrial, almost early **Godflesh** like coldness without any empty space. In many ways **December** possess a hardcore ethic. Their songs are typically three minutes in length and filled with intelligence and emotion. The problem with bands that are this extreme is they sacrifice songwriting in favor of extremeness. Not the case with **December**, *Praying Hoping Nothing* contains many grooves and heaviness that allow songs to stick in your head long after listening to it. This is powerful. **INZANE**.

**DEEP PURPLE... *In Concert With The London Symphony Orchestra*... 75...** To celebrate their appearance with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at Royal Albert Hall thirty years ago, **Deep Purple** return to Royal Albert Hall with the London Symphony Orchestra and perform some of the classics in this two hour, double disc set. Most of the tunes were composed by keyboardist Jon Lord and the orchestra is conducted by Paul Mann. Disc two features a three part "Concerto for Group and Orchestra" which, of course, leans to the classical side. "Ted the Mechanic" sounds awesome here, and "Watching the Sky" and "Smoke on the Water" all rock. "Sometimes I Feel Like Screaming" lends itself well with the orchestral integration. "Pictured Within" starts Disc One off on a quiet note, the Sam Brown fronted "Wait A While" gives a feminine take on the melancholy tune. By the time "That's Why God is Singing the Blues" kicks in on track six the orchestra has become full blown, and Ronnie James Dio has added his power to "Sitting on a Dream" and "Love is All". Guitarist Steve Morse shines with his band on the guitar driven instrumental "Take it Off the Top". Things build to a crescendo on closing numbers "Wring That Neck" and the classic "Pictures of Home". This experiment is very ambitious and full of life but ultimately becomes overblown and only a must for dedicated **Deep Purple** fans and those who wish to hear a combination of hard rock and classical music. **SPITFIRE**.

**DEFLESHED... *Fast Forward*... 82...** The true meaning of power trio returns with their third disc of relentless thrash. Gustaf Jorde (vocals/ bass), Lars Lofven (guitars), and Matte Modin (drums) return with *Fast Forward*. This is not to say that they sound like **Kreator** or **Destruction**, per se, but **Defleshed** truly embody that aggressive energy without any lame contrivances of their peers. On *Fast Forward*, **Defleshed** blast through ten songs in about thirty seven minutes. Lofven's riffs are fast, catchy, with a hint of rawness and pure thrash in its true meaning. This is perhaps the first Swedish band from the late nineties that does not sound like they come from Gothenburg. **Defleshed** earned a lot of praise and respect amongst the underground with their second disc, '97's *Under the Blade*. Metal Blade issued it in the States and people quickly caught on. With a touring slot with **Cannibal Corpse** again, **Defleshed** are ready to expand their loyal fanbase. This is a worthy follow up but I prefer *Under the Blade*- "Entering My Yesterdays" is a song they will never top. **PAVEMENT**.

**DIABOLIQUE... *Butterflies*... 77...** This six song e.p. is a prelude to their upcoming full length, *The Last Song*. Their debut full length, *Wedding the Grotesque*, had a doom influenced gothic sound, especially with Kristian Wahlin's deep vocals. Meanwhile, their sophomore effort, *The Black Flower*, represented great strides for this Swedish band. Incorporating a subdued rock approach with touches of **Sisters Of Mercy** and the **Fields Of The Nephilim**, *The Black Flower* was an atmospheric, yet catchy piece of work that would've made **Tiamat** proud. *Butterflies* is a natural progression. The arrangements are more accessible, and Wahlin's vocals will recall early eighties acts like **O.M.D.**, the **Cure**, even **Depeche Mode**. Opening track "Rain" and "Summer of Her Heart" are memorable and have enough hooks to maintain interest, but "Losing You", "Stolen Moments", and "Beneath the Shade" all sound like weak mid eighties British new wave pop. Hey, at least you get Wahlin's usual remarkable album cover design, no one does them better. **NECROPOLIS**.

**DIE VERBANNTEN KINDER EVAS... *In Darkness Let Me Dwell*... 76...** As metal continues to grow and evolve, there is a growing group of esoteric individuals creating an ambient scene. Bands like **Pazuzu**, **Mortiis**, **Rajna**, and **Summoning** are all creating their own interpretations with dark atmospheres. The latest entry is **Die Verbannten Kinder Evas**. This German band have two previous releases, *Same* and *Come Heavy Sleep*, which garnered them critical acclaim. With *In Darkness Let Me Dwell*, founding members Richard Lederer (**Summoning**) and Tanis Borsky have moved further into classical terrain. This is certainly apparent on songs like "Overpast" and "In Darkness Let Me Dwell". Borsky has a dreamy, complex voice that is essential to this composition. Lederer uses a clear, gothic tone to complement. A **Summoning** influence can be heard via the bombastic drums often present, and especially within "On A Faded Violet". The enchanting vocals makes *In Darkness Let Me Dwell* a listenable experience, it's just that **Die Verbannten Kinder Evas** has more in common with classical music than metal. **NAPALM**.

**DIGITAL RUIN... *Dwelling In The Out*... 92...** You may remember **Digital Ruin** released their debut, *Listen*, about three years ago through Siegen Records. Many compared them to *Rage for Order* era of **Queensryche** but one listen to their new record, *Dwelling in the Out*, will prove **Digital Ruin** stand alone. The closest comparison I can conjure could be recent **Maraya** material but **Digital Ruin** have a more natural flow. What makes **Digital Ruin** special you ask? For starters there is the innovative use of keyboards. Much like **Event**, but not with the same sound, **Digital Ruin**'s keyboards enhance the darkness-maybe that's where *Rage for Order* comes in. The guitars are heavy, groove oriented with an intense crunch. Despite that base, **Digital Ruin** will often add atmospheric, intricate passages that appeal to the progressive fanbase. Then there's Matt Pacheco's vocal delivery. Incomparable to any other singer he gives his all with a gritty, powerful, medium tone. On songs like "Darkest Day" and "Adrift" he gives a deeply passionate performance with a touch of darkness. *Dwelling in the Out* is a poignant record with melodies that will grow on you and never drift from your conscience. The title track is very doomy. **INSIDE OUT**.

**DIO... *Magica*... 74...** Look who's back with Ronnie James. Guitarist Craig Goldy (*Dream Evil*), drummer Simon Wright (*Lock Up the Wolves*) and bassist Jimmy Bain (*Rainbow*) have all worked on **Dio**'s best material. I like the idea of a full blown concept album and **Dio** has written the most intelligent lyrics of his career but *Magica* is dull. There are no immediate hits like his early material, i.e. "Last in Line", "Holy Diver", and there is no punch like that characterized by guitarist Tracy G.'s tenure, i.e. "Pain", "Give Her the Gun". Goldy's guitar playing is lame and even when he has the spotlight he fails to shine. "Challis" starts out like a rip off of "Cat Scratch Fever". "As Long as it's Not About Love" is a lame attempt at a ballad. *Magica* is an ambitious project. **Dio** attempts new ideas and often bridges gaps with samples, narration, and even some classical touches, but ultimately very little works. "Turn to Stone" is a memorable anthem and "Feed My Head" has a slithering riff, easy to sing choruses, and a rocking groove but two strong songs pale when matched with the rest of *Magica*. I admire **Dio**'s nearly twenty minute "Magica- The Story" narration. Unfortunately, *Magica* is **Dio**'s most ambitious and least satisfying album in his thirty five year, twenty plus album career. **SPITFIRE**.

**DISCIPLES OF MOCKERY... *Prelude To Apocalypse*... 80...** **Disciples Of Mockery** have been receiving massive praise from fans and musicians alike. This New Jersey death metal quartet have garnered attention due to Craig Pillard (vocals and guitars), Ronny Deo (bass), and Jim Roe's (drums) involvement with **Incantation**. Along with **Incantation** main stay John McEntee, these musicians made up the line up on their *Mortal Throne of Nazarene* album. Soundwise, **Disciples Of Mockery** play the same style of death metal. It's **Incantation** style with some slower, doomy sections to break up the pace. *Prelude to Apocalypse* sounds really good considering it was recorded in about a week. **Anthrax**/ Sebastian Bach guitarist Paul Crook helped the band out in the production department. While **Disciples Of Mockery** won't get any points for originality these guys are seasoned musicians and know how to please their fans. I'd personally like to see them add more elements.

**DISMAL EUPHONY... *Lady Ablaze*... 80...** After a one album absence, *All Little Devils* was released through Nuclear Blast, **Dismal Euphony** return to Napalm Records for a new e.p. *Lady Ablaze* features five previously unreleased songs and adequately shows the strong diversity this Norwegian band has to offer. The

opening title track has some strong electronic elements, and their trademark raw male vocals, melodic female vocals. The quintessential **Dismal Euphony** track, "Lady Ablaze" flows through a variety of emotions and depths. Despite catchy female vocals, "Abandon" is straight forward and dull. "Cabinet Bizarre" is a gothic tinged interlude welcoming the unbridled ferocity of "150 M.P.H.". A brutal, in your face structure with well placed keyboards; "150 M.P.H." proves **Dismal Euphony** can be exciting. *Lady Ablaze* closes with the atmospheric instrumental "Bortgang". While "Lady Ablaze" and "150 M.P.H." rank among this upcoming band's best material, a five song, less than twenty minute disc simply whets the appetite and makes one hope that Nuclear Blast does a better job promoting the next record. **NAPALM**.

**DISTURBED... Coming Down With The Sickness... 83...** This is apparently a five song preview to **Disturbed's** upcoming Giant release, *The Sickness*. **Disturbed** play an impressive style of modern metal that focuses on well written songs and ignores trendy vocal styles and gimmicks. **Disturbed** are still heavy and the vocals are decidedly metal but they aren't jumping on the rap metal bandwagon. They also add some slight electronic influence in the background. While modern bands like **Staind**, **Godsmack**, etc. **Disturbed** can not be directly compared to any other bands. That's a good thing. On *Coming Down with the Sickness*, we get album versions of "Stupify", "The Game", "Voice", and "Down with the Sickness", and a radio edit of "Fear". Look for *The Sickness* soon, it should be worthy of major label status. **GIANT**.

**DIVINE RAPTURE... Divine Rapture... 89...** This debut from **Divine Rapture**, a Pennsylvania death metal band, proves there is some undiscovered talent breaking in the underground. *Divine Rapture* consists of six songs and then five of those that are mixed backwards- very interesting. Mike Hrubovack has an excellent, deep and understandable voice that may conjure memories of David Vincent. My favorite aspect of **Divine Rapture** is the guitar playing. The rhythms are fast and technical while the leads are fancy and exciting. It would be easy to make comparisons to Trey Azagthoth but that would diminish the impact of the insane guitar playing on this disc from J.J. My favorite tune is "Black Moon Harvest" with its immediately catchy guitar harmonies played over technical rhythms. For those who want to check out this incredibly original tune you can find it in this issue's compilation disc. There is a shortage of guitar heroes in the death metal genre but **Divine Rapture** offer one who will make an immediate impact. Check out the instrumental solo, "The Well of Enlightenment" for proof. I can't wait to see where this band is heading. Great layout, design, and songs. P.O. Box 159, Chester Heights, PA 19017.

**DIVISION ALPHA... Fajium One... 84...** Holy Records once again does a superior job with their packaging. **Division Alpha's** eighteen page booklet is glossy and appears to be of the best quality I've ever seen. **Division Alpha** play a style of music that is rooted in guitar driven industrial but with a futuristic look and theme. Hell, song titles like "Erase My Software" and "Access Denied" show **Division Alpha** is a band in the computer age. Ironically, these two opening tracks are their best. The guitar is simplistic yet catchy and memorable. There is a familiarity and excitement to the sound despite the cold tone. The mid paced grind and aggressive vocals make "Hidden in the Mass" worth repeated listens. The only time **Division Alpha** falters is when they slow things down and abandon the guitars. "Access Denied", "Disparate World", and "To Us" sound lame and toothless as a result. "Deviance Imminent" closes *Fajium One* on a fast paced, thrilling, and guitar driven high note. I see a lot of potential in this band. Their futuristic image is fresh and quite energetic, something that is sorely lacking in the world of metal guitars and electronic technology. Songs like "Erase My Software", "Access Denied", "Hidden in the Mass", and "Deviance Imminent" are so good, they more than make up for any missteps. **HOLY**.

**DOMINE... Dragonlord... 73...** Maybe it's just me, but I can't get into **Domine's** medieval, epic power metal. It lacks hooks, any memorable vocal lines, and basically rumbles on without any particular direction and nothing that will make you remember the songs. Vocalist Morby has a powerful, true metal voice that fits the music well and even hints at Messiah Marcolin are evident, but he lacks any variety and quite frankly I'm ecstatic that Rob Tyrant is back in **Labyrinth** because I don't think Morby could express the melodic tendencies of **Domine's** Italian brothers. Many people see a correlation between **Domine** and **Manowar** but the latter is on a totally different plane. It's not that **Domine** aren't ambitious. Their discs; *Dragonlord* and *Champion Eternal*, have fantastic layout and a recognizable design, it's just that the epic style gets boring quick. *Dragonlord* does not have the energy that it should. I admire their non trendy stance and belief in their metal but I want more conviction. **METAL BLADE**.

**EMBODIMENT... Prophecies Of Sickness... 83...** Tennessee's underground death metal upstarts have recently issued *Prophecies of Sickness*. It's a nice package and reveals a band with lots of potential. **Embodiment** are certainly very heavy death metal and often lean toward the technical side of things. Michael Grim uses a diversified vocal attack that crosses deep vocals with a demonic coarseness. Songs like "The Golden Dawn" and "The Awakening" create a sombre atmosphere and a brief escape from the mayhem. In many ways **Embodiment** are rooted in eighties extreme metal. They are not following any modern trends, instead they take influences from **Deicide** and **Morbid Angel** but create a sound to call their own. Like early **Morbid Angel**, **Embodiment** use atmospheric keyboard passages to give a contrast to their aggressive songs. At a time when death metal has forgotten its roots, **Embodiment** is an enthusiastic kick in the ass to remind people of the power it represents. Digipak c.d. available for \$13, 400 E. Rickert Street, Dickson, TN 37055.

**ENTOMBED... Uprising... 85...** The classic logo has returned, and like **My Dying Bride**, the original ethics have returned with it. *Uprising* takes *Wolverine Blues* and *To Ride Shoot Straight and Speak the Truth*; in my opinion their best efforts, and come out with a raw, energetic, kick in the ass. This makes up for the disappointing and open minded *Same Difference*. "Seeing Red" sounds like classic **Motorhead**, "Something out of Nothing" meshes old **Slayer** with modern **Entombed**, "Won't Back Down" has a belligerent punk groove, "Time Out" has a retro sounding **Clutch** like riff, "Returning to Madness" is slow and slithering, and closer "In the Flesh" is doomy. Despite all the various flavors, *Uprising* is a focused assault with no tricks and no holding back. L.G. Petrov's vocals are drowned in effects on "Year In Year Out" but otherwise he is his usual, old style self and "Come Clean" might be his best performance yet. This should be the boost that **Entombed** needs to become a leader in the extreme metal field again. **MUSIC FOR NATIONS**.

**EVER EVE... Regret... 82...** Despite the suicide death of vocalist Tom Sedotschenko, **Ever Eve** keep on going. *Regret* is their third record in as many years and their most refined and mature. I preferred the diverse approach deftly executed on last year's *Stormbirds* but *Regret* does have its moments. The techno hints on the beginning of opener "Misery's Dawn" is never truly realized but it is clear that electronics will play a role in future excursions. Benjamin Richter's vocals are a more stright forward gothic style, it is a slight departure from Sedotschenko who often utilized vocals ranging from tortured screams to clear melodic delivery. Richter gives **Ever Eve** a more focused direction, although his Hetfield tinged vocals on "Passion and Demise" are annoying. The best track is perhaps the instrumental, "The Eclipse of the Seventh Sun". A memorable mover with some spacey yet retro sounding keyboard enhancement. Their cover of "House of the Rising Sun" is unique and "Fall into Oblivion" and "Kolyma" are also highlights. "Kolyma" is upbeat but melancholy vocally. Often **Ever Eve** come across like you would expect **Paradise Lost** to sound like these days, before they forgot the importance of guitars and emotional vocals. Of course, *Regret* offers another amazing cover artwork. **NUCLEAR BLAST**.

**EXUVIATE... Exuviate... 82...** You would never believe it but the vocalist on **Exuviate's** self titled debut is female. I'm sure this will be a focal point for many writers so I will simply say she possesses a demonic style that is deep, but most of the time April Taylor screams with a no holds barred intensity. The music is fast and chaotic death metal with some technical guitar playing and some razor sharp, fast drumming. Some songs worthy of note include "Haunting Possession" which is slow and doomy in the beginning thanks to Doug Randazzo's guitar while Sam Lara counteracts with his accelerated drumming. Also of note, is the opening track "The Coming Plague" which showcases the music talents of Randazzo and Lara in particular. "Insanity" sounds like an excuse to solo for four minutes and is self indulgent. While no one has been able to duplicate **Suffocation's** success, **Exuviate** prove, on their debut, to be a band that is ready to make their mark on the long Island death metal scene. [www.angelfire.com/njz/exuviate](http://www.angelfire.com/njz/exuviate).

**EYE OF THE STORM... F2... 88...** I received this self released sophomore effort from a New Jersey band, throw it in the disc player, and I am reminded of one of my favorite bands ever. Paul Sportelli has that same soaring, charismatic, yet very moody voice that Buddha used and made **Last Crack** so special. His clear style fits well with the hard rock/ metal groove behind him. If you take away the happy, cheesy funk of "One World" and the first six songs show a band in top form. Catchy riffs, atmospheric rock with crisp clarity, and passion abound. The prog tinged instrumental, "Dominion of Kings" and the ballad "Rainy Sunday" interrupt the flow, but **Eye Of The Storm** get back on track with a slithering, wicked "Spawn". Guitarist Craig Marcus uses keyboards for a haunting effect. I have yet to hear a band to match **Last Crack's** genius but I'm gonna keep a close eye on this band because they are approaching that pinnacle.

**FLESHCRAWL... *As Blood Rains From The Sky We Walk The Path Of Endless Fire...* 70...** I can't stand over dubbed vocals, especially with death metal bands. That was the main reason I couldn't deal with **Obituary's** John Tardy. **Fleshcrawl** have been around for a long time. They certainly seem like a pleasant group of guys and I can't think of too many bands who have recorded records in Fredman Studios, Peter Tagtgren's Abyss Studio, and Dan Swano's Unisound Studio. While their early work like *Descend into the Absurd and Impurity* were impressive, recent albums including their Metal Blade debut, *As Blood Rains from the Sky We Walk the Path of Endless Fire*, have become noisy messes. There are strong hints of that early Swedish death metal sound that helped break bands like **Dismember** and **Entombed** but **Fleshcrawl** come across sounding sloppy comparatively. There's no doubt that there is a lot of conviction in their unwavering stance and belief in death metal, I admire that, I'd just like to hear better songs. **METAL BLADE.**

**THE FLOWER KINGS... *Alive On Planet Earth...* 79...** The **Flower Kings** were an unknown entity outside of the progressive rock world until recent efforts but inside out to get them noticed in the States. Vocalist/ guitarist Roine Stolt is also known as a member of the supergroup **Transatlantic**. The **Flower Kings** have little to do with metal and are perhaps most similar to **Spocks Beard** minus the vocal harmonies. The band sounds so good and confident that it's hard to believe this two disc set was recorded live. *Alive on Planet Earth* features a disc recorded live in North America in 1998 featuring "There is More to this World", "Church of Your Heart", "The Judas Kiss", "Nothing New Under the Sun", and a cover of **Genesis'** "The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway". Disc two was recorded in 1999 on tour in Japan. Featured songs are "Big Puzzle", "Sounds of Violence", "Three Stories", "In the Eyes of the World", "The Flower King", and "Stardust We Are Part 3". Excellent futuristic cover artwork. **INSIDE OUT.**

**GLASSJAW... *Everything You Wanted To Know About Silence...* 83...** This record reminds me a lot of **Faith No More**. That's not a bad thing. However, nothing in particular jumps right out at you. This young Long Island band takes several listens to absorb. They are so good at their craft that they will often deceive you with aggressive outbursts and melodic vocals that are raw yet intricate. At times **Tool** may come to mind, at others even **Radiohead**. Similar to another local band, **Among Thieves**, **Glassjaw** aren't afraid to expose their heart. Unlike some other recent Roadrunner artists; **Spineshank**, **Coal Chamber**, **Slipknot**, etc., **Glassjaw** do offer a sound that does not borrow or rip off another band's sound, although I do feel fans of **Faith No More** or even **Tool** can get something out of this. The sound that **Glassjaw**, and to an extent other Long Island artists like **Among Thieves** and **Nympho** are playing is more emotional and multi faceted than the hardcore this area is famous for. **ROADRUNNER.**

**GLOOMY GRIM... *Life...* 76...** I really wanted to like this band. They're on the beloved Holy Records and have some cool imagery. I just can't deal with the vocals. They sound as if the band should be called **Trolly Grim**. Is he singing through a throat box? Does he smoke too many cigarettes? I guess the vocals are original, it's just that they are very annoying. Musically, **Gloomy Grim** are very interesting. I have no idea what category they could possibly belong to but I guess my description could be theatrical, guitar driven goth. There are plenty of keyboards but it is the heavy guitar work and its excellent tone; especially on songs like "The Chosen One" and "Mistress of the Stormblast" that truly shine. The former is a stunningly original and memorable composition. There are members from **Gloomy Grim** who also play with **Soulgrind**, thankfully, **Soulgrind** is more diverse and adventurous and also feature a female vocalist to break up this irritating whine. Remember the vocals on **Immortal's** *Blizzard Beasts?* Those were better than the vocals on *Life*. **Gloomy Grim** get creativity points for the almost industrial percussion on "Revelation 666". **HOLY.**

**GORGOROTH... *Incipit Satan...* 90...** I can't believe this is the same band that recorded the horrible *Destroyer* from two years ago. *Incipit Satan* is an intense barrage of mayhem that is nothing short of brilliant. Rarely has a straight forward black metal album so impressed me. The guitars have more in common with death metal, while the vocals are plain sick. The heavy crunch is especially prevalent on the opening title track, which has hints of industrialized noise; the ending of "Unchain My Heart", and "Ein Eim au Blod og Helvetesild". Vocally, "Incipit Satan" is insanely abrasive, and conversely, "Litani til Satan" has deep hypnotic vocals. For the old school fans, "An Excerpt of X" has a **Burzum** like raw, yet melodic black metal feel. "Will to Power" features an uncharacteristic ambience before "When Love Rages Wild in My Heart" closes with melodic technicality and samples. Finally, a legendary black metal band truly lives up to its promise. This not only blows *Destroyer* away, but also *Pentagram*, *Antichrist*, and *Under the Sign of Hell*. I still can't get those guitars out of my head because they are so damn good and brutal. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

**GROPE... *Intercooler...* 78...** *Intercooler* appears to be a logical successor to '97's *Desert Storm*. The first two full lengths, *Primates* and *The Fury*, were abrasive, industrial tinged metal. *Desert Storm* was still an aggressive album, but *Intercooler* sees **Grope** further distance themselves from their past. They now have more in common with **Corrosion Of Conformity** than **Fear Factory**. **Grope** welcome aboard new bassist Oberst and new vocalist Alex Clausens. Oberst replaced Jimmi Thorso who lost a bout with cancer. Clausens has a delivery which expresses more soul than Per Ebdrup's aggressive side. **Grope** enlisted the services of producer John Luster (**Corrosion Of Conformity**, **Cry Of Love**) and the finished product shows. While *Intercooler* is a good sounding record and features some heavy, cool **Sabbath** riffs here and there, it just doesn't have that energy **Grope** so easily used to show. Noted exceptions are "Someone Died in You", "Six Feet Under and Far Away", and "Cupid's Shotgun". This trio of tunes are catchy and rock with anything **C.O.C.** has done in the mid to late 90's. **DIE HARD.**

**HELLCHILD... *Bare Skin...* 77...** Thanks to Howling Bull, Japanese bands like **Hellchild** are becoming introduced to American audiences. **Hellchild** has been around for over twelve years and the only original member is guitarist Eiichiro Suzuki. Among their previous releases are full lengths *Where the Conflict Reaches* (93), *Discordance Axis* (95), *Circulating Contradiction* (97), and now *Bareskin*. Despite numerous line-up changes, Suzuki has kept **Hellchild** together and arranged tours with bands like **Carcass** and **Cannibal Corpse** in Japan and **Corrupted** and **Disassociate** in America. **Hellchild** play a style of metal that combines death metal with some hardcore influences. There is a slight rock element to their prominently death metal approach. The guitar riffs are mid paced and often catchy but I find Tsukasa Harakawa's vocals to be unappealing. *Bareskin* isn't a horrible record, it's just rather generic. **HOWLING BULL.**

**HERBERT... *Stepping Off To Eden...* 82...** This California band appears to be the West Coast's answer to **Monster Magnet**. While **Herbert** are not up to the superior vibe that Dave Wyndorf's crew presents, *Stepping Off to Eden* is an enthusiastic blend of retro rock, psychedelia, and modern energy. After the self released debut, *Chrysalis*, **Herbert** inked a deal with the new label Fueled Up Records and they look to make an impact on a scene filled with weak bands and a lack of originality. Vocalist Mat Fitzsimmons has a unique voice that may draw comparisons to Weatherman (**C.O.C.**), Wyndorf, and/ or **Ozzy** but maintains its characteristic feeling. While *Stepping Off to Eden* has several upbeat songs that surely go over well live, the strongest tracks are songs like the **Sabbath**, crushing sound of "The Monster", the attitude of "Picking Apples", and the psychedelia of closer "Locust Rain". Guitarist Mike Anderson gets a chance to truly shine on "Locust Rain". There are a lot of bands out there with a sound like **Herbert** but few have the enthusiastic vibe that **Herbert** does. I look forward to watching this band continue to evolve and mature, hopefully without losing any of this fervor. **FUELED UP.**

**HIMINBJORG... *In The Ravens Shadow...* 85...** I was quite enamored with this French band's debut, *Where Ravens Fly*. This band has managed to create and develop their own brand of black metal. Long on atmosphere and majestic pagan qualities but without abandoning aggression and traditional black metal ethics. The vocals often alternate between a deep, clear gothic tone and intense, raw screaming. The duo of Zahaah and Elvan show their multi dimensional talent by handling all the instruments. Some may compare **Himinbjorg** to bands like **Ulver** and early **Einherjer**, but they have established their own unique identity with medieval elements, a Pagan background, and an interest for atmospheric keyboards and acoustics. It is obvious that **Himinbjorg** have put a lot of time and effort into creating *In the Ravens Shadow*. Despite a poor drum sound they deserve lots of praise for being able to find their niche in a scene full of followers. **RED STREAM.**

**HOLY MOTHER... *My World War...* 90...** Why isn't this band huge? Why are they relegated to Europe and unable to release an album Stateside? *My World War* is their fourth full length and sees **Holy Mother** offering their most diverse platter to date. In the past, especially on 98's *Toxic Rain*, **Holy Mother** would offer pounding double kick drums, riff heavy grooving guitars, Randy Coven's bass expertise, and Mike Tirelli's signature snarl. While songs like "My World War" and "High" have that **Holy Mother** sound we've come to love, they have given each song on *My World War* a specific identity. On songs like "Living on Luck", "The Itch", or their first ballad, "Yesterday", **Holy Mother** take the good ethics of late 80's hard rock and heavy metal, but integrate a sense of power and sincerity. They vary the pace on "Freakshow" and its fast attitude, "My World War" and its metal stomp, the grinding rock and heavy drumming of Jim

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# KAMELOT

# VIRGIN STEELE



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on "Save Me", and their experimental side on "Mr. Right". Guitarist Jon Bivona steps in to replace Rich Naso but **Holy Mother** doesn't miss a beat. In the past they have covered **Dio** and **Judas Priest**, this time it's Billy Idol's "Rebel Yell". They are currently looking for a new deal and anyone would be a fool not to pursue them. **SHARK**.

**IMPALED... *The Dead Shall Dead Remain...* 86...** I thought the **Exhumed** cover was sick, I think **Impaled's** gorey artwork is just as brutal. Through some great promotion, word of mouth, and general shock tactics California's **Impaled** are out to make a name for themselves. In many ways, *The Dead Shall Dead Remain* reminds of **Carcass' *Discanting the Insalubrious*** album. **Impaled** have that same brutal, technical, yet fast guitar sound and a passion for gore inspired lyrics and terminology and the same twisted extreme nature. *The Dead Shall Dead Remain* is an album that has helped restore my faith in the American underground, this is a classic in the making. I like the fact that **Impaled** are willing to slow down once in awhile and not just blast away. That is where brutality becomes a factor. Another positive is the near perfect production. The balance between the guitars, drums, and vocals allows for all three components to complement each other and not have one dominate. With so many extreme bands out there it's nice to see a couple distinguish themselves. **NECROPOLIS**.

**IMPALED NAZARENE... *Nihil...* 81...** **Impaled Nazarene's** sixth release, *Nihil*, is basically the same type of album we've come to expect from them. While **Suomi Finland Perkele** will always be my favorite; *Latex Cult*, *Rapture*, and now *Nihil* have solidified **Impaled Nazarene's** status as a unique band that combines grind and black metal into an insane, ultra fast blaze. We have come to acknowledge **Mika Luttinen** coarse, raw vocal approach as instantly recognizable. *Nihil* features some of their best material since 94's **Suomi Finland Perkele**. "Human Proof", "Posteclipse Era", and "How the Laughter Died" all manage to add a melodic touch, with memorable riffage among the speed. When these elements are added, **Impaled Nazarene** not only manage to separate themselves, they also do it in style. **Children Of Bodom/ Sinergy** guitarist **Alexi Laiho** has joined as lead guitarist and bassist **Jani Lehtosaari** replaces long time member **Jarva**. Otherwise, business as usual. **OSMOSE**.

**IMPELLITERI... *Crunch...* 84...** Guitarist **Chris Impelliteri** has released seven albums since his 1987 self titled debut. His nineties records have been criticized for sounding too modern. Those same people will surely be unhappy with *Crunch*. I enjoy **Impelliteri's** heavy riff laden approach. He does play some fine, flashy leads but it's the guitar crunch that pulls listeners in. The modern groove of "Spanish Fire" and "Wasted Earth" will pull in a younger audience if they give it a listen. Album closer "Fear No Evil" sounds like a bastard mix of **White Zombie** and **Saigon Kick**. Elsewhere, "Texas Nuclear Boogie" is an instrumental with lots of flashy solos. There is certainly enough guitar to satisfy even **Racer X** fanatics. Chris employs a slithering groove on the heavy "Wake Me Up" to change the pace. The heavy thrashing "Slay the Dragon" has some complex vocal arrangements from **Bob Rock**, who has that **Zack Stevens (Savatage)** metal style. The only misstep is the sappy ballad "Forever Yours". Overall, **Impelliteri** have produced a diverse album that should please everybody if they can look past his modern crunch.

**IN EXTREMO... *Verehrt Und Angespion...* 82...** In all honesty I found **In Extremo's** Metal Blade debut, *Weckt Die Toten*, to be contrived and quite unfocused. *Verehrt Und Angespion* is a surprisingly more aggressive and exciting sounding record. Their stageman and medieval theatrics have become legendary. I just felt the music, more importantly; the metal, was left too far behind. On songs like "Herr Mannelig", "Pavane", and "In Extremo" the band have allowed **Thomas der Munzer** to throw in some heavy riffs. **In Extremo** incorporate no less than three musicians who call themselves **Dr. Pymonte**, **Yellow Pfeiffer**, and **Flex der Biegsame**; that play bagpipes and flute. Their foreign lyrics, non English credits and song titles, and avant garde approach may scare away many potential fans but **In Extremo** embody the medieval spirit like no other band. I prefer **Skyclad**, but even they are not as true as **In Extremo**. **METAL BLADE**.

**INFECTIOUS GROOVES... *Boracho...* 78...** I'm not sure why this fourth **Infectious Grooves** album has not been released in America. It has apparently been released through **Mike Muir's** Suicidal Records label. Returning with **Muir** are ex-Suicidal **Tendencies** bassist **Robert Trujillo**, guitarists **Dean Pleasants** and **Adam Siegel**, and ex-**Bad 4 Good** drummer **Brooks Wackerman**. Overall *Boracho* doesn't match up to their debut, *The Groove That Makes Your Booty Move*. **Trujillo's** slap happy funky playing is more restrained here. Opener "Leave Me Alone" sees **Infectious Grooves** playing a more sublime style that relies less on theatrics and more on quality songwriting. Elsewhere, "Going Going Gone" is the best song they've written since "I'm Gonna Be My King" from their debut. There is slightly less humor than previous efforts and thankfully the often annoying **Sarsippius** fails to appear for his between songs banter. *Boracho* is not a bad record and should be sought after by fans. I wish **Muir** would get **Suicidal** more focused again. Look for *Boracho* in the import racks. **SUICIDAL**.

**IN THE WOODS... *Three Times Seven On A Pilgrimage...* 73...** **In The Woods** continue to progress with each release and I feel that they reached their creative peak on *Omnia*. *Three Times Seven On A Pilgrimage* sees **In The Woods** mellowing out and have no resemblance whatsoever to the band that created black metal classics like *Heart of the Ages* or *Return to the Isle of Men*. This record is slow, depressing, and long. Once in awhile a cool guitar sound will creep through but otherwise *Three Times Seven On A Pilgrimage* wallows in a catatonic, depressed state. Among the songs on here are covers of **King Crimson's** "Epitaph", **Pink Floyd's** "Let There Be More Light", and **Syd Barrett's** "If It's In You". These choices reveal **In The Woods'** musical direction, which favors late 60's and early 70's psychedelic and progressive art rock. This is a keyboard dominated record and female vocals abound as **Jan-Kenneth** takes on a reduced role vocally. **PROPHECY**.

**JACOBS DREAM... *Jacobs Dream...* 79...** There may be some confusion amongst you progressive metal affectionado who managed to find a seven song self titled album from **Jacobs Dream** nearly two years ago. Their Metal Blade debut is also self titled but contains twelve new tracks. Some have likened **Jacobs Dream** to bands like early **Queensryche** and **Crimson Glory**; this is certainly accurate when one hears "Mad House of Cain" and its similarities to "Lost Reflection" from the latter band's self titled debut; however something is lacking. The music doesn't present anything special. It's not that **Jacobs Dream** is bad, it's just that I don't hear anything special. "Tale of Fears" is a well written song that builds upon a strong foundation and "Black Watch" has some great solos and **Maidenesque** harmonies but otherwise the songwriting is quite average. **Gary Holtzman** is a talented player, I'd like to see him add some new licks to his repertoire. The aspect of **Jacobs Dream** that has everyone talking is **David Taylor's** charismatic vocals. One can truly hear legends like **Tate** and **Midnight** lurking in his unique approach. An obvious talent, he will be revered even more if he shows an ability to diversify his style. Excuse the dark, black metal looking album cover. **METAL BLADE**.

**JUDAS ISCARIOT... *Heaven In Flames...* 79...** Hey, most of the song titles are only four or five words long! Other than that, all of the characteristics that have made **Akhenaten's** one man project an underground legend are still present on their Red Stream debut, *Heaven in Flames*. It is clear that **Akhenaten** holds firm to his true black metal, anti-Christian, and pro-Nietzschean beliefs. I admire his refusal to conform to modern black metal styles (even **Mayhem** has changed) but each **Judas Iscariot** release is predictable and lacks production values. For the true underground fan, therein lies the appeal. My favorite quality of **Judas Iscariot** is the guitar playing which has become more accomplished and contains subtle melodies within the fast, malevolent rhythms. In many ways, **Judas Iscariot** has become the American equivalent of **Dark Throne**; extreme, raw, blasphemous, esoteric, and defiant. **RED STREAM**.

**KAMELOT... *The Fourth Legacy...* 84...** Florida's **Kamelot** return with perhaps their finest record to date. While original vocalist **Mark Vanderbilt** added his characteristic vocals to **Kamelot's** first two records, *Eternity* and *Dominion*, his inability to commit to European tours led ex-**Conception** vocalist **Roy Khan** coming aboard to record 98's *Siege Perilous*. On *The Fourth Legacy* **Khan** puts in his best performance in years. With more time to contribute to guitarist **Thom Youngblood's** compositions, **Khan** gives a confident, well rounded effort. *The Fourth Legacy* sees **Kamelot** experimenting with a string section and choirs, adding flavor to songs like the title track and "Lunar Sanctum". "Silent Goddess" has some heavy riffs and "The Inquisitor", highlighted by **Glenn Barry's** bass, sounds like it could have fit on **Conception's** excellent epitaph, *Flow*. All elements of **Kamelot's** music comes together on *The Fourth Legacy*. The European style of power metal, hints of progressive, and classical influenced guitar playing from **Youngblood**. This time **Kamelot** traveled to Germany for **Sascha Paeth's (Heaven's Gate, Angra, Rhapsody)** expertise in the production department. **NOISE**.

**KILL II THIS... *Trinity...* 86...** In many respects I feel that **Kill II This** are filling the void left behind when **Prong** broke up. **Matt Pollock** does have some similarities to **Tommy Victor**, but not only that, **Kill II This** makes use of modern technology to enhance their aggression. Despite various line-up changes through the years, guitarist **Mark Mynett** has kept the band focused, fresh, and exciting. As the sub title, *Voodoo Vices and the Virgin Mary* and song titles like "God on Drugs", "Spiritual Darkness", and "The Way of All Flesh" show their commentary on modern vices and religion. The best aspect of **Kill II This** is



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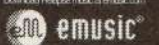
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their seemingly effortless ability to add different genres into the groove oriented metal sound without ever sounding pretentious or contrived. Industrial, techno, Alice In Chains like doom, samples, and just plain old good songwriting are blended together giving each tune an identity. I can't pin point highlights because there isn't a weak song on *Trinity*. Don't overlook this excellent English band. All three records are exciting, fresh, and timeless- better yet, perhaps ahead of their time. **VISIBLE NOISE.**

**KITTIE... *Kittie... 82...*** Excuse the ridiculous album cover. I personally would have rather seen real photos of these young ladies. Unfortunately, females have not been taken seriously when it comes to heavy metal. Despite their elegant appearance, **Kittie** has been inspired by bands from the dark side like **Today Is The Day**, **Static X**, and **Napalm Death**. A recent tour with **Slipknot** will surely increase their exposure. **Kittie** have a sound comparable to recent **Machine Head** and Morgan Lander's vocals are alternately elegant and insane. She conjures visions of ex-**Tura Satana** front woman Tarrie B. She and Fallon Bowman create some catchy groove oriented riffing with an occasional doom influence. Many feel **Kittie** appeals to the hardcore audience as well. If one is able to look past the stereotypes, **Kittie** is a modern groove band that will attract followers of everyone from **Machine Head** to **Coal Chamber**. If anything, Morgan can create two separate extremes with her intense and melodic styles. **ARTEMIS.**

**KONKHRA... *Come Down Cold... 77...*** It appeared that **Konkhra** has always been posed for stardom but never quite made it. Their early records, *Sexual Affective Disorder* and *Spit or Swallow* showed a band that rivaled the early Swedish death metal scene of **Entombed** and **Grave**. Metal Blade issued their third full length in 1997, *Weed Out the Weak*. This album had more in common with American bands like **Machine Head** and **Metallica**. Now we have *Come Down Cold*. This album was recorded at the famous studio The Plant in San Francisco with Vincent Wojno (**Machine Head**, **Metallica**). While *Come Down Cold* is their best produced album to date, it sounds like their least accomplished. With the exception of some cool guitar noises on "Divide and Conquer" and a slightly experimental closer, "Procreation", **Konkhra** sound like they have lost their enthusiasm. Bassist Lars Schmidt has rejoined Anders Lundemark (vocals and guitars), Per Jensen has replaced Chris Kontos behind the kit, and even though James Murphy again guests as lead guitarist, Lars Mayland has stepped in to replace him. Lundemark sounds too much like James Hetfield and even though *Come Down Cold* probably won't see an American release, it sounds like a band trying to catch a trend. **DIE HARD.**

**KRISIUN... *Conquerors Of Armageddon... 89...*** There is no band in the underground who gets praised more than **Krisiun**. People from **Angel Corpse** to **Cannibal Corpse** have lauded this Brazilian trio in these very pages. They have been honing their craft for nearly a decade now and following two releases on Germany's G.U.N. Records, *Black Force Domain* and *Apocalyptic Revelation*, **Krisiun** sign a deal with Century Media which allows the general public to catch up with what the press and other musicians already know. This band is a monster. Max Kolesne's drumming ability is peerless. He is precise, tight, and lightning quick. His relentless pace allows the occasional groove sound even heavier. Moyses Kolesne's new found groove firmly places **Krisiun** at the top of the refreshing modern death metal scene. Songs are more memorable than ever. Moyses often reigns in his solos for a melodic note picked bridge that is exhilarating and unpredictable. Alex Carmage still maintains his raw, brutal vocal approach following a bridge between old school **Krisiun** and the mature song writing found on *Conquerors of Armageddon*. Hear what all the hype is about. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

**LOBOTOMY... *Born In Hell... 85...*** This is some good stuff. Take that heavy, early nineties Swedish guitar sound, add a thick and heavy bottom end, and a killer death metal groove and you have **Lobotomy**. The best part of **Lobotomy** is that you will remember the songs. Despite the insane heaviness they stick in your head immediately (those subtle hamronmies don't hurt either) and you can actually understand what Max Collin has to say. *Born in Hell* sounds like a logical follow up to the impressive sophomore effort *Kill*. Somehow they've gotten heavier and more commercial. A solid production job from newcomer Jocke Pettersson. It's nice to hear an old school death metal band modernize their sound without forgetting their roots. It's been almost a decade but **Lobotomy** have proven they are here to stay. Mark my words- *Born in Hell* has the heaviest grooves I have ever heard on any metal record. **METAL BLADE.**

**LORD BELIAL... *Unholy Crusade... 85...*** Here is **Lord Belial** long awaited third album. *Unholy Crusade* shows this Swedish band becoming one of the elite of the black metal genre. Opener "Unholy Crusade" proves they can blast with **Marduk** and Dark's vocals are intense and brutal. After this annihilating track, they turn around with the melodic "War of Hate". The guitar slithers and Sin proves his percussive fury is both faster and tighter than almost anyone. The melodic solo on "Lord of Evil Spirits" show hints of power metal, then kicking into a fierce barrage of heavy thrash. It is on the middle part of *Unholy Crusade* that both guitarist Vassago and drummer Sin show their immense talent. The beginning of "Divide et Impera" is **Lord Belial** at their most melodic. Lamia's female vocals add a beautiful contrast at the end of this phenomenal track. Through out it all, Dark's vocals remain intense and pure black metal. My favorite aspect of **Lord Belial** is their heavy guitar and brutal sound. Very few black metal bands re this guitar based. **METAL BLADE.**

**LOWBROW... *Victims At Play... 86...*** There's no denying that **Obituary** will be remembered as innovators and their place among the death metal elite is firmly established, but I could never get past John Tardy's over dramatic vocals and constant overdubs. The only thing that kept me listening to **Obituary** was Allen West and his signature doom/ death guitar sound. He was at his best laying down some massive mid paced grooves and **Lowbrow** takes full advantage of his talent. Former **Obituary** roadie Rich Hornberger (vocals) hooked up with **Obituary**, ex-**Six Feet Under** guitarist Allen West, ex-**Nasty Savage** drummer Curt Beeson, ex-**Acheron**, ex-**Nasty Savage** guitarist Ben Meyer, and ex-**Death** bassist Scott Carino. Carino soon departed and another **Nasty Savage** connection, it is West and his guitar that gives **Lowbrow** its trademark. Rich's vocals are obviously less annoying than Tardy's, he uses a deep yet understandable death metal approach that will make people think old school death metal. **Lowbrow** do a good job varying the pace. It's nice to see this group of musicians working together again. Maybe **Lowbrow** will lead a second wave of Floridian death metal. **CROOK'D.**

**MALEVOLENT CREATION... *Manifestation... 83...*** Best of albums are few and far between when it comes to death metal bands. **Malevolent Creation** has been around for over a decade and have released seven albums to date. Although many feel there was a creative low around the time of *Retribution*, in recent years **Malevolent Creation** has been putting out some excellent records, especially 98's *The Fine Art of Murder*. *Manifestation* is a collection that features twenty songs and fifteen minutes of live video footage. Each album is represented, even two tracks from their industrial and death metal collision, *Joe Black*. Throughout their career guitarist Phil Fasciana has made sure each record is filled with great death metal tunes despite an always changing line-up. **PAVEMENT.**

**MALIGNANCY... *Intrauterine Cannibalism... 86...*** **Malignancy** is the mastermind of vocalist Danny Nelson, **Dirty Brown Eye** guitarist Ron Kachnic, and Mortician members, Roger J. Beaujard on drums, and Desmond Tolhurst on bass. *Intrauterine Cannibalism* features a dozen two to three minute burst of grind speed with technical guitar playing and an uncanny sense of groove. Song titles like "Oral Excrement", "Fried Afterbirth", "Waterlogged Corpse", and "Intestinal Sodomy" reveal their gore drenched lyrical topics. Ron's guitar playing is technically intense but he will often place an emphasis on mid to fast paced guitar riffs which often stick in your head. Songs like "Fried Afterbirth" and "Profitable Extinction" even allow for Desmond's bass groove to shine in the forefront. Danny's vocals tend to be low and deep, often leaving the listener unable to decipher the lyrics. In a scene often riddled with copycats, **Malignancy** are trying to give an interesting burst of excitement to the extreme metal field. **UNITED GUTTURAL.**

**MASTERMIND... *Angels Of The Apocalypse... 80...*** You never know what the Berends' brothers will have up their sleeves. Following last years all instrumental album, *Exselsior*, comes *Angels of the Apocalypse*, featuring new vocalist Lisa Bouchelle and keyboardist Jens Johansson. *Angels of the Apocalypse* has more drive than previous **Mastermind** releases and Rich's drums are the force that propels **Mastermind** into metal territory. "The End of the World" starts out exciting but at ten minutes the length is overbearing. Lisa's sultry vocals sound unique and different but gives a touch of class to the Berends' compositions. "2000 Years" has a seductive, mesmerizing groove that I'd like to see **Mastermind** further explore. With the exception of the instrumental "With Dignity and Grace", most songs are around six minutes and often over stay their welcome. For the progressive and guitar crowd there is plenty of space for Bill's guitar playing and impressive solos. Both Lisa and Bill get to show their chops on the ballad "A Million Miles Away". For you progheads there's a cover of E.L.P.'s twelve minute "The Endless Enigma" as a bonus track. **Mastermind** balance the progressive and the metal quite well. Lisa has a strong voice but I preferred the instrumental album. **INSIDE OUT.**

**MAUDLIN OF THE WELL... *My Fruit Psycho Bells A Seed Combustible... 85...*** At first glance it is obvious that **Maudlin Of The Well** is anything but typical. Hence, the name, the weird album cover and title, and just about everything about the band. With influences like **Oxiplegatz**, the **Tea Party**, **In The Woods**,

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and **Disembowelment** you know this is not ordinary. Musically, foreign instruments such as clarinet, flugelhorn, saxophone, cello, a full time trumpet player; vocals that encompass grind, death, black metal; clear male and female vocals, etc. The result is at times messy and too busy, but one must commend **Maudlin Of The Well** for creating something original. At times they veer into doom territory but this band is impossible to get a grip on. Several listens are needed to absorb *My Fruit Psycho Bells* and even then it's impossible to comprehend. An advantage to listening to this is that even after repeated listens you will hear something you didn't hear before. Sometimes quiet and atmospheric, sometimes abrasive and daring, **Maudlin Of The Well** makes other America avant garde bands like **Sculptured** and **Agalloch** sound safe. **DARK SYMPHONIES.**

**MAYHEM... Grand Declaration of War... 91...** Some people are going to be pissed. **Mayhem** have gone the route of **Dodheimsgard** and the **Kovenant** by incorporating modern electronic sounds into their intense traditional black metal. The album kicks off with some melodic guitar playing then proceeds to add a military drumbeat combined with near gothic vocals...and that's one of the safe tracks. "A Grand Declaration of War" takes *Wolf Lairs Abyss*'s intensity but adds precision percussion and spoken vocals and once again- melodic guitar phrasing. The vocals are often experimental. Don't be surprised to hear a spoken word line repeated together with **Mayhem's** signature black metal style vocals. Bursts of chaos like "A Time to Die" maintains a focus. This combined with melodic guitars become prevalent characteristics on *Grand Declaration of War*. As the album winds to its conclusion, **Mayhem** become even more experimental. "Part III" is totally industrial, "Il Principe" has electronic vocals, "A Bloodsword and a Colder Sun" is drowned in vocal effects and "Completion in Science of Agony" sounds like it's influenced by **Arcturus**. Long time fans of black metal will feel Euryonymous spinning in his grave but this is a bold and exciting experiment that will lead black metal into the future. **NECROPOLIS.**

**M.D.F.M.K... M.D.F.M.K... 80...** Don't ask me why they've reversed the acronym. They sound the same, Sascha Konietzko and Tim Skold are still in the band. Joining the dynamic duo is new vocalist Lucia Cifarelli. I read a review in a major entertainment magazine that stated the guitars were missing but there is still enough guitars in **M.D.F.M.K.** to please long time fans. The best tracks appear early, "Now" and "Rabblrouser" are both busy techno tunes with a heavy beat and some guitars. Lucia makes her presence known on "Get Out of My Head" and its catchy vocal hooks. If you want some grinding guitars go to track eight, "Transmutation". All the trademarks that made **K.M.F.D.M.** special are here, so all you die hards should not fret. **M.D.F.M.K.** is not their best work but it is not a disappointment either. Skold has brought in his special flavor but has modified his style to not conflict with **M.D.F.M.K.'s** ideals. **UNIVERSAL.**

**MENTAL HOME... Upon The Shores Of Inner Seas... 86...** What amazing cover artwork. Perhaps Russia's most popular band joins the Century Media roster and further distances themselves from their death metal roots. Even those who have followed their career since their hard to find debut, *Mirrorland*, or their two releases on The End, *Vale* and *Black Art*, the progressive metal found on *Upon the Shores of Inner Seas* is shocking. **Mental Home** often draw comparisons to *Wild Honey* era of **Tiamat** but I'd rather liken them to **Amorphis**, although they are more keyboard oriented, the guitars are heavy, and the drums faster. **Mental Home** effectively equipoise the atmospheric arrangements and guitar driven power. Sergey Dmitriev's vocals are certainly more melodic, as he uses a clean tone throughout the record. My favorite tune would be "Against My Will" with its pounding kick drums, adventurous guitar passages, and Sergey's powerful guitar crunch and clean vocals. It's nice to see a modern band develop themselves in the same manner as bands like **Amorphis**, **Tiamat**, **Rotting Christ**, etc. Constant evolution and progression makes these bands always a welcome listen. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

**METAL CHURCH... Live... 79...** This album features live material from *The Dark* tour back in 1986. For long time **Metal Church** fans this recording should be of great interest. The Wayne/ Venderhoof/ Wells/ Erickson/ Arrington line-up is intact. Even though all but Craig Wells were involved in last year's reunion album, *Masterpeace*, the band was at its strongest during the time period *Live* was recorded. From their self titled debut we have "Hitman", "Metal Church", "Highway Star", and their quintessential "Gods of Wrath". Also featured are "Ton of Bricks", "Start the Fire", "The Dark", "Psycho", "Watch the Children Pray", and "Beyond the Black". For those disappointed with the reunion's results, *Live* is a good look back to **Metal Church's** glory days. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

**MILLENIUM... Angelfire... 84...** Out of the ashes of **Eyewitness** arises **Millenium**. Both bands feature the talents of guitarist Ralph Santolla, vocalist Todd Plant, and drummer Oliver Hanson. Joining them are bassist Manfred Binder and guitarist Shane French. Like the underrated **Eyewitness**, **Millenium** play an excellent combination of hard rock/ heavy metal that is pure class. *Angelfire* is quite polished, and despite the obvious talent **Millenium** lack spontaneity. Plant is an excellent frontman with a voice that maintains a level intensity and works well with melodies. Santolla is an exceptional lead guitarist and the riffs on *Angelfire* allow **Millenium** to be more appealing to metal crowds than **Ten**. **Millenium's** sophomore effort has a little more punch than the two **Eyewitness** albums and **Millenium's** self titled debut. Santolla and Hanson handle the crystal clear production duties and Tom Morris mixed, Mark Prater (ex-**Iced Earth**) mastered disc represents one of the best sounding records from Morrisound studio. For the best melodic metal it's bands like **Millenium** who consistently deliver the goods. **FRONTIERS.**

**MINDS EYE... Waiting For The Tide... 89...** It took some time, I listened... and eventually it clicked. *Waiting for the Tide* is an album that will not grasp your attention at first. There is nothing technically impressive, there is no aggression, or unpredictable passage. **Minds Eye** concentrate more on writing song oriented pieces that reach immense levels of depth. The lyrics are melancholy and depressed but always show a ray of hope. All characteristics culminate with the moving "Closer", an alternate perspective on **Queensryche's** "Bridge". Since their debut, *Into the Unknown*, **Minds Eye** have switched vocalists. Andreas Novak brings new found maturity and individuality when compared to John Persson's work on their debut and his Tate/ Alder inflections. Novak gives the songs the necessary heartfelt emotion and avoids overwhelming the listener his (unnecessary) histrionics. The music is subtle and deceptively complex, but that is their trademark. "Closer" is a tearjerker like no other and you can clearly understand every single word out of Novak's mouth, a major rarity these days. **Minds Eye** do not clamor for your look of astonishment or your enthusiastic fist pumping, rather they touch your soul and bring tears to even the most blinded eyes. After all, the eyes are the window to the soul. **ROUND.**

**MISANTHROPE... Oeuvres Interdites... 88...** This new **Misanthrope** is a thirteen track; limited edition, all unreleased material disc. For those unfamiliar with this unbelievable French act you are missing something incredibly special. **Misanthrope** play technical metal with elements of death and thrash, and at times, a hint of goth- especially in S.A.S. de L'Argilliere's deep vocals. Words can not describe the talent found in this band. They are unbelievably tight and can change gears on a dime. Even when they are at their most experimental they do not alienate the listener. Jean Jacques Moreac's bass playing is highly skilled and will sometimes sneak in some funk ("La Druidesse du Gevaudan" is his best work). While **Misanthrope's** roots stretch back into the early 90's, it appears that most of the material on *Oeuvres Interdites* is culminated from recent times, as musically it is akin to the brilliant *Visionnaire* and last year's *Libertine Mutilations*. Hell, even the French lyrics give *Oeuvres Interdites* a listenable quality. Check out the intense enunciation on "Les Litanies de Satan" for proof. If you don't own *Visionnaire* you are missing out. **HOLY.**

**MISERY LOVES COMPANY... Your Vision Was Never Mine To Share... 84...** Two of my favorite discs in the 90's have been **Misery Loves Company's** 1994 self titled debut and 1997's *Not Like Them*. The debut featured catchy industrial metal that could have appealed to fans of **Ministry** or **Godflesh** but offered more variety than anyone on the scene at the time. It's follow up contained more depth and the vocals had an intensely harsh screaming voice to complement the monotone dreamy style to make songs like "Feed the Creep" and "Them Nails" excellent bursts of intense emotion. Now we have *Your Vision Was Never Mine to Share* which is a more doomy affair; songs like "Rise and Fall", "Like a Suicide", and "The Drowning Man" wallow in slow to mid paced misery. Only "No Exit" and to an extent "Like a Suicide" make use of the vocal dichotomy. *Your Vision Was Never Mine to Share* may take a few more spins before its melodies sink in and it may lack the vivacious energy of its two predecessors but this Swedish band deserves everyone's attention. **Misery Loves Company** now have a stable line-up so expect the songwriting depth displayed here to continue. **EARACHE.**

**MR. BIG... Get Over It... 84...** It's been three years since *Hey Man* came out and it appeared that **Mr. Big** needed a break. Billy Sheehan did his **Niacin** project, a **Talas** reunion, and **Explorers Club**, Eric Martin, Pat Torpley, and Paul Gilbert all established solo careers. Now they're back. Gilbert has since reformed **Racer X** and is no longer involved with **Mr. Big**. His replacement is ex-**Poison** guitarist Richie Kotzen. Kotzen adds his signature bluesy style, allowing **Mr. Big** to take advantage of Martin's soulful delivery and re-energized this electrified foursome. Oddly enough, **Mr. Big** comes across with a sound similar to the **Black Crowes**. It's this blues rock that has redefined **Mr. Big** after five albums. There are no ballads to be found, no outrageous soloing a la "Addicted to that

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Rush", Sheehan is more of a groove player now, and Kotzen brings them to a new level. We have songs like "Static", a kindred spirit of "Mr. Big", and **Black Crowes** tinged numbers like "A Rose Alone" and "Dancing with My Devils". **ATLANTIC.**

**MONUMENTUM... Musaeum Hermiticum... 80...** *Musaeum Hermiticum* is not the proper follow up to the last release on Misanthropy, *In Ansetia Christi*. Rather it is a collection of all unreleased tracks from the late eighties. This is a five song, twenty minute e.p. of music that appears to be influenced by **Celtic Frost's Into the Pandemonium**. Dark, doomy guitars are complemented by some classical touches and the vocals are similar to a moaning, theatrical Tom Warrior. Roberto Mammarelli has signed a contract with Necropolis, so you can expect new material some time later this year from **Monumentum**. It is nice to see revolutionary black metal artists like **Thorns** and **Monumentum** having their classic material and their more avantgarde modern compositions, receive proper releases. **NECROPOLIS.**

**MORTIIS... Crypt Of The Wizard... 68...** *Crypt of the Wizard* is a reissue of a collection of **Mortiis'** work recorded prior to last year's Earache debut, *The Stargate*. This was originally released on his own label, Dark Dungeon Music, and before that appeared as a limited edition twelve inch series. As the bio states, *Crypt of the Wizard* was **Mortiis'** first release that showed him shortening his full length epics into shorter song oriented compositions. His first three albums were like long soundtracks. *Crypt of the Wizard* is cut into ten separate songs. Overall I find this album to be extremely dull. Not much happens and the music is quite subdued and quiet. No real vibes or emotions emit forth from this mundane piece of work. I find *The Stargate* to be a much more enjoyable listening experience. This drags on for over an hour of ambient dullness. **EARACHE.**

**MUTANT... The Aeonic Majesty... 79...** *The Aeonic Majesty* is an ultra fast paced black metal album with some technical guitar playing, lightning quick drumming and over the top screaming vocals. **Mutant** features two members (Peter Lake and Henrik Oblsson) of the talented death metal combo, **Theory In Practice**. Upon first listen, the blinding speed is welcome. Despite the pace, the drumming does not sound clinical, however, after awhile it becomes tedious and overwhelming. The screaming certainly does not help matters. The vocals offer no variation whatsoever. **Mutant** slow down a little on "Premonitions Erupt" and "Dark Spheres", and really change gears on the slower title track, thus offering a refreshing change of pace. The dark, stop and go power and off beat drumming on closing number "Abduct to Mutate" shows **Mutant** as more than a novelty and can come up with something twisted and original. Greatly talented musicians, but poor vocals weaken what could be a great album. That album cover leaves a lasting image and makes Alien look tame. **LISTENABLE.**

**MYRIADS... In Spheres Without Time... 77...** *In Spheres Without Time* features five lengthy tracks of depressive metal, alternating between the coarse and brutal male vocals of Alexander Twiss (guitars) and beautiful operatic vocals of Mona UIndheim (keyboards). *In Spheres Without Time* is a pretty decent album that ultimately shows a band in its infant stages but with limitless potential. While there is little to capture the ear, Mona is an outstanding vocalist and the music is quite adventurous. There's enough metal guitar to offset the quieter acoustic moments and keyboard excursions. **Myriads** features ex-**Twin Obscenity** members Twiss and Skottene for those keeping track at home. It will be interesting to see where **Myriads** will progress from here. They effectively combine subgenres like gothic and atmospheric metal but in a scene filled with such great bands like **Ever Eve**, **Tristania**, and **Sins Of Thy Beloved**, they fall slightly short. An exciting moment occurs at the end of "The Day of Wrath" as Mona's usually pretty voice gradually grows extremely raw at the end of each line. I will be looking for a strong follow up. **NAPALM.**

**NECK... Should My Fist Eye... 90...** Long Island's **Neck** have created quite a name for themselves. This four piece had been featured in *Transcending the Mundane* in Issue #8 via an interview and a review of their self financed *Crawl Away* e.p. *Should My Fist Eye* is their debut for Cho'sin Records, a California based and upcoming label. **Neck** fall somewhere in that modern, aggressive metal with an emphasis on extremes. I would like to allow for a **Dillinger Escape Plan** comparison but **Neck** are not as technical, have more melodies, and are better songwriters. Fans of the band will recognize tunes like "Crawl Away", "Fuck It", and the extremely intense "Three Crosses". **Neck** have become known for their contrasting extremes and newer songs like "Stingmask II" show Mike Daffemer at his schizophrenic best, manic screams combined with some clear, melodic verses. "Open Window" was a pleasant surprise. It's laid back, dreamy style adds another facet to this unpredictable and evolving band. Joining Mike is guitarist Greg Kubacki who is equally dynamic, drummer Larry Hundertmark, and **Cipher** guitarist Chris Fry on bass. Highlights? The whole album is one. "Old Teeth" may be their best song yet. **CHO'SIN.**

**NIACIN... Deep... 81...** Billy Sheehan (bass), John Novello (keyboards), and Dennis Chambers (drums) comprise the multi talented trio known as **Niacin**. *Deep* is less jazz based, and more energetic and funkier than the first two releases making *Deep* the most interesting purchase for the *Transcending the Mundane* readers. With the exception of "Things Ain't What They Used to Be" which feature Billy on rhythm guitar, Glenn Hughes on vocals, and Steve Lukather on lead guitars; *Deep* flows with its trio feeding off each other and exploring uncharted territories. This is undoubtedly Billy's best work to date. He fills in with a full sounding groove and anchors the foundation without his famous 80's flash. Chambers can do anything when it comes to percussion. The centerpiece of **Niacin** is Novello and his work on the Hammond B-3. The long forgotten instrument is played with power and finesse updating the classic sound made famous by Ken Hensley (**Uriah Heep**) and Jon Lord (**Deep Purple**) in the early seventies. For a nice surprise **Niacin** cover **Van Halen's** "Mean Streets" with interesting results. You have to be in the right mood for **Niacin** and it is difficult not to wander after two or three songs but you can't deny the level of talent and professionalism here. **MAGNA CARTA.**

**NIGHT IN GALES... Nailwork... 86...** Another impressive release from Nuclear Blast. Recent successes from **Gorgoroth**, **Darkseed**, and **Night In Gales** proves they know the potential these artists had all along. There is more maturation on *Nailwork*, their third full length, than any previous effort exhibited. Opening track immediately impresses with Bjorn Goobes new found use of clear vocals. This addition which frequently occurs throughout *Nailwork* has enabled **Night In Gales** to become more listenable without losing their aggressive Swedish sound. The music is still razor sharp and although they don't incorporate as many melodies as say, **In Flames**, **Night In Gales** concentrate on memorable riffs. They are also doing a good job in making their word combination a trademark. It will be exciting to hear what they do next. This quintet has managed to keep all their members and gradually grow with each record without altering their foundation. They also cover "Black Velvet", virtually unrecognizable here. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

**NOCTURNUS... Ethereal Tomb... 86...** It makes me feel like justice has been served. One of the most innovative bands from the early 90's and still a major influence on later 90's experimental/ avant garde metal have reformed and returned with their first disc in eight years, *Ethereal Tomb*. The early nineties was time for great excitement because of their technical ability bands like **Pestilence**, **Death**, **Cynic**, and **Nocturnus** brought to the death metal scene. Joining original members; keyboardist Louis Panzer and guitarists Mike Davis and Sean McKenney, are drummer Rick Bizzaro and vocalist/ bassist Emo Mowery. Mowery's vocals are in that death metal vein but he will use vocal effects and overall does not stray far from the Mike Browning fronted albums, *The Key* and *Thresholds*. The same can be said for the music. *Ethereal Tomb* has the same death metal groove with the trademark keyboards and flashy guitar solos. Despite the huge gap in time between *Ethereal Tomb* and *Thresholds*, **Nocturnus** still sounds ahead of their time. There is perhaps more melody here and on songs like "Paranormal States"; confident piece of songwriting with memorable hooks and pizzazz, and "The Killing", Mowery makes use of vocal effects to enhance the futuristic music. The quiet and melodious "Outland" is a fitting conclusion to the **Nocturnus** masterpiece. I've been waiting for an album like this since **Cynic** released *Focus* seven years ago. **SEASON OF MIST.**

**NO RETREAT... Rise Of The Underground... 67...** **No Retreat** is a Pennsylvania (Steel City) hardcore band who have recently released *Rise of the Underground*. Despite various member changes, **No Retreat's** line-up has finally been stabilized. *Rise of the Underground* is a rather predictable form of hardcore with a slight death metal touch. Although they have some powerful moments on songs like "Underdog", **No Retreat** ultimately sound like your average band playing the circuit for fun. An old school approach **No Retreat** offer nothing fresh or too exciting. Produced by **Pro-Pain** guitarist Eric Klinger, one hopes they will build upon this foundation double kick and the vocals rather low, when combined with the heavy guitar sound some death metal fans may find *Rise of the Underground* appealing. **DA'CORE.**

**NOTRE DAME... Le Theatre Du Vampire... 81...** Former **King Diamond** drummer Snowy Shaw returns for his second album of vampiric extreme metal. In **Notre Dame**, Snowy handles vocals, bass, and guitars, writes all the lyrics and music, and has effectively created memorable image that may someday rival **Cradle Of Filth** in originality and familiarity. Snowy twists fairy tales into evil dirges. To experience **Notre Dame** best would be as a visual spectacle. He



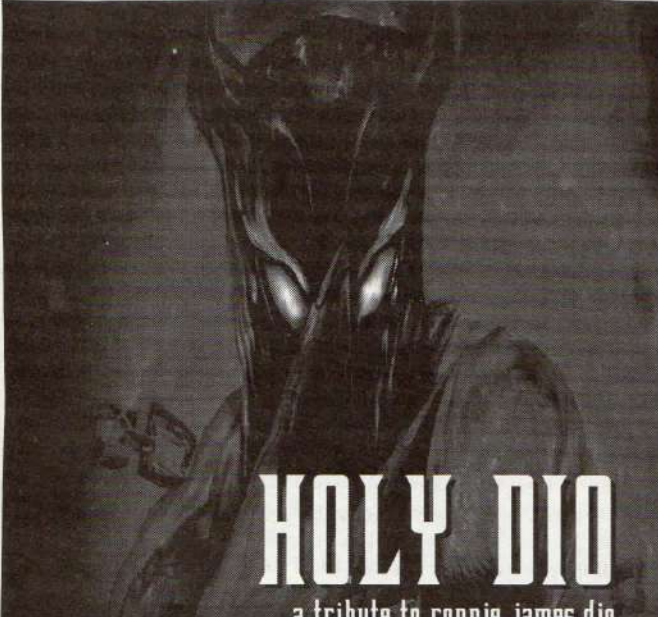
has made his theatrical aspirations clear since last year's debut, *Coming to a Theatre Near You*. The music is quite diverse and the only way to pigeonhole it is to call it gothic black metal. Snowy will often use both black metal shrieks and deep gothic tones depending on what the song dictates. While there is no shortage of theatrical, organ based dirges there is plenty of metal guitar on hand. "Vlad the Impaler" has a modern groove with Vampirella's female vocals. "Faust the Ghostwriter" has plenty of guitar and "Black Birthday" has intricate riffs similar to **King Diamond** or even **Megadeth**. High points include the aforementioned "Vlad the Impaler", the melodic black metal of "Sisterhood", and the goth industrial "Sabbath". *Le Theatre du Vampire* maintains the diversity of **Notre Dame's** debut but contains better songwriting. **OSMOSE**.

**NOVEMBRE... Classica... 77...** *Classica* is **Novembre's** third release and the Italian avantgarde metallers' first album for Century Media. Many comparisons have been made to bands like **Opeth** but **Novembre** lacks the superior skills to justify lofty correlations. While *Wish I Could Dream it Again* was a lengthy and experimental release, it showed **Novembre** had a lot of potential. Three years later they released *Arte Novencio* and it appeared their potential was realized. Carmelo Orlando started using clean, melodic vocals almost exclusively, complementing the music almost to perfection. *Classica* appears to be a combination of those two records. Carmelo uses both his raw, black metal style and the clean melodic style over intricate, weaving guitars and often poounding double bass drums. I would personally rather see them abandon their rough vocals and fast pace and further explore the slow guitar melodies and sombre atmospheres. **CENTURY MEDIA**.

**OLD MANS CHILD... Revelation 666 The Curse of Damnation... 77...** *Revelation 666* is **Old Mans Child's** fourth record and when matched up to 98's excellent *Ill Natured Spiritual Invasion* it sounds like there is something lacking. Galder still plays his guitar with a vengeance and still has subtle hints of melody to his signature style but nothing on *Revelation 666* stands out. For the first time in a long time Galder has a full band supporting. Returning to **Old Mans Child** is guitarist Jardar and Glader has added drummer Grimar and bassist Memnoch to the line-up. In come respects this line-up has given **Old Mans Child** more depth and better songwriting. For my tastes, I prefer the aggressive thrash and Gene Hoglan's (**Dark Angel**, **Strapping Young Lad**) drumming, which made *Ill Natured Spiritual Invasion* such a kick in the ass. The keyboards and melodies make *Revelation 666* sound too generic and at times uninspired. By no means is this a bad album, it's just that **Old Mans Child** has failed to separate themselves from a convoluted Norwegian black metal scene. **CENTURY MEDIA**.

**ONE MINUTE SILENCE... Buy Now Saved Later... 79...** If I'm not mistaken, this is England's rap metal band, **One Minute Silence's** third effort. They first came to my attention via a *Metal Maniacs* feature a couple of years ago. Vocalist Bill Barry impressed me with his quick humor and intelligent manner. The album he was promoting, *Available in all Colors*, was a solid album of rap/ metal with a few doses of funk and boundless energy. Now come *Buy Now Saved Later* and I wonder if this hasn't maybe set them back a step. It's not a bad record, I just expected something more following such a good record the last time. There are certainly some good tunes in the middle, "Roof of the World" and "If I Can Change" come to mind but opening tracks "Rise and Shine" and "1845" annoyed me despite their short running times. The energetic funk is not as prevalent either, the bass playing is more restrained. Colin Richardson offers a name producer and a clear sound but you still can't hide the fact that **One Minute Silence** sounds more and more like a **Rage Against The Machine** derivative. **V2**.


**PANTERA... Reinventing The Steel...83...** **Pantera** has taken their longest break, four years, between records and have come back with perhaps their best record since *Cowboys from Hell*. **Pantera** sounds like a band reenergized and ready to recapture the success of *Vulgar Display of Power* and *Far Beyond Driven*. There was a rumor that Phil Anselmo would go back to a melodic singing style like he had on *Cowboys from Hell* but with the exception of "Revolution is My Name" he unleashes his typical aggression. "Hellbound" is perhaps their best opener, a hell bent, slamming tune with no holding back. Elsewhere is the moving riff on "Yesterday Don't Mean Shit" and the well written "It Makes Them Disappear" that will please long time fans. Dimebag Darrell displays his chops with some piercing squeals on "You've Got to Belong to it" and creative sounds on "Death Rattle", yes his guitar sounds like a rattlesnake. Welcome back. Vinnie Paul and Rex Brown deliver their usual solid performances. **ELEKTRA**.



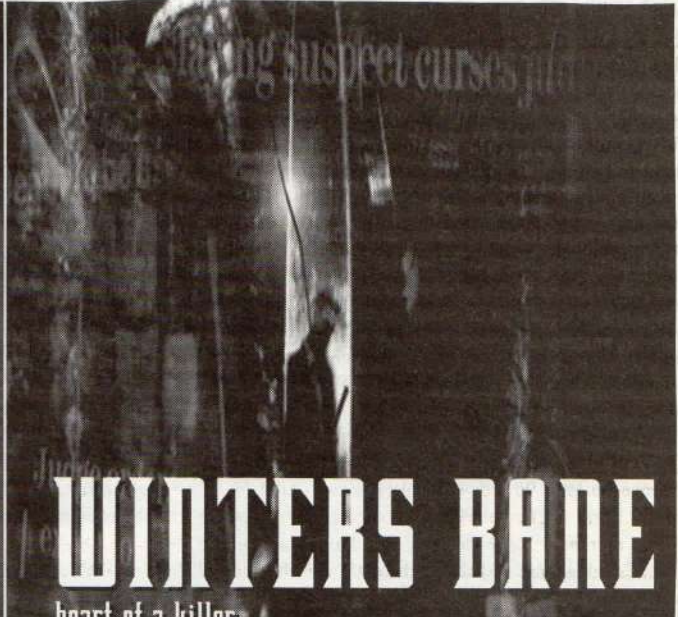
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**PINK CREAM 69... *Sonic Dynamite... 78...*** I'm not sure what to make of Germany's **Pink Cream 69**. The first three Andi Deris (**Helloween**) fronted discs were underrated albums of heavy metal, border line hard rock music. To replace Deris, **Pink Cream 69** recruited David Readman from England and issued two disappointments, *Change* and *Food for Thought*. Their first proper U.S. release, last year's *Electrified* was by far their best work. A weak track was nowhere to be found. The record was one of the best of the year and certainly one of the most overlooked. Expectations for *Sonic Dynamite* were very high. Alfred Koffler (guitars), Dennis Ward (bass), and Kosta Zafriou (drums) were just coming off an excellent album with D.C. Cooper and I expected *Sonic Dynamite* to be the equal of *Electrified*. While some songs like the title track, "The Spirit", "Speed of Light", and "Lost in Illusions" are hits, most of the other tunes are easily forgettable. If you've been a long time fan I don't think *Sonic Dynamite* will disappoint you, it's just that we've seen what they are capable of on *Electrified* and it would've been nice to see it duplicated. **MASSACRE.**

**PITCH SHIFTER... *UN-UK... 76...*** This is a four song e.p. that will apparently precede a new full length later this year. **UN-UK** sees **Pitch Shifter** expand upon the punk attitude they displayed on 98's *www.pitchshifter.com* without losing the techno influence. Recent **Pitch Shifter** output has not been far removed from what fellow Brits **Prodigy** have been up to. "Un-United Kingdom" is in your face punk with techno beats. "Everything Sucks" is rather dull but memorable. The same can be said about "Kerosene". To round out *UN-UK* we have a Fuzz Townshend remix of "Un-United Kingdom" that does not match the original. Three new songs and sixteen minutes worth of music makes *UN-UK* a must for die hards only. I would like to see them take the belligerent attitude of "Un-United Kingdom" a little further next time. **ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES.**

**PLATYPUS... *Ice Cycles... 82...*** Ty Tabor gets around. Since his solo debut from about a year and a half ago, he has recorded two **Kings X** records; *Tape Head* and the upcoming *Please Come Home Mr. Bulbous*, and two **Platypus** records; *When Pus Comes to Shove* and *Ice Cycles*. Joining Ty once again are **Dixie Dregs**, ex-**Winger** drummer Rod Morgenstein, **Planet X**, ex-**Dream Theater** keyboardist Derek Sherinian, and **Dream Theater** bassist John Myung. Tabor's identifiable vocal style and the song structures suggest his influence is the strongest and most of *Ice Cycles* could be compared to **Kings X**. While the prog affectionados will quite enjoy the instrumental workouts on the five minute "25" and the seven part, ten and a half minute "Partial to the Bean", I find the other thirty minutes to be quite enjoyable. Without losing its identity **Platypus** offer a variety of mood and emotions on songs like "Oh God", "Better Left Unsaid", "The Tower", "Cry", "I Need You", and "Gone". Well written songs that will satisfy even the most ardent **Kings X** fan, this matches up with Ty's best work to date. What I find most impressive is that for such an all star cast of well known musicians and varied backgrounds, on *Ice Cycles*, **Platypus** sound more focused than any other side project I can think of. **INSIDE OUT.**

**POEMA ARCANUS... *Arcane XIII... 89...*** This was a pleasant surprise. **Poema Arcanus** came to me via a Chile label I had never heard of before. *Arcane XIII* is really seventy four minutes of slow music with strong doom and goth sounds, and touches of death and maybe a hint of black metal. Somehow it turns out to be an exciting listen. Most of the time the vocals are deep and clear, definitely goth inspired, although he will add some rough vocal styles when the music picks up, (i.e. "Timeless Sands"). Sometimes he even reminds me of a more powerful Eddie Vedder (think metal power, not alternative whine). Despite the slow nature of the music, the guitars are often busy and experimental; although always rooted in heaviness. **Poema Arcanus** are a truly unique listening experience. The vocals are one of a kind, the deep moaning style will surely be an acquired taste but it's nice being able to understand what he's saying. Great music complements the vocals to perfection. There are hints of *Serenades* era of **Anathema**. This is well worth seeking out. **PICOROCO.**

**PRIMEVAL... *Scorn Of Incubus... 82...*** This is a special limited edition pressing of **Primeval's** new material. Excellent package and artwork from Daniel Shaw adorn this soon to be underground classic. We get three new tracks and a new version of "Catacomb Depths" which is called "Scorn of Incubus" here, a remix of "Manipulator", live version of "Lal", and a cover of guitarist Vocto Fernandez' former band **Relayer's** "Brainchild". **Primeval** play a style of metal that takes elements from grindcore, death metal, and some black metal and twists it together with some doom and the result shows that **Primeval** have lots of potential. The production on *Scorn of Incubus* is on the weak side and the drums can be annoying at times but one can tell that **Primeval** have the ability to become a serious name in the not too distant future. I particularly enjoyed the remix of "Manipulator", probably the first remix to not sound contrived or even industrial for that matter. For \$5 this impressive package is well worth your money. Make money orders payable to S. Miranda and mail to P.O. Box 30615, Houston, TX 77249-0615.

**THE QUIET ROOM... *Reconceive... 82...*** Changes have obviously taken place in the land of **The Quiet Room**. They no longer sound like a **Fates Warning** hybrid as they did on their 1997 debut, *Introspect*. One reason is the departure of vocalist Chadd Castor, but more significantly is the music has become more aggressive. You have to listen to *Reconceive* a few times to be able to still hear the progressive tendencies of their earlier work. Pete Jewell is a good vocalist but lacks character. It would be nice to see a little more variation. On songs like "Realms of Deceit" he sounds like James Hetfield. When he does shift gears, like the end of "Suffercation" or on "Reason for Change", he thrives. He definitely excels on the surreal, mellow vocal passages. Also new in **The Quiet Room** camp is the rhythm section of Ron Munshower (bass) and Graeme Wood (drums). For those familiar with *Introspect*, *Reconceive* will take you by surprise. The progressive element is still there, it's just camouflaged a little more. I feel **The Quiet Room** works better when they go more in the progressive direction, although they balance the prog and aggression on "Your Hate" to near perfection. "Room 15" is a great instrumental, **The Quiet Room** explores without sacrificing structure or heaviness. Pete Jewell is not as talented as their old vocalist, and at times it shows. **METAL BLADE.**

**RAGE... *Ghosts... 73...*** Is this **Savatage**? "Beginning of the End" kicks off the album and I'll be damned if it wouldn't fit on *Wake of Magellan*. It is a crime that Germany's long time metal stalwarts **Rage** have gone practically unnoticed. Their career spans over ten albums and vocalist/ bassist Peter Wagner has become synonymous with his band's name in the same fashion as Biff Byford/ **Saxon**, Lemmy/ **Motorhead**, etc. Through the years **Rage** has matured in a similar fashion as **Savatage**. *Ghosts* is a mature effort with a spiritual concept and once again features the Lingua Mortis Orchestra in support. Although they appear on the record, guitarists Sven Fischer and Spiros Efthimiadas, drummer Chris Efthimidas, and keyboardist Christian Wolff have departed. In coming are metal legends Victor Smolksi (guitars) and Mike Terrana (drums). Overall, *Ghosts* is a very mediocre effort. The album plods along at a sombre pace and is quite dull when compared to classics like *Secrets in a Weird World* or *End of All Days*, or even last year's *Thirteen* for that matter. The only song that captures these ears is the lively "Fear". Hopefully Peavy can pick up the pieces and come up with a killer follow up and put **Rage** back on track. What is it with the **Queen** sounding "Tomorrow's Yesterday"? **GUN.**

**RAIN FELL WITHIN... *Believe... 92...*** You rarely hear albums as good as *Believe*. To call **Rain Fell Within** passionate would be an understatement. Vocalist Dawn Smith has established herself as the definitive female lead vocalist. Her operatic approach is not as accessible as Anneke (**The Gathering**) or Christine (**Lacuna Coil**) but she brings a haunting, angelic sound that catches on after several listens. *Believe* contains five tracks. Opener "A False Reality" is perhaps their best. Tim Miller's pounding double bass almost sounds awkward against the symphonic base but it provides a moving, energetic vibe rarely found in bands of this ilk. "Alone" begins in a mournful manner but once Tim's percussion kicks in the song moves toward a dramatic climax. It isn't until "Believe", the third track, comes along that the metal guitars take over and Dawn's keyboards take a backseat. The result will please **Iron Maiden** fans as easily as those who worship **Therion**. The music on "Sorrow Becomes Me" takes on a progressive edge and closer, "The Sun in My Wound" ends the record on a sombre note but the first four tracks are eight minute journeys that are dark and beautiful. **DARK SYMPHONIES.**

**RAJNA... *Yahili... 85...*** This was a shock. Even though Holy Records goes out of their way to create a diverse yet archetypical roster, a band like **Rajna** was completely unexpected. By no means is this metal. It is quite seductive, exotic, and relaxing. **Rajna** consists of three musicians; J. Lefebvre, G. Chambellant, and F. Lefebvre, who use Tibetan and Indian instruments to create the new age atmospheric music found on *Yahili*. A prophetic quote from their bio helps describe them: "You can situate **Rajna** music somewhere between dream and journey, it's an initiation to the independence of spirit". Yes, indeed. *Yahili* is a great album to fall asleep to. It has a calming effect that is rarely found in the metal genre. While I have an appreciation for the unorthodox musical instruments **Rajna** play, I prefer the percussive tunes and the enchanting female vocals. "Shalai" is a standout track that possesses both qualities. This is a shocking move from any metal label, but **Rajna** further proves Holy Records belief in the avant garde and in quality. **HOLY.**

**RIVER OF CHANGE... *Where Reality Can Not Enter... 83...*** One hundred percent, true progressive metal. **River Of Change** seemingly come from nowhere

release an album of slightly above average metal with over the top keyboards and many **Rush** and **Dream Theater** influences. Vocalist Claudio Conti reminds me of local favorites **October Thorns'** vocalist Paul Laplaca in his Geddy Lee inspired melodies, but Conti lacks Paul's depth and emotion. That is not meant to demean **River Of Change**, it's just that in today's exciting climate and with bands like **Pain Of Salvation** and **October Thorns** adding new twists, a band like this sounds safe. There are people out there who surely would rather it be that way anyway. Fabio Bernardi is a star in making. His keyboard playing is prominent through out and often adds an unpredictable flamboyance to **River Of Change's** compositions. His talents are showcased on the beginning of "From Beyond" and "Medieval Dream". Guitarist Luca Cardilli is not afraid to lay down a heavy groove as evidenced by "The Wonder", "From Beyond", or the rousing closer, "Midian". He often takes a backseat to Fabio's amazing keyboard skills, but still adds his own rhythmic flair. If it weren't for an unfocused second half, *Where Reality Can Not Enter* would rank among the best of the year. Watch out for them in the future. I'm sure they'll come up with something special in a few years. **B.O.**

**RUNNING WILD... Victory... 72...** Somehow **Running Wild** follow up their best record, *The Rivalry*, with their worst, *Victory*. It starts out promising enough. "Fall of Dorkas" begins with "Painkiller" type of drums, and works into an **Anvil** worthy anthem. Then the unthinkable happens. "When Time Runs Out" sounds like a lame 80's pop tune with a cheap drum machine. So does "The Guardian", so does "The Hussar". The latter is the worst sounding yet. It's too happy. Some songs show a glimmer of hope. "Return of the Gods" is a return to the fast opener style shown on "Fall of Dorkas". "Timeriders", "The Tsar", and "Victory" have classic **Running Wild** characteristics despite the horrid drumming. "Tsar" has those **Maiden** guitar harmonies they've been known to do. Angelo Sasso gets credit for the drumming- I don't know what the hell he did, but I've rarely heard an album that was practically ruined because of the drummer- especially a legend like **Running Wild**. Jorg Michael, you must make time to return. What a lame cover of the **Beatle's** "Revolution". **GUN.**


**SAMSON... Shock Tactics... 82...** This is a reissue of **Samson's** 1981 release, *Shock Tactics*. People will remember **Samson** as one of the leaders of the early 80's New Wave of British Heavy Metal. They are perhaps best known as **Iron Maiden's** Bruce Dickinson's first band. *Shock Tactics* is one of the best records from the era and the album does not sound nearly as dated as some of the classic album from that time period. **Samson** may be the namesake of guitarist Paul Samson but there's no denying Dickinson's coming of age on this record. It is easy to see why he was chosen to replace Paul Di'anno in **Iron Maiden** for their pivotal third release, *Number of the Beast*. *Shock Tactics* features some of **Samson's** best material. "Go to Hell" and "Once Bitten" were immediate hits. "Blood Lust" ranks among Bruce Bruce's best performances of his career. His piercing screams set a new standard for metal vocalists and this song epitomizes his talent. This is a deserving reissue. **SANCTUARY.**

**SAMSON... Survivors... 81...** *Survivors* is **Samson's** introduction to the world. It originally appeared in 1979. *Survivors* is dated but what is contained on here represents the roots of the British metal scene and is similar to early **Saxon** efforts and **Def Leppard's** debut, *On Through the Night*. The line-up on *Survivors* was Paul Samson (guitars), Chris Aylmer (bass), and the infamous Thunderstick, aka Barry Graham (drums). Paul Samson's vocals are more rock/ blues based than Bruce Dickison's wail. Although I feel **Samson** best work can be found on the Dickinson fronted *Shock Tactics*, Paul's style works well with the music here on *Survivors*. I think Sanctuary is wise in reissuing records from both singers to show what each had to offer. **SANCTUARY.**


**SAMSON... Live At Reading '81... 79...** I believe this live recording from the Reading Festival was Bruce Dickinson's last set with **Samson** before joining **Iron Maiden**. This was also the infamous gig that saw drummer Thunderstick playing enclosed within a massive cage. The tracks included on this disc are, "Big Brother", "Take it Like a Man", "Nice Girl", "Earth Mover", "Vice Versa", "Bright Lights", "Walking out on You", "Hammerhead", "Riding with the Angels", and "Gravy Train". The highlights of course were "Vice Versa" and "Riding with the Angels". The disc is upbeat and the songs may sound dated but retain their top quality. Listening to this shows why Bruce Bruce was the obvious choice to replace Paul Di'anno in **Iron Maiden**. **SANCTUARY.**

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**SAMSON... Head On... 78...** *Head On* first appeared in 1980 and like the other **Samson** reissues, *Shock Tactics*, *Live at Reading '81*, and *Survivors*, it appears the label is taking advantage of Bruce Dickinson's return to **Iron Maiden**. *Head On* sounds quite dated, but was obviously a heavy release for the time period it was originally released. On *Head On*, half of the songs feature the talented lungs of Bruce Bruce, but the other half feature guitarist Paul Samson, who is decidedly inferior to Bruce Bruce's powerful wail. With the exception of the classic "Vice Versa", there are no great tunes on *Head On*, although there's no denying the energetic U.F.O. influences songs like "Hard Times" and "Hammerhead". Considering *Head On* is an album that was originally released twenty years ago, it's not a bad record. It just has no place in modern music. **SANCTUARY.**

**SCULPTURED... Apollo Ends... 89...** This is one unique specimen. Main composer Don Anderson has created a near masterpiece. *Apollo Ends* is a journey that is hypnotic and weird. Don's guitar playing has an esoteric processed sound that borders on progressive. He shares the vocals with Brian Yager, Don using a coarse style, Brian a clear, doom approach not dissimilar to **The Obsessed/ Spirit Caravan's** *Wino*. To make *Sculptured* even more independent, they will color their compositions with trombone (Clint Idsinga) and trumpet (Burke Harris). Lyrically, *Apollo Ends* centers around loneliness, depression, nausea, and morning. It presents yet another element that further separates *Sculptured* from any comparisons. Joining Anderson and Yager are **Agalloch** mainman and drummer John Haughm and **Nothing** mainman and bassist Jason Walton. "Apollo Destroys Apollo Creates" is a ten minute instrumental with some creative yet noisy guitar sounds that build for half the song. It is the only unfocused song on this soon to be classic. Elsewhere, "Snow Covers All" is *Sculptured* at their best. A memorable vocal line and their most commercial, yet still avantgarde presentation yet. **THE END.**

**SENTENCED... Crimson... 82...** I have mixed feelings regarding *Sentenced*. While their songs are rarely memorable, this Finnish veteran band has the ability to write original songs that sound like no other band. There is a certain depth to their metal. Of course, lyrically *Sentenced* still deal in their depressive, suicidal doldrums as song titles like "Home in Despair", "No More Beating as One", and "Killing Me Killing You", suggest. On *Crimson*, *Sentenced* add a few subtle touches which make the songs here a little more interesting than usual. While they aren't the most memorable songs, each one does possess an identity. Some highlights include "Broken", which reminds me a little of *Icon* era **Paradise Lost**, and the vocal effects and emotive vibe of "One More Day". I feel that *Sentenced* are continuing to show maturation in their playing, there is depth and a subtle desire for experimentation, but Ville Laihiala needs to have his limiting vocal style to expand at the same rate. All in all *Crimson* is good, my complaints are relatively minor. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

**SETHERIAL... Hell Eternal... 87...** So many bands try to accomplish what *Setherial* have done on *Hell Eternal*. *Setherial's* third release is brutally raw and aggressive black metal that does not translate into noise. *Hell Eternal* is a maelstrom of power. It is what all these people use to promote the extreme metal band of the week. Seven songs that attack the listener, *Setherial* never let up on their savageness. This is the beauty in violence. Peter Tagtgren does an excellent job on production. He has produced so many bands that Abyss Studio has become cliché. Here he reaffirms his status as a highly qualified and in demand producer. Themgoroth's (ex-**Dark Funeral**) vocals are intense, like the music, this attack is confrontational but professional in its quality. While *Nord* and *Lords of the Nightrealm* both had their moments, *Setherial's* talent has truly come to fruition on *Hell Eternal*. I admire and appreciate the experimentation prevalent in today's extreme metal scene, I have to compliment this fierce and brutal, no gimmicks, no unnecessary additions record. **NAPALM.**

**SHADOWS FALL... Of One Blood... 84...** This band has created some major buzz recently. The last time Century Media promoted an American band like this was when *Stuck Mojo* came out over five years ago. Once again the hype is worthy of the band's talent. *Shadows Fall* play a style of metal that borrows elements from such diverse places as the Swedish/ Gothenburg death metal scene, Boston hardcore, and even old school thrash. The resulting sound is like no other and is not the mish mosh it sounds like they could be. All the songs have a focus and flow to them. A song like "Crushing Belial" starts out Swedish, throws in a classic thrash riff, climax with a deeply melodic mid section, and then proceed to tap into *Annihilator* like techno thrash. Brian Fair has a diverse range that allows him to reach abrasive intensity, deep growls, and even a classy clear tone that is equally emphatic in its emotion. "Fleshhold" has some of the most headbang worthy riffs not heard of since *Pronk* riffs were displayed on M.T.V. in the early 90's. *Shadows Fall* have the unique ability to draw from almost every genre of metal without betraying the ideals held by each. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

**SHOCK MACHINE... Shock Machine... 75...** *Shock Machine* is a project featuring **Helloween** bassist Markus Grosskopf and drummer Uli Kusch, with ex-**Doc Eisenhauer** members, vocalist Olli Lugini, and guitarist Rolfi Feldmann. *Shock Machine* originally surfaced in the late 80's while **Helloween** were legally tied up and before they released largely disappointing albums, *Pink Bubbles Go Ape* and *Chameleon*. Now, nearly ten years later, *Shock Machine* finally release their self titled debut. Overall, *Shock Machine* is quite dull. Oli Lugini's vocals are slightly coarse, nearly a Brian Johnson/ Jason McMaster rasp but deeper and more powerful, but also too one dimensional. With the exception of the heavy stomp on "Running"; it doesn't seem as though much time was spent on this. Of course, **Helloween** is Grosskopf and Kusch's money maker so *Shock Machine* is probably more of a hobby. **SANCTUARY.**

**SHUTDOWN... Something To Prove... 83...** New York's hardcore heroes *Shutdown* feel they have something to prove. Critics have pointed out their youth and supposed incompetence when it comes to playing their instruments but *Shutdown* show they're here to stay. *Something to Prove* is a ten minute, four song e.p. that follows 98's debut, *Against All Odds*, and bridges the gap to their sophomore effort which is expected to be out this summer. They actually possess more of an old school crossover sound with some heavy guitar riffs and vocalist Mark Scodotto is certainly the best hardcore frontman I have heard in a long time. After a short "Intro", we get "The Judged", "Don't Look Back", and "No Compromise". Look for them on tour now with the **Cro-Mags** and **All Out War**. Heed Mark's advice, "never be ashamed of who you are or what you believe". *Shutdown* have more groove than most hardcore bands. **VICTORY.**

**SIEBENBURGEN... Delictum... 82...** Some recent changes have occurred in the **Siebenburgen** camp. Gone is female vocalist Lovisa Hallstedt to be replaced by Kicki Højert. Unlike Loreia and Grimjaur, the majority of the lyrics on *Delictum* is written in English. They have maintained their dark vampiric stance and although there are certainly gothic influences on *Delictum*, **Siebenburgen** aren't afraid to show an aggressive, near black metal style. Kicki's vocal embellishments make the rumbling songs to a new level of class. **Siebenburgen** aren't as refined as **Tristania** but thanks to Kicki there is a level of professionalism that many bands can't hope to achieve. As an extra bonus, they have recorded a cover of **W.A.S.P.'s** "Animal". Unlike many other bands that fall into this genre, **Siebenburgen** do not delve into keyboard or melodic passages. Instead they tend to keep the pace fast with traditional metal influences and Kicki's feminine vocals to complement Marcus Ehlin's harsh style. **NAPALM.**

**SKITZO... Got Sick... 88...** This California band has been around since **Testament** released *The Legacy* and **Death Angel** were teenagers releasing *The Ultra Violence*. Vocalist/ songwriter Lance Ozanix has become famous for him vomiting on stage and his controversial lyrical concepts. Once again he is sure to offend with his obscene album cover showing a mouth in place of a vagina, spewing forth green puke. If you look beneath the outrageous exterior, Lance has put together a deceptively great album. Inspired by eighties metal acts, *Got Sick* is pure metal with catchy headbanging riffs galore. Opener, "Gates of Hell" is simplistic yet true metal with some quiet moments that prove Lance's song oriented approach. "Loner" is a sadistic ballad that shows a malevolent character despite the tranquil structure of the song. "Class Dismembered" is a song that ignorant people have wrongly criticized **Skitzo** as being a musical accomplice to **Columbine**. Joining Lance on *Got Sick* are guests such as guitarists Jim Martin (ex-**Faith No More**) and Steve Smythe (**Testament**, ex-**Vicious Rumors**). With four full lengths and countless e.p.'s to their catalogue, **Skitzo** deserves to be hailed for their persistence.

**SLAUGHTER LORD... Thrash til Death... 83...** Yes indeed, the album title says it all. This is a classic thrash album featuring material that was recorded in the mid eighties. **Slaughter Lord** caused quite a stir in their native Australia but their potential was never realized as they broke up before ever releasing an album. *Thrash til Death* features their *Taste of Blood* demo and various unreleased tracks. While the recording quality is lacking, the spirit and conviction is not. *Thrash til Death* will have **Kreator** and **Destruction** fans salivating and truthfully **Slaughter Lord** is better than those bands or many others from that scene. The solos are plenty and first rate, the guitar sound ("Die by Power" in particular) is killer. Unfortunately the vocals are trapped in mid eighties cliché, mid range and raspy. Of course, the music embodies the energy and thrills of a scene that has been lost in the eighties as contemporary acts simply rehash old ideas and do not try to modernize the genre. **HAMMERHEART.**

**SNAPCASE... Designs For Automotion... 83...** This hardcore upstate New York band has been making quite a name for themselves. They are greatly revered and upon listening to *Designs for Automotion* I can understand why. **Snapcase** are basically doing what bands like **Helmet**, **Quicksand**, and **Clutch** did years

before, perhaps leaning to a more raw and less technical approach. When it comes to this style of music my one complaint is that the vocals are often the same throughout. This makes bands sound too one dimensional and takes away from the emotional peaks and valleys that should shine through. This can also be said about **Snapcase**. I really like Daryl Taberski's vocals but he rarely changes his style on any of the eleven tracks. This is about my only complaint regarding **Snapcase**. They are worthy of all the attention they are receiving and even sceptics will be turned on to the fresh and energized music. **VICTORY.**

**SOILWORK... The Chainheart Machine... 85...** You may recall this Swedish band was interviewed in an earlier issue after Listenable Records debut *Steel Bath Suicide*. Century Media has licensed their sophomore effort for American audiences. Although **Soilwork** record at Studio Fredman, they make an extra effort to distance themselves from that scene. They pick up where bands like **Carcass** left off, add some blazing solos, deceptive technical ability, and a keyboard player. The result is a modern thrash sound with lots of potential. I find the vocals to be a bit too one dimensional, but the talent of these musicians more than make up for it. "Generation Speedkill" has some cool keyboard work going on in the background. Most of the songs move at a rapid pace. It's on **Soilwork's** longest numbers, "Spirits of the Future Sun" and closer "Room No. 99" that they show their most variety. Some slow passages allow for groove and some quirky surprises. The latter track fades into some noisy industrial mayhem. This is a strong band who now have two very good albums under their belt. They are more innovative than half the other bands will ever think of being, yet I look to their pivotal third album to hopefully be the album that will make them essential. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

**SOMNUS... Awakening The Crown... 84...** *Awakening the Crown* is an excellent debut that features an easily identifiable mix of symphonic black metal with a medieval feel and some touches of gothic. Unlike the flashiness of **Dimmu Borgir**, **Somnus** focuses on creating and developing a dark, sombre atmosphere while maintaining aggressive vocals. While Scott Hilberg has an excellent coarse style, he will add a deep gothic, sometimes spoken style for great effect. At times keyboardist Rhiannon lends her feminine voice. It is her keyboard playing that effectively enhances the music and often adds a neo classical sound to the compositions. The lyrics are a great read, very poetic in nature. This Cleveland based band first caught my attention at the March Metal Meltdown. It was at this show that their talents were really revealed. Unlike many American extreme bands, they look to create an original sound and are talented at creating atmospheres without neglecting the song. **ROOT OF ALL EVIL.**

**SONATA ARCTICA... Ecliptica... 79...** Nice logo. Cool blue ice water, **Sonata Arctica** unleash their debut, *Ecliptica*. This is an album of powerful European power metal. Flashy keyboards, kicking double bass, typical power metal riffs, Michael Kiske like vocals- it all makes for a safe, yet classy album of power metal. The only thing unusual about **Sonata Arctica** is that they come from Finland. It may have taken a decade but apparently there is a band ready to step out from the shadow of **Stratovarius**. Tony may not be the accomplished keyboardist that Jens Johansson is but he does add needed pizzazz. While *Ecliptica* is not a bad album it just lacks originality. On the positive side, Tony has moments of brilliance and when Jani adds a little groove like on "My Land" or speed like "8th Commandment" **Sonata Arctica** shows lots of potential. "Letter to Dana" has some heart wrenching lyrics but not even the addition of a flute can make it a powerful statement of a song. With the exception of a few exciting parts, *Ecliptica* is largely a forgettable album. **SPINEFARM.**

**SOUL CAGES... Craft... 81...** What a cool name. I often find myself listening to **Soul Cages** and hoping that they can take their collective talents and write the ultimate tune. All the qualities are present. Thorsten Staroske is a superior vocalist who truly has his own style, you can't compare his clear, quirky but very listenable tone to anyone. The musicianship is top shelf quality and even though **Soul Cages** are classified as progressive metal it appears that they are afraid to take chances. Their self titled debut and *Moments* both were special but *Craft* sounds like a band that is confident in their songwriting but lacking a desire to expand their core sound. Even drummer Jorg Nitschke does not have the same double bass power and enthusiasm that would energize even the most mundane of **Soul Cages** compositions. On the positive side, "Falling" is deeply emotional and songs like "A Part of Me" and "Imprisoned" have their moments. Beate Kuhbier once again guests, this time on "The Light of Day", for a feminine contrast to Thorsten. If you like progressive with metal elements and a laid back approach, **Soul Cages** should be sought. **MASSACRE.**

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**SOUL REAPER... *Written In Blood... 77...*** Soul Reaper come to us from Sweden and play an old school, **Morbid Angel** influenced style of death metal. It's not that the songwriting on *Written In Blood* is poor or anything, I just find Soul Reaper to be a little too ordinary for my tastes. The guitars rip and give the album a nice edge but that's the only highlight. Soul Reaper are heavily adorned in spiked arm bands, pentagrams, and black creating an obvious blasphemous image. Their biggest claim to fame, one which the band downplays is that Soul Reaper features members of **Dissection**. They say this was actually the direction that **Dissection** was headed in before Jon's arrest. I know that Soul Reaper want to be remembered for their extreme sound but why can't they perform more like their brilliantly dark, yet melodic intro on the title track? **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

**SOUTHERN GENTLEMEN... *Exotic Dancer Blues... 77...*** Southern Gentlemen is a trio that plays "very heavy blues rock". Yes, indeed. David T. Chastain lists the influences for Southern Gentlemen as ZZ Top, Robin Trower, Jimi Hendrix, and Lynyrd Skynyrd. Take those bands and add a dose of heavy metal and you have *Exotic Dancer Blues*. David handles the vocals as well and his vocals fit the blues style that he, drummer Dennis Lesh and bassist Kevin Kekes are playing. David is a legendary guitarist and his solo albums (David T. Chastain/ Chastain), Zanister, and C.J.S.S. are all highly sought after but Southern Gentlemen allows him to cross over into a more commercial fanbase. The 70's classic rock fans would definitely dig this. The problem is most of those people rely on the radio for their music and in the year 2000 modern rock musicians are neglected. David's lead playing is exceptional as usual, and although his blues riffs are adequate, they are often simplistic and never truly go anywhere. What can I say? The blues were never meant to be complicated. I think closer, "Time Traveller" is an exceptional track but other than the solos, the rest of *Exotic Dancer Blues* is quite predictable. Chastain vocalist Kate French provides some sexy photos. **LEVIATHAN.**

**SPIRAL ARCHITECT... *A Sceptics Universe... 92...*** This band will have progressive metal fans salivating. Take such diverse acts like **Death**, **Psychotic Waltz**, **Rush**, and **Cynic**; twist it all into an original blend of aggression and sophistication and you may come close to what **Spiral Architect** is about. This Norwegian band has been talked about in the underground for so long that it is surprising that *A Sceptics Universe* is their debut. There is so much to listen to and yet **Spiral Architect** are never excessive. The technical, dreamy interludes effectively clash with the riff driven guitar exercises. Oeyvind Haegeland has a unique vocal approach that has hints of John Arch (ex-Fates Warning) but also an uncanny resemblance to the talented Buddy Lackey (ex-Psychotic Waltz). Some other original qualities are Lars Norberg's incipient bass playing. His fretless, no limitations work out makes **Spiral Architect** a band in a league of their own. Only Sean Malone and maybe Steve DiGiorgio can touch him. The surreal, melodic, and atmospheric passages recall the best moments of **Cynic**. There are very few bands that can appeal to so many different types of listeners. From the immediate song structures to the abstract atmospheres, **Spiral Architect** have surpassed the masters and created a ground breaking yet easily delineated sound. **SENSORY.**

**SPIRIT CARAVAN... *Dreamwheel... 82...*** *Dreamwheel* is a five song e.p. of Scott Weinrich's trademark metal/ Sabbath riffs and slight blues influence. Joining Wino are bassist Dave Sherman and drummer Gary Isom. Following the demise of **The Obsessed**, Wino put together a new trio called **Shine**. Shortly thereafter a name change to **Spirit Caravan** took place and out came *Dreamwheel*. Anyone familiar with Wino's past work with **St. Vitus** and **The Obsessed** will certainly not be surprised by what is on offer here. Full of riffs and soul, **Spirit Caravan** particularly impress on the jamming "Re-Alignment/ Higher Power" and the almost **Kings X** sounding "Sun Stoned". "Yourself" is one of the best tunes Wino has come up with yet. **METEOR CITY.**

**STEEL PROPHET... *Messiah... 86...*** Less than a year after Nuclear Blast released *Dark Hallucinations* comes *Messiah*. **Messiah** sees **Steel Prophet** offering a variety of song structures. They have never been so diverse. The opener, "The Ides of March" is inspired by classic literature once again, this time Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. Ending in a similar double bass kick as "Montag" from *Dark Hallucinations*, it proves new drummer Kevin Cafferty to be a worthy successor to the departed Pat Magrath. The best of **Steel Prophet** occurs after the anthemic title track. "Vengeance Attained" starts slowly and builds up to a rousing metal epic. Rick Mythiasin proves to be an exceptionally talented vocalist capable of stepping beyond Dickinson's shadow. "Mysteries of Iniquity" is their best. The crushingly heavy riff has become entrenched in my subconscious as Steve Kachinsky's dark side comes out to create a forboding feel. The guitars build on top of one another before **Maiden's** omnipresent influence creeps in during the verse. **Steel Prophet** are long time veterans who are finally beginning to attract well deserved attention. The more progressive nature of *The Goddess Principle* and *Into the Void* has been left behind for a more traditional approach with unpredictable touches. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

**STRATOVARIUS... *Infinite... 87...*** This is an improvement over 98's *Destiny*. *Infinite* sees **Stratovarius** at their best and most creative. My main criticism of them has not been their execution, rather their lack of originality. Previous efforts contain songs that sounded like other bands, "1000 Rainy Nights" "030366" (**Queensryche**), "No Turning Back" (**Helloween**), "Reign of Terror" (**Savatage**), "The Kiss of Judas" (Yngwie Malmsteen), etc. On *Infinite* we hear a band full of power and confidence. "Millennium" is a kicking sing-a-long tune, "Phoenix" has some sledgehammer, precision power, "A Million Light Years Away" features vocalist Timo Kotipelto at his best, and the epic "Infinity" is full of class. The only weak link is the lame epic ballad "Mother Gaia". As usual there is some great interplay between guitarist Timo Tolkki and keyboardist Jens Johansson. Tolkki has never been better and with Jorg Michael anchoring the drums making this the heaviest, most focused, and powerful **Stratovarius** album yet. As usual you get one of the most majestic album covers ever created. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

**SUMMON... *Baptized By Fire... 86...*** **Summon** comes to us from Necropolis via Killjoy's (**Necrophagia**) Baphomet label. Of the many American black metal bands, **Summon** are one of the best. The production on *Baptized by Fire* is better than most in the black metal genre. This allows the instruments to be heard. The guitars are brutally heavy, enough so that it sounds like a death metal band playing black metal. The drums are fast and powerful, something that many extreme band singularly achieve but rarely accomplish both. There are several highlights. The quiet yet heavy "Realm of No Return" shows a confidence in guitar based atmosphere before blasting chaos. "Dark Descent of Fallen Souls" is brutal and **Summon** prove their talent with ever so brief pauses in between chorus lines. The drumming on *Baptized by Fire*, courtesy of Astaroth, is brilliant. Throughout it all, the vocals are harsh yet listenable and don't forget about the incredible guitar. This would look nice alongside **Gorgoroth's** *Incipit Satan* on your shelf. Is that actually the bass I hear on "Beyond the Gates of Storm"? **NECROPOLIS.**

**SWORDMASTER... *Moribund Transgoria... 74...*** **Swordmaster** have made a name for themselves with their retro thrash sound. While *Moribund Transgoria* sees them incorporating more melody and the impressive leads of new guitarist Beast Electric, the limiting vocal style is holding back any further progress. Like previous efforts, *Postmortem Tales* and *Deathraider*, *Moribund Transgoria* was produced by **King Diamond** guitarist Andy LaRocque. Without blatantly ripping off anyone, it's obvious that **Swordmaster** is paying homage to the same eighties thrash scene that spawned bands like  **Destruction** and **Kreator**. Except for some brief flashes, loved that great solo on "Metamorphosis the Sweat of Cain" and the melodic and welcome change of pace of "The Grottesque Xtravaganza", *Moribund Transgoria* is too much of the same over and over again. Like **Bewitched**, **Swordmaster** fall victim to a self imposed vocal style that limits their appeal. Please write more songs like "The Grottesque Xtravaganza". **OSMOSE.**

**TEN... *Spellbound... 81...*** The Italian hard rock/ heavy metal label Frontiers Records has found a home in the States and the first two releases are from **Ten** and **Millenium**. *Spellbound* has been out for about a year but thanks to Sumthing Distribuion these British hard rockers will see a higher profile. This is **Ten's** fourth release and their most accomplished to date. Featuring a stunning cover of medieval art and various mystical intros and passages, *Spellbound* has a touch of fantasy pervading its traditional hard rock base. I find the ballads are on the lame side but songs like the catchy title track, the medieval tinged "Red", and rockers such as "Eclipse" and "The Phantom" raise **Ten** above your standard rock band. Gary Hughes possesses a confident voice with power and identity. The bio states that *Spellbound* will capture the attention of fans from bands like **Savatage** and **Stratovarius**, but this may be too commercial for them. Yet **Ten** is sure to be too adventurous for your average **Bon Jovi** or **Def Leppard** fan too. Who the hell cares anyway, *Spellbound* is above average hard rock with class and sophistication plus Celtic touches. **FRONTIERS.**

**TEN JINN... *As On A Darkling Plain... 78...*** While readers should be familiar with the metal side of Inside Out Music with bands like **Mastermind**, **The Flower Kings**, and **Ten Jinn**, they are equally adept at finding pure progressive talent. Vocalist/ keyboardist John Paul Strauss is the mastermind behind this West Coast prog band. *As on a Darkling Plain* opens with a forty minute epic title track that is developed in eight parts. This epic is obviously influenced by the likes of

Anne Rice's vampire series and contains instrumentals like "Theater of the Vampires" and "Those Who Must Be Kept", and a poem by Rice's husband on "The Dance of Les Innocents". The last thirty minutes contains six songs unrelated to the vampiric concept. Musically, **Ten Jinn** are quite mellow and very musical. Perhaps close to the more progressive side of **Soundscape** musically, **Ten Jinn** don't approach metal's aggressiveness. Strauss has a mid range vocal style which separates him from the usual high tone vocalists of the genre. This is probably for die hard prog fans only. Cool cover. **INSIDE OUT.**

**THANATOS... *Emerging From The Netherworld...* 78...** With a logo like that, the artwork, and the bright colors- you would not guess that **Thanatos** was an early nineties, technical death metal band. *Emerging from the Netherworld* was **Thanatos'** 1990 debut. The music is on the fast, technical side (think early **Pestilence**) with rough old school death metal vocals; which unfortunately, hinder the quality music. Like early death metal acts, **Thanatos** have a strong dose of classic thrash thrown into their riffs. In addition to the original release, the label has included seven demo tracks and a live track. In addition to these two reissues, **Thanatos** has reformed and will release their first record in eight years, *Angelic Encounters*, this summer. Joining original guitarist and vocalist Stephan Gebedi will be **Sinister**, **Houwitser** drummer Aad Kloosterwaard and **Houwitser**, **Judgement Day** bassist Theo van Eekelen. **HAMMERHEART.**

**THANATOS... *Realm Of Ecstasy...* 84...** This album cover is even cooler than the one from their debut. *Realm of Ecstasy* is certainly an improvement over *Emerging from the Netherworld*. The guitars are more powerful, the riffs more technical, and there is a stronger sense of confidence and maturity. Once again, I feel that Stephan Gebedi's one dimensional vocals are detrimental to the complex, yet aggressive music. As a bonus, this reissue includes their four track demo, *Omnicolor*. Each of the nine tracks from *Realm of Ecstasy* have some heavy, thrashing guitar riffs that put almost all the bands from that era to shame. **Thanatos** would not sound out of place today with music as good as what is found here. Despite the technical nature of the music, **Thanatos** will allow the song to develop and slow the pace for emphasis on power. If only they had a better vocalist, who knows how good they could be. **HAMMERHEART.**

**THERAPY?... *Suicide Pact You First...* 72...** Clever title. Hasn't that always been a **Therapy?** trademark? Unfortunately, other **Therapy?** trademarks have seemingly shot themselves in the head because *Suicide Pact* is quite boring and lacks the identity that early **Therapy?** albums like *Troublelegum* and *Caucasian Psychosis* possessed. Opener "He's Not That Kind of Girl" is punchy with a **Clutch** weirdness and a **Danzig** howl to Andy Cairns' vocals. "Jam Jar Jail" has an old **Alice Cooper** like simplicity and epitomizes most of this disc's rather dull nature. They still have that in your face controversial style, it's just that something is missing. Somehow this Irish bunch has lost its originality. Half way through the old **Therapy?** does creep in. "Six Mile Water" is a moody, emotional ballad along the lines of "Gone" or "A Moment of Clarity". It is a talent that the moody **Therapy?** always pulls off to perfection. Next up, "Little Tongues First" is reminiscent of the old days when they were full of virility. We have a kick ass six minute instrumental titled "Big Cave In". Three good songs in the middle of an eleven song disc does not make a good album. Seek out *Caucasian Psychosis* and tell me that wasn't released about eight years too early.

**THERION... *Deggial...* 88...** I don't think any other band has released more material through the nineties. *Deggial* is their seventh full length, in addition to five e.p.'s. *Deggial* makes its intentions clear from the start. "Seven Secrets of the Sphinx" features Christofer Johnsson's heaviest and most adventurous guitar playing since *Symphony Masses*. "Enter Yril-Ye" has an eighties metal riff out of the **Ozzy/Maiden** school. Of course, **Therion** continues to develop and bloom their operatic approach first made prominent on '95's *Lepaca Kliffoth*. On *Deggial*, Johnsson has incorporated a full choir, a tenor, strings, brass, and woodwinds. Martina Hornbacher rejoins as the main female voice and it appears Johnsson has finally found a stable line-up with Thommy Eriksson (guitars), Jan Kazda (bass), and Wolf Simon (drums). Highlights include "The Invincible" and Johnsson's interpretation of Carl Orff's "O Fortunato" (*The Omen* song) closes the album on a fulfilling note. Overall, *Deggial* presents a full sounding opera with heavy guitars and passionate male and female vocals and choirs. A timeless masterpiece, Johnsson has created his most mature work to date. More metal than *Vovin* or *Theli*. **Therion** have left **Celtic Frost's** shadow way behind.

#### NUCLEAR BLAST.

**THORNSPAWN... *Blood Of The Holy Taint Thy Steel...* 75...** **Thornspawn** is yet another brutal, raw, fast black metal band from the States that is placing an emphasis on the ethics and spirit of the Scandinavian pioneers over the electronic, folk, and atmosphere that currently dominates the scene. Their non trendy stance is admirable but as a listener I find *Blood of the Holy Taints thy Steel* to be too repetitious and dull. Each song pounds by with no variation, no change of pace, you can't understand the lyrics, basically it's a mess. For more credibility **Thornspawn** include bassist Bjorn Haga who was once a member of the legendary underground band **Neurovore**. On a positive note, the layout, design, and artwork are all top notch quality. There is nothing subtle about **Thornspawn**. This Texas band goes full speed ahead and cares not for melody or memorable riffs. I respect their ideals, it's just that *Blood of the Holy Taint thy Steel* won't be in my c.d. player that often because I've heard this all before. **NECROPOLIS.**

**THROES OF DAWN... *Binding Of The Spirit...* 77...** The evolution of **Throes Of Dawn** continues. Their debut, *Pakkasherra* was a very raw, aggressive black metal album but its follow up *Dreams of the Black Earth* showed **Throes Of Dawn** becoming more keyboard based and using more melodic structures. *Binding of the Spirit* is their most accomplished work to date. The music is mid paced, dark and often keyboard dominant. The weakness of *Binding of the Spirit* is in the one dimensional, over dramatic vocals. They are obviously trying to further expand musically but the vocals remain primitive. This will surely make **Throes Of Dawn** more appealing to the underground audience. The coolest part about *Binding the Spirit* is the cover. Bright to dark red engulfs a dragonfly, making this a very original cover. On songs like "Binding of the Spirit onto Earth" I find the vocals too outrageous and forcing thus taking away from the slow, doomy atmosphere. This is a common complaint on this record. **AVANTGARDE.**

**THUNDERHEAD... *Ugly Side...* 80...** What can you say about **Thunderhead?** The Connecticut metal band will often record an album that will feature excellent, thought provoking power metal tunes along side crappy, juvenile anthems. This inconsistency has plagued **Thunderhead** throughout the course of their six full lengths. Only *Killing with Style* was good start to finish. It's been four years since *Were You Told the Truth About Hell* but **Thunderhead** have returned with one of their best records. After a straight ahead rocker, "Liar", a succession of songs represent *Ugly Side's* best. "Rock Bottom" is an instant hit. "Footsteps of Fear" combines headbanging riffs with Ted Bullet's old school vocal hooks. Then we have the dynamics of the epic "Blood". Classic **Thunderhead** all the way. From there, the next six songs are short and to the point. Nothing to knock your socks off, but nothing that will embarrass them. "A Really Hard Time" closes *Ugly Side* with heavy riffage and Ted's identifiable vocal rants and chorus hooks. **Thunderhead** have never delivered an album that warrant top ten lists, however longevity is a factor and they have written several great tunes that are memorable and timeless. **STEAMHAMMER.**

**TOURNIQUET... *Microscopic View Of A Telescopic Realm...* 81...** Christian metal has a bad reputation. The scene may not have developed into anything more than a cult following but I challenge anyone to listen to **Mortification's** last disc or **Extol** and tell me they are boring. Long time metallers **Tourniquet** have once again signed to Metal Blade who release their sixth full length to an unsuspecting public. Most of the songs on *Microscopic View* run over the six minute mark as **Tourniquet** offer a well rounded spectrum of ideas. This band is anything but predictable. Firmly rooted in metal, **Tourniquet** will often add melodic vocal harmonies and memorable verses. They come across as being a bit preachy, especially on "Erratic Palpitations of the Human Spirit", but due to their creativity one can easily overlook any drawbacks. Aaron Guerra has an interesting guitar tone that is raw yet comprehensible, his playing is technical yet catchy. There is a certain dichotomy to this band and their musical vision that will leave many listeners feeling they love them or hate them. **METAL BLADE.**

**TRANSATLANTIC... *SMPTe...* 72...** The *SMPTe* stands for Stolt, Roine (**Flower Kings**), Morse, Neal (**Spocks Beard**), Portnoy, Mike (**Dream Theater**) and Trewavas, Pete (**Marillion**). With pedigree like that, **Transatlantic** sounds like the ultimate prog rock super group. *SMPTe* has five tracks lasting well over seventy minutes, automatically telling the listener that it is sure to be self indulgent. While **Transatlantic** was originally planned to include Jim Matheos of **Fates Warning**, who cancelled due to other commitments, Neal suggested the inclusion of Roine. The first track, "All of the Above", is a thirty minute epic that is too indulgent for my tastes. Neal fares better with "We All Need Some Light" and "Mystery Train". The latter includes some cool, experimental drum techniques from Portnoy. "My New World", penned by Roine, offers a change of pace but is simply too weird and pompous and at sixteen minutes it may be half the length of "All of the Above" but is still obviously too long. To close *SMPTe* we get a cover of **Procol Harum's** "In Held In I". This may be a prog rock fans dream but it's too much to absorb for me. Neal creates his usual vocal harmonies and melodies making **Transatlantic** sound closest to **Spocks Beard**, but only a die hard can sit through this. **RADIANT.**

**TRANSPORT LEAGUE... *Satanic Panic...* 87...** I like the white clothed look this Swedish groove metal band are presenting. Their name was derived from **Clutch's** debut, *Transnational Speedy League*, and the sound is not a million miles removed from a collision of **Clutch** and **Sepultura**. Unlike the many other bands who attempt to sound the same way, **Transport League** do what they do with conviction. Tony Jelencovich is one of the best vocalists for this style I have ever heard. Listen to songs like "Neckdraft" or "Tar" for evidence of his ability to use both harsh vocals and a clearer melodic tone with ease and

no sign of contrivance. New drummer Patrik J. Sten appears to have made **Transport League** more focused. Unlike their first two releases, *Satanic Panic* has not one weak track. When they lock into a groove, "Psycho Connected", they do not let go. Simplistic riffs with a raw biting edge and just enough dynamics to maintain interest start to finish without becoming boring may not sound difficult but **Transport League** are one of the few to effectively do it. **PAVEMENT**. **TRISTANIA... *Beyond The Veil... 96...*** Wow! This is perhaps one of the best records I've heard in a long time. *Beyond The Veil* is powerful, dark, and full of class. This album sets a standard in the gothic metal world. Somehow **Tristania** fail to succumb to the daring, moping, boring drama this genre is normally known for. There is plenty of metal, lots of guitars, lots of melody, and deep vocals to counter balance the keyboards, choirs, and female vocals. The choirs of "Aphelion" are bombastic, beautiful, and quite memorable. The keyboard melodies add melancholy but also allow the music to be just as catchy as those choirs. At times they will experiment with a dose of electronics/ industrial elements without interrupting the flow. All of **Tristania's** elements converge on "Heretique". The double bass drums, the aggressive male vocals countered by a clear male chant like vocal, a church like choir over industrial percussion- it all works together to a mesmerizing effect. What's even more amazing is that **Tristania** create a mood without ever sacrificing the guitars, the drums, or the metal. There has not been a better album for vocals released that I can recall. I love **Therion** but this blows them away. **NAPALM**.

**TRIUMPHATOR... *Wings Of Antichrist... 72...*** From Sweden comes another noisy black metal band. While many liken **Triumphator** to Swedish legends like **Marduk** and **Dark Funeral**, *Wings of Antichrist* does not match up to them. Slightly more chaotic, **Triumphator** do not possess any memorable qualities to their songwriting. Lone original member and songwriter Marcus Teno (bass) is joined by **Funeral Myst's** Arioch (vocals and guitars) and **Marduk's** Fredrik (drums) on this debut. The production of Peter Tagtgren does allow for some comprehensible listening but **Triumphator** maintain a raw underground feel throughout these eight songs. While I do not find *Wings of Antichrist* to be all that listenable, dedicated black metal fans will appreciate their crude and uncompromisingly scathing attack. **NECROPOLIS**.

**LUCA TURILLI... *Kings Of The Nordic Twilight... 85...*** I enjoyed **Rhapsody** guitarist Luca Turilli's solo record better than his highly acclaimed full time band. Of course, the artwork is spectacular and the layout is colorful and very informative, you would be hard pressed to find better representation. In many ways, *King of the Nordic Twilight* is not so different than Luca's work with **Rhapsody**. Producer Sascha Paeth feels this album is his best work to date. Joining Turilli are Lord Byron vocalist Olaf Hayer and **Heavens Gate** members Paeth (bass, guitars) and Robert Hunecke Rizzo (drums). The result is a stellar album with incredible catchy anthems like "Legend of Steel", "The Ancient Forest of Elves", and "Black Dragon" providing some long choruses not heard since the last **Blind Guardian** record. There is more classical instrumentation on *King of the Nordic Twilight* as Luca hired an opera choir and integrated violin, flute, piano, and viola into his metal repertoire. The album is, of course, an epic concept album with the closing title track running over ten minutes and a classical/ metal achievement that would even satisfy Chris Johnson (**Therion**). Maybe I simply prefer Olaf's vocals to Fabio's (**Rhapsody**) but I find myself enjoying Turilli's solo effort immensely. **LIMB**.

**UNDER THE SUN... *Under The Sun... 76...*** **Under The Sun's** self titled debut is an accomplished record which will undoubtedly create a buzz in the progressive rock circles. Band leader Chris Shyrack (vocals, guitars) prefers the term "cinematic symphonic art rock" but **Under The Sun** is drawing many comparisons to the seventies masters of progressive rock like **Rush**, **Yes**, and **Genesis**. *Under the Sun* is modern sounding and excellently produced. Opening track, "The Golden Voyage" is the highlight of the album and had me thinking this was going to be a landmark album but it was all downhill from there. Sure, these guys are great musicians it's just that after awhile they become boring. Songs like "Reflections" fall somewhere between **Rush** and **Pink Floyd** but don't really go anywhere. I really enjoyed Kurt Barabas' bass playing, often reminding me of the awesome Chris Squire (**Yes**), filling in the spaces and supplying a much needed groove. I like progressive music when combined with metal (**October Thorns** and **Digital Ruin** come to mind) but when it's lengthy and not energetic (i.e. **Under The Sun**, the **Flower Kings**) I become bored. **Under The Sun** have been honing their skills for ten years and they are talented enough to warrant a break, I just don't think their audience will expand beyond fans of the aforementioned bands. **MAGNA CARTA**.

**UNITED... *Distorted Vision... 83...*** This is another Japanese import brought to America via Howling Bull Records. **United** has been on the scene since 1981 when they began as a **Judas Priest** cover band. After a few years, two e.p.'s and several line-up changes, **United** finally appeared in 1990 with their debut, *Bloody but Unbowed*. Following that came *Human Zoo*, *N.O.I.Q.*, and tours with **Slayer** and **Machine Head** in Japan. After new vocalist Shinichi Inazu joined **United** the band recorded *Reload* with **Machine Head** producer Vincent Wojna. *Distorted Vision* was once again produced by Wojna and sees **United's** style of metal taking a modern approach. "Sick and Angry" has a near **Pantera** crunch and aggression, "So Damn Low" a punk attitude, and "Change" takes its time building up in a **Skinlab** type fashion. While **United** have come a long way since their days as a **Priest** cover band, it is obvious that they are influenced by modern styles of metal like the bands mentioned above. **United** have an identifiable sound and hopefully they will appeal to American audience the same way fans do their peers. **HOWLING BULL**.

**URANIUM 235... *Cultural Minority... 92...*** A band like this has been sorely missing recently. **Uranium 235** play a style of industrial metal with an emphasis on songwriting not the usual **Nine Inch Nails/ Ministry** cliches. Although Shane does show an aggressive, harsh side every once in awhile, he is best remembered for his clear, melodic vocals. What, you ask? An industrial band without distorted vocals? Yes, indeed. For those who remember a band called **Mind Bomb** who released one album in 1993, **Uranium 235** comes closest to that sound. The beats, the electronics, the danceable rhythms are all here, they are simply augmented by instantly memorable choruses. To throw a curve, **Uranium 235** follow catchy yet predictable. "Radio Shut Down" and "Here it Comes" with the fast paced **K.M.F.D.M.** influenced "Stimulation". One of the few songs to feature vocal effects, "God Thing", uses the stomping guitars for hooks. "Creator" has that rock/ electronic combo sound that makes **Acumen Nation** so good. If you haven't picked up on it yet, **Uranium 235** also place an emphasis on not only making each song catchy but also its own separate entity. That alone is an admirable accomplishment. "Scent Explosion" is my favorite. The pulsing bass, myriads of vocal hooks, and an upbeat percussion makes it an instant hit. The only misstep is their cover of "You Spin Me Round". **MYSTIC**.

**USURPER... *Visions From The Gods... 80...*** I remember when this demo came out in 1994. It was an exciting work and had a profound effect upon me. Their debut full length, *Diabolisis*, was nothing short of brilliant and their stature has grown in recent years. **Usurper** takes the values of **Hellhammer**, old **Celtic Frost**, and injects a healthy dose of speed. For those who missed out on the original demo, **Necropolis** has put together this nine song disc under the same title. In addition to the tracks that appeared on the demo we get a live version of "Blood Passion", two versions of "Soulstalker", and a different version of "Wolford". This is a nice compilation from a band that values tradition but injects their own ideas but it's been a few years since *Skeletal Season* and I can't wait for new material. **NECROPOLIS**.

**VADER... *Litany... 83...*** It's taken about ten years but it appears that they have finally established themselves as a death metal institution. *Litany* is their fourth full length (I'm not counting countless e.p.'s and live albums) and sees their signature sound neither expanding nor stagnating, despite once again singing to a new label (Metal Blade). Except for an occasional two or three second twist and a couple samples, *Litany* sounds very much like its predecessors. Doc's drumming is still in top form and Peter Wiwczarek's guitar riffs are abundant and fast. On some songs, "Xeper" and "A World of Hurt" for example, the guitars have an Allen West (**Obituary**, **Lowbrow**) heavy doom like sound. Pavel Frelik once again provides many of the lyrics (**Vader's** best yet) and Jacek Wisniewski does an amazing job with the artwork. There are some memorable songs and some cool thrashy but insanely heavy riffs ("The Calling", "The World Made Flesh") but otherwise it's a case of been there, done that for **Vader**. *Litany* is quality death metal. **METAL BLADE**.

**W.A.S.P... *The Best Of The Best Volume One 1984-2000... 78...*** This is a compilation of songs put together by Blackie Lawless. *The Best of the Best* features all up tempo rockers with tracks coming from six of their eight albums, sixteen year career. Now to the featured tracks. For the completist there are two new tracks, a cover of Elton John's "Saturday's Alright for Fighting, (I preferred **Flotsam And Jetsam's** 80's version) and "Unreal", a straight ahead rocker. "Animal" is on here as well. From their self titled debut are "I Wanna Be Somebody", "L.O.V.E. Machine", "On Your Knees", and "Show No Mercy". Representing *The Last Command* are "Blind in Texas", "Wild Child", and "Sex Drive". "95 Nasty" comes from *Inside the Electric Circus*, and the lone representations from **W.A.S.P.'s** best albums, *The Headless Children* and *The Crimson Idol*, are "Mean Man" and "Chainsaw Charlie" respectively. Closing the album are "Hellorado" and "Dirty Balls" from last year's *Hellorado* disc. *The Best of the Best* coincides with the digitally remastered reissues of the six studio albums that features songs on this compilation and *Live in the Raw* and *Double Live Assassins*. Underrated discs *Kill Fuck Die* and *Still Not Black Enough* have apparently been neglected. In all honesty, I feel *The Best of the Best* would better be titled best of the mediocre. These tracks are good fist pumping metal but the best tracks Blackie and company have done have been left elsewhere. **SNAPPER**.



**WINDS OF SIRIUS... *Beyond All Temples And Myths...77...*** It's become clear that Napalm Records and Season Of Mist are the two labels that are frontrunners of the gothic metal scene. **Winds Of Sirius** comes to us from the latter. *Beyond All Temples and Myths* is an album that presents gothic metal without relying on female vocals or slick production. The guitars are heavy, often doomy and slow, the vocals are male and rough, rarely moaning. This is a heavy album despite the gothic elements. **Winds Of Sirius** lack originality and the album goes by without leaving anything to grasp on to. **Winds Of Sirius** have yet to find their niche. Included in the line-up are former **Amaymon** members; Lord K Sangdragon on guitars, bass, keyboards, and vocals and Fred Puvilland on drums. The six proper songs all run over five minutes and are too long for their own good. Overall, *Beyond All Temples and Myths* is a generic affair and hopefully **Winds Of Sirius** will show growth on the next record. **SEASON OF MIST.**

**WINTERS BANE... *Heart Of A Killer... 84...*** Once Tim Owens was chosen to replace Rob Halford in **Judas Priest**, it was just a matter of time before **Winters Bane's** 1993 debut and Ripper's only previous recorded output, would be reissued. Now, seven years later, *Heart of a Killer* still sounds relevant. Owens' vocals are in top form and it is obvious why he has gained such critical acclaim. *Heart of a Killer* is an interesting concept story that centers on a judge receiving a heart transplant from a murderer he sentenced to death. What transpires is a haunting story that is intelligently written and perfectly executed. This is a two disc release. The first disc features the same songs that appeared on the debut release from Massacre Records. The second disc features material from their demo and live songs from late 1993. This is a must for any heavy metal fan and certainly those who appreciate the almighty **Priest**. Owens matches Halford, especially on songs like "Wages of Sin" and "Horror Glances". Of the twelve tracks on disc two, nine are live and three are unreleased. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

**YELLOW MACHINEGUN... *Spot Remover... 76...*** What happens when three beautiful Japanese females get together to form a rock 'n roll band? **Yellow Machinegun**. This Japanese trio play an aggressive style of music that combines rock and hardcore with some hints of grind. The fifteen songs on *Spot Remover* blast by in a rather quick half hour, propelled by Kaori Okumura's chaotic vocal attack. *Spot Remover* is their follow up to Father's *Golden Fish* debut. *Spot Remover* finds **Yellow Machinegun** heavier and faster. Although *Spot Remover* has been available for almost two years in Japan, this trio finally get a U.S. release. **Yellow Machinegun** are not fancy, they just plug in and rock. You won't find melody, but there's plenty of aggression. Fortunately Kaori is recovering from an illness and **Yellow Machinegun** will be recording soon. **HOWLING BULL.**

**HOLY DIO: A Tribute To Ronnie James Dio... 84...** This compilation features some of the best American (**Steel Prophet**, **Jag Panzer**, **Destiny's End**, **Fates Warning**, and **Solitude Aeternus**) and German (**Angel Dust**, **Enola Gay**, **Primal Fear**, **Blind Guardian**, **Gamma Ray**, and **Doro**) power metal acts. I like the idea that the fourteen bands congregated here cover **Dio** material from his **Rainbow**, **Black Sabbath**, and solo backgrounds. **Black Sabbath's** "Neon Knights" (**Steel Prophet**), "Sign of the Southern Cross" (**Fates Warning**), "Children of the Sea" (**Jag Panzer**), and "Heaven and Hell" (**Enola Gay**); appear alongside **Rainbow's** "Man on the Silver Mountain" (**Hammerfall**), and "Kill the King" (**Primal Fear**) and early **Dio** "The Last in Line" (**Destiny's End**) next to recent **Dio** like "Egypt" (**Doro**). There's no denying R.J. Dio has made a lasting impact on today's power metal scene and this compilation brings together the best of the modern metal bands. The European version features more tracks. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

**INSIDE OUT MUSIC AMERICA... *Sampler 2000 Volume One... 87...*** This compilation features tracks from Inside Out America's newest releases. Tracks from **Platypus** are "Oh God" and their ten minute instrumental "Partial to the Bean" from *Ice Cycles*; "House of Cards" from Ian Parry; "Spirit of the Land"/"Inside" from **Pain Of Salvation**; "Dreams" from D.C. Cooper; "I Can" from **Ten Jinn**; the **Flower Kings'** cover of **Genesis'** "The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway"; and "Living for Yesterday" from **Digital Ruin**. This label has some of the best progressive metal bands out there. **Vanden Plas**, **Pain Of Salvation**, and **Digital Ruin** are a trio of bands that are particularly impressive. D.C. Cooper and Ian Parry offer underrated material. **Ten Jinn** and the **Flower Kings** are best suited for the progressive crowds. For more info on these artists check out interviews with the bands and the label in this issue. **INSIDE OUT.**

**METAL FOR MUTHAS... *Volume One... 77...*** This is a reissue of the 1981 compilation that made the New Wave of British Heavy Metal a legendary scene. In this day and age, *Metal for Muthas* sounds quite dated. One can not deny the talent found here. Most of the songs veer in a bouncy, heavy rock direction. Songs by legendary metallers **Iron Maiden**, "Sanctuary" and "Wrathchild", stand alongside collectors favorites like **Samson**, **Praying Mantis**, and **Angelwitch**; and more obscure bands like **Ethel The Frog**, **Nutz**, **E.F. Band**, and **Sledgehammer**. **Toad The Wet Sprocket** appear via the dated "Blues in A", but otherwise this collection is well deserved. The **Maiden** tracks rank among the best they've ever recorded and **Angelwitch** were quite heavy and esoteric for the time period. This reissue has a special place in every long time, dedicated true metallers heart; it's just that now does not seem like the best time to reissue it. **SANCTUARY.**

**METAL FOR MUTHAS VOLUME TWO... *Gut Loud... 73...*** Volume Two of *Metal for Muthas* is the sequel to the acclaimed *Volume One* originally appearing back in 1981. Many of the bands appearing here are not well known. **Trespass** who appear via "One of These Days" and "Stormchild", along with **Iron Maiden** guitarist Jannick Gers former band **White Spirit**, "High Upon High", were the best known. Other bands to appear on this compilation are **Eazy Money**, **Xero**, **Dark Star**, **Horsepower**, **Red Alert**, **Chevy**, and **The Raid**. It all sounds obviously old and out of place these days, and although most of these songs sounded inspired when they came out, they lack any power or excitement. Not as good as its predecessor. *Metal for Muthas Volume Two* may document the late seventies and early eighties New Wave of British Heavy Metal scene but it is certainly not the best representation of what England had to offer. **SANCTUARY.**

**POWER FROM THE NORTH... *Sweden Rocks The World... 84...*** This is a great package. Everyone is aware of how healthy the Swedish metal scene has been though the nineties and on *Sweden Rocks the World* we hear the bands of the late 90's cover tunes from Swedish bands who started the scene in the eighties. There is a good variety as established acts like **In Flames**, **Entombed**, **Hammerfall**, and **Meshuggah** are included with up and comers like **Lost Souls**, **Lions Share**, **Transport League**, **Glory**, **The Crown**, **Gooseflesh**, **Treasure Land**, and **The Haunted**; and lesser knowns like **The Quill**, **Locomotive Breath**, and **Southpaw**. Three of my favorites are covered here: the early Europe track "Scream of Anger" (**Locomotive Breath**), **Electric Boys'** "Ready to Believe" (**Lions Share**), and John Norum's "Love is Meant to Last Forever" (**Treasure Land**). Two Yngwie Malmsteen tracks are covered; doomsters **Candlemass** and **Stillborn**, the legendary **Bathory** and **Heavy Load**, and undiscovered gems by **Treat**, **Agony**, **Glorious Bankrobbers**, **Trash**, **November**, and **Whimzy**. Perhaps the best aspect is the packaging which includes detailed information about each band and a commentary on the Swedish scene. For those who have further interest in the Swedish scene pick up Janne Stark's "The Encyclopedia of Swedish Hard Rock and Heavy Metal". **DIGITAL DIMENSION.**

## Demos:

**OBSCURE... *Obscure...*** This is a four song debut from a Phoenix, Arizona four piece known as **Obscure**. While the band sounds quite promising, especially because of the various backgrounds from each of their four members, they only scratch the surface on this four track recording. Unlike many bands of this genre, **Obscure** have a sound to call their own. Vocalist Jim Calabrese has a powerful voice in the same vein of **Ice Age's** Josh Pincus and I'm sure he will shine on a professional recording. Opener "The Boundaries of Evermore" is an epic prog metal tune with heavy metal elements. "Morphed Silence" is straight ahead and right to the point. "Not At All" is quite heavy with some intense technical runs and excellent leads from Vince LuPone. Closer "Dorian Gray" is perhaps the song that shows **Obscure's** potential. Quiet classical moments are augmented by heavy old **Metallica** like riffing. Casey Dixon shows some Neil Peart inspired percussion on here as well. P.O. Box 43014 Phoenix, Arizona 85080-3014 [www.ivorygate.com/obscure](http://www.ivorygate.com/obscure)

**PUTRILAGE... *Gorenography...*** What an apt title. The cover artwork is definitely gorenographic. **Putrilage** originally formed back in 1994 under the name of **Carrion**. They soon added a new vocalist in Aaron Medniola and bassist Chris Hervera and became known as **Putrilage**. The four songs on display here are "Gorenography", "Facial Bowel Release", "Until She's Dead", and "Hack Slash Cut You Bleed". All are technical death metal with deep, indiscernable vocals. The bass playing in particular is quite accomplished. The slowed down mid section on "Facial Bowel Release" shows a band with some massive potential. Many would compare this to early **Cannibal Corpse** or even **Suffocation** but perhaps a little more cathcy. Quite impressive.

Interview with Jim Pitulski

One of the most exciting labels in America has only been in business here for about a year despite the fact that their European office has established themselves as a major player in the progressive metal scene. When Inside Out Music America released their first official U.S. release last November, **Vanden Plas' Far Off Grace**, all of a sudden the underground of progressive metal in America got excited about the prospect of their band perhaps getting noticed and pushed in their home country. As this label has continued to grow in the States bands like the **Flower Kings**, **Ten Jinn**, **Digital Ruin**, **Pain Of Salvation**, **Mastermind**, Ian Parry's **Consortium Project**, D.C. Cooper, and **Platypus** have been released domestically, all to massive critical acclaim. I spoke to the American label boss of Inside Out Music America, Jim Pitulski about what he expects to accomplish with his career and his love for progressive rock and metal.

### Give me a little information about your background.

When I first moved to New York City to get into the record business I hooked up with Mechanic Records, which was part of M.C.A. for marketing. It was a small company so we did everything there. One thing that I did was review demos. Steve Sinclair, who was running the label at the time had a demo for a band called **Majesty**. I've always been a prog fan; **Emerson Lake And Palmer**, **Yes**, **Genesis**, and when I heard this I flipped out because I was a fan of metal as well. I didn't know that there were bands around playing this stuff. We went out to see them and I fell in love with the band. We put out their first album on Mechanic. Right before we were gonna release the record we found out that we couldn't use the name **Majesty** because it was owned by some lounge act in Las Vegas. The band came up with the name **Dream Theater**. I made some career moves right around the time that album came out. Most notably I worked at Columbia Records in their artist development department. I worked with bands like **Judas Priest** and **Alice In Chains**. I went to Polygram as a product manager. Through all that time, I stayed in touch with the **Dream Theater** guys and we remained friends. Their manager at the time, Derek Simon, had gotten them a deal with Atco Records. They were signed by Derek Oliver and Derek Schulman. Derek Schulman used to be the lead singer for a band called **Gentle Giant** and Derek was the president of the label at the time. I guess he was the right kind of person for them. **Dream Theater** really stagnated at Mechanic because they didn't really understand it. M.C.A. didn't know what to do it. The band signed to Atco and they recorded **Images and Words**. They lost their management. John Petrucci called me and was very alarmed and panicked. I said don't worry, I'll help you out and we'll see what we can do. I started working with the guys and it got better and better. I never left. We started Roundtable Management. I did that for about five or six years. We parted company amicably. While I managed **Dream Theater** I realized there were a lot of progressive bands out there. **Images and Words** really exploded. A lot of progressive bands started getting in touch with us. One of the bands that did catch my attention was a band called **Spocks Beard**. I started working with these guys and picked up a couple other clients. During the course of my travels with **Dream Theater** I met a guy named Tomas Waber. Tomas started a joint thing with Martin Orford, who was the keyboard player for I.Q. They started a label called Giant Electric Pea in Germany. Martin was in London and it was a joint effort. They were releasing progressive records. Tomas started his own thing on the side called Inside Out Music. He was, again, focusing on progressive rock and metal. Europe was really embracing that stuff. It grew and Tomas approached me about forming a partnership and setting up here and releasing records worldwide. Between the two of us and a strategic partner in Japan we could virtually offer a worldwide deal to bands. It sounded like a great deal. Tomas is a great business man and he knows and loves the music. I thought that this would be a good path for me to take so I decided to take the plunge.

### When did Tomas start the label?

Most of the titles came out on G.E.P. It was the **I.Q.** stuff, **Threshold**, and a couple other bands. Tomas signed **Spocks Beard** to Inside Out Music for Europe. Neal and I were working on Radiant Records because we couldn't find a deal that we liked here in the States. Neal started Radiant Records and I got them a deal to R.E.D. Distribution through Metal Blade. It's kind of like my set up with Caroline Distribution and Century Media. Neal handles most of the day to day stuff at his office in Nashville. I handle management responsibilities and some of the label duties from up here. We've got Radiant Records, Roundtable Management, and Inside Out Music; so we wear three different hats here. It's all fun and it's a labor of love. It was three or four years ago that Tomas started Inside Out. It took off

and they are one of the strongest independent labels in Europe. We've been a company since last November when we released our first records. It's been going slow and steady. The North American market is not as big as Europe for this music. This is not one of the more popular forms of music in the States. It's got a loyal audience though and I like that. My heroes for labels are ones like Sub Pop and Epitaph. I like what they did. They took a form of music that was not in vogue. Sub Pop signed bands like **Mudhoney** and **Nirvana**. That took years and years before grunge became a household word. They did it with integrity. Eventually the trend caught up to where they were at.

### I'm surprised that progressive metal hasn't taken off yet.

One of the great things that happened was the internet. With the advent of the internet I think a lot of people found that their esoteric likes in music was actually shared by a lot of people and they started finding each other and set up bulletin boards, websites, and chatrooms set up for it. It could be a lot bigger than it is. Unfortunately a lot of people who were into progressive music in the seventies have moved on with their lives. They are no longer active music consumers. There is a segment that does still follow it. If you go to the prog festivals, not the prog metal festivals, you see a lot of people are well into their forties. The real success will come around when the younger kids think that the music is cool again. I have a friend of mine who isn't even old enough to drink in bars yet. He does the Pittsburgh Progressive Rock Series. The kid knows every trivia about progressive rock you can think of. This music is not their far off from that the kids that are into the **Grateful Dead** type of bands like **Phish** and **Train**.

### It's got to be frustrating trying to make this a cohesive scene.

It's easy to blame M.T.V. which is the Frankenstein monster that we have created. When I was younger and I started getting into music like **E.L.P.** and **Yes**, we were listening to music on the F.M. radio. **Yes** would be right next to Bob Seger, **Kiss**, the **Marshall Tucker Band**, on the radio. You would be exposed and therefore open to a variety of music. Now it's too segregated. I think there's a group of kids who are looking for more substance in their lives and in their music. I think they will find a lot of substance here and I think they may find that attractive. I guarantee it if M.T.V. embraced progressive rock the kids would open up to it.

### There are some great bands on your roster.

When I first heard **Pain Of Salvation** I knew there was something special going on here. They're in the studio right now recording the new album. The key is to get these bands over here to tour. A lot of these bands are European and we aren't in a position to bring them over and lose money. We're not healthy enough as a company to take this risk. With **Dream Theater** we blew all these preconceived formulas apart. From all the marketing research and statistics they know that if a band is selling x amount of records they are gonna sell x amount of tickets. If you have x amount of tickets selling you can sell x amount of merchandise at those shows. **Dream Theater** completely blew that formula apart because we were drawing way more people at concerts than we should have and we were selling a lot more merchandise per head than we should have. That tells you there is an active audience again. That's gonna be our avenue for success. Hopefully we can figure out a way to make it work financially. With **Dream Theater** we would have a show and blow the people away there and then the word of mouth would spread and then we'd hit that market again and sometimes it would more than double the crowd. We're gonna try the same thing with **Spocks Beard**.

### What are your goals for this year?

I'm looking to get more North American talent on our roster. A lot of the talent that we have is coming from Europe right now because it's a healthier environment. I'm getting a lot of demo tapes now, anywhere from three to five bands a day from various stages in their career. My goal is to keep building the roster so that we have healthy product flow. That product will give us income that we can put back into marketing and artist development. Hopefully one or two of these bands is going to rise up and give us a door the rest of us can walk through. I'd like to be the company that does it. I am looking for bands that take the art and try to make it their own and take it somewhere else.



#### Interview with Odin

Two of the leaders in the underground metal movement are run by the same person. Napalm Records America and Moribund Records have been releasing some of the best gothic/ experimental and death/ black metal, respectively. Napalm has released one of the best records of the year in the form of *Tristania's Beyond the Veil*. They have also secured a great U.S. distribution deal. Moribund will be releasing the new *Windham Hell* record by the time you read this and if all the hype is realized this should also be one of the year's best. Look for new releases from Moribund to contain better production and Odin will help some of these bands get onto tours here in the States. I spoke to both labels' boss, Odin about these record companies that everyone should become familiar with if you are not already.

#### When did you start Moribund?

The idea was founded in the late eighties. I was a d.j. at a predominantly heavy metal and back then I was too young and I didn't have any backing. In 1991 I started all the work to get the label started and in 1992 we put out our first release. That was a seven inch e.p. for *Infestor*. As far as Napalm, I started the American office in March of 1999. They had a prior American office and a guy who put out an *Abigor* and a *Summoning* but nothing else really hapened. They had no representation over here for years. We just signed a deal for America through D.N.A. distribution. They're the biggest one stop independent distributor in America. They're bigger than Caroline. They are a distributor for Pavement Music and S.P.V., who is our major distributor for Napalm overseas. Starting on June 6 we will be in every store in America with *Tristania*, *Summoning*, the new *Obtained Enslavement*, *Vintersword*, *Odier Markings Son*. We'll be bringing out new albums and back catalogue. All the people who have been reluctant to order from underground sources or lables like Century Media casn now go almost anywhere and find them.

#### What were your goals when you started Moribund?

I believe I have achieved all the goals that I had when I started Moribund. When I started the label it was the heyday of the death metal scene. There was a lot of good new death metal bands that were getting overlooked because the industry was saturated. It was at the same time that bands like *Emperor* and *Burzum* were just doing demos and the modern black metal movement started. I wanted to put out quality music from band who could not get on a label at that time. There wasn't the large amount of labels that have proliferated and the underground scene that exists today didn't exist back then. There's also an ideology behind it because I've always looked at metal as a war against ignorant thought in general and especially Christianity which I feel is the number one detractor in development. Anyone who is educated and has a world wide view should be able to come to that conclusion. Why not use the bands that I put out as a propoganda to spread the message. When I started the label it was just a hobby. I ran it out of my closet in downtown Seattle. I just wanted to put out records. It didn't make a difference to me if I just sold fifty copies and the rest sat in my closet. I definitely want to sell records and get them out there but at the same time I wouldn't just sign a band who would sell ten thousand records, but I wouldn't not sign a band because they're not gonna sell more than two thousand copies. I'm still gonna put out music that llike musically and lyrically. I want to get the albums more available and to the public.

#### Do you have future goals for Moribund?

We have the new *Windham Hell* and *Thy Infernal's* in the studio. I want to get our bands regularly touring across the States. Anyone who has been in the metal scene can see that touring has been dead in the nineties. The market for touring in America is piss poor. Part of it is the fans don't support underground music enough, part of it is most of the bands are playing bars only. Even a band like *Immolation* will play in front of only one hundred people because the other three hundred kids couldn't get in. The other problem is promoters in general because they are reluctant to support metal. Metal is coming back. Hopefully we'll have tours like we did in the eighties when *Slayer* and *King Diamond* could sell out a three thousand seat arena. That's our number one goal there, get our bands touring and better distribution.

#### How would you describe the music you put out through Napalm?

The second week in June we have the new record for *Sins Of Thy Beloved*

coming out. That's the next highlight after *Tristania*. It's immaculate. They a cover of *Metallica* on the new record and hopefully we'll get some commerial rock play for that song. Napalm is the head lable but there's sub labels. The bulk of the Napalm roster started out black metal but then they started putting out experimental bands like *Korova*. They got *Tristania* and *Dismal Euphony*. Today, the main thrust of the label is going in the gothic metal direction. There's no chance we'll drop our black metal bands. The gothic scene is new and upcoming. It's gonna get really big. We've got some of the best bands and we're looking for a few more to take this off. One thing that you can count on is that Napalm bands will have an excellent production on all the newer stuff. We've really upped the budgets so the bands get a top notch studio and good producers. If the new *Tristania* album was done at your average American studio that would have been nothing. The great production lets all the elements stand out in the forefront.

#### Any chance of Napalm bands going on tour in the States?

Yeah, we're working on it. We're gonna have major distribution in America. We're preparing to bring *Tristania* over for a tour in September or October. If it's successful we'll bring some more Napalm bands over to tour. They've done four tours in Europe. They just finished touring with *Tiamat* and *Anathema*. They did a co-headlining tour with *Sins Of Thy Beloved*. We just released a VHS video of their first tour for *Widows Weed*. It's got one pro edited MTV clip. That'll give you an idea of how powerful they are live.

#### Any new releases through Moribund?

We've got promos going out this week for *Windham Hell*. Two more weeks will be the official release date for that. In my opinion *Windham Hell* is the most underrated band in the entire metal scene. It's epic stuff but it's too experimental for your average death metal or average black metal fan. Sometime next month we'll get the first *Mactatus* album, *Blot*, out. It was originally released with about a thousand copies through a label in France. We've got *Thy Infernal* in the studio doing a new record. *Wind Of The Black Mountains* is done recording their new record. We're looking for a couple of new bands for Moribund. We're looking for original bands in all metal categories. It doesn't have to be a black metal band even though that's been the major thrust of the label. We're not just limited to death metal or black metal.

#### Any new singings to Napalm?

We have a new singing from Germany, a band called *Morgenstern*. It translates into morning star. It's middle age music mixed with modern metal. It's like *In Extremo* but more authentic in the middle age part. There's a new album from *Myriads*. In June we will release *Forlorn*, who have done two prior albums in Norway. It's excellent viking metal like *Einherjer* but they have their own identity. The new *Sins Of Thy Beloved* is ready, *Mactatus* is currently recording, *In Battle* should be recording soon. *Morgul* just got picked up by Century Media. It was time to get an American office to promote this stuff over here. In Europe it's the third biggest label after Nuclear Blast and Century Media. We're very prominent over there. If we approach a band to sign them we can offer a good deal. We can now do that in America as well. The bulk of the bands that will be signed will have been around for awhile, but we would never rule out singing a band that had never done a release.

#### Final comments?

Both labels have great bands. You can see the ad in this magazine. We can send you mail order catalogs. We also sell stuff from other labels. We have music from the entire metal and darkwave spectrum. I'd like to tell the kids who support underground metal music, don't support it as a trend, live it as your life.

Napalm Records America, P.O. Box 382, Bremerton, WA 98337  
napalm@silverlink.net  
call direct at 877-4NAPALM (877-462-7256)  
Send \$1 for full mail order catalog

Moribund Cult, P.O. Box 77314, Seattle, WA 98177-0314  
moribund@waypt.com  
call 360-379-3649  
www.blackmetal.com/~mega/moribund

# KISS ALIVE FOR A FINAL FAREWELL BY JEFF BROWN

So it all starts with a phone call from Tom saying that Gene Simmons had announced on W.C.W. the night before that **Kiss** would be launching a farewell tour of the U.S. starting in mid-March. While in the world of rock 'n roll, these sort of final curtain calls rarely turn out to be final, something told me that this was a sincere case of stopping while you're still ahead. Sure, the '96 reunion was the monster of all **Kiss** tours, but '98's *Psycho Circus*; with its over hyped and anti-climatic #1-D staging, left the band playing to half filled arenas all along the East Coast until quietly cancelling the remainder of their U.S. dates.

With spring break just around the corner and the tour rolling through lovely southern California at just the right time, it seemed like the vacation itinerary that planned itself. What a perfect opportunity to catch these aging icons a few more times, as well as visit some of my childhood haunts in San Diego. When considering someone to take along, who better than my pal Ron, who like none other, truly lives for all things starting with K and ending with the double S.

Hats off to the boys for bringing the wild man Ted Nugent, and well... a Sebastian Bach less **Skid Row** along with them this time out, to at least make it a cohesive package of classic hard rock/ metal. Seeing the band each night on their '96 *Alive* Worldwide tour with a different alternative/ modern rock band opening for them every couple of cities seemed rather lame. I think the idea this time out was probably to hook folks who were on the fence about shelling out another \$85.00 to see these guys run through essentially the same track selection (more on this later) for the third tour running. If they could catch the Nuge' on the same bill, then it's really a night of nostalgia for the thirty something rock 'n roller.

Our first gig was in Vegas. We flew in the night prior to the show, at the relatively new Mandalay Bay Event Center. This was to be one of the smaller venues that they had booked for the tour, a hall situated inside a casino/ hotel complex, hence it was sold out well in advance. My friend had secured his ticket during the V.H. 1 pre-sale several weeks prior; I however had to do some scrounging around the area. A slight feeling of worry started to come on when some dork who worked in the local Tower Records said "yeah man, in Vegas, if you don't have like a thousand bucks, the scalpers won't even talk to you". As luck would have it, I met a woman from Oklahoma in the casino several hours before the gig. She and her husband had flown out for the weekend and for some reason, he'd decided to bail on the show that day. Good news for me as I wound up scoring a 12th row seat for face value. My curious feeling that this woman looked familiar turned out to be correct when later in the night she recounted a tale of how several years before, on a visit to Manhattan, she had been stopped on the street by a cameraman in Times Square and asked to spend the next hour sitting in as an impromptu guest on the David Letterman show; one of the few episodes I'd actually caught since his jump to C.B.S. a few years back. Another highlight of the evening was meeting some dudes from Spain, on holiday to catch some **Kiss** gigs, just like us. Needless to say, my mind was completely blown, whilst in the midst of discussing **Baron Rojo** and other cult Spanish heavy metal bands, one of them says; "well I do the official website for **Baron Rojo**". **Kiss** gig or not, this was a cool night!

On to the show itself. (No I didn't bother watching **Skid Row**) I did enjoy the fifty minutes plus of greatest hits from the Motor City Madman. You can always count on some priceless comments from brother Ted, and tonight would be no different, such as the following gem attached to the segueway into "Kiss My Ass", the only post-70's tune included in the abbreviated set. "Here's a thought, if you can't speak English, get the fuck out of America okay!". The Gonzo Rock Squad is a three piece these days, with Marco Mendoza from the John Sykes band on bass and Tommy Aldridge (and still playing with the energy and enthusiasm of a twenty year old) on the drums. Once Nuge had shot his flaming arrow through the guitar, his grand crescendo of "Great White Buffalo" complete, it would be just a short intermission between us wanting the best, and getting it.

As always, the staging for this year's **Kiss** extravaganza features some modifications. Harkening back to the '77 tour, the bands starts the show from a platform suspending about twenty feet above the stage, then is lowered down to the floor to the sounds of "all right Las Vegas..." a most famous of all rock 'n roll intros. "Detroit Rock City" is once again back as the set opener. A safe choice; though many will agree that nothing gets an arena moving like the three chord thunder of "Deuce". Guessing what track selection comprised the ensuing two hour spectacle would certainly not require much more than a familiarity with the *Alive* and *Alive II* lps. Despite still being a great time out, therein lies the trouble with the last couple of **Kiss** tours: the band has become far too complacent in their construction of an exciting concert repertoire. When **Kiss** toured in the 70's, seeing them on the *Love Gun* tour meant a completely different show than seeing them on *Destroyer* and *Dynasty*. Yes, they were a cutting edge band then, whereas now they are simply helping those same fans, well into their adult lives, relive some carefree nostalgia. "But Jeff", you might argue, "bands like **Deep Purple** and **Led Zeppelin** usually played the same standards tour after tour without great modifications made to the set". That's true, but they were also much more loose flowing and improvisational acts that would often play the same tunes radically different from one night to the next. **Kiss** is a much more structured band with a highly choreographed show. The flash pods go off, Ace's guitar smokes, and the lightning rig move with such precision as to allow you to set your watch by them. In lieu of the spontaneous element being absent from the performances in this regard, I, along with many of my other **Kiss** Army pals, have long felt that the band could do more to vary the set list with greater regularity, allowing for more non standard classics like "Flaming Youth", "Mr. Speed", "Room Service", "Rocket Ride", "Baby Driver", "Plaster Caster", and "Love Theme from Kiss" to rotate their way in and out of the set. Another justification for this would be, that unlike bands like the **Eagles** and the **Stones** that have millions of casual fans who go to see them once a tour or less, **Kiss** has an unusually high percentage of repeat customers. The same faces that you see in New York are there in Jersey, Philadelphia, and beyond. This notion is corroborated by the fact that their album sales fall far short of their concert tour receipts. Why? Because a fan may buy five or ten tickets to various shows, but still only Soundscans as old album.

So getting back to the gig, the surprises of the night were the inclusion of a couple of the 80's era tunes into the set: namely "I Love it Loud", "Lick it Up", and "Heaven's on Fire". While this was a novelty that admittedly sounded far better than I might have anticipated, I still fail to see the point of it. Half the fans of the original band had jumped ship by the time *Animalize* was released anyway. All in all it was okay I guess. The pyrotechnics were, as always first rate, and the inclusion of "I Stole Your Love" as an encore was something which the fans would be treated to tonight alone. We also got to see Peter Criss completely foul up the lyrics to "Beth", which was quite funny. I mean, this is like forgetting the digits to your social security number or something. Perhaps the cat needs to be taking ginko? Definitely a fun night and a nice maiden excursion for myself to the city of Las Vegas.

The next morning was up bright and early to be off in our rental car, destined for Anaheim, and night number two of our rock 'n roll roadtrip. Situated in this absolutely beautiful suburban community, the recently constructed Anaheim Duck Pond was a somewhat larger venue than the Mandalay Bay; probably on par with the Garden at about 17,000 capacity. Much to our chagrin, tonight's gig as well, was all but sold to the rafters: sending us across the street to haggle with some of the no doubt, finer members of the community to procure seats for ourselves. Forty minutes later, and about \$80 the poorer, Ron and I headed into the paisley colored done to assume the pair of lower balcony seats that tonight we would be calling home.

Barring the previously mentioned absence of "I Stole Your Love", tonight's set ran chronologically the same as in Las Vegas. What made it curious to watch were the myriad of technical glitches that seem to plague tonight's performance. Gene's nightly flight to the top of the lightning rig was aborted about six feet above the stage, leaving him grounded for "God of Thunder". Even worse, the winch and pulley that transports Paul out to a small platform in the middle of the arena ceased to work in mid-motion, leaving him dangling above the crowd as the band played the first four bars of the song over and over. Eventually, it did kick into gear enough to bring him back to where he started on the main stage, giving him the opportunity to regain his composure enough to say in classic, hammy fashion "all right people, let's just imagine that I'm out there with you okay?". While interesting for the novelty of it, glitches like these caused the Anaheim gig, for myself, to be ranked as the most lackluster of the three shows that we would attend.

Sunday morning came and it was off again for a beautiful two hour ride down the coast to my childhood home of San Diego. Riding through my old neighborhood and past the venue of the night's show, the San Diego Sports Arena, reminded me of the night, some twenty plus years earlier, when as a child I had been forced to go with my mother while she went to play bingo. The trauma arose from the fact that the **Kiss Dynasty** tour was rolling through town that night, and despite the fact that I was barely eight years old, I wanted to go damn it. I could so vividly recall riding past the arena on the way to some godforsaken

bingo parlor, with my face pressed up against the passenger side window, as I longingly gazed at the parking lot full of fans, getting rowdy and psyched for the night's show. One can only speculate if such injustice was the spark that ignited my lifelong interest in the live performance element of rock 'n roll.

Having said that, the San Diego Sports Arena has a charm and character that other arenas lack. No professional sports teams play there, and it is slightly dilapidated. The sign out front almost looks home made, and the adorning palm trees are just so cool. We had scored 15th row tickets for tonight's show back home over the phone, so the pressure of not having to deal with scalpers again allowed us to just walk around and soak up some of the pre-show vibe. I took note of an absolutely stunning Japanese girl that I had spotted also the night before in Anaheim, wearing a home made Peter Criss *Love Gun* era costume. (momentarily causing me to forget what brought me to this city in the first place) Once again, the Nuge was quite funny and entertaining tonight. "This next guitar lick is so sexy, even the faggots will be eating pussy tonight" he proclaimed before dropping to his knees and tearing into the opening riff of "Strangelord". Tonight in particular, he went over so well as to make one recall the days when gigs like this were headlined by Ted.

As for Kiss, the nostalgia of being back in S.D. and the problem free delivery of tonight's show made this one my favorite of the three. I assume if you've read this far into my review, you're probably a Kiss fan already anyway, so there's little use in saying that Gene spit blood, breathed fire, and said "oh yeah". Paul pranced around, and once again chastised the critics for predicting this tour would fail. Ace looked like he needed thorazine but still played killer, and Peter, well... Peter was there too.

This turned out to be a fun little trip for us both and certainly with a two night stand just around the corner at Jones Beach Theater here on Long Island, not quite our final fix in this long standing obsession that we Kiss fans have endured through the ages. I do not argue with people when they say that Kiss is a corporation, whose music has been far overshadowed by its shameless marketing of schlock. Nor do I argue with folks who cite the numerous better musicians that can be found in far less successful bands. There is however something eternally gratifying about leaving your brain at home for the night, and taking a few hours to truly embrace the "Rock and Roll All Night, Party Every Day" philosophy.

## Assorted reviews by Keith Oswald

**BUCKETHEAD... *Monsters And Robots...* 4 out of 5...** For those of you who aren't aware of **Buckethead**, he's a guitarist that wears a white mask and a Kentucky Fried Chicken bucket on his head. He makes his home in California and has recently been opening up for **Primus**. He has five solo albums out, including this one and is known for being in the avantgarde rock band **Praxis**. **Praxis** features bassist Bill Laswell and drummer Brain, who is now playing with **Primus**. *Monsters and Robots* features Brain, bassist Les Claypool from **Primus**, funk bassist Bootsy Collins, and others. The music that is played on the album ranges from metal, hip hop, techno, funk, ambient soundscapes, and other bizarre sounds that can not be described. The music is influenced by sci-fi and horror films, that should have been realized when reading the title of the record. Overall *Monsters and Robots* is an exciting listen. This is not and I repeat, not, like a Steve Vai or Joe Satriani record. **Buckethead** is not just playing the guitar and abusing the word solo like these guys do. *Monsters and Robots* will be an enjoyable listen over and over again.

**THE CURE... *Bloodflowers...* 3 out of 5...** The Cure's eleventh studio album, not counting live or greatest hits albums. *Bloodflowers* may be the band's last record, but one of their best overall. Tracks such as "Where the Birds Always Sing" and "The Last Day of Summer" are good examples of classic **Cure** doing their somber, doom, and gloom goth music. Frontman Robert Smith's lyrics are quite depressing to say the least. From isolation, to dreams, to relationships gone bad, Smith covers it all. Any situation that deals with sadness will be in Smith's lyrics. The **Cure** proved to the world that they are the number one gothic band in the world today. Another job well done.

**MELVINS... *The Crybaby...* 2 out of 5...** The **Melvins**' third release on Mike Patton's Ipecac label. Prior to this release the **Melvins** recorded in 1999, *The Maggot*, *The Bootlicker*, and now *The Crybaby*, finished a three part trilogy for themselves. *The Crybaby* is a unique record, mainly because guitarist, vocalist Buzz Osbourne, drummer Dale Crover, and bassist Kevin Rutmanis are backing up the guest musicians, instead of the guest musicians backing the **Melvins** on these songs. Buzz doesn't even sing a song on the record. You have 70's teen idol Leif Garrett singing his own version of **Nirvana**'s mega hit "Smells Like Teen Spirit", vocalist David Yow from the **Jesus Lizard**, country singer Hank Williams III doing two tracks with **Helmet** guitarist Henry Bogdan, ex-**Faith No More** vocalist Mike Patton, and rock band **Tool**, vocalist Bliss Blood from the **Painteens**, vocalist Kevin Sharp from the now defunct grindcore act **Brutal Truth**, and many others. A great line-up of artists, but not too memorable after the first listen. Out of three c.d.'s this is the second best. *The Maggot* is a very good album and *The Bootlicker* is complete crap. If you have the other two pick up *The Crybaby* for the series, if you don't still pick it up just for the all star cast. Just remember this record has all the traditional **Melvins** riffs you want to sink your teeth into but with more alternative influences than any of their prior albums.

**ROLLINS BAND... *Get Some Go Again...* 3 out of 5...** Lead vocalist Henry Rollins is back with a brand new album that features members from a hard rock outfit called **Mother Superior**. Guitarist Jim Wilson, bassist Marcus Blake, and drummer Jason Mackenroth, created an album that is quite simplistic, reminding me of **Thin Lizzy**, or any other hard rock band from the late 70's, early 80's. *Get Some Go Again* is much different than the last three records the **Rollins Band** had put out. The jazz influence that was created by former members Melvin Gibbs (bass), Sim Cain (drums), and Chris Haskett (guitars) is sadly gone. This trio gave the music a rich and colorful sound that fused rock and jazz with a touch of blues. The new record has some slight similarities to other rock bands. The song "Monster" will make you think of **Guns 'n Roses** hit song "Paradise City". "You Let Yourself Down" (which is the best song on the album), has the same intro as **Motorhead**'s hit song "Ace of Spades". "On the Day" is filled with lots of blues that can be compared to **Danzig**'s *ucifuge* album. *Get Some Go Again* features, on two tracks, guitarist Wayne Kramer, who is from the legendary rock band of the late 60's, the **MC5**. The two tracks are nothing great, but they do hold your interest. Overall it's an album with lots of drive, aggression, and power, something that music today just does not have.

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Look for Issue #10 on June 15th. We will feature interviews with **Lowbrow**, **Loudness**, **Ark**, **Kill II This**, **Poema Arcanus**, **U.D.O.**, **the Quiet Room**, **The Crown**, **Divine Rapture**, **Holy Mother**, **Vanden Plas**, **Swarm**, **Kings X**, **Impaled**, **Agathodaimon**, **Atomic Opera**, **Fleshcrawl**, and **Deceased**.



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# KAMELOT

Interview with guitarist Thomas Youngblood

America has not grasped what superior progressive/ power metal bands like **Kamelot**, **Elegy**, and **Lefay** have to offer. Fortunately we have a label like Noise finally promoting these excellent bands here in the States. **Kamelot** were born in Florida in the early nineties and quickly signed a deal to Noise Records. Their first two records, *Eternity* and *Dominion*, are popular records among the underground fans and are frequently purchased through the many mail order companies based in America. These records featured the Geoff Tate operatic vocal style of Mark Vanderbilt, however due to his inability to commit to touring, ex-**Conception** vocalist Roy Khan stepped in and recorded *Siege Perilous* with the band. His style brought a new found maturity to **Kamelot**, but somehow lacked the energy of Vanderbilt's signature vocals from the previous efforts. This time **Kamelot** recorded in Germany with famed producer Sascha Peath and the result is the best record of their career. *The Fourth Legacy* brings Thom's classic medieval songs to a new level and he adds new classical elements to his metal sound. Khan gives the best performance of his career. For *The Fourth Legacy* he was given the time to dedicate and add special touches to each of the songs. Here is Thom to tell us about **Kamelot**.

## What are your thoughts on the new album?

I love it. I think it's our best record. It's set a standard for us and it's something to build on for the new line-up. When Roy came in to the group on *Siege Perilous* he didn't have a chance to work with the group. When we wrote the songs we didn't have a vocalist working with us. Part of the big difference is having him to work with us from the beginning of the record.

## He adds a special sound.

I liked that about his style too. In **Conception** he's always good at layering his vocal lines, that's become his trademark.

## Flow was one of my favorite albums.

I think the **Ark** project is cool, that Tore is doing. Roy is very happy to be in **Kamelot** and it's very important for him to be so psyched about it. He's the most enthusiastic in the band right now.

## How did you come to work with Sascha Peath?

On the last record I wanted to use a German producer but we were running late and there were a lot of things not running right. When we started working on the new songs we were thinking about who we wanted and Sascha was on top of the list. I worked with Tommy Newton and didn't want to work with him again. I gave Sascha a call and we got along very well. Working with him was like working with family, it was very relaxed.

## Kamelot has a good balance between progressive and power metal, do you feel you have an identifiable sound?

I don't think we sound like anyone. We've always had a certain kind of sound and I think this record has that backbone. We've added new elements and every record we've tried to change. We like to challenge ourselves and the fans like that too.

## What are some new elements on *The Fourth Legacy* that you're proud of?

I really like what we've done with "Desert Reign" and "Arabia". There's a Persian/ Arabian influence. On "Shadow of Uther" there's a Celtic feel. We've added these things into our repertoire. The people appreciate that we are trying to be different but still continue to be a metal band.

## How are things in the American market for this record?

It's much better. We never had anybody working the record. *Siege Perilous* was the first **Kamelot** record officially released in America. They weren't focusing on power metal at all and they realized that there is a market in the States. They have a guy working in L.A. who's really supporting us and trying to make some noise for us. I'm looking forward to opening up the market for us here and in Canada.

## Any tour plans?

Not yet. We're waiting for the right opportunity. I would like to see a five band package, bands like **Kamelot**, **Gamma Ray**, **Stratovarius**, to go into each state

and bring a lot of money. I think a small tour would be tough on bands. It would take that kind of a line-up to bring out five hundred people to each show. To do a tour on our own would kill us psychologically when we play in front of so many people in Europe.

## How was it working with Ian Parry on his solo record?

That was a lot of fun. It was cool because I hadn't worked with anyone outside of **Kamelot**. **Kamelot** was my first band and I never had a chance to collaborate with other people. I wrote a song for his next record. It's gonna be interesting to hear how he sings over top of my style of writing. Ian's a great guy. We did a tour together and now he comes to Florida a lot. When I go to Europe I stop and visit him.

## What's going on with Monarque?

That's really on the backburner. I'm letting Mark take the reigns for it because I'm busy with **Kamelot**. I want to make **Kamelot** my priority but hopefully after the summer we'll be able to work on it. It's hard with our schedules. Mark is not totally into the whole music thing. He wants to do it but it's more of a background thing. It will probably be one of those things that will drag on until we're finished and put it out.

## How would you describe your style?

I grew up with bands like **Rush**. I liked Alex Lifeson's nylon style, finger picking. I like to do these classical guitar parts in our music. I don't analyze how I play too much. It's mostly feeling. When I first started I was frustrated trying to figure out how other people played solos. That's how I got my own style.

## What are your tour plans?

We start a tour in Europe with **Crimson Glory**. It's gonna be interesting to see the fans reaction to their new singer.

## Why didn't you want to use Morrisound again?

The thing about Morrisound is they book a lot of artists. If you run over time you're fucked. They are more worried about money than about quality. We've been recording there since 1992, but if a bigger band comes in they'll cancel your schedule. We'll never go back there.

## How has the response been to Roy's vocals as opposed to Mark?

Roy and I talked about not only the **Kamelot** fans but also the **Conception** fans, we felt there would be a point where there would be an adjustment. Either we would gain fans from both bands or lose fans from both bands. In the end I think we gained new fans outside of the other two. After this record the questions about the old vocalist have slowed down. It's gonna take time for people to realize this is the line-up and it's not gonna change. A lot of people loved Mark's voice. A lot of people loved Roy's. I don't think there's anyone who can say they don't like Roy's voice. He wants to move to America but right now is not the right time. We like this adventure of travelling to Norway and him coming to America. We really concentrate on working during those times.

## Discography:

2000... *The Fourth Legacy* (Noise)  
1998... *Siege Perilous* (Noise)  
1997... *Dominion* (Noise)  
1995... *Eternity* (Noise)

## Current line-up:

Thomas Youngblood... guitars  
Roy Khan... vocals  
Glenn Barry... bass  
Casey Grillo... drums



# K R I S I U N

Interview with guitarist Moyses Kolesne

One of the most talked about bands in the underground in recent months comes to America via Brazil and the fine people at Century Media, **Krisiun**. The band has established a name for themselves with incessant touring with some of the elite death and black metal bands. They have been around for about ten years and after a couple of demos and a self financed mini-disc, **Krisiun** unleashed their debut, *Black Force Domain*. This afforded them a tour in Europe and they recorded the follow up, *Apocalyptic Revelation* with **Kreator/Sodom** producer Harris Johns over in Germany. Following this record they toured in the States with **Incantation** and **Angel Corpse**. Now for the first time, **Krisiun** receive a proper U.S. release through their new deal with Century Media. The new record, *Conquerors of Armageddon* is a landmark album in the same tradition as **Slayer's** *Reign in Blood* or **Kreator's** *Endless Pain*. This album is fast and heavy but most importantly contains some crushing riffs, great vocals, and a great sense of professionalism. Here is guitarist Moyses Kolesne to speak about it.

## Are you happy with everything?

Yeah, we are very happy. This is the first time that we got really good quality and we have a good label backing us now. After all those years of touring and recording we finally have the maturity. We are proud and have nothing to complain. The guys from **Morbid Angel** help us and say that this is one of the best death metal albums ever.

## This record is really heavy but also catchy.

We've learned from touring so much and we now know how to make a good album in the studio. We're like to do more groove. Before I played a lot of leads. When you're a beginner you want to show that you're good. Now it's like a band. We worked more as a band this time. The riffs mean more. We did some tours and we know which parts the crowd likes more. My main concern is for death metal fans but we also want other people to know that it can be catchy and still underground.

## Every band I talk to has a lot to say about Krisiun.

I'm really happy about these bands. Guys like **Cannibal Corpse**, **Incantation**, **Morbid Angel**, the American death metal bands are great and we're big fans of them. It's like a dream come true being able to play with these bands. It's not like a guy who writes for a magazine and doesn't know anything about death metal, these compliments are coming from bands that play death metal. We love to play live and we practice a lot. We always give a hundred percent onstage, we don't care if we're tired. With this kind of music you can't go on stage and be dead. You have to let the feeling of your music flow through your performance. The live performance for us is very important. As a live band we have a good guy doing our sound. On our records we want to make everything true. We're not like a lot of bands that are trendy and fast but have a lot of computers behind them live and they sound like shit. The main thing for our band is playing live.

## When did you form the band?

The band came in 1991. We are brothers so we were playing together before but we were just beginning to feel out which kind of music we should do. We decided to practice our instruments and make a serious band in the future. The three brothers got together in 1991 to make a band. That's the main reason why we reach this type of musicality, because we practice a lot. Finally in '97 we got a label to give us some support. We did tours five times in Europe, twice in the U.S., and the Milwaukee Metalfest. We paid for *Black Force Domain* but they licensed that for Europe. We decided to go with Century Media because it was a better offer for the band. They're an incredible label and give their bands all their support. They see that our band fights for what's best for metal. We recorded a mini c.d. and two demo tapes. They help the American scene because they release the bands there and they get the bands to tour there. They do whatever it takes. Without them, the metal scene would be dead. That's why we chose to go with them. With Century Media if one album doesn't sell good they believe the next will. They

work the band's career. A band can grow up knowing that. Many labels drop you if you don't do well after one album.

## Was it difficult to get Krisiun's music outside of Brazil?

It's hard to get your music out of Brazil. It's hard enough for Americans but in Brazil it's twice as hard. Many bands don't get out of here because they quickly break up. There's a lot of good bands and good musicians but they break up the band for stupid reasons- their job or their family. You have to go outside of Brazil to promote your band. Now we have Century Media in Brazil and they release all their records. There's **Roadrunner** and **Nuclear Blast**. In the future they will pick up some of these Brazilian bands because they are working here and selling here. If there's a really good band here they will get a chance. There's something more from here than jungle music.

## How were your tours in the States?

We did one long tour and the Milwaukee Metalfest. We did like twenty eight, thirty shows. We got a good crowd reaction, we got a really good turn out. We want to make another tour there. We already have a tour lined up. We're gonna do a tour with **Immortal** and **Satyricon**. It starts the twenty eighth of March. **Immortal** will be on the tour for one week and then they leave and then **Amon Amarth** will join in for two weeks. Then we do a tour in Europe in May. We're gonna be back in the U.S. to tour with **Vader** and **Angel Corpse** in June or May.

## What's your opinion of the death metal scene?

It's really strong. There's a lot of good death metal bands. Death metal got boring in the beginning of the nineties. The bands just got cheesier. People were more into either Seattle or gothic. Death metal is coming

on really strong. People see death metal as strong with really good musicians. You go to shows and you see these junkies playing but when you have a death metal band playing and they have this energy and play really well. The musical approach is much higher. Death metal has a new wave coming on really strong. There's our band, **Hate Eternal**, **Angel Corpse**, **Diabolic**, **Cryptopsy**. Death metal is really strong in Europe. The reason is because of the great bands. People get tired of seeing the same bands play the same music. Now it's refreshing.

## What makes Krisiun special?

When people listen they know it's **Krisiun**. We have a legion of followers. We aren't trying to rip people off, we play what we want and not copy anybody. We can play faster than most bands, the leads are faster. We play technical, raw, and aggressive. There's always real double bass. It's very natural and real. We have our own music. A lot of bands have a shitty blast but Max has the great blast, even Pete Sandoval from **Morbid Angel** says the same thing. Many bands say they are the fastest or most brutal but that's bullshit because they are not. When I read these interviews I know they are liars. The main guys know who are the real musicians. We are big death metal fans so the music that we do is what we want to listen to. We want it fast and brutal but clear. The must play precise. We never accept mistakes. When you speed up you must keep the dynamics. People remember our music even though it's fast and brutal.

## Discography:

2000... *Conquerors Of Armageddon* (Century Media)  
1998... *Apocalyptic Revelation* (G.U.N.)  
1996... *Black Force Domain* (G.U.N.)

## Current line-up:

Alex Caramgo... vocals and bass  
Moyes Kolesne... guitars  
Max Kolesne... drums





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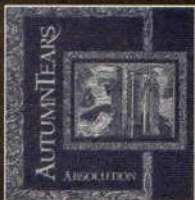
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Interview with guitarist Ron Kachnic

One band that is doing something that is both brutal and original is from Yonkers and is called **Malignancy**. I was first introduced to the band through guitarist Ron Kachnic who is also in the band **Dirty Brown Eye** that was featured in our last issue. I finally caught their live show at the New Jersey Metal Meltdown and was very impressed. This extreme death metal band incorporates lots of grooves and technical playing within an extreme structure. Along with Kachnic and vocalist Danny Nelson, **Malignancy** also features **Mortician** members, Roger Beaujard on drums and Desmond Tolhurst on bass. Following the Metalfest weekend I spoke to Ron about this upcoming death metal band.

#### What is your opinion of the New Jersey Metalfest?

It was the worst sounding Metalfest that I have ever seen. The sound of the stages, it wasn't the bands fault. The way the stages were set up were horrible. I was really disappointed. The Nighfall stage sounded the best. It was great to see some of the bands, but I didn't have as much fun as I usually do. Even Astbury Park last year was better. There was more people. They only drew three thousand on Friday, they were supposed to draw ten. The way they separated the stages were ridiculous.

#### How did Malignancy get together?

**Malignancy** was formed by Danny Nelson and Javier Velez in February of 1992. I wasn't in the band until the end of '95. I was doing stuff more **Dirty Brown Eye** style. I knew Rog from **Mortician** and he was the only other guitar player that could play I wanted to play. Since '95 he's learned the drums. The heaviest stuff I had played was like **Celtic Frost** and **Kreator**. In 1995 it was Roger Beaujard, Desmond Tolhurst, Danny Nelson, and me. We recorded our first demo, *Ignorance is Bliss*. There was an earlier demo called *Eaten Out from Within*, that was 1993. Danny is the only original member. It's his baby. We slowly changed the style once we all got into the band.

#### Were you pleased with the recording of *Intrauterine Cannibalism*?

Yeah, except we wish that Danny vocals were a little higher in the mix on a couple of tracks. That's because we were under the gun mixing down. We had to get it out in time for the Metalfests. It took us about two weekends. We have our own studio in the Poconos. That's where my drummer Roger lives, we do all our **Malignancy** and **Mortician** recordings there. **420** and **Primitive Brutality**, Roger's solo project, just did recordings there. We've got a twenty four track Soundcraft Spirit board, computer recording equipment. We've got everything computerized. Our MP3's are recorded and sent to each band member. We practice in front of our computers at our houses. We love recording. It took four or five days total to record *Intrauterine Cannibalism*. We don't waste time because we all work full time. I think the brutal bands should get a chance to have a bigger recording budget.

We listen to different things. Danny has demo tapes of every old school death metal band, from **Repulsion** up. He makes sure we don't write stuff that's been done before. Every riff has to pass the Danny Nelson test. I'm listening to **Human Remains**, **Dillinger Escape Plan**, **Candiria**, **Dying Fetus**, **Skinless**, **Disfigured**, **Cephalic Carnage**. I don't listen to the early 90's death metal bands that are still putting out stuff. I think the new **Cannibal** album is definitely good. It brings me back to *Butchered at Birth*. I like the new **Angel Corpse**. Desmond listens to **Slayer**, **Mercyful Fate**- he's the thrash head in the band. He loves old **Exodus**. He's a schooled musician too. He went to Berkeley. I wanted to do the same thing but I couldn't afford it. I got a degree in music but I went to a community college. It's all about musicianship and anti-trend all the time. We also have to have *Star Wars* on everything. *Star Wars* is like ketchup on hamburgers for us. It's a main influence on us. Not on songwriting but a way of being. We have a good time with this band.

#### What's the plan for the rest of the year?

We have a new album coming out late this spring. We have one more song to write. It'll be five new ones and the *Ignorance is Bliss* demo will be on this. It'll probably be a ten dollar c.d. The songs are more brutal but more strange and we don't want

to lose groove. I'd call it progressive with technical textures. I listen to **King Crimson**, **Yes**, **Rush**. I wanted to bring that aspect into death metal with this band. That's where the technical guitar playing comes from. No one knows how to describe this thing. We're happy with the scene. We're starting to get new fans. The club only holds a hundred and fifty and we'll have at least fifty kids showing up that we don't know for us.

**You guys seem to do a tremendous job promoting Malignancy.** I'll tell you **Dying Fetus** works hard. I see those Blunt Force ads everything. **Deeds Of Flesh** also. You see them all the time and they do it on their own labels. We love that kind of atmosphere. It's like they are their own Relapse. I want to get something in *Terrorizer*. I'd also like to get into *Metal Maniacs*. We don't have a name for the new album yet but it'll be out on United Guttural. I can't really tell anyone the concept yet but it'll be a classic cover. We don't want to use zombies and blood, we just like to bend what's normal.

#### How is it being on a label like United Guttural?

Rich is the owner of United Guttural and he is in **Fleshgrind**, he does it all. He takes out ads in *Pit* magazine and in all the great magazines. He pushed the hell out of us and I owe him everything. I see **Malignancy** on the back cover of things and it counts. We want to be the band on United Guttural that makes United Guttural. We love all the other guys but we're trying to push ourselves over the mountain. We want that label to be big. We're not going into this thinking about other labels, we're thinking what do we have to do to make this album big and put United Guttural and us on the map? Can we make an ultra brutal label and be as big as Relapse. Roger and Rich do a lot of stuff together. It's not a partnership but they work in conjunction with each other. They did the Metalfest magazine together and they're gonna do it for every festival. People tried to pull them off in the past but never got anywhere. It looked great.

#### What are your plans for the future?

We have the Ohio Festival Easter weekend. We're gonna do every fest, L.A., Texas. We're gonna go on a tour before L.A. Fest and after L.A. Fest. We're going to the Czech Republic with **Mortician** for a couple of shows. We're gonna be treated like a big band instead of an opener for once. We're trying to do something. There's a lot of really good bands that are starting to work hard. Next week we're playing with **Dying Fetus** in Maryland. We'd love to go out with **Immolation**.

#### How do you feel about being the only guitarist in Malignancy?

I'm trying to sound as good as bands like **Dying Fetus**, **Gorgasm**, **Gorguts**, **Cryptopsy**- they all have two guitarists with big time guitar sounds. I can't go off as much as I want to. I can only incorporate solo riffing live otherwise it's gonna sound thin with just the bass. We're looking for a guitarist. We have an open audition for anyone who's willing to travel to the Poconos every weekend to practice. I want to go off on harmonies like Trey. I'd like someone to give me the room. Eventually you're gonna see this band with another guitar player. It could open the doors for a different type of **Malignancy** album. There's no solos on this album. I thought they were trendy. I think I'll unleash some solos in the future. They won't be high pitched though, they'll be ultra low. Danny's gonna have new vocal styles. He's gonna do some weird stuff to mix it up for him. We want to make everything fresh. We're much faster now. Everyone's gonna get the chance to see this band grow.

#### Discography:

1999... *Intrauterine Cannibalism* (United Guttural)

#### Current line-up:

Danny Nelson... vocals  
Ron Kachnic... guitars  
Desmond Tulhurst... bass  
Roger Beaujard... drums



# maudlin of the well

Interview with vocalist Jason Byron

One of the weirdest, most fascinating, and bizarre bands I have heard in some time come to us in the form of **Maudlin Of The Well**. This band employs nine musicians, including three guitarists, two vocalists, and a trumpet, a saxophone and horn player. Their debut, *My Fruit Psychobells*, utilizes everything from grindcore to ambience; brutal vocals, clean vocals, screaming vocals, female vocals- it's all here. For fans of **Mr. Bungle**, **Brutal Truth**, **Sculptured**, or even more obscure bands like **Oxiplegatz**, **Disembowelment**, and **Sieges Even**. Their lyrical content is as abstract as you would expect. Dark Symphonies must be commended for taking a chance on this band, **Maudlin Of The Well** will never come close to being mainstream, but with enough exposure they should develop a sizable cult following. I had the pleasure of seeing them play live at the New Jersey Metalfest and despite some early sound problems that delayed their set, **Maudlin Of The Well** impressed with their ability to be slow, doomy, and atmospheric then blinding speed with lots of grind.

**How was the New Jersey Metal Meltdown?**

The sound sucked. The smoke alarm screwed everything up. I think we sounded okay. I look forward to doing it again.

**Are you happy with this record?**

Yeah, I think it came out really good. Tobi is the main guy in the band, he's in Massachusetts. It's really tough to get up there and practice. With the next album, I'll have more input and it'll be more of a band influence. I'm impressed with this one but the next one is gonna be a lot better.

**How would you describe what you're doing?**

That's a good question, I don't know. It's weird ass music. It's pretty intricate and there are some surprises. All the vocals that I laid down are from like three years ago. They finished a lot of these songs without me even there. When I listened to the c.d. I was completely blown away, it's very intricate sounding stuff. It's all a part of this astral metal thing that we're trying to convey. My perception of it is like a dreamscape. It's like a dream, because it breaks up everywhere.

**How do you approach this music with your vocals?**

I do the death stuff, although I would like to go into more clear sounding stuff in the future. Having one vocalist is cool but it's been done a million times. This is a different approach. You get more points of view and it's more layered with different vocal styles.

**Tell me about the artwork.**

Tobi is the one who drew everything. The cover artwork, that's supposed to be someone throwing his fruit, which is himself, into the ocean. That's our recurring theme. The ocean is the primal mother, the most scary, most wonderful, the coolest thing ever. The artwork on the back with the two little goblins playing with the thing, at the end of track eight where we're all laughing- that's what that is supposed to be. We're running around in the middle of the woods, in the middle of winter pretending we're goblins.

**Do people seem to be making the effort to listen to Maudlin Of The Well and figure out what you're doing?**

Yeah. There's been so many people getting into it. The extent of my music is what shows I go to. The last festival we did, we had so many people saying we were great. It's awesome. I'm more inclined to expect a warmer welcome in Europe.

**Any plans for tours?**

Not currently. We have the Milwaukee Metalfest coming up in July. We're trying to set up some shows on our own in the meantime. By that time we'll probably start working on the next album.

**How has the new material been shaping up?**

I've only heard the skeleton of a song. What I've heard so far is really different, and weird. All I've heard so far was the guitar. I won't be able to really hear it until it's done because trying to write lyrics is too hard when you have no music to go by. What I heard so far sounds awesome.

**Is it difficult to get the timing down with nine people on stage?**

The only shows we've played so far was the one in New Jersey and the one in Worcester. The only difficult part is getting everybody transportation. We usually meet at Tobi's school, New Hampshire college, in a few cars. Once we're all there it's just a nightmare for the sound guy. That's one of the reasons why the sound sucks. Hopefully, in the not too distant future we'll have our own sound guy.

**What are some bands that you're into?**

I'm into **Faith No More** and **Mr. Bungle**. I'm into some older heavy stuff like **Morbid Angel**, **Deicide**, **Tangerine Dream**; who are my main lyrical influence.

**When will you be in the studio again?**

Tobi is graduating from school this spring. He has access to the studio here, which is free. We'll probably try to get as much done now before he's gone. We plan on moving up to Boston together in the next half year. It'll be easier to rehearse because everyone will be under one roof.

We'll get everything done and get in the studio and get it done in a week. The bulk of the musicians are up in Massachusetts and then there's me in Connecticut. Since I'm doing my stuff last it should work pretty well.

**Do you write all the lyrics?**

No. I've done most of them. On the last album I did four out of the seven so I don't know what the last three are about. I'm into romantic poetry, Shelley especially. I get a lot of my influence from the ocean. It's real sour, depressing stuff. There's a lot of love and death. It doesn't have to be doomy. It's my outlook on things. Suicide is a popular topic. The ocean is so big, there's so much weird shit at the bottom, we don't even know.

**Do you do any other types of writing?**

I've had writer's block for a few years.

In the past I've been really into gothic horror short stories. Back in 1996 I found out that poetry was definitely my calling. I started writing poetry for three and a half years. In the last year or so I haven't written that much besides lyrics for the band.

**Do you have any plans to pursue a career as a writer?**

There's no market for it. Hi, I'm a romantic poet- "get out of here!". In future, if we make it a little bigger and people will start pursuing my interests, maybe I can use that as a catapult for me. I think it'll just be a personal pursuit.

**Discography:**

1999... *My Fruit Psychobells* A Seed Combustible (Dark Symphonies)

**Current line-up:**

Jason Byron... vocals  
Maria Stella... vocals  
Greg Massi... guitars  
Josh Seipp-Williams... guitars  
Cas Lucas... guitars  
Tobias Driver... bass and clarinet  
Sam Gutterman... drums  
Jason Bitner... trumpet and horns  
Terran Olson... keyboards



## Interview with Jack Koshic by Paul Laplaca

This interview was conducted by Paul Laplaca, the vocalist for Brooklyn based prog rockers **October Thorns**. They have performed at the last three shows in Koshic's Metal Mania series.

### **How did you get involved with promotions?**

Actually, it's something I've always wanted to do. I remember seeing my first show and just knowing it was something I wanted to be a part of. I've always been a fan first and foremost.

### **Are you a musician as well?**

No, I wish I was.

### **What was the first show you attended?**

It was in 1967 before metal, Gary Plunkett and the Union Gap. I've wanted to do my own shows from the very beginning.

### **Did you start small and do single band shows first?**

Oh yeah. I've worked hard for it. The first metalfest was fourteen years ago and we had to start small. I've always been completely responsible for paying the bands and taking the risk. It's brutal, more times than I can remember things have fallen apart.

### **What happened in Texas?**

I think the problem with the Texas show was it was the first time we had played there. We still had people from Louisiana and Florida show up and from all over the country really. But it's an expensive show to put on and that's the reason we ask unsigned bands to help sell tickets. If your band is worth being on that stage then selling twenty tickets shouldn't be that big a problem. If you can't do that then why are you wasting my time and worse than that, why are you wasting your own time as a band? Plus you get a full two day pass and get to play, hopefully, in front of several thousand of your closest friends, in front of eighteen to twenty five record labels and their A&R reps. Every year someone gets signed out of the Metafests. You get to put it on your resume. I mean if the only thing you've done before is open for a band called **Loaded Scrotum** (which is probably a killer band and real popular but have never played outside of their hometown) but now you play the Metafest and you share the stage with **S.O.D.**, the **Misfits**, and **Sentenced** and now you've got something to talk about.

**Yeah, for October Thorns we totally used that as a springboard to get into several magazines and it helped us get a lot of other shows. If you do it right it can be a great experience.**

It's a great place to network. If your band really is something, it's a great place to show it off because the right people are there.

### **What do you do the rest of the year?**

I'm a design consultant for the W.W.F. and I do some other things but the Metal Mania series is a full time job.

### **Who else do you have on your staff?**

Joe Arnett and Marianna Zandella have both moved on to better paying jobs, I'm pretty much a mom and pop shop. I work out of my home.

### **How much business training do you have?**

Well, I've managed a bunch of bands over the years and had some schooling.

### **Do you have any advice for people wanting to get into promotions?**

Just jump into it with both feet. My first show I went out and got a credit card and maxed it out, had a loss the first time through. I mean I've done everything from, "clean up in aisle three" to driving a bus. You just keep pushing. I spent seven years in New York City and just carved a niche for myself in metal. I mean fifteen years ago I never thought I'd be listening to music this extreme, my favorite band was **Talas**.

**They just released a live album in Japan and do a couple of shows a year. I'd love to get them for a fest.**

**There seems to be a history of mix ups and cancellations associated with the fests. Have you jumped the gun in some of these cases and advertised bands before they were fully committed?**

That's not the case. Every band that we've announced or put on our website or in a flyer has been committed. Now, whether something happens where they get denied at the airport and can't get into the country or someone has a heart attack and dies, that's out of my control. You get one hundred and forty bands playing at these shows and somebody is bound to drop off. A couple of years ago **Cannibal**

**Corpse** was playing the Milwaukee Metalfest and their van broke down in Champaign, Illinois. There was no way they were going to make it up there. Also on that bus was the drummer from **Angel Corpse** and they couldn't play show either. I lost two bands that day because of truck failure, is that my fault? You got **Marduk**, they just plain did not get on that airplane and weirded out and blew off North America altogether and never told why. Is that my fault that it happened? No, they didn't get on the plane. I'm always under attack, always got a damage control situation going on. Someone always jacks you on the price saying that you have an exclusive performance in North America and the next thing you know it falls right in the middle of a tour. It's happened to me several times. The only appearance of **Venom** in America period in I don't know how many years, the same year that they headlined **Dynamo** they ended up getting \$40,000 plus airfare and hotel accommodations for five days, it adds up. You don't know how many times I've done a show and chased the tour but just to say goodbye to my rent and food money for the next three months. You have to remember at the end of the day, no bands- no fans so you got to remember that. And we keep track of who did well, who got the biggest pop, who was great to work with, who was an asshole.

**By the way, you've always had great crews and everyone has always been very good to us at these shows.**

Yeah, it's not their first time at the rodeo. They've done a lot of shows

### **What do you think your biggest accomplishment has been so far?**

You mean besides my daughter? Besides my family I would probably have to say the first Metafest. I'm very proud of that. Any one really.

### **Are you going to continue with four shows per year?**

We're going to see how this year went before planning next year. We're trying to give ourselves three to four months between shows and that's not a whole lot of time. We've got really big plans and we're looking at some of the biggest headliners that we've ever had. We will probably go with three for now. The **Mayhem** in May show had to be rescheduled due to changes in the building's insurance policy. The L.A. show has been moved to November but we haven't given up on Texas yet. We enjoyed a modest success in N.J. and just hope to keep this series going.

## **"Eviscerating North America 2000"**

Dwell Records priority artist Los Angeles own **Coffin Texts** have landed support slot for the upcoming **Incantation** tour

Here are some upcoming dates:

May 9- Denver, CO TBA

May 10- Salt Lake City, UT TBA

May 11- Spokane, WA at Fort Spokane Brewery

May 12- Seattle, WA at Breakroom

May 13- Portland, OR at Satyricon

May 14- San Francisco, CA at Club Cocodrie

May 15- Sacramento, CA at Bo Jangles

May 16- San Jose, CA at Cactus Club

May 17- W. Hollywood, CA at Whiskey A Go-Go

May 18- Corona, CA at Showcase Theater

May 19- San Diego, CA TBA

May 20- Phoenix, AZ TBA

May 22- Houston, TX TBA

May 23- New Orleans, LA at Zeppelins

May 24- Little Rock, AR TBA

May 25- Memphis, TN TBA

May 26- Atlanta, GA TBA

May 27- Tampa, FL at Brass Mug

May 28- Ft. Lauderdale, FL at Culture Room

# NIACIN

Interview with bassist Billy Sheehan

**Niacin** is one unique band. The focal point of this trio is John Novello's use of the famous Hammond B-3, the forgotten instrument from the seventies that makes **Niacin** totally special. Joining Novello is bassist extraordinaire Billy Sheehan (**Mr. Big**, **Explorers Club**) and the extremely talented drummer Dennis Chambers. Their newly released album, *Deep*, is less jazz based and has more groove. The trio of musicians feed off one another and have created a very spontaneous piece of work. Always energetic and rarely tedious despite being an instrumental effort, *Deep* is quite easy to listen to and will often inject some excitement. To change things up, vocalist Glenn Hughes and guitarist Steve Lukather appear on the track "Things Ain't What They Used To Be". Another surprise is **Niacin's** rendition of **Van Halen's** "Mean Streets". Here is Billy to speak about **Niacin**.

## Are you pleased with this new Niacin record?

Yeah. Most of the time when you do a record it's like this painful birth and it takes awhile to get over and start listening to it. Recently I've done most of my recording digitally, especially this album and it's made it so much easier to make a record according to how you hear it in your head. This record came out like we intended it to. It made it easy and minus any trauma.

## How does this record stack up next to your previous work?

I've done some things that I haven't done on anything else. I've still got a lot to learn on bass and this is another step in one direction. It's hard for me to be objective about my own self, but I think a few years from now I'm gonna say "how did I do that?". I'll have to learn it all over again. I've had a couple **Niacin** songs that I had to play a couple months after I was doing something else and I go back and listen to it and think "what in the world am I doing?". How did I come up with that in the first place? I'm giving myself lessons for the future.

## I think your playing on this is your best.

Dennis Chambers has a groove that grabs you by the throat and leaves you no choice. It's groove or die. He changed my life and the way I approach bass. It's been an amazing learning experience working with him. He does things that I never knew about before. I've been playing in white rock bands and I was never exposed to some of this stuff. Standing next to Dennis while he's doing his thing is an incredible experience and it's improved my playing a lot. He's the best musician I've ever played with.

## For those who are uninformed, what is the Hammond B-3?

If you've heard "Give Me Some Loving", "Born to be Wild", or almost anything by **Three Dog Night**, **the Young Rascals**, **Emerson Lake and Palmer**, **Yes**, even **Crosby Stills and Nash**, and the first couple of **Led Zepplin** albums there's a lot of B-3. John Paul Jones is an incredible Hammond B-3 player. The first **Santana** album is a complete Hammond B-3 record. There was a time when it was almost as important as the guitar and in some cases the guitar was secondary. The guitar was this solo and rhythm thing, but the B-3 was the focus. I never played with a B-3 before. It was so important to me when I grew up listening to **Led Zepplin**, **Humble Pie**, **Spooky Tooth**, **Uriah Heep**, all heavy bands that I was into. We hang on to some of the tradition but also bring it up to date with **Niacin**. It's infused with a modern structure.

## Any reason why there isn't any guitar on this record?

It's a guitar world. A lot of guitar players buy this record to play along with it because there is not guitar there. We did the one song with guitars to show that we don't hate guitars. It's easier as a three piece band. You get that three corner triangle. A three legged table is easier to make than a four leg table. It's easy for me to focus on Dennis and let John go, or to focus on John and let Dennis go. It's a cool interaction. It's like a lot of rock bands that just have one guitar, bass, drums, and vocals. It gives me a lot of room as a bass player but it also requires me to play a lot more to make up for other musicians. It's more challenging to be in a three piece band. If it's too easy I lose interest. Instead of taking the path of least resistance I take the path of most resistance.

## This record sounds spontaneous, how does the songwriting take place?

John and I put stuff together and sit down with Dennis and he puts his magic to it. we send him a tape a couple of weeks before he comes in and we make quick

changes and hit the record button. It is spontaneous. One thing about work digitally is we don't have to worry about being a slave to the machine anymore. If it's out of sequence we can worry about the engineer putting it together later. It reminds me of a lot of the **Beatle** bootlegs.

## What's up with your solo album?

I'm working on that right now. One is a solo bass record and one is a solo singing record. Usually when someone does a solo record they make the mistake of singing on a track or two and everybody has to go through the trouble of skipping over those tracks. I figured I'd save everybody the trouble and do two c.d.'s. I've got tons of stuff that I've written over the years. I can lay down a rough cassette from two years ago and then fill in the cracks how it's supposed to be. It makes it real easy for me to put things together. They'll probably be out at the end of the summer. The way the schedules landed was odd. We have a new **Mr. Big** record out March 22nd and this record just came out. I'm gonna be doing some touring with **Niacin** and some stuff with **Mr. Big**. I squeeze as much of the solo projects here and there when I can.

## Will they be a simultaneous release?

Probably not, but they'll be pretty close to each other. I plan to post a lot of MP3 files on my website. It'll be old pieces of music that wasn't available before, it's at [www.billysheehan.com](http://www.billysheehan.com). There's all kinds of obscure stuff that people have been asking me about through the years.

## Will the Mr. Big release be the same album that was already released in Japan?

Yes. For business reasons they like to release it in Asia first so they don't get killed with cheap imports. People say "why do you always put a bonus track on in Japan?". The label insists upon it because otherwise people would just buy the American version for ten dollars cheaper. They do very well for us in Japan. People there are very sincere and they are as wonderful audience. I explain to people that the **Spinal Tap** analogy that a lot of people make, that whatever you do people will love it, is just not true. You're under a microscope there sometimes. The culture is so polite and accomodating that a lot of people don't know when they don't like you. We had bands who were out selling us ten to one and they were going home for a lack of ticket sales. We just got back from there from a tour with **Niacin**. We played the Blue Note in Osaka and in Tokyo. They are sitting so close that I could put my drink on my table. I have a lot of respect for those people over there. They've done music a great service. Between Japan and some European countries they've kept bands alive that would have gone away. There's some great blues artists, jazz artists, that couldn't get arrested here are worshipped there.

## Richie Kotzen has added a blues based sound to Mr. Big.

We love Paul and he's an amazing player. He can mimic a lot of stuff and be really good at it. He can play a million notes a minute and he's good at it. He does these acrobatic things that other people can dream of doing. It was a stumbling block that we had to put a blind spot in, right from the beginning of the band. Eric's got this bluesy, soulful voice and then we've got this speedy guitar player. I would never say anything bad about our older stuff, but in the back of our minds we were always saying, we wanted to go back to the **Humble Pie**, **Bad Company** thing. That's Richie through and through. As upset as we were when Paul quit, it was a blessing in disguise.

## Discography:

2000... *Deep* (Magna Carta)  
1998... *High Bias*  
1997... *Niacin*

## Current line-up:

John Novello... keyboards  
Billy Sheehan... bass  
Dennis Chambers... drums



# Night in Gales

Interview with bassist Tobias Bruchmann

In one week I got three albums from Nuclear Blast. They were the new Gorgoroth, **Night In Gales**, and **Darkseed**. The amazing thing about this trio of discs is the amount of improvement each band showed. *Nailwork* is **Night In Gales** third full length and sees them at their most experimental. For the first time Bjorn Goobes is using clear vocals as well as his signature coarse style. The result is genius, as each song is exciting and filled with intense emotion. Musically, **Night In Gales** still play a form of extreme music, it's just that the vocals add a new twist and more dynamics. On *Nailwork*, **Night In Gales** have even less Swedish influences than their previous efforts.

## How do you feel about this new record?

The new record, *Nailwork*, I am real satisfied with the reactions we've got. We've been told that there has been a big market and there have been lots of interviews in America for *Nailwork*. The feeling is very well within every member of **Night In Gales**. We had a hard time before we recorded *Nailwork*. We had some discussions about what to do for the next album. We really took the time to make a new album and everything is going in the right way. My favorite song is "Blades of Laughter". I like to play it in the rehearsal room. It's going fast without clean vocals. It makes that song different than the others on *Nailwork*. Don't misunderstand me. The whole album is very good. He is singing with rough vocals and then at the end he sings with clean vocals.

## Bjorn's vocals have never been better.

The combination of the growth, screams, the clean vocals, and the effects- he had a really big development. We always tried to remain interesting but we never changed the vocals. Each album Bjorn was singing similar. Now he's made it modern and brutal death metal. It fit very well with the arrangements. He arranged it with us together and he took more time than ever before.

## How have you been able to maintain the same line-up through the years?

We had changed the singer from our debut mini-c.d. We recorded a limited seven inch, a thousand copies and Christian was on that also. We are really friends. We are not only together to make music. We've known each other for a long time. Bjorn was singing in my side project band. Christian is back in the business, now he is singing in my side project. There is no secret behind it. It's hard to find good musicians in our area. People that are mental and musically stable.

## What's the name of the side project?

In **Blackest Velvet**. Last year we recorded our debut album. It is coming out on the twenty fourth of July. It is coming out on a small German label. **Night In Gales** is forever my main band. I have no time to go on tour with two bands. I have a full time job. We had recorded songs from 1995, right around the time we started **Night In Gales**. Now we are nearly a band. We are trying to write and rehearse regularly. If we have the chance to record the next album we will do it.

## Would you agree that **Night In Gales** has developed from a Swedish sound into something new and fresh?

We always hear that **Night In Gales** is a German band that sounds like they come from Gothenburg. After our first output, we had not heard of **Dark Tranquillity** or **At The Gates**. It was a hard start for us. We read the names in our first reviews. We have become a little famous in the underground scene because of it. After that we have not really shown any signs of a direct sound to these bands. We tried to develop after each release. The step from our demo to our debut album was a little,

then a little more, the biggest step was from *Thunderbeast* to *Nailwork*. We have found our own sound. Only a little bit will remind you of melodic death metal. We are now harder than before, fresher, modern sounding, and not very commercial. It's not that I'm not proud about our last albums. They're honest albums. Do you know of any other German bands that sound like they're from Sweden? I can not hear that sound anymore. It's been four years. We were not on top of our musical skills when we recorded *Towards the Twilight* or *Thunderbeast*. A year later, after *Nailwork*, I don't know how the evolution of our band is going. I know that we are going the right way at the moment. I am very satisfied that many people remind our band that we are going on our own sound.

## It seems as though your use of compound words has become a trademark.

From the beginning we've done this art game. **Night In Gales** is a art game too. Nightingale is a bird, **Night In Gales** is a stormy night. Through all our lyrics we have many art games. Bjorn's job is to make great lyrics. He took a lot of time on the new lyrics. On some of these he's tried to be more poetic and romantic in art form. He's trying to transform his mood into an aggressive thing. When he wrote the last album, he drew a picture and made some lyrics. We told him to write modern lyrics that would fit the song, not romantic. You have to be in your face with the lyrics. "Nailwork", when you look at the cover artwork you see nails with hands. It's a concept. For *Thunderbeast* the music and lyrics weren't one hundred percent together. This time he spent a lot of time with the lyrics and the arrangements to the songs. Nowadays it is a trademark for **Night In Gales**. He also did the artwork for *Thunderbeast* and *Nailwork*.

## Is **Night In Gales** accepted in Germany?

In the biggest German magazines we have eight of ten.

Nuclear Blast is putting big advertisements for the **Stratovarius**, **Primal Fear**, and **Sinner** but not **Night In Gales**, **Soul Reaper**, and **Darkseed**. I hate some things that they did for promotion on *Nailwork*. Most of the magazines in Europe have giving us good reviews and many interviews. It's been a big reaction. Especially now that we are getting interviews



in American. At the end of the year we are going to Japan and that's been our first goal. Our next dream will be to go to America.

## Discography:

2000... *Nailwork* (Nuclear Blast)  
1998... *Thunderbeast* (Nuclear Blast)  
1997... *Towards The Twilight* (Nuclear Blast)  
1996... *Sylphlike* (self)

## Current line-up:

Bjorn Goobes... vocals  
Frank Basten... guitars  
Jens Basten... guitars  
Tobias Bruchmann... bass  
Christian Bab... drums

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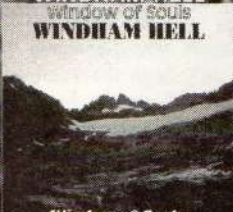


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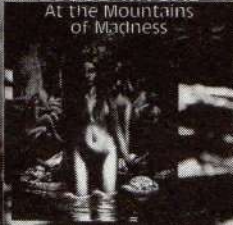


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DARKNESS ENSHROUD - "Totentanz" CD  
WIND OF THE BLACK MOUNTAINS - "tba" CD  
THY INFERNAL - "tba" CD  
INQUISITION - "Invoking the Majestic Throne of Satan" CD  
JUDAS ISCARIOT - "tba" 6th CD  
BLOOD RITUAL - "tba" CD

# PAIN of SALVATION

Interview with vocalist and guitarist Daniel Gildenow

One of my favorite bands has taken the progressive metal genre by storm in the last year or two. Sweden's **Pain Of Salvation** play a modern, experimental, intelligent, and even dangerous form of metal that holds no boundaries. Expert musicianship and creative, smart, political lyrical topics abound. **Pain Of Salvation** has been introduced to the States via their exciting, unpredictable debut, *Entropia*, and its follow up, the more mature *One Hour by the Concrete Lake*. I spoke at length with vocalist and guitarist Daniel Gildenow about his band. m Believe it or not, they are already back in the studio and should have their third release out by the end of the year.

## What are you up to?

We went into the studio the 13th of March. The album will be a bit more heavy. It's a mixture of *Entropia* and *One Hour by the Concrete Lake*. *Entropia* has more of a groovy feeling and *One Hour by the Concrete Lake* is cold and technical. We're trying to fill a void in the music scene. you can recognize a tension in the albums. Many people like *Entropia* because it's out there and *Concrete Lake* is more focused. For *Entropia* we had a lot of material. It's a mixture of different attitudes. With *One Hour by the Concrete Lake* we were able to make it as a complete album from the start because we knew it was gonna be a concept.

## Tell me about this concept.

I was studying Peacework at the University of Gothenburg in the fall of '97. I wrote an essay called Water War in Swedish. It dealt with environmental issues, water consumption, and the military and how these issues are connected in a way that most people don't see them. When I was trying to get material for this essay I found that there were no books dealing with these issues together. I knew that reading books about environmental issues that the military was doing huge damage to the environment that weren't brought up in the books about the military. I had to come up with about twenty good books and come up with connections by reading different parts of the books. I felt that I wanted to make this concept, it's more interesting to have something to say. I wanted to use this space to say something important. I had to get an idea of how to make it into a concept because an essay is not very poetic. It's an epic. I had to find a way to make it more interesting to read about in a lyrical way. I presented the idea to the rest of the band and they were very interested. I showed them the essay and all the material I used because I wanted everybody to be up to date with what it's all about. I had to translate it from essay to lyrical form, which was the hardest part. I think reading about human emotions is very interesting. I had to have human characters. I had one character going through this essay. We have this man working in the military industry. He had doubts, that I have myself, about these issues. This main character wanted to see how he affected the world with this job that he has. That was not a part of the essay. People have a feeling that what they do will not affect the world. People often feel that it's okay if they don't change and as long as everybody else changes. It's similar to the idea of someone saying, if I don't do this then someone else will. This character travels around the world. That's chapter two of the story. We follow him on this journey and we see the situations through his eyes. We see a war situation in "Handful of Nothing". It deals with the water consumption. I used the form of a Swedish documentary on people living in the desert and how they related to water. People in the Western world feel they can use water whenever they want. We expose this natural resource. We go to the Canadian Indians in "Black Hills". Here in Sweden, we hear that the nuclear industry is clean. We don't mine nuclear waste here in Sweden- as long as nothing happens. We don't see what happens when someone else has to mine uranium. We get a lot of uranium here in Sweden from Canada. The Indian territories are forced to give up their grounds for nuclear waste. Environmentally and morally, the nuclear industry is very dirty. The end of chapter two, "Home" and "Black Hills" deals with these issues and we see it from the Indian perspective. We leave the main character for awhile.

## I'm surprised you had no problems with the government.

Everything is official in Sweden. Everyone can go in and take a look at what's happening, but not many people use

this right. One of the teachers at Peace Work comes from Norway but has lived in Sweden most of his life. He spent time in prison because he had discovered official information and put it together. It's fine when you take the information on its own but it's too much if you put all this information together. He was released after a short while. The third chapter of the story wraps up the story. The main character ends up in part of the former Soviet Union. I feel bad about that because the Soviet Union is always depicted as the bad guys all over the world. With the break up of the Soviet Union it became known that they had dumped nuclear waste here in this place in the 1940's. It's a lake called Karachay and it's located in Kyshtym. It had radioactive waste in it for fifty years. At a point in 1988 it was so bad that if you stood my the lake for one hour you would undoubtedly die. The solution was to cover the whole lake with concrete. That's a typical solution that humans make- let's cover it up. Cover up the failure with concrete, cementing the problem- it's so bizarre that I had to use it. It's wrong for people to think that I won't destroy my place and it doesn't matter what happens somewhere else. What happens in other areas does affect the planet earth and that's where we live.

## I like your point, to look as many sources as possible.

We have a motto, think for yourself.

## How do you feel about be called a progressive band?

A problem with the genre we are labeled with- it's not very progressive anymore. If you look at what the word intended from the beginning, you have to have a progress.

## Discography:

1999... One Hour By The Concrete Lake (Inside Out)

1998... Entropia (Inside Out)

## Current line-up:

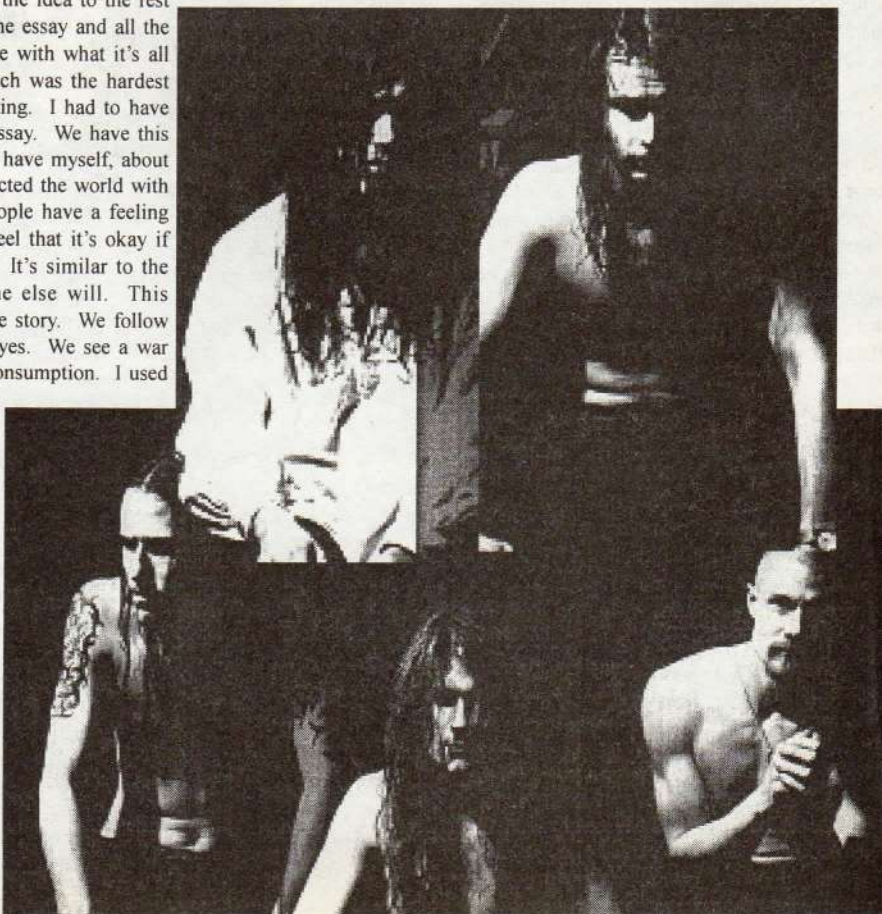
Daniel Gildenow... vocals and guitars

Johan Hallgren... guitars

Kristoffer Gildenow... bass

Johan Langeli... drums

Fredrik Hermansson... keyboards





# Rain Fell Within

Interview with keyboardist and vocalist Dawn Smith

Virginia's **Rain Fell Within** were picked up by the upcoming American label Dark Symphonies last year and they have issued their second effort, *Believe*. *Believe* is a stunning album. The first thing you will notice are the beautiful operatic vocals of Dawn Smith, but the more you listen the more you realize that Dawn is unlike any vocalist you have ever heard. Her operatic style and the power metal style of the band make comparisons to bands like the **Gathering** and **The 3rd And The Mortal** appear lame. *Believe* contains five lengthy but accessible tracks that run the gamut of emotions. Despite the presence of female vocals and keyboards, **Rain Fell Within** make sure that the music is often fast paced and powerful, pure metal. I spoke to Dawn about their Dark Symphonies debut, *Believe*. I would also like to thank **Rain Fell Within** and Ted from Dark Symphonies for allowing me to use the artwork for this c.d. compilation and the cover artwork.

## How would you describe your sound?

I don't think we fit into any category but we've been calling ourselves atmospheric, melodic metal. A lot of people like to call it doom but doom to me is really slow. We are not slow. We're more mid paced to fast. We have slower stuff. We don't set limits on ourselves as far as what speed we have or what type of music we write. We don't try to fit into any categories. One song may fit into this category and the next will fit into another, it's all metal though.

## How would you describe your first release?

I think it was very good for a demo. Most bands just do a four track recording for their demo, we actually went into a studio to record that. For a demo, the sound was pretty good. Our music has greatly matured since then. We also have a couple of different members than were on the demo.

## Would you like to give a brief description of the lyrics?

I would say it is dark. I don't have a very positive outlook on life so it tends to show in the lyrics. Things that have happened in my life influence it a little bit. I take one certain thing that happened and then I make a story around that. They're things that I think could happen in this world. I don't want someone looking at it and going "hey, that's about me." There's a time to share your emotions with people and there's a time when there's too much to share. In music you can share your emotions without telling too much about yourself. "False Reality" stemmed off of something. There was a rumor going around that my band was addicted to heroin. I don't know where it came from. Somebody said they saw us at a local club in a van shooting up heroin. We don't own a van and none of us does anything like that. Everybody has their different favorite song.

## How is the scene in Virginia?

Recently we've been travelling to different places. The scene out here used to be very good. There were a number of places that metal bands could play and there was a big metal scene. A lot of the bands have broken up and a lot of the clubs don't want to let metal play there anymore. When you do play a show it's hard to get the weekend. They give you week nights and there's no point in doing that. The scene has really gone downhill here. We've been going out of state. We've all taked a lot of time off from work to go to these shows so it might be awhile before we make it to New York.

## Have you played any other metal fests?

We played the New England Metalfest and New Jersey. We're playing another Massachusetts metalfest at the same place we played for the New England Metalfest. That's in May with **Kovenant** and **Amorphis**. Then we're playing Milwaukee. The New England Fest was hard because it was mostly a hardcore fest. The people didn't want to accept anything that wouldn't allow them to beat each other up.

## Have you experienced any prejudice because you're a woman singing in a metal band?

There are certain people out there who close their minds to any music that isn't their type of thing. They think female vocals are not metal. I think those close minded people will always remain close minded. Even if they did like it they wouldn't give it enough listens because they aren't gonna want to like it. I listen to a little bit of everything. I always give everything a chance.

## What is your background?

My first tape was **Aerosmith**. I've always been listening to stuff that's on the heavy side. When other kids were listening to **New Kids On The Block** I was listening to **Motley Crue**. Then someone got me into **My Dying Bride**. Then I started listening to doom metal and death metal.

## What do you plan on doing musically in the future?

Never be surprised by anything we do. It'll always be something different but it will always be metal. We would never turn around and say we're not metal anymore and change.

## Why are you a pessimistic person?

I think it depends on how your life has gone and what has happened to you. If you were always liked and always popular you're probably gonna have a positive outlook on life. I was not one of those people. I've been picked on my entire life. I'm not happy with the world. I have never bowed down to anybody's standards. That's why I got picked on. I'm never gonna do anything just to make somebody else happy. If I did something, I did it for myself and a lot of people don't like that. People start treating you badly, when they don't agree with you.

## What's your favorite song on this record?

I think everyone would agree with me when I say "Believe" is our favorite. That's why we named the album after it. We really like how the music came together. The words show how people have that outlook on life. It's about a fallen angel who comes down to change humanity because everybody is mean to each other. She comes down and tried to change people but she finds

out that people won't change.

## Are you equally passionate about the keyboards?

I've been playing the piano since I was three but we could never afford one so I've always had a keyboard. I do consider myself to be more of a vocalist than a pianist, probably because I actually get along with my vocal coach.

## How did you develop your vocal style?

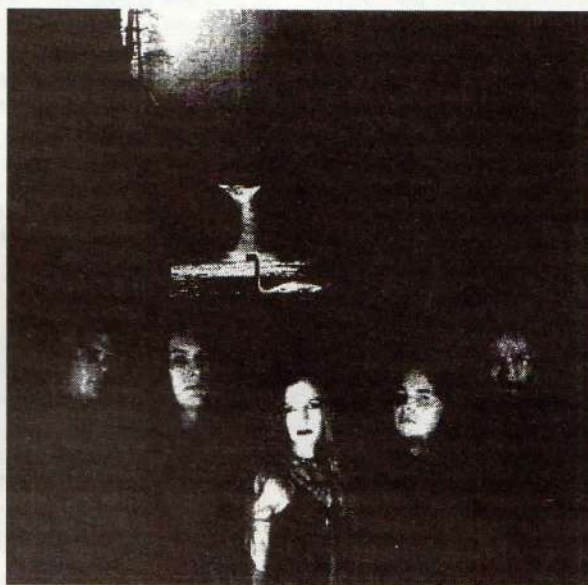
There's vocalists that I like, Kari from **The 3rd And The Mortal** and Anecke from the **Gathering**, but you're talking about people's vocal chords that don't sound the same. I don't sound like them and I would never try to. My training is in opera. When I sing with the band I mix that with rock vocals. The problem with opera is that I can't stand the competition. Women are bitches and they're all mean to each other. I prefer to just stay with the band.

## Discography:

2000... *Believe* (Dark Symphonies)  
1998... *Solemn Days*

## Current line-up:

Dawn Smith... vocals and keyboards  
Kevin Thomas... guitars  
Owen Davis... guitars  
Charles Gore... bass  
Tim Miller... drums



# SCULPTURED

Interview with vocalist and guitarist Don Anderson

There are a few bands hailing from America who are out to prove that the Europeans aren't the only ones who know how to play avantgarde/ atmospheric metal. Joining bands like **Cold Colours**, **Maudlin Of The Well**, and **Rain Fell Within**; **Sculptured** are playing a unique style of metal never heard before. Their new release, *Apollo Ends*, is a more memorable record than their debut, *The Spear of the Lily is Aureoled*. *Apollo Ends* is actually more progressive than expected. Once again mainman Don Anderson uses trombone and trumpet players to enhance his vision. While **Sculptured** members Jason Walton (bass/ **Nothing**) and John Haughm (drums/ **Agalloch**) fulfill their creativity in their respective bands, **Sculptured** is Anderson's vision. I spoke to him recently about **Sculptured** and their great new album, *Apollo Ends*.

## What are you trying to do with Sculptured?

I try to present something new, not just musically but also harmonically with the chords and harmonies we use. I try to do that in ways that are not usually done in metal. I try to make music that is very dissonant and extreme, not that it's fast, but it's hard on the ears. I think people will either love it or hate it.

## What inspired the lyric concept?

The album is essentially a concept album. There's only one song that strays from the overall theme, "Snow Covers All". All the other songs are connected lyrically and some are connected musically as well. The lyrics are autobiographical. They are all about my feelings toward the earth, the sun, the end of the world, and illness. I mix it all together and create a theme. I feel sick at certain times, especially early in the morning. I try to connect that with how animals can sense a storm coming. I wake up every morning feeling sick and having that as a symbol of the end of the world. The sun is a representation of the atomic bomb. Essentially the sun is the enemy and that's why I use the word Apollo. If I didn't know that **My Dying Bride** would have an album called *The Light at the End of the World*, I wish I had thought of that. That would have been a beautiful title for my album.

## Why did you switch from the title of Goldberg?

You get excited when you're writing an album and I had it all planned out. When I started writing the lyrics everything changed. When I started writing the lyrics something more personal started to come out. I don't feel comfortable writing about someone else. What came out was essentially about myself.

## It's interesting that you, Jason, and John have created your own scene.

I'm really proud that we are able to work together. When we were doing **Agalloch** I was finishing the writing on **Sculptured**. We recorded the **Agalloch** sessions and then went right into **Sculptured**. Next time we'll do one and then a break before the next one. When we do **Agalloch**, John calls the shots. There's no ego because we each have our own projects. Things we do in **Sculptured** we wouldn't

do in **Agalloch** and vice versa. **Nothing** is mostly all Jason. I haven't done much. He lives in Minnesota. If he lived here I would probably be more a part of **Nothing**. A lot of that happened because we live in a small town.

## What influences you as a musician?

Me and Jason click like brothers. He lived with me for about a year. He clearly understands what I want to do with **Sculptured**. We share a lot of the same ideas and thoughts. Me and John differ on a lot of things. I can confront those issues with **Agalloch** because that's his thing. When he first heard **Sculptured**'s first album, which he is not

on, he did not like the brass. Now he's come to really accept that. **Agalloch** is really intensely layered and John's into that minimalistic songwriting. I've come to accept that too. We give and take each other a lot.

## I wanted to ask you about the vocal contrasts.

I went to high school with Brian and we were both in Jazz choir together. I always liked his voice but it didn't dawn on me to work with him until I decided I wanted some clean vocals. There's only so much you can do with the growl vocals. There's no way you can have melody or do harmonies. I didn't want the typical heavy metal vocals. He has a straight male voice. He did the first album and I wanted him to be a part of the band. He shares the same ideology behind what we are trying to do musically. I'm really happy with his vocals. I plan to use them at least fifty, sixty percent of the time.

## Do you plan on doing any live shows?

There's a lot of wishful thinking. Because **Sculptured** has the brass, it would be hard to reproduce it live. I'm the only guitarist and there's plenty of times when we would need three guitars. Everybody's going to school, the trombone player lives in Seattle, Jason lives in Minnesota-it's virtually impossible. **Agalloch** is easier because all we would need is a drummer.

## What inspired you to incorporate brass instruments?

The guy who owns the studio where we recorded the first album is a killer trumpet player. There was a section that I wanted a solo but I'm sick of guitar solos and I didn't want a keyboard solo so what the hell let's do a trumpet. **Dream Theater** had a soprano sax solo on *Images and Words* and that sounded really cool. It sounded good so we kept on doing it. We integrated it into the music and thought why not add a trombone? I got that from **Steely Dan**, one of my favorite bands. I try to think of **Sculptured** as a modern, metal **Steely Dan** in some cases. I may be flattering myself a bit.

## How do your surroundings affect what you do with Sculptured?

I'm into this integration of flesh and bone into soil, blood, and dirt. This oneness with nature. Where I live there's a strong native American culture. It's very beautiful here. It rains constantly. I get paranoid and start to feel sick if I'm in a traffic jam for too long. Being in big crowds really affects me. That comes up inside of myself and then I exorcise that out of myself. It's more of nature influencing me and then me taking that out and putting that into the music. With **Agalloch** it's more of an outer expression of nature and the beauty of it.

## I've heard that you are a huge fan of cinema.

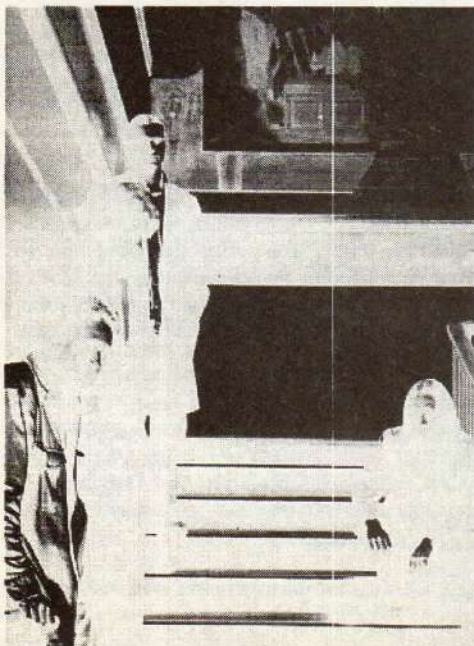
It's my number one love. That's what I hope to do with my life in one way or another. I love pure cinema. I'm a huge Hitchcock fan but my number one favorite director is Woody Allen. I'm obsessed with Woody Allen, my girlfriend hates it. She says when I get mad I tend to act like Woody Allen. I'm definitely a huge horror fan, especially from Italy. Argento, Fucchi, and I also like a lot of the erotic lesbian vampire films. I like violent films, disturbing, confrontational films that force you to look what's on the screen and think. I'm also a big David Cronenberg fan. He's probably the director that will lead us into the 21st. Century. He influenced me with the illness thing and the body manipulation. He's more with technology while mine is with nature but they are interchangeable too. I think Peter Greenaway is brilliant. *The Pillow Book* is made for a theater that has not yet been invented. This year I've liked *Being John Malkovich* a lot, *Run Lola Run*, and *The Blair Witch Project*.

## Discography:

1999... *Apollo Ends* (The End)  
1998... *The Spear Of The Lily Is Aureoled* (The End)

## Current line-up:

Don Anderson... vocals and guitars  
Brian Yager... vocals  
Jason Walton... bass  
John Haughm... drums  
Clint Idsinga... trombone  
Burke Harris... trumpet



# SENTENCED

Interview with bassist Sami Kukkohovi

Finland's **Sentenced** first came on the metal scene with two extreme, near black metal style albums- *Shadows of the Past* and *North From Here* in the early 90's. When they released their third record, *Amok*, a significant change had taken place. Now **Sentenced** were incorporating a more atmospheric dark metal sound. Following this progression vocalist/ bassist Taneli Jarva left the band. Soon bassist Sami Kukkohovi and vocalist Ville Laihiala joined and the line-up was solidified. Ville's vocal style allowed **Sentenced** to further expand their sound on *Down*, *Frozen*, and their new release, *Crimson*. Each album sees **Sentenced** further maturing into the individual metal sound found today. The songs on *Crimson* maintain an individual identity with some memorable hooks and melodies. I spoke to Sami about the new record and why Finland is full of depressed people.

## Are you happy with *Crimson*?

Yeah, we're totally satisfied. It was a long process, almost a year from the first note to the final product. We don't have any regrets, which is rare. We're waiting to see what the audience thinks of it.

## What new elements have you added to **Sentenced** with this record?

The basic sound this time is heavier than on the previous one. There is a lot more contrast between the songs and even inside the song. All the songs are pretty different from each other, more than ever before. On the whole you can recognize these songs to belong to the same album. One thing that has been added is the depth to the atmospheres. There's more different feelings and emotions on this album than we've ever had on an album. One of our main goals was to make the songs stand out from each other. When there is a silent part on the album it is really was silent, the contrasts between the parts are bigger than ever.

## What's your thoughts on the album cover?

We had only a title first. We gave Niklas Sundin, who was the guitar player from **Dark Tranquillity**, this title and he came up with idea for something that has drowned forever and has died. It matches with the lyrics. Visually, it's one of the best covers we've ever had. There's no bigger meaning of wisdom behind the cover.

## What's your viewpoint on the Finnish music scene?

It is very good at the moment. I think Finnish people have this basic melancholy in their blood and some sense of depression. We have extreme weather conditions and we are isolated here. You can do one of three things here. You can either kill yourself, you can watch t.v., or you can try to become a musician. There is a lot of bands coming out nowadays. A lot of them are getting international attention. We have ten bands now that are selling pretty good in Europe. Every band is sticking to their own thing. No one is trying to imitate any band from the States, or Germany, or Sweden. Everyone is trying to create something of their own and that is very healthy for our metal scene. It can't be interesting to do the same thing over again.

## What makes Finland such a depressed region?

I think there's nothing wrong with the country itself, it's a good country. Everything is working very well. The mentality of the people is totally different. People are not talking about their emotions with each other. People are silent and they keep both positive and negative things inside. After a while they have to come out in a way or another. When you have music to express yourself it's a natural way to get some relief. Instruments are almost replacing talking in Finland in some sense.

## People seem to be distant towards one another.

They are here in the north. I'm very comfortable with that. I don't like to have small talk with anyone that I don't know. I like the fact that people here say what they mean and mean what they say. If they don't have anything to talk about they shut up and let the fellow man be.

I believe you do need someone you can talk to to release your emotions.

I

I agree. I am married. I can say I understand what you are talking about. On the whole still, we intentionally keep things inside so that we can put them out in some other form.

## Do you feel your label, Century Media, has grown with your band at the same pace?

It has been good all the way. When we started out it was a new thing for us to have an international record company. At the time we didn't realize it was a new thing for them as well. They had some problems with some of their employees maybe five years ago and there were big changes in the company, but it didn't have any effect on us. With each album they are giving us more and more attention as a band. The relationship between us is getting better all the time. Before this album we extended our deal with them so we will be with them in the future for a couple more albums at least. Why would we leave now that we've gotten to know them and it's gotten better and better.

## What special elements do you personally add to **Sentenced**?

I have the most effect with the songs that I have written. Whoever writes the song, he is responsible for making it special in some way. If we have two songs that are similar to each other we have to throw away one of them to make each song different. I have written the music for "Fragile" and "Dead Moon Rising". I really try to concentrate on the atmosphere on the songs and having different sounds in there. It's the responsibility of the composer in **Sentenced** to make the difference.

## What's your touring situation?

In the spring we will play a lot of shows in Finland first. Then we will play a lot of festivals all over Europe. After the summer we are doing a headline tour in Europe. In September or so we will come to the States and play with **Iced Earth** for at least three weeks. We have received a lot of e-mail from the States asking why haven't we been there, when are we coming, and so on. There seems to be people who already know us and like us over there.

## What is your set list at this point?

We play from *Amok* on. There's four main albums that we play songs from. There's a lot of material to choose from. To play these songs that are older than *Amok*, they are so much different from the stuff that we are doing nowadays, it doesn't make sense to try fit them in the set list. Our goal has been that we can't be categorized as power metal or heavy metal or death metal, but to create something of our own. If someone wants to find out what we're about they have to listen to our music. It can't be explained in words only.

## Final comments?

Keep the hate and I hope to see you in America. I hope to see all the metalheads when we come on tour.

## Discography:

2000... *Crimson* (Century Media)  
1998... *Frozen* (Century Media)  
1996... *Down* (Century Media)  
1994... *Amok* (Century Media)  
1993... *North From Here* (Century Media)  
1992... *Shadows Of The Past* (Century Media)

## Current line-up:

Ville Laihiala...vocals  
Sami Lopakka... guitars  
Miika Tenkula... guitars  
Vesa Ranta... drums  
Sami Kukkohovi... bass



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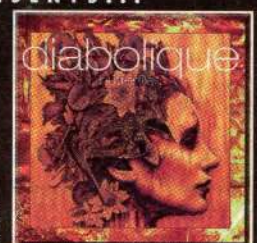
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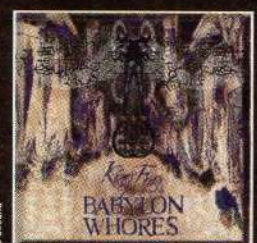
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# SHADOWS FALL

Interview with bassist Paul Romanko

When you peruse the roster of Century Media you will notice how bands like **Tiamat**, **Rotting Christ**, **Moonspell**, **Samael**, etc. have been allowed to gradually progress and always have the support of the label behind them. In recent years they have not signed too many bands because they have so many bands on their roster that they continue to focus on. Recently Century Media has signed two talented underground metal bands, **Krisiun** and **Shadows Fall**. Both bands are already playing metal at a professional level and already have recorded records that many of the veterans of their roster have only recently been able to accomplish. Massachusetts's **Shadows Fall** are a perfect blend of power metal, thrash, hardcore, death metal, and even some of the Swedish melody thrown in for good measure. The mix surprisingly works because there is such a natural flow to their second record and debut for Century Media, *Of One Blood*. Here is bassist Paul Romanko to talk about it.

## This record is very original despite its natural sound.

That's the response we want. I very happy with it. We finally are beginning to show a direction for something new. The new style is definitely starting to open up and show our influences. We've added a new dimension to the music. Collectively we are a diverse band. There's a lot of things we cross over on to. There's a big influence from the Gothenburg sound, **Carcass**-*Heartwork*, had a big influence especially on Brian and I. We have a hardcore background and even just good old rock and roll has an influence. We're not afraid to show all the influences. There's a conscious effort to make everything sound like **Shadows Fall**, which is a derivative of those influences instead of taking those influences directly. We spend a lot of time songwriting. A lot of those songs takes us a good two weeks to a month to complete. We don't force them if they aren't happening. It's easy to put riffs together. The things that make it flow together is what we concentrate on. There might be a drastic change in style but we will have the right accents, the right tempo change where it works. We try tons of ideas. We usually come up with two or three ideas for a bridge before we come up with something.

## When did Shadows Fall originally start?

The band was originally started by Jon and Matt. They were involved with other bands and **Shadows Fall** was a side project. They got Dave to play on the demo. They originally had a different singer. Dave got involved because he was liking it. The singer that did the demo had to leave because of work reasons and he felt that he couldn't commit what was needed. He left the band and that's when Phil and I came into the picture. That's when we did the *Sombre Eyes to the Sky* album. We demoed some new material and we were having problems with the vocal style on some stuff so we had a peaceful separation with Phil. **Overcast** broke up and we asked Brian to try out. He was the only guy we ever tried out and he flowed right in.

## How would you compare *Sombre Eyes to the Sky* to *Of One Blood*?

It's got more death metal vocals. Musically, it has a lot of melody along with the heaviness. Some of the songs weren't as focused as the songs on the newer stuff. We now concentrate more on songwriting than making chaotic riffs and connections. There's more flow than the random chaos. Playing together longer and getting everyone's input has allowed us to focus more on writing songs.

## There's a lot of contrasts going on vocally.

There's certain times that we can do those two part vocal harmonies and it's a nice break from all the aggressiveness. It adds texture to the whole song. The rough vocals over a clean part or clean vocals over an aggressive part gives it a different take. We don't ever limit the options that could work somewhere and we usually try out different things. He may try a heavier voice and we may find out that the middle of the range, thrash vocal style works better. Sometimes Matt and Brian do

a nice harmonized part. There's no reason to worry about limits unless you put them upon yourself. We're writing new material already, some of it's death metal influenced, some of it's very rock 'n roll influenced. We fuse it into our style. We'd like to call ourselves a metal band and not worry about the pigeonholing. There's a lot of good different styles in metal. We try to make our music reflect that.

## What would be your advice to a new band starting out?

Get some material out and play anywhere, everywhere, and anytime possible. Playing shows is where we sold a lot of our material. If it's a twenty hour drive, tie two shows into it. Once you get that going on, you get a buzz. Our second release we did as a demo and shopped it to labels. It still hasn't come out to this day. Some of that material from that demo is on the *Of One Blood* album, there's a song that didn't make the album that we may use in the future. That worked for us. It got our name around. I would emphasize playing live the most.

## What made you decide to go with Century Media?

They've been great to us. The promotion they've been doing for the record has been fantastic. The pressure is on us to do our end of the deal. They've primed all the radio stations. It's just a matter of us getting out and touring and selling some units. I can't say enough about how great they've treated us.

## What are your tour plans?

That's the next piece of the puzzle. We want to put something together for this summer. Our personal plan is to stay out for a better part of the year. We're looking at the U.S. this summer. The German office is releasing the record two weeks after the U.S. That will help dictate whether we make it over to Europe or not. We re-issued our debut record to Genet Records in Belgium.

## What are your goals for this year?

The ultimate goal would be to move as many units as possible. The first one is around the thirteen thousand mark. We didn't have the advertising and the push that we're having with this record. We'll see how many repeat customers we get. We then want to get out and tour. In another year or year and a half time we'll be ready to put out a new record. We want to nurture this thing and let it grow as it will. Depending as it

grows will determine how things are done for the next record. I think we can achieve what we're looking for. If doesn't achieve that, it's not the label because they've definitely done their part. If you work hard you'll make things happen. It makes it all that nicer when good things do happen. There's a sense of achievement.

## Why would someone want to buy a Shadows Fall record?

It's got a lot of familiar overtones but it's also cutting on some new ground. It'll take more than a listen or two to comprehend what's going on. It's a nice change of pace compared to what else is coming out.

## Discography:

2000... *Of One Blood* (Century Media)  
1998... *Sombre Eyes To The Sky* (Genet)

## Current line-up:

Brain Fair... vocals  
Jonathan Donais... guitars  
Matthew Bachand... guitars  
Paul Romanko... bass  
David Germain... drums



# SKITZO

Interview with vocalist Lance Ozanix

It is really unfortunate that many bands who present themselves in an outrageous or controversial manner are often overlooked when it comes to their music. California's Skitzo are certainly one of these bands. Lance Ozanix has been performing his old school metal for over a decade and still gets no respect. Lance has become famous for his appearance on the Jerry Springer show and his ability to vomit on command. His lyrics are often controversial and portray the dark side of the human mind. Any preconceived notions of Lance were thrown out the first time that I spoke to him. He is well spoken, intelligent, and takes great pride in his art. Musically, Skitzo have an old school metal sound but are surprisingly appealing to the younger generation as well. Joining Lance on their new record, *Got Sick*, are ex-Faith No More guitarist Jim Martin and Testament, ex-Vicious Rumors guitarist Steve Smyth. Here's Lance to tell us about it.

## Are you happy with how everything has come out with *Got Sick*?

Yes, definitely. It took a year to do. The last record was a lot of problems. This one was a lot more easier. We had guest musicians and it was a lot of fun. I've known Jim since they opened for Metallica in 1989. We've kept in touch. When his departure from Faith No More came we started playing together a lot more with the Jim Martin Project. When I asked him to be on my album he was at the North Bay to be on Primus' record. He killed two birds with one stone that week. I've known Steve Smyth for many years. Him and I are in a band called Sweet Leaf which is a Black Sabbath/Ozzy metal tribute. We do that once or twice every month.

## Skitzo is one of the few bands who have received exposure through television, how do you feel about that experience?

We were pretty fortunate. People perceive you different when you're exposed that way. People think you're a lot more freakier than you really are, that's fine. The notoriety becomes bigger. Business is better.

## Is there a concept on *Got Sick*?

Yeah. It has a t.v. talk show theme, but it's in purgatory or hell. I call it the bowels of hell on the album. The album before that I have a concept too. I'm in a psychiatrist office and I'm under hypnosis and in between songs we did hypnosis therapy. That was on the album *Psycho Babble*. Every album from now on is going to have a theme. I don't like to have space between songs. There's a lot more room for creativity.

## When did Skitzo actually start?

At age five I picked up some drums. At age ten I started to play the piano. At eleven or twelve I started playing guitar too. In '79 I was in my first band. I was like twelve then. It was a punk band called God Awful. These guys were twenty years old. I was exposed to punk bands nobody has ever heard of. I played with them for about a year, got plastered with beer and drugs. I saw Motorhead on a video show. I wanted to be like that. I like the distorted, fast, crazy stuff. God Awful were going more psychedelic. I didn't want to do that so I quit them and started Skitzo in '81. I had the band name Venom but I had to change it because I found out the almighty Venom was already out. I changed it to Skitzo. Later on I became a Venom fan and sure enough they had a song called "Schitzo". I changed the spelling. By '84 I started doing a demo. By '86, '87, '88 we did a lot of magazines, radio, merchandise, touring, playing with a lot of major 80's metal bands like Possessed, Death Angel, Metallica. I miss that scene. We've been through the mill with the ups and downs of the metal scene, especially in '91 when the Nirvana/Seattle scene came in. We played to empty clubs for six years. We couldn't play with anyone because all the metal bands from the Bay area quit. We kept going but we had to play with a lot of shitty alternative bands. People hated us, they still hate us. Some people can't wait for us to finish. Our guitar player died in '95. If there was ever time I was going to quit it would have been then. We've had our equipment stolen twice. There have been fifty eight members in this band. We're like a West Coast Spinal Tap. Everytime I put out

an album is a highlight. Every time we do a show it's a highlight. Nothing really tops anything except existing every day. There was a highlight. The first time we jammed in 1981, 82. I remember that day being so special. I still have that rehearsal tape. Once a year I'll pop that tape in and celebrate.

## What are some misconceptions that people may have when they think of Skitzo?

They think I'm a drug user. I'm a total straight edge. I haven't touched anything in sixteen years- not even cigarettes, booze. Most people think I'm wacked out on speed, heroin, or something. They may think that we're total Satan worshippers, which is not the deal here. If you listen to the album it is quite humorous. I like humor that makes you think. The ones who understand it are the ones who really get into it. People who hop into a show real quick don't get the whole kabang, they just get the surface of it. If I quit the puking, that's an obvious bandwagging trend, we could try to be like every other band and we would get accepted but I don't want to do that. Some people see the vomiting onstage and say that's what we're all about and there's no talent there. I have to beg to differ because there's a lot of talented people on that album.

## How have people been responding to the new record?

This album has been out for about a month now. The West Coast hasn't been responding well, but it has been doing well on the East Coast. I've never had the East Coast dive into a record like this. The West Coast is weird. We aren't accepted in the San Francisco area. The feedback I've been getting around here about the record is that it's too long and boring. People outside of California feel that it's got a lot to offer and they like it. Usually it's turned around. A lot of people in my area like the last album better. I geared *Got Sick* towards old school metal. People say it's too boring and offers nothing new. I've been sending c.d.'s to kids who are into Limp Bizkit and Kid Rock and they have been more receptive. They tell me we put Limp Bizkit to shame and this is brutal. I ask them have you ever heard of Slayer? They go, "no!". These younger people have never been exposed to Kreator, Destruction, the Cro-Mags, Possessed, or Slayer. The first time they hear something that has double bass and screeching guitar they are surprised. When we grew up we had Headbanger's Ball and some knowledge of what was going on in the underground. The underground is gonna be dimishing. In a way M.T.V. is good not to do this because it leaves people hungry for this stuff because they don't shove it down our throats. People who go to shows now and really into it. Zines and underground radio shows deserve thanks.

## Are you gonna do any touring for this album?

We're working on it. We're doing a lot of t.v. stuff. We used to tour but without a label it's like throwing a lot of money out the window. I remember doing our first tour in 1988 and it felt like we were doing benefit shows. Until we get a good distribution or backing we won't be able to tour for awhile. You will hear about us on t.v. In a way the puking has taken me that far. It gives me an opportunity to get to the audience in a different way.

## Discography:

1999... Got Sick  
1997... Psycho Babble  
1994... Symusar  
1992... Evilution



# SOILWORK

Interview with guitarist Peter Wiches

The Swedish metal scene has become one of boredom and stagnation. While new bands that emerge from Sweden continue to follow the footsteps of bands like **In Flames** and **Arch Enemy**, **Soilwork** have chosen to take a separate path. Their debut, *Steel Bath Suicide*, was released on Listenable Records two years ago and proved that **Soilwork** had the potential to become a big name in the metal scene. Their aggressive, precision style was modern but did not sacrifice the ethics of true heavy metal. **Soilwork** is a band that is influenced as readily by **M.S.G.** and **Judas Priest** as they are by **At The Gates** and **Carcass**. They were recently picked up by Century Media who have released *The Chainheart Machine*. The new record takes what they produced on the debut and expands it even further. Here is guitarist Peter Wiches to speak about the band that he feels will lead metal into the future.

## Did the recording process go smoothly?

Everything went perfect since we changed members in the band. We changed drummers and guitarists as well. I think that helped us out and made the music more progressive and technical. We felt like we were held back when we did the last album. We didn't have the possibility to explore all the things that we wanted to do because there was a lack of musicality by the old members. The new members came together good personally.

## How did Century Media come into the picture?

We were down in the Netherlands and we were playing with **Darkane** and **Naglfar**. We met the guys from Century Media. We had a rough mix of the new album and I gave it to him and they were very interested. They asked me to do a license of the album.

## Where did the album title come from?

*The Chainheart Machine* was something we came up during the time we were in the studio. We like to play with words. For example, with **Soilwork** people think we're gardeners. If you take the name first, it's the hard working people who make it through but we have to make it work on the lower levels first. People said it's gonna be very hard to promote this name. It's different from every other band. We feel that it's a visionary of the future where the machines take over. The machines take over more and the human being becomes the worker, the soil worker underneath the machines. It's the chainheart machine that takes over everything. That's what the concept is about.

## You seem to be the only Swedish band to have a full time keyboardist.

If you take away the keyboards from the production you would hear a big difference. It's very important for us to have the same kind of sound when we play live. There's a lot of people asking us why we have keyboards. We like to experiment. There's a lot of keyboards on the new album that you don't even hear but if you take them away you will notice a definite change. The synthesizers may be in the background but they make the music bigger and that's very important for us. For the next album we're gonna experiment a lot more. We'll make it more heard on the new album. We have a Japanese bonus track for the album. We did that song two or three months after we did the album. We still have the screaming vocals but the choruses have a Devin Townsend like sound. **Strapping Young Lad** is our favorite band.

## Are any of you guys involved with **Darkane**?

None of us are playing with **Darkane**. Bjorn played with them when they first started the band because they needed a singer. After that Bjorn decided that he wanted to concentrate on **Soilwork** more so he quit. They had someone else they wanted to try out. They wanted more melodic vocals.

Despite recording the album in Studio Fredman, **Soilwork** has an original sound.

We told Fredman that we wanted something different. He usually mixes in his own vein. It's good for himself, he makes a name with his own production and everybody can relate to that. We wanted something more filthy, dirty, more thrashy. He managed to do that very well. I also think that it's up to the musicians what kind of playing you have. A lot of the bands in Sweden that play the same kind of music, they listen to **In Flames** and try to copy their style. I like **In Flames** but I'm not a major fan of them. I only have *Colony*. I listen to *Black Earth*, the first **Arch Enemy** album. I listen to **Dio**, **Deep Purple**, **Black Sabbath**. You can get a lot more from the old roots. For example, **Testament** grew up with **Slayer**, **Black Sabbath**. We are so young. I'm twenty one. When I grew up it was **Twisted Sister** and **Kiss**. It's good to listen to all kinds of music to come up with something that's original.

## Where will the music go in the future?

I think we're still gonna keep with the technical stuff. We're gonna evolve the vocals and have them more melodic. Not in the vein of **Dark Tranquillity**. We like to have the screaming type of songs. If you listen to *Ocean Machine*, we want to do a lot of open chords and floating vocals that are big sounding. That's a big step for us. We can lose listeners by evolving with melodic vocals. I think that people will accept it. The new stuff will still be fast but it will be more arranged. We do what we like.

## What's your touring situation?

We've been to Japan and we'd like to come to America. It's a country where everybody understands you. We learn English at a very early age. Everybody will understand you when you stop at a gas station and ask for directions. When you go around in Germany nobody understands English or Swedish. I've been to the States twice. I was there with my folks. That was a great experience. I went to Arizona, Florida, and New York. Arizona is great with the desert. I was only in New York for two days so I didn't get an impact. I had a huge jet lag so I didn't get to experience it at all.

## Discography:

2000... *The Chainheart Machine* (Century Media)  
1998... *Steel Bath Suicide* (Listenable)

## Current line-up:

Bjorn Strid... vocals  
Peter Wiches... guitars  
Ola Frenning... guitars  
Ola Flink... bass  
Henry Ranta... drums  
Carlos Del Olmo Holmberg... keyboards





# Solace in the Shadows

Interview with vocalist and guitarist John Sheldon

**Solace In The Shadows** is a new band residing in the United States that is taking a European style of atmosphere and adding their own aggressive elements giving the band a sound that is incomparable to any others on the scene. Their five song debut e.p. *Of Darkness in Angels*, shows remarkable songwriting ability and intelligence, qualities rarely found in such a young band. Perhaps the best aspect of **Solace In The Shadows** is the fact that they do not sacrifice their aggressiveness for the sake of atmosphere and melody; rather they combine all elements into an energetic sound. Here is John Sheldon to tell us about **Solace In The Shadows**.

## How was the New Jersey Metalfest for you guys?

It all went well, except that right before we were supposed to go on we realized that we didn't bring our keyboard so our keyboardist didn't play with us.

## Let's talk about the origins of Solace In The Shadows.

We've all been going to school together, we've all been in the same grade, and always been hanging out. The other guitarist and I, Matt, have been playing together in various bands before we decided to form **Solace In The Shadows**. The drummer and him have lived on the same street and have known each other for thirteen years. They were born on the same day. They're like soul mates. The three of us formed the original core of the band. The bassist joined, left for a little while and then rejoined. The keyboardist joined a few years back as well. That's what we have now. The keyboardist joined so we could go in a more melodic, progressive direction. We have a lot of old school and melodic influences.

## Was *Of Darkness in Angels* your first recorded output?

We had a professional tape the year before but we promoted that really badly. It didn't have what we wanted, it wasn't produced very well. We only play one song on it and another song we played in a different version on the c.d. There's one song that we're probably gonna re-record.

## How has the promotion been going for this disc?

Things have been picking up. At least every other day a letter from somebody or a zine will contact us. We only had two so-so reviews and no outright bad reviews so we're really pleased with that. The people who don't like it so far are the labels, everybody else seems to like it. I send out packages to people all the time. I sent it out to about sixty different zines and once in awhile I will pick one up and we're in there. We've been putting ads in some zines. It costs a lot of money.

## How has the live situation been?

We love playing live, it's the greatest thing in the world. We don't get to play as often as we like. We usually play to an underage crowd. Recently, I was talking to some of the band I am friends with and they are tired of playing to only an underage crowd, so we're gonna get together and combine the audiences. If we do a show in this area we draw a hundred or a hundred and fifty kids. It's a small scene. We're trying to break into the Philadelphia scene. The opening bands are always these bad, not really even metal bands. We call the guy all the time and he always says next time. Hopefully sometime we'll get to play in front of a bigger band.

## How do you think people are going to perceive Solace In The Shadows?

I'm not totally sure. Everybody I talk to picks out different aspects. A lot of people seem to be really into the vocals. They think they're real powerful. They're not the most original vocals in the world but I try to make them a tad

different than black metal or death metal vocals. Some people say they like the thrash aspect, some people say they like the black metal aspect, some people say they really like the keyboards, some people say they really like the guitars. Everybody likes different things. Everybody likes the drums. He's got a lot of vitality. He's a drum monster. We're going in the "By Night We Burn" direction. Those are the songs that we like playing the best and those are the songs that people like seeing the best. Every since the bassist came back, right before the recording, he's added a lot to the music. We can do more with the guitars. It puts the music in a position for more power, before it was more harshness. Our music is energetic with some slow, doomy interludes, and then back into the energy. A lot of our previous songs don't have any repetition. Now we're gonna go for simplistic song structure with a little more repetition. We've got distribution through Nuclear Blast. We've got to build a fanbase first.

## I like the name Solace In The Shadows.

The name change we did when the keyboardist came in. It reflects our change in style. We got it from that old movie *Legend*, with Tim Curry and Tom Cruise. There's also a *Limbonic Art* song with that in it.

## How many new songs do you have written?

Right now we have two. We did those two at Metalfest. We're gonna start writing again because we've been practicing so much for Metalfest and this headlining show we have in about two weeks. We'll start writing two or three more songs and go back in the studio this summer. It depends on our finances and how much a response we're getting, we hope that maybe label support will come in between so that we can go for the full length. I assume we'll do another four or five song disc, but we'll package it better. We like to sell it as cheap as possible. People aren't gonna spend fifteen bucks on a band they've never heard of before. I'd rather spend more money in the studio than a fancy cover. Hopefully we can do a week in the studio this time.

## If I'm not mistaken you're all still in high school?

Yeah, we're all in our senior year. We're all going to college next year but we're all staying in the Philadelphia area for college. The keyboardist might go abroad. We're gonna keep practicing in the same place. Some of the guys are going for a career in the music business, sound engineering, that stuff. Music is the first thing for us. If we

got signed and had a chance to go on tour we would all definitely drop out of college. It's only four years. We'll do that and keep the band going as strong as we can.

## Discography:

1999... *Of Darkness In Angels* (self)

## Current line-up:

John Sheldon... vocals and guitars  
Matt Moore... guitars  
Jason Conrad... bass  
Pat Battaglia... drums  
Hugh Morretta... keyboards

## Website:

[www.op.net/~prbill/solaceintheshadows](http://www.op.net/~prbill/solaceintheshadows)



# Stratovarius

Interview with keyboardist Jens Johansson

Over the course of a career that spans back into the eighties and covers eight full length studio albums, **Stratovarius** have developed into the leaders of the European power metal scene. Although they haven't had the impact that was expected in America, their status has gradually risen in the States as well. Original member/ song writer Timo Tolkki has assembled an all star line-up. Joining Tolkki are vocalist Timo Kotipelto, bassist Jari Kanulainen, ex-Yngwie Malmsteen/ Dio keyboardist Jens Johansson, and **Running Wild** drummer Jorg Michael. While previous efforts have sometimes been criticised not for their quality but rather their lack of originality, their Nuclear Blast debut, *Infinite* is an energized and exciting album. From the razor sharp riffage of "Millennium" to the beautiful epic balladry of "Mother Gaia", and the European smash "Hunting High and Low"; **Stratovarius** have truly recorded the best record of their career. I spoke to Jens about the new record.

## Are you pleased with the new record?

It is good. I don't know if it's our best one. We took our time more than we usually do. Everybody got together and recorded together. This time we actually sat down a couple times before going in and played the songs through a few times. Everybody had more songs ready. We had like twenty or twenty two songs ready. We were more thorough this time. We know all the little tricks with recording.

## How long have you been in Stratovarius?

Since '94, '95. The first time I recorded with them was Christmas of '94. In the beginning they didn't do much touring.

## Any chance of the band coming over here to America?

I think it would be fun. They shouldn't be expecting too much. What's popular here is not really this type of music. The previous label, maybe weren't strong here in the States. I think this label seems to have more of a presence. We'd lose lots of money by going to the States, but we might want to go anyway. It's such a big country and we'll have to play some small places. Maybe we'll do a tour opening up for another band. I've been out with Yngwie and even then it was like toilet level. It's not the glory days anymore.

## Where's Stratovarius become the most popular?

The best touring situation for us right now would probably be in Southern Europe; Italy, Greece. We can consistently put four or five thousand people in those cities. It's getting better in Germany. Japan is very good record sales wise but we don't do more than three, four, or five gigs in Japan. We're more of a foreign act. The record sales in Japan are great and that carries the promotional aspects in other areas. It's growing everywhere. Finland is excellent for us.

## Where are you living now?

I live in New York. I moved here ten years ago. I moved from L.A. about five years ago. I live here but I work somewhere else. We record and tour in Europe. I met this drummer the other day, Mike Terrana, he was doing the same thing I am now. He finally had enough of flying so he moved to Germany.

## How was your experience with Yngwie?

I recorded with one band before that and released one c.d. I was in a band called **Silver Mountain**. I was seventeen years old. In 1984, '85 I did like five Yngwie records and a bunch of tours. Those were the good old days. We had Polygram Records really pushing us. People came out and bought tickets.

## What was he like?

Many of the people he meets deal with him only on the surface. I wouldn't call it a negative experience. He's actually a funny guy. He doesn't have an evil heart. He's humorous but he shows it in some strange ways. Other people's misfortunes often amuse him. Lots of guys are like that. A person who knows him for awhile and he respects you and that relationship will be better. It depends on who's doing the experience. We started almost at the same level, actually I was in a signed band before he was. We came from the same little shit country.

## How do you feel about the Mastermind records and your solo record?

It wasn't really a solo record. It was a rock record with Mike from **Symphony X** on guitar and one of Yngwie's singers called Goram. I have some solo stuff that's more progressive, it's not really rock or metal. It's all paying the bills right now. With Yngwie, maybe he was insecure and maybe jealous. If we would do other things he would get defensive. Why, don't you love me anymore? That type of feeling. It is very childish in some respects.

## You have helped revolutionize the use of keyboards in metal, what are your thoughts on the subject?

It's not really a metal instrument. I remember when I started people would really turn up their noses. When I started bands like **Accept** were popular. It's been a hard struggle for sixteen years. We did some stuff with Yngwie that proved it was possible to use keyboards in metal. There were a couple other bands that used keyboards but it was wimpy like **Bon Jovi** or the progressive stuff. I should send my bills to **Dream Theater**, Kevin Moore, and **Symphony X**- these guys can pay them for me! **Dio** used keyboards in the eighties and he had to be behind the curtain or under the stage.

## A lot of people like Stratovarius for the interplay between the keyboards and the guitars.

The last few albums have toned that down a bit. We don't have any instrumentals on this record. It's more about songs. It's been done too many times. It's not a question of artistic release because I get to do this

wanky stuff on the solo records. Maybe the next record will be different but *Destiny* and *Infinite* haven't had any long instrumentals. You need to focus on the songs. Since Jorg and I joined we've gotten more progressive sounding.

## What are your thoughts on the best of release from Noise?

If it was up to me I'd rather not see that released but they have the rights to get the last bite of the apple. It's ripping off the

fans. Most of the tracks were already available. The collectors will get it. The cover was funny. The drummer, Jorg, has an influence on that. He thought if this record had such a horrible cover nobody would buy it. It's appropriate because it's regurgitated material. We had a t-shirt that we made as a joke for Finland because they drink so much. It was an elk vomiting on a light post. I think only a Finnish fan would understand the joke.

## How has Timo Tolkki been feeling lately?

I think he is not as depressed. You can tell in the lyrics. The therapy seems to be helping him and he is much more positive. He is doing much better. He is enjoying his life and the music again.

## Discography:

2000... *Infinite* (Nuclear Blast)  
1998... *Destiny* (Noise)  
1997... *Visions* (Noise)  
1996... *Episode* (Noise)  
1995... *Fourth Dimension* (Noise)  
1994... *Dreamspace* (Noise)  
1992... *Twilight Time* (Noise)  
1989... *Fright Night* (C.B.S.)

## Current line-up:

Timo Tolkki... guitars  
Timo Kotipelto... vocals  
Jari Kanulainen... bass  
Jens Johansson... keyboards  
Jorg Michael... drums



# SUMMONING

Interview with Silenius

I feel that Napalm Records is one of the grossly overlooked labels when it comes to putting out the most innovative and talented underground artists. One such band on their roster is Austria's **Summoning**. This band is difficult to describe because they do not fall neatly into any particular category. The first identifiable trait is the powerful percussion that propels the music into a new realm. The duo of Silenius and Protector have put together four full lengths and one e.p. since 1995 and their newest, *Stronghold* is definitely their best yet. I conducted an interview with Silenius via fax and here are the results.

## How do you feel about *Stronghold*?

Well the solos are going quite well and the response by the press and by the fans was amazing so there is nothing to worry about for us. We are really satisfied. After the release of *Stronghold* about half a year ago here in Europe we were not lazy. Both of us worked for side projects. Protector released his new album of *Die Verbannten Kinder Evas* and I finished the production of my militant industrial project called *Kreuzweg Ost* together with Martin (**Hollenthon**, ex-**Pungent Stench**). So it will take us some time to work for new material for **Summoning**.

## Describe your sound.

This time we paid more attention to the guitar work, so the whole album sounds more heavy again than our previous releases. As the guitars took over the leading role of the melody lines. I think this time they fit better to the keyboard sounds. The effect is that the songs sound less hypnotic and monotonous, but nevertheless they are still in the typical **Summoning** style; bombastic, mid tempo hymns with this special epic touch. Also the vocal lines are getting more rhythmic this time and one song is followed only with female vocals as a kind of experiment. Maybe our new release, *Stronghold*, can appeal to a larger audience this time.

## What does nature represent for **Summoning**?

I think to get the essence out of our music you have to listen to our songs on a walkman while you are on a mountain trip. The combination of musical stimulation and the visual attraction help to get this special feeling and to drown yourself in a daydream. This combination between wonderlust, nature and dark emotions of high adventure also play a dominant role while reading the books of Tolkien, whose creation is the lyrical background to our songs and the whole concept of **Summoning**.

## What is the connection between **Summoning** and **Abigor**?

The only connection is that I was the singer of all their releases except the latest one and the demos. Otherwise there is no close connection. Their music is still pure black metal, fast and technical and with a pure Satanic concept.

## Tell me a little of what life is like in Austria.

Living in Austria is quite pleasant but nothing special of course. In the moment the whole world thinks of us to be a Nazi nation because the new government is a more right winged conservatism. But this new image is of course nonsense, we are still based on democracy and this won't change in the future.

## Are there any bands that are worthy of attention?

Musical wise I am proud of the fact that most of the Austrian bands don't seem to follow trends. At least they have their own individuality. The metal scene is very small and except for **Abigor** I can only recommend **Hollenthon**. But in the fields of dark wave, industrial, and avantgarde we have some very good bands here like **Dorgaard**, **Dominion**, **Dachau**, and **Pazuzu** (he now immigrated to Canada).

## What does the flaming eye stand for on *Nightshade Forests*?

The burning eye is the synonym for Sauron the Lord of Chaos taken as a trademark of Tolkien's middle earth concept.

## How do you attain that bombastic drum sound?

As Protector was a drummer in former bands he likes to make experiments with drum sounds and make noise on his computer and keyboard. That's the reason why we don't work with a real drumkit simply not to limit our sound.

## Are you friends with **Pazuzu** and how do you feel about their music?

Both Protector and me did the music of the first **Pazuzu** c.d., *And All was Silent* for the small Norwegian label, **Head Not Found**. It was our first release even before **Summoning** back in '94 or '95. Later he worked with Martin Schieni for the second release, *Awaken the Dragon*, on their own label, **Dark Mother** with a little

help of us. Then their label got bankrupt. **Pazuzu** released his black metal band, **Raventhron** on **Avantgarde** and immigrated to Canada with his wife. Meanwhile, I have very little contact with him. I know that he has finished his new album and I have heard that he will visit us next year again. So I am looking forward to meeting him again.

## Have you ever considered relocating to another country?

No, never. I'm a very lazy traveller and I can't imagine settling in another country.

## Why is Tolkien such a strong influence on **Summoning**?

I totally admire his mind, world of fantasy, his creation of history, culture, and languages of a world full of ancient wisdom and magical powers. This act of creation is far above the average personal thinking and imagination and at least in my way absolutely admirable. My wish was to wake a musical translation or a kind of individual soundtrack to the dark realms of this world. Maybe **Summoning** is just a musical advertisement for people to read his books.

## When you listen to your own work, how do you feel?

Whenever a new c.d. of us is released I have heard the songs so often that in that moment I'm totally tired to listen to them once more. So I always need the space of one or two months to get into my work again. I think that's normal. Then I see what is great and what we could have done better. Normally we are never really satisfied.

## What does the future hold for **Summoning**?

The future is still covered by thick clouds.

## Discography:

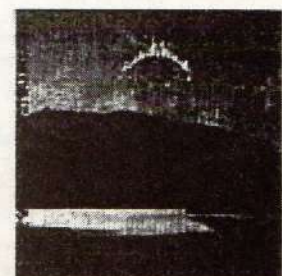
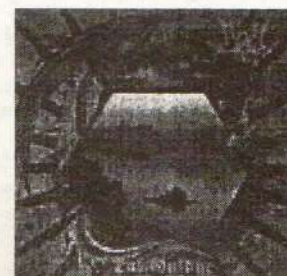
- 1999... *Stronghold* (Napalm)
- 1997... *Nightshade Forests* e.p. (Napalm)
- 1997... *Dol Guldur* (Napalm)
- 1995... *Minas Morgul* (Napalm)
- 1995... *Lug Burz* (Napalm)

## Current line-up:

- Silenius
- Protector



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# TOURNIQUET

Interview with vocalist Luke Easter

Christian metal is often criticized for being dull and unimaginative. Anyone who feels that way should check out bands like Extol and Tourniquet. Tourniquet have recently joined their friends Mortification on the Metal Blade roster and have released their sixth full length studio album, *Microscopic View of a Telescopic Realm*. It is a difficult task describing the music on this album. It is proudly metal but Tourniquet will often throw surprises at the listener. Lyrically, Tourniquet touch upon topics many bands would not want to go near. They challenge with their intellect and controversial subject matter. Musically, this trio utilizes a broad scope of creativity, never settling for repeating ideas in more than one song. I spoke to vocalist Luke Easter about *Microscopic View of a Telescopic Realm*.

## Are you happy with how the new album came out?

Very happy with it. I honestly think this is our best record. Musically, lyrically, performance wise, it exceeds my expectations. We're very proud of it.

## What are your goals for the new record?

We're gonna continue doing what we've been doing. We're gonna do fly out dates. We're not gonna do heavy touring. We all have other things that we do. Going on tour is not feasible for us. From a financial stand point it's better for us to do it that way. We're gonna try to push the record as far as we can. We've got a great record company behind us. This goes out global and it'll be the widest distribution we've ever had.

## How would you describe your lyrical content?

It would be easy to fall into a trap. A lot of bands repeat the same themes. We try to approach life from a Christian perspective. Nothing is a taboo lyrically. We'll write about whatever is in our hearts or on our minds at the time. We write about it from a Christian stand point. We have songs like "The Skeezix Dilemma Part II", it's the follow up to "The Skeezix Dilemma" from our third album, *Pathogenic Ocular Dissonance*, those are both about child abuse. "Skeezix Part II" is about overcoming. "Servant of the Bones" is about not dealing with issues from the past and how they can ruin our lives now. It ends up hurting us more than it does the other person. There's more to writing Christian songs than just paraphrasing John 3:16. Christians have other issues in their lives. We're trying to reach a broader audience. We appreciate our Christian fanbase but there's a bigger picture. We'd like to reach the unsaved person and the non-Christian who might not go to a church but they might be willing to listen to a Tourniquet record.

## Do you find a lot of people aren't willing to give Tourniquet a chance?

We've been fortunate because we don't get much of that. People appreciate our music whether their Christian or not. We've probably had more acceptance in the secular market from a musical point of view. There's not many Christian bands doing what we do so a lot of our influences are secular. You can listen to stuff like Slayer, Korn, or Cannibal Corpse and we don't agree with their lyrics per se, but we can appreciate the elements in their music that are interesting. If your music is interesting enough and if your honest lyrically and musically people are gonna see that. We have people tell us they don't dig the Christian message and don't agree with the God thing but they respect us as musicians they dig what we do musically. We're have more credibility and respect in secular circles than we do in Christian circles. We get lumped in as heavy metal but there's a lot more to our music than that. We're not easy to categorize. Unless you're easy to pigeonhole they don't know what to do with you.

## What does Tourniquet have to offer that your average metal band lacks?

We try and keep things different. We're a rock band and we need to operate within certain confines. All three of us listen to different kinds of music. There's more to us than metal. Ted puts it well, we really appreciate extremes. We like extremely heavy, distorted, ugly guitar sound; we like pretty, crisp, clear acoustic guitar sounds and everything in between. The same thing goes for the vocals. When we do a record we're writing with the audience in mind because they're going to be the ones buying the final product. At the same time we try entertain ourselves and challenge ourselves. If we don't like the record then there's no point in putting it out. We're gonna have to play it for the next year or two until we put

out a new album. Musically, I think we offer something unique and different. If you look at our body of work this is our tenth release; six studio albums, two e.p.'s, the acoustic record, and the greatest hits record. If you listen to them back to back there's certain elements that are the same but realistically none of them sound alike. We're fortunate that our fans allow us to do that, but at the same time we need to do that. We need to keep progressing as musicians and as people. Change for the sake of change can be counter productive.

## What has been your greatest accomplishment?

For me personally, getting into the band has been the high point and the biggest obstacle. It was tough getting up the courage to send the tape in. Once I was in the band it was euphoric. As a band, the high point right now would be this new record. The hardest part has been dealing with the shake up as far as line-up changes. It can be rattling sometimes when you end up with an opening where you've always had a person. We've risen to the challenge and we've moved on. We have a bass player who plays live with us and his name is Steve Andino. He's a friend of ours and he did a couple of shows with us last year. He's a great bass player, has great stage presence, and a great person. As far as Tourniquet in the studio it's just the three of us.

## You had me running to the dictionary looking up words with your lyrics.

I've always enjoy English. I read a lot. I don't believe in using simple words when bigger, flowery prose will work. As far as Ted, it's the same thing. There's been so many songs written already, you don't want to repeat yourself or repeat what somebody else as done. You want to convey the same thign but you want to find a new way to do it. Sometimes we end up using gigantic words. It's become a trademark and it makes the music interesting. It encourages people to go grab a dictionary and expand their vocabulary.

## Have you experienced prejudice because your a Christian band?

Not too much. We played the Milwaukee Metal Fest in '98. There was only two Christian bands on the bill, us and Living Sacrifice. There was people telling us to f-Jesus, stuff like that, but that's fairly rare. When you play the music that we do and you take the stand, people will generally just ignore you because they can't be bothered or they will respect you because you're willing to take a stand like that- especially in this arena.

## What are some of your favorite books?

Obviously the Bible. I really like C.S. Lewis a lot. I hate to admit it but I'm a big Stephen King fan. I like well written things, it doesn't matter who it's by. I really like Frank McCourt. Anything with lush prose and I'm there.

## What's your favorite quote from the Bible?

"Sorrow is better than laughter because a sad face is good for the heart". On the surface it sounds depressing, but it makes

you reflect and grow as a person.

## Discography:

1999... *Microscopic View Of A Telescopic Realm* (Metal Blade)  
1997... *Crawl To China* (Benson)  
1994... *Vanishing Lessons* (Frontline)  
1992... *Pathogenic Ocular Dissonance* (Frontline)  
1991... *Psycho Surgery* (Frontline)  
1990... *Stop The Bleeding* (Frontline)

## Current line-up:

Luke Easter... vocals  
Aaron Guerra... guitars  
Ted Kirkpatrick... drums

## Website:

members.aol.com/tourniq/index..htm



# TRANSATLANTIC

Interview with drummer Mike Portnoy

In the same tradition as **Platypus**, an new supergroup of talented musicians have gotten together to record an album of great progressive rock with an appreciation for past legends. **Transatlantic** was originally formed by **Dream Theater** drummer Mike Portnoy who always wanted to work with **Spocks Beard**'s main man Neal Morse. This alliance was formed with the idea that Mike's long time friend and **Fates Warning** guitarist Jim Matheos could work with them as well but due to scheduling conflicts, **Flower Kings**' guitarist Roine Stolt joined the project to replace Matheos. **Marillion** bassist Pete Trewavas became the final piece to this international prog group's puzzle. The end result is a debut album that is very demanding and it takes several listens to just absorb all that is going on. Most of the tunes were written by Morse, so songs like "All of the Above" and "Mystery Train" have that distinctive **Spocks Beard** sound to them. I spoke to drummer Mike Portnoy the day before he left for Europe to do another leg of the continuing **Dream Theater** tour.

## How did this group come together?

It took awhile. It started with my love for progressive music, specifically **Spocks Beard**'s music and Neal's writing. I'm also a fan of **Marillion** and I had gotten into the **Flower Kings**. I wanted to do a meeting of the minds with the heads of these progressive families. I wanted to work with Neal so I called him up and that's where the origins begin.

## Are you happy with the results?

I couldn't be happier. It was great working with the guys, I have a lot of respect for them. We had a real good time working together. The end result is amazing. I listen to it and I can't believe that this is a side project. If we were a band this would be a monumental record. It felt like we were making something like **Yes**' *Close to the Edge*, a significant work. It was just a side project, we didn't plan it to happen this way. It was a demanding and challenging process. The standards that I'm used to with **Liquid Tension** and **Dream Theater** are the busy, technical music- to me this was more laid back. I was able to play simpler and more song oriented but at the same time the elements within those songs had the old school progressive features, odd time signatures and extensive instrumental sections. For me, it was a step into straight ahead direction but it still stayed intricate.

**One song that impressed me with your drumming was "Mystery Train".** "Mystery Train" had fun verses because I overdubbed a whole different set up. It had a **King Crimson** vibe so Pete was playing a Tony Leven bass line and I went for a tightly tuned snare. We compressed the hell out of the drums and panned it over to one side. It was fun. I got to play with some weird **Crimson**-esque groove on the verses and more **Beatles**-esque with four part harmonies and all of us singing. There's a lot of contrast going on there.

## Neal's input certainly shows up on this record.

"We All Need Some Light" is totally him. He brought it in and it was so beautiful that we didn't even touch it. "All of the Above" and "Mystery Train" were songs that he brought in and we developed as a band. You're hearing a lot of Neal but twisted into directions that he normally wouldn't have gone. With **Spocks** he's the sole songwriter.

## Was it difficult to get this project together?

The scheduling was the hard part. It took awhile from the initial discussions to getting in the studio. It was a year long process. It took awhile before all the schedules aligned. The writing, the arranging, and the recording of the basic tracks only took about a week. It was right in the middle of my recording of the new **Dream Theater** record. I went from one record into the next. For the future we'd love to do more writing and recording together and possibly some touring. The biggest obstacle is going to be aligning four different schedules from four different bands.

## I guess Jim Matheos (Fates Warning) was unable to contribute because of scheduling conflicts?

Originally my idea was to work with Neal and Jim. My take on Jim was very simple, he was the main writer and the brain behind his band. I wanted to work with

the leaders of their respective bands. I've been a friend of Jim's and a fan and supporter for many, many years but the scheduling didn't work out. Jim was tied up with his solo album and then he started writing for the **Fates Warning** album.

## Is there any chance of it happening in the future?

A similar thing happened with the **Liquid Tension** project, I put the band together from a list of millions of different combinations of people. The final combination became **Liquid Tension**. The same with this. When the four of us came together we became **Transatlantic**. It's not an open ended project.

## Are you involved with any other projects?

Between this and touring with **Dream Theater** for the whole year, and trying to raise a family- I have a wife and two children, I don't have time for anything else. I do drum clinics, drum videos, my plate is always filled. I'm gonna be doing the **Dream Theater** tour for the rest of the year so I have no time for any other projects. If I did I would give my time to **Transatlantic**.

## It's amazing how quickly you write and record the music for Transatlantic and Liquid Tension.

With our normal bands we spend so much time on things. To have an album like this gives a different perspective and it's fun.

## How has the Dream Theater tour going?

It's awesome, we just finished six weeks in America with the **Dixie Dregs** opening and it was an incredible tour, probably the best tour that we've ever done. We leave tomorrow for Europe. We're gonna be on the road all year.

## Are you pleased with how everything has come out with that record?

I couldn't be happier artistically and acceptance from the fans. It's been voted best album of the year in the metal and progressive magazines. It's getting a lot of attention and critical acclaim so we couldn't be happier. The people that we want to hear the record, the response

has been amazing. We don't have high expectations for the mainstream. We're not gonna try to fool ourselves with the musical climate. We're happy with where we are.

## It sounds like you made a record and had fun with it.

We had complete freedom. That's what we said- the hell with radio or trying to write a hit. We only care about ourselves and our fans and everybody else can go fuck themselves.

## How old are your children.

One and three.

## Do you still live on Long Island?

No, we live in upstate New York. I'm from Long Island but I don't live there anymore. I'm in Rockland county now. It's a great place to come home to.

## Final comments?

I'm looking forward to touring and having people get a hold of **Transatlantic** and digging into that. We'll be back in July to tour the States again.

## Discography:

2000... SMPTe (Metal Blade)

## Current line-up:

Neal Morse... vocals and keyboards  
Roine Stolt... guitars  
Pete Trewavas... bass  
Mike Portnoy... drums



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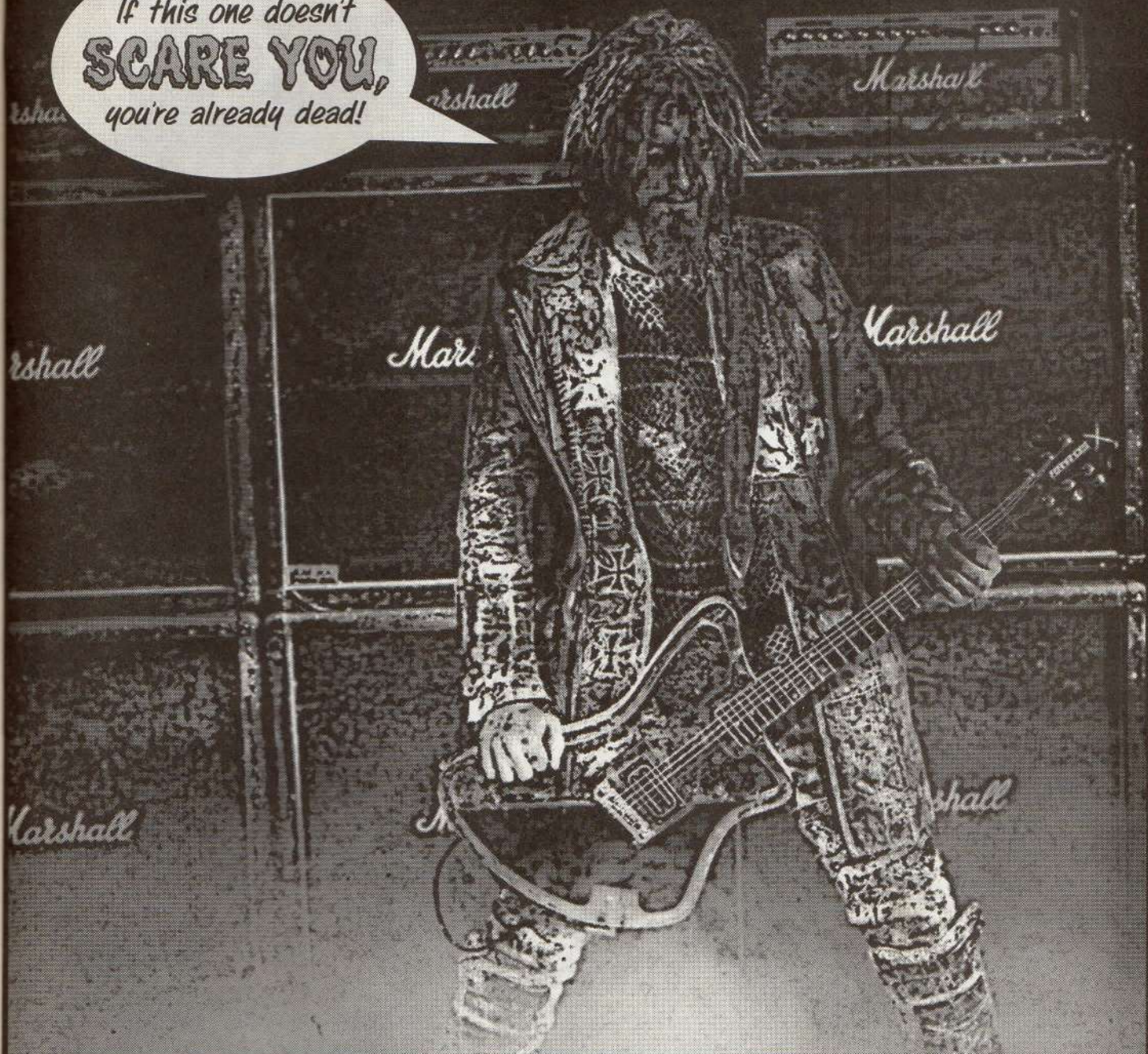
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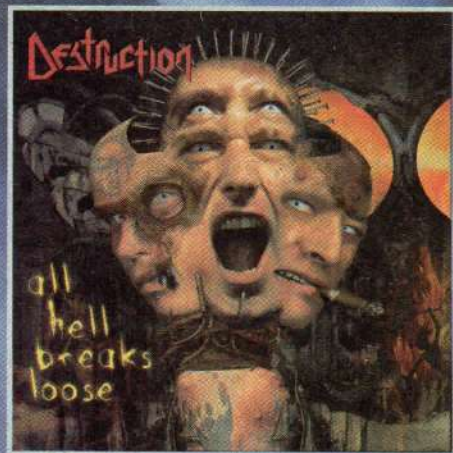
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