

Transcending the MUNDANE

Issue #8
free

Features a plethora of metal styles



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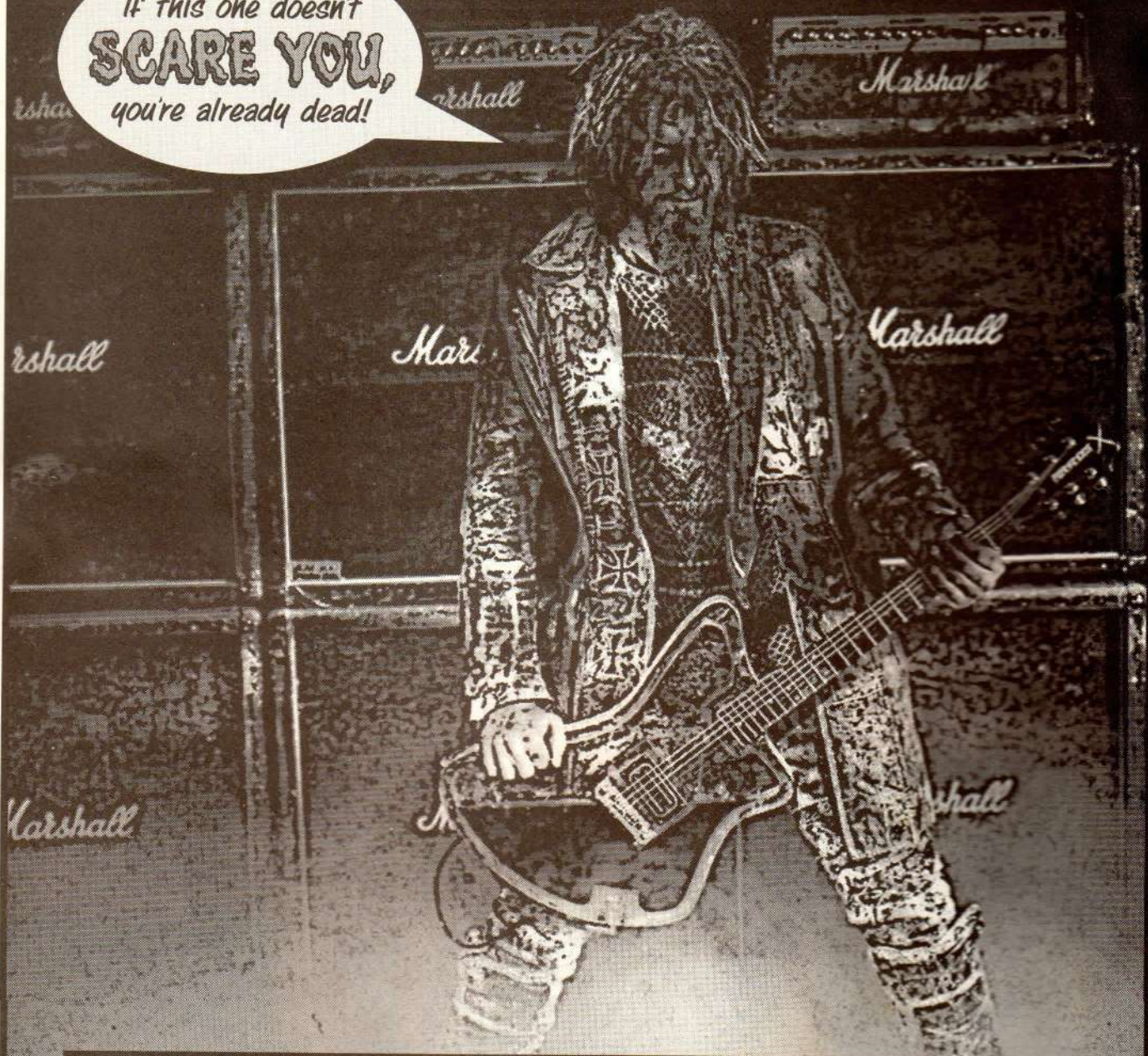
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| AGALLOCH | <i>Black the Sun, of Blood</i> | |
| | | NEUROTICA |
| ALICIA X | GODGORY | NOVEMBER'S BDM |
| | Gothic Knights | |
| ANGEL DUST | | nympho |
| ARCH ENEMY | HEAVENS GATE | Power Of Omens |
| | | ROYAL HUNT |
| CANNIBAL CORPSE | | Samael |
| | IN FLAMES | SUM BEER CHURCH |
| CORONAN | | SEBASTIAN BACH |
| crust "420" | KOVENANT | Spite |
| CREST OF DARKNESS | LYNCH MOB | substance D |
| | MERCYFUL FATE | TULUS |
| DANZIG | MOONSPELL | |
| dark, tranquility | | |
| dirty brown eye | NECK | |
| drawn | NEGATIVE FATE | |
| ENERTIA | | |
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| EVENT | | |



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News...

- * New releases early next year from Necropolis Records include: **Sadistic Intent** (*The Second Coming of Darkness*), **Triumphator** (*Wings of Antichrist*), **Diabolique** (*Butterflies* e.p.), **In Aeternum** (*The Pestilent Plague*), and a new **Solstice** record.
- * Necropolis also has a new imprint label dedicated to death metal and grindcore. They have already signed **Impaled** from California. Necropolis have also merged with the Swedish label **Black Sun** for American audiences. Look for the excellent sophomore album from **Evergrey** and an **Yngwie Malmsteen** tribute.
- * Italy's **Avantgarde Records** have signed **Evoken**, **Darzamat**, and **Throes Of Dawn**.
- * Per **Mollor Jensen** has replaced **adrian Erlandsson** in the **Haunted**. Erlandsson is now drumming in **Cradle Of Filth**.
- * **Mercury Rising** have broken up.
- * Former **Yngwie** drummer **Mike Terrana** and **Mind Odyssey** guitarist **Victor Smolsky** have joined **Rage**. *Ghosts* is available now.
- * **Marshall Law** have signed to **Metal Blade**.
- * Look for **Dio's Magica** early next year. Guitarist **Craig Goldy**, bassist **Jimmy Bain**, and drummer **Simon Wright** complete the line-up.
- * **Devin Townsend** has another new band, **Physicist**. Supposedly it's a combination of his other three bands: **Strapping Young Lad**, **Infinity**, and **Ocean Machine**.
- * **Grope** has recently released *Intercooler* with new vocalist **Alex Clausen**.
- * **Konkhra's Come Down Cold** and **Artillery's B.A.C.K.** are also available through **Die Hard**.
- * **Vicious Rumors** are recording *Sadistic Symphony* right now with new vocalist **Morgan thorn**. **Larry Howe** has left, **Steve Smythe** is in **Testament** now, and **James Murphy** may appear on the new album.
- * **Joey Belladonna** is touring with **John Bush** and **Anthrax** for one time only reunion.
- * Look for the **Death Metal Massacre 2000** tour featuring **Cannibal Corpse**, **God Dethroned**, **Hate Eternal**, and **Diabolic**.
- * **Mike Gilbert** is back in **Flotsam And Jetsam** as **Mark Simpson** has now joined the **Lynch Mob**.
- * Upcoming releases from **Metal Blade** include **Lizzy Borden's Deal with the Devil**, **Armored Saint's Revelation**, **Quiet Room's Reconceive**, **Thought Industry's Short Wave on a Cold Day**, as well as releases from **Fleshcrawl**, **Vader**, **October 31**, and **Symphony X**.
- * **Symphorce**, ex-**Ivanhoe** vocalist **Andy Franck** is also in **Brainstorm** now.
- * **Soul Cages** have released their long awaited third disc, *Craft*.
- * **Sanvoisen** are currently recording their third disc.
- * **Hammerheart** have signed **Cruachan** (folk metal), **Skyfire** (power/ death metal), and **Viking Crown** (Phil Anselmo's black metal band).
- * **Raise Hell** will release their second record, *Not Dead Yet*, this spring.
- * **Night In Gales** are finished recording *Nailwork*.
- * **Dave Hunt** is the new singer in **Benediction**.
- * **Uli Kursch (Helloween)** is now also drumming in **Sinner**.
- * Look for **Darkseed's Diving into Darkness**, **Steel Prophet's Messiah**, and **Therion's Deggial** this spring through **Nuclear Blast**.
- * Both **Iced Earth** and **Steel Prophet** are looking for new drummers.
- * The next **W.A.S.P.** will supposedly sound like the excellent *Headless Children*.
- * **Crimson**, the new album from **Sentenced** should be out soon.
- * **Stratovarius** are recording their new album, *Infinite*.
- * **Roadrunner** have already dropped **Amen**.
- * **Cemetery** have reformed again, under the name **Cemetery 1213**. **Sundown** is no longer operating.
- * Look for **Kamelot's Fourth Legacy** in February.
- * **Morgana Lefay** still features **Jonas Soderlind**, **Joaquim Heder**, and **Daniel Persson** but main songwriters are trying to stop **Black Mark** from allowing them to release an album under that name as **Charles Rytkonen** and guitarist **Tony Erikson** continue with **Lefay**.
- * **Gorgoroth** will release *Incipit Satan* soon.
- * Ex-**Borknagar** drummer **Grim** has committed suicide.
- * **Old Mans Child** have finished recording *Revelation 666* with ex-**Dimmu Borgir** **Kenneth Akesson** on drums.
- * **Abattoir** are back together again.
- * **St. Madness** bass player **Randy Ax** has moved to Florida and is replaced by **World War Spencer** from **Dr. Frankenshred**.

Classifieds:

Transcending the Mundane now offers a classified section. \$5 per word.

Winters Bane is looking for a new vocalist. This is **Ripper Owens** former band. They are looking for someone in the vein of **Owens**, **Rob Halford**, or **Apocrypha's Steve Placia**. Send packages to **Eric** at **D.C.A. 268 Bush Street #3237, San Francisco, CA 94104**

New York's Zandelle are looking for a bassist so that **George Tsalikis** can concentrate on his vocals. Call **Zandelle** at **718-745-4642**

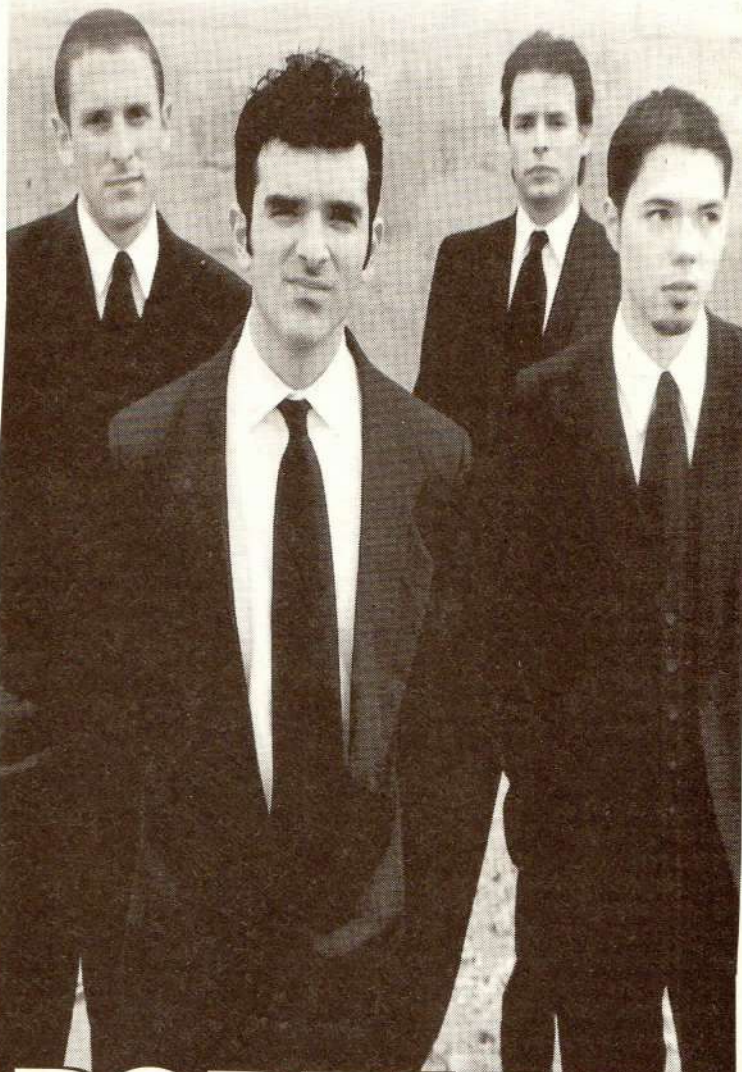
The excellent progressive power metal group from Texas, **Power Of Omens** is searching for a new keyboardist. Interested parties should contact **Alex** at **210-479-7006**.

New York alternative band **Dim** are looking for a new bassist. Call them at **718-356-8322**.

Here we are again... finally! It's been several months since Issue #6 and the Power Mad Special #7 came out in August. My sincerest apologies for the delays. I would like to thank Marty at *Metal Maniacs* for the great review of *Transcending the Mundane* #5. I got a couple hundred letters in response to this review. That exposure has helped me reach many dedicated metal fans. Good news is on the horizon for followers of *Transcending the Mundane*. Beginning in March, this publication will be released monthly. That's right, every month you will see a new issue. If you notice this issue now includes color and a c.d. compilation. These changes will not effect the cost of *Transcending the Mundane*, it will always remain a free publication. In addition, we will have massive expansion in the amount of copies of each issue. If anyone knows of a store in their town that should carry *Transcending the Mundane* please write or call. I hope you enjoy the disc. There are many new bands on there that deserve attention and hopefully this will help them gain some exposure. Anyone interested in participating in future compilations or in advertising should call me at 516-563-6326 or write to 5 Hudson Avenue, Bohemia, New York 11716.

Thank you to Brett Clarin. His constant contributions behind the scenes makes this zine possible. Thank you to Jeff Brown, Tom Destefano, Keith Oswald, Mike Spaccarotella and Y.Y.P. for your contributions. An appreciation goes out to the following people who helped set up interviews and place advertisements in this zine. Michael Kovins & Marshall, Jon & Full Moon, Andreas & The End, Eric & D.C.A., Marti and Eric & Olympic, Matt & Century Media, Jon Paris, Dennis & Spitfire, Bob & Metal Blade, Laurent & Listenable, Chip and Mark & Chipster Entertainment, Martin & Prophecy, Paula and Liz & Nuclear Blast, Denis & Sentinel Steel, Oliver & Limb, Odin & Napalm and Moribund, Guido & Hammerheart, Stefania & Avantgarde, Adrienne & N.M.G., Ken & Wonderdrug, Ken & Sensory, Keith & Siegen, Phillipe & Holy, Eric & Progressive Arts Media, Rhonda Saenz, Dan & Magna Carta, Maria & Martyr, Slip Disc, Janice and Michael & Majestic, E.J. & Prosthetic, Steve & Noise, Intromental, Prophet and Marge & St. Madness, John H. & T.V.T., and Anne Leighton. My apologies to anyone that I missed.

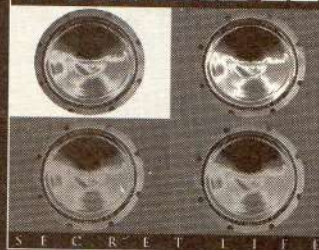
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AGALLOCH

Interview with vocalist/ guitarist Jon Haugm

Those of you who have read Issue #6 and checked out the interview/ article with The End Records will recognize the name **Agalloch**. This American band is like no other from this country. **Agalloch** play a style of metal that deals with sombre and melancholic atmospheres, with a misanthropic point of view. Their debut album, *Pale Folklore*, is an experience that requires time to allow the melodies and moods to sink through. They are thought provoking and majestic, beautiful yet primitive. I spoke to Jon Haugm about this elusive band.

Did *Pale Folklore* come out the way that you wanted it to?

Some ways. With any album there's gonna be problems and this album had its share of them. Soundwise, it came out pretty much how I wanted it. A lot of the original feeling that I wanted for the album was damaged by the mix. Next time I hope that we'll get a more dynamic production and we're gonna handle the mastering as well. There was a hidden track on the c.d. but when they did the mastering but they destroyed that. As far as the packaging, they used this new manufacturer and this manufacturer really sucks. Half the c.d.'s were cut crooked and shit like that. I was very upset about that. I was probably about sixty percent happy with it.

How did **Agalloch** get together?

I played in a band with Breyer and J. William in early '95 called **Aeolachrymae**. It was a doom death thing that never really went anywhere. We split that band and formed three other bands; **Susurrus Inanis**, **Nothing**, and **Agalloch**. **Susurrus Inanis** formed first and I had nothing to do with that. I was talking to Breyer about doing a metal band, so we sat down one night and figured out what we should do and how we could make it somewhat different and a little bit surprising for a U.S. band. We wanted to keep it low key for a long time. I met Anderson and he joined the band later on. Then we did the demo that came out in '97. J. William joined the band and that's the line-up as it is now. To this day we still don't have a permanent drummer. Drummers are hard to come by, especially in this area. Even if we could find a drummer we would want to do our material, personality wise- it is rare to find a drummer that you can get along with for more than ten minutes. I take care of the session drumming. We haven't played live at all, that's okay because half the band isn't into that anyway.

Why the name **Agalloch**?

I spent a couple of months trying to think of a name for this obscure band. We wanted something different yet something that would go with our whole woods and forestry imagery. One day I was flipping through the dictionary and I found the word **agaloch**. It's some sort of Middle Eastern resonant word that means incense. It sounded great and it had a unique meaning behind it. One thing that influences my music is wood smoke and the smell of burning pine. It fit in well with our influences and our concept. A lot of people think it has something to do with Satanism.

Where do you draw inspiration for your lyrics and is there a concept behind *Pale Folklore*?

It's kind of a concept, but not really. *Pale Folklore*, the title, ties in with some of the songs which revolve around winter time. For me, it's a very depressive season so I can identify with the winter months. I'm a depressive person. Our next album will have more of a concept. My lyrics draw upon inspiration from natural things- walking in the woods, the smell of wood smoke, the tragedies of life, being alive and being human.

Why is the first song in three parts?

It's a twenty minute song. We thought it was so long that it should be split into three parts. It naturally has three sections anyway. A lot of people are confused because on the booklet it has six songs and they look on the c.d. and there's eight songs. They think that we have two hidden songs.

Where do you draw your influences, **Agalloch** does not sound like an American band?

I listen to a lot of non metal music, I also listen to a lot of gothic music. It was a natural decision to go with a lot of our influences and not try to be this or that. On our demo there's an obvious Swedish influence because a couple of us are into a lot of the melodic Swedish death metal bands that were great in the mid 90's. There are some good bands popping up in the U.S. nowadays. It's cultural too. I grew up in Montana so that wintry woods thing is a part of my life and part of my soul. That's why we have great bands like **December Wolves**. They come from New England and that first album captures that New England winter, forest thing. Then again you have bands like **Absu** from Dallas, Texas so it's not always that way.

What direction will you be going in for the next album?

It's hard to say at this point. There's a lot more acoustic stuff and some electronic stuff that we're experimenting with. It's not gonna be some drastic thing like what **Ulver** has done. I would like to get away from the metal thing because I think metal these days is very cheap and classless. I don't want to be evolved in that genre. I'd rather have people say that we're a musical entity. We don't set out to play metal or black metal. We play what we want. It's hard to say what our second album is gonna be like. I have a few ideas and a few riffs but nothing concrete.

What did you mean by keeping a low profile?

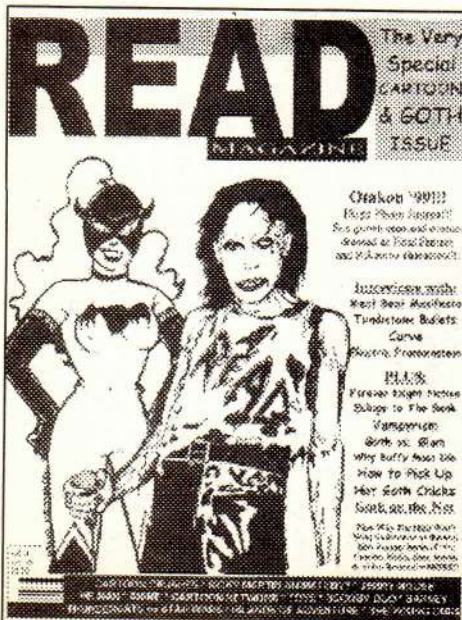
It's more special if you have a band that you like and a band that's unique that's not pushed in everyone's face. It's a special occasion when you see an interview with **Ulver** or **In The Woods**. They don't do many interviews and they keep a low profile. That's one problem that I'm having with The End Records, because they push their bands a lot. If somebody wanted to have their band everywhere it would be a dream come true to be on The End Records. They have great promotion. A band like **Agalloch** is not something you want to push and have everywhere. I'd rather people search out **Agalloch** and have it hard to get. That's something that we can't control. I could always refuse to do interviews. People in Finland are feeling that because we have no distribution in Finland. I was just in Finland a couple of months ago. Those people will definitely like **Agalloch** but at the same time it makes me feel good that they have to search for it. With our next album I'm gonna tell The End that I don't wanna be promoted like this. We have the same publicist that does **Kiss**. This is getting out of control.

Will you ever do this material live?

We'll probably play live sometime in the future, probably after our second album. Once we release two or three albums and we play live it'll be special. **Thy Serpent** did that when I went to Finland and it was their second gig ever and here they have three albums out already. We'll play live when we're ready and when we have a line-up that's suitable for it.

Discography:

1999... *Pale Folklore* (The End)



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Interviews with Meat Beat Manifesto, Curve, Tombstone Bullets, Electric Frankenstein

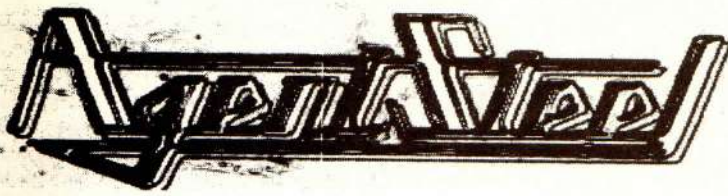
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Interview with guitarist Juan Garcia

As the 1990's come to an end, it has clearly become the time for countless reunions. While many unmentioned reunions are pathetic attempts at past glory, some like **Agent Steel** and **Crimson Glory** should be received with open arms. There is a parallel between these two bands, mainly because they both featured enigmatic vocalists that became their trademark. Now they both contain new vocalists with a modern appeal balanced with each band's classic sound. Original vocalist John Cyris' whereabouts is unknown, so **Agent Steel** went out and got a new vocalist named Bruce Hall. While all **Agent Steel** trademarks; the high pitched vocals, complex guitar patterns, and science fiction themes are still apparent however they are now more accessible and *Omega Conspiracy* is their heaviest album to date. After a twelve year layoff, here is Juan to update us on **Agent Steel**. Check out the new record, *Omega Conspiracy*, out on Candlelight Records.

How did this reformation take place?

The drummer Chuck Profus has been trying to get me to do this **Agent Steel** thing again for about eight years. I was doing **Evil Dead** at the time and I didn't see a power metal thing happening. Bernie Versailles went over to Europe and played with **Fates Warning** on the *Still Life* tour, he came back and told me you'd be surprised how many **Agent Steel** fans were at the shows asking about **Agent Steel**. The idea stuck out in my mind. Chuck was playing in a punk band to get his chops back and I was playing bass with them for fun. So we decided if we were gonna get serious about music, let's just put together **Agent Steel** again. It was weird, it sounded like 1986. I think some people will appreciate it. We were rehearsing here and there for fun and we started to write new material and did a demo. The first couple of songs we wrote didn't represent the band correctly, but the demos got out anyway and they were a bit progressive sounding. The drums were programmed because we were trying to see what direction to go. All these people in the underground world were paying these ridiculous prices for c.d.'s. This is very sick. The reissues added to the whole thing also. They license stuff and the artist is always the last to know about these things.

Why was the band called Agents Of Steel at first?

I liked the name **Agents Of Steel**, I think it's a better name in my honest opinion. The fact that Cyris wasn't in the band I thought it would be cool to call it **Agents Of Steel**. It seemed to cause more confusion than anything. If **Judas Priest** can go on without Halford and **Iron Maiden** can go on without Di'anno and keep their name, let's keep it simple and keep the name. There was a few labels that thought it was a cool idea.

How did you hook up with Bruce Hall?

Bruce was a friend of Bernie's. He was in a band called **Gringe Fist**. They were popular out here and some labels wanted to sign them. He went through the whole music business deception at one point and he decided to quit music all together. Bernie kept in touch with him through the years and when we were ready to reform he told me about Bruce and that he was somebody who could hit the highs and do some of the lows like Bruce Dickinson. I thought it would be interesting to go in that direction because that was something that Cyris didn't do. He didn't do enough mids. I love the highs, I love Rob Halford's style but I thought it would be good to do something heavy as well as high pitched. It offers a little variation. People in Europe appreciate the fact that the band is a little easier to listen to now. It's not so much in your face with high screams, although that was cool too. He's not trying to be John Cyris which is what I like. Even if you get someone who can clone it, people would rather just hear John anyway, so you might as well try something different.

Have people been upset that you reformed with a new vocalist?

Not really. It was very surprising. In the beginning, before the album came out there was people upset. They were pissed at Century Media for reissuing the stuff. Some collectors were pissed. They've accepted the new singer. A lot of people thought we should have done this in the beginning when we had problems with Cyris. The management thought we were nothing without him and had everybody brainwashed. He was a great musician and singer but he was very hard to deal with.

I think you're in the same position as **Crimson Glory** in that you both are reforming with new vocalists who are replacing legends.

I agree. It's been a fresh perspective. The show we did in Europe was one of the best vacations I ever had in my life because everybody got along really well. We were there for a week just to play one show. This was the way it should have been in the beginning. It wasn't like Cyris did it on purpose but he was behind most of the arguments and the chaos in the band and with the labels and management. The band could've gone a long ways if he had kept his head on straight. We had interest from Capitol Records and I didn't even care. It sounds crazy. For years I didn't want to deal with a singer in a band. When I formed **Evil Dead** it was out of aggression. I wanted a bass player to sing and I didn't care about good vocals. I wanted to play thrash. I thought all good singers were freaks. It took me awhile to regain trust in good singers. Bruce is one of the most normal guys I've met but most good singers are wackos.

What led to all of the craziness in John's head?

It's hard to say. I can't pin point it. When I first met him he was totally normal. He was totally into metal, good lyrical consciousness, extraterrestrial life but little by little he got jaded. I think a lot of it had to do with his divorce. It was probably a combination of everything. He just disappeared. It's crazy. It's very sad. You've got to move on.

I noticed that the lyrics and visuals fit with the old Agent Steel material.

The coolest thing about it is that Bruce came up with the lyrics. I would give him ideas as far as what **Agent Steel** is all about. This is our trademark trip. Now we have the internet so there's more information out there and people are more open minded. In the 80's you were looked upon as a freak. We did this years before the *X-Files* was around. We were freaks of nature in the 80's. Scott Ian used to trip on us. Bruce has got in a groove and he's into it more than Cyris was.

Were you involved with any other bands besides Evil Dead?

We did a couple **Evil Dead** records for S.P.V. What stopped **Evil Dead** was the fact that we couldn't get a U.S. label. At one point Roadrunner was gonna put it out in the U.S. It was at the same time as they put out **Sepultura**. For some reason they got into an argument with S.P.V. and they wouldn't give them **Sodom**, **Destruction**, or **Evil Dead**, etc. That was why the band never took off. We did a Milwaukee Fest and things went great. We couldn't get the right label. I took **Evil Dead** and changed it to **Terror**. It was the same kind of logo and we started to do it in Spanish. It was industrial metal in Spanish. There was nothing in Spanish that was heavy. We started to go down to Mexico and play down there. There's a huge scene there. The only problem down there is a lot of pirating was going on. We signed a deal with an indie through B.M.G. and we got ripped off on the deal. It made me sick of the thing. They don't know how to work metal even though it's huge. I had a good time and I got to see a lot of archaeological sights. I went to the pyramids. When **Maiden** plays down there they play in front of thirty thousand people. I thought it would be different doing it in Spanish. We have one album out of print because the company isn't printing anymore. We have another album written that maybe someday we'll record.

What are your plans for next year?

We're doing a **Riot**, **Anvil** tour. That's eighteen shows in a row with no days in a row. We want to stay over there and do as many shows as possible. We want to do all the festivals. We'd like to release a single, probably "New Godz". Sometime after the summer we'll get ready to record another record. You will definitely see another **Agent Steel** record and it won't be another ten years.

Discography:

1999... *Omega Conspiracy* (Candlelight)
1987... *Unstoppable Force* (Century Media reissue)
1985... *Skeptics Apocalypse* (Century Media reissue)

Current line-up:

Bruce Hall... vocals
Bernie Versailles... guitars
Juan Garcia... guitars
Chuck Profus... drums
Karlos Medina... bass

Alchemy X

Interview with guitarist Rob Schreiber

Alchemy X is a progressive metal band from New York City that has recently released their debut, *A Delicate Balance*, and this band deserves to be noticed. They rely on intricate arrangements but retain a prevalent metal background and rarely utilize keyboards. This approach leads to a heavier than usual prog band. *A Delicate Balance* was recorded at the same studio frequented by **Dream Theater**. This allows the sound quality to actually match that of the songwriting and performance. After a brief departure, vocalist Marty Morin is back in the band. I spoke to guitarist Rob Schreiber at a Brooklyn pub about this new band.

Give me the background history of Alchemy X.

I moved out here in 1994 and assumed my career. I ended up hooking up with Chris Fox, the other guitarist in the band. I ended up going to this trucking company right near my apartment and I got a job on the spot. I met Chris there and we hit it off immediately. The two of us established a bond. We started writing for about a year and a half. Then we started to find players. We hooked up with Chris Scorsese, our drummer, because his band was looking for two guitar players. I remember the ad said "come with us and be rich and famous". We called him up and found out he was really into **Queensryche**. We joined their band and basically figured out that the bass player and the singer didn't fit. We practiced for about a month and pulled Chris aside and the three of us started. We put some material together. We went through a series of singers, a couple bass players and about a year later we ran into Marty, the singer. He wanted it to take off right away, but we were still in the building stages. We stayed in touch in the meantime. About six months later we found Steve, the bass player. He popped up through an ad in the paper. He came in September of '96 and about a month later Marty called back and said he wanted in. In November of '96 the whole thing was together. At that time, Chris, Chris, and myself had the majority of the music written. By December we were doing shows.

How did you hook up with Beartrack Studio?

Once the music came together and everybody was happy with the situation we wanted to do a demo or an album. Everybody believed in the music and we decided to spend the money and go do a c.d. We weren't really happy with a lot of the studios we checked out. In the meantime we decided to do a demo, which was a horrible experience at a studio in Manhattan. Marty said let's try to get into Beartrack, that's where **Dream Theater** recorded *Images and Words*. Doug Oberkircher was the engineer. We looked at each other and said we can't afford this. We called for a week straight and nobody would talk to me. Finally, the manager called me back and said "our studio only works with major bands like Tina Turner, Julian Lennon, **Foreigner**, and **Dream Theater**." I told him our story and he said you don't have enough money to record here. We asked him to think about it. We only had about fifteen thousand dollars at the time so we called him back. We wanted to get the best studio we could and get some major names attached to it. We sent them a demo and they were impressed. He liked it and we were told that Doug was looking for a band to take under his wings. We turned out to be his pet project. At the end of '97 we went in there and started laying tracks down. It was the most amazing experience we ever had. The drum and the rhythm tracks were done there and then we went to Doug's private studio and did the overdubs in there. The whole process took from November to June of '98. We worked all day and then drove up there to the studio until three o'clock in the morning. It was a lot of stress and a lot of pressure.

How has the response been?

It was slow to take off. This last week we were picked up by Sentinel Steel. He really loves it. He took our entire lot of c.d.'s. Marty got us the hook up for that. We have to put a new order for a thousand of them. People are talking about us on the internet. It's slowly taking off. The more we get out there, the better we're doing. We were getting people saying it was too progressive, too heavy, too eighthies. We grew up in the eighties so we're into **Van Halen**, **Dokken**, those are our influences. Chris Fox is a big Eddie Van Halen freak. I was more into Randy

Rhoads. Steve's totally into **Rush**. Marty and our drummer are really into **Queensryche**. We've got all these mixes in there.

What has been your live situation?

In August we did our last run. We did a bunch of shows in Jersey, we did some Connecticut shows. At that point we got frustrated with each other and things weren't happening. The last couple of shows were let downs. We played in Connecticut, in a local bar, who could care less who we were. They just wanted to hear **Lynyrd Skynyrd**. Since then we haven't played out at all. We didn't even want to. The bottom line is the promoter wants to see people and people want to hear cover tunes. Right now we're just concentrating on promoting the c.d. and getting it out there. We want to get it to Europe. We're in the process of getting in the studio next year.

How are the new songs shaping up?

They sound more like what the band is about. They're a little heavier in some instances. We have all the elements; progressive, heavy, still structure oriented enough that it's listenable and not musical masturbation. We have one song, "Just Before Dying" that's eight or nine minutes and then it goes into an outro section and ends up being fifteen minutes long. We love doing that, but it's okay if you only do it on one or two songs. We're very conscious of having one for the radio. It's hard to get all those little ideas in less than five minutes. When you're used to going off it's hard to put the reigns on and stop it. I don't know how **Rush** did it. The bass player has a seven string and now Chris and I both have a seven string. Doug helped try to make some of the songs more listenable friendly. He worked with the textures and the sounds more than anything. The new songs show more of an identity and what the band is all about. The sounds you hear on the first c.d. is a lot of Chris and myself. That stuff is two or three years old. "Sister", "Requiem by Moonlight", "Seventh Sign" are more fresh.

Will you go to Breaktrack again?



No, we can't afford it. We know what we have to do this time. Doug helped us out a lot. He taught us how to go about the business aspect of it. Being able to put his name with our c.d. has helped. We're very lucky that he did it. The experience was great. We're probably gonna use a studio here in Brooklyn. It's a good studio and they're giving us a good rate.

What's up with Marty, is he back in the band full time?

He's still got frustration there. He was really gung ho and wanting to get things happening right away and they weren't. Now, it's the best situation we've ever been in. He made his decision. We discussed it and he jumped to another band and we were ready to find a new singer. Only a couple singers had anything worthwhile to listen to. Marty went out and saw what was available. He went out and that didn't work. We all grew from the experience. We needed him and he needed us. We got back together a couple of weeks ago and had a talk. We decided to do the next album and keep the same guys. Marty's vocals create an identity for the band. It's a family, the relationship is there. We love each other and hate each other all the same.

Discography:

1999... *A Delicate Balance* (Plastic Giraffe)

Current line-up:

Martin Morin... vocals
Rob Schreiber... guitars
Chris Fox... guitars
Steve Ratchen... bass
Chris Scorsese... drums



Interview with Gene Palubicki

While many feel that the death metal scene in the mid to late 90's has become stagnant in America, **Angel Corpse** has been one of the few bands to establish a very solid reputation over the course of the last few years. They have recently released their third album, *The Inexorable*, through Olympic Records which sees them on a continued upward incline in terms of respectability. **Angel Corpse** has always seemed to be able to hook up with the right tours, they never release a disappointing album, the covers are stunning pieces of art, and they always sound good- in a nutshell this band reeks of professionalism. As bands like **Krisiun**, **Deeds Of Flesh**, and **Angel Corpse** continue to solidify their reputations, death metal is sure to be strong in the year 2000.

What are your feelings on *The Inexorable*?

As for the songwriting, there's some of the most expansive and dynamic songs that we've come up with yet. We've pushed ourselves up in brutality before, so we didn't want to just do that again. We wanted to come up with some ideas within that realm that were fresh. The further expansion of adding something new while still staying relative to what the original idea of what this band always wanted to be about. We don't want to alienate anybody who listens to us by doing a one eighty. We add something new to what we started to do each time. We want to make it interesting compared to what we did before. We don't want to bore anybody. I think all three albums are totally independent of each other as far as that goes, but they're all relative to the sound we started with. The impact that this album can have is not as instantaneous as *Exterminate*. Once the impact starts on *Exterminate*, it keeps compounding that burst from start to finish. This album, the impact is the same, but there's variations on the type of impact that we wanted to make. All the songs have their own thing going on. If you compare a song like "Begotten" to song like "Stormgods Unbound", there's no real relationship with the writing styles. A lot of bands try to keep maximum extreme from start to finish but have a real tendency to have all the songs start sounding the same. I like that but for my own material I wanted it done for a different way track to track. Whatever we do next will be something we've done but we'll throw in some new twists. If you take an album like *Ride the Lightning* from **Metallica**, if you hear any part of any song you know what song it is. They don't blaze through every song. That was the peak that band had.

How do you feel about recording at Morrisound?

We do have some hang ups about the production. We did this on a limited budget too. I think we got the best we could do with the time. We needed to go to Morrisound to get the drum sound we wanted. The other stuff we did at a small studio in Tampa. I think we got the vibe that we wanted from it. The presentation and the performances were pretty close to the mark of what we wanted here.

This has record once again has outstanding cover art.

We wanted to have super explosive album covers. We don't want to have anything subdued at all. That album cover picture is the picture we want people to have in their minds over the course of the entire listening of the album. Take the *Reign in Blood* album. When you listen to that you have the picture in your head of all the stuff that's going on the cover of the album. You see heads being decapitated, goats smeared with blood, those images are in your mind as you listen to the music and it colors the listening experience. We'll never have a lackluster album cover because then people would have a lackluster image in their mind of what the music is portraying. The lyrics, the music, and the visuals all have to be one thing.

You play extreme music yet it's uncategorizable, blurring the boundaries of what people try to impose.

We just concocted a style that we found pleasing to what our tastes were. It's unfortunate too because their interest will slip because they can't categorize us. Some people want the security of what they listen to, to be identifiable. Yes, this is a black metal band and I like black metal as opposed to this is a black metal band but I exclusively like death metal. It's not a fault, in some cases that might be detrimental to us. Some people might like what we're doing but they don't understand exactly where we're coming from, so it might be a turn off. It hasn't

altered any of our direction or our vision. It makes us more of a self influenced entity. Most of the material on this new album was **Angel Corpse** inspiring **Angel Corpse**. We looked at what we've done and what we've thought about doing and we used that as our main guiding force. We put together what we thought would be the perfect songs. This time we start off even more abruptly than we have before. We wanted to up the ante of the sickness right at the start of the album. Around '89-'90 when the extreme death metal bands were coming out there was a blur of the bands and who was who. If you takes us, **Krisiun**, **Hate Eternal**, **Diabolic**, none of us sound the same at all yet we're still doing extreme metal at the maximum intensity, but we have our own take on it to make it the best. That's something that has been achieved in this period that the initially explosion of this style never really had. Now it's come to fruition.

Why wasn't this album released on Osmose in America?

The distribution for the U.S. office is still not good. It's a very slowly growing office for the U.S. With all the plans we have for a U.S. tour, the office is not able to keep up with what we wanted to do. If we stayed with that it would be further detrimental to us. After all the touring we did for *Exterminate* in the U.S. and then not have our record available in stores like it should have been it blackened the progress for that album because nobody could find it. If your record is not working has hard as you are, there's a problem. We corrected that problem. Now we have a team on both sides of the Atlantic working for us. We have Olympic doing their stuff for us and we have Osmose doing the same thing for us in Europe. We've got exactly what we want. We've created our own rules for this thing and we're achieving this because of it.

Where's your biggest fanbase?

In America, we've had some good shows in New York City, and in Texas and Arizona. There's some crazy motherfuckers down there. Even Denver, Colorado we have a strong following. We've had good shows out in California too. Some of the real dynamite shows were in San Antonio. If I want to pin point a place would be Texas. I wish it was like that every place.

Have you ever encountered censorship problems?

No, we've never had any particular group try to censor us. We've had some people misunderstand our lyrics, or how some of us look in this band. They've tried to attribute some sort of political angle on what we're about. We've went through the process of dispelling that in as many places as we can. We've never had any direct censoring entanglements. They try to attack the high profile groups to scare off some upstarts. There's nothing we can do about that but try to make them see the true angle we're coming from. We're not going to apologize to people because they get upset about what they think we're about. We're not crossing anybody.



Final comments?

Watch out for the U.S. tour. We will be in New York City, probably in February or March. If we can get the package we want to get it will be an armageddon 2000 type deal. That's how it comes back to the title *The Inexorable*. It's unyielding, unstoppable, merciless, unrelenting. We don't stop, we don't yield to anyone or anything.

Discography:

- 1999... *The Inexorable* (Olympic)
- 1997... *Exterminate* (Osmose)
- 1996... *Hammer Of Gods* (Osmose)

Current line-up:

- Gene Palubicki
- Pete Helmkamp
- Tony Laureano

ANGEL DUST

Interview with bassist Frank Banx

One of my favorite bands in the 90's is Germany's **Angel Dust**. The band released two acclaimed albums in the 80's and then broke up. They reformed in the mid 90's and released the explosive *Border of Reality* in 1998. They immediately followed that up with the more keyboard oriented, multi dimensional *Bleed* record. Not as immediate as *Border of Reality*, this album contains depth and emotion most bands can not touch. They are already recording the next record and be on the watch for it in the spring of 2000. Everything about this band is class. They somehow manage to create music that would appeal to traditional metal, thrash metal, progressive metal, and power metal fans. Do not underestimate this band because they have blown away anyone who has taken a chance on their album.

Are you happy with *Bleed*?

Yeah, we're quite happy. We are very surprised what happened in the U.S.A. We get hundreds of e-mails. We didn't expect that.

Why did you break up after the first two records in the 80's?

The main thing about the first two records is that we did them with two complete different line-ups. We changed our style, not because we wanted to change from the first record to the second record, but we had a completely new line-up. It's difficult to do what you want to do if you have to work with completely new people. It's very important that we've had a stable line-up since *Border of Reality*. I promise you we will have the same line-up for the next album because we've nearly finished the songwriting for that album. We released *Bleed* in April. We want to do one record a year.

What happened after *To Dust You Will Decay*, why was it so long before you reformed again?

We had a lot of personal problems with the first line-up and we wanted to be sure to have the right people together to do what I call a band. If you want to do something you believe in you want to have people you can believe in. You should be friends with them. We've been carefully searching out the right people. I can't remember how many people we tried. In the end we had the right people. We did some other bands and other music but since the end of '94 we concentrated on **Angel Dust** and the line-up. A really important point was to find people that we are sure about and that we can work with for years. It's very important when you tour that you don't kill each other. In my opinion we've proved that we've found the right people. For the first time in our career we've been able to record two records with the same line-up. I believe we will continue to work like this.



Were you involved with any bands that released albums in those years?

I played in a metal band called **Crown**. This album was released in 1991. There were a few now famous members in the band. Our drummer is now in **Sodom**. We also had a Polish guy who worked with the band called **Scanner**. All these members were involved in this album. If you have the opportunity to listen to it you should. The name of the album was *The Dying Race*. It was also released on Century Media. That's what I did between 1990 and 1993. In 1994 we started to try to reform **Angel Dust** again.

How does the material for the next album sound?

It's like *Bleed*, so we have developed the synthesizers. It makes the music smooth. We like to work with an aggressive sound. It's a little like **Rammstein** meets **Angel Dust**. If you listen to *Bleed* we have a track like this called "Sanity". It runs through the whole track and even though you don't hear it, it's something that's keeps you busy. We now have this style that we want to continue with. It's not the same album of course, but it's like the style we touched on with *Bleed*.

Any chance of **Angel Dust** touring over here?

I just spoke to our record company today. We decided it would be interesting to get us over to America to play. I'm not sure, but I feel it. Century Media does a very

good job. They give you opportunities to spread your work.

Did you tour in Europe for *Bleed*?

No, we had some problems with our promoters here in Germany. We should have been booked for some festival shows with **Nevermore**, for some reason we always play together with them. The promoter forgot us. It's so stupid that it has to be true. In the end we played four shows to promote *Bleed*. We toured two times for *Border of Reality*. I can promise you we will do more shows for the next record. I was very angry, I want to make sure that this shit doesn't happen again. It's necessary to spread the word.

Is Steven your brother?

Yes. He joined in late '96. He's a great talent. I'm lucky I was able to turn him to join the band. We've been working together very good.

Did you know that your early albums are very expensive for collectors to buy?

We are close to getting the rights back for the tapes so we will probably rerelease them. They shouldn't pay such a lot of money for just one album. We will be able to rerelease them next year. Even if they had to get them through mail order here in Germany it will be cheaper for them. We released them with less than one thousand copies on c.d. in 1986. I'm proud to hear that but I want people to wait a few months so they don't have to pay so much money.

When did Dirk join the band?

He joined in August of '97. This is a funny story. I was so sick of checking out singers. People said you need to check this guy. It was horrible tape he sent. Everyone said come on for two weeks, just invite him down. He came down and in one minute I was shocked at how good he was. This is my favorite singer for my band.

How is the metal scene in Germany?

It's a way of life, the metal scene. The German metal scene has become very big in the last five years. It's unbelievable. There is no **Kiss**, no **Aerosmith**. I don't know how this metal scene will develop but it's quite big here. Most people say Germany has become the second biggest metal market in the world. The kids listen to metal here. Seventy percent of the people we get at our concerts are between the ages of seventeen and twenty five. We have a complete new generation of

metal fans. It's the same all over Europe. We played a show last Sunday, there were a few girls throwing up teddy bears and roses. We started to laugh because we couldn't believe it.

Final comments?

All I can say, my personal biggest dream is to come to America and play. Hopefully we can make it through someday. I want to see you soon.

Discography:

1999... *Bleed* (Century Media)
1998... *Border Of Reality* (Century Media)
1988... *To Dust You Will Decay*
1986... *Into The Dark Past*

Current line-up:

Dirk Thurisch... vocals
Bernd Aufermann... guitars
Frank Banx... bass
Steven Banx... keyboards
Dirk Assmuth... drums

ARCH ENEMY

Interview with guitarist Michael Amott

While they are already quite popular in Europe and Japan, bands like **Hammerfall**, **In Flames**, and **Arch Enemy** have been causing a stir in the usually dormant States as well. **Arch Enemy**'s initial claim to fame was the inclusion of ex-**Carcass** guitarist Michael Amott in their line-up. After their third record, *Burning Bridges*, and a Japanese explosion, **Arch Enemy** have become a household name. The soaring guitar work of Michael and his younger brother Chris has become their trademark. While Johan Liva returns as vocalist, **Arch Enemy** have recruited a new rhythm section: Sharlee D'Angelo and Daniel Erlandsson. Here is Michael.

Burning Bridges is a quick follow up to *Stigmata*.

Yeah, that's right. We ran into some problems with *Stigmata* and had some line-up changes. It prevented us from going on tour. Me and my brother sat down and wrote a new album rather quickly.

I noticed that you have a new bass player named Sharlee D'Angelo, I find it a coincidence because there are bass players in **Witchery**, **Mercyful Fate**, **Dismember**, and now **Arch Enemy** all with the same name.

He's been doing a lot of recording with various bands. His main band of course is **Mercyful Fate**. He's played with us live in South America in April and at the Dynamo Festival in Holland. He's going on tour with us now. King Diamond's gonna go in and record anew solo album so he can tour with us. He's a great bass player. We're happy that he's into playing with us. It seems like it's gonna work out okay.

How would you explain the success **Arch Enemy** in Japan?

It's been a growing thing since the first album. We went over a supported **Cathedral** in '97. The second album, *Stigmata*, did really good over there so we did a headlining tour. The new album has been out for a month and a half and *Burning Bridges* is doing exceptionally well. It seems like it's growing. We're gonna go back and tour in late October. We incorporate a lot of traditional heavy metal guitar work. There's a lot of melody. We've been lucky. The level of promotion over there is a little bit different. We want to push **Arch Enemy** everywhere. It looks like we'll be touring the States with **Nevermore**.

Do you ever see the vocals going in a more melodic direction?

What makes it interesting to me is contrast between the brutal vocals and melodic vocals. I think if you took away the brutal vocals we'd be just another power metal band. We're as good musicians as any power metal band. I like this combination. If we had more melodic vocals I don't know if we would be the best power metal band out there. We believe in what we do and I don't know anybody doing exactly like we do. We're definitely working with the vocals and trying to make them more catchy. The vocal arrangements are really important. He improved his vocals a lot since the last album. He's gonna just keep getting better. We're very happy with the way the album turned out but I'm my worst critic. We've already written a bit

How have you and Chris grown as musicians working together? He's become more involved in the songwriting. We basically co-wrote this album together. In the past, he's thrown in an odd riff or melody here and there. We have a really good working relationship. There's a lot of inspiration.

Will there be another **Armageddon** album?

At this point I don't believe so. We're very busy with this now. We're gonna focus on **Arch Enemy** now. That was more a one off project. That band didn't really exist. It had musicians from other bands.

What's up with **Spiritual Beggars**?

We start recording in three weeks. That's gonna be released late this year. We hope things don't overlap each other.

How was **Dynamo** this year?

Dynamo is always good for the bands that play there. It's got all types of metal. It was a very exciting time. We replaced **Morbid Angel**.

Discography:

1999... *Burning Bridges* (Century Media)

1998... *Stigmata* (Century Media)

1996... *Black Earth* (W.A.R.)

Current line-up:

Johan Liva... vocals

Michael Amott... guitars

Chris Amott... guitars

Sharlee D'Angelo... bass

Daniel Erlandsson... drums



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BABYLON WHORES

Interview with vocalist Ike Vil

While the Finnish band known as **Babylon Whores** have released two acclaimed underground records, the *Cold Heaven* debut and the *Deggael* e.p., now that they have signed to Necropolis they have matured their sound and *King Fear* sounds like a band focused on their future. Combining the ethics of rock 'n roll with a little goth thrown in, **Babylon Whores** are more refined than their death rock tag would insinuate. I spoke to vocalist Vil, one of the most intelligent people in the business about *King Fear* and tried to delve into his ambiguous, complex mind. At the hour of midnight (Finnish time), with the first snow falling- here is Vil.

How do you feel about the Necropolis deal?

All over our history has been a smooth flow, we've always been in the right place at the right moment. Just as it was with *Cold Heaven*, we went into the studio with no knowledge of who was gonna pay for it. During the recording of *Cold Heaven* that we got the deal with Misanthropy. Now we were aware that Misanthropy were gonna fold. We knew that we had to make a really good album that somebody would want to pick us up. We got responses from four places and Necropolis showed the most interest and the most enthusiasm. We have nothing to complain about so far. It's nice to have a label that's based in the U.S. I think this record is American popular culture, from Elvis to the *Creature from the Black Lagoon*. You could say it's romantic poets and classical literature are looped through the eyes of James Dean who practices black magic.

How do you feel about the lyrics on *King Fear*?

We've been a band for five years and there comes a point when it becomes serious and quite stressing for you to surpass yourself and right better lyrics and better songs. I have reached a point where I have automatic songwriting. I reach a self induced trance and I feel more in sync with my brain. I can form my subconscious on paper. It is through this my that archetypical stuff comes through. When I'm writing lyrics and music too, there is no limitations on it. Being in a band is an overrated hobby. You should treat writing lyrics as you would living your life. It should be as grandiose, pretentious, and all encompassing as your life. You put in stuff that's true to yourself. The lyrics are infinitely personal but also completely alien for me. There's a lot of people who tell me that they don't understand my lyrics because they haven't read all the books that I have read, but I think they're every day stuff. I've always said reality is like fascism. You can never tell somebody it has to be interpreted this way. If I said "Love Satan" is a Satanists cry for mutilating people, I would get into trouble, but I wouldn't go saying his interpretation is wrong. *King Fear* is a concept album. I came up with the song order after telling the story. If I had thought about ten years in European history and ten years in my friend's life, then I would see what points would reflect each other. They are mirrors for each other, that's what I find interesting. Poetry is the only form of mainstream magic that is left. In poetic metaphors things are left to be opened up in the person's own head so that they're not transcribed into the mundane.

I read that you were writing a thesis on Western diaboligy, how's it coming along?

I haven't completed it yet. I should be out of university soon, it's just that I've had so many things in my head. My thesis is about the devil in the Western world. It's about the meat of Satan worship. It's a topic that takes a premeditated strength. In Finland, nobody cares shit about my thesis. Last spring a Finnish guy who listens to black metal, he actually killed his friend. It was sort of a sacrifice. Then, everyone in Finland started to talk about Satan wor-



ship and how it ties up with black metal. There's this common myth, spread by the yellow press, that the people in the smaller towns believe any people with long hair is planning to sacrifice the children. I think you have that in the States too. The bottom line in my thesis is that if we speak of the devil, he is sure to appear. People cling to that black and white concept, basically Christianity has embedded into our culture. It is a problem that you can't solve unless you start thinking in holistical terms and not in black and white. Dichotomy has always been about contradictions. There's this paradox of why didn't the Eastern cultures, the older cultures in India and Japan, come up with industrialism. Why was it here in Europe that they came up with the Industrial Revolution. Max Weber said that they have such a different way of seeing things. The Protestant ethic is the work is good and being lazy- you know what they say about the work of idle hands. In India, with Hinduism, bad and good need each other. The whole existence on this planet is both good and evil, man is both good and evil. If you are good but you have to project the evil elsewhere, the evil is sure to appear. If you think of evil as aggression, it becomes this on going force- then good is just being passive. You certainly need both. Going down to strict oppositions is a good way of portraying something and dissecting information can be coughed up in metaphors. I think in the lyrics you get a lot of that black and white stuff.

The music on this disc is very catchy.

From the beginning we have had a vision, but it is just now that the technical means between the vision and the finished product have grown up to be the end product of the original vision. The first financed e.p.'s were pretty horrible actually. They are collectors items now, but I don't recommend that anybody try to obtain them. With *Cold Heaven*, this is a cliché, but we've pretty much found out something for ourselves. We're not competitive musicians, more of this feeling. **Type O Negative** and **Danzig** are great bands and I love them, but they have this great technical mask that you can go behind and churn out a song. They didn't have this pain or urge to create any more. We definitely have that. I don't know when it is going to stop, maybe when we're financially comfortable you will see an end of our creativity.

Yeah, but bands need to be creative to survive.

Chaos is a blessing and a curse. We've grown up to be the voluntary children of chaos. When we were recording the album, the whole band was breaking up all of the time. We haven't had a training place for like eight months. Lots of people seem to think we hate each other, that's completely unfounded. I would like to think that making this album has made us more close. With **Babylon Whores**, nothing has ever worked smoothly. You can hear that we're pretty desperate sometimes.

What are your plans for the States?

We're looking forward to doing something in February 2000. Our drummer is getting married right now and we have commitments in Finland but after that we're looking for a tour. I have never been there. I'm a misanthrope. I don't go there looking for people. I go there for old comic books and stuff.

The webpage is <http://come.to-kingfear.com>

Discography:

1999... *King Fear* (Necropolis)
1998... *Deggael* (Misanthropy)
1997... *Cold Heaven* (Misanthropy)

Current line-up:

Ike Vil... vocals
Antti Litmanen... guitars
Jake Babylon... bass
Pete Liha... drums

SEBASTIAN Bach

Interview with vocalist Sebastian Bach

There once was a time when **Skid Row** was one of the biggest bands in the world. While their self titled debut was rather shallow, the next record, *Slave to the Grind*, is a metal classic. Their final album together, *Subhuman Race*, featured a more alternative approach yet more aggressive than its predecessor. Vocalist Sebastian Bach and drummer Rob Afuso were gone and the remaining members are now in an obscure Jersey punk band called **Ozone Monday**. Sebastian has recently started his solo career with various supporting musicians but with a common vision: bring bring energetic rocking metal. In the live environment he refuses to deny his past, alternating between newly penned tunes with **Skid Row**'s heavier rockers. The recently released *Bring em Bach Alive* showcases Sebastian's mindset at the moment and here he is to talk about it.

How did this album come together?

I was bored being off the road. I called my management and asked if I can go out. We started with two weeks and they all sold out so it turned into a hundred and four concerts. Now I've got my own record deal. The first came out November 2nd called *Bring em Bach Alive*. It's got ten live songs and five new songs.

Were you ever apprehensive about what the response would be?

I spent ten years of my life making the name of my old band famous. Luckily my own name was known as well. I didn't want start a new band with a whole new name and people wouldn't know I was in the band, names are irrelevant anyway compared to the music. **Ozzy Osbourne** live, Friday night! Who's playing bass? Who the hell cares! You know what you're gonna get with me. I sing my heart out, one hundred percent energy, I'm gonna do the hits, I'm gonna do some new stuff.

I saw you play at Coney Island High and it was packed.

It was so tiny. From my vantage point it looked like all these heads packed in, going up the sides of the wall, crawling up the back wall. I made more money that night headlining and selling out Coney Island High than I did opening up for **Bon Jovi** at Giants Stadium in front of eighty thousand people. How weird is that? So many people came there with tickets and I get a bonus. I can't believe that it's a better business move to headline Coney Island High than to play Giants Stadium. Eighty thousand people! Somebody got paid and I know it wasn't me.

All I could see was Jimmy's green wings from my vantage point.

He's a great guy. It's not like I fired him and hired Paul Crook. On my record I have different people; **Wolf Hoffman (Accept)**. He's written some of the heaviest guitar riffs ever. He's looking for a singer, there's a lot of guitarists looking for singers. I'm in a great position. I can make the best c.d. I can. I can take the best from **Richie Scarlet**, **Wolf Hoffman**, whoever I'm looking to jam with.

Why did you put out a live album first?

I wanted to put out a studio album first. Atlantic Records asked me to do a full live c.d. I had to say to them thanks, but I've got to put out at least five new tracks. I want to hear new stuff. They want to keep releasing "Youth Gone Wild", I'm thirty one you pricks. What have you done for me lately. People aren't stupid. I think major labels think the average rock band is a dork. I think they want to hear new stuff. I wish **Kiss** would change their set list. I've heard that set thirteen times. Throw "Parasite" in there, "She" or something. I like changing stuff.

What happened to Skid Row?

I got kicked out in December of '96. Rob got kicked out after that. Their idea of what a great record band and what my idea of what a great rock band is were two different things. After the first couple of albums it was the same exact goal that we had. We were in a band for ten years and that's a long time for a rock band. We didn't do that many c.d.'s but we were together a long time. Instead of three c.d.'s. I want twenty c.d.'s. I want to have a body of work and avoid the trends. I have a vision to carry through the musical aspiration.

How did you feel about the comic?

Everything you're holding in your hand is from my twisted brain. The grass on the c.d., I tried to make it smokable but they don't have the technology. All the comic book, all the notes, I did all the credits. I've always been a huge **Marvel Comics** freak. I know there are a lot of comic fans that are rock fans. I've got a solo deal. I can pick whoever I want to do the booklet. I called **Marvel** and they said sure. They're designing a **Marvel** backdrop for the live show. I'm just having fun. I don't have to clear it with four other band members or the record company or a management firm, I can just rock! I never understood why bands like **Skid Row**,

Guns 'n Roses, and **Def Leppard**, all the big hard rock bands took like four years between records. I'd go crazy. It's such a corporation. They're all business people. It feels now, like when **Skid Row** first started. It's really fun and everything is full on.

I like the set list you have for your live material, the only song that I don't care for is "I Remember You".

Right on. "Frozen", that's something that **Priest** wish they wrote. I like heavier stuff too. "Monkey Business" is heavy. Even the ballad, "In a Darkened Room", that's something that **Clapton** would write.

I hate ballads but I think "In a Darkened Room" and "Wasted Time" are great ballads.

Coming from someone who hates ballads, that's a great compliment. My idea of a heavy rock ballad is "Beyond the Realms of Death" by **Judas Priest**. When I was doing "Wasted Time" I wasn't trying to write "Never Say Goodbye" by **Bon Jovi**, I was trying for "Beyond the Realms of Death". When you listen to the structure of that song it's very similar to "Beyond the Realms of Death". That totally takes me away when I listen to it. If you listen to my ballads, there's screams a plenty! It's not like "Every Rose Has Its Thorn"! I don't get that. I've got to hear some feeling and some balls.

What's your future plans?

I signed a four album deal with **Spitfire**. I've got my work cut out for me. I will be working with **Michael Wagener** on the first one. I've got tons of heavy tunes laying around. I'm always trying to make *Back in Black* by **AC/DC**. I'll never reach that goal but I'll have a lot of fun trying.

It seems that you haven't even reached your peak yet.

When the first **Skid Row** album came out I was like eighteen. I could scream high but I didn't sound like a man because I was a kid. On *Slave to the Grind* I was twenty three, twenty four so I had my voice. You can listen to my records and you can hear me growing up as a man. If you sing from the diaphragm you can get more powerful, more volume, more range, as you get older. If you sing from the throat you'll end up really hurting. I do my scales, I warm up, and my voice gets way louder than it ever was. I take care of it. I don't smoke cigarettes, I smoke other things. No hard booze. A couple of beers is alright. I look at my voice as an instrument. I gain more control over the voice as I get older. On "Rock and Roll" I scream so high on the verses, I defy anyone to sing along with that. When I did "18 and Life" I never thought I could top that. It's not just higher or more power, it's about emotion, the melodies, the song structure. I love music so much. I'm tired of waiting around. I do shit, then I deal with the consequences. I don't have anything to hide. I can sing, here's a microphone, here's the set, let's fucking do this. I know musicians who treat it like a business. Ace is my hero. When he plays a lead, he's feeling and emotion kicks ass.

In your opinion, who is the epitome of the frontman?

Bon Scott, is the epitome. He's boozing, chicks, screaming his nuts off. No background tapes or bullshit. Raw power. It may not be perfect, but he gave it everything he's got. When I watch his old videos, he's so cool. His power and charisma were unique. As far as vocalists go, I watched **V.H.I** the other night with **Bad Company** live. **Paul Rodgers** is so powerful, classy, and cool. Every two words, he's doing a thousand notes. That's a mature, man vocalist.

What's your favorite local club?

Probably **Birch Hill** because it's so close to my house.

Website: sebastianbach.com

Discography:

1999... *Bring Em Bach Alive* (**Spitfire**)

Current line-up:

Sebastian Bach... vocals

Richie Scarlet... guitars

Paul Crook... guitars

Larry... bass

Mark McConnell... drums

CANNIBAL CORPSE

Interview with guitarist Jack Owen

They are one of the most controversial bands in history, they are considered among the top three bands of their genre, they follow nobody's rules, and they have one of the most loyal legions of fans. You could say that in their thirteen year, seven album career, that **Cannibal Corpse** have established their own set of rules and dedicated themselves to producing quality music and an intense but easily identifiable audience. After last year's *Gallery of Suicide* produced disappointing sales and a mixed response, **Cannibal Corpse** entered a new studio (Village Studios in Texas) with a new producer (Colin Richardson), leaving behind the confines of their hometown studio (Morrisound) and past producers (Jim Morris, Scott Burns). The result is more straight forward and more blasting, leaving behind the experimental and slower pace found on *Gallery of Suicide*—which in my opinion ranks among the best albums ever. I spoke to guitarist Jack Owen about *Bloodthirst*.

How do you feel about *Bloodthirst*?

Everyone's happy with it, especially the band. It was great working with Colin, it was great to work at a different studio. It was a major step for us because all of our other albums were recorded at Morrisound with either Scott Burns or Jim Morris. It was very interesting to go somewhere else. It's a totally different atmosphere and I think it shows. The press loves it so far, it's looking good.

What did Colin add differently than Jim or Scott have previously done?

He's more of a mad scientist. He's got a more hands on approach to every little phase of the album. If something doesn't sound right he'll make sure it does sound right. You know his sound is typical, but good. He does a lot of death metal and grindcore stuff, but he'll do more **Korn** type bands as well.

Where did you record *Bloodthirst*?

In El Paso, Texas. It's right on the border of Mexico, around the Rio Grande River. It's in the middle of nowhere, which is a good thing. You can't get away from the studio, you can't get distracted. It can be like a nine to five job, here the set up is great. It's got a hacienda tacked on to it. It's got a Waco feel to it.

This album seems to have less experimentation and slower material than *Gallery of Suicide*, would you agree?

The songs are more direct, more in your face, and shorter with more blasting. There was a little concern over the last album because there was a lot of slow stuff on it. We remedied that. You listen to the first song, "Pounded into Dust" and it's total blast. All the songs have their own feel but it's more of a blasting album.

How was the response for *Gallery of Suicide*?

The response was good, it kind of died out a couple weeks after the release. The album didn't carry itself as long as it should have. I think we'll change that with this album. It's an album that will transcend time.

You came out with this album rather quick.

We had a solid seven or eight months off with nothing to do so we would just practice, six, seven days a week and put together songs pretty quick. The only thing we had to do during writing was a couple of shows in Mexico and a couple in South America, other than that it was just a straight shot of solid writing. I actually had to rehearse the old songs after the recording. That's how much we were concentrating on the new stuff.

What's your tour plans?

We're gonna be in Europe for Halloween and Thanksgiving, it looks like. We're gonna headline with **Defleshed** opening and the **Angel Corpse**, **Marduk** tour is going on at the same time so we're gonna combine the shows for like ten or eleven festivals, mainly in Germany. The States and Canada looks like February. Then we'll go back over to Europe in April or May for some festivals. Then we'll do some west dates in May and June. We're looking at Japan and Australia next summer some time.

What's the set list looking like?

From the first three albums we'll have two or three songs from those. We'll add an extra song from *The Bleeding*, *Vile*, and *Gallery*. I think we'll have four new ones. It's pretty tough picking a set, we have seventy five songs. You can't please everybody but we'll do something from every album at least.

You've always had to deal with censorship and a narrow minded public, how has that affected the band recently?

The Bob Dole thing died out obviously. We had some problems in New Zealand. There was a murder in Australia, it kind of died out but for awhile we were banned there. It was one of those things where they found one of our cassettes in the car. In Germany for five or six years they've tried to ban our albums and they actually have. They have a censored version of the first three albums. They have a black cover with the logo and the name of the album. We play in Germany we can't perform any of the songs off the first three albums. We can play "Fucked with a Knife" but nothing from the first three albums. **Marduk** has had the same thing happen to them. Maybe one album at a time, we'll see if *The Bleeding* gets banned this year. The band's got an overall concept and we never run out of ideas. Everybody knows what the name of the band is, they know what it stands for, somebody always pops up for a concept for a song or lyrics or artwork. We learned from bands that would always change their style, when we were kids. We never wanted to do that. **Celtic Frost** is a case in point.

What bands have you become fans of recently?

I've been listening to **Arch Enemy** a little bit. Michael Amott, from **Carcass** has brought a new approach, shredding death metal. The **Defleshed** album is great, the one that Metal Blade put out, *Under the Blade*. They have a new one out but I'm not sure what label it's gonna be on. **Krisiun**, they're a new breed of hyper black; **Cryptopsy** and **Angel Corpse**, their new album is killer. That's about it for heavier stuff.

Would you want to discuss the two songs you contributed to *Bloodthirst*?

One was "Spine Splitter". I think I was listening to a little too much **Fear Factory**. It gave me the idea for this chugging riff that went a long with the drums and it gave it a percussive feel. We always like to break it up with something heavy in the middle and that one was to break it up and freak you out a little bit. The other one was "Raped by the Beast", I was listening to **Krisiun**. A lot of people said they can hear some **Possessed** on the new album.

Any significant meaning to the title *Bloodthirst*?

Not really. We were looking across words. We make up a master list of words and titles and phrases up at the practice room, on the wall. After practice we break out the dictionary or thesaurus. Paul came across the word *bloodthirst*. It was a cool album title.

Final comments?

Thank you to everybody for the support and we'll see you on tour.



Discography:

- 1999... *Bloodthirst* (Metal Blade)
- 1998... *Gallery Of Suicide* (Metal Blade)
- 1996... *Vile* (Metal Blade)
- 1994... *The Bleeding* (Metal Blade)
- 1993... *Hammer Smashed Face e.p.* (Metal Blade)
- 1992... *Tomb Of The Mutilated* (Metal Blade)
- 1991... *Butchered At Birth* (Metal Blade)
- 1990... *Eaten Back To Life* (Metal Blade)

Current line-up:

- George Fisher... vocals
- Jack Owen... guitars
- Pat O'Brien... guitars
- Alex Webster... bass
- Paul Mazurkiewicz... drums

CENTURIAN

Interview with drummer Wim Van de Valk

In the early nineties death metal was the genre of metal that rose to the top and proved that there was an audience for the guttural vocals, heavy guitar riffage, and double bass drum barrage. As the nineties close, death metal has been forced underground again. Bands like **Suffocation** and **Oppressor** have broken up, long periods of time have elapsed between **Obituary** and **Broken Hope** albums, Chuck Schuldiner has gone into power metal territory, but there are a few who still embody the spirit and aggressive nature of the Florida death metal scene. If one looks around you see **Malevolent Creation**, **Monstrosity**, and **Morbid Angel** reaching their creative peak. In the underground scene we have bands like **Corpse Vomit**, **Hate Eternal**, **Diabolic**, and **Deeds Of Flesh** in America, while overseas the only newer band making noise are Holland's **Centurian**. I spoke to drummer Wim from the Full Moon artists after a weekend of traveling.

Are you happy with the way this new record came out?

We're quite happy with it. Of course things could be better. We used the same studio as the mini c.d., but they bought new equipment which was better. The sound is raw and extreme, which is good, but it could be better. With the songs, we are very happy with the way everything worked out.

Do you think that people overlook Centurian because there are no gimmicks, it's all about quality music?

It's pure **Centurian**. I don't know what to say about it. We like to concentrate on the music. A lot of bands these days use a lot of energy in things around the band, instead of what they are playing. We concentrate on the music. It's most important. There's so many bands that you see their picture and you see the album, it should be great, then you listen to it and it's very disappointing. They concentrate on images. The most important thing for us is the music. Because we are so busy with the music we don't get the attention to the things around it.

How is the live situation?

This weekend we played a show in the former Eastern Germany. It should be a pretty big show, but the promoters also organized a show about ten kilometers from the place. The two bands are very popular in that area. We had only two hundred or one hundred and fifty people show up. We did not play that well because we had to drive all night for ten hours. We had to wait all day, so we were up for like forty hours before we played the show. It was rough for me, especially playing the drums. I'm also the old guy in the band.

Is Centurian your first band?

No, I've played in a lot of bands before. I'm over thirty now. When I was eighteen or nineteen I played in two thrash bands. I stepped out with two guys and started **Inquisitor**. I started the band and played until the end, about seven years. During my time in **Inquisitor** I played with **Judgement Day** for three years. I played in **Ocult** for a couple of months, only when they did their tour in Europe. Their drummer couldn't make it, so I played with them for two months with **Immortal** and **Marduk**. After seven years with **Inquisitor**, I kicked out some people because of drugs. It was killing the band as well as themselves. The guitarist went to **Ancient Rites** so I was alone. I found new members. At first we wanted to continue **Inquisitor** but the sound changed a lot because of the new members. We decided to start a new band.

Is there any reason why you released the mini album first?

It was an introduction. I was playing in bands for ten years and I didn't want people to forget what I was doing. After six or seven months we already had a lot of songs so we decided to do it quick. We wanted to show everybody that this was a continuation of **Inquisitor** because **Inquisitor** was very well known here in Europe. A lot of people didn't want the band called that so I didn't use that with my new band.

How did you hook up with Full Moon?

When we recorded the demo I sent out about a hundred copies to people I knew here in Europe. I sent two tapes to a guy in Germany, coincidentally, Jon was in Europe at the same time and he was visiting the guy. He heard the tape and he

wanted to sign us. We started negotiating and within a month everything was finished. There were a lot of other labels interested in **Centurian**. There were a lot of labels interested in Holland but if we signed here we would probably do very well in Holland but not across the world. Because our music, death metal, is doing very good in the United States, that it was good to sign with an American label like Full Moon. Our first album sold very well. Full Moon did a lot of promotion for the mini album. Full Moon had us play at the Milwaukee Metal Fest. They've done very good for us. Full Moon is doing so good in the States in promotion that it's also hard for Full Moon to do good promotion in Europe. That's the only thing we don't like. We can do much better here in Europe.

How was your experience in Milwaukee?

Like a dream come true, of course. A lot of people know about it here in Holland. A lot of people from Holland and Europe go there. We're playing eleven shows here in Holland, Belgium, and Germany but we never went away so far. When we arrived at the airport it was obvious that a lot of guys knew us. A lot of bands recognized us because of the good promotion job Full Moon does for us. We got on stage they announced us and hundreds of people were cheering. We played a short set, about thirty minutes and we played drunk. After the show the guy who organizes it, Jack Koshack, talked to us about how things were and he said he would like to have us back for next year. We only had time for one show. We are arranging something so that we can play with another band, then we will play ten songs. We hope it will happen again.

What's your impression of America?

People in Europe think death metal is doing very great in the States. When we talk to a guy in the States, they think the music in Europe is much better. America is not as big for death metal as we think. We hear a lot of bands are telling me that in the States a lot of shows are cancelled. You don't see that happen in Europe. I hear a lot of bands are supposed to play like twenty eight, thirty shows and they end up playing two or three shows. Europe thinks concerts are arranged better here. If a band comes to Europe to play thirty shows, they play thirty shows. In the contract in the U.S.A. they set up allows them to cancel the day before a show if they don't sell enough tickets. If things were arranged a little bit better there could be more shows over there. If you do good promotion the people will come out. We don't want to wait too long for our next album. When you wait too long people are gonna forget you. Maybe we'll do a live e.p. in between albums. We want to hold the attention of the people.

Is there any particular meaning behind the album title, *Choronzonic Chaos Gods*?

In the lyrics there is a constant theme running through them. **Choronzon** is the demon of chaos. They fight against all that is holy. The **Choronzon** are the gate keepers in hell. Every song has its own subject, the music and lyrics fit each other very well. We tried to work them together. Many people ask about the 333 on the album cover. You have 666 is the number of the beast. 333 is the most diabolic a person can be. It's also the number for the **choronzon**. The demon has the number in it. There's two demons of the **choronzon**, together those demons are the beast, 666.

Discography:

1999... *Choronzonic Chaos Gods* (Full Moon)
1998... *Of Purest Fire* e.p. (Full Moon)

Current line-up:

Seth Van de Loo... vocals
Rob Oorthuis... guitars
Patrick Boley... bass
Wim Van de Valk... drums



crawl "420"

Interview with vocalist Dan Miller

The California band **Crawl 420** was brought to my attention by a staff member at *Metal Blade* and I am pleased to have been turned on to this upcoming metal band. **Crawl 420** combine metal, hardcore, and aggression into an in your face concoction that leaves the listener admiring their ability to express their emotions. This is not 90's poser material, instead **Crawl 420** have established a reputation as a hard working band dedicated to their craft. They have released a self titled debut e.p. and now their first full length, *Severe*. This band refuses to wait for attention, they're ready to make their presence known. Here is vocalist Dan Miller to tell us about it.

How do you feel about *Severe*?

The recording itself didn't come out as good as we wanted it to, but it never does. Our live shows are more kick ass than the c.d.'s that we put out. That's not a bad thing. When it goes to people who haven't seen us live, that doesn't represent our band. We pride ourselves on our live show. A lot of energy, a lot of kids having fun- that's what it's all about. I can't go to a show and just stand there.

Give us an introduction to **Crawl 420**.

We started off about five years ago under the name **Corrode**. We went through a lot of changes in the band. The only members still existing from **Corrode** are me and Chris, the bass player. We started out trying to do some heavy stuff. The heavy scene was almost completely dead, ska was just coming in. We grew up with metal, **Anthrax** and **S.O.D.**, so that's what we wanted to do. We changed our name to **Crawl** when we left our drummer. We added the suffix **420** because there's another **Crawl** out there. I've only heard soundbites over the internet, but they're pretty good. We were one of the first bands out here to tune down to A. Our guitar player didn't have a seven string at the time so he put bass strings on it. We got a real thick chunky sound and people dug it. It was fat, but it wasn't death. We developed a following and it's grown from there. We have one other release under **Crawl 420** and it's a self titled e.p. It's got six songs on it. With **Corrode** we had a c.d. called **Fist to Face**. I don't even have a copy of that one.

How has your sound evolved between albums?

I think we've grown quite a bit songwriting wise. The songs used to be 4/4, slam and get off the stage. Now we put a little more thought into our songs, especially in the lyrical content. I put a lot more meaning into the songs this time around. Instead of singing about just anger and hate, it's something everybody can relate to. We've just matured as a band. We had a little more time in the studio, but we're really frustrated with the producer. On the c.d. it says, tracked by Eric, "you owe us a thousand dollars, you prick". He really pushed us on this recording. That's why it sounds different on each song and sounds muffled here and there. We're happy with the song quality.

Where does the band go on the next record?

We keep trying to move on and try new stuff, but there's only so much stuff that you can do. Everything's been done already. You're taking something that someone's already done and adding your own flavor. We like the niche we're in now. We're not death, we're not thrash, we're in between. I guess you'd call it power groove. There's not many bands out here doing good power groove, they're trying to. The new songs we've written now are going in the same direction of this c.d. Every band that was doing decent metal turned to **Korn** and **Coal Chamber** clones because that's the money maker. If you're doing it for the money, that's cool, but if you're doing it because you like the music- that's why we do it. We love

metal, metal's been there since day one for us so we're gonna keep doing it.

It seems there's a hardcore influence as well.

There's a **Sick Of It All**, **Hatebreed** vibe. We played with both of them and went off. It's cool because we can transverse in between crowds. We can play to death metal and hardcore. We play with a lot of national acts and it helps us to grow from their influences. **Sick Of It All** are really cool and they've been doing it for a long time.

What are your goals for *Severe*?

We want to get it out there and have the people hear the new stuff. A lot of the stuff was written for that c.d. and meant to open the ears of the fans out there. Our first c.d. sold over twenty two hundred quick. That's pretty good for a band that has almost no promotion at all. People wanted something new. We'd like someone to back us next and get something with a little power and crunch behind. We're looking for something that represents us live. We're looking for labels. There's a thousand bands out there trying to do the same thing we are, you just have to bust a nut and go get it. The kids out here are trend followers. These bands that sound like **Korn** make money because the clubs want them. We have a solid following but there's only so many places we can play because of our crowd. They don't hurt each other, but they get into a frenzy. That's what it's all about. Releasing some energy and having a good time.

Any tour plans?

We're working on the West Coast now. It's a college situation, that's our target audience and you can get a lot of radio play on the college stations. There's absolutely nothing for our style of music out here.

We're all family men. We do this with our whole heart and soul but to be out there away from our family with no compensation is tough to do. We've had a lot of interest so we're hoping for the best.

I wondered what is your opinion of your vocal approach?

My singing evolved from having input from other people. Kirk from **Crowbar** said I've got a great voice but I should just belt it out more. That goes against the grain of everything I've been taught to me. There's a lot of passion in what I sing so that makes it more varied. I

sing about stuff that means something to me. You can only be angry for so long. The first song is written about the Native tribe, our bass player is Indian and they are getting screwed out here. He was at pow wows and pickets protesting the taking away of their land. I see what he's going through and I wrote something about it. It means something to me. It's meant to be cold, it's meant to be cold, but sometimes it's meant to be flavorful too.

Discography:

1999... *Severe* (self)
1997... *Crawl 420* (self)

Current line-up:

Dan Miller... vocals
Joe Young... guitars
Chris Dorame... bass
Tony Rhoden... drums



CREST OF DARKNESS

Interview with vocalist/ bassist Ingar Amlien

When I heard *The Ogress* I was immediately impressed with the open minded music this black metal album contained, as well as the progressive tendencies of some of the songs. When I found out that the main man behind this band was former **Conception** bassist Ingar Amlien, I was initially shocked but soon things fell into place. **Conception** released four albums of acclaimed power metal on Noise Records before disbanding in 1997. Their final album, *Flow*, is nothing short of brilliant. While vocalist Roy Khan joined **Kamelot**, guitarist Tore Ostby created the weird **Ark**, and Amlien formed the extreme metal band **Crest Of Darkness**. *The Ogress* is actually the third record released from this band. Among the musicians joining Amlien are former **Conception** drummer Arve Heimdahl and Roy Khan joins him for two songs. This is a band to watch out for. I spoke to Ingar about this exciting band.

How did you get Crest Of Darkness together?

When we ended **Conception** it was mainly because we had to do different things on our own. I had this idea of making a project with darker, more aggressive music. I wanted to keep something from **Conception**. I guess it's quite different but I think I learned quite a lot about production and making an album with good musicians and such things. It's quite different from **Conception**. On *The Ogress* is Arve Heimdahl, he was also in **Conception**, and Khan is singing a few parts here and there. Right now I'm trying to do something new with **Crest Of Darkness**. I'm trying to get together a more stable line-up. The first few years of **Crest Of Darkness** had different musicians on the recordings but I see after *The Ogress* album we are starting to do a tour quite soon in Europe. To become a good live band we need a stable line-up and a more regular band. For the moment, I have a new drummer and a new guitar player. In the studio I will continue to do a lot of guitar myself.

I heard that Conception was disappointed with the reaction to Flow, but I didn't know if this was true or not.

I guess we were a little bit disappointed with the latest album by **Conception**. We thought it might sell better than it really did. We were happy with the results ourselves, and I think all our fans liked the *Flow* album. Things might have been different if it had sold incredible amounts of copies, but I feel that it was time for doing something new. It's great to still be great friends and we are helping each other with different things now and then. There's no problem for me to talk to the drummer or Roy, from **Conception**- we're still very good friends.

Did you play on Ark?

I haven't heard the final result myself. I'm going to meet the guitar player tonight and get the album from him then. I'm playing on two songs. It's been a long time since I did it. I've heard that the new **Kamelot** album will be really great. Everybody says they have high expectatons for this album. I think Roy will have more influence on the song writing.

How would you describe Crest Of Darkness?

I have to find some kind of label to describe the music, but I feel the black metal label doesn't fit **Crest Of Darkness**. There are definitely elements of black metal there but it's also got progressive elements and older heavy metal. When I'm writing the songs I'm not thinking about whether there's a special label or not. I'm trying to do something that's personal. I'm trying to have a certain atmosphere on the **Crest Of Darkness** albums. I want it to be dark, melancholic but also aggressive. I have an idea behind everything I'm doing, but I'm not afraid to do things that other black metal bands won't use. I'm doing things the way I want.

Is this a concept album?

Almost all the lyrics are inspired by this story about a female mass murderer called Belle Gunnes. She has different nicknames, the Ogress was one of them. *The Ogress* is based upon her story. The title song, I come close to the real story. I wanted it to be a little bit mystical. I didn't want to tell the whole story. In the beginning I tried to put historical facts into the lyrics. She came from Norway, but she immigrated to America when she was about nineteen or twenty. As she became older, she was once married but she became widowed. She was living on a farm and she was quite wealthy. She wanted to get more money and she was advertising to get new men to come to her place. After she would get in touch with these men,

a lot of them came to her. She said if they were serious about her, they had to bring some money to her. After the men came to her place, this woman killed them. She didn't get to know the men very much. They don't know for sure how many she killed, but they are talking about more than forty persons. I can picture this woman, the place she was living, and sometimes it's difficult to believe. She had a special room where she took the dead bodies and she cut them into pieces, later she buried them on the farm. I use this story as a background. In the title song I'm quite close to the real story. I'm letting Kristin, the female singer, behave like Belle Gunnes; then I'm coming in between her lines and telling the truth. Not all of them have very much to do with the Ogress, but ninety percent of the songs have this woman in my thoughts. I'm not sure if it's right to call it a concept album.

Was it your intention to do the vocals when you formed Crest Of Darkness?

It was my plan to play guitars and do the vocals. I had a lot of ideas in mind when we split up **Conception**. I played a lot of instruments and I felt that I'd like to do a lot of recording myself. There's different reasons behind it. I wanted to have as much control as possible. When I listen to the album again I feel that this is something special. It doesn't sound like anything else. If I had other musicians to handle the guitars, if I had other people to produce the album, and I had a lot of other people come in with their opinions I would say some of the originality would have passed away somewhere. I had such strong ideas and I was sure of what I wanted to do. I feel that the songs and the final results are the most important, I could have fifty musicians work with me doing as many of my ideas as possible, but the it's the result that's the most important thing for me.

Tell me about the other two albums.

There's a mini c.d. with four songs called *Quench My Thirst* and there's one full length album called *Sinister Scenario*. *The Ogress* is the third release from **Crest Of Darkness**. The vocals, my kind of singing is almost the same. With the words I'm doing something different from song to song. *The Ogress* album compared to the first two releases on Head Not Found, I'm doing all the vocals myself. The songs in general have a lot in common with *The Ogress*. I like the albums very much. I would say *Sinister Scenario*, for some people, is a little bit strange. Personally, I think it has a lot in common with *The Ogress*. I would say there's more variations on *The Ogress*, especially because of the vocals. I'm surprised about the distribution. I know it's a difficult market with releasing this music but it worries me a bit because a lot of people believe *The Ogress* is the first album from **Crest Of Darkness**. It worries me because the first couple of releases are really good. When it comes to Listenable Records, they have done a very good job. It's completely different then what's been done before.

Final comments?

I would like to say we are working very hard with new songs these days. We are planning to go into the studio in March of next year. Everything's ready more or less with the studio. The next album will be released in August next year, maybe earlier.

Discography:

- 1999... *The Ogress* (Listenable)
- 1998... *Sinister Scenario* (Voices Of Wonder)
- 1997... *Quench My Thirst* (Voices Of Wonder)

Current line-up:

- Ingar Amlien... vocals, guitars, and bass
- Kristin Fjellseth... vocals
- Jan Petter Ringvold... keyboards
- Arve Heimdahl... drums

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CRIMSON GLORY

Interview with guitarist Jon Drenning

With all these excellent progressive power metal bands coming out in the mid to late 90's it is unfortunate that many of the originators of the genre are not offering anything groundbreaking. While both **Fates Warning** and **Dream Theater** continue to put out high quality albums, neither add anything new. **Queensryche** are a mere shadow of their 80's creativity. When **Crimson Glory** decided to reform a couple of years ago, my hope for a classic band to return to form was reinvigorated. Their self titled debut and *Transcendence* were two of the most original and powerful records of the time. Vocalist Midnight established himself as one of the most unique singers ever and although he was unable to take place in this reformation, new vocalist Wade Black offers a fresh perspective without betraying the roots of **Crimson Glory**. I spoke to Jon Drenning about *Astronomica*. As you will see, he is appreciative of all the support and loyal to the sound that the band established with their first two records.

What do you think about the new album?

Considering everything that we went through I'm very pleased. We did everything ourselves, total autonomy. Other than the guys in the band we didn't have any outside influences. We built our own studio, we did all the engineering and mixing and I did the production myself. It worked to our advantage on this record because I really wanted to establish the band with the original vision that we intended for the band. We were really disgruntled with the way the *Strange and Beautiful* album came out. This is an album that closes up a chapter in the band's history because this is our third album in our minds. At the same time it is also a new beginning to the band. I wanted to make a record that really followed *Transcendence* the way it should have been but at the same time make a record for the future. Hopefully, this record satisfies the old fans and the new fans that we have yet to gain.

What caused the delay in getting this record to the stores?

Last year, half way through recording the record we lost all the data- the first material and the backup material. It was through some very mysterious events. There's no explanation for it other than that somebody had to do it. It was some kind of electronic espionage. I can't tell you who or why but it was really strange. We actually had somebody break into the studio. It was really eerie and it was really disheartening at the time. Fortunately we overcame the whole event. We had some serious concern because we were wondering who or why someone was doing this. Maybe it was relating to some of the U.F.O. material that we had attained. It was like a real *X-Files* episode for awhile. We started watching our studio for to see if we were followed. It was really strange, it was like a story within a story. It wasn't even something you could conjure up. We were able to re-record the record again from scratch. We had cassette tapes of some of the songs so we were able to do again and even better the second time. If we were gonna do this again we were gonna make it better than it was. We never intended this record to be *Transcendence* number two, but it had to be an album that was more suitable to follow *Transcendence*. It had to be the album that was gonna bridge the gap between our old singer and our new singer. I'm very proud of what we accomplished on our earlier records and I'm equally proud of what we've accomplished with our new album and I think that the band is really built for success this time around for the future.

I hear a lot of people were disappointed in *Strange and Beautiful* but I thought it had some good tracks.

I think it's a good record, it's just not a **Crimson Glory** record. If any other band had made that record it would've gotten much better reviews. Because we made that record, it wasn't what people were anticipating. Prior to making *Strange and Beautiful* we had a chemistry writing our songs. Jeff and I would do all the primary songwriting and Midnight was doing the primary lyrics. For some reason on the third record he got more involved with the music. He also plays guitar. On the first album he would submit several songs, and we would always take one song. On the first album we took "Lost Reflection", on the second album we used the song "Transcendence", on the third record he wanted to use a lot more of his material. It was written acoustically so it really changed the whole complexion of our sound. It was something that I was very unhappy with but we had an obligation to finish this record. If we didn't give Midnight his way he was gonna walk out then. We had to finish a record that we really didn't want to make. When this record was done I put the brakes on. I wasn't going down that road again. There's

no way in hell I was gonna make another *Strange and Beautiful* record. Although it is a good record it isn't a good **Crimson Glory** representation. It was important for us to make *Astronomica* a **Crimson Glory** record, an album that fans should truly appreciate. Although Midnight is not singing on it, our new singer Wade Black is equally talented, equally special, and equally unique. He's a guy that we can really build a strong future around. I didn't want to get another Midnight, that would be totally redundant. Midnight is so unique in his own way, there's no point in finding somebody who sounds like Midnight. When I saw Midnight for the first time I got the same feeling as when I saw Wade. Wade's a guy who is really raw, he's really inexperienced, he really doesn't know what he's doing yet, but he's got a cool voice and he needs to be coached. That's exactly what we did with Midnight and that's exactly what we're gonna do with Wade. We're very fortunate to have come across two talented, unique singers who could really contribute to this musical genre in a positive way.

You discovered Wade in Tampa, correct?

Yes, he was in a band called **Lucian Black**. Jeff and I were going to a show and we were playing in a band called **Crush** at the time, and we heard Wade. We couldn't see him but we could hear him. This guy had an awesome voice. The band that he was in wasn't very musical, they were like a death power metal band. I introduced myself to him after the show, he told me he loved **Crimson Glory**. I wasn't making a **Crimson Glory** record at the time, this was only in 1993, 1994. I told him to give me his telephone number and I'd call him some time. I didn't call him for three years. I wasn't ready to make a **Crimson Glory** record at that time. I didn't want to make a record that would fall on deaf ears, I didn't think the music scene was conducive for us. Jeff and I played the waiting game, we were really patient and waited until the time was right. We approached Midnight at first. We did want to give Midnight every chance again to do this, but his heart wasn't in it and his vocal style has changed so much that he wasn't really into the condition to sing this way anymore. He's not in the music business at all anymore. He doesn't have the durability to sing like this anymore. It wouldn't be fair to us to put out another record to say it's a reunion. I didn't think we could be true to the fans because I don't think Midnight could deliver the type of performance that we needed. I knew Wade was a hungry young singer who could come in and would be very coachable and a guy who would put in a tremendous effort. He's not only a great singer but he's also a tremendous person and individual. Before we handed the reins over to a new singer in this band it had to be somebody who handled the job both as a singer and as a person. Even if he's not your primary songwriter, he is a flag bearer for the band. He is the foundation, he is the centerpiece. We needed to have a centerpiece that we could build a future with. He is a confident individual and a healthy minded individual and very loyal. I couldn't have anybody better and I'm very pleased. I was very meticulous and very careful about who I got to do the job here.

Why did Midnight originally leave the band?

It was mutual between all of us. I was the one who put the brakes on the whole project. We told Midnight that we weren't gonna go any farther with him at this stage because he changed the style so much. We had lost our original sound that we intended, the whole vision of the band had changed, the complexion of the songs. We just told him that we would be better off not going in that direction anymore. We had several shows that we had to do. Like two weeks worth of shows, ending with the Foundations Forum in Los Angeles. Midnight wasn't even in the condition to sing live. He couldn't. We did one show with Midnight for *Strange and Beautiful* in Tampa, Florida and it was a complete disaster. We didn't want to complete the tour with Midnight, we couldn't. It wasn't that we didn't want to, we couldn't. We had to get somebody and that's when David Van Landing came in and replaced Midnight for two weeks to fulfill our obligations and that was the end of it. Ever since then Midnight has not been in the business anymore.

Was "The Other Side of Midnight" a tribute Midnight or a sequel to "Lost Reflection"?

Absolutely. I thought it was important because after hearing "Lost Reflection" I think of Midnight. Obviously we couldn't re-record that song, but rather make it a continuing saga. That way our new fans can become a part of it. I thought it was a good idea to pay tribute to Midnight and continue the saga.

What was Erotic Liquid Culture?

That was nothing to do with **Crimson Glory** at all. That was a project that Jeff and I, and Ravi did with David. David had come in and sang and we liked David so much as a person we wanted to do something on the side. We did an album that took us three weeks to write and record. It was something we did for fun and it was the first time David would sing on an album. He was very happy to finally get a chance to sing on a record. It was really clear that we weren't making a **Crimson Glory** record. It was totally a different style. It was a way of cleansing ourselves from the whole *Strange and Beautiful* mistake. It did us a lot of good to get on with our lives. We're gonna be offering it on our website. We're gonna put a disclaimer, if you like **Crimson Glory**- this is not like **Crimson Glory**. It's totally different, but it's good. We recorded with Neil Kernon out in Texas. We did a good job mixing it so it sounds good. David is a great singer and he ended up singing with Michael Schenker, on his live album. David is a very talented individual and very good friend of mine. He got the job with Michael Schenker because of the c.d. he did with us. It got him recognition and I was very happy for him.

Did you record anything with Crush?

We made a c.d. with **Crush** too. We recorded over twenty songs. This album again was done in the matter of a couple of months. It was totally different than **Erotic Liquid Culture**. **Erotic Liquid Culture** was more commercial and funky groove sounding, **Crush** was more heavy funk. It was totally different, neither band was like **Crimson Glory**. The **Crush** c.d. came out pretty good itself. We'll be offering that on our website too.

What's your tour plans for this record?

We're going to Europe in the beginning of January next year. We've got shows in Germany, France, Greece, and Italy. Then we're gonna head over to Japan for a week or so and then we're gonna head back to America in early spring. In March we'll start doing shows in America. We're gonna head back to Europe again to do a more extensive tour. It will also include the really large festivals in Germany, Holland, and places like that. We have a lot of touring planned. We also have ideas for the next record already put together. We have the album title for the next record, we have the album cover put together, we have several songs composed. We wanna get the album out in October or November. If we end up not touring so much we'll try to get it out before Christmas of next year.

What would your set list look like?

We're gonna be doing several of the old songs, as many as we can because there's a lot of songs that we love equally as our fans do. You're gonna hear a lot of songs off the first record like "Valhalla", "Dragon Lady", "Azrael", "Mayday"; from the second record we'll do songs like "In Dark Places", "Masque of Red Death", "Where Dragons Rule", "Lady of Winter", as many of the heavy songs as we can do. Wade does an excellent job on the early stuff. He has a lot more energy, a lot of power and more aggression than Midnight does so it's heavier overall. When people come to see us they better fasten their seat belts.

Has there been any consideration for Crimson Glory to play at the Power Mad Festival?

I talked to the gentleman today who does the Power Mad Festival. He told me he would be more than honored to have us headline it in August. I told him that it would be something that we would be very interested in, provided that we're in the States at the time. It might be something that actually works out.

Your band has been many a topic of conversation in the progressive power metal scene, many people feel Crimson Glory were visionaries.

We try to be visionary. I always thought **Crimson Glory** were a band about the future. We try to set the standards that other bands will follow. We were overshadowed by **Queensryche**, but over the course of time our music has withstood even better. I'm very pleased and very honored that people think that. I told somebody today that you could release either of those first records and they would be equally received today. That's how you determine a great band. I'm not saying we're a great band but I've always said the great bands always make records that are timeless. We're very fortunate that so many people consider us to be in the same vein as all these other great bands. It's nice to carve your own niche in this space of time. We were very young, we were teenagers when we started **Crimson Glory**. We're not much older than the bands that are starting now, and we're not as old as most of these established bands. I think we can be a leader into the new millenium. I think we can lead this power metal genre to the next millenium with *Astronomica*.

How did you hook up with Doc?

Steve has always been a very good friend of mine and we've always had a lot of

respect and admiration for each other and we've followed each other's bands and careers. We started in the same city, on the same record company- which happened to rip us both off. We have a lot of similarities and our music is similar. When we started to make this album I was demoing and I called Steve and told him he was the only one I wanted to play on this record. "I don't wanna go out auditioning twenty people, I don't wanna go out on the internet telling people I'm looking for a drummer- I want you." He listened to this demo and he loved it. I wanted him in a band again and to recapture that spirit from when he was in **Savatage**. He feels great. I'm very happy for him. As long as he wants to be in this band, he's welcome to stay.

Do you still live in Tampa?

I live in Anna Marie, Florida. It's just south of Tampa on a small island. I live in house on a beach on a small island by myself. It's very secluded, it's very **Crimson Glory** like. We've never been media hogs, we're very private individuals and I think it's added to the mystery of the band.

Were you worried about fans not liking *Astronomica* because of Midnight's departure?

There's fans that are huge Midnight fans, and they have every right to be- Midnight is a very special singer but in order for **Crimson Glory** to come back and have a future we had to make the only decision that we could make and that was to get a new singer that was prepared to do what we needed to do. I think you can look forward to many great **Crimson Glory** records in the future and you're gonna see a lot of development and growth within the band. You can see Wade's got the raw aggression, the raw power- we've got to harness that, we've got to get him to convey the lyrics more emotionally at times. It's like Midnight was early on. Midnight had a chance to grow with the band, Wade got thrown into the fire so he's learning on the job. It's really fun to watch Wade because he's like a kid in a candy store. He's so grateful, you could never find a better person.

Final comments?

I'd like to say to the fans that read your story, how flattered we are and how proud we are of our fans for keeping so loyal for so many years and holding our band in such esteem and high regard. When we're doing a project we feel very good about it, but its fans that really determine your fate. We've been very fortunate to have very good fans that have kept the **Crimson Glory** music alive. We're very honored.

Discography:

1999... *Astronomica* (Spitfire)
1991... *Strange And Beautiful* (M.C.A.)
1988... *Transcendence* (Roadrunner)
1986... *Crimson Glory* (Roadrunner)

Current line-up:

Wade Black... vocals
Jon Drenning... guitars
Ben Jackson... guitars
Jeff Lords... bass
Steve Wacholz... drums

Website:

www.crimsonglory.com



DANZIG

Interview with vocalist Glenn Danzig

When I had the opportunity to go to the E-Magine offices to interview Glenn Danzig it was a chance I could not refuse. When I was a teenager we would jam Danzig tunes from his self titled debut and "Twist of Cain" was one of the first songs I learned to play on guitar. Danzig is most revered by some for his work with the legendary horror punk band the Misfits through the late 70's to the early 80's. Some know him from his first post Misfits project Samhain who released three albums through the mid-80's. He later put together Danzig and released their self titled debut in 1988. Along with King's X's debut, these two albums represented a fresh sound in the stagnant late 80's. After "Mother" became a surprise hit via the e.p. *Thralldemonsweatlive*, Danzig appeared to be reaching unprecedented heights. Glenn found drummer Joey Castillo and bassist Josh Lazie and released his Hollywood debut, *Blackacidevil* in 1995. It was a drastic departure for Danzig, its pulsating techno beats and often effect laden vocal styles turned off traditional Danzig fans. He has now signed a deal with E-Magine Entertainment and has bestowed *Satan's Child* upon the public. Elements from *Blackacidevil* are still present but the songwriting has stepped up a notch and some dirty Black Sabbath (pun intended) riffs. Here is the soft spoken, almost quiet Glenn to tell us about it.

What are your thoughts about the new record and album deal?

What I tried to do was take all the Danzig records including *Thrall* and take all my favorite elements out of all of them and try to mix them with new flavors. I like it. Working with Christoff (E-Magine co-president) is great because I've worked with him for many years. He ran B.M.G. over in Germany, they had us, Guns 'n Roses, and Slayer. They are very artist oriented.

Are you trying to create a big internet promotional attack?

I've been involved with the internet for quite awhile because of my comic book company and because of Danzig's fanbase. When Christoff first approached me about doing this kind of deal, we still have traditional distribution, but he started make more and more sense and I was really unhappy with the major label deal. Same with Def American too, not getting paid and that's why I left Rubin's label and why everyone left that label, then Hollywood the whole thing about Disney flipping out about having us on the label. I had my own label anyway so I said this is the way to go. There's gonna be tons of stuff. A Samhain boxed set, I got all the stuff back from Hollywood so we're gonna rerelease *Blackacidevil* because it's been out of print for awhile now. A Danzig double live record.

Is "Lilin" related to the idea of Lilith and Kali related to vampiric literature?

Yeah, Lilin are the children of Lilith. Kali is the blood goddess. Kali is something I got into a while ago. When I did the *Death Dealer* stuff I incorporated some of her warriors in there. They have the scarification with the pebbles going down their skin, on their nose, tattoos on their face. They guarded Kali.

Is Jaguar God going to be made into a movie?

They were talking about doing a bunch of different movie projects. *Grub Girl* is about a hooker, is going to be three different cuts- an adult movie, a Troma midnight movie, and a director's cut with a more violence because in the adult world you can't make movies with violence and sex, otherwise you get into trouble. Laws change as you go over state lines. *Venus Domina* which has no sex but is creepy dominatrix shit- I want to make it a cross between a snuff film and a Cronenberg movie. Like the stuff the Japanese are doing straight to video, the really crazy, creepy camera angles. It's really disturbing when you watch it. I don't like mediocre stuff. I'd rather people either loved it or hated it. I want an extreme reaction.

What did you think of the mixed response afforded *Blackacidevil*?

I didn't think it would cause that much of a reaction. When it first came out to radio, we were on tour with *Ozzfest*, and they were adding "Sacrifice" like they were with "Mother". This was wild. Some die hard Danzig fans hated it, some loved it. There were people who never liked Danzig that came out and said this was cool. It was really weird to see the reaction.

Do you feel that *Blackacidevil* was that different?

There's a guy I used to know who is a magazine reviewer, and he went on to A&R at Roadrunner, called me and said "man, I love the record, it's the best Samhain record you've done." We moved back towards that roadway starting with *Danzig 3* and moving on. Some of the older fans loved this album because of the underground vibe to it. People who liked "Mother" and that kind of stuff were like "what is this?". Either way it did what it was supposed to do which is clear the air. Now I see so many bands imitate the stuff we did on that album.

Look at Rob Zombie!

I can't believe, he snagged our logo. I was at a radio station the other night and they show me this collection that says *Seven Hits from Hell*, we had a Misfits record called *Three Hits from Hell*. I remember when David Letterman was gonna use his Ten Top at C.B.S. and N.B.C. threatened to sue him because it was intellectual property. I just want the credit, I don't care about a check.

What happened to the line-up of John Christ, Chuck Biscuits, and Eerie Von?

Joey, our current drummer did the tour for *Danzig 4* because Biscuits was gone. Enough said about that, there's other stuff but I don't wanna say anything. John and I agreed that he was gonna leave the band as far back as when we had Biscuits and Eerie. It started out really good but John wanted to go into that Yngwie, guitar hero stuff, and old school Judas Priest stuff. That's not where Danzig was. We've always been a cross between punk and metal. John wanted to be Eddie Van Halen, Yngwie, or something. As he tried to do that stuff it just became annoying. When we would record he saw it as an opportunity to play a lead and it was destroying the song. It really started to bug the band. Eerie left on his own to do his own thing. I would've let him stay, now I wouldn't want him to come back because we're a different band. I'm very happy with Joey and Lazie. Now our new guitar player is Todd Youth, from D-Generation and Murphy's Law.

How is your comic book company doing?

We're gonna put out comics sporadically, but we're gonna be moving into media stuff now. It actually costs the same amount to put out a comic as it does a low budget movie. We're gonna be doing direct to video releases and some theatrical releases. We've got the *Satanika* movie now, we've got a budget.

Were you surprised by the success of "Mother" back in '93?

I always liked the song. In the beginning on *Danzig 1* up to when M.T.V. freaked out about the video, they said that Rick gave them the unedited video. It was funny because six years later, we did it without any airplay or videoplay. The song would be on *Headbanger's Ball* and they would cut it in half, even if they would play us at all. It was cool when we put out that e.p. to stop bootleggers. We came back from tour and the record company said "you won't believe this but "Mother" is being played all over the country". I'd rather it be us or Black Flag, than some really boring, middle of the road crap.

Discography:

1999... *Satan's Child* (E-Magine)
1996... *Blackacidevil* (Hollywood)
1994... *4* (Def American)
1993... *Thralldemonsweatlive* e.p. (Def American)
1992... *How The Gods Kill* (Def American)
1990... *Lucifuge* (Def American)
1988... *Danzig* (Def American)

Current line-up:

Glenn Danzig... vocals
Todd Youth... guitars
Josh Lazie... bass
Joey Castillo... drums

dark tranquillity

Interview with vocalist Michael Stanne

Not many bands can lay a claim to being trendsetters. That is just what **Dark Tranquillity** did back in the early 90's along with the likes of **In Flames**. The Swedish death metal style that has become stereotyped as the Gothenburg sound was first heard when **Dark Tranquillity** released *Skydancer* back in 1993. After signing with Osmose the band proceeded to release *The Gallery* and *The Mind's I*. Both records expanded on the original ideas they presented on their debut. Aggressive vocals with intense arrangements and intricate riffing, yet melodic, the band created a scene. Despite the critical acclaim, **Dark Tranquillity** were unable to progress much. Their label, Osmose, has become a haven for extreme music and **Dark Tranquillity's** melodic tendencies did not quite fit their roster. Many viewed *The Mind's I* as a great album, however it was more of the same music that appeared on *The Gallery*. A change was needed. The band signed a deal with Century Media and have now released *Projector*, a diverse album that does expand upon their original sound. Even more melody has been injected and vocalist Mikael Stanne gives a diversified performance.

Dark Tranquillity has become exciting again.

How do you feel about *Projector*?

It feels really good. We've finally got used to it now. We recorded it in August of last year and now we finally have it in the stores.

What happened with Osmose?

We were supposed to release the album with Osmose, they paid for it, but we got cold feet. We felt the album was gonna be different and we changed our approach to the whole thing. Osmose always have the same thing going for them. They have their own way of distribution and their own way of promoting, and their look in advertisements. That didn't blend well with what we were doing so we said let's send out the record to other labels and see what they think. We got an amazing response and we got a manager who coordinated all these talks and negotiations. We said to Osmose, we're gonna go somewhere else and we bought the album from them. After these long negotiations with these labels we decided to go with Century Media. They were the coolest and were really open to our stuff. The other labels were control freaks. They wanted us to record new songs that were faster and they didn't like the cover. Osmose has been so great for us. We always get what we need and everything's on time, they have the same way of doing things over and over again. We didn't want the same promotions and tours- minimal. We didn't want to have the same kind of advertisements- a half page and misspelled. We wanted something more serious. No hard feelings were involved.

What's the idea behind the album title and the artwork?

In order to get all these frustrations out I had to see it from a new perspective. I had to get it away from me and get a different perspective. The album deals with a lot of personal anguish. Taking a step away from it made everything bigger because you analyze it even more. It blows out of proportion. It gets bigger, like what a projector does for images. The cover was Niklas' way of interpreting the lyrics. It's melancholy.

What makes this album different from *The Mind's I*?

It doesn't have this focus on aggression or intensity that *Mind's I* had, and it doesn't have the focus of technicality and complex stuff that *The Gallery* had. It's more song based, it's more emotional. We could take the times with every song and explore different possibilities with the arrangements. It's more honest. It's what we really wanted to do. A step away from what we were known to do and a step ahead without losing contact with what we always have loved.

Is there any reason why you have maintained such a steady line-up?

We went through a line-up change recently, but more about that later. It's still me, Niklas, Martin, and Anders who have been there all the time. We were writing everything more or less and the core of it. Me, Niklas, and Martin went to kindergarten together. Anders and I have been best friends since we were nine or

ten. We share a lot of experiences. We know each other so well that we communicate in a different way. We know what each other thinks all the time. If I come up with a song concept or a riff, I know how the other guys are gonna feel about it from the start. We always try to challenge each other with new stuff. Everybody has their own life besides the band, but we all hangout all the time. We go out on weekends, so it works really well. Fredrik isn't in the band anymore because he didn't have the time, because he's such a busy guy and he had a baby on the way at the time. It caused a conflict and either he took the time or he left. It was really sad because he's great friend and a brilliant guitar player. Martin went from bass to guitar, and we got a keyboard player. He's an old friend of ours. We started auditioning bass players but nothing worked out. We got a friend who knew what we were about, he's been a fan of ours forever and he always wanted to be in the band. He said he'd quit his job if we wanted him tomorrow and he did.

Do you think that all the people who identify the Gothenburg sound with *At The Gates*, *In Flames*, and *Dark Tranquillity*; have overlooked what your band is all about?

I don't know. **At The Gates** had great success with *Slaughter of the Soul* and they had a really great label to support it. It came out everywhere and everyone knew about it. It's a great record. **In Flames** are on Nuclear Blast and they're getting a lot of exposure and a lot of press, but we have stayed barren. We've continued playing but we've stayed low key. There's always talk about this Gothenburg scene. It's feels pretty weird but I've accepted it. We've all been friends for a long time, we grew up together. We listened to the same music and we came from the same neighborhood. It's very natural. The scene really happened in '88, '89, and '90. It was

really exciting. That's when all these bands started out. **Nihilist** started before they became **Entombed**, and **Grotesque** who later became **At The Gates**. We had this club here called Velvet and it was the coolest place. All these bands played there, from industrial to brutal electronic and death metal. We went there and exchanged demos. We just hung out there. A lot of foreign bands came there, like **Carcass**, **Master**. That's when it really felt like a scene. Everybody was there and it felt like we had this secret. A lot of bands started at this time and that inspired bands to start later.

Final comments?

I hope that people will open their ears to the record and take it for what it is and not expect another album of what we've done before but another step ahead.

Discography:

1999... *Projector* (Century Media)
1997... *The Mind's I* (Osmose)
1996... *Enter Suicide Angels* e.p. (Osmose)
1995... *The Gallery* (Osmose)
1995... *Of Chaos And Eternal Night* e.p. (Spinefarm)
1993... *Skydancer* (Spinefarm)

Current line-up:

Mikael Stanne... vocals
Niklas Sundin... guitars
Michael Niklasson... guitars
Martin Henriksson... bass
Anders Jivarp... drums
Martin Brandstom... keyboards



DIRTY BROWN EYE

Interview with guitarist Ron Kachnic

One band that immediately caught my ears was **Dirty Brown Eye**. I received their self-titled debut a few months ago and I was immediately impressed with their diversified assault. **Dirty Brown Eye** have influences that draw from hardcore as equally as death metal, it all adds together into a sound that is all their own. They refuse to follow any trends and they don't have any preconceived notions of what they should sound like. I spoke to guitarist Ron Kachnic, who also doubles in the death metal band **Malignancy**, about **Dirty Brown Eye**.

How did Dirty Brown Eye get together?

Brown Eye comes from three separate bands from the early 1990's. The first is **Insult II Injury** from Century Media Records. That's our lead singer Jim Gibbons. He stumbled into a rehearsal room while he was still in **Insult II Injury**. He saw us three guys jamming in a room in Westchester. I was in a band called **Disfunction**, Arthur was singing for a band called **Brick**, and Jim Horan played drums for a band called **Incontinento**. At first it was the three of us jamming, we had a singer and we kept the name **Incontinento**. We played a few shows in Long Island. Our singer, Chris, left to work on the Star Trek show in California, **Deep Space Nine**. This guy from **Insult II Injury** kept stumbling into our rehearsals and he asked to audition. This guy's in a signed band and he's asking us to audition! It took two or three months to get the name **Dirty Brown Eye**. We moved rehearsals to this bar that really made **Dirty Brown Eye** the band that it is, the bar is called the Sanitarium in Yonkers. We practiced in there during the day on the stage while the old timers were drinking. These old timers would watch pornos during the day. One day the bartender asked one of the old guys if he liked giving it in the brown eye, it's an oldtimers term meaning stick it up your ass. Wally said "sure I like sticking it up the dirty brown eye". We heard that and we got the name **Dirty Brown Eye**. We didn't give three shits about the name, we wanted the music to speak for itself.

What do you hope to accomplish musically with Dirty Brown Eye?

We want to cross over. In the old days everyone said cross over with **D.R.I.**, to me I didn't hear any cross over. Cross over, to me, goes from **Faith No More/ Mr. Bungle** to **Suffocation**. When I play these metal fests we want to impress everyone there. We don't push any evil, even though our songs have to do with reality. You can still be heavy as fuck, but we don't talk about the devil or gore—that's all been done.

Have you had any label interest?

M.I.A. showed interest, **Candiria's** label. They called us up and wanted to hear stuff. I sent them stuff, I got feedback, but I haven't had a sit down with them. I have a management team working on it. It's looking grim to me. I want to play **Ozz Fest** with this music and blow away bands like **Slipknot** that say they're heavy. In October I was at Jack Owens from **Cannibal Corpse** house in Florida and he told me they got on **Ozz Fest**. They played two months with **Ozz Fest** on the side stage. That's impressive. To see the reaction on the faces of these kids who have never heard death metal, that's worth it to me. As far as record companies are concerned the music we listen to doesn't even exist. I can't wait for this California trend to fall for the next thing. Now that kids are used to hearing distorted guitars again, the next thing will move into the real heavy shit.

Where do you see your sound going?

We're getting heavier. The first album is more on the light side of the cross over than the new album will be. I'll tell you what I've been listening to and it shows in the music. No riffs are stolen. I try not to listen to music but it does influence you. I listen to **Soilent Green**, **Candiria**, **Deadguy**, **Human Remains**, **Cryptopsy** and Chris Cornell's solo album, it's like **Temple Of The Dog**—I'm the death metal guy. I write all the songs for **Malignancy**. I want the speed of **Soilent Green**. We go on tour and we see death metal going into a new direction. **Dirty Brown Eye** will be able to open a lot of death metal shows with this new album because it's gonna be so heavy.

When do you see the new album coming out?

It's half written, so another two or three months worth of writing and then we'll hit purple light. We're hoping by the summer. Before that we'll go to **Mortician/Malignancy** studio and do a rough cut. We don't have a concept for it yet. We haven't made a real **D.B.E.** logo, everytime I think of **D.B.E.** I think of **Dead Brains Cells**. The kids today don't know **D.B.C.** but I keep thinking of **D.B.C.**, **D.R.I.**, all the letter bands. I don't want to be a letter band, but we'll have an alternate logo. Our singer, who came from **Insult**—his influences are **Elvis Presley**, **Misfits**, **Glenn Danzig** of course, old **Metallica**, old **Megadeth**, **Iron Maiden**,

Demolition Hammer, **Faith No More**, **Mr. Bungle**, and the **Doors**. That's where my singer comes from. The bass player he's into the old **Metal Blade** compilations before **Metallica** even got signed. He liked **Budgie**, **Diamond Head**, early **Megadeth**, **Chris Poland's** solo album, **Chili Peppers**, **Entombed**, **C.O.C.**, **Fugazi**, **Quicksand**, and he's the biggest **Metallica** fan of us all. Our drummer refuses to be a double bass drummer. He wants to play a single bass and take on the world even though his big influence is **Dave Lombardo**. He's not a **Neal Peart/Rush** fan. He's got crazy shit going on, I don't know where he gets it from. He listens to **Candiria** too, **Puya**, I like Spanish in the metal when it's done well. I didn't like **Overdose**. It sounded like they were biting off **Testament** riffs. This magazine in New Orleans gave us a review of Jimmy's singing and it was a cross between a young **James Hetfield** and **Pepper Keenan** from **C.O.C.** That's where he comes from. Not that he listens to that but that's where he comes from. We've got a big hardcore scene in Westchester. It's called the **Common Bond Crew**, **C.B.C.** There's about fifteen bands in this county. We bond together and support the shows, we've only got about two places to play in town. We make a scene happen. I give a lot of credit to **Castle Heights**. I've had some unbelievable sold out death metal shows there. We have three or four nationals come to **Castle Heights** every month.

Final comments?

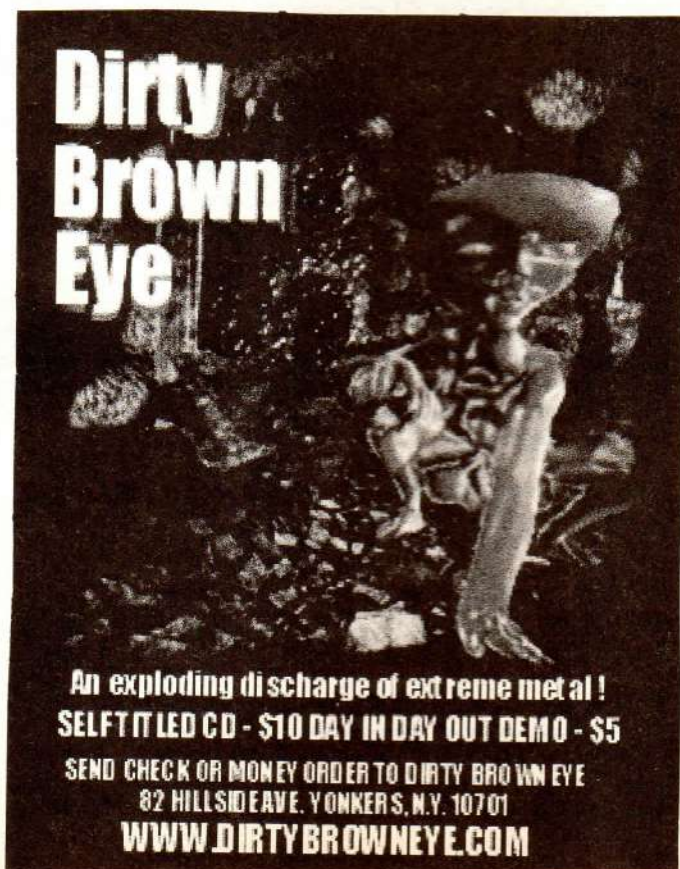
We just won the **Ernie Ball Battle of the Bands**. We're one of seventeen bands now that have a chance to win twenty five thousand dollars. On **January 15th** we play **Dallas, Texas**. If we win in Texas we go to the **N.A.M.M. Fest** in **L.A.** Look out for **Dirty Brown Eye** at **Astbury Metal Metal Meltdown**. We'll be doing an east coast tour from **Maine** to **Florida** this summer. We'll be playing numerous shows in the area this summer as well. It'll be a big summer for **Dirty Brown Eye**.

Discography:

1999... **Dirty Brown Eye**

Current line-up:

James Gibbons... vocals
Ron Kachnic... guitars
Arthur Micewicz... bass
Jimmy Horan... drums



Dirty Brown Eye

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drawn

Interview with guitarist Christer Andre Cederberg

Mysterious, unique, avantgarde, emotional, or as their label describes them, "innovative dirty atmospheric metal". I'm not sure how to describe Norway's **Drawn**, but you can start with acts like **Arcturus**, **Agalloch**, **Ulver**, and **In The Woods**. **Drawn** was formed in 1994, and although all the members have a metal background, the music they create with **Drawn** goes beyond any description metal can provide. Some may already be familiar with guitarist Christer's full time band, **In The Woods**. Those who have followed that band's career will notice that he is a musician who defies the limitations and boundaries of metal and expands them to a breaking point. Enough babbling, let's hear from Christer.

Give me some background information on Drawn.

We started in '94. Krsitian and Atle had a band with another drummer and it was gonna be like a cover band. They needed another guitar player, so I started. It was natural for us to make our own music because we listen to a lot of different music. We play for ourselves so we have to fulfill our every wish musically. We have a lot of styles that we want to express. This drummer quit and Thomas joined us. We made a self financed mini c.d.. We got Jan Kenneth from **In The Woods** involved because he has a lot of contacts in the underground. One of the magazines from Finland liked us very much. He called Martin from Prophecy and told Martin he liked us. Martin called us for a deal, so things went very easy.

How would you describe Drawn's music?

I have trouble answering these questions. When I listen to a record for the first time I think it's much better if you take time to like it. If you like it at once you will probably get bored. It's like this when we play music. If we were to play black metal or death metal I think it would be very boring. I don't listen to metal much at all. It's more about emotions. If you were to describe it you'd have to describe the emotions you get from it. People react differently on it. Everybody has their own definition. The fifth song, "Marygold", there's singing that's out of tune but it's the emotions that comes. It felt right for Dorum when he sang it. A lot of people don't like that kind of singing because it's annoying, but it's about the feeling.

Does your participation with both In The Woods and Drawn create any conflicts?

Very little. In both ^{bands} members all the members can do what's right for them. We have been compared to **In The Woods**. My style fits for both bands. With **In The Woods** it's one person making the music and we add everything on top. It's very easy for me to make music on this material because it's close to what I like myself. It's not like I use one riff there and another riff with this band. It's not like you go empty, you always have a lot of music inside. It's no problem. You have to give a hundred percent for both bands. You have to give everything. Both bands are very good friends. It's one big happy family.

Has In The Woods signed with Prophecy Productions as well?

Yes. There will be a seven inch and one album in January. We put together this thing with extra songs from our past. It's very strange.

Do you think some people may be disappointed in how In The Woods has changed since Heart of the Ages?

To be honest, I don't care. In **Drawn** you have to be honest with yourself. We could make a death metal, woman vocal, album and try to sell a lot. I hate that kind of stuff. A lot of people who like **In The Woods** because of the originality, so they're open minded. They will probably like the next album and the next album after that. If people don't like it they can buy another black metal album. When I go to buy metal it's hard to find something that I like because I'm tired of all the cliches. For **Drawn**, everything's very personal. Atle and I make the songs, all the harmonies. With **In The Woods** they take my guitar with the material already made. I try to make my emotions through it. You have to expand your horizons. If you find a style and you really like it and people really like it, it's good to continue but for me, it's too boring. I'm not criticizing others, because I don't care what they do. If you make an album it's important that you have to be satisfied with it, but the next one has to be better. It's not like *A New World* sounds good so let's make *A New World Two*. You have eight songs, but it's wrong to make them separate and put them on an album. It's important that you make an album. There has to be a line through the songs. They have to be good as a whole. There's a reason why the fourth song is the fourth song. I hate when you have a good c.d., you have nine songs, seven good and two bad songs- it fucks up the album com-

pletely. You can hear if it's quality or not, even if you don't like it.

Was there a reason why you called this *A New World*?

I could try to explain the lyrics, but the lyrics are very odd. Atle makes all the lyrics. It's very hard to explain them. I don't always get it, when he tries to explain. Basically, he worked at a mental hospital. The people you meet there have some very serious problems with their psyche. These feelings they represent are the extreme sides of our feelings. You can learn a lot about them. If a person's like this it's wrong to call them crazy. They have the same feelings, it's just more extreme. When you work in a place like this, you get in a lot of moods and it makes you think about these people and yourself. The lyrics are not concrete, they're not about them. It's more about mental issues. If I say hope you know what I mean. It's a cliché, but there's a reason why it exists. We strive for something better, always. There's no reason why I should explain how I feel or the way he feels because every listener should be able to interpret it for themselves. It makes it more personal. People have to get their own meaning out of it.

Was it intentional that the album cover is actually upside down?

A lot of people ask me about this. It's supposed to be the other way around. It adds more spice to it. There was no major thought behind it. It's very important that you don't take yourself so serious. You need a sense of humor. The seventh song, where Jan Kenneth sings, the solo is three screams. We had quite a laugh when we recorded it because it's a cliché thing to do. Since it's done on purpose I think it's very funny. When he screams it sounds very evil but the words are quite funny actually. One of our favorite lines was "shut up you bloody puss wart". That's what he screams. We're not trying to be evil. I don't understand why people call it dark metal or black metal. The intentions behind it are not that way at all. I don't feel like an evil person, I'm a happy person. Image can be a good thing but for us we're not interested. We have very few pictures with **In The Woods** and with **Drawn** also. The music should speak for itself. We don't have an enormous visual presentation. These people who look evil and say they run around in the woods with corpsepaint, when you see them they aren't that evil. I think they're good people. They love their mom, they just won't admit it. These people have a lot of sadness. It's bad for me to criticize these images, because I can understand what they're doing. We have our style and I hope they respect it and other people have their style and it should be respected. I don't want any hard feelings. For **Drawn**, it's a natural image.

Final comments?

Thank you. It's very interesting to have these kind of interviews where you can talk about what you feel like. It's better than talking about what kind of chords I like. It's about emotions and that's what makes this a good interview.

Discography:

1999... *A New World* (Prophecy)
1998... *Plan Be* (Prophecy)

Current line-up:

Atle Dorum... vocals and guitars
Christer Andre Cederberg... guitars
Per Kristian Strovland... bass
Jan Ingar Pettersen... drums

Drawn: *A New World?* "innovative dirty atmospheric metal"
Tenhi: *Kauan* "folkloric progressive rock, dark melancholic"
Gods Tower: *Ebony Birds* "pagan folklore doom metal"

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ENERTIA

Interview with bassist Joe Paciolla

There are several American bands that have gone virtually unnoticed by labels, the press, and even the fans. When it comes to **Enertia** this travesty has to end. This New York band has been around for years and have three releases under their belts. I have spoken to bassist Joe Paciolla several times and I have the greatest respect for this hard working musician. A music fan who is dedicated to supporting the metal scene, Joe has gone as far as to help organize small tours with other bands like **Without Warning** and **Division** in the hopes to spread this strong U.S. power metal scene to as many audiences as possible. **Enertia** have recently released their second full length, *Flashpoint*, and like previous efforts it's a powerful disc of modern metal that puts even well known bands to shame. Here is Joe to tell us about his band.

Let's do a background question.

I grew up listening to bands like **Wrathchild America**, those guys were the reason I got into this. They're my favorite band of all time. They put on such an intense live show and it looked like so much fun that I wanted to be up there. **3D** is one of my top three albums of all time. Those guys were ahead of their time. I have never seen a better drummer than Shannon Larkin. I heard that he auditioned for **Slayer** and I can't believe he didn't get the gig. They got dumped after that second album. I saw **Pantera** three times on the *Cowboys* tour. The first time that I saw them they opened for **Exodus** and **Suicidal Tendencies**. Diamond Darrell came out wearing a **Wrathchild America** shirt. I think they picked up some of **Wrathchild America's** influences. I had *Projects in the Jungle* when it was a new album. I always dug those guys and when I saw my favorite band compared to them I didn't think it was fair to **Wrathchild America**. I always had this vision in my mind of what I wanted my band to be. I was looking for people who got along. I wanted five guys who had a similar direction they wanted to go in. In 1994 I met the drummer, Jeff, and a couple of months later I met the other guitar player, Dave. Me and the drummer were playing with a different singer and guitar player and it was going nowhere. The guitar player wanted to be like Yanni, the singer was an alcoholic. Me and the drummer were looking for a common thing. When Dave heard what we were doing he came on. Scott was playing in a band in Albany called **Attica**. I happened to go see them play one night and I didn't like the band but the singer stood out for me. A month later he quit **Attica** and we gave him a call to see if he was interested. He wanted to take a break from music, but if we don't find anybody call him. We had three of the five songs on *Law of Three* that we were playing at that point. Two months later we called him at the perfect time. Now we had him. We wanted to be a two guitar player band and Roman came in. He was playing in a band called **Mind Drive**. **Enertia** was originally gonna be more of a project. We didn't plan on playing out live. At that time I was engaged and supposed to move to California. I was gonna live in Los Angeles and see if anyone would be interested in the tape. That was unrealistic, but things worked out anyway. We decided to give this a try. We spent about forty five hundred bucks and did everything the right way. *Law of Three* was successful.

Have you experienced much success with Enertia?

Yes and no. Albany is a tough market. We're not a hardcore band. We've come a long way with our live show. We're having a good time. Before we go on stage I get this adrenaline rush. Playing live makes it worthwhile for me. Even if there is just five people watching us we get fired up. That's why I like our name so much. What three of us have realized is that this will probably be nothing more than a glorified hobby. We're a versatile band. We can do any style of music we wanted to, this just comes naturally. We don't try to write a particular kind of song. Some of the best ideas are the spontaneous ones we have in our practice room. I think this new song that we've written will be a real good opener. When the five of us got

together we made sure we all agreed on a direction. We all like bands like **Pantera**, *Burn My Eyes* had just come out, we liked **Fear Factory** a lot, but at the same time me and drummer grew up with bands like **Thin Lizzy**, **AC/DC**, **Judas Priest**, **U.F.O.** I'm into the New Wave of British Heavy Metal. Roman likes Alex Skolnick and that era of **Testament** and he's a big fan of the David Lee Roth era of **Van Halen**. Dave is into **Sevendust**, **Korn**. I can appreciate that but I have no use for **Korn**. We don't want to go in that direction but you may catch a hint of it now and then. I really like **Stuck Mojo** a lot too.

I noticed that you mentioned your appreciation for organ donors on your disc, I figured there must be some personal connection.

I was a diabetic for twenty five years. As a result of having diabetes for so long I had to get a new kidney. It was caught at a really early stage. I was lucky. I didn't have to go on dialysis or anything. The cool part of this operation, I joke about it as a buy one get one free, but I also got a new pancreas at the same time. I now have a working pancreas. I had been insulin dependent. It's amazing. I'm not a religious person. I attribute this to science. I consider myself to be real lucky. I've had a few people say to me that they've signed up for organ donation after hearing my story. I'm not gonna be at our shows promoting that, but I think that people should be aware that there's a need for that. More people need to know. If you read the personal credits, on every release that I'm involved with I'm gonna thank my anonymous donor. I didn't even know this person. My initial impression when the doctor told me, I thought that I would be in a wheelchair. I thought I was gonna have to stop playing music. Five days after I had my surgery I was playing my bass in the hospital. I felt that was what I needed to recover. My family is big and very supportive. My mother was there the whole time. I had a transplant on January 13th of '97 and it was two weeks to the day I was in the practice room with the band. I remember reading that the drummer for **R.E.M.** had brain surgery and six weeks later he was playing with them. I'm not an **R.E.M.** fan but I give that guy a lot of credit. I think that there would have been a couple more songs on *Momentum* if I didn't have the surgery when I did. The bottom line is that people should think about signing up to be a donor. It doesn't mean you have to do it. I waited four and a half years. I could've gotten a kidney from one person and a pancreas from another but I decided that I didn't want to have to go through that twice, first of all. I had never had surgery before in my life, but I was completely prepared for it. I wasn't nervous. I was ready, I had been waiting for so long.



Website:

www.animated-insanity.com/enertia.html

E-Mail:

enertia@animated-insanity.com

Discography:

1999... *Flashpoint* (Animated Insanity)
1997... *Momentum* (Animated Insanity)
1996... *Law Of Three* (Animated Insanity)

Current line-up:

Scott Featherstone... vocals
Dave Stafford... guitars
Roman Singleton... guitars
Joe Paciolla... bass
Jeff Daley... drums

ENGINE

Interview with vocalist Ray Alder

The self titled debut from California's **Engine** sounds like a record which will immediately have a place in the 90's and appeal to fans of bands like **Tool** and the **Deftones**. There are two differences however. One, is that **Engine** are fronted by **Fates Warning's** Ray Alder, he of an angelic yet powerful voice. Second, is that **Engine** is comprised of members who already have full time jobs with other bands. Guitarist **Bernie Versailles** has recently reformed **Angel Steel** and bassist **Joey Vera** has rejoined **Armored Saint** in addition to his contributions to **Fates Warning**, and finally drummer **Pete Parada** comes from hardcore heroes **Face To Face**. With this kind of pedigree, **Engine** were able to enter the studio and have a good time recording a modern album without the expectations that their regular bands would command. Although **Engine** is not the best album I've heard this year, it does contain some kicking tunes and some people will be surprised. I spoke to the always pleasant **Ray Alder** about his new side project.

Did this album come out the way you wanted it to?

Yes and no. I knew I wanted a heavy record, I knew I wanted something simple but with a good melody over it. I actually wanted it to be heavier than it came out to be. It's a lot heavier than anything that **Fates** has done. It matches up with what I listen to now. I like a lot of the new stuff but I try to mix it with a little melody.

What has the response been so far?

It's been great. **Rock Hard** and **Heavy Ode** **Was** gave it close to the top. That's a great start so far. I've even spied on some of the message boards and some of the **Fates Warning** fans dig it. For me this was a departure, there's no sense in me doing a **Fates Warning** part two. This is a reflection of what my influences are and what I listen to. It was fun. It was easy. It came right out. We didn't have to work to make a song. Imagine hanging out with a couple of your friends and drinking some beers in the studio. There was no pressure at all, even when we were in the studio recording. No big time frame. The record company isn't gonna come crashing down our doors if we're late. I can't wait to do another solo record. Look at the lyrics of "Taste". What I'm talking about in that song is that I'm kicking myself in the ass out of frustration that I've had all these opportunities because I have so many friends involved in the music industry. **Mark (Zonder)**, our drummer, owns a studio and out of pure laziness I haven't done it. It took about as long to record as it did to write so it went so fast.

I enjoyed your vocals on that.

I was reaching for those screams. The only time I could do that with **Fates Warning** was when I lost my voice for ten days in a row. When we were writing the song in **Bernie's** house, we were cracking up because it was so much fun. The people who are close minded, and I don't mean that in a bad way because I'm close minded too, won't like it. Big prog fans won't like it because it's not what they normally like. I'm not even singing the way that I usually do. I knew that some **Fates** fans would think, what is he trying to prove but I'm not trying to prove anything. I'm just putting out what my influences are as far as the music business goes and what I listen to every single day in my car. I just want to do a record like that. If they don't like it, I completely understand. Hopefully, I'll get some new fans out of it. Then some of those new fans who never knew **Fates Warning** will find out about **Fates Warning**. If they had as much fun as we did doing this thing, they would want to do their own record also.

Why did you use the name Engine and not Ray Alder?

The style of music that's on the **Engine** record, I don't think it's possible. **Bruce Dickinson** can use his name because of where he came from. **Fates Warning** has fans but we're not a huge band. Not a lot of people are gonna take kindly to a band playing this type of music called the **Ray Alder Band**. I figured the best thing to do with it would be to give it a name. As long as people know that **Engine** is my solo project, not my band. As long as you can squash the rumors that **Fates Warning** is breaking up because **Jim** did a solo record and I did a solo record. Since we have the studios and the friends with us, why not do it. I'm not gonna say "I don't dare do something with another band because my fans would be offended." **King's X** did it and **Ty Tabor** called it **Ty Tabor** and **Doug Pinnick** called it **Poundhound**. Everyone knows that it was just something that they did in between. I think

Engine is a good name and to have it in big block letters in bright green works. Everybody is busy now, **Bernie's** doing the new **Agent Steel** record, **Joey's** doing an **Armored Saint** reunion, and **Pete's** on tour with **Face To Face**. It's great that everybody has all these opportunities in front of them.

Are you going to play any live shows?

There's been a lot of talk about it. **Bernie** and I discussed it and we'd love to do live shows. It's a matter of finding the right bands to open for. It's a new thing so we obviously can't expect to go out and headline. Once the record comes out we'll see what the response is like. We'll at least do some L.A. shows to get the ball rolling out here, as long as it doesn't interfere with what I'm doing with **Fates**.

What do you hope to accomplish with Engine?

I hope to reach a different audience. That was the whole point with a solo record. I didn't want to make it solely for **Fates Warning** fans because I knew when they heard the record they wouldn't like it too much. I hope that it doesn't offend them so much that they don't like **Fates Warning** anymore. I signed a multiple record deal with **Metal Blade** so once there's another break in the **Fates** thing we'll do another **Engine** record. There's no reason why you can't do two things and not be successful at it. I'm pretty positive that we will do another record but if not then that's the way things go, but the option is available and that's a good thing. I want to do a heavier album than this one. You hear a lot of heavy music now but either the vocals are a lot of screaming or you don't understand what's going on. These vocals are not as clear as **Fates Warning** but it's a melody that's carried over the music. To me, it's new and hopefully it'll catch on. The **Deftones** music to me is awesome.

What's up with Fates Warning at the moment?

We're doing another record right now. I talked to **Jim** and it looks like we'll go to Greece in mid October to do a couple of shows. We haven't played there in nine or ten years. The way the writing is going right now is really well so we might be in the studio in December. Everytime we do a record it's completely different than the other ones. "The Strand" was the first time that I was able to sing that differently on a record and using a rough voice for a **Fates Warning** song. **A.P.S.O.G.** was definitely a departure, it was a big progressive move for us. I think more out of frustration than anything. It did get a good response from the people. I think ninety percent of the fans liked it. People are probably expecting **A.P.S.O.G.** part two, and they will probably get that to a certain extent. The new writing is very progressive and it's heavier. It's much more guitar oriented. It moves a lot more than **A.P.S.O.G.** and it's not a fifty five minute song either. I'm looking forward to seeing what the final product will sound like too.

Did you know that there's a Fates Warning tribute album called Through Different Eyes with Mayadome, Steel Prophet, etc.?

I heard about that but I didn't know that it was out already. There's got to be some **Awaken the Guardian** tunes on there. I think **Jim** has that, I can't see one of those getting past **Jim**.

Final comments?

As far as **Fates Warning** fans are concerned, I hope that they don't lose any faith in **Fates Warning**. If they can't listen to it with an open mind, just move on and the next **Fates Warning** will be out soon and it'll be fine.

Discography:

1999... **Engine** (**Metal Blade**)

Current line-up:

Ray Alder... vocals

Bernie Versailles... guitars

Joey Vera... bass

Pete Parada... drums



EVENT

Interview with drummer Matt Scurlfield

The band's biography states "Event will be the next generation of progressive rock." Bold statement indeed, however in this case it is true. Event have managed to combine the technical virtuosity of **Rush**, the sense of melody of **Fates Warning**, and the futuristic elements such as the creative keyboards- then wrapped with an excellent sense of song structure and you have **Event**. This Massachusetts band is still young and are currently working on their second disc. On *Electric Skies*, **Event** created a professional debut that is shocking in quality. The mastermind behind the music is guitarist/ keyboardist Shaun Michaud. His innovative approach to his instruments is what sets **Event** firmly into the future. I spoke to drummer Matt Scurlfield about happens around **Event**.

How did Event get together?

We formed at Berklee College of Music in Boston. There was an ensemble there that Joe Stump runs. It was the only heavy metal ensemble in school. I started taking that class. Shaun joined the class the second or third semester that I had taken it. I heard a demo tape that he had, it was a tape of "Aimless". This guy was a great player so I asked him if he wanted to get together and play. Jay ended up joining the ensemble through a friend of mine. We started a band with the three of us. I was in a band with Dave when I was younger and I brought Dave in the sing.

What's Event up to at the moment?

We're finishing up the writing for the new record. We have twelve songs done and we'll be tracking the drums the day after Christmas. We've been doing some live shows, but we're gonna take some time off to concentrate on the new record.

What makes Event special?

I think it's a series of things that we attempt to do. We draw from a lot of different influences. My guitar player, Shaun, basically writes all the songs. He draws from such a wide variety of influences that we go in different directions all the time. Obviously we've been influenced by progressive bands and all the latest ones that are around. We concentrate on doing more song oriented material. We draw a lot of influence from the later **Fates Warning** records and some of the later **Queensryche** stuff to try and really create hooks, draw people in and keep their attention. We felt we did pretty well with that on the last record. We threw just the right amount of stuff in their to keep it shredding. It keeps them interested and there's a lot of odd time measures in there. **Fates Warning** is more one of my influences. It's always easier for people to compare bands like **Event** to bands like **Fates Warning**, **Queensryche**, and **Dream Theater**.

The keyboards separate Event from any band out there.

If you wanted to pick one thing that separates us sound wise, one of the main things is the keyboards. That has a lot to do with Shaun. He takes all the sounds that you hear on the record, they're programmed by him. He'll take a sound from scratch and build it. He knows how to work with all the machines we use to construct sound with wave forms and effects to make all the sounds. Sometimes an entire tune will be based around an effect or a sound he designed. Sometimes Shaun wrote intro licks and that turned into the rest of the tune. Our new record is gonna be a slightly different direction because it's gonna be more guitar oriented than the last one. There will be plenty of keyboards on there and there will be plenty of cool sounds. That's the main thing with us and the keyboards. We want to make something that's really cool and catches your ears. It's gonna be slightly less melodic. It's gonna be more riffs.

Has Event garnered any label interest besides Leviation?

It wasn't actually released on Leviation. Two of us play with Joe Stump and he said the guy who runs Leviation Records would be interested in checking you guys out.

We sent it down to David Chastain and he liked the stuff a lot. He licensed the record for us and got us distribution deals for us in the rest of the world. He shopped the record for us and he got us distribution in South America, Japan, and Europe. The record was released in those parts of the world. In the United States we released it on our own. Most of our distribution in the United States is through the internet.

How has the response been to the record?

We had a great response over in Japan. We sold a lot of c.d.'s over there and we did lots of press. We had a really good rating in *Burn* magazine which is key. To get a good rating in *Burn* means you'll do pretty well.

How long have you and Jay been playing with Joe Stump?

Jay joined first. Joe lost his bass player maybe two and a half years ago. Jay recorded the *Rapid Fire Rondo* record with Joe. After that their drummer, Jamie quit, so I jumped in about six months after Jay did. Jamie decided he was gonna get married and do the family thing. We went in the studio and tracked the drums and bass, then guitars for Joe's newest record. It's not quite finished yet. This is gonna be his third **Reign Of Terror** record and Mike Vescera's gonna do the vocals. I think it's gonna be Joe's best to date. I really like the tunes. He's got a nice mix of good power metal, like **Stratovarius** and some **Blackmore**-ish type of tunes. It's structured pretty well and of course Mike is a well known guy. We had Mats Olausson, who is Yngwie's keyboard player, play keyboards on it. It's gonna be mixed in a couple of weeks.

Are you gonna do any new shows in the near future?

There's one thing that I'm pushing for right now. **Digital Ruin** are good friends of ours and they're playing at a club in Rhode Island. They bring national acts in there all the time. I was down there

Friday night for **Lynch Mob**. He has all the old eighties acts in there. We played there about a month ago with **Dokken**. We're looking to do a show there the end of January or the beginning of February with **Digital Ruin** to celebrate the release of their record on *Inside Out*. They've been together for eight years.

I think Event has the ability to appeal to fans of hard rock/metal as well as the progheads and technical fans.

We're definitely hoping to pick up some of the heavier folks on the next record. We have implemented a seven string into the new record. The a lot of heavy riffs. It's not chunky like *Awake*. It's more along the lines of **Kings X**'s heavy riffs. Take a lot of **Kings X**, put it in odd time, and put a lot of keyboard effects over it; then you have what our new record sounds like. The new record will hopefully be done in February. I'm not sure what's gonna happen with the release. We'll be playing the southern end of New England with **Digital Ruin** and we'll be playing the northern end with **Divine Regale**. Their drummer is doing the singing now.

Discography:
1999... *Electric Skies* (Self)

Current line-up:
Dave DeLuco... vocals
Shaun Michaud... guitars
Jay Rigney... bass
Matt Scurlfield... drums



Godless Desire

Interview with vocalist/ bassist Count August

While obvious comparisons to **Gwar** are inevitable, Holland's **Godless Of Desire** are able to create a controversial live show, however they also make sure that their musical style is pure metal with an affinity to the 80's. **Godless Of Desire** developed a fanbase by playing festivals such as the Wacken Open Air Festival in Germany and Holland's Dynamo Festival. It was their stage show that captured everybody's attention. Full of evil and anti-religious imagery, a feel for the macabre, and various scenarios, **Godless Of Desire** have drawn the admiration of theatrical metal fans who have grown bored with **Gwar** and the **Misfits**, but due to the ire of club venues they are often censored. I spoke to Count August about this rising Dutch metal band.

How do you feel about your new album?

We recorded this album last year and we already released it ourselves. We played the Wacken Open Air Festival. We did ourselves, one thousand copies and then Metal Blade took it over. We're too small to come to America right now. When we record our next album it will be a quick follow-up. I expect to record the new album around Christmas of this year. It should be out early next year.

When you formed the band what was your plan?

The idea of this band is to bring the old glory days of the real heavy metal, between early 80's to mid-80's. We want to bring heavy metal back on the map again. The production is more 90's, they didn't have the equipment from the early 80's, but I think the songs we wrote have the same feeling and are in the same vein as back then.

Describe your live show.

The only problem is we're from Europe, and you're from America. We should sell more c.d.'s in America before people will come see our show. They should see our video clip, or our video that we will have out-we have already made three videos. We have three girls in the band and lots of fire. I think it's a cross between a band like **Kiss** and a band like **Venom**, compared to the show. It's over the top and also very metal and black metal with lots of pyros.

Have you run into any problems with people accepting the show?

We have had problems. We've been refused a few times. I don't think it's a big problem because it's many small communities. Also, because we are an extreme band we get coverage on television so I think it brings a lot of good things. They say they want us to come to their town but the mayor doesn't want you because you're too extreme. The same thing happened with **Type O Negative** in Europe because everybody thought Pete Steele was a Nazi. It brought him a lot of positive things.

Is there anything in particular that they have a problem with?

It's the anti-Christian thing. We're not a sex band. Do you know a band called **Rock Bitch**, we're not like them. They are a bunch of girls who go on stage totally naked, we don't do that. Our show with the girls is suggestion. You see beautiful girls. They don't show everything but it's suggestion. It's not such a big problem with the girl on stage, but the anti-Christian ideas does cause problems.

I see that Gerrit from Sacred Steel wrote some lyrics on the album.

He did part of the lyrics from "Live for Metal Die for Metal".

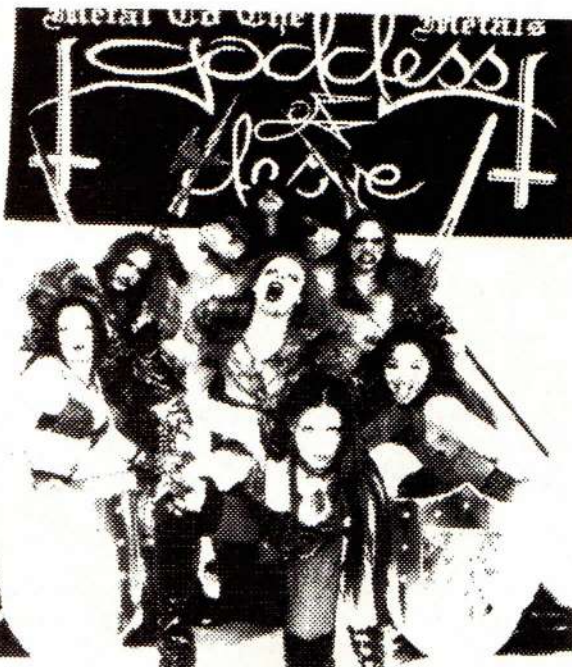
Do you feel that there are any bands that have that same feeling from the

80's?

A lot of bands are doing the same thing like we do, with the same purpose. All bands are coming back and having reunion shows. **Sacred Steel** are such a band. We met them because we did a cover song of **Mercyful Fate**, "Nuns Have No Fun". King Diamond sings very high, I can't sing very high but Gerrit does. We asked Gerrit to do the vocals for this one. After that day they did three shows in Holland, Germany, and Belgium. After three shows they asked us to do an opening show in Germany for their release party. The singer of **Sacred Steel** and the guitarist of **Sacred Steel** came onstage and they had nun suits on. They would dress up like nuns and do the song with us.

"Ride" reminded me of mid-80's Motorhead, would you agree?

That was the purpose of it. It was a tribute to it. Grev Drake is a big **Motorhead** fan so he liked to do the vocals like Lemmy does. He was in the studio with a bottle of whiskey and a rough voice so he could do it **Motorhead** style. We do it but we do it for the fun. People forget it. I always say in interviews heavy metal is about drinking beer, having fun, and banging your head together, not take everything so serious. It's simple. I'm thirty three years old and I know what heavy metal is about.



What are your plans for the rest of this year?

We did Wacken last year and the year before that we did Dynamo. We hope this year that there is a good festival to play. I think on Metal Blade the album came out too late here in Europe. It came out in Europe and most festivals are decided, especially the smaller bands. That's why we want to record this Christmas and have the album out early next year. Metal Blade is gonna release the l.p. version of this c.d., and the l.p. version is gonna have two new songs on it. We do weekend gigs in Germany mostly. This week we played in Holland for the first time in fourteen months. We're a Dutch band and we don't get to play in Holland.

What kind of music is popular in Holland?

It's more music like **God Dethroned** or hardcore, or like **Korn** and **Marilyn Manson**. They don't understand heavy metal here in Holland anymore.

In Germany they do understand it. We did play a lot in Holland in the beginning because we were on television and everybody wants to goggle us. We already did like fifty shows in Holland. Things change, we had to invade Germany of course. The German audience rules, they're so devoted.

What about Japan, has this record been released in Japan yet?

I don't know. We didn't have any interviews from that part of the world. I should ask Metal Blade what's happening over there. I got a fax from somebody in Japan and they said the c.d.'s in the shop. The Southern part of Europe is also pretty strong.

Discography:

1999... Triumph Of Symbol (Metal Blade)
1997... Let Us Win This War (independent)

Current line-up:

Count August... vocals and bass
Grev Drake... guitars and vocals
Emperor Mark... drums

GODGORY

Interview with vocalist Matte Andersson

Swedish metal band **Godgory** began their career in the early 90's playing covers, but the band soon tired of remakes and began to write their own original material. In 1996 **Godgory** released their debut, *Sea of Dreams*, and quickly followed it up with *Shadows Dance*. Unable to maintain a steady line-up, the band has been comprised of permanent members, vocalist Matte Andersson and drummer Erik Andersson, and studio musicians. While this process has allowed **Godgory** to produce excellent quality music, they sound has yet to come into a cohesive focus. This year they signed a deal with Nuclear Blast who recently released *Resurrection*. This new record has a killer guitar sound and several excellent songs, and proves that **Godgory** have some incredible potential. Here is vocalist Matte Andersson.

What are your thoughts on this new album?

Yeah, I'm very happy with the new album because everything is so much better than we've done before. The sound is better, the atmosphere, and the arrangements, and my vocals have improved.

Why don't you have a permanent line-up?

After we recorded *Shadows Dance*, our guitarist left us because he had to concentrate on his studies. He's studying to be a teacher and he's going to school for three and a half years. The other three members are in another band which is their first priority. We decided to let them go and find permanent members for **Godgory**. It's very hard in Sweden to find members who are not involved in other bands.

What do you think about the guitar sound on *Resurrection*?

We are very satisfied with Mikael, he had been a member in **Godgory** so we knew that he was a great guitar player and that's why we wanted to use him on *Resurrection*.

How did you get **Godgory** started?

Me and Erik were in another band and we thought those guys we were playing with had no progress. We formed **Godgory** and we had no material so in the beginning we played covers. After awhile we thought we should write our own material. We never thought about what style we wanted to play. Erik just wrote the material and it came out the way it did. We wanted to express our feelings, so that's what we did. I think we have our own style. We listen to a lot of music and we get influenced by that.

Do people think you and Erik are brothers?

We have heard that a lot. Every interview we've done, "your brother Erik"- "no!".

How would you compare *Sea of Dreams* to *Resurrection* and what the band is today?

Sea of Dreams is a good album and we recorded on the weekend with much overtime, so it was pretty

good for those circumstances. We have a lot of great songs on that album that I like today.

What about *Shadows Dance*?

It's more mature than *Sea of Dreams*. It's a good album, too. I don't like the guitar sound. It sounds corny to me. Otherwise it's a great album with great material. We were in the studio for three weeks.

What are the chances of the band playing live?

If we get an offer for a tour we'll use session musicians. Mikael, who played on the album- I think we can convince him to go on tour with us. We have a couple friends who can play, from other bands, if we asked them I guess we could get them on the tour.

How would you describe your vocal style?

It comes natural to me. If it's a slow song it becomes darker when I sing, when it's a fast song I add more energy to it. It's not something I think about.

Which studio do you have a preference for?

I liked the last studio we were in, the Studio Fassaden. It's good to be only eighty kilometers from home, you can take the bus and go home. When you are in a place where you can't get home, you get bored and maybe it can affect the record.

What are your goals for this album?

I hope we sell a lot of records. We sold about ten thousand copies of *Shadows Dance*. We hopefully will double that with this record because I think we deserve it. It's so much better than previous albums. Everything has improved, the vocals, the sounds, and the arrangements. It should get recognition in the underground.

Discography:

1999... *Resurrection* (Nuclear Blast)
1997... *Shadows Dance* (Invasion)
1996... *Sea Of Dreams* (Invasion)

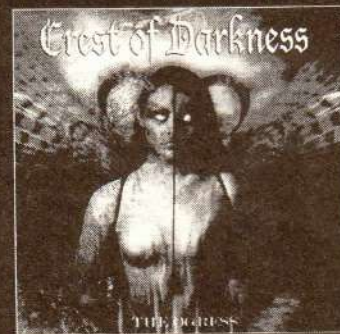


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Gothic Knights

Guitarist John Tsantakis, vocalist Bryan Avatar, and bassist Mario Consentino

People who feel the only true metal is coming from over in Europe need to open their eyes and check out some of the American bands who are upholding the sound and spirit of classic bands like **Savatage**, **Metal Church**, and **Jag Panzer**. Among the new revolution of metal warriors are New York bands like **Gothic Knights** and **Zandelle**. The band signed a deal with rising metal label Sentinel Steel and released their self titled debut album in 1996. While playing shows all over the band wrote new songs and finally *Kingdom of the Knights* is now released. The album is classic metal and full of quality songs, from the instant classics like "At Dawn You Die" and "Ring of Souls" to reworked versions of older songs, "War in the Sky" and "Song of Roland". After a show with **Zandelle** and **Anvil** we spoke to **Gothic Knights** in Manhattan.

Give a little background history.

John: **Gothic Knights** started in back in 1990. In high school I had the desire to write originals and put a band together. The original line up, Mario's been in the band since the beginning. It's funny we just finished playing with **Zandelle** and George (Tsalkis) was our first singer. In the first few years we did it because we loved the music, we had a passion to write songs. We played a lot of shows here in New York City because there was still a scene here. We brought in a new drummer, Brian Dispost, he's on the first c.d. By October of 1993 George had to finish school, it was a mutual parting and Rick Sanchez joined the band. Several months after that we recorded our first demo which brought a lot of attention. That was the breaking point. We started playing bigger shows at L'Amours. We recorded the first c.d. with Denis Gulbey (Sentinel Steel) and released it in 1996. Around that time Rick left the band. He became a born again Christian. He could not sing his own lyrics.

Mario: He had problems with some of the lyrics and while recording he changed some of them. On the first c.d. "Heart of Sorrow" had some lyrics changed. The demo version is very, very different. The first c.d. sold well and brought some believers to the band. We needed a new singer and Bryan joined the band around that same time. We were looking at many singers and through many recommendations we found Bryan Avatar. We started getting back into things and we got bigger shows with **Manowar** and **Savatage**.

John: We were writing new material for the labels because they were expecting new music. 1997 was the worst year for the **Knights**. The drummer, Brian, got very sick. He got multiple sclerosis. It was devastating for all of us. The four of us used to go and drink beers, to the water, and practice. It was devastating to see him go. We were so against letting him go that we wanted to see if he could come back from it. Little did we know...

Bryan: That we were beating a dead horse.

Mario: It first started off with his hands being numb. We wrote it off in the beginning, but it got progressively worse. One day he got diagnosed with it. That was the beginning of the end. He told us we need to find a new drummer.

John: There's so much faith between us four, it was heart wrenching. We got the new drummer, Kevin. Within a year and a half we finished our second c.d. That's where we are now. It was released in August of '99. We're already getting feedback from the labels and it's been picked up by the underground labels. Nuclear Blast has picked up our distribution. Denis has done tremendous work with his label over the past few years. We got the artwork and man, I could paint my wall with it, it's so good. What the labels expect the band to do now is prove that we can write more material. There's a feeling that the band has been stagnant because of this deal with the drummer. We have a lot of material that we've already written. We're at the point where we don't even know where to start. Bryan plays piano so we can add a little more, like King Diamond. It's gonna add more atmosphere to the band.

Mario: We have a lot more varied stuff coming out. We have "The Vampire Song", which is more gothic, scary song. We have some really heavy songs and we have some power ballads. This band likes to incorporate all the styles. We've also got some straight out of the eighties, Malmsteen meets **Malden** stuff like "Keeper of the Gate". You want to stick to one thing and keep the fans happy, but there's stuff that comes out of the heart sometimes and you do want to challenge yourself.

Bryan: We all have different influences. We all incorporate that inside the songs.

John: We have an identity. You mix the heaviness of **Manowar** and **Savatage**,

but we want to branch out a little bit.

Any talk of Gothic Knights going over to Europe for a tour?

Bryan: We're waiting for the phone call!

John: I'm going to Europe next year so I'm planning on meeting a few people. I want to see what's out there with the festivals. I'm gonna get lost in Europe for awhile.

Do you feel that "Nightmare of the Witch" has become a trademark song for Gothic Knights?

Mario: Definitely the trademark closing song, with the double bass, it's a classic ending song.

The first time I saw Gothic Knights you opened up for Division and Vicious Rumors at Castle Heights.

Bryan: That was Brian's last show. That was on November 30th.

John: After he tried coming back, he played one show with us and that was it.

How's he doing now?

Bryan: He's not good. He's in the hospital now. They're trying to make it stop where it is instead of progressing more. He's very high spirited about it. He's not complaining at all, he never complained to begin with.

John: He always drank more than all of us combined. Talk about drummers wanting to kill themselves. In the winter everyone's bundled up and the guys walking around in a leather jacket and a t-shirt.

Things are looking up at the moment though.

John: The record's getting positive responses.

Mario: We have to get the promotion and things will move up.

Bryan: Metal Blade has merged with Denis. Anything Denis has, Metal Blade's gonna put in stores.

John: With this distribution deal our c.d.'s will be in Metal Blade's catalogue. It's a giant step for Sentinel Steel and a positive step for us. We're crossing our fingers. We're at the bridge. The labels want to see us write new material.

John: There's no such thing as getting to the top on an elevator. It's step by step. You go up ten steps, you may fall three but you're still climbing.

Mario: We don't give a shit. We do what we like. If it happens, it happens. We've been patient. We've done this for almost ten years now and we're still going strong. At least we get to play with some of the people we love.

What happens if no labels are willing to pick Gothic Knights up?

John: Denis is very committed to this band, we're very committed to him also. Denis is very happy with what we write. We have six, seven new songs all ready to go. He asked us if we want to go in and record in a few months. We want to write another five or six and then we'll start talking. Right now is a very interested moment for the band. In the next

few months we see something happening.

Mario: There was definitely a satisfaction from the first c.d. to the second c.d. Hopefully it'll get even better and be the epitome of what we want from the band.

Bryan: We're gonna go beat up the executives at M.T.V. because they don't play any metal anymore.

Discography:

1999... Kingdom Of The Knights (Sentinel Steel)

1996... Gothic Knights (Sentinel Steel)

Current line-up:

Bryan Avatar... vocals

John Tsantakis... guitars

Mario Consentino... bass

Kevin Myers... drums



HADES

Interview with guitarist Dan Lorenzo and vocalist Alan Tecchio

Hades are back again. Their new record *The Downside* will be released in February and is their best offering to date. This album has it all, from some heavy, near death metal songs, to some heavy groove, some thrash, an acoustic song, a classic rock song- it's all here, **Hades** style. This has been a busy year for the band. It has only been a year since they released *Savior Self*. I recently saw them play in New Jersey where they debuted the song "Ground Zero" and filmed a video for the song. Dan and Alan also had a **Non-Fiction** reunion show in the beginning of December. Now three quarters of **Non-Fiction** is in **Hades**, as bassist Kevin Bolembach has joined **Hades**. I spoke to the always comical duo, Alan and Dan about the new record.

What are your thoughts on *The Downside*?

Dan: I always get a weird feeling and I wonder if it's a good record or not. I don't listen to it for a few weeks so I can clear my head, I listened to it last night and I was like "wow, this is fucking amazing." I'm really happy with it. There's always things that you wish you could do differently. Alan had a line in "Hoax" that we wish was louder and we wish the bass drums were lower in volume in the song "Pay the Price", but I would say out of ten records that Alan and I have done together *In the Know* is my favorite and *The Downside* is my second favorite.

Alan: For me it's the other way around. *The Downside* is my favorite. It's the most recent thing we've done and we spent a lot of time writing it. We spent the entire year rehearsing every single week. We did it without a bass player but Dan plays a lot of the bass on the record anyway. I love *Savior Self*. It was good to come back with that but on this one we had more time to write and it shows.

Dan: D.D. Verni played bass on "Bitter Suite #1". Mike Christi is playing congas on "The Me That Might Have Been" and "It's a Wonderful Lie", and Billy Milano is doing the vocals on "The Downside Reprise".

I was wondering if you were gonna kick Alan out because you have Dave and Billy singing on this album.

Dan: There's discussions about that right now because Dave said he would work for less money than Alan. Here's something else that will surprise you without a scorecard, that's Alan singing all of "Hoax". Dave sings all of "Pay the Price". Scott LePage plays bass on "The Me That Might Have Been", "Ground Zero N.Y.C.", D.D. Verni plays bass on "Bitter Suite #1", and Ed plays bass on "Shove It", and I play bass on the rest of the record. Ed Furhman wrote "Shove It", "Align the Planets", and two thirds of "Become Dust".

You took some chances on this record, it's better than *Savior Self*.

Dan: That's what I like about it. It's a classic heavy metal record. It's not look we're a thrash metal band, or we're a death metal band. This is what we do.

Alan: If journalists want to not like it they won't. If you're **AC/DC** they'll say you suck because you never change your sound and if you're **Metallica** they'll say you suck because you change your sound too much. It's amazing how diverse *The Downside* is. You have traditional metal, death metal, commercial metal with "Hail to the Thief", speed metal, acoustic songs.

Dan: "It's a Wonderful Lie" is my least favorite song on the record because that's like eight years old. Me, Scott, Dave, and Ed feel that "The Me That Might Have Been" came out perfect for us. Which songs didn't you like on *Savior Self*?

"The Agnostic", "The End of the Bargain", maybe "Fall"

Dan: You know how your fanzine got reviewed in *Metal Maniacs*. We didn't like pages eight through twelve of your last issue. Were you at the **Non-Fiction** reunion. It was awesome but there was at least fifty people who told us they would be there but they didn't show up. What's your excuse?

I had a cyst removed from my jaw and then I had an allergic reaction to the medication.

Dan: How long did it take for you to come up with this excuse?

Alan: It was a good time and brought back a lot of memories. All of a sudden we're cramped up in the dressing room together and we haven't done this in so long. **Non-Fiction** toured the world together, now we're stuck in a room together.

Dan: When Alan said it was cramped it's because Mike has gained a little bit of weight. It was our longest set ever. We did a lot of stuff from *It's a Wonderful Lie*, and the obvious ones from *Preface* and *In the Know*.

Tell me about this new version of *Resisting Success*?

Dan: Alan and I are so proud of our past as well. We always hope that one of these

records will get a lot of attention and check out our older stuff. We had rereleased that a couple years ago but we ran out of them and the guy who did it lost the artwork so Alan redid it and it looks way better than the original version that we put out.

Alan: The remastering helps a lot too. It makes it look a lot nicer, we remastered it, and threw on some bonus tracks also.

How has the response been since you signed with Metal Blade?

Alan: There's a big press push and they're bringing us over to play Wacken in the summer. There's a lot more going on with this record than with *Savior Self*. We've got our lives and we're happy with them. We're able to do this music because Metal Blade thinks we're a decent enough band to allow us to record. We're sitting on top of the world right now. Your entire lives are at the whim of the record industry when you're playing music. You have to sell units, you have to get signed. We don't have to do anything but write good music.

Dan: We envy us. It's a perfect balance of everything. I was hesitant to play live because I didn't want to look like an old man up there. I think we're a safe distance from embarrassing ourselves and putting out crap like some of these bands who get back together. Even though it's just a hobby to me it's a real serious hobby. I wouldn't hurt the name and put out something inferior. When I went to Europe last year I did seventy seven interviews and the general consensus was that we weren't ever gonna top *Resisting Success*. That was a great record for the time, it sounds less than great but for us we're way more excited about the new stuff. We got great reviews for *Savior Self*. We've always been the critics darlings. We just got a couple bad reviews for *Savior Self* in a couple fanzines. We put way more time into *The Downside* and we know this is a better record.

What's the situation with the bass position?

Dan: We're not gonna be able to jam with this guy until January 15th but I know he can do the job. His name is Kevin Bolembach.

Alan: We haven't had much luck with bass players. Scott would be great to do it but he lives in Texas.

Dan: We're pissed at Scott. We told him he could be in **Hades**. All he had to do was leave his wife and kids in Texas.

Alan: We're hoping Kevin will work out. It'll be weird having the **Non-Fiction** thing there. At the same time it's natural because we play with people that we're friends with.

Dan: Kevin is in the family tree. When he was auditioning for **Non-Fiction** he knew how to play half the **Hades** songs then. I know he can do the job. Kevin is a professional musician, more so than I am a guitar player. He's an animal on the bass.

When's your next show?

Dan: March 4th at the Wreck Room. If everything works well with Kevin we'll do some Saturday nights in Boston, Philadelphia, or D.C.

Final comments?

Dan: We have a **Hades** home video coming out soon. We finished a new video for "Ground Zero N.Y.C.". We're taking out commercials on M.T.V. around the time the album comes out. Ed Furhman is actually paying for it.

Alan: We're not up Metal Blade's ass for money and I think that's one of the reasons they like us so much.

Discography:

2000... *The Downside* (Metal Blade)
1999... *Savior Self* (Metal Blade)
1995... *Exist To Resist*
1988... *If At First You Don't Succeed*
1986... *Resisting Success*

Current line-up:

Alan Tecchio... vocals
Dan Lorenzo... guitars
Ed Furhman... guitars
Dave Lecinsky... drums
Kevin Bolembach... bass

Website:

www.hadesusa.com

HEAVEN'S GATE

Interview with guitarist Sascha Paeth

One of the leaders of the European power metal scene is a largely unknown entity here. Hopefully this will all change because **Heaven's Gate** is one of those bands that puts out one excellent album after another. They first appeared ten years ago with their debut, *In Control*. They proceeded to release two more albums in the early eighties, *Living in Hysteria* and *Hell for Sale*, along with a couple of e.p.'s before going on hiatus. They returned in 1996 with *Planet E* and have recently issued *Menergy*, their best release to date. *Menergy* combines the power of their early speed metal attack with a new mature, almost progressive edge. The album is full of great tunes and has received massive critical response. They also have a *Boxed* set that is well worth searching out- especially through R.A.M. who have most of their catalogue available for great prices. I spoke to guitarist Sascha Paeth, who is becoming best known for his production duties in the late 90's. *Menergy* is an album that would appeal to fans of both metal and progressive rock. It is an album that your average **Fates Warning** fan can enjoy as much as you fellow **Helloween**-er. I spoke to Sascha about both **Heaven's Gate** and his role as a very in demand producer at his place in Germany.

For those who are unfamiliar with the band tell us how you got started. It was formed in '85- '86, under a different name, **Steel Tower**. I joined in '88 to do the first recording and then we had the new name. Only one change of members occurred. The bass player left in '95. Then we added a new bass player. We did *In Control*, a mini album, *Open the Gate and Watch*, *Living in Hysteria*, another mini album, *Hell for Sale*, *Live for Sale*, a lot of records. *Planet E* came out in '96.

What happened between *Hell for Sale* and *Planet E*?

We had the live album, *Live in Japan*. After the tour we didn't go on seriously for awhile. We needed a break, there was no problem or anything.

What is the concept behind *Menergy*? You have each song starting with an introduction.

Some people are annoyed by it. It creates an atmosphere. We had the whole thing without, "Teleshoot" we call it, and we compared the masters without and with and we were much more interested with them. The idea behind it was to have two or three after the mastering but then we did it for every song. It was not really planned. It's not a concept album, basically the songs are about the same topic. That's because once you start out writing lyrics and you're inspired by the topic and then you just go for it.

What does *Menergy* mean?

It's a word game- man and energy. The record is about the clashing of human nature and modern technology. This is the word.

How would you describe the sound on *Menergy*?

It's a true sound. It shows the interests of each member. We didn't care about anything. Usually we do an album and we say let's go in this direction or that direction. There was also some pressure from record companies, but last few years we said we don't care about it anymore. We do what we want to do. We want a sound for the band that everybody's happy with. We didn't plan to have a new sound. We do what we like and this is what comes out. We try to leave cliches and do what we think is the right thing for the songs. Some people say it's not melodic metal anymore- okay then listen to the old records. We would get bored if we did the same thing and it would mirror in the music and that's not cool.

Have you done any touring for this record?

Not really. We have done some single shows. We had an offer to play in Greece but I don't know if it's going to happen. We played in Sweden with **Stratovarius**. This time we said let's not plan a tour. It's a bit problematic and to tour Germany, for example, it's hard to play during the week. There are maybe half of the people than on the weekend. You do the tour and you have expenses that you have to pay for touring. No income even would be okay, but we don't want to have to pay for it.

How are things for **Heaven's Gate in Japan?**

It's not like in the early 90's anymore. First of all, we had this big gap between *Hell for Sale* and *Planet E*. It's always a problem there so we lost some of the fans. Then we changed the direction a little bit with *Planet E*. It was not heavy metal

anymore, not straight heavy metal. We lost maybe half of our fans with *Planet E* and with *Menergy* it's even less. But we gained some people in Europe and South America so it's reversed. We now have interest in North America. The market is different now. I think we'll have distribution in America early next year.

How long have you been working as a producer?

The first thing I worked on was **Angra**, *Angels Cry*. That was 1993. It was the first bigger thing. In the last four years I work alone on stuff like **Rhapsody**.

What bands have you produced?

There's so many recordings I've taken part in the last few years, like fifty or sixty. The most important was **Angra**, **Rhapsody**, Luca Turelli, or **Gigantor**. With **Rhapsody**, you can't do a straight recording, it doesn't work. Luca's doing really well here. It sounds like **Rhapsody** but the melodies are more catchy and little straighter. I also worked on the new **Rhapsody** but that will be out in April or March. I also worked with **Kamelot**. We mixed it this week.

Is there any bands out there that you would like to work with that you haven't yet?

My roots are more rock oriented so I would like to do something more rock oriented. No particular band, but something more dirty. The production part is interesting but for the future I'd like to do some different things as well. I would also like to do some pop stuff, which I did already. If you keep doing the same stuff you become stupid doing it. It's got to be refreshing. I'm not gonna quit doing these other things, I'll just do more. Next year's already booked. It's better than being jobless.

What's the plan for **Heaven's Gate next year?**

We'll do a new album next year. We'll probably record it in April. We'll do some of the basic recordings in March, then **Rhapsody** is going on tour, maybe with **Stratovarius**. Then we'll do the record, a little faster than usual. It'll probably be more straight forward. We hope we can finish.

Tell me about *Boxed*.

People thought it would be a rip off and a rerelease. It's the price of a regular record and it's got a couple c.d.'s worth of material, our e.p.'s, and bonus tracks. It's sold really well. I think it had the wrong cover. They fucked up the first three or four thousand copies.

Final comments?

I'm happy there's some response in America now. I hope the record company is gonna release it there next year. I'm not seriously thinking about a tour.

The scene in the States is getting better.

It's happening more now. There's a little bit of a revival of the eighties heavy metal style like **Dio**. Maybe something's gonna happen.

Discography:

1999... *Menergy*
1999... *Boxed*
1997... *In The Mood* e.p.
1996... *Planet E*
1994... *Live In Japan*
1992... *Hell For Sale*
1991... *More Hysteria* e.p.
1991... *Living In Hysteria*
1990... *Open The Gate And Watch* e.p.
1989... *In Control*

Current line-up:

Thomas Rettke... vocals
Sascha Paeth... guitars
Bonny Bilski... guitars
Thorsten Muller... drums
Robert Hunercke... bass

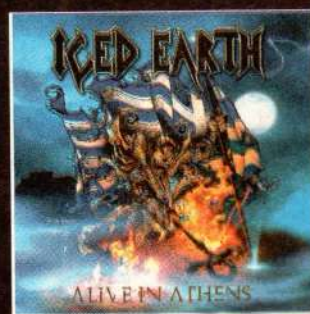
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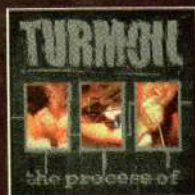
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Interview with bassist/ vocalist Ross Dolan

One of the fixtures on the New York death metal scene, **Immolation** have been together for over a dozen years. Even though their output consists of three proper full length albums, they have established themselves as an institution with their blasphemous lyrics and straight ahead, well played approach. They recently released their second record for Metal Blade, titled *Failures for Gods*. It is your typical album and while **Immolation** may be predictable in sound they also have a reputation for quality. Here is a talk with vocalist/ bassist Ross Dolan.

What are your plans for the summer?

We have only eleven shows right now. They're set up around the Milwaukee Festival. In August some Canadian dates are supposed to be planned. From there they want us to do a sweep of the States, then supposedly we're going to Europe in September. That's the plan right now but nothing's set in stone.

Comparing *Failures for Gods* to your other albums, how has the band progressed?

With each album we've definitely progressed musically. We still maintained our identity. I think it's important for bands to establish an identity. One thing I think is consistent through out all the albums is the fact you can put it on, listen to a minute of it and know it's us right away. We've been consistent with our sound but yet with each album we've matured as people and as musicians and lyrically. It's definitely our best produced album. We made the decision to go to Millbrook Studio. This is the first album we've done with Paul Orofino. He was the coolest guy. We went up there and it was the first studio we checked out. A friend of ours in Yonkers has a rehearsal studio and he had done some work with Paul. He said "check out this studio, he's a really cool guy." We went up there and he made you feel relaxed, which is important, especially when you're recording. We gave him the two c.d.'s and he's like "I haven't worked with this stuff but I know I can make you guys sound better." We liked that right away. He's been around for many years. A good producer, it doesn't matter what type of music he's worked with, they really know how to bring out the sound. With this album it's produced well enough that you can hear what's going on with the guitars, the drums, everything has a nice fat sound, but at the same time it's not overproduced. The last album lacked a lot in the production department. His studio is the perfect environment, there's nothing up there. He cooks awesome barbecued chicken wings.

Is this Alex's first recording?

Yeah. He joined the band right after *Here in After* came out. He did all the touring for that album. He hit the studio with us once, we did a *Mercyful Fate* song- "Satan's Fall". That was the first time he was in the studio. This was the first time he actually recorded a full length with us. He was well prepared before he went in and it went pretty smooth. We always spend a lot of time on the drums to make sure they're on the money. That's usually the point that we're most anal about. Once the drums are done everything else falls into place because that's the backbone. We can't wait to get back in there and do something else.

Is there any reason why there's a long time gap between albums?

Common question, the first album was on Roadrunner Records and the main reason for the five year span between that and *Here in After* was the fact that it took us a long while to get out of the Roadrunner deal, then we were without a label for about two years. You're really limited as to what you can do with a new album without a label behind you. Even though we were inactive we still did a lot of stuff we went down to South America, we went to Canada, Puerto Rico, we did a lot of festival, in the U.S. It was still a very low key time for us. Once we got interest from a few labels, Metal Blade was one of them, and then we got the ball rolling again. *Here in After* was recorded before we even signed with Metal Blade. This album was actually recorded last summer. It probably would've been out before the end of last year. We use Andreas Marshall for the artwork on every cover, obviously we had to use him again. Unfortunately when we were done recording the album, he was still involved with other projects. He does film production in Germany, so he wasn't available until December which really screwed us up. We had the two full pieces of artwork and we have the little icons that he did for us so he had a lot to tackle, with this album. It took him about two months to complete everything. Metal Blade didn't have everything for the layout until March. This time around we're gonna get in touch with Andreas as soon as we get the conceptual ideas down.

Is *Dawn of Possession* out of print?

Chris (Forbes) just told me recently it was out of print. I don't know because I still see it around here and there. When *Here in After* came out I saw it everywhere. In the last couple months I haven't seen it that much. I don't know the story, I wish it wasn't. If they aren't gonna print up anymore then I wish they would sell us the rights and we'll do it. We'll find out, I'll call Monte. We're still on good terms but things didn't work out. We're in a better situation now with Metal Blade.

Where do you draw inspiration for your lyrics?

From our own personal life and experience. The lyrics are something we all, as a band, agree with. Even when Alex joined the band something he really enjoyed was our lyrical approach. They reflect our personal feelings on the subject of religion. Religion played a part in all of our lives, at one moment or another, not in an extreme sense. I went to a Catholic high school and that was a turning point for me. I started questioning a lot of things. It's not meant to change people's minds or encourage people in any way, we're just expressing how we feel. Some people might get offended by it. I spoke to a guy doing an interview two weeks ago and even though he liked the lyrics he said there were a few things that offended him. I told him, we aren't trying to win a personality contest. The lyrics are very blunt and to the point, and they are written in a dark way because the music is dark. The music and the lyrics go hand in hand. The lyrics play as an important part as the music. We try to make the lyrics complement the music and at the same time at an intellectual level. You can read any given song and draw something from it. I have people talking to me with different interpretations for the songs and even though they're far off the mark there's something that I didn't even look at. We know what the songs are about because we have it in mind when we're writing them. It all comes down to the whole control issue. Somebody said to me, "you sound very pessimistic and like you have a lot of hatred toward Christians." No, actually we don't hate anybody really, we don't hate Christians. We hate the fact that people allow themselves to be manipulated and controlled. Religion plays no part in my life. I'm gonna be thirty this year. It's a nice story to tell kids about God and the Devil, heaven and hell, but in 1999 when there's so many crazy things going on in the world it really has no substance in my life. A lot of people obviously need it for some reason. It gives them hope. I don't think people should look outside themselves for inspiration. I believe you should treat people the way you would want to be treated. I think the premise is good, I don't think it's necessarily a bad thing for some people. If you're a strong minded person maybe it can enhance your life. Most people see it in the wrong light. We're not a Satanic band. Any references we make to the devil are personifications of evil. Everybody is capable of good and evil.

What are your thoughts on *Stepping on Angels Before Dawn*?

A friend of ours in France, Laurent from Listenable Records, he approached us awhile ago about doing a c.d. with the demos. A lot of people were asking him to tape copies of the demo. During that time between *Dawn of Possession* and *Here in After* we got a lot of requests in the mail, a lot of people wanted us to send them out demos. We felt the best thing to do was release it on c.d. Nothing was coming out at that time, so at least people would know we're still around. We even included the **Rigor Mortis** recording on there too. I was a fan of **Rigor Mortis**, we used to go to their rehearsals. We put some old bootlegs, live gigs, pre-*Dawn of Possession* and some tracks from *Dawn of Possession* recorded at various times but didn't make it on to anything. We spent a lot of time on the layout, getting the pictures together. We included the letter we got from Dig at Earache that Roadrunner sent us. It was pretty silly. That was really fun because we got to pull out old stuff. It was for the real die hards.

Discography:

1999... *Failures For Gods* (Metal Blade)
1995... *Here In After* (Metal Blade)
1991... *Dawn Of Possession* (Roadrunner)

Current line-up:

Ross Dolan... vocals and bass
Robert Vigna... guitars
Thomas Wilkinson... guitars
Alex Hernandez... drums

IN FLAMES

Interview with drummer Daniel Svensson

By the time this issue hits the newstands, **In Flames** will be into their American tour with **Moonspell**. Such a high profile opportunity in the U.S. has come so infrequently for foreign bands that it proves how successful **In Flames** have become. This year they released their fifth album, *Colony*. They have showed a steady yet gradual maturation throughout their career and *Colony* represents their most accessible material to date. Vocalist Anders Friden has never been more clear and the music features many textures to their established intricate melodic death metal sound. I spoke to new drummer Daniel Svensson who replaces Bjorn Gelotte, who in turn takes over guitar duties for the departed Niklas Engelin. Daniel, while certainly was pleasant enough, did not seem to be the most talkative person.

What are your feelings on *Colony*?

I think it's the greatest **In Flames** album. We have done some new experiments on it. We have some clean vocals, some samples, and some keyboard parts.

Is *Sacrilege* still together?

I talked to Daniel yesterday, he asked if I could do the vocals on the next album. I'm not a member anymore but I'll do some session vocals.

What is **In Flames doing now?**

We're doing some festivals in Europe. We go to Japan in July for one week for some gigs and a lot of promotional work. This fall we will do a big European tour with **Dark Tranquillity** and **Children Of Bodom**. I think it's a great line-up.

Do you try to focus on making each album different from the next?

We have to develop the music. You can't stay the same. It's for our own sake, it's more fun to play. It makes it more interesting for the people to listen to and maybe we can pick up some new fans. I think the old fans will stay with us because it's still the original **In Flames** sound as well.

How is **In Flames received in Japan now?**

We do very well in Japan. I think it's because of the melodies because they love guitar playing. I don't know how they will react to the new experimental stuff.

Is this the first time for you in America?

Yeah, we've never been there before. **Hammerfall** was over with **Death** and that was a very good thing.

Are you involved with any side projects?

Not me. I don't have time for it because we have too much with **In Flames**. I will do the session vocals with **Sacrilege** but it will not take long.

What are your goals for *Colony*?

Our main goal was to do a better album than the previous one and I think we've done that. We want to tour as much as possible and go to places, like the States, that we haven't been to before. We want to catch more fans and to spread our music.

Will the band have a steady line-up now?

I think so. In the past, **In Flames** have had a lot of line-ups. I think this one will stay long time because we work good as a group and we like each other. I think it'll be a stable line-up for a long time.

Will you ever use a different studio than Studio Fredman?

We're satisfied, but maybe we will try something different for the next album. Maybe we'll go to a studio in the States.

Do you think bands like **In Flames or **Dark Tranquillity** get overlooked because there's so many bands from Gothenburg?**

I don't think so. Maybe in the States, not Europe.

Will you continue with the experimentation found on *Colony*?
I think we will go a little bit further.

Discography:

1999... *Colony* (Nuclear Blast)
1998... *Whoracle* (Nuclear Blast)
1997... *The Jester Race* (Nuclear Blast)
1995... *Subterranean* (W.A.R.)
1994... *Lunar Strain* (W.A.R.)



Current line-up:

Anders Friden... vocals
Jesper Stromblad... guitars
Bjorn Gelotte... guitars
Peter Iwers... bass
Daniel Svensson... drums

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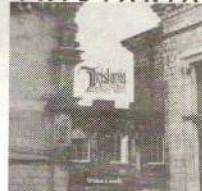
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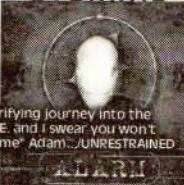


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ABHORRENCE... Ascension... 81... Despite the low budget, that melting face on the cover is really cool. They need to find a more legible logo though. **Abhorrence** are an extremely talented band from Brazil that play old school death metal very well. **Ascension** is a short, three song mini-disc featuring the songs, "Reborn to Vengeance", "Communication with the Dead", and "Horde of the Demons". The music that Rangel Arroyo (guitars), Kleber Marnier (bass), and Fernando Arroyo (drums) play is solid but it's Rangel's superior and convincing vocals that raises **Abhorrence** to a new level. I look forward to more material from this great band. **WILD RAGS.**

ABIGOR... Channeling The Quintessence Of Satan... 78... Austria's **Abigor** have had one of the most prolific careers in the underground black metal scene. *Channeling the Quintessence of Satan* is their fifth full length, in addition to three e.p.'s over the course of six years. While many black metal bands are incorporating aspects of other genres into their style, **Abigor** have stuck to their guns. They are not as raw as **Dark Throne** and on the blasting sections they are noisy and muddy. It is in the atmospheric intros, the occasional catchy riff, or as in the technical virtuosity of "Utopia Consumed" that they stand out. Interesting artwork adorns this dark brown ambience. Vocals are performed by Thurisaz. On "Pandora's Miasmatic Breath" he gives an insanely intense performance. With a huge marketing and promotional campaign, maybe **Abigor** will finally command the respect they deserve. **NAPALM.**

AETERNUS... Shadows Of Old... 87... One of my favorite death metal bands returns just a year after *And So the Night Became* was issued by Pavement. **Aeternus** is one of the best bands of this genre. As their bio aptly describes them: "imagine **Bolt Thrower** clashing into **Immortal**." The bombastic drums and crushing rhythms are much like England's death metal kings, but their imagery has a stronger link to the black metal scene. *Shadows of Old* is their fourth release since they debuted with the mini disc *Dark Sorcery* in 1996. The key word for **Aeternus**, once again like **Bolt Thrower**, is consistency. They have accumulated as many great songs as **Deicide** in half the time. **Aeternus** keep themselves a step ahead of everybody by being unafraid to add new elements now and then to their established sound. While their members come from the Norwegian black metal scene (**Immortal**, **Gorgoroth**, **Obtained Enslavement**), it's nice to see them focus their efforts and take extreme music to a new level of brutality and innovation. **HAMMERHEART.**

ALCHEMY X... A Delicate Balance... 88... What is it with all these X bands? How come they're all from the East Coast of America? How come they are all so good? *A Delicate Balance* is the debut offering from New York's **Alchemy X**. It is a well produced disc, mostly metal with some progressive tendencies and very little keyboards. When **Alchemy X** slow things down, as they do on part two ("Emotion") of "Autumn Sonata", they bear a striking resemblance to 90's era **Fates Warning**. Martin Morin is one of the more emotional vocalists of the genre. He wavers between the progressive melodic and the power metal of "Alchemy". A band that is very accessible despite some fancy passages, **Alchemy X**'s debut avoids the usual prog metal classification and gives the band a massive foundation to build upon. **PLASTIC GIRAFFE.** Available through Sentinel Steel @ 973-398-3436

AGATHODAIMON... Higher Art Of Rebellion... 83... Many people have been criticizing **Agathodaimon** and their multi-faceted sound. Some feel they are contrived and pretentious. Hey, maybe they are but on *Higher Art of Rebellion* I hear a lot of potential. *Higher Art of Rebellion* begins with the slow, doomy "Ne Cheama Pamintul" which closes with theatrical keyboards. The gothic/ black metal elements on "Tongue of Thorns", the atmospheric "A Death in its Plenitude", the groove laden "Body of Clay", the beautiful "Novus Ordo Seclorum", and the goth tinged/ clear vocals of "When She's Mute" all work well. You can't fault **Agathodaimon** on their ambitions or willingness to take risks. Although there is plenty of positive things happening on *Higher Art of Rebellion*, their perfect song has yet to be written. *Higher Art of Rebellion* is a worthy follow up to *Blacken the Angel* and shows **Agathodaimon** have the potential to carve a career similar to the great **Septic Flesh**. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

AGENT STEEL... Omega Conspiracy... 85... It's been a dozen years since *Unstoppable Force* created an unprecedented buzz in the metal world. Wild riffs, insane time signatures, and the soaring vocals of John Cyris were hailed as groundbreaking. *Omega Conspiracy* starts a new chapter. The extraterrestrial lyrical topics are still present, however, missing is John Cyris of course. The disintegration of Cyris' mind is what led **Agent Steel** to break up in the first place. Original members Juan Garcia and Bernie Versailles (guitars), and Chuck Profus (drums) recruited bassist Karlos Medina and vocalist Bruce Hall for the *Omega Conspiracy*. While there is still some technical playing, the music is thrashy (a little like *Skeptics Apocalypse*) with some groove thrown in for modernization. Bruce Hall sings in an upper register most of the time with some low range growls. I can already hear the detractors of the Ripper Owens and **Judas Priest** collaboration crying once again. You know Cyris is gone, so you must accept the direction Hall takes them in. He will actually remind you of a cross between Ray Alder (**Fates Warning**) and Sean Killian (**Violence**) on "Illuminati is Machine". Welcome back. **CANDLELIGHT.**

AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED/ CONVERGE... The Poacher Diaries... 82... I was not a huge fan of last year's debut full length, *Honkey Reduction*, but the nine songs that **Agoraphobic Nosebleed** contribute to this split e.p. are nothing short of phenomenal. The drum machine is purely manic and guitarist Scott Hull's guitar playing alternates between dense riffage and swarming noise. The true gem is actually found in Jay Randall's insane vocals. Whether they are drowned in distortion or shouted over blast beats, Jay has produced a performance that rivals Kevin Sharpe in his prime. Look for another full length, *Frozen Corpse Stuffed with Dope*, on Relapse early next year. I am not familiar with **Converge**, although I know they have approximately four releases to their name. On *The Poacher Diaries*, **Converge** is represented by six tunes. While the music is often quite interesting, complex and dissonant, the vocals are too over the top and incomprehensible. **ANb** have a winner, **Converge** needs better vocals to go with their intense and complex assault. Although I enjoy the noisy psychedelia of "They Stretch for Miles". **RELAPSE.**

AGRESSOR... Medieval Rites... 87... Along with **Mercyless**, **Agressor** has proven that France has some good death metal to offer. **Agressor** originally appeared with a mini-c.d. called *Satan's Sodomy* in 1987. They released three early 90's records, *Neverending Destiny*, *Towards Beyond*, and *Symposium of Rebirth* before going on hiatus. Alex Tocquaine (guitar/ vocals) and Joel Guigou (bass) reformed **Agressor** and worked together with drummers Morten Nielsen and Kai Haito to create *Medieval Rites*. While Alex still uses a death metal vocal style, his guitar playing is technical yet aggressive and thrash based. With many people sad over **Coroner**'s premature demise, *Medieval Rites* fits in well with albums like *Mental Vortex*. In an unusual move, **Agressor** expand upon the experimentalization they used on *Symposium of Rebirth* by incorporating flutes, violin, trumpet, and a female opera singer. Whether it be the exploratory and epic opener, "Medieval Rites", the ultra aggressive "Bloodshed", the technical "Wandering Soul", the experimental nature of the several instrumental interludes, or the **King Diamond** cover, "Welcome Home", **Agressor** have created a phenomenal record. Alex has a guitar sound that would make Hanneman and King envious. **SEASON OF MIST.**

AMDUSCIAS... Amduscias... 79... Japan's **Amduscias** have arrived on American shores via Metal Blade. While **Sigh** may be their best known export of the black metal genre, **Amduscias** offer first class black metal, with intense and listenable vocals and some busy but heavy guitar work. This self titled release was recorded back in the spring of 1997 so for the underground fans, **Amduscias** may already be in your collection. My favorite track is "Hell on Earth". There is a certain suspense **Amduscias** employ and when combined with Tomoya's melodic guitar solo, the band has added elements lacking from their European counterparts. Just to remind you of their stance, the following track "Dominion of Darkness" is raw and angry. The six song e.p. is enough to make even a casual fan curious to see where **Amduscias** proceed from here. **METAL BLADE.**

AMON AMARTH... The Avenger... 83... While **Amon Amarth** may not be setting new standards with their intense Swedish death metal sound, they are creating a solid legacy that made bands like **Unleashed** more of an institution than a band. I don't mean this to say that **Amon Amarth** sound like **Unleashed** or that they are boring. On the contrary, *The Avenger* is a solid kick ass death metal album that is unstoppable. The guitars are raw and aggressive but are precise and energizing. Like previous releases, the *Sorrow throughout the Nine Worlds* e.p. and last year's Metal Blade debut, *Once Sent from the Golden Hall*, *The Avenger* never lets up and plays out quicker than you think. While their lyrics are based in Viking mythology they avoid the musical Viking influences of contemporaries like **Enslaved** or **Mithotyn**. New drummer Fredrik Andersson capably fills in the double kick of departed Martin Lopez, so Lopez could concentrate on **Opeeth**. Sweden needs bands like **Amon Amarth** to carry on their tradition. **METAL BLADE.**

AMSVARTNER... The Trollish Mirror... 79... Like **Amduscias**, **Amsvartner** comes to America via Metal Blade and *The Trollish Mirror* is a four song taster much the same way **Amduscias** was. **Amsvartner** was formed in Sweden back in 1993, later releasing *The Trollish Mirror* in 1997. **Amsvartner** consists of three brothers; Marcus Johansson (vocals) and his twin brothers, Albin (bass) and Alfred (drums). They employ the twin guitar attack of Daniel Nugaard and Jonathan Holmgren. Like many Scandinavian extreme metal bands, **Amsvartner** combine black and death metal, however on *The Trollish Mirror* the former is the more prevalent. A solid debut which shows potential. **METAL BLADE.**

ANATA vs. BETHZAIDA... War... 80... Interesting concept. Each band contributes four tracks. For **Anata** we have two accelerated blasts of metal, a cover

Morbid Angel's "Day of Suffering" that exposes **Anata's** weak vocals, and **Anata** cover **Bethzaida's** "The Tranquillity of My Last Breath". Not very impressive. Score it a 72 for **Anata**. On the other hand **Bethzaida's** Viking metal is easier to digest. On "Last Day of Sodoma" they do an excellent job of balancing crushing guitar riffs and medieval atmospheric embellishments. "Expulsion" has stop and go riffs with machine like precision. This is one of the best tracks I've heard this year. **Bethzaida's** cover of Swedish folk poet Frederik Bellman is an interesting choice. This slow, melancholic dirge is a great lead into their aggressive cover of **Anata's** "Under Azure Skies". Score an 88 for **Bethzaida**, a truly original band that has a lot to offer for the extreme metal scene.

SEASON OF MIST.

ANATHEMA... Judgement... 92... There was a time when **Anathema** were one of my favorite bands. When *The Silent Enigma* came out in 1995, I viewed the first post-Darren White album as a masterpiece. The depth and subtle arrangements were a landmark grossly overlooked. While many hailed subsequent albums, *Eternity* and *Alternative 4*, these were major disappointments. With *Judgement*, **Anathema** have seemingly reached their peak. The developments which took place on the previous two discs come into focus on *Judgement*. Many elements that made *The Silent Enigma* special are present. Vincent Cavanaugh has greatly improved as a vocalist and "Pitiless" is his inimitable performance. He makes this song the catchiest of their career. While Duncan Patterson remains departed (replaced by Dave Pybus), drummer John Douglas has returned. The **Pink Floyd** comparisons are inevitable, they certainly don't help with passages like the "hey you" on "Forgotten Hopes", but *Judgement* is incomparable. One of the darkest, most intense, deceptively complex albums of our generation. *Judgement* and *The Silent Enigma* stand side by side as two of the best albums of the 90's. **MUSIC FOR NATIONS.**

ANCIENT... The Halls Of Eternity... 73... While they are not one of the best liked bands in black metal, one can not deny that they have made an impression on the genre. I have always felt that **Ancient** were more musical than many of their black metal brethren. The guitar work is always impressive and Aphazel has never been afraid to add melodic elements or fuse a little death metal, gothic, or power metal here or there. I am a little disappointed with *The Halls of Eternity*. Although there is some atmosphere, *The Halls of Eternity* is more straight forward than either *The Cainian Chronicle* or *Mad Grandiose Bloodfiends*. For the first time Aphazel also takes over the vocal position and it shows. His vocals are up front in the mix and adhere to the black metal style but he is rather boring and offers no variation. Jesus Christ returns on bass and guitars but Krigse is the new drummer and following in the footsteps of Kimberly Goss (*The Cainian Chronicle*) and Erichte (*Mad Grandiose Bloodfiends*) is new female vocalist Deadly Kristin. Overall the music is quite good, I would just like to see Aphazel stick to guitars and keyboards and find a new vocalist. **METAL BLADE.**

ANCIENT CEREMONY... Fallen Angels Symphony... 86... Of the four priority releases from Cacophonous this year, **Ebony Lake** and **Twilight Ophera** both reveal massive potential, **Sigh's** *Dread Dreams* is their best ever, but **Ancient Ceremony** is my favorite. This band combines various metal styles into a very listenable record. *Fallen Angels Symphony*, like other Cacophonous releases, is theatrical in nature. Taking a sexual, vampiric lyrical approach, one can link **Ancient Ceremony** to the gothic scene. The vocals of Chris Adnerle are tortured and raw, yet Cynthia Follman and Erna Siikavirta add femininity to the compositions. The guitars are crunchy and hover between Swedish death metal and traditional heavy metal, in style. While the keyboards and female vocals are important aspects of *Fallen Angels Symphony* it is the metal guitar playing of new members, Patrick Meyer and Marc Barbian, that give **Ancient Ceremony** a solid foundation on which to build their diversified forboding style. **Ancient Ceremony** could very easily follow the daring terrain of the revered experimental symphonic masters known as **Therion**. **CACOPHONOUS.**

ANDEAVOR... Once Upon Time... 91... This is an excellently written, well produced album of progressive power metal. While some may want to compare the music to **Dream Theater** and the vocals to **Rush**, the resemblance is relatively minor. **Andeavor** have made a record that would make the above veterans proud- and it's their first one. The music does have intricacies but **Andeavor** rarely stray from the core of the song and they are very catchy. There is enough guitar to keep it metal. "Heavens Gate" is a song that has not left my head because of the vocal hooks and memorable lyrics. Without any gloss or backing vocals Douglas Peck creates vocal hooks on the choruses- especially "The Long Walk" and "Heavens Gate". Even the token ballad, "Anybody's Guess" is a strong track. At over seventy minutes and a dozen tracks **Andeavor** give more than enough music for your money. Even if this album was recorded by veteran musicians it would be stunning. The fact that this is **Andeavor's** first, uh, endeavor is shocking. No filler at all. You are evil if you pass this by. **PROGRESSIVE MUSIC MANAGEMENT.**

ANGEL CORPSE... The Inexorable... 78... **Angel Corpse**, like **Cannibal Corpse**, have relocated to Tampa, Florida where they once again have recorded at Morrisound Studio. While their brand of death/ black/ thrash metal has a die hard core audience, I don't anticipate their legions to increase drastically. The *Inexorable* is their third full length and each of the eight songs blast by with no variation or melody. Both *Hammer of Gods* and *Exterminate* had more hooks. The addition of Tony Laureano on drums gives **Angel Corpse** are more professional sound but the best part of *The Inexorable* is Joe Petagno's demonic cover artwork. While still on Osmose for the rest of the world, *The Inexorable* was licensed to Olympic for North America. For me, **Angel Corpse** are quality musicians who take pride in their extreme sound, it's just that there isn't much to latch on to. Their constant live shows and their uncanny knack of hooking up with great tours will greatly increase their audience. **OLYMPIC.**

ANGEL DUST... Bleed... 88... Finally, **Angel Dust's** fourth release is out in America. The German band released two discs, *Into the Dark Past* and *To Dust You Will Decay*, in the mid to late 80's. Both discs were a combination of thrash and power metal. As the late 90's approached, drummer Dirk Assmuth and bassist Frank Banx reformed **Angel Dust**. Joining them this time was guitarist Bernd Aufermann and vocalist Dirk Thurisch. The result was last year's amazing disc, *Border of Reality*. **Angel Dust** quickly re-entered Woodhouse and recorded *Bleed* with Siggie Bemm (**Seven Witches**). While I preferred *Border of Reality* ever so slightly, *Bleed* is classy and superbly written power metal. Most of *Bleed's* songs are mid paced and catchy, with Steven Banx adding some synth and sample enhancement. One of the true gems is "Follow", an epic tune that begins as a ballad, turns into classic thrash, and then to melodic power metal. *Bleed* may not be as immediate or energetic as *Border of Reality* but **Angel Dust** have created a record with more depth. Thurisch once again proves to be one of the best new vocalists on the scene. He is nearly perfect in pitch, clarity, and power. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

ANNIHILATOR... Criteria For A Black Widow... 83... Jeff Waters called up drummer Ray Hartmann and vocalist Randy Rampage and all of a sudden sixty percent of the original *Alice in Hell* line-up was intact. While *Never Neverland* was an excellent sophomore release, *Criteria for a Black Widow* sounds like a more suitable follow up to that classic debut. Many people may not have realized that Jeff also recorded *King of the Kill*, *Refresh the Demon*, and *Remains* following their third disc, *Set the World on Fire*. While those three were more or less solo albums, with some excellent songs, **Annihilator's** seventh studio release should please fans of *Never Neverland* and *Alice in Hell*. Some songs like the ripping "Bloodbath", "Back to the Palace" (which rhymes with?!), and "Double Dare" were co-written by John Bates who had a role in the Alice themed lyrics. There's every facet of Jeff Waters repertoire, from the technical aggressive thrash; "Bloodbath", to intricate instrumentals; "Schizos Part III", to more modern aggression and mayhem; "Criteria for a Black Widow". Welcome back Randy and Ray, but Jeff had the spirit going all along. When is the **Metallica** reunion? **C.M.C. INTERNATIONAL.**

ANTITHESES... Antithesis... 92... This album should have you reaching for those old **Helstar**, **Fates Warning**, **King Diamond**, and **Megadeth** records. *Antithesis* starts with a bang. "Netherworld" starts off and Ty Cook wastes no time kicking in with his vocals. It's a quirky song for sure, but a daring and original way to open a record. Songs like "Breeding the Beast" will immediately recall *Rust in Peace* era of **Megadeth** with Cook's Mustaine tendencies and the heavy intricacies of the music. "The Curse" balances 90's progressive with 80's power metal to perfection. For a self financed debut, this sounds excellent. No two songs sound alike. "Netherworld" is chaotic, "Breeding the Beast" weaves through a variety of passages without losing focus, "Secret Fires" is a ballad but "Plastic" is thrashy- all power metal styles are represented. **Antithesis** make the music intricate enough that the listener can point out some progressive tendencies. Available for \$12 at 978 Township Road, Nova, OH 44859.

ARCH ENEMY... Burning Bridges... 82... For any band, that third album is almost always the most crucial to a band's growth. With their third disc, *Burning Bridges*, **Arch Enemy** have a winner. Guitarist brothers Amott, continue to astound with their talent and cohesiveness. They have become the quintessential twin guitar attack of the late 90's. They have it all; fast and technical riffs, beautifully melodic solos, powerful thrashing sections; all wrapped up with uncanny fluidity. On *Burning Bridges*, Sharlee D'Angelo joins on bass- how can he possibly keep this up? He must drop something. If one were to compare *Burning Bridges* to previous albums, *Stigmata* and *Black Earth*, the newest album shows **Arch Enemy** at their songwriting peak. Not only do they impress musically, but with songs like "Dead Inside" and "Seed of Hate" they also write tunes that will stick with you. When will America catch on? Look for them on tour with **Nevermore** this winter. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

Jorn Lande, ex-**Conception** guitarist Tore Ostby, and Yngwie Malmsteen/ ex-T.N.T. drummer John Macaluso. **Ark** have produced an album that is very special. With **Mundanus Imperium**, Lande bore an uncanny resemblance to Ronnie James Dio, interestingly enough he sounds like David Coverdale here. That's where any **Whitesnake** comparisons end. Macaluso makes sure that the drums are busy and sometimes quite experimental. I was told that **Conception** broke up due to Tore's disappointment in the reception to their excellent *Flow* album. **Ark** abandons both Tore's modern power metal playing on *Flow* and his neo-classical approach on the first couple of **Conception** records. Taking an experimental approach, Tore gives **Ark**'s seven lengthy songs an indescribable feel. It's a style that makes **Ark** an individual entity that is loaded with quirkiness. **AVALON**.

AS DIVINE GRACE... *Supremature... 74...* I wanted to like *Supremature*. I listened to it several times, hoping the melancholic melodies would take hold. They never truly did. *Supremature* is **As Divine Grace**'s second full length and the follow up to '97's successful *Lumo* disc. *Supremature* is a depressed, laid back, and ultimately boring affair. While Hanna Kalske's vocal melodies are quite lovely, she never truly varies the pace nor expresses much emotion. It's as if the whole band were sedated. There isn't much metal or gothic here, rather **As Divine Grace** sound more like a lame rock band with no enthusiasm. With so many great bands out there, this one would sound good in a local pub but it just doesn't capture the essence of sadness, nor present any of the forlorn atmospheres you would expect from this band. Hopefully, a more inspired effort on the next album will put them back on track. **AVANTGARDE**.

ATTACKER... *Battle At Helms Deep... 85...* What can you say about Sentinel Steel's packaging. You get a *Metal Forces*, a *Rock Hard*, and a *Metal Hammer* review from 1984-85, a three page biography, various fliers for shows, a two page interview with *Suck City*, lyrics, credits, correspondence; both the new and the original cover. For those who missed out, **Attacker** released two albums of traditional power metal in the mid to late 80's and without Sentinel Steel's reissue, they would have even slipped these ears. On their debut, *Battle at Helms Deep*, **Attacker** combine the best elements of **Maiden** and **Priest** and create a disc to rival the masters of that time. Being that *Battle at Helms Deep* came out in 1985 is even more shocking. The music does not even sound dated by today's standards. Original vocalist Bob Mitchell has a high register, powerful delivery that complements the catchy metallic hooks from guitarists Jim Mooney and Pat Marinelli. Songs like "The Wrath of Nevermore" and "Disciple" are timeless metal anthems that you can sing to and bang your head to. **SENTINEL STEEL**. **ATTACKER... *The Second Coming... 80...*** The **Attacker** saga continues. For my personal tastes, their debut, *Battle at Helms Deep*, is a better record. Between records vocalist Bob Mitchell and guitarist Jim Mooney left and John Leone and Tom D'Amico stepped in. Leone's voice was more operatic, almost always singing in a high register, thus unable to create the type of hooks that Mitchell was able to. Musically, **Attacker** veered more into a speed metal direction. The *Second Coming* is more technical, and less song oriented. Some people may be more inclined to like *The Second Coming* better for these reasons. I just feel *Battle at Helms Deep* has more melody without betraying the metallic essence. Again, you have Denis Gulbey's stellar packaging along with demo versions of "Lord of Thunder", "Zero Hour", and "Emanon". Sadly, this is Leone's lone representation of his vocal talents. **SENTINEL STEEL**. P.O. Box 123, Rockaway, NJ 07866 973-398-3436

BABYLON WHORES... *King Fear... 82...* Denmark's underground death rock kings are ready to conquer America. **Babylon Whores** released a couple of albums in Europe to critical acclaim, but after the demise of England's Misanthropy Records they have now signed a deal with Necropolis, who promptly release *King Fear*. I would hesitate to call **Babylon Whores** death rock, the term may have been appropriate in the past, but Ike Vil's vocals are not death metal at all. They do have that Swedish hard rock sound down quite well but when combined with Ike's vocals the band brings this style to new levels of accessibility. Even on songs like "Errate Stigmata", **Babylon Whores** are at least catchy. They do a good job of creating a gothic sound. Antti Litanen adds some doom, blues, and plenty of punchy riffs for a kick ass rock 'n roll vibe. This is a great album for a good time. At the very least, **Babylon Whores** fill a void that was created by **Almighty**'s sad break up. **NECROPOLIS**.

SEBASTIAN BACH... *Bring Em Bach Alive... 86...* While his former guitarists and bass player have formed **Ozone Monday**, ex-**Skid Row** vocalist Sebastian Bach has continued where *Subhuman Race* left off with a new band featuring guitarists Richie Scarlet and Jimmy Flemion (since departed, replaced by Paul Crook of Anthrax), bassist Larry, and drummer Mark McConnell. This disc originally appeared last year via Atlantic Records and featured a plethora of **Skid Row** tunes recorded live in Japan. Among those are tracks "18 and Life", "I Remember You", and "Youth Gone Wild" from their '89 self titled debut, "Slave to the Grind", "Riot Act", "In a Darkened Room", and "Monkey Business" from *Slave to the Grind*, and "Frozen", "Beat Yourself Blind", and "Mudkicker" which appeared on **Skid Row**'s last album together, *Subhuman Race*. Bach has wisely picked the heaviest and most energized songs for the live setting. They come across louder and faster than the originals. There are five studio tracks. "Rock 'n Roll", written by Bach and **Accept** guitarist Wolf Hoffman, "Done Bleeding" and "Counterpunch" which truly rock. "Blasphemer" is a dose of punk and "Superjerk Superstar Supertears" is awkward, both penned by Flemion. Joining Bas, Flemion, and Larry in the studio are ex-**Fleshley**'s **Comet** guitarist Richie Scarlet and drummer Anton Fig. Bas has brought back the attitude of rock 'n roll. A ten page comic is included. **SPITFIRE**.

BAL SAGOTH... *The Power Cosmic... 78...* What can you say about Byron's epic fantasy band. This English quintet has been creating their own brand of unique symphonic battle metal for years. *The Power Cosmic* is their Nuclear Blast debut, but **Bal Sagoth** have developed a strong cult following over the course of their three discs for Cacophonous Records. Many feel that **Bal Sagoth** is over the top, too pretentious, too symphonic, too contrived, etc. to be taken seriously. I have always taken **Bal Sagoth** with a grain of salt. While Byron has created a world of his own with **Bal Sagoth**'s lyrical terrain, if you look beyond his grand scope and listen to the intricate song structures and Jonny Maudling's extensive keyboard melodies and dominance, **Bal Sagoth** is an interesting experience. While I prefer last year's *Battle Magic*, *The Power Cosmic* is a more melodic affair. The keyboards are more prominent than ever and Byron's vocals are well diversified. The skeptic in me sees Nuclear Blast developing **Bal Sagoth** as a band who can capture **Covenant**'s *Nexus Polaris* sound, but fans of past efforts will surely enjoy **Bal Sagoth**'s new opus. They still create the best album covers ever. **NUCLEAR BLAST**.

BANG TANGO... *Greatest Tricks... 84...* **Bang Tango** has always been one of the most underrated bands born in the 80's. While Joe LeSte looked and sounded like Steven Tyler's little brother, the band combined funk with a refreshingly heavy and energetic form of metal. They scored an M.T.V. hit with "Someone Like You" from their debut *Psycho Cafe*. In 1991, they released *Dancing on Coals*, once again an excellent record which yielded the modest hit "Untied and True". While they lost their American deal they then released *Love After Death* overseas in 1994. A heavier, less funky album, **Bang Tango** scored yet another excellent album. The past five years have seen the band in turmoil. The only members from the original line-up are LeSte and Kyle Kyle. Like other **Deadline** albums from the 80's artists, **Bang Tango** have rerecorded past songs; "My Favorite 9" from *Love After Death*, "Dressed up Vamp", "I'm in Love", and "Untied and True" from *Dancing on Coals*, and "Do What You're Told", "Love Injection", and "Someone Like You" from *Psycho Cafe*. Four unreleased and rather weak tracks are "Daddy", "Cuts You Down", "Can You Boogie", and a cover of "Children of the Revolution". This band has so many great tunes there was no way *Greatest Tricks* was going to be a poor disc. **DEADLINE**.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN... *Till Birth Do Us Part... 76...* I am really trying to like the Danish progressive metal band, *Behind The Curtain*. When I try to think of bands I could compare **Behind The Curtain** to, I draw blanks. *Till Birth do Us Part* is not an album one can digest in one sitting. It takes a listener several attempts to begin to comprehend the vision they are creating. The music is spacious which allows all instrumentation to be heard and gives the band freedom to roam. The guitars are clear toned and even when there is a guitar crunch, like on "Artificial Trance" and "The Fields of Despair" it lacks a certain bite. I find both drummer Brian Rasmussen and keyboardist Morten Sandager, to both be exceptional and creative forces who give **Behind The Curtain** some identity. They live up difficult to grasp tunes like "Dreaming of a Way" and "I Believe". While Jonas Herholdt Froberg is a talented vocalist with a unique, almost Messiahs Marcolin (**Candlemass**) tone, he fails to provide any memorable vocal lines. This is the biggest fault I have with **Behind The Curtain**, they are talented but in such a saturated market, their songwriting skills leave something to be desired. **SENSORY**.

BEWITCHED... *At The Gates Of Hell... 74...* **Bewitched** have always been able to appeal to the black metal, thrash, death metal, and power metal communities. They embody the imagery and attitude of **Venom**, the true stance of **Manowar** and **Thor** (who guest sings on "Let the Blood Run Red"), and the origins of thrash (**Kreator**, **Destruction**). On *At the Gates of Hell*, the vocals are even less black metal sounding and are firmly rooted in the Cronos/ **Schmier** school of singing. Unfortunately, like many of those mid eighties metal bands, **Bewitched** are predictable and sound dated, but hey, that was always their intention. With five albums in four years, including last year's live album, **Bewitched** have already had a prolific career. I don't see their fanbase ever expanding beyond cult status. I did enjoy the **Iron Maiden** flavored guitar on "The Sinner and the Saint". **OSMOSE**.

BEYOND DAWN... *Electric Sulking Machine... 78...* So much potential. That's what **Beyond Dawn** showed on their debut, *Pity Love*, and even last year's

Revelry. Emerging from the same depressive school of sedated doom as **Anathema** and **My Dying Bride**, **Beyond Dawn** showed an avantgarde style of expression. Their use of trumpets and percussion driven songs were at the very least a unique twist on a stagnant scene. Now they have signed to Peaceville who release *Electric Sulking Machine*. After a surprisingly mid paced opener, "Violence Heals", the first half bombs. "Addictions Are Private" is dominated by heavy drums, "Certain Qualities" makes use of trumpets, but even though these trademarks are what made **Beyond Dawn** special, here they are uninspirational. The techno beats on "Fairy Liquid" and the daring "Aage" make the album interesting. The latter has fuzzy bass, heavy drum beats, female vocals, and an experimental edge. "Cigarette" sounds like what **My Dying Bride** tried to achieve with *34.788% Complete*. Considering the fact that **Beyond Dawn** used to make a complete album of great tunes, five good songs is not up to par. Maybe this is **Beyond Dawn's** version of *Alternative 4* and their *Judgement* will come next. I hope so. I do like the bass line on "Hairy Liquor"- reminds me of **Coroner's** brilliant "Host". **PEACEVILLE.**

BILE... Sex Reflex... 88... I hope Slipknot are paying Bile some royalties. While Slipknot is more rhythmic, Bile leans toward the industrial scene, however, visually Bile had created that same circus atmosphere all the way back in 1992. Their debut, *Suck Pump*, and follow up, *Teknowhore* allowed Bile to achieve moderate commercial success but due to the demise of their label (Energy Records) they have kept a low profile recently. *The Strangeland* soundtrack yielded their best song ever, "In League", which also makes an appearance on *Sex Reflex*. Not much has changed with Krztoff's vision. "Betty Page", "Rock is Dead in Bed", and "In League" and others create that electronic based vibe with Dave Sussman's guitar riffs and Krztoff's effect drenched vocals. R.H. Bear returns on bass and ex-Suffocation drummer Doug Bohn complete Bile's line-up. While I prefer the songs, Krztoff has created several instrumental intros and an epic closer, "The Hunger the Feeding the Afterglow", that true industrial heads will enjoy. With **K.M.F.D.M.** finished, the world needs Bile's return. **BILE STYLE.**

BLACK LABEL SOCIETY... Sonic Brew... 92... Zakk is back. When the first notes of "Miracle Man" rang out on his first outing with Ozzy over ten years ago, we knew this boy could play. While Ozzy's studio output in the 90's has been limited, Zakk has gone on his own. His first foray was with **Pride And Glory**, in 1993. The blues drenched rock made **Corrosion Of Conformity** sound lame. His '96 solo album, *Book of Shadows*, is quiet, raw, and stripped down. Now he is fierce and ready to rock. *Sonic Brew* is in your face, angry, aggressive, and harmonic laden. That's right, his trademark harmonics are back with some insanely heavy guitar riffs. His vocal style is true and emotional. No gloss here, pure emotion. **Black Label Society** is **Lynyrd Skynyrd** on steroids. Songs like "Low Down", which is a sick hybrid of **Pantera**, **Ministry**, and **Skynyrd**, are so heavy and kick ass it's insane. And people thought **Raging Slab** were heavy. In a just world, *Sonic Brew* would have the same effect as *Appetite for Destruction*. Spitfire can do no wrong. **SPITFIRE.**

BLOODBATH... Breeding Death... 78... The cover looks like old school death metal. The music and the vocals sound like old school death metal. The musician's names look familiar. Is **Breeding Death** an unreleased death metal album from 1992? Actually, **Bloodbath** is a band formed by a group of friends to play a style of music that is a tribute to their roots. You know the names, Mikael Akerfeldt (vocals, **Opeth**), Anders Nyström (guitars, **Katatonia**, **Diaboliq Masquerade**), Jonas Renkse (guitars, **Katatonia**, **October Tide**), and Dan Swano (drums, ex-**Edge Of Sanity**, currently in fifty other bands). **Breeding Death** is a very short e.p. with just three songs. While they have captured the essence of death metal's roots, it's surprising this talented quartet didn't come up with any new twists. On the flip side, their day jobs are so demanding and revered that a side project like this can only be fun. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

BONFIRE... Fuel To The Flames... 74... Germany's popular hard rockers **Bonfire** quickly follow up last year's *Rebel Soul* with *Fuel to the Flames*. The band released four albums in the mid to late 80's and even had a video for "Sword and Stone" from the *Shocker* soundtrack. While I admire the fact that they've stuck with their 80's hard rock sound as if they weren't aware of the 90's, I find their music to have little substance. Only vocalist Claus Lessmann remains from their 1989 line-up on *Point Blank*, perhaps their most popular U.S. record. On *Fuel to the Flames*, **Bonfire** display a pride and love for their heritage. Songs like "Proud of My Country", "Rebel Pride", and "Thumbs Up for Europe" state their obvious feelings. They also do a cover of **Lynyrd Skynyrd's** "Sweet Home Alabama". Like previous albums, **Bonfire** effectively balance the fourteen tracks with several ballads and slower songs. "Goodnight Amanda" and "Life After Love" are typical ballads. **Bonfire's** best moments are on the mid paced heavy rockers like "Rebel Pride", "Break Down the Walls", and their ode to bike week, "Daytona Nights". **Bonfire** are rekindling the spirit of 80's hard rock. Uh oh. **B.M.G. EUROPE.**

BREAKER... Accept... 80... A little **Accept** worship happening here? Some may remember back in '87 when this band released their debut, *Get Tough*. They are a true metal band who disappeared into obscurity and have recently reformed the band, their former label; Auburn Records, and reissued *Get Tough* with bonus tracks. While **Breaker** has an obvious influence (are those Wolf Hoffman's guitars on the cover?), they are not **Accept** clones. Jim Hamar has a distinguishable voice that is nothing like Udo. As one would imagine, **Breaker's** most loyal audience lies in Germany. On this limited edition e.p. we have a new cover of **Accept's** "Breaker", two songs recorded in 1990; "Action" and "Life of Crime", a song from '88; "Still Life", a song from 1987, "10 Seconds In", and a demo track from 1982, "Sleepless Nights". Listening to these tracks makes you wonder why **Breaker** never hit it huge. I don't know if this c.d. will be more than a new cover track only, or if **Breaker** may be giving this another shot. **AUBURN.**

BROKEN HOPE... Grottesque Blessings... 88... It has finally arrived. While new label, Martyr Music has made **Broken Hope** their priority and with ads everywhere for months, the finished product is here. On *Grottesque Blessings*, **Broken Hope** have reached a level of musicianship that transcends even classics like *Repulsive Conception* and *Loathing*. While they do blast with the best of them, it is the mid paced, slithering technical aspects that make *Grottesque Blessings* a ground breaking experience. The atmospheres and technical approach that **Broken Hope** achieve on songs like "Wolf Among Sheep" and "Necro-Fellatio" will remind listeners of bands like **Cynic** and **Atheist**, yet **Broken Hope** never betray their death metal roots. It is amazing that *Grottesque Blessings* features some of the best bass playing of the year, considering that Brian Griffin, Brian Hobbie (**Internal Bleeding**), Ryan Schimmenti (**Disfigured**), and Mike Zwicke all appear. While Joe Ptacek has created a band trademark with his deep vocals, I look forward to seeing what ex-**Numskull** vocalist Scott Creekmore will do in the live setting. With Griffin's growing talent as a top notch producer and some classy musical sections, **Broken Hope** has taken the next step. **MARTYR.**

BRUTAL TRUTH... Goodbye Cruel World... 80... This aptly titled, two disc set is an epitaph for the recently disbanded **Brutal Truth**. Over the course of three full lengths, several e.p.'s, seven inches, and nine years together, they are sadly finished. Relapse has put together a fabulous package with tons of photos, and memorabilia, and fifty six tracks. The first disc is a live recording of an Australian show in August of 1998. The twenty three tracks span their entire career. Disc two features rare material, cover songs, and some alternative versions of old songs. While this package is a must for die hard fans and not a bad addition to anyone who likes eclectic extreme music, their three full lengths- *Extreme Conditions Demand Extreme Responses*, *Need to Control*, and *Sounds of the Animal Kingdom*; are all essential. **RELAPSE.**

BURNT OFFERING... Walk Of The Dead... 82... Nearly ten years after their self titled debut and subsequent break up, Chicago's **Burnt Offering** returns with a new album. Original members Jim Martinelli (guitars), Mitch (drums), and Hal Shore (vocals) now a foursome, are joined by bassist Dolph Ciringione. In their original incarnation, **Burnt Offering** played an aggressive style of thrash that bordered on death metal. One listen to *Walk of the Dead* and you will find that time has not changed these guys. The eleven tracks on display, including a cover of **Venom's** "Black Metal", do not sound dated but it's obvious **Burnt Offering** are a product of the 80's. Part of the appeal of *Walk of the Dead* is the fact that the vocals are understandable. In a day and age when the retro thrash underground movement is offering one replaceable crappy band after another, it's nice to see a classic band come back and do it the right way. **S.O.D.**

CANDIRIA... Process Of Self Development... 84... New York and its surrounding areas are well aware of **Candiria's** powerful musical vision. Through out the past half a dozen years or so **Candiria** has played relentless. A juggernaut of intensity, both live and in the studio, this band has more to offer than acclaimed bands like **Soilent Green** and **Dillinger Escape Plan**. With effortless ease and fluidity, **Candiria** have the amazing ability to go from full throttle aggression to melodic interludes and jazzy, sometimes ambient passages. As musicians, guitarist John Lamacchia, bassist Michael MacIvor, and drummer Kenneth Schalk are peerless. That is no overstatement. They blend jazz, progressive, hardcore, thrash, death, and grindcore into a cohesive sound that you will not hear anywhere else. To top it off, *Process of Self Development* sounds better than their previous two discs, although the band has always had the rare ability that allows their live energy to transfer to the studio. The last three tracks are weird, ambient, and experimental. Kevin Greeland plays bagpipes and Tim Byrnes contributes some trumpet to five songs. I still feel Carley Coma is a weak link. His screaming, no holds barred style reveals talent but no variety. When the pace mellows his rap style is even less bearable. **M.I.A.**

CANDLEMASS... From The 13th Sun... 78... Looking back on their legendary debut, *Epicus Doomicus Metallicus*, and the three subsequent follow ups and one must realize that **Candlemass** were one of the most underrated bands of all time. Messiah Marcolin proved to be one of the best vocalists on classics like

Nightfall, Ancient Dreams, and Tales of Creation. Once he left, the band recruited Tomas Vikstrom for *Chapter VI*, which also had some classic songs. Then they broke up. Bassist Leif Edling reformed the Swedish doom masters with a new band that included **Arch Enemy** guitarist Michael Amott. *Dactylis Gomerata* represented a change. Adding more psychedelia this time, **Candlemass** were still rooted in **Sabbath** inspired doom but this new album and line-up did not sound like the same band. On *From the 13th Sun*, Mats Stahl replaces Amott and while the 70's psychedelia remains, he also brings a heavier doom sound that often allows the listener to recall "Black Sabbath". Songs like "Tot" and "Galatea" sound like **Sabbath** recordings from 1970. With the exception of "Elephant Star", *From the 13th Sun* wallows a little too much in that 70's psychedelic doom. Bjorn Stodkivist does a good Ozzy impression but offers no variety. Edling made a smart move by enlisting Stahl's services because his sound is classic. **MUSIC FOR NATIONS.**

CANNIBAL CORPSE... Bloodthirst... 84... Hard to believe that this is **Cannibal Corpse's** seventh studio and their third record since Chris Barnes left. Last year's *Gallery of Suicide* was a landmark death metal masterpiece, die hards felt it was too experimental for their narrow minded tastes but I'd encourage any fan of music to purchase it. *Bloodthirst* is an album that appears to be going back to *Vile*. No slow, creepy songs, no instrumentals, and suddenly Corpsegrinder is sounding mortal again. His performance on *Gallery of Suicide*, in my opinion, was the best ever. On *Bloodthirst* his raw screams are not as prevalent and usually occur at the ends of stanzas. For every mid paced, memorable tune, "The Spine Splitter" for example, there are three blast beat dominated songs, "Raped by the Beast", "Condemned to Anger", and countless others for example. Lyrics are basically split between bassist Alex Webster and drummer Paul Mazurkiewicz, while musically Webster and guitarist Pat O'Brien are the primary creative forces. Once again we have Vincent Locke's trademark album cover carnage and this time Colin Richardson produces. Have they recorded a disappointing album yet? **METAL BLADE.**

CATHEDRAL... In Memoriam... 78... This is a reissue of **Cathedral's** debut e.p. which led to their deal with Earache in 1991. Also included are five songs recorded live in Holland during 1991. The **Cathedral** that recorded *In Memoriam* and their debut, *Forest of Equilibrium*, was a much slower, down tuned, doom band than what is found on *The Ethereal Mirror* and subsequent records. While **Cathedral** die hards are usually split into two halves, they either prefer the slow doom of the early albums or the retro groove of the later ones. I personally, prefer the later material. There's no denying that the songs on *In Memoriam* contain some foundation building songs. Although the band has gone through countless line-up changes in the 1990's, *In Memoriam* featured core members Lee Dorrian (vocals) and Garry Jennings (guitars) along with guitarist Adam Lehan, bassist Mark Griffiths, and drummer Ben Mochrie. If you are a dedicated fan or simply want to hear the roots of **Cathedral**, this is a necessary purchase, otherwise stick with any of their other records. **MUSIC CARTEL.**

CENTURIAN... Choronzonic Chaos Gods... 82... While the second tier of American death metal bands; **Malevolent Creation** and **Monstrosity** for example, are now reaching their peak it is the overseas scene which is spawning bands like **Devilyn** and **Centurian** that is solidifying what many perceive as a dying genre. Last year **Centurian** released an e.p., *Of Purest Fire*, and it received modest acclaim in the underground. This debut full length sees **Centurian** uncompromisingly brutal. No hints at melody, just pure blasphemous aggression. The guitars will occasionally relent and create some alternate riffing which gives short breaks from the double bass blasting. This works best on "Misanthropic Luciferian" and offers *Choronzonic Chaos Gods* its most memorable moment. No gimmicks, no added influences, **Centurian** is all about a pure death metal assault. **FULL MOON.**

CIPHER... 4:45... 92... At the time of this writing, **Cipher** have unfortunately broken up. I loved their full length debut, *Kingdom of the Blind*, and despite a change in vocalists I was real anxious for their new disc. While George may not have Mark's range, he has a voice which perfectly displays the necessary emotions. *4:45*, subtitled *A Day of Reckoning*, is a concept album about a person's dissent into frustration and eventually aggression. It is unfortunate that **Cipher** will surely be overlooked. As the case has been with incredible acts like Bush era **Anthrax**, **Non-Fiction**, **Life Of Agony**, and **Psychotic Waltz**- this emotional, aggressive, intelligent metal has often been overlooked. George has not quite a sound, but a style similar to Keith Caputo when he was in **Life Of Agony**, but the added death metal style vocals and black metal screams on songs like "Pressure", "Dead Weight", and "The Awakening" enhance the intensity of this album. There is plenty of melodic moments, especially on songs like "Killing Floor" and "Defenseless". **Cipher** is a study in emotion and aggression, a balance **Pantera** will never understand. Although I enjoyed Matt DiFabio's **Non Fiction** like groove and simplicity on *Kingdom of the Blind*, he shows more growth here without compromising his raw style. My only complaint is excepting two short songs and a cover of **Queensryche's** "Spreading the Disease", there are only six proper songs. Buy this! Monumental Group P.O. Box 569 Hatboro, PA 19040. www.monumentalgroup.com.

CIPHER... Protoculture... 85... Do not confuse this New York rap/ hardcore combo with Pennsylvania's aggressive metal combo. These guys graduated from a high school I used to work at as a permanent substitute. They are an intelligent band and dedicated musicians. Moe Mitchell tends to veer more in a rapper direction but also has a strong hardcore background. Chris Fry has an unbelievably heavy tone on this four track offering. He locks into a slow, crunchy groove and unlike previous recordings, **Cipher** keeps the pace slow to mid, although Moe can still spew an intense amount of words. Definitely their best offering to date. Moe is an acquired taste but musically **Cipher** is approaching their peak.

COALESCENCE... 0:12 Revolution In Just Listening... 83... The U.S. has spawned a new scene in recent years. There is a rising population in hardcore bands who are taking brutality and innovations to fresh levels. The labels at the forefront of this movement are M.I.A. (**Indecision**, **Candiria**) and Relapse (**Dillinger Escape Plan**, **Converge**, **Coalesce**, among others). After several e.p.'s and one full length, *Give Them Rope*, **Coalesce** return with their Relapse debut. *0:12 Revolution In Just Listening* consists of nine songs and just under a half an hour of music. Most of the songs are quite catchy and deceptively complex. Even with a thick distortion one can hear that these guys can play. Sean Ingram's vocals are coarse and at times he will use some distortion to alter his tone. Even on grooving songs like "While the Jackass Operation Spins its Wheels" **Coalesce** will take off with some technical runs. This is a solid album with exceptional music. Let's see if **Coalesce** can make that final step and join the elite. **RELAPSE.**

CODESEVEN... Division Of Labor... 86... **Breach**, **Spite**, and **Neck** are a few bands that come to mind when I think of North Carolina's **Codeseven**. They effortlessly bounce between raw, intense aggression and quieter, deeper moments- both musically and vocally. Jeff Jenkins provides the singing and David Owen handles the screaming. **Codeseven** consists of the said vocalist, guitarist Eric Weyer, and brothers, James (guitars), Matt (drums), and Jon (bass) Tuttle. The screaming may be overwhelming at times but the music always remains interesting and diverse, plus you know there will be a melodic section around the corner. Bands like **Helmet** and **Clutch** started this post hardcore experimentation and I can't say enough about **Codeseven** or the other bands mentioned, who have expanded the genre into new and exhilarating areas. **MUSIC CARTEL.**

CONTROL DENIED... The Fragile Art Of Existence... 86... Here is the record everyone in the power metal community has been waiting for. The ultra talented musicians of **Death**, with a vocalist of Rob Halford quality. How can that combination fail? **Psycho Scream's** Tim Aymar sounds like a cross between **Metal Church's** David Wayne and **Nevermore's** Warrell Dane. Musically, **Death** members are abound. There is, of course, Chuck Schuldiner on guitars, along with present and past **Death** members Shannon Hamm (guitars), Steve DiGiorgio (bass), and Richard Christy (drums). The music is as heavy as **Death**, but features some more melodic passages. Despite Aymar's power metal approach, *The Fragile Art of Existence* will take several listens to absorb due to the heaviness and the complexity of the music. DiGiorgio actually tops all his previous work on "What If". Some people thought **Control Denied** would sound like a bastard child of **Judas Priest** but Schuldiner simply expands his vast repertoire that he exposed to us with **Death**. The powerful rhythm section sets the music into a new dimension. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

D.C. COOPER... D.C. Cooper... 91... I'm usually not a big fan of solo records, but people like D.C. Cooper, Ian Parry, and James LaBrie are proving that they are worth listening to. D.C. Cooper appeared on *Paradox* and *Moving Target* with **Royal Hunt** before deciding to do a solo disc. While Andre Andersen recorded *Changing Skin*, rumors began that D.C. Cooper had departed from **Royal Hunt**. Despite Andre's denials in Issue #6, D.C. Cooper has been replaced by John West and is now a solo artist. Joining D.C. are ex-**Conception** guitarist Tore Ostby, and **Pink Cream 69** members Alfred Koffler (guitars), Dennis Ward (bass), and Kosta Zafrinou (drums), along with **Vanden Plas** keyboardist Guenter Werno. D.C. has created a great album that, like **Royal Hunt**, balances power metal and hard rock. His vocals are better than ever and works well with this guitar oriented band. **PC69** are one of the most underrated bands out there and this album continues to show why. Album closer "The Union" ranks among the best tracks ever made. The piano and "never before, never again, turn on you" choir gives the song a touch of class and is a bold step in classic songwriting. Surprisingly, "Until the End" is the only song resembling a ballad. The rest of the dozen tracks rock with class and professionalism. "The Union"-a definitive song of our time. **INSIDE OUT.**

CORE... The Hustle Is On... 80... Did an elementary student draw this cover? This New Jersey band recorded their debut for Atlantic Records called *Revival*. The band went on to tour with **Clutch**, **Fu Manchu**, and **Orange 9mm**; and even made an appearance at Woodstock '99. *The Hustle is On* truly sounds like

it should have come out in the 70's. This is retro rock with 70's sounds and jams. The record label has tagged **Core** "tripnotic retro rock" and that's an apt description. The influence of Jimi Hendrix, **Blue Cheer**, and even **Cream** can indeed be heard. At times lazy with no place to go, "Square and Round", and at others immediate and vibrant, "Fleetwood"; **Core** will make an impression on this stoner/ retro rock scene. Operating as a trio, including brothers Tim Ryan (drums) and Fin Ryan (vocals and guitars) along with bassist Carmine Pernini, **Core** have the potential to break away from the pack. **M.I.A.**

CRANIUM... Speed Metal Sentence... 72... Speed Metal Garbage. Like labelmates **Vondur**, one would be a fool to take **Cranium** seriously. So you ask- why would you want to spend money on it? **Cranium** is an entity that worships the mid 80's of **Kreator** and **Destruction**. I suggest you spend your money on any of those original discs. They are far superior. Make sure your track down some of the classic **Kreator** records. You will see where a lot of this retro thrash movement has been inspired. Mid 80's records like *Terrible Certainty* and *Endless Pain* a classic albums that are necessary to track down. Among the **Destruction** records that are worthy of any metalheads collection are *Sentence of Death* and *Mad Butcher*. Oh yeah, I forgot I was reviewing the new **Cranium** disc. They are a mere shadow of the former masters. **NECROPOLIS.**

CRAWL 420... Severe... 84... From California comes another 90's groovecore band. I have a feeling they had to add the **420** to their name due to the band **Crawl** from Wisconsin. *Severe* sounds like a low budget affair but that helps magnify the anger of the music. **Crawl 420** lean more toward the hardcore side of things, and musically I can hear a band with a massive upside to their potential. Dan Miller's vocals are typical for the postering anger they create. They do an effective cover of **Black Sabbath's** "Into the Void", making it aggressive without losing the true nature of the song. This is their second release and **Crawl 420** have achieved a heavy, modern hardcore sound without incorporating the trendy elements of other local artists. I have a feeling it is inevitable that **Crawl 420** will sign to a label worthy of their talents and disc number three, with an even better production, will put them over the top.

CREST OF DARKNESS... The Ogress... 94... Ingar Amlien has been one busy individual. Following **Conception's** sad split in 1997 he formed **Crest Of Darkness** so that he could express the horror and forboding dark side of his creativity. They released two discs on **Voices Of Wonder**; *Quench My Thirst* and *Sinister Scenario*, before signing with **Listenable Records**. *The Ogress* obliterates any preconceived notions of how black metal should sound. While there is often a raw, aggressive side that would please **Dark Throne** fans, Amlien is accompanied by Kristin Fjellseth's beautiful voice and he will inject some memorable progressive moments to complement the melodic keyboards. Ex-**Conception** drummer Arve Heimdahl contributes, while **Kamelot/ ex-Conception** vocalist Roy Khan sings on the futuristic prog/ power metal tune "Reference" and the death metal sounding "Sweet Scent of Death". *The Ogress* is very theatrical with a loose concept occurring throughout. Amlien handles **Crest Of Darkness** primarily as a solo project. In addition to his bass duties, he also plays guitar and handles the coarse vocals, as well as production. For the open minded. **LISTENABLE.**

CRIMSON GLORY... Astronomica... 92... In my opinion, this is the most anticipated release in years. Following the disappointing third album, *Strange and Beautiful*, enigmatic vocalist **Midnight** disappeared and members went on with bands like **Parish**, **Erotic Liquid Culture**, and **Crush**. A few years later guitarists Jon Drenning and Ben Jackson, and bassist Jeff Lords reformed **Crimson Glory** with ex-**Savatage** drummer Steve Wacholz and new vocalist Wade Black. After several delays, it has finally arrived. Would **Crimson Glory** return to the metal sound from *Transcendence* and their self titled debut and would Wade Black be able to make listeners forget about **Midnight**? The answers are yes and maybe respectively. Wade Black establishes himself as a formidable vocalist with a recognizable voice and powerful range. The music is pure progressive power metal and unlike the **Midnight** dominated *Strange and Beautiful* there is no **Zeppelin** worship. Lords in particular shines. His powerful bass playing fills in the groove and Wacholz contributes an impressive comeback. On songs like "New World Machine", "Astronomica", "Lucifers Hammer", and "Cyber Christ" the band is in top form. My only complaint is that he has a tendency to scream too much. "War of the Worlds" is classic **Glory** but his invariable screaming is intolerable. A vexatious percussion dominant intro, "March to Glory" may make a great live introduction but on tape it is long and tedious. Long time fans will enjoy the "Lost Reflection" sequel, "The Other Side of the Midnight". Welcome back, we missed you. **SPITFIRE.**

CRO-MAGS... Revenge... 78... The **Cro-Mags** are back. Can the **Crumbsuckers** be far behind? Their first release since 93's disappointing *Near Death Experience*. The *Revenge* line-up, of course, does not feature vocalist John Joseph, however Harley Flanagan (vocals and bass) and Parris Mayhew (guitars) are joined by guests Rocky George (ex-**Suicidal Tendencies** guitarist) and drummer Dave DiCenso who has worked with the **Cro-Mags** before. *Revenge* has more in common with *Age of Quarrel* and *Best Wishes* than it does with the metalcore of *Alpha Omega*, however, *Revenge* is not as focused as the **Cro-Mags** were in their prime. There is a pop/ punk vibe running through *Revenge*, especially with Harley's vocals, than the hardcore leanings of the past. There are a couple of good songs, "Steal My Crown" and "These Streets" are both among their best, however *Revenge* is not as heavy as their other albums and lacks a focused direction. It is nice to see them back together and doing it themselves. **CRO-MAG.**

CRUCIFER... The World Dies... 79... **Crucifer** has been around for almost a decade and have released several e.p.'s, demos, and discs such as *Festival of Death* and *Pictures of Heaven* through **Wild Rags**. *The World Dies* consists of fourteen songs and over an hour of music pulled from three separate recording sessions between 1989 and 1999. Though the trio is known as a death metal band, I find **Crucifer** to be straight ahead 80's heavy metal. Jeff Riddle does sing in a gruff voice but rarely would I classify his style as death metal. On songs like "No Color" he resembles **Celtic Frost's** Tom Warrior with some trademark moans and stylings. Musically, **Crucifer** are mid paced and although they lack a punch, they are an adequate metal band. The music found on *The World Dies* is simplistic yet effective. I just don't agree whole heartedly with all the death metal comparisons. **WILD RAGS.**

CRYOGENIC... Celephais... 84... This new era of progressive black metal is captivating my interest. **Cryogenic**, musically, have a lot in common with what Nagash had done with **Covenant** on *Nexus Polaris*. **Cryogenic** are one of the first German black metal bands and with their debut, *Celephais*, they are commanding attention. Much of *Celephais* blasts by, but there is always some melodic sections, usually played by keyboardist Thehemoth, which adds a progressive element. While the vocals are black metal and buried in the mix, **Cryogenic** add a dose of originality with Thehemoth performing his keys. Highlights include the somber and theatrical "Processia Nocturna Teil 1" which leads into the aggressive "Processia Nocturna Teil 2" and the melancholic piano playing of "Celephais- Finale", which closes the album. While there is enough black metal and a raw production job by Harris Johns (**Kreator**, **Sodom**), the melodic elements and keyboards may dissuade the die hards. **SOLISTITIUM.**

CULTUS SANGUINE... The Sum Of All Fears... 88... This is a great disc. Somehow, **Cultus Sanguine** manage to come up a style of gothic metal that sounds quite original. The only thing that is even near the same region as *The Sum of All Fears* would be *The Silent Enigma* era of **Anathema**. Ignore any **Type O Negative** comparisons. There is something very appealing to Joe F.'s vocals. He has a legitimate tortured vocal style that does not sound contrived or forced. It's a combination of shouting and moaning but it's very powerful and prominent in the mix. Rather than keep the music in the slow doldrums of despair, **Fabrizio** often employs a double bass kick which keeps the tunes moving along at a decent pace. **Cultus Sanguine** have a self titled mini disc and their debut full length, *Shadows Blood*, came out last year. They will issue, *Buio Omega*, sometime early next year. This is a band coming into its own. A perfect balance of metal, gothic, and experimental, not unlike a **Celtic Frost** from *Into the Pandemonium*. **SEASON OF MIST.**

CYRCLE IX... A New Dimension... 97... The only bad thing I can say about *A New Dimension* is that at four songs, less than twenty minutes there is not enough. Anyway, the four songs that do appear are powerful and will rip the head off progressive fans but will impress power metal people with its heavy parts. "Tormenting You" is a mid paced stomp. "Headcase" slams the listener, I hesitate to call it thrash but those guitar riffs are heavy. On the other two tracks, "The Inevitable End" and "Live in the Past", **Cycle IX** show their progressive side. *A New Dimension* is a dynamic album with hardly a flaw. Mark Klein's drumming is powerful and heavy without straying from the context of the song. The guitar playing of Mike Hollis proves he can crunch with the best of them yet still play intricate arrangements with anyone. Pete Wallace is a superior vocalist who gives it his all on this recording. He can scream like no other and adds a fresh sound to this new, dynamic and exciting band. Everyone must buy. P.O. Box 1575, Cranford, NJ 07016. Kleintunes@hotmail.com

DANZIG... Satans Child... 86... While Glenn Danzig immersed himself with his comic book company and other endeavors, I was wary that **Danzig** was put on the backburner. I was pleasantly surprised to get a call from his publicist about an interview. While he amassed a steady fanbase throughout the late 80's, early 90's, and scored radio hits like "Mother" and "Dirty Black Summer", **Danzig** demolished some of his trademarks following a disappointing 4. When the dust settled, his band was gone, Rick Rubin and **Def America** was gone, and a new album; *Blackacidevil*, and sound; industrial, were created. Modern fans embraced *Blackacidevil* but it left classic fans in the cold. While *Satans Child* is closer in sound to *Blackacidevil* to *Lucifuge* or *Danzig*, it is a more focused and easier to digest record. Bassist Lazie and drummer Joey Castillo return for their second disc, while Glenn adds a **Black Sabbath** influence to his guitar playing, especially

on "Lilin" and the doomy "Apokalips". *Satans Child's* strength is in Danzig's dynamic vocal performance. Perhaps the best of his long career. The Morrison comparisons return on "Thirteen", he is drowning with effects on "East Indian Devil", and aggressive on "Belly of the Beast". "Cult Without a Name" will conjure visions of classics like "How the Gods Kill", *Satans Child* lays lame 90's artists like Rob Zombie and Coal Chamber to rest. **E-MAGINE.**

DARKANE... *Rusted Angel... 92...* I never thought I would hear a band that could match *Strapping Young Lad's* brilliance. I have been proven wrong. **Darkane** take the basics of the N.W.O.S.D.M. sound, inject memorable riffs, a careful talent for song structure, and a dose of Devin Townsend schizophrenia. The vocals are insanely harsh with some unusual doses of melody. Unlike many of their Swedish counterparts, **Darkane** have already found their niche. Despite the extreme nature of their songs, they know it is necessary to add memorable riffs and vocal lines. I can't help but use *Strapping Young Lad* as a measuring stick. **Darkane** take what S.Y.L. have created with their two studio discs and have added new elements that make *Rusted Angel* a truly original entity. They also make good use of a string section and a fourteen piece choir. Former *Agrator* guitarist Christofer Malmstrom and drummer Peter Wildoer (also ex-**Armageddon**, ex-**Arch Enemy**) have created a band that rises above a talented but stagnated scene. This is a must for all extreme metal fans. **W.A.R.**

DARK THRONE... *Ravishing Grinness... 78...* The legendary Norwegian black metal band, creator of eight albums that were filled with ravishing grinness, and subject of a tribute album including the greatest black metal bands ever, have finally returned. With a three year gap in between albums, after the first seven appeared in succession, I forget how important **Dark Throne** is to Norwegian black metal. While they strive to keep the roots of black metal fresh in the minds of everyone, it is unfortunate that **Dark Throne** haven't expanded their sound at all. The guitar playing sounds more intricate and at times, especially on "Across the Vacuum", it is even more melodic, but these are subtle changes. I miss their *Celtic Frost* riffs from *Panzerfaust*. The six songs on *Ravishing Grinness* average more than six minutes in length but do not offer much variety. I admire their defiant stance toward modern black metal but there is no growth and I would rather play old *Bathory* albums anyway. **MOONFOG.**

DEADBEATS... *Deadbeats... 73...* What hath ex-*Entombed* drummer, now *Hellcopters* guitarist/ frontman wrought? Since the Tomas Skogsberg produced band has become popular all around the world it was inevitable that others would follow. Members of *Edge Of Sanity* have formed the **Deadbeats** to express their punk rock side. This self titled debut is raw and energetic, but like most punk rock, the **Deadbeats** are quite boring and predictable. Each of the thirteen tracks cruise by without any excitement or variation. It may just be a matter of taste, because people who enjoy this genre may very well dig this band. I just don't find any appeal for my tastes. **FUELED UP.**

DEAD SILENT SLUMBER... *Entombed In The Midnight Hour... 84...* Jens Ryden (*Naglfar*) has created an interesting solo project. He deserves a lot of credit for the graphic design work he has done with this record and its exceptional logo. The photos show a man who looks like a metal star. All this classy presentation had me expecting a lot from **Dead Silent Slumber** musically as well. Unfortunately, the music doesn't live up to my expectations. That doesn't mean that *Entombed in the Midnight Hour* is bad, on the contrary Jens is able to do more than his limitations as a member of *Naglfar*. He is unafraid to add female vocals or synthesizers to help fill a song. His vocals are harsh and quite extreme rendering the accessibility of the songs here mute. There is a melancholic tinge to most of the music and even though Jens doesn't use real drums, it is not as obvious as you would expect. This is a well produced album and lays a solid foundation for Jens to build upon. I just wish he used a better vocal style for his compositions. **HAMMERHEART.**

DEFENDER... *They Came Over The High Pass... 85...* You rarely see a power metal solo project, but that's exactly what **Defender** is. From the mind of Philip Von Segebaden (*Cranium*, ex-*Afflicted*), comes *They Came Over the High Pass*. Helping Philip out are vocalist Michael van de Graaf (ex-*Afflicted*) and drummer Peter Nagy (*Mork Gryning*). I have mixed feelings about **Defender**. I expected a lot and at first I was disappointed. Upon several listens I began to absorb the atmosphere and the creative identity Philip has established in one album. One song that particularly shines is "High Himalayan Valley". A slow moving epic filled with a grand sing a long chorus and an emotional center that many bands try to attain but almost always fail. Another enjoyable aspect of **Defender** is the album's continual flow. From the atmospheric opener to the fast "The Siege of Himengar", to the rousing instrumental "Summit Day", the anthem "Dragon", all the way to the sad closer, "Nomads of the Stars". *They Came Over the High Pass* takes several listens to fully comprehend. An intelligent piece of work that was obviously well planned, at the very least *They Came Over the High Pass* will be remembered as the album that allowed Necropolis to branch out into other genres of metal. **NECROPOLIS.**

DELLAMORTE... *Home Sweet Hell... 79...* Remember the early 90's Swedish death metal movement, when bands like *Entombed*, *Grave*, and *Dismember* gave the world some excitement? Well, **Dellamorte** are here to keep that spirit alive. Slightly more intense, with a *Motorhead* rock vibe to songs like "Supercharged", "Bones", and "Motorkill"; what **Dellamorte** lack in skill they make up for in chaos. There may be fourteen tracks but *Home Sweet Hell* is over in a little more than half an hour. They don't mess around. Peter Tagtgren gives his usual production job, just the right amount of dirtiness and clarity. **Dellamorte** have never sounded better. They may not offer much variety or originality but **Dellamorte** have certainly captured that *Entombed Left Hand Path* sound perfectly and let it rip. **OSMOSE.**

DEMONS AND WIZARDS... *Demons and Wizards... 89...* The much anticipated collaboration between *Iced Earth's* Jon Schaefer and *Blind Guardian's* Hansi Kursch is bestowed upon us. After touring together in their respective bands, Hansi and Jon became good friends and decided to work on a separate project together. **Demons and Wizards** came out pretty much the way one would expect from these guys. The music is pure *Iced Earth* and the vocals are well thought out and executed. The key to **Demons and Wizards** is how they delicately balance full on metal assaults with quiet moments; "Heaven's Denied" is heavy and powerful before a quiet closing. Helping Hansi and Jon are members of *Iced Earth*, including ex-drummer Mark Prater. Not to criticize Matthew Barlow, but Hansi brings Schaefer's compositions to a new level. Barlow does exceptionally well with the heavier material while Hansi develops choir arrangements and harmonies to expand the mellow side of Jon's playing. Since **Demons and Wizards** will be a project that will continue when *Iced Earth* and *Blind Guardian* schedules permit, the metal fan has the best of three worlds. **Demons and Wizards** is better than anything *Blind Guardian* has done and ranks with the best of *Iced Earth*. **S.P.V.**

DENIAL OF GOD... *Klabautermanden... 80...* This black metal band has developed a strong cult following but is perhaps best known by their failure to capitalize on their potential. Personnel and label problems have led to a cancellation of a pivotal *Mayhem* tour, the release of only two mini-c.d.'s; *The Ghouls of Dog* and *Klabautermanden*, and constant clashes. Through it all, guitarist Azter and vocalist Ustamallagam have kept this Danish act together. **Denial Of God** have built their reputation based on an extravagant live show that makes *Mayhem* look tame. *Klabautermanden* is a four song, nineteen minute disc. While intro, "Stormvarslet" and the blasting title track are unremarkable; "Black Horror Metal" and "Dethrone the Tyrant God" are guitar driven assaults of violence. Look for their full length debut, *Horror Metal*, next year... hopefully. **HAMMERHEART.**

DERANGED... *III... 80...* Yes, they are and yes it is. **Deranged** have created a name for themselves in the underground circuit via several seven inches and mini-c.d.'s. Their debut, *Rated X*, received some critical acclaim and following last year's *High on Blood*, **Deranged** are starting to show their potential. *III* shows **Deranged's** intense, aggressive, yet technical sound at their best. The guitars are heavy with flashes of technical brilliance, crazy solos, and some occasional catchy parts. The drumming ranks among the best out there. There are some unorthodox fills and the industrial percussion of the instrumental title track shows a new dimension I hope to see the band explore. Vocally, **Deranged** are guttural death metal, totally unable to be understood and work best with effects like on "Death Tripping". It will be interesting to see if **Deranged** will rise above their cult status and join the new wave of death metal ready to explode. **LISTENABLE.**

DEVILYN... *Reborn In Pain... 83...* Listenable Records does not put out many releases each year but when they do you can expect top notch packaging and a quality product. This fall they have issued the incredible *Crest Of Darkness* and now comes Poland's **Devilyn** with their second disc. While **Vader** may be the undisputed champions of Polish death metal, **Devilyn** are the new challengers. **Devilyn**, like **Vader**, play their own brand of brutal death metal. *Reborn in Pain*, like *Anger* before, is not overly complex. However, don't underestimate their playing ability. We have heard the music found on *Reborn in Pain* in the early 90's but very few bands are still playing it nowadays so it actually sounds fresh. With some melodic solos, an occasional headbanging riff, excellent cover artwork, and the tempo changing "Final Truth". *Reborn in Pain* is an above average release. **LISTENABLE.**

DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN... *Calculating Infinity... 87...* This music is good. While all you people were out there raving about *Meshuggah* last spring, **Dillinger Escape Plan** is for your autumn listening pleasure. This New Jersey quintet are just as musically precise and talented and also have a vocalist who screams his lungs out, however while *Meshuggah* are thrash/ industrial based, **Dillinger Escape Plan** go more hardcore/ industrial. Their crazy guitar playing

which incorporates quirky melodies will also appeal to fans of newer Voivod material. There are just enough quiet moments to offset the insane craziness of the music. While they are in the midst of a tour with **Mr. Bungle**, **Dillinger Escape Plan** are on the cusp of stardom. Very few bands have the talent to appeal to hardcore and progressive crowds. Somehow this Jersey bunch pulls it off. **RELAPSE**.

DIM... Empty Lunchbox Stories... 82... Ignore the ridiculous cover. I'm not sure if *Empty Lunchbox Stories* is supposed to be considered a demo or an e.p. I was introduced to **Dim** at a diverse music festival in Staten Island. They distinguished themselves from the myriad of styles with an intense set that showcased the hardest pounding drummer I've ever seen in a live environment. **Dim** plays a style of alternative that will appeal to fans of bands like **Nirvana**. Anthony Sacco provides the same type of energy on *Empty Lunchbox Stories* and adds an intensity to Russell Franceschini's angst ridden vocals. "Wasted Lung" breaks up this five song disc with its quiet acoustic guitars and lamentable lyrics. **Dim** may not be a true metal band but their impassioned performance is sure to command respect. There is a record deal waiting to happen with this band, even if it isn't 1993. Poor production but good tunes. P.O. Box 120199, Staten Island, NY 10312.

DISARRAY... A Lesson In Respect... 78... Tennessee underground metal kings **Disarray** are finally receiving some mainstream respect. In the mid 90's they released two discs, *Widespread Human Disaster* and *Bleed*, which firmly established them in the American underground network. While they are often compared to bands like **Crowbar** and **Pro-Pain**, **Disarray** have vocals which come across like a raging James Hetfield and their guitar playing is full of shredding riffs. It is the heavy quality of the music this trio creates that allows them to tour with modern aggressive bands as well as death metal acts. While I find *A Lesson in Respect* to have some exceptional moments, I would like to see them add a little more originality to their mix. This is a good album but there is nothing here that warrants multiple listens. Their biography sums it up best: **Disarray** "combine the heaviest elements of old school thrash and new school hardcore while remaining loyal to their underground cult following." **ECLIPSE**.

DISMEMBER... Hate Campaign... 74... Since the ground breaking debut from 1991, *Like an Everflowing Stream*, **Dismember** have returned every two years with a quality death metal album. While bands they created a scene with like **Entombed** (new direction), **Grave**, and **Unleashed** (both disbanded) are gone; **Dismember** have stood defiant and have remained true to their death metal roots. *Hate Campaign* is faster and less melodic than recent albums like *Massive Killing Capacity* or even '97's *Death Metal*. While the die hard fans will praise **Dismember** for their unyielding stance, *Hate Campaign* doesn't have enough variety to please my tastes. There are none of the twists offered on the debut, very few hooks, and no change of pace. That latter comment helps the intentional idea of having one song run into another. There are a couple of songs worthy of mention. "Beyond Good and Evil" has groove and memorable vocal lines, "Patrol 17" has an intensely melodic solo with double guitar harmonies, and the closing title track is like the early 90's **Dismember**. **NUCLEAR BLAST**.

DOG FACED GODS... Random Chaos Theory In Action... 88... I have heard that this record was often compared to American bands like **Fear Factory** and **Machine Head**. The former is more suitable than the latter. I do feel that both **Fear Factory** and **Machine Head** have added an indelible mark on 90's metal, but when I listen to European bands like **Prophecy** and **Dog Faced Gods**, I realize that sometimes the less publicized bands are better. *Random Chaos Theory in Action* is well produced and very powerful. Drummer Richard Evensand is a revelation. A drummer this insane has been sorely missed lately. It is his deliverance that make this music work. **Dog Faced Gods** are a well oiled machine. The sound will obliterate you, yet with such a clarity that you will know what hit you. Unlike the many pretenders of this genre, **Dog Faced Gods** sound human. The emotion here is real. My only complaint is that I would like to hear just a little more variety or maybe even more samples. Actually, **Dog Faced Gods** is probably more akin to recent Voivod output. **BLACK SUN**.

DOUBLE DRIVE... 1000 Yard Stare... 78... What is it with these major label bands? **Double Drive**, like **Second Coming**, have released a debut album that is above average- both safe and almost unwilling to take chances. **Double Drive** has developed a devoted following around their native Atlanta area. M.C.A. either took note of their large crowds or maybe they thought Atlanta had more to offer than **Sevendust**. **Double Drive** has been compared to **Soundgarden** and **Monster Magnet**, however considering that it took both of those bands almost a decade to attain their peak, it is an insult to classify **Double Drive** in the same category. Most of it is generic. Donnie Hamby offers a humanistic vocal approach, although he lacks identity. I feel **Double Drive** work best on the more uptempo songs like "Sacrifice". I said before this is an above average affair, it's just nothing ground breaking or eye opening. I wouldn't mind hearing a song like "Belief System" or "Sacrifice" on the radio though. **M.C.A.**

DRAWN... A New World... 92... Is this the future of metal? **Drawn** play an indescribable type of atmospheric metal that sees elements of prog rock, doom, even black metal take shape into a new form- impossible to describe. The last time I heard an album like this as good as *A New World* was **Anathema's The Silent Enigma**. That is the only record that comes close to what **Drawn** have created. **Drawn** was formed in 1994 by vocalist/ guitarist Atle Dorum, bassist Per Kristian, and drummer Jan Ingar Pettersen. Shortly thereafter, **In The Woods** guitarist Christer Andre Lederberg joined. Christer has left an indelible mark on **Drawn's** style, as **In The Woods** have progressed to the same realm. Expect the unexpected. Each song is an epic journey. Even a memorable song like "Marygold" is prone to weirdness, with a blast beat section and clear vocals sung over the top no less. However, "Yours and Mine" has the most hideous vocals however. If **Arcturus'** unofficial follow up to *La Masquerade Infernale* wasn't so electronic based, *A New World* would've been the next logical step. Like **Tenhi**, **Drawn** relies an atmospheric and subtlety, however there is just enough guitar and unpredictability to please extreme metal fans also. **PROPHECY**.

DYING DAY... Red Shift... 84... I quite enjoyed their first offering, but on *Redshift* this English band has improved the quality of their output. The production may be on the weak side but the songwriting shines through. On *Redshift*, **Dying Day** have more of a focus, and it sounds more 80's metal, mid paced thrash but with a groove as well. The song which best displays **Dying Day's** maturity is the power metal tune "Wintersun". A catchy mid paced riff with a great vocal performance. The sixth and final track is a cover of **Judas Priest's** "Grinder". An appropriate remake for this upcoming metal band. Dead Centre, 11 Beech Road, Upwey, Weymouth, Dorset, DT3 5NP, England. <http://members.xoom.com/DyingDay/>

EARTHTONE 9... Off Kilter Enhancement... 93... Very impressive. England offers a band that rivals this growing hardcore scene in America that has spawned the **Dillinger Escape Plan**, **Coalesce**, **Neck**, **Neurosis**, among many others. **Earthtone 9** have a down to earth (pun intended) emotional base that many extreme hardcore/ metal bands lack. While comparisons to bands like **Sepultura** and **Tool** abound, this English quintet have created an identity on album number two. Karl screams his lungs out on songs like "Grind and Click", "Off Killer", and "I Nagual Eye", but it's his melodic approach to "Zechariah Rush", "Enertia 65800", and the deceptively quiet calmness of "0...0...0...". Unlike their contemporaries, **Earthtone 9** are song based. Hooks are just as important as atmospheres and intricacies. The vocals don't always have to be screamed. Songs need time to develop but they never neglect memorable melodies. "0...0...0..." gets my vote as one of the best songs of all time. Driven by Si's percussion and Karl's subdued vocalizations and a beautiful chorus, **Earthtone 9** have created an emotional triumph without any blatant aggression. This album is worth buying for this song alone. It is perhaps most amazing that the rest of *Off Kilter Enhancement* is almost just as good. **COPRO**.

EBONY LAKE... On The Eve Of The Grimly Inventive... 79... Cacophonous Records have established themselves as a label unafraid to release indulgent symphonic extreme music. With bands like **Sigh**, **Ancient Ceremony**, **Twilight Ophera**, and **Ebony Lake**, there is a theatrical dimension that may either burden a listener or touch upon genius. I think **Ebony Lake** have massive potential. The vocals are quite raw and totally unattainable, however, the music could raise **Ebony Lake** to a new domain. *On the Eve of the Grimly Inventive* is symphonic in nature, keyboards and atmospheric arrangements combine with their chaotic song structures. Songs like "A Voice in the Piano" play out like a theatrical event. The band photo depicts four men and two females but I'm not sure whose contributions dominate. Unless the vocals become more diverse, **Ebony Lake** with occupy a novelty status. **CACOPHONOUS**.

ELECTRIC WIZARD... Supercoven... 77... Any band that combines "Electric Funeral" and "The Wizard" into their band's name is going to be strongly influenced by **Black Sabbath**. This London based trio have developed a strong underground cult following through their obscure releases. **Electric Wizard** create a truly identifiable sound at a time when many stoner/ doom bands sound the same. **Electric Wizard** are crushingly heavy due to their slow, epic numbers. They are most effective on their riff based songs but often **Electric Wizard** will take an experimental, atmospheric approach to their music. They come across like the **Melvins** on steroids. *Supercoven* features four songs, forty plus minutes of pure **Electric Wizard**. Included are a demo version of "Wizards of Gore", a live version of "Electric Wizard", and the title track. Like *Incarnate*, *Supercoven* was originally released through Southern Lord, but in conjunction with M.I.A. Records, **Electric Wizard** will reach more people. **M.I.A.**

ENDURA... Elder Signs... 84... This is some weird shit. A chilling, original, and eerie musical vision that is experimental and ambient, yet hypnotic and listenable, the most impressive thing about *Elder Signs* is the packaging. For sixteen dollars you get two discs, almost two hours of music, and a twenty four page

booklet and thirty tracks. **Endura** began in the early 80's under the name **Abraxas** before changing their name. They have released countless discs throughout the 90's and recently reformed for *Elder Signs*. While some tracks are of course more difficult to digest, songs like the new age "Colours" or the melancholic "Yaruna" are an adventure to behold. I, initially, had a difficult time getting into the music. If it is played as background music, it is easy to lose your focus. If you play *Elder Signs* with headphones and concentrate, **Endura** are a cerebral journey that you will want to experience time and again. **RED STREAM.**

ENERTIA... Flashpoint... 93... There is a void in metal music. While we have bands like **Pantera** who have a tight, aggressive groove, but Phil Anselmo hasn't tried singing since 90's *Cowboys from Hell*. To combine groove ridden aggressive metal with hooks galore and any semblance of a vocalist is practically a lost cause. Then comes **Enertia**. The New York based band has released an e.p., *Law of Three* (1996) and a full length, *Momentum* (1997), before so they are not a new band. They are often compared to **Flotsam And Jetsam**, and Scott Featherstone does sound like Eric A.K., and, yes, the music is the same aggro groove that **F&J** are attempting these days, however **Enertia** rocks. They now have twenty three recorded songs and every one of them is a winner. That is **Enertia's** true strength. The songwriting is energetic and exciting but they are impeccable when it comes to writing a riff or a melody that pulls you into each song. A good mix allows all the instruments proper representation. It is only a matter of time before **Enertia** becomes a huge success, all the ingredients are already there. **ANIMATED INSANITY.** \$11 to P.O. Box 687, Gloversville, NY 12078. <http://www.animated-insanity.com/enertia.html>

ENGINE... Engine... 77... Did you ever wonder what a band like **Tool** would sound like if they had a vocalist with the ability to hit the high notes and inject melody with the aggression? Ever wonder what 90's metal would sound like with the vocalist from **Fates Warning**? Here it is. **Engine** come across like the **Deftones** with a real singer. Ray Alder is my favorite vocalist and he does a fine job here but the lyrics he has written are boring, the music is too redundant, and the verses and choruses are too repetitive. Joining Ray are **Fates Warning** bandmate Joey Vera, close friend and **Agent Steel** guitarist Bernie Versailles, and drummer Pete Parada. An experienced group of power metal musicians playing 90's groove metal. They do it well but like most bands this style it becomes mundane. Some highlights are "Taste", which sees Ray at his most diverse and intense and "Falling Star" which is as close to a **Fates Warning** tune as they get. Not a bad debut but I would expect variety and better hooks from such veteran musicians. Maybe they didn't spend that much time on it. **METAL BLADE.**

ENGORGED... Death Metal Attack 2... 87... Very impressive. *Death Metal Attack 2* is the sequel to *Death Metal Attack*. The band has nicely pressed both onto one disc. It appears that the death metal underground is once again rising, **Engorged** play an inspired style of death metal that contains early 90's values yet does not sound out of place with the new millennium. I am very impressed with Akkad's raw, sometimes screaming, always intense vocal approach. He gives **Engorged** character that would not be present had he used a growling technique. Their lyrics are humorous. How can you not laugh at titles like "In Support of Multinational Corporations", "Kings of Beer", "Legalize Child Porn", or "Raping the Full House Twins"? This disc is worth the price for the twenty one songs present. Highly recommended. **RAZORBACK.** \$12 payable to Billy Nocera @ P.O. Box 321, Farmingville, NY 11738.

ENOCHIAN CRESCENT... Omega Telocovim... 80... *Omega Telocovim* is **Enochian Crescent's** second full length and it further establishes them as potential leaders of the extreme metal society. *Omega Telocovim* is a slab of extreme metal that combines **Marduk** speed with *Dance of December Souls* **Katantonia** guitar, for an original sound. The vocals have that typical Finnish cold, rawness to them. It's the music that I find the most appealing. Even the speed picking of "Transversary" is heavy and well produced. There is something catchy about the notes played over rapid fire double bass on "Tis the Sound of Tempest that Drowns Us Out" and the song offers some clear vocals and intense melody. This is the song that realizes **Enochian Crescent's** true dormant prominence. Although the guitar melodies on "Vakisinkastettu" have been popularized in Sweden, the rest of *Omega Telocovim's* listening enjoyment can be found in the intense guitar tone and memorable, yet frigid riffs. **AVANTGARDE.**

ENOLA GAY... Strange Encounter... 84... This German metal band released two mid 90's albums, *Pressure* and *F.O.T.H.*, and now suddenly appear with a new album and a European deal with Century Media. *Strange Encounter* does not stray far from their established sound. Their straight ahead power metal music is timeless, 80's power with 90's production. There may be some **Metallica** similarities with the crunching guitars and Peter Diersmann's occasional Hetfield like growl may have people thinking of 1991's *Black* album. However, tunes like "Sick Society" with its cold feel and rich bass will have listeners reaching for their *Rage for Order* cassettes. On *Strange Encounter*, **Enola Gay** write about the evil of mankind. Topics range from war, "Enola Gay"; to sexual predators, "Psycho Lover"; to an internet commentary, "Browsing". With so many bands leaning in progressive directions, and others like **Grave Digger** and **Blind Guardian** creating epic structures, a band like **Enola Gay** are an invigorating kick in the ass. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

ENTHRONED... The Apocalypse Manifesto... 82... I know that I have been harsh when reviewing previous releases from **Enthroned** and with *The Apocalypse Manifesto*, their third full length, I feel the band is nearing their peak. The band's production, along with Tommy Tagtgren is top notch and a significant reason for the excellent quality of this album. There's an awesome cover concept from guitarist Nornagert as well. Most of the music blasts by at lightning speed but due to the clear production and the superior musicianship, **Enthroned** sound chaotic yet focused. There are times when Nebiros and Nornagert slow things down and play some thrash riffs. Sabathan uses his tortured scream and it is his voice and new drummer's Blackthorn's talents that give **Enthroned** their trademark. Always keep an open mind, because you never know when a band will gain their focus. **BLACKEND.**

ENTOMBED... Black Juju... 76... All these Man's Ruin releases sound the same. Even a band like **Entombed** falls into that stoner rock territory with a dirty album of sloppy rock. It should not be too surprising to people who listened to last year's *Same Difference*. It is clear that **Entombed** have gone the direction of **Queens Of The Stone Age** when it would make more sense for them to go in a noisy **Neurosis** vein. There is nothing special about the eight songs on *Black Juju*. They rock with lots of muddied distortion and L.G. Petrov's raw vocal approach, although he continues to become more accessible. He even sounds like Lee Dorrian on "Vices of Proxy". If *Wolverine Blues* was the last **Entombed** record you bought, you'll be shocked at how lame this is. If you are a fan of what Man's Ruin is putting out, this **Entombed** e.p. is up your alley. **MANS RUIN.**

EVENT... Electric Skies... 87... I like this band. *Electric Skies* is a very good record but most importantly it shows promise. Once this band establishes itself and experiments a little more they will be a force to be reckoned with. Perhaps **Event's** biggest attribute is their ability to write a three minute song that is catchy yet shows that this band has the talent to play with the progressive masters. One of the most unique keyboardists ever, Shaun Michaud gives **Event** an identity. They appear in every song and provide a transition that enables the music room to breathe. Michaud's textured guitar playing also allows bassist Jay Rigney and drummer Matt Scurfield to lock in with a heavy yet melodic groove. Dave DeLuco is a quality vocalist and although critics compare him to Tate and Alder, he truly sounds like neither, yet he fits in perfectly. Along with **Power Of Omens** and **Minds Eye**, **Event's** *Electric Skies* ranks with the best progressive metal debuts of all time. 214 Hill Road, Boxboro, MA 01719. www.mysticfishhook.com.

EVERGREY... Solitude Tragedy Dominance... 89... This is Evergrey's follow up to their impressive debut, *The Dark Discovery*. Despite a pretentious title, **Evergrey** serve up an astonishing disc that does not stray far from their debut, despite an improved growth in songwriting. **Evergrey** play a style of metal that you can bang your head and still feel the intense emotion of the intelligently written lyrics. The heaviness of the guitar is augmented by keyboard embellishment and sampled spoken word passages. Tom S. Englund may not be a technically elegant vocalist but has the ability to convey the loneliness and desperation of the lyrics. That is where **Evergrey** has found their niche. They don't use grace, they don't incorporate gimmicks- they simply write exceptional tunes with no unnecessary ideas. On closer "The Corey Curse", Englund's admiration for **Pink Floyd's** David Gilmour shines through in his simplistic sentiment. Every note is felt and the melancholic keyboards intensify a deeply emotional song. Can't say enough about this great Swedish power metal band. **G.N.W.**

EYEHATEGOD... Southern Discomfort... 76... **EyeHateGod's** long rumored epitaph, *Southern Discomfort*, is finally upon us. The band last surfaced from their Louisiana depths in 1996 with *Dopesick*. Their raw, slow, extreme **Sabbath** inspired noise has spawned many imitators and *Southern Discomfort* reminds those who have forgotten their importance. I have always admired their extreme nature and resistance to write anything that is listenable, but that's exactly why **EyeHateGod** are nothing more than a novelty to me. *Southern Discomfort* includes songs from their two seven inches with **13**, their *Ruptured Heart Theory* seven inch, some studio out takes, and alternate versions of old songs. While Jimmy Bower is still in both **Down** and **Crowbar** and Brian Patton is busy with **Soilent Green**, it is unknown when new material will appear, but it seems that Century Media expects them to record again. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

FACE OF ANGER... Faceless... 79... *Faceless* kicks off with a crunchy guitar, heavy percussion, and soulful vocals. Then you realize *Faceless* was produced by Andy Sneap. What do you think this Texan quartet's debut sounds like? That's right, 90's post-**Korn**, post-**Pantera**. Musically **Face Of Anger** are a pleasure to listen to. The grooves are thick, the bass is heard with clarity and the percussion adds an industrial tinge. With Sneap at the helm you know it will sound good. Although I like the fact that Frazier does not bark like most vocalists of this genre and his soulful approach adds a dose of melody but he never adds

any new emotion. This lack of diversity hinders **Face Of Anger** and even the expressive music can't save *Faceless*. Publio Casillas has mastered the art of groove. It's not **Pantera**, it's not hardcore, and despite its simplistic nature each song is interesting. Bassist James Martin and drummer Dave Eliac provide a solid and sometimes spectacular backbone. **NOISE**.

FLEURITY... *Last Minute Lies... 82...* *Last Minute Lies* is the four song e.p. that Magic Logic from **Dodheimsgard** was talking about in the last issue. This man continues to grow as a musician and songwriter. **Fleurity** have come up with an album that is more progressive than previous efforts. I assume **Dodheimsgard** keyboardist Magic, also known as Alexander Nordgaren, the guitarist/ bassist of **Fleurity**. He is joined by drummer S.E. Hattevik and female vocalists, Karianne Horn on "Facets" and "I Saw Claws", and Ayna B. Johansen on "Vortex". "Facets" maintains a surreal vibe, while both "I Saw Claws" and "Vortex" have more upbeat moments. *Last Minute Lies* is a twenty minute, four song (one hidden jazz track) progressive adventure. Not a band you can pigeonhole. **SUPERNAL**.

FLOWER KINGS... *Flower Power... 79...* This progressive band has been in the news lately because of their involvement with a project featuring members of **Dream Theater** and **Spocks Beard**. The **Flower Kings** are obviously a talented bunch, it's just that *Flower Power* is too long and takes too much time to develop. This is a double disc. The first disc runs at over sixty eight minutes and includes the sixty minute epic, "Garden of Dreams". This song is divided into eighteen tracks, with the ninth one the best that I hear. It is an upbeat song with obvious technical virtuosity and a burst of excitement amid an otherwise laid back and introspective prog album. Haase Froberg's vocals are similar to **Pink Floyd's** surrealistic style. Disc two runs for nearly seventy four minutes and has two eleven minute epics, "Deaf Numb and Blind" and "Calling Home". An album that fans of old **Yes** and **Genesis** will surely enjoy but there's too much happening to catch these ears. Bodin is an immense talent and these guys are deceptively great writers. **INSIDE OUT**.

FOREST OF IMPALED... *Demonvoid... 82...* When you have a label like Red Stream who puts out quality music time and time again, each release is intriguing. No two bands sound the same, or similar for that matter, but they will always issue top shelf quality. **Forest Of Impaled** defy categorization. It is extreme, yet fails to capture death, black, or thrash metal's wholesome characteristics. Instead, *Demonvoid* embodies elements of each. The guitar tone is raw but fresh, with thrashing riffs amongst rolling drums and deep, tortured vocals. A touch of keyboards adds a certain mood and are placed only when needed. There is a sense of melody within the riffage that captures the ears and draws the listener in. It is a deceptive tactic because **Forest Of Impaled** are an extreme band with a traditional metal sound rooted in the early to mid 80's. **RED STREAM**.

FORTE... *Rise Above... 80...* Oklahoma's **Forte** has been around for a decade now and due to America's trend hopping and their German label Massacre Records inconsistent U.S. distribution, they have been largely ignored. What a shame. Despite an unstable vocalist position, over the course of four full lengths brothers Scott, drummer Greg and guitarist Jeff, along with bassist Richard Sharp, have been releasing quality, no nonsense power metal. New singer David Thompson is nothing special but does an adequate job with *Rise Above's* aggressive material. **Forte** is still rooted in late 80's aggressive power metal, they continue to write this way while preferring to pretend bands like **Pantera** never existed. *Rise Above* is a quick listen. The combination of short songs and a rapid pace, in your face attack makes it appear even shorter. Highlights include the face ripping "Ninety Nine" and "Destroyer", both crush and Greg shows he could out pound even your most ambitious death metal drummers. "Forgiven" is the most catchy song and "Over My Head" combines the two styles. *Rise Above* closes with the uncharacteristic ballad, "Until the End of Time". No effects, no bullshit, just pure metal. **MASSACRE**.

FULL DEVIL JACKET... *A Wax Box To Put Your Frankenstein Heads In... 78...* Another major label band with an angry 90's hard rock sound. Like most of these type of bands, **Full Devil Jacket** sound professional, they play some good riffs, the vocals sound good, but you can not say they set themselves on an island all their own. They have a background that begs for success. They have appeared at Woodstock and on the Warped Tour. They have a big fan in **Megadeth**, who have also lent a hand in their development. *A Wax Box* is a five song e.p. that serves as an introduction to the band until they release their full length debut in January. The first four songs are well played, but very typical for this boring genre. The final song is acoustic and moody. Who knows? Maybe they will be huge someday, it would be nice to see a band without gimmicks become as popular as **Korn** or **Limp Bizkit**. **MERCURY**.

GARDENIAN... *Soulburner... 83...* With the major success of bands like **In Flames** and **Children Of Bodom**, and the growing fanbase for bands like **Night In Gales**, Nuclear Blast must've liked what they heard on **Gardenian's** Listenable Records debut, *Two Feet Stand* and signed them for their sophomore release *Soulburner*. **Gardenian** are what you would expect from a Swedish death metal band. Clear, yet raw and down tuned guitars, trademark coarse black metallish raspy vocals, and sharp aggression. It's all here. **Gardenian** do appear to be at least trying to make each song a special entity, rather than having an album filled with one dimensional tunes. They have a healthy mix of groove based riffs with more traditional Swedish riffs. "If Tomorrow's Gone" features lots of melody and the clear vocals of ex-**Artech** vocalist Erik Hawk. Next up, "Small Electric Space" with a piano intro and clear theatrical vocals. Then, with "Chaos in Flesh" and "Ecstasy of Life", they return to their established Swedish sound. Then it's back to the more diversified clear vocals of Hawk and music on "Tell the World I'm Sorry" and "Loss". While I appreciate both styles it would make more sense to have an album of one style or the other rather than mix the two styles. If anything, *Soulburner* proves that **Gardenian** have some intense potential. **NUCLEAR BLAST**.

THE GATHERING... *Superheat... 78...* 1999 is the year of the live album for Century Media artists. **Iced Earth**, **Stuck Mojo**, and now the **Gathering** have all released live discs. The songs that comprise *Superheat* are "The Big Sleep", "Probably Built in the Fifties", "Liberty Bell", "Marooned", "Rescue Me", and "My Electricity" from last year's *How to Measure a Planet* disc; "On Most Surfaces" and "Nighttime Birds" from the previous disc also titled *Nighttime Birds*; and "Strange Machines" and "Sand and Mercury" from *Mandyllion*. Obviously, all the material was taken from the years that vocalist Anneke Van Biersbergen was in the band. I'm sure that the **Gathering** are a great live band, it's just that I'd rather listen to the albums. **CENTURY MEDIA**.

GODDESS OF DESIRE... *Symbol Of Triumph... 77...* True 80's metal is back. At least if Holland's **Goddess Of Desire** have a say it is. The music is thrash with no idea the 90's have passed by. They employ a stage show with women on stage and show their anti-Christian beliefs. Count August may not possess the best vocals in the world but he does conjure that mid-80's metal feeling. All of the eleven songs on *Symbol of Triumph* are headbanging worthy and possess passing hints of **Venom** and **Bulldozer**. I enjoyed the **Motorhead** tribute of "Ride", it sounds like a cover song! **Sacred Steel's** Gerrit Mutz contributes lyrics to "Metal Forever". While they may sound dated at times, songs like "Whimps and Bastards", "Live for Metal", and "Heaven and Hell", show where their hearts are. **METAL BLADE**.

GODFLESH... *Us And Them... 86...* Justin Broadrick feels he has created the definitive **Godflesh** album. You know what? He almost pulled it off. *Us and Them* effectively balances *Pure* era vocals and harshness with *Selfless'* keen ear for melody and *Songs of Love and Hate's* techno elements. "I Me Mine" is the embodiment of the above description. "Us and Them" would have fit perfectly on *Pure*. However, after the **Ministry** like bass of "Endgames", **Godflesh** flounder ever so slightly. There are some good tunes, just nothing that would fit in with the classics beside those first two masterpieces. I do credit Justin and long time collaborator G.C. Green for making *Us and Them* the most varied **Godflesh** album of their career. It's a shame that some fans abandoned **Godflesh** after what some perceived as a weak album, *Selfless*, because despite the novelty of *Streetcleaner* and *Pure* wearing off, with *Us and Them* and *Songs of Love and Hate*, **Godflesh** have further evolved their sound without surrendering their core. **EARACHE**.

GODGLORY... *Resurrection... 79...* What a great opening. "Resurrection" begins with the coolest guitar crunch I've ever heard, sublime keyboards, eases into a mellow acoustic and whispered section and I think we're into something special. It appears as though **Godgory** consists of two permanent members, vocalist Matte Andersson and drummer Erik Andersen. They are joined by session musicians, guitarist/ bassist Mikael Dahlqvist and keyboardist Thomas Heder. With songs like the title track **Godgory** appear to bridge the gap between *Just Dreaming* and *Chapter 7* eras of **Crematory**. Second track "Crimson Snow" sound like a Gothenburg tune, "My Dead Dreams" is a combination of **Metallica** and **Sentenced**. Perhaps it is **Godgory's** background as a cover band but on *Resurrection* they have not produced much of an identity. By this point in their career it would be nice to see better vocals and a more focused direction. I would like to see Dahlqvist and Heder become permanent members because they do give **Godgory** as original edge. **NUCLEAR BLAST**.

GODS TOWER... *Ebony Birds... 80...* The "pagan folklore doom metal" found on *Ebony Birds* first took shape all the way back in 1989. This Russian quintet have two previous releases, 1997's *The Eerie* and 1998's *The Turns*, both on Metal Gen. Of the three discs from Prophecy that I received, **Gods Tower** are the most metal. Many may compare their sound to the European atmospheric doom scene but **Gods Tower** are a unique entity. Lasley Knife has a rough, doomy, slightly primitive style, yet he also uses effective chant like passages like on "Raising Arrows". At time I find that **Gods Tower** may be a contrast. On an atmospheric song like "The Eerie", Knife's style is a little too rough for the melancholic music. There are times when the moods captivate my interest, but there are other when **Gods Tower** are a little too obscure. Regardless, the band is unafraid to take risks. I look forward to future endeavors. **PROPHECY**.

GOOSEFLESH... *Chemical Garden*... 81... I am still unsure of the direction Digital Dimension is taking. Horrible rapcore (**Rhythm Trip**), heavy industrial (**Lab Animals**), powerful melodic metal (**PC69**), and now death rock from Sweden (**Gooseflesh**). **Gooseflesh** remind me a little of some Swedish counterparts like **Face Down** and **Lost Souls**. However, they appear to be more textured and less precise. *Chemical Garden* is their full length debut and established then as a band to watch. They have a certain catchiness and they manage to transcend the boundaries of hardcore, hard rock, and groove metal while combining the styles but not falling into one of their traps. Kristian Lampila tends to sing in a rough style but he refuses to allow his voice to become stagnant and he adapts well to the evolving music. For good measure, **Gooseflesh** also dabbles into some retro doom ("Controller") at times. Unlike their American counterparts, **Gooseflesh** write songs that remain memorable and refuse to go for over the top, look how tough I am stances. When I want modern aggressiveness I look to Swedish bands like **Gooseflesh**, **Lost Souls**, **Meshuggah**, and **Dog Faced Gods**. **DIGITAL DIMENSION**.

GORBALROG... *Untergang*... 83... Fascinating album cover with creative colors and a melodic, theatrical opening instrumental, "Blutige Schwingen", appealed to my curiosity, but overall I find *Untergang* a little too raw and chaotic to me. The music is quite interesting, it's just the vocals sound ridiculous. With *Untergang* (*Decline*), Zargonath (guitars and vocals) and Mortynoth (drums, keyboards, and vocals) have created an archaic debut that is unrefined but shows unlimited potential. Just like **Cryogenic's** *Celephais*, **Gorbalrog** were produced by Harris Johns and while he did a good job allowing everything to be heard, the vocals are mixed better than **Cryogenic**, **Gorbalrog** still remain largely inaccessible. While **Cryogenic** do a better job with the atmospheres, **Gorbalrog** are better songwriters, more diversified, and flow easier. "Untergang" is truly melodic with deep gothic vocals and is an easy listen. Only those with an open mind and at least a curiosity about black metal will truly appreciate the astonishing debut **Gorbalrog** have created. **MILLENIUM**.

GOTHIC KNIGHTS... *Kingdom Of The Knights*... 89... Three years since their impressive self titled debut comes *Kingdom of the Knights*. This underrated New York City band has created a classic metal album in the tradition of **Priest**, **Maiden**, and **Savatage**. Of course, you also get Sentinel Steel's professional artwork and fancy booklet. **Gothic Knights** uphold the tradition of the masters yet they don't forget the importance of a great riff or intelligent hooks. Unlike their European contemporaries, **Gothic Knights** keep a healthy pace and concentrate on the vocal hooks. Bryan Avatar shows his prowess in the upper register, yet maintains an identifiable pitch. A twist of Jon Oliva (**Savatage**) and John Artch (ex-**Fates Warning**) is on display. Those who have following **Gothic Knights** will recognize classics like "At Dawn You Die", "Ring of Souls", a reworking of "War in the Sky", and the epic "Song of Roland". No ballads here, just pure metal. This band is not fancy, yet like their influences, **Savatage** and **Saxon**, they deliver the goods. **SENTINEL STEEL**.

GRAVE DIGGER... *Excalibur*... 80... And you thought **Maiden** had the best album covers. **Grave Digger** return with another classic German metal album. *Excalibur* is "the story of King Arthur and the Round Table", a metal opus in twelve chapters", as conceived by vocalist Chris Bottendahl. *Excalibur* was King Arthur's sword, which had the ability to cut through stone. Lyrically, *Excalibur* is yet another **Grave Digger** masterpiece. With the bagpipes taking a backseat, *Excalibur* is a more straight forward metal album than last year's *Knights of the Cross*. Fans of **Blind Guardian** and **Iron Savior's** big sing along choruses will surely enjoy songs like "Pendragon" and "The Final War". While most songs have that fast paced, double bass, busy feel; it's songs like "Lancelot" which highlight some distinguishable guitar riffs. To further enhance obvious comparisons, **Iron Savior's** Piet Sielck and **Blind Guardian's** Hansi Kursch provide backing vocals. While *Knights of the Cross* had more bagpipes, Eric Fish appears with an assortment of background sounds such as, bagpipes, barockboe, schalmei, and whistles. Don't ask me what the middle two are. Another German metal classic. **GUN**.

GREAT WHITE... *Can't Get There From Here*... 70... This feels like an 80's revival. **Great White**, **Ratt**, **Slaughter**, who's next? **Faster Pussycat**? *Can't Get There From Here* follows a trend that **Great White** have set on their 90's records. Not enough rockers and too many weak ballads. Their bluesy sound has not progressed since *Twice Shy*. Up until after that 1989 classic **Great White** produced one excellent album after another, self titled release, *On Your Knees* e.p., *Shot in the Dark*, *Once Bitten*, and *Twice Shy*. They have been unable to come up with another song like "Rock Me" or "Face the Day". The trio of Jack Russell, Mark Kendall, and Michael Lardie are joined by long time drummer Audie Desbrow and new bassist Sean McNabb. Even though they had help from extraordinary songwriters like Jack Blades and Don Dokken, they fall short. On a positive note, "Gone to the Dogs" rocks hard and "Psychedelic Hurricane" and "Wooden Jesus" have the depth and feeling that made past songs special. When you have twelve songs and seven of them are ballads you are going to have a tedious album. Didn't they play enough ballads on *Sail Away*? **SONY**.

GRIEF OF EMERALD... *Nightspawn*... 80... Bulletbelts, black metal, a thank you to Necropolis, so, do you think **Grief Of Emerald** is predictable? While opener "The Beginning" is a fast and furious black metal tune akin to **Emperor** musically, while Johnny distinguishes himself with powerful vocals. On subsequent tracks the band show discernable characteristics. In between fast paced black metal, **Grief Of Emerald** exhibit some mid paced and catchy riffs. Robert's keyboards appear enough to add melody, although the keyboards sometimes are miscast on the fast sections. A keen sense of melody and just enough hooks makes *Nightspawn* an interesting listen. Musically I do believe *In the Nightside Eclipse* is a valid reference point, although the guitars are more listenable and headbanging worthy. Remind anyone of *Equilibrium IX*? "Day of Doom" lives up to its deep title by displaying some fine doom metal. **Grief Of Emerald** have created a nice piece of work. And you thought only **Dimmu Borgir** could pull this style off. **LISTENABLE**.

GROUNDSWELL... *Corrode*... 74... This simply does not transcend the mundane. I am unfamiliar with vocalist John Penney's old band, **Ned's Atomic Dustbin**, but his new band is rather dull and unimaginative. *Corrode* is a five song e.p. of alternative rock. The title track is indeed a catchy tune with an upbeat sound and many melodic vocal hooks. The percussive yet mellow "Second Head" fails to go anywhere. "You Think" and "Find Out Why" are predictable and prosaic. There is also a radio edit of "Corrode" to close this e.p. This music is made for the mainstream and could have a wide appeal. I just don't hear anything that inspires me. **GIG**.

HADES... *The Downside*... 96... Man, they did it again... even better. Just a year after *Savior Self*, **Hades** return with *The Downside*. This is one of the best albums I've heard in awhile. They take the aggressive elements from *Savior Self* and allow drummer Dave Lescinsky to do some singing and further expand on his talented double bass barrage. "Ground Zero" opens *The Downside* with a shout along chorus and effective use of Alan Tecchio's high and low range. "Align the Planets" has an infectious stomp. On the other end of the spectrum, "It's a Wonderful Lie" is barren and sad, a ballad reminiscent of **Non-Fiction**, "Responsible" is doomy, "The Me That Might Have Been" a lamentation and it represents *The Downside's* most dynamic tune. The death metal sounds most like Lescinsky's influence and pops up on three tracks in particular, expanding upon "Y2K"; "Hoax" and "Pay the Price". Surprisingly, Alan sings all of "Hoax", which is pure death metal except for some impressive screams. Dave sings all of "Pay the Price", which he shows off his range, and the closing track is a condensed version of the opener with mostly a death metal feel due to Billy Milano's (**S.O.D.**) guest vocals. "Hail to the Thief" sounds like old **Aerosmith**, although it is a good song it sounds out of place between "Pay the Price" and the controlled aggression of "Shove It". *Savior Self* and *The Downside* have reshaped **Hades'** career. This is essential. **METAL BLADE**.

HADES... *Resisting Success*... 86... This is a reissue of **Hades'** debut album from 1986. In the late 80's **Hades** caused quite a stir amongst the thrash community with *Resisting Success* and *If At First You Don't Succeed*. While the music was not that unusual, Alan Tecchio's high range vocals were often an acquired taste. It is this vocal approach that truly allows **Hades** to step into a whole new realm of music. This version of *Resisting Success* are the original mixes and are digitally remastered. All nine of the original songs appear here, including favorites like "The Leaders", "On to Iliad", "Nightstalker", "The Cross", and "Masque of the Red Death". There are two bonus tracks, "Savior Self" which appeared on last year's album by the same name, and "Rape of Persphone" which can also be found on '95's *Exist to Resist*. *Resisting Success* is a different sound than **Hades** of the late 90's. Speed metal vs. groove with death metal influences. Joining Dan Lorenzo (guitars) and Alan Tecchio (vocals) on *Resisting Success*, are bassist Jim Schulamn, guitarist Scott LaPage, and drummer T. Coombs.

HAGALAZ RUNEDANCE... *Urd That Which Was*... 91... Thus far in the 90's, women's contribution to metal has been more of a sharing of vocals with a rough singing male. The **Gathering**, **Lacuna Coil**, and **Sinergy** are obvious exceptions. Until Andrea Haugen came along there has not been an album out there that embodied the female spirit. Here is a quote from the bio: "**Hagalaz Runedance** is particularly focused on the feminine mysteries of the North, the goddess worship tradition, the great knowledge of the wise women and the strong position women hold in pagan society." Musically, there are two new songs on this e.p., the percussive heavy folk of "Wake Skadi" and the atmospheric "Urd That Which Was". Also featured are trance remixes of earlier songs. "When the Trees Were Silenced", "Behold the Passionate Ways of Nature", and "When the Trees Were Silenced", "Behold the Passionate Ways of Nature", and "When the Falcon Flies"; the latter done by **Ulver/ Arcturus** composer Garm. This is a disc that everyone should appreciate. Listen to what Andrea has to say, she's sure to open some eyes. **WELL OF URD**.

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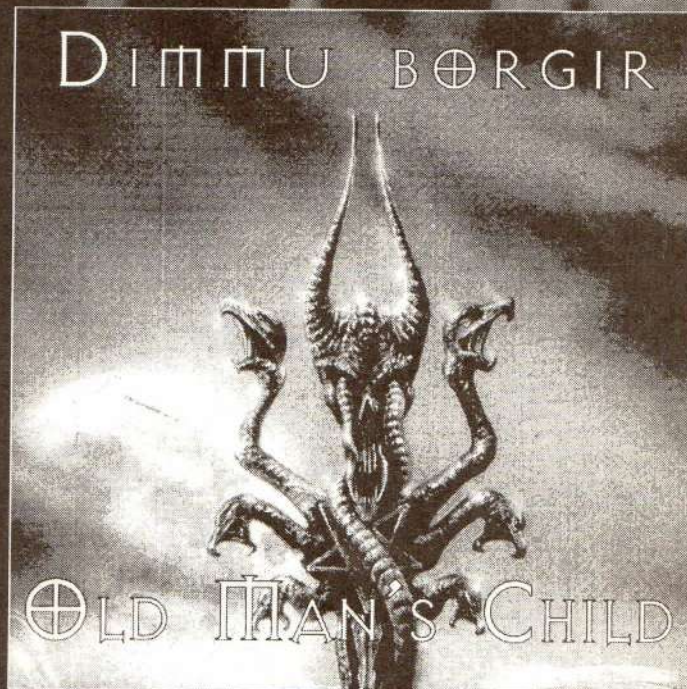
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HANGNAIL... *Ten Days Before Summer...* 88... Hangnail are another band who has benefitted from the Music Cartel and Rise Above alliance that results in *Ten Days Before Summer*, their full length debut, hitting American shores. If you are familiar with Rise Above, there is no doubt that you can guess their style of music. Like **Sheavy**, **Orange Goblin**, etc.; **Hangnail** play a 70's based retro rock. While they may not be as riff based as other bands of this genre, **Hangnail** do possess a heart and soul that is lacking. From start to finish, *Ten Days Before Summer* rocks. "Keep On" is a reflective song with emotional moods. They follow that track with the dirty groove of "Summer Rain". **Hangnail** are not nearly close to being great musicians and their "let's drink beer and hang out" attitude is unimpressive, but they certainly know how to create a batch of enthusiastic tunes that rivals **Orange Goblin** in entertainment value. Unsurprisingly, Dave Chang (**Orange Goblin**) produces. **MUSIC CARTEL.**

HEAVENS GATE... *Menergy...* 88... Sometimes the best metal comes from a band you had never heard of before. **Heavens Gate** may be an unknown entity on these shores, but don't let them get away. German power metal at its best, they've been doing it almost as long as **Blind Guardian** and as good as **Helloween**. *Menergy* is their fifth full length release and is their most rocking to date. While past releases were faster and more orchestrated, *Menergy* is more hard rock with some minor experimentation in between. They can still slam them out, "Mastermind", but songs like "Menergy" show a **Fates Warning** like progression, "Enter Enternity", a **Queensryche** drama, and all the songs rock. The eleven tracks features an introduction of samples and narration. It's a quality that reminds one of *Operation Mindcrime*. Sascha Paeth has become a revered producer in this genre because of his work with bands like **Gamma Ray** and **Rhapsody** but deserves the same accolade for his work as a guitarist. Thomas Rettke is truly one of the best vocalists out there. Find this band. **LIMB.**

HOLLOW... *Architect Of The Mind...* 87... Sweden's **Hollow** follow up their excellent full length debut, *Modern Cathedral*, with another great album of crunchy power metal. On songs like "Cognito" they come across as a mix of **Metallica** and **Helloween**. There's a riff right out of "Leper Messiah" and Andreas Stoltz's vocals have a Michael Kiske's sound to them. "Rain" sound a little like a song from their debut. The guitars are ripping with a crude distorted sound and uncultivated harmonics. Songs like "Shadow God", "Walls of Confusion", and "Deified" are riff heavy metal. Stoltz has an instantly recognizable voice, at times sounding like Midnight singing in a thrash band, although he does lack variety. On slow sections of songs like "Rain" and "Secluded Dreams" he can convey a certain emotion but he does not display any aggression or anger which sometimes contradicts the intensity of the guitars. Minor complaints aside, this is a heavy guitar oriented album with unique, melodic vocals and neither expands nor regresses the music of their debut. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

HOLLOW GROUND... *Sik 2000 Balls...* 84... *Sik 2000 Balls* is a thirteen song disc that includes five songs from their debut e.p., *Sik Fucked Up Godlike* and eight songs from the follow up, *Rape at 2000 Decibels*. The former was released in 1995, the latter would probably compare to **Pantera**. Matt may use a similar vocal style to Phil Anselmo but musically **Hollow Ground** have 80's thrash roots to combine with their modern sound. This all makes for an enjoyable listen. Usually, these types of bands bore me rather quickly, but **Hollow Ground** are enjoyable. I like the fact that I can hear what Rob is doing on his bass at all times. He works with Dan very well, combining for a foundation that Matt can jam with. There may not be any perfect tracks but there is not one weak song either. P. O. Box 741, Babylon, NY 11702 www.hollowground.com

I MOTHER EARTH... *Blue Green Orange...* 82... Canada's **I Mother Earth** released their debut, *Dig*, back in 1993 and to this day it ranks among my all time favorites. An intense jolt of energy, the three musicians created their own unique individual styles and provided an enthusiastic kick to a mundane music scene. Three years later they reappeared with *Scenery and Fish*. Lacking the excitement of its predecessor, it nonetheless produced some good alternative metal songs. Shortly after vocalist Edwin left and he was promptly replaced by Brian Byrne. Byrne has a similar style to Edwin and overall *Blue Green Orange* bears more resemblance to *Scenery and Fish* than *Dig*. Christian Tanna is the best drummer you've never heard of. The Latin rhythms he has created are previously unheard in this genre. He has expanded his repertoire to include African and Brazilian percussion, as well. His brother Jagori provides the coloring to Christian's authentic rhythms and Bruce Gordon's expressive bass playing. Check out "Summertime in the Void", a song worthy of their near perfect debut. **I Mother Earth** has evolved into a refined band and although they lack the intensity and energy of their debut they are still a band that deserves attention. **UNIVERSAL.**

INDECISION... *Release The Cure...* 87... They may finally be receiving their just due. Over the past six year's New York's **Indecision** have toured relentlessly while releasing three albums and over a dozen seven inches. It appears that M.I.A. Records has a significant budget and they are into promoting legends in the making, like **Candiria** and **Indecision**. Many feel that **Indecision** are the premier New York City hardcore band. With *Release the Cure*, they are proving these people right. Lyrically based on the idea of a government/ health industry conspiracy which **Indecision** believe have failed to release the known cure for diseases such as A.I.D.'s and cancer. Recent additions like ex-**Milhouse** vocalist Artie Philie and guitarist Rachel Rosen fit in perfectly and with production by **Agnostic Front** legend Roger Miret, *Release the Cure* is one of the best hardcore albums ever. With a near metallic crunch on the slower parts, **Indecision** have the ability to appeal to hardcore legions and metalheads alike. **M.I.A.**

IN EXTREMO... *Weckt Die Toten...* 70... I'm sorry but there are only three bands who effectively blend folk music and metal. **Skyclad**, **Ulver**, and **Tempest** are the best out there. If the idea of those two genres meshing appeals to you, find those albums and avoid *Weckt Die Toten*. The music is not that bad, but the vocals just don't work, maybe it's the German lyrics. I find their variety of interests and stories interesting but this proclaimed minstrel lifestyle sounds corny. **In Extremo** employ seven musicians including a full time bagpipe player (Yello Pfeiffer). Some tunes that do work are the heavily percussive "Villemann og Magnhild" and its powerful chants, and the melancholy "Maria Virgin", however there is too much medieval and not enough metal. **In Extremo** will certainly entertain many people, I just can't grasp the concept. **METAL BLADE.**

ION VEIN... *Beyond Tomorrow...* 88... Perhaps I'm biased because guitarist Chris Lotesto is one of the nicest people I've met, perhaps it's because of the strong buzz this Chicago prog metal band has garnered, or simply because they are a damn good band- but *Beyond Tomorrow* is a stunning debut. Scott Lang has obviously been influenced by Mike Portnoy but **Ion Vein** are more difficult to categorize than saying they sound like **Dream Theater**. Russ Klimczak has a unique voice that would make Midnight proud, but it's the complexity and heaviness of the music that sets **Ion Vein** apart. It is only on songs like "Heart of the Matter" that one can call **Ion Vein** progressive. The faster material features some impressive interplay between Lotesto and John Malufka, yet they are rooted in 80's power metal. *Beyond Tomorrow* will appeal to **Liege Lord** fans as easily as those who worship **Dream Theater**. They manage to capture their sound with minimal use of keyboards. **MAJESPHHERE.** \$12 to Majesphere Records, P.O. Box 7911, Hoffman Estates, IL 60195-7911 www.ionvein.com

IRON MAN... *Generation Void...* 80... At times I found *Generation Void* a little boring but hidden beneath its simplicity is an album that rocks in the same vein as early **Sabbath**. Unlike others who have blatantly ripped off **Black Sabbath**, **Iron Man** write lommi style riffs that he has not done yet. Dan Michalak will get some comparisons to Ozzy but he is not a clone either. The best way to categorize **Iron Man** is seventies inspired rock combined with a little doom. Songs like "King of Kings", "Generation Void", and "Forever Yours", all rock with some soulful metal guitar playing from Alfred Morns. Although the drum solo on "Juggernaut" is also a trait found on seventies rock albums, I find it entirely unnecessary. **Iron Man** have seemingly picked up the slack since **The Obsessed**'s demise. **BRAINTICKET.**

IRON SAVIOR... *Interlude...* 83... The rising German metal masters return with their fourth release in three years. Following their self titled debut, *Coming Home* e.p., and *Unification* comes *Interlude*. *Interlude* contains five live songs- "Iron Savior", "Brave New World", "Watcher in the Sky", "Riding on Fire", and "For the World"; four new songs, and a rather weak cover of **Judas Priest**'s "Desert Plains". This has some impressive packaging and if you are unfamiliar with the **Iron Savior** story this disc explains it all. Now back to those four new tunes. "Stone Cold" is simply not up to par with their usual top notch quality. "Touching the Rainbow" and "The Hatchet of War" are classic Savior tunes and "Contortions of Time" may be the heaviest song Piet Sielck and his gang have written. The live songs were recorded at **Iron Savior**'s 1998 appearance at the Wacken Open Air Festival. For all you metalheads just picking up on bands like **Blind Guardian** and **Gamma Ray** remember **Iron Savior** features ex-**Helloween** members Piet Sielck and Kai Hansen who also operates **Gamma Ray**. **NOISE.**

JUDAS ISCARIOT... *Distant In Solitary Night...* 78... **Judas Iscariot** is basically a solo project in which Akhenaten can express his philosophical ideals. *Distant in Solitary Night* is the fourth album in four years for Akhenaten. While I admire his artistic vision, I find the lackluster production to be a hindrance. When **Judas Iscariot** delve into the expansive guitar playing, creating medieval atmospheres, there is an obvious creative mind at work. Unfortunately, poor production fails to allow **Judas Iscariot** to realize its full potential. The guitar playing is raw and at times doomy with subtle melodies. Hints of **Ophthalamia** are present in the guitar work. As usual the song titles read like long sentences. "The Clear Moon and the Glory of the Darkness" represents the best guitar work, while on closer, "Portions of Eternity Too Great for the Eye of Man", Akhenaten spews forth his philosophies. This is a true underground band. **Judas Iscariot**

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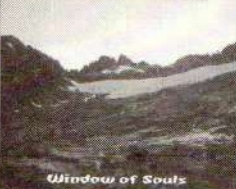


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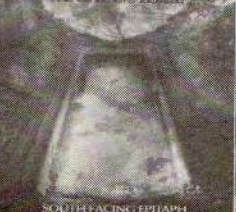


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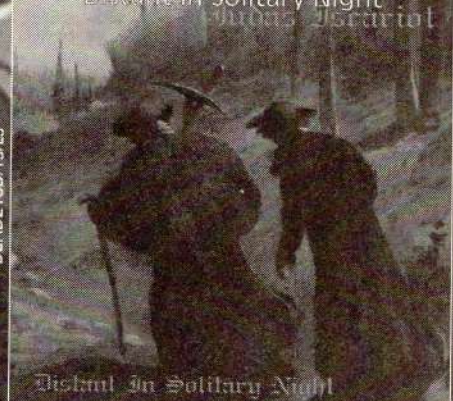


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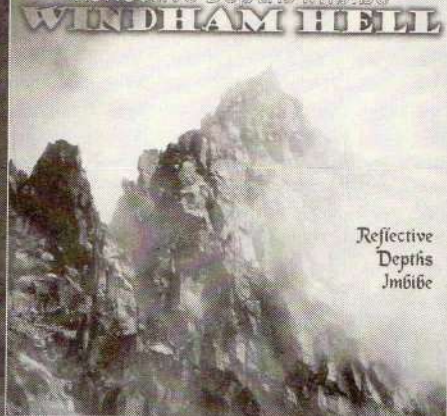


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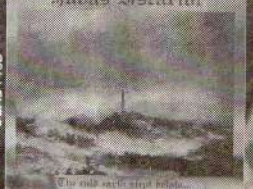


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are raw and atmospheric, interesting most of the time but too underproduced. **MORIBUND.**

KAMPFAR... *Fra Underverdenen... 72...* The solo project from ex-Mock mainman Dolk sees its second full length release. **Kampf** play folk inspired black metal that is long on roots and short on originality. For black metal fans, *Fra Underverdenen* should be a solid release but I don't hear anything that excites me here. The stripped down melodies on "Norse" and their memorable cover artwork aside, **Kampf** are just too familiar at a time when everybody is either focusing on quality or originality. I don't hear much growth between *Fra Underverdenen* and *Mellom Skogledde Aaser*. Unfortunately, anyone expecting a fresh black metal album should look elsewhere because **Kampf** sound dated. Then again, if this is the style you've always enjoyed this would sit nicely with those old Satyricon and Immortal records. **HAMMERHEART.**

KARMA TO BURN... *Wild Wonderful Purgatory... 76...* What an odd band. I can't recall another band so intent on avoiding success. Two years ago they released a self titled debut on Roadrunner that was a great record. The vocals were rather weak but finally a band came along who could step into the void that **Kyuss** left behind when they broke up. **Karma To Burn** were not happy with the vocals and felt they were better represented as an instrumental group. We all know how intent Roadrunner is on album sales and how well instrumental music sells. Needless to say, **Karma To Burn** and Roadrunner went their separate ways and the band returns with the record they wanted to make, on a new label, M.I.A. *Wild Wonderful Purgatory* is similar to *Karma to Burn*, but I miss the vocals. While the jams are good and maintain a point of convergence, it is not interesting enough to remain in this stripped down mode. I admire their ideas and defiant stand in the face of the corporate music industry but their style of rock is lacking something... and I don't mean the music. **M.I.A.**

KATATONIA... *Tonights Decision... 81...* There was a time when **Kataton** produced a sound which rivaled **Paradise Lost** at their best (*Gothic, Shades of God*). On *Brave Murder Day*, **Kataton** began a progression into a more sombre yet quieter realm which was realized fully on their milestone *Discouraged Ones* album. While there is still a common thread to **Paradise Lost** in terms of growth towards commercial accessibility, the Swedish ones have done so without alienating all their fans. While opener "For My Demons" ranks among the best tracks they've recorded, there are no classics like "I Break" or "Stay for Awhile" on *Tonights Decision*. Like previous albums, this must be listened to several times before the dreamy and subtle melodies which maintain **Kataton**'s state of bereavement. On "Had To" and "Black Session" the guitar is heavier than *Discouraged Ones*. Dan Swano contributes drums and **Opeth**'s Mikael Akerfeldt co-produced the vocals. Despite the level of quality **Kataton** presents, there are a couple of songs not up to par. **PEACEVILLE.**

KEEP OF KALESSIN... *Agnen: A Journey Through The Dark... 87...* While **Kovenant**, **Dodheimsgard**, and **Satyricon** continue to evolve it has become necessary for underground Norwegian black metal bands to step up and replace them. Two bands that sound ready are **Mactatus** and now **Keep Of Kalestin**. *A Journey through the Dark* was once again inspired lyrically, by U. Le Guin who wrote the magical fantasy "The Earthsea Quartet". Musically, this follow up to their debut, *Through Times of War*, contains that high pitched guitar playing which injects a subtle melody to their intense assault. It is a sound that **Enslaved** mastered on *Frost*. **Keep Of Kalestin** are all about songwriting. Vocally, **Keep Of Kalestin** are more than proficient. Typical of the genre, they remain coarse with a slight growl to them. This is not an album where you'll find a lot of keyboard playing. This is a guitar driven record that is well produced, heavy, clear, and quite busy. Welcome the new breed of Norwegian black metal. **AVANTEGARDE.**

KLANK... *Numb... 92...* Long Island's **Klank** has been getting around lately. The band has been played on E.S.P.N. and have a video being played on there in January. They released their debut two years ago on Tooth And Nail Records and now find themselves on the growing Progressive Arts Media label. Their new album, *Numb*, is an exciting album of modern metal. Their sound has elements found in the more commercial industrial scene but they are very song oriented and possess a cool groove. **Klank** is not a band that is satisfied throwing something out there. The band spends an amazing amount of time making sure that each song has all the necessary ingredients and sounds. The only weak track here is "Bleed Me Dry", the rest of these tunes are of top quality. **PROGRESSIVE ARTS MEDIA.**

MICHAEL KNIGHT... *Necropolis... 84...* Michael Knight, guitarist extraordinaire and editor of *Guitar 2001*, has released a c.d. single, "Necropolis" which appears on the soundtrack for the independent movie, *Evil Streets*. Unlike many of the showoffs who strive to portray their speed and ability to solo for hours on end, it is clear that Michael can write a catchy song without the benefit of vocals. That is no easy task. This is only a single but is worth seeking out by guitar freaks or anyone who can appreciate a well written instrumental. P.O. Box 651, Floral Park, NY 11002 www.guitar2001.com

KOVENANT... *Animatronic... 90...* This Norwegian black metal scene is in a serious state of evolution. Bands like **Thorns**, **Dodheimsgard**, **Ulver**, and **Kovenant** keep listeners on their toes, guessing what they will do next. Changes have taken place in the **Kovenant** camp. *Animatronic* sounds nothing like *In Times Before the Light* and is even incomparable to the complex *Nexus Polaris*. Gone from *Nexus Polaris* are **Dimmu Borgir** guitarist Astennu and **Cradle Of Filth** vocalist Sarah Jezebel Deva. Nagash, Blackheart, and Hellhammer have changed their personal monickers to Lex Icon, Psy Coma, and Von Blomberg, respectively. Due to another Norwegian band with the same name, **Covenant** is now known as the **Kovenant**. Visually **Kovenant** now sports a Marilyn Manson like freakness. Now, what about the music? *Animatronic* is more rooted in the industrial scene with some heavy, mid paced guitars and spacey keyboards. Female vocal embellishment adds a sense of melody to Psy Coma's still coarse vocals. At times, *Animatronic* have some traditional metal elements blended in. While **Marilyn Manson** comparisons will be inevitable, **Kovenant**'s third disc is an energetic, apocalyptic and futuristic vision that is years ahead of its time. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

KROKUS... *Round 13... 78...* This is indeed their thirteenth studio record. I have yet to track down the first three; *Krokus, To You All*, and *Pain Killer*; but albums like *Metal Rendez-vous*, *Hardware*, *One Vice at a Time*, and their peak of commercial and artistic success, 83's *Headhunter*, should be staples in any metalheads collection. Three more records appeared through the mid to late 80's. The nineties **Krokus** output has been relegated to 1990's *Stampepe* (new line-up), 1995's *To Rock or Not To Be*, and now *Round 13*. Like previous 90's output, *Round 13* is a solid hard rock album. Sure, there's some filler, but songs like "Suck My Guitar", "Gypsy Love", and "Guitar Rules" rank with classics like "Winning Man" and "Midnight Maniac". As usual, guitarist Fernando Von Arb does most of the songwriting. There's a percussive cover of "Heya" and a new vocalist, as Carl Senteance steps in for Marc Storage. He has a slight Storage rasp and a slight Robert Plant high pitch to his voice. Sure, **Krokus** may sound dated and the lyrics aren't any different but they do have some core fans who could dig this. **ANGEL AIR.**

LAB ANIMALS... *Silent Weapons For Quiet Wars... 77...* Digital Dimension has a mixed track record with me. The commercial metal of **PC69** was great but rap metallers **Rhythm Trip** sucked. I had no idea what to expect from **Lab Animals**. At thirteen tracks, and almost an hour of music, *Silent Weapons for Quiet Wars* is a mixed affair with too much filler. "Worlds in Collision" is an industrial metal fans dream and would fit perfectly on *Psalm 69*, hell it's better than anything **Ministry** has done since then. This track is truly one of the best the genre has ever produced. They follow that with the insanely boring and repetitious "Angel Dust". "24 Hours in Hell" is too proceeded despite heavy guitars. While **Lab Animals** avoid the commercial aspects of **Filter**, and the **Ministry** sound alike syndrome, there is not enough guitar, too much electronics, and a lack of vocal diversity. If only the rest of the disc was as good as "Worlds in Collision". **DIGITAL DIMENSION.**

LABYRINTH... *Timeless Crime... 87...* Italy's rising progressive power metallers quickly return with this five song e.p. After a brief departure of vocalist Rob Tyrant, **Domine** vocalist Morby joined and left shortly thereafter to usher the return of the Tyrant. Over the course of two full lengths, the Fabio Lozzo (**Rhapsody**) fronted debut *No Limits*, and last years Metal Blade debut, *Return to Heaven Denied*, **Labyrinth** have established themselves as frontrunners of this talented and loaded genre. Unlike many of their contemporaries, **Labyrinth** have a rare ability to utilize both keyboard dominated progressive elements and powerful double bass guitar driven metal, and write catchy melodies. As a hidden bonus track, they also cover **Sanctuary**'s "Die for My Sins". **METAL BLADE.**

LAKE OF TEARS... *Forever Autumn... 65...* Where have you gone? There were hints on their third full length, *A Crimson Cosmos*, that **Lake Of Tears** would eventually evolve into the sound found on *Forever Autumn*, but this is lame. On albums like *Headstones* and especially *Greater Art*, **Lake Of Tears** have produced a boring album with no defining character. They have almost, not quite as bad, but their career appears to be mirroring **Pyogenesis** in overall effect. They do still experiment, so those fans who admired **Lake Of Tears** open minded musical stance will enjoy their use of flute, cello, and accordian but otherwise Daniel Brennare has written a mature but uninspired album. Of course, they do create yet another amazing album cover. **BLACK MARK.**

LEADFOOT... *Take A Look... 72...* Maybe they benefitted from production money through Roadrunner because the amount of time **Leadfoot** spent on *Take a Look* was less than a week. There is a constant rawness permeating on this disc but the quality of the songs suffer. Overall, *Take a Look* is boring, it lacks the "damn that was good" quality of their debut, *Bring it On*. **Leadfoot**'s prominent publicity comes via vocalist Karl Agell and bassist Phil Swisher's

contribution to **Corrosion Of Conformity's** excellent 1991 disc, *Blind*. Lyrically, **Leadfoot** don't come close to **C.O.C.'s** intelligent rhetoric, however they do share a common ground musically. I feel bad for criticizing *Take a Look*. Even though **Leadfoot** sound like the same band that recorded *Bring it On* in 1997, somehow they must have forgotten the idea of songwriting. I don't think they could've matched *Bring it On* if they took a year to record it. Do yourself a favor, buy *Bring it On* and take a look elsewhere. **MUSIC CARTEL**.

LEATHERWOLF... Wide Open... 79... After ten years of inactivity, **Leatherwolf** return with a new live album. A little history is in order. The California band was first lauded for their triple axe attack. Their style of melodic power metal is timeless and went over the heads of all the poseur metal fans of the late 80's. Therefore, besides a loyal cult following **Leatherwolf** went largely ignored. Their last two albums together, *Leatherwolf* (1987) and *Street Ready* (1989), are both classics that are essential to anybody's collection. Rarely is a band this melodic yet still so powerful. This live album is a welcome return, but they are, obviously, unable to reproduce those powerful layered vocal melodies found on songs like "Gypsies and Thieves", "The Calling", or "Street Ready". Some may prefer the stripped down approach. This is a complete reunion and **Leatherwolf** will be recording a new album soon. New song, "Tools of Discipline" is a classic **Leatherwolf** anthem. They also perform a cover of the **Doors'** "Break on Through" and include no less than five songs from their 1984 debut. Welcome back. Available through **Perris Records @ Dept. MM, P.O. Box 140031, Austin, TX 78714-0031. www.perrisrecords.com**

LEFAY... The Seventh Seal... 83... Yes, **Lefay** is actually **Morgana Lefay**- although **Morgana Lefay** still records for **Black Mark**. It is confusing. The *Seventh Seal* sounds like the same band that recorded *Malificeum* in 1996, or any of their other four albums, despite the departure of three members and the name change. **Lefay** has been causing quite a stir among power metalheads. This is surprising because the music and vocals on *The Seventh Seal* is the same they've been doing all along. Guitarist **Tony Eriksson** provides the slow to mid paced guitar crunch (think a heavier version of **Solitude Aeturnus**) while **Charles Rytkonen** offers his clear and powerful vocals for a melodic effect. Don't let the **Pantera** comparisons thrown around in their bio scare you, **Lefay** are for true metal fans. Their choir on "The Seventh Seal", the melodic moments of "The Boon He Gives", and the heaviness of "Child of Time" are highlights. The songwriting tandem of **Rytkonen** and **Eriksson** are still here, so if you liked past efforts you will enjoy this as well. **NOISE**.

LE RUE DELASHAY... Musick In Theory And Practice... 76... The biography may have a better explanation for what you hear on *Musick In Theory and Practice*: "Welding the powerful forces of classical musick with the haunting atmosphere more akin to modern horror fans." **Le Rue Delashay** is best known for his work with **Lord Of All Desires**. This is actually his fourth release, he had a self titled debut in '97, *Walpurgisnacht*, the *Haunting* in '98, *The Court Composer* '99, and now *Musick in Theory and Practice*. His music is layered with classical overtones. I can not find the words to describe **Le rue Delashay's** music. It is twisted, bizarre, forboding, but not malevolent, fast or disruptive. It is theatrical. This is not metal. Instead one must listen with an open mind and maybe someone can get something out of his vision. It is more a soundtrack than anything. Personally, I'd rather listen to **Brett Clarin's Journey Into Darkness. ROOT OF ALL EVIL.**

LOCK UP... Pleasures Pave Sewers... 72... When will a talent filled side project live up to expectations? For many of these bands, it appears to be "let's hang out, drink some beers, and jam"- in that order. While a gathering like this may be fun, the music bestowed upon the public is normally disappointing. **Lock Up** is the collective talents of guitarist **Jesse Pintado (Napalm Death)**, drummer **Nick Barker (ex-Cradle Of Filth- who isn't?)**, bassist **Shane Embury (Napalm Death)**, and vocalist **Peter Tagtgren (Hypocrisy)**. For the most part, *Pleasures Pave Sewers* blasts by in a dozen tracks and clocks in around the half hour mark. Based upon the performers involved and **Lock Up's** traditional grind/ death stance, the band is sure to sell quite a few albums. However, *Pleasures Pave Sewers* is rather lackluster save for an inventive riff here and there. To quote their bio: "It's not taken too seriously... zero keyboards, zero withering goth vocals, zero filters, zero effects, just plain undiluted savageness." **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

LOUDNESS... Engine... 84... It seems like they released *Dragon* just six months ago. Continuing the trend starting on *Dragon*, a beautiful woman adorns the disc. **Loudness** is a band that has been greatly unappreciated in the 90's. The **Masaki Yamada** albums, there are five of them so far, are experimental works with some 90's groove, psychedelia, and aggression molded together. I will admit that each album does have some weak links and extended sections that tend to drag way too long but there are always some surprises. The **Chili Peppers** funk on "Mirror Ball" from *Dragon*, the psychedelic sounds on *Heavy Metal Hippies*. On *Engine* it's the way the bass and guitars work together to perfection on the energetic "Asylum". **Naoto Shibata** has really come into his own with his dynamic bass playing skills. **Akira Takasaki** continues to concentrate on groove and atmospheres unlike his flashy riffs and solos that permeated the 80's records. Very few bands play the 90's groove metal the right way, **Loudness** are one of them. **ROOMS.**

The advertisement features a dark, atmospheric background with a large, stylized title "SMELL THE STENCH OF DEATH" in a gothic font at the top center. Below the title are two album covers. The left cover is for "Pazuzu: III - The End of Ages", showing a chaotic scene of figures in a dark, possibly hellish environment. The right cover is for "Keep of Kalessin: Agnen: A Journey Through the Dark", featuring a close-up of a person's face with a glowing, ethereal light source. Text at the bottom of each cover provides details about the albums. At the very bottom, there is distributor information and a website URL.

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MACHINE HEAD... *The Burning Red...* 80... While many true metal fans abhor these trend setters I really enjoyed their debut *Burn My Eyes*. To this day it is in my regular rotation. The next disc, *The More Things Change*, lacked the vibrant quality of its predecessor. Now we have their pivotal third release which falls somewhere between their previous discs in terms of quality. The band continues to evolve as they once again replace another member, this time Ahrué Luster steps in for guitarist Logan Mader. Among the new sounds incorporated are infrequent rapping by Robert Flynn and a *Sepultura/ Soulfly* feel to the music. Actually, *The Burning Red* reminds me of **Prong**. **Machine Head** have always injected a dose of melody to their aggression and they do so even more on *The Burning Red*. One surprising note, **Machine Head** perform a cover of the **Police** classic "Message in the Bottle" and have a mellow closer, "The Burning Red". Of course when you have Ross Robinson in the producer's chair and Terry Date doing the mixing, you have a great sounding record with the live energy coming across in the studio. **ROADRUNNER**.

MACTATUS... *Provenance Of Cruelty...* 84... A cool Petagno cover, skeletons, goat horns, can't read the logo- it can only be black metal. It is actually pretty damn good black metal. **Mactatus** have some impressive contributors on *Provenance of Cruelty*. **Emperor's** Samoth handles production and **Dark Throne's** Nocturno Culto penned "Draped in Shadows of Satan's Pride". It is nice to see a new band come out of Norway that upholds the tradition that bands like **Emperor** started. **Mactatus** play a slower, more melodic style of black metal but vocally and image wise they are true to their roots. These melodic passages and Forn's melancholy synth make **Mactatus** special. It is a balance that makes them listenable and transcends the raw nature of the genre. Two of the eight tracks are in Norwegian as the band does not exclusively sing in English or their native tongue. It remains to be seen whether or not a new player on the scene will be accepted by audiences, hell it took **Dimmu Borgir** three albums, but **Mactatus** are doing the right things. **NAPALM**.

YNGWIE MALMSTEEN... *Alchemy...* 92... Year after year, Yngwie puts out one classic disc after another. Quickly following his all instrumental effort, *Concerto Suite*, Yngwie returns with *Trilogy* vocalist Mark Boals for his eleventh studio album. On *Alchemy*, Yngwie cuts loose a little more than usual. On the instrumental opener, "Blitzkrieg", he rips his fretboard like never before. Elsewhere, the album's highlights occur early on. "Playing With Fire" sounds like it came from *Trilogy*. "The Stand", inspired by Stephen King's popular novel, is perhaps his best written song ever. A heavy groove oriented tune with Boals dynamic performance, it is instantly catchy and memorable. On "Wield My Sword", Yngwie delves into the fantasy based European metal that bands like **Rhapsody** are mastering. These three tunes showcase Yngwie at his best ever. On "Legion of the Damned" Boals uses an evil touch along with his trademark style. "Voodoo Nights" is yet another winner. *Alchemy* closes with the three part instrumental "Asylum". Keyboardist Mats Olausson remains from as far back as *Eclipse* and bassist Barry Dunaway appears on his third album. New drummer John Macaluso (**Ark**, ex-T.N.T.) adds his powerful style to Yngwie's aggressive attack. **DREAM CATCHER**.

MAMMOTH... *Volume...* 75... If only the Music Cartel spent more time finding bands like **Codeseven** and **Clawfinger**, and avoided putting out average stoner rock. At least they got it right with **Orange Goblin**. **Mammoth** fall somewhere between the above English band and the atrocious **Electric Wizard** and **Sleep**. They aren't bad they just don't do anything new. I do appreciate Nicklas Andersson's mesmerizing vocal style but the music puts me to sleep. The music is not heavy but does have a retro feel that may be appealing to some people. It's bands like this that make me really miss **Big Chief**. While Nicklas handles vocals on about half the tracks, Jorgen Andersson does the other half. I like Niklas' style, but Jorgen tends to bore me, especially when he sounds a little like **Ozzy**. There is a garage vibe to this disc, so it sounds spontaneous, but they forget to add energy. **MUSIC CARTEL**.

MASTERMIND... *Excelsior...* 84... **Mastermind** titles their latest disc *Excelsior* after the 1841 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem. They are better known in Europe and Japan, this New Jersey band caused a stir at 1998's 2nd Annual Power Mad Festival as they closed it with an intense set of instrumental virtuosity and a hot looking blonde vocalist. The brothers Berends- Bill on guitars, synth, and bass and Rich on drums may look like red neck bikers but their music is sophisticated and sure to please all you prog heads and guitar wankers alike. *Excelsior* is pure instrumental, it requires several listens to absorb. I am usually not into this type of music without vocals but **Mastermind** amazingly remain fresh and exciting, creating a musical journey that will truly leave you mesmerized. Ex-Yngwie Malmsteen and fellow Jerseyite keyboardist Jens Johansson plies his trade on *Excelsior* as well. This disc has made more appearances in my player than any in years as I go to sleep at night. That is an exceptional compliment. **INSIDE OUT**.

SCOTT MCGILL'S HAND FARM... *Ripe...* 82... This is a must for all instrumental/ jazz/ fusion/ metal fans. Scott released his debut a year ago and *Ripe* is a better sounding and mature record. He is not so much a solo artist, but rather a musician more interested in sounds and textures. At times he reminds me of Mark Huetteman but otherwise his style is incomparable. Joining Scott on *Ripe* are drummer Vic Stevens and recently departed bassist Chico Huff. I find songs like "Industrial Blowout" to be adventurous and almost **Rush** like but even the quieter numbers like "Un Monde de Incertitudes" are an enjoyable listen because of his profuse fluidity. Scott is a student of music who has already surpassed many masters. It's just a matter of time before his dedication and enthusiasm puts him in the same breath as Howe, Vai, or Friedman. **LASERS EDGE**.

MEATHOOK SEED... *Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth...* 85... Those of you wondering where you've heard the name **Meathook Seed** will recall an album titled *Embedded* that came out in 1993. It was a side project which dabbled in experimental and industrial music. Among the members were **Napalm Death's** guitarist Mitch Harris, and bassist Shane Embury, along with **Obituary** members drummer John Tardy and guitarist Trevor Perez, who handled vocals. On *B.I.B.L.E.*, the **Obituary** guys have left and now Shane Embury contributes bass to only two tracks. Joining Mitch are vocalist Christophe Lamouret (**Out**) and drummer Ian Treacy. *B.I.B.L.E.* is more melodic than *Embedded*. **Meathook Seed** still play electronic based metal, however *B.I.B.L.E.* has an almost surreal effect. The music is calm and wanders through in a dreamlike state. Lamouret is a better vocalist than Peres, although he does at times, use the same type of whispered effect. **Dream Catcher** has put together an impressive collage of colorful and exploratory photos for an excellent package. **DREAM CATCHER**.

MEGADETH... *Risk...* 68... The only risk that **Megadeth** is taking with this album would be losing their fans. After six excellent albums of technical thrash and power metal, **Megadeth** came out with the putrid 1997 release, *Cryptic Writings*, and many thought they finally had a long overdue weak album. With this cast of musicians, **Megadeth** should have been able to record a better album in their sleep. *Risk* starts off well enough. The opening rocker "Insomnia" annoyed me at first but it is a catchy number. "Prince of Darkness" and "Crush Em" are modern sounding and represent the best songs on *Risk*. While "The Doctor is Calling" and "Time" are both textured and ambitious, they lack any energy or spontaneity. Songs like "Breadline" and most of the last half of the record; especially "I'll Be There" are lackluster and boring. It's almost like **Megadeth** passed right through the "mature" phase of their career and immediately fell into "over the hill". Dave Mustaine may be trying hard to become a better vocalist but his weaknesses are easily exposed. Marty Friedman has no flashy solos, Dave Ellefson has no memorable bass lines, and new drummer, veteran Jimmy DeGrasso, does not match the work Nick Menza contributed on these four previous releases. **CAPITOL**.

MERAUDER... *Five Deadly Venoms...* 84... New York's metalcore quintet have been quiet lately. Their well received debut, *Master Killer*, was released back in 1995 when this type of music had about reached its peak. They now return with *Five Deadly Venoms*. Even though the band has been known in the hardcore community, most of *Five Deadly Venoms* sounds metal. "Scared" opens and is a memorable crunch of groove metal. Somehow I find Jorge's vocals more listenable than most of this style. He has the aggression but is more organic sounding than **Hatebreed** or **Earth Crisis**. Musically, **Merauder** are unafraid to sow things down and add melodic moments like the mid section of "Find My Way". A.J. Novello (**Both Worlds**) does a very good job with production. You can hear all the instruments clearly; no single instrument dominates. Unlike most of today's metalcore, **Merauder** will add a dose of melody and some flashy guitar solos. They also cover the **Cro-Mags** "Life of My Own". At thirty minutes, this album is an exciting offering that does not bore. **CENTURY MEDIA**.

MERCYLESS... *Cold...* 86... In the early 90's **Mercyless** established a strong reputation as an upcoming death metal band and a rare French one at that. They showed some promise on their debut, *Abject Offerings*, but it was the follow up, *Coloured Funeral*, which caused a stir. Then **Mercyless** disappeared. Apparently, *Cold* was recorded sometime in 1996 but now it finally sees a release date through Pavement Music. They have evolved from their death metal roots and now play a style of metal that is not so easy to categorize. The prevalent sound they create is one that closely resembles a melodic **Sepultura**. Don't be fooled, **Mercyless** also tap into other realms, including power metal and thrash. Unfortunately, I'm unaware of future endeavors. Here's what the band has to say: "Cold is not a concept album, it's just a personal interpretation of change and progression. We are continually trying to explore new horizons, hoping that the open minded people will enjoy what we create. Now, our message has, always been simple; no promises, no guarantees... and no

regrets." You will not regret purchasing *Cold*. **PAVEMENT.**

METAL CHURCH... *Masterpiece*... 75... Vocalist David Wayne and guitarist Kurdt Vanderhoof rejoin **Metal Church** and the band has signed a deal with Nuclear Blast. *Masterpiece* is their first album in six years and it is only slightly better than *Hanging in the Balance*. Wayne appeared on the first two discs and was replaced by Mike Howe (ex-**Heretic**) for three albums. The first four are all classics, this reunion disc has too much filler. After an average opener, "Falldown" and "Into Dust" follow and they represent *Masterpiece's* best material. Both are well written songs and see Wayne utilizing both his melodic and coarse Udo styles. After that it's downhill. "Faster Than Life" is a solid tune with previously unheard vocal effects but the quieter moments of "Kiss for the Dead" and "Masterpiece" don't work the same way, say "Watch the Children Pray" did. The other songs are plain boring and their cover of **Aerosmith's** "Toys in the Attic" sucks. It's nice to see David and Kurdt, who really never really from behind the scenes, return, however I hope they bring better songs with them next time. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

METALIUM... *Millennium Metal*... 88... This super group was fomred with metal pride and a true metal stance. In the tradition of late 90's bands like **Heimdall** and **Primal Fear**, **Metalium** refuse to acknowledge trends. Lars Ratz formed **Metalium** and quickly added ex-Yngwie Malmsteen drummer Mike Terana, **Savatage** guitarist Chris Caffery, **Brainstorm** vocalist Henning Basse and guitarist Matthias Lange. Songs like "Dream of Doom" and "Revelation" represent some of the best metal songs ever written. "Break the Speak" is insanely heavy and with a strong and powerful rhythm section especially apparent in the beginning of "Revelation" and "Metalium", this band is extremely powerful. Even the ballad, "Metamorphosis" is pure metal. Hanne does a stellar job throughout. The vocal effects on "Void of Fire" and his dynamic performance on "Metalium" prove his career will show him to be one of the best. Terana also deserves mention for one of the most powerful and distinguished kick drum performances. There is also a cover of **Deep Purple's** "Smoke on the Water". **PAVEMENT.**

MIDEVIL... *Forced To Believe*... 82... This is a slight departure for **Midevil**. While everyone likened *Thee Almighty* and *Expiration Date* to *Ride the Lightning*/*Master of Puppets* era **Metallica**, **Midevil** appear ready to leave those comparisons behind. The music is still heavy, it still has some ripping solos but the *Thee Almighty* character no longer adorns the cover, Jon Pamblanco is singing more melodically and the music is more modern. Despite lead guitarist Joe Mitchell's departure, **Midevil** forge ahead. Like **Flotsam And Jetsam** had done many years ago, **Midevil** find themselves expanding from thrash metal's boundaries and are writing better songs without abandoning their roots. Jon's melodic vocals sometimes make the music sound deceptively heavy but **Midevil** are proving to be a viable entity with something fresh to offer. Can't wait to see what comes next. *Forced to Believe* is a bridge that connects *Expiration Date* to an unknown destination. \$8 to P.O. Box 44324, Brooklyn, OH 44144

MONUMENT... *Resting Place*... 88... This is forgotten metal. What **Monument** play on their sophomore release is what made 80's metal special. Many compare their style to the first two **Flotsam And Jetsam** albums. Vocalist Kirk Callaway may remind you of Eric A.K. but it is the intelligently placed gang vocals that make *Resting Place* special. It is a quality I found annoying and overused in the late 80's but is so seldom used now that it is welcome here. Another positive is the variety found on this record. "Hopeless" and "Lost in Paradise" are crushingly heavy. Sean Kelly has found a balance between crunchy power and memorable riffs. Somehow Kevin Courtney's double bass pounding is deceptively fast. **Monument** do not sound like **Pantera**, yet I must liken Courtney's drum technique to Vinnie Paul, especially on songs like "Lies". He uses an uncanny double bass technique. The hardcore influenced "Mortal Divinity" and "The Game" help balance the doomy "Reflections" and "Eyes of Sorrow". *Resting Place* closes with the slow, atmospheric, spoken word and classic doom of the title track. Keep the disc playing for some crushing riffs and melodic solos. **Monument** have achieved a modern production with classic metal trademarks, and enough variety to keep your interest yet they never stray from their core. \$10 to P.O. Box 892881, Oklahoma City, OK 731289. www.microworld.com/monumnt

MOONSPELL... *The Butterfly Effect*... 90... **Moonspell** follow up their impressive third disc, *Sin/ Pecado*, with a superior album, *The Butterfly Effect*. This well produced album sees vocalist Fernando Ribiero returning to a more aggressive vocal style, using various effects, and giving the new record an industrial feel

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to it. This time around **Moonspell** acquired the services of famed English producer Andy Reilly (Bruce Dickinson, the **Cult**, U.F.O.) to produce *The Butterfly Effect*. From the aggressive "Soul Sick" and "Lustmord" to more atmospheric tracks like "Can't Bee", **Moonspell** has never been this good or this diverse.

CENTURY MEDIA.

MORTICIAN... Chainsaw Dismemberment... 80... *Chainsaw Dismemberment* is **Mortician's** best effort to date. While many hate them, you have to respect them. Throughout the 90's they continually put out trademark discs with classic horror samples, drum machine mayhem, gargling vocals, and detuned guitars. This time they tune those puppies so low the guitar sounds like a bass. It appears that Desmond Tolhurst has become a full time member, joining Will Rahmer and Roger Beaujard in their sick and twisted universe. Wes Benscoter does another fascinating cover. There are twenty eight songs here and judging by titles like "Splattered", "Decayed", "Rabid", and "Mass Mutilation"; **Mortician** have not softened one iota. Their best material occurs when they slow the riffs down to a mid paced crunch fest. They have also improved their drum machine programming skills. **RELAPSE.**

MORTIFICATION... Hammer Of God... 90... After a very disappointing release last year, *Triumph of Mercy*, **Mortification** return this year with their best release to date, *Hammer of God*. Excellent mid to fast paced thrash with some technical moments all three members have put in their best performance. "Martyrs" has a near **Annihilator** technicality rarely shown, they follow that up with the simplistic stomp of "Lock Up the Night", everywhere you turn they are doing everything right. Even the albums weak link, "D.W.A.M." is at least energetic. Included on *Hammer of God* are six bonus tracks. "Medley", "God Rulz", along with demo versions of "At War with War", "Visited by an Angel", and "Unified Truth", and an instrumental version of opener "Metal Crusade". **Mortification** have always sought to make each album different, even though all the core elements are always present. With *Hammer of God* they have restored my faith in the band, but not God. Good job. **METAL BLADE.**

MORTIIS... The Stargate... 83... For years, the legend of **Mortiiis** has been one of visual dominance. Almost any metal fan can conceive his appearance but only a few can conjure his sound. The former **Emperor** keyboardist has recently signed a contract with Earache Records, who have released his fifth full length, *The Stargate*. I am unfamiliar with his previous work but I must say that I am quite impressed by *The Stargate*. This is an eight song album with classical overtones and is surrealistic and mystical. There are no vocals, although there is often female accompaniment which provides an operative vibe. These are provided by Sarah Jezabel Deva. Some may argue that **Mortiiis'** gothic image and classical music has no place in the metal scene or even on the daring Earache Records. However, if you sit back and absorb what he has created it is stunningly beautiful. A magical journey that is absorbed easily and never becomes too indulgent or inaccessible. **EARACHE.**

MULLMUZZLER... Keep It To Yourself... 84... With all the projects that **Dream Theater** members have been involved with, from **Liquid Tension** to **Playtypus** and several **Magna Carta** projects, vocalist James LaBrie has been conspicuously absent besides a brief guest appearance with **Shadow Gallery**. **Mullmuzzler** is not what you would expect, while there is some experimentation and plenty of progressive, *Keep it to Yourself* is quite heavy. Songs like "His Voice", "Lace", and the dynamic "As a Man Thinks" really rock. "Statued" is one of the best compositions I've heard all year. Great performance. "Shores of Avalon" sounds just like the **Cult**, with LaBrie recalling Ian Astbury. The only low points were the two ballads, "Sacrifice" and "Slow Burn", and the anti-Clinton rant and annoying horn section on "Beelzebubba". LaBrie gets to shine and as always proves to be one of the best vocalists in the business. Joining him are **Dali's Dilemma** keyboardist Matt Guillory, ex-**Annihilator**, ex-**Extreme** drummer Mike Mangini, guitarist Mike Keneally, and bassist Bryan Beller. If he can come up with material like the astonishing "Statued", his solo career may be as successful as his day job. **MAGNA CARTA.**

MURDER 1... American Junkie... 71... Remember the crushingly heavy guitars and gang vocals that characterized **Clutch's** debut full length? *American Junkie* opens with the one minute plus "Put it On" that kicks ass and could have been on that classic album. Then they ruin it with the boring punk anthem "Better off Dead". Next is the exciting groove and retro style of "Flight of the Nazgul". Great tune. "American Junkie" is okay, but "Girlfriend" is more anthemic punk boredom. A cover of "No Woman No Cry" is alright. "We Don't Get High", despite its positive message is silly. The spoken word passages are totally unnecessary. "Put it On" and "Flight of the Nazgul" are phenomenal tunes that remind you how energetic this style of music can be but there is way too much material that does not work. Maybe next time they will create half an album of good tunes. **PAVEMENT.**

MY DYING BRIDE... The Light At The End Of The World... 82... They have returned. Perhaps they feel 34.788% *Complete* was a mistake because one year later there is another new **My Dying Bride** record. This time the old logo returns, the dark browns are back, and the sound that made albums like *Turn Loose the Swans* and *Like Gods of the Sun* classics has resurfaced. Hell, even a swan graces the cover. While the previous record had some great tunes, the classic **My Dying Bride** sound was forsaken. *The Light at the End of the World* sees Aaron returning to his death metal roots, especially the ripping four minute tune, "The Fever Sea". Other times he uses that welcoming gothic tone adding atmosphere to Andrew's melancholic doom approach. The title track, "Edenbeast", and "Christliar" all run over the ten minute mark and a third version of "Sear Me" closes the record. *The Light at the End of the World* is a return to their roots with a nod to *Like Gods of the Sun*. **PEACEVILLE.**

NATRON... Negative Prevails... 83... This being **Natron's** Holy Records debut and the band representing one of the few recent signings of Holy Records, I had very high expectations. While bands like **Septic Flesh**, **Nightfall**, **Misanthrope**, and **S.U.P.** perpetually mature, the raw and unbridled appression that was characteristic of France's best label has fallen by the wayside in place of a more artistic expression. **Natron** come right for the jugular with some fast, intense, yet melody laden death metal. Throughout the album, **Natron** avoid the cliches that plague many death metal bands. Whether it be the obvious, classical acoustic guitar on "Blood Streams", or the many obscure guitar subtleties that make each crushing riff sound fresh. One rarely hears a debut with a sound this good. The guitars are heavy and crushing yet very listenable. The drums are loud and clear with no tinny, typewriter sound. Vocally, **Natron** easily fall into the death metal style, yet once again they are professional and easy on the ears. **HOLY.**

NECK... Crawl Away... 90... You may recall my admiration for this Long Island band when I wrote a review of their self titled debut a couple of issues ago. Here is a six song e.p. that continues their impressive growth. The charm in **Neck's** pseudo- hardcore sound is their impressive originality. The guitars are aggressive yet very experimental. The vocals are sometimes clear and melodic, sometimes face ripping raw. "Forget" represents their usual dynamic structures. "Crawl Away" starts off with some dreamy, mellow, and actually remain quite accessible. "Patterns" is aggressive, noisy, and all over the place- a song that will appeal to **Dillinger Escape Plan** fans. There is a cover of **Metallica's** "The Thing That Should Not Be", which they remake with their style. The addictive crunch of "3 Crosses" and the spacey **Voivod-ish** tones to "Cinder" close *Crawl Away*. This band demands attention for their original blend of aggression. There are no neat categories to place **Neck** into so don't try to classify them.

NECROPHAGIA... Black Blood Vomitorium... 88... **Necrophagia** are quickly becoming one of my favorite death metal bands. They are carrying on the tradition of classic **Autopsy** and create some of the most twisted riffs ever. *Black Blood Vomitorium* is a four song e.p. lasting less than twenty minutes but it's worth it for the four new songs on display. **Necrophagia** are true pioneers, looking back on the first two releases from the mid eighties, *Season of the Dead* and *Ready for Death*, and it's hard to believe that they were doing this twisted form of horror and death metal before anyone else. The appeal of **Necrophagia** lies in teh guitar riffs. Where many brag about how sick and evil their sound is, **Necrophagia** are one of the few who actually live up to their promise. The vocals are over the top but once again, therein lies the appeal. Truly one of a kind. **RED STREAM.**

NEUROTICA... Living In Dog Years... 94... This is a band that will be noticed. Quickly following up last year's Brian Johnson (**AC/DC**) produced debut, *Seed, Living in Dog Years* is more than a worthy sophomore effort. Opener "Ride of Your Life" manages an **Alice In Chains** laid back harmony with a full on aggro assault and a rapid fire vocal section without sounding contrived. **Neurotica** works best when the guitar is groove oriented in the classic sense and border between modern and classic as they do on songs like "Don't Blow it Away" and "Those Dayz These Dayz" which actually reveals an Angus Young like riff. "Up in the Hay" and "A Lot of the Same" both contain a **Sabbath** inspired groove. "Stars in My Eyes" is a nice change of pace and "Said She" is a worthy follow up to last year's hit ballad, "Easy Speak". "Said She" demands to be heard and should rank amongst classics like "Black" and "Rooster". Don't be fooled. They may have a Seattle influence, they may come from the same state as **Creed** and **Limp Bizkit**, but **Neurotica** are for real. Not one weak song on here. **N.M.G.**

NIGHT CONQUERS DAY... Rebellion Is The Art Of Survival... 86... Yet another winner from Holland's Hammerheart Records. Surprisingly, **Night Conquers Day** is actually from New York. This band is a unique specimen. *Rebellion is the Art of Survival* is only seven songs but lasts over seventy minutes. **Night Conquers Day** is not something that can easily be categorized. The music is adventurous and covers virtually every style of metal. There are moments of tranquility and others that encompass the furthest realm of extremity. Vocally **Night Conquers Day** goes from raw black metal, to old school metal, and

even some King Diamond like shrieks. To further illustrate the concept of *Rebellion is the Art of Survival*, they have enlisted the services of artist Kris Varwimp, who has also done covers for *Absu*, *Enthroned*, and *Marduk*. The winged creature in the sky looks similar to the version found on *Nightwing*. This is not an easy disc to digest. Not only is it a long one but the depths of each song and the multitude of styles, sometimes offset with quiet moments, may turn off the casual listener. One must take time to digest what they are accomplishing. **HAMMERHEART.**

NIGHTMARES END... *Blackend Mystery*... 85... When I received a copy of Wisconsin's power/ progressive metallers *Nightmares End*'s four song demo, I was immediately impressed by vocalist Nightmare's style. Much like the enigmatic former *Crimson Glory* vocalist Midnight, his style is unique and instantly recognizable. He has the rare ability to raise a band to a new level and separate them from the pack. Musically, *Nightmares End* are basically straight power metal. They avoid all current trends, including America's aggressive guitar crunch and Europe's symphonic, double kick power metal. Instead, *Nightmares End* add elements of doom (*Solitude Aeternus*) and some gothic imagery. The band is known for their lavish stage show, complete with a castle and various features of the macabre. Despite the glam look of their photos, *Nightmares End* are true metal. *Blackend Mystery* features the four songs from their demo, with four more added. The only drawbacks are a rather weak production and the feeling that, despite his phenomenal talent, like Alan Tecchio and Midnight, Nightmare is a "love him or hate him" type of vocalist. Once he adds a little variety to his ground breaking style and the production improves, *Nightmares End* will rise to the top. **SIEGEN.**

JOHN NORUM... *Slipped Into Tomorrow*... 84... Ex-Europe guitarist returns with his fifth solo release and first since '96's *Worlds Away*. Much like John Sykes, I have always preferred John Norum to perform all his vocals. Both have recognizable vocals and may not be technically precise, they add an emotional element to their compositions. On *Slipped into Tomorrow*, Norum performs all the vocals and is joined by bassist Stefan Rodin and drummer Thomas Broman. His guitar driven attack is in full force on songs like "Blackscape", "Waiting on You", and "Freedom is My Truth", but overall *Slipped into Tomorrow* fails to match up to his excellent 1988 debut, *Total Control*. While Norum's vocal style has not changed much since his debut, his moaning, near Layne Staley vocals on "Freedom is My Truth" adds a new dimension to his repertoire. Elsewhere, his guitar playing is energetic, heavy riffs occasional harmonics, melodic leads galore- all vintage Norum. If you like guitar dominant albums filled with melody and class, John Norum is well worth the price of import. **E.M.I.**

NOTHING... *Nondescript*... 84... You may remember John Haughm mentioned *Nothing* in our *Agalloch* interview this issue. Here is their first release, *Nondescript: Ouroborous Vermiform Onroborous Sanguine*. This is a collection of demo tracks recorded between 1995-1998. They will soon issue their debut, *Grey*, on Eibon Records. *Nothing* is the brainchild of Jason Walton, who also helps out with *Sculptured* and *Agalloch*. Joining him are John Haughm (*Agalloch*'s main composer, *Sculptured*) and *Arise From Thorns* vocalist Michelle Loose. Together as *Confusion*, *Apathy*, and *Silence* respectively, they are the ingredients of *Nothing*. Most of *Nondescript* is quiet and almost ambient. However, the best part of *Nothing* is when the pace picks up and moves a little, like on "Wielding Orkham's Razor". There is almost no vocals, but with a myriad of effects and lots of synthesizer work, Jason has constructed an album that plays like a soundtrack for a movie. It's sombre and melancholy, but underneath is a hint of something wishing to be free. **ROOT OF ALL EVIL.**

NOVEMBERS DOOM... *Of Sculptured Ivy And Stone Flowers*... 84... With bands like *Novembers Doom* and *Em Sinfonia* (who vocalist Paul Kuhr was greatly involved with), Martyr Music is quickly putting out some of the best symphonic doom metal from America. *Novembers Doom* has a lot in common with the legendary *My Dying Bride*, although *Novembers Doom* lack the violin and keyboard dominance. Paul Kuhr utilizes many vocal styles, although a gruff death metal style is prominent, a dreamy style can often be heard. At times Cathy Jo Hejna offers a female perspective to counteract Kuhr's rough side. Guitarist Eric Burnley is the main songwriter here and he proves to be a master of moods and depths. *Novembers Doom* do not rely on the same formula song after song. Each one is an entity that allows any pace; usually slow, and any means to evolve. If a song needs acoustic guitar or crushing riffs it's there. If need be there will be aggressive gruff vocals or surreal, clear, mesmerizing vocals. While *My Dying Bride*, *Paradise Lost*, and *Anathema* have grown into new pastures, it's American bands like *In Ruins* and *Novembers Doom* that are carrying the torch. **MARTYR.**

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NOVEMBER 17... Defy Everything... 76... Last year **November 17** released *Trust No One* to an unsuspecting public. *Trust No One* was a mechanical, industrial record which took what **Ministry** did on *Psalm 69* and made it colder and more focused. All around, *Trust No One* was one of the best discs to come out that year. I eagerly anticipated *Defy Everything* and while the music is in the same vein, Trevor Askew has changed his vocal style to a one dimensional harshness similar to Gary Meskil of **Pro-Pain**. This gives *Defy Everything* more of a hardcore feel. The samples are still present but overall *Defy Everything* is a more organic affair. Therefore, this album sounds more intense, it packs one huge wallop. Personally, I prefer the variety and the more accessible vocals offered on their debut. Neil Kernon again handles the production with confidence. The lyrics reflect the album title and Trevor writes an emotional song, "Mirror", for his slain brother. I really enjoy the music, it's just the vocals are too much of the same and are quite annoying. Trevor, more variety next time, please. **SLIP DISC.**

NYMPHO... Nympho... 94... Long Island's **A Day For Honey** has gone through some changes. Guitarist Tom Capone is stepping into the line-up and the band have now changed their name to **Nympho**. There's no denying that Capone's presence with **Nympho** will garner them some attention from both the record industry and fans. In actuality, **Nympho** do not differ drastically from **A Day For Honey** and their self titled debut. The music is aggressive rock/ alternative with Tracey Vera's conversely aggressive and resonant vocals. **Nympho** often operate with a duality. The melodic sections are complemented by more aggressive passages which effectively convey the raw emotion of the lyrics. This is a band that must be experienced live. However, this four song demo does a good job of translating the bands energy onto disc. "Deflowered", "Windinyourhair", the **Alice In Chains** like mood of "Dust", and "Ill-Fated" appear here.

THE OBSESSED... Incarnate... 83... *Incarnate* was originally released early in the year through Southern Lord, now an agreement with M.I.A. Records allows this **Obsessed** compilation a larger profile. *Incarnate* features b-sides, unreleased tracks, compilation tracks, seven inches, and a cover of **Lynyrd Skynyrd's** "On the Hunt". **The Obsessed** has always been Scott Weinrich's baby. The vocalist/ guitarist released **The Obsessed's** debut back in 1979. He then went on to join **St. Vitus** and recorded three records with them. He then reformed **The Obsessed** and released *Lunar Womb* (1991) and *The Church Within* (1994). Sadly **The Obsessed** then broke up again. Now we have *Incarnate* as an epitaph. While some of the songs have appeared before, there is enough unreleased material to make this worth your money. While **The Obsessed** are obviously influenced by **Sabbath**, they are truly pioneers of this stoner rock scene that M.I.A. and the Music Cartel have created. No one has done it better since *The Church Within*. *Incarnate* lacks the flow that their three studio album have, therefore, I strongly suggest you buy *The Church Within*- the band's crowning achievement. Be sure to check out Weinrich's new band, **Spirit Caravan**. **M.I.A.**

OLD FUNERAL... The Older Ones... 76... **Old Funeral** is an underground Norwegian death metal band which burst on the scene in the late 80's, early 90's. *The Older Ones* consists of eleven songs containing a death metal vibe, others like "Alone Walking", represent some of the origins of black metal. **Old Funeral** is perhaps best remembered as the band which had featured famous black metal musicians such as Abbath (**Immortal**), Jørn Tonsberg (**Hades Almighty**), and Varg Vikernes (murderer) in its line-up at various times. While *The Older Ones* is a nice collectors item, it sounds dated and raw. If reviewed at the time the songs were written, **Old Funeral** would certainly have warranted a better review. **HAMMERHEART.**

OPETH... Still Life... 84... Somehow it seems appropriate that **Beyond Dawn**, **Katatonía**, and **Opeth** have joined **My Dying Bride** on the Peaceville roster. While **Katatonía** have seemingly reached a stable ground, **Opeth** are still in a state of evolution. While in the past they've had a propensity to never play the same riff or melody twice, on *Still Life* they are becoming more song oriented and use more clear vocals than ever. Despite their efforts to write memorable tunes, five of the seven tracks are over nine minutes in length and none maintain any melodies that are memorable. Having said that, **Opeth** have sustained the level of intense and innovative song structures that were fully realized on their previous disc. I can understand while many declare **Opeth** the musical geniuses of our time and I admit that they never fail to impress me with their intricate and powerful songs and guitar work, it's just that I need more to grasp on to. **PEACEVILLE.**

ORANGE 9MM... Pretend I'm Human... 72... **Orange 9mm** came recommended to me from a friend a couple of years back and I liked their first two releases, *Tragic* and *Driver Not Included*, both were energetic and exciting. About a year and a half ago they released an e.p. While it marked a departure from their largely one dimensional material, it lacked that high octane vibe. Two years later, they return with *Pretend I'm Human*, which is more of the same found on their e.p. The album starts out well enough. "When You Lie" is a burst of virility, a show of **Orange 9MM** songwriting skills. The heavy alternative and modern groove of "Lifeless" is a worthy follow up to "When You Lie". Then it's all down hill. "Facelift" is boring and restrained, acoustic tinged "Touching Skies" is mature but unmoving. "Alien" is classic **Orange 9mm** but the mellow and sometimes ambient "Dragon", "Innocence", "Tightrope", and short instrumental closer "Day One" belies an uneventful band. Taylor McLean takes over bass duties on the album due to the bassist's departure, which has affected their sound. **NG.**

PAIN OF SALVATION... One Hour By The Concrete Lake... 90... "Sit for a while, why rush? The beauty is all around. The red sky of the morning, the different colours of the landscape, the freshness of the breeze, so sit for a while and rest with the spirit of the land."- John Renshaw. Mr. Renshaw could not have, inadvertently, described **Pain Of Salvation** any better. Do not pass judgement upon this disc until at least half a dozen listens. On the surface, **Pain Of Salvation** are a progressive metal band but man are they separating themselves from the pack. *One Hour by the Concrete Lake* is a concept album to end all concept albums. A thoroughly researched subject about science and war, they leave you wanting to go to a library to find out more. Daniel Gildenlow will not impress you with his range, but rarely has a clean vocalist conveyed such emotion. The musicianship is stellar, shifting gears through aggression, symphonic, and melancholic with ease. Gildenlow and Johan Hallgren prove to be rare guitarists who know when to not play and exactly what each song requires. While **October Thorns** and *Pain Of Salvation* are opposite ends of a spectrum, both represent a new and exciting wave of progressive metal. **INSIDE OUT.**

PAIN OF SALVATION... Entropia... 95... Two **Pain Of Salvation** releases in one issue? I've died and gone to heaven. Now if only **Conception** would join **Crimson Glory** and **Leatherwolf** in the reunion sweepstakes I can retire. *Entropia* is heir debut and is now being reissued by Inside Out Music America. This band is ambitious. Like *One Hour by the Concrete Lake*, *Entropia* is an intricate concept album. **Pain Of Salvation** are unlike any other band. They are a combination of **Faith No More** and **Dream Theater**. Musically, intricate yet unpredictable and dangerous. Take **Thought Industry**, but instead of an alternative influence, let a progressive metal influence seep in. That is the only description I can come up with for this Swedish band. *Entropia* is heavier and more schizophrenic than *One Hour by the Concrete Lake*. **Galactic Cowboy** harmonies, **Faith No More** oddness, and **Chili Peppers** funk appear throughout. "Welcome to Entropia" is an industrial interlude leading to the theatrical "Winning a War". The funky side of Kristoffer Gildenlow's bass playing shines through on "People Passing By" and "Nightmist". The most amazing thing about **Pain Of Salvation**, especially on *Entropia*, is their ability to appeal to many audiences. "To the End" is a crowning jewel. A short intro, "Void of Her", with **Fates Warning's** progressive leanings, then we have **Meshuggah** like precision riffs, a combination of **Thought Industry** chaotic vocal patterns and **Spocks Beard** harmonies, **Metallica's** heaviness and a jazz section that develops in "To the End". The most exciting part is "Nightmist", its energetic mid section of slapped bass and funky rhythms. Truly astounding piece of work. **INSIDE OUT.**

PARADISE LOST... Host... 77... There are people out there that disliked *One Second's* drastic change in sound so much that they no longer acknowledge **Paradise Lost** as a metal band. Well they had to do something. If you disregard the death metal sound of *Lost Paradise*, the next six albums can be grouped in pairs. *Gothic* and *Shades of God* were primitive yet, landmark albums of aggressive doom with hints of what would become the gothic scene. *Icon* and *Draconian Times* were more mainstream with Nick Holmes sounding like James Hetfield's brother, the former album was a masterpiece, the latter was stale. Then came *One Second*, an electronic, sometimes poppy foray that left fans bewildered. *Host* is a logical follow up and represents *One Second's* twin. Any of these songs are interchangeable with those found on *One Second*. While I miss Greg MacKintosh's ground breaking guitar playing, I admire his keyboard skills and Holme's new found ability to create vocal hooks. Those who can get over the fact that **Paradise Lost** have grown since the boring *Draconian Times* will appreciate songs like "Nothing Sacred", "In All Honesty", "Ordinary Days", and "Permanent Solution". The members are the same, the lyrics are the same, so is the attitude. Why give up on them? **E.M.I.**

IAN PARRY... Consortium Project... 84... Ian Parry returns with a new solo disc. The former **Vengeance** vocalist is also a full time member of **Elegy** (he appeared on last year's *Manifestations of Fear*) but he will also continue as a solo artist. His powerful, yet melodic style (think of Dio in a prog band) fits in well with the diversified records. The *Consortium Project* is more metal based than past projects, **Elegy's** influence maybe, and Ian has enlisted top quality musicians to help him. Among them are Patrick Rondat, Thomas Youngblood (**Kamelot**) on guitars, Tommy Newton (producer, **Victory**) on bass, and drummer Dirk Bruinenberg (**Elegy**). If you know Ian, songwriting is very important. Tracks like "Banquet for Thieves", "Evil World", "Garden of Eden", "The Snake", and "Criminals and Kings" feature Stephan Lill's stop and go guitar crunch. Thomas Youngblood shows all facets of his talent on "Change Breeds Contempt".

Hopefully the *Consortium Project* will allow Ian's excessive talent to be fully appreciated. **INSIDE OUT.**

PAZUZU... *The End Of Ages...* 78... Taking their name from an ancient Sumerian demon, **Pazuzu** was formed in 1994 by **Summoning** members Silenius Gregor and Richard Lederer, along with Ray Wells from **Raventhorne**. **Pazuzu** proceeded to release two discs, *And All Was Silent* and *Awaken the Dragon*. Now, only Wells remains as **Pazuzu** sign a three album deal with **Avantgarde Music** and bestow *The End of Ages* upon us. While the attitude is black metal, the sound is atmospheric and ambient. **Pazuzu** add instruments like flutes, kettle drums, and bagpipes to their original sound. To quote the back of the disc: "This music was guided by the hands of decadence, evil, filth, suffering, and plague... this is the antidote for life." True enough, there is not much life on *The End of Ages*. Ray Wells creates an album that plays out like a soundtrack. Fifteen atmospheric scenes with spoken word that is best absorbed with headphones. **AVANTGARDE.**

PEGAZUS... *Breaking The Chains...* 78... Predictable. I admire **Pegazus** and their long time true metal stance but I find each track is the same anthemic metal with average vocals and average music. "Metal Forever" is the **Pegazus** theme song, typical lyrics. With titles like "Queen Evil", "Chariots of the Gods", and "Apache Warrior" you can already hear what *Breaking the Chains* will sound like. On a roster that includes **Primal Fear** and **Hollow**, **Pegazus** are too limited to reach their full potential. New bassist Corey Betts replaces Dave King. Vocalist Danni Ceceit has that identifiable mid range reminiscent of **Hollow's** Andreas Stoltz. I don't mean to sound negative about **Pegazus**, it's just that their refusal to betray their true metal stance will always liomit their obvious potential. On the flip side many will hold their proud metal attitude in reverence. There's a cover of **Helloween's** "A Little Time". **Gothic Knights** do this style of metal better but **Pegazus** come up with some damn fine album covers too. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

PRETTY BOY FLOYD... *Porn Stars...* 76... Yeah right. Glam rockers but not stars. This California band had some success with the late 80's album, *Leather Boyz with Electric Toyz*, but were obviously hindered by grunge. They returned last year with an e.p., *A Tale of Sex Designer Drugs and the Death of Rock 'n Roll*, and now *Porn Stars*. they sound like a combination of *Too Fast for Love* era **Motley Crue** and *Open Up and Say Ahh* era **Poison**. With names like Kristy, Keri, Keff and Keri and their caked on make-up, **Pretty Boy Floyd** are out of place in the 90's. Among the songs on *Porn Stars* are covers of **Kiss'** "Shout it Out Loud" and Alice Cooper's "Department of Youth". There also are re-recordings of songs like the excellent ballad "I Wanna Be With You". Believe it or not **Pretty Boy Floyd** have a place in rock, however it would have been nice to see some new songs, but that's what you get from **Deadline**. **DEADLINE.**

PRIMER 55... *Introduction To Mayhem...* 78... I wish I could tell you that I hate **Primer 55** and that *Introduction to Mayhem* is the worst album I've heard this year... but something's stopping me. It's not because of their sexist lyrics or their trendy style. It's not because of trendy guests like M.C.U.D. (**Underdog**) from (**hed**)pe or Chris Kilmore from **Incubus**. It's not because they've played with modern trendsetters like **Loudmouth** and **Sevendust**. It's not because they combine popular trends like rap and hardcore. It's not because their single, "Loose", will be featured on a W.C.W. Compilation that is being put together by rap empire **Tommy Boy Records**. It's not because vocalist Jason is a.k.a. J-Sin. Maybe it's because their heavy hip hop drumming, noticeable bass, and despite elementary school lyrics, J-Sin's enthusiastic vocal performance which surprisingly is seldom annoying, and Bobby Burns aggressive yet groove based guitar playing. **Primer 55** is striving to become the next American trendsetter and all the ingredients are in place. Love it or hate it, in my opinion there are bands taht are worse. **ISLAND/ DEF JAM.**

PRIMORDIAL... *The Burning Season...* 82... This Irish band has been highly acclaimed through two full lengths, *Imrama* and *Journeys End*, both considered underground classics. They recently signed with **Hammerheart Records** and now release this four song, thirty minute plus e.p. After hearing *The Burning Season*, I can tell that this band has some serious potential, I just would not consider them the best of their genre. **Primordial** play a slow to mid paced style of metal which combines elements of doom, gothic, and power metal with touches of death and black thrown in. To these ears, the best song on *The Burning Season* is the title track. The vocals are clear and powerful with an occasional rasp for emphasis. "The Sun Set on Life Forever" features several subtle touches which reveal a textured composition that bands like **Anathema** have mastered. There is an increase in pace and black metal vocals on there as well which prohibits the listener from becoming bored. They have reached their peak but **Primordial** continue to evolve. **HAMMERHEART.**

PROPHECY... *Contagion...* 90... I'm sure every review will compare **Prophecy** to **Fear Factory**, so let's get it over with right away. *Contagion* sounds like it could have been the follow up to *Soul of a New Machine*, however, it sounds pretty damn good. The programmed drums and industrial touches combined with



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heavy guitars and aggressive vocals work perfect together. Most of the tunes sound like the **Malevolent Creation** remixes on *Joe Black*. I know there are people out there who will hate this but you have to respect the power and virility this band brings. Like Burton Bell, Mike will use both a clear melodic style and an aggressive, in your face style. Unlike most vocalists who follow this trend, Mike will stick with one and switch when appropriate- not every other line. Techno and death metal is a combination that is very underused. When it's done right as have **Prophecy**, it is a fresh, aggressive, and exciting sound.

PAVEMENT.

PSYCHOTIC WALTZ... Dark Millennium... 60... Warning! This is not a new **Psychotic Waltz** release. We all know how the band feels about egotistical vocalist Buddy Lackey, so a true reunion will never happen. Guitarist Brian McAlpine's post **Psychotic Waltz** solo project, **Dark Star**, open this sixteen song, seventy seven minute disc, with *Penetralia: A Soundtrack for Reaching the Higher Spheres into Narcotic Dances*. These seven songs are instrumental ambient passages that are quite good but sound nothing like **Psychotic Waltz**. The guitar team of Dan Rock and Brian McAlpine offer the instrumentals "Flight to Nowhere" and "The Dream". We get a studio version of **Black Sabbath's** "Disturbing the Priest", a live from Dynamo in 1991 with "Nothing", "And the Devil Cried", and "In This Place", and covers of **Pink Floyd's** "In the Flesh", "Disturbing the Priest" (again!), and **Ozzy Osbourne's** "Diary of a Madman". The interview with Mike Clift gets cut off. This is not **Psychotic Waltz**. It has some cool artwork inside, but buy any of their four studio albums; *Bleeding*, *Mosquito*, *Into the Everflow*, and *A Social Grace* contain some of the best songs of our generation. **INSTITUTE OF ART.**

RABIES CASTE... For The Vomiting Tractor Drivers... 84... **Rabies Caste** is an Israeli band who play a style of music akin to American bands like **Neurosis** and **Unsane**. Everything you know about hardcore, alternative, and noise is pushed by **Rabies Caste**. The music is diligent and ardent, never relenting yet it varies enough that it is not overbearing. Dave K.'s vocals are often effect laden which allows his screaming to become almost non human. There may be something about the jams that **Rabies Caste** create, but I don't hear as much of those **Kyuss** comparisons would lead you to believe. Maybe, there is a dose of early **Helmet** or **Clutch** but this band is not so easy to describe. If you thought the album title was weird, check out song titles like "Astronaut/ Alien", "Technorobot", and "Now I Crush You" and see that this band is obscure. Overall, I find *For Vomiting Tractor Drivers* to be an interesting listening experience. They don't provide constant hammering like **Unsane** and they don't wander as much as **Neurosis**. **Rabies Caste** would fit quite nicely on the Relapse roster.

INFERNAL RACKET.

RACER X... Technical Difficulties... 83... Another reunion. People still talk about the two discs this band released in the mid eighties. These guys made a name form themselves over night with *Street Lethal* and *Second Heat*, two albums which truly shred from start to finish and **Racer X** were decidedly ahead of their time. Paul Gilbert went on to **Mr. Big**, Scott Travis to **Judas Priest**, Jeff Martin switched to drums in **Badlands**. Now, they are back with *Technical Difficulties*, apparently a Japanese only release. Even though guitarist Bruce Bouillet does not appear, he helped pen three of the fourteen tunes. Even without Bouillet, Gilbert does a great job doubling his leads for that dual effect that made **Racer X** so popular. Unlike the metal assault of *Street Lethal*, *Technical Difficulties* has more of a hard rock feel. Jeff's vocals are more restrained and even Gilbert's rhythms are not as fast as they used to be. Even Travis is restrained. Listening to *Technical Difficulties* it is surprising that he is the same man who came up with the drumming on "Painkiller". **MERCURY.**

RATT... Ratt... 78... *Ratt* return with a new major label album, their first in nine years. Stephen Pearcy, Warren DeMartini, and Bobby Blotzer are present with new bassist Robbie Crane. Gone are Robin Crosby and Juan Crucier. They still play that same ratt 'n roll we've come to expect. None of the 90's influenced music Pearcy has been experimenting with on his side projects. If anything, *Ratt* spotlights Martini's exceptional talent as a lead guitarist as he allows a slight blues sound to creep in here and there. Some highlights are the anthemic "Gave Up Giving Up" and "Luv Sick", and the well written and heavy "Dead Reckoning". They have never been able to match the excellent *Out of the Cellar* album from sixteen years ago but they still offer some energetic rock. **SONY.**

RAVEN... Raw Tracks... 82... *Raw Tracks* is not the new **Raven** studio album, that would be *One for All*. *Raw Tracks* is a compilation of **Raven** tracks that includes live, unreleased, rare, and cover songs. Mid eighties tracks like "Firepower", "Don't Need Your Money", an alternate version of "Savage and the Hungry", "Nightmare Ride", "Get it Right", "On and On", "Extract the action", "Barbarian", "Hot Moves", "Rock Until You Drop", "All for One", and "Young Blood". Tracks with Joe Hasselvander on drums are "Juggernaut", "Thunderlord", "Gimmie a Break", "White Hot Anger", and "Altar". There is also covers of Janis Joplin's "Move Over" and Queen's "Tie Your Mother Down". John (vocals and bass) and Mark (guitars) Gallagher have created a legacy that includes over a dozen studio albums and several e.p.'s. They have always had weak tracks but they always create a few great underrated songs each album. My personal favorite from this compilation in "White Hot Anger". **METAL BLADE.**

READING ZERO... The Actual... 85... This was originally released in 1997 but *The Actual* was given to me at this year's Power Mad Festival and it warrants a review. **Reading Zero** is unlike any other band. It's not because they are weird or outlandish. It's because they have managed to capture an accessible progmetal sound without any obvious influences. Everything about this band is unique. Usually that's a term reserved for bands that purposely try to be quirky, that's not the case with **Reading Zero**. Their focus is on the songwriting. The guitarists will often play two separate melody lines while remaining focused on the songs, this makes the music more interesting. Vocalist Chris Pellerin has a clear voice and while he may sound familiar and may not have an individual style he fits in perfectly with the music. This is a band with a lot of potential. I look forward to their new e.p. which should be released shortly. My only complaint is that it is difficult to distinguish one song from the next because of the similarities. It's a minor complaint considering **Reading Zero** have already established their own sound and it is pretty damn good.

REBAELLIUN... Burn The Promised Land... 86... A decade and a half after another Brazilian band caused a stir (**Sepultura**) comes **Rebaellun**. Often mentioned in the same breath as the highly respected **Krisiun**, **Rebaellun** have produced a debut that would make veterans of the death metal scene proud. They issued a two song cassette a year ago that captured the ears of the underground with its savage brutality yet top notch musicianship. It featured two songs that are also found here, "At War" and "Spawning the Rebellion". There have been some whisperings that *Burn the Promised Land* is even comparable to *Reign in Blood*. While **Rebaellun** aren't at **Slayer's** status yet, they clearly show the potential to forge a career similar to them. There is a second wave of death metal bands that appear poised to bring the genre back to the top again. You can count on **Rebaellun** to be one of the ones to lead the way. **HAMMERHEART.**

RED GIANT... Ultra Magnetic Glowing Sound... 74... *Ultra Magnetic Glowing Sound* is **Red Giant's** follow up to '95's debut *Psychoblaster and Misuse of Power*. While **Red Giant** have been critical acclaimed and have played with bands like **Nebula** and **Fu Manchu**, I find their music to be tedious and difficult to sit through. They combine the heaviness of **Sabbath** with the psychedelia of **Hawkwind**. This style works well on individual tracks like "Pervert" but over the course of a dozen tracks and over an hour running time, *Ultra Magnetic Glowing Sound* is too long. Unlike many of their contemporaries, **Red Giant** balance a retro vibe with futuristic sounds and feeling. Like **The Obsessed's Incarnate**, *Ultra Magnetic Glowing Sound* originally appeared over a year ago on Cambodia Recordings. The same people who enjoyed **Monster Magnet's** early 90's records should be able to get into **Red Giant**. **M.I.A.**

REGURGITATE... Effortless Regurgitation... 77... Leave it to Relapse, they are one of the only high profile independent labels that keep grindcore alive. *Effortless Regurgitation* consists of material that was recorded about five years ago. Some feel **Regurgitate** has a similar sound and lyrical content as **Carcass**, circa *Symphonies of Sickness*. *Effortless Regurgitation* fall slightly short of that masterpiece. While Peter's drums sound out of place at times, and the music can be sloppy, I feel **Regurgitate** work best when they slow things down and allow that heavy as fuck guitar find a groove. You will not be able to understand one word that Rikard gargles. Opening track, "The Act of Intestinal Regurgitation" is pure sickness. There are sixty three tracks to choose from. The Swedish underground sound sounds out of place in the late 90's. While many feel this material was classic, I can't help but to imagine it as quite ordinary and quite sick. If "Frenzy Faecal Munching" is for you, regurgitate. **RELAPSE.**

RIGOR SARDONICUS... Risus Ex Mortuus... 80... **Rigor Sardonicus** would like thank no one but themselves for this recording. Should anyone have been left out of this list it was entirely intentional." That's an attitude I like. This is a unique band. Extremely depressing, extremely slow, extremely underground. **Rigor Sardonicus** play a style of doom that exceeds all others. The guttural groans that are considered the vocals are totally incomprehensible. While some may be put off by the drum machine, I feel that it only enhances the underground quality of the music. **Rigor Sardonicus** work best with contrasting speeds like on "Deaths Revelation" and "Parasitosis". While *Risus Ex Mortuus* is an acquired taste, Joseph Fogarazzo and Glenn Hamaton have put together an underground classic that ranks up there with bands like **Autopsy** and **Necrophagia**. Good disc for family barbecues. **SMILING DEATH.** \$10 payable to Joseph J. Fogarazzo @ P.O. Box 77, Selden, NY 11784

RIOT... Sons Of Society... 82... I will not go so far as to call **Riot** boring but their five 90's albums with vocalist Mike DiMeo are largely unmemorable. It's not

that their songs aren't catchy, they just fail to embed themselves like the 80's era of **Riot**. *Sons of Society* is yet another solid album but provides nothing new. Each of **Riot's** four vocalists have created distinctive eras, from Speranza to Forrester to Moore and now DiMeo, who has had the longest tenure of any of them. Mark Reale has established **Riot's** steadiest line-ups ever with guitarist Mike Flyntz, bassist Pete Perez, and drummer Bobby Jarzombek. While the songs have become familiar, **Riot** lacks the spark and, apparently, the desire to take risks. 1991's *Privilege of Power* was the last album to do so. While I may appear to be slugging *Sons of Society*, in truth I respect the legacy **Riot** has created and you would be hard pressed to find a better songwriter than Reale. Songs like "On the Wings of Life", "Sons of Society", and "The Law" rank with the best of 90's **Riot** and the ballad "Cover Me" is a slight departure. Some may love them for their consistency but I'd like to be surprised once in awhile. **METAL BLADE.**

R22... A Picture Is Worth 1000 Lies... 84... "R22 is freon, representing the cold world that we live in." If only their music was as easy to describe. *A Picture is Worth 1000 Lies* sounds like a genre bending album that draws from several influences. According to the bio they like **Faith No More**, **Incubus**, **Napalm Death**, **Beatles**, **Pantera**, **Meshuggah**, and Stevie Ray Vaughn. That still doesn't help. **R22** takes some elements of modern hardcore, gives it a slight industrial bite, and they still don't sound like anybody. Vocalist Alex uses a wide range of styles which makes **R22** a diversified band. You never know what they will do next. **R22** come from Long Island so they've spent a lot of time playing with hardcore bands. I could see that audience embracing this disc, it's just that one must remain open minded enough to accept **R22's** penchant for being unpredictable. I'm glad to see that **Faith No More** is influencing more and more of the extreme metal bands. Write to 4 Fairview Avenue, Oceanside, NY 11572

ROYAL HUNT... Fear... 88... This prolific Danish band returns with their fifth studio album and a new singer. While D.C. Cooper went to record a solo disc, keyboardist Andre Andersen went and recorded a solo album himself, *Changing Skin*, late last year with his **Royal Hunt** cohorts and their original vocalist, Kenny Lubcke. D.C. is now officially out and **Artension** vocalist John West is in. **Royal Hunt** have some fine albums, *Paradox* and *Moving Target* are both great records but *Fear* surpassed everything they've done. West's vocals add depth and more feeling than D.C. was able to conjure and Jacob Kjaer in particular puts in a stellar effort. The key to **Royal Hunt's** success has been in their songwriting skills but even within their structures Kjaer proves to be extremely diverse and a lead player who should become a legend similar to people like Norum, Sykes, and Lynch. Andre adds his talented touches as always, a strong complement to Kjaer's leads and Steen Mogensen continues to provide a solid backbone. The first four songs, "Fear", "Faces of War", "Cold City Lights", and "Lies" are **Royal Hunt** in peak form. I guess Andre got the balladry out of his system with *Changing Skin* because *Fear* rocks. **MAJESTIC ENTERTAINMENT.**

RYKERS... Life's A Gamble... 67... This came in the mail in the same package as **Merauder's** *Five Deadly Venoms*. While **Merauder's** eight track, thirty minute album flew by, this eighteen track, nearly fifty minute record is a drag and does not do much for me. **Rykers** fourth full length may still appeal to classic hardcore fans but this music sounds uninspired, predictable, and unenthusiastic. Kid D. sings in a rough hardcore tone but fails to sound convincing. Musically, what **Rykers** have to offer your little brother could learn to play in a week. In a time when bands like **Neck** and **Dillinger Escape Plan** are turning the hardcore genre upside down, **Rykers** have absolutely nothing new to offer. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

ST. MADNESS... Spiritual Visions... 89... When will the world catch on? No band spends more money on advertisements, they perform live incessantly, they write controversial yet very catchy metal anthems, they have a visual spectacle, and deal with intelligent and thought provoking lyrical concepts. **St. Madness** have released three albums. *Spiritual Visions* originally appeared in 1997 under the band named **Crown Of Thorns** and an album titled *The Spiritual Visions of St. Madness*. This is a reissue under their proper name, **St. Madness**, and the shortened title, *Spiritual Visions*. Included is the bonus track, "When the Terror Comes". *Spiritual Visions* is a concept album about the ongoing character Lester Thorns. The booklet tells a two page story about Lester Thorns- is he a murderer or is he a saint? The theatrical nature of **St. Madness** plays out well on *Spiritual Visions*. The popular anthem, "Love's Butcher Shop" is an instant classic. "St. Madness" and "Frustrated" rank among their best work. Be sure to pick up last year's excellent disc, *God Bless America* and keep an eye out for **St. Madness**. They're paid their dues and have a lot to offer. **NASTY PRICK.**

SALLY... Sally... 73... As more and more of these retro sotner rock bands keep popping up, it makes me realize how great bands like **Orange Goblin** and **Hangnail** are. **Sally** (named after Sally Hardesty from the *Texas Cahinsaw Massacre*) just does not distinguish themselves from the countless bands doing this style of music. England, in particular, is a breeding ground for them. **Sally** toiled in the English underground until they grabbed Rise Above's Lee Dorrian's attention. They soon acquired the services of **Penance** vocalist Lee Smith and now unleash their debut album. **Sally** has that typical fuzzy guitar sound and unlike **Black Sabbath**, **Sally** does not have any of those classic riffs or a distinguishable heavy guitar sound characterized by others in the genre. Hopefully, album number two will prove me wrong. **MUSIC CARTEL.**

SAMAE... Eternal... 86... I know there are many **Samael** fans out there who revere *Ceremony of Opposites* and feel that **Samael** has become too electronic sounding. However, if you look at the quantum leap in maturity from *Blood Ritual* to *Ceremony of Opposites* it should not surprise listeners the growth that occurred on the *Rebellion* e.p. and *Passage* full length. *Eternal* picks right up where they left off on last year's e.p., *Exodus*. It is electronically based with heavy percussion, grooving guitars, and Vorph's trademark rough vocal style. The massive percussive sounds, combined with **Samael's** qualities make songs like "Year Zero", "Ailleurs", and "Us" sound like hybrids of **Sadist's** excellent *Crust* album. Xy's songwriting and style combined with meticulous production values has made **Samael** into an institution. While **Samael** wanders further into industrial and gothic territories, true fans will realize they have not changed, rather simply grown. **CENTURY MEDIA.**

SAM BLACK CHURCH... Unincorporated... 75... *Unincorporated* is not a new **Sam Black Church** album. It is however, a remastered reissue of some old tracks that originally appeared in the late 80's, early 90's. The tracks on *Unincorporated* include "Too Many Boss", "Big Barbecue", "Disjustice", "Try", "Captain of the World", and "Formaldehyde". These tracks are presented in their raw and primitive form. *Unincorporated* captures the energy of this Boston quartet, however, when compared to their mid 90's output, it lacks substance. Wonderdrug Records is building a solid foundation with New England bands like **Tree** and **Sam Black Church**- bands whose purpose is the cathartic release of energy and emotion. **WONDERDRUG.**

SATYRICON... Intermezzo II... 78... When *Megiddo* came out several months after *Nemesis Divina*, many fans were annoyed and confused by some of the industrial experimentation **Satyricon** displayed. After several delays, the band finally appears again with the four song e.p. and teaser before their full length, *Rebel Extravaganza* is released later this fall. *Intermezzo II* is a logical progression from *Nemesis Divina*. Despite the avantgarde look **Satyr** and **Frost** are showing, *Intermezzo II* is rooted in black metal. The only hints of changing occur on "Blessed from Below". **Thorn's** S.W. Krupp helped **Satyr** with this experimental track and **Thorns** influence is obvious. While I still feel *Dark Medieval Times* and *Shadowthrone* are their best, **Satyricon** are an intriguing band and who knows what they will do next. **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

GARY SCHUTT... Playthings... 88... This looked scary. What a cheesy cover. I had to give it a chance. Gary Schutt used to work at Murray Snider's Music Center in Monticello and that was the closest thing we had to a music store half an hour away in Livingston Manor. Gary also played with Jeff Scott Soto in **Takara**. He is obviously a product of the eighties because on *Playthings* he takes all the positive elements of the late 80's hard rock/ metal scene and creates one kick ass disc. Even his ballads are good. After a short intro, "In the Middle" kicks in and it's better than anything **Van Halen** has written since their debut. Gary distinguishes himself on the heavy groove of "Act of Sympathy" and from there on to closer "Merry Go Round" there is no weak songs. Gary has an excellent voice for this style. Unlike many of those 80's bands, *Playthings* is an album that contains depth in the songwriting and the lyrics, it's not as shallow as you would expect. It's been awhile since a disc like this came along. An album with flashy leads, catchy rhythms and great vocals is hard to find. **PULSE.**

SEPTIC FLESH... Revolution D.N.A... 90... This band is getting to be an excellent specimen. The progression between *Fallen Temple* and *Revolution D.N.A.* is astounding. All the potential they offered a glimpse of through their previous four albums comes to fruition on this new disc. Perhaps the greatest leap is in the vocal department. Spiros' coarse vocals take on a more theatrical feel and are not stuck in the limiting death metal style. On *Revolution D.N.A.* he offers a variety of styles without leaving old fans stranded. Sotiris complements Spiros with some monotonous clear stylings which enhance the melodies. As I said earlier, the songwriting has drastically matured. While they are by no means clones, I feel **Septic Flesh** have stepped into a niche that **Paradise Lost** should have inhabited following their classic *Gothic* album. Chris and Sotiris combine for some Mackintosh/ Aedy like melancholic melodies. At a running time of nearly an hour, **Septic Flesh** have created another epic record. Their clever use of samples enhances the songwriting and gives each tune an identity. Despite the loss of female vocalist Natalie Rassoulis, Sotiris and Spiros have created enough variety to make listeners not even notice her departure. Fredrik Nordstrom adds his Studio Fredman vibe without pigeonholing the band, unlike many others who have recorded there. Highly recommended. **HOLY.**

Alchemy X

1. "Sister"

taken from *A Delicate Balance*

e-mail: Alchemy-X@Prodigy.net
Rob Schreiber @718-361-0961 or Martin Morin @ 201-941-9608
A Delicate Balance is available through Sentinel Steel--
P.O. Box 123, Rockaway, NJ 07866 phone/ fax 973-398-3436

Antithesis

2. "Breeding the Beast"

taken from *Antithesis*

<http://www.antithesismusic.com> -or- <http://www.intromental.com>
antithesis@earthlink.net
Antithesis is available for \$12 978 Township Road, Nova, OH 44859
"Antithesis provides... a variety of heavy grooves, intense vocal & instrumental harmonies, a full compliment of melodic hooks"- bio

crawl "420"

3. "Slime"

taken from *Severe*

www.bongman.com www.crawl420.com
Severe is available for \$10 947 Villa Montes Cir. Corona, CA 92879
"Bridging the gap between older thrash with newer extreme hardcore/ metal... these boys hammer home with a thick, hearty sound that shines with power.. adding a heavier edge that sets them apart"-
Marco Barbieri (Ill Literature)

DIRTY BROWN EYE

4. Sick Hands of Fate"

taken from *Dirty Brown Eye*

www.dirtybrowneye.com *Dirty Brown Eye* available for \$10 82
Hillside Ave, Yonkers, NY 10701 None Of The Above/ Slipped Disc
"We want to cross over. Cross over, to me, goes from **Faith No More** to **Suffocation**. We don't push any evil... our songs have to do with reality. You can still be heavy as fuck, but we don't talk about the devil or gore, that's all been done before."- Ron (guitars)

ENERTIA

5. "Victim of Thought"

taken from *Flashpoint*

Flashpoint \$11... *Momentum* ('97) \$11... *Law of Three* ('96) \$6
P.O. Box 687, Gloversville, NY 12078
<http://www.animated-insanity.com/enertia.html>
e-mail: enertia@animated-insanity.com

ION VEIN

6. "Reflections Unclear"

taken from *Beyond Tomorrow*

Beyond Tomorrow is available through Majesphere Records for \$12
www.ionvein.com e-mail: mail@ionvein.com
P.O. Box 7911, Hoffman Estates, IL 60195-7911
"Their brand of melodic, powerful, sometimes progressive metal captures the essence of what's been missing in the rock world for quite some time- passion and conviction."

K'LANK

7. "Blind"

taken from *Numb*

Numb is available through Progressive Arts Media
106 N. Courtez Circle C, Pompano Beach, FL 33068
"Numb is an absolute must have for fans of heavy, groove oriented industrialized metal" Featuring Daren Diolosa (ex-Circle Of Dust) and John Zaletel (ex-Great Kat)

MONDAY KNIGHTS

8. "Thank You for the Metal"

from their demo

mondayknights@aol.com Demo is available for \$3
2530 Middle Country Road, Centereach, NY 11720
3 song demo featuring "King of the Death Match",
"Thank You for the Metal", and "Cataclysm/ No Mans Land"
True metal in the vein of **Maiden** and **Manowar**. Looking for label.

MONUMENT

9. "Hopeless"

taken from *Resting Place*

www.microworld.com/monument
monument@microworld.com
P.O. Box 892881, Oklahoma City, OK 73189
Resting Place is available for \$10 *Dust* for \$4



10. "The Girl Wins"

taken from *Fuck You and Your Pink Mood*

160 N. Broadway, Nyack, NY 10960 914-353-5202
taken from forthcoming album *Fuck You and Your Pretty Mood*
Earth Spirit Down is also available for \$6 check or money order
"Quite the cacophony can be found emanating from Negativehate's recent c.d., *Earth Spirit Down*, which borrows elements of the better industrial sludge/ noise bands (i.e. Godflesh, Neurosis, Skinny Puppy)- Ula Gehret, Metal Maniacs



11. "A Lot of the Same"

taken from *Living in the Dog Years*

Hear it before you buy it neurotica.net
CD available in stores now
Released by N.M.G.
www.newtownmusic.com
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12. "Deflowered"

taken from their demo

Contact Ronald S. Bienstock & Associates 212-399-0099
rsbesq@aol.com nymphoinfo@juno.com
Produced & Engineered by Chris Gibson and Nympho
at Upstart Studios 4 track demo available now.



13. "Second Skin: New Flesh" taken from
Disembody: The New Flesh (Century Media)

Second full length, *Disembody: The New Flesh* is available
through Century Media Records
www.centurymedia.com mail@centurymedia.com
1453-A 14th St., #324, Santa Monica, CA 90404



14. "By Night We Burn"

Taken from *Of Darkness in Angels*

173 Friendship Road, Drexel Hill, PA 19026 610-789-8664
DarthShldn@aol.com
<http://www.op.net/~prbill/solaceintheshadows>
"Dark melodic metal" *Of Darkness in Angels* (5 songs) out now



15. "Addictions"

Taken from *Addictions* (Noise)

U.S.: <http://www.us.noiserecords.com>
Addictions is available in stores now Todd Chaisson:
"This record will give you an idea of what goes through an addicts mind and how I personally deal with it everyday"



16. "Slow Burn" from ex-Monster X

Contact Tatto Management @ 310-379-3533
or TattoMngt@aol.com
Recorded at Clear Cut, Saddle Brook, NJ
Produced by Tru Smoke Diezel and Max Castlenova

If your c.d. is missing or you see someone selling this please contact 516-563-6326. State where you received the magazine and your address and one will be sent to you immediately. All songs on this compilation are copyrighted. For further info please contact the bands at the addresses above or me at 5 Hudson Ave, Bohemia, NY 11716 (516) 563-6326... Brett

SEVENDUST... Home... 85... I have never seen such an aggressive promotional push like T.V.T. Records is doing for **Sevendust**. Two page ads in major magazines, television commercials, etc. Their major money spending has helped **Sevendust** become one of the front runners of the 90's alternative metal revolution. Vocalist Lajon easily sways from Corey Glover like soul to Max Cavalera like aggression. It is this ease that raises **Sevendust** from being yet another clone band. Like **Korn** and **Machine Head**, **Sevendust** operate on a different plane than the trend hoppers. Without using annoying rap tones, Lajon creates a rhythmic counterpoint to the often groove laden music and his multi-faceted approach lends an identity to each of the thirteen tracks. This is a trait that even veterans like **Korn** fall into. With all the intense marketing afforded **Sevendust** and their high profile, even casual fans are familiar with them, therefore I have nothing new to say. However, any praise heaped on Lajon is not enough. T.V.T.

SEVEN FOOT SPLEEN... Enter Therapy... 66... Yes, they should- especially if it will help Jon learn how to sing. His vocals truly ruin any originality and twists the music takes. **Seven Foot Spleen** hail from the same region as **Buzzov-en**, whose influence may help explain **Seven Foot Spleen's** extreme style. Each song tends to twist and turn and the listener can never truly get a grip on the structure of each track. It is certainly the slow, doomy passages that help save **Enter Therapy** from the trash, but I can not emphasize how truly horrible the vocals really are. **Seven Foot Spleen** meld hardcore, noise core, and stoner rock into a retro sounding experience but when compared to a band like **Breach** or, hell, even **Buzzov-en**, **Seven Foot Spleen** fall more than seven feet short. M.I.A. should concentrate on quality, not quantity. M.I.A.

SIGH... Scenario IV Dread Dreams... 83... With their tenth year in existence, Japan's **Sigh** has recently released their fourth album, *Dread Dreams* through their long time English label, Cacophonous. *Dread Dreams* may be a bit more focused than 1997's *Hail Horror Hail*, however, there is still enough experimentation to keep old fans happy. Despite the heavy metal music **Sigh** create, they are apt to include such oddities as doom and country, "Black Curse"; and even hand claps, "Iconoclasm in the 4th Desert"; and "Severed Ways" is a combination of doom and gothic. Even though *Dread Dreams* is perhaps prominently a doom album, Mirai maintains his usual black metal rasp throughout. I know that **Sigh** has always been a band meant to keep listeners on their toes, but I wasn't expecting such a power metal album. I guess it is these elements of surprise which originally attracted Euronymous to **Sigh**. While *Hail Horror Hail's* lyrical content was the basis for a soundtrack of a horror film, *Dread Dreams* plays out like a dream, shifting abruptly through moments in time, creating scenes. CACOPHONOUS.

SINERGY... Beware The Heavens... 84... The perennial part time musician steps forth from the shadows and proves to be an excellent frontwoman. Kimberly Goss has been involved in several bands, both live and in the studio, amongst them are; **Ancient and Thierion**. For now **Sinergy** is an all star line-up. Joining Kimberly in her vision are boyfriend and **Children Of Bodom** guitarist Alexi Laiho, **In Flames** guitarist Jasper Stromblad, **Mercyful Fate** bassist Sharlee D'Angelo, and drummer Ronny Milanowicz. Given her past endeavors one would expect **Sinergy** to be part of the black metal legions. However, **Sinergy** can not be so easily categorized. Musically it sounds like you would expect knowing the twin guitar tandem of Laiho and Stromblad. Kimberly's vocals are surreal yet powerful. She is in front of the mix despite the clarity of her voice. Except for a classical interlude, "Born Unto Fire and Passion", a quiet instrumental, "Pulsation", and a ballad, "Razor Blade Salvation", *Beware the Heavens* is an album somewhere between mid and fast paced, somewhere between power metal and thrash. Check out the addicting chorus of the title track. NUCLEAR BLAST.

SINNER... The Second Decade... 83... For those who have wondered what Germany's longest running hard rock/ heavy metal (excepting the **Scorpions** of course) sound like, *The Second Decade* is a good album to buy. Out of the fifteen tracks, ten come from the last three studio albums; *Bottom Line*, *Judgement Day*, and *The Nature of Evil*. Two unreleased tracks, full on metal "The Truth is Out There" and the acoustic "Respect", a cover of **Accept's** "Balls to the Wall", a short intro, and a live version of "Born to Rock". **Sinner** has created over ten albums during the course of their existence. Many are keyboard driven 80's poseur metal but check out *The Second Decade* or their last three studio albums and you'll find quality power driven metal. **Sinner** are currently recording a new studio album titles *The End of Sanctuary*. Their current line-up is vocalist/ bassist Mat Sinner (**Primal Fear**), guitarists Alex Bewroth and Henry Wotter (ex-**Thunderhead**), who replaces the ailing Tom Naumann, keyboardist Frank Roessler, and drummer Fritz Randow (ex-**Victory**). NUCLEAR BLAST.

SKEPTICISM... Aes... 90... I rarely like these type of discs but man has **Skepticism** come up with one amazing journey. *Aes* is one twenty seven minute track, that is mesmerizing. With a steady percussive background, guitars, keyboards, and occasional spoken vocals provide a tapestry of melancholic vibes. With *Aes*, **Skepticism** have somehow become more sophisticated than what was found on previous releases. Though the music is still disconsolate, there is some sense of hope found on *Aes*. Suddenly, **Skepticism** sound more modern. Don't think they have become that much more accessible because at nearly half an hour "Aes" is a very demanding listen. However, it is somehow even easier to slip into that surreal world that **Skepticism** creates for the listener to lose themselves in. Highly recommended. RED STREAM.

SKYLARK... Gate Of Hell... 78... Italy and Underground Symphony have become synonymous with symphonic power metal. **Skylark** have been on the scene for several years now and they continue to try to push the boundaries of power metal. *Gate of Hell* is the first of a two part *Divine Gates* opera. Musically, **Skylark** continue in that double kick, epic metal that has been popularized by **Rhapsody**. **Skylark's** claim to fame is keyboardist Eddy Antonini, whose remarkable talent is an acquired taste. Often he will use a harpsichord and piano to solidify his icon status. On *Gate of Hell*, vocalist Fabio Dozzo (**Rhapsody**, ex-**Labyrinth**) contributes his familiar, powerful style. *Gate of Hell* is, of course, part one of a concept. Among the other vocalists lending their talents to speaking roles are **Labyrinth** vocalist Rob Tyrant, Giovanni de Giorgi, Falco Orlandini, Monica Golfetto, and Marina Maggioni. The discs will come out as a gatefold book with excellent packaging and artwork. It's an ambitious project but like most bands of this style there are very few hooks. UNDERGROUND SYMPHONY.

SLAUGHTER... Back To Reality... 83... I like rooting for **Slaughter**. This band wears their heart on their sleeve. They work hard, they spend time with their fans, they ignore trends, however... they never seem to produce an album loaded with great songs. *Back to Reality* starts out good enough. On "Killing Time", new guitarist Jeff Blando makes his presence immediately known with some heavy rock 'n groove guitar. He has some impressive theatrics on "Take Me Away" and "Trailer Park Boogie". It is Blando's presence that allows **Slaughter** to rise to the next level. No disrespect to the late Tim Kelly but this guy is a guitar maniac and when he slithers in with some dirty, bluesy riffs like on "Bad Groove" (is that Mark singing?) he is on top of his game. Mark Slaughter, Dana Strum, and Blas Elias- I tip my cap to you for respecting Kelly when he was going through problems and respecting your fans. Unlike most of their peers, these guys still rock out on almost every track. C.M.C. INTERNATIONAL.

SLIPKNOT... Slipknot... 76... I read somewhere: "Korn+ Insane Clown Posse= Slipknot." This is accurate visually, however I hear more **Sepultura** than **Korn** from this California nine piece alternative metal band. Roadrunner has become famous for establishing new trends, **Machine Head** and **Fear Factory**, and clones such as **Korn Chamber**, **Spine Factory**, and now **Slipknot**. I admit to initially being intrigued by the possibility of two percussionists and two people providing samples- imagine the chaos that would ensue. While **Slipknot** is very percussive, Igor Cavalera could have done this with one arm. I must also admit to enjoying the aggressive anthems like "Sic". I understand the effect that 90's vocalists have, but Corey's performance is too one dimensional and you never get a break from his non stop bantering. The only reprieve appears on the exceptional "Spit it Out" with its catchy chorus. Musically, I find **Slipknot** at the very least, an energetic specimen which like **Coal Chamber**, will hopefully see them establish more originality on disc number two. ROADRUNNER.

SO DIVINE... City Park Demo... 82... This retro/ stoner rock movement is in full swing and since **So Divine** play it well I'm sure you will hear moer from this Swedish quartet soon. **So Divine** lock into the **Kyuss** vibe with a bluesy vocalist. All three songs, "City Park", "Demons Distance", and "Blue" are focused and well written. **So Divine** are already playing at a professional level. Jon Martinson, Brevduvegen 59, S-556 25 Jonkoping, Sweden 011-46-36-76594.

SODOM... Code Red... 86... Sodom returns with yet another ripping album. After overcoming a commercial period in the late 80's, Sodom's underpublicized 90's out put has produced one classic after another, with *Code Red* being among the best. Like 1997's *Til Death Do Us Unite*, *Code Red* appears to have a bit of **Slayer** worship going on. **Sodom** rips through aggressive thrash anthems that would make any *South of Heaven* devotee proud. While Tom Angelripper is the undeniable force behind Sodom, drummer Bobby and guitarist Bernemann have added a consistent intensity that not only warrants Araya, King, Hanneman, and Lombardo comparisons, but also makes for a great album start to finish. "What Hell Can Create", "Spiritual Demise", "Warlike Conspiracy", "Code Red", and "The Wolf and the Lamb" are all trademark **Sodom**. As usual, Harris Johns helps out with production and leads on "The Wolf and the Lamb". Unlike their 80's German contemporaries, **Kreator** and **Destruction**, don't expect **Sodom** to ever change. PAVEMENT.

SOLACE IN THE SHADOWS... Of Darkness In Angels... 84... This Pennsylvanian band sounds like it could fit on the roster of The End Records. An

American band with a European sound, **Solace In The Shadows** play an atmospheric style of black metal that will also appeal to some of you underground doom fans as well. **Solace In The Shadows** were originally known as **Armageddon** and those of you who may recall **Armageddon** will find they have abandoned most of their death metal influences. Even though the production is weak, the listener can clearly see that this is a band which will be attracting serious attention before too long. Melodic keyboards and occasional atmospheric passages add an air of melancholy to the raw black metal aggression of the faster sections. *Of Darkness in Angels* is probably meant to be listened to as a demo, however, with five songs, and a running time of almost twenty eight minutes, there is plenty of music on display. 173 Friendship Road, Drexel Hill, PA 19026 www.op.net/~prbill/solaceintheshadows.

SOULGRIND... Kalma... 84... In the biography there is a description of **Soulgrind's** sound: "hypnotic heavy doom dark ethereal metal." That is an apt description. Over the course of four full length albums **Soulgrind** has been anything but predictable. Flashes of brilliance were often mixed with noisy, nonsensical passages but the potential was always there. Although *Kalma's* weakest tracks are the first two, "Kalma" and "Goatride", this is their most focused effort to date. The male vocals are really extreme and those two tracks expose how quickly they become unbearable. Ms. W. Lilith complements with her classy and clear vocals, with her best performance on "Rememberance Through Deep Red Masquerade". Her mesmerizing voice and the intricate yet catchy Swedish sounding guitar work well together. Speaking of guitar, there is some grooving doom riffs on "Across the Field of Thought" worth noting. Elsewhere, the melancholic "Seed" offers a change of pace, "Harsh Mother Time" is alternately noisy and quiet, and "Pagan Pride" has some crushing grooves. This Finnish band, featuring all the members of **Gloomy Grim**, offers no boundaries approach to their unique and extreme metal style. **HOLY**.

STEP KINGS... Let's Get It On... 83... Fans of 90's aggression will enjoy New Jersey's hard working **Step Kings'** full length debut. There are elements of rap, hardcore, and groove metal but somehow the **Step Kings** avoid the cliches of any of those genres. "Friends" kicks off reminding of **Rage Against The Machine** minus Zack's annoying vocals. The dual vocal attack from Bob McLynn and Fern work well on "Vibe", a combination of melody and urgency. "Imoance" is energetic, catchy, and has a cool emotional edge. Some songs don't quite work. "Better off When" does not move me and their cover of **Pink Floyd's** "Another Brick in the Wall" is unnecessary. *Let's Get It On* has its flaws but with bands like the **Step Kings** and **Tree** working so hard and playing out so often they deserve your support. **FANTASTIC PLASTIC**.

STUCK MOJO... Hvy 1... 78... When you are a band that is full of aggression and energy like Atlanta's **Stuck Mojo** it is just a matter of time before a live album is issued. *Hvy 1* was recorded at a capacity crowd gig in their hometown and includes a total of fifteen songs taken from their three full length releases. As usual, Andy Sneap provides sharp production. For people who care less about live discs, there are two new studio tracks, "Reborn" and "My Will". The former shows new found maturity without sacrificing integrity, the latter is lame and not even a true song. I apologize for the low score given to *Hvy 1*, for a live disc it is excellent, however, I have to be selfish and say I prefer new material. Look for a new record next spring. **CENTURY MEDIA**.

SUBSTANCE D... Addictions... 93... The California trio recorded their debut, *Black*, over four years ago while vocalist Todd Chaisson was in the throes of drug abuse. **Substance D.** return with *Addictions* and while the lyrical topics often deal with his daily struggles, Todd is recovered. **Substance D.** play a modern style of aggressive metal that simply crushes the competition. This band is professional in every sense of the term. They defy stereotypes which continue to hinder modern aggressive bands. For one, **Substance D.** offer variety. From the raging, cutting riff of "Everyday", to the slow grind of "My Life", to the industrial mayhem of "California", to the stripped down power of "Who Am I" - in the space of four songs they manage to individualize their tunes while maintaining their identity. *Addictions* is a sample laden record. All of this is wrapped with a superior production from guitarist Michael Parin. Never before have distorted guitars been recorded so crisp. Songs like "This Devil Inside", "Everyday", "My Life", and "Who Am I" all deal with Todd's struggles with drug addiction and add an authenticity to the anger and intense emotion found on this record. This is the present and future of aggressive metal. **NOISE**.

SUMMONING... Stronghold... 88... **Summoning** originated as a side project of **Abigor** featuring Protector and Silenius but some standout material, **Summoning** have certainly by passed **Abigor** in my opinion. This band, like **Abigor**, has been quite busy. In 1995 they released two album, *Lugburz* and *Minas Morgul*, in 1997 came *Dol Guldur* and the mini-disc, *Nightshade Forests*. Now we have *Stronghold*. **Summoning** is a one in a million identity. The primary instrument is a heavy percussive drum beat. Layers of majestic keyboards and the well planted guitar riff complements the rhythms. Lyrically, **Summoning** are inspired by Tolkien's writings. With power metal bands like **Wuthering Heights** and **Blind Guardian** utilizing medieval themes, it's nice to see an

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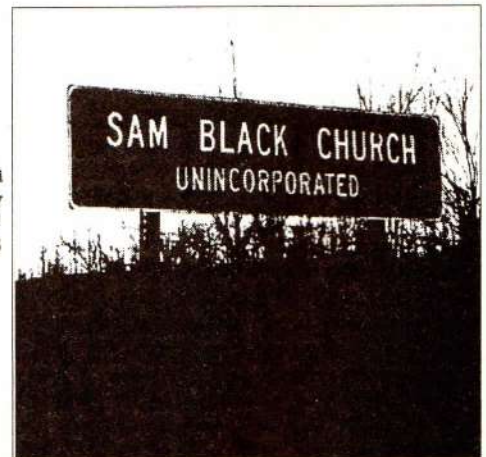
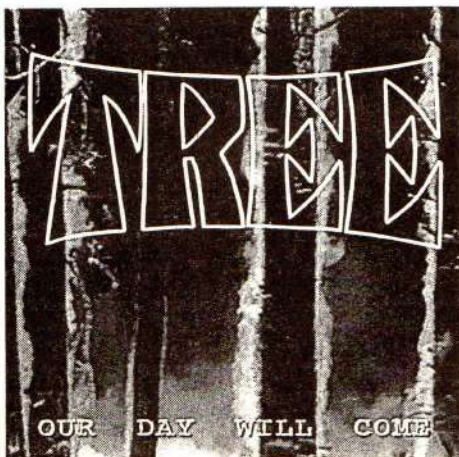
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extreme band perform their interpretations. With the male vocals are powerful and coarse, the female vocals on "Where Hope and Daylight Die" propel **Summoning** to a new realm. The guitar riffs on "Like Some Snow White Marble Eyes" make it the best track on *Stronghold*. Let **Summoning** take you on an hour plus bombastic journey, I recommend it. **NAPALM**.

SUN RED SUN... *Lost Tracks... 83...* I'm sure most everyone knows about Ray Gillen. He toured with **Black Sabbath** back in 1986. He then hooked up with ex-Ozzy guitarist Jake E. Lee with **Badlands** and they released two albums of high energy blues metal. Ray left **Badlands** and joined a group guitarist Al Romano was forming called **Sun Red Sun**. Also in **Sun Red Sun** were bassist Mike Starr (**Alice In Chains**) and drummer Bobby Rondinelli (**Rainbow**). Ray recorded almost an album's worth of tracks before succumbing to the A.I.D.'s virus. Romano continued with John West, who, coincidentally, replaced Gillen in **Badlands** briefly before they disbanded. That means the songs on *Lost Tracks* are all sung by **Artension/ Royal Hunt** vocalist John West. Amazingly West sounds just as good as Gillen on familiar tracks like "Hardlife", "Lock Me Up", "Outrageous", "Intoxication", and "Responsible". Among the more unfamiliar tracks here are "Heavy Metal Cowboy", "Ornamental Paper", "Prophets of Doom", and "The Hawaiians", along with live songs "Deadly Nightshade", and "Big Misunderstanding". **Sun Red Sun** will always be known for what might have been. Romano is an excellent writer and a straight metal guitarist. Among other people who have passed through Romano's band are ex-**Mindfunk** bassist John Monte and **Savatage** guitarist Chris Caffery. *Lost Tracks* is available through Crook'd Records. **CROOK'D**

S.U.P... *Chronophobia... 90...* **Spherical Unit Provided** return with their fourth album. The last two discs, *Room Seven* and a re-recording of an earlier album titled *The Cube*, were experimental albums that melded the coarse and clear vocals of the dual guitar playing Loez brothers and futuristic music akin to **Voivod**'s underrated *Angel Rat*, for lack of a better comparison. *Chronophobia* is a concept album with the lyrics describing twin brothers separated at birth who reunite at the north pole. Weird story, but this is not your usual band. On most tracks, "But All Has Changed" and "Chronophobia", for example, S.U.P. dig into an intense groove with death metal vocals and spacey, surreal passages submerged in between. It is difficult to describe what S.U.P. are doing. It is so unique and different that the only possible parallel could be early 90's **Voivod**. The music is slow to mid paced, with heavy guitars, subtle melodies, and a sound neither death, doom, groove, nor industrial, yet takes a little from each into S.U.P.'s twisted universe. The Loez brothers did a phenomenal job making sure *Chronophobia* is a listening experience you have never heard before. Highly recommended. **HOLY**.

TARTAROS... *The Red Jewel... 82...* Charmand Grimloch recently had the excellent **Tartaros** debut, *The Grand Psychotic Castle*, issued by Necropolis. Not wanting to spoil the momentum, Grimloch returns with the concept album, *The Red Jewel*. Grimloch is perhaps best known as **Emperor**'s touring keyboardist and many ingredients found on *In the Nightside Eclipse* can be heard in **Tartaros** as well. Like mid career **Emperor**, there is a hidden sense of melody to be heard within the chaos. I'm not sure who else, if anyone, helps contribute to his vision but Grimloch is a unique keyboardist who never dominates but uses his keyboard playing to create never heard before melodies. Except for a carnival-esque intro, "Lamentable Sonat", **Tartaros** blast by at a rapid pace with Grimloch's keyboard playing sometimes reaching psychedelic overtones. A solid and unique quality often missing in black metal, a concept album that should draw in fans of **Emperor**, **Dimmu Borgir**, and the like. **NECROPOLIS**.

TENHI... *Kauan... 86...* The bio describes **Tenhi**'s musical style as "folkloric progressive rock, dark and melancholic". Accurate assessment, a style that can only come from the suicide capital of the world- Finland. **Tenhi** released a c.d. single, *Hallavedet*, last year which was well received overseas. In many ways **Tenhi** remind me of Roger Waters' work with **Pink Floyd**. The songs are textured, with acoustic guitar, synth, violin, and grand piano all being added to the ambience. The vocals are tranquil and subtle, often between a moan and a whisper, when they actually appear. For all intents and purposes, *Kauan* is an instrumental album. **Tenhi** are at a place which I thought **Anathema** would be heading following *Alternative 4*. The trio of Ilkka Salminen (vocals, drums, guitars), Ilmari Illakainen (bass, guitars, piano, percussion), and Tyko Saarikko (guitars, synth, vocals) are obviously multi-talented. On their debut, **Tenhi** have created a level of class and maturity that is unprecedented. *Kauan* is by no means metal, but a fan can certainly appreciate the melancholic atmospheres **Tenhi** has created. **PROPHECY**.

TERROR SQUAD... *The Wild Stream Of Eternal Sin... 85...* As the thrash revolution maintains a stronghold in the underground it is amazing how much the music of bands like **Kreator**, **Destruction**, and **Bulldozer** are appreciated. The American label with the European and Scandinavian roster, Necropolis, has been the front runner of this resurgence. Unsurprisingly, that is exactly where I first heard **Terror Squad**. You may also recognize **Terror Squad** from the *Headbanger's Against Disco* seven inch which featured "Disco Bloody Disco". They failed to distinguish themselves on the *Thrashing Holocaust* compilation but with their debut full length **Terror Squad** sounds better unlike most of their counterparts, **Terror Squad** truly and unequivocally capture the true essence of thrash metal without sounding dated. The Japanese trio are known by their pseudonyms, Lord of Nightmare, Sonic Riot, and Frankenstein. The vocals are coarse but understandable and certainly hot black metal, in other words old school. The brief melodic solo outburst adds some melody to the face ripping riffs. **WORLD CHAOS**.

THY INFERNAL... *Satan's Wrath... 70...* The cold, grim, evil people at Moribund bring us this seven song, thirty minute disc of underground extreme metal. Although I do hear a lot of potential beneath a poor production and horrible old school black metal vocals, *Satan's Wrath* does not fulfill any of the promises that occasionally surface. **Thy Infernal** have built a reputation for their insane live shows. It shows, the chaotic music sounds too noisy on disc but has more potential in the live setting. With cheesy artwork and stage names like Slut and Rapist, **Thy Infernal** will need to make rapid progress to be taken seriously. There's also a cover of **Slayer**'s classic "Black Magic". I know there are people out there who love underground, underproduced, raw, disordered black metal mayhem. If you're reading this, **Thy Infernal** is for you. Everyone else, steer clear of *Satan's Wrath*. **MORIBUND**.

TIAMAT... *Skeleton Skeleton... 76...* I have a slight problem with **Tiamat**. Although they have been unique innovators of an entire scene and a band that was always willing to experiment, I feel they have yet to live up to the potential they showed on *Clouds and Wildhoney*. *A Deeper Kind of Slumber* made extensive use of electronic technology and was a sombre record with some moments. Now comes *Skeleton Skeleton*, which contains a lyrical shift from their nature based lyrics to an urban approach, probably precipitated by Johan Endlund's move from Sweden to Dortmund, Germany. *Skeleton Skeleton* is a more organic, more aggressive affair than *A Deeper Kind of Slumber*, although Johan sticks to his sedated **Pink Floyd** like vocal style. His brilliant keyboard work on "To Have and Have Not" ranks among the best tracks of his career. Both "Church of Tiamat" and "Brighter Than the Sun" with its female back up vocals, are quality songs and even their cover of the **Rolling Stones**' "Sympathy for the Devil" fits in, however the rest of *Skeleton Skeleton* is riddled with average material. Johan, you can do better than this. **CENTURY MEDIA**.

TODAY IS THE DAY... *In The Eyes Of God... 84...* The madness of Steve Austin continues. **Today Is The Day** returns with their fourth disc of insanity. There is something beautiful about this band. Amid all the mayhem, Austin creates a surrealistic beauty within his inhuman screams. I don't know how Steve comes up with such an amazing array of supporting musicians. This time he is joined by bassist Bill Kelliher and drummer Brann Dailor. Together, this trio creates much which effectively combines grindcore and progressive into a collage of contrasting insanity. Through it all, there is a control which allows **Today Is The Day** to create hooks and relieve tension. The opening title track is an instant classic and a study in how extreme music should be written for the masses. Although the core of their style has remained intact since the beginning, **Today Is The Day** will always intrigue me with their brand of extreme progressive music. Worth a risk if you are unfamiliar with them. **RELAPSE**.

DEVIN TOWNSEND... *Infinity... 74...* I love Devin Townsend (**Strapping Young Lad**, **Ocean Machine**). He is a true genius as a musician. He often borders on insanity, a trait that finds his music even more cathartic. While **Strapping Young Lad** is about sheer anger and aggression, his other two projects- *Infinity* and *Ocean Machine*, allows the listener to delve into other sides of this Canadian's personality. Supposedly, *Infinity* and *Ocean Machine* are supposed to be polar opposites. I can't quite hear it. Opener "Truth" could easily have been placed on *Bio-Mech*. "Christeen" is wacky, but catchy. Other songs have appealing moments, like the bouncing groove of "Bad Devil" and its **Ministry** sounds but the catchy chorus sounds out of place. It's this dichotomy that epitomizes Devin's work. His weird, experimental side is balanced with surprising, sometimes subtle moments of accessibility. I commend Devin for coming up with another disc of experimental music which sometimes harbors on brilliance, it's just not much to my liking. I preferred *Ocean Machine* and I can't wait for that third **Strapping Young Lad** studio album. Get pissed Devin! **H.D. RECORDS**.

TREE... *Our Day Will Come... 82...* Yes, it certainly will if they continue to work as hard as they do. **Tree** have influences that reach into hardcore, punk metal, and alternative and yet they manage to attain a style all their own. It's been almost three years since their last full length, *Downsizing the American*

Those who know **Tree** will not be surprised by their confrontational, anti-corporate, with Christian overtones; lyrical approach. As *Our Day Will Come* opens with "real" the first two apparent talents are River's ability to use raw, coarse aggression and melodic vocals effectively and the heavy yet very groove oriented guitars. There are more humanistic elements to the music than the cold precision that many of these 90's bands play. *Our Day Will Come* packs well over an hour of music and closes with the extended jam, "Super Secret Jukebox Mix". I give **Tree** a lot of credit for keeping the listeners interest engaged throughout these dozen songs, it's not often that a contrasting band produce so many memorable moments. They work hard, they keep it real, **Tree** is a good band to support. **WONDERDRUG.**

TULUS... Evil 1999... 85... While **Tulus** may be a fresh face on the black metal scene in America, they have already established themselves on Norway's Hot Records with two previous releases, *Pure Black Energy* and *Mysterion*. **Tulus** have also garnered attention due to **Cradle Of Filth's** guest female vocalist Sarah Jezebel Diva's appearance on *Mysterion*. **Tulus** also double with Galder of **Old Mans Child** as his live musicians. I am unfamiliar with earlier **Tulus** recordings but *Evil 1999* is energetic black metal with some intricate and melodic sections within each song to maintain interest throughout the disc. They are unafraid to change speeds. While some songs blast at hyperspeed, "Menneskefar" and "Cyprianus" for instance; others create a mid paced heaviness, like "Tarantulus". While bands like **Dodheimsgard** and **Ulver** add electronics, it's nice to hear a black metal band experiment without leaving their base audience behind. Even the chants and acoustic guitars on "Salme" do not sound out of place. I've rarely heard so much bass in black metal before. *Evil 1999* is for people who enjoyed the style sound on **Satyricon's** classic, *Dark Medieval Times*. **HAMMERHEART.**

TWILIGHT OPHERA... Midnight Hour... 79... If there was ever a death metal album which played more like a soundtrack for a horror film, it is *Midnight Horror*. While countrymen **Children Of Bodom** have attained international success, Finnish bands like **Soulgrind**, **Gloomy Grim**, **Gandalf**, and **Twilight Ophera**, continue to create a theatrical view of extreme metal. If you take away the ever present keyboards, I don't think **Twilight Ophera** are all the unique. The music trends to blast by with some occasional riffing and Sauli Karkunen's vocals never sway from that black/ death coarseness. While *Midnight Horror* is surely an improvement over 1997's debut, *Shadows Embrace the Dark*. Mikko Kaipainen and Toni Naykki play their best when they slow down and play harmony based riffs. The traditional metal playing on songs like "Black Fire in the Chasm of Rapture" and "Night Beholds the Supreme Clandestine" is what makes **Twilight Ophera** special. This band does have limitless potential, I'll give them another album or two to develop their ideas further. **CACOPHONOUS.**

TWISTED TOWER DIRE... The Curse Of Twisted Tower... 87... Some may remember Virginia's **Twisted Tower Dire** from the *Metal Injection* compilation, which "Starlight Requiem" appeared. Since then Janet has left the band and in steps Tony Taylor. Overall *The Curse of Twisted Tower* brings to mind the epic metal days of **Iron Maiden**. While "The Valkyrie Death Squadrons" runs over ten minutes, most of the eight tunes hover around the six minute mark. The best tune on display is "The Curse of Twisted Tower", an anthemic track with a power vocal display from Tony and an energetic **Danzig** like riff. Musically, **Twisted Tower Dire** may not be particularly heavy but they are true metal and produce many **Maiden**-esque galloping and busy rhythms. While the cover featuring a painting of the five members and the weak production work against the band, their undeniable fervor for all things metal and their strengthening of the underground American metal scene has to be admired. **MISKATONIC.** \$14 to 10021 Scenic View Terrace, Vienna, VA 22182

VANDEN PLAS... Far Off Grace... 88... **Vanden Plas** released two previous albums, *Colour Temple* and *The God Thing*, to mostly critical acclaim. They tread the line between hard rock, heavy metal, and progressive power metal. The first two discs, I felt, were inconsistent. The strong **Dokken** influence crept in too often. On *Far Off Grace*, **Vanden Plas** have created their best album. The modern riffage (i.e. heavy groove) of opener "I Can See" works well with Andy Kuntz' melodic vocals. From there, each song is an epic journey starting with the superior title track. "Far Off Place" is **Vanden Plas** at their best. Kuntz offers intelligent melodic phrasing over a building mass of guitars and keyboards before kicking into a powerful chorus which satisfies the intense build up. The heavy muted guitar riff, keyboards, and Kuntz' LaBrie styling make "Iodic Rain" conjure *Images and Words*, but thankfully there are no hard rock plagiarisms. Even a kicking cover of **Dokken's** "Kiss of Death" doesn't sound out of place. **INSIDE OUT.**

VENOM... Calm Before The Storm... 80... This is an interesting reissue. Many **Venom** fans felt *Calm Before the Storm* was an abomination compared to their early classic records. While **Cronos** and **Abaddon** were still around, Mike and Jim came aboard as new guitarists and some of **Venom's** essence was lost. Slightly more commercial than *Black Metal* or *Possessed* for example, the **Venom** punk metal style was still there on songs like "Black Xmas", "Metal Punk", and "Krakin Up". Sure "The Chanting of the Priests" and "Beauty and the Beast" were more accessible but *Calm Before the Storm* is still worthy. I am surprised to see a label like **Deadline** (maybe they were inspired by the **Venom** song on this disc) putting out **Venom** albums like this and *Cast in Stone*. **DEADLINE.**

VIKING CROWN... Unorthodox Steps Of Ritual... 60... This is one of the worst albums ever. How **Necrophagia's** Killjoy ever became interested in **Viking Crown** is beyond me. I have always enjoyed and respected everything **Red Stream** puts out, but this is awful. Even when there are times a subtle melody is emerging, the weak production ruins it. Vocally I have not heard an album worse. Not only is Anton off key but his style is ridiculous. The **Cookie Monster** sounds like **Geoff Tate** compared to him. I'm not sure what **Viking Crown** are trying to do but I've decided to call myself **Satan Lucifer**, I'm going to break out my pots and pans and record an album in my bedroom better than *Unorthodox Steps of Garbage*. This actually makes me look forward to the next **Pantera** album. **BAPHOMET.**

VIOLET ULTRA... Psychobabble... 74... **Therapy?**, wherefore art thou? I didn't realize that **Therapy?** changed their name to **Ultra Violet**, I mean **Violet Ultra**. They released a previous album, *Holier Than Thou*, that I have not heard yet. I'm not sure if it sounds like early albums (*Baby Teeth*), but *Psychobabble* is more of the lame pop punk they have done on recent efforts. Wait a minute **Violet Ultra** doesn't have **Andy Cairns** singing. This is another band. Are they a **Therapy?** cover band? Actually, **Violet Ultra** lack the immediacy of **Therapy?'s** early albums and the dark maturity of later efforts. Even though I often compare bands to one another, I try to emphasize any originality a band has to offer. Unfortunately, **Violet Ultra** sound too much like a combination of **Therapy?**, **Nirvana**, and the **Offspring**, to allow them to stand on their own. I've never been much of a fan of this pop punk genre anyway. **COPRO.**

VIRGIN STEELE... The House Of Atreus Act I... 85... Long Island's ambitious concept minded **Virgin Steele** return with "a barbaric romantic opera" that is power metal. *The House of Atreus* is a Greek tale written by **Dave Defeis** and features twenty two tracks, many classical styled metal instrumentals, and ten speaking parts. **Defeis** handles the various roles with ease, creating feelings of anger, revenge, sadness, and lamentation. *The House of Atreus* plays out like a true concept album, adhering more to the story and emotions that past song oriented endeavors. The result is a full sounding effort with intense arrangements in which is best listened to from start to finish. "Kingdom of the Fearless" starts the album off with **Manowar** inspired true metal with **Defeis** doing a perfect **Eric Adams** impression. He has developed into a great vocalist. He uses his **Manowar** voice when necessary, but he also alters his voice to a clear style on "Return of the King" sounds a little like *Rust in Peace* era **Megadeth** musically, and in perhaps his best performance ever, he established a melancholy, memorable emotion that transcends the limitations of metal. Look for *Act II* next summer. **NOISE.**

VITAL REMAINS... Dawn Of The Apocalypse... 85... One of the most underrated bands. For a decade **Vital Remains** has released five albums of undeniable quality. They teeter the line between death metal and black metal, especially now with new vocalist **Thorn** creating screams amidst death metal lows. **Vital Remains** is pure class. Once again, the cover artwork is professional- amazing to say the least. **Dave Suzuki** provides some searing solos, his lead work ranks among the best of any genre. What really makes **Vital Remains** special however, is their song structures and ability to write ultimate riffs at the right time. "Behold the Throne of Chaos" may blast away, but they reign in the speed with some tempo changes and heavy riffs, add in some atmospheric notes and some keyboard layering and you have the blueprint for perfect songwriting. **Vital Remains** have the ability to smoothly transfer moods within their structure. With "The Night Has a Thousand Eyes", **Thorn** has created a massive percussion based song. An all time classic. These two songs, combined with "Sanctity in Blasphemous Rain" and the title track constitute the best quality **Vital Remains** have presented. **OSMOSE.**

WARRANT... Latest And Greatest... 74... I have mixed feelings about **Warrant**. On the one hand their glammed out look and their shallow debut album, *Dirty Rotten Filthy Stinking Rich*, represented all that was wrong with that music scene. They follow that up a year later with *Cherry Pie*. The anthemic title track was a big radio hit but it was songs like "Uncle Tom's Cabin" that showed **Warrant** had potential. Then came their masterpiece- *Dog Eat Dog*. Serious lyrical topics that portrayed a dark, forboding future- the album yielded one excellent song after another. Just like **Winger** did on *Pull*, they came out with an album that would enable audiences to take them seriously at a time when everyone turned their backs on them. While several line-up changes led to unfocused releases *Ultraphobic* and *Belly to Belly*, the band seemed lost. Now comes *Greatest and Latest*, which features re-recorded versions of part hits- "Cherry Pie", "Down

Boys", "Uncle Tom's Cabin", "Sometimes She Cries", "Heaven", and "I Saw Red", the underrated "32 Pennies" and "Hollywood", unreleased tracks "The Jones", "Southern Comfort", "Thin Disguise", and "Bad Tattoo", and techno remixes of "Down Boys", "Cherry Pie", and "32 Pennies". The four new tracks are quite average and the remixes are lame. You should buy Dog Eat Dog and listen with an open mind. **DEADLINE.**

WE... *Living The Lore...* 75... While America and England have become known as the mecca for psychedelic doom metal, when a band such as We come out from Norway with sound that's a cross between **Kyuss** and **Soundgarden** both musically and in the Cornell/ Garcia style of Thomas' vocals. We lock into a mid paced, mesmerizing groove and jam through six minute tunes. While the likes of **Terrorizer** are bragging about *Living the Lore*, I find We to be quite average. The pace does not change and each song is difficult to decipher from the other. A common complaint about this genre is that it does not offer anything fresh and We are not any different. An odd tune or two, "Peddler" for example, provide some energy but We's fourth release serves better as background music and is easy to forget. **VOICES OF WONDER.**

WHITE SKULL... *Tales From The North...* 82... As Italian bands like **Rhapsody**, **Heimdall**, **Athena**, **Labyrinth**, **Skylark**, etc. raise symphonic metal to new heights it was a surprise to see Nuclear Blast sign **White Skull**. The epic viking metal they produce can be heard on previous Underground Symphony releases *I Won't Burn Alone* and *Embittered*. *Tales from the North* is all metal straight through unlike previous releases which saw **White Skull** delve into a more hard rock territory at times. Heavy **Maiden**-esque guitar playing interlaced with Alessandro Mantiero's often double bass kick give **White Skull** that epic feel. Frederica de Boni has yet to hone her vocal skills but it's her raw, quirky feel that gives **White Skull** its identity. Throughout *Tales from the North* she creates several choral hooks out of seemingly difficult parts. Just look to songs like "Gods of the Sea" and "The Terrible Slaughter" for evidence. Some of **White Skull**'s best moments appear on *Tales from the North*- the viking choir and ultra memorable chorus on "Asgard" and the ripping guitars on "The Killing Queen". **NUCLEAR BLAST.**

WILLOW WISP... *Delusions Of Grandeur...* 88... Somehow I don't find it surprising that a band like **Willow Wisp** has been spawned out of Hollywood. Their black gothic image cries for attention. However, it is their music which interests me the most. Their second full length effectively combines the extreme black metal of **Cradle Of Filth** with the dark gothic percussion of **Vasaria**. This combination demands that the listener of *Delusions of Grandeur* must be open minded and willing to go with **Willow Wisp**'s unpredictable changes in style. Air-rik can go from the most tortured screams to a deep, powerful Pete Steele tone in seconds. He will occasionally add death metal grunts just to keep everyone off balance. This schizophrenic ideology will either annoy or intrigue, sometimes both at the same time. They are not as keyboard oriented as you would expect, often they are simply providing a church like ambience, but they help create a gothic/ theatrical vibe. I question **Willow Wisp**'s appeal. They are too extreme for anyone who is uninterested in black metal yet betray many of the unwavering stances true black metal fans revere. If **Willow Wisp** can gain more focus on album three perhaps they can overcome these handicaps. For the open minded. **FULL MOON.**

WITCHERY... *Dead Hot And Ready...* 83... Necropolis has become a respectable label for this retro blackened thrash movement and **Witchery** are the band leading the way. I will not deny their influence or their desire to bring back 80's thrash but there are flaws. While vocalist Toxine may appeal to black metal crowds, his one dimensional screaming holds back some excellent riffs and refreshing metal ideas. The melodic section before the solo on "Resurrection" cries for a vocalist with the ability to actual diversify their skills. Jensen's superior riffing and intelligent ideas are often ruined by Toxine's basic black metal screams. After *Witchburner*, an e.p. consisting of mostly cover tunes it's nice to see **Witchery** return with an album of original material and headbanging riffs. With two and a half albums in the same amount of time, **Witchery** have developed a sound and imagery that is instantly recognizable. Now the questions is- can they grow? Toxine, are you listening? **NECROPOLIS.**

WITHOUT GRIEF... *Absorbing The Ashes...* 86... They definitely have that Swedish death metal sound. Energetic, razor sharp death thrash that we have heard before. **Without Grief** may not be doing anything new, but they play so well that fans of bands from **Dismember** to **At The Gates** can rejoice. **Without Grief** avoid the Gothenberg traps and have recorded *Absorbing the Ashes* in Denmark. This helps the band establish some sort of identity. The departure of guitarist Nicklas Lindh and bassist Ola Berg and their subsequent replacements, Thean Thide and Bjorn respectively, has apparently made **Without Grief** a more focused band. *Absorbing the Ashes* is more straightforward than their intricate debut, *Deflower*. The melodies are more apparent and the guitar playing in particular is heavier. An impressive performance from drummer Patrick Johansson raises the band a notch and gives *Absorbing the Ashes* a professional sound. The solos are a pleasure to listen to because they're so melodic. Speaking of melody, the attention paid to melodies on songs like "To the End" and "Instrumental" truly magnify the heaviness of the riffs. A classic in the making. **SERIOUS ENTERTAINMENT.**

WUTHERING HEIGHTS... *Within...* 88... How do you like this description: "Symphonic speed metal, grandiose and orchestral, over the top progressive"? This Danish band effortlessly fuses folk and neo-classical into their metal sound. Songwriter/ guitarist Erik Ravn has creatively written a striking debut that demands attention. Touches of **Maiden** and **Blind Guardian** are sprinkled throughout, although I find the folk influence is what distinguishes **Wuthering Heights** from their 90's peers. Violinist Henriette Cordes and flute player Troels Liebgott add their personality as guest musicians. Also of interest is the colorful and shockingly beautiful artwork of Kritian Wahlin (**Diabolique**, **Lefay**) and the powerful and melodic vocals of Sweden's Kristian Andren (Fifth Reason, **Tad Morose**, **Memento Mori**). For once a thirteen and a half minute epic, "Dreamwalker", does not bore or disappoint. I am still amazed that **Wuthering Heights** have created a debut that rivals compositions created today by bands who have taken about ten years to excel. **SENSORY.**

ZAKK WYLDE... *Book Of Shadows...* 86... You must give Spitfire credit with these reissues, they will load as many songs as possible. Their re-issues of Zakk Wyld's *Book of Shadows* and his first solo effort with **Pride And Glory** both contain two discs to accommodate the bonus tracks. Here disc two contains "Evil Ways", "The Color Green", and "Peddlers of Death". *Book of Shadows* is raw, emotional, tense, and pretty damn lamentable. The stripped down and basic approach Zakk takes initially threw me off. I was greatly disappointed. However, upon the third and fourth listen I finally grasped Zakk Wyld's pure emotion and hooks. This is a record that comes from the heart and leaves all pretensions at the door. There are very few hints of the Zakk Wyld we knew from **Ozzy**, and the solo or two. Most of the time it is Zakk and his acoustic guitar. He is accommodated by James Lomenzo the **Pride And Glory** and ex-**White Lion** bassist and drummer Joe Vitale. I strongly recommend this disc to all music fans. This is not metal, maybe more classic rock with a tinge of southern blues, but this man is all heart. **SPITFIRE.**

ZANDELLE... *Shadows Of Reality...* 82... As a result of George Tsalikis contributions as a member of **Gothic Knights**, his new band **Zandelle** and his former band will forever be related. While **Zandelle**'s debut was more a solo project, *Shadows of Reality* finds George with a fully functional band. They still may be lacking in the production department but on songs like "Darkness of the Night", "Soul of Darkness", and "The Warrior" **Zandelle** are purveyors of true 80's style power metal. George's vocals are too high and the music is a little too progressive for **Manowar** comparisons but maybe all the early **Queensryche** comparisons aren't too far fetched. Slower numbers like the doomy "Queen Witch" and melodic "The Abyss" allow George to show his full repertoire. Easing the burden, *Shadows of Reality* has two shredding guitarists in Anthony Maglio and Joe Hartoularos and a permanent drummer in John Lasanta. As an unexpected bonus **Zandelle** cover **Gothic Knights**' "Creature of the Dark", which was originally written by Tsalikis and is dedicated to **Gothic Knight**'s former drummer Brian Dispost.

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Lick This: *The Guitar 2001 Compilation...* 90... For any fan of guitar, this compilation is a must. While the players that Michael Knight has assembled are only known to true devotees to instrumental guitar, the talent found here is top notch and demanding attention. Almost all fifteen tracks on *Lick This* are exciting. You have some of the best funk induced guitar playing ever recorded, **The Magic Elf** and **Sons Of Infinity**; to a flowing melodic Steve Booke, an acoustic intro and progressive **Dream Theater** like journey by Steve Speelman, to Dr. Frankenshred's (**St. Madness**) break out on "Igor's Revenge", to the sample laden "Portrait of a Killer" by Steve Mannocho. The DeMarco Brothers and Mike Gallagher create excellent tracks as well. The three gems of this batch, and I mean these are must listens- come from Rusty Cooley, Michael Lee Ostrander, and Mike Chlaschiak. Coley comes up with a flowing tune rife with fluid leads and catchy riffs. Ostrander produces some heavy licks and an industrial vibe. Finally, Chlaschiak creates heavy, near thrash rhythms with some intense leads. This disc is an astonishing journey with very few flaws. Even though it's all instrumental anyone can enjoy this. **GUITAR 2001.**

Manifesto: *An Infernal Racket Sampler...* 80... Infernal Racket Records has compiled a disc of East Coast modern hardcore bands that is pointing the way toward contemporary music. The promising **Rabies Caste** kick off with "Rhino and Croc". **Rabies Caste** are a band to watch. They combine hardcore and

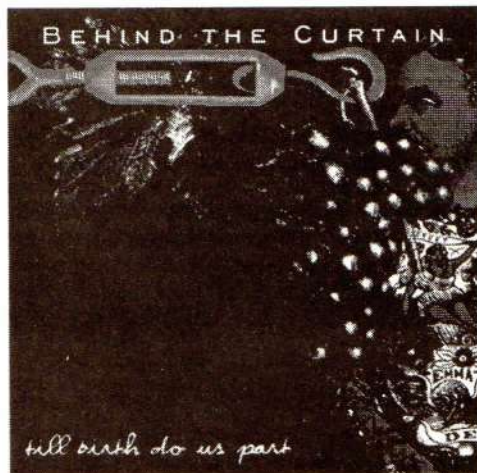
retro rock into an intense new sound. Unreleased tracks by **Meatjack**, **Bobbykork**, and **Calm** also appear. Escape Artist Records are represented by **Burn It Down**, **Isis**, and **Time In Malta**; Ghetto Cat Records by **Wally** and **Stillwater**. Some name readers will recognize are **Turmoil** and **Cave In**. To be honest, none of the fifteen tracks are standouts. However, there is a core of post modern hardcore bands that are raising the boundaries and experimenting with some extreme and insane styles. **INFERNAL RACKET**. P.O. Box 4641, Bethlehem, PA 18018.

Never Give In: A Tribute To Bad Brains... 80... Century Media has done an excellent job putting together the right type of bands (although having **Moby** perform the opening track was daring) for their tribute albums. Would you expect anything less- these guys are the consummate professionals (hats off to Matt Bower). Unlike Dwell Records, who will throw any band on their tributes, with both the **Judas Priest** and newly released **Bad Brains** tributes, they choose the participating bands carefully. Among those on *Never Give In* are veterans like **Sepultura** and **Entombed**; rising hardcore metal acts like **Ignite**, **Vision Of Disorder**, **Snapcase**, **Shai Hulud**, and **Cave In**. The only bands that appear from Century Media's roster are **Skinlab**, **Turmoil**, and **Haste**. Of course, most of the material on *Never Give In* comes from **Bad Brains** early 80's era. Classics like "Sailing On", "Pay to Cum", "Fearless Vampire Killers", and "I Luv I Juh" are covered. The best tracks were **Vision Of Disorder's** "Soulcraft", **Turmoil's** version of "Coptic Times", and **Cave In's** excellent "I Luv I Jah".

CENTURY MEDIA.
Powermad 1999... 92... This two disc set was given to the people who attended Powermad on their way in the door. Songs by almost all the bands that played, including **Mayadome**, **Evergrey**, **Antithesis**, **Ion Vein**, **Midevil**, **Ice Age**, **Cipher**, **Division**, **Cyrcle IX**, **Holy Mother**, **Nightmares End**, **Cage**, **Andeavor**, **Talamasca**, **Forte**, **Twisted Tower Dire**, **Monument**, and **New Eden**. A new **Mystic Force** song, "Identical Strangers"- new vocalist and the music is excellent progressive power metal and is accessible. **Gamma Ray's** anthemic "Send Me a Sign" is track three and **Twilight Kingdom** appear via "Awakening". The music is progressive and the vocalist unique. On disc two there is another three songs from bands who did not play at Power Mad. **Nocturnal Rites** with "Destiny Calls" and **Iron Savior** with "Coming Home". Track nine is a mystery. It was supposed to be **Reignstorm's** "Ruler of Today", but it is not. This a great compilation of upcoming U.S. progressive power metal bands, two Swedish bands, and three tracks from established European power metal bands (**Gamma Ray**, **Iron Savior**, and **Nocturnal Rites**). **SIEGEN**.

RISE 13: Magick Rock Volume 1... 83... Hey is that the same scantily clad female found on **Leadfoot's** *Take a Look* disc. Some of these bands have been reviewed in this zine before- **Orange Goblin**, **Sheavy**, **Hangnail**, and **Electric Wizard** have been written about here before. I quite enjoy both **Orange Goblin** and **Hangnail** considerably. **Rise 13** kicks off with Unida's "Black Woman" and proves that former **Kyuss** vocalist Jon Garcia is in peak form. Reminiscent of **Kyuss** minus long jams. Better known "stoner rock" bands like **Acrimony**, **Goatsnake**, and **Spirit Caravan** also appear. Of the lesser known bands there are **Drag Pack**, **Solarized**, **Sally**, **Shallow**, and **13**. **Drag Pack** sound like they came right out of 1972 with a thick distorted sound and bad vocals. **Solarized** have an energetic and enthusiastic approach with "Mean Spirit"- perhaps the best track here. **Sally** rumble ahead with nothing special and **Shallow** is heavily distorted and with a slight punk attitude. While there are so many bands out there playing this heavy distorted rock, especially on labels like M.I.A. and the Music Cartel, a compilation like *Rise 13* will allow the listener to pick and choose their idea of the finest out there. At the same time, the spirit running through these thirteen tracks is the same. **MUSIC CARTEL**.

ROOT-OF-ALL-EVIL... Label Sampler... 92... **Lorde Of All Desires** "Whence Chaos Cometh" comes from their second full length, *The Scent of Malevolence*. Well played, melodic black metal, only complaint is the typewriter drums on the fast parts. **Disturbed** "Creature of Habit" was recorded in 1991 and sounds like **Kreator** circa *Extreme Aggressions*, yet more modern. **Valhalla's** "Battlefield Genesis" is technical death thrash, reminiscent of early **Coroner**. Catchy riffing. **Opaque's** "Payback" is modern, **Pantera** sounding aggrometal. Not bad. **Demonicon** "Infested", formerly known as **Dominion**, sloppy death metal with slight hints of melody. **Cold Colours** "Agony", formerly known as **Wolfthorn**. This is original. Groove and modern yet, not easy to categorize. The keyboards and uniqueness make it comparable to a heavy **Faith No More**. "Turbid Relation", **Tellurium**, modern death groove with original vocals. **Impaler** "Golbin Queen" is a punk rock anthem from newly released *It Won't Die*. **Plan E** "Less Sea More Poison" is weird, bass heavy,



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atmospheric hard rock. **Le'rue Delashay** "Symphonair Noctem Opus 48" short snippet of classical music, interesting. **Dwole** "Veil of Tears" is ambient. The **Unholy** "Hammer of Thor" is boring metal with no highlights. **612 Crew** "Ron Jeremy" is boring, death metal with some cool heavy groove at the end, and of course the requisite female moaning. **Rev. Poky Bunge** "Shitkicker" is sloppy, noisy, horrible. **K** "War Kill" 90's groove metal, pretty good. Ripsnorter "Black Widow" is sort of like **Danzig** and not easy to get a vibe on. Nothing's "Wielding Okmans's Razor" is about dark ambient atmospheres. **Malmstorm's** "Journey's End" closes with an almost upbeat soundtrack like instrumental. Lots of variety adorns this disc. **Plan E, Cold Colours, Valhalla, and Lorde Of All Desires** are all bands to watch in the future. **ROOT OF ALL EVIL.**

666: The Number One Beast: A Tribute To Iron Maiden... 82... With a **Slayer** and now an **Iron Maiden** tribute, Deadline appears to be joining Dwell Records in the tribute foray. At least they have found a suitable line-up of musicians. **F.M.'s** Steve Overland sings "Can I Play with Madness" and "Run to the Hills", ex-**Grim Reaper**, ex-**Onslaught** vocalist Steve Grimmett sings on "2 Minutes to Midnight" and "Number of the Beast", Paul Di'anno (ex-**Iron Maiden, Killers, Battlezone**) appears redoing his own "Wrathchild", "Running Free", "Phantom of the Opera", and "Iron Maiden". **Rainbow's** Doogie White is on "The Evil That Men Do", and finally ex-**M.S.G.** vocalist Gary Barden contributes to "The Trooper". Among the musicians are ex-**Fastway** vocalist/ guitarist Lea Hart, who appears to have organized this, with other guitarists- Paul Quinn (**Saxon**), Bernie Torme, Andy Barnett (**F.M.**), Rob Page, Steve Parry, and Dave Colwell (**Bad Company**). Other musicians playing throughout the album are drummer Steve Bennett, bassist Dean Moriarty, and keyboardist Jem Davies (ex-**U.F.O.**, **F.M.**) This is an interesting album and all the songs are faithfully covered but obviously, the originals are better. **DEADLINE.**

THRASHING HOLOCAUST... 81... Necropolis has done a great job of compiling a disc full of modern thrash bands who plot a form which is associated with the mid-80's and bands like **Kreator** and **Destruction**. Among the nineteen bands on *Thrashing Holocaust* are from Necropolis roster like; **Witchery, Usurper, Deathwitch, the Ancients Rebirth, Abominator, and Ashes**. More popular names like **Absu, Nocturnal Breed, Inferno, and Satanic Slaughter** alongside tracks by **Desaster, Sadistic Intent, Sabbath, Lordes Werre, Metal Lucifer, Abigail, Desekrator, Terror Squad, and Dekapitator**. I am not a big fan of this style. Most of these bands lack the urgency and intensity found in the eighties. The vocals are boring and one can not distinguish one scream from another. You can instantly tell Schmier's voice from Mille's but there is not one vocalist on *Thrashing Holocaust* who stands above the rest. On a positive note, Necropolis has assembled the best of this genre, although I wonder why Bewitched is nowhere to be found. **NECROPOLIS.**

THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES: A Tribute To Fates Warning... 86... When Mike Gray started to put this project together that tribute craze was not in full bloom, so one must look beyond that and realize that he has assembled a solid line-up of upcoming prog metal bands to pay tribute to the most popular American band of the genre. Surprisingly, most of the dozen tunes come from the Ray Alder era. Even more surprising is **Planet Sarcasm** opens *Through Different Eyes* with their version of "A Pleasant Shade of Grey Part II" and **Wolverine** closes with "Part XII". Known and established acts like **Mayadome, Steel Prophet, and Soundscape** share space with newer bands like **Dreamline, Prymary, and Morpheus Web**. Other artists are **Spiral Architect, Vendetta, Finalxit, and Reignstorm**. Almost all renditions are similar to the originals with the exception being **Spiral Architect's** reworking of "Prelude to Ruin". Their version is more technical and intense. Their bass player is incredible and the band shows tons of potential. Like many other compilations, I am happy that Mike chose underground bands, however only **Spiral Architect** was able to add their own style. It must have been cool for **Soundscape** to cover "Fata Morgana" as Rob Thorne toured with **Fates Warning** when he was in **Sacred Oath** back in 1987. From the John Artch era we have covers of "The Apparition", "Prelude to Ruin", "The Sorceress", and "Fata Morgana".

TRUE METAL TRIUMPHANT... 92... Doesn't the title of this compilation say it all? Sentinel Steel Records celebrates their successful venture in the music industry with this disc which features new artists like **Onward, Gothic Knights, and Legend Maker** along with bands Denis Gulbey has reissued like **Attacker, Axehammer, Burning Starr, Manilla Road, and Sacred Oath**. **Onward** is great traditional metal with Toby Knapp's lightning neo-classical leads and **Legend Maker's** Michael Grant on vocals. **Gothic Knights** hail from Brooklyn and appear via "War in the Sky" and "Keeper of the Gate" from their newly released classic **Fates Warning** inspired metal on *Kingdom of the Knights*. **Legend Maker** hail from Brazil and their metal is epic and leans towards early **Helloween** in style. Somehow Denis has found some obscure 80's metal bands who rightfully deserve attention. I particularly liked **Manilla Road**, who combined power and doom metal with an original twist, and **Sacred Oath**. Influenced by **Mercyful Fate**, featuring the gallop of **Iron Maiden**, current **Soundscape** frontman Rob Thorne's first musical venture sees a reissue through Sentinel Steel. Obviously, a major fan of music, Denis puts together packaging that puts major labels to shame. **SENTINEL STEEL.**

WHITE... The End Records... 95... This amazing compilation features tracks from all nine of their bands. The booklet is so thick that it barely fits in the jewel case. Everything you would want to know about this professional label can be found here. **Odes Of Ecstasy** open with "Abstract Thoughts", an experimental track with surreal female operatic vocals and background chants. This will be on their upcoming disc. **Sculptured** appear via "Snow Covers All" from their upcoming album *Apollo Ends*. This track exemplifies their experimental/ prog/ death/ doom with some sax and occasional clear vocals. From **Mental Home's** upcoming album, *Against the Sun*, comes "Stained". A massive progression from *Black Art*, this track contains clear vocals and a progressive feel. **Love History** perform "The Gleam of Midnight Sky/ Smell of Tears" which was taken from their upcoming debut, *Galileo Figaro Magnifico*. They are primarily instrumental with a progressive, often beautiful feel with mainly female vocals. The melancholic **Agalloch** appear with "Hallways of Enchanted Abony". The vocals are rather weak but music is moody. A section of the seventy plus epic from **Mistigo Vargoth Darkestra's** "The Key to the Gates of Apocalypses" actually has me more interested than before. **Scholomance** are here with "Toy, A Primrose Path to the Second Circle", technical musicianship, astounding keys, and death vocals. **Epoch Of The Unlight's** "Conflagration of Hate" is a death metal tune, more straight forward than the rest of The End's roster. Vocals remind me of Mille from late 80's **Kreator**. Finally we have a new **Nocturnal Mortem** tune, "Perun's Celestial Silver" from their upcoming album *Nechrist*. The tune is busy with some neo-black metal elements and several innovative ideas. This unbelievable package is available for only three bucks. **THE END.**

Demos:

CRANIAL TORMENT... Death Is Rising... **Cranial Torment** play a raw and brutal style of death metal that shows little originality. The recording is very raw and muddy. Maybe with a better production they can put together a more enthusiastic showing. *Death is Rising* contains the following tracks; "Bodybug Lust", "Thoughts of a Graverobber", "Putrid Mass Mutilation", and "Amputation of Vital Organs". What sounds like great lead are barely audible in the mix. 32 Paradise Street, Peristeri, 121 36, Athens Greece.

DESCEND... Hate For Your Blood... This, my friends, is quite excellent. I'm not sure what these guys are doing but it is original, unpredictable, extreme, and riff oriented. Perhaps it was "the influence of mind altering substances" that helped them, but extreme metal has never been so catchy. **Descend** have deeper roots in death metal, as Nate Worthington uses both low growls and coarse screams. A slight **Sabbath** influence creeps into the riffs as well. Worth seeking. Two songs are featured- "Hate for Your Blood" and "Through the Eyes of Pain". P.O. Box 770376, Cleveland, OH 44107 216-221-1408.

DIRTY BROWN EYE... This two song cassette features new songs not available on their self titled debut. "Day In Day Out" was rather nondescript, a surprisingly lame tune from this exciting Yonkers band. "Power of the Sith" on the other hand is exactly what we've come to expect from death metal to screaming vocal passages and the music goes beyond any categorization. An excellent tune that combines many genres into an original but catchy sound. 82 Hillside Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10703 914-463-3245 www.dirtybrowneye.com

MIND TWIST... This is a three song demo from an upcoming Long Island metal band featuring vocalist Motz, guitarists Allison and Phavian, bassist Bone, and drummer Mike. **Mind Twist** play a modern style of metal that has garnered them a lot of attention in the New York scene, especially with hardcore crowds. The three proper songs are rather short and aggressive with some hooks. This is a band that is doing things right. The songs on here match those of any professional band and this disc is well produced. They even include a bonus track with some weird ambience. P.O. Box 181, Centerreach, NY 11720 MindTwist@email.com www.mindtwistnet.com

MONDAY KNIGHTS... This is a Long Island based true metal band featuring members from **Iron Rainbow**, bassist Tom Von Dest, drummer Iron Brian, and guitarist Rob Angel, are joined by Scott Oliva the vocalist of **Live After Death**, ex-**Inner Strength**. This three song demo features the songs "King of the Death Match", "Thank You for the Metal", and "Cataclysm/ No Mans Land". The vocals are comparable to **Iron Maiden's** Bruce Dickinson- powerful and melodic. Musically, **Monday Knights** draw on influences such as **Manowar** and **Maiden**. "Cataclysm/ No Mans Land" is a classic in the making. After an acoustic intro and some great bass playing this song kicks in and it's better than anything **Maiden** have done in over ten years. 2530 Middle Country Road, Centerreach, NY 11720 mondayknights@aol.com

SCRAPE... This New York band has put together an impressive sound. This tape contains the songs "Servant", "Branded", "Dead Alone", "Phased", and "God of Disguise". Their sound combines hardcore and death metal into an effective mix of aggression. The vocals have the right amount of power and coarseness and **Scrape** avoids any cliches this style of metal usually utilizes. Pheroze Karai, 164 Powers Street, Apt. 3, Brooklyn, NY 11211. 718-302-5012, scrape_pheroze@hotmail.com scrape718@aol.com

TERROR THRONE... 1999 Rehearsal... This is a recording of a **Terror Throne** rehearsal from October 1999. We get five songs, "Strengthrouhatred", "Faithless", "Hexed Cursed and Jinxed", "Terror and Tragedy", and "The Fantastic Massacre". The songs are sloppy and noisy, which does not allow **Terror Throne's** true sound to stand out. They are rooted in death metal with some black metal influences. They often have short melodic intros. This is a rehearsal tape and it shows. P.O. Box 101, Summit, IL 60501.

Keith Oswald:

Misfits: Famous Monsters 4 out of 5

The **Misfits** return this time around with Roadrunner Records backing them up on their newest album titles, *Famous Monsters*. Eighteen new songs that keep the **Misfits** tradition alive, with catchy melodies, great sing along choruses and lyrics that deal with such contents as horror and the science fiction movies of the 50's and 60's. Such titles are, "Lost in Space", "Die Monster Die", "Them", and many others. Musically the **Misfits** approach the new album with a heavier up tempo sound, that has many similarities to their 1983 e.p., *Earth A.D.* *Earth A.D.* had a sound unlike no other, by combining punk and metal to create an early hardcore sound. *Earth A.D.* was the last album before singer Glenn Danzig broke the band up. *Famous Monsters* definitely has much more of a thicker louder sound than their predecessor, 1997's *American Psycho*. Released by Geffen Records, *American Psycho* is no way near the heaviness of the new record, but the vocal harmonies and choruses on *American Psycho* are brought out much more on each song. "Fiend Club" and "Forbidden Zone" are more of the traditional **Misfit** songs, that could be compared to their 1978 debut album *Static Age*. But the most interesting song on the new album is "Saturday Night", a do wop styled number that will make you feel like it's the 1950's all over again. Very interesting. All in all *Famous Monsters* is an instant hit with me. If you like the **Misfits**, pre **Danzig** or post **Danzig**, this one will have you digging up someone's grave before you know it. Pick it up.

"Who in the 21st. Century will Dominate the Metal Scene" by Keith Oswald

As the year comes to a close, we can say that metal has evolved into many different styles and genres during the 1990's. The following paragraphs contain many styles of metal that are in today's music scene. There will always be a handful of commercialized metal in the airwaves and in the 1990's you have **Limp Bizkit**, **Marilyn Manson**, **Korn**, **Kid Rock**, **Ozzy Osbourne**, **Pantera**, and many others. Many of you as well as me would not consider this metal, but when you go to the record stores there bands are categorized under metal. M.T.V. always takes the most trendy, fashionable and talentless acts and make them stars. As we approach 2000, M.T.V. will eventually throw these bands away and follow some new crap to sell. Unless you like to make commercial radio junk over and over again, like **Osbourne**, **Metallica**, **Aerosmith**, or **Megadeth**, these bands will be washed up before you know it. The one band I'm afraid may sell out to M.T.V. is **Fear Factory**. They may be the next in line to become a household name. Remember one thing, do not support M.T.V., They will make any band feel at home and then a year later rip you apart. Corporate music is and will always be shit!

Power/ progressive metal exploded in the late 90's and is still on the rise. With the originators being **Manowar**, **Helloween**, **Savatage**, **Queensryche**, **Fates Warning**, etc. They put together a style of music that consisted of complex arrangements with lots of guitar solos and well crafted singing. Influencing many 90's acts as **Iced Earth**, **Hammerfall**, **Blind Guardian**, **Angra**, and others. For the 21st. century I see these bands taking off and doing really well.

Death metal and grindcore is a late 80's, early 90's phenomenon. Many of the originators of these two styles began breaking up by the mid 90's. **Carcass**, **Cynic**, **Pestilence**, **Atheist**, **Nocturnus** (recently have reformed) all had amazing album, but just couldn't continue mainly from horrible album sales and too many musical differences. Today, **Obituary**, **Napalm Death**, **Cannibal Corpse**, **Deicide**, and **Morbid Angel** are the strength behind solid death metal. The attention that these bands once had will never rise to that level and I feel for the new century death/ grindcore will continue to get smaller and smaller acclaim.

The most harsh form of metal that I always thought would stay underground forever was black metal. Black metal goes as far back as 1985-86 with Sweden's **Bathory**, but the sound of black metal that everyone knows and loves started with the rise of **Mayhem**, **Burzum**, **Emperor**, **Dark Throne**, and **Immortal** all coming out of Norway. From the years of 1991 to 1994 there were a series of murders, church fires, desecrating graves, and other criminal acts within these bands. By 1996 black metal began to see the light of day when some black metal bands began to sign with Nuclear Blast and Century Media, two of the biggest independent labels in metal. Bands such as **Emperor**, Norway's **Dimmu Borgir** and England's **Cradle Of Filth** took black metal into new realms. This also bought a massive flood onto the scene that was not needed at all. As for the 21st. century I see black metal getting larger and more commercial. Who knows maybe **Cradle Of Filth** will be approached by Epic or Capitol Records.

Speed/ thrash metal is and will always be around, but the popularity of this genre of music is just limited to a cult following. So many of the originators either broke up or changed their style completely. (**Metallica** and **Megadeth** to name a few). In the 1990's, **Forbidden**, **Coroner**, **Exodus**, **Death Angel**, **Dark Angel**, **Nuclear Assault**, and **Metal Church** all called it quits. Today with the likes of **Anthrax**, **Overkill**, **Kreator**, **Flotsam And Jetsam**, and **Testament**, speed/ thrash is still alive but just not in the forefront of metal like it was ten years ago. I don't think that for the 21st. century you'll see a resurgence of thrash, but the ones that put these albums out, you're guaranteed a decent album.

Atmospheric metal is defined as being heavy in the guitar playing and having the guttural vocals but also having melodies in the keyboard playing, with female vocals. If it wasn't for **Celtic Frost's** 1987 album *Into the Pandemonium* there would be no atmospheric metal. Bands like **Tiamat**, **Moonspell**, **Katonia**, **Lake Of Tears**, the **Gathering**, **Therion**, **Beyond Dawn**, **Anathema**, **Amorphis**, and **Crematory** all started out playing death metal but by their third and fourth albums, melodies and female vocals began to slowly creep into the picture. Some of these bands even include some musical influences from goth. For the next decade I see some of these bands going further as well as never bands like **Within Temptation**, **Even Song**, **Drawn**, and **Cryogenic** doing well.

Techno/ black metal came on to the scene with such early acts as Norway's **Mysticum**, **Zyklon B**, **Beherit**, and the extremely noisy **Vondur**. But within the last two years, some of the originators in black metal have been adding keyboards, sampling, and synchronized drum beats, on top of their original sound. Such veteran acts as **Samael**, **Ulver**, **Thorns**, **Dodheimsgard**, **Arcturus**, and the new **Kovenant** are some of the bands that are creating this fresh new style of black metal. It's still a brand new creation, so I see it peaking within the next three years.

Industrial metal started breaking ground in the late 80's with **Ministry** and **K.M.F.D.M.** Throughout the 1990's there were many bands mixing metal with industrial such as **Skrew**, **Bile**, **Nine Inch Nails**, and the ever so popular **Marilyn Manson**. The scene is kind of quiet right now, except for Germany's **Rammstein**. **Rammstein** has lots of catchy hooks with an extremely heavy guitar sound similar to **Ministry**. The vocals are clear, which is unusual for industrial music since most of the bands need to distort their voice with static. Hate that! Anyway, **Rammstein** sings all their lyrics in German. I don't mind since it gives the music a much darker feel. The only time we need to worry is when they well out and start singing in English.

Hardcore is fusing metal with punk and lyrics dealing with growing up on the streets and politics. **Minor Threat**, **Cro-Mags**, **Agnostic Front**, early **Black Flag** as well as **D.R.I.** all began in the early 80's and took their musical assault to local clubs and bars playing in front of kids who were tired of corporate rock and roll. These bands usually put their own records out and promoted themselves. As the 1990's rolled in the attitude n hardcore never really changed. Bands like **Sick Of It All**, **V.O.D.**, **Biohazard**, **Integrity**, and millions of others are having much success in teh areas these bands originated from. Long Island has one of the largest hardcore scenes in the country. For the next century hardcore won't die out. On Long Island all kids buy is hardcore and pop punk. I would like to see it fizzle out and die, but I'm not the majority buying this stuff.

Doom/ stoner metal all started with the birth of **Black Sabbath** in the early 70's and continued with **Pentagram**, **St. Vitus**, **Trouble**, **Candlemass**, and **Solitude Aeternus** in the 80's and up into the early 90's. In 1991 **Cathedral** put their first album out and began a whole new sound that would be considered stoner metal. Stoner metal was considered **Corrosion Of Conformity**, **Fu Manchu**, **Sheavy**, **Orange Goblin**, **Celestial Season**, **Las Cruces**, and so on. Doom still exists, but the bands that are under this category are more atmospheric with keyboards and at times female vocals. **Evoken**, **Skepticism**, and **Unholy** are some examples of this new form of doom. For the 21st. century early doom and stoner metal will die out, since the 90's were the decade for the 70's influences. As for the atmospheric doom bands, their popularity will never soar, but there's always a small group that will buy this material.

Glam could be traced back as far as 1972 where the New York Dolls, Kiss, Slade, Angel, and even Alice Cooper were all inventing what we know and hate as glam. In the L.A. scene around 1981 Ratt and Motley Crue were starting to make noise. As the late 80's rolled in glam was becoming much more pop oriented and commercialized. Bands like Poison, Trixter, Bulletboys, Nelson, and Bon Jovi were all getting world wide recognition. In 1987 Guns 'n Roses exploded onto the scene and there was no stopping them until 1992. In 1992 glam thank goodness was nearly dead from the commercialized growth of grunge. (a.k.a. Nirvana, Alice In Chains, Stone Temple Pilots, Pearl Jam, etc.) In the shadows however lurked the glam scene, still hanging on by a thread of teased hair. Bands such as Faster Pussycat, L.A. Guns, Enuff Znuuff, and others are still putting albums out unfortunately. Who knows what the 21st. century holds for glam. Hell, we may see again the lipstick, pink tights, and teased hair as well as the bad music all coming to a record store near you. Kiss you are on my shit list. Don't put another thing out. Talentless old men wearing gay ass make up.

Traditional metal is of course the pioneers who started heavy metal. Black Sabbath, Judas Priest, AC/DC, etc. Many of these bands went through millions of band members, a dozen different labels and being on top or being in the gutter. Today many of these bands are still putting records out. You have U.F.O., Scorpions, Accept, Anvil, Exciter, Saxon, Motorhead, Riot, etc. all going strong. The sound and style these veteran bands play will always be respected and purchased. With the rise of power metal many of these bands have the acclaim they once had. The two styles go hand in hand.

The last thing I want to comment on is that for the 21st. century, Iron Maiden will hit the status they once were. As long as they have Bruce Dickinson singing, with Murray, Harris, Smith, McBrain, and yes, Janick Gers on guitars, Iron Maiden should do exceptionally well in Europe and maybe get some notoriety again in the United States.

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November to Dismember

by Y.Y.P.

November to Dismember, the third metal fest installment presented this year went off without a hitch down in San Antonio, Texas. Spawned by the legendary Milwaukee Metalfest, this event was part of a series of shows designed to reach the four corners of the United States and bring the brutal attack of modern metal to the masses while pushing the fakers and cynics aside. The March Metal Meltdown in N.J. last year was the first production offered by promoter Jack Koshic outside of the popular Milwaukee shows which have been gaining momentum and international attention for years. The only shows of their kind in the U.S., Koshic's Metalfests have been compared to the mammoth European shows that have been keeping metal alive through these lean years of M.T.V. and radio indifference. Now with metal on the rise again these shows are at the cutting edge, presenting a wide variety of underground and mainstream acts encompassing death, thrash, doom, progressive, and hardcore styles.

Never a stranger to controversy, Jack Koshic has had his share of run-ins with local politics because of the size and content of his shows. There were several local camera crews covering the initial stages of this event, gravitating to the more outlandish characters and some of the early bands that were performing. These shows seem to generate a certain degree of trepidation and concern wherever they happen to occur but it's ironic that something like Woodstock '99 collapsed into violent chaos when the Metalfests have remained mostly free of destructive behavior.

The show got off to a bit of a slow start as the first few bands hit the three separate stages in a desperate bid for the attention of the early arrivals. The main stage featured **Shango**, one of the many N.Y.C. bands making the trek to Texas for this show. The vocalist/ bassist is a ferocious mix of biker/ wrestler/ comedian with a touch of Savador Dali thrown in. A handlebar moustache, goatee and mile high mohawk sitting squarely on top of his three hundred pound frame is something that should not be missed. The music fuses punk, hardcore, and metal with tongue in cheek lyrics for a devastating effect. The drumming here is rock solid and the guitarist has a tone so thick it's like having a telephone book dropped on your head. **Shango** has performed at the last three shows and would probably be better served if they went on later in the evening. Because they are stylistically much different than the majority of the bands that play at these shows, they would be a welcome relief to what sometimes sounds like a wild pack of snarling barking dogs.

The same thing could be said about **October Thorns**, a Brooklyn based band on the Nightfall stage that had the crowd roaring its approval in between songs. This six piece monster continues to stun and surprise the majority of the people that attend these shows blending styles from techno to thrash. Rooted in technical virtuosity they sometimes draw comparisons to **Dream Theater** and other prog bands but they are definitely more aggressive than progressive. The twin guitars are dominated by a seventeen year old high school senior who has more chops than many seasoned veterans and just as much finesse. Lightning fast harmony runs are perfectly doubled by the second guitarist who has a kinetic stage presence that is reminiscent of the Tasmanian Devil. They were accentuated by the flashy showmanship of their six string bassist who brought back fond memories of the best arena rock of the 80's. Never resting for a moment, he put on a great show and had no problem keeping the pace with the two guitarists. The synth lines were exotic and textural, relying on classical theory, electronica, and blinding solos to evoke **Rammstein** as much as Chopin in any given moment. Many bands use keyboards as an after thought but these guys have the keys at an equal level of intricacy. **October Thorns** is anchored by one of the best drummers this style has to offer. This is a performer who uses technical ability to create memorable and melodic drum parts, crossing the line between beat keeper and songwriter.

The vocals were a surprising blend of clean tenor and bleating grunts with almost all of the band members given solo lines and harmonies. Both guitarists had powerful voices, one going for a psychotic death approach and the other managed the bulk of the clean harmonies. The lead vocalist has a range that can go from both a low rumble to shrieking highs in an instant and he was one of the only frontmen at this event with a clean singing style. At times wild and out of control, this guy brings to mind a bit of Jim Morrison and Mike Patton but still seems to need a little work on his performance skills. All in all a great performance from an up and coming band that has only been together for about a year and has managed to hit the last three fests in addition to Power Mad and as well as an opening slot for **In Flames** in N.J.

Unfortunately with an event this size it's impossible to see every band and it makes for a very long two days. Much to my disappointment I missed **Wycked Wytch** who had a standout performance at Milwaukee this year. They've gone through a complete line-up change since then and I was interested in the new direction but heard from word of mouth that they did well. They are one of the few bands to feature a woman let alone a lead singer and she has a range and style that

can peel the paint off the walls. When I caught them in Milwaukee this summer I literally dragged all my friends down to center stage where we stood, jaws agape as this unearthly sound came out of this woman.

Pissing Razors has been making quite a name for themselves in the past few months and they did not disappoint, delivering a high energy set that made you feel like you knew what they were talking about when they came up the band's name. **Bloodstorm**, one of the most visually interesting bands fell a little short musically. They are well known for taking their dark dimension lyrics seriously but it's hard to follow if you're not up on the terminology. However, they put on a decent show and looked amazing in their chain mail and battle armor.

When I first saw **Riot** at the Meltdown in N.J., it was to my embarrassment that I had never heard of them before. I was an instant convert from the first note. This 80's metal band should have been up there with **Whitesnake** and **Def Leppard** but didn't make it that far, probably because they are about one hundred times better. Mike DiMeo is possibly the most powerful vocalist in that genre, blending soulful blues with effortless balls to the wall metal screaming. The dual lead guitars were extremely melodic and tasteful, reminiscent of **Racer X** or the **Eagles** on steroids. One of the best performances at the show even though they are far outside of what the underground scene considers relevant at this point. Well, fuck 'em.

Flotsam And Jetsam failed to hold my attention, probably due to no fault of their own just fatigue on my own part. They were followed by **Skinlab**, who have a great stage show but are hampered by weak songs. They are tons of fun to watch and have plenty of New York attitude and aggression but failed to deliver a solid memorable hook or riff. Next up was **Crowbar** who played a wonderfully slow, grinding style of metal that reminded me of a bulldozer in low gear, crushing and relentless. I missed most of the **Chasm's** set but after hearing only the last few chords of the last song this is certainly something that I won't miss in the future.

Grey Skies Fallen, one of the big standouts at the March show returned with a vengeance after a relatively lifeless performance in Milwaukee. Several line-up changes in the past year have caused some level of inconsistency in their performances but with the current members they seem to have solidified their dirge like doom style into an amazing sonic sludge. Vocals are powerful and majestic from a booming baritone to growling death styles. The two guitars offer a rich texture of harmony and counterpoint that when blended with the keyboards are almost orchestral. One of the best performances I've seen from them.

Moonspell had a great show, blending theatricality (they all come out in a light dusting of white powder and beat up clothes) with solid songwriting. There is a goth element, borrowing from Peter Murphy and **Bauhaus** but with a decidedly modern edge. I made a half joking remark to Pete Steele of **Type O Negative** at a recent show that **Moonspell** was ripping them off. He laughed and said, "we're ripping them off!" **Moonspell** makes great use of dynamics and clean guitars to give contrast to the heavy dark themes and crushing instrumental sections. Their front man is a great performer who looks completely unbalanced as he tells his tales of vampire lore in a deep European accent that only serves to add to their theatrical flair.

The mighty **Storm Troopers Of Death** took the main stage and proceeded to tear shit up in a way that only they can do. There's nothing like an old school N.Y.C. mosh pit and Texas provided a perfect cyclone of whirling bodies and demented personalities. Songs like "Pussy Whipped" and "Speak English or Die" were delivered with fresh energy and a renewed sense of commitment to their fans. Scott Ian's rhythm guitar work is simply stunning, proving that a guitarist can still be technically amazing even without taking a solo. **S.O.D.** is a force to be reckoned with sending out blast beats like machine gun fire and pummeling the pit with their aggression and good humor.

Finally the long wait for Sweden's **In Flames** was over and never has there been a band with a more appropriate name. When they played in Milwaukee and it was so packed that I had to watch them from across the hall. This time I was able to get right up front and let me tell you, it was unbelievable. This band maintains a sense of structure and melody that **Maiden** and **Priest** solidified in the 80's but these guys take it one step further, incorporating the vocal style of current metal and dropping the guitars to grunge low C tunings. This is a must see band for any fan of modern metal with a scorching delivery and hooks so memorable you'll be singing them the second time around. They have one of the best frontmen I have ever seen, kind of a cross between Eddie Vedder in his pre whiner stage and Joe Cocker in full epileptic spasm. I can't say enough good things about this band and everyone I've met has the same opinion. See this band live at all costs.

Director: Paul Thomas Anderson

"The Man Who is Making Hollywood an Exciting Place Again" by Brett Van Put

One of the most unpredictable and cutting edge directors to emerge in the late eighties is Paul Thomas Anderson. He first came onto the big screen via a small independent movie titled *Hard Eight*. While this movie showed the potential he would eventually allow to come to fruition, it does not measure up to what he did with both *Boogie Nights* and *Magnolia*. Both of these films are masterpieces.

Hard Eight came out in 1995 and told the story of a man played by John C. Reilly, who is broke and down on his luck while sitting outside of a diner near Las Vegas. A stranger played by Phillip Baker Hall shows up and offers him a chance to win back the money Reilly lost in Vegas by loaning him enough and telling him how to go about winning it back. Surprisingly, Hall's character turns out to be legitimate and his influence helps Reilly become financially prosperous. Small roles by Samuel Jackson and Gweneith Paltrow. One must wonder why Hall would be so willing to help out Reilly and by the end of the movie Jackson's character reveals the surprising twist and the connection that the two partners had unbeknownst to Reilly's character. Although this was a clever turn of events, the movie does not stand up to Anderson's work on *Boogie Nights* and *Magnolia*. However, *Hard Eight* does establish Hall, Reilly, and Philip Seymour Hoffman in a small cameo as actors who would play large roles in subsequent films of Anderson. He also uses chiming bells as a foreshadow of intense scenes, a device that enhances *Boogie Nights* most insane scenes as it comes to its finale. There is also mention of the character of Floyd Gondoli, who appears in *Boogie Nights*. Anderson also displayed his admiration for Martin Scorsese with some directorial nods to his past works, especially in the way characters would give money to each other with the camera operating in slow motion.

Next for Anderson was *Boogie Nights*. This movie had a running time of over three hours and told the story of people involved in the porno industry over a period of ten years in the late seventies and early eighties. Many people mistaking thought it would be a *Saturday Night Fever* type of film and were put off by the content and the language, leading to many congregating to the theater exits well before the end. The best thing about *Boogie Nights* is perhaps the acting ability of the largely unknown or washed up cast. Although the film centered largely on Mark Wahlberg's character, people such as Hoffman, Burt Reynolds (nominated for the Oscar), Julianne Moore, Reilly, Don Cheadle, Heather Graham, and William H. Macy how really steal the show. While *Boogie Nights* did an effective job of showing the stupidity of the people involved it also allowed the audience to feel a sympathy and a kindness to this eclectic group of characters and their actions.

This film contained some of the most unpredictable scenes in recent memory. As the film winds down and Cheadle's character enters a doughnut shop while his pregnant wife (Melora Walters) waits in the car is thrilling and totally unpredictable. What seems at first to be a horrible sequence of events actually leads to unexpected dreams coming true. The following scene in which Wahlberg, Reilly, and Thomas Jane try to rip off a notorious drug dealer played by Alfred Molina is as intense as it gets. Anderson allows the camera to linger on Wahlberg's face as he goes through a series of emotions betraying the desperation of his situation. Once again a shocking chain of events ensue with the final outcome surprisingly upbeat. The theme of this film is family. No matter what happens between people who are close to one another, there is always forgiveness in times of need. *Boogie Nights* is propelled by one of the best soundtracks ever, making songs like Night Ranger's "Sister Christian" and Rick Springfield's "Jessie's Girl" songs that will never let you forget the memorable scene stealers played by Jane and Alfred Molina. *Boogie Nights* is largely a series of scenes that are larger than the whole. Many of these are brilliant and unforgettable, even if the plot moves at a rather slow pace. Scorsese is once again in inspiration as Wahlberg's speech to himself in the mirror is modeled after Raging Bull and DeNiro's memorable speech- thrice repeated. Anderson uses the Biblical story of the prodigal son as a mirror for Wahlberg's character's descent into drug addiction and ultimate return to ask for forgiveness.

This year saw the release of *Magnolia*. While many are hyping Tom Cruise's role as an Oscar contender and a shocking role reversal for the American icon, this film once again is driven by its talented and diverse cast. Almost all of the *Boogie Nights* cast, including minor characters all play roles in this movie. *Magnolia* once again runs at over a three hour mark but it is well worth your time and money. Joining Cruise is once again Reilly (a lonely cop), Hall (a scummy game show host), Jason Robards (dying man), Moore (his depressed, drugged wife), Walters (Hall's drug addicted daughter), Hoffman (Robards sympathetic nurse), Macy (former child game show star). This is once again a film that's theme centers around forgiveness and redemption. Like *Boogie Nights*, this film was not something that Hollywood would openly embrace due to his penchant for coarse language and difficult scenes of emotion. Like *Boogie Nights*, there is a surprisingly low body count despite the potential for violence or dangerous drug habits. This film also, like *Boogie Nights*, shows the absurdity of situations that people deal with in every day life and how they react to them. In addition to Anderson's Scorsese nods, he use Hitchcockian camera angles. He sets up his story by telling the real life coincidence of a person who climbs atop a building and jumps off a building attempting suicide only to land in a safety net below, however he is shot by a wife arguing with her husband who accidentally fires his shotgun. The shot, coincidentally, his the young man attempting suicide thereby making it a homicide- one more coincidence is that the young man is actually their son. Yes, the mother murdered her own son. This scene of chance sets up a cast of characters living in L.A. whose lives intersect with one another in odd and sometimes amusing ways. Yes indeed, Cruise does steal the show as a over arrogant group leader of women dominators. His decent from overconfidence and ultimate break down is one of the stories many highlights. Aimee Mann's performance on the soundtrack mirrors the musical prominence Anderson developed with *Boogie Nights* music. Once again the Bible is a source of inspiration for Anderson. In a shocking scene near the end of the movie, a hailing of frogs careens out of the sky upon the characters. This bold move by Anderson is allegorical in idea, however its shocking display and awkwardness leaves the audience hysterically laughing at its absurdity. This is a filmmaker who plays by his own rules. With three films to his credit, Anderson has the power to have final say on script and casting decisions, a rare quality that ensures his movies will be something of excitement for his audiences.

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The second day of these shows is always a bitch to get up for. Sore from the pits and a bit hung over, I stumbled over to the Civic Center in time to catch Forcefed, yet another N.Y.C. band to make it down. These poor guys had to travel fifty hours by bus and they made sure that it counted. Forcefed has taken a slight change in direction since their Milwaukee appearance, replacing their drummer and guitarist and going more death core. It seemed to suit their vocalists quite well as they wound a couple numbers down to a painful snails pace that was heavy as fuck. They are the masters of self promotion as well creating a feeding frenzy at the end of their set, giving out free merchandise. For the remainder of the day their t-shirts could be seen in the crowd with "Brooklyn Pride" emblazoned on the back.

I was surprised and disappointed by the fact that Anal Blast was actually quite good. With song titles like "Tampon Teabag" and "Suck Your Shit Off My Cock", I was hoping to ridicule them all day but they were tight and interesting with an impressive vocalist and great musicians. The crowd seemed more interested in the half naked dancers on stage and San Antonio police had to make sure things didn't get out of hand. The set was marred by some small technical difficulties and also by the fact that the lyrics were completely unintelligible. If you're going to great lengths to be this offensive why not make sure that everyone can understand you?

After a short break to visit the Alamo I returned in time to see Morbid Angel, a band that has had to cancel on several past scheduled appearances finally came through much to the relief of their fans. Long considered to be one of the best bands in the death metal field, they set out to prove this to be true with their barbaric drumming, vast sweeping guitar lines and guttural vocals. Although there was little stylistic variation in their set, they were able to grab your attention with the sheer force of their delivery. Many die hard fans would have had a problem with a new front man but this crowd gave him their complete support.

Finally there was the ultimately disappointing sets by Danzig. I don't know why I was under the impression that this would be a good show. Opening with a Samhain reunion, Glen failed to impress, hampered by pitch problems and monitor feedback that he seemed completely oblivious to. After about three songs I headed back to the hotel only to find that one of our companions had been left behind. We returned just in time to see the top of the Danzig set and decided to stay but once again were forced to leave out of sheer boredom and exhaustion. I don't want to be too critical because I am afraid that he'll come and kick my sorry ass but I was really hoping for something more. The live footage for "Mother" back in the 80's is what my vision of Danzig is live and this simply didn't measure up.

Jack Koshic seems bent on providing America with a travelling circus of metal's dark underbelly. This music is not for the faint of heart and features none of the qualities featured by M.T.V.'s flavor of the month hybrid bands. If metal is your passion, make every effort to catch one of these shows, one in L.A. during May and the return to N.J. for this year's March Metal Meltdown. You won't be disappointed.

Big Bang '99

A Benefit for the Eric Carr Fund at St. Jude Children's Hospital

by Y.Y.P.

Sunday July 18, 1999 saw a gathering of high caliber progressive metal bands that was off the scale in terms of intensity and raw talent. Most of the bands have either played or are scheduled to play at Powermad, the East Coast's premier prog metal fest and it was a treat to see them all without making the trek to Baltimore.

First up was **October Thorns**, a new six piece outfit out of the Brooklyn area who started a buzz that lasted the whole day and beyond. In the truest definition of progressive music they blended musical elements which are diverse and cross boundaries of styles and stereotypes. The lead guitarist is only sixteen years old and he's already got the chops and feel of a professional twice his age. John Petrucci look out! Most of the songs draw a quick **Dream Theater** comparison but as the set progressed the styles of **Meshuggah**, **Faith No More**, and **Death** started to creep in. They quickly won over the early arrivals and other band members with a fantastic set while the sun was still shining down through the skylights. They have a dual guitar set up balanced by a great keyboardist that utilized the full range of textures and sounds that totally complemented the songs. Their energetic stage performance and complex song arrangements make this a band to be on the lookout for. The drummer and bass player alone have more stage presence than most of the front men currently on the scene so you can imagine what kind of impact six of them had. The vocalist expanded his already amazing variety of styles with multiple effects treatments almost treating his voice like a guitar. Look for them at this year's Powermad and Milwaukee Metalfest as well as local shows listed on www.Catalystpromotions.com.

Next up was **X Factor X**, a band with clear ties to 80's pop metal but with a decidedly 90's twist. The vocalist had the rock star thing down pat with all the stage presence of a David Coverdale but a little more rock than cock. The harmonies seemed a little rusty and unrehearsed but the main vocals were clear and pitch perfect. They've incorporated a new bassist who blended slap and flamenco styles into an already ambitious mix of metal and half distorted alternative sounds. The guitarist had a great tone and had little use for effects or self indulgent soloing. They can be reached at www.xfactorx.com.

Currently at work on their next project for Italy's Energy Records, **Aztec Jade** laid to waste last year's performance at Powermad. Their music is based on powerful orchestral textures and they can switch from full blown to subtle in the blink of an eye. The bassist used a two hand technique more for counterpoint lines than flashy hammer-on moves and it helped to propel the music giving it a cool groove and flow. They use inventive and original synth sounds and a great sense of dynamics to give the vocals plenty of inspiration for melody. The lack of any marketable hooks in the choruses would be the only criticism for an otherwise very intriguing band. Their website is www.klink.net.

Another band to play last year's Powermad was **Event**. The drummer/ stage manager for the show wore so many hats that day I swore he was the Cat in the Hat until Rob Thorne actually came out in a red and white top hat but let's save that for his review. Matt was also responsible for the keyboard parts and you'd have to be Dick Tracy to figure out how he pulled it off. He was also a major contributor of equipment to the show letting all the drummers abuse his set. Hats off to Matt-pun intended. This band lays out a solid foundation of prog fused with electronic elements and intricate jazz laced melodies. The vocalist is a dead ringer for Keifer Sutherland and has a great arrogant stage presence that is borderline cool/ annoying. Maybe he's cool because he's annoying. Anyway, the vocals were a mid-range, smooth trip full of power and confidence with emotional harmonies and themes. The synth parts were flowing and full of filter manipulation not just pads and stabs but well developed parts and ideas. This band clearly had some schooling but it wasn't in the level of musicianship that they were most impressive. All of the bands at this event were at better than average to stellar musicianship but **Event** had great songs as well. They can be reached at www.mysticfishhook.com.

When **Crucible** trotted out a museum of 70's classic keyboards like a B3, CP70, OB8 and even a Mellotron it was easy to jump to the conclusion that the music of early **Genesis** had played an influence on them. When they started playing they supported this conclusion and then went far beyond. Form crystal clear clean guitar to sweeping British style art music, these guys held the banner for a time when prog was more about anguish than anger and angst. Each player represented taste and restraint and played with a level of maturity that only comes from years of experience. The drum fills were so tasteful that one would think that they were listening to a seasoned session pro. The vocalist had a fantastic theater style voice that blended perfectly with the keyboardist's harmonies and made it sound as if there were many more than just two of them singing. This band probably has the only four string bassist left in the world and he clearly makes use

of every inch of that fretboard. The songs were moody and beautiful and full of evocative melodies that left an extremely pleasant feeling of well being in the listener's mind.

This was in sharp contrast to the music of **Enertia**. These boys were dirty. Just filthy and you had to love every minute of it. With a style so raw and aggressive you'd think someone was sandblasting your face, these guys draw on 70's tradition bass lines and catchy riffs to grind you into submission. The lead guitarist blazes with guitar hero technique but never bores you with excess. As for the vocals, it was as if someone had kidnapped Dio and forced him to drink lighter fluid and then fire one up. Most of the songs reminded me of E.Z.O.'s "Kiss of Fire" from early **Headbanger's Ball** footage with foot stomping riffs and psychotic drums. The drummer made extensive use of a bizarre little riveted hi-hat and it was extremely effective in their unique brand of metal. They can be found on the web at www.animated-insanity.com/enertia.html.

Next up were Magna Carta recording artists **Ice Age**, a band that makes you wish **Styx** had taken themselves more seriously. The lead vocalist was surrounded by a maze of keyboards that would make Keith Emerson blush. Although the equipment obscured him a bit, the size and amount of toys in his set-up added to the feeling of a huge progressive event. Their music was sweeping and majestic without a trace of pretension. The theatrical vocals were delivered with passion and conviction and the whole band played with great finesse. Supporting the June release of their debut c.d., *The Great Divide* they ripped through a variety of new numbers as well as some that the crowd was obviously familiar with. They've also been recently featured in *Progression* and *Billboard* magazines heralding a return to music with a harder edge and they certainly delivered a set of intelligent, well thought out excursions into this style of modern prog.

Soundscape finally got the crowd to its feet drawing upon the foundation laid down by bands like **Yes** and **Gentle Giant**. Their thick layers of four part vocal harmonies brought to mind the rich textures of *Fragile* as well as the instrumental virtuosity presented on other **Yes** albums like *Close to the Edge*. Clearly playing to a hometown crowd (it's not often that you see people dancing to this type of music) this band worked their amazing connection to their audience with solid pop inspired hooks and uplifting choruses. Their guitarist possesses a level of dexterity and fluidity that is simply mind boggling and his interplay with the keyboardist/ vocalist was at a level not seen since Beck and Hammer wrote the Bible on jazz fusion. Their performance was full of energy and without any sense of posturing, it was all honest and straight from the heart. This approach doesn't seem to work with many of today's bands so it was good to see a band that wasn't afraid to enjoy themselves onstage and let everyone know about it. They can be reached at www.angelthorne.com.

Closing the show was Joe Stump, a walking time warp to the 80's when guitarists were king and shred was the flavor of the day. He started off with a harmonizer riff that quickly broke into a neo-classical romp straight out of *Rising Force* era Yngwie. If that's not your cup of tea, Joe's not for you because he is faithful and true to this style without compromise. Joining him onstage were members of **Event** to fill out his back-up band as well as Mike Vescera, a former **Loudness**/ Yngwie vocalist. If this style does ever come back around this is a band that certainly has the chops to hold their own. Neo-neo classical metal? www.joestump.com.

Event organizer Christina Ricciardi made an impressive debut as an organizer and promoter of this awesome production. For a first attempt at an event this large it was an overwhelming success. Keep an eye out for these bands as they make their way around the area and if this is the type of music you're into, consider travelling to the regional festivals they will be appearing at. They could all use a little home town support.



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3rd Annual Power Mad Festival

by Brett Van Put

I would like to start off by saying the Power Mad Festival was the best weekend of my life. Never have I had such a good time at a show before. Every band was enjoyable, all the people were friendly, and we were never bored. I would like to thank all the bands, the staff, and most importantly, Keith Menser for a thrilling weekend.

My best friend, Samantha, and I arrived in Baltimore later than expected due to extreme traffic, but after checking in to our hotel room we travelled to Tall Cedars hoping we weren't too late. Due to a shortage of guitar heads, opener **Zandelle** went on about two hours later than the scheduled four o'clock start. The N.Y.C. based foursome kicked off with some classic 80's inspired metal. Vocalist/ bassist George Tsalikis impressed with his ability to keep his voice in the upper register throughout their set. This band shows promise and if they get to a good studio for their third release, **Zandelle** will make an impact.

One of the highlights of the festival came next, **Twisted Tower Dire**. I learned about the band through Jeff Brown's Bad Posture record label, with whom T.T.D. recorded a seven inch and had a song on their *Metal Injection* disc. Their Maiden inspired epic metal has people buzzing about this band. Just check out their review in the usually cynical toward power metal, *Terrorizer* magazine. Vocalist Tony Taylor and guitarist Scott Waldrop are two nice guys who are true metal warriors. Tony is one of the most intense and dedicated singers in the business.

Next up is Wisconsin's **Talamasca**. Vocalist Steve Gentz sounds even better live and his sense of humor is welcome. One of the nicest bands in the business, it will be a travesty if they don't make an impact on the metal scene. After a late night/ early morning breakfast with Steve, guitarist Andy Paredes, and **Planet Sarcasm** guitarist Mike Grey, a good friendship was started. Hell, Andy even took an immediate vacation and travelled to Long Island to visit us.

Division have established a reputation as partiers. Matt Crooks must have been annihilated the whole entire weekend. Their set included songs from their two albums, *Paradise Lost* and *Ascension to Eternity*. They are an exciting band to watch and their popularity in the metal scene proves them to be great people. Vocalist Scott Stewart has a unique voice that is unparalleled.

Another band that we spent some time with and impressed with their desire to live and breath metal and pleasant demeanor was **Nightmares End**. An interesting live specimen, their doom/ prog/ traditional/ gothic combination allows them originality. Drummer Raven and bassist Tyson (Jani Lane look alike) are great people, while vocalist Nightmare alternates between a freaky surreal personality and a genuine down to earth personality. Look for their debut, *Blackened Mystery*.

Cleveland's **Antithesis** played tracks from their self titled debut which has been compared to the likes of **Mercyful Fate** and **Fates Warning**. They played an inspired set and even though this sounds redundant, bassist James Lewis and drummer Paul Kostyack proved to be pleasant company.

I must commend **Ion Vein**. Not only did they play an exceptional set of original progressive power metal (no keyboards) but they also stayed the whole weekend and supported every band that played. **Ion Vein** are one of the upcoming bands and their debut, *Beyond Tomorrow*, proves they are a band of infinite potential. Guitarist Chris Lotesto is an intelligent and thoughtful person which makes their success all the more special.

The closer of the opening night, **Tiles**, performed a **Rush** inspired set of progressive hard rock. The band came down from Michigan and played songs from their three releases. I compliment the Power Mad stage crew and the bands for making sure **Tiles** went on when they were scheduled to do so. They were technically exceptional yet lacked energy or a stage presence. A successful evening that was most remembered an energetic **Twisted Tower Dire** and the flamboyant **Nightmares End**.

Day Two: As expected, Saturday was the best attended day of the festival. Scott McGill's **Hand Farm** kicked off at one o'clock with his unique brand of instrumental jazz/ progression/ metal blend. A good twist that helped make the day special.

Cleveland's **Midevil** played a set comprised of tunes from their first two full lengths, *The Almighty* and *Expiration Date*, and a couple from their new e.p., *Forced to Believe*. **Midevil** plays an energetic thrash with Hetfield like vocals.

One band that really ripped some heads off were **Forte**. The band has been around for ten years and just continue to get tighter and louder. Bassist Rev and Scott brothers, drummer Greg and guitarist Jeff, have kept **Forte** rolling despite several vocalist changes. Their Power Mad set took songs from all four of their releases and they proved to be the heaviest and most aggressive band of the weekend.

San Diego's **Cage** have developed a reputation for their 80's power metal and their desire to make it popular again. While they played an excellent set of **Priest/ Savatage/** vintage 80's metal they had the difficult task of following **Forte's** aggressive set. They also did a great cover of **Savatage's** "Dungeons are Calling". Due to **Ice Age's** cancellation and **Soundscape's** late arrival there was

Now for the highlight of the festival. Connecticut's **Soundscape** injected a needed stage presence and personality. Rob Thorne donned his trademark top hat and played shirtless with his flamboyant spandex pants. Guitarist Todd Rose has developed a reputation as one of the best guitarists in the business. Hopefully **Soundscape** will survive, all the work they have done has mostly gone over people's heads but no band puts on a better show. I challenge anyone to show me another band with a better live presentation. The Power Mad crowd obviously agreed as **Soundscape** received the only chant for an encore. Due to strict scheduling and respect for the other bands they failed to oblige.

After that set, the most amazing thing is that **Evergrey, Mayadome, Holy Mother, and Lethal** followed with astounding sets themselves. **Evergrey** offered a set that culled the best songs from both *The Dark Discovery* and their newly released *Solitude Dominance Tragedy*. Emotional, powerful metal with effective sample and keyboard enhancement. **Evergrey** have the rare ability to have emotionally charged lyrics and music combined with crushingly heavy music. It is this paradox that summarizes the tall and massive frontman/ guitarist Tom S. Englund and his mellow countenance.

This was a big night for **Mayadome**, who like **Evergrey**, made the trip all the way from Sweden. **Mayadome's** set was recorded for an upcoming live album to be released by Siegen Records. The bands has several adamant followers in the States and their shows have been well attended. Even though I found vocalist Bassel's essence crowd coercion to be a bit too much the band played an excellent set that took songs from both of their releases. Drummer Teddy Moller is one of the most talented musicians and an ardent supporter of the metal scene.

After the enthusiastic crowd response to **Soundscape, Evergrey, and Mayadome, Holy Mother** had the pressure of putting on a show to compete with them. Even though they were visibly disappointed by the crowd response they played a high energy set of kick ass metal. Perhaps a little too rock oriented, don't get me wrong they are very heavy, but the progressive crowd may be too demanding for them. I must thank **Holy Mother** for opening with "Electric Love", my favorite song by these Long Island rockers.

The headliners of the night, **Lethal**, closed the night with one of the most talked about sets of the weekend. The Kentucky band's first record, *Programmed* (1990) came out before many of these Power Mad bands even started. The only band here to have once had the benefit of M.T.V. exposure. **Lethal** kicked out a set comprised of a couple tunes from both *Programmed* and *Poison Seed*, while displaying about five new songs. Vocalist Tom Mallicoat showed he could still sing in that amazing falsetto heard on songs like "Immune". The newer material sounds more like the *Poison Seed* era than *Programmed*.

I was quite surprised to hear Samantha say that she was exhausted as our third and final day arrived. She has more stamina than I do and even a great package like the **Quiet Room/ Jag Panzer/ Iced Earth** has been known to test my resolve. It was at this point that I realized this weekend would never bore me. Even the time between bands was never too long because it presented me with time to socialize. **Monument** were the first band on the bill as their set began at one, I was happy to see a few familiar faces from the well attended Saturday show. **Monument** were quite energetic and their doom laced true metal went over quite well. All you underground metal devotees should give them respect for devoting time and money while setting up a booth and listening station for the Power Mad weekend.

Next came Pennsylvania's **Andeavor** with an excellently played progressive metal set. Douglas Peck is even more impressive in the live setting with his powerful and emotional vocals. This band has already proven with a professional sound that even **Dream Theater** was unable to attain upon first try.

October Thorns- remember that name and track down their debut e.p. when it comes out this fall. Definitely the biggest surprise and if not for **Lethal** and **Soundscape**, the best performance, this band really turned heads with their modern progressive sound. Their straight prog songs are impressive enough but when they get really aggressive and Paul Laplaca utilizes various vocal styles they produce an original and invigorating sound. Props to Laplaca who also played keyboards. They are the only band who successfully played shows at festivals in New Jersey, Milwaukee, and Baltimore.

After a drawing for a guitar signed by all the bands who played that weekend, **Cipher** took the stage. It wasn't easy to match **October Thorns** set but **Cipher** produced a set of tunes from their debut full length, *Kingdom of the Blind*, and newly released *4:45*, that was truly crushing. **Cipher** play a style of metal likened to bands like **Anthrax**, **J**, and **Psychotic Waltz** but it is guitarist Matt Difabio who sets them

Metalfest XIII: Three N.Y.C. Bands Hit the Road

by Y.Y.P.

For NYC based bands **Forcefed**, **Zandelle**, and **October Thorns** the trek to Milwaukee for the annual Metalfest was no walk in the park. Late starts and miscommunications, common occurrences in the life of any young musician only served to compound the already grueling 18 hour drive. All three bands are members of Brooklyn based Catalyst Promotions, a loose conglomerate of New York City talent that spans the range from hardcore to metal and beyond. Dave Pando, founder of both Catalyst and prog metal rockers **October Thorns** started his morning at 5 a.m. when he put in a full shift at his day job. He then got behind the wheel for the lion's share of the drive, stopping briefly only for gas and Vivarin. Travelling long distances together can put a strain on any relationship but as one road weary traveler remarked, "There's something about a shared experience, surviving a trial together. It brings you closer together as a band and as friends."

This sense of pulling together was evident in many of the travelling musicians and their companions as well. The obstacles to overcome were formidable and considering the flack that this event has received it's no surprise that young bands were feeling a strong sense of, "us against them" as the performance date drew near. Metalfest promoter Jack Koshic has been widely criticized in the past for his approach, specifically his policy for making bands buy \$1000 worth of tickets up front as well as a nominal fee for entry on the day that they're not performing. This year he also ran into considerable difficulty when the State Fair Park reneged on an earlier agreement to hold the annual extravaganza there.

In spite of the inherent problems an event of this size can generate (or perhaps because of them) bands from all over the country and even the world have found a community of like minded fans and musicians that they can share their enthusiasm with. All across America for the two days preceding the event you could find travelling caravans of bands and their followers plodding their way to Milwaukee in what amounted to a mass exodus of black t-shirts, leather, and a generous supply of attitude. Drivers would pass one another with metallic salutes and shouts of, "what band do you play with?" barked over the roar of the road. Every rest stop was filled with mid western terror as hoards of tattooed and multiple pierced freaks descended for a quick bite and an even quicker return to the highway. This all served to create a bond similar to soldiers going into battle together. For many fans and musicians this was a moment of truth, a self defining step and it wasn't taken lightly.

"This is a chance for us to show our support and meet other bands," one devotee explained. "Metal music is making a strong comeback and I want to enjoy it before the recording industry devours it and strips it of all its credibility. It seems that every few years a musical style comes into prominence and the record labels and M.T.V. jump all over it and over expose it to the point that it kills itself. Look at alternative music in the early 90's. It was a reaction against all the image based bands of the 80's but by the time the media ran with it, the new uniforms of non-conformity had become mainstream and flannel shirts replaced spandex without any real change in how the business was run. "We're hoping that the same thing doesn't happen with this new wave of metal." Most fans share this outlook and are wary of any outsider interest. "Keeping it underground keeps it real", remarked another.

For **October Thorns** the six piece juggernaut from Brooklyn, this is one of several small steps in their young career. Guitarist Dave Pando explains, "We just played the March Metal Meltdown in New Jersey and we will be playing the Powermad festival in Baltimore at the end of August. We're pretty fortunate that our crossover of several different styles allows us to be at home on any one of these stages. I think that we are the only band to play all three shows this year and that's a hat trick we're all pretty proud of. We've been together less than nine months and we've accomplished a lot."

On the day of the show **Forcefed** was put in the unfortunate position of playing an 11:30 a.m. slot. Luckily this event attracts quite a die hard crowd and even though they were few in numbers they made up for it with their enthusiasm (ever see a mosh pit before twelve noon?) Front man Ray Mazzola prowled the stage like a pro and took full advantage of the Brooklyn crowd that had travelled the country to see these three bands. The high point of their set was when they brought up vocalist Tom Cummings of **Vext**, yet another Catalyst band. They proceeded to tear into a vicious hardcore duet that made most of the death metal bands that day look like they were playing the Barney theme song.

Unfortunately **October Thorns** and **Zandelle** were both on at the same time at different stages so they couldn't catch each other's show but both bands had memorable performances. **Thorns**' blazed the rough a short set of songs that showcased their trademark sound of combining several different styles and had the

place roaring its approval between songs. Their explosive delivery and psychotic stage presence left an impression that attracted several small labels and management companies. **Zandelle** also had a great set with new fans surrounding them afterwards demanding autographs and future show information. A sweat soaked George Tsalakis, vocalist and bassist for the band half joked, "Now I know what it feels like to be a rock star!"

The following day should have been one of rest and recovery, riding high on the enthusiasm of a great show but it was back to the road for these tired musicians. There were late starts and miscommunications (now where have we heard THAT before?) but the level to which Murphy's Law was demonstrated was beyond anything that could be anticipated.

Once the cars and vans were finally loaded up, one of the drivers locked the door with the keys inside. To add insult to injury the vehicle was running with the A.C. on full blast to combat the mounting heat of a late summer morning. Normal coat hangers are impossible to find at a hotel so there was a mad scramble to find something to open the door with but after a short treasure hunt in the hotel dumpster some wire was found. The door was opened and much cheerful celebration ensued as they piled into the three car caravan and left on their way. It wasn't long before they noticed that they were one car short so they made a violent u-turn to find the missing vehicle, inadvertently burying the keyboardist from **Thorns** with equipment as he lay in the back of the van. Christine, the car from hell wouldn't start until the band took turns piunding on the hood. It turns out it was in neutral and started up just fine once it was put in park. Due to heavy road construction there were several detours to get to the main highway out of town. After forty five minutes of driving around in circles they found themselves right back at the hotel. When they did make it to the highway, construction once again forced them into a maze of detours that put them in the wrong direction for over an hour. They made it to Chicago just in time for the start of the evening rush hour. When they escaped from this nightmare, it seemed to settle down for a little while until someone raised the question. "What are we doing in Michigan?" Once they were turned around and headed home again one of the cars hit a screw in the road from, you guessed it construction work! Finding an open repair shop on a Sunday afternoon in the middle of nowhere was near impossible but after three failed attempts a knid old man at a gas station said he would help patch the tire even though he had never done it before. The patch held up all the way home and they made it back to the NYC area just in time for the morning rush hour. The guitarist from **Thorns** made it to summer classes only an hour late and the rest of the band returned to the studio to unload the gear.

At the end of it all when the rental van was returned and the last band member made it home, it was a full thirty six hours past the time that this whole ordeal began. Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction.

Look for all three bands in the New York City area as well as the major festival this year. You won't be disappointed.

Power Mad

continued from previous page...

apart. Complementing lead vocalist George with everything from high pitched screams to death metal lows, Matt is the voice of emotion. In some ways this upcoming band reminds me of early career **Life Of Agony** in their intense style.

Finally, the effects of this long weekend were starting to set in. Perhaps the two best known bands were next. True metal warriors and recently signed to Metal Blade artist **October 31** ran through a professional set of true metal tunes and Nuclear Blast artists and California natives **New Eden** raced through a set of speed metal/ European metal anthems. Tony DeVita is the tallest vocalist I have ever seen.

The last band of the weekend were perhaps the most impressive. New Jersey's **Cycle IX** and their no limitations progressive power metal was perfectly executed. Mark Klein is a rock solid drummer but I was also impressed with Mike Hollis' ability to go from a classic like "YYZ" to crunch rhythm with ease. Pete Wallace added a talented and emotional performance. Look for **Power Mad IV** to be yet another special event. Thanks to all who made this happen. For more information on the festival or the bands who played there write to Transcending the Mundane @ 5 Hudson Avenue, Bohemia, NY 11716 for a program featuring interviews with organizer Keith Menser and all the bands.



While loyal readers have become familiar with my monthly column which spotlights the best of the independent record labels in the country, I have decided not to ignore what foreign labels have to offer. This issue I have conducted an interview with France's Holy Records, one of my favorite overseas labels. Holy Records is all about quality. They have developed and nurtured bands like **Septic Flesh** and **Nightfall** from raw bands with obvious growth potential to exciting innovative acts that they are today. Each release is a time consuming plan which does not neglect any detail in the process; from artwork, to packaging, to song quality, Holy Records adds an individual touch of originality to each release. I spoke to label boss Phillippe (**Misanthrope**).

Tell me about Holy Records.

It was formed by Severline and me in 1991. We both are co-owner and co-director. We do things together. There is no boss. We are checking the new demos, the artists to sign to see if it's strong enough to be on Holy Records. We do imports and exports of the records. We also handle promotion.

Why did you form the label?

At the very beginning it was very critical. We started quite young. We had to do something special. We were in touch with **Nightfall**. The album was almost recorded and they were looking for somebody to release it. They wanted to put it on c.d. and l.p. We worked for six months to get some cash. We put that out. I was living at my parent's house and I remember getting one thousand c.d.'s and one thousand l.p.'s. It was a whole mess. We thought oh shit, what have we done. We spent all of the cash. My parent's house was full of *Parade through the Centuries*. We had to find some distribution and trading. At this point we started promotion and mail order. The first thing was produce the band, then we get the c.d.'s and we don't know how to get rid of them. We started a company about two years afterwards. We were fans of music and we wanted to do something. It was not common to have a label in France in 1991. We are big fans of metal and extreme metal. We like melodic doom and gothic stuff. We wanted death metal to be more lyrical and classical. We enjoy an eclectic mix of music. *Parade through the Centuries* brings in the keyboards and the acoustic guitar into death metal. That's why we signed them. It was so cool at the time. The scene was ruled by **Morbid Angel**, **Dismember**, **Entombed**, and **Cannibal Corpse**, it was really straight forward death metal. The first black metal album at that time was from **Samael** on Osmose. Now it's a big company. There are two people running mail order and two people running the office label. We have twenty one different bands and four thousand different c.d.'s in mail order. The craziness is lost but the love of the music is still there and alive.

Holy Records seems to take a lot of time making sure they put out a quality package.

This is Severline side. She's crazy about putting together beautiful digi packs, and the layout. She speaks to the bands and she's very close with them. We try to give some quality. I work more from the production side and she works with the visuals and the band's image. We do this because we love it. It's not like "we'll sell seven thousand of this so let's calculate how much profit we can make from this one. We really don't care at all whether we make money or lose money on the band. The important thing is that we get the product that we love. There is good production, good mastering. We try to understand the bands and know what they are looking for. Holy Records will give the bands what they want. We stick to them. They are not just a number or a release. Most of them are friends and we stick together. In the eight years we only kept about seventeen, eighteen bands because it allows us to be more sensitive and more human. There is a human side to Holy Records. It's like a great family. These bands are like our children. That's why we take so much care of them. Once I did mastering three times of the same band. We try to be as perfect as we can. Music is not the only thing, you should also bring an image into everything. You don't become a Holy Records band just because you have a band. You should do something really different. It doesn't matter what the music style is, we should feel really strong about it.

What's your opinion of the growth bands on your label have experienced?

When we sign a band from a demo tape or an album it's impossible to know how they will end up. Even bands like **Nightfall** and **Septic Flesh**. Now **Nightfall** is really big on the electronic side. I think they find the freedom they need with our label. During the seven years that we were able to do what we wanted and we've trusted them one hundred percent. I think bands like **Septic Flesh** and even

Misanthrope know what they are doing will end up on the c.d. and will get the promotion and the right exposure. They have a special freedom in their music and their songwriting. They know that everything behind the music will be handled with care. It's important that our bands be different. In the music business we don't have to bring something new but something different. We work in steps from the recording, to the mastering, to the layout, to the printing of the artwork, to the distribution.

Did you ever imagine it growing into what it is today?

We started in one room. I was twenty one and Seveline was nineteen. We did not imagine it. Now we have fifty albums out, four people working, a four hundred sixty square meter desk and everything is okay. When you don't feel that your job is work, your day passes fast and you are always on the move and working fast. We are not working for a factory and coming home and watching t.v. Our life is something different. We are thoroughly disconnected with other people. Our reality is not the same as other people. It's always good to be motivated. There is always new bands, new talent, all going on all the time. It's never flat. Even now I can not do all we want as a label. Not just because of money, but because it's so wide and we can do so many things.

What's your game plan for the new year?

Survive. We have to rearrange our job for the new century. We will always buy food and clothes. But all the culture you can get for free from the internet. One the other hand all the people who are working for the culture, including the music and of course, extreme metal will have to find a new way to sell c.d.'s. We will learn and change ourselves but it will be slow. I can say Holy Records is and has been a great story. It's been a part of ten years of my life and I will never forget it. When there was a big black metal trend it would have been so easy to do a black metal thing. I call this business. You can do it with or without brains. With Holy we always took risks. If you listen to the first **Nightfall** or the first **Orphaned Land**, if I put this albums out today it's still a good album. Finding our way and believing in somethings that others will not is the key of prosperity.

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Elend: <i>Lecons De Tenebres</i>	HOLY08CD
Elend: <i>Les Tenebres Du Dehors</i>	HOLY17CD
Elend: <i>Weeping Nights</i>	HOLY26CD
Exhumation: <i>Dance Across The Past</i>	HOLY38CD
Gloomy Grim: <i>Blood Monsters Darkness</i>	HOLY34CD
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Legenda: <i>Eclipse</i>	HOLY36CD
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Misanthrope: <i>Miracles: Totem Taboo</i>	HOLY06CD
Misanthrope: <i>1666: Theatre Bizarre</i>	HOLY16CD
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Misanthrope: <i>Libertine Humiliations</i>	HOLY40CD
Natron: <i>Negative Prevails</i>	HOLY47CD
Nightfall: <i>Parade Into Centuries</i>	HOLY01CD
Nightfall: <i>Macabre Sunsets</i>	HOLY04CD
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Septic Flesh: <i>The Eldest Cosmonaut</i>	HOLY37CD
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sick metal

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Revolution D.N.A. didn't change their composition, it's top songwriting in maturity, efficacy, and melodies of their career. Including original and audacious samplers in a futuristic android style performed by the classical music expert Chris Antoniou. An impressive duel of male vocals lead by the dragon brothers Spiros and Sotiris.

Soulgrind

FINLAND
criminal heavy black
KALMA

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SIEGEN RECORDS

Interview with Keith Menser

For dedicated readers, Keith Menser needs no introduction- he and his festival, Power Mad, were featured in Issue #7. Keith Menser is the only person in America who is trying to design a festival like those that are famous in Europe (Wacken, Bang Your Head, etc.) that highlights power metal and progressive talents. For many European power metal fans Keith Menser needs no introduction, you know him from his legendary and greatly underrated metal band **Mystic Force**. For the underground power/ progressive metal scene, Keith Menser needs no introduction. In addition to organizing Power Mad he also operates a Stateside label called Siegen Records. This label is going to become a major player in the American power metal scene in the coming years. The focus of this interview is directed at Siegen Records and Keith's goals for the label. For every one skeptic and critic, Keith Menser has turned five people into believing in his vision and admire his dedication and personal drive to overcome any obstacles thrown in his way. Here is Keith to tell us about one of his many jobs- manager/ owner/ etc. of Siegen Records.

What gave you the idea to start a label?

My band, **Mystic Force**, had a deal in Europe. I had a hard time getting a deal in America. We went out to conventions like the Foundations Forum and we noticed that American metal was not getting the attention from record companies that it deserved. It started getting depressing here with all these bands getting ripped off. I found out that if you want something done you have to do it for yourself. Our album came out on our former European label and it was complete confusion. We got a package in themail with completed c.d.'s and we were supposed to be waiting for a package with sample artwork to approve. The photos were cut, the thank you's were cut, and it really caused a problem for **Mystic Force**. There was supposed to be a dedication to our drummer's fiancée who died while we were making the records. We talked to several bands and we realized that we weren't the only band having records out in Europe and not getting any royalty checks. I decided the best way to get something done in America would be to start my own label.

Tell us about your releases.

The next release will be **Twilight Kingdom**. There's **Nightmares End**, they play a style of doom metal in the sense of an early **Sanctuary**. They have an album called **Blackened Mystery**. The third one is gonna be a band called **Holy Mother** from your area of New York. We're releasing a best of which will be their first American release. It contains songs from every album they've released to date. It's a nineteen track disc. All three of these releases will come out on January 4th. In the first week of February you'll see **Mystic Force's Man vs. Machine**. The look awaited **Mystic Force** album. On the same day we're releasing a best of **Mystic Force** album called **Elysian Fields Best Of Volume One**. We have a couple of unreleased demo tracks, a ton of pictures. In addition to that we're doing a **Queensryche** tribute record. It's called **Warning: Minds are Raging Empires**. It's gonna be a two part disc series. Part One will be coming out in February. It features a whole host of bands, **Mayadome**, **Twilight Kingdom**, **Power Of Omens**, **Talamasca**, **Nightmares End**, **Cycle IX**, **Factor 5**, **Black Symphony**, just to name a few. It's gonna be a great disc. It features bands that are in the same genre as **Queensryche**, power and progressive metal. We're not gonna shy away from that style and have a death metal singer try to sound like Geoff Tate. It's purely out of being a **Queensryche** fan. I've met them in the past and after seeing eight or nine **Iron Maiden** tributes it's only right to have a tribute for **Queensryche**. I heard something about **Poison** having a tribute- **Queensryche** definitely deserves one. They had quite a bit of influence in the eighties and to this day, any band of the genre would have to say that they were influenced one way or another by **Queensryche**. They influenced me quite a bit. To this day I've loved every release that they've done. If I ever did a tribute it would have to be them or **Rush** and **Rush** has already been done, so **Queensryche** it was. We're not looking to jump on this tribute thing. This is a one off, it's a fun project and it's something for the Siegen bands to have fun with as well. We've got some other things coming up down the road but we'll keep them quiet until they're set. We will also have **Delusion** coming in February. The singer is a short, little guy. He's like four and a half foot tall. He's got a huge voice but he had a hernia operation. He's out of commission. We're starting to get him in the studio. It's gonna be a twelve song disc. I've playing bass on it. It's straight ahead, power metal. It's melodic, but not progressive or all over the place. The vocals are the key point of the disc. These European labels are flipping out on **Delusion**.

It seems that the year 2000 will have massive growth by Siegen Records. We just worked a deal out with Valley Distribution, which is the biggest one stop shop in the nation. We worked a situation out with Alliance. They'll put the

products in all the chain stores in America; Blockbusters, Circuit City's, all the regular c.d. shops. Along with the deal, our products will be available in over ninety c.d. internet stores; like cdnow.com, amazon.com, buyitnow.com, cduniversal.com. I'm in negotiation with a company in South America for distribution. I have a m and d deal with a company in Italy and we have a company in Germany that's bidding over the Italian company so we're in a bidding war with a couple of companies over in Europe. Then we'll move into the Japanese world. I've got people in Japan helping me right now. They're representing and introducing what we're doing to them. Canada will be the next place that we'll try to lock down. For a small organization we're covering a bit of ground. Siegen Records is a company that's at a small level, we've shown some growth and we've put some quality releases out. The product we put out competes with any competitor. We use the major label pressing plants so it's great quality materials that we make. With the amount of resources that we have we've shown great growth. In the year 2000, one of the major issues will be to see this network chain built, which has already fallen into place and build a bigger staff that we can move into the next century at a higher level. We want to prove to be a serious independent label not just a small independent company. Ironically they're both falling into place, but nothing happens over night. When you work for it and bust your butt it's much more rewarding.

Siegen Records Discography:

Mystic Force... Shipwrecked/ Take Command

Mystic Force... Another World e.p

Mystic Force... The Eternal Quest

Mystic Force... A Step Beyond

Mystic Force... Man vs. Machine

Mystic Force... Elysian Fields/ Best Of Volume One

Various Artists... Molten Metal Monsters Volume One

Various Artists... Molten Metal Monsters Volume Two

Various Artists... Queensryche Tribute

Digital Ruin... Listen (voted one of the best prog metal debut metal c.d.'s)

Pimp Daddy Longstockin... Outlet (crushing power metal made of anger)

Twilight Kingdom... Adze (great debut made of intense prog metal)

Mayadome... Near Life Experience (the second lp from Swedish prog metal group)

Delusion... The Tragedy of Regret (melodic power metal w/ great vocals)

Division... Ascension to Eternity (second lp from Va. power metal act)

Nightmares End... Blackened Mystery (haunting power metal from Wis.)

Holy Mother... Best of (U.S. metal best of from their four lp's)

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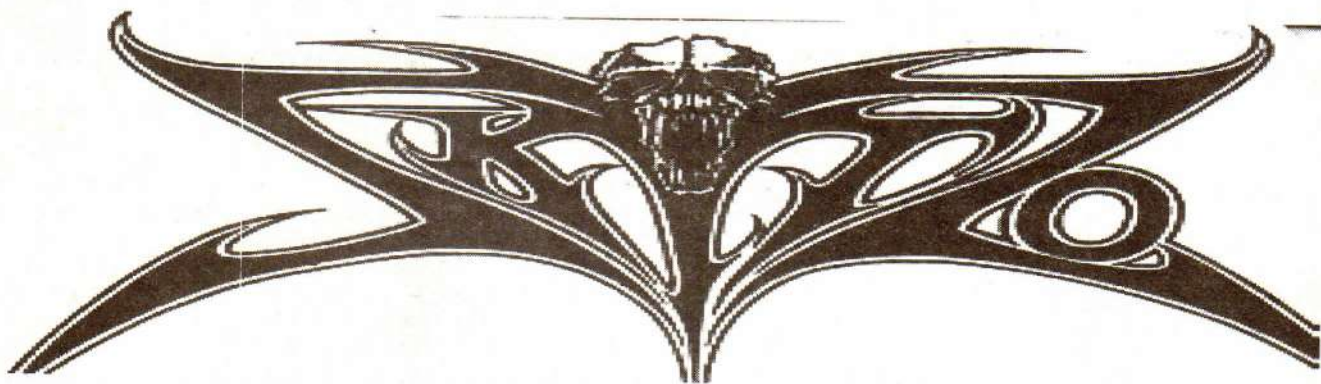


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- Seconds Magazine

TIAMAT return with a new album that combines the moody emotion of their last release with the aggressive urgency of *Wildboney* to create some of the band's finest moments ever.

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- Metal Maniacs

TIAMAT

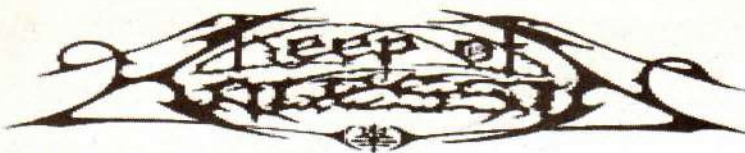


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Interview with guitarist Obsidian

There is a strong black metal movement happening over in Norway. I'm not referring to the exciting electronic based style of black metal either, that's discussed in other sections of this magazine. There are some recent bands who are doing some damage early in their careers like **Tulus** and **Keep Of Kalessin**. The Ursula Le Guin inspired band released their greatly acclaimed debut, *Through Times of War* two years ago and now resurface with *Agnen: A Journey Through the Dark*. It is time to recognize a band that will keep black metal strong into the next decade.

Tell me about how Keep Of Kalessin got started.

The idea came to mind in late '93. Me and Ghash started to think about it and made plans for a band. We started rehearsing in '94. At that time Ghash played the guitar and vocals and I did the drums. I've always been a guitarist, for years before we started **Keep Of Kalessin** but I really wanted to try the drums. We formed the band with a session bass player at first. We played a couple of very small gigs in Norway. We realized if we wanted to take it further we had to get a stable line-up. We got a hold of Watach, the bass player, later on we found a proper drummer named Vyl. I went to back to guitar when we got Vyl. I was inferior to this great drummer who could really do what we were thinking of. We rehearsed for a time and really started playing in '96. There were lots of technical problems. After that we found a new rehearsal place. We didn't find the new place until eight months after. The demo was wasted. We held it back for a couple months because we weren't tight at all and we weren't satisfied with it. We decided to send it out to a few labels to see if it got a response. We signed with Avantgarde Music in Italy. By that time we had found a new rehearsal space and we rehearsed for three months before going in to record *Through Times of War*. We played a few gigs after *Through Times of War* was released. We also played three gigs in Norway to promote ourselves. After that we left our rehearsal place again so we had some problems between *Through Times of War* and the recording of *Agnen*. Somehow we managed to rehearse and record the second album. We recorded it in October of '98. We couldn't release it until the summer. Now it's on its way. We had a lot of problems with the rehearsal places. There are lots of bands without rehearsal places. We didn't get the flow in rehearsal like we should. We're still keeping the band alive, we just hope to improve in every aspect of the music.

Where did the name come from?

Keep Of Kalessin is a from *The Earthsea Quartet*, by a lady called Ursula Le Guin. We've always been inspired by fantasy and science fiction. We took the band name from this extreme magic and intelligence. We were fascinated by the mythical side. It's the strong hold of the eldest dragon. We started under the name **Ildskjaer**, which means fire but it was pretty typical. We wanted something different, not a one word band name. I think it sounds really cool.

Do you still play the drums at all?

I quit the drums. It's cool to play sometimes, but I don't practice drums. I focus on the guitars. The difference between us and all the Norwegian bands, they pick up the guitars right after the concept. We've been playing, we've been studying for years before we played black metal. We've made rock 'n roll and heavy metal years before we started **Keep Of Kalessin**. We are all very musical. I think you can hear that in the music. Another difference between us and other Norwegian black metal bands is our song structure is more thought through. If you listen to the new **Satyricon** record, they just pack hundreds of riffs together in one song. You get no feeling from the song. People like bands like that because they are big. The last **Satyricon** album is not a good album. That's a fact. You can have lots of parts and riffs but you have to use them so they fit together. You can't just jump around from riff to riff. There's no thought from song to song. You have to have a sentiment. We start out and get the audience into a mood and we lift them even higher. The other bands seem to forget about the songs. The song structure is very important and you don't pack riffs together. You have to be real about what you're doing. The bigger bands think they don't need to think about what they are doing anymore because they sell anyway. We learn more from their mistakes than they do. We know we make mistakes but we learn from them and others as well. We get much better from that. All the big bands started out really good. **Immortal** has been able to create good songs and keep a flow through their song. On the latest album they jump from a riff to another riff and it doesn't flow. **Emperor** had this great flow on *Nightside*, now they just have some horrible, horrible riffs that are completely different. **Dissection** were doing it very well. They have a

flow and sentiment. We have lots and lots of great parts but we can't use them because we can't make them into songs. I must save the parts for the time when I have a place to have them. I can't put them into a song that has nothing to do with it. You can't have great parts and not think about the rest of the song. If you look at the eighties heavy metal bands like **Iron Maiden** and **Metallica** on *Master of Puppets* they had extremely great songs. They have long songs but they flow through the songs.

Will you be playing any shows?

We have planned a tour in December. We have plans for pyrotechs and we also have some amazing ideas. We can kick ass on any show. It's gonna be an amazing show. The problem is that we can't do this all around Europe. We might get it to work in Norway but we don't have the money to bring it to Europe. Avantgarde wants us to play with **Behemoth** in Athens. If we are gonna sign with Avantgarde for a third album, an important point is touring. We want to tour as much as we can take. Hopefully they can manage to get us on some tours with some bigger bands or book us some gigs around Europe. America would be great too. It's not up to us. It's Avantgarde who finances the band. We are not big enough to tour for ourselves. We play ten times better now that we've been able to rehearse.

When will you be writing new material?

We have the material but since we haven't had the rehearsal space for six months we haven't been able to get it together as a band. Now we have to rehearse for the live show. After we have rehearsed the live set we will work on new material. The new material is a little bit slower and it's actually faster than before at times. It's very atmospheric, more atmospheric than our previous stuff. It won't be the atmosphere that we had before, it'll be more in the foreground. Now we listen to our albums and we forget the atmospheres. My stuff is gonna be a bit slower and more atmospheric but not wimpy. It's really evil. Vyl is craving this very fast, amazing pounding away. He's playing with lots of speed. I laugh because it's the fastest I've ever heard.

Discography:

1999... *Agnen: A Journey Through The Dark* (Avantgarde)
1997... *Through Times Of War* (Avantgarde)

Current line-up:

Ghash... vocals and guitars
Obsidian... guitars
Watach... bass
Vyl... drums

Available from Avantgarde Music:

As Divine Grace: *Supremature* (melancholic rock, female vocals)

Behemoth: *Satanica* (black/ death metal legends)

Enochian Crescent: *Omega Telocvovim* (eccentric, unpredictable, talented extreme metal)

Keep Of Kalessin: *Agnen: A Journey Through the Dark* (song oriented black metal)

Pazuzu: *III The End Of Ages* (dark, ambient gothic instrumental music)

Solefald: *Neonism* (progressive black metal that is unpredictable and impossible to classify)

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K L A N K

Interview with John, Pat, and Darren

Long Island is one of the most underrated places for musical talent. We have power metal bands like **Virgin Steele**, **Riot**, **Without Warning**, and **Holy Mother**, who have experienced massive success in Europe and very little in their home towns. Everyone is aware of the strong hardcore scene in this area, but bands like **Nympho** and **Klank** are often the most overlooked. **Klank** play a modern style of industrial based hard rock that may be comparable to bands like **Stabbing Westward** and **Gravity Kills**, but they manage to transcend the genres cliches and limitations to produce a new album, *Numb*, that is an excellently produced record with superior songwriting and an eagerness to make sure each song is special. Keep an eye on E.S.P.N., as the band has been asked to play live on a show coming up in January. I spoke to the band at a diner in Farmingdale about their new album which should be in stores by the time you read this.

The scene does seem to be getting better.

John: There's like five bands that are hard rock or metal in the top twenty. I think it's already coming back. **Godsmack** has gone platinum. It's making it wide open for guys like us to play. Even though I don't like them, I'd have to say that **Godsmack** was amazing live.

How did Klank get started?

Darren: **Circle Of Dust** came to an end and I used to do stuff on the side. It took about six months to get my head together and then I figured out what I wanted. I knew Pat already.

John: He was the singer in his last band. He was out in California touring his way back this way and he needed a drummer after that because he was borrowing somebody. I was in the band and then Pat joined when we did that October to December tour. Danny came in January while these guys were in California for New Year's. We started touring again two weeks later. We finished March of '98. We did a couple of standard shows. I won't tell you how cold that was. It was so bad that you would wake up every ten minutes.

Darren: It worked out great with Danny, we all clicked.

John: Then we got hired to do four or five shows in the Mid West.

Pat: We got scheduled for four shows in one months time. We were in the middle of the Mid West with no money but we didn't want to back out. If you break your obligations you'll have problems getting more tours. We ended up havin' to cancel the tour anyway but the guy never bothered to call any of the clubs to let them know, so according to them we didn't even show up.

John: Danny lives in Orange County so he's spreading the word about us around California. The four of us have been together since '97. One promoter was pissed because he spent like a grand promoting the show. He said the place was pack and here we didn't show up.

Darren: All these things are could've, should've. Everything is secured now.

John: I had to take six months off because of my broken back. We had a show and a video in the midst of it. It's like sports players, I had to play through the pain. I went on stage for forty five minutes and went back to the hotel and went to sleep. We were supposed to go to Canada in December but I couldn't do it. We're waiting until I get approval from the doctors.

Darren: John's one of these guys who can tell the weather before the weather guy can.

It sounds like you've hit a string of bad luck.

John: Yeah, but we've also had some good things happen. We had the E.S.P.N. show. Bonnie Riley hooked us up with that. I'm not doinf this for the money, I do it for those forty five minutes that we're on stage. I'm a live person.

Darren: She's got a lot of friends. She's got a lot of people who can help us out and get us on some tours over the summer.

John: The guys from **Lynch Mob** told us they would hook us up with some stuff but I haven't heard back from them yet. They were so overwhelmingly nice.

Darren: People get busy, it's understandable.

John: We're basically working on promoting the c.d. and getting a tour set up. We're doing the E.S.P.N. live thing. We're just trying to make the money back because we spent a lot making the c.d. This is our lives. This is how we earn our money.

Pat: We're watching M.T.V. and the Backstreet Boys were talking about their first tour. They had a bus and they only had two hotel rooms. That was struggling. We had seven guys in a room.

Darren: One time we had nine guys stuffed into a van. We're driving in Michigan and the tire pops off the rental trailer. I'm sitting in the back which has no seat, so I'm on a cooler. We do always meet the coolest kids.

John: They make it so worth it. After the show you talk to them and they're so psyched. They get so much out of the show. You feel like they understood the

point that you're trying to make. We see each other every day, we're not a band anymore- it's a family. Darren lives with me and Pat basically stays at my house from five o'clock until twelve o'clock every night. Before I broke my back I'd go to work and we'd come back and play together all night. There's always been stress between the people who do everything and the people who want to look like they're doing everything. People in this band are willing to do something. Everybody puts one hundred and fifty percent into the band.

Darren: Now that Danny's still located on the West coast, he's like a street team on his own.

John: We carry each other too. When someone is down, we pick you back up.

Darren: We don't get our hopes up but if something good happens then we log it down. You don't cross it off like it's not happening but at the same time you take it in stride.

John: I don't believe anything.

What's your live situation like?

John: They ask us "where's your bass player?", we don't have a bass player. He's on the A.D.A.T. We play to the A.D.A.T. live, which has the samplers. Everything else is live. The vocals, drums, and guitars are always live, and Pat does some keyboard stuff.

Darren: It's an experience. We go all out and make the show special. We bridge the gap between the dance club and the live atmosphere.

John: We have a two foot disco ball, we have laser lights, strobes.

Darren: It's got metal, it's got a lot melody. We came from that era of music.

John: If you looked at my c.d. case, or Darren's, or Pat's. It's not one genre. We have new wave, Depeche Mode, Prince, jazz, modern rock, metal. We're not industrial metal. You have the basis of the song and then we add the special touches. It's not like industrial music where everything is electronically driven. There's acoustic drums, acoustic guitars.

Pat: We play to an A.D.A.T., so John has to play to a click. It's more of a challenge. You can't go off time.

What's the deal with the first album?

Pat: That came out in '96. Darren was alone and that record was basically written by one person. Now the way we write is; Darren writes the song then he gives it to me. I add some programming ideas and then I give it to John and he throws his drums over it. We rip it apart and then build it back together again. We bounce ideas off each other.

Darren: The first c.d. is more straight metal. It still had melody. This has more diversity, a little more focused on less vocal samples and more keyboards and noise. Everybody worked on this new record. We're so diverse so there's something to please everybody.

John: On the first record everything was programmed, there's live drums on the new album.

Pat: It was fun making this record. We're perfectionists. We always want to make the music sound better. We did everything ourselves, from the artwork to the mastering.

Final comments?

John: We want to get on to a tour. We don't care if we have to buy our way on, then we'll do that. That's the only way we're gonna sell the c.d. We could do a club tour, and I'd love to do that, but we want to tour with someone else and get more exposure.

Pat: We're ready to take the next step.

Darren: The good thing is that we can play with bands like **Fear Factory**, **God Lives Underwater**, **Stabbing Westward**, **Nine Inch Nails**, and **Marilyn Manson**- our music complements it well. It's not that we sound like those bands, but we can fit in their crowd.

John: We have that heaviness. We have melody and we don't write the same song over and over.

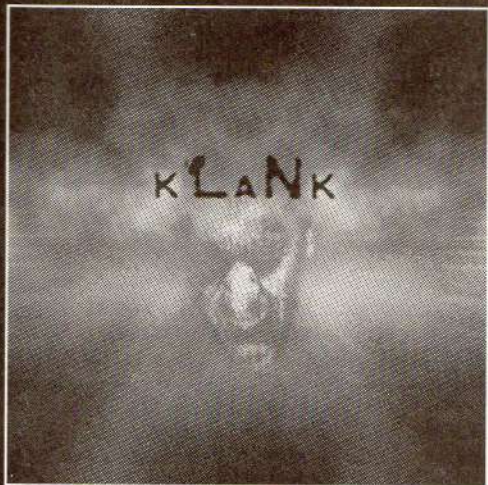
Darren: We want to take the mosh pit to the dance floor.

Discography:

2000... *Numb* (Progressive Arts Media)
1998... *Still Suffering* (Tooth And Nail)

Current line-up:

Darren... vocals
Pat... guitars and keyboards
Danny... guitars
John... drums



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KOVENANT

Interview with vocalist/ bassist Lex Icon

Things have changed dramatically in the *Covenant*, I mean *Kovenant* camp. The spelling of the name (due to a German industrial band with the same name), a change in sound, and even some name changes have taken place. The result is *Animatronic*. This album is more aligned with a more extreme *Marilyn Manson*, extreme industrial with a black metal core. While the debut, *In Times Before the Light*, was pure black metal; *Nexus Polaris* became more of a symphonic futuristic vision of black metal and now *Animatronic* continues to take *Kovenant* into the future. Nagash, Hellhammer, and Blackheart are now known as Lex Icon, Von Blomberg, and Psy Coma. Gone are Astennu (back with *Dimmu Borgir*) and Sarah Jezebel Diva. I spoke to Lex Icon about these major changes.

What's this new version of Kovenant about?

We're really concentrating on the American market this time. It's the same as it's always been about. *Kovenant* is the personification of movies like the *Matrix*, *Starship Troopers*, and *Mad Max* put together. We thought about changing the name totally, but we won the Grammy awards in Germany and we've achieved so many things with our name so we thought it would be stupid to change it. We adopted the "the" and the "K". It makes us stand out a little more and it looks more magical. Lex Icon and Psy Coma sounds more like Axl Rose and Slash.

Describe the change in the music.

We've changed everything. We changed the way we play the drums, the keyboards, the singing, the way of writing the songs, the lyrics. *Nexus* was more technical finesse. The new one is based more on power and stomping metal. It gets more of an emotion. We worked more with rhythms this time. The guitars are less technical, they're based more on power chords. We used different guitar techniques and different guitar riffs. We tried a different formula. Some of the songs we did a pop thing, verse-chorus-verse-chorus, to see if it works. It works for old bands like *Venom*. That's why you hear songs like "New World Order", "In the Name of the Future".

Do you think this is more of an industrial album?

I don't think so. I think it's more electronic than industrial. There's a thin, fine line between it. If you look an industrial bands you have *Nine Inch Nails* and noise. Electronic bands have more keyboards, and electronic drum loops. We also tried to incorporate different musical styles like disco, strange as it might sound. We used a producer for the first time on this one. He came up with a description of the sound- a mixture of John Travolta and the *Sex Pistols*. There's a lot of weird influences on that album. It's the most honest album that we've done. I found out today that we charted on the Norwegian charts. It's strange because usually only bands like Shania Twain, Ricky Martin make it. We also charted in Germany.

A friend of mine said that Animatronic sounded like Rammstein.

Yeah, there's a German influence there. What do you expect? We're on a German record label, we spend almost half our time down there. We were influenced by a lot of old music too, like the *Pet Shop Boys*, *Sisters Of Mercy*. On some songs like "Mirrors Paradise" you can hear this gothic influence. Did you hear "Spaceman"? It's a cover song. This band had one hit called "Spaceman". Nobody recognizes the song. Maybe we'll be like *Orgy* and become big playing someone else's songs. We'll always do these strange cover songs. We always want to confuse people. When you listen to bands long enough you can predict what the next riff will come from. It's good to have influences from other countries because it makes your music unpredictable, but at the same time very interesting.

Why the change in the visual appearance?

The only thing that we've changed is we started putting on make up. When everyone else is taking it off, we're putting it back on. We're the kind of band that when ten thousand people say yes, we say no. Just out of spite. We have to, it's the essence of *Kovenant*- total rebellion. *Kovenant* is probably the most visual band you will find on the Norwegian music scene. We work hard on being very visual. These new pictures we took now we spent half of our budgets alone. We hired a *Playboy* photographer. We have a lot of strange pictures coming out. There's a lot of freaky merchandising. Hopefully, we're gonna do a home video soon. Even our live show is excessive. We've been threatened to be kicked off

stage so many times.

Do you have any tours lined up?

We're supposed to do a big American tour in January or February. We just signed a deal with an American management company called World Management. It's the same company that has *Morbid Angel*, the *Genitorturers*. We have plans to maybe go with *Genitorturers*. We'd rather go with a really big band and destroy America. We're concentrating a lot more on America than other countries. It has the biggest musical market in the world, then you have Germany second, Australia and Japan. Maybe I'll get a chance to move to Hollywood.

Your image is a combination of the macabre and the future.

Yeah. We're planning to record a few singles with some new songs, cover songs, and some remixes. Hopefully we'll gonna do some videos. We're influenced by the *Nightmare Before Christmas* from Tim Burton. We have an offer to do a video like that. It would be something fucked up and bizarre like that. It will also be very science fiction and horror- the essence of *Kovenant*.

I heard that you had some throat problems, how are you doing?

I sprained my voice because I was getting too much into things. We stayed there for three months and the producer got the sick sides out of me. I couldn't talk for two or three weeks. That's what happens when you do a lot of alcohol and drugs. Now we're drinking orange juice by the gallons. We're healthy boys. If you want to win you have to be fit. We like to irritate people and say outrageous things. We were in Germany and we did all these interview sessions. You know how sensitive the Germans are about the World War. We tell them why they lost the war when they get attitudes. In France, when the president was doing these atomic bombs stuff, we were out there proclaiming the return of nuclear energy. We don't plan this, it's in our nature to do it. We feel obligated to do it. In our spare time we're planning to kill religious icons, storming the embassies. We even had this plan to storm the Norwegian senate. Me and Psy Coma were always getting in trouble. They know who we are.

Is there anybody who deserves attacks?

There's always some nice victims. The people who really deserve it never get it from us anyway. They are already targets. Humans are like vultures. If they see one weak animal they all attack. It's survival of the fittest. In Norway we have the jante law, it's a law that everyone in Scandanavia follows. "Don't think that you're better than us, don't think you can achieve anything, don't think that you're anything special". Every chance we get we step on that fucking law. When we won the grammy we had this after party thing. We've got this famous rock 'n roll priest so drunk. We went to our hotel and he was actually touching me, feeling my penis in the elevator. There's like ten people in there and they're like "my God that's him!". The next day we called all the newspapers and television stations and his career is now going down the tubes.

How do people feel about you in Norway?

We're universally hated. We're the most hated band in Norway. We out sell anyone, except *Dimmu Borgir*. I did some strange interviews and I was banned from some magazines. Fans who think we've sold out I don't consider them music fans at all. They're fans of the ideology. If only people knew Fenriz they way I do. He's even more fucked up than we are. He's always drunk and playing with his smurfs all day!

Discography:

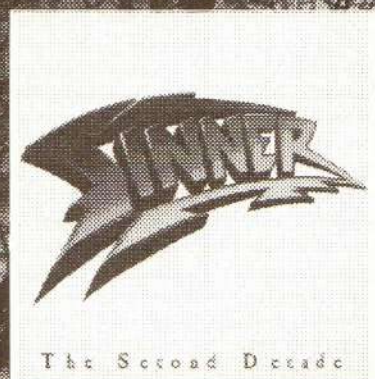
1999... *Animatronic* (Nuclear Blast)
1998... *Nexus Polaris* (Nuclear Blast)
1995... *In Times Before The Light* (Mordgrimm)

Current line-up:

Psy Coma... vocals and bass
Lex Icon... guitars
Von Blomberg... drums



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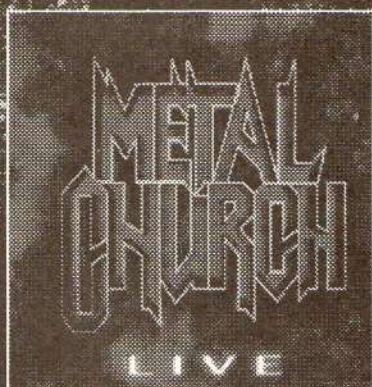
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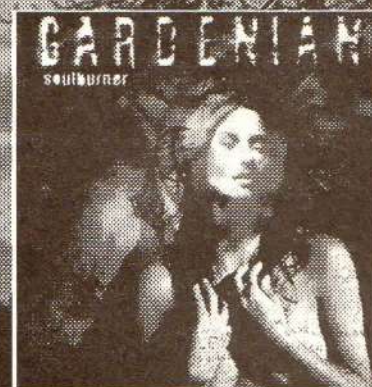
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LEADFOOT

Interview with vocalist Karl Agell

Back in 1991, legendary hardcore band **Corrosion Of Conformity** released their first album in four years. This album, *Blind*, would quickly become one of the most critically acclaimed records of the 90's. *Blind* was raw and raging, pure metal with politically charged lyrics and two songs that would become hits- "Voting with a Bullet" and "Dance of the Damned". As the band delved into serious work with their follow up, *Deliverance*, the band kicked out vocalist Karl Agell, who had made his debut on *Blind*, and bassist Pete Swisher quit shortly after. They went on to form the straight ahead, hard rock band **Leadfoot**. Despite some problems with their first label, Roadrunner, the band signed with the Music Cartel who reissued their debut, *Bring it On*, in the States and now release *Take a Look*. While *Bring it On* was an energetic kick in the ass, with some great guitar work, *Take a Look* was recorded in less than a week and is less polished. While this rapid recording gives the album a live vibe, it lacks the quality of its predecessor. I spoke to Karl about this upcoming band.

Did Leadfoot tour in Europe for *Bring it On* or did Roadrunner leave you hanging?

No, they bent us over backwards and hurt us every which way but it was released in Europe and the Music Cartel picked it up for the U.S. It was the biggest jack off scene. We lost our drummer off that album, we lost Ryan almost a year ago. He started fading out. It was hard. There was no reward. We found the new guys Tim and Scott and we're able to get a better band together. I'm pushing *Take a Look* a lot better because it's a much better line-up. It was a producer free environment. We were able to knock it out in four days. It's raw as hell but it represents the band live. I think this record is a lot closer to the balls out live show we have going on. I'm not saying anything bad about *Bring it On*. It takes one thing to get to another. I'm just ready to tour. I'm looking forward to this. We played seven or eight shows in New York. We do the Eastern seaboard but the place we hit the most is New York. We want to get up the music industry's ass and get people to pay attention and it's been working. We're trying to do the smart assault in New York. Now that we're getting things lined up we're getting ready for the big push in January. "Redline" is being remixed by Marco Barbieri. The radio single is gonna go out in early to mid January. It will get a big U.S. push and we have a new booking agent. It's not like we haven't put in the hours. We're just annoying ourselves right now.

There was a four year gap in between leaving Corrosion Of Conformity and *Bring it On*.

It wasn't for a lack of trying. I formed **Leadfoot** three months after, not even. I was kicked out in June of '93 and Phil left C.O.C. the day after I got kicked out. I got the number one songwriter, in my opinion, with me. Woody jammed with us a little while, but he had his obligations to C.O.C. He's been with them forever. We picked up Graham shortly thereafter. We've been doing the same shit that you're listening to since '93. That's where I was leading with C.O.C. The reason that they sound the way that they do now, is thanks to Phil. He started the whole music. They couldn't deny that if they tried. It was a shitty divorce but good things come out of it. No one was jumping into our corner because they were into signing **No Doubt**, **Green Day**, and **Offspring** clones. It seems the tide is turning. We're getting lumped in with the whole stoner thing, which is totally cool, but I think we've got an edge on that. I think that we're just straight up rock 'n roll. I like a lot of those bands and I don't resent having one foot in that because we get high like everybody else. I don't think stoner rock is our selling ticket. We need genres and categories in order to sell music.

What's up for the States?

We trying to get out, we've got some ideas going. Our manager and label, as well as myself, are working diligently, on getting some good things lined up. We were so close to getting the **Motorhead** and **Zakk Wylde** tours. Sometimes it's the highest bidder who gets these things. We're not coming to it with a position of a lot of money.

How have Tim and Scott fit into Leadfoot?

They've picked us up by our collars and lifted us to the next rung on the ladder. Nothing against the guys from the past, I was sorry to see them go. They were not asked to leave, they left due to things in their lives that they wanted to do. I'm not gonna say anything bad about them, but I'm gonna celebrate the fact that I've got these new guys in the band. Tim is a drum, rhythm prodigy. Scott plays lead, so we've been able to explore a dual guitar, **Thin Lizzy** mode. The dualing leads that

you hear on the record are Scott and Graham going for it.

How did you record this so quickly?

We were ready. We got the line-up down with Scott back in March. We had a sense of trust in Eric at the Music Cartel. We had three shows in the New York area. We met up with Eric, signed, and went straight into the studio. We tracked everything live in one day and did some overdubs. We came back and did the mix in a day and a half. It was a four thousand dollar recording. I wouldn't mind remixing it and bringing out some more stuff, but you've got to roll sometimes and I'm satisfied. We were drinking and smoking and laughing the whole time. Today we mixed another song. We tracked a **Skynyrd** song called "I Need You". It's the second song on *Second Helping*. We recorded this seven minute forty seven second ballad which is a record for us. That should be out next year on a **Skynyrd** tribute album.

How do you feel about the Music Cartel? Do you think Leadfoot might get lost in the shuffle because there's so many releases?

I feel that Eric's put us on the top pedestal there. That's not to take anything away from any of the other releases he's got going on but I feel that he's giving us a lot of attention and he's got a lot of faith in the future. We're not obligated to him for our next record, we're free agents. I would love to do another record with the Music Cartel because I know what to expect. I think in the sense that he's helping us, we can help him take it to the next level. In an ideal world we can all move up.

***Blind* was a legendary record, what were your thoughts on that experience?**

That was an amazing thing. I wouldn't want to repeat the experience because it was ten weeks in the studio in New York City. We lived in a welfare hotel for the first half of that. There were literally rats fighting over Phil's puke when he got drunk one night. On one side it was a really tough, painful experience. There was a lot of extreme moments and a lot of pain and confusion. At the same time that generated a lot of power and angst. You can feel on that record a certain tension there. I'm proud of a lot of that stuff. I think I brought something to a lot of those songs. They hadn't had a singer before and since in my opinion. I'll be an asshole, I'm allowed to be. At the time you know it's good, but you don't realize it would have that kind of impact. I wish, for every time that I heard that *Blind* was ground breaking that I had a penny or a nickel. You would be talking to me on my golden phone. I thought I was taking it to the next step with *Deliverance*. I was in the studio for five weeks on that record and I got fired in the studio. A lot of people put it in their top ten for metal records. The song "Buried" was a song that Phil had written and no one in C.O.C. took it seriously. That was a year and a half after I had joined the band. That was the song that brought me into C.O.C. I got a tape from those guys and a vocal melody came in, the lyrics and I brought it down. To me, that's what set the whole thing rolling in the rock 'n roll direction. When you listen to parts of that record it's not much different than what we're doing now. That was very political and a lot of commentary. I stand behind all of that now, but the last ten years I've rolled with the punches and it changes your perspective. Now, **Leadfoot** has some serious lyrics but also a lot about having a good time and not taking shit too seriously. I'm still a young man and I still have a lot of rock 'n roll in me.

Final comments?

We get these blurbs like redneck rock or stoner rock, fuck that. I want people to look beyond that and remember what they liked about the kick ass bands from the 60's and 70's. Go with the feeling. We're trying to have a good time, all the time.

Discography:

1999... *Take A Look* (Music Cartel)
1997... *Bring It On* (Roadrunner)

Current line-up:

Karl Agell... vocals
Graham Fry... guitars
Scott Little... guitars
Phil Swisher... bass
Tim Haisman... drums

LEATHERWOLF

Interview with drummer Dean Roberts

In my opinion, 1999 has been the ultimate year for reunions. We have two of my top ten bands of all time reforming; **Crimson Glory** and **Leatherwolf**. We last heard from **Leatherwolf** ten years ago when they released *Street Ready*. The band was renowned for their three guitar attack. **Leatherwolf** were a combination of power metal, a dash of progressive intelligence, some intricate keyboard layering, and the most powerful choruses ever put to tape. At the very least **Leatherwolf** are currently writing new songs for an album that should be out by next summer. In the meantime we have a fifteen track live release.

How did this reformation take place and who is involved now?

It's still the same guys; me, Carey, Geoff, Paul, and Mike. After a certain amount of time one of our old managers was having a party at the old Troubador in Hollywood. One of our friends wanted to have a surprise party and have us play for her. From there we played a show at the Galaxy and then we decided to make a live album. From there we got asked to play a gig in Germany.

Why did you originally break up?

Just problems with Island. Me, Paul, Carey, Geoff, and Mike didn't really want to play the same type of music. Carey, Mike, and Geoff went their own way. I started another band. Mike left that band and then everything fell apart. That ended like eight years ago.

Did it feel weird playing together again?

It wasn't really. It took a little bit of time to learn all that guitar stuff again. It wasn't as hard as I thought.

How would you describe your sound now?

It has heavier songs, it has mellower songs. It's more of a heavy metal thing. We're gonna redo a song or two that we were writing before we broke up. It's gonna be more broader. We'll have some piano songs on this one. Mike plays piano. He likes blues, Carey and Geoff like the heavier stuff. We're mixing that all together now.

One thing that was impressive about Leatherwolf was the powerful choruses, is that something that you'll also be continuing?

We'll be singing, but I don't think when we record we're gonna layer the things we did on both of those records. It's too hard to reproduce live. We're gonna try to do what we can play live. We're gonna sing the same way but we just did it like twenty times. That's how it got so beefy. It'll still be going on just not as many harmonies. You can double the mics but you can't do what we did in the studio live unless you run samples and that's nightmare.

Have you played many live shows lately?

No. We haven't played since Europe which was August. We're writing songs right now and we're hoping to be done the end of March. We're hoping to play six shows around the United States in February, then we'll come back here and play a show in Orange County. We want to see what kind of response we can get. People seem to be interested so we're gonna play some shows and see what happens.

Where was the band most popular in the eighties?

We were real popular in Europe. It would have been better if we had more promotion going over there. In Germany and Holland, those were the better shows. Those are the ones I liked. The crowd knew all of our songs and they sang them all. It was pretty amazing. We're selling a few c.d.'s here. It's fifty/ fifty compared to Europe as far as what we're selling. It's surprising.

How has Perris Records and their distribution going so far?

That's going really good. They're shipping off a couple of hundred every week to the one stops around the States. Right now we're making a deal with Japan. They'll have the exclusive rights to sell the live album in Japan. One guys sold five hundred c.d.'s in three months in a little store over there. We're gonna go with a little promotion with a bigger distribution company over there. In Germany we're still doing the same thing. There's a little distribution company and their buying them from us and their selling them over there. Me and Geoff were gonna fly over to Holland because this company was interested in selling our stuff all over Europe. We're gonna go over there and promote it. They've already bought their first order. I don't think it was the music why we didn't go anywhere. It was the label

and the way they went about promotion, there wasn't any. The band got frustrated and thought that maybe that the music was a problem. Some of us thought that going in a different direction might be the solution. It's who is pulling the strings, that's what the problem is. That's why we gave it up back then. This time around we're gonna see what happens. We wouldn't be making this next record if the live album wasn't doing so good. They are so much into it. I've got a roofing company, Mike's got a company, Geoff's got a business, Carey's got a business, Paul's working in Denver. We fell into our little groove to survive. It's weird how things worked out. Whoever thought that we would play a little party at the Troubador and then us getting back together. I always thought that we were really good. I thought we had the music to go a little further than we really went.

What are thoughts on each of the three albums individually?

The first record was fun to make and it was fun to write the songs, but it wasn't recorded that well. I wish we would've got to go on tour for that album when it first came out. We never got to go on a very good tour. The second album was a lot of fun to make too. We got signed and we went to the Bahamas to make that. The third album we started wondering, shit man we aren't selling any records. It affected the way we wrote *Street Ready*. *Street Ready* didn't work and Island wanted us to make another record. I liked all three records. I still listen to them. On our live record we did "Endangered Species", "Off the Track", "Kill and Kill Again", "Season of the Witch". They're recorded the same way on the live album. There's also "Gypsies and Thieves", "Street Ready", "Spiter", "Spirits in the Wind", "Hideaway", "Wicked Ways", "Thunder", "The Calling", "Too Much", there's a new song on there called "Tools of Discipline", and there's a version of the Doors "Break on Through". There's people that like "Share the Dream", "Rise or Fall", "Bad Moon Rising", and "Black Knight" so we're thinking maybe we have to go to the second album and make another live one with the rest of the tunes. The new song is a killer song. I want to put it on the next record. You can record in the studio better than you can live.

When will you have the new album recorded and on the streets?

Hopefully before June or July. Then it will be ready to be distributed.

Will you tour after that?

We're hoping. It'll depend on what goes on with labels, tour support, and somebody to help sell this puppy. We all have bills and we need to

take care of business so we have to make sure that we can tour and still support our life. We have some hook ups to maybe go over to Europe and Japan. It's all just a shot in the dark. Our manager has been telling us that this could work out really good. Live albums really don't do that good. I think so many people are interested in **Leatherwolf** and that's why it's doing so well, but we'll see. It's fun to go back to the first album now that we're better musically and there's technology that's better to record with. We think we're much better than the album showed.

Final comments?

We're back and hopefully we'll be back in your neighborhood, wherever it is we can play. We always wanted to play live we just never had the chance to do that.

Discography:

- 1999... Wide Open (Self/ Perris)
- 1989... Street Ready (Island)
- 1987... Leatherwolf (Island)
- 1984... Leatherwolf (Self)

Current line-up:

- Michael Olivieri... vocals
- Carey Howe... guitars
- Geoff Gayer... guitars
- Paul Carman... bass
- Dean Roberts... drums



Lynch Mob

Interview with guitarist George Lynch and vocalist Kirk Harper

No band has done such a drastic change in styles as Lynch Mob. The band led by ex-Dokken guitarist George Lynch, has recently been put back together with totally new musicians. The sound has gone from the 80's style found on *Wicked Sensation* and *Lynch Mob* to a modern style that fuses rap and metal similar to bands like Limp Bizkit and Korn. While they do a convincing job in the live setting, most fans are turned off by the new style. Admittedly, *Smoke This* does take several listens to digest and to actually forget about inbred expectations. Long time George Lynch fan Mike Spaccarotella sat down with Lynch and vocalist Kirk Harper to speak about the new Lynch Mob.

Tell me about the new line-up.

Kirk: If you go see Korn, Limp Bizkit, and bands from that genre you see a great show if you're into the music. You don't see any guitar solo. We do a lot of guitar solos off this record which is different than in the past. I always dug the great players. It's nice to sit with the caliber of the musicians in this band.

George: We have Mark Simpson from Flotsam And Jetsam in the band now. He was in originally. He's like a utility man, he does everything. He's an excellent guitarist, he can do programming. He wasn't on the record but he'll be doing it in the live show. It's not like karaoke, we're a real band.

When does your tour start?

Kirk: It starts October 22nd, and it ends December 20th, in Florida.

George: Then we go back out New Year's Eve. We played House Of Blues in Chicago.

Kirk: We are doing some big venues and some clubs. We don't care where we play as long as we can go out there and do what we do. We do old Lynch Mob like "Wicked Sensation", "Mr. Scary", "Tooth and Nail", our interpretation of "Kiss of Death". We may go in and record the version that we do now. The music is essential the same but it drops into this half time groove rather than the up tempo double time. It's the nastiest groove. We sing the choruses and the pre choruses the same. When we first came out we didn't do any of the old things. When we signed with Koch they signed us on the merit of the new music. We wanted to thoroughly push that. At the same time we want to give the fans some of the old stuff. We've added six or seven tunes into our set. It's a two hour set. We want people to get into the new music but also to hear something that they're familiar with and keep them involved. We're trying to bridge the gap between the parents that are in the mid thirties who were into Dokken and early Lynch Mob and the kids who come to see the new stuff to enjoy it. We had all the kids up front and the parents in the back. Now they have a common denominator between the kids and themselves. You see this history. A lot of the fans that are into this new stuff are between fifteen and twenty two years old. They don't realize the history that George has.

Do you think that change in direction alienates some of your older fans?

George: I have to go in a different direction.

Kirk: Stevie Wonder is my all time favorite. My parent got me into the fifties music and bee bop. I was into the crooners. I was really blessed to be in a family with a wide musical background. I was inundated with everything as a kid. I loved doing voices. It grew out of necessity because back in the day we were doing everything from Dokken to Bon Jovi and I found myself trying to sing like all these different voices. After years of doing that I came up with my own little niche. I love singing. True singers are gonna have longevity. Now that hip hop is in full force I feel that there is a future there too. Hip hop is the rock and roll of now. I feel blessed that I am able to do both. I am a drummer by nature and when I heard music with drums and vocals I was in there. If you can add all of that and put it into continuity. I'm happy with what I'm doing now. It's been a freedom playing with George.

George: He said to me when we started recording, "I can go three different ways on all these songs. I can do what I really like to do, I can do straight up eighties style, or aggressive hardcore. He can adapt to whatever. I told him to do what he wants to do. There was a couple of songs where we had to work through some things.

Kirk: George has never worked with a singer who was willing to work with him. It was always "you write the music, I sing".

George: I'm not used to playing with people who aren't open to other people's ideas, or they do but they take credit for it. This is great because not only Kirk and I have a say but everybody else in the band does too. I've always been that way. As far as the guitar aspect, I know what I want to do. I have people offer suggestions or ask me for feedback. I can ask these guys for suggestions. Clancy McCarthy, our drummer, has his own style and he's a monster. We've got all these guys who are self contained musicians who don't make any excuses, and don't have a lack of opinions. The problem is that we have too many ideas. Each one of us could do our own solo album. Kirk raps, he sings, he plays bass, he plays guitars. Gabe's been

into everything from hardcore and death metal bands to popish, Latin bands.

Kirk: I've played a couple of shows with Jennifer Lopez.

George: We play "Wicked Sensation" and the biggest problem is that he can't play straight, but he can do it.

George you have your own website as well as Lynch Mob, do you think internet technology has changed music?

George: Everything's possible. It gives the artist more control. It allows an artist to get his stuff to his audience, which is good. It goes around this block, and it goes right directly to the people. Gabe and I were looking at the MP3's and how we can use this as a promotional tool. Record sales go up seventy to hundred percent in some instances because of the MP3. Then they want to buy the full length c.d.

Kirk: There's a lot more options now for the artist. A long time ago you couldn't do these things unless you had a really good record deal.

George: There's more artistic control over the music and their own lives. The machine sustains itself not the artist. In my experience the system the way it has been up until now is broke. Artists really want nothing more than to have their music heard. The old argument in this business is you put something in front of a guy and say here's your chance to shine. There's six billion people on this planet and fifty percent of something is better than one hundred percent of nothing. Psychologically, how can you argue with that. That's the only option there is. You see people who have some money coming in and they're spending a lot of money. Things are going good and you never think it's gonna end. The people in your place, the management, business managers, all the people who are supposed to be taking care of you aren't if you're ignorant. I was in a situation where I had a lot of money. Nobody told me there'd be taxes or investments. They were investing their money. I'm forty five years old, I've got two ex-wives, four kids, and how much money do I have in the bank? We all better get to work.

There's been a new popularity in the eighties metal, do you think it's hype or that it's just good music?

Kirk: I think it's a little bit of both. Everything was song oriented back then. Songwriters set themselves apart. Poison was a pop rock band. They wrote a lot of good songs; very simple but very successful. One minute that whole genre was riding on top of the world and then the next day you're not even getting a phone call back. You can't get on tour. You can't get tour buses anymore. You're in a van with a six by nine trailer being pulled around. You've got to get a job.

George: Or get on "Where Are They Now". It's like a relationship. After a few years you remember the good stuff even though ninety percent of it was bad. You have to take what has worked which is technical ability, used as moderation and a tool. The songs aren't vehicles for guitar solos. Songs are very important and a positive approach to the music. There was a party atmosphere around the music. There's nothing wrong with bringing those elements back. Nothing's ever going to be the same.

Kirk: People could really be rock stars back then.

George: There's plenty of rock stars today. Courtney Love is a rock star. All it takes is learning and no talent. They have to count on talented people to do their thing for them. You realize how hard they have to work to get there and you appreciate it. Everything seemed to be pushed to the extreme. There was good songwriting and good guitar playing and good production but when all three of those and more got pushed to the edge it built up to this thing that was comical. One thing works and you ride that but then you hit a wall.

One thing that seems to die is musicianship. If I put on a Lynch Mob album it's because I want to hear George blister. I want more of that.

George: Nobody's incorporating elements of the eighties with what we have now. You're gonna see that start to happen.

Kirk: We're trying to combine those elements on this record. Everything we're into now is popular music but we add the elements of the musicianship that we had back in the eighties. We get into this groove that is simplistic to the ear, but I can hear really good chops as well.

George: You can't just add a to b to c. It's a more complex symmetry than that. We want to make guitar important again and make it a viable tool. In our music you have to do something new. You can't just be old solos dressed up in the nineties. Tom Morello is doing that. He's not a technically great guitar player but he can do all that stuff. John Lowery, the guy who played on the Two record does a lot of really cool inventive stuff. He did the David Lee Roth record and he did Marilyn Manson.

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MERCYFUL FATE

Interview with vocalist King Diamond

One of the truly legendary bands to arise from the early 80's is remarkably operating at its peak performance in the late 90's. Their groundbreaking and extremely revolutionary discs from the early 80's, *Melissa* and *Don't Break the Oath*, are classics that need no introduction. The band reunited eight years later with original members vocalist King Diamond, guitarists Hank Sherman and Michael Denner, bassist Tim Hansen, joined by **King Diamond** drummer Snowy Shaw. The result was *In the Shadows*. Throughout the late nineties, *Into the Unknown*, *Dead Again*, and recently released *9* have restored fans faith in **Mercyful Fate**. I spoke to King about recent occurrences in **Mercyful Fate** and when you are talking to one of the nicest people in metal history you can always expect an event filled conversation.

Now that 9 has been completed for awhile what are your feelings on it? I think it's really turned out good. In a positive way I think it has captured a lot of the old feeling, but still bringing new fresh elements into it. We did two new cover songs, we have never done that before. There's a couple new voices used too. Specifically in "Sold My Soul", you can recognize some new elements in the voice. We're trying new ideas, new harmonies, and going back to the bigger choir voices behind the music, with more complex harmonies. The older feeling is more in respect in the mix between the aggression and the melody. In the days of *Melissa* and *Don't Break the Oath* there was a really special mix of aggression and melody. Maybe it's got something to do with Mike Wead coming into the band. He brought about the old **Mercyful Fate** feeling because he learned all of Michael Denner's solos to the note. We'd go out and play live and suddenly we'd recognize Michael Denner's solo better than when he played them himself.

I've noticed a hard to find live and demo bootleg from the early 80's titled House of Satan- are you aware of this?

Yeah, I think so. There was so many tapes floating around in the early days. They were released through the normal record stores at one point- *From the Depths of Hell* and *Curse of the Pharaohs* were two that I remember seeing at a Blockbuster or something like that. They didn't know it. It was presented from the bootleggers. The English found the place and destroyed over five thousand copies. A few months later it was available again but also only as a bootleg. That's what hurts. In between the normal albums. Here comes a guy listening to **Metallica** and thinking "I'll give the original band a chance, let's see what they're like" and they pick up a copy of *Curse of the Pharaohs*. It's cool but it's not the same. I wouldn't mind if they had a section at Blockbuster or all the others that said bootlegs and everybody knew what it was. Only the true fans would buy that anyway. A potential new fan that might get something out of what you're doing.

Why is this album titled 9, besides the obvious.

Obviously it's our ninth recorded album as **Mercyful Fate**. *9* has that magical ability to go full circle. Whatever you multiple, add up the figures and it always equals nine. It comes from trying to capture that initial feel. If you have the number eight in mind you will pay a little more attention to it. The guys came down and said our apartment number where we live while we're recording is 225. In the gas station on the way there was the number 9. When you talk about recording the songs and figure out what tempo it should be, how many beats per minute. It has a digital readout and more than half the songs added up to nine.

What led to Michael Denner's departure from the band?

The usual- family. We will always be very good friends. I have rarely had to part with members, in any of the two bands, under bad circumstances. Only once with **King Diamond** because of drugs- we don't want to see it. That was a bad break. No one wanted it to end. Timi was the first with his girlfriend getting pregnant and having a child. You can't do both. She left with the child six months later. Michael Denner's girlfriend had two children from a previous marriage and they got married. They bought a house and he's got his record shop in Denmark. That's when he asked for a stand in on the U.S. tour for *Into the Unknown*. He suggested Mike Wead himself. He has that Schenker feel that Michael Denner had but he also has that modern aggressive touch. He's a great person too, so he's got all the qualities you want. We did the European tour and again Michael Denner had to pass on it. Then came the time to record *Dead Again*. Now what, Mike? Either you're in a hundred percent or it was Mike Wead. I think Michael Denner was glad to finally be pushed against the wall. It's been bothering him to come up with excuses. On the last European tour Mike Wead comes up to me and says "do you realize that tonight when we play, this is the line-up that has played the most shows ever?" We didn't play many shows in the early days. We did a U.S. tour and an Italian tour. We never did a full European tour.

You've been busier now than at any time in your career.

Yeah, I don't complain at all. I love it. We recorded the album, then there was all this press stuff, and then we did a tour in Europe, and we played a bunch of festivals in the summer and some shows with **Metallica** and **Monster Magnet**. In Milan at a festival called Gods of Metal **Metallica** played the **Mercyful Fate**'s medley live. They invited Hank and I onstage and do it with them. It was really cool, with no make up on. We came back here for five days and then we had to go to another European tour, then were we here for ten days and then we had to go to South America. On Sunday I fly out and do a U.S. tour. From that it is **King Diamond** for awhile.

What's up with the new King Diamond album?

We go in the studio the third of January. It will be like two months from when I come back from the U.S. tour and when we start. We've already got a lot of stuff prepared. We're like eighty percent done. I think you'll like it. We really know that studio now, we got a good sound with **Mercyful Fate**. We're gonna use the same co-producer.

All the members from both King Diamond and Mercyful Fate keep busy with various projects- Gutrix, Ill Will, etc., it's interesting that they all work together in so many other capacities. They get around to different bands. Hank and the drummer was doing **Gutrix**, but that was four years. I think it just got rereleased on New Renaissance Records. Hank does have another side project now, I don't remember what it's called- it's him, the vocalist, and Bjarne on drums, Hank is doing the bass right now. Sharlee of course, is in so many black metal bands. Mike Wead has **Memento Mori**, **Hexenhaus**, and another new project. As soon as **Mercyful Fate** gets busy everything is dropped. It's different with **King Diamond** though. We always have a special priority, there's nothing there that would ever stop that. It's a fact that **King Diamond** has outsold and outplayed **Mercyful Fate**. That's certainly my baby and Andy's too. Both bands have a really good feel, we all get along fine, we don't have any of these stupid ego problems. We enjoy being on stage and in each others company. The highlight for me is that hour and a half on stage and the rest of touring sucks. I can't sleep on anything that's moving. It's irritating because I could really catch up on a lot of that sleep there. One of the most important things for me as a vocalist is to get some rest. I strive to get at least five hours of sleep and it doesn't get to be much more than that on tour. I stay away from alcohol. I can't stay up and hangout with the other guys and drink, that I can do when I'm off tour. It comes down to paying respect to the fans, because they're the ones that we do this for. I have to sound as good as I can.

Andy Paredes from Talamasca showed me a tape from 1988 with you on Geraldo Rivera.

He sent a crew to Florida to do an interview with me. I did a forty five minute interview explaining the Satanic philosophy and it wasn't sensational enough. There was nothing outrageous there, it was all logic. He said: "I can't use this for anything." He cuts out one little line, and then he says "bullshit". Then he had these people come in and say "I sold my baby to the devil", and he had them behind this screen. He was probably using his crew. It was so bad. It was a horrible show. I saw that and thought, that little prick.

Discography:

1999... *9* (Metal Blade)
1998... *Dead Again* (Metal Blade)
1996... *Into The Unknown* (Metal Blade)
1994... *Time* (Metal Blade)
1993... *In The Shadows* (Metal Blade)
1985... *Don't Break The Oath*
1983... *Melissa*
1982... *The Beginning*

Current line-up:

King Diamond... vocals
Hank Sherman... guitars
Mike Wead... guitars
Sharlee D'Angelo... bass
Bjarne T. Holm... drums

MOONSPELL

Interview with drummer Mike Gaspar

Much like other bands on Century Media's roster, such as **Tiamat** and **Samael**, **Moonspell** are the epitome of progression. From their black metal tinged debut **Wolfheart**, to the more gothic **Irreligious**, to an experimental **Sin/ Pecado** and now a more focused yet more adventurous **The Butterfly Effect**, **Moonspell** have evolved into a challenging yet very listenable act. Rather than recording in the unofficial Century Media studio in Germany, Woodhouse, the band packed up and went to England to record with Andy Riley instead of Waldemar Sorychta. While **The Butterfly Effect** is indeed more aggressive than **Sin/ Pecado**, it is yet another step into the modern realm and Fernando uses even more of a diverse range. This album is one of the best albums to be released this year, a triumph that any metal/gothic fan should enjoy. Here is drummer Mike Gaspar to tell us about it.

What are your thoughts on the new Moonspell record?

This album was a brand new experience because we changed from our old producer Waldemar Sorychta to a new one named Andy Riley. We did that because in any kind of relationship things can go stale. We decided to change studio, change producer. When you have someone listen to your music for the first time they always have new opinions and it's more exciting. In a place like London you're free. Musically, because this guy's English he doesn't care what you try- if it works, it works. The German way of recording is too strict. You feel like you're a kid and there's a teacher. In England, with this new producer Andy Riley, we recorded constantly during the night. If things weren't working we could just go to the pub and have a beer or something. He was so free that we would stop to watch television programs if we felt like it. We were really comfortable and at the end of the day we get more work done that way because you're excited and you know you feel good. I think that reflected a lot in the album. With Century Media everybody goes to Woodhouse and everything ends up sounding the same. In England, Andy Riley usually produces things like Bruce Dickinson, **Queerboys**, **Skin**, he's an engineer for David Bowie, and he's really rocky. He looks like a rock star and he's free to try anything. In the beginning of a song we wanted some noise so he said let's throw a trashcan from the top of the stairs. When you're that free it's really cool to experiment. I put my drum kit in different places. Fernando recorded his vocals at night for the mood. For this album we tried to have the essence of **Moonspell**. We tried to get that aggressive side back from when we were younger, we listened to death metal again. We remembered the past and all the good times we used to have but we also wanted to stay in this modern age. It doesn't make much sense to make an album from the 80's or 70's. We prefer to keep the essence of those times and make something more modern that everybody can relate to. The kind of music that Fernando listens to, he tries to imitate different voices and all these growling and screams. Then he went through a phase where he did more mainstream stuff, singing more but at the end of the day he found out he is more comfortable with these screaming vocals. When you hear him in the studio it's the easiest thing for him to do. He gets them in the first take. For most people it's the hardest thing to do, but for him it's the most natural. He's always been into extreme stuff. We like to play live a lot. You make an album and then spend a month recording it. You spend the rest of the year on the road, so you can't make songs that you can't play live and entertain people with.

Are you coming over to America?

Yes. We're gonna have our first experience in America. We're gonna do one show in Mexico to start off the tour. Then we go to Texas for a festival with **Danzig** in San Antonio. Then we go to Colorado, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Toronto, Montreal, Worcester, and in New York at the Wetlands. You don't want to start off too big, it's the first time. We're expecting to play the smallest places ever. We really want to see what's happening. We're used to touring a lot in Europe and we know what the scene is like, we have no idea what it's like in America. We have to get that experience and come back stronger.

Have you maintained the same type fanbase as when you did Wolfheart?

I think a lot of our fans have stayed with us. Our fans can always expect something different and that makes it more exciting for them. Of course you always have those fans that start saying, you sell out, but I think that's ridiculous. I like to talk a lot with people at the shows. They know they can go to a **Moonspell** show and we'll play old songs. We try to give them a little bit of each album so you don't just get the last material. If you've been with us a long time you like to hear the old stuff. In America it's gonna be our first experience so this album is the one that's gonna get the most attention but we'll definitely play some old songs also.

Tell the readers about the butterfly effect.

The guy behind the lyrics and the concept is Fernando, our vocalist, but I can give you the basics. The butterfly effect is a concept that was discovered by Edward Lawrence. He worked in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He discovered this in 1961. He was playing with his computer and he put different data in and something catastrophic happened. From small occurrences something big and disastrous can happen. An example can be like the flapping of a butterfly's wing in China can alter the weather in the United States. That's the basic concept. Where **Moonspell** take this, it's transposed to a human, individualist level. Small occurrences in your day to day life can create something disastrous that you can never expect. I think that's happened to everyone. We try to translate it to a human sense so that everyone can understand it.

How did you approach your drumming on this album? Did you do anything differently?

The big difference on this album was in the composing because most of it was done by our keyboard player. He did it at home on a computer. In the past we would lock ourselves into a room and feed off each other. One this album when a keyboard player or a guitar player write drum patterns they can come up with strange things. They've never had drum lessons, they don't have a ruling. That's why stuff like **Nine Inch Nails** the rhythm patterns are really crazy. That was real interesting for me because when I got the tapes to put the drum machine patterns into real drumming what came up was strange rhythms that I would never think of because it was done by someone who had no idea what drums were all about. The most fun part for this album was in the recording studio because I had this amazing acoustic room. Andy Riley would constantly through microphones everywhere and we got a really live sound to the drumming. I had the most amazing drum sound. It was so exciting to play because everything was so big and loud. At the same time I had the opportunity to mix some triggering. You have all eclectic triggering or you have all acoustic. I wanted to have the warm feeling of a human playing but a little bit of technology to give it that big push like on songs "Lustmord" and "Soulsick". On other songs like "Can't Bee" it starts on the rhythm on a really small drum kit with two microphones to get that real acoustic feeling. In the middle of the song you have this big crack that comes in. That's from the triggers. You have all these sounds going on. The bass player is friends with this percussionist that used to play for the **Pet Shop Boys** and **Smoke City**. He lives in London so we invited him to come in and do whatever he could freely on each song. That was an interesting experience because he's an amazing percussionist. He gave lots of flavor to songs rhythm wise. The last song "K" is all percussion, that was given to him to do whatever he wants. He had shells, he would put certain instruments in water, he had an Udu which had holes in it and you push air into it to create strange sounds.

Discography:

- 1999... **The Butterfly Effect** (Century Media)
- 1998... **Sin/ Pecado** (Century Media)
- 1996... **Irreligious** (Century Media)
- 1995... **Wolfheart** (Century Media)

Current line-up:

- Fernando Ribeiro... vocals
- Ricardo Amorim... guitars
- Sergio Crestana... bass
- Mike Gaspar... drums
- Pedro Paisao... keyboards





Interview with vocalist/ bassist Steve Rowe

Many readers will be familiar with Steve Rowe and his band **Mortification** from a past interview. Steve is a survivor. He continues to win his battle with leukemia and refuses to give up any aspect of his life. This is good for his fans because *Hammer of God* is their best release to date. Following the disappointing *Triumph of Mercy* a year later, *Hammer of God* is everything that *Triumph of Mercy* was not. Each song ranks among the best contained on their nine studio albums. There is a traditional power metal influence permeating through and the production is the best in years. We spoke to the always talkative Steve about what **Mortification** have been up to in the last year.

This album has a change of style.

People know us as a death metal band. I've been heading in this direction but it's taken me this long to reach what I wanted to achieve. I had somebody build a twenty four track studio and we got a great producer in there and I think we've come up with something that's the best thing we've ever done. It's a hybrid of things. I still like the grindcore and death metal thing but we wanted to get away from that processed drum sound. We wanted to bury the bass guitar more which was a compromise on my part. We wanted to combine traditional metal with a **Slayer** type of thing, but do it in a modern setting.

Triumph of Mercy was my least favorite Mortification album.

When we did *Triumph of Mercy* I went through extreme cancer. *Triumph of Mercy* had some good songs on there but the production was bad. When we recorded it I was off my knot. I had been on morphine and pethadaine for fourteen months, that's heroin. When we did that album I was a heroin addict from the medication. Instead of going through a four day withdrawal, I went through a two week withdrawal. It should have been the end of the band, but I was well enough to do it. I was in the hospital for three months before I could learn how to walk again. I had a lot of spare time so I spent a lot of time writing music. A lot of the songs on *Hammer of God* were written while I was sitting in the hospital in a wheelchair. The album was inspired by what I had been through, as was *Triumph of Mercy* as well, but I had time to really write music that reflected what I was trying to say. I was in a coma twice, I was in a wheelchair twice, I had the most extreme cancer. I was given a one percent chance to live. I got through it and I was able to write music inside of my mind. The music was really passionate. When you listen to the record it sounds like we really mean it and we aren't just going through the motions. We played that album like it was the last thing we were gonna do on earth. We used a real drum kit and I made Keith play things a hundred times until it was exactly how it should have been. Of course we also added all the bonus tracks. *Triumph of Mercy* was going to be more similar to this album but we didn't know if we were gonna do another one. We tried to do the blast beats like we did on *Scrolls of the Megilloth*. The reason we did the bonus tracks on the new album was because we had the original demos of "At War with War" and stuff like that which was more thrash oriented than grindcore. That's how we originally had written them but at the last minute we tried to make them more intense. We should have done them the original way we wrote them. That surprised me about Metal Blade licensing *Triumph of Mercy* from me because, obviously being a Christian band we sell in Christian stores all over America, but I felt we should have presented an early album to Brian (Slagel). *Triumph of Mercy* just wasn't as good. *Envision Evangeline* started to get to where I wanted to but we didn't make it until *Hammer of God*. The keyboards on this album add, not just melody but a lot of strength to the music. The keyboards on the chorus on "Metal Crusade" brings in melody to the music which we never had before. That's what makes bands like **Metallica** effective. Their music is heavy but it's melodic- well they aren't heavy anymore, but if you listened to the *Black* album that's what made it melodic. People don't realize that Hetfield's vocals are all layered with keyboards.

How are you feeling now?

We toured America last year for twenty five shows. We just toured Europe and that I think was the highlight of my career. We've been together for ten years and we've never been to Scandanavia before, we toured Germany twice. This time we went to Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Finland. When we went to Norway people went crazy. We're on Nuclear Blast on Europe, and we're

pulling crowds as big as those who are selling ten, twenty times what we are. We're pulling the same crowds as bands as **Amorphis** and **Dimmu Borgir**. The people who are into our music and really supportive. We played in Norway to four thousand. The black metal people wanted to know where we were at. I did this interview with a black metal magazine, *Nordic Visions*, and they never printed it of course. We told them where we were playing, when we were playing, and exactly where we were going to be and told them they were welcome to come. There was a few of them, but I was so excited about playing that I didn't even think about them. We've received countless death threats from there but it wasn't a problem. I have no fear of life or death, obviously, I've looked death right in the face. It doesn't matter what anybody could do to me, it wouldn't be a big deal. A lot of that stuff is all talk and no action. If I hadn't been sick I probably would have been fearful but I was so excited about playing it didn't matter. I wanted to do an American tour right now but the other blokes have stuff to do. Our drummer just got married to a gal in St. Louis and he's bringing her back home to Australia. We're not a full time band at all. There's not a lot of money in this business. They've got a life. The drummer's got a really good computer job.

It seems like you have a stable line-up now.

Four years and three albums. Our young guitarist is incredible. He's twelve years younger than I am. He's never heard an **Iron Maiden** album in his life. I'm playing **Slayer** and **Dio** and he's not into it. He's into hardcore. You've got a hardcore guitarist in a metal band, it's interesting. He's got short hair, he does all those jumps. He just wants to be in an extreme band. The drummer's just perfect for the band because he's playing straight forward music. We used to have a drummer that was really progressive and that didn't fit. If this album took off and sold really well and we were able to do some decent touring they would be willing to do it but there's not enough cash for us to do it full time.

How is your record label doing?

I have my own record label and a mail order business as well. I sell a lot of Christian metal bands. I've got a distribution system here. The label would've been a lot bigger now if I hadn't got sick. I have an office in America. We're gonna sign some new bands. Hopefully we can get more bands on labels like Metal Blade. Metal Blade is signing Christian bands at the moment because there is a market for it. People in this country are more open to religious ideas than people in Europe and Australia are. They've signed **Tourniquet** again, **King's X**, and they are looking at some other bands. **Ultimatum** is doing a new album now.

Final comments?

Just that maybe people would look behind any prejudices they might have because of our lyrics. Listen to the music. The reason why we're so up front with our lyrics is because the black metal bands are so up front with their lyrics. I liked **Death** because he's walked away from that boring, one dimensional Satanic stuff. He's writing from his point of view and his experi-

ences. He's had hard times, when you write from that perspective it comes out pretty good. I really respect him for what he's been doing.

Discography:

- 1999... Hammer Of God (Metal Blade)
- 1998... Triumph Of Mercy (Metal Blade)
- 1996... Envision Evangeline (Nuclear Blast)
- 1995... Primitive Rhythm Machine (Frontline)
- 1994... Blood World (Frontline)
- 1993... Post Momentary Affliction (Frontline)
- 1992... Scrolls Of The Megilloth (Frontline)
- 1991... Mortification (Frontline)
- 1990... Break The Curse (Frontline)

Current line-up:

- Steve Rowe... vocals and bass
- Lincoln Bowen... guitars
- Keith Bannister... drums



MULLMUZZLER

Interview with vocalist James LaBrie

Whenever a musician decides to do a solo album away from his regular band the results are often not even a shadow of that person's day gig. Most likely the solo effort is a self indulgent mess. While his bandmates performed in side projects such as **Liquid Tension**, **Platypus**, and **Gordian Knot**; **Dream Theater** vocalist James LaBrie decided to record a solo album of his own, *Keep it to Yourself*. His band is known by the peculiar monicker, **Mullmuzzler**, and the disc has been issued through Magna Carta Records. *Keep it to Yourself* is an impressive piece of work. More song oriented than **Dream Theater**, **Mullmuzzler** nonetheless have something exciting to offer. I spoke to James about this record in late summer. He is a true gentleman who was a pleasure to talk to.

What was the idea behind doing this solo album?

It was originally brought to my attention by Mike Varney and Pete Morticelli. They asked if I'd be interested in doing a solo project with Magna Carta. At the time I said, let me think about it. It's got to be the right thing. I want to work with some cool writers. I want to have cool players on it as well. I said let's do it but I have to wait until I'm done with the tour with **Dream Theater**. Our last show for *Falling Into Infinity* was in South America in late September, then I jumped into the **Mullmuzzler** project. I worked with guys like Matt Guillory. I wrote three songs with him on the album. I worked with mainly Carl Cadden James from **Shadow Gallery**. I wrote a few songs with him and a couple of other guys from the band. They're really cool guys and they were coming up with some great stuff. Then I worked together with Trent Gardner on a few songs. I was not only a writer, but I was the producer. I had to be on top of everything. I had a vision of where I wanted the music to go. I wanted it to be somewhat progressive but with a hard rock, groove oriented album. I know a lot of people were probably expecting me to come out with more of a Steve Perry kind of angle, songs that are predictable and safe. They thought it would be radio friendly. I said no way, I don't want to do that. So I decided I would surprise everyone. I wanted to do an album like this. I wanted it to be mainly a hard rock album and get something out there with a lot of energy and very short to the point songs. The reason why I wanted to get together with the guys from **Shadow Gallery** was because I had been approached by Carl Cadden James. He got Mike Varney to get in touch with me and they wanted me to sing this little bit on their last album. I knew the band and I heard *Carved in Stone* and thought it was pretty cool. When Carl approached me, I was on tour with **Dream Theater** but I had a day off and I met Carl in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He drove me to my next gig. He's a great guy, very intelligent, and a well spoken person. I really enjoyed his company. Carl came to one of the **Dream Theater** shows and he gave me a copy of *Tyranny*. I remember listening to it and it was great. It's very *Mindcrime*/*Queensryche* sounding. I was really impressed by it. One of the things I said to Mike and Pete when I was putting together a list of writers, I want to see what's shaking in Carl Cadden James' world of music. He threw me some ideas. Working with Matt Guillory from **Dali's Dilemma** and obviously I did *Age of Impact* with Trent and we got a rapport going. He's a terrific guy and is really talented. He's on another plane. He's one of the nicest guys I've ever dealt with. I can't believe how nice this guy is. You're almost waiting for him to snap and cut your head off. Writing with him was a learning experience. I knew I had a vision of what kind of players would come on here. I needed technically good players but also with a certain feel of style about them. I got in touch with Mike Mangini and he wanted to do it. We did a festival in Europe with **Extreme** and I remember watching Mike Mangini on stage and he's great. He was working on the next Steve Vai album and Mike Keneally was in the band. He played with Frank Zappa. This guy's incredible. The bass player for his band had a great feel, he was technically brilliant but he wasn't showing it. He was more into a soulful approach to bass playing. That's what separates the men from the boys. I got in touch with Mike Keneally. I asked about Bryan Beller. I wanted to meet this guy first and he was very professional and very laid back. I thought Matt Guillory was an incredible writer and player so he played the piano and keyboards.

The album was very cohesive although I thought "Beezebubba" was different because of the horn section.

That was like a Chicago style. I was really into it. When Trent approached me with this idea he said I hear this stuff going on. I said let's go for it. Let's really beef this thing up and put it on the album. He asked me if I thought it was too off to the left and I said fuck being "too off to the left", this is where I come from. I love the earlier Chicago stuff.

My favorite was "Statued".

That I wrote with Matt. I remember when we were writing it and Matt approached me and said "why don't we put some instrumental thing in here?" I listened to the song so far and I decided let's leave it the way it is. It's balls to the wall. It's got a great feel and it would be typical if we threw this instrumental interlude on. The effect that I wanted to get out of it was that the person listening to it wanted to hear more. Let's not elongate it, just make it concise and end it. "Shores of Avalon" was the East Indian/**Zeppelin** progressive approach. It was seductive.

Why the name Mullmuzzler?

It's a hybrid word. When I had to let Elektra know that I was doing a side project because there's contractual obligations, so they said no way you can use James LaBrie. You can't put your face on the front, all these contractual agreements. What can you do, when your on a major you can't say "fuck you" because at the end of the day you're the one walking away with your tail between your legs. It might not be right it's just the nature of the business. They gave me the release so I could do another album with another label. I didn't want to push the envelope. They said when you want to do a solo album with us that's when we'll release it as James LaBrie. When I do an album like that with Elektra I would approach them with the other styles of music that I enjoy, believe it or not like George Michael, Sting. I'm really into that stuff as well, which is probably what some people expected from me this time. *Burn* magazine in Japan just flew over to do an interview with me and they were blown away. They thought it would be a Steve Perry approach. These were the parameters that I had to work with. We did a lot of phone calls, e-mails and then I flew out a made sure that everything came together. It was a absurd approach to take when constructing an album. Instead of being in a room and working things out like we do in **Dream Theater**, this wasn't anything like that. It was really bizarre. When I was coming up with a name there's been a lot of mulling and pondering thoughts. Mull- where can I go with it? I'm not just gonna call it **Mull**. I was thinking of some of the lyrical content. There's the expression of your fears and insecurities. Sometimes people don't pick up on it and walk away and it turns tragic. That's where I came up with muzzler, which means to gag or to suppress one's expression. I put those words together, it's never been done before and it's a whole new word- **Mullmuzzler**. It's a word that I created and it's a description. That's where the album title came in- *Keep it to Yourself*. The first song, "His Voice", the lyric that I wrote there is about one of my best friends that I lost fifteen years ago. If it was today with the knowledge and experiences, and everything that I've come into contact with in life in general, I probably would've been able to save my friend. I would not question the vibes I got from my friend. He was completely confused and scared and he ended up taking his life. That's what it's all about. Don't walk away from something, say something when you feel it. It could be the difference between something amazing and something tragic. I came up with the art concept. The only change that I wanted was that the ear is on a flat angle- I wanted that to be like you and I were face to face and I was speaking to your ear it would be at a completely different angle. I wanted it slightly detached.

Will you play any live shows?

I think the only way I would consider doing some shows live is that it has to make sense. Where the shows are gonna be played and why they're gonna be played. There has to be a special meaning behind it. I'm not gonna take these guys and do shows here and there and everywhere. We were even asked to do shows for the Japanese but at this point I don't think so. I would if the terms and the reasons for me doing it made perfect sense to me and I would never know that until it was approached to me. These guys are all great players and I know I'd have a riot on stage with them. There's a completely different vibe and feel. It would be refreshing. I'm sure that **Liquid Tension** was rejuvenating to John and Mike, and to be on stage in a totally different environment- although Jordan is now in **Dream Theater**. When people hear the next **Dream Theater** they're gonna be blown. It's an album that we've been wanting to make and it's finally being made. It would be easy for me to say to the Japanese that I'd come over and I'd make a bundle of money but that's not the reason why I want to do it. I want to do it because I want to have a good time doing and do it correctly so I would blow minds with this as well.

NECK

One of the bands that has been greatly overlooked is Long Island's Neck. While local bands like **Vision Of Disorder** have gone on to some commercial success, and others like New Jersey's **Dillinger Eascape Plan** are picking up good tours, it's now time for Neck. This band is absolutely crazy. The music and the vocals are truly schizophrenic. One minute they can be quiet and beautiful the next a whirlwind of technical virtuosity and tortured screams. While their self titled debut and *Crawl Away* e.p. has established them as band to watch their upcoming full length, *Should My Fist Eye*, should open some eyes. I spoke to the band at a rehearsal one cold Monday night. Their sense of humor, and laid back attitude is in direct contrast to their twisted musical vision. Of course, I got to meet the drummer they call Crazy Larry.

What is Neck doing now?

Mike: We have a studio album coming out in January. We're on Cho'sin Records out of Sacramento, California. This guy started up a record label, he works at Vagrant Records. We're the first band that he's doing. He's putting some major money behind it. It seems he's very serious about getting us on tour and to Europe.

Is there any formula for Neck, I can see hardcore, grindcore, even death metal people or prog fans getting into this music?

Mike: We try to write what makes us happy. We were never a hardcore band to begin with, we just played hardcore shows because they're the only shows we could play. We're not trying to appeal to any crowd, we're just trying to do our own thing. Everybody wants to be set apart. Greg's playing guitar, I'm singing, Larry's playing drums, and Chris is playing bass- you can't confuse it with another band and call it something else.

The vocals have a nice contrast between insane screams and melody.

Mike: We go in a lot of different directions at once. The newer songs are more melodic than the older ones. They're more daring, it's all directions at once.

Greg: I had a part with Larry and Mike said I don't know what it's gonna sound like but let's do it.

Mike: It sounds like we're here playing with two different songs going on at once.

Are you familiar with Voivod? I think the guitar playing is like Voivod's but just more insane and unbridled.

Mike: I have one of their albums that I bought in seventh grade. It was very tinny sounding, but everybody compares us to them and I've never listened to them.

Greg: I never heard of them either. After the first time somebody compared us to them I listened to them but I don't really hear it. I got the one with the aliens on the cover, *The Outer Limits*.

Mike: I thought they were saying we sound like Devo.

So you should get some touring soon?

Mike: Once he gets a master of the album he wants to get us a management company. He wants to hook something up for Germany, Italy, and France. We've gotten stuff hooked up through S.F.T. before but we couldn't go out there because we only had three shows. After that we'll do something in America.

When will the new record be coming out?

Mike: On January 18th. It was originally gonna be the end of November and that got pushed back because we've still got the master.

Greg: We do everything ourselves so it takes a little more time.

Mike: We've done more interviews in Europe than we have here. It's really strange that these radio stations in the middle of nowhere play our shit. With S.F.T. we sold like two to three thousand records, hopefully now we'll go to the next step.

Greg: We want to make a living off of this as much as possible. Right now we all have jobs and it's hard.

Larry: Can I answer one question?

How would you describe your drumming?

Larry: Like a machine that was given too much voltage. Any space at all I try to put a drum in. Okay. If you want me to describe how it sounds, it's like a stolen tank crashing into a church. Now ask me another one. I want to change my answer. It's like a piece of shit with flies attacking it. Okay. Then you can add the thing about the tank.

Mike: Larry likes to arrange things.

Where does the music go from here?

Mike: I don't know, wherever it goes. I don't give a shit.

Greg: Musically, we don't know. We just want to play and get as much out of it we can.

Larry: We want to play more abandoned building and sewers.

Discography:

2000... *Should My Fist Eye* (Cho'sin)

1999... *Crawl Away* (self)

1998... *Neck* (S.F.T.)

Current line-up:

Mike Dafferner... vocals

Greg Kubacki... guitars

Larry Hundertmark... drums

Chris Frye... bass

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NEGATIVEHATE

Interview with vocalist/ guitarist Chuck Scandura and bassist/ vocalist Keith Ranalli

One band that has been causing quite a stir is New York's **Negativehate**. This extreme metal band incorporates industrial elements with touches of hardcore and grind for a individual sound. They take what bands like **Godflesh** and **Brutal Truth** have done, except twist it around into an unpredictable mix of aggression. Their debut, *Earth Spirit Down* was released last year and they have just about finished recording the sophomore effort, *Fuck You and Your Pink World*. This band is a crushing assault that will surely catch the ears of many listeners. You have been warned. Here is a discussion I had with Chuck Scandura and Keith Ranalli at their house in Nyack.

Tell me about your background.

Chuck: Keith and I went to college together. We're both into the same type of intense music, from **Janes Addiction** to **Anthrax**, **Metallica**, and **Megadeth**, to **Godflesh**, **King Crimson**, Bob Dylan. He was in a band and I was in a band. We were hanging out a lot as friends. We were going to S.U.N.Y. Pottsdam, and after we departed we decided to get back together at some point and start a band. We completed our education at two different colleges and we kept in contact. We had a tight link of communication through the mail. We wrote about what the vision should be when we started this band. We felt the energy and potential for the band that we communiated. I got super hyper during my last year at S.U.N.Y. Purchase. I wanted to start it now. I broke up with my girl and there was a lot tension there so I called the band **Negativehate**.

Keith: Interestingly enough one of the bass players that we employed at that time, now plays guitar.

Chuck: We both got our degrees form college and then we got together in Nanuet. We both got jobs and started making noise in our bedrooms.

Keith: It took about three years to put the first album out. We had our own perspective. We had collect all the equipment, build a studio, and even that first album is recorded totally minimally. There are a lot of old songs on there. What we do is heavy industrial, grindcore, ambient.

Chuck: There aren't many bands doing what we do vocally especially. We're integrated electronics with heavy distorted guitars and that insane vocal style. We usually play with a lot of hardcore bands and death metal bands.

How has the response been so far?

Chuck: With the hardcore bands we have a tough time because of the electronics. We have a better turn out in the city at industrial clubs.

Keith: We've built up a small fanbase. We're totally grateful for it. A lot of times we have serious problems soundwise at shows. A lot of things plug in and there's a lot going on.

You have a contrast between quiet moments and noisy heavier sounds.

Chuck: I think we put a little bit too much preparation into it. At some points we could leave it, but we keep tweaking.

Keith: We're mastering the new album now. These are versions that we've heard now for six months, yet today I still feel everything sucks.

Chuck: Knowing that this is the final product that's going out to the public and that you can't change it is always frustrating. It started on a really depressing note. There was a lot of anxiety and emotion that went into it. We're past that and I am really glad we can release it as a finished piece of work. We can do the next thing, which will probably be a hip hop c.d.

Keith: It's a side project. We're surrounded by hip hop influences and we love the music ourselves.

Chuck: Keith and I are really into hip hop and into metal, but we hate hip hop metal. The closest thing is to being okay is **Rage Against The Machine**. It's still hasn't reached its potential.

Keith: Both styles have to come natural.

Chuck: **Anthrax**, "I am the Man" was a good fusion at that point. Then they did "Bring the Noise". That wouldn't stand up today but back then it was done well.

When you add an electronic influence it adds a new type of aggression.

Chuck: It gives us the opportunity to express ourselves rhythmically. The drums are an instrument we both can play, but we'd never call ourselves drummers. We can compose music rhythmically on a machine. The drum machine is a broad influence, there's a lot of things you can do on it. A lot of people are surprised when they find out we have the cheapest, low end drum machine. We tweak it to death. We don't have a sampler. We have a digital recording device which we load all our samples on.

Keith: Once I discovered how electronics can be used in music I realized I can use that to tap into songs that relate to music. It's a new world. I'm willing to incorporate the experience of living in my own generation into my music. Electronics are everywhere. One the one hand it will steal away from the soul of organic music, but in the same way I am a child of this generation.

Chuck: It's a careful balance of organic sounds and electronic sounds. I get frustrated with straight up techno. I'm sure there's software out there that automatically writes music and that's totally alienated the human element. We're trying to keep the balance. We have the human voices and element to the music. We're slow to take it all in. We don't have a computer, we don't have the internet, we don't have cell phones, we don't have beepers, there's no television here. The only thing that we have that's electronic is our music equipment and our radios. We have access to certain things.

Keith: We understand how that doesn't necessarily benefit us either. We take it at the pace we can. If we're gonna be successful we have to grow and take it to a new level.

Chuck: We almost cursed ourselves a few years ago when we wrote a song called "Internet". The choruse was "internet, internet, we are not connected". We never released it and it's to our own benefit because at some point we are going to have a website.

Keith: The nature of this country has been to swing back and forth between periods of being conservative and twenty, thirty years later something shows up shredding that whole system, and the country reacts again to that liberalism and gets real conservative again. Almost everything in my collection has some kind of electronic incorporated in it. You have the **Skin Chamber** albums, the **Brutal Truth** albums- which I'm very selective about, **Meathook Seed**, **Godflesh**.

What's up with your new album?

Keith: It's called *Fuck You and Your Pink Mood*. We have our whole lives to continue redcording albums so it's acceptable at this point in our lives to focus on this particular emotion, in this particular way. It's heavy as all hell, it's heavier than our last album and it's grindier.

Have you had any label interest?

Chuck: We do, but at this point we do't even want to talk about it. There's people interested in funding our next record, which is good. At this point, we don't care because we're gonna make music anyway. Now we get to oversea everything. If it's out there, there's enough people frustrated with the music scene would be interested in what we have to offer. Lyrically, this next record is more impressive than the last one. All the music is recorded and we're mastering it today. We're waiting it out a little bit but we're trying to get everything organized, I would say it'll be out in no more than a couple of months.

Keith: I believe that the lyrics in this band offer something different. We write a poem for each song. We don't have a verse, chorus, or a hook. There's nothing that repeats, lyrical anyway. Lyrics are incorporated in the song as if it were another instrument.

Chuck: It's hard to interpret the music with this type of music. One diferece between this album and the last one is that the poetry is a lot more extensive. These poems are pretty dense.

Keith: Three members of the band broke up with their girlfriends at the time at the album was getting written. The album has a certain focus which is dark.

What elements are different with your side project from average hip hop?

Chuck: No matter how hard we try to make straight stuff, it still comes out really unique.

Keith: We love hip hop beats but we want to make them better.

Discography:

2000... *Fuck You And Your Pink Mood* (Piss Grey Sky)

1998... *Earth Spirit Down* (Piss Grey Sky)

Current line-up:

Chuck Scandura... vocals and guitars

Keith Ranalli... vocals and bass

Dimitri Benzinger... drums

Garret Gilroy... guitars



Interview with vocalist Kelly Schaefer

One of the nicest guys in the business is back with his second record with *Neurotica*, *Living in Dog Years*. Kelly Schaefer is known by most people because of his involvement with the Floridian technical death metal band, *Atheist*. Now he fronts *Neurotica*, a hard hitting metal band that is taking all the necessary steps to blow what is popular out of the water and show that their brand of metal is ready to conquer the world. They recently toured up the East Coast in support of their new record. This is an album that demands attention. Not a weak song to be found, *Living in Dog Years* is an aggressive jolt of energy from start to finish. I spoke to Kelly about his new style.

Were you able to play out live this much for the last album?

No. I think it's one of the reasons that it didn't sell as well. It was just a big mess. When the distribution deal fell through it threw everything off. The album was heavier than it needed to be at the time, *Matchbox 20* and *Radiohead* were big at the time, so it was hard for us to find a second single. I'm glad we went back in and did another record. Some day I hope we have a record that will make people go back and check that record out. It was hard for us to find an agent the first time around. Everyone wants to wait and see what happens. We did some dates in Texas and North Carolina, places like that where we were getting a lot of radio play, but we didn't do a full tour. We did maybe fifty shows tops for that album when we needed to do two hundred and fifty shows. It's the only way to push a brand new band. We just want to get into people's c.d. player and we'll be all set. It's so hard to break through to the radio but we need radio to break the record. It's been okay considering what we're up against. We were going in to some of these shows totally cold and kicking ass. It got to the point where the promoters were like "we want to have you guys back". Radio stations like W.D.S.G. in New Jersey were super supportive and really enthused after seeing the band. Many people thought the live sound was stronger than on the album. I think in January we'll see a lot of things happen in the Northeast, especially after this tour we just did with *Lynch Mob*. They're playing a lot of rap metal so they were having a tough time keeping their people at the shows. People came to see him do *Dokken*, I admire the fact that he's trying to reinvent himself but it's tough. We had nothing to lose in the opening slot. The promoters and club owners got to see what we're about and now we have at least fourteen places that we can go back to.

This is a great record, there isn't a weak song on here.

We worked extra hard on this one. We had Doug Kaye producing and he had never really produced the band before but he had a knack of knowing. He's spent a lot of time doing this, about twelve years, and now he's president of our label. He knows what we should sound like. The songs that we brought to him and the versions that are on the album are so different. I fought him a lot of the way. A lot of the things that are happening on that album are far from my roots. I'm all about crazy arrangements. It's hard for me to play a straight 4/4 thing and have it go for twelve bars. Everything that I fought him on for this album are things that people point out as maturity in our song writing. I'm not gonna take credit for it. I learned how to approach my songwriting differently now. The next time around I'll have my shit together. We try to be over indulgent, it's a long time for the hook to come in and he helped me get to the point. I liked it that way. It's not nearly as involved as *Atheist* and spending three months on a song. Now we could write three or four a day, good quality songs.

People sometimes forget what a great band *Atheist* were.

I want to get all three of them out in the States again. Hopefully through N.M.G. or anybody who's interested. The label from overseas basically stole them from us. Two can play at the game, I can put it out in the States. We have never seen a dime from that band. I want to get it out here so that people can check out *Elements*. We wrote that whole thing and recorded it in forty days. I hope that people can accept what I'm doing with *Neurotica*. It's hard to get out of that boys club of death metal. I feel so lucky that I was able to get out of it and reinvent myself into a new band. It's hard to imagine John Tardy coming out and singing,

not that I'm John Tardy because he was far more brutal than I was. People are gonna either hate or will maybe understand. I will get a whole new group into it as well as some of the older fans. Everybody, including Doug Kaye who co-wrote some of the stuff in it, it's all about the band. I still play the guitar and come up with a lot of guitar riffs but it's more of a family now. We love each other and they're the coolest bunch of guys. We created the music in *Atheist* under extreme personal differences. I truly hope that people embrace this music because I feel that we could do this forever. We're just happy to get a shot at this and escape all of our roots. All of the guys in the band come from death metal and psychedelic metal roots. It's like getting naked and the anticipation of getting naked in front of people scares the fuck out of people, but once you get naked it feels fucking great. That's what this is like. This is as heavy as I feel like being now. If I want to write the sickest shit on earth tomorrow, I'll go and get into that mind frame. It's as heavy as it needs to be.

It's so rare that you can have someone embrace their past despite the fact that they've moved on to a different style of music. I'm lucky that I'm able to do this. You can look back at fashion too. What we wore ten years ago was crazy. I don't think anybody's not gonna buy a *Neurotica* album because they don't like *Atheist*. I hope people go and check out this new record. It's got some shit in it, it's just controlled. I feared "Said She" and "Stars in My Eyes" the most because they are bordering on a ballad. It's not really ballads though, that's what's so hard to explain. It's mellow and emotional but it's not a fucking ballad. It's human emotion and heartfelt, just like a person.

People are generally calm and sensitive creatures but we do blow up. That's what *Neurotica's* music is about. It's electric, it sizzles, it's right in your face, direct and to the point. It's fun to play this stuff. Live it's easy to translate because it's pure emotion. It's real. We're not using loops and samples. It's guitars, bass, drums, and vocals. That's why I have a lot of respect for *Rage Against The Machine*. They're keeping it real. I enjoy the raw sound you can create with just the instruments. We went back and forth for like six hours a day with "Stars in My Eyes". That song scared the fuck out of me. As soon as we recorded it the first time I knew I felt this and with

everyone's encouragement I was able to do it. It was a huge branching out for me. There's a lot of real melody and real singing. My voice goes to different places but only because I allowed it to. Brian produced my vocals on *Seed* and he went for an aggressive, screaming approach. That was cool for those songs. This time around Doug brought a lot of traditional arrangements to the mix. It was fun because I'm a fan of old *Sabbath* and *Zeppelin*. We wanted to have six definitive songs that nobody could say could not be in the radio and we didn't want to lose the harder edge of *Neurotica*. That had a lot to do with Doug. I want to let those younger bands out there know, don't be afraid to let somebody help you. It's not a good idea to represent yourself in court and it's not a good idea to produce yourself either. You can go to different places you could never take yourself if you allow someone you can trust to produce you. It can be a career making experience if you let it be. We're working on a soundtrack with Brian right now. It's a movie about Tourette's syndrome. It's being done by Nicolas Cage's production company. Neve Campbell is gonna be in it. My and Shawn have done some background music for it. That should be out in the summer of next year.

Discography:

1999... *Living In Dog Years* (N.M.G.)
1998... *Seed* (N.M.G.)

Current line-up:

Kelly Schaefer... vocals
Shawn Bowen... guitars
Louis Polito... guitars
Migwell Przybyl... bass
G.J. Gosman... drums



NOVEMBERS DOOM

Interview with vocalist Paul Kuhr

Everyone knows about European bands like *My Dying Bride*, *Anathema*, *Paradise Lost*, even *Opeth*, *Cemetery* and the like. But when it comes to impressive, melancholic doom bands, America lacks far behind in talent. Among the bands that are starting to raise some attention are *Evoken*, *Em Sinfonia*, and *Novembers Doom*. Vocalist Paul Kuhr is actually a member of two of those bands. The new label, Martyr Music, has released the debut e.p. from *Em Sinfonia*, in *Mournings Syphony*, and *Novembers Doom*'s debut full length, *Of Sculptured Ivy and Stone Flowers*. It is an impressive album that effortlessly conveys the complex emotions of the music and complex structure of the doom laden vocals. I spoke to Paul about his rising status in America.

I didn't realize that you've been around for so long.

In this particular genre it was difficult at the time we started getting into this and started recording the music. All the eyes were on the European bands when we started and that was basically all of our influences as well. Being an American band when the grinding death metal was popular was difficult starting out. The only people who would give us the time of day were Avantgarde. I worked so hard and so long to come up with what we have right now as a unit. Not only is it difficult to get fan recognition here, playing this style of music, it's difficult finding musicians that are into this style of music as well. Drummers especially, they get bored because of the speed of the music. Guitarists start running out of ideas because they aren't into this style of music and they don't know how to write. They think it's basically slow death metal and that's completely not what we want to do. It took me awhile to find the right people for the band and people who had the same ideas for what we wanted to do. We recorded the seven inch material for us and Regress then brought it to Avantgarde, who he was friends with, and he said you should do a full length with them. They then sold the rights to Avantgarde. I still see it from time to time. It sold about seven thousand copies. It's more or less harder to get a hold of these days because the rights have reverted back to the band and we told Avantgarde to stop pressing it. I don't know what we're gonna do with it yet. We were talking about rereleasing it with some other material that we haven't put out yet. It's up to the label if they want to release it. If not, we'll probably do a limited run if we do it. Then we did the e.p. We wrote the three songs and always had the intentions of putting them on the full length. The e.p. wasn't really meant for sale. It was more for shopping to the labels. At this point I just give them away. We only have about a hundred left. Anybody who orders our c.d. through our website gets it for free. They're on the full length but their slightly different versions.

How has the reception been in America for the new album?

It's been better than we expected. It's selling in the States better than we expected it to. I haven't seen a bad review on it yet. Not everybody likes every song on it but that's what we were aiming for when we recorded it. We didn't want any two songs to sound exactly alike. We wanted everybody who picked it up and listened to it to find at least something on it that they liked, whether it was one song or three songs. There's songs on the album that I thought could've been a lot better. There may be things that we would have done differently or left off. That will all be remedied on the next album. We had a really good write up on us in *Metal Maniacs*, *Hit Parader*. I had no idea that anything would be in there. We have a local band that's called *Loudmouth* and I saw their name on the cover. I was looking through it and there's a full color picture of us. My jaw dropped. I think it was the first time I had ever bought a *Hit Parader* magazine.

Do you find it difficult to come up with a cohesive sound for this music?

It's not a concern whatsoever. I think the beauty of what we're doing, and I hate to pat ourselves on the back, but I'm so proud of the talent that every member has and the influences that everybody draws from. No matter what style we drift into, it still sounds like *Novembers Doom*. If you listen for the comparisons between "Reaping Forests Calm" and "All the Beauty Twice Again", they are completely different songs in every way but they both still sound like *Novembers Doom*. That has a lot to do with Eric, the guitarist's, writing style is extremely unique. When he auditioned people a few years ago, we auditioned eight people and he was the guy. His playing style is so original and unique it blew us away. He's the core of the music. He writes all the music, presents it to us, and then the band arranges things around it. We all sit down and make it a big collaboration with everybody. We change some things and then everything comes together. That's why I think everything sounds like us no matter what it is we're doing. We try very hard to make sure that every member is happy with every song. The next album is more

than half written. We're hoping to record again in January or February and have it out by May of next year. It's shaping up, already, to be better than *Sculptured Ivy*.

Describe your approach to the lyrics.

Everything that I write, and it sounds so cliché, but I wouldn't be able to sit down and write the songs that I write if I didn't have the true feelings that I'm writing. It sounds corny and sappy but that's how it is. I never force anything, I go through writer's block like anyone else. I can't just sit down and write a song. It depends on how I'm feeling that day, what's on my mind. It's all personal feelings that I put down on paper. The one thing that I try to do, which drives my wife nuts, is that I don't come out and tell you what I'm thinking about. It's extremely vague. I want people to read it and whatever they get from it, whatever they think it's about that's what I want. I want people to get their own ideas and their own feelings for what I put down on paper. We think that we have that album that covers all the bases for what somebody would like to hear. The only complaints that we've had is that people like one style of a song that they want us to do a whole album like that. The next album's gonna be more or less the same way, only with more elements to the music than what we've already done. It will still have the heavy songs, the beautiful sounding songs, and some real depressing stuff on this one as well.

Do you ever seeing your band evolving, like *Paradise Lost*, into another genre?

As long as the band is called *Novembers Doom* the core will always remain. I've been disappointed by so many bands that I've falling in love with in the past. I hate mentioning names, but *Paradise Lost* is one of those bands. When I heard *Lost Paradise* and *Gothic I* fell off my chair. Those are unbelievable albums and as time went on they got more poppy and they completely lost what blew me away. We have a fraction of the people who buy *Paradise Lost* but for those people, I will not let them down like certain bands have done. *Brave Murder Day* is my favorite *Katatonica* album, and every album they've put out has a style change and none of them suck. There's a band, along with *Anathema*, that have kept their core. *Serenades* is my favorite album but I love *Judgement* and *Alternative 4*. They went to two completely different styles but they were great at both styles. It all depends on the talent of the band I think. The doom scene has gotten better in America but it's all leaning toward the stoner rock thing. There's some fantastic bands in that like *Las Cruces*, although they aren't as heavy as us they still give us a chance to play shows with them rather than the grinding death metal bands which we got stuck with here in Chicago for a long time.

What's the deal with *Em Sinfonia*?

We went to Brian Griffin's studio to record the e.p. He told us when we first walked in the door, he's starting a doom band with all female vocals, kind of like the *Gathering*. After we recorded the three songs he pulled me and Mary to the side and said he "never envisioned male vocals on *Em Sinfonia* but I like the way you sing and I want you to do this with me". That was an honor so of course we did it with him. The four songs recorded were already written. There was no real collaboration on my part or Mary's part. Brian did a great job. He pieced all together. He laid down the drums and guitars. Mary and I went in and did the vocals. Then they laid down the violins and the female vocals. It was a fun project. Brian's talking about taking it more seriously and they are writing for a full length. I'll definitely return and sing on the album for him. It'll be much more of a collaboration. The music's gonna be different, more people are getting involved in the writing.

Discography:

1999... *Of Sculptured Ivy And Stone Flowers* (Martyr)
1997...*For Every Leaf That Falls* e.p. (self)
1995... *Amid* (Avantgarde)

Current line-up:

Paul Kuhr... vocals
Cathy Jo Hejna... vocals
Eric Burnley... guitars
Larry Roberts... guitars
Mary Bielich... bass
Emmett Hall... drums

November 17

Interview with guitarist Chris Cannella

From Phoenix, Arizona comes the aggressive **November 17**. The band released their debut, *Trust No One*, last year on Slip Disc Records. *Trust No One* was a bombastic album that rivaled **Ministry** in terms of powerful rhythms and a cold, harsh aggressiveness. The band resurface this year with a new album, *Defy Everything*, and a new direction. *Defy Everything* comes across more organic, in your face, and raw. The vocals are no longer drenched in effects and now possess an almost hardcore intensity. This new sound will certainly come across better in the live environment. To quote their bio: "fierce, angry music to fuel the revolution". I spoke to guitarist Chris Cannella about the direction **November 17** are heading.

This record seems more harsh than *Trust No One*, was this intentional?

Yeah, it definitely was. *Trust No One* was recorded and mixed in nine days and was meant to be a demo. It was done in Texas in the same studio with Neil, but more on a friendly basis than a business basis. It was very machine, very cold. We wanted the new one to be more like we are live. We always felt *Trust No One* didn't sound like us. We're very high energy live. We've come out of most of our shows bruised and bloody. We left a lot of the feedback on it. Instead of having Jason using an electronic drum kit, we had him use an acoustic drum kit on this record. The sequencing is still there, we just wanted it to be more raw. It took three times as long to get it that way. We dried the vocals out. There's no vocal effects, just a little delay and little panning.

The first record was more industrial sounding but I noticed this was more hardcore would you agree?

I'm glad you noticed that. Me and Jason, the drummer, have been hardcore fanatics for years. I'm originally from New York, and even though I moved out here when I was young, I always listened to stuff like the **Cro-Mags**, **Agnostic Front**, and all that great stuff. We decided to put more of a punk rock and hardcore influence on the record. I got him into hardcore about ten years ago. Instead of making everything sound sampled we wanted it to be more raw. Let's get into your face and have some fun. When a lot of people got *Trust No One*, especially on the East Coast and here in Phoenix, they say it doesn't do you justice because your live show is so raw, heavy, and in your face. When we did *Defy Everything* everyone said it was so different from *Trust No One*, but it's been about five years since we recorded *Trust No One* and it was only released nationally two years ago. You can't please everybody but we're definitely happy with *Defy Everything*. We even have a fifth member in the band now again. We have a second guitarist and we're writing together now. His real name is Brian. He's from England. He used to be the roadies for **Sepultura**, **Slayer**, **Biohazard**, all those guys. Everyone knows him as Rude T. We're not sure what's going on with the release of *Defy Everything*, but we're having a hard time getting everything organized for a tour. We're having bad luck. We just wanna get back on the road. We love playing New York. There's three major markets for us, here in Phoenix, Chicago where our label's at, and New York City. The kids show up, older kids wearing a **Sick Of It All** shirt or a younger kid wearing a **Skinny Puppy** shirt, they're jumping into the pit and getting down. We were blown away by that at C.B.'s, the Wetlands. We love the sounds of the darker edge of music, but there's nothing like an energetic show and you have audience interaction. Nothing beats that flow when you're on stage. I saw great **Skinny Puppy** shows but they're nothing like the first **Sick Of It All** tour, the early **Biohazard** shows, or **Agnostic**- the kids went crazy. We're trying to get that **Skinny Puppy** kid hanging out with the **Dead Kennedy's** kid. We have the heavy crossover appeal.

How did you hook up with Slip Disc?

We were shopping around a long time with *Trust No One*. We were ready to record another demo, actually some of the songs on *Defy Everything* were gonna be on it, that's how old some of these songs are. One label we shopped to said it was too heavy for their style of music. They handed it over to the A&R rep at Slip Disc and he contacted us. We had a few offers on the table but their's was the best. We still had creative control and it was more like a family nature back then. This is our last album of the contract so we're not sure what's gonna happen at this point. They're thinking about relocating to Philly. Right now they're distributed by

Mercury, but I think that's gonna change in January. I'm not sure what's going on. I'm not talking anything bad about them, but it's crazy. They're still fairly new. They haven't established their feet in the ground. We're the ones that got Neil that job. All those bands except for **Rorschach Test** who was working with Neil at the same time. We were both unsigned at the time. We did minimal touring at the time, just regional shows, and we both ended up hooking up with Neil. When we got the offer from Slip Disc, we told them to get in touch with Neil and they had a merger. We got to know Neil from his producing two **Skrew** albums. There's a lot friendly stuff going on with Neil.

Speaking of Skrew, do you know what Adam's up to now?

He's in a new band. I don't know the name of it, but I know that he's not singing, he's just playing guitar. I'm assuming it's a **Limp Bizkit** type of thing. It's a heavy thing with the d.j. spinning. Everything's weird with that guy, so let him be. Too bad **Skrew** couldn't keep a steady line-up. I think they were up to thirty six line-up changes. We've had the same four of us together since the first inception. Rudy, he was our first roadie. We wanted him in the band, because he knows us.

Why is the band called November 17?

In 1972, in Greece, there was a small college full of students who stood up against fascism and Nazism occurring at the time. A group of governmental soldiers killed them as terrorists. A terrorist organization formed out of this, called the Equalist Organization of 17 November. It's an extreme leftist organization. There's only six members. They all use the same caliber Colt, 1911 weapon. They've only made about thirteen assassinations, but they were part of that whole idea of avenging the school kids. They did nothing wrong. We did a little research on it. We were originally just called November. That sounded very glam rock. Damon came across an article about the Equalist Organization of 17 November, so we flopped it around and called it **November 17**. The only problem with that is we're gonna have a hard time playing Greece.



When you look at the album titles and the song titles, it seems like there's an intense stance.

The main topic behind everything is think for yourself. Use your own brain. You were born an individual, why die a copy? All the lyrics are based on metaphors. You can interpret them any way you want to. There's no definite topic to any song, with the exception of "Mirror". That was about Trevor's brother, he was shot in a drive by. He was his little fifteen year old brother. That's the only thing with a distinct topic, everything else is metaphorical concept rather than an idea.

Think for yourself, don't give into peer pressure, don't get into the drug scenario- you can avoid that. If you keep your head strong, you can do anything. Don't think like me, don't think like my brother, don't think like anybody- think like you. If you're a terrible person, stay terrible. Me and Jason used to play in a progressive band like **Dream Theater**. We always tried to keep the music tight and clean. I did all the guitars on this record to make things tight. That's why Jason had the acoustic kit for this record, to give it that tight, percussive feeling and live edge to it. I think the album came out a little bit polished in certain areas. We had a limited budget. Someone asked Neil Peart from **Rush** if he could have one wish what would it be, he said one show that I did not make a mistake.

Discography:

1999... *Defy Everything* (Slip Disc)

1997... *Trust No One* (Slip Disc)

Current line-up:

Trevor Askew... vocals

Chris Cannella... guitars

Rudy... guitars

Damon... bass

Jason Kowalski... drums

nympho

Interview with Nympho

One of the best bands to come out of the late nineties are unknown to the general public. Their lone recorded output has been a five song demo recorded this past summer. There will soon come a time when everyone will be bragging about this upcoming band and when they do you can say you heard it first. When **A Day For Honey** broke up last summer, former members Tracy Jorg (vocals), Ed Ciappa (guitars), Anthony D'Aiuto (bass), and Larry Gorman (drums) hooked up with ex-**Quicksand** guitarist Tom Capone and **Nympho** was born. **Nympho** is a groove oriented hard rock/ heavy metal band that will have listeners recalling the best the genre has offered through the past decade- **Janes Addiction** and **Quicksand** are the closest one can compare **Nympho** to somebody. Ed creates a solid groove, Tom complements him with some coloration, Larry sets a foundation, and Anthony creates intricate yet often catchy bass lines to fill in the spaces. Frontwoman Tracy is a combination of beauty, power, angst, and rage. There is often a contrast of quiet, melodic moments and then an intense breakout of emotion and Tracy is more than capable of enhancing the music's intensity. I spoke to the band at an early December rehearsal.

What is Nympho up to at the moment?

Tracy: We're writing a lot, in hopes to get picked up by a label.

Tom: We're working on new material

Anthony: We're demoing and doing live shows.

Larry: We've only been together for six months.

Tracy: We're playing with **Kittie** in January.

Tom: We're gonna go to the studio in late January and record new stuff, shop it. It'll be totally new songs.

Larry: We want to find more of a sound.

How would you describe your sound and how did Nympho come together?

Anthony: We felt **A Day For Honey** reached what it could do. We wanted to take more of a groove angle. **A Day For Honey** was more progressive, which was cool at the time. With **Nympho** we're more laid back with the groove. It's heavy but with simpler time signatures. People can rock out to the music and enjoy it. We're not going over people's heads. We're not pretentious, just pure rock.

Larry: We'll just groove on something for an hour. The same thing over and over.

Anthony: With that in mind, we were looking for another guitar player. Tom happened to be available so we asked him. It seemed natural for him to join. He helps make the music special, there's a passion in it.

Ed: We've all played together in bands before. We've done so many different things together in the past.

Tom, what happened to Quicksand?

Tom: We got back together but we ended up breaking up again. We did one tour with the **Deftones** and now it's pretty much over.

Why the name Nympho?

Anthony: Tracy's really a sex maniac.

Larry: We wanted something short and strong.

Ed: You can't forget that name.

Larry: Our music and lyrics are a lot more sexually driven. It's more sensuous, especially the direction we want to go in. It doesn't have to be over the top screaming. It's gonna be moody, just not too feminine.

Tom: We want to do another demo or two and hopefully find ourselves musically. We're new as a band and we're still exploring. We're taking our time and finding our sound. We're in no rush.

Larry: We're in no rush at all, we want to take our time. It's the right attitude. We're not jumping on any trends. We would be jumping the gun if we record now. We wouldn't reach our full potential. We've already done the label thing and we jumped the gun on that.

Is there any label interest yet?

Tom: Labels have come to check our show out. We haven't gotten ourselves out there much yet. We're being realistic, we're not trying to get signed right away.

Larry: We want to find our identity first. Right now it's just a buzz but we need to define ourselves.

What are your goals in the live environment?

Tom: We want to make it something that people can get into. We have to play a lot of shows and get into a groove. We want to nail our sound down.

Anthony: We want it to continue to develop.

Tom: It's gonna be some time before we record a whole album so we want to work on our live sound and find our niche.

How do you feel about being a two guitar band?

Tom: There's no butting heads. We complement each other.

Ed: We both come from the same school of music.

Tom: It's not like one of us has been a traditional guitar player, with flashy solos. We lay a groove down and add coloring over top of that. One thing that'll be different is when we add more effects. It takes time to get the different effects down.

Ed: These songs definitely have the potential to be enhanced. We went in there slammed it out as a demo. We were together only a couple of weeks. With this next demo we're hoping to do a little bit more. I don't think we'll be able to do what we want but we'll explore different options that we have. Because it is a demo we can get it on tape and see how it sounds.

Do you have many new songs?

Larry: We have five new songs down.

Anthony: We have two that we played at our last show.

How do you feel about playing in New York?

Tom: There's no scene in New York. In the early 90's there were always people at shows no matter who was playing. There were more up and coming bands. The problem that we're having is that the music isn't that unusual but there aren't many bands doing this thing. The scene that I came from always had people involved. Everyone was in a band and you'd always see people at shows.

It's nice to see a good female singer in a band that is not contrived or a gimmick. It creates a good contrast.

Larry: We're not trying to play up the feminine thing. It fits with the name and the lyrics. **Nymphomaniac** is defined as the sexual urge found in women. It doesn't say anything about men at all.

Anthony: Eventually we'll get Tracy to perform naked!

Tracy: My microphone will be shaped like a vibrator. I won't be singing.

Anthony: There'd be a big screen behind her showing pornos.

Tracy: That would be fucking cool!

Anthony: We'll have an orgy on stage.

Do you think Nympho can interest metal crowds?

Tom: Yeah, a good portion of metal people can get into the band.

Anthony: Rock, metal, whatever.

Larry: Most people don't limit themselves. It's just music. Look at **Radiohead**, they aren't metal but metalheads get into them. **The Cure** is not metal but they have that appeal.

Last words?

Tracy: Look for **Nympho** in 2000.

Discography:

1999... **Nympho** (demo)

Current line-up:

Tracy Jorg... vocals

Tom Capone... guitars

Ed Ciappa... guitars

Anthony D'Aiuto... bass

Larry Gorman... drums

Contact:

nymphoinfo@juno.com

Power of Omens

Interview with drummer Alex Arellano

One of the bands that have really impressed me this year is Texas progressive metallers **Power Of Omens**. The band released their debut, *Eyes of the Oracle*, this past June and were slated to appear at the third annual Power Mad Festival but due to the departure of their keyboardist and a near guest appearance from **Ice Age's** Josh Pincus, the band was unable to attend. **Power Of Omens** have surprisingly created an instant classic. The music is intricate and complex but never becomes too elusive. The vocals of Chris Salinas are full of character and unique. Along with bands like **Event** and **Soundscape** the underground of original progressive metal is rising.

What happened to your keyboardist?

We were supposed to play Power Mad and while we were getting ready he just showed up and said he wasn't gonna do it. We've already had this booked for a long time and he pretty much didn't want to play live. We wanted to write with us, put his name on the c.d., but then when it was time to go play he wanted us to hire someone else. That's not the way it works. We've been looking for keyboard players but in this part of Texas and anywhere in the U.S. there aren't that many. We've been trying to get in touch a couple other keyboard players playing with other guys that are pretty cool and want to work with us but we'd have to fly them back and forth.

How did the band get together?

I was living in California, I was playing with a couple of guys I knew there. I remember hearing **Fates Warning** and **Dream Theater**; *When Day and Dream Unite*, **Kansas**, **Magellan**, so I got together with a keyboard player and we couldn't find anybody in L.A. that would be into doing this. At the time my sister was getting married so I came here for my sister's wedding and I decided to check out the scene here. I picked up a free newspaper and I found out Dave was looking for a bass player in the style of **Dream Theater** and **Queensryche** for his band. I'm not a bass player but I figured I could call up and find out about the scene here. I called him and he never returned my calls so I returned to L.A. In like six months or so he called me back. "Do you remember me, a couple of months ago you left me a message?" He said they're looking for a drummer. I told him I was moving down there in the summer and that I'd bring the keyboard player with me. We sent him a demo tape of what we had and he sent me a demo of their material and we both liked what we had. We moved here and started working together. At that time he had a vocalist so all we needed was a bass player. When we got here the vocalist decided not to do it and he went back to Oregon. Then we met Chris. He showed up and liked the material and said "I'm in". He didn't have to try out. The minute we heard each other we were in together. We never had a trial period with anybody we always just clicked. We went through a couple bass players. We had an ad out and about a year went by and we forgot about it. We were looking for a bass player and a keyboardist so Dave said why don't we record a demo. Dave played the keyboards and bass and we recorded our demo ourselves. We get a call from Matt about the ad, needless to say he liked our stuff and we liked him and he joined the band. We started working in new material. We gave the demo away to anybody who asked for it. D.C.A. Records called us and offered us a deal, let's not even think about it and we signed with them. Everything seemed fine but Eric's contacts were more for the power material than the progressive material. We weren't getting any response and bad reviews from the labels that Eric was telling us about. We thought we were gonna get some money for recording up front. There was nobody interested and we had to record and release something. We decided to do it on our own. He said if he couldn't do anything for us he'd let us go anyway. We called him and he sent a letter saying we were off the contract. I started looking around at other labels and I found Elevate through the internet. I got in touch with them and sent us a demo. These guys were on the ball with us. A month and a half after we had been released from D.C.A. we signed with Elevate. His a really nice guy but all the bands he works with are power metal. We had been with him for about a year and all we had was negative stuff. It's been doing really good in Europe. Elevate has been really good to us.

Where is Elevate based from?

They're from Italy, in Rome. We signed in '97, the label had been going on for about six months before we signed. **Black Jester** and **Heimdall** are on that label.

We were the fourth band to sign with them and we were the only non European band to sign with them. When people think of the name **Power Of Omens** the first thing they think of is devil worship, which is really stupid. People think of the movie *The Omen*. The band is all Catholic. None of us do drugs, we don't smoke, we're way beyond clean. We're really good people. I went to Catholic school all my life and I showed the c.d. to my old teachers who knew me since kindergarten and are friends of the family, they read the lyrics and the name and they loved the stuff.

I was surprised to hear how well Dave played the keyboards.

We didn't have a keyboard player but we had this space for keyboards. That's where the problem is now because we need a keyboard player live. We rehearsed with a click track and a sequencer for the keyboards, but for one we need ear monitors and we don't have any. A lot of people said just play without the keyboards, but the keyboards are what jells it together. We have a lot of orchestrating and the keyboards are a main point for us. Some parts we had written the keyboards first and built the parts to it. With a lot of my drums I'm playing to where the keyboard is. I key off to either the keyboards or the guitar on all the stuff. Josh was gonna help us but it would be hard to do considering our keyboard player took almost a year to learn how to play it. People don't realize all the stuff that's in there. It's been very hard to get a replacement.

What's the next step for the band?

Right now we're working on new material. As soon as we find somebody to learn the old material and then as we write hopefully we'll start playing live. The whole reason we got into a band was to play live. We've only played twice as far as **Power Of Omens** goes. If things had worked out the label would have taken us to Italy this summer. We don't want to get stuck just playing in San Antonio.

How was the response for those two shows?

The first gig we had a pretty good amount of ads and promotions and we had a massive flooding that Saturday before we played. The club was packed. We had people from all over Texas and from other States who flew in to see us. The second went the same way. They asked us to play again. The scene is stronger for heavy metal and power metal, not so much progressive metal. I wish we could be playing more right now. Next year we have to make Power Mad no matter what because we've been invited every year since our demo. We have to find contacts so that when we want to play we know which clubs to go to. Texas is so big it would take you days to get out of here. A lot of people think San Antonio and most of Texas is all desert like Arizona, but it's actually not like that. I love San Antonio but it's very humid here. I grew up in Mexico. We lived in Chicago and then moved to Mexico City when I was a kid. Then I went to California and I liked it there and got stuck there. It took me a little while to leave. At first I was in Hollywood but that place is weird. I moved toward the coast and it was much better. I have a lot of friends there but it's not a very good place. I was there for years and I couldn't keep a band going. I come here and it's a small town and I get a band going.

Discography:

1999... *Eyes Of The Oracle* (Elevate)

Current line-up:

Chris Salinas... vocals
Dave Gallegos... guitars
Matt Williamson... bass
Alex Arellano... drums

Address:

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14702 Hidden Glen Woods
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amobetrano@ol.com

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ROYAL HUNT

Interview with vocalist John West

The Danish band **Royal Hunt** should be familiar to all *Transcending the Mundane* readers. We have conducted interviews with Andre Andersen and his cohorts both as a solo artist and as a band. While **Royal Hunt** has recently released their fifth studio album, now with their third lead singer, they are in peak form. D.C. Cooper, who sang on the previous two records, *Paradox* and *Moving Target*, has left to pursue a career as a solo artist. Enter John West. John is known for his stints with **Sun Red Sun** and **Badlands**, although no material from either era has been officially released. He has released a handful of solo records, worked on Cozy Powell's solo disc, and recorded four albums with **Artension**. For the first time in his career, it looks like John is in a stable position.

How did you hook up with Royal Hunt?

I was interested in them, mainly because **Artension** was always a studio project. **Royal Hunt** was a chance for me to get out and play live with a band that's been together a long time. We are able to tour and promote. I really liked their music and I thought my voice would fit good. I recorded a version of the song "Far Away" off **Royal Hunt's** *Moving Target* album. They had heard some of my record before so they decided to fly me over and see how we got along. I spent three days in Denmark, it was my first time in Denmark. I hung out and tried some of their new material. We got along really well. A couple of weeks later I went over and we started worked on the album.

Do you find it difficult with them living in Denmark and you're the sole member here?

It's a little more travelling for me. I don't mind it. When we get together and rehearse, a couple of the guys live like two hours away and they have to drive. For me it's a seven hour flight so it's not that much difference if you really look at it in perspective. I knew what I was getting involved with. I'm actually happy, before when I was doing albums I would do the album, take pictures, do some interviews and that was it. A year would go by and then you do another record. This is a whole different ballgame. There's a lot more involved. With this situation we're working on our show, we've done a video, we're working a promotional tour all over the world. It's a real band situation, a rock 'n roll family. We see each other a lot more, it's what I've been looking for.

What do you think you've added to Royal Hunt on Fear?

As I look at some of the older material, I think Andre has matured a lot as a lyricist and as a composer. I think this is his best work. Every year he's gotten better and better at song writing. What I bring to the band is some more depth. I have more of a soul, r & b flavor to my voice, along with the metal side. It gives the ballads a different feel and a little bit more dynamic- say if the verse is a little more mellow I can go from real mellow to real heavy. They've always had a hard rock and metal thing going on with the singers they've had, they've never been able to go into that realm of r & b, soul trip while also keeping it metal.

It must be nice to finally be in situation you're completely satisfied with.

I've been waiting for this my whole life. **Artension** could have been a great touring band. We were on the wrong label and we were all living in different parts of the world. **Royal Hunt** was exactly what I needed. Musically, I think we're a perfect fit. It gives me more room, the voice shines in **Royal Hunt**. Andre writes that way- melody first and the vocal is going to be on top. They take so much care in how they mix the voice. There's a lot of focus on getting the best possible sound. In the past I felt I was undermixed and it takes your power away.

I liked Artension but the songwriting was missing.

The focus begins with the melody in **Royal Hunt**. The focus in **Artension** was to be over the top. We wanted to shock people. It's a different mentality in **Royal Hunt**. There's a lot of progressive elements in **Royal Hunt's** music but it all flows so well that you don't realize how intricate the music is. The melodies hold you there. There's strong melodies, big choruses, tons of backing vocals. You can't stop singing these melodies and whistling the tunes because the hooks are big.

Is Artension finished?

I finished the fourth album, I was in the middle of it when I started the **Royal Hunt** audition. I did the last album and it's the same line-up as *Forces of Nature*. It's a killer album. We took a lot of chances on this one. It was our last commitment to the label. We decided to go out with a bang. We spent a lot of extra time on the album and tried to take it to the top level. I'm full time with **Royal Hunt** now. If Vatalji and Roger wanted to do another **Artension** record with another singer they

could. I'm not gonna try to stop them. Who knows? Down the road maybe we'll get together and do another studio project. **Royal Hunt** is really cool about doing stuff on the side. When D.C. said **Royal Hunt** didn't want me to do a solo record, it's really a bunch of shit. As long as the focus is **Royal Hunt**, they're fine with it. Hopefully, I'll be writing with **Royal Hunt** and that'll satisfy my creative side.

What was your experience with Badlands like?

That was my first big break. I moved to L.A. in 1992. It was brief. I was in the band for eight months. They were on their last leg and I didn't know it at the time. I thought it would be great. When I got there they were in total chaos. They owed everybody money, everybody was broke. I didn't know what I was getting involved with, for me it was a break. What I came away from it with, first of all check the water before you dive in. A guy from Cortland moves to L.A. and comes home broke. I got a name for myself because I was the guy who replaced Ray Gillen. That was the one thing that I got out of it. From there I started touring with Mike Lee Ferkins for a couple of years, a great guitar player. That's how I got introduced to Shrapnel. I did an album with Cozy Powell in '94-'95. I started to get more attention overseas. Then I got the **Artension** gig and that really pushed me out there. Our first album, we didn't expect it to do what it did. It blew up in Japan. I wrote all the songs and did all the vocals in ten days. It started taking off but we were still limited by the deal that we had. We had a small deal with a small company, there's no tour support, there's no promotional support. We wanted to tour and take it to the next level but we couldn't. After three albums of the same story I just started looking for other things. Yngwie actually hired me to sing on his new album. Before I got the **Royal Hunt** audition I went down to Miami for like a week. He was a big fan of **Artension**. He really wanted me to sing on his record, I'd be paid this, I'd get to do that, we'd write songs together- the whole deal was set before I even left. I get down there and he said I'm writing the whole record and it all changed. Personality wise, he's not my type of person. I try to surround myself with quality people. I consider myself a normal person so I got the hell out of there.

I noticed a recently released Sun Red Sun disc you sang on also.

The **Sun Red Sun** thing is a way for somebody to make some money off the death of Ray Gillen. We were just doing demo tapes at the time, it wasn't meant to be an album. I started to get successful and all of a sudden these lost tracks with me on it comes out. I never authorized those to be used. It's all been released against everyone's wishes. I don't endorse it and I don't tell people I did it. If the fans want to have everything I've ever done, they'll get it. If they actually know the true story of how it is they'll probably boycott it. I'm sure Ray's family never saw a penny from that record. If his mother was getting some of the royalties then I would support it. I followed Ray into two bands but I never met the man. I really respected him as a singer. Everybody I talked to about him said he was a really good guy. He was the nice guy in **Badlands**. I met the other guys so I know first hand. When I came back here and started working on **Sun Red Sun**, everybody said he was so cool and so talented.

Do you still live in Cortland?

Dio paved the way. **Elf** played my high school. When they did that **Rainbow** album every guy was from Cortland except for Blackmore. It brought it close to me. I had no fear. I own property here, my wife's family is here, we're happy. I do a lot of hunting, snowmobiling, fishing, and camping; all the things I like to do are here.

Discography:

1999... *Fear* (Majestic)
1998... *Moving Target* (Magna Carta)
1997... *Paradox* (Magna Carta)
1994... *Clown In The Mirror* (Japan only)
1993... *Land Of Broken Hearts* (Japan only)

Current line-up:

John West... vocals
Andre Andersen... keyboards
Jacob Kjaer... guitars
Steen Mogensen... bass
Allan Sorensen... drums

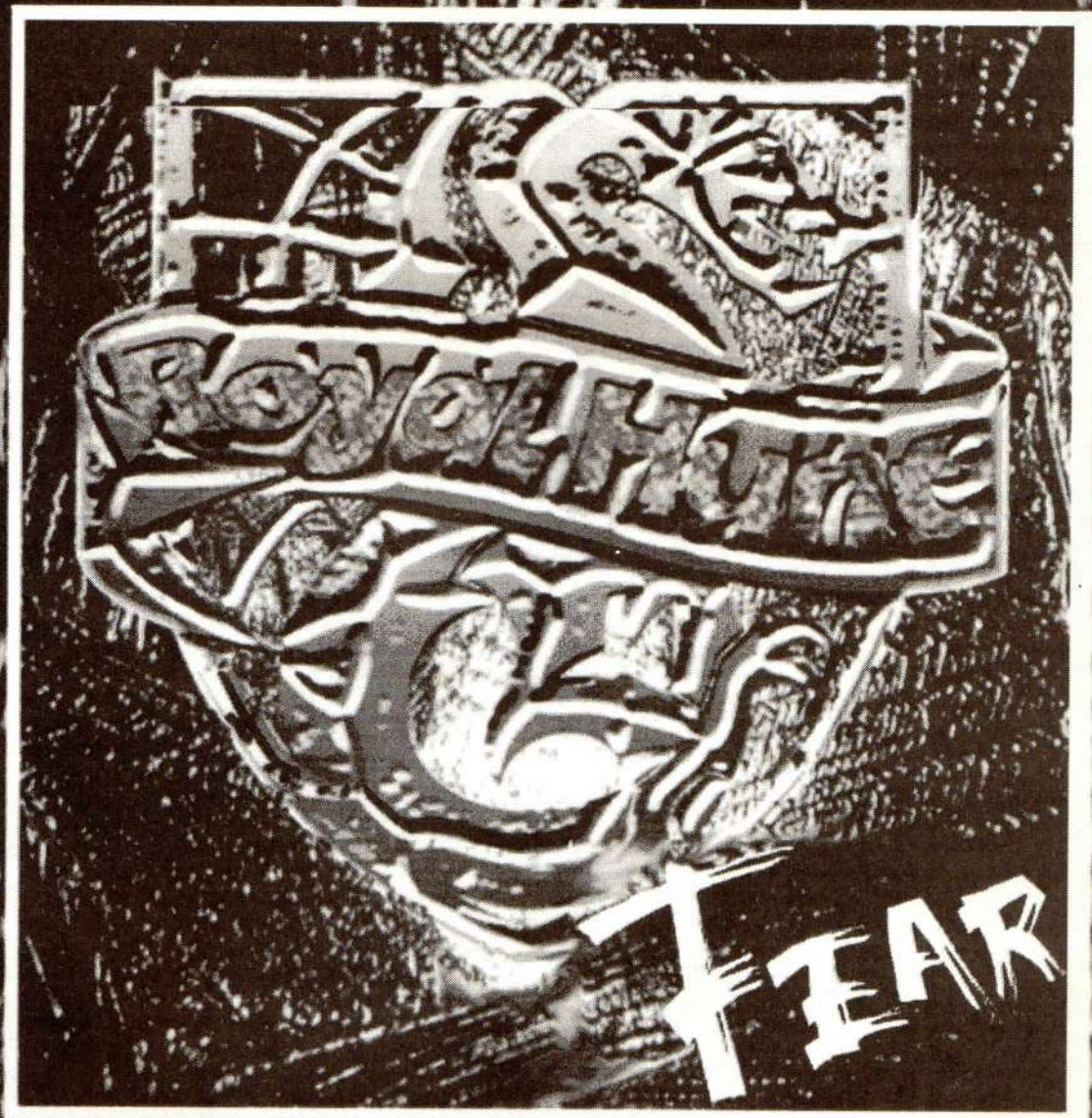
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Samael

Interview with drummer and keyboardist Xy

One of the bands who have revolutionized the extreme metal genre throughout the 90's has progressed into an entity that is innovative and experimental while somehow managing to maintain an identity. With their fifth full length, *Eternal*, Samael have once again progressed from the sound found on *Passage*. Many, including myself, feel that their third album, *Ceremony of Opposites*, is one of the best records of the 90's. However with their subsequent albums and e.p.'s the band expanded that sound and have added a more electronic vibe. *Eternal* is an album that contains even more depth than previous releases. At times Samael even approach a progressive realm previously not heard. Over the course of their career Samael will always be remembered as a band that has never been afraid of progressing and experimenting. Here is Xy to tell you about Samael.

What are your thoughts looking back to *Worship Him* and *Blood Ritual*?

If somebody discovered Samael on the new album, they should go back to the first album if they want to. It's been a regular progression. There's a line through all our albums. When I look back I think if we recorded nowadays it would be different. It's where we were at the time. There's still some ideas that I like there. It's nothing that we would deny from the past.

***Ceremony of Opposites* was a landmark album, how do you feel that has contributed to your career?**

It was a strong point. That's when we added keyboards in the band. We found something that we wanted to do. That was the album that we did the most touring for. It was the first time we played in the States, the first time we played in England.

What happened next with the *Rebellion* e.p. and then *Passage*?

To me it's a progression from the album before. We take the idea and try to free it further. I think *Rebellion* was a period when we looked through the past and we added new electronic stuff. We decided to use a drum machine which was something different for us as well. At that time was a weird period. Everybody was telling us don't do that. We were unsure but we wanted to try, if you wanna do something you should really go for it. I think everybody understood what we were doing and where we were going.

How did you record the drums and percussion for this album?

We recorded it with real drums along with the electronics which made it somewhat warmer. The main idea was getting a meshing with human feeling somewhere. That was the first time we did it that way.

How did you come up with your stage name?

When we started a long time there was a plan to make things different between the band and us. It was made to keep things to ourselves. My friends would call me Xy, and it just became part of us and the band. I could change my name by now but I like it this way. It separates who we are in the band and who we are in day to day life. It's just what we are.

What's the concept behind the album cover?

It was friend of ours that did it, we wanted to get something that would represent the whole album. It has nothing to do with a concept album but at the end we wanted to have a cover that put all the songs together. For me, it's a point in the middle of nowhere. It could be seen as a star or a man or something. It's just one point that's connected with the rest. It's flying somewhere.

How has your experience working with Rotting Christ been?

I'm happy with that. It was just an idea for me to try something. It was a really nice experience for me. I could learn a lot and it's good to be on both sides. It's good to be able to produce somebody and see another band as well. It's a good collaboration. It was a challenge. I maybe needed to prove something to myself. You try something new so I guess you go for it and try to do something right. We did a really good production, but it's not something that I want to stay too much in. We have a new album and I want to put all the energy in the band now. There's was one period where we all decided to try stuff besides Samael. Now we want to promote the new album and play live.

Are you touring this fall in the States?

We start in September. We are in the States for a month which is lovely. We've been waiting for a pretty long time. It's gonna be really nice. We're gonna bring everything and try to present the best we could. It's been a long time, five years.

Do you feel that people are disappointed with the more electronic sounds of recent material?

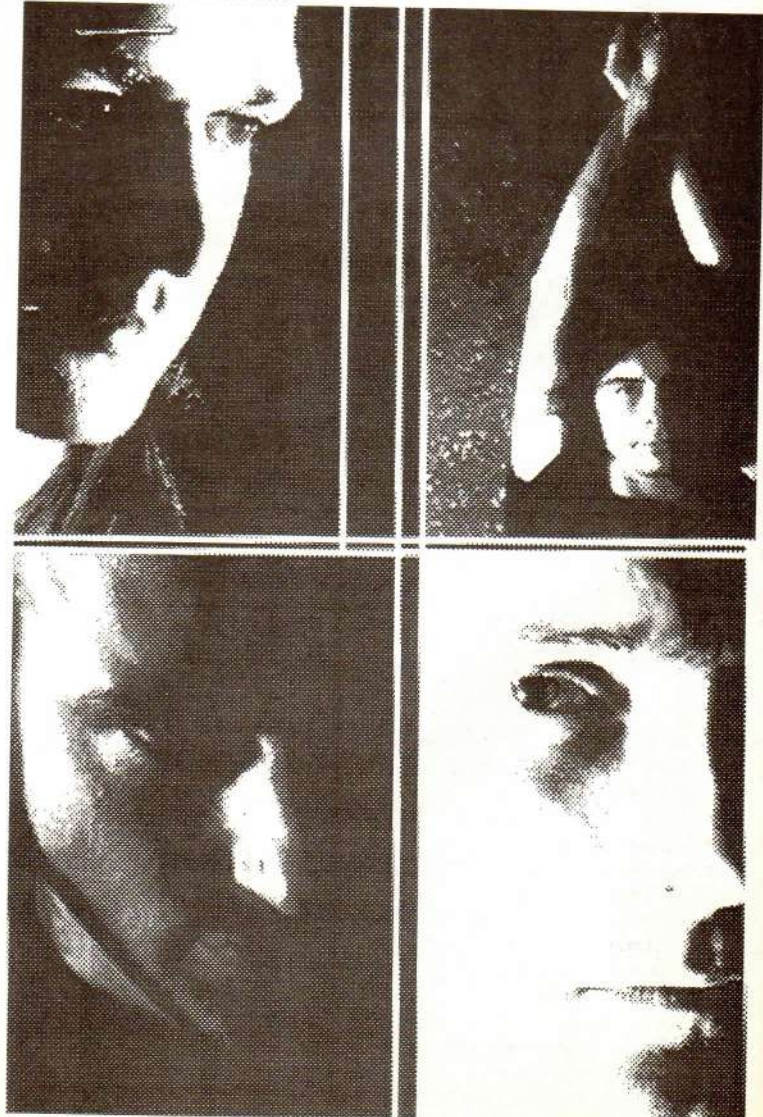
We try to get a normal evolution there and it's something we like. As long as you do something that's fair to yourself and something that you trust in. It seems to me that people who like Samael they can expect us to make a step in between albums. Maybe if we did the same album twice people would also be disappointed. It's nice to get more direct views from people who listen to the music.

Discography:

1999... *Eternal* (Century Media)
1998... *Exodus* e.p. (Century Media)
1996... *Passage* (Century Media)
1995... *Rebellion* e.p. (Century Media)
1994... *Ceremony Of Opposites* (Century Media)
1992... *Blood Ritual* (Century Media)
1991... *Worship Him* (J.L. America/ Century Media)

Current line-up:

Vorph... vocals and guitars
Xy... drums and keyboards
Kaos... guitars
Masmiseim... bass



SAM BLACK CHURCH

Interview with drummer J.R. Roach

One label that is growing rapidly throughout the years in New England is Wonderdrug Records. Among the bands that they are working with are Tree and Sam Black Church. Other bands making a name for themselves on their roster include Scissor Fight, Tree, Slughog, 6L6, and Honeyball. All these bands have similar traits. Sam Black Church have established a name for themselves over the course of a half dozen releases. Sam Black Church have the ability to transcend genres and appeal to your average hardcore fan as much as an everyday metal head. I spoke to drummer J.R. Roach about a reissue of *Unincorporated*, a release that features music from early in their career.

I don't know if you're a baseball fan but this Met game has been going on for thirteen innings and they're still tied.

I didn't even know that game was still going. We're watching the Red Sox, Yankees up here.

I'm one of the few people from New York that is actually a Red Sox fan. Uh-oh! That's what I like to hear.

Let's start off with some background information.

Three of us grew up together in Green Brair County, West Virginia. We played in various bands together even when we were twelve, thirteen years old. We're all a little staggered in age. Ben, our original guitar player, came up here for school and then the rest of us followed him up here for school as well. We met the fourth member, the bass player Richard. Ben and Jet met him in college at B.U. The band's name, Sam Black Church, is the name of my hometown in West Virginia. It's named after a circuit writing Methodist minister who finally settled down there. They named the church and the surrounding community after him. It's very, very rural. Ben, our old guitar player, wrote everything. Our first rehearsal was in June of 1988. We've been together for over eleven years.

Tell me about the new release, *Unincorporated*.

When we first started we were playing shows around Boston and Mark McKay, the drummer for Slapshot saw our second show. We had already recorded a demo, but he gave us the money to manufacture it on a seven inch. We only made two thousand copies and those sold right away. I saw that seven inch at Bleeker Bob's for like forty five dollars. Everywhere we go, regionally, they're asking where they can get that seven inch. We are rereleasing it on hand numbered seven inch vinyl. The c.d. has bonus stuff, some demos that we did around that time.

What was your first official release?

Our self titled e.p. came out on Tang the end of '92. We put out a full length after that called *Let in Life* in '93. We put out the full length, *Super Christ* in '95, and then we ended up going to court with Tang Records over a deal we had going with Geffen. We hadn't talked with Tang for a year. We legally notified them of termination of contract because we had fulfilled the contract. As soon as we started working with Geffen and had done a little bit of recording for them the label threatened to come after us. That slowed things up majorly for about two years. It really sucked. We had to pay tens of thousands of dollars to go in and prove we were right to begin with. Then we put out *That Which Does Not Kill Us Makes Us Stronger* in '97. We put that out on our own label and we called the label Untangled to fuck with Tang Records. We licensed that to Wonderdrug. When we were ready to do another record we decided to do it through Wonderdrug because they gave us a very flexible and a very reasonable contract. They're very cool over there. We've known the owner, Ken, for ten years basically. We're in the midst of writing the next record now and that's hopefully coming out in March.

What is your opinion of the live situation?

It's strange, we've done a lot of touring in the U.S. with everyone from Stuck Mojo and Helmet to Fear. There's certain cities where we do really well and certain cities where they've never heard of us. New York is a tough market, especially when it comes to the hardcore stuff. You've got that strange New York/Boston hardcore rivalry. It doesn't make too much sense. There are a few New York hardcore bands that we've played with and gotten along with very well. Bands like Crisis are easy to get along with. We've played some really great shows in New York and sometimes they stink. What can you do?

How would you describe your situation?

When we first started everything was oriented towards the speed, thrash, grind stuff, and we were corresponding with bands like Napalm Death and we were

playing shows around New England with bands like Vital Remains. All of us have considered us a metal band. That's what we grew up on. In West Virginia you get things a couple years too late. We were listening to Van Halen and Motley Crue when we discovered Black Flag, Bad Brains, and Husker Du. We always appreciated the ability to play a lot of these metal bands, but a lot of them had no message at all. What lit the fire under our asses was when we saw some of these bands that we held in awe and they weren't really that good live. They weren't putting a lot of effort into their show. Obviously I'm not counting the Cro-Mags or the Bad Brains, but we started out doing what we thought was metal with some message. We got embraced by the Boston hardcore community and played with Slapshot and did all these all ages in Boston. That's a culture that virtually doesn't exist here anymore. It's because of the clubs and lack of places to do it. When we started there was a hardcore matinee every weekend. Sam Black and Tree were virtually banned in Boston for like two years. There was a lot of violence at a lot of hardcore shows. Madball would come to town and rip shit up, or Earth Crisis, or Blood For Blood would rip shit up and clubs would react to it. We had an incident almost three years ago. Tree and Sam Black were playing on Halloween night at Mama Kin. There was a fight and a friend of ours stepped in to break up this fight and he got cut in his back with a rug knife. He had to get like eighty stitches externally and sixty stitches internally. Because of that violence and the guy sued the club so Tree and Sam Black were off the list. It's weird because Tree and us, Blood For Blood and Converge are the biggest drawing bands in Boston. It just got to recently where we can play but clubs book us 21 plus. We can do 18 plus but we have to play on a Wednesday night. We play all ages all around New England and all around the country, it's just in Boston that we have to play 21 plus. Like ourselves, Tree is like the Susan Lucci of Boston hardcore. We've been nominated in the Boston music awards twelve times for either live performance or best hardcore band, etc. and we've never won. We'll play anywhere, with anybody. We've played shows with Motorhead and Dio, then turn around and play with Hatebreed or Converge the next week. I can't tell you if it's metal or hardcore. It's more entertaining to play with different styles. When we play with Fear we take all of the mid tempo and slow dirgy metal stuff out of the set and we play nothing but the fast, two minute long hardcore songs. That was a couple of years ago. A couple of the guys had long hair and we'd walk into these hardcore Fear fans and they didn't want to like us at all but usually by the second song we won them over. I can't put my finger on what it is.

What happened with the Geffen deal?

We did a demo deal with them. It was the crazy timing of the industry. They worked with us for a year, they were very flexible and very cool about trying to work this thing out with Tang. Tang was threatening but they wouldn't communicate at all. It was a really bad situation and they stuck with us for a year and then Geffen said you take care of these guys and let us know. We took them to court and by the time the two year period that it took to take care of the whole thing, Geffen doesn't even exist anymore. There is no Geffen Records anymore. By the time we finished the suit the turn around is so fast. Being an A&R person in the industry, by the time we were ready the people who we were working with weren't even working at the label anymore. They weren't even working with a label. They went to management companies. We're talking to labels now. We're talking to Wonderdrug, we're going in with the idea that the next record will come out on Wonderdrug. When we finish with the recording we're gonna shop it to the people that we know and Wonderdrug will shop it to the people they know.

Discography:

1999... *Unincorporated* (Wonderdrug)
1998... *The Black Comedy* (Wonderdrug)
1997... *That Which Does Not Kill Us Makes Us Stronger* (Untangled)
1995... *Super Christ* (Tang)
1992... *Let In Life* (Tang)

Current line-up:

Jet... vocals
Zack... guitars
Richard G. Lewis... bass
J.R. Roach... drums

S P I T E

Interview with vocalist Chris Shittongue

Once again Prosthetic Records has put out another great modern metal band. North Carolina's **Spite** have released a second album, *Bastard Complex*, which fuses styles of extremity into a hard hitting sound that is not easy to categorize. This band incorporates some more melodic vocals for their intense assault and *Bastard Complex* ranks among the best heavy albums released this year. I spoke to the talkative Chris about all things **Spite**.

How would you describe your sound?

We're not a hardcore band. We just think that we're a rock and roll band. We are heavy but we're not a metal band. We're not a band like **Korn**, but we go over well with those crowds. We used to get distributed by Relapse and they would describe us as hardcore, but accessible. We don't want the hardcore label because that might alienate the people. The hardcore kids love us, the rock and roll kids like us, the thirty year old who listens to **AC/DC** and **Black Sabbath** likes us too. We've manage to jump genres. I'm happy that we aren't classified. The only draw back is that the label will try to put something on us. Our label is like "it's **Tool** meets **Helmet** meets **Jesus Lizard**". They'll name five bands from very spread out forms of music. I can give you a hundred bands that we're influenced by. I can never see us sounding like **Korn**. Magazines will review the record and say it's run of the mill **Korn** sounding band and that's the most wrong they can be. They didn't listen to it. A lot of people see what is popular in heavy music and so everything else that's heavy falls into that category. There are a few who have listened to it and understands the music.

I know that if Prosthetic put it out it must be good.

With Prosthetic, those guys have really good ears. I talk to E.J. all the time and we always agree on what bands are great. He listens to more metal than I do, but bands that I have an ear for he'll like as well. I can throw in **Lynyrd Skynyrd**, **Dimmu Borgir**, **Clutch**, or **Radiohead**, I just like good music. I think the label is doing a good job with their bands. Music makes people happy and if that's the case that's fine, I don't have to like. I'm not gonna dog a kid out for liking a particular band. Heavy music has hit a saturation point. It's like you have the hair metal that got huge and everybody did that. Thank God **Nirvana** came around. When you have everybody doing the same thing, then the music suffers. Some of my favorite records from that era are the first **Faster Pussycat** record, **L.A. Guns'** *Hollywood Vampires*. Then that genre got kicked to the side. Not because they weren't writing good albums, it was because what was going on at that time there were a bunch of shitty bands. It's very unfair. This industry chews people up and spits them out. It's a dream to write music and put it out to the public. Look at **Soul Asylum**. They had one album that was M.T.V.'s favorite, now they did a show up north and there were fifteen people at the club. They were taking requests from the audience. Meanwhile down the street you have **Kid Rock** or **Limp Bizkit** playing down the street.

There's a band that was so huge and now they can't get anybody at their shows now. At least **Soundgarden** and **Alice In Chains** went out on top.

Some of these labels just follow the trends.

You know what's funny is that all their bands are fucking behind. They could take a chance and put something new, instead their bands are like a year and a half behind the trends. **Coal Chamber** that band is making a mistake in my opinion. I've heard some songs off the new album and I don't think it's a good record and I don't think they're a good band. The kids are into it. I thought that maybe I'm missing something.

That first record didn't go anywhere until Sharon Osbourne took over.

That's all it takes. You can take the most contrived shit band in the world, put enough money into and take out some big ads in *Spin* and *Rolling Stone*, call some radio heads and they're gonna be big. If you buy onto the **Ozzfest** you're there. Some people choose to do that formula. I choice to struggle and do it my way until I give up, that's fine. I don't think I could live with myself. I worry about bands like **Clutch**, which is a killer band and I think they've reached their peak. I don't think they got marketed right. The label forgot them because they aren't rapping. I'm just glad they're still putting out **Clutch** records.

There was a time when they took a chance with Fear

Factory on their first album.

There's only a couple of bands on Roadrunner that I'm into. One of them is **Type O Negative**, I think they rule. I think *World Coming Down* is a great record. They always sound like **Type O Negative**. They don't foray into new territory and they don't follow any trends. Obviously that band is not gonna be a huge band with what they are playing. They probably make enough money. They tour and they don't follow any trends and you can't ask for anything more than that. If you can do what you want and make a living at it, you're having fun and you're happy- that's ideal. I can see the bands on that label whimpering in front of the A&R person. That place is just a mockery. I'm waiting for them to put out something different. **Slipknot** was so typical. The bands often don't have to do that. They have a choice. If you're a good band you'll get noticed. We're a good band and we're a great live band and I know it will eventually come around for us. We don't have any outside influences to change the band. We do what we want to do. I don't want any other hands in the pot.

You mentioned your desire to write books, care to elaborate?

I'd like to do a collection of short stories that are off the wall. They are observational stories. They're from experience. I look forward to writing. I'm hoping the literary world is not as fucked up as the music business, but I'm sure that it is. Big business is big business. I'd like to do novels. Right now I've got the chance to do music. If I didn't have the chance to write the lyrics I probably wouldn't love it as much. I'm doing the same thing in music right now that I would do if it were in print. If I weren't in a band I would still be writing that stuff. I'm glad that people like the lyrics. It's nice to hear that people know that I'm not up there cursing and screaming. If you don't use the cursing right it sounds juvenile.

None of the kids are into the music bands like you are playing.

Graphics have a lot to do with that. The Northeast we haven't done too much. Everywhere else in the nation has been cool for us. The Northeast is really tough. I'd rather go to Texas where we do very well.

Discography:

1999... *Bastard Complex* (Prosthetic)
1997... *Heavy Whipping Cream* (self)

Current line-up:

Chris Shittongue... vocals
Dan Young... guitars
Josh Pratt... bass
Byron McDonald... drums



NEW FROM METAL BLADE



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MERCYFUL FATE

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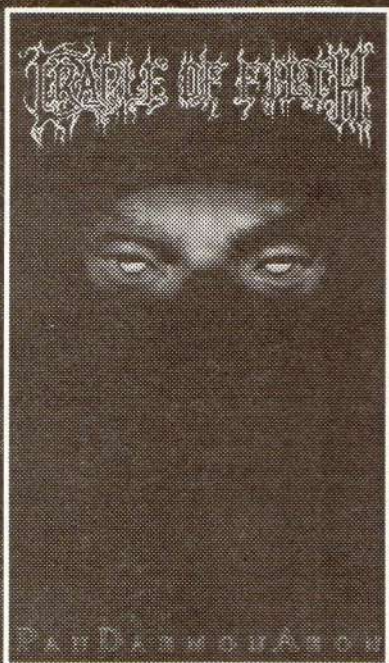
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RIOT

Sons Of Society

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IN EXTREMO

Weckt Die Toten

German folk metal meets Rammstein



ENGINE

Engine

Solo project from Ray Alder of Fates Warning.



substance D

Interview with vocalist/ bassist Todd Chaisson

Not many people wear their heart on their sleeves like **Substance D**. vocalist Todd Chaisson. While he has reached a point light years, musically and emotionally, from his stint with glamsters **Tuff**; the man has overcome massive obstacles to become one of the true rising stars of a saturated genre. **Substance D**. are a modern aggressive metal band, however no one does what they do with their conviction or reveal such an emotional openness. We spoke to Todd over a year ago when **Substance D**'s debut finally was released in the States through F.A.D. While F.A.D. was being taken over by Noise, **Substance D**. did not get the necessary push behind them. Now Noise is committed to an aggressive campaign to get **Substance D**. in everyone's face, so stardom may be right around the corner. Todd is one of the most open and honest people you will ever talk to so his conversations are always detailed and revealing.

What are your thoughts on *Addictions*?

I think *Addictions* is the record that we wanted to make since the three of us have been playing together. We were given the time to spend two months in pre production, four months recording it, and maybe a month of that doing regular vocals. We really got to take our time and experiment with the technology that's available to us today in the recording industry. We were able to accomplish ninety eight percent of everything that we wanted to do.

What was the two percent that you weren't happy with?

Any time that a band does a record, especially on a small label with a small budget; if you had an extra ten thousand dollars and an extra week we could have come up with some better sounds, maybe we would have added a song or too. That was the only time that our label put pressure on us, they wanted it released this year. We understood their point in wanted to do so but on the creative side it would have been great to have a couple more weeks. We had nearly thirty songs. That was the two percent and it's not anything that's gonna cause me to lose any sleep. With *Black*, that was only fifty percent of what we wanted to do. With our second album being ninety eight percent I think that is something we can live with. The unfortunate thing about the *Black* record was the time when it was released. Had it been released in 1992 or 1993 it might have seen a different existence. We wanted to make a record where we didn't make the same mistakes as we did with *Black*. We wanted to make a record that was fresh three to four years from now. We released *Black* six years after it truly should have been released.

Care to elaborate on your lyrical approach?

These lyrics are very personal to me. Six of the tracks on here, like "The Devil Inside", "Every Day", "My Life", "unsaid", "Burning Time", "Who Am I", and "Tweak", all those songs come from experiences that I had to deal with. About two or three years ago there was a point in my life where I had become one hundred percent addicted to speed. It started about four to five years back when I tried to casually do it. I ended up saying fuck my job and missing rehearsals here and there. I started selling it and the next thing I know I'm involved in some gangs and carrying a gun. Then I'm doing speed every day. I wouldn't even go anywhere unless I had my speed. It was real bad. It got to the point where I burned lots of bridges with my friends. I was homeless, I didn't have any money and Michael and T. came and picked me up one night. It was in March or May and it was pouring rain out. I was literally dripping in a box behind a grocery store. I had really fallen down and Michael really pulled me out of this. He gave me a place to live and a couple of months at his house to get my act together. He spent a lot of time with me, so did a partner of mine who I do some exterior things with, they really took the time and played some music that we had done a year earlier that was some kick ass stuff. They were trying to show me the potential that I had. Through the lowest point of addictions to getting past it are reflected in the lyrics on this album; the emotions that I had to go through, the frame of mind, the scenarios I had to go through. Not only the negative aspects but a song like "Burning Time" is about firing it up and getting your act back together. I believe in God but I had lost faith in God, but I was trying to get it back. I realized that the world didn't owe me nothing and I had to earn everything that I wanted. It gave me a lot of ammunition on this record. I don't want people to think that by my approach to these lyrics and the outcome of my story is don't smoke, don't drink, don't do drugs—that's not what I'm here to say. I'm just painting a picture of what I went through. I don't recommend anyone to become a heroin junkie. I'm not saying don't go out to the bar and drink your beers because I do that. This record really covers the

dark side. I was both fortunate and unfortunate to have gone through that. The solution is not to die and become a statistic. Had I been by myself it very well might have defeated me. With the support of my very close friends and the guys in the band, if I was truly by myself I think it's pretty safe to say I would not be here. I had no money but I certainly had drugs and guns. When you've been up for eight days and your holding a gun, why not? It's a stupid way to think but some of those scenarios ran through my mind. It's a battle that I'll have until the day I die. I'm going on just about three years of what I consider sobriety. There's been one or two very small, insignificant instances where the wheel on my wagon cracked. I'm drunk somewhere at a party and out of habit I do something. I have a choice- I either kick myself in the ass, I go home, say some prayers and lift some weights and jug this off; or I just go in that room, throw down my cash and say hook me up. It's given me all sorts of stories that I can tell people. I sing my songs for myself. I can't sing about dragons or flying saucers. I need to sing about personal aspects of my life or the world around me. Because of some of the evil, nasty things that I have done and encountered in my lifetime during those years when I wasn't the person that I am now, there's got to be some amends made whether it be to my God or to society in general. I try to be a nice guy and a good person, but I also try to send a message.

What are your tour plans?

It's been close to a year since we've played live. My mother became ill with cancer and passed away and I took about a month off to deal with that, and we've been recording for the rest of the time. We're gonna play some shows around San Diego and refine our live show. We're toying around with the idea of adding some live effects. For the remainder of the year we're gonna play all over California, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, just some neighboring states and try to get our act together. We'll take a couple of weeks off around Christmas. Starting next year we'll get a booking agent. There's talk of us going over to Europe in March or April. We want to make a bid for the first stage at Ozfest this year. I know we have financial support from our label in these regards.

How is being on Noise for the band?

I love the relationship we have with Noise. They know and we know that they just don't have that kind of capital. But they are extending their arm to us further than any of their other bands. They're hiring street teams for us, adding radio market teams for extended amounts of time. We had a lot of meetings with Noise and their success in the United States and we posed some questions to them. They're interested in become a player Stateside. Their European marketing seems to be considerably more than they do in the States. Our goal was to influence them to pay more attention in the U.S. They've made us their number one priority for 2000, they've given us almost everything we've asked them for. If I want to talk to somebody, I know these guys. I hang out with them. I'm grateful to be on Noise, they treat us excellent. If you're a band on our level, a band that's not interested in shopping for that major label for another two years; Noise couldn't be a better place to be at.

Final comments?

If you hear about the band and you see that it's getting a good review from a writer that you trust go out and get the c.d. or send us an e-mail. We'll send you an advance cassette of a song or two. You can try it out and if you like it you can buy it. Go to our website: www.substanced.com. I personally check the e-mail every day. I'm constantly in touch with the people who go there. People can spend time with us after we get off stage. We like to get on the street level with the people that are there and buy them a drink for a change.

Discography:

1999... *Addictions* (Noise)
1997... *Black* (F.A.D./ Noise)

Current line-up:

Todd Chaisson... vocals and bass
Michael Parnin... guitars
T... drums

After the Fire, Water, Wrath, Storm, Pain and Tears...We will meet again in Honour, Faith and Love...

VIRGIN STEELE



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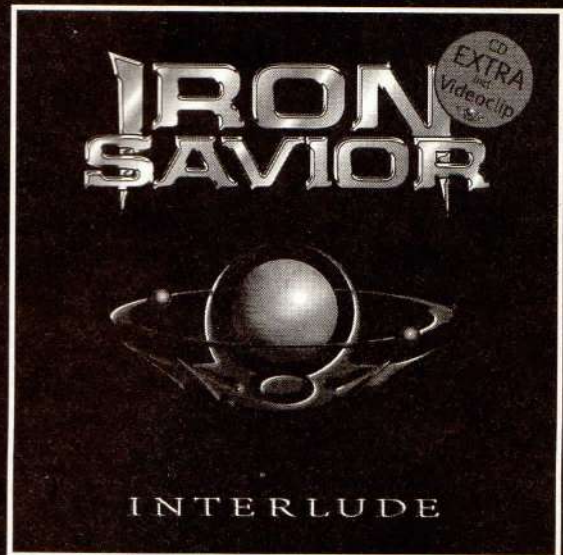
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TULUS

Interview with drummer Sarke

Black metal has never been stronger in Norway. While everyone is aware of the *Immortal's* and the *Dark Throne's* of the world, it's bands like *Tulus* and *Keep Of Kalessin* that are started to come into their own and cause a second wave of bands to gain notoriety in the underground scene. Hammerheart Records has been releasing some of the best in underground metal in recent months and *Tulus* make their own niche with their brand of energetic black metal. They pay attention to the sound quality more than most, making their third release, *Evil 1999*, an interesting listen from start to finish. I was able to set up an interview through Guido at Hammerheart with drummer Tomas Sarke about *Tulus*.

How did you get Tulus going?

We started in 1995. We released *Pure Black Energy* in 1996. We also did an album on our own in 1998 (*Mysterion*) and now we're on Hammerheart for our third album.

How would you describe the sound on *Evil 1999*?

We just make music. We want everyone to hear the guitars, the bass, and the drums. I think it's an honest album from our side.

Do you have tour plans?

We have done some concerts, but we have not been on tour because we don't have the financial support from our label. I think we'll get it soon. Hammerheart is the first label that we're on and I don't think they'll just put us on tour. The album is just out so we'll have to see. We've helped *Old Mans Child* out on tour so we have been out. We know how it is.

Will you still continue to tour with *Old Mans Child*?

No. Now we have to focus everything on *Tulus*. We've been out of *Old Man's Child* for over a year now.

What are your lyrical topics?

We write about Norwegian topics; magic, witchcraft, so it's interesting stuff but it's in Norwegian so it's difficult for everyone to understand.

Do you see yourselves changing over to English, or sticking with Norwegian lyrics exclusively?

I think we'll keep going with the Norwegian lyrics for now. You can't understand what we say anyway, so I don't think it matters. We have talked about having English verse on paper, but we'll see. It's difficult to get a direct translation in English from Norwegian. We'll see what happens.

What does the band's name translate into?

It's nothing, it's just a name for us. It's a description of the music and us. It doesn't mean anything in Norwegian.

What part of Norway do you live?

We're ten minutes by car to Oslo. It's okay living here.

I've never heard of a country that valued nature so much.

It's a big difference from New York to Norway, but if you go in Oslo it's the same. If you go outside Oslo, in the upper part of Norway then you have very nice mountains and forests, rivers- they all very beautiful. Every big city is always the same.

What is your opinion of what will happen in the year 2000?

I don't think much about the year 2000. It means nothing to me. I don't care. The year 2000 it's an excuse to get more alcohol. It's just a number and I really don't like it.

Do you drink yourself?

Not too much, no.

Do you think that *Evil 1999* will be the album that will allow you to make a living in the music business?

I think this is a good album for people to get to know us and start to like us. They have started buying our albums. I hope we will get up there now. We want to get more interviews, get on tour- we are a good live band. I think this is the album that will break us through in the black metal genre. We got a lot of good critical reviews on this album. On the first album we got very good reviews on but the distribution was not too good. We're much better now with Hammerheart. We hope that people can go in the store and buy it.

Do you have any idea where somebody can find the first two records?

We own the rights ourselves now. We bought back the rights. We have everything here now. I don't know if Hammerheart is going to release it or if they'll wait. If a good label wants to release them again it's a very good opportunity.

Have you had the same line-up since the first album?

Yeah. The bass player has been changed but that's been it now.

Final comments?

I hope that people will check out the album. It's a very good album. We also have t-shirts and long sleeves.

Discography:

1999... *Evil 1999* (Hammerheart)
1998... *Mysterion* (self)
1996... *Pure Black Energy* (Hot)

Current line-up:

Blodstrup... vocals and guitars
Sirgraanug... bass
Sarke... drums

Website:

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Interview with bassist/ keyboardist Glenn

Willow Wisp has stirred all sorts of controversy. Whether it be their shocking live shows, their outrageous appearance, or their twisted music- Hollywood's rising gothic black metal quartet are ready for the big time. Their signing to the traditional black metal label Full Moon Productions has also created a clamoring from the devoted black metal fans who feel **Willow Wisp** betray the values of black metal. In reality, **Willow Wisp** combine the outrageous aggression of black metal with the sombre atmospheres and visuals of the gothic scene. For the open minded listener, they have created a sophomore offering that defies categorization and shows a band that is determined to create music on their terms. Here is Glenn to tell us about *Delusion of Grandeur*.

I was surprised to find out that Willow Wisp has been around since 1991. We've been around longer than that. Erik and Tony started the band in high school, in like '85, '86. Then they were playing cover songs. It didn't really fully develop until I joined the band in '91 and later Raven joined the band. It's always been hard to find members for the type of music that we played. It was easy to find me because I'm Erik's brother. As soon as I graduated high school I said screw this, I'm not going to college, I'm gonna move to Hollywood and be in a band. We've been such a poor band. We used to live on the streets of Hollywood in our car, eating out of garbage cans, living off of strippers, just to fulfill the dream of being in a band and getting some poor saps to listen to our music. It's been awhile since we've become established because not too many people have been willing to take a chance with us. Not too many people want to support something that they don't understand or that's original. Everybody wants to take credit for what's there.

Tell me about the first official release.

That was released in 1997, *The Building Up and Breaking Down of Matter*. That was released on our own. We did it ourselves because we were sick of not having any support. The only reason we were able to pay for that was because I got into a car accident. I sued the people who ran into me so from the money for that we made a c.d. If it wasn't for the fate of an accident we'd probably still be putting out demo tapes. Our music has always been so odd and we weren't able to establish ourselves without a full c.d. It got us the deal with Full Moon Productions. They got a lot of shit for putting us on there. A lot of their hardcore fans were like "what the fuck is this, there faggots shouldn't be on this label...". I think Jon originally saw us in an interview for *Nordic Vision* and then we sent him out a package. He's not into the keyboard stuff, he's into the hardcore stuff himself, but we had this one song on our first c.d. called "Sodomized by God" and a saw where we repeat over and over again "fuck Jesus, fuck God". As long as he knows that we're anti-religion and anti-God. He doesn't necessarily like the gothic but he's taking a chance anyway. It's disappointing, the response that we got from the black metal community. "We're listeners of black metal music, we don't keep up with the gossip- but they're putting us down for something that we've always looked up to. They make you feel ashamed to like the stuff that you're supposed to like. I didn't know that there were rules to playing music. When we write the music we don't even think about what other people are gonna think. We're doing it so people can open up their minds to something that they normally wouldn't listen to.

How would you describe what you do in your live shows?

You should put as much effort into your live show as you do the music. It annoys us to see bands go on stage like they just woke up. People pay money to see you, you should entertain them. We do fire breathing. Tony does a trash can murder ritual. If the opportunity strikes he takes a garbage can in the middle of the audience and plays a solo on top of it. Then he takes a hammer and smashes it to pieces. He doesn't know if somebody's gonna jump on him and attack. When he's done the audience takes over and smashes it. We tie an octopus on a cross and dangle it over people. Erik has actually taken a gun and put it in people's mouths while we're playing. People actually put their head up to the gun. There's one part during "As They Age They Engage", where Erik will put shaving cream all over his chest and start shaving and cutting himself up. It's his way of letting out his aggression. One time for Halloween he carved a pumpkin and put it on his head and it had live worms in it. We take it each time to be a surprise. When I go to a show it's boring if the band is up there in their jeans and t-shirt. I'd rather sit at home and listen to their c.d.

There is more to the band than just an image, I'm always surprised how interesting Willow Wisp is musically.

When we write the music, we each individually write it. I am more in the gothic, **Christian Death**, the **Cure**; although I like black metal. Tony is more into the black metal, hardcore, and he likes some gothic. We bring in different elements at different times. "A New Ice Age Approaches" was written by Erik. He wrote the guitars, the keyboards, the bass, everything. We all appreciate the music and each other's work. That brings forth our creative energy more. We're all open minded. "The Oldest Joke in the Book" was originally gonna be a rap song but through our demented minds it became what it is and now it doesn't sound anything like a rap song. We never say "we can't do this". That defeats the whole purpose of being a musician. As a musician, you're here to explore your ability. We have so much music between the three of us, because we just recently departed with Raven, that we actually put songs that are really old. "As They Age They Engage" was written in 1992. One song that we're gonna put on the next c.d. was written in 1989. We want to be different, but not intentionally. It comes naturally because that's the way we are. I know a lot of people say we're trying to be like Marilyn Manson, we're trying to be like **Cradle Of Filth**, etc. but in actuality we just write the music however it comes out. They look at the image and think we're trying to be a certain way.

Do have many people go out of their way to offer their support?

There's been a few. People like yourself, that have their own magazine, or the underground fanzines- those are the people who give us the best reviews and understand us the most as opposed to *Hit Parader* or bigger magazines. These people are supposed to be professionals, yet they don't grasp the what some sixteen year old in their basement would understand. I would never say a band sucks because of the color of their shoes. That's how ridiculous some of these bigger magazines get. A lot of underground people think that underground music should stay underground. I think underground people are there because nobody will like them, so they're stuck in the underground. Our philosophy has always been that we want to rule the world, but we want to do it our way. We're here to get as many people as possible to listen to us but not conform to what the big guys want us to be or not to change later down the road. They forget that the reason why they became big was because they were doing what they wanted. It's always been our goal to challenge these people because there are so many stupid people out there and that makes us work harder. It comes across to some people that we're selling out because more people like us. Our goal has been to first write the music how we want it and then to push it to as many people as possible but never forget what we were in the beginning. Sit in your basement and play your guitar in front of the mirror but don't sit there and put out a c.d. and complain that it sells a lot. Black metal became huge because it's cool music, it's aggressive, and something everybody needs in their life. It's the reason we use it, but then people complain- black metal is selling out now. What gives you the right to listen to it and nobody else. The need for explaining ourselves to people has been our biggest setback. People always say, what type of music are you?

People don't realize they can think for themselves.

Even if you're a heretic, you're defying God. As soon as you become a unified group defying one group, you're no better than they are. Satanism is a great belief. I would call myself a Satanist before I would call myself a Christian, but even it has its flaws and stupidity level because it's a group like anything else. If these people took the time to think that life is really nothing and that you can't really explain what's after life, a lot of people aren't strong enough to handle that type of situation. They have to look to religion for something to live for. I can't wait to get to the point where religious people bother us about our music. I'll take them on, head to head.

Discography:

1999... *Delusions Of Grandeur* (Full Moon)

1997... *The Building Up And Breaking Down Of Matter* (self)

Current line-up:

Erik... vocals, guitars, keyboards, and bass

Glenn... bass and keyboards

Tony... drums, guitars, and keyboards

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WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Interview with guitarist Erik Ravn

With the European power metal scene reaching new heights of success, bands are popping up all over the place. There are several bands that are commanding attention. However, very few debuts can come close to touching **Wuthering Heights'** first offering, *Within*. This is an intelligent, Tolkien inspired album that combines metal, folk, progressive, and epic structures without sounding pretentious or contrived. For the first time, **Blind Guardian** have some competition for the symphonic style of metal. *Within* is an epic journey with stunning artwork and a first class package all the way around. Some people may be familiar with vocalist Kristian Andren, who has worked with **Tad Morose** and **Memento Mori**. His vocals raise songwriter Erik Ravn's vision to unprecedented heights. I spoke to Erik about this band that will create a stir in the near future.

Give our readers a quick synopsis of Wuthering Heights formation.

I started the band around 1989. It was with totally different people and a different name. It's been ten years of name changing and changing band members. Now we've ended up with a line-up that has been stable for the last couple of years.

How do you feel about *Within*?

I'm totally pleased. There's nothing I'd like redone. The artwork, the sound, the music, everything is just the way I wanted it to be. It's really nice.

Kristian Whalen does some of the best artwork I've ever seen.

It took him a little time to get into the music. He wanted to fit the spirit of the music into the picture. I think he really did that.

Was this album inspired a little by Tolkien?

Not a little bit, a lot actually. I'm a huge fan of Tolkien. They're a big inspiration lyric wise. The way we treat the language is definitely inspired by Tolkien. I don't use typical Tolkien scenarios for my songs. It's based on my own life. It's autobiographical but in a fantasy style. It's authentic but presented in a mythological way. I transform my life into my own mythology. It's my own beliefs in a fantasy universe.

How did Kristian Andren become involved in the band?

Through our management. I don't know any vocalists of his caliber in Copenhagen so we had to look to Sweden. The management came up with some people that would perhaps be interested and Kristian was very hooked on the idea. He came down here for rehearsal. It clicked, we really got along. He's a very nice guy and he fits with the band even though we don't see each other at all because of distance. It really worked well and he was very serious about it and very professional. He's my voice. It would be natural for me to sing them, but I don't have the technique to do that. His good at understanding what I'm trying to say. He's expressing what I would express if I had the voice. I'm very happy about the collaboration. It's more melodic than the other things he's been doing but he can do a lot of different things with his voice.

Will he be a full time member?

Yes, he is. He can't be full time living in Sweden but he is definitely the vocalist of **Wuthering Heights**.

How do you incorporate the folk element into your vision?

I have done it for a number of years. I really like folk music. I go to see a lot of live shows. I don't really have many records of folk music but I like to go to see the stuff live. When you write stuff it just comes out. The vibe you get from folk music really fits the lyrical content of **Wuthering Heights**. It's a different thing to do. I don't think we have any limitations. It's impossible to follow any trend because they shift too fast. Most of these songs were written about seven years ago. I follow my own evolution as a composer. I have a confidence that I will eventually reach my own standards of composing. I'd rather speak to my own compositional universe. I could make more popular music by following some trend but it wouldn't be my music. That's not why I do it. The song should have the length that it should have. I don't write with the time in my head. A short song could be just as interesting as a long song and vice versa. It's an irrelevant point.

My favorite song is "Enter the Cave", even though it's basically an introduction.

That's an old song actually. I think the oldest song on the c.d. is "The Wanderers

Farewell". That was performed live in 1992. It's been on every recording I've ever done. I have several different versions now.

Has it been frustrating because you've been together for so long and now you finally have a new release?

Yeah, it's still frustrating. We still have trouble with distribution. We're not sure if it's gonna come out in Scandinavia. I have no idea if it's out anywhere. It's available from the record label but I don't know how far it's gotten beyond that. The album is done and that's what I've wanted to do for a decade. We still need to get a band review. We've only had these totally amazing reviews and everybody that we talk to really likes the stuff. If you have a band like that in your stable, push it. I'm not a business guy and I don't know how things work. It's hard to explain to people who want to buy your record, you can't buy it. I don't know why. I hope that's gonna work out at some point in time.

Is there any talk of the band coming over to these shores?

It's as always, the money. Of course we would love it. We always want to play for people who want to hear us but it's always a lot of practical stuff. Powermad would probably be an option. I would like to take the music to people everywhere. Even though we have this symphonic sound, it can be hard to redo in a live situation but I think we have really strong power when we play live. It has something to do with the fact that we don't play live very often. When we do play we're totally fired up and want to make a huge party out of it. The few shows we've done so far have been great. We'd like to get the music into the States.

What's the future hold for Wuthering Heights?

The first thing is we're gonna rehearse a lot in the near future. We haven't had a rehearsal stage for awhile now. We've just gotten that now. We've got a new guitar player. He had to fit right into the band. Hopefully we're gonna do some shows in various places and then we're gonna prepare the next album. It's is written and also the next album is also written. I have so much material, that's not the problem.

Final comments?

I hope that the record will be out soon so that people can buy it. In Europe there's a hype about this but it doesn't help if they can't get the record. Then people will check out what we've been doing all these years, that's my hope for the near future.

Discography:

1999... *Within* (Sensory)

Current line-up:

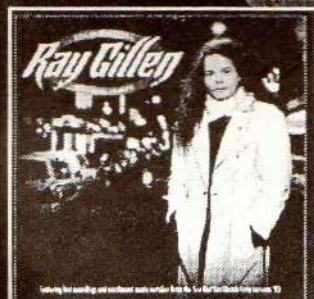
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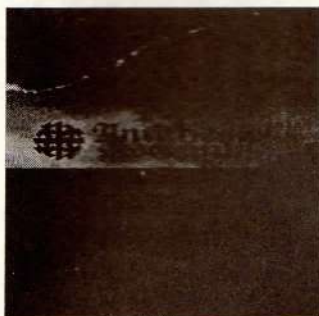
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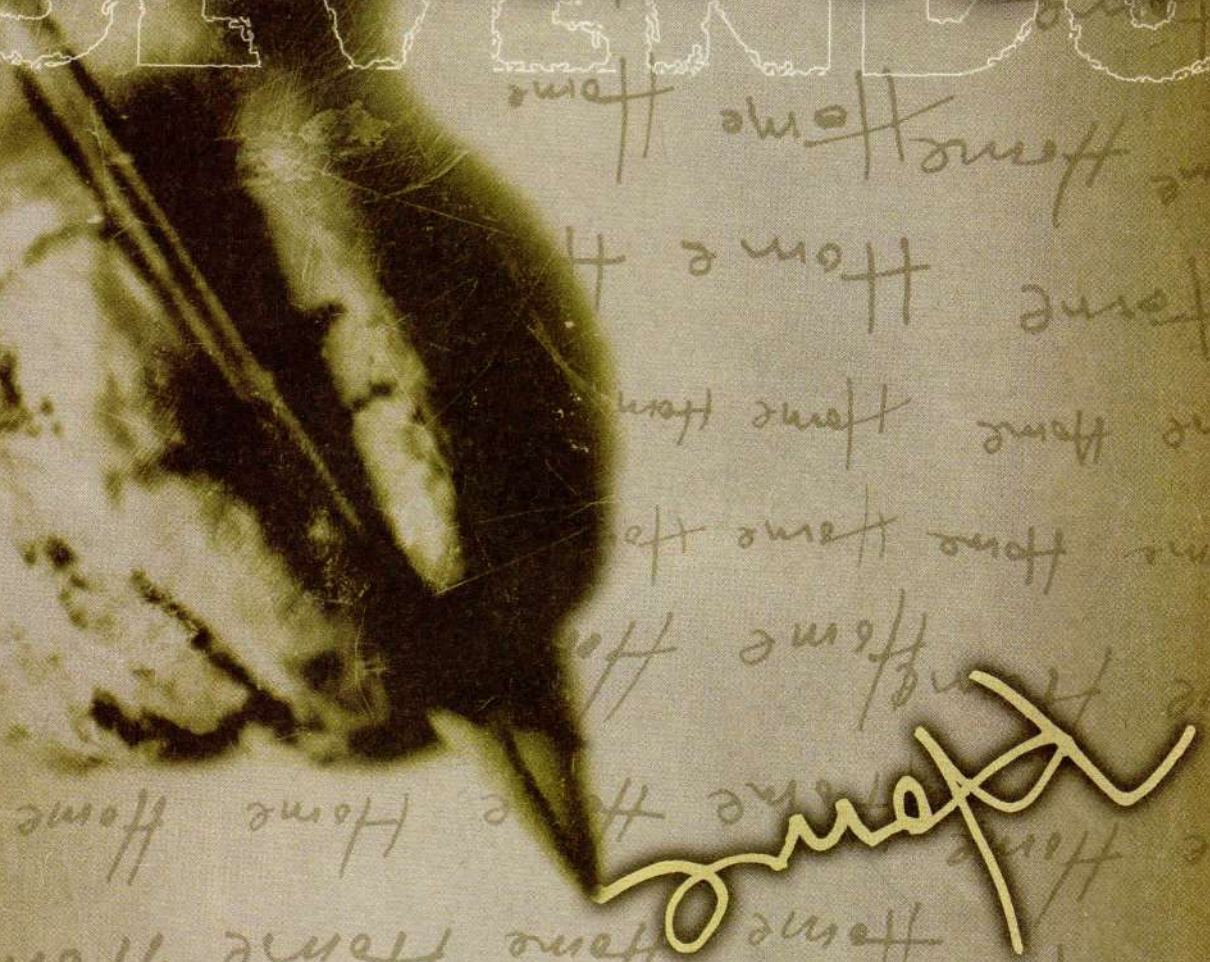
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