

MILWAUKEE METALFEST ~ POWERMAD FESTIVAL



SOIL
PUYA
TILES
LEFAY
SAMAEL
SINISTER
KAMELOT
GODGORY
NOCTUARY
HYPOCRISY
IRON MAIDEN
LACUNA COIL
MORTIFICATION
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SUMMER/FALL
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NOVEMBERS
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AT THE MILWAUKEE METALFEST



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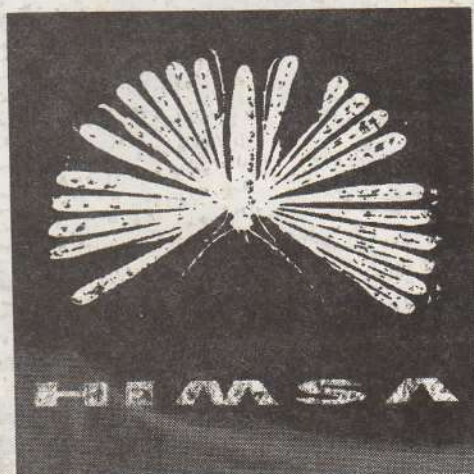


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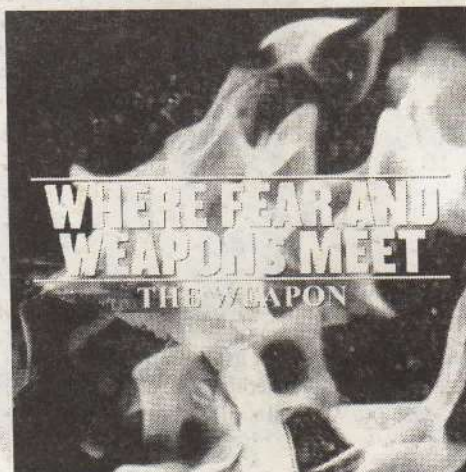


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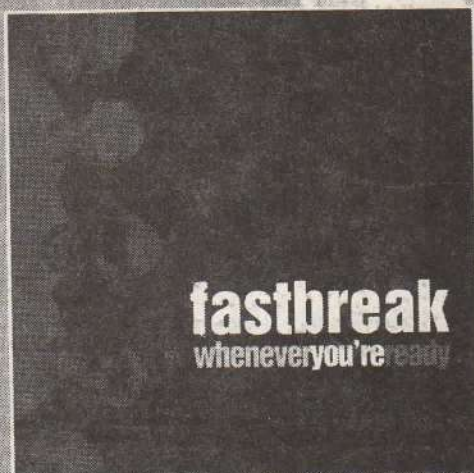


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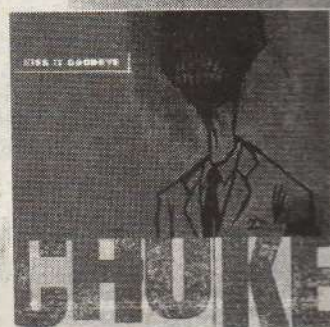
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Someone new

~Mike Portnoy (DREAM THEATER)

WAGES

The wages of work is cash.
The wages of cash is want more cash.
The wages of want more cash is vicious competition.
The wages of vicious competition is the world we live in.
The work-cash-want circle is the vicious circle
that ever turned men into fiends...

~ D.H. Lawrence

The Metal scene here in the U.S., while it is vibrant, exuberant, and growing strong with each new convert, is very small and very much underground. I'm stating the obvious, but it is the belief of many that this might not be the case for much longer. Alas, our recent history has shown us that Metal can exist outside of the underground. Some would just as soon keep it underground though, as they would argue that this is exactly what saves it from commercialization and exploitation. Others would like to see it grow more popular within the mainstream so as to gain a larger audience, thus influencing and converting new people into the Brother and Sisterhood. I feel a pressing need right now to enlighten you all and to raise questions in your own mind, to get you to think about the music and the Metal scene you hold so close to your Steel Heart. I'm writing this in the hopes that you will become aware of certain evil trends that exist here in the U.S. and that you might be able to combat them in the future.

These trends are occasioned and perpetuated within our culture by a little machine (working in conjunction with Portnoy's "big machines") known as the television. The TV is the biggest threat to the stability of this nation. Unfortunately, it is the best thing to happen to a country whose economy is rooted in capitalism. Capitalism thrives on consumerism, which is economically manifested in the chronic purchasing of new goods and services *with little attention paid to their true need*. It tells its viewers what to buy, when to buy it, where and how to buy it, and why we "absolutely cannot exist" without it! We don't really need all the products it tells us to buy. It's not only the advertisements on television that are the guilty party either; the pathetic dramas and sit-coms that are aired tell us what we should be wearing, how we should be talking, and what type of people we should be. They also present a false, yet very believable form of reality. The pseudo-reality projected in the television shows and the impulses it causes within viewers to buy unnecessary items both combine to overall "dumb down" our society. It creates mindless sheep who just follow the trends. How can a society be imaginative and creative if they are force-fed a false reality? True and good art mimics reality; it holds a mirror up to that which we perceive to be real and we interpret our world through it. If we learn our reality from the television (a severe distortion of the reality of our surroundings) how can good, imaginative, creative, and true art be constructed? It can't.

So how does all this relate to Metal? Guess what is *not* on the television (not to mention the radios and magazines)? Fucking Metal! This is why our art is so real, so true, so genuine. And when it was on television (back in the day), a lot of it was bad Metal, exploited Metal, commercialized Metal. Most of it was not real. It was a false reality of that which had an underlying truth that existed (and still does) in the underground. The flip side to this is that we, for a long time, have been struggling to keep it alive. The American Metal scene was in a sad state of affairs at the beginning of the decade, but at least it remained true to itself! But the underground will not be too underground for much longer, because Metal is making a comeback. It's happening right now, perpetuated by Crusades like ours and those of our Fellow Keepers of the Faith. So we are soon about to enter a new struggle. It will no longer be a fight to keep Metal alive though, rather it will be a labor of love to keep Metal real- to keep it artistic. At the present moment, Metal does not kowtow to the corporate big wigs because the only big wigs in Metal are the ones who love it for its artistic integrity! True Brothers and Sisters of Steel do not need the television to tell them what music to buy or listen to. The Steel unites us and keeps us of one accord. This is a foreign concept to our fickle culture who worship the small machine in their living room, permitting it to tell them what's "in" or "out." We don't follow trends; we think for ourselves. So what are we going to do when Metal hits the mainstream market again? It inevitably will; I promise you that. The suits and ties that run the television stations will once again be trying to commercialize and mainstream the music, stripping it of its aesthetic qualities and replacing these qualities with the latest sound- the latest trend. Of course, when people tire of it (because it is mindless and repetitively boring, the way almost all of TV is) and the music stops generating the desired cash flow, these corporate vultures will turn around and clamp their vicious talons around another victim.

Metal has a strong following here in the underground and it will only grow bigger and stronger with the advent of the new millennium. It might even rival Europe's triumphant scene someday. I am a firm believer in the idea that the underground Metal scene can grow dauntingly large without selling out, without losing its raw, emotional edge, and without compromising its artistic merit. But how do we do that? I think we can learn from our European Brothers and Sisters here. Their scene is currently booming, yet their Metal is far from the commercialized crap that polluted our scene back when American Metal was huge in the 80s. To the average European, art is an entity to be revered and looked upon with much acclaim and celebration; it's the triumph of the human will. To the average American, art is just another vehicle to perpetuate the endless vicious circle of capitalism fueled by consumerism; it's the triumph of the almighty dollar. This is exactly why festivals such as the Wacken Open Air and Dynamo so overshadow our Milwaukee Metalfest and Powermad Festival. They have a deep love and passion for an art form that is exciting, powerful, moving, and honest. There exists a fundamental difference in culture between us and our European counterparts and the evidence of this is strikingly clear, not only when the Metal scene is examined, but also when we stop to analyze other cultural and societal aspects as well. Brothers and Sisters, we need to guard one another and not allow each other to become discouraged by the mindless sheep surrounding us. We need to enlighten ourselves and be wary of our enemy. Metal is once again on the rise here in the United States and we need to raise our swords high aloft, praise the names of our Steel-Hearted Artificers, and give glory, honor, and praise to all that is forged of the Sacred Ore... without compromise! All Hail True Metal!!

~ Tom J. Hughes

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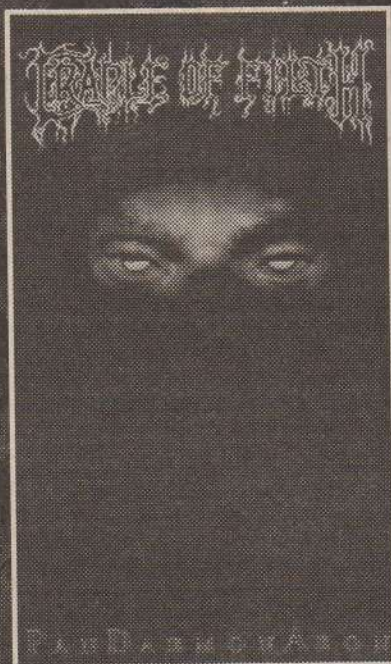
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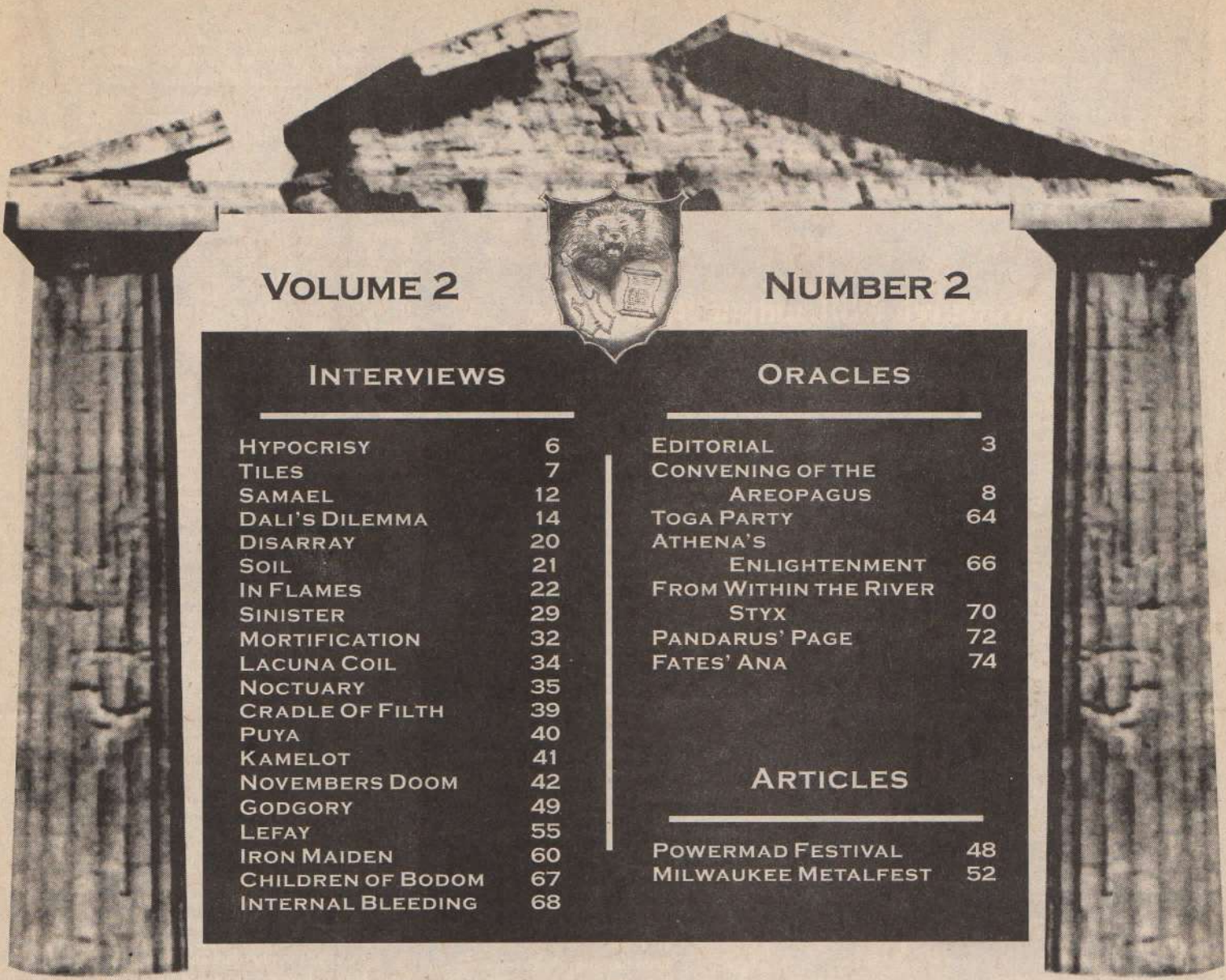


ENGINE

Engine

Solo project from Ray Alder of Fates Warning.





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NUMBER 2

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Publisher/Editor/Writer - Tom J. Hughes

Editor/Writer - Mark Morton

Graphical Layout Design Editor - Chester Ney

Writers - Chris Hawkins, Tyler Pursel, Jeff Kent, Keith Sullivan, Michael Rosser

Contributing Writers- Vahak Janbazian, Mark Gromen

Publicist - Maria Abril, Savior Marketing and PR

Web Site Design - Rick Alexander, Chester Ney

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Record labels, distributors, publicists, fanzines, and bands- get in touch with us for advertising and further distribution information.

Promethean Crusade

c/o Mark Morton

119 King St.

Pottstown, PA 19464, USA

Phone: (610) 326-3286

E-mail: cokeman@bellatlantic.net

The Fractured Millennium Approaches By Mark Morton

Peter Tagtgren. The name is synonymous with extreme on many levels; a producer, a songwriter, an experimentalist with neo-Metal project PAIN, and best known as the extraterrestrial-throated frontman/lead guitarist of the renowned Hypocrisy. The band's most recent release, simply titled Hypocrisy, takes the listener on a mental roller coaster, melding emotional extremes with the many facets of Metal. This year saw the band in the US more times than they've ever been before. They've gotten a small taste of what a true American Metal crowd has to offer, and the band is eager for a return visit for the chilled monkey brain-dessert! Anyone who has seen the band most definitely wants them to come back, as they should, for the millennium may bring our Final Chapter!

Promethean Crusade: What do you think of American Metal?

Hypocrisy: There are so many great bands, too many to name. SLAYER, DEICIDE, MORBID [ANGEL], POSSESSED, there are just so many.

PC: How does the American audience compare with the rest of the world?

H: Well, we've only played the bigger festivals in America: Milwaukee Metalfest and March Metal Meltdown, but the response from the fans is definitely killer. And over the years, we've been getting more and more US fans; it's great. It's not just Death Metal or Black Metal.

PC: That's the nice thing about Hypocrisy, your writing style manages to incorporate elements from all walks of Metal.

H: Yeah, I think that influence comes from the music I listen to, which is all kinds of music. And I'm not afraid to change things up and put different things in there. It's not exactly experimentation, certain influences just tend to rub off now and again, because I listen to stuff

from ELVIS to LED ZEPPELIN to KISS to DEICIDE to SLAYER, all kinds of stuff.

PC: Yeah. The great thing about Hypocrisy's music is that each song can stand on its own, singular from the rest, but still be part of the Hypocrisy sound. Somewhat like QUEEN, they could do anything they wanted, and it would be accepted, because the band was so versatile.

H: Basically, we just write what we want, follow our hearts, and try really hard not to repeat ourselves.

I try to be creative, put a lot of effort and sweat into it, when it comes to organizing and building up the songs. I could just settle for a couple of riffs, but I want to make the songs as good as possible. I'm a very self-critical person. I always try to give 100% in everything I do.

PC: Is that due, in part, to the fact that you produce as well?

H: Yeah, maybe. That's the only way I do things, do it right or don't do it at all!

PC: Which would you rather be doing, writing and performing or producing?

H: It's a 50/50 thing. I've been thinking about that, too. But when you stand on the stage, it's so rewarding, from working hard in the studio with your own album. But also, it's really cool to work with other bands.

PC: The new album contains many more slow-paced songs

than fast songs. Do you find that it's easier to work with the slower songs and find the faster ones too 2-dimensional?

H: For this album, we had written 7 or 8 songs each, and we just picked the ones we felt were the best. It wasn't a matter of fast versus slow, the songs just had to have something to them that really catches you, be it the speed or aggression, or the way it depressed you. They just had to have some kind of emotional content. You develop a bit of your own style and techniques when you write like this. You really find your own niche.

PC: I've noticed on most of your albums within the past couple years, the last song is always very down and dismal. Do you do that intentionally, because it could possibly bring closure to the band or foreshadow the end of the world?

H: I just want whoever listens to the albums to think for a while about what life is all about. I

just want to get people in that thinking mood.

This most recent album is pretty diverse, though, each song tells its own story.

"Apocalyptic Hybrid" is like a *Star Wars* meets *Independence Day* story, totally science fiction. While "Fractured Millennium" talks about how self-destructive humans are, and whether or not we're going to survive to see the millennium.

It's a very wide album, both in lyrics and music style. But the music is more powerful, as far as getting you into different moods and whatnot.

PC: Is there any significance to the name Hypocrisy with regards to each individual album?

H: No, not really. Hypocrisy can relate to so many different things, which is why it's a good name to have. There are always two sides to every story.

PC: Since you recently issued a live album, do you see this as a mark of relative success, or was it just a contractual obligation?

H: The story behind the live album is very simple. We played at this big festival in Germany, Wacken, and Nuclear Blast wanted to record a bunch of bands for a compilation, you know

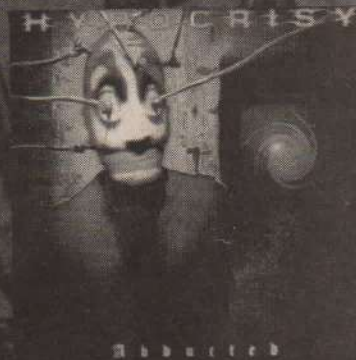
one song by each band at this gig. We went up on stage, did our thing and didn't think twice about it. When we saw the end result, we said that we ain't gonna be on no fucking compilation, we're going to do our own live album! And we did our own live video, too, because it's such good quality and it's not scamming people for money. We don't look at it as the band being 'legendary,' it just came out with such great quality. I think the old songs sound so much better on this live album.

PC: Is there going to be another PAIN album?

H: Yes, I'm actually working on it right now. I just signed to Universal/Polygram Europe for the release. It's really weird, because it took a really long time to get any response. I don't know how many demos I sent out in the past year, but all of the sudden, labels started calling, so I signed a nice deal with Polygram.

PC: Do you use PAIN as an experimental project where you try new things to see if they would work in Hypocrisy's sound?

H: Sometimes yeah. As I said, I don't like to repeat myself. PAIN is a great project because I can stretch my vocal abilities, since it's not a straight-forward Death Metal project. So a lot of the vocal experimentation I sometimes bring over to Hypocrisy, I think it helps the band evolve.



TILES

The Presents of their Presence

By Tom J. Hughes

Chris Herin, Tiles' guitarist, keyboardist, mandolin and banjo player, and main lyricist and songwriter (whew!) is a really great guy. We must've chatted for close to two hours about everything under the sun, thus this conversation you're about to read has been severely edited. It's a shame, too, because we talked about a lot of interesting things so I guess you can call this the crème de la crème of our discourse. Personality-wise, musically, and philosophically, Herin is a man of deep thought, and this is very much reflected in his lyrics and complicated song structures. Prog Metallers listen up! Tiles is a band worth you taking time out of your already 25-hour day.

Promethean Crusade: I'm reading your lyrics and

sensing an overall theme of change or lack thereof. People are afraid of change, but your music is anything but stagnant. It's constantly changing time and you have all these change-ups in your songs, and I was wondering if you could comment on this dichotomy.

Tiles: I guess all that means is we practice what we preach.

We try to be somewhat adventurous with our music. A lot of the lyrics reflect the rut that people get trapped in, and being one of those kinds of people myself, it's kind of easy to write about that kind of stuff. And hopefully the lyrics aren't all about one same topic, but there is definitely a thread of personal introspection and evaluation that most people go through to live somewhat of a

more adventurous or higher-quality life. You know how you go to your job every week, five days a week, you come home and watch TV. Musically I don't think we're breaking any new ground.

PC: You don't think so? Tell me who else is playing the banjo in a Progressive Rock band?

TS: That's kind of cool, let's see... BELLA FLECK AND THE FLECKTONES, but the banjo isn't really that integral to what we're doing. It adds texture and grabs your attention.

PC: Towards the end you have a violin, but everyone uses that instrument, and then you have a mandolin too...

TS: Yeah, JETHRO TULL has incorporated some Folk elements into their music and I'm a big fan of theirs, so that's where I feel that kind of stuff.

PC: And 'The Sandtrap Jig' is a nice little Folk type of ditty.

TS: Yeah we started to catch a little backlash to those minute-long interludes. Some people feel it breaks up the flow of what's happening. I don't think so, but others do.

PC: I think it goes back to what you were saying about the change-ups and practicing what you preach and I think you are making some headway and contributing to the art world in your own style that no one else can duplicate. There's so many others that just sound like the other guy out there.

TS: Yeah, I actually get depressed sometimes when

I read reviews and realize the magnitude of bands and the volume of CDs out there. Does the world really need somebody else to put out another CD or should we just put a moratorium on it for five years to do justice to what has already been released that has never had a chance for people to hear?

PC: Wow, I never thought about holding off on all art before.

TS: That's something that I'm sure a capitalist society would never understand. I just feel that way sometimes because there's more music out there that I could ever listen to and sometimes things don't catch on until years after the band has broken up and you look back on it then. There's just so much of everything actually that the challenge in America is not finding anything to do, it's being able to maintain your focus and try to find things you like to do without becoming sidetracked.

PC: So would you conclude with the notion that there is nothing new under the sun or do you think that there's still plenty to do, it's just that we need innovators to do it?

TS: Oh, I'm sure there's all kinds of music out there to be made. Every generation has a lot to offer the next, it's just that as society ages, it's like a library that just keeps getting bigger and bigger. It just is too much for one person.

PC: So are you happy with the way *Presence of Mind* turned out?

TS: Oh yeah. It was a difficult album to make with all of our day jobs, my wife and I had a baby around that time, but after this whole time we're still quite happy with it. It really takes the elements of the first two, our self-titled album and *Fencing the Clear*, and combines them rather well.

PC: You guys have day jobs?! Man, that sucks. You're on a recognized label with great music that's well produced and you can't get paid for your artistic merit.

TS: Well we've been able

to make three CDs so far and whether or not we can make a financially sustaining career out of it or not, that almost becomes immaterial because we can still do it. So maybe my standards are too low. It must be somebody else's fault that I can't have a career in music. You know, I generally think that because we're not writing popular Hip Hop tunes-**PC:** Fuck that!! Popular music is so damn simple! It's stupid and happy and...

TS: Precisely. I think it's funny, too, because Rock was considered less of an art form than Jazz, which was considered less of an art form than Classical. So if you look at the history of music, even during the Classical Period of Classical music where there were compositions and virtuoso musicianship required to perform the song, everything slowly went down to the lowest common denominator. It used to be, back in the '60s or '70s, that you could actually get through a song only strumming three chords on the guitar, or even like with NIRVANA. And now you have actual music being taken out of the vocals. It's not actually singing; it's just pure

beat and rhythm. So I'll be curious to see what's left with the elements of music during the next round of Popular music. So it always seems to gravitate towards the lowest common denominator.

PC: I guess that's sort of the same thing with Literature, too. Way back you only had a few people who wrote and they were the elite of society, the learned, and the intellectual. It was all in Latin so common folk were all illiterate. Then people started writing in the vernacular and a whole mass of people beforehand who were uneducated suddenly became literate and everyone started writing about everything. Now with mass education, we have almost no one illiterate and too many people writing all this crap and to find the best, the most artistic, and the most intelligible writings in the world today is tough because there is just too much crap and it's all turned out so simplistic and almost debased from the artistic pedestal it once had.

TS: Well, I don't want to get too philosophical about it, but it really mirrors society. Society has gotten away from, really, the artistic side of things and the emphasis is not on the art anymore. I think you could make a case for society being less educated than it used to be. Therefore, your lowest common denominator is getting lower and that's why things become popular and sell millions and millions of units, because the average person is not quite as sharp as they used to be. Therefore, what they like is not quite as intricate or easy to grasp.

PC: Television has a lot to do with the 'dumbing down' of society, too.

TS: Well you can't blame the medium or technology. Now everyone is complaining about the anonymity of the Internet and people sitting in front of an empty computer all day long. You can't blame computers, only the humans because it's a choice. The television doesn't tell you to watch it for six hours a day.

PC: But what is it about Americans, though, that really good music doesn't reach more people? What's in the food that the Japanese or Europeans eat that they know what good music is and we don't?

TS: It's probably a cultural thing. Music in North America is so tied to a social or political statement, fashion, or a combination of these three, I don't believe that this is the case in Europe. Japan has got stricter educational requirements. All of the people grow up learning about music and the Classical composers and such, which is why a guy like YNGWIE MALMSTEEM can still sell thousands and remain popular, because the Japanese did not have a backlash against knowing how to play your instrument. And Europe, except for England, have stuck to their meat and potatoes. They just haven't left their roots and know what it's all about. You

know, England, which is probably where we get it from, is tied in with the fashion and celebrity aspect of it with bands like OASIS and THE SPICE GIRLS. It becomes a social phenomenon as opposed to music first.

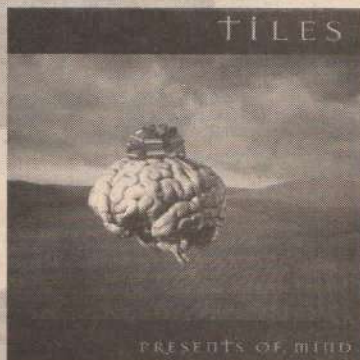
PC: Yeah, with all the tabloids and what people say instead of what they play, which is what got them popular to begin with.

TS: I guess any band wanting to make it just needs go over there and plop their weenie

out in the subway and they'll be on their way.

PC: Hey, now you know what to do to sell more than fifty records over there!

TS: Now all I need is a plane ticket.



Convening of the Areopagus



In Flames Colony (Nuclear Blast)

All right, I'm gonna make this real easy for everyone. If you have never heard In Flames' music, you are an absolute asshole and do not deserve to call yourself a Metalhead. In Flames are gods of the universe who are to be worshipped within the mighty Shrine of Metal. If you do not like In Flames, may a horrible plague be bestowed upon you, your family, and your town's water supply. This disc, like every other the band has released, is purely flawless, magnificent, melodic, and majestic Death Metal. I know one question that you're all going to want to know the answer to is, "How does it compare to *The Jester Race* or *Whoracle*?" Sorry to disappoint you, but I'm not touching that one with a 50 foot pole. All of In Flames' releases are perfect and when something is perfect, you need not compare it to anything else, let alone other perfect things. This new album is the best goddamn release you will hear for a long



Tiles Presents of Mind (Magna Carta)

This disc was immediately likeable! My first impression was Progressive music with a groove. Though there are a few songs towards the end there that I could live without, the opening track, "Static", is absolutely wonderful! Throughout a lot of the disc, and particularly in the song "Taking Control", they incorporate a banjo and mandolin into the grand scheme of things. Along with the usual technical virtuosity and off-time bravado, this little twist separates Tiles from Magna Carta's other Progressive legends. They will wow you with their musical talent and win you over with their style and groove, proving to the countless musicians out there that it takes more than just lightning-quick fingers to cut a brilliant and memorable song. They are a far cry from the typical Progressive Rock band, possessing a sound uniquely their own. I highly applaud them for not blending in and for having the presence of mind to stand out apart from the rest.

time. And by a long time, I mean 'til their next one is released. There are a lot of amazing Metal bands out there, but few will ever reach the status that these prodigies from Gothenburg have reached. To demean this band is to wish death upon yourself. If you honestly have yet to hear this band and yet still claim yourself to be a Metalhead, seek professional help, then go buy all of their CDs. I know none of you need a review to tell you that In Flames are a great band and that you should buy *Colony*, but I can't think of another way to finish this critique. Don't miss out on this disc. Get your hands on it by any means necessary (and I mean any) and help it to find a cozy home on your CD rack.



Clockwork Surface Tension (Sensory/Laser's Edge)

Clockwork stands out in a crowd of flashy Progressive Metal bands by underplaying their technique and using fresh instrumentation. The abundance of intriguing sounds like flutes, and especially the gypsy tinged classical guitar breaks, make *Surface Tension* one of the better albums of its genre. Your first reaction is going to be to check the CD player to make sure you've got the correct disc. *Surface Tension* starts slowly with subtle piano, flutes and strings before the fast and

intricate guitar comes in. The stand out track here is "The Convolution Box", a blistering instrumental that covers more ground than most albums do, let alone songs. Not to be outdone by his instrumental counterparts, Douglas Gillin belts out lyrics like, "perpetual parade of petroglyphs" that prove he can cut it. A nice touch is the last track, which after twelve minutes dissolves into an acoustic campfire version and then dissolves into the crackling of the campfire itself. A well put together package of musicianship, singing, and great writing. For an excellent and thorough catalogue of the Laser's Edge's Prog Rockers and many other Progressive bands, write to Ken Golden at lasercd@aol.com or PO Box 388, Voorhees, NJ 08043-0388.

Electric Frankenstein How to Make a Monster (Victory)



The inside sleeve of Electric Frankenstein's new CD says, "Rock is Dead" - Billy Corgan, "Smashing Pumpkins are dead" - Rock." That is just what it seems like this band is doing, keeping Rock alive. Electric Frankenstein's Rock sound has hints of Punk

here and there. They can be compared to MONSTER MAGNET, especially in their singer, Steve Miller's, voice. Love them or hate them, they are keeping a dying form of music alive.

Enthroned The Apocalypse Manifesto (Blackend)

Truly melodic Black Metal is something which I believe to often be terribly executed. With the sentencing of DISSECTION frontman, Jon Nodveid, it looks as though the kings of melodic Black Metal will never release anything again. Enthroned are a very new school BM band who play some piercing, melodic music and don't have to resort to keyboards to give them that beautiful, yet evil tone which so many notable BM bands possess. For that very reason I believe you should give this band a chance.

Boy Sets Fire In Chrysalis (Initial)

From the opening riff of this album I was already into them. This band can be classified as Hardcore, but they also have a strong melodic side to them, which they aren't afraid to show. This is evidenced from the first four songs. The first song is a totally heavy, Hardcore song that is reminiscent of UNSANE. Then the next three, which are a little more on the lighter side (yet still with a heavy edge), are more emotional. The third song, "Losers of the Year", is sort of a biographical song about the band and their tours and how people criticize them. A line from the song is, "You drove six hours and you got paid twenty bucks? What a bunch of losers! Yeah, I guess we are." The last song is a really good cover of the DEAD KENNEDYS, "Weekend in Cambodia". A full length CD from Boy Sets Fire should be something to keep an eye out for.



BOY SETS FIRE

Ragnarok (UK)
Domgeorn
 (Eldethorn/Neat Metal)

I have no clue why no one likes this disc, because I fucking love it!!! It is the perfect blend of Folk music and Black Metal. Other bands like CARPATHIAN FOREST have tried to do this, but Ragnarok (UK) achieve this fusion without error. I honestly cannot find a flaw with anything on this magnificently crafted, brilliant work of art! This might be due to the fact that I have a strong affinity towards the Old English language. The art, language, and culture of our ancestors are gloriously represented throughout the inlay cover and in the songs, too. Old English lyrics in the Saxon tongue are written out (and sometimes translated into modern English) and sung in keeping with the traditional pronunciation and grammar. Kennings and familiar Old English themes of wyrd, war, and valor saturate the oral part of the songs while flutes, classical guitars, the celtic harp, bodhran, whistle, side drum, and fiddle take you back to Heorot Castle! The fierce Black Metal tracks bring you back to reality soon enough, though, and Deorth's voice shrieks louder than Grendel's as his arms are being ripped out of their sockets! MANOWAR's



classic cut, "Heart of Steel" is Blackened with a vengeance in reverence to the Kings of Metal, while the traditional song, "John Barleycorn" is given a traditional rendition. A very moving and emotionally stirring highlight comes in the middle of the CD on track six. It's nine minutes of poetic and musical genius. It begins with a poem spoken in Saxon with gentle waves washing ashore in the background. A chorus of men's voices and then cries of war slowly fade into the forefront as a ship washes ashore carrying on it men arrayed in battle. These warriors then fight with an audible, graphic violence akin to the visuals displayed in Braveheart. Then the slice of a sword, a heart beating, and in comes the celtic harp. A lullaby-like song accompanied by drums, piano, flute, and female vocals enchants the listener as the song eventually fades away into the next track which begins with a gentle thunder roll. Domgeorn is a masterpiece from beginning to end, from the cry of the raven to the cry of the warrior. It's so Metal even the Folk songs wreak of iron-clad fervor! Do not pay attention to the short little write-ups in the other fanzines because they don't know what they are talking about (at least when it comes to this CD)! Black Metal and Folk fans unite! This is so worth your time and effort to track down... trust me!

Gordian Knot
 (Sensory/Laser's Edge)

This is a band and album as complex as the title indicates. Gordian Knot is a supergroup of sorts featuring Trey Gunn of KING CRIMSON, John Myung of DREAM THEATER and members of CYNIC- including leader Sean Malone, whose vision created this incredibly beautiful music. Perfect for driving across a post apocalyptic wasteland, this CD conjures images as disparate as walls of blinking electronic components and desert landscapes. If you're a musician, you will sit in front of your speakers and shake your head asking, "how'd they do that?" Sooner or later you'll give up and just enjoy the ever-changing soundscape created by these talented technicians. Choosing a favorite track would be difficult as it works so well as a whole, but "River's Dancing" sounds like the ultimate IRON MAIDEN solo arranged for a band. Although I believe that they could pull it off live, I think this album should stand alone as a work of musical art. I could write more but I'd rather you heard this for yourself.

Asteroids
Burning Out In The Atmosphere
 (Bishop Enterprises)

This is another one of those discs that passed through many hands here at the Crusade. It's been compared to a DEVO Metal album, it's been deemed as unclassifiable (unless of course you count that crap category- ouch!), and it's been said to be a worse album than the *Ghostbusters'* soundtracks (double ouch!). I will admit that it has its flaws ("Golden Rule" is just a bad song), but the opening track, "Atmospheric Disturbance", is very respectable and reminds me of a really laid back RUSH tune. Track four is not a Country song (as I have read time and time again), rather it is a song poking fun at Country music; it's quite comedic, actually. I hear some EMERSON, LAKE, & PALMER influences, along with some CHEAP TRICK and YES action on a few tracks, which makes me think that with some better production and a couple more years of maturity these guys could really do something spectacular. If Asteroids arrived on the music scene in the 70s instead of the 90s, perhaps more ears would perk up. Don't write them off immediately because they have a different type of sound that you might not be used to at the moment, rather reflect on exactly what it is you are listening to and try to relate to the music from the artist's perspective. I'm sure Asteroids aren't purposely trying to sound like shit, and they certainly don't, so open your mind a bit and expand your musical tastes... check into Asteroids if you feel so inclined.

PC 69
Electrified
 (Digital Dimension)

I played this disc for a friend of mine and her first reaction was, "we don't have anything like this anymore" and her second was, "what radio station is going to play this?" Both statements are true and both are a little sad. We could use more bands like PC 69 (the PC, by the way stands for Pink Cream... work on a new name guys... please) and the world would be a better place if there were. They play a positive, melodic Power Metal that unfortunately peaked with QUEENSRYCHE in the late 80's. Hailing from Germany, PC 69 will draw the inevitable comparisons to THE SCORPIONS and HELLOWEEN which is valid- I mean how can you escape those two Teutonic giants of Metal? With worldwide sales topping 300,000 and a recent opening slot on BRUCE DICKINSON's latest South American excursion,



PC 69 sets its sights on America. This gets us back to the previously mentioned s a d statements, but have no fear: there is a place for this somewhat nostalgic sound. Expect to hear more from these guys.

Spock's Beard
Day For Night
 (Metal Blade)



In case you have never heard of these guys, Spock's Beard are a Retro-Progressive Rock band who fuse the 70's style of Prog with the technology and raw finesse of today's most flashy Prog bands. They are, bar-none, the most unique Progressive band in today's genre and also one of the most talented. Weird synthesized effects pop in and out of the forefront while the groundwork laid down by the fat bass lines just totally uplift the clean and distorted guitars with precision, grace, and power. Clean and professional

vocals aren't show-offy or glummy, rather they are as down-to-earth as you can get with respect to the out-of-this-world time changes and syncopation in the music. Slow, fast, weird, powerful, emotional, funny, dramatic, and experimental songs all make for a highly exhilarating and moving 65 minutes. There's a little bit of everything on here, and this is a more refined and thorough release than their prior efforts. If you're a cult follower, I'm sure you have this already, and if you're riding the fence, pull the splinters out of your ass and get moving!

Integrity
 2000
 (Victory)

Among all the good Hardcore there is always the "not so good," and this seems to be one of them. This CD can be described one way: boring. There is nothing special about 2000. Terrible vocals and less-than-average riffs are the only thing Integrity has to offer. They try to do a new thing every once in a while at some parts of the disc, but they fail miserably. You aren't missing much by not checking out these guys.



Vim Patior
Magni Nominus Umbra
(Blackend)

As much as I love Black Metal, this band just doesn't do anything for me. Black Metal, in my opinion, is supposed to have a sense of evil, darkness, or some kind of entity to it. All this band does is blast while the singer executes mediocre screams with attempts at clean vocals. Too many bands think they can play like this and get away with it and they don't realize that they need something of their own too make them stand out from the barrage of shitty Black Metal bands out there. Black Metal seems to head in two separate paths these days. The first path is what I like to call "project DIMMU BORGIR". This is where every BM band thinks that if they have a keyboard player that they will kick ass. The other path is what I call the "Old School Path". This is where every band tries to replicate the sounds of MAYHEM, DARKTHRONE or BURZUM. They release albums with so much treble you'd think your eardrums would explode. What I think many Black Metal bands have yet to discover is that you have to find your own niche in the scene and not try to steal or mimic someone else's. This is why there are so many shitty wanna-be bands like HECATE ENTHRONED in the world. I believe if Vim Patior would come up with something distinctive to add to their sound, then they would have a far better shot at Black Metal stardom.

Thy Withering Orchard
Soft Glow of Perishing Cold
(Amenta)

If the CD title doesn't give it away, I'll mention a few song titles: "Winter Embrace", "...And Dawn Will Bleed its Final Light", "Burdened With all that Tires", and "Fertile Wounds". Dark, depressing, and very atmospheric Doom Metal is what we have here, folks, and it's great! As melodic as it is melancholic, if the aria of keyboards doesn't sweep you away then the strain of the guitars will. Slow and then faster tempos towards the end keep it from drudging on, and the mix of clean and harsh vocals throughout keep things interesting as well. This music isn't so depressing, though, that you want to kill yourself after a few listens, rather it offers some consolation to the weary and downtrodden and lets you know that someone else out there feels just like you do. They are creating something positive out of their experiences and so should you... so check these guys out if thou dost feel lonely and depressed.



Black Funeral
Moon of Charcith
(Full Moon Productions)

This is some scary shit right here. This project of Michael Ford from VALEFOR was supposedly designed as a "Sigil of sound" which, if utilized properly, can act as an opening gateway toward the reverse side. I had the honor of interviewing Mr. Ford for my own fanzine a while back and I gotta be honest, the man is a fucking lunatic. This is some of the most frightening stuff I've heard in a while, but I'm not surprised. Black Funeral can fit somewhere in the same category as WUMPSCUT or VAMPIRE RODENTS: they're all very sick people who play very sick music. While others will use the sounds on this disc to open a gateway, this CD will come in handy for me later on in October for scaring annoying, candy-hunting nuisances off of my front porch.



Soil
Throttle Junkies
(MIA)

I knew there was a reason I liked these guys so fuckin' much... they started out deliberately trying to not sound like those fuckheads, KORN! Hell yeah, man!! Soil rock hard and furious, ripping through power chords and steady Rock rhythms like they're on a mission to teach the world that shredding guitars and fierce vocals not only have their place in Metal, but Hard Rock, too! They have the instant like-ability of a totally hot, naked woman (sorry to all our gay and female readers... I'm not being politically correct and I don't give a fuck!), but Soil don't have any strings attached. You don't have to buy them flowers or watch romance movies to hop in the sack with them, man. Just plug in your headphones, lay your head down on your pillow, and bam! Instantaneous fun in bed!! Instead of going to heaven with a little rock and roll, you'll be in heaven with this Rock and Roll! They're that good, Brother.



Soulmotor
(CMC International)

Hi, we're here because we heard there's an opening for the SOUNDGARDEN position? Oh, our qualifications, well uh, no we're not quite as good as they are. We do come right before them alphabetically though, so maybe people will get confused in the record store and buy our album instead. Our new album also has a triangle and circle shaped icon on the cover sorta like the cover of *Badmotorfinger*, which reminds us, *Badmotor*.../Soulmotor, how about that! No? Well, uh, our singer can growl, scream, and sing in a soulful way and we use that ever popular dropped D tuning. Still no luck huh? Yeah, well SOUNDGARDEN was great. How did you know we had all their albums? Is it that obvious? Oh, OK, thanks anyway.

Strychnine
Inverted Crucifixion
(Apparition Entertainment)

About the only thing this CD is good for is its movie samples. They're all over the place and unfortunately they stand out above the music. Actually, the music itself isn't too bad, it's the vocals that are horrible. They are either too high in the mix or buried too far below, belching along like Chris Barnes through a cheesy sampler with faulty wiring. The music becomes more cacophonous as the disc progresses and all hope is lost towards the end. Better production and a new vocalist would do these guys good, because the music itself is alright. If you're looking for some cool samples for a compilation tape you're dubbing, get in touch with Pete Serro at PO Box 173, Keyport, NJ 07735 USA.

Feast Eternal
Prisons of Flesh
(demo)

There is nothing like good, solid Death Metal! When written, played, and produced properly it is such a treat to the ears. Feast Eternal provide such wonderment and delight, playing a brand of Death Metal that is brutal, sometimes grinding, and very in-your-face. Some melodic and technical time changes are perfectly augmented by the barbaric vocals and carnage-wreaking guitars which all told make for a remarkable listen from beginning to end. Solid State should look Feast Eternal's way because they take the intense verve of EMBODYMENT and fuse it with the melodic ferocity of EXTOL. They have the potential to be as big as LIVING SACRIFICE someday if given the opportunity and I highly recommend them to all fans of Death Metal!! Contact them at: PO Box 88, Grawn, MI, 49637. Feasteternal@gtii.com, http://members.tripod.com/Feast_Eternal/.

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S A M A E L

The Eternal Insights of a Man Eclectic

By Tom J. Hughes

Samael are one of those bands that have never produced the same album twice. They are forever changing and re-defining their sound, re-shaping, expanding, and re-molding the boundaries of Metal with each and every release. Eternal, their latest offering of technological, metallic bliss, is their most ambitious album to date. Never before have synthesizers and other various electronic gadgets played such a prominent role in Metal's sound; never before has a guitar been so well complemented by a modern tool such as a computer- unless, of course, you count the distortion effects of an amplifier! Drum machines, computer programming, and electronic synthesizers have permanently affixed themselves to the Samael sound (thanks to the fine efforts of musical prodigy, Xy, the band's songwriter), yet Samael still remain one of the darkest and heaviest bands in Metal today. Permanently planting for themselves a prolific place within Metal's elite with the release of 1996's Passage, Samael fend off would-be replacements with Eternal and they show no signs of ever leaving their post. Metal are Samael's roots and Metal they shall forever be, no matter how diverse their sound may become. This interview was conducted with Vorph, Samael's vocalist, lyricist, and guitarist.

Promethean Crusade: The contrast in styles between your early music and the music you are writing and playing now is striking.
Samael: We had to start somewhere at a certain point and I suppose a few of the elements we had at the time we still have today, but they are mixed and they evolved in a different way. I think we kept something from the past, but put more of us from the inside into our music, more and more. I don't deny anything we did before.



PC: As far as the thank you list in *Blood Ritual* goes, you thank God for giving you 'this eternal hate against his concept and against his worshippers.' Do you still hold these sentiments?

SA: At a certain point I just feel that there is no need to fight against something you are not for. You just should not care about it or just try to use it in your own way. Now I try to make up my mind between these two points, more or less.

PC: So it's not prevalent in your mind as much anymore, this hatred against Christianity?

SA: I'm not really under the influence anymore from those people because I went to school and at the time you have religion every week and all that stuff, so it's way behind me now. It doesn't touch me anywhere.

PC: So are you prescribing to any religion right now or are you a free thinker?

SA: I just think you can pick up ideas in any religion, but as long as you don't follow the whole thing... you gotta make up

your own mind at some point and decide what you want. I guess nobody can know that. Of course, I believe in spirituality; it's a quest. Anytime you've got nothing better to do, it's always good to look inside and try to rearrange things, to look back inside yourself, you know?

PC: Ever dabble in any magic? You seem like the type of guy who would be into all that.

SA: No, no. I was really looking for a lot of different aspects of any one belief at a certain point. I guess I've always tried to pick the best part of everything for myself, but like I told you, I'm not really following anything. I'm not involved in any sort of movement whatsoever.

PC: Are you happy with how *Eternal* turned out?

SA: Yeah, very happy, because it's a quite new recording which has already been out for a month here in Europe. So, it took a long time to record this album, more than the previous album, so we had more time to maybe not experiment with the recording, but we had more time for the mix. So we had a little more time to push the idea further than before.

PC: You guys came here to the U.S. a while back... 1994 I believe. Was there a lot of crowd response last time and if so, was it a factor in bringing you over here again, this time as a headlining act?

SA: The first time we came with CANNIBAL CORPSE and played only shows up and down the East Coast. They had a following of people at every show so it was not that bad at all. For us, it was a good experience because we never were there before so we were there just to present the band to a lot of people that never heard about us. I think the ratio was quite good because after the tour we doubled the sale of the record.

PC: You guys are playing with DIMMU BORGIR this time. What do you think about Black Metal as a whole?

SA: Yeah, there are a few good bands, of course, but that's the music I was listening to when I first started with Samael and we were different at the time. But I think a lot of bands will develop their own style and get more interesting in the future but so far there are only a few and they all sound the same.

PC: You guys have Black Metal roots.

SA: There was the origin of the band when we started and we were influenced by bands like HELLHAMMER, BATHORY, VENOM, and stuff like that. So that was the only music we were able to play at first and I was into the most extreme side of Metal, really, and there was nothing more extreme at the time.

PC: But you were able to progress over time... you're not Black Metal anymore and pushing the boundaries of Metal itself, so what would you consider your style as now?

SA: Well I don't like being labeled or whatever. I don't really care whatsoever. I know the roots we got and from there we just try to do build something we feel comfortable with and that's the main point really.

PC: Tell me about Switzerland. There's a lot of mountains, right?

SA: Yeah, there are mountains, lakes, money-

PC: A lot of money, yeah!

SA: Yeah, it's supposed to be that way. But um, well, it's a really small country and we have three different national languages: German, French, and Italian. That's probably the most interesting thing about Switzerland, the different mixes of culture, which so far it works because we've been together for a long time.

PC: My parents went to Switzerland and bought a clock.

SA: [laughs] Good thing! Good thing. Clocks and chocolate... that's the cliché of Switzerland, but it's not only that, of course. But when you come here for the first time that's probably what you will look for, but when you live here it's sort of different, I suppose.

PC: Why do you guys redo your older songs all the time?

SA: It just kind of happened more or less. I mean, we never released a live album or something. And you know, at the time you change a song a little bit and a little bit and at a certain point you might feel that you changed it enough to re-record it. And that's what we did with *Rebellion*. We had two old songs and the same thing with *Exodus* with the *Ceremony of Opposites* songs. I guess they're different than the version on the original albums, so that's the main reason, really, to give the chance to people that never came to see us live to hear the song how it's done today.

PC: And I guess Xy does all the re-programming and re-recording...

SA: Oh he never stops! Once he's finished with a song he always starts to think about what he can change or what else it can be.

PC: So what do you think of the re-making of *Passage* on classical strings and keyboards?

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

SA: I thought it was interesting, really, because first he came up with two or three songs he re-recorded which were never meant for an album, he was just doing them for himself to maybe make a tape for us or something. And we felt that it was fun to listen to that way. So when *Passage* started to sell more we thought to go for the whole album. It's quite interesting; it's not something you will listen to twice in a row, I suppose, but sometimes it's good to pick up in a song the same parts on keyboards because all the song structures are still the same.

PC: You display a concern with the dialectic and

perhaps Eastern or oriental philosophy with the Ying-Yang theory on many of your albums. Opposites appear all over the artwork and the lyrics. How much oriental philosophy do you allow to penetrate your mindworkings?

SA: Well, I always try to go from here to there and pick up everything. The things I think that are strong enough to be a part of something I want to create or use for the future. I just remember how strong it was and years later it just comes out and is something different than it was. I'm not more into Hinduism or Jewish religion or whatever. It's just a whole thing that I pick apart and choose for myself. But with the thing about the opposites, that's a subject we had happen on our albums a lot. Many

different songs, even on this album, like 'Nautilus and Zeppelin', which is whole the idea of having something floating in the air and something down in the sea and finding the

connection between both of them, which they are more or less moving the same way. In anything, once you have a point of view, if you push it a little further you would find the opposite at a certain point. The only way, I guess, to be more or less right is to find the bridge between both.

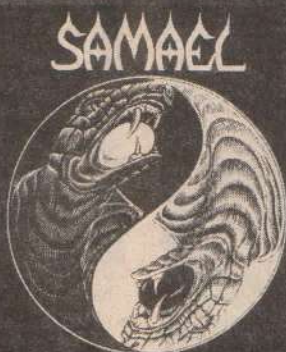
PC: Hence the symbolism behind the cross on the cover stretching out across space eternal.

SA: Yeah, it's sort of a cross that gives one more dimension than the usual

one. We did intend to call the album 'The Cross' [track five on the new CD ~ed.] at a certain point, but then we didn't want to have a song to be the title, to have one song in front of the rest. We didn't want people to see the one title of the song and forget about the rest, thinking that this is a one-song album, which it isn't. So then we thought about finding a title which would fit to the general concept of all the titles of the album. I think *Eternal* has a pretty large meaning so it can go for anything that is on this album, probably. Because it is so large meaning; it goes on forever for anything. I guess it also has this idea of time and space without any boundary. You can put anything inside and it will never go over.

PC: More and more electronics are being implemented into Samael's sound and production. I don't want to say you guys are incorporating less Metal into your music, but *Eternal* has got less of a metallic feel than most purely Metal albums. Is this the direction Samael will take in the future?

SA: We don't know really. We don't make plans and say we won't do that again or that we will never do this because you never know. We just follow our feelings and of course keep on working with the drum machine, because that was a good idea, but for the rest I don't know. I mean, with this album, for example, when we did record it, for the first time Xy did play some of the cymbal and toms live. Then he did this sort of weird mix between the machine and the real drum. So with the programming and all that, I don't know what might happen in the future.



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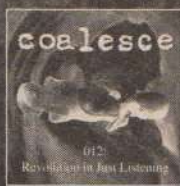
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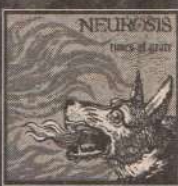
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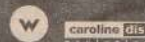
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Dali's Dilemma

By Tom J. Hughes

Jeremy Colson is a very busy guy. Not only does he play with STU HAMM on JAMES MURPHY'S latest, Feeding the Machine, and with Trent Gardner of MAGELLAN doing a concept album on the life of Leonardo DaVinci (just to name a couple!), he just also happens to be the drummer on Dali's Dilemma's debut, Manifesto for Futurism. Contrary to popular opinion, Dali's Dilemma do not sound like DREAM THEATER in any way shape or form, a point which I make here because I edited it out of the conversation. What I've decided to keep, though, is an interesting conversation about the Progressive music scene as a whole and how his band fits into the grand scheme of things.

Promethean Crusade: You guys are from northern California, and I know there's a relatively big scene in the Bay Area, a lot of bands are coming out of there, anything going on in northern California as opposed to the southern part of the state? What's going on out there that there are so many bands coming out of California?

Dali's Dilemma: It's kind of interesting that you ask that, because I do a lot of sessions and different other sort of those kinds of things up here. But I think the thing about the Bay Area or San Francisco scene is that it seems to, in comparison to southern California, like LA, it seems to be more artsy. You kind of don't know what to expect. It seems that when you go down to LA, you get a lot of bands that are really hungry to get a record deal and they're all in that routine: wearing the right clothes, playing the right kind of music, and that whole thing. They really, really want to get a record deal and make it big. And up here, you go to a club and you see the weirdest stuff like you've never seen before! In San Francisco, everybody is so different and diverse; the shock value itself is very interesting and crazy. Making it big and rich is not that big a thing. As far as the Progressive Rock scene goes, though, it's almost non-existent out here. I think back in New York it seems to be bigger.

PC: So you not only have this dichotomy in your own state, but there's a differentiation between the East and the West Coast, the East having New York and Boston being more Progressive and LA and stuff where the bands are more Rock oriented.

DD: It's definitely more Rock oriented out here. I've never really been to New York, but I've heard there are a lot of Progressive Rock fests out there. And also, a lot of the bands responsible for this scene are from out there, too, so there's a much bigger audience for it. In general, though, there is an audience for it out here as well. Almost everywhere there is a small crowd for it, it's just a

question of more bands getting out here to play; there's just not enough Progressive bands getting out here to play. I remember when SPOCK'S BEARD came, there was a line outside the clubs to get in. It kind of lets you know that there is a scene. You go on line and you can just see all the people interested in it. It's one of those things where there is a scene, but you're not seeing it in all the magazines or MTV. I think

it's a growing scene out here that I would like to see get bigger.

PC: As far as your name goes and how it kind of relates to 'the challenge of doing something this experimental and becoming commercially accepted' that is oftentimes a very, very fine line. How much of you wants to just play great music that is highly artistic and experimental and how much of you wants to be the next DREAM THEATER or RUSH, both commercially acceptable and experimental? And also, where do you draw the line?

DD: I think one of the biggest goals and challenges for us, which isn't maybe for other Progressive bands who play music that I can't stand, where they only focus on the textual aspect and the songwriting is forgotten about... I mean they write these really long songs with cool lyrics and long intros, but they don't have a hook for

emotionally impacting; that's just so important to the listener.

PC: "Hills of Memory", a song that you wrote, is one of the most memorable and shortest!

DD: Yeah, that was one where we were going to put more technical stuff in it, but why? The song sounds good! I like the verse, I like the chorus, it is emotional, and it's fine. One of the great things about Progressive Rock is that you don't have to categorize your stuff as far as what you wanna do for each song. It's not like, just because we're Progressive we have to make each song ten minutes long. You're allowed that freedom to sound like METALLICA in one song and then PETER GABRIEL in the next song. I'm so thankful to be in a situation like that where I don't have to put boundaries on what I writing about or playing.

PC: I think the Prog scene as a whole is basically pushing the boundaries already with the technical side of things. So going back to the 'dilemma' part of your name, has it all been done already? Has Progressive music progressed to its limits?

DD: Well, for me, I've always been inspired by really crappy music because it really makes me say that this is not what I want to do! It's one of those things that is good about crappy music, and there is so much of it out there. One of the things about Progressive Rock is that I don't think it will ever become highly commercialized or stuck because it's always been a real individual thing. Look at the people who listen to it; it's always been the ones who have strayed away from things and went their own way. They want to listen to something else... something different. You almost

feel like you're part of a little club. When I'm listening to a CD that has sold millions of copies, it's hard to feel that closeness, whereas if you're listening to a band that not many people have ever heard of before and you really, really like it, I always thought that that was the coolest thing; it's your own.

PC: So what about bands like RUSH or DREAM THEATER that in the beginning only musicians perhaps knew about, but now everyone knows who they are and are listening to them? Does that taint your image of them?

DD: I actually like that because with Progressive music it takes so much to gain a large following. Here's the thing: look at all the bands on MTV that are really doing well and it's always that one album that's huge and then they die out. In particular with Progressive Rock, looking at RUSH or

DREAM THEATER, look at how many albums they just keep producing and look at how their fan base has grown. And their fans are so loyal! I think that's what is peculiar about Progressive music and you start out, you might not have millions of people, but your fan base grows with loyal people who stick with you through all your changes. We're not planning on making one album and being huge. We love the idea that a few years down the road we'll gain more and more fans and eventually become a well-known Progressive band. That's a goal for us. And another thing about Progressive Rock is that people don't look for that one song that's big. People appreciate you for everything that you do. DREAM THEATER and RUSH are good examples and have proved this theory rather well and it's the direction that we would like to go.

Continued on next page



their chorus or anything like that, just a bunch of polyrhythmic sounds. I always remember a song, even if it's only three minutes long, if it has a hook way more than I'm gonna remember a ten minute song with just virtuoso, technical stuff with nothing to remember it by. I think one of the things that has made Progressive music go where it has, as far as bands who have made an impact, are the ones who have found a happy medium between being technical and also writing great songs. You look at the bands in the 70's, KANSAS and ELP and those bands, they got where they got because the songs that got played on the radio were the shorter, more ballad-type songs. It proves that they can write that along with writing the ten-minute songs. It's really important if you're gonna play Progressive music to have a technical aspect, but not so much where you can't have a catchy verse or chorus or something that is



Continued from previous page

PC: JAMES MURPHY is listed as one of the guys that performed some of the recording, so you have some extreme influences going on with this album as well, I'm sure.

DD: Yeah, that's definitely something that we're all influenced by as well. One of the things that turns me away from some of the Progressive Rock that's out there is when it sounds almost like it's too much from the 70s era and they don't add any of the heavy stuff from today. For us, we like to put elements of METALLICA, FEAR FACTORY, PANTERA, and bands like that into our music and giving them a Progressive element. I'd like to see Progressive music grow into something that is more heavy. There's bands out there doing the Progressive thing that are heavy... like MESHUGGAH, I love them! They kick ass! They're crazy. I mean, you listen to their rhythms and they are so out there that the vocal melodies are going against the rhythms! They're really harsh vocals and it's so cool because they're really doing their own thing.

PC: I don't know how the hell they do it. Their drummer... how does he-

DD: He's insane! When I listen to him, I'm just floored by it! And the thing that really floors me is that they are not taking anything too much from somewhere else that they sound like a rip-off. It's their own sound. You could say a technical PANTERA if anything, and that is where I'd like to see Dali's Dilemma go in the future as far as trying to find something that no one has really gone over too much. That's where I'd like to see Progressive music go.

PC: I'm so glad you're saying this because you'll never hear a lot of Progressive bands go heavy. As much as I like Progressive music, sometimes you just need something more.

DD: You lose that "meaty" sound. I know what you mean. I always love the idea of going heavy and one of the coolest aspects of Progressive Rock is when you have bands that have done the heavy thing as well as the soft thing. The dynamics are just so amazing when you have these two different sections combined. It brings out much more than when you just have one level of sound. It's cool to have distorted guitars and then keyboards; it makes for this heavy, yet... I don't know the word for it... it really just defines its own sound and I think that is so cool.

PC: Kind of like Mike Portnoy [DREAM THEATER's drummer] wearing a NAPALM DEATH T-shirt!

DD: Exactly! Or when he's wearing a BEASTIE BOYS shirt.

PC: And then you guys are thanking Jerry Springer and the Jerky Boys...

DD: Yeah, the drive to LA listening to the Jerky Boys and then hanging out in the hotel room with Springer on the TV really helped us out, man!

Hollenthon *Domus Mundi* (Napalm Records)

This disc is absolutely brilliant! Never have I heard such a beautiful union of Metal and Classical orchestration since THERION unearthed *Theli*, but this disc is even more exceptional. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that Hollenthon is so great that they can take *Theli*...clean it up and wipe the dust off it really nice...turn it sideways...and stick it straight up Christofer Johnsson's CandyAss! Just kidding! I'd never try to disrespect Mr. Johnsson's obvious brilliant composing ability, but should you give a listen to *Domus Mundi*, you would understand. Where THERION is tending to stray away from the Metal aspect of their music (a la AMORPHIS), Hollenthon welcome the soul of Metal with open arms. Think of OLD MAN'S CHILD's *Ill-Natured Spiritual Invasion* combined with anything THERION & DIMMU BORGIR have done lately, and you can imagine the beast that would emerge from that fire! Heavy, menacing, and ruthless riffaging trade off with clean and virulent vocals and intertwine with orchestrations that have an inclination for darkness comprise this debut outing by Hollenthon. I just hope that they haven't suffered from premature musical ejaculation and blew their wad with their first album!

HOLLENTHON



Gandalf *Deadly Fairytales* (Wicked World)

Within the inside spine of Gandalf's Wicked World debut (like Earache needs a sub-label for Metal bands!), there are three words printed: "Melodic Death Groove," and damn if that doesn't sum it up! Now, there are a lot of you who will claim that Gandalf is merely an IN FLAMES clone and will write them off without really giving them a chance. I'm not going to lie to you; Gandalf do bear a striking resemblance in sound to those almighty Swedes, BUT SO WHAT! No one ever calls IN FLAMES an AT THE GATES clone, yet the two bands share a similar sound. The bottom line is Timmo, Jari, Sami, Nalle, and Kirka are extremely talented Metal musicians playing in an extremely crowded sub-genre of Metal. Gandalf may not be the most original of the new melodic breed, but *Deadly Fairytales* is one hell of a fun ride from the opening track, "The End of Time", to the closer, "Never Again". I'd put my money down on the next ride being something special.



Death of Millions *Frozen* (Dies Irae)

Death of Millions perform true American Death Metal. There are no frills here and no ultra-catchy Hardcore breakdowns. This is pure Death Metal. Though it is not anything to necessarily rave about, this album's strength lies within the band not trying to be something they aren't. For that, they are to be commended. The music is a hybrid of CANNIBAL CORPSE, DEICIDE, and OBITUARY. Those are all (or were) killer bands making Death of Millions a band not to shy away from.

Crucifer *The World Dies 1989-1999* (Wild Rags)

Nothing gets my blood pumping more than an Old School influenced Death Metal act. This disc is an anthology chronicling ten years of pure Crucifer Death Metal! It is the perfect way to introduce you to the band, since it compiles tracks from past demos, seven inches, and EPs. If you know nothing of the band, allow me to bring the band into perspective for you. Obvious influences on Crucifer's style include SODOM, DARK ANGEL, PESTILENCE, SEPULTURA (the track "World Dies" bears a strong resemblance to "Inner Self"), CELTIC FROST and any other band that molded what would become both the Death Metal and Thrash Metal genres. Combined with Crucifer's love of horror movies, you have yourself a Grade A abhorrence to mainstream Rock! Crucifer is another band only recommended for those amorous to Old School Death Metal, but since it is a compilation of sorts, I strongly suggest that the kids give it a shot, too! Who knows, this could be the vanguard of a rejuvenated sound!!

CRUCIFER



Divided Multitude

Inner Self
(Sensor)

Divided Multitude is a band that defies easy explanation: they have elements of Power and Progressive Metal, but they also play music that contains some of the mid-song time changes that characterizes the more technical aspects of Metal. This Swedish group (yeah another one, WHAT do they put in the water up there?) can play, and that's basically all that matters when you get right down to it. The first track, "Maybe" is pure Power Metal with keyboard work that lies way in the background, as do the keys for the bulk of the disc you know there's some keyboards being played, but they are not prominent in most of the up-tempo tunes. "Heart of the Moment" starts off with some very 'MAIDEN-esque guitar work, and then goes into the aforementioned time changes before settling into a nice piano/keys driven groove. This one song is a good example of DM's diversity. Singer Sindre Antonsen has a slightly accented voice (which makes me think of some of the Italian singers for some reason) that sounds good with the music and he neither gets too high or low; he stays primarily in one range. The ever-present ballad, "Pictures of Home", starts with vocals, piano, and acoustic guitar and then kicks in with more 'MAIDEN guitar-work about halfway in. Simply put, this disc has a good combination of crunch with just enough keyboards to fill that Progressive Metal fix.

Monstrosity

In Dark Purity
(Olympic Recordings, Inc.)

Goddamn, this is seriously brutal shit! Monstrosity truly does not fuck around! *In Dark Purity*, which is by far the band's most impressive release to date (and among the elite Death Metal albums of the year!), beats the shit out of you with its pile-driving skin pounding, rakes your sorry ass over the flaming coals of its mincing guitar frenzy, macerates your flesh with a low-end blitzkrieg, and completely vaporizes your remains with an unearthly vocal assault! I have not heard a Death Metal album this carnivorous, bloodthirsty and ferocious since VADER's *The Ultimate Incantation* or SUFFOCATION's *Pierced From Within!* And that is an unbridled compliment, because any band that can match brutality with those two bands is seriously in need of recognition! Always acknowledged as the band that gave CANNIBAL CORPSE a new vocalist, Monstrosity finally comes into their own as a violent, technically-skilled entity, capturing your attention within the first couple seconds of the lead track (which follows an ominous synthesizer intro that builds the fearful tension). Their rampage is furious and rabid throughout the entire disc, which culminates in a majestic cover of SLAYER's "Angel Of Death", a true Death Metal anthem deserving of such immortalization. Monstrosity is definitely a band to fear!!



Lunatic Gods

Sitting by the Fire
(Metal Age Productions)

There is so much going on here it's not even funny. From just one listen, you can easily tell that these Slovaks are very talented musicians. Unfortunately, they're lacking in the songwriting department. Musical solos of all kinds are played, and played excellently at that, but there seems to be no sense of organization or structure. Electric and acoustic guitar solos are very prominent, as are piano, keyboard, flute, violin, and organ solos- and this is all great stuff- but it's too scattered. "Return of Deads Thoughts" is their one instrumental and is definitely their best track. It's when they start to put lyrics (not sung rather well, either) into the mix that things start to go haywire. For instance, "World of Lies" begins with this amazing keyboard piece with lots of worldly influences, but when the heavy shit starts kicking in and the vocalist(s?) start singing, I lose interest. Then when the singing stops and the song goes into a musical breakdown, things become highly enjoyable once again. *Sitting by the Fire* is a very, very commendable disc and if you're a music aficionado with a penchant for flashy, show-offy type solos, then I recommend it highly. I really think that if they get a better vocalist and mature more as an entire unit (that not only plays the music real well, but puts it together real well, too), then shall they become a force to be reckoned with in the Metal community.

Unholy

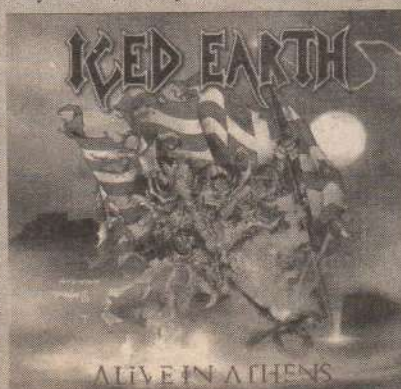
Gracefallen
(Avantgarde)

Unholy deliver some very traditional Doom Metal, but with immaculate female vocals. They are a very talented act who utilize bleak, slow drums and super heavy guitars to craft an exquisite work of art. For those of you who enjoyed Anathema's *The Silent Enigma*, I feel you will find this release to be quite a commendable one. Very dispirited stuff we got here, and there is also some very mentionable keyboard work (the dark pipe organ being one of my favorite aspects). I have no complaints about this disc and I feel those of you who enjoy killer Doom Metal will not either. I don't know how many more of these gloomy discs I can review... I find myself becoming filled with despondency.

Iced Earth

Alive In Athens
(Century Media)

Is this double-CD even worth reviewing? Any self-respecting Iced Earth fan already owns it, and if you don't like Iced Earth, you won't even bother with it, right? HELL FUCKING NO!!! Listen man, these live discs are so fuckin' bad that even my Iced Earth-not-loving brother loves them! And how can you not?! Iced Earth embody Metal; they are Metal's skin- Metal incarnate, if you will. Their consecrated fans deserve this live performance, and oh how live it is! Some live recordings just display



Skunk Anansie

Post Orgasmic Chill
(Virgin Records)

Yes, I know I should be shot for even mentioning such a major record label, and for reviewing a band that isn't exactly Metal, but this British band's abilities should not go unnoticed! The band plays an aggressive Rock that is impossible to categorize, for their music can jump from sedate, melancholy, akin to PETER GABRIEL or a darker SEAL, to a Punk-inspired, hard frenzy like BAD BRAINS and CRO-MAGS. The addition of vocalist Skin's social-psychoschizophrenia only fuels the band's fire to expand their ingenuity and savage grace. It's pretty bizarre that Skunk Anansie is terribly huge in Europe and hardly acknowledged here in the US, especially since they are on a major record label and play music that is both mentally-intriguing and radio-friendly (check out "We Don't Need Who You Think You Are" and "Lately"). Maybe it is due to the idea that some of their music is a bit abrasive and all of it is "heady" thinking person's music. It's a common fact that anything that induces radical, independent thought is immediately blacklisted and hidden from public view! Hopefully Skunk Anansie and bands that follow in their wake will help to break this barrier!

alternate, extended, or chopped up versions of songs, but Iced Earth play entire songs from blistering beginning to energizing end, and they span their entire catalogue in the process. No Iced Earth release is misrepresented here, and this live performance can dually serve as a greatest hits disc set. Not only does Iced Earth perfectly electrify you with their impeccable performance, they add another instrument to their songs as well- their fans! Fans singing, fans shouting, fans cheering, fans screaming, fans oooooohhhhhing, and fans clapping! Fans have played an integral part in Iced Earth's success thus far and now they are an inescapable part of the band's

sound! Never before have I heard a recording so well display a crowd's reaction to the music; it's truly an awe-inspiring feeling and I've actually gotten trembles from the endless cheers. If I close my eyes and put on my headphones, I can actually picture myself there and I become thoroughly energized by the Brothers and Sisters surrounding me in my head. *Alive in Athens* is 22 songs of headbanging bliss and in my book it's a big, giant HELL FUCKING YEAH!!!

M-Squad (Primate)

"Hey guys, you wanna come over to my house and jam? We can use my basement." Sometimes it starts out as simply as this, and very often that's as far as it gets. M-Squad (M for Mushroom) takes it to the next level by recording and releasing a CD to commemorate the event. The songs are simple but effective with slow churning riffs that are easy to play while under the influence, and even better to listen to while chemically stimulated. Unfortunately I don't subscribe to their use of foreign substances, but there's still some good vibes here. M-Squad are obviously not trying too hard to impress with technique, rather they set a great mood of darkness and murk straight out of the Gowanus canal (or your own local polluted waterway.) Eli Brown has a voice reminiscent of Mr. John Bush of ARMORED SAINT/ANTHRAX fame while the band draws on its 'SABBATH infused upbringing. The only real waste here is "Hoedown Jam," which I'm sure was fun at the time, but on disc it's just a repetitive acoustic wank. Stick to the distortion pedals guys and clean up the basement after you're done. Get in touch with them at 241 12th St., Brooklyn, NY 11215. Email: PrimateUSA@aol.com

TNT *Transistor* (Spitfire)

Not all bands from the 80's are content to rely on their 15 year-old reputations to promote new works. TNT has obviously been listening to a lot of different music over the last few years. The opener, "Just Like God", jumpstarts your speakers with an electronic blitz that's part Electronica part Speed Metal. Vocalist Tony Harnell's acidic tone is perfect for such a combination. In a rather dramatic shift, the next few tracks hearken back to that 80's sound with all too familiar melodic vocals and hooks. "Fantasia Espanola" fulfills the power ballad quotient rather well, but the rest of the album never quite matches the intensity of the first song. The final song, a short and fast Axl Rose tinged "No Guarantees", comes closest, but in between the album relies too much on a slightly updated sound. There is some good music on *Transistor* and it is not a bad album. If they can build from here, they've got a good shot at remaining one of the Old School bands that survived the lean years.



The Atomic Bitchwax (Tee Pee/MIA Records)

How can you not like a band with this name? Patched together featuring members of MONSTER MAGNET, GODSPEED and SLAPROCKET, these proud citizens of The Garden State turn up the fuzz and transport us to a time when everything was easier. The riffs plod and the solos flow seamlessly into each other without losing momentum. A mix of all music from the late 60's and early 70's with heavy guitar parts and psychedelic solos sets The Atomic Bitchwax apart from those bands that are anchored in a single sound from one era. Heavy Metal fans both young and old should be able to find something here to like.

Hades Almighty *Millenium Nocturne* (Hammerheart)

With the opening chords of this very powerful, medieval Black Metal disc, I already knew this was going to be a delightful listen. The opening is very beautiful. It starts with some very sullen piano and after about 30 seconds, the lonely piano is joined by some strings and an ethereal choir. Then out of nowhere you're bombarded by a storm of thrashing blasphemy. The rest of the disc goes on pretty much in the same vein and what bad can I say about true Black Metal with superb orchestration. Yet again, the mighty Hammerheart blesses us with another rising force in the underground Metal scene. If you dig AETERNUS you will love this release.

D-Ray: *Round One*

Nemeh's O.D. : *Too Frustrated To Be*

Bury Me Deep: *Graceheart*

Spoon: *Subvert*

(Heart, Trust & Respect!)

As I understand it HTR is a Finland based magazine that took it upon itself to produce and release a series of CD's on a their self-produced label. The resulting 3 EP's and one album provide a snapshot of 4 relatively new bands in their formative stages. D-Ray is the one band with enough output to merit a whole CD. Round One is a cohesive blend of Aggro-Metal and good old-fashioned Hardcore featuring chunky rhythms and barked vocals. Nemeh's O.D. drops the tuning to D and flirts with the Seattle Grunge sound, a little too much maybe. Not the most original sound, but some decent songs. Spoon (insert TICK reference here) wastes no time in getting right to the hooks on their EP. Each tune seems to start with a solid riff that the rest of the tune builds upon. The clear vocals reveal their Scandinavian heritage and I love to hear that. Bury Me Deep's Graceheart EP is maybe the most promising of this bunch. Not content to rely on a single influence, they appear to have found their own voice amid the ashes. The guitar riff of "Double Coca" bounces and rolls along with a life of it's own, and the vocals of "Bastardfly" have a nice melancholic moan. Taken together, these four releases hold their ground and HTR should be commended for their effort. Maybe Promethean Crusade will someday do the same.

Root-O-Evil Compilation

Roots IV: ZoSo

(Root-O-Evil)

Root-O-Evil Records Presents

All Hail Earl Root! Comp after comp, I am just amazed at all the good music that is out there. I don't know how he does it, but he always manages to get the best unknown bands together (he even signs a few of them) on one grand compilation which never fails to bathe the listener in sounds that pretty much run the gamut of Heavy Metal. This fourth installment of compilations opens up with the ferocious intensity of LORDE OF ALL DESIRES who combine orchestrated keyboards and Thrash-influenced, melodic Death Metal. LE'RUE DELASHAY's "The Chapel Serenades" are present here in three different movements, all of which are beautiful mini-arias featuring orchestrated keyboards. COLD COLOURS (formerly WOLFTHORN) are a Doom oriented Death Metal band with an operatic female vocalist and killer distorted and clean guitar harmonies; definitely keep your eyes peeled for their soon-to-be-released *Somnium XIII!* 612 CREW's offering, "No", is yet another example of what all Hardcore should be like while NOVEMBERS DOOM's contribution, "For Every Leaf that Falls", is a perfect model for all Doom bands to revere. FLESHGRIND give us a taste of some brutal-as-shit Death Metal while NOTHING take you on a journey through synthesized soundscapes and Gothic mirth. Earl hasn't lost his sense of humor in all of this seriously great music, though, and has included a few sick jokes to keep it all jovial and light-hearted. JANYTOR's "Monster Metal Maddness" gets my vote for funniest home recording while BOBBY E's "The Unfortunate Chef" is just too weird for words. Please go out and get this and all other Root-O-Evil comps out there, for it's a vast plethora of great bands, great music, and great fun for the whole entire family!

Shy

Let The Hammer Fall
(Neat)

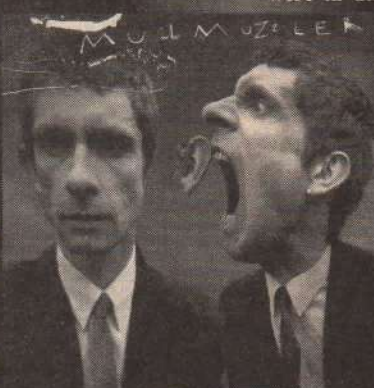
If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Shy must live by this motto, because they're still churning out the mid-eighties pop metal like it's 1984. Hey, if it works for them, great. There is no shortage of pyrotechnic guitar solo's by Steve Harris (no, not THAT Steve Harris) and every member must have a microphone to create the vocal harmonies that pop up on every track. All this album needs are some of those synthesized handclaps. With all the bands today relying on the 90's grunge cliches Shy actually sounds rather refreshing.



Mullmuzzler

Keep it to Yourself
(Magna Carta)

I am absolutely amazed at the sheer genius that resides within all the members of DREAM THEATER. I mean, these guys can do no wrong!! All of their respective side projects (PLATYPUS and LIQUID TENSION EXPERIMENT, just to name two) are a complete departure from the DREAM THEATER sound, they all sound distinct from one another, and they all are musical bliss! Take James Labrie's (DT's vocalist) Mullmuzzler, for example. You would think that because he is singing on all the songs that it would sound like DT... but it doesn't at all. To prove this, I played it for my brother, who instantly recognized Labrie's voice, yet even when I lied and told him it was new DT he insisted that it just couldn't be... my bro knows, man!! Anyway, Mullmuzzler employs a less Rock sound and a more Prog sound than his full time outfit. The biggest departure from DT lies in three areas: keyboards play a very prominent roll, there is less soloing on the part of all the band



members, and the album as a whole is not as cohesively put together as a DT album would be. Perhaps this is due to the fact that all the songs were written while all the songwriters were in different parts of the world. They

corresponded through phone, e-mail, and faxes, but never in person until they recorded the tracks! All in all, though, Mullmuzzler is a treat to the ears; it's very Progressive ("Shores of Avalon" and "His Voice"), a lot of fun ("Beelzebubba"), hard rockin' ("Guardian Angel" and "Lace"), and emotionally stirring ("Sacrifice"). Until the new DT album is released (I CAN'T FUCKING WAIT!!) this is going to have to hold us over, and this is definitely NOT a bad thing, folks!

Stillwater

The Treble Hook
(Ghetto Cat)

There is only one thing I can immediately say about this band: frighteningly mediocre. I can't really figure out what they're trying to do, although I can definitely conclude that their sound is a combination of funky sounding, metallic riffs. The recording quality is very low which takes away from a lot of the songs. Jon Pospischil's vocals are also very lackluster, though his lyrics aren't that bad. I can easily compare this band's sound to that of CLUTCH's. Overall, this band definitely needs a lot of work.

Earthcorpse

The Taste Of Sin
(Shiver Records)

Take PARADISE LOST's *Lost Paradise*, fuse it with ANATHEMA's *Pentecost III* and BENEDICTION's *The Grand Leveller*, and you can begin to understand the ability and emotional discharge Earthcorpse presents. Tastes of SLAYER's *South Of Heaven* are also present, but the mood Earthcorpse wields and projects is one of bitter sorrow. What is with all these depressed bands lately? Yeah, we all know Heavy Metal isn't popular, but do you really have to bring us all down with that reality? Don't revel in your depression, get up and fight! But hey, Earthcorpse do what they do well, and they probably will end up committing suicide due to the strength of their abilities. Come on guys, is Britain really that bad a place to live? So what if you lost Graham Chapman and Benny Hill, you've still got Rowan Atkinson (Mr. Bean), James Bond, and your greatest Welsh export Tom Jones!! Granted, I've never been to the UK, but it can't be nearly as bad as the USA. I mean, at least in Europe, Metal is acknowledged as a viable form of musical art! But then, after reading through the lyrics, it becomes apparent that the band seems to bask in the pain of loss and agnostic contempt, which is a staple trademark of dark, Doom Metal bands anyway. So take it for what it is, another talented band that is disturbed and fed up with life. Contact Shiver Records at: c/o Hans de Wyngaert, Bossepleinstraat 6, 3128 Baal, Belgium or call +32 16-53-49-43.

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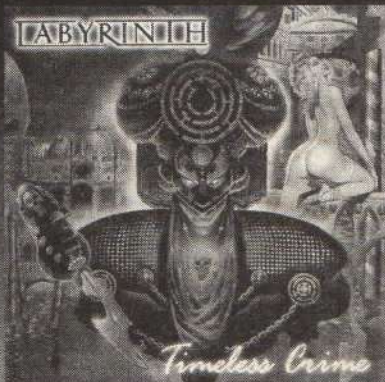
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Labyrinth
Timeless Crime
(Metal Blade)

From the land of RHAPSODY comes the second Metal Blade offering of Italy's Labyrinth. Though only a five song EP, *Timeless Crime* exhibits all of Labyrinth's strengths, which largely lie in their soulful, haunting synthesizer and piano work. Gearing more towards a Progressive feel with this release, the band treats your ears to powerful, melodic Metal, although at times they flaunt their abilities to the excessive. The guitar work, albeit magnificent, usually comes off as mere fluff, which is very much accentuated by the DREAM THEATER-esque vocals. All complaints aside, this is a fine piece of work by a highly skilled band, who is struggling greatly to wrench itself out from the shadow of the previously mentioned national Metal heroes, RHAPSODY (though it is difficult to tell the bands apart from their press photos). Megakudos go to Labyrinth's hidden track on this disc, a vibrant, 90s-sized version of the legendary SANCTUARY's "Die For My Sins", which actually packs more punch than the original, I'm surprised to admit, and the addition of keyboards to the song only add to its mystique. Mark my words, the next release from Labyrinth will definitely be one of great strength and merit!

Hellstorm
Fucking Bleed
(Demo)

This demo is nothing short of amazing. Hellstorm is not just another Norwegian Black Metal band. Instead, their style is completely well-crafted and all their own. This four song demo, in fact, travels between the glorious Speed/Thrash era of the Almighty KREATOR, POSSESSED, and SODOM; Death Metal a la MORBID ANGEL; and Black Metal done right in the vein of MAYHEM and IMMORTAL. This all equals pure METAL!!!! They have combined all that is great about those bands, but have left it raw, invoking images of underground chaos and mystery. Listening to this demo takes me back to a time when the underground was close-knit, when each tape traded brought forth a new face to raw and brutal music. It does my Metal heart well to know that that feeling of unity and experimentation is not dead since so many "Black Metal" bands are appearing on larger labels. I recommend ordering this demo to EVERYONE. If you are looking for true, unblemished Metal the way it was intended, this is the way to go. Contact: Apocalyptic Empire Records and Distribution P.O. Box 9, 7501, Stjordal, NORWAY **Also, you can ask for a FREE catalogue when you write... the company has TONS of great discs to choose from!!!

October Tide
Grey Dawn
(Avantgarde Music)

Imagine melodic Swedish Death Metal slowed down to almost a Doomy feel and you have October Tide. The equation results in anthems of power aided heavily by a killer production job. If you are in constant search for melody in your music, then check out October Tide. Though they are not as memorable as some of their counterparts, October Tide are certainly on the right path.

Cathedral
Caravan Beyond Redemption
(Earache)

Does anyone else remember Lee Dorian from his NAPALM DEATH days? Cathedral is about as far in the opposite direction from that as possible, but I suppose that is old news now. If you liked Cathedral before (or at least since their post *Soul Sacrifice* days), then you will certainly not be disappointed with this latest album. If you have never heard Cathedral, imagine a 90's version of BLACK SABBATH, or rather, imagine BLACK SABBATH as a 70's version of Cathedral, for their music is so close. The album's strongest point is its production, which is completely solid in every aspect. Cathedral have also managed to write more memorable songs. There are a few tracks off this disc that I would not be surprised to hear on a Rock radio station. Yes, they are (gasp) catchy. It is a good catchy, though, much like a classic OZZY or MAIDEN record. We must all give Cathedral praise, for they provide us all with the best fuzzy cannabis-lined Metal these days since Sabbath went off to make money!



Tchort
The Heavens Are Showing the Glory of Tchort
(RaspuDisc Records)

If the album title hasn't given it away, this is a band that does not take itself seriously, but it seriously rocks! Saturating their music with inspiration from BLACK SABBATH and KISS, Tchort comes across as a Canadian GWAR (as elegantly exhibited in the song "Gory Hallelujah (Let Us Prey)"), minus the prosthetics and violence! Each song is comprised of simple, groove-based riffs, coming off almost as trippy as CATHEDRAL, and lyrical satire is splashed throughout. Some songs nearly sound like blatant SABBATH and KISS plagiarism, but that is part of the fun; you need only to listen beyond the obvious negative truth to their simplistic, FRANK ZAPPA-worshipping core, and you will find that the band has an important message to relay. Simply put: life is too short to be spending all your time worrying about what the future holds, hope and depression are irrelevant, live for the moment, and get the most out of life while you still have a breath in your lungs!! This message is more poetically put throughout the song "Beelzebub Pie", an acoustic, Folk song about the rise of Satan as the new Messiah, but since everyone's going to die anyway, it doesn't matter! But my favorite part of the song is their "folking-up" of the chorus to "Number Of The Beast" within the song. Oh, and on a final note, this band has no connections whatsoever to EMPEROR's ex-bassist!

In Extremo
Weckt Die Toten!
(Metal Blade)

In Extremo give me the same feeling that RAGNAROK (UK) do... they both make me feel so damn good to be alive! I absolutely love bands that are not afraid to conform to any one standard or genre of music and I can honestly say that I have never heard anything like this before. Just as RAGNAROK (UK) fuse Black Metal and Old English lyrics and culture, so to do In Extremo fuse good ol' fashion Metal with Middle Ages folklore and whoopla! Their garb exudes Chaucerian character and I can just hear In Extremo performing live at the Tabard Inn as the pilgrims stumble in from their journey to Canterbury. King Arthur surely would hire these minstrels to perform in his court and Robin Hood and his band of merry men would dance around the fire to the toe-tappin', foot-stompin' melodies of *Weckt Die Toten!*... if they had electricity that is! For not only do bagpipes,

flutes, and kettledrums appear on this finely crafted CD, but so too are there equal amounts of electric guitars, bass, and drums. Bagpipes and electric guitars (very few acoustic guitars, surprisingly enough) trade solos back and forth (no doubt showing off their extraordinary talent... do you know how hard it is to play the bagpipes, let alone with this kind of speed and technicality!) while Einhorn's raspy vocals carry on an oral tradition begun by our ancestors since the dawn of recorded history. Sometimes this music takes on a *Braveheart* soundtrack type of sound and oftentimes I just want to drop what I'm doing and just drive on down to the Renaissance Faire for some venerating, romantic revelry! This music rocks hard, is medieval and modern throughout, and is a must for fans of Folk and



Rock alike. The 20th century meets the 15th century in this music; alas, most of these lyrics originated anywhere between the 8th and 14th centuries! In Extremo is preserving our Western culture in their art and all hails should be bestowed upon them for bringing our heritage to life.



Disarray

By Tom J. Hughes

Fuckin' Chuck Bonnett rules, man! His stories rule, his music rules, his goatee rules... the list just goes on! His mere existence defines what the underground Metal scene is all about; as he aptly puts it, "I'm on the music 24/7." His whole life is about the music, from his band, Disarray, to his record label and fanzine, both of which go by the moniker Inner V.O.I.D. In addition to three brutal and well-crafted Death Metal releases (Widespread Human Disaster, Bleed, [both available through Inner V.O.I.D. Records], and A Lesson in Respect [their Eclipse Records debut]), be on the lookout for three tribute albums featuring Disarray. Dwell Records will be releasing RUSH ("Tom Sawyer" gets de-tuned and chunked up quite a bit because Chuck doesn't like those "woman vocals!") and PANTERA tributes ("Rise") and Eclipse will also be releasing a PANTERA tribute ("Walk") of their own. Chuck's southern drawl is as thick as his meaty riffs in this no holds barred interview and I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did conducting it.

Promethean Crusade: So tell me about the scene in Nashville. Is it all just hicks down there or what?

Disarray: Yeah, we have our stereotypes down here, with Country and all that, but there's a lot of good bands down here, there's a few clubs, but we're kind of like the outcasts. We've kind of just stuck with doing the underground thing and kind of avoided playin' local all the time. It's not too bad, though.

PC: So there is a scene down there, but you guys are so underground that you don't even participate in it!

D: Well we play remotely around Nashville, like maybe once a month or so, but really there's only four or five bands that we really care to play with. There's a lot of shit-talkers and a lot of competition. People tear down flyers or cover them up to promote shows on the same night as ours- it's pretty cutthroat.

PC: That's bull shit, man! Speaking of bull shit, tell me about your jail stint.

D: Oh, man, this goes back to the shit-talkers in the scene. In '94 we had this guitar player who will remain anonymous, and he stayed with us for about two weeks and we knew it wasn't gonna work, so we just said, 'see ya.' And ever since then, he's been in all these little bands around home and now it's this big rival thing. But we're not part of the rival thing, we don't even care, because it's a jealousy thing. So in '97 we did a lot of tourin' and evidently he got all envious. So one day I'm just driving down the road and I had a busted tail light on my truck and a cop pulled me over. So I'm like, 'Fuck, you know. 'Fuckin' pigs, man,' you know. So no big deal, until he ran my license through and he told me I had a warrant out for my arrest! So I'm like, 'What the fuck! Man I was laughin' and like, 'What the hell!' you know, because we've been like plagued with lots of psychos tryin' to start shit and tryin' to sue us, there's always somethin'. So I wasn't surprised. So, I get down to the jail cell, and this guy's mom, the guy that used to play with us, she's the biggest drug fiend. She's cracked out. She put a warrant on everybody in our band, sayin' that we'd drive by her house and throw beer bottles at her, all of which is totally untrue. And that's the small part! She said that I was makin' prank calls to her house, sayin' that I was going to rape her seven-year-old daughter, sayin' I was going to cut her body into pieces and spread her body all over town. So, here these pigs are- they're lookin' at me, fuckin' two feet of hair, big goatee, I'm guilty!

PC: Of course, of course!

D: I'm sittin' there, like, 'What the fuck?' I had to, like, pay to get out of jail, and all the shit and go to court. I'm not spendin' my own money to get an attorney over this stupid shit. I've already fuckin' spent money to get out of jail, I had to miss a couple days of work, all this shit. The rest of the band just turned themselves in, and we all went to court on the same day. It was like a big joke around home, all the bands just quit talkin' to us. It was like, 'Oh, I heard Chuck's this rapist.' I always look at it like

this: if people's got that much free time startin' shit and dreamin' this shit up, then they're not spendin' enough time promotin' their own projects. It just added fuel to the fire, and just makes me want to make our band that much bigger, and shove it in their face.

PC: Right on, Bro! So, how long is your goatee, anyway?

D: Let me pull it down. It's probably about 7 or 8 inches.

PC: 8 inches?! How long is Dimebag's?

D: Mine's longer than that, because people are always saying, 'Oh, he's tryin' to be PANTERA.' I'm like, 'No, my shit's longer.' Whenever it's long enough to get in your fuckin' food, you know you got your shit hangin'!

PC: You got your own personal tie there!

D: I guess it's tacky, but I don't care. People at work were like, 'Cool! ZZ TOP!' And then one guy asked me if I was Amish, and I was like,

'Yeah, I got my horse and buggy parked out front.' Dumb ass! Yeah, I'm fuckin' Amish with my SEPULTURA shirt on!

PC: So, are there a lot of pick-up trucks down there?

D: Yeah, the younger kids down here ride around in their souped-up, little mini-trucks, listenin' to their whigger music. It's like any other place. There's a lot less opportunity down here than from where you're at [Philadelphia]. I guess it's no different from any other town, though, really.

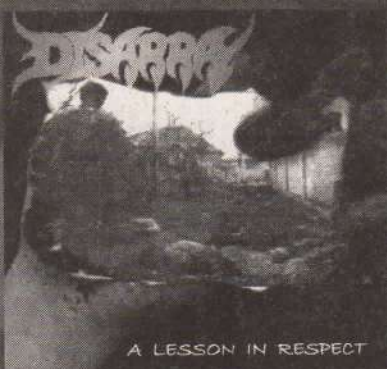
PC: What the hell were you guys thinking with that LYNRYD SKYNYRD cover?

D: Well, we'd play up North a

lot and people would be like, 'Where are you from?' and all this shit. So we'd tell them and they'd all just shout 'SKYNYRD' for the hell of it, bein' all funny and shit. So we were dickin' around at practice one day and just were like, 'Man, we should fuckin' re-write that shit! Just all bust into it sometime.' So we played in 'Jersey with VICIOUS CIRCLE and some band, GRUNT, one time and we showed up late and this guy's all talkin' shit, sayin' we're from Alabama- he didn't know what the fuck he was talkin' about- and of course, somebody shouted out 'SKYNYRD!' But we were prepared this time, so we busted right into that shit and I swear to God, you could've heard a fuckin' pin drop after we were done! So after that, man, everybody wanted to hear it all the time.

PC: 'If I stay here with you, bitch!'

D: Yeah, we actually said 'girl' the first time, because we were hoping to maybe get it on the radio, but everyone else says 'bitch,' and we don't give a shit anyway, so we're like, 'Fuck it!' But we're gonna have to carry bats with us on tour now, like when we go down to Florida, 'cause those people have their parents buried to 'Freebird' and shit. We mean no disrespect, of course, we were all weaned on them down here. I fuckin' love 'SKYNYRD'. And plus, we wanted something to make our new record stand out from all the others out there, too, so then we recorded the shit.



A LESSON IN RESPECT

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

PC: You don't think 'Piss' stands out? That song fuckin' rips!!

D: That's actually the first song that Chris is tryin' to push to the radio stations, so we'll see what happens.

PC: So you mentioned the hate thing already, but what else keeps you guys sounding so good and original in a sometimes stagnant and mediocre Death/Thrash scene?

D: Well, I'm kind of embarrassed about this, but when I was growing up, bands like RATT, MOTLEY CRUE, fuckin' W.A.S.P.- bands that would, like, have songs that stick in your head... memorable riffs and memorable choruses-

PC: 'Girls, Girls, Girls!'

D: Fuck yeah, exactly! Shit, I'm not ashamed to admit it, man! Like bands that concentrate on memorable songs and riffs instead of like, "I gotta have this most technical riff to impress the fuckin' one percent musicians out there!" So when we're jammin' on a riff in practice, if it's pretty thumpin', I'll try to write a vocal track over it and it just comes together. Otherwise, unless it's got something we can grasp onto, we don't want anything to do with it. That's the *Reader's Digest* version of how we come up with songs!

PC: I think that if it wasn't for bands like W.A.S.P. or RATT, though, bands now wouldn't have as strong of a foundation to work from.

D: Hell yeah! Without a doubt! Anyone who says they didn't listen to those bands is probably lying

or trying to be 'Mr. Tough Guy' or 'Mr. Brutal!'

PC: Yeah, you can't forget your past.

D: Shit, no! I still listen to fuckin' W.A.S.P.! But we're diverse, too. On our road trips, you'll hear anything from SUFFOCATION to fuckin' POISON! I'm not ashamed, man. When you're in fuckin' Junior High, you're not gonna be all in the underground. You go to the fuckin' mall or listen to the radio or MTV and buy whatever is there. Fuckin' Headbanger's Ball is how I started getting' into all the harder shit. Fuckin' PRONG and NUCLEAR ASSAULT and SUICIDAL TENDENCIES. That's the shit that bridged me over from the weak shit to the heavy shit! But I still listen to the other stuff. I'm almost ashamed to let someone into our van sometimes, but...

PC: It shouldn't be that way, though! You can't forget your past... and who DOESN'T listen to the fuckin' CRUE!

D: Hell yeah! That's part of how it all got started, with those guys, man!

PC: Unfortunately, I missed the BATHORY and VENOM boat. The whole Black Metal thing.

D: Yeah, you couldn't get that stuff down here, though, because of the whole bible belt thing. My mom, she's all embarrassed about it now, but she was, back in the day, bein' like, 'You gotta make sure you check all of Chuck's album covers

because..." and all this shit! Me and Hooch, man, we were in about seventh or eighth grade in church, man, and we'd be sittin' there on this meetin' about the dangers of Heavy Metal music. They'd have slides of Blackie Lawless drinking blood out of a skull and all these damn album covers. And I swear to God, one time we was sittin' there and they had *Reign in Blood* and



Last Command, fuckin' MOTLEY CRUE's *Theater of Pain*, fuckin' OZZY's shit up there, and they asked the crowd if they knew anybody with these, and I fuckin' raised my hand and said, 'Damn, I have every one of 'em!'

PC: What did they do?

D: They all turned around and looked at me like I was some kind of freak.

PC: Like you fuckin' worship Satan or something.

D: Yeah, like I get that shit all the time. One

time, when I was in Junior High, me and all my Metal buddies, we all knew the school photographer and it was the last day of school or whatever. So he had a couple more rolls of film to kill, so he's like, 'All you guys get together.' So here we are with our METALLICA and DIO shirts on, stickin' out our fuckin' devil horns and all huddled together and shit, stickin' our tongues out and shit, didn't think nothin' about it. So then it was like, middle of the summer, and my mom makes me go to another one of these God damned, fuckin' church meetings about music. So I'm sittin' in the back and they're showin' their slides and sayin' 'This stuff is already in the schools here in Dickson County!' Then he pulls up that fuckin' picture of me and my buddies! That's how bad it was, but it ain't that bad no more.

PC: You guys are making quite a name for yourselves with these sick-ass album covers of yours.

D: Yeah, the other ones were just thrown together, but this one has a meaning. Basically, the soldier walkin' down that path, he just wasted those two bodies, that represents anybody that gets in our way or path with where we are goin' with the band. We just lay those people to waste. And the hand liftin' the picture up, that's like us liftin' up the band out of the ashes, rebuildin' it. So there's symbolism involved there.



SOIL

Puttin' the Pedal to the Metal

By Tom J. Hughes

It's full speed ahead for Chicago's Soil, whose full-length follow-up to last year's *El Chupacabra* EP, *Throttle Junkies*, is starting to take the Rock world by storm... or is it the Metal world? "I don't care what people call us," states Shaun Glass, Soil's maniacal guitarist. "We write music for ourselves. We try to write stuff that we would want to listen to in the van on the way to shows." While Shaun states that his influences range anywhere from SUFFOCATION to METALLICA, people most often compare their music to ALICE IN CHAINS or CORROSION OF CONFORMITY. "Yeah, I've heard people say we sound like LYNRYD SKYNYRD on Speed, too! But that is inevitable. People will always pigeonhole you when you first come out to try and state the direction from where the band is going. Then hopefully we'll break that mold and become just Soil."

Just being Soil is a good thing, too! They've got a seriously aggressive Hard Rock sound, tinged with metallic heaviness and Blues soul. Funky, Rockin' and Rollin', and full of testosterone, Soil is just the kind of band Metalheads can turn to when they need a little change-up from all the anger and rage. "I used to play bass in BROKEN HOPE and still am very much in tune with the Metal world, though Soil's brand of music stems from more Rock influences... I needed to express myself a little differently and I couldn't do that in BROKEN HOPE. I needed to play some Rock and now I'm having fun doing exactly that."

Soil have only been together for a little over a year when their debut EP, *El Chupacabra* came out last year. So what's up with the strange name and freaky CD cover? "*El Chupacabra* was a sort of gimmick to try and make our disc stand out a little more. Paul Kuhr from NOVEMBERS DOOM designed it and he also did the cover for *Throttle Junkies* and he made the girl a little horny... something we all can get into! ...the Mexicans are scared to death of the Chupacabra. He's like the Lochness Monster of Mexico." *Throttle Junkies*, their current release, contains three of the five songs from *El Chupacabra* and is a brilliant follow-up to the stellar debut. I asked Shaun what the future holds for Soil and he stated, "The next album will be different, but still have that Soil sound. We want to progress and not keep putting out the same album over and over again. Like none of our songs sound the same, they're all different and we want to do that with our records as well." If the future resembles the performance of Soil's first two releases then, it should be a very bright future for these five rockers.



SOIL

MR. DEATH MAGAZINE
NRVDD003
CHROME

In Flames

By Tom J. Hughes

If you are into Metal, I don't care to what capacity or extent, and you are not a fan of In Flames, then I suggest you stop reading now because you are not worthy! How can you deny the supremacy of In Flames! As far as extreme music goes, there are none higher. It's really as simple as that. Thusly, given my proclivity towards kissing the ground Jesper and Peter walked on as they came over to the breakfast table the morning after their stellar performance at this year's Milwaukee Metalfest, you might be able to begin to understand the butterflies in my stomach as we talked over French toast and orange juice. My nervousness soon subsided, however, as these two men proved to be very down to earth and quite amicable. We must've bullshitted for over 45 minutes afterwards, and I walked away from the hotel with a natural high heretofore unattained in my 24 years of existence (that is, before I met Anneke after the GATHERING played here in Philadelphia three days after Milwaukee!). Anyway, this is mostly uncut (Jesper was suffering from a slight hangover and multiple waitress visits disrupted some of the flow of the conversation) as I tried to present both the serious and lighter side of a band many place in the higher echelons of musical genius and superiority.

Promethean Crusade: So you guys have a new video coming out soon, huh?

Peter Iwers: Yeah, I don't know if it's out yet but it's been made and should be available soon.

PC: So what's it comprised of?

PI: It's a big party! Just us hanging out and playing. There's a video for 'Ordinary Story' on it, too.

PC: Any other videos besides that one?

Jesper Stromblad: No, but we'll do one more for the album, though we haven't decided which one yet.

PI: There is some shitty stuff that Nuclear Blast Germany put together that they made which we had no part of. It's not for this album and we donated nothing to it, but it's out anyway.

PC: Now I know Relapse released AMORPHIS' *Privilege of Evil* against their will, and you guys aren't too thrilled about this video of Nuke's, so why do these labels do this?

JS: Money [Jesper excuses himself from the table at this point ~ed.].

PI: Yeah, that's it. And I don't have a clue because it's going to bad for them as well because the video is so bad, and we told them but they don't care. They made one for *Whoracle* and we told them to never do this again. Then they told us, OK, but just as long as we know that they already made one. There wasn't much we could do.

PC: Well instead of releasing these videos that apparently aren't very good, why not release what people really want which is *Lunar Strain* and *Subterranean*?

PI: Maybe, we'll see. It's been in discussion a little bit but I can't really say for sure. I know a lot of people have been asking for it, but I don't even have *Subterranean* myself.

PC: So what were you guys expecting at the 'fest here in Milwaukee?

PI: We

heard that there was quite a big fuss over here for us from America, so we kind of expected a big crowd because everybody has been telling us to get over here for a few years now. So we expected a lot, but then again we weren't expecting too much; we were very excited. We expected to play the big stage because we were promised that from the start, but I think the sound was better in this hall [Kilbourn Hall, which actually showcased ALL the cool bands at Milwaukee Metalfest, but you can read about that in the write-up on said 'fest ~ed.] and we could see all our fans because it was really full-PC: The place was packed!! You couldn't move in there! I turned around in the photo pit to check out the crowd and it was wall to wall people! It must've been great for you guys to see that kind of response.

PI: Yeah, it was really, really cool.

PC: And there was a buzz about you guys, too, because all these people I talked to before the 'fest were like, 'Oh! I can't miss In Flames!'

PI: Yeah? It's a once in a lifetime experience, then.

PC: What, you guys aren't coming back on tour?

PI: Oh yeah. We have plans to come back in November to do a mini tour [Jesper returns]. Plans are in speculation right now, like we'll start in South America and work our way up, so we'll see.

PC: Will you be headlining, because the GATHERING is supporting, at least in Philly, which is where I'll be checking them out.

PI: They're supporting? Who?

PC: SWITCHBLADE SYMPHONY. I like them, but the GATHERING is just so much better.

PI: Yeah, I like them a lot. I saw them before one time.

PC: It must be nice over there in Europe getting to see all these bands all the time.

JS: Well, not so much where we come from as in Germany. And if you live in Berlin or Cologne or something like that, you can go to a club or show every night.

PI: In Germany, in most cities, all the time... every night.

PC: Now do you think that because Germany is in the middle of the continent that the love for Metal causes a ripple effect throughout all of Europe, thusly causing the scene there to be that much better than here in the 'States. Because here, I see a bunch of shit- people constantly worrying about

record sales, this trend or that trend...

PI: I think that is because America is so big.

JS: I don't know. I have this impression that America is small, because all the bands are more sensitive to trends and follow-the-leader.

PC: KORN and MARILYN MANSON sounding the same and-

PI: Well I actually like KORN, but you only need one band to make

that music, not all these copies. But this thing that Metal is everywhere in Europe is pretty exaggerated. It's a bit too much sometimes and people want everything that is Metal, I guess.

Like I said, there's a few bands that can be original sounding and then there are 100 copies of it, which makes everything not sound so good.

PC: So Jesper, tell me about SINERGY. Was that a once and done thing or will that still be something you will continue to do in the future?

JS: Well, for me, I'm not touring or playing with them, I just write the music. I recorded the music with them, so it was a one-time thing for me, but we'll see if I continue to do the same thing with them on the next album.

PC: The music is totally different than In Flames. Were you doing a lot of experimenting or is it another facet of your style you can't fit into In Flames?

JS: I don't know, I didn't know what to expect. When I met the band, we didn't have any material and we didn't have any idea what the studio would sound like. We did the album in one week; we rehearsed everyday and that's how the songs turned out. Of course it doesn't sound like In Flames because there is no point for me to do In Flames with another band.

PC: So is Kimberly Goss a bitch? I heard she's a pain in the ass.

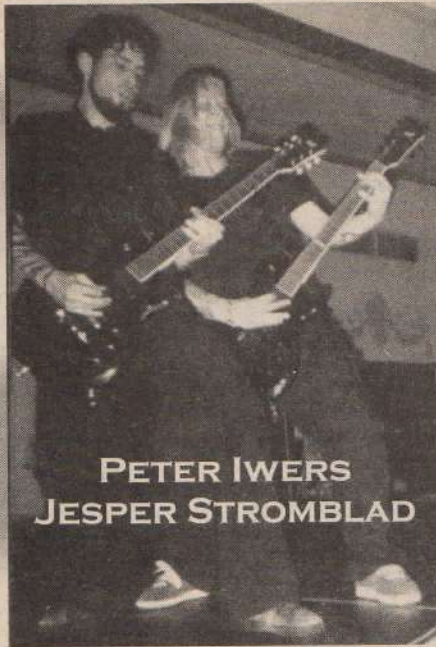
JS: [long silence... then he smiles and chuckles...] I heard that, too. [Another long pause. I just look at Peter and he smirks] She's cool...

to me. Uuuuuuuuu... to me, she was cool. I, uh, really don't want to say... let's not talk about it.

PC: Alrighty then! Bjorn Gelotte stepping down from the drums and playing guitar now, amidst all the other line-up changes, how is this working out for you guys?

Continued on next page





**PETER IWERS
JESPER STROMBLAD**

Continued from previous page

PI: It's very good. Bjorn is first and foremost a guitarist, so it came natural to him-

JS: We had a guitarist who didn't really work out so good and we needed to do something. We needed a good guitarist and we had one in the band already- the drummer! He doesn't like to play the drums, well he didn't mind it, but he loves to play guitar so why not let him? So now everyone in the band is comfortable with their positions and it all clicks together.

PC: So can you guys ever do anything wrong? People practically worship you guys over here, and you've got these three outstanding albums, will you ever put out a bad one?

JS: No. We'll never put out anything bad and can always guarantee that it's always going to be top quality in production and with the music. If we feel that it is not good enough we will not release it. And we have a lot of inspiration for the next album.

PC: So are you guys enjoying your little visit to America?

PI: Yeah, except for the heat.

JS: Today, it's not as bad, I think.

PC: That's because you haven't been outside yet. It's the humidity that does it.

PI: Yeah, but otherwise we really love it. We haven't had any chance to get around and do stuff. We're leaving tomorrow [Sunday] and we only got here on Thursday.

PC: So what would you like to see if you had some time?

PI: *The Jerry Springer Show.*

JS: Yeah, and we want to see a baseball game.

PI: We just want to watch things, you know.

JS: Just to go in a convenience store is like sight seeing for us.

PI: You always see it in movies and-

PC: People going in and shootin' up the place!

JS: Yeah! They go in and rob it!

PI: And we all like *The Simpsons*. That is what America is like for us.

PC: So you guys know all this American pop-culture stuff that gets imported into Sweden, you're very fluent in your English, and all your lyrics are in English, yet Japan and Germany are your biggest markets. What do you think of the American Metal scene, even though it's very underground, and why place such a high price tag on it?

JS: Well, Germany and Japan are huge markets, but America too, not in the same way, but more underground. I mean 99 out of 100 e-mails or from our guestbook, everything is from the 'States.

PI: And from Canada, in the south from Mexico.

JS: I think that if people know that we exist that we would do really well over here. I have heard from people who say that they did not know this type of music existed. They've listened to *Master of Puppets* back in '86 and now the best thing they can get their hands on are KORN or LIMP BIZKIT. Then they hear the *Whoracle* album and think it's the best thing since, well, whenever.

PI: I think that people are afraid to market it big, and if it were to be marketed really big, or as much as possible, I think it might have a chance to become as big as those bands and make it into the bigger stores, and not just us but our kind of music, because it doesn't exist for the general public. People just know all the KORN look-a-likes so it's good that we've done this show and are here now.



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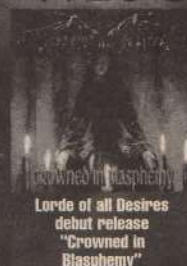
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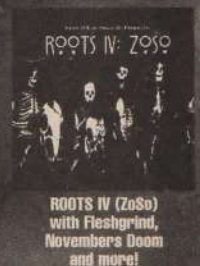
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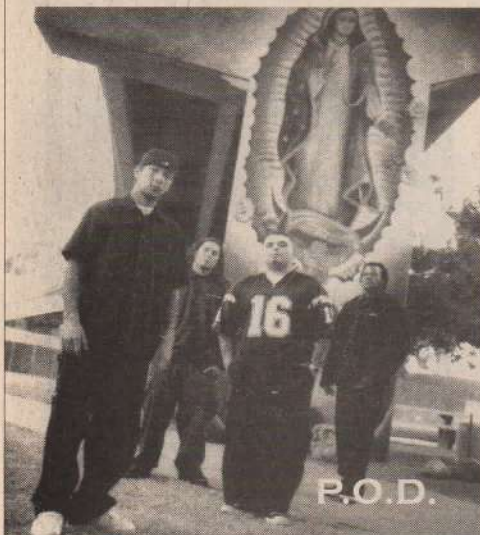
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and more!

Payable on Death
The Warriors
(Tooth & Nail)

This is a new EP released by the Christian Rapcore band, P.O.D. It contains some songs from their album *Brown* and it has some new material which will appear on their upcoming release under Atlantic Records. This CD is tight from beginning to end. This CD is chock full of great riffs, great bass lines, great beats, and great vocals. The first two songs, "Southtown" and "Breathe Babylon", are absolute highlights on this CD. Lyrically, it's just as great with some very positive messages (in Sonny's own words). They're new album should be definitely something to look out for. It should be equally as good, if not better.



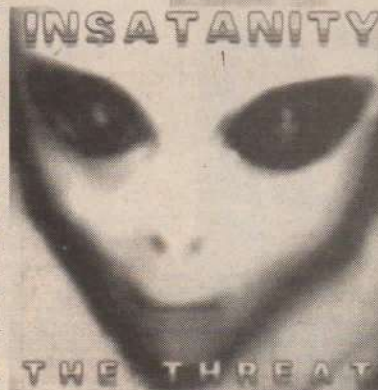
P.O.D.

Majestic
Abstract Symphony
(Massacre Records)

One thing that you can be sure of in any musical style is that when a certain band starts to achieve any sort of success, whether it's commercial success or just praise from their peers, a whole slew of acts are going to come along that mimics that style (consciously or not). Enter Majestic, a Swedish group that obviously has been listening to SYMPHONY X. The noticeable difference, besides technical ability, is that Majestic's vocalist, Jonas Blum, has a higher range than S-X's Russell Allen. Otherwise, though, Majestic is a band that strides the line between neo-Classical Metal and Power Metal. Majestic offer the listener noodling guitars underplayed with fast keyboard fills, although the guitar work isn't quite as fast as what you'd come to expect for this style of music (or at least what you'd expect of S-X's virtuoso, Michael Romeo). The ballad, "Standing Alone", makes you wonder what might've been if this style would have been around in the mid-eighties, because Majestic does a good job of combining the "power ballad" concept with the more modern style of playing. Majestic isn't afraid to put the pedal to the metal either; the unfortunately titled "Nitro Pitbull" (a song about riding motorcycles another 80s Metal theme if there ever was one), is just balls-to-the-wall Speed Metal and stands apart as a definite departure from the rest of the disc. Overall, Majestic isn't the most technical band in the genre, but with a good singer, good harmonies to back him up, and a proficient playing style, these guys are heading in the right direction.

Mark Huettman
Product
(Bishop Enterprises)

You can tell this guy is from California... Southern California, that is. San Diego: land of endless palm trees and fun in the sun where babes and beaches stretch out before you for mile upon endless happy mile. Did I say happy... is that word allowed in a Metalhead's vocabulary? OK, I'm going to admit it: once in a great, long while I pop in a few "happy" CDs because I just happen to be in a... hold on... get ready for this... a good mood! I'm not all angst and agony 24 / 7 my friends (though I like to appear that I am to the masses) and when I'm feeling a bit saucy, I pop in Mark Huettman's solo disc because it's "happier" than the class nerd who just got laid by the captain of the cheerleading squad. Huettman's soloing kind of reminds me of a cross between very early STEVE VAI and JOE SATHRIANI with some ERIC JOHNSON fuzzy-warm feelings thrown in for good measure. Some piano and keyboards add texture to a few of the songs and above-average drumming accompanies the overdubbed guitar tracks. Weird guitar affects and flanger-action are also prevalent. This disc is perfect for the summertime weather, and it might even provide a ray of sunshine for you in the dark recesses of winter.



Insatinity
The Threat
(demo)

From the first crushing riffs, it is apparent that Insatinity is fueled by complete anger and hatred, as the intro sample forewarns! Insatinity is a Death Metal band without equal, in that not only is the music extremely brutal, fast, and unrelenting, but it purveys a very important lyrical message as well. The band expresses a total release of ignorance and apathy, and that if you wish to survive in the next millennium, you must shed all predilections and preconceived notions that you believe to be 'truths.' In order to transcend to the next level of conscience and survive in this dying world, there is no room left for the hypocrisy of mere 'beliefs.' Man must learn to unlearn and find his own path through force of will and of mind. It's a pretty 'heady' concept, but given enough thought, it only makes sense. And, yes, the band can back up these bold statements by forcing its way into your mind with the most otherworldly, malevolent Metal ever recorded. Insatinity is a band to be both feared and respected. "Prepare yourself, The Threat is real, The Threat is here" !!! Write to: Insatinity c/o Mark Rhochar, 1104 Morris Street, Philadelphia, PA 19148, or e-mail rhochar@insatinity.com

Step Kings
Lets Get it On
(Fantastic Plastic Records)

The new release from the Step Kings is totally decked out in Pulp style comics and the music completely matches this Pop-ish motif on the CD sleeve. These guys offer a very Pop Punk/Hardcore style of music with a little bit of Jazz and Hip-Hop thrown in for good measure. Their riffs are very catchy and they have gripping hooks as well. Their one song, "Right is Wrong", is a good example of this, complete with Hardcore riffs, a melodic chorus section, and a funky ending. "Independence Day" is a very Punk type song with BAD RELIGION-esque riffs. In general, the music is aggressive but it also has a lighter aspect to it. It's very easy to listen to, though the lyrics are very in-your-face at the same time. They seemed to have combined Pop, Hardcore, and Punk very well. If you want music that will get you up and have a good time, the Step Kings' *Lets Get it On* is for you.



No Innocent Victim
Flesh and Blood
(Victory)

This is NIV's Victory Records debut and it is a killer album from beginning to end. For an LA area band they totally have a brutal New York Hardcore style. The music is a faster paced style of Hardcore packed with lots of slower breakdowns and choruses. Kyle Fisher's vocals are equally as brutal and powerful. All twelve songs on this CD are phenomenal. "My Beliefs", the third track, is one song worth mentioning. Basically it's about, whether people like it or not, they are a part of the Hardcore scene and they will always hold to their Christian convictions. One of the last lines of the song is, "I thought hardcore was about standing up for what you believe in", which basically sums up the song. This is one CD any fan of Hardcore or heavy music should check out.



ARCH ENEMY

Burning Bridges

Burning Bridges is another example of this band's unstoppable talents. A classy concoction of the best elements of traditional metal and death metal fueled by the insane guitar skills of brothers Michael and Christopher Amott.



LACUNA COIL

In A Reverie

The much-anticipated full-length from Italy's Lacuna Coil becomes a reality. Melding the power of goth, metal and rock into an infectious mix of sensuous euphoria topped off by the complementing vocals of Cristina and Andrea.



DARK TRANQUILLITY

Projector

Sweden's Dark Tranquillity have made a vast impact on the "Gothenburg Sound" and *Projector*, their first official release in the States, is the culmination of 10 years of ripened creativity, talent and unrestrained vision.

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OVERDOSE

Overdose *Circus of Death* (Pavement)

I really tried to like this CD, but nothing really stands out for me. Overdose play their share of blazing solos and cool riffs, but so do other Thrash bands. Breaking out of Brazil and managing to develop a strong fan base across the world has been quite an accomplishment, but their strongest showings have always been when they incorporate their native percussion and tribal beats into their songs. This element that separated them from the slew of others in the Thrash scene is totally absent on *Circus of Death*. This is not a bad disc at all, it's just not the Overdose I learned to appreciate over the past few albums and this latest is a little disappointing. It's average Thrash Metal that only the diehards should appreciate.

Haste *Pursuit in the Face of Consequence* (Century Media)

It is a shame for a band with such good music to have two horrible vocalists. They have tight, near-perfect riffs, but then these two terrible voices. The one singer has this high pitched, almost pre-pubescent squeal type of voice while the other has this very mediocre deep growl which could sound good if worked on a little. Together they sound disturbing, and together they ruin this great music which the rest of the band is playing. It would do them well if they got new singers or at least replaced Chris Mosley, the one with the annoying, high-pitched scream.

James Murphy *Feeding The Machine* (Shrapnel)

This just goes to show you what a truly gifted and thoughtful guitarist can produce given his own studio and supportive record label. The second solo album from TESTAMENT's lead guitarist is a technical marvel and a musical treat. This is more than just a "guitarist's" album, it's great music with well written songs and guitar parts that crackle and ooze Metal in all of its forms.

These albums usually become a "look how fast I can play scales" project, but *Feeding The Machine* escapes with its soul intact. I can't possibly mention the exquisite Dave McKean cover art, so there, I just did.



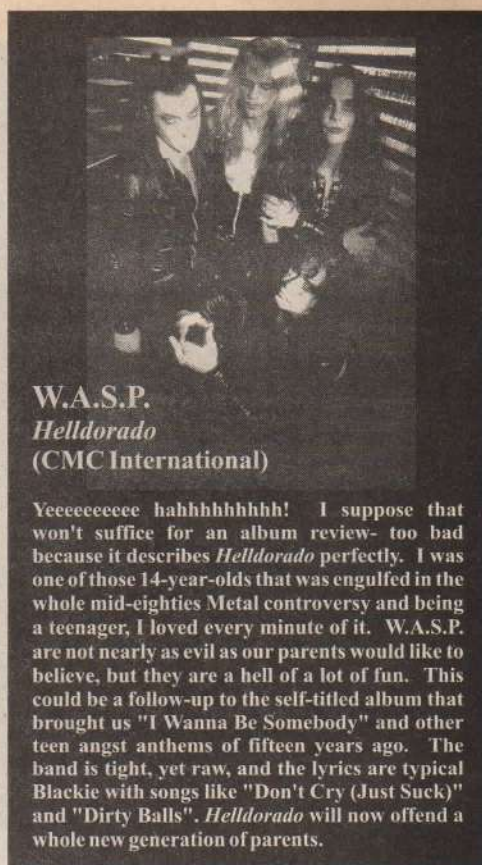
Grita! Compilation (V/A)

Metalo (Grita!)

This Latin tinged compilation features fourteen bands from all over the world and will mostly please fans of Hardcore. Some Thrash bands like RAMP (an outstanding Portuguese band in the vein of old DEATH ANGEL) and old ARMORED SAINT (circa 1989) appear, and a couple Death Metal bands like BRUJERIA (the Mexican Kings of Death Metal!) and MAKINA (also from Mexico and just as brutal) make their presence known, but most of the songs are previously unreleased Hardcore tracks. PUYA and PISSING RAZORS, of course, stand out above the crowd, but let's not underestimate the power and fury of ILL NINO and LODO Y ASTALTO, both of whom stomp it out with the best of them. BRUTAL THIN's contribution starts out with a traditional Latin/Spanish melody with some 007 flare and then blasts into a groovy Hardcore tune with some funky Spanish rhythms and beats thrown into the mix. RAIMUNDOS have fun throwing their Portuguese pandemonium party of profanity while RATOS DE PORAO make their bid for the next Brazilian KORN or GODSMACK. Metalo is not a bad comp at all and Grita! does a great job of introducing some unknown Latino/Spanish/Portuguese bands to the rest of the world.

Lacrimosa *Elodia* (Hall of Sermon)

All music should be this melodious, splendid, and entrancing! Tilo Wolff, the male half of this dynamic extravaganza, has as much creative ingenuity and bravura as Christofer Johnsson of THERION. Only VOVIN incorporates as much Classical movements and arias as *Elodia* (I'm speaking of current Metal releases, mind you), but Wolff managed to bring in the entire London Symphony Orchestra for his latest effort. I'm thinking that there are more Classical elements than Metal, though there is plenty of Metal to go around. *Elodia* moves through three Acts. Act 1 is almost purely Classical with very little distorted guitars, while Act 2 is almost the exact opposite. The first track of Act 3 (an astounding 14:09 in length) introduces a chorus instead of just hearing the naked voices of Tilo or Anne Nurmi (keyboardist and female vocalist rounding off the core of Lacrimosa) and this final Act is the perfect blend of Classical music and Metal. *Elodia* is the quintessential Rock Opera about a love doomed for failure; it's a flawless concept album whose beauty and grace, doom and despair are rivaled by few. Lacrimosa have been performing and mesmerizing European fans for years and it is a damn shame that they are not known worldwide as artisans of musical bliss and weavers of symphonic rapture. Those of you unfamiliar with Lacrimosa's silvery illustrations of life portentous are surely missing out on a craft inspired only by the gods themselves. Contact Hall of Sermon at www.hall-of-sermon.de, PO Box 749, CH-4310 Rheinfelden, Switzerland. www.lacrimosa.com.



W.A.S.P. *Helldorado* (CMC International)

Yeeeeeeeeee hahhhhhhhhh! I suppose that won't suffice for an album review- too bad because it describes *Helldorado* perfectly. I was one of those 14-year-olds that was engulfed in the whole mid-eighties Metal controversy and being a teenager, I loved every minute of it. W.A.S.P. are not nearly as evil as our parents would like to believe, but they are a hell of a lot of fun. This could be a follow-up to the self-titled album that brought us "I Wanna Be Somebody" and other teen angst anthems of fifteen years ago. The band is tight, yet raw, and the lyrics are typical Blackie with songs like "Don't Cry (Just Suck)" and "Dirty Balls". *Helldorado* will now offend a whole new generation of parents.

Boulder (River On Fire Records)

Hey, at least they pressed a CD demo. What has your band done? Oh, you don't even have a band? Well then shut up! You should call these guys and ask them if they know Wayne and Garth since they're both from Aurora. The music here isn't anything really horrible, but these vocals sound like someone being injured- and over the phone at that. Despite the fact that the uh, person on the uh, cover of this release is wearing a METALLICA shirt, I'd say Boulder has more in common with some of the early 80's Hardcore bands like BLACK FLAG. In all seriousness, we should support local bands that release stuff like this because it only costs us a few bucks and it may earn the band enough cash to produce something really good someday. 3515 Nautilus Tr., Aurora, OH 44202.

Liar *While the City Sleeps* (Future)

A labor of love created in the studio by only two musicians... this is kinda fun. The vocal production is slick and multitracked in an attempt to create a "band" feeling- and it works. This is a great summer album of upbeat Hard Rock tunes, and well-written tunes at that. These guys understand how to combine a catchy hook with a nice melody and a great guitar solo, even if the solos do sound a little like everything JAKE E. LEE ever played. Pop this into your car's tapedeck or into your boombox on the beach and you'll be sure to have a good time.

Razorback Records Presents:
GORE IS YOUR MASTER
 Compilation #1



Razorback Records
Compilation #1
Gore Is Your Master
 (Razorback)

Holy shit! 28 tracks of brutal, grinding, sick-ass, Death Metal!! There is nothing like it in the world! You have to pick this comp up if you are into Death Metal because this label thrives on the goriest, most sludge-filled music known to man! No fucking pussies allowed, here, Brother! This disc is as intense as fucking balls! Most of the bands listed are from Europe, and all of their addresses are listed in the sleeve, so it's a very informative buy if you are just getting into the Death scene. Billy Nocera is the guy you want to write to. He also produces one of the sickest fanzines out there called *I Spit on Your Grave*. Jill Girardi, former MORTAL COIL founder, contributes to this sewer-laden publication turned web 'zine and it is a must-read for underground enthusiasts into "extreme horror/gore/exploitation films" and "extreme Gore/Grind/Brutal/Death/ Noisecore" styles of music. Get in touch with these two at PO Box 321, Farmingville, NY 11738 USA. [Http://maxpages.com/razorbackrecs](http://maxpages.com/razorbackrecs), Wnocera@aol.com

Ewigkeit
Starscape
 (Eldethorn)

This disc proves that veritable musicians have no boundaries and that Metal reaches far beyond ferocious guitar riffs and Satanism. What we have here is a CD of cosmic Black Metal with a pinch of Doom to form an arcane magnum opus from the darkest depths of the universe and if Han Solo were a Metalhead this would definitely be his shit. Following in the footsteps of the mighty COVENANT, this band has developed a proclivity for ambient space-like keyboards which make for an ear tingling listen. It bothers me greatly that bands like PYOGENESIS can make money in the Metal world and that bands who are actually "good" are probably jockeying a counter at a local convenience store. Support Ewigkeit; they are a really good band who will probably be overlooked by many. If you are smart you will not let this great band pass you by.



Crook'd Records Compilation
Compilation Tape #1
 (Crook'd)

This is the first and newest compilation out by the Jamestown, NC label, Crook'd Records. An interesting side note is that Kerry King of SLAYER is on the cover. I guess they thought that would be a cool and would sell them more tapes. Whatever. This tape is chock full of Death Metal, some good, some not so good. In general, most of the bands were good on this comp, such as VICIOUS CIRCLE and SOCIETY'S BURDEN. If you like any Crook'd Records bands, this comp is for you. If you like Death Metal, I also encourage you to pick it up. Get in touch with Crook'd Records c/o Dave Harman, PO Box 25, Jamestown, NC 27282.

Dali's Dilemma
Manifesto for Futurism
 (Magna Carta)

Opening with a Technoish-sounding keyboard intro, the first track shortly kicks into some serious Prog and until the last note is sounded, the disc never wanes from the unbelievable! Extraordinary riffs and catchy choruses are the main thrust of almost every song on this amazing debut. They are reminiscent of SYMPHONY X as far as their music goes, but the vocalist's sometimes raspy and low-key voice gives them that tiny uniqueness needed to stand out amidst a swarm of other talented Prog rockers sharing their label. After only a few listens you'll be singing along to songs like "Miracle in Yesteryear" and "Hills of Memory", both of which have very memorable choruses that have that nasty habit of spending the day with you. And they are not so technical that you have to listen to them 1000 times before you can memorize their songs either, but they are not simple enough to connote passivity in your listening to them. They are not your typical, technically superior Progressive band (though they are certainly virtuosos on their instruments), and if you're not paying attention, they'll leave you in a cloud of smoke wondering what just happened to that riff you were jamming to ten minutes ago!

Stretcher
 (Demo)

This was quite a surprise to tell you the truth. I figured, two song demo, whatever- but on the contrary, it was quite refreshing. They are a good Metal band. There are elements of Grind in their sound and I couldn't help but think early SLAYER now and then as I was listening to these songs. I guess Stretcher would cite them as an influence. The two songs, "Machination" and "Straight Jacket" are both good and the introduction to the former song is highly entertaining- almost two minutes of excerpts from speeches made by politicians over some Arabic chanting. I am very curious as what their full length is going sound like. Contact Stretcher c/o Ryan Hernandez, 825 College Blvd. #102, Oceanside, CA 92057.



Ice Age
The Great Divide
 (Magna Carta)

It takes more than chops and speed to be a truly great Progressive Metal band these days. Ice Age have these two elements, but they now need to work on songwriting. Much of this disc feels disjointed, as if sections of songs were written but never finished. With that in mind, there are some great parts of songs here and there, and if you aren't paying close attention, it sounds great. Ice Age show a lot of promise and talent. Maybe with the support of their record label and, perhaps if they would play some songs other people have written for them (or play cover songs because they are too talented to play and write at the same time... like the walking and chewing gum thing!), maybe then they could produce a piece of Progressive Metal history, but this isn't it.

Punk Uprisings
Incompatible 2
 (Victory)

This is a CD-ROM 'zine and a compilation made by *Punk Uprisings*, distributed by Victory Records. It's a good concept, part 'zine, part comp. It has lots of interviews, photos, and videos regarding the bands. There are also a lot of other random miscellaneous things thrown in also, like ... Star Wars tattoos? Most of the bands are Hardcore, such as H2O and THE JUDAS FACTOR, with some Punk bands thrown in as well. Many surprises are contained herein and it is well worth looking into for fans of both Punk and Hardcore alike. Contact Victory about this at PO Box 146546, Chicago, IL 60614.



Spitfire
The Dead Next Door
 (Solid State)

These guys are brutal and they're Christian! Insane riffs pummel you from beginning to end on this album. They have so much power for just being a three-piece, and while it is true that recording techniques can compensate for this, I wouldn't be surprised if they embody this same intensity and full sound live. They're beats, rhythms, and start/stop timings are amazing, along with the crazy guitar noises produced by Chris Raines. His blood throated voice interlaced in between all these sounds are simply killer. They do soften up in some songs, though. Track four, "Marasmus", contains some clean guitar and plain singing, but it's soon converted into total dark heaviness afterwards. This band is recommended to anyone who likes HELMET, ZAO, TRAINING FOR UTOPIA, or UNSANE and also to anyone who would like to hear some good heavy, Hardcore music.

Codeseven

Division of Labor
(TMC Records)

It seems like now-a-days many heavy bands are starting to utilize melodic singing, mixing it up with their heavier Hardcore riffs. This isn't a new concept, but it seems to be prevalent in many big bands today. Even LIMP BIZKIT has started to throw some melodic vocals into their pathetic attempt of blending Hip-Hop and heavy music. One band that seems to have found their niche in this type of Hardcore/melodic music is Codeseven, for they mix harsh vocals in with the Hardcore parts and clean vocals for the melodic parts. They have two vocalists and every time a band has two main vocalists, there is always something lacking in at least one of the singers. It is far more impressive when just one person takes care of all the vocal parts: singing, yelling, screaming, etc. DEFTONES, FAR, HELMET, SYSTEM OF A DOWN, and INCUBUS are all bands with a single versatile singer, and unfortunately, neither of the singers for Codeseven come close to the flexibility of the vocalists from the aforementioned bands. Codeseven do have phenomenal lyrics though, and their music is just as technical and complicated. One thing that wouldn't hurt the band is to bring to the forefront the melodic, singing parts, which would add a lot to their music. Any fan of this hybrid of Hardcore and melodic music like FAR or DEFTONES (who don't share my dual-vocalist disdain) should give Codeseven a listen.

Silentium

Infinita Plango Vulnera
(Spikefarm)

Spinefarm just started a new sub-label for (initially) Finnish-based bands that show much promise for the future, and I cannot think of a better band to kick things off with than Silentium! Hey Now!! They start things off with rain and a piano... OPETH!! Well, no, not quite, but things do progress quite nicely from there on out. As *Infinita Plango Vulnera* develops, one hears mourning guitars and woeful violins, slightly distorted (sometimes screeching) and oftentimes clean male vocals, and heavenly female vocals. *The Angel and the Dark River*-era MY DYING BRIDE, LACUNA COIL-esque reverie, and BESEECH-type bravado seem to play a role in the influence department, but the incursion of keyboards separate Silentium from these bands as they prove quite powerfully with song after song that they are more than just mere clones in a soon-to-be-overcrowded Doom scene. The keyboards (and especially the piano sound coupled with the violin) give Silentium a more Classical feel to them than most other Doom bands, and the fact that their guitarist plays more than just sorrowful riffs and dirges (he knows how to wail out a solo or two!) sets them apart as well. In fact, an acoustic guitar is introduced later on with "Maiden of the Forest", and this is all it took for me to become completely absorbed with Silentium. The way the keyboardist and violinist play off each other, as well as the male and female vocalist, is just astonishing sometimes and you can definitely tell that these guys spent a lot of time fine-tuning these songs to perfection. The lyrics are just as powerful as the music, too... top notch song writing! The music is poetic and the lyrics roll off the tongue in a musical fashion when read aloud... pure genius! I love it! Mucho kudos to Spinefarm for scrounging around the Finnish countryside for these guys... I can't wait to see who you find next!

Myon

Heaven's Garden
(Noise Records)

Well this is a stretch from the Noise material I've come to know and love... Prog-Metal? Yes, from Finland comes this band of talented yet quite confusing musicians. They confuse me in that, although their music is vivacious, for technicality's sake the album is composed of love songs, and like DURAN DURAN, the lyrics make little sense. Yes, the band sounds too happy (and ever so pleased to show you how well they play) for their own good, like all the FATES LIQUID THEATERS of the world, but at least Myon stick to self-contained "songs" rather than 20 minute tracks of "self-indulgence." The only element I really see missing from the disc (which incidentally prevents me from completely enjoying the disc) is the lack of a "heavy" appeal, which is usually intrinsic to Noise Records bands. Then again, I am not the most prolific person when it comes to Progressive music, so I leave you with the closest band comparison in my limited knowledge of the genre: Myon dwells in the same arena as MERCURY RISING (who I still wish had retained their early QUEENSRYCHE / KAMELOT characteristics).



Metalium

Millennium Metal - Chapter One
(Pavement Music)

Do not dismiss the METALLICA section of your local record store just yet, gentle reader, for it may be hiding one of the best Power Metal CDs of the year. No, our fallen kings have not returned from there alternative grave yet, but within the dozens of dismal copies of *Load* and *Reload*, and between the hallowed jewel cases of *...Puppets*, *...Lightning*, and *...And Justice*, there may be lurking a copy of Metalium's debut CD *Millennium Metal - Chapter One*. Metalium is not one of the many METALLICA tributes that are floating around out there (as was the mistake made at my local Sam Goody), but rather a tribute to everything that makes Power Metal utterly entrancing. The song writing on this disc is above reproach and at times resembles the last two godly BRUCE DICKINSON offerings. And indeed, Henning Basse's vocals are planted firmly in the DICKINSON meets JEFF SCOTT SOTO School. I swear his vocal chords are coated with gold, and I believe young Mr. Basse

KREATOR

Endorama
(Pavement)

It's almost difficult to believe that Germany's Death/Thrash pioneers, Kreator, have been releasing material for fourteen years (beginning with the immortal *Flag Of Hate* EP, 1985, on the illustrious Noise label), and their US popularity had peaked with 1989's *Extreme Aggression* (on the CBS/Epic label). Well, contrary to common American belief, the band has never broken up, and has consistently released albums since that fabled time. Over the years, the band has been maturing and redefining their sound, allowing them to become more accessible to the ever-changing Metal genre. This is not to say that they have abandoned their embittered, heavy punch, rather, they have merely evolved. Bearing little resemblance to 1995's hyper-fury of *Cause For Conflict*, the band has opted for a more streamlined, near-experimental, emotion-spewing sound similar to a hybrid of their last album *Outcast* and 1992's *Renewal* (most will attribute this slower, brooding, technology-based sound to the addition of CORONER's Tommy Vetterli). Do not consider *Endorama* a departure, a deliberate shunning of longtime fans. Listen to it with an open mind, as Kreator have stretched the boundaries of creativity and have presented us with a new outlook on influence and experience!

has a very bright future indeed. The guitar duties are handled by *Chris Caffery (*see SAVATAGE if you are a clueless KORN fan) and the soon to be very well known Matthias Lange. The addicting riff-heavy / melody-lead combination that the two produce has me rewinding several songs repeatedly. Bass man Larz Ratz (no jokes please this man shines) handles the production of the disc well, although dry, it seem to add a certain charm to the recording. Within the first page of the booklet, there is printed a prologue written and spoken by drummer Mike Terrana (formerly of Y. J. MALMSTEEN). Oddly though, this prologue is hidden at the end of the disc (which effectively makes it an epilogue) and it nonetheless speaks for itself: "My love for true Metal burns deep within, I must be true to myself and to the dream." Amen, my Brother in Metal, Amen! *Millennium Metal - Chapter One* may house the best collection of Power Metal this year, though we'll have to wait and see what MAIDEN has up there collective twelve sleeves. If this is only chapter one in the Millennium Metal saga, then I'll be waiting with bated breath for chapter two.

SINISTER

Measuring Aggression By Mark Morton

Violent. Ferocious. Maniacal. Brutal. All of these words are frequently used when describing the intensity of Sinister's music. But the fact of the matter is, there is no one word which can describe the homicidal frenzy that exudes from the band's albums. The vicious onslaught of sound that the band produces may be caused by the individual members' adoration for the genre itself. Guitarist Bart elaborates on this, the band's relationship with Nuclear Blast, and the longevity of Death Metal!

Promethean Crusade: Is Sinister a collective vision, or is it your own?

Sinister: It's definitely collective. All the members in the band are into total Death/Grind Metal. Everybody is liking our own music very much. This is the music we all choose to make.

PC: Is this what the band initially set out to do?

S: Yeah, when we were kids, before we learned how to play, we were all into Death Metal, so we all bought instruments with no real intent. And this is the music that came out.

PC: So your focus has not changed?

S: No, not at all. At the time, there was SLAYER, INCUBUS, DEICIDE and CANNIBAL CORPSE, so the music didn't really change that much.

PC: Do you see yourselves progressing at all, making any changes to your sound?

S: I don't think we'll ever change our style completely. If we do, we'll use a different band name, because 'Sinister' is a name that stands for Death Metal, fast and aggressive. I think it's inappropriate to become a slow band and use keyboards. At this point in time nobody likes slow music, we're all still very much into Death/Grind, so I don't see any reason why we need to change our

style or write slower music.

PC: I find it interesting that you are fans of the genre, because a lot of bands that play whatever music they choose to play, oftentimes do not listen to that same style of music.

S: Yeah, I think that's somewhat weird. Music, of course, is a hobby, it's something you should like to do. Even though playing

different types of music is very nice, too, it's awesome if you actually play the music that you really like!

PC: Why is Metal important to you?

S: You can get rid of a lot of aggression through it. Like when you get home from work, the first thing you do is put on some Death Metal and bang your head for five minutes, and you'll forget about the frustrations from work. It's like getting into a fight. It's a definite release of aggression and allows you to get quiet again.

PC: Had you heard about the school shootings over here in the US?

S: Yeah, but it was only a small item on the news. This is what happens when the world becomes overpopulated; fucked up shit happens. People do a lot of weird things around the world, and this is just one of them. And this blaming MARIYN MANSON is just bullshit. If you're a fucked up kid, you're a fucked up kid. If there was no Heavy Metal, these shootings would still happen! I think they should have just listened to Death Metal, because it would take away all their

aggressions!! It worked for me when I was a kid!

PC: Do you think that your next album will help Death Metal continue through the next Millennium, or do you think the standards of Death Metal will change?

S: I think Death Metal is a unique entity. Death Metal has been relatively unchanged for about 12 years, and we'll most likely be into it for another 20 at least. Yeah, the face of Heavy Metal has been changing, but there are still kids coming up just turning 18, and they're getting into Death Metal, so as long as there are people who will listen to and appreciate this kind of music, it will always exist. I think Death Metal really stands on its own in that respect, I think it will be around for a long time to come.

PC: Now, whenever I listen to a Death Metal CD, no matter what it is, I unwittingly end up comparing it to SUFFOCATION's *Effigy Of The Forgotten*, simply because I think it's the most brutal album ever made. When you write music, do you make an active attempt to out-brutalize another band?

S: No, we don't do anything like that, simply because I don't think we're that fast of a band. Of course we use a lot of blast beats, but there are much, much more brutal bands out there, like CRYPTOPSY, who are now so much more brutal than us! So, no we don't try to do that, we just aim to write good Death Metal songs. We don't try to compare ourselves to other bands. Sure, people may listen to our albums and hear a part that they think sounds like DEICIDE or CANNIBAL CORPSE, but we really try to eliminate that stuff, so nobody gets the impression that they've heard it before.

PC: I noticed between *Hate* and the newer material, you've cut way down on the Satanic imagery. Is this due to the new vocalist?

S: Yeah, actually Mike, our old singer, was the only guy in the band who was heavily into Satanism, reading *The Necronomicon* all the time and stuff. We really didn't care what the lyrics said, as long as they weren't about flowers and things like that. Our new singer is more of an anti-Christian, since he comes from a small community, which is overrun with Christians, so he gets his aggressions out that way. We really don't mind at all. You can interpret the lyrics in anyway you like, any way that is relevant to you. The music is still most important.

PC: Sinister has been on Nuclear Blast throughout its entire career, which dates back to nearly the dawn of the label. Why have you never attempted to change labels?

S: Why should we? Nuclear Blast has been so good to us over the years and gives us the ability to have our records sold worldwide. They give us tons of press and interviews, if we were to jump to another label, things would start going downhill.

PC: How did you get acquainted with Nuclear Blast to begin with?

S: Well, we released our first demo, which sold between 1500 and 2000 copies, and Markus Staiger [founder of Nuclear Blast] heard about it. Coincidentally, we played a show in Stuttgart, which is where Nuclear Blast is based, and Markus came out to the concert. When we got off the stage, he had the contracts in his hand and passed them to us, he really thought we were a great band and that we should be on his label. And this is why we are still on Nuclear Blast, because he still likes our music very much, and we still make good music. We make Nuclear Blast some good money, and we're very easy to work with, so there's no problems there. We're very happy with where we are with them.





Slavearc

Structural Damage in the Blueprint of Humanity (Screams of Salvation)

I have very little tolerance for Grindcore, but Slavearc managed to grab my attention for the full length of the CD, and then I went back for more! These guys have some very powerful lyrics and a constant theme running throughout all the songs. They also don't play the same damn riff in every song... and their songs aren't a mere one or two minutes either! Good change-ups, brutal as shit vocals, and bludgeoning guitars keep it real and Grindcore fans should not pass this disc up at all. Even a guy like me, who hates most mindless Grindcore digs it- and so should you.

Stretch Arm Strong

Rituals of Life (Solid State)

I've heard so many good things about this band, so my expectations were very high. After the first listen, I wasn't able to have the reactions that other people had. It took a couple of listens and then it started to grow on me. It's not bad Hardcore by any means, but it's not the style I'm accustomed to. They have an old school meets new school type style, which can easily be compared to SICK OF IT ALL and others of the like. They have really good breakdown sections and their music is fun and fast paced. If you were like me and felt like disregarding them after the first few listens because of false expectations, don't! You'll regret it.

Plan E

Songs For A Rainy Day (Root-O-Evil)

The unique double bass line-up of Plan E is much more interesting on paper than on CD. With treated vocals and raw percussion this sounds more like a Gothic Industrial experiment than any kind of a Metal album. Too bad because I was really hoping that two basses would be able to do some interesting bottom end work, instead they just thud churn out repetitive riffs that don't go anywhere. One odd thing about these vocals is that they remind me of "Mexican Radio" by WALL OF VOODOO... remember that old chestnut from 20 years ago?



Derek Sherinian

Planet X (Magna Carta)

OK, I have this problem. I don't like Derek Sherinian. He could never live up to the god-like status of Kevin Moore, and the best band in the world, DREAM THEATER, just didn't sound the same with him banging on the ivories. He's also a pompous ass who thinks he is the best thing to happen to Rock music since the analog synthesizer! Well, he plays the digital kind and does a damn good job at it, too! Wait, did I just say something good about the guy whom Jordan Rudess could play circles around?! You got it! I'm setting aside my well-founded and justified prejudices and saying that this is a good solo album- as far as Keyboard solo projects go. Remember Joe Satriani's *Not of this Earth* or Steve Vai's *Flex-Able*? This disc has that 80's guitar/keyboard attack type of flare to it... very show-offy and glamorous (go figure. This is the guy Alice Cooper calls "arrogance personified!"). It's purely instrumental, with more guitar and keyboard solos than you can shake a stick at and Derek proves himself to be quite the musician here.



Swallow your pride and just belly up to the counter and check it out already. www.dereksherinian.com.

Chroma Key

Dead Air for Radios (Fight Evil)

I fuckin' love Kevin Moore! It's that simple. You want excellent songcrafting with poignant, brilliant, thought-provoking, and stellar lyrics? Look no further! You want Metal, though, you better skip ahead to the next review... the guy's a fuckin' keyboardist for crying out loud! Regardless, this is a melancholy and sometimes up-beat, very ambient release with Kevin taking care of the vocals and keyboards, Jason Anderson on guitar, and FATES WARNING members Joey Vera and Mark Zonder on bass and drums respectively. Fans of Progressive music (especially of FATES WARNING and DREAM THEATER) should do themselves a favor and check this out. It ain't nowhere close to Metal (or even Hard or Progressive Rock for that matter!); it's just great music written and arranged by one of the best musicians to tread this planetary sphere, and I fuckin' love it!! Fight Evil Records, PO Box 55758, Valencia, CA, 91385. www.chromakey.com.



Swoon

Flavour (Astro Atlantic)

Heavy on the electronics and special effects, Swoon will fill your ear hole with more processors and synthesizers than MTV's *Club MTV Party To Go* disc. While I can only take so much of this galactically groovin' Club/Dance music, it is worth mentioning in these pages because these guys are absolutely electrifying live! I caught them at their CD release party and the energy on that dance floor and up on the stage rivaled any Metal show out there! The Philadelphia music scene is just about dead and everyone is playing the same old songs (yes, I'm talking about Metal here!) over and over again while these four fellows just keep writing good, solid, catchy, hooky, and happy songs. They have a penchant for writing unique material (unique for the 90's, that is) that takes you back to the 80's

Pop scene when MADONNA, MICHAEL JACKSON, PRINCE, and BOY GEORGE reigned supreme. Get in on these guys while the shows and merchandise are still relatively cheap; Swoon is going all the way to the top someday... I just have this feeling about them. www.cyberswoon.com. swoon@cyberswoon.com 74-2 Drexelbrook Dr., Drexel Hill, PA 19026. (610) 532-1175.



Slaughter

Back To Reality (CMC International)

Just put the gun to my fuckin' head because I actually like this damn CD! I was planning on making fun of it when I first decided to give it a spin, but then this really cool riff came blazing through my speakers and I never shut it off! Perhaps the reason I like it so much is because it sounds an awful lot like their debut (damn that chick is hot!), which, when you are in ninth grade, is a great CD. Slaughter finally stopped trying to keep up with all the latest trends and fads in our revolving-door music industry and decided to stick it to us the old fashioned way- with the almighty power chord and artificial harmonic! Their new guitarist has more wwwwaaahhsss than ZAKK WYLDE on crack! No "Up all Night", let's-beat-this-song-to-death riff raff here, folks- just good, solid Hard Rock songs played by some scarred veterans who deserve a renewed glance from people like me who have been ignoring them for the past few years.

Lacuna Coil
In a Reverie
 (Century Media)

Lacuna Coil's first EP absolutely floored me, so I really tried to give this debut full-length a good many listens to let it sink in and envelope me with mournful melodies shrouded in Gothic gowns- but all to no avail. It's a good release, don't get me wrong, but it just can't touch their self-titled debut. A few songs like "Stately Lover", "To Myself I Turned", and "Cold" are memorable enough to warrant repeated listens of the disc, but as a whole it's nothing spectacular. A good release for sure, but not ethereal Gothic Metal like I was expecting it to be. Perhaps one definite reason I don't like *In a Reverie* as



much as their debut is because they re-did "Falling" and called it "Falling Again". The original was a cleanly played and sung aria featuring Christina's naked vocals which flowed fluidly with grace and skill. "Falling Again" provides overdubs of her voice which gives it a fullness matched by the distorted guitars playing with her in the chorus. The innocence and penetrating poignancy got lost somewhere (the synthesized drum loop doesn't help at all, either) and no matter how many times I listen to it, I just don't get it. *In a Reverie* is more of a let down than anything, for without their debut EP to compare it to, I'd be giving it a rave review, for they are still producing a type of music that is unique only unto themselves; they don't sound like anyone else and that is very difficult to do these days, so for that I greatly commend them and still hold them in the highest of regards.

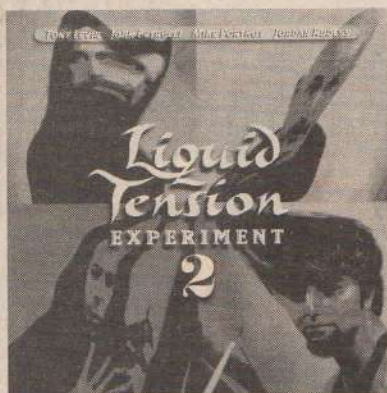
Mammoth Volume
 (The Music Cartel)

This bass-heavy Mood Metal with a retro 70's feel is all the rage now with bands like CLUTCH and MOSTER MAGNET receiving National attention. The fever has spread to Scandinavia and bands like Mammoth Volume have become infected. An apt name for them as the first few minutes of the disc are huge, the quieter passages are not quite as exciting, but do provide for a great contrast. Jorgen Andersson's vocals cut through the thick sound with a clean resonance that keeps the tunes from becoming bogged down, too many bands of this genre tend to drop everything down low, including their vocals. "Dervishsong" slowly builds from a guitar/vocal duo to a slow marchlike tempo pausing briefly for a nice guitar break, peaking then winding back down to a sudden finish. With "Shindig" they manage to successfully combine their ancient heritage with the newer American influenced sound, and on "Family Tree" the mood lightens a bit with a DEEP PURPLE-esque organ. Track ten, "Matthew 6:21", throws a curve that's as brilliant as it is shocking in the form of an instrumental Jazz combo that's simply amazing! All of these songs are very well written and none are longer than they need to be. This album has everything going for it. I suggest you go out and find this album right now, Mammoth Volume is most definitely a band to keep an eye on.



Liquid Tension Experiment 2
 (Magna Carta)

Can I just say that these four men are gods? Do we still have that in this modernized, spiritless, and scientifically advanced world? Can gods take on human form, play heavenly music with precision, grace, skill, virtuosity, and genius, leaving us lesser humans standing there in awe? Can anyone



in heaven above or on earth below play the guitar with such sweet tenderness and raw guts like John Petrucci? When Jordan Rudess dons his fingers upon the ivories, do angels swoon in majestic revelry? Do the very gods of this age and ages past bow down to worship Mike Portnoy as he surrounds himself with skins outstretched? As Tony Levin plucks his bass, do not even the Muses themselves cringe with jealousy? Can I write the rest of this review without posing any more questions? Let me tell you something folks, this is a Progressive Rock opus not to be ignored by anyone in the Prog scene. If you're into Prog and you have not yet familiarized yourself with Liquid Tension Experiment, do not even think of calling yourself a fan of the genre. The disc's very essence is Progressive, from the orchestrated compositions right down to the improvised jams. It schools the listener in the art of listening to music for the sake of the music; you absolutely cannot listen to it and not be affected by it. This music is neither for the faint of heart nor for the feeble-minded. Fans of DREAM THEATER should know that their follow-up to *Falling Into Infinity* will be in the vein of this Liquid Tension release, and the recording sessions themselves inspired much of the music that will be on the new album. Those who have ears to hear, let them hear, for a new prophecy has been handed down to us from the realm of the gods, and its name is Liquid Tension Experiment.

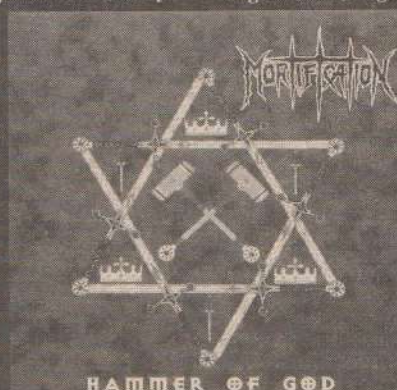
Schindler
Time [EP]
 (Eastworld)

Remember the Boston based Pop-Metal band, MASS? Schindler has risen from their ashes with ex-members Ian Millan and Steve Beatty fronting a Post-Punk trio in the HUSKER DU/SUGAR vein. The three songs presented here offer a darkly melodic, full sound that may seem too tame for the average Metal fan, but if you're looking for something a bit different, you could do worse. The band does seem like it was rushed into the studio following a tour. Vocal lines repeat endlessly as if more lyrics were to have been written, but never got finished. There's a working class honesty in these few tunes that comes across very well and I look forward to

hearing a more fleshed out complete album.

Mortification
Hammer of God
 (Metal Blade)

I'm a huge Mortification fan and love Steve Rowe to death, but why did he disband with his guttural growls!? The intensity of these new songs is as hard as ever, but Mr. Rowe yells on key instead of growling and it just doesn't sound right. Damn, even now as I jam to these heavy-ass riffs, I just yearn with everything in me for just one long, low, deep, and hard gggggrrrrrrroooooooowwwwwlllllll to emanate from his vocal chords! This gripe aside, I can honestly say that *Hammer of God* offers the listener some killer Death Metal tinged with some clean, melodic parts and wonderful guitar solos. It's a definite step up from last year's *Triumph of Mercy*, though it still doesn't touch *Scrolls of the Megiloth* or



Post Momentary Affliction (but of course, it would take a miracle directly from heaven above to top those two masterpieces!). While most of the lyrics once again deal with sound biblical doctrine penned from a man engrossed in Christ's teachings, Rowe takes some political license with the song, "D.W.A.M." (an acronym for Daniel Was A Mosher... very amusing to say the least). Six bonus tracks appear at the end, including a medley of old favorites (yells instead of growls once again, which only make me go back in my catalog and grab the classics!) and a re-make of the cult favorite, "The Majestic Infiltration of Order" (aptly entitled, "God Rulz"). Hints at the glory of Power Metal creep in here and there as we see Mortification crawling out from under their strict Death Metal pigeonhole. I liked them where they were, but it's all good, even if I have to get used to some different types of vocals.

MORTIFICATION

By Tom J. Hughes

I grew up in a Christian home and for as long as I can remember I learned all about the "evils" of Heavy Metal music. In my teenage years I could never really reconcile Metal with my beliefs; the religious ideologies handed down to me from my parents and church didn't make room for "the devil's music" and I was confounded for a few years. Then I heard about a Christian Death Metal band called Mortification and it literally threw me for a loop! I couldn't believe what I was hearing- let alone believe what I was reading in the CD inlay covers! Steve Rowe's music had a profound impact on my life and I kind of feel bad about how this interview turned out, because it makes him appear like a pretty negative guy. On the contrary, his message is a very positive one, it just so happens that his musical tastes have progressed over the years and they haven't coincided with mine. However, Hammer of God, in and of itself, without compare to any previous Mortification releases, is a great listen. I just happen to be a huge fan of their first three releases with the original line-up and I guess I put Steve on the defensive with my line of questioning, thus I take full responsibility for the not-so-stellar representation of this great band in these pages.

Mortification: So what do you think of the new one?

Promethean Crusade: *Hammer of God* is great.

M: I think I've finally hit where I wanted to hit all along.

PC: You think so?

M: Yeah, the whole idea of Mortification at the start was, well I came from this crushing Metal band in the 80's called LIGHTFORCE, and I wanted to do a cross between German Thrash and SLAYER, or METALLICA, something thing like that, and of course include the whole Death Metal bit. And we did that, but ever since then I've kind of been trying to create what I just created and I finally think I did it.

PC: So all the times you did the Death Metal thing back in the day, that really wasn't what Mortification was all about?

M: Well, it wasn't what I wanted to do. Jayson and Mick [former drummer and guitarist, respectively ~ed.] really wanted to do the Death Metal thing and I've always wanted to do, for want of a better word, the Thrash thing. I mean, I wanted to take LIGHTFORCE, which was kind of like early IRON MAIDEN, that next step forward. I wanted to take Mortification into a more aggressive sort of thing and away from Death Metal because I didn't want to do it; it was going to die. So then we did *Post Momentary*... and Jayson hated the

album, which actually ended up being our biggest selling album in Europe. And then we had this new line-up and with *Envision Evangelene* we really started to hit what I always wanted to do.

PC: So whatever happened to Jayson and Mick?

M: Well Jayson left the band because we did *Post Momentary* and he saw Mortification is a Death Metal / Grindcore band and he wanted me to be the Christian version of Glenn Benton. See, I like doing funny stuff, like on the new album with

"D.W.A.M." [an acronym for Daniel Was A Mosher ~ed.]. I like to do silly things and tell jokes on stage. Death Metal is always too serious, I mean our music is serious but... well that's why I've always liked about bands like MAIDEN, they kind of had a light-hearted attitude but were a serious band. The whole Death Metal thing was too dark and gloomy for my personality, I mean I like the music, it's pretty cool. And Jayson would play those drums like an insane person but not how our style was going, and Phil [Jayson's replacement] was not even a quarter as good as



Jayson was and from then on I've really been able to go for what I really wanted to do. And Keith, our drummer now, he can't play that odd stuff either. We tried to do some blast beat stuff on the last album and it never worked out. But now he's just playing perfectly for what I've written and Lincoln [Mortification's current guitarist] is such a good musician he can take the music anywhere.

PC: So everyone who is a fan of you guys knows that you fought cancer and won.

M: I shouldn't be alive today. I should've been dead twice.

PC: So you have this very moving piece about your battle and of your miraculous recovery in *Triumph of Mercy*, and then this little, simple, child-like prayer at the end. I don't mean to belittle prayer, but aren't you oversimplifying or dumbing down Christianity and making it not seem so meaningful and life changing?

M: Well, we always put a salvation prayer on everything we do.

PC: Yeah, and it's always the same, simple one you learn in kindergarten.

M: Well, coming to Christ is a simple thing. Maybe we wouldn't be so blatant with what we do, but there's so many Black Metal bands out there that are so boring it's not funny. Being on Metal Blade and Nuclear Blast, two major independent labels, as long as they don't mind

us being blatant like the other Black Metal bands we'll continue to include the prayer. And the thing is, if you put a simple prayer on there and people read the lyrics, their heart gets touched by that. You see, I grew up in the 80's Christian music scene where everything was bold, evangelistic, and to the point. If you look at STRYPER, they sold millions of records and every song was [singing in a fake, falsetto voice] "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!" So you can succeed in doing it and I've never had a problem with being up front about it.

PC: I don't either. I'm just worried that people will think they can read or say one little prayer and then all of a sudden they're a Christian. It's not like that. Christianity is a way of life; it's an entire worldview that many don't understand, especially in Metal.

M: Of course. You need backup which is why below the prayer we have 'check into your local bible-believing church.' If you pray that prayer you need to find someone to teach you and counsel you, so people will hopefully find a good church to guide them in the right direction.

PC: So do you get a lot of responses from people saying that your lyrics or music changed their life?

M: Totally. Yeah, all the time. From all over the world, too. When I was sick, I got so many faxes and e-mails from people that I couldn't keep up with it. One that really hit me was from a guy in Germany; it was very powerful. He said that back in '96 there were 20 or 30 guys just hanging out at the mall. So this guy from a youth group in a local church there handed out 25 Mortification CDs to all of them and invited them to come out in Friday night to this youth thing he was having. And they knew what this was all about, but he wasn't pushy or anything, so they came out and 25 people got saved that night. And he wrote in the e-mail that this is still going on. I mean, when we were in Norway, these two guys came up and said to me that outside of God, Mortification is the number one thing in their life.

PC: What!?

M: Forget chicks! Forget school!

PC: No way!

M: Well we told them, you know, school is important and that you need to work hard. They said their parents wouldn't let them listen to Metal, but they would let them listen to Mortification.

PC: So do you have many problems from extreme Christians who say that you can't be a true Christian and play or listen to Metal simultaneously?

M: Yeah. I hate it. Some people wouldn't put our CDs in the Christian book stores because of the covers, which is really stupid because the covers, well like our logo, the three swords obviously representing the Trinity, you know the sword of the Spirit in the bible, crushing the skull below, which obviously is a symbol of the devil. And on *Post Momentary*... the Trinity is represented on the throne, but people... well these Christian bookstores had to order them anyway because all the kids wanted them. They're like 'we can't put these on our shelves with all these swords and skulls and....' It's unbelievable some of the stuff people have written about me!

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Like this guy put out a book on Christian Rock, and he was even saying that AMY GRANT and SANDI PATTI were playing the devil's music! Seriously! But then he got to Mortification, of course, and he said that they are the biggest exponent of the satanic lie. They're only in this to make money and what? If I wanted to make money I wouldn't go into Christian Death Metal! And he said the singer of



this band, which he's making all this up, the singer gets possessed before he goes on stage so the demons can sing through him. It's so funny. But with the graphic covers and lyrics, I've learned through maturity and time that, I mean they're still all true. 'Rotting corpses buried deep' means dying to yourself, of course, in the context of the song, but I've learned to focus on the positive rather than on the negative. Our music is now more uplifting and the covers are, too. Like Black Metal bands put the pentagram on their covers, dark and evil, we put the Star of David on ours for spiritual uplifting, more positive symbolism.

PC: So how would you defend Christianity against all the Black Metal bands and their legions of followers that say Christianity is only for mindless people who can't think for themselves?

M: Well, I'll tell you something about Black Metal: it's the most mindless thing there is. It's

boring and there's so much of it out there: everyone's copying off of everyone else. Nothing is original and it's totally mindless and kids get into it because they want to belong to something. They don't do it because they want to worship Satan, they want to be part of a group- part of a movement. They really don't know why they hate Christianity, they only hate it because it's a cool thing to hate. These Satanic people, they're all such wimps, I was

reading an interview with MARILYN MANSON and this Christian politician asked him if he would ever wear a T-shirt that says 'Kill All the Muslims.' Of course he wouldn't! Or would he stick his private parts in the Q'uaran like the Bible or the Book of Mormon? No, because someone would strap a bomb on himself and blow himself and MARILYN MANSON up. What's the point in fighting a war against Christianity when all Christians do is forgive you back? All these Black Metal bands talk about war and I don't understand it.

PC: So getting back to Hammer of God, I like it much better than Triumph of Mercy-

M: Oh, everybody says that.



HAMMER OF GOD

PC: Yeah, I like it, but I still think your older stuff, the brutal Death Metal and harsh vocals is where it's at.

M: Well, Death Metal is dead. Especially CANNIBAL CORPSE or, even the big Nuclear Blast bands like DISMEMBERMENT or BENEDICTION, when they first started out they were selling something like 60 or 70,000

units. Now they're only selling like 12,000 units or so. People don't want to hear it anymore.

The new DEATH album is selling massive, but it's not Death Metal, you know? His new vocals are even more Black Metal than anything; I don't think they were ever really Death vocals like other Death Metal bands. Death Metal is dead. I can't even think of a single Death Metal band in Australia.



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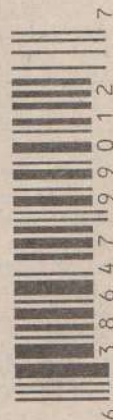
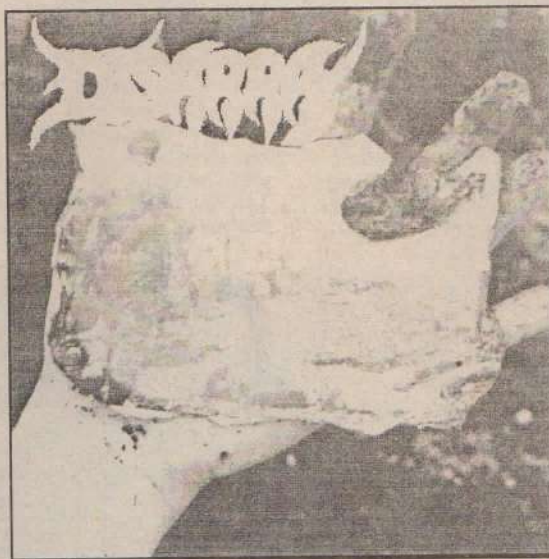
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Lacuna Coil

By Tom J. Hughes



It's not often that I get to talk to beautiful chick Metalheads (I think they're either repulsed by my twig-like arms and legs or crooked teeth), so when I was afforded the opportunity to chat with the beautiful Cristina Scabbia (luckily video phones are not a common commodity) I jumped at the chance. Lacuna Coil's full-length debut, In A Reverie, while not as hauntingly mesmerizing as their awe-inspiring, self-titled EP, is Goth Metal bliss plagued with mournful lyrics and saddening chord structures. Christina proves to be quite the light-hearted one here and is pretty vocal and proud of her country, music, sexuality... and food!

Promethean Crusade: So what is it that Italians do better?

Lacuna Coil: Oh! [she starts laughing] You saw the picture?!

PC: Of course.

LC: It's like a joke because it was a present from the chief of Century Media. I don't know what exactly or why, but they asked me to put it on.

PC: They actually asked you to put that shirt on?

LC: Yeah, they wanted to take our picture and they wanted me to wear that and I was like sure. Why not?

PC: Really! How do you feel about that? I mean...

LC: Well, it depends on what you mean. It's because we cook better [she starts laughing again]!

PC: It's the food! Oh, I get it now!

LC: Of course, that's it!

PC: So I take it that it's the pizza then?

LC: Yeah, a lot of pizza and pasta... when we go on tour and I'm away from Italy for a while, the

only thing I really miss are my parents and the food!

PC: The food is that good?!

LC: Yeah. I was fat when we came back from touring. Everyday it's chocolate and basically shit, really. The food is horrible outside of Italy. Germany and Holland are terrible... a lot of fries and...

PC: Well don't come to America then, because that's all we do is eat shit and get fat!

LC: But the problem is that I really like to eat shit! Every time I come back I weigh three kilos more because I like shit. It's a big problem.

PC: Have you ever been over here to the US?

LC: No, but maybe next year because we are probably going to play some festivals over there. I can't wait.

PC: So tell me about *In A Reverie*. Are you happy with how it turned out?

LC: We're really proud of it, of course, just like every time we do a new album. We changed our line-up from the last EP this time. We have a new drummer, a new guitar player, and another guitar player who is not a real member of Lacuna Coil right now. He's only here now to help us on tour and during the gigs, but he's not helping us with the compositions right now. Maybe things will change in the future, though. And with this album we just wanted to express who we are now because with the first album we had some problems with the old line-up. We had to make some changes because they wanted to stay into more Rock stuff or continue into a more U2

style or something, but we wanted to stay into Metal. Not because we are like, 'HEAVY METAL!! HEAVY METAL!!' [she's laughing again] but it's important for us to stay here. We like this kind of music. We like the attitude of Heavy Metal and we like to play it and we don't want to be commercial or to go to MTV. We don't care about that.

PC: That's great.

LC: And I think this album is more mature, not because it's a new album, but because we took



more time with the compositions, the vocal lines, and we had one week more to record the album. So we had more time to work on this project and we really like the songs.

PC: So how is the reaction over in Europe so far?

LC: Oh, very, very good. I know we ran out of... what's the word... the first printing of it, whatever you call that, we sold out of them. That was a few months or so ago and they had to reprint the

copies, so we must have sold around 35,000 copies or so, which I think is good for a first album. I mean, for an Italian band it is not easy! **PC:** So tell me about the Italian scene? Are you the biggest thing over there right now?

LC: No, it is not like that. There is another band, RHAPSODY, that is very big. They're from Florence, I believe, and are very big. I think they are very good players, but I don't like the style. They are more famous than us. We are proud because we are, I believe, the only well-known band out of Italy that doesn't play Classic Metal. Right now that is the trend and everyone is playing it.

PC: And what about the rest of Europe, outside of Italy?

LC: It depends where, because in Germany the scene is very, very big. You can go in the supermarket and listen to MORBID ANGEL, for example! In Italy, this is not possible, because you can only listen to Italian music or dance stuff—something really commercial. It's growing, I think, though, because people are understanding that Metal is not the music of the devil. It's one of the few musics that is not being played by the computer. And in France, too, there is quite a big scene there. But Germany is the biggest.

PC: Why is that? What is it about Germany that is so Metal?

LC: Because they have a lot of gigs. For example, if you look at an Italian magazine for Metal, you will see only a few gigs—like five or so in a month. But in Germany, you can see twenty in one day! There are so many bands that go to Germany; it's normal for them. They have a more open mind, maybe, I don't know why. I guess it's just a lot of long-haired, drinking, physical, Metal people!

PC: So are you tired of being compared to the GATHERING?

LC: Of course we are not so happy about it, but I think it's normal. Right now, the problem the GATHERING is having is that every journalist tells them they sound like PINK FLOYD. And PARADISE LOST right now is being compared to DEPECHE MODE, so every band has this problem. We are a little bit sick, but don't have too many problems because we are big fans of the GATHERING. I used to write to Anneke often, so we don't have too many problems. I want people to realize that, maybe with the first EP, we played a similar style, but now we are different; we are

not a clone. The most similar thing is we have the same label and we have two female singers, but the voice is completely different. She's more technical and I try to be more passionate because I never studied how to sing. And their music is more atmospheric—a single note might last a minute! Right now, our music is going in completely different directions.

PC: I agree, because how can one listen to *How to Measure a Planet?* And then your stuff and say they sound the same? If it was just Andrea singing, no one would be saying that at all.

LC: Of course, there are not so many women in the Metal scene, so you are

right. But I want people to know that we have two singers. I'm not the only singer in the band and there is not a main singer and then one who does the chorus. We are two singers, and this is the main difference, because we can use every kind of voice; we can use all the tones. I can sing higher notes and Andrea can work with the low notes, so it's an advantage for us.

Continued on next page

Lacuna Coil



Continued from previous page

PC: And it separates your sound from a lot of others, too, because he's not growling for the most part and you're not operatic.

LC: Thank you, yeah, that is true. It is good to compare with the first album, for example, because it gives people something that they can know what they are listening for. But when styles change, you can't compare them to that same band. Maybe compare it to another band, but not the same one, and especially the GATHERING, because it is completely different.

PC: Being a woman in a male-dominated Metal scene, do you experience a problem with all these guys coming onto you or is this not a problem?

LC: It's normal because there are not so many girls, and sometimes people in the Metal scene think that all the girls are a bitch. Sometimes when you go on stage they scream, 'Naked! Naked!' or something like that. Italy is the worst country for this kind of thing. Sometimes they'll be like, 'Show me your pussy!' Here that is normal. But I really don't care because right now there is a lot of respect for me because I read in the magazine that I have a good voice and that they like the music instead of, 'She's a sex symbol.' I don't think about me as a sex symbol and I don't care. I really care about music. But no, it's not hard to be a woman in Metal.

PC: So you don't care about being a sex symbol, but then you go and wear a T-shirt that says, 'Italians do it better'...

LC: Yeah, but that was a joke for me, too. I mean, it's not the T-shirt that makes me a sex symbol. I'm really happy to be a female and I like to play with my image because even if I don't want to be a sex symbol, this doesn't mean that I'm not feminine or don't like to be sexy. I'm not sexy every time, I can be sexy during a picture, but not in every moment of my life. To be a sex symbol does not mean that you are a bitch and some people cannot understand the difference.

PC: So is that you on the cover... naked?

LC: Yeah, that's me and Andrea on the cover with body paint. The background, it is computer, of course, but that's real paint on our bodies. It took more than ten hours of body painting and five showers to take away the color! It was terrible... never again!

PC: Whose idea was it to redo 'Falling' and why?

LC: It was the only song that I wrote together with the bass player that is right now in the band and the other songs were written with the cooperation of the old members. So it was the only song written by those members still in the band. Originally on the EP, we wanted it to have distorted guitars and a loop, but the old members didn't want to do that. So we re-proposed it again with the new members to play it how we wanted it originally with the loop and distorted guitars. I normally do not like electronic sounds, but this song, it was a good time for the fake drums and the loop! I prefer 'Falling Again' a thousand times to 'Falling'.



For Salvation

By Chris Hawkins

An Interview with Joseph Van Fossen (guitars/vocals) of Noctuary

Black Metal... the mere mention of the name stirs up various images in the heads of all. It is certain that when thinking of Black Metal, most will almost immediately associate it with visions of Scandinavia. Perhaps that is reasonable because it seems that it is the acts of a few there that have drawn the attention directly to Norway and Sweden. It is those who assume that Scandinavia holds a monopoly on darkness that are blasphemously wrong. In all forms of Metal, the U.S. has been thrown into the shadows. What would Black Metal be without the greatness of our own SLAYER, POSSESSED, OR MORBID ANGEL? Those who have written the U.S. off will certainly rethink their stance in the coming days. Black Metal was never intended to be a status-oriented, commercialized genre that is only judged by place of origin and social circles. Enter Noctuary. They hail from California and play sick Black Metal the way it was to be intended. If you are looking for keyboard solos ripped off of 70's Prog Metal and horror movie soundtracks, and Anne Rice-inspired gothic imagery, look somewhere else. If you would prefer true Black Metal with a hint of classic Thrash thrown in, check out Noctuary's debut, For Salvation.

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Promethean Crusade: Do you think that black metal is getting too commercial?

Noctuary: A lot of the bigger bands are definitely pretty commercial. Although, they will never break into the mainstream in the US, with MTV and all of that. The problem with those bands is that they're making less extreme music in the quest for record sales.

PC: Can a band still be true and sell records?

N: I think that's possible, as long as their

success doesn't go to their heads. They shouldn't want, or need the success.

PC: Very true. The greatest musicians knew little or no "success" in their own lifetimes.

N: Yeah, most great musicians were not even well known until years after their deaths.

PC: Is there a theme that you try to convey through your music?

N: Not really. We just write about our emotions, straight from within. We don't concentrate on keeping a certain theme to our lyrics or music.

PC: From where do you get the emotional inspiration?

N: Basically, from everyday life. Getting fed up with certain things, and whatnot.

Christianity definitely has an impact on our daily lives here. Since everything on TV and in public is run by Christians, practically.

PC: Can you see a day when that may change?

N: Not for a long time. Eventually people will grow minds of their own and things will begin to change. But, it takes time, just like it took time for

Christianity to dominate. Although, Christian ideals were forced upon.

PC: Do you see yourself as a fighter for change? Is that an ideal you feel that is integral in Black Metal?

N: Yes, I think all Black Metal bands would consider themselves warriors in this war against Christianity. That's the good thing about the growth of Black Metal bands, etc. More warriors to fight alongside us.

PC: Isn't ours a war for TRUTH?

N: Yes, definitely... if there is a reoccurring theme in our lyrics, it's the battle for truth to be seen.

PC: What is truth to you?

N: Well, I believe that the only thing that controls one's life is themselves. Everyone should set their own personal moral standards and values... and should not look to religion for answers or for guidance. Since religion is nothing more than rules, set by others.

Daeonia
Alice
(Candlelight)

Yet another band has popped up playing Goth with just enough Metal elements thrown in for it to come my way. There are piles of bands playing this brand of music, and it seems that many of the European bands, who at one time had the ability to produce crushing, yet groundbreaking music, are throwing their guitars down for keyboards and sequencers. Think what you will. Daeonia play a style similar to bands like DREADFUL SHADOWS, LOVE LIKE BLOOD, and newer MOONSPELL. They really do not have any remarkable features that can distinguish them from the aforementioned bands, but if you happen to like that style, then this should fit neatly into your stack.



Who Dares Wins

Bolt Thrower
Who Dares Wins
(Earache)

Ah, yet another great release from Britain's mighty Bolt Thrower, the band that can incite a war with but a chord. Earache's final 'Hail Mary' from the band is a collection of rarities, bonus tracks, and unreleased tracks 'through the ages' of the band's development and monarchy as the greatest War Metal band in the world. I cannot complain, since most of the material on this disc was not available in the U.S. until now. Tracks from both the *Cenotaph* and *Spearhead* EPs are presented, as well as the bonus tracks from *The Fourth Crusade*, a re-recording of my favorite Bolt Thrower tune "World Eater", a live version of "Realm Of Chaos" and the never before released "Overlord". Ten tracks of pure brutal mayhem, just what everyone needs to get through the workday! So who cares if Earache is trying to squeeze one more buck out of the band, this is Bolt Thrower for Christ's sake, BUY THE DAMN DISC!!!

Lefay
Symphony Of The Damned
(Noise Records)

Finally, The Rock has come back to...oops! I mean, finally, Sweden's ever imaginative melodic Doom/Power masters Lefay has re-recorded their mythical debut release (which originally saw a vinyl-only pressing of 537 copies in 1990, under their former moniker MORGANA LEFAY). The CD gives us a beautiful glimpse into the past from the present, as Lefay taunts and hypnotizes us with brilliantly sorrowful Scandinavian-bred Power Metal in a way only they can produce. Although the songs are nearly ten years old, Lefay has put a modern, melodic slant on Thrash, by infusing it with their own brand of drunken magic, largely through the brilliant axemanship of founding member Tony Eriksson and the savage but smooth vocal crooning of Charles Rytkonen. Interesting treats on the disc include re-recordings of the tracks "Last Rites" and "The Secret Doctrine", both of which had previously appeared on MORGANA LEFAY's second Black Mark Productions release *The Secret Doctrine*. There are also four cover tunes on the disc as an added bonus, but you really don't need that to entice you to buy *Symphony Of The Damned*- the magnificent music should sell itself!

LEFAY



Symphony Of The Damned

Talisman. Finally, four months after its European release date (is there something we can do about these delays?!), it hit U.S. shores and my CD player. Was it worth the wait? To steal a line from Stone Cold... "Oh Hell Yeah!" Nocturnal Rites have assembled eleven songs of absolute, pure Power Metal, performed at such a level of proficiency that it's almost magical. All the elements are in place to make this disc a classic: heart ("The Legend Lives On"), feeling ("Glorious"), speed ("When Fire Comes to Ice"), and majesty ("The Iron Force"). As far as I'm concerned, Anders Zackrisson is the best

vocalist in Power Metal today, and the guitar tandem of Mannberg and Norberg is quickly becoming a serious force to contend with. Let's not overlook the solid bass work by Nils Eriksson, as well as the two newcomers, Lingval and Bernhardsson (drums and keys, respectively) who both hold their own in the magical mix. Now if we could only get them on a package tour of the U.S. with JAG PANZER and HAMMERFALL.

Hypocrisy
(Nuclear Blast)

Hypocrisy is incredible! I know it, if you're reading Promethean Crusade you know it, so what is there left to say about Mr. Tagtgren and company's newest eleven song collection of musical savagery? It's really quite simple: this is the BEST Hypocrisy CD ever! This is their...*And Justice for All*, this is their *Heartwork*, their *Blessed are the Sick*, and their *Slaughter of the Soul*. The diversity shown on the last three Hypocrisy offerings have all come to a musical and creative peak. Nothing drags or diverts your attention away from the completely overwhelming musical landscape that Hypocrisy relentlessly delivers. "Fractured Millennium" opens this masterwork with operatic harmonies, keyboards, and a Halford-esque screech (no, that's NOT a misprint!), which is a technique that Peter uses several times throughout this disc- each time in good taste, mind you. "Elastic Inverted Visions", "Until the End of Time", "Time Warp", and a total mindfuck of a song, "Selfinflicted Overload" are all separate songs unto themselves, yet somehow never stray from the overall vibe of the CD. There are many styles of extreme music represented here: Classic Metal, Punk, Thrash, Black, Death, and Hardcore are all rapped together and used for the greater good of the music as a whole. Hypocrisy have assembled nothing short of perfection. The only complaint I have is that there is no lyric sheet. I know this is to add to the overall mystique that surrounds Hypocrisy, but come on, even *Cause of Death* had some lyrics!

Various Artists
The Metallic-Era Volume II
(Neat Records)

The second installment of Neat Records compilation series devoted to presenting the world with original versions of cover tunes made famous by Metallica brings us many of the tracks covered on the *Garage Inc.* travesty. I enjoy these compilations, simply because it proves two things: 1) no matter what they say in interviews & otherwise, Metallica's roots dwell completely in Metal, and they'll never be able to escape it, regardless of how mainstream they make their music. And 2) no matter how much money Metallica makes from covering these songs, they still pale in comparison to the originals! I can never forgive Metallica for blaspheming the purity and total evil of MERCYFUL FATE, and their covers of SKYNYRD and MOTORHEAD are laughable. But this release presents all those originals in all of their stellar glory. My only complaint is that the sound quality of the compilation is less than glorious. It would have been a real treat to hear all these classic songs re-mastered and cleaned up, but Neat probably doesn't have the money or time to devote to such a treatment. So we shall deal with this collection as it is meant - to enjoy these golden nuggets of Metal history and reflect upon a band's abandonment of their influence.

Nocturnal Rites
The Sacred Talisman
(Century Media)

Last year I was completely taken away with Nocturnal Rites' sophomore opus, *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*. That disc dominated my CD player for over a month. So I was extremely eager to get my paws on the third installment of the Nocturnal Rites story, *The Sacred*



Fornever
We Whom Are
 (demo)

Why aren't these guys signed? What the hell is wrong with all you record labels out there? Or maybe, what the hell is wrong with Fornever for not getting this promo out to the powers that be? Whatever the case is, these guys kick ass and need to be heard! Every instrument is showcased brilliantly on this release. From the groovy and technical guitar riffs to the superior drumming and funky bass lines, *We Whom Are* is a quick-paced brand of dexterous Death Metal that does not overuse the infamous power chord or rely too much on rehashed riffs. Grunts, moans, screams, growls, and shouts are all part of their vocalist's repertoire, as well as a mourning violin, which makes its appearance at the end of the final song, "The Garden of Never". Technically superior than most grinding or power-chord driven DM bands, Fornever are a band that proves once again that DM cannot be ignored because DM is an ever-growing, ever-changing, and ever-expanding genre of music. Fornever are proponents and catalysts of this phenomenon and it's about time people start opening their ears to some fresh, new blood bleeding into the pool of talent that comprises this great musical art form we call Death Metal.



Appolyon
Diaboli Gratia
 (Full Moon Productions)

Appolyon's Full Moon debut presents them as a Black Metal band that is trying to expand. Much of the music is traditional Black Metal, which is played in a sub-par fashion...the blasts and guitar work simply cannot touch the examples of masters. It is when Appolyon spreads its wings that it briefly rises above mediocrity. In these rare moments on the disc, the music is almost trance-like, not quite as convincing as BETHLEHEM, but still in that realm. Perhaps this is the album that Appolyon needed to record in order to realize which direction they take. Let us all hope that they choose the right path.

Transcendence
The Meridian Project
 (demo)

Transcendence has released easily the best self-produced demo I've ever heard. With a little support and some distribution, this band could become a major force in Progressive Metal. Hailing from the middle of the Dallas/Ft. Worth metroplex (NOT exactly a Prog-Metal hotbed), Transcendence has all of the ingredients for being a great Progressive act: good vocalist, guitar-work that is both melodic and crunching, and keyboards that don't take a backseat to the rest of the music. The one thing that keeps entering my mind every time I listen to this CD is that there is some serious appreciation for IRON MAIDEN's guitar style going on here. "Filtered Lenses" and "Set Fire to the Sky" in particular have opening riffs that hint strongly of MAIDEN, but with the complimentary keyboards these songs don't come off as MAIDEN knock-offs. Greg Drew, the band's vocalist, has a voice that is mid-range, but when he needs to rip off the higher notes he succeeds; the only time he has any problems is when he reaches for the lower notes, but these are few and far between. There's a couple of instrumentals on the disc. First, there's the title track, which is a blistering minute-and-a-half exercise in keyboard and guitar virtuosity, which sounds like something that could have been on an ARTENSION release. Then we have "Alpha" which shares the spirit and technical ability of DREAM THEATER's "Ytse Jam". "No Trace" is the standout track for me (on a disc full of standouts). It's a power ballad in every sense of the word, yet it has this very haunting feel to it. Hell, it's even the typical "lost love" power ballad, which fueled most of the 80s metal bands record sales, but this is from a Prog-Metal band...big difference. Drew makes the best use of his vocal abilities, especially with the double layering of his vocals on this track, including some impressive high notes. *The Meridian Project* is probably the best Prog-Metal disc I've heard this year, and that's including a couple of pretty good releases by ICE AGE and DALI'S DILEMMA. Do yourself a favor and check Transcendence out at their web site, www.TranscendenceMusic.net.



Engine
 (Metal Blade)

FATES WARNING fans, take heed! Ray Alder has created a musical moter with more torque and horsepower than anything a respectable FATES WARNING album would be allowed to produce. Sure, FW has their heavier moments, but its more like a Probe GT's zippiness as compared to Engine's Mustang Cobra power! Engine's power chord assault and fat bass riffs rock hard while Alder's vocals range anywhere from piercing screams to enraged yells. Alder still belts out those harmonies like he does in his full-time band, but this solo album shows a completely different side of him. It's a more simple, straightforward sound with no frills or technical bravado to cover up the rage inside. Far from a Prog sound, this disc is pure Hard Rock that is sure to please FW fans because of its listenability and Hard Rock / Metal fans because of its chunkiness.

Goddess of Desire
Symbol Of Triumph
 (Metal Blade)

Leading off with a track that rings of "Manitou", I knew immediately that Goddess of Desire was going to appeal to my Old School evil Metal affections for bands like VENOM, BATHORY and CELTIC FROST. Aye, the band has congealed the abilities of these aforementioned icons, and the result is not merely a swarming homage (in a doubtlessly classier style than DESEKRATION), but *Symbol of Triumph* proves that those olden sounds are still viable in today's Hard Music heathendom! Many bands would just as soon give praise to the more accessible early and mid 80s Metal bands, but Goddess Of Desire knows the root of evil in Metal stems from the dank recesses of Metal history. They bring to light the horrifying realism that such morbid classics will never die as long as modern bands continue to find charm and influence in their toils! It is this belief that all fans of Metal should cling to: never forget where you came from! It's okay to praise the new, but it is even more important to remember and reflect upon the past, for without the past, there can be no future!!

Moment Maniacs
Two Fuckin Pieces
 (Distortion Records)

Recorded by Peter Tagtgren in the infamous Abyss Studio, Moment Maniacs are brutal, in your face, and extreme. The opening ultra-low power chord drew me into its Death / Grindeore grasp and there was no turning back until I was completely pummeled into the floor of my dorm room! The vocals are shouted (as opposed to screaming or growling) and a definite HYPOCRISY comparison can be drawn (big surprise, there, huh?) on account of the distorted guitar and bass sound. While it's a quite indistinct sound, Moment Maniacs do, in fact, hold their own, forcing you to listen to them even as their sonic assault bludgeons your head into two fuckin' pieces!



Skepticism

Aes
(Red Stream)

Misery has a sonic counterpart, and its name is Skepticism. Their latest venture through the cavernous realms of depression takes the listener on a journey through the tortured terrain of his/her own lost soul. While morose and mournful, this one-track epic dirge leads you on a march of fate. Along the way, you meet face-to-face with despair, emptiness, and abandonment. Your expedition culminates with the startling revelation that there is no light at the end of the tunnel, and you are left weakened, hollow, and alone. Skepticism creates a new study of sorrow and loss with each progressing release, more so than MY DYING BRIDE could ever hope to achieve.

Shamash

Eternal As Time
(Oz Records)

The latest in an ever-growing genre of melodic Black Metal, Mexico's Shamash prove that they have more than mere shrill vocals to play the game. Infusing symphonic keyboards in a similar fashion to CRADLE OF FILTH or DIMMU BORGIR, the band's music comes off as very Thrash-influenced not too far removed from DISSECTION. The vocals range anywhere from an ear-piercing scream to a deep, clean baritone. No jumpy time changes and no excessive blasting, just a free-flowing dark Metal experience is what you'll be attaining from this disc. The cover and liner notes can be a bit misleading as they direct you to believe that they are another depressing Goth band, however, the music is far too energetic and majestic to equate with that presumption. Although the shrieking vocals can become excessive at times, it does not displace the band's vibe of emotional dark Metal.



Entombed

Monkey Puss (Live In London)
(Earache)

Obviously, this disc was unearthed from the vaults of Dig's basement, but that's not a bad thing! Spotting Entombed's finest hour (prior to their Hardcore-infatuated degradation) during 1992's *Clandestine* tour, the band shreds through a set of their classic trademark Gothenburg-styled melodic Death Metal, which brought them as much praise as criticism at the time of the studio album's release. Looking back now, through the evidence presented on this live disc, it is obvious that their influence greatly preceded them, for how can you go wrong with Grind/Death classics like "Stranger Aeons", "Sinners Bleed" and the ever omnipotent "Left Hand Path"? To this very day, their break into the *Phantasm* theme at the end of "Left Hand Path" still gives me chills! *Monkey Puss* truly is a time capsule, in that it shows how great the days of old were, and how much the Death Metal scene has progressed since Entombed's age of influence!

Virgin Steele

The House of Atreus: Act I
(Noise Records)

Virgin Steele, a band whose illustrious six-album career (each album exhibiting extremely intelligent musical growth) has brought them increased admiration and respect in nearly every country in the world, except America. So it is only fitting that they make their American debut with a sure-fire classic, *The House of Atreus: Act I*, Virgin Steele's most innovative and artistic endeavor to date. The album is a Metal-Opera of sorts, in fact, it is a legitimate opera, which has been performed throughout Europe! Similar to SAVATAGE, the album is almost totally composed of tragedy with the proverbial ray of hope peeking through when the story is at its bleakest. The theme of the album tells of the classical Romantic epic tragedy that befalls Agamemnon (hero of the Trojan War) and all who had dwelt in the house of his father, Atreus, essentially the entire royal family of Argos! A similar theme is presented in Shakespeare's Hamlet, but the Greek Tragedy is much more complex and gruesome, but you need to experience it to obtain the full effect. Needless to say, Virgin Steele successfully display all of the necessary emotion through vocal and musical interpretation, each instrument enhancing the required emotional effect. The might of MANOWAR, the moroseness of QUEENSRYCHE, and the classical prowess of QUEEN are presented within Virgin Steele's repertoire, making the band a viable asset to both Metal and Progressive worlds alike. Give *The House OF Atreus: Act I* a listen, and may your perception of life be forever altered!

The Chosen Ones out early Nov.



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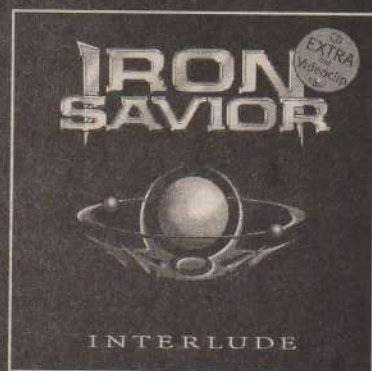
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The Forest Whispers Their Name

By Tyler Pursel

Recently the Black Metal scene has planted its feet deeply in American soil. Much of this is owed to the British (That's right folks—they're not Norwegian) outfit, Cradle of Filth. Utilizing the twin guitar attack of greats like IRON MAIDEN meshed with romantic, almost Renaissance keyboards (and not to mention Dani Filth's unique vocal style), Cradle of Filth have taken America, as well as certain overseas countries, by storm. In the past year or so, though, Cradle have undergone some serious changes. At the completion of Dusk and Her Embrace, keyboardist, Damian, departed for unknown reasons. And more recently, hammer god, Nicholas Barker, left the band to play for DIMMU BORGIR as well as fill in for BORKNAGAR on their recent American tour. With all of this going on, Cradle have still managed to put together a home video as well as play at the famous Milwaukee MetalFest, despite a local minister accusing the band of "Bringing the Devil's music to America." You'd think after all this the band members would be quite bitter, but my chat with Stuart went quite well and although much has affected the band recently, he seemed quite happy with where things are headed. Parents be very afraid!!! MARILYN MANSON has nothing on these guys!

Promethean Crusade: What's going on with you guys right now?

Cradle Of Filth: Well we are working on the new EP which, at the rate we're going, will probably turn into the next album.

PC: That is very cool.

COF: Yeah, we're actually quite excited about it.

PC: What else?

COF: We also have a home video coming out very soon which is a very exciting thing for us.

PC: How do you feel about the Black Metal scene today?

COF: I dunno. It's very Norwegian dominated and that is a tad bothersome. It's kinda like nowadays if you're not from Norway, you're not "True Black Metal." I've actually had many people come up to me and say, "Wow, you guys are great but you're not from Norway." In my opinion that's quite a load of shit.

PC: It's funny you say that because I love how everyone talks about Norwegian Black Metal, and yet you guys are probably the most known in the scene right now— and you're from Britain.

COF: Yeah, it's a bunch of shit really.

PC: Why did Nick Barker leave the band?

COF: I'm sure everybody is coming up with some

elaborate reason why, but it's really quite simple: he and Dani could not get along. After recording Cruelty... things just got bad between the two of them. Then Nicholas heard about the opening in DIMMU BORGIR and just decided that is what he would rather be doing.

PC: Nick has been a part of the band since its inception. Don't you think it will have a large affect on your sound?

COF: It's hard to say, really. I mean when Damian left the band we thought that things would be a lot different. Now we got Les and things have changed a little, but not a whole lot. Our new drummer is named Adrian.

PC: Didn't he play with December Moon?

COF: No, that's the guy that played on the EP, he was just filling in until we could find someone.

PC: What do you like to do to just chill out from all the touring and public appearances and such.

COF: probably the same things you do, man. Play Playstation, listen to music, drink. You know, what any other normal person would do.

PC: Come to think of it that does sound a lot like my weekends.

COF: (laughs)

PC: I've seen in pictures you guys wearing a lot of Old School Black Metal T-shirts, such as GORGOROTH and BURZUM. Are you guys big into the Old School scene?

COF: Yeah, definitely. I mean that was like our era. I'm very big into GORGOROTH; they're a great band. A lot of people today don't realize that without those bands there probably wouldn't be a Black Metal scene.

PC: How do you feel about Hecate Enthroned?

COF: (laughs) let's just say their influenced and leave it at that!

PC: Fine with me. What can Cradle fans expect to hear in a live set?

COF: It will be pretty even, really. We always try to play an equal amount of material from our albums, usually two songs from all



DANI FILTH

except Cruelty... which we usually play three from. We try to keep it even for our fans from the older albums. We still play songs like "Black Goddess Rises" and "Summer Dying Fast".

PC: Well I have not been graced with the joy of seeing you guys perform yet, but when I do I hope to hear "The Forest Whispers my Name".

COF: Oh, definitely, we play that one at almost every show actually.

PC: Do you enjoy listening to your own material?

COF: Hmm... for me it like brings back the memories of when we were making it. It's almost like I completely tune out the music and just think back to events that occurred when we were recording a certain song or album. It's kind of cool actually, I think.

PC: Let's talk about this business with the Wisconsin minister who accused you of "bringing the Devil's music to America."

COF: It's more bullshit really. If I'm correct, they said the same thing when Marilyn Manson came here. It doesn't bother me much. They haven't done much harm as far as I know. We're still set to play the Milwaukee 'Fest so I'm not concerned [And indeed they did play, both to much acclaim and dismay. Read all about it in our featured article on the Milwaukee MetalFest ~ed.].

PC: yeah there's not to much they can do about that sort of

thing. How do you feel about becoming a part of Nuclear Blast?

COF: Pretty good, we have this new album and home video coming out so things are going pretty well.

PC: And I guess to finish up, what do you think the future holds for Cradle of Filth?

COF: Well, hopefully more music and pissing off more people.

CRADLE OF FILTH



Cruelty And The Beast



DANI FILTH

Man! Does Eduardo Paniagua know how to talk! I thought he was going to bust a nut the whole time we were chatting! His excitement and energy is well warranted, though, for he and his band definitely have produced an album well worth the praise it has been receiving in the press recently. Puya's Fundamental incorporates Latin grooves and Metal power which all meld into a heavy-ass groove attained by very few in either the Hardcore or Metal genres. Many bands have one or the other, ferocity or groove, but few yoke them together as well as Puya! Hailing from Puerto Rico, but with much American influence, Puya are not a band to be ignored by both Metalheads and Hardcore fans alike. Puya stand as an ever-affirming testament that the boundaries that lie within the vast genre of Metal are becoming harder and harder to define.



PUYA

By Tom J. Hughes

Promethean Crusade: So tell me about the scene in Puerto Rico right now.

PUYA: There is no big scene at all necessarily for Metal. There is a big audience for Metal, but it doesn't have too much exposure as far as radio or the magazines and stuff like that like there is in the U.S. But there is definitely a big following for it. Whenever heavy bands come to Puerto Rico, like PANTERA or SEPULTURA, they have great shows. But as far as the actual music scene goes, the stuff you see on TV and magazines or hear on the radio, it tends to be more Latin, or more traditional like Reggae. But we're changing all of that!

PC: Yeah! So is that why you moved to Ft. Lauderdale for a while, to enhance your sound a bit?

PUYA: Well that was one of the reasons. After being here for two or three years playing around the island, we wanted to see what else we could do. So we went there because it was the most logical step for us. It was the closest place from Puerto Rico that we could fly to and we already had friends there, so it was kind of easy for us to become established. We lived there for four years and it was a struggle the whole time, but we did become influenced by the heavy music surrounding us there. Lots of Hardcore and Death Metal there. So we took that home with us as a tool, but we still kept the traditional stuff and influences which separates us from most of the Rock bands.

And when we came back, people looked at us with different eyes because we were gone for so long and changed. Especially other bands that were or are trying to do the same thing, they are now looking up to us. It takes a lot of balls to break out and try something new and it's also an extreme amount of work. There's got to be a certain level of insanity involved! It's the only way for everybody to bear with all that you have to put up with. Any person in their right mind would've quit already! But we keep going because it's the only thing we know how to do.

PC: Anyone trying to do anything in the music

scene is going to have to work hard, that's for sure! So when you guys were in Florida, did you intend to get heavier and to focus on the Metal aspect of your music or did it just happen because of your environment?

PUYA: When we were still in Puerto Rico, the music was definitely not as heavy as it got later. You could see it coming maybe, but before Florida, it was more Blues oriented. Then when we were out of our country and surrounded by all this Heavy Metal music, of course we were influenced. But I don't know if it was being away from the island for so long or if we missed it, but we went back to our more traditional music and stayed with it, also. We wanted to go back to our roots and that is why the music went in that direction, too. We grew up on that

stuff, our traditional music, listening to it forever it seems! We didn't plan to put the two together really, it just kind of grew naturally. There were no rules when we wrote the songs, it just flowed naturally. And for the lyrics, too. We used to do a lot of English songs and then as the band progressed it got a little more Spanish. The record is more Spanish than English, but there were many English songs that didn't make it to the record. And we sometimes start in English and finish in

Spanish and the other way too, but whatever kind of sounds better or whatever, it just flows naturally and there are no rules between the Spanish and the English. We try to write lyrics about real life stuff, too, so that the people can relate individually. We want the listener to be an active part of the band, and not just a part of the herd! We all have our own brains and can make our own decisions. We want people to figure out things for themselves and not be so indecisive. We don't like to have people tell you how to dress or what to do with your life. We invite people to choose for themselves and

to be individuals with our songs on this record. That's the overall message, even though each song is a little different, the music is the most basic thing.

PC: It's the universal language.

PUYA: That's precisely the reason why we called it *Fundamental*, because the music is the most fundamental thing.

PC: How do you think this affects your English audience, though, with mostly Spanish lyrics?

PUYA: Nobody seemed to have a problem with it, as far as the record label and the management. So we just went on with it, and the producer was crazy about it. But in the beginning it was a big worry of mine. I didn't know how people would react to a mostly Spanish record, which is why we put the translation on the record. I mean, we were playing mainly to an English audience in the 'States, but after being on the road for eight or nine months playing Anglo shows as well as Latin, I noticed that the barrier was not that big. And every day it keeps getting smaller and smaller and hopefully one day it will disappear. There might be some people who get turned off because of the language thing, but I don't really care about that because it's the way we wrote it and felt at the time, and so far we're getting very positive responses.

PC: I think the music speaks for itself, though.

PUYA: Exactly. I mean, we're mainly a Hardcore or Rock style band, but I ask them to tell me one Hardcore band where you can understand what they're saying anyway! So Spanish or English, it really doesn't make a difference anyway.

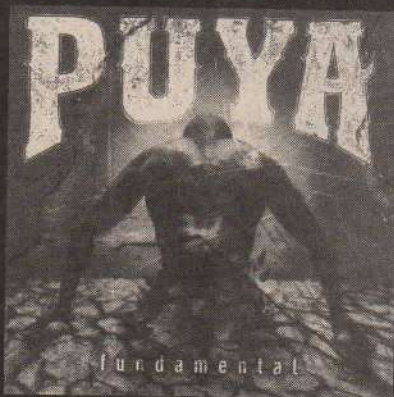
PC: So what did you guys think of the March Metal Meltdown?

PUYA: Yeah, we played and it went really good. We played with SEPULTURA a few days before then along with SPINESHANK and a few others, and getting to know all these guys and gaining their respect after we've been listening to all of them for so long is really great. The Meltdown was great, but on Saturday night when SEPULTURA played it was real late and the people were tired, but we had, like, the perfect time slot and things were great for us. The place was packed and the people were really getting into it.

PC: Did you sense a difference between your style of music, the more Hardcore stuff, with the more dark, real Metal or maybe even Goth, where everyone is wearing black and leather with long hair and stuff?

PUYA: Yeah, but we never really haven't gotten into any gimmicks and stuff. We really don't have time to think about that! We just like to play and hopefully everyone will get the same satisfaction from listening to it as we get from playing it. It is what it is; it's all about music and nothing else. We try to push that fact, that music goes beyond language, culture, and race. Anyone from any part of the world can listen to music and feel it, they can feel the rhythm and the energy. It's great that some bands are putting their own influences from their own countries into their music. There needs to be more of that. People who didn't know anything about Puerto Rico do now, you know? I think that it is great that people are starting to get it. They're being open-minded and that is one of the things we're trying to accomplish.

Continued on next page



Continued from previous page

PC: It seems to me that you guys took the intensity and energy of Heavy Metal and put the feeling and groove of your own music into it and-

PUYA: Yeah, because when we play shows there is like this extension of energy between the band and the crowd and there is no comparison! I mean, when you play heavy and see the people's faces, it's the best feeling and we love to play the heavy stuff!

PC: So you don't care about being looked down upon by Metalheads deep in the underground simply because you're not Metal enough?

PUYA: Naw. Not at all. We don't care. People will think whatever they want. We're getting great feedback from everybody and we're getting a lot of exposure in different places just for doing our own thing. We know it's working and that we're onto something. We've all been playing since we were little, even before the band. It's our passion and we need to keep pursuing that. Even if nobody was listening to us, we'd still be playing! I mean, we listen to all different kinds of music from Classical music to SLAYER and we have all these influences in our music.

PC: That's great because I think a lot of Americans are closed-minded when it comes to music. They listen to only one kind and never branch out. They aren't receptive to different cultures and their music.

PUYA: That might be true, but people are really responding, especially the younger ones from the new generation. When we play all-ages shows, the kids who are like fifteen or whatever, they come only for the music. They don't come to drink or whatever, they go for the band, and when they grow up they'll keep coming to our shows. Even the adults, whether they are Anglo or Latino, no matter what age or who we're opening for, it hasn't been an obstacle.

PC: So there is no difference between crowd reactions from your Latino audience and your American/English audience?

PUYA: Well, the main difference is that the Latino audience will hear the music and understand it right away. They understand where we come from and are more familiar with the Latin sound. I guess the Americans, it takes a few more minutes for them to get it. They might reach down for their CD jackets or whatever, but I get tons of e-mails saying that they are learning Spanish with our record! They're catching up on all our phrases and having fun with it! I never would've suspected it.

PC: That's funny because in our schools, along the southern borders of California, Texas, and Florida, we're having trouble teaching kids English! We have to have bilingual education down there for all the Spanish speaking families with kids who don't learn English.

PUYA: Really? Here in Puerto Rico we have an advantage because we've been affiliated with the 'States for so long, that we have a very good English program. Especially in the private schools, kids are forced to learn it from like the first grade because all the books are written in English. Math, science, and history is all taught in English. But to tell you the truth, I learned most of my English from watching television and all the cartoons from when I was a little kid!

KAMELOT

by Mark Gromen

Returning to his native Tampa from a job with a European supplier of soccer apparel, guitarist Thom Youngblood is a man with several irons in the fire. Not only is he preparing the fourth album for his band, Kamelot, but along with friend & ELEGY frontman, Ian Parry, recorded "Flight Of Icarus" for the upcoming Meteorcity tribute to IRON MAIDEN. Thom's also working with a second band, MONARQUE, which features former Kamelot vocalist Mark Vanderbilt, and has undertaken the challenge of starting a new compilation series, devoted entirely to Progressive and Power Metalers, called *Powerquest*. To say he's busy is an understatement, but he realizes the time is right for Kamelot's catchy, slightly technical melodies to make an impact at home, as it already has abroad.

As a result of touring together, Youngblood & Parry became fast friends, reciprocating on each other's latest recordings. After adding his chops to a pair of cuts on Parry's forthcoming CONSORTIUM PROJECT disc, the Brit asked Thom and his bandmates to record the 'MAIDEN track. "IRON MAIDEN were one of my favorite bands growing up," admits the guitarist. "They were the inspiration for starting to play and writing [songs]. It's cool, because [Ian] could have used ELEGY, or any other musicians, because [the label] specifically asked Ian to do a song. "Flight Of Icarus" is one of my favorite 'MAIDEN songs. I knew it's a good grooving, straight-ahead guitar song. We didn't have any hesitation about doing it."

"Flight Of Icarus" was recorded in drummer, Casey Grillo's, home studio where Kamelot, apart from Norwegian vocalist, Roy Khan, also did pre-production with HEAVENS GATE guitarist-turned-producer, Sascha Paeth. The as yet untitled opus will be recorded in Germany this fall, with a planned street date of January 2000. "We've flown Sascha over [to Tampa] for a month. It's a godsend. We've never done pre-production before. We'd just go in the studio and start recording. Now I know pre-production is the key. Before you go in and start paying for recording time, take time with the

producer to make the song. Have an outside ear, "Try this, try that. Skim this, cut that."

As to the direction the new disc will take, the guitarist assures, "We're going to be more power, less symphonic and just use studio musicians for keyboards. The focus is more on guitar oriented songs. We don't want to base our music on keyboards. We want to keep the power and aggressiveness. If I have any negatives about our last release (*Siege Perilous*), it should have been a little more heavy." He continues, "We're going to have ten to twelve songs on the album. Everything we do, whether the theme is Medieval or Arthurian, it's always relates to the present time. On the last record, we had a song called "King's Eyes," which was about making the most out of life, taking chances and doing what you want. Even though we have Medieval themes, it's not about a certain person or time in the past. That becomes hokey. The two [new ones] that really stand out in my mind are "Glory", about a crusader who's

fighting with his conscience about killing in the name of God and "Knights Of Arabia", a complete Persian, Egyptian feel. Over the past few months, I've been listening to a lot of that style of music and wanted to apply it to what we're doing."

"We're going to have Persian musicians playing on it. That's one of the reasons I

picked Sascha (to produce), because he really wants to make it authentic. If we're going to do an Arabian song, I want to do it right. I've played keyboards for years and Roy's an accomplished pianist, but we felt we could do better for the keyboard instrumental side of Kamelot. If it means hiring an awesome keyboard player, that's what we're going to do. We don't want to be saying, 'It could have been better.' We want to be 100% satisfied. We're taking three months to record and three weeks to mix. We're going overboard as far as time, but we're gonna have time to listen back to the record, after we're done. If there are any changes, [we can] go back. We really didn't have the luxury, in the past, to do that. Expectations, for us, are really high."



NOVEMBERS DOOM

THE SOLACE OF SADNESS
BY TOM J. HUGHES

I don't think I've ever had a more easy-going conversation with a stranger before in my life. After talking with Paul Kuhr, the band's founder and vocalist, and even before the phone conversation with just his lyrics and music before me, I felt like I've really found a kindred spirit. With the lone exception of Chuck Bonnett of DISARRAY, I never felt closer to someone I've never even met before! As with my DISARRAY interview, I didn't really write any questions out beforehand and just relied on the conversation itself to materialize into a meaningful and insightful probe into the human side of Metal- the real spirit behind the powerful music. Oftentimes we just listen to the music and feel its overpowering sensation flow through us and we don't stop to look at from where exactly it is these sonic waves of energetic force are emerging. Life's experiences in all of its twists and turns shape and mold the art we deem Metal, and it is our ethics, morals, beliefs, and environment which overwhelmingly permeate our thought patterns, severely affecting our art. One cannot separate the mind from the man, nor can we separate the artist from his art. Therefore, when speaking of one's experiences and beliefs, his environment and mindworkings, we really are, then, discussing the art itself. Keep this not only in mind when reading this particular interview, but most others as well (that is, if the interviewer really knows what he is doing, which of course, will evidence itself in the course of the conversation).

Promethean Crusade: What happens after you die?

Novembers Doom: I don't handle death well, at all. It really bothers me because it's so unknown and it's not that it's a fear of death, but it's a fear of not living. I can't imagine or put into focus the afterlife- if there is an afterlife. Maybe there is absolutely nothing. It's such a hard concept and I have no idea...

PC: As far as your own personal beliefs go, whether you have religious ideas or religious things you do, or your philosophy, because in your lyrics you talk about death an awful lot. Even just solitude, being alone...

ND: See I was born and raised Catholic, and my parents put me through Sunday school and all that stuff, so I was raised with this Catholic belief. But especially getting older, not so much when you're young because... I think when you're young, religion is good because it molds morals in people. But as you get older and start making up your own mind and making decisions for yourself, I think that's when you start to question faith and start to really disbelieve a lot of the things that were taught. You start looking at things around you and you think there is no possible way that an all-loving God could let things like this happen.

PC: I hear you there and I have the same

problems myself. You know, I was raised in a Christian home and now I have all these questions and I feel that just from listening to your music and reading your lyrics that I could talk to you forever. Usually I get nervous before interviews but I feel so natural right now just talking with you about these things.

ND: You know, you just paid me one of the greatest compliments I could get, seriously.

PC: Really? You think?

ND: I put so much into what I write. So much thought goes into it and so many different emotions go into every word, and that's one of the reasons why I try to make the Death Metal vocals as audible and as understandable as possible. Because I got a lot to say and if people can't really understand what I'm saying then it kind of defeats the purpose of even writing. So I really stress hard to try to let people understand or be able to decipher what it is that's coming out of my mouth on tape.

PC: So have you ever thought of going with more clean vocals than the little bits you have on the disc?

ND: Well, I jumped into it a little on this CD with "Forever With Unopened Eye" and I've got some clean stuff going on the back of "The Jealous Sun". I did a little bit of clean stuff with the other band I'm in, EM SINFONIA, but basically I think with the next recording that we've already started writing stuff for, I've been playing around with some stuff but I've never been vocally trained at all, so I'm just thankful I'm not tone deaf. There's



so many things I would like to do but I just don't have the abilities because I've never been properly shown how to do it.

PC: So you just kind of wing it?

ND: Yeah, that's exactly what I do! I've always been fairly good at the whole Death Metal thing and then I started to do the clean stuff and it's a bit of a challenge but I want to try and expand on that a little bit more for the future.

PC: Shaun Glass of SOIL told me that you did the cover art for their two releases. Any other bands whose artwork you contributed to?

ND: Yeah, I did the MACABRE GLOOM re-release. I used to do everything for Red Stream, so I did a few SKEPTICISM and BETHLEHEM CDs. I did the HIMINBJORG cover... a lot of stuff for Pat. I did the EM SINFONIA art and everything for Olympic Records, too, like GORGUTS, DIVINE EMPIRE, the OZZY tribute that we have a track on. I'm currently doing BROKEN HOPE, the new MACABRE, ANGEL CORPSE, INNER SELF...

PC: So you're really busy right now.

ND: A lot of this, though, isn't my original cover art. I do more of the layout and graphic design; I put it all together and add elements to it. I would like to do more original stuff like SOIL and EM SINFONIA, but I'm so busy. I also do corporate stuff, like for Harley Davidson and stuff at my nine-to-five job then I come home and do all this freelance stuff.

PC: So you ride?

ND: No, I just did their Christmas card and some other stuff like that, but I'd love to ride. Actually, for years and years I wanted a bike. But one day I was with Brian Griffin, from BROKEN HOPE and EM SINFONIA, my wife, and Maria Abril from the label and we were going to a restaurant on this dark, windy road and we saw a horrible, horrible accident. We got out of the car and we were with this guy, he didn't have his helmet, him or his girlfriend, they sideswiped this car and we were basically hanging onto this guy watching him die in our arms. It was brutal. And then I saw like ten million pieces of the bike and his twisted leg behind him... he was broken and mangled and you could see he was slipping quick. They had to get him out of there with a chopper, so after I saw that...

PC: Holy shit, you're scaring me off my bike.

ND: It was so rough, man. I was gung-ho. I was getting a Harley, there was no stopping me until I saw that and then this happened. It's pretty real when you're right there and watching it take place. It's stuff like that that I witness and experience or see that I think about and it goes right into my thought patterns when I write.

PC: And it really moves you and affects you... puts you in a meditative or reflective state.

ND: You know, I looked for this for a very long time. Novembers Doom has been around since about 1989 and I went through so many different band members and I was never quite happy until I found Eric Burnley, the guitarist who writes all the music. That guy blows me away. I've never written with any musician that I would want to write with more than him because he amazes me with everything he comes up with. It's very different; you'll never see him play just a power chord. Every string, everywhere he plays, he's just amazing, so he really creates that atmosphere that I've always been looking for and it complements what I want to do perfectly. If Eric ever wanted to not do this anymore, I'd pretty much throw in the towel. Honestly, I don't think I could ever

find another guitarist to write with fully that would make me as happy with the outcome as what he's done.

PC: It's funny you say happy because you're music is anything but! Maybe satisfied or...

ND: Satisfied, I guess, would be a better word! What's funny, though, is I hate happy music. It's just a waste of time to me because it's just boring and happy! What's the point? It doesn't move me. There's no emotion; it's just dumb and happy. Like my parents listen to all that happy, sappy Oldies crap. I mean, come on!

PC: Yeah, it's so true. It's just not real. It's fake.

ND: That's very true.

PC: And all the people, just the sheer, mass amounts of people that listen to all this happy shit... they're fake, too. They never think deep thoughts or care about the big picture, like, one big thing that I'm struggling with right now is why are we here? What's my purpose besides supporting music, which is what I love? No one wants to talk about this stuff and they all just piss me off.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

ND: I think you're right. You don't ask any questions that I don't ask myself all the time.

PC: And I'm not sure if I'd call myself a Christian anymore, although I'm drawn to it more than any other religion because it answers more questions than the other religions do.

ND: I'm torn all the time and that's why it was so hard to answer that question earlier about the afterlife. I'm torn because one day I'll sit down and think about it and I'll think that a human being, life itself is too unbelievable for their not to be... there has to be an answer other than science. I have a hard time buying that reproduction and life itself is merely... it's too amazing to be a science. So I'll sit there and I'll think that there has to be a higher power. There has to be something that created life and I'll draw a lot from that. But then the next day I'll sit and I'll think no! Forget about it! There's nothing and all you're gonna do is lay in a box and rot. Your mind is just gonna shut off and there'll be nothing left. And then I'll get in moods where I'll think that what if everything shuts down except for your voice in your mind? What if that never goes away? What if that is all you have left for eternity? Then I think that is where religion comes into play. No matter what religion you have, if you follow that religion and you've lived your life to its fullest, you'll live in that little voice in your mind for eternity in complete peace. But if you've went against everything you've been taught, then it'll be kind of like that chaotic craziness for eternity. I'm really torn on religion right now.

PC: As far as your female vocals go, how about trying to enhance them more or use them more in the future, because I think they're not used as much as I'd like.

ND: Well, Cathy was the only one who had the vocal training and Mary Bielich, who was in MYTHIC-

PC: MYTHIC!?! I remember them! Whatever happened to the other two girls?

ND: The singer went on to form DEMONICH CHRIST and then they split up and now they're called DARK MOON without her singing. They're a phenomenal band that just signed with Music For Nations. Terry, the drummer, she lives in Pittsburgh and I really don't think she's doing anything with music at this time.

PC: I always wondered what happened to them!
ND: Yeah, now's a really good time to talk about women in the band because Cathy is no longer with us. There's reasons she's not more up front in a lot of this music. We wanted her to be more prominent, we wanted her to have more songs like "All the Beauty Twice Again", we wanted her to have more lead vocal roles, but she was never fully involved with this band even though she's been with me since day one. Everything we've ever done she's been on with me. She's not into Death Metal whatsoever, but for some reason when she heard what we were doing, it moved her so much that she had to be a part of the band. But it wasn't in her heart to be in a band. She had a lot of issues and left for the other side of the country on three weeks notice. So we are currently looking for someone to replace her and if we haven't found someone by this second album we're going to find someone just to sing as a session vocalist, so there is probably going to be less female vocals on the new one.

PC: That's too bad.

ND: Yeah, but a lot of thought and writing went into this next piece and I really tried to tie everything together. It's going to be a concept piece and not a minute of silence on the whole record. From everything we've talked about already it seems like you're really going to get into it a lot.

Iron Savior

Interludes

(Noise Records)

Ah, the mighty iron-man Piet Sielck treats us to another dose of Space Metal not even a year after blessing us with *Unification!* Though to be regarded as an EP, *Interludes* is comprised of ten tracks, five live (from their magnificent performance at 1998's Wacken Open Air Festival) and five brand new studio recordings. While the live tracks are flawless and brilliant, the true magic of this disc lies in the new songs. Piet Sielck and company (minus the assistance of Kai Hansen) have composed magnificent, tasteful anthems of pure Metal, which would have fit perfectly on *Unification*. "Contortions Of Time" is an absolute 'hand clapping' track, full of heavy riffage and MAIDEN-like signatures, while "Touching The Rainbow" is strangely an epic RAINBOW-ish ode to Hope. "Stone Cold" (Mr. Austin's new entrance music?) has hints of ELO and, although a very upbeat sounding

Children of Bodom

Hatebreeder

(Nuclear Blast)

It is very rare that a band jumps onto the scene with a debut album that floors each listener with its unique style. Children of Bodom's debut did just that, blending many styles into one sound unique only to them- an achievement that takes most bands many years to accomplish, if they ever do. With such lofty words being said, the question now arises, have Children of Bodom matured? Yes! Children of Bodom have successfully built upon the nearly flawless sound of their debut. The songs on *Hatebreeder* flow with more ease than on *Something Wild*, and there are many more surprises for the listener. In fact, it takes more than one listen to fully grasp this album and to be able to hear the intricacies of each respective instrument. Carrying on with tradition, Children of Bodom still blend the elements of Thrash and Old-School Classic Heavy Metal, but it is on *Hatebreeder* that refinement is added.

Perhaps the biggest difference between *Hatebreeder* and its predecessor is that there is more technicality in the music coupled with more riffs that are soon to be classic. Each instrument shines in its own moment of glory, and is allowed to do so with a definite improvement in the production department. Children of Bodom create some of the most intense, yet impressive music out there that is sure to please fans of varying genres of Metal.

song with a catchy chorus, is a depressing reflection on an unfulfilled life. "The Hatchet Of War" sounds like a song left off of *Unification*, but I cannot understand why; it's an exciting, lively call to arms. If you didn't

already know, "Desert Plains" is a respectful reworking of the JUDAS PRIEST classic. Of course, as with all Iron Savior works, the lyrics depict parallels to the state and battle within the Metal scene... read them, you'll understand! *Interludes* serves its intended purpose well and it entices the listener to demand more Savior!!!!

IRON SAVIOR



INTERLUDE

Sea of Tranquility

The Omegan Ruins

(Cursed Productions)

Wading through the piles of face paint, nail polish, false vampire teeth, and broomsticks, it is hard to find examples of True Metal these days. Look no further than Sea of Tranquility. I played this disc and loved every minute of it. The key word here is solid. Sea of Tranquility are difficult to fit neatly into one specific genre so I won't even bother going there. That, my friends, is the mark of a good band. What I can tell you is that if you were ever a fan of great Metal such as old OBITUARY, CARCASS, KREATOR, and POSSESSED you will definitely love this album!

Morbid Angel

Love of Lava (bonus disc)

(Earache)

Morbid Angel is the greatest Death Metal band of all time. This is a fact, not just my opinion. Even after suffering through the devastating departure of one of Death Metal's all-time greatest front men, "The God of Emptiness" himself, David Vincent, Morbid Angel forged ahead and smashed our heads in once again with the pummeling, *Formulas Fatal to the Flesh*. Aside from the newest Emperor offering, I can't remember a CD that was so heavily scrutinized

by the Metal press. Almost a year after its original release, Mr. Azagthoth deems us worthy of another issuing of *Formulas...*, but this time there is a special treat, a blessing if you will- a second disc that contains no less than 40 minutes of Geor... ummm... I mean Trey's finest solos, isolated out of their original setting and presented to us without drums, bass, or rhythm guitar. This disc is not for everyone and even I, the world's biggest Morbid Angel fan, have two minor complaints: 1) having to pay \$27 for a CD that I already had purchased on the day of its release and 2) the lack of solos from

anything predating *Domination*. But these are only minor and seemed to be eased when looking at the autographed "Chewier Fish" pick that came with the disc. *Love of Lava* is geared to the Morbid Angel fan who just simply must have everything that has Morbid Angel's name on it. So if you are the proud owner of *Abominations of Desolation*, *The Laibach Remixes*, *Morbid Angel- the Beginning*, and to a lesser extent, *Entangled in Chaos*, start combing the racks of your local import store. Happy hunting!

Children Of Bodom



Hatebreeder

Samael
Eternal
 (Century Media)

When Samael released the *Exodus* EP, I wasn't too thrilled. I saw those few new tracks as a straying away from the brilliance that radiated from *Passage*. With *Eternal*, though, I now find myself in a conundrum. *Eternal* picks up right where *Exodus* left off, yet I love it! Perhaps it's because I'm a year removed from those earlier sentiments, or it could be because I now have twelve songs instead of just six (technically seven, I guess) to judge said album by... either way, I like *Eternal* much more so than *Exodus* even though they are very similar in sound, structure, and style. With each passing album, Samael's sound becomes more rhythmic and digitized. The melodies of a guitar riff, a string piece, or piano interlude are cleverly harbored behind a wall of electronic pulses, appearing here and there, but never lasting. Synthesized loops and ghostly choirs are programmed to accentuate the dark, brooding guitars and vocals as Xy once again displays his knack for computer programming. Samael are by far one of the most modern of Metal bands, opting for a more mechanized, synthesized sound that is oh so



prevalent in Techno / Dance / Club / Rave / and DJ music. In fact, if you just heard the first five to ten seconds of many of these tracks, you'd think Samael was just another DJ cutting a full length release. There's plenty of Metal to go around, though, and I see Samael as bridging a gap between two genres of music that heretofore have been at odds with one another. Metalheads hate clubs and those people who frequent these dance clubs don't like Metalheads, am I not correct? Samael prove with *Eternal* (the culmination of a sound which began with *Rebellion*) that ALL music is to be appreciated on one level or another, and that the definable constructs we build around our differing sounds are not that easily grounded in reality. The reality is that music is music is music; subcultures flock around the styles and flavors of the month, but we all bleed red. It's this mystery that Samael is touching upon with *Eternal*, the simple fact that there is nothing new under the sun and that all our music is ultimately the same yesterday, today, and forever. When performed

properly, it spans time and cultures, which is what all good art does. Metal needs bands like Samael to make us realize that there actually is an entire world of music out there besides Metal, though sometimes we'd like to think otherwise.

Under Moonlight Sadness
After the Cosmic Gate
 (Oz Records)

Wow, who would've thought that our neighbors downstairs harbored such talent? When I think of Mexico, the last thing I think of is Metal! Alas, though, 'tis true and mine ears detect the majestic sounds of atmospheric (and melodic! Oh the mere thought!) Black Metal at that!! Under Moonlight Sadness is comprised of six wonderful musicians who are not afraid to push the boundaries of an art form developed in Scandinavia, yet which has cropped up in every corner of the globe with as many different styles and sounds as countries it now appears in. UMS provide their own ethnic twist to the genre, incorporating classic guitars, panpipes, rain sticks, the kena, and various other ancient and modern instruments into their songs. Fusing these ethnocentric sounds with the international and culture-crossing elements of Metal, UMS have developed a unique sound and style quite pleasing to my ears. Cellos, a plethora of synthesizer sounds running the gamut of sonic definition, samples, piano, heavy and clean guitars, clean vocals, Death vocals, some female vocals, glorious choirs, and whispers are all part of the



diverse UMS sound... and I fucking love it! I hate to tag the term Black Metal on them (because I personally can't stand the genre in its rawest and most popular form), but this is where their roots lie, so please do not let this deter you from checking them out. UMS are so diverse and I can't pigeonhole them to any one genre, but unfortunately I have to critique them within the confines of which Metal has thus appeared in our lifetime; thus the term Black Metal is used. To try and put it simply, they incorporate Black Metal elements but have too many outside influences to be considered Black Metal. Coming from Mexico and given their culture's mestizo characteristics, it should come as no surprise that I am having a difficult time defining their sound...

Latin American countries do this type of thing all the time. Their entire culture of music defies strict categorization because they take influences from all over the globe and put it into their songs and dances. The same can be said of UMS: they are properly representing their culture in the sphere of Heavy Metal and are to be commended highly for their aesthetic achievement. Real fans of music that is abrasive and artistic, raw and melodic, and morose and majestic will surely find UMS a cultivated and tasteful listen, as pleasing to the ears as crickets under a full moon and clear night sky.



Mercyful Fate
 9
 (Metal Blade)

Being a card-carrying member in the church of "Diamond" it was extremely difficult to watch as Mercyful Fate released their last two discs, *Into the Unknown* and *Dead Again*, which both consisted of mediocre compositions (at least by Fate standards). So I was reluctant to shell out \$20 on a new Mercyful Fate CD, especially when you couple this with the fact that nearly all the Diamond / Fate catalogs have been re-issued with bonus tracks. So why take a chance on 9 when *Melissa* and *Don't Break the Oath* are sitting on the racks in shiny new packages? Because 9 is the CD you wanted Mercyful Fate to release back in '93 when the reunion was first announced. 9 is by far the most aggressive Fate CD to date, unrelenting in its assault, pausing only to let you breathe for a moment, then smacking you with a shovel right between the eyes! "Insane", "Sold My Soul", "House on the Hill", and "Buried Alive" will all be considered classics and stand shoulder to shoulder with the likes of "Gypsy", "Satan's Fall", "A Dangerous Meeting". Sounds like a bold statement, I know, but on a scale from one to ten, I'd give 9 an 18 (18 is actually 9).

Night To Die
All Evil Crying
 (Repulse)

An exquisite 3-track EP of total agonized Death/Thrash, Night To Die offer us a glimpse of energy and sorrow through very skilled musicianship. Chock-full of native Spanish & Eastern influence, the band formulates a mood of somberness, but not to the point of hopeless depression. Their power lies within the perfect marriage of their Spanish culture with MESHUGGAH & DIMMU BORGIR speed-Thrash guitar elements, making for an emotional yet energetic performance. My only criticism of *All Evil Crying* is that the disc is way too short, once the palate is whetted, the hunger is not sated. I eagerly anticipate a full-length release! As always, Repulse's ass-kicking releases are available in the U.S. through the Century Media mail order catalog.



NO FASHION RECORDS WHERE WE GO OTHERS CAN ONLY FOLLOW

WHERE WE GO OTHERS CAN ONLY FOLLOW



NFR033

"The Unholy Crusade" their long awaited third album. The band remains eager, the line-up is the same... it is only the violence that increases.

LORD BELIAL
The Unholy Crusade



NFR032

Finally, Hypocrite delivers the album that will rate them as a new school Death Metal act of the highest order. Listen and learn.

HYPOCRITE
Into The Halls Of The Blind



NFR034

"Vexilla Regis Prodeunt Inferni" a innovative and experimental Metallic Black Symphony Of Death.

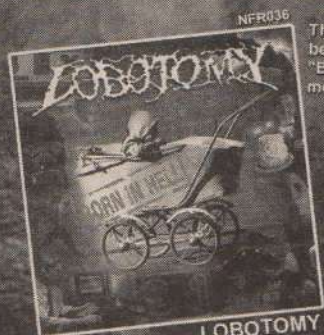
NOCTES
Vexilla Regis Prodeunt Inferni



NFR031

If you think that black metal have turned into something dull and predictable, then listen to "Vrede" and you will change your mind.

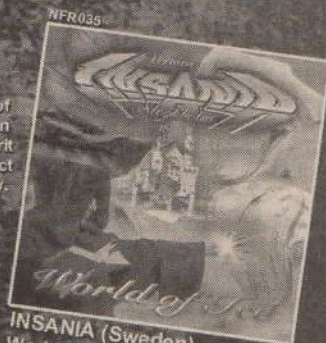
ALLEGIANCE
Vrede



NFR036

The third album from Swedens best old-school death metal band. "Born in Hell" shows what death metal is all about...sheer brutality!

LOBOTOMY
Born In Hell



NFR035

Building on the heritage of such legends as Helloween Insania interpretes the spirit of true power metal in a direct fascinating and honest way.

INSANIA (Sweden)
World Of Ice

NFR039



VIA-WHERE WE GO OTHERS CAN ONLY FOLLOW

This compilation from No Fashion Records contains some of the best Swedish Metal bands at the moment. From the blasphemous Dark Funeral to the new Power Metal sensation Insania (Stockholm), this is a showcase of a label that is always a step ahead.

UP-COMING RELEASES:

NFR038 Vassago- Knights From Hell
NFR039 Dark Funeral-Teach Children To... (Cover Ep)
NFR040 Fester-Silence (re-mastered + bonus tracks)
T.B.A Dark Funeral-S/T (re-release of the legendary debut mini-CD. With new layout & photos including bonus tracks and lyrics)



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Cannibal Corpse

Bloodthirst
(Metal Blade)

Following up 1998's near self-destructive *Gallery of Suicide*, the monarchs of repulsion bounce back with an album that is on the scale of 1992's *Tomb Of The Mutilated*. Much credit is due to renowned producer Colin Richardson, who assisted in the sculpting of CARCASS' finest releases! With this album, he has helped Cannibal accentuate their individual strengths and hone their style to a deadly, serrated, Carcharodon edge, rejuvenating the band to dangerous proportions! Although gore-soaked lyrics have become the band's bland trademark, their music has taken on new life, pulverizing your senses with each track! George's vocals are even more vile and blood-curdling than his previous performances. Paul's skin-pounding has the precision of a surgeon, Alex's low end presentation is as intense as ever, and Pat & Jack's finely-tuned, dual guitar assault grinds your auditory nerves to new levels of torment. This is the return of the Cannibal Corpse of old, taking pleasure in their unforgiving destruction of humanity through the abuse of Metal!



Prophecy

Contagion
(Pavement)

When FEAR FACTORY released *Soul of a New Machine* a few years back, I must admit that I was instantly a fan. Without the intention of knocking FEAR FACTORY's chosen direction, Prophecy's sound can be summed up as what FEAR FACTORY would have sounded like had they stuck to the style of their debut. Prophecy takes that Death Metal meets Industrial approach and refines it. One can tell that early FEAR FACTORY played a great role in shaping this band, but Prophecy are not the product of their influences remaining on familiar ground. At times, Prophecy can play as brutal as many of the Death Metal bands today, and at other times this brutality is matched with superb programming. It is when Prophecy lays down the groove that they excel in sickness. The key word here is diversity, and Prophecy is truly the sum of its parts. Fans of many different styles are bound to love this disc.

PROPHECY



Katatonia

Tonight's Decision
(Peaceville)

I must admit that I have never been a big fan of Katatonia for the simple reason that I felt their previous albums lied more in the realm of mediocrity than ground-breaking experimentation. I am starting to think again after hearing this latest album, which is unlike anything they have previously done. It does seem that many of the European bands are taking new directions far from their past, but for Katatonia, this is a definite improvement. Gone are the Death vocals, which are replaced with a melancholic drone that accents this dreary music quite well. This is not an album that can be described as "heavy" or "mellow", but it is rather a picture painted of emotions. The guitars and melodies in general serve more as a device for conveying feeling than to showcase riffs. Katatonia's writing style has become more closely matched to bands like THE CURE or SISTERS OF MERCY who use the same formula of texture rather than meat and potatoes guitar riffs. What results somewhere is the combined atmosphere of PINK FLOYD and THE CURE with a heavier guitar sound. It works, and quite well. By "mellowing out", Katatonia have actually

become darker than many of the contemporaries, and have proved that this darkness in music is not the result of some formula, but rather from one's soul.

Pessimist

Blood for the Gods
(Lost Disciple)

Some people have made the most tragic mistake of rendering Death Metal as a dying art form that has keeled over in the wake of the growing popularity of Black Metal. Though one can say that Death Metal bands may not be as "photogenic" or "shocking", isn't it the music that matters most? Pessimist's new release comes at the perfect time, a time when Death Metal needs resurgence, and *Blood for the Gods* most definitely delivers the goods. I'm trying to refrain from giving this album the run-of-the-mill Death Metal album review, but I just cannot help but say that this album is brutal, or, rather, BRUUUUUTAAAAAAL!!! The album is just as brutal as it is technical, and just as raw as it is tight, which brings me to my point. Pessimist have divinely captured the essence of all that is Death Metal by not becoming fixated on one particular musical idea, but rather working as a powerhouse to produce a crushing overall effect. The guitar work is absolutely amazing, with squeals and leads that will send every guitarist to their practice room dying to emulate their newfound heroes. The drums are tight and diverse as well, plowing through some of the most syncopated double-bass this side of Pete Sandoval. On top of all this, the vocals are the final icing on the cake with the lows being the most guttural, bruising sounds and the highs shrieking painfully and ripping vocal chords along the way. Pessimist is now secured with a firm place among the all-stars of Death Metal. In fact, they may just take the lead! BUY THIS ALBUM!!!

Even Song
Path of the Angels

Even Song
Path of the Angels
(Displeased)

Even Song is comprised of five really depressed Hungarians. And why are they so depressed you might ask? Well, if they caught Century Media's eye before THEATRE OF TRAGEDY did, then they'd be really popular right now! But I'm sure one band sounding like THEATRE OF TRAGEDY is all CM can handle, so they have to stick with Displeased for now. I mean, Even Song are the spittin' image of TOT. If someone played this disc for me and told me it was TOT's newest release, I would say they lost some atmosphere, but I really don't think I would have trouble believing them! Even Song's male (both clean and distorted) and female vocals pretty much match up to Raymond and Liv Kristine's and the basic song structures are very similar. One big difference between the two bands, though, is that Even Song have a better drummer than THEATRE OF TRAGEDY... but then again, who doesn't! Obviously, if you're a fan of atmospheric Metal with strong female vocals and long, drawn out songs, then *Path of the Angels* is definitely for you.

Ashes You Leave

Desperate Existence
(Musickness/Morbid Records)

Opening with a soft soundscape consisting of chimes, a flute, gentle winds, and an even gentler celestial voice, Ashes You Leave calmly invite you into their dark and quiet home, beckoning you to close your eyes and let your imagination do all the wandering. Your ears slowly begin to pick up visions of violins amidst distorted guitars and flighty flutes flirting with harsh vocals. Clean guitar melodies are interrupted by massive power chords, yet much attention is paid to silencing the heavier guitars in favor of softer, more quiet, and less obtrusive instruments. Keyboards are used more sparingly than one would think in a Doom / Goth band such as Ashes You Leave, yet they do have their prominence throughout much of the disc's openers and slower parts. They happen to have more Metal elements than most other bands in this genre and they incorporate lots of Death vocals and screams, distorted guitars, and the double bass pedal- even during the slow parts! An average song on this 56-minute opus will run you about eight minutes, so if you don't have a long attention span, forget about even attempting to listen to this CD. *Desperate Existence* is absolutely great to listen to on your headphones right before you go to sleep, and if you need a consoling band in times of trouble, look no further than Ashes You Leave.

October 31

Visions Of The End
(Old Metal Records)

Alas, we are finally treated to the sounds of Mr. King Fowley's (DECEASED, DOOMSTONE) True Metal soul. *Visions Of The End* is a reissue of the band's debut EP, but as an added bonus, five demo tracks are included. While not as polished sounding as their full length *The Fire Awaits You*, this disc exhibits every facet of King Fowley's Metal Beast! The influences of ANVIL, MERCYFUL FATE, RAVEN & ANGEL WITCH are saturated throughout every track on the disc, and even hints of the last DECEASED release unwittingly seep through as well, making this a necessary addition to the True Metal purist. If this is not enough to make you salivate in anticipation, *Visions Of The End* also includes faithful cover versions of classic songs by LIZZY BORDEN, JAG PANZER and WARLORD (the latter probably a rebuttal to HAMMERFALL's rendition of the same song on their debut). At the end of the day, though, Metal is Metal, and King Fowley is a True champion to the faith! Old Metal Records, 5953 North 10th Street, Arlington, VA 22205.

Mistigo Varggoth Darkestra
Key to the Gates of the Apocalypse
(The End)

This release is a side project of Kjaaz of NOKTURNAL MORTUM and is just as equally bad as NOKTURNAL MORTUM's material. This disc is one, long, 77-minute track of noise- and I don't mean that in a good way. It sounds to me like Kjaaz put a tape recorder in his backyard and just let it run all night. It kind of reminds me of NEUROSIS' shitty side project, TRIBES OF NEUROT. This album is a complete waste of money and I recommend you steer clear of it.

Rebaellium
At War
(Hammerheart)

Rebaellium play a style of Death Metal close to that of *Blessed Are the Sick*-era Morbid Angel. The riffs are unrelenting, forging a wall of brutal sound. When other bands are completely clueless as to "what sounds good", opting to play bastardized Death Metal riddled with Hardcore, Rebaellium remain true. The songs are kick-ass and with some improved studio sound, this band will be much more enjoyable in the future. Check this disc out for a taste of good traditional Death Metal.



At War



Metal Church
Masterpeace
(Nuclear Blast)

They're back! OK, I realize that they were never really gone, but I'm happy to see this album released nonetheless. Metal Church were one of the premier Metal bands of the mid 80's and made their mark as labelmates of METALLICA on Elektra. Then grunge hit their hometown of Seattle and things went downhill. There was no way that they were going to succumb to the trend; they hold Metal as a religion. *Masterpeace* finally sees the light of day on Nuclear Blast and also brings back lead screecher David Wayne. These guys always had it all with great riffs, great chops, and most importantly, great songs. You have to listen to their stuff all the way through to find out how the story ends; even without words they can tell a story that builds and keeps you in suspense. Songs like "Kiss For The Dead" are a perfect example; it's got acoustic beauty, narrative lyrics, power, a hook, and it all wraps up in under seven minutes. If you're looking for galloping speed then go straight for "Lb. Of Cure"; it doesn't mess around with intros and extended middle sections. This album has everything that makes Metal Church one of the best true Heavy Metal bands around today or ever, including a brilliant cover of AEROSMITH's "Toys In The Attic". Their deal with Nuclear Blast should expose Metal Church to a brand new generation of fans, and older fans should now expect to see a lot more from them.

Lorde of All Desires
The Scent of Malevolence
(Root-O-Evil)

Once again, I'm going to take the chance to proclaim in print that the U.S. should be recognized! Lorde of All Desires is yet another band carrying the unholy torch for America. Their sound is a bit experimental at times, and what impressed me was the use of the acoustic guitar playing striking passages, offering a diversion from the other material which could be described as a thickly layered form of Black/Death Metal. This band shows great promise, for already they are combining elements of great Death and Black Metal. Some of the more erratic parts remind me of earlier OPETH material... this is surely a compliment. On the whole, the disc is a great addition to the Metal scene, and a big leap in the right direction for the American scene.

Solefald
Neonism
(Avantgarde Music)

Solefald is perhaps one of my greatest new discoveries in the past few months. Having never heard of them, this disc came as a complete and most satisfying shock to me. *Neonism* is actually Solefald's second full-length, and I cannot wait to get my hands on their debut. Solefald hails from Norway and is not afraid to list classic, more "Americanized" bands such as METALLICA and FAITH NO MORE as influences. Do not fret, though, for this album is like nothing one could conceive on that bit of information alone. *Neonism* is great in that it combines so many different styles, feelings, and atmospheres into one psychotic, non-chemical-induced musical trip. Some points of the album sound somewhat (though not identically similar to) like some of their Norwegian counterparts, lying more in the realm of VED BBUENS ENDE or ARCTURUS rather than MAYHEM or DARKTHRONE. To put it bluntly, this album is for the open-minded. The album mixes all the aforementioned styles with aspects of Industrial, MR. BUNGLE-esque silliness, and straight-forward riffage contorted from the annals of Classic Metal. The end result is nothing short of pure yet twisted, maniacal yet soothing, and mellow-dramatic yet tongue in cheek musical bliss. Yes, the album excels in contradictions, peaks and valleys, and crazy turns down paths that take the listener through hell, heaven, and a porno flick. To appreciate Solefald is to appreciate the beauty of the insane- and the comedy of darkness.

Lake of Tears
Forever Autumn
(Black Mark)

I'm not familiar with the first two Lake of Tears releases. I have heard their third release, *A Crimson Cosmos*, though, and I like the overall idea and sound of the disc, but it lacks something. Well, whatever that something is, it's certainly contained on *Forever Autumn*. From the moment I heard the opening and sorrowful cello on the first track, I knew I was in for a great listen. Though this comparison is only half-true for *A Crimson Cosmos*, *Forever Autumn* can be said to have a PINK FLOYD meets newer ANATHEMA or KATATONIA type of sound. Memorable and well-written guitar solos are skillfully placed against a backdrop of atmospheric keyboards and acoustic guitar melodies accompany passionate, yet rusty vocals. Strings and woodwinds sullenly walk alongside the piano as though they were comfortably lost in the rustic woods adorning the beautiful pictorial artwork of the CDs insides and cover. The lyrics are penned with a poetic hand well versed in the pagan religions and a love-lost romanticism. A beautiful and moving concept album through and through, fans of melancholic and atmospheric Rock should fall for this album like yellow leaves from a nut-brown tree.



LAKE OF TEARS

POWERMAD

THE THIRD TESTAMENT

BY MARK MORTON

1999 seems to be turning out to be the 'Year of the Music Festival'. One such festival, Baltimore, Maryland's Powermad, has recently (August 20th to the 22nd) celebrated its third year of highlighting and featuring some of the world's premier Power and Progressive Metal bands. Unlike most other music festivals, Powermad received little advance promotion (outside Progressive Metal Internet rings), and was thusly the cause of its scant turnout. However, the low attendance did not hinder the scheduled bands' performances! I must give great thanks to Mr. Keith Menser (of the band MYSTIC FORCE and Siegen Records) and Global Connections (<http://websnet.com/global>) for organizing and collecting the bands for this 3-day event, though the addition of well-known crowd gatherers like ICED EARTH, MANOWAR, HELLOWEEN, MERCYFUL FATE or even STEEL PROPHEX would have greatly enhanced the attendance.

Peaking at approximately 200 people, these Power-crazed fans not only had the ability to view and enjoy bands that rarely tour the area, but they had the option of shopping for some of those incredible and hard-to-find Metal albums at the retail stands. It was great to see representatives of Noise Records, Century Media and Nuclear Blast all peddling their incredible merchandise (the quickest selling of which being Century Media's special, limited 3-disc version of ICED EARTH's *Live In Athens*, which sold for a measly \$25). I found myself spending a lot of time chatting with the Noise and Century Media staff members, because who knows when they will next be on the East Coast? And I consequently ended up dropping \$150 for CDs!!!

Anyway, all nonsense aside, fans were treated extremely well, receiving a two-disc compilation highlighting the performing bands as well as tracks by better known Power Metal bands like GAMMA RAY, IRON SAVIOR and

NOCTURNAL RITES... all this for merely showing up! Another perk included the ability to come and go as one pleased (quite a rarity at festival events), which was quite pleasant since Cokes were \$2! But at the Chinese restaurant 2 doors up from the ballroom-styled Tall Cedars venue, sodas were only 60 cents! Enough digression, on to the bands!

Friday brought one hell of a thunderstorm as well as a decent onslaught of talent, ranging from the highly melodic and powerful TALAMASCA (from Wisconsin) to the intensity and skilled musicianship of both Virginia's DIVISION and Ohio's ANTITHESIS. The true highlight of the evening, in my opinion though, was Illinois' ION VEIN, whose Progressive ability was matched by the songs' hypnotic melody. Many fans would say that Magna Carta recording artists, TILES, owned that evening, but they were a bit too proggy for my taste!

Saturday kicked off with guitar virtuoso SCOTT MCGILL, whose obvious mastery of the guitar shrouded our ears to the fact that he really wasn't playing songs, just a collection of mind-numbing licks! Next up was Ohio's MIDEVIL, who played a very cool, groove-oriented Power-Thrash similar to that of

latter day METAL CHURCH (with Mike Howe on vocals). FORTE, hailing from Oklahoma, literally tore the place up with their near brutal brand of aggressive Thrash, which was a pleasant change from all of the event's performers who focused more on the "art" aspect of musicianship rather than the fun, more ear-appealing Metal side. FORTE was followed up by San Diego-based CAGE, who performed heavy, epic Metal with twin guitar harmonies and a vocalist who sounded like a young Klaus Meine (SCORPIONS). Magna Carta artists, ICE AGE, were supposed to play next but failed to appear due to car trouble (and if any of you spoke with me at the event, you'll realize that I deeply sympathized with their predicament)! After the ever-elusive SOUNDSCAPE, who had apparently disappeared until their scheduled time, the evening introduced us to the two bands that made the grand trip over from Sweden. First up was EVERGREY, whose Cronos-like vocals sounded like they were lifted right off of VENOM's *Calm Before The Storm*. This countered their ICED EARTH-inspired, grandiose choruses and powerful, melody-soaked Prog Metal with time changes aplenty! After

EVERGREY came fellow Scandinavians, MAYADOME, who definitely stole the show with their DREAM THEATER-styled elegance. But what really attracted the audience was the inclusion of a guest female vocalist, who gave the band a very obvious the GATHERING-esque quality. New York's HOLY MOTHER (my main reason for attending, because they simply kick ass!) really played their hearts out to an audience

that was exhausted by the day's activities. The band acknowledged this and proclaimed, "Yeah, we know you're all tired and want to go to bed, but we're here to keep you awake for a bit longer!" And that they did, blowing us all away with a crushing set of their JUDAS PRIEST/DIO mayhem! Then, it was definitely time for bed!

Sunday, the least attended day of the event (and what would you expect, having to travel home through all the beach traffic!), kicked off with

Oklahoma's (who would have thought that Oklahoma would have such a vibrant Metal scene?) MONUMENT, who treated us all to an eclectic array of Metal sounds, ranging from the Doomy, melodiousness of LEFAY to SLAYER-like Death/Thrash. Needless to say, they were there to kick some ass! Pennsylvania-grown ANDEAVOR followed them, and brought us back to the FATES WARNING/QUEENSRYCHE embellished, Power Prog we'd come to expect from this event. Sadly, I had missed many of the day's featured performers, including Nuclear Blast's own NEW EDEN & King Fowley-fronted OCTOBER 31, and I am still kicking myself in the pants for it, since both bands' albums are nothing short of incredible! Anyway, hopefully next year, Powermad will bring in more fans of Melodic Metal. I, for one, know that there are more of you in the US than let on, especially as exhibited in the increased interest in the genre over the past couple years! This coupled with at least six months advertising advancement, Powermad 2000 will turn out to be an experience not to be missed!



For those of you who are just tuning in, Godgory are the best thing to happen to the Atmospheric Death Metal scene since... well... hmmm... this certainly is a conundrum. I'd say MORGION or NOVEMBERS DOOM, but they're too slow and doomy. And I'd say IN FLAMES or GARDEN OF SHADOWS, but they're more melodic and intense than atmospheric. Come to think of it, every band that comes to mind is either too doomy or too aggressive in comparison to the "just-rightness" of Godgory. So how can I do justice to their sound while still giving people who have never heard them an idea of the majestic soundscapes my ears are beholding? How about taking little snippets of all the aforementioned bands and throwing in mucho quantities of HYPOCRISY,

EDGE OF SANITY, and OPETH? "That's good, perhaps," states Matte Andersson, who just happens to be half of the Swedish entity known as Godgory. "We listen to a lot of EDGE OF SANITY and like them. So yeah, that's good!"

Did I just say "half of the Swedish entity?" Godgory's extremely full sound and chunky riffs can be attributed to only two men? "It was after we recorded *Shadow's Dance*, [Godgory's second album] that Stefan, the rhythm guitarist, left us to concentrate on his studies because he's going to be a teacher and going to be going to school for four-and-a-half years, so he had no time for Godgory. And the other three they are

Godgory

By Tom J. Hughes

involved in other bands. That was their first priority, so me and Erik [Andersson, not to be confused as brothers!] thought it was better to let them go and find new members. But it's hard to find members in Sweden. We want someone who can concentrate on Godgory 100%. Everyone in our hometown is involved in two or three bands."



Shit... I know people over here that would die for Godgory's problems! Too many band members to choose from? How about just finding one!! Unfortunately, though, that's not Godgory's only problem right now. I asked about his excitement for their upcoming tour with COVENANT, HYPOCRISY, and DISMAL EUPHONY and Matte replied with

reservation, "No, unfortunately we will not be playing the Nuclear Blast Festival. They told us that we are not going on the tour because we haven't sold enough albums so they couldn't afford to send us along." And they kick so much

ass, too! Of course, Matte agreed with me, but I'm not just kissing ass here. It's true. Godgory are as intense as they are solemn, as aggressive as they are brooding, as melodic as they are dissonant, and damnit, they're just a great band.

I am, however, only familiar with their latest release, *Resurrection*, and know nothing of their first two recordings, *Sea of Dreams* and *Shadow's Dance*. "They are a little less mature, but you can still hear that it is Godgory when you listen to it," states Matte. "But, it's *Resurrection* that is our best album so far. We have improved so much and matured as songwriters." The opening, title track was an instant classic for me, but it seemed odd that the lyrics were so positive for such a dark-sounding song. "We thought that song best represents Godgory and we thought we would name the album *Resurrection* as well."

So it's the dichotomy that exists within the very heart of Godgory that works so well. The opposing forces of open atmosphere and dense, crunching Metal, the quick aggression and slow melodies throughout the disc's entirety... All of these elements combined make for a thoroughly enjoyable listen. So what does the future hold for Godgory? "I think [our next album] is going to be more melodic than it is now because I think we have more influences. We are not only looking at what other bands are doing in the underground, but we have new influences from other musics to make our music interesting." Wow! I can hardly wait! But until then, I'll be checking into Godgory's first two releases. It really makes you think about all the great music that exists out there that we just haven't heard yet. But as far as Godgory goes... you now have no excuse! Check out <http://home.bip.net/gory> or www.angelfire.com/sk/godgory for more information on this great, great band.

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Erase the Slate

Dokken
Erase The Slate
(CMC International)

Erase The Slate is the new disc from these German Hard Rockers... I'm sorry, I couldn't resist. It seemed like every reviewer used to think that Dokken was from Germany. To be fair they did have to travel to Europe to record and release their debut album 18 years ago- 18 years ago? I guess the numbers are right and the critics who thought Dokken was dead were wrong. Back in business again after a few years of uncertainty, the band has teamed up with former WINGER guitarist, Reb Beach, to produce a respectable album of well written tunes. With bands like DEF LEPPARD recently debuting on the Billboard charts at Number 11, melodic Hard Rock acts from the 80's are roaring back, and Dokken looks to be in good shape.

Dimmu Borgir/Old Mans Child
Devils Path and In the Shades of Life
(Hammerheart)

Hell Yeah! Two releases I've been digging on forever now have finally been slapped onto one disc that is readily available to anyone who desires it. *Devils Path* is a mini disc that Dimmu Borgir released on Shagrath's own Hot Records previous to Stian Aarstad joining the band and them signing with the majestic Nuclear Blast. It features the original version of the *Enthroned Darkness Triumphant* track, "Master of Disharmony", as well as the title song and two covers of the CELTIC FROST classic, *Nocturnal Fear*: one being performed in their own style, the other the original way. *In the Shades of Life* is a very hard to find mini disc recorded before signing to the kick-ass Century Media. The material is very good: it's much more Old School than any of their other material was. This CD of classic goodies aptly shows you what two of your favorite bands were like before their signing to larger labels. Black Metallers rejoice, for no longer will you have to go through the hassles of mail order services to try and obtain these rare treats.

Dimmu Borgir



Old Man's Child

Disarray
A Lesson in Respect
(Eclipse)

This three-piece from Tennessee simply kick ass. They can thrash it out with the best of them and the entire CD is one big, long, hate-infested, anger-releasing party for the disgruntled. They take elements of Thrash and Death Metal and fuse it with minute and miniscule amounts of Hardcore for a groove and soul only those in the South seem to possess! Fans of *Bleed* will fall in love with this release instantly, for the opener, "Piss (Back Stabbing Coward)", is immediately memorable and as pleasing to the ears as Queen Amidala is to the eyes! But LYNRYD SKYNYRD fans beware! "Freebird" is herein covered and the result is nothing like the original... Ronnie Van Zant is surely out there somewhere laughing his ass off! Disarray is slowly building a reputation for themselves as one of the hardest working and underrated bands in the underground scene. Since my discovery of them last year, they have never disappointed and I recommend them very highly to anyone who needs to release some excess energy or just jam to some hard and heavy music.



BURZUM

Burzum
Hlidskjalf
(Misanthropy)

Now how can I possibly give good ol' Vargie (A.K.A. "Count Grishnach") a bad review. This man is responsible for my quickly growing interest in Old School Black Metal, as well as being the founder of the scene along with what's his name... never mind- the Count killed him. Recently recorded in Trondheim prison, the Count Graces us with the second part of his three part trilogy and the follow up to the immaculate *Daudi Baldrs*. *Hlidskjalf* is a splendid album of medieval Folk

music enriched with far superior sound quality than that of *Daudi Baldrs*. This disc is based on the myths surrounding the death of the Old Norse god, Wuotan, while it's precursor told the legend of the Viking, Baldr. I know there are many of you out there who detest Varg, whether it be for his slaying of Eurononous, his paranoiac views on Christianity, his politics, or racism; or maybe you

just don't like his music, which is something I could not possibly understand. What I do know is that he is not apprehensive in standing up for what he truly believes in. I'm not saying that I totally agree with all that he does, but I do love and respect him for his bravery and music. If you have not yet heard Burzum, then you cannot say you know what true Black Metal is. *Hvis Lyset Tar Oss* was a superb release, *Filosofem* is destined to be a classic, and who can forget the iconic *Transilvanyian Hunger* album with Fenriz of DARKTHRONE on drums. Burzum is where it all started, it is Black Metal at it's finest.

Victory Records Compilation
Only the Strong 1999
(Victory)

This comp features all the new artists and new material from your favorite Hardcore bands, such as NO INNOCENT VICTIM, VISION, BUILT TO LAST, and AGNOSTIC FRONT. All the bands on this comp have more or less an old school vibe to them and the contributions from both NIV and AGNOSTIC FRONT are both wonderful. If you want to check out this year's finest in Hardcore, this comp should be a must get.

Wally
Freud
(Ghetto Cat)

Good ol', homegrown, garage-soundin' Thrash is what these guys are serving up. Some very short glimpses of Punk appear, though, as well as some groovy Blues riffs in a breakdown here and there. John Rutsey (only the most dedicated RUSH fan will recognize this name!) is given his own personal tribute, and the band's song titles would make even the most ardent TOURNIQUET fan tongue-tied (you know who you are, you *Pathogenic Ocular Dissonance* freaks!). These guys are a fucking laugh-and-a-half from start to finish. It's shit like this that keeps the underground alive and dangerous to all of you no-thinking, one-hit-wonder-lovin', fifteen-minutes-of-fame-seekin' dumb-asses who think that KORN or mother fuckin' new METALLICA is Metal! Hey, stupid! Wake the fuck up because this is what it's all about!! Don't get me wrong, there exists better music out there, but these guys are keeping the scene alive and are the real deal, not some phonies who will sell out to the latest trend in the music scene. They are so underground, they don't even have a fucking e-mail address! So get in touch with them c/o Ghetto Cat Records, Box 30909, Philadelphia, PA 19104 USA.

Soulside Records Compilation
Orchestrated Chaos Vol. 3
(Soulside)

This is your typical Death Metal comp featuring mostly American DM bands. Highlights include the always-impressive FLESHGRIND performing "Sordid Degradation" and THE FALLEN doing "Rectal Wench". While I've heard better from MYSELF AM HELL, ANGELKILL's "Crown of Flies" really impressed me, as did SKINLESS's "Scum Cookie". The ENTOMBED track is barely worth mentioning because it sucks so bad, but two tracks from ENFORSAKEN entitled "Standing in the Shadows..." and "Into the Everblack" make up for it. ENFORSAKEN are melodically heavy and I'd like to hear more from them, actually. FORTY DAYS LONGING incorporate a violin into their fast-paced DM track, "Starvation Techniques", which is my favorite track on the whole comp. This song alone is worth checking into the entire CD! THROUGH ASHES play a doomy type of DM which I like a lot and the final song, "As One", by ELYSIAN FIELDS is the perfect way to close out a very respectable DM comp. If you're seeking out new bands to engorge your pining DM ears, I'd highly recommend it. Contact Soulside at 400 Manda 302, Wheeling, IL 60090.



Therion
Crowning of Atlantis
(Nuclear Blast)

Can Christofer Johnsson do any wrong? I mean, the title track alone just continues to prove what the man accomplished with *Vovin*, which is that he is a fucking musical prodigy! And then there are nine more songs to indulge myself with! Anyway, three original (and one re-recorded) songs are included herein which are simply extensions of *Vovin*. Three covers are also included in the album's repertoire, including LOUDNESS' "Crazy Nights" (great Power Metal track), MANOWAR's "Thor (The Powerhead)" (I'm sure the Kings of Metal would be proud), and ACCEPT's "Seawinds" (entrancing and beautiful female-fronted acoustic song). Live versions of "To Mega Therion", "The Wings of the Hydra", and "Black Sun" are included on the end for your listening pleasure as well. The mindworkings of this man are nothing short of brilliant and I cannot listen to this disc without being happy. It just puts me in such a good mood every time I listen to it, no matter how angry or upset I am! The man has this affect on me... pure fucking genius. It's really that simple.

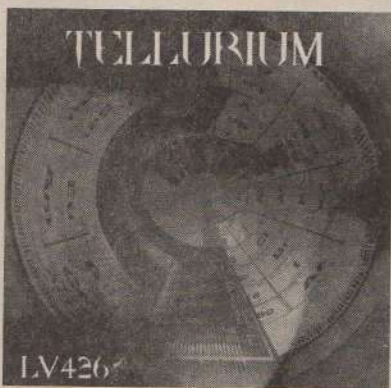
Mortician
Chainsaw Dismemberment
(Relapse)

Holy shit this is brutal! Fuckin' A is this shit heavy! Damn! This is so fuckin' heavy! Can Death Metal get any more brutal than this? De-tuning one's guitar three fuckin' steps is probably illegal in most states, but I don't think these guys give a fuck. I guess lowering their sound put 'em that much closer to the grave they crawled out of to record this Metal maelstrom which bludgeons the listener's earhole with pummeling riffs and thunderous grinds. *Chainsaw Dismemberment* is by far the heaviest Mortician release to date, and surely one of the most brutal Death Metal releases of all time. Of course, it wouldn't be a Mortician release without the B-movie clips thrown in between a lot of the songs, and we've got some killer sound bytes on this one! Very funny, very sick, very morbid, and yes, very heavy, Death Metal now has an even higher standard to measure up to now that we've been graced with this euphony of disharmonic gore and ill-sounding carnage. Long live Death Metal!!



Six Feet Under
Maximum Violence
(Metal Blade)

It's about fuckin' time Six Feet Under came out with a good CD! It looks like the departure of Allen West was exactly what was needed to get these guys to write and play something worth listening to, because their previous releases simply sucked! We don't need two OBITUARYs, and that's exactly what Six Feet Under was with West- an OBITUARY clone. Now that he's gone back to OBITUARY full time, Six Feet Under can get on with their agenda, which I hope includes more of what is offered on *Maximum Violence*. This latest release features Chris Barnes returning to his trademark Death vocals like only he can perform them- no experimenting going on here! Just pure, gory, powerful, groovy, and chunky Death Metal in it's rawest form! Steve Swanson (ex-MASSACRE) takes West's place and provides just enough presence to alter SFU's sound for the better and has converted me from a SFU basher to lover! Death Metal has another great band to add to its ever-impressing roster and one less clone now to worry about!



Tellurium
LV426
(Root-O-Evil)

Tellurium are an Industrial Metal band who are very interesting and highly listenable. This band is pretty experimental and it seems like they're not afraid of trying out new things. The second song on the CD, for instance, has a Hip-Hop beat throughout the whole song. They use some good effects as far noises and samples go, and their riffs are pretty good as well. The overall recording and production is lacking, but once they start recording with better sound quality, they should really start to shine and stick out in my mind.

Golgotha
Elemental Changes
(Repulse)

Aside from a cool and dark Metal cover of the KISS classic "Love Gun", all this band does is try to mimic all that MOONSPELL have strived for since their inception. Everything sounds very simplistic and who wants to hear stuff like this when there are bands like MOONSPELL. Golgotha leave me feeling rather lethargic and henceforth, I cannot go on with this review- I must go take a nap now. So to finish this up quickly, we have diagnosed this specimen to be nothing more than a poor man's MOONSPELL.



Buried Alive
The Death of Your Perfect World
(Victory Records)

These guys are so fucking hard that one listen will flatten your head like an ACME anvil! Think of the brutality of INTERNAL BLEEDING combined with the Hardcore crossover sensibilities of STRIFE and SNAPCASE, and you've got a good impression of the mega-insanity that Buried Alive exudes! The music is fast, furious, and you have no choice but to listen to what they have to say. They're not exactly preaching but offering an aggression that envelops your attention and gives no release until the CD ends. Definitely not a band to be fucked with!



Milwaukee Metalfest XIII



Confessions of a Metalfest Junkie
Written and photographed by Tom J. Hughes

6000 people. 160 bands. 4 stages. 2 nights. 1 place. Man, what a rush! While there were many problems that surrounded this year's Milwaukee Metalfest (namely not having an arena to hold the event until the last minute!), I'm not going to discuss any of them. I'm not going to discuss the less-than-projected turn-out of fans, I'm not going to talk about all the bands that cancelled, and I'm not going to explain why Metalfests in Europe are so much better than festivals here in the U.S. (you can read about this and its related topics in the editorial by yours truly)... and why not? Because you don't give a shit! You want Metal! You want that which courses through your veins and gives you a reason to live; you want your sustenance; you want your reality. Behind the organizers of the event, behind the movers and shakers of the music industry, and behind all the fans lies a veil of sonic density that cannot, and shall not, be ignored. It is that which people flock and cling to when they have no other place to go, and it is that which convened thousands of ravenous kinsmen to bow down, worship, and hail their master... METAL!! So, without further ado, on with the Crusade.

"I'm kind of glad a lot of the bigger names cancelled," commented Carl Schultz of Relapse Records. "It gives exposure to a lot of the smaller bands who can sometimes be much more exciting." How true such a statement is! While there were still some big names that kicked some serious ass and got me to drive over fifteen hours to see them, it was the gathering of sooooo many smaller bands that was the true essence of what Milwaukee Metalfest is all about. Hence, we have the Relapse Stage, one of the four stages

which showcased the event. Of course, some of the bigger bands signed to Relapse played here, like **S O I L E N T GREEN**, **TODAY IS THE DAY**, and **DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN**, but the stage was mostly reserved for bands like **STRYCHNINE**,

SCRAPE, **STRETCHER**, **FLESHGRIND**, and even more obscure bands like **SADISTIC INTENT**, **DEVOURMENT**, and **ROGUE**. Since it was really the only place in the convention hall to comfortably sit down in, this large auditorium served as a haven for folks interested in relaxing while at the same time catching up on some real underground music which bled profusely with intensity, excitement, and desire. For those who were so moved by the potency up on stage, though, there was a small pit area located directly in front of the platform where fans could release some pent up energy.



The Relapse Stage was located upstairs while the other three stages were on the ground level. Juneau and Kilbourn Hall were two spacious rooms featuring relatively large stages and a plethora of big and obscure bands. Bruce Hall, the main stage, featured the biggest bands and its vast size also held the vendorville area and wrestling ring. The wrestling this year sucked and I don't want to discuss it at all; it only hampered my meanderings around vendorville. This year's vendorville was (of course) a bunch of tables surrounding the wrestling ring which circled around the back perimeter of Bruce Hall. The likes of Nuclear Blast, Century Media, Metal Blade, Relapse, X-Rated, NAPALM, *Metal Maniacs*, and scores of others aligned themselves in one, giant half-circle and it was such a joy to shop AND listen to top notch performances from the other side of the hall. When I wasn't hanging out at vendorville or checking out the bands on the main stage, I was usually in Kilbourn Hall... and loving life! The amount of stellar bands that performed on this stage was absolutely amazing and the bulk of my time was actually spent in this very hall. Kilbourn showcased the infallible **IN FLAMES**, the decadent **DISARRAY** and **DEAD BY MORNING**, and the pummeling **PESSIMIST**, **DYING FETUS**, and **SINISTER** just to name a few. However, it is with **LUNGBRUSH** on the main stage Friday night that we begin the blow by blow assault of the weekend known as Milwaukee Metalfest.

LUNGBRUSH was a very "needed" band in Bruce Hall, for they had to awaken a catatonic crowd left over from **KITTIE**. I couldn't figure this chick band out. I mean, they aren't even Metal! I walked around to see who exactly was into a band like this and I bumped into Mark Gromen who looked about as puzzled as I was. We both exchanged a shrug of shoulders and a hearty laugh at the foolery on

stage. I suffered through **KITTIE** while patiently waiting for **LUNGBRUSH** and then he left- still laughing. The wait was worth it, though, because they kicked ass! Their mix of Hardcore and Thrash really pumped up the crowd and ushered unto me a rush of adrenaline that was not to leave me until I had to leave the city on Sunday! Needless to say, they were a great way to start Friday night. **JUNGLE ROT** wowed me next. They took the Kilbourn stage and packed them in! Unfortunately, I couldn't hang out for their entire set due to a personal crisis, but what little I did catch was very impressive.

Once I finally got myself together, next on my agenda was the **GATHERING**. How to measure a band's flawless performance? They were awe-inspiring, to say the least. Anneke charmed the

crowd with her charisma and angelic voice while the rest of the band seemed to be as happy to be there as we were to see them! These godsends graced us with four songs: "Great Ocean Road", "On Most Surfaces", "Strange Machines", and "Probably Built in the Fifties". Fucking phenomenal, brilliantly breathtaking, and perfectly performed, all of these songs caused in my heart such a heightened sense of rapture that I thought I had died and gone to heaven! So disappointed was I when they left after only four songs! My disappointment was soon vindicated,



ANNEKE FROM THE
GATHERING, AND
TOM J. HUGHES

though, for I was lucky enough to catch them the very next week in Philadelphia. If Milwaukee was heaven, then Philly was fucking Nirvana (minus Kurt Ko-caine, of course, because no place is cool with him around)!! They played twice as many songs, performed an encore, and hung out afterwards with me, Chrissy Gulczynski of *Enslain* magazine, and Jeff Rappaport of *Metal Rules!* Hanging out with fellow Keepers of the Faith AND having Anneke put her arm around me and tell me how great she thought *Promethean Crusade* was (she picked up a copy in Milwaukee and admitted to reading it cover to cover!) was too much for me to handle... I think my heart is still laying there on the ground behind the Troc!

Moving now from a female-fronted band to a Black Metal band with female vocals, we're back in Milwaukee, Friday night at the Kilbourn stage- where else! **TWIN OBSCENITY** is the band in question, but unfortunately, I cannot give them such a glowing review. Their music was great, just like on all their releases, but they didn't have very good stage presence. Everyone was moving to their music except **TWIN OBSCENITY** themselves! Guys... could we look any more bored? **TWIN OBSCENITY** play an atmospheric brand of Black Metal that I have grown an affinity for over the years, and the music is very moving, but apparently not to the band. I just wanted to punch their female vocalist because she was the worst. There was not a single moment when she looked like she wanted to be there and she made me angry. Most of these people will never see you perform ever again! At least pretend you're happy to be on stage!

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As uninspired as TWIN OBSCENITY appeared to be, IN FLAMES were the exact opposite! ALL FUCKING HAIL IN FLAMES!! FUCKING A DID THEY KICK ASS!! IN FLAMES were the best band there- hands fucking down! They opened with the scorching "Embody the Invisible" and everyone in Kilbourn went insane! Anders flew all over the fucking stage like a bat out of hell while Jesper and Peter spewed out those mighty riffs with decadent skill. The energy exuded on



IN FLAMES

stage was equally reciprocated on Kilbourn's floor and this kinetic transfer mutated like a cancerous tumor on speed, igniting wallops of violence and vehemence both on and off the stage! "Artifacts of the Black Rain", "Jotun", and "Episode 666" represented *The Jester Race* and *Whorace* respectively while "Ordinary Story", "Scorn", "Colony", and "Behind Space '99" rounded off *Colony*. There is no doubt in my mind that it was the most intense show I have ever witnessed in my life! Never before was I so overcome with such feelings of rage and joy all rolled up into one! This being their debut performance on U.S. shores only heightened my excitement and I was so inebriated afterwards that people thought I was drunk! I was staggering and stumbling... I couldn't think straight... I was a fucking wreck! After a good twenty minutes or so I think I regained my composure somewhat and drove home that night completely high on life. All I could say to myself and my friends, over and over again, was that I had survived IN FLAMES and could die a happy man. Little did I know, though, the goodies in store for me on Saturday.

DISA-fucking-RRAY baby! That's what got me jump started on Saturday! Before they went on stage I shouted, "SKYNYRD! I wanna hear some SKYNYRD!" Chuck Bonnett (DISARRAY's guitarist / vocalist) just looked at me and smiled, knowing full well that he would fulfill



DISARRAY

my wish. They blazed through a blistering twenty-minute set and their intensity reinforced Kilbourn's report as the one place in Milwaukee to be that weekend! Chuck threw out a T-shirt to the most active person on the floor and floored the folks with their rendition of "Freebird" at the tail end. All in all, it was a great fucking way to start Saturday! About a half-hour later OCTOBER THORNS took the stage and surprised the fuck out of me! I never heard of them and decided that their name was pretty cool, so I decided to give them a shot. I'm so glad I did, too, because they wreaked some serious havoc up there. OCTOBER THORNS are a Progressive Metal band that is as heavy as they are talented. Their vocalist could really wail, too! Clenching the microphone like his life depended on it, he belted out some potent lyrics while his band mates delivered chomping riff after progressively intricate riff. Their twin-guitar attack, coupled with superb drumming and

keyboard playing, was enough to get me to buy one of their releases... which I have to admit I have not gotten around to yet! But I will-I promise!

DEAD BY MORNING was another band I was introduced to in Milwaukee. Holy fucking shit did they pack in a crowd, too! It's 3:30 in the afternoon and Kilbourn Hall is once again filled with eager Metalheads who won't leave until their Hearts of Steel have been properly honored. Not only did DEAD BY MORNING give these starving Warrior's Hearts more Metal than a blacksmith in medieval

times, they fucking ripped them out of their chest, polished the mother fuckers, and thrust them right back in the exposed cavity- without even missing a beat! The carnage which naturally ensued from this massive bloodletting was all too apparent as the gigantic spikes impaling their leather attire literally dripped with blood! Alas, the immense broad sword their vocalist, Raven, pulled out towards the end of their rapacious set cried for more blood with every scream and screech he shouted. Lightning-paced drums and an enormously full

guitar sound was all the sonic weight needed to draw the attention of many an ear. Black Metal with hints of Death (and no cheesy keyboards or fake atmosphere) defines the sound of DEAD BY MORNING, a band with a buzz who you should all be hearing from very shortly. You have been warned!

I took a much needed break after DEAD BY MORNING left the stage. They wore me out! So I walked outside and the first thing I run into is a beat down! Some kid got the shit kicked out of him right in front of me. It was terrible! Two guys ganged up on this one dude and trounced him to the ground. Then, the one guy holds the dude's head in place on the concrete sidewalk like a football on a tee, then

the other guy kicks him with his boot as hard as he could! I was like, "holy shit!" I couldn't believe what I was seeing... I thought this stuff only happened in the movies! Myself, being the pussy that I am, did nothing to try and help this poor dude. Hell, I didn't want to get my face booted in (fucking DEAD BY MORNING ripped open my chest for crying out loud!), so I just kept on walking. I felt kind of bad, but I was hungry, so my empty stomach was of greater concern to me. I'm such a selfish bastard! I did get back in time, though, to witness the greatest marathon of music I have ever experienced in my life. Yes, my Brothers and Sisters, there is life after IN FLAMES!

I'm talking about DYING FETUS, INTERNAL BLEEDING, MONSTROSITY, NILE, MORGION, SINISTER, and MORTICIAN! The conglomerate performance of these seven bands can be summed up quite simply by the words of an awe-struck guy standing in front of me during DYING FETUS' set: "GOD DAMN!!!" It was great- after every mind blowing break-down or ear-rupturing riff, the dude would turn to his friend and utter a flabbergasted, "God Damn!!!" For some unknown reason, I never got into DYING FETUS, but after witnessing their pummeling performance in Kilbourn Hall that night, you can bank on the fact that I'll be checking out their catalog real soon! Great fucking Death Metal, through and through, man... it was absolutely amazing. And then there's INTERNAL



DEAD BY MORNING

BLEEDING! They started tearing shit up almost as soon as they plugged in their equipment. No fooling around here, folks! Their Hardcore influenced Death Metal was brutal, fast, and unrelenting... they never fucking slowed down... not once!

I really wanted to stay in Kilbourn, because next

up was CRIMINAL, but my editorial instincts forced me to check out CRIMINAL on the main stage. Following the little voice in my head wasn't the worst thing I could've done either, because CRIMINAL proved to be as good as everybody told me. I wasn't too impressed with their debut CD, though many friends told me otherwise and thought I was smoking crack. But their great sound and awesome stage presence finally won me over, and I now listen to the CD with an enlightened mind. Seeing bands live really gives you another dimension to listen to while you're "seeing" their sound come to life through your mind's eye. So CRIMINAL held their own and kicked some ass, though I will admit I didn't hang around for their full set. What the hell was I doing in Bruce Hall when Kilbourn was once again beckoning for me to enter its hallowed doors?

Back inside my new church, I watched MONSTROSITY pulverize all Metalheads in sight! Death fucking Metal reigned and right there, right then, there was no other place I would rather have been! The crowd went ballistic with their closing song, "Angel of Death"!!! SLAYER was never this barbarous! I personally busted a nut when I heard the opening riff and thought to

myself afterwards, "does it get any better than this?" Hell yeah!! NILE took the stage with their ultra-low keyboard samples, de-tuned guitars, growls, and snarls. Their sound was very intimidating and extremely brutal; you could tell they hang out in catacombs and sarcophaguses. Scary shit, man, and after the end of every song they would call for the horns, and the crowd would respond in droves, saluting them with more hails than Ramses received in his prime!



NILE

Continued on next page

Kilbourn cleared out after NILE left. I was like, "Wait, guys! MORGION is coming on!" Then I recalled the fact that these mother fuckers probably haven't had a break since PESSIMIST (two bands before DYING FETUS... around five hours ago!), so they needed one. Luckily, when MORGION hit the stage, Kilbourn was once again filled to capacity! Lots of smoke and sludge-filled riffs permeated the air, and though it was difficult to see what was going on half the time, the ghostly figures that ominously stood atop the stage put on an exceptional show. Slow, doomy, and



dark Death Metal was all these guys played, and this was a refreshing change of pace from the unyielding sounds of the previous bands. This was not to be so for long, however, because SINISTER was next. Holy fuck were they fast! Standing in stark contrast to MORGION, SINISTER ran all over the stage, growled and played the fuck out of their voices and instruments, and were furiously fast as shit! "Aggressive Measures" my ass! We're talking belligerent balls the size of King Kong's! Is there anyone as sinister as... well... SINISTER?! Perhaps not, but MORTICIAN comes pretty damn close and would give them a run for their money, I'm sure. MORTICIAN were like a cross between MORGION and SINISTER: brutal as fuck, but they just stood there! I would've liked to see a little more action on stage, but what the hell? When you're playing that fast and furious, you can't concentrate too much on anything else! Once again, though, I'm sorry to say that I could not stay for the entire set.

At about the same time on the main stage, CRADLE OF FILTH were doing their thing. Now, I am not the world's biggest CRADLE fan; I never liked them. There is, however, an imposing mystique surrounding them and since they were headlining the event, I felt some

obligation to check them out. Their production, of course, was big and grand, and they employed many lights and effects to accompany their slaying sound. It was almost too much, though, and a little over the top. Perhaps I was talking to all the wrong people, but even fans of the band left disappointed! The smoke, lights, and lasers distracted one from the music itself, which got lost in all the hoopla. The vast size of Bruce Hall didn't help their sound either. Not only were there too many effects supplementing CRADLE's music, but there seemed to be too much music! This is not a problem that persists only with CRADLE, though. Any band with as many guitar parts, melodies, vocal styles, and all around atmosphere will have trouble mixing them all as well live as they do in the recording studio. Unfortunately, I haven't found one

person yet who loved their performance, and like I said, I talked with many fans of theirs.

The semi-lackluster performance of CRADLE left me hungry for some fucking Metal. Luckily for me, there was still one band left to see who I knew could kill my crave... PISSING RAZORS! They were the final band to play on the Relapse Stage and were a very fitting band to end my Metallfest experience with. They didn't hit the stage 'til 1am, which made for an obviously long and exhausting day, yet their music was so invigorating that a giant pit was created and people moshed like there was no tomorrow- and there wasn't! I was tired as hell, but I knew this would all be over way too soon, and the RAZORS were just so fucking energizing that I couldn't help but get mixed up in the brawl! Things became so frenzied that Jack



Koshick himself had to pull me and a couple others aside to tell us to stay off the chairs (the next best thing to stage diving, I guess). Wow, what a great fucking finale! PISSING RAZORS manifested energy in its rawest form and exuded so much of it through their collected personas that after it was all said and done, I could barely walk! I stumbled outside of the giant auditorium to my car and literally collapsed!

So there you have it... my weekend in a nutshell! Unfortunately, much has been left out, but this is supposed to be an article, not a novel! This was my first Milwaukee Metallfest experience and I cannot wait until next year! I made many new friends and solidified older friendships, hung out with some really cool bands, and experienced firsthand the blood, sweat, and tears that make up the underground Metal scene. If you've never been to a gathering of Brothers and Sisters like this, then you are sorely missing out on a life-changing experience. Metallfests reinforce and strengthen the ties that bind us and remind us that we all eat, sleep, and breathe the same existence- the reality of Metal! Koshick has already established in other cities Metallfests of their own on account of all the success he's had in Milwaukee and New Jersey. This proves that our culture is strong, it will prevail, and we will endure, but only if we cling to one another in the name of Metal. Many hails to you all, my Brothers and Sisters; I will see you again in Jersey!



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LEFAY

Unlocking The Seventh Seal By Mark Morton

Throughout this grand galaxy of Metal and promotion of Hard Music, many bands deserving of merit tend to remain largely anonymous, due to the swarming masses of press that prefer to bring their readers another Q & A with gold or platinum-selling "artists." Yes, this problem does indeed exist within the realm of Metal, and it is sad, because the most noteworthy of bands may forever exist solely in the hearts of the truly devoted. Take Sweden's Lefay, for instance. This band, formerly known as Morgana Lefay, released four masterfully crafted studio albums and a 'best of' disc for Black Mark Productions, before undergoing internal problems, which resulted in a split with the label and a subsequent name change. And how many of you folks are actually familiar with the material? Now, we're aware that Black Mark's material isn't the easiest to obtain stateside, but the fact remains, this band is in definite need of some major press, especially now, what with the upswing of Melodic Power Metal. Noise Records knew a veritable goldmine when they saw it and snatched up the revived creative force, now in the guise of Lefay. Noise is currently embarking on a campaign to educate the masses to the band's trademark regal melancholy, having already released a new studio album, The Seventh Seal, and soon to be releasing the band's mythic debut, Symphony Of The Damned, which had an initial vinyl release of only 537 copies!! So sit back, grab your notebooks, and prepare for today's lesson into one of the world's most underrated Metal bands, with your guest professor, Lefay vocalist Charles Rytkonen!

Promethean Crusade:

Since the band is still pretty much unknown in the US, we do not have as much access to news regarding you, and I am still pretty much shrouded from the exact reason why MORGANA LEFAY split up. All I had heard was that 3 of the guys moved away, but there was no reasoning given.

Lefay: That's basically what happened. They wanted to move to the capital city of Sweden, Stockholm, and get some regular jobs. They wanted to earn some money, for

once in their lives (laughs). Since they're grown-up people, they can decide what they want to do for themselves. So we said, "Okay, you can move to Stockholm, but we're going to stay here in our town (Bollnas) and continue with the band." It would have been too expensive in gas to keep the band having to travel the 300 kilometers between Stockholm and Bollnas.

PC: A similar situation happened between Snowy Shaw and MEMENTO MORI!



Seventh Seal.

PC: Does Kristian get to hear the music before he begins with the artwork?

L: No, usually we don't have the material written yet, just a concept. I tell him some of the things I'm writing about or the title of the album, and he begins painting with that. He has free hands to paint whatever he wants, because I trust him on this end.

PC: Tell me a bit about the legendary *Symphony Of The Damned* album.

L: Yeah, I guess it's a common problem. We are still pretty good friends, but we have three new members, who we have known for 15 years.

PC: Yeah, I heard that your new guitarist actually filled in on an earlier MORGANA LEFAY tour.

L: That's correct. Peter Grehn was on a tour with us

in '95. We're very good friends, as is the entire band!

PC: With all the internal changes in the band, does Bollnas Metal still rule?

L: Yeah, that's a little saying we have here, because Bollnas is a small town, and there are a lot of Metalheads in this town. And I think you would have to search very hard in this country to find another town that has as many Metalheads in it. It's very special to us. There are only about 28,000 inhabitants in our town, but most of the bands that come out of Bollnas play Hard Rock, Heavy Metal or some kind of Metal.

PC: That's very, very cool!

From the changes between the new band, I've noticed almost no adjustment in your sound, except that it may be a bit heavier now.

L: In our opinion, we are not a different band. We are still MORGANA LEFAY under this guise! We had to change the name to LEFAY because of some legal shit. We don't want to have to become lawyers to play this music. We just want to play, but somehow, we were forced to change the name, so we changed it as little as possible; we just took out "Morgana."

Tony and I have done most of the music writing anyway. This is just a continuation of MORGANA LEFAY. We've actually heard

rumors that Black Mark is forcing the three members, who moved to Stockholm, to record a new MORGANA LEFAY album, and I think that is a little stupid.

PC: How did you manage to keep the logo style and trademark hourglass on the album covers?

L: Black Mark had nothing to do with that. We keep in close contact with the artist (Kristian Wahlin), he has the same kind of fantasy influence as us. We have a great connection. We just told him that he had to keep using the sand glass and logo style and everything. I think we will keep using this type of artwork for our albums. The cover art is much like a story, from *Knowing Just As I* to this one, *The*

L: It was a horribly produced first album released solely on vinyl (just to see ourselves spin on vinyl, [laughs]), we self-financed everything. There were a lot of die-hard fans who wanted us to release it on CD, but we lost the master tapes. So we had to re-record it, and we had a lot of fun doing it, and the songs came out sounding a lot fresher!

PC: Is this re-release like a George Lucas 'Special Edition' with the addition of material that you wanted to put into it but didn't have the time nor money to devote to it?

L: No, we just went into a studio in our hometown and recorded it in a matter of days, then we mixed it at The WaveStation, where we used to record our other albums. On the original release, the lyrics were in lousy English, so we

changed that a little, but it's still probably lousy. We're from Sweden, so we apologize for that.

PC: Where does the inspiration for your lyrics come from, because some of the stuff you write is really out there!

L: I'm very interested in occult things, fantasy stuff. I don't really like to write about common things, like the reality we live in, because we see that everyday on the news, and love? David Coverdale wrote everything you could possibly write about love! We think this suits us well, I read a lot of

fantasy books and Stephen King, Clive Barker and Tolkien for sure.

PC: That's something I was going to mention, that there are no Tolkien references on the new album.

L: No, the new album is based on my own imagination, except "The Seventh Seal" which, of course, is about the Book of the Revelation in The Bible, and "Harga" which is about a folk legend that occurred very close to our town. About 20 kilometers outside the town, there is a mountain called Harga. The legend says that the Devil played the violin for the youth there, and they got possessed, etc. It's a very well known legend here, so we wanted to write about that. The violins in the beginning of the song are actually playing the "Harga" folklore song.

PC: I also noticed that on *The Seventh Seal* that there is a more prominent 70s Hard Rock appeal to the music than was ever present on any of the previous releases. What is this attributed to?

L: That is probably the combination of Tony's and my influences. I listen to a lot of 1970s and 80s Rock music and almost none of the newer 90s bands. I have my vinyl collection, which I listen to frequently. Sometimes I even listen to JANIS JOPLIN and CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL, and that's very far away from what we are playing. Tony listens to a lot of METALLICA, MESHUGGAH, PANTERA, and a lot of early Hard Rock/Metal like JUDAS PRIEST. The combination of that mixture, I guess, creates that sound, if we have any special kind of sound. We just do it, if we like a song, then we record it. Then it's up to the people to judge, if they don't like it, then buy another record! We play for ourselves, first and foremost! We're not like MARILYN MANSON, who wants to get dressed up in women's underwear just to get an image; this is just 100% music!

Carpe Tenebrum

Mirrored Hate Painting
(Hammerheart)

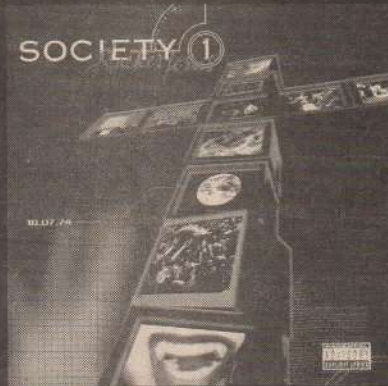
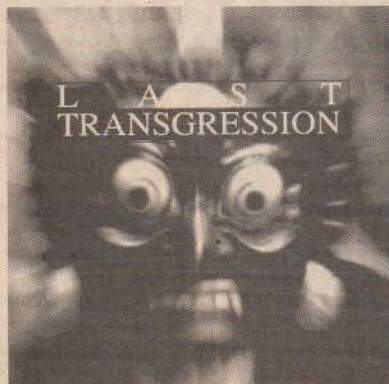
This is an absolutely Utopian release of pure, orchestral Black Metal featuring one of the only Black Metal musicians from the land down under. Astennu (DIMMU BORGIR and COVENANT) handles all of the musical duties while Lex Icon (A.K.A. Nagash, also of DIMMU BORGIR and COVENANT fame) takes care of the vocal work. Take DIMMU, and add more blasting and Nagash! After listening to Carpe Tenebrum for a while now, I have to say that I like Nagash's vocals better than Shagrath's. What bad things can I say of something that was spawned from the two aforementioned bands? Those of you who like DIMMU BORGIR should without a doubt check out CARPE TENEBRUM as well as TROLL, FIMBULWINTER and RAGANAROK, which are also other projects that their members were or are involved with.



Last Transgression

(Demo)

After several line up changes, the Death Metal band, Last Transgression, from Montgomery, Alabama finally put out a full length CD. I have to say that I wasn't completely impressed with this band. That is not to say that they're a bad band, but they aren't great by any means. They do have some crazy grooves going on, though, but the keyboards they throw in are overkill at times. The vocals are another problem; they're way too processed which takes away a lot from the natural voice. As far as their overall sound, it's very comparable to that of MACHINE HEAD and FEAR FACTORY. Any fan of those styles of Metal should give this band a try, though, at least. Contact Last Transgression c/o Terry Thompson, P.O. Box 680695, Prattville, AL 36066.



Society 1

Slacker Jesus
(Inzane)

In some circles, Matt Zane is known as an adult movie director. In others, he is known as the singer of the band Society 1, an interesting hybrid of Industrial and Neo-Metal. Their music is really tight and they have some killer riffs and beats. However, the problem is that Matt Zane isn't much of a vocalist. He doesn't have a good singing voice- or yelling voice for that matter. You can't really understand all the words he is singing, and unfortunately his voice also comes out sounding like Jonathon Davis' (of KORN fame) at times. I'd suggest for Mr. Zane to keep his day job as an adult movie director, but apparently their live shows are basically porno movies anyway. In that case, commence as you wish, Matt Zane. I'm sure some people will enjoy Society 1's blend of Industrial and grindy Hardcore riffs, as well as Zane's straining voice.



Uriah Heep

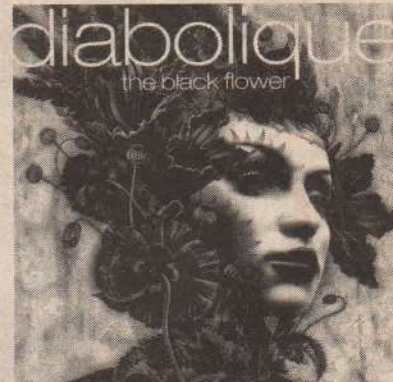
Sonic Origami
(Spitfire)

OK, I admit it. I thought all these guys were either dead or working at Wal-Mart. Boy was I wrong! With a history spanning nearly 30 years, Uriah Heep figures into almost every aspect of today's Metal scene. They were Heavy Metal pioneers and have influenced hundreds of bands both directly and indirectly, be it with their sound or with their attitudes and touring schedule. With guitarist Mick Box the only original member, the band returns with their first album since 1995's *Sea Of Light* in an effort to remind today's younger audiences what it's all about. Soaring vocal harmonies and melodic hooks abound; there's not a bad song on this disc. It remains to be seen if the kids will embrace this beautiful sound, but they should realize the debt owed this band for their three decades of music. Recognition should also be given to Spitfire for the inclusion of bands like TESTAMENT and Uriah Heep on the same roster.

Diabolique

The Black Flower
(Black Sun)

On this release we are graced with some very gloomy Gothic Metal. Every song is very emotional, very much like that of ANATHEMA or MY DYING BRIDE. Very intense keyboard work we've got here, but not so much that it commands the disc. Everything about this band is very dismal, but one thing I can't get past is the guitar work, which bears a strong resemblance to the GIN BLOSSOMS. Despite this fact I find it to be extremely enjoyable. If melancholic Metal enflames your despair-filled soul, then Diabolique is a band that you will really like. I'm not quite sure why they appeal to me but something about them is very catchy. Support Black Sun and check out Diabolique's new disc; it is definitely worth your dollar. Box 29, S-40 122 Gothenburg, Sweden. Blacksun@dolores.se www.dolores.se/blacksun/blackinfo.htm



Adversary

We Must Be in Hell
(Demo)

Well for starters this band could use a new name. I know shitloads of bands who have the same name. I know in my reviews I tend to be a bit hard on vocalists, but trust me, this guy sounds like someone shoved his scrotum down his throat. The music is very skillful and the production is not that dreadful either, except for a few songs. Again, I will give this band the same advice that I give to so many others: try a new vocalist and see how that works. While *We Must Be in Hell* might not be something to write home about, writing to Mr. Miller (the man behind the scenes of both Adversary and Cursed Productions) is certainly worth your time. PO Box 302, Elkhart, IN 46515-0302. Cursed@sbinet.com.



Mob Rules

Savage Land

(Limb Music/SPV/Inside Out)

Hailing from Germany, Mob Rules brings to the table, for their debut release, a very DIO/RAINBOW/early SCORPIONS-flavored melodic Metal. Though indirect in their delivery, the band's songwriting ability is very commendable and their musicianship displays the best of the aforementioned influences. The album cover depicts a very Mad Max/Road Warrior post-apocalyptic world, and the band photo reflects this impression, but as a whole, the album possesses BLIND GUARDIAN's classical epic journey aspect and SAVATAGE's conceptual feel. One track that deserves mention (as it truly stands out in my mind) is

"Savage Land Part III (No Reason Why)", because its intro is a precise echo of CRIMSON GLORY's "Lost Reflection", and it transcends from there into a SAVATAGE/JOURNEY-like poetic powerfest. *Savage Land* is highly impressive for a debut album, and I hope to see great things in the future from this talented young band.



Mactatus

Provenance of Cruelty

(Napalm Records)

I don't know when this deluge of Black Metal is going to end, but when it does I'm sure there will only be a few bands left over from all the hype to carry the torch. One of these bands will surely be Mactatus. Co-produced by Samoth and containing some keyboard work by Ihsahn (both of EMPEROR fame), *Provenance of Cruelty* is not to

be ignored by anyone into Black Metal. They do not overuse the blast beat, the vocals don't screech intolerably like a banshee, the music is extremely epic and atmospheric, and the production is top notch. This might be hard to believe, but they create their own unique sound in this over-saturated market. Yes, they employ some female vocals, but again, they are not overdone and her voice melds flawlessly into the rest of the music; she actually sounds like she belongs there instead of making an appearance just to follow a trend. I usually pass Black Metal CDs off to other writers in the Crusade who are much more into the BM scene than I because I personally think it all sounds

the same and is just a garble of noise. Mactatus, however, are very listenable even for my BM-hating ears and they've found a nice home in my 10-disc changer in the car. No other BM band has been able to achieve such a feat and I'm sure they will not disappoint you if you give them the chance yourself—even if you hate Black Metal! Trust me!



Sins of Omission

The Creation

(Black Sun)

Sins of Omission offer us a sound that is nothing new—melodic Death Metal from Gothenburg—but they do manage to hold their own. It's a disc I grew to like a lot only after many listens because I initially had to get past my IN FLAMES meets AT THE GATES notion. I also heard some NIGHT IN GALES and CHILDREN OF BODOM influences early on, too, but then I thought that if you're going to imitate a sound, the combination of these four bands is not such a bad idea! So I really dig it now, even though my first impression wasn't so keen. There are a few clean parts scattered here and there, as well as a chorus (a la THERION) at the end of "The Experiment". This is a sound we've all heard before, but it is worth your effort to at least check out once.



Godgory

Resurrection

(Nuclear Blast)

You've probably never heard of Godgory until now... well let me be the first to tell you that they fuckin' rule!! They are a Swedish two-piece (session musicians outnumber band members in this case) who play a melodic, dark, very atmospheric, and intense brand of Death Metal. Some songs, like the opening title track, are dark, yet emotionally uplifting (OPETH) and others, like "Crimson Snow", are violently violating (EDGE



Novembers Doom

Of Sculptured Ivy and Stone Flowers

(Martyr Music Group)

Novembers Doom sound more like MY DYING BRIDE than MY DYING BRIDE does! I'm serious, man. MDB stopped sounding like themselves after *The Angel and the Dark River* and they've been sounding less like themselves ever since. So what should MDB sound like? Like Novembers Doom, of course! I guess that doesn't help, though.... How about this: take the raw intensity and speed of *As the Flower Withers* and fuse it with the despondency and forlornness of *The Angel and the Dark River*. Presto! You have spectacular Doom Metal akin to *Turn Loose the Swans* which was MDB at their peak (so some would say, while I'm sure others would disagree). Novembers Doom are everything a great Doom band should be. They've got sullen lyrics; growling, clean, and spoken male vocals; operatic, female vocals; and clean and acoustic guitars that are both simultaneously sad and angry. There are no keyboards playing fake-sounding orchestras and no cellos or violins can be heard providing that little, extra whine. Pure Metal here, folks, a la guitars, drums, and the human voice (except for "Before the Wind", which really isn't a ND song anyway). So if you're like me and miss the glory days of ANATHEMA, MY DYING BRIDE, KATATONIA, or PARADISE LOST, then Novembers Doom is a band that you definitely need to look into.

OF SANITY). "Adultery" is a melancholic lament which is highly melodic, utilizing classical-sounding acoustic guitars and swooning keyboards to counterbalance the angry guitars and vicious vocals penetrating the chorus and finale. "My Dead Dreams" and "Collector of Tears" smack of some HYPOCRISY ingenuity minus the "blackness" that oftentimes exudes from their Death Metal and ACCEPT's "Princess of the Dawn" is given a darkened exhumation

while still retaining its Power Metal skeleton. *Resurrection* is Godgory's pinnacle consummation, bringing to full fruition what their debut and sophomore efforts, *Sea of Dreams* and *Shadow's Dance*, always promised but never amply dealt. This being their first international release with a lot of label support, it shouldn't be long until Godgory become a staple in the melodic Death Metal realm.

Crimson Glory

Astronomica
(Spitfire Records)

Yes! Yes! Fucking A, Yes!! The galaxy's most kick ass Melodic Metal band has finally returned and allows us to once again bask in its divine resplendence! Crimson Glory...merely mentioning the name gives me chills. The fond memories of *Transcendence* come flooding back, as Crimson Glory was always a band that could make you feel like you were being caught in a musical whirlwind which defied both time and space. *Astronomica* continues this grandiose tradition of metaphysical travel with ten brand new tracks of prophetic wisdom. Songwriting-wise, CG has added elements of progression and flamboyant technical genius to their repertoire and mesmerizes you with riveting anthems, soul-piercing ballads and complacent compositions, all of which are lyrically loomed over by Otherworldly themes. New vocalist Wade "War Machine" Black, fills Midnight's shoes as best he can (though no one could possibly ever match Midnight's golden throated luminescence) and reminds us of a holy blend of Ripper Owens' (JUDAS PRIEST) raging wails and Charles Rytkenon's (LEFAY) dismal melancholy. Many of the album's songs have already grafted themselves to various parts of my brain, causing a symbiotic relationship between myself and the essence of *Astronomica!* The lead-off track, "March to Glory", originally composed by New Age mogul ENYA, depicts the ignorance and ironic glorification of war throughout the years on this planet. "War of The World" is a punchy, aggressive, bass-fluent war cry from alien beings against the Earth. "Edge of Forever" echoes heavily of TESTAMENT's "Return To Serenity" and is a somber piece questioning the

Scattered Remnants

Destined To Fail
(Repulse Records)

Charming you with it's cobra-like, twisting orchestrated intro, Massachusetts-based butchers Scattered Remnants draws you down into the spiraling chasm of Death Metal disparity, engulfing you with a thousand flesh-feasting jaws of aural mayhem! Though the lyrics point to internal damnation and suffering, the music encompasses the shearing mania exhibited in the gen's finest assassins, from SUFFOCATION to MONSTROSITY! Scattered Remnants are among the elite in Death Metal cutlery, displaying eight finely-crafted abominations with the release of *Destined to Fail* (a sarcastic remark depicting the expectations of any band that performs this form of "un-viable" music). Though, in many respects, the statement is true, it shall not discourage those who truly believe in the power and strength gained from playing and listening to this music! If you do not believe in the omnipotence of massacring, brutal Death Metal, perhaps this disc will alter your outlook.

afterlife. "The Other Side of Midnight" might as well be called "Lost Reflection, Part II", because it continues the cryptic tale of the darkness within one's soul, accompanied by quite a haunting melody! The album comes to a head with "Cydonia", which tells of a region of Mars that may at one time been inhabited...or may still be! The music within the song also rings of a hopeful future, where knowledge prevails over ignorance and wisdom is achieved through experience! *Astronomica* is a necessity for Metal to successfully traverse to the next millennium.

Scrape

(Self titled demo)

The New York City area has always brought us many original and dynamic bands such as VISION OF DISORDER, HELMET, and CANDIRIA. And it is no surprise that New York is home to Scrape, another band that follows in the originality of these already established bands. Scrape's sound is hard to put a finger on. Their sound is an intense hybrid of Death Metal, Grind, and Hardcore. Musically and vocally it is very brutal and intense. One critic has described the lead singer's voice, Pheroze Karai, as being "from hell". Their self-titled and self-released demo holds up to all of these descriptions. All six songs are great. There is pure, raw, and open emotion in all of them. Scrape is now independently working on their full length CD and it should be no time before a major label picks them up. Contact them at 164 Powers St., Apt. 3, Brooklyn, NY 11211. www.scrapeonline.com

Jesus Martyr
Sudamerican Porno
Repulse Records

Jesus Martyr are a record label's dream come true. They play a brand of marketable, heavy music with an image not too far from those that they choose to emulate. In their music is a perfect blend of FEAR FACTORY and DEFTONES. The album almost alternates between songs/passages that sound like those two bands. The vocals are closest to Hardcore a la EARTH CRISIS. They have the ideal sound to place them in malls across suburban America.

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Garden of Shadows

Heart of the Corona
(X-Rated Records)

I love Death Metal that isn't just grinding and brutal for the sake of simply being heavy. Hence, I love Garden of Shadows because they incorporate a lot of different sounds into their music. Atmospheric keyboards, grinds that break down to a slower paced groove, a majestic twin-guitar attack, guttural growls from hell, and celestial female vocals all provide a plethora of sounds for my ears to behold. Garden of Shadows are simultaneously beautiful and brutal, atmospherically subtle in their orchestration and bludgeoningly heavy with their compositions. Jumping from soft and subtle acoustic guitar melodies to lightning-paced guitar riffs, keeping the listener on his toes, is what Garden of Shadows are all about. Their goal of becoming one of the foremost atmospheric Death Metal bands in the USA will surely become apparent if these guys keep up the great work. Contact X-Rated Records c/o Mathias Kietzmann at Apdo. Postal 1-2023, Cuernavaca, Mor., C.P. 62001, Mexico. X_rated_records@yahoo.com. <http://xrr.musicpage.com>. Or contact the band directly, c/o Brian R. at 14712 Botany Way, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. Bmissant@aol.com.



Amber Asylum

Songs of Sex and Death
(Release)

You know the last half of the song, "The Angel and the Dark River", where the music just drones on and fades away eventually amidst a sea of samples and disillusioned soundscapes? This entire CD is akin to those six minutes. Hell, MY DYING BRIDE is a Speed Metal band when compared to the snail-like characteristics of Amber Asylum's music. We've got over 52 minutes of slow, quiet, ambient, and dark sounds portrayed for us here, and it's perfect music for relaxing or mellowing out to. Some of the songs are reminiscent of an orchestra pit warming up before a show while other songs lull you to sleep with their repetitive samples and quiet interludes. A contra bass lends its support to the saddened cello and violin while sometimes operatic, but mostly soprano female vocals glide over top of the deadening music. This CD must be played with no other sounds for it to compete against, for the subtle sounds and perishing bliss will always lose out to a mind distracted. This disc needs to be experienced, not just heard; it needs to be listened to, not just played. Clear your thoughts and let Amber Asylum replace them with starving spirituality. Their music is the next best thing to silence in a world full of cacophony and pollution.

Dark Tower

Chronicles of Forests Untouched
(Demo)

Before there was the master craftsman MORTIIS, I'm sure there was the poor, struggling MORTIIS. Before he became the underground cult figure that he is today, I'm sure, back in the day, he was simply an ugly little man who had vision, talent, and charisma-but no money. Dark Tower is the moniker affirmed to one man, Ivariis (like a NINE INCH NAILS, TRENT REZNOR type of deal), and, although Ivariis is neither ugly nor little, I see a lot of MORTIIS in him. Conceived, written, and performed solely on a Korg NS synthesizer, *Chronicles of Forests Untouched* would be a masterpiece of music if it didn't sound like what my first Nintendo role playing games sounded like when I was a little kid. Games like *Zelda*, *Dragon Warrior*, *Faxanadu*, and *Final Fantasy* all had really cool music playing in the background, but it was just cheesy-sounding. This is great music written by a man of immense talent-but he needs money! He needs a new synth! Nevertheless, this music is very atmospheric, sometimes majestic, sometimes dark, always tranquil, and soothing to the soul. The MORTIIS influence is a staple to his sound, but on some tracks I also hear ENYA. I like to listen to Dark Tower when I need to unwind or reflect on the day's happenings. It's repetitive melodies, serene resonance, and ritualistic air would complement any atmospheric or melodic Death / Black Metal band, which I know Ivariis is very much into. If you're looking for a remarkable songwriter with an immense penchant for melody and ambience, look no further than Ivariis. Get in touch with him and his fledgling record label, Moonblood Records, by writing to 1111 Riverside Dr., Pottstown, PA 19464.



White Skull

Tales From The North
(Nuclear Blast)

Jumping right in with an intro very reminiscent of ARCH's "Conversio Prelude" (an epic keyboard-based melody), I knew immediately that this disc deserved my undivided attention! Anyway, the first full song from the disc is verily inspired by GAMMA RAY'S *Insanity And Genius*, but as the album progresses, White Skull carve their niche quite nicely between GR's melodic prowess and RUNNING WILD's raw power. Lyrically, the band lean more toward RUNNING WILD's concept of sea voyages and battles, but mostly from a Norse perspective, which is quite odd, since White Skull is Italian! Regardless, the band have created a beautifully crafted Power Metal masterpiece for their Nuclear Blast debut, and I am excited to see what the band has next in store for the world!



Internal Bleeding

Driven to Conquer
(Pavement)

Death Metal that grooves baby! I love it! Thrashing it out long and hard for close to a decade, Internal Bleeding continue to pummel their fans with one monstrous tune after another on this, their latest offering. While small elements of Hardcore can be detected, this is pure Death Metal through and through. I say small because the lyrical content alone would disqualify it from being Death Metal, but the music is fast, furious, brutal, in your face, and full of rage. Hey, that sounds like a good description of Hardcore music, too... well, Hardcore bands don't grind and their lyrics aren't generally shouted at this intensity (actually, it's more like a semi-growl type of shout which replaces the guttural vocals of previous Internal Bleeding releases). These guys never slow down, man... I don't know how they can be so intense for so damn long! I get tired just listening to them! I've already talked to die-hard Internal Bleeding fans who are completely digging on this, and with this new Hardcore-ized Death Metal sound, some new fans are going to be joining the ranks, I'm sure.

Requiem

Asphyxiated Scum of Society
(demo)

These guys sound like a cross between old CANNIBAL CORPSE and really old SEPULTURA. Very brutal and under-produced Death Metal is what you'll find if you decide to check into them. Once in a while a clean guitar will creep its way into the mix and they slow it down occasionally for some melodic break downs, but overall it's not too interesting. They've got a nice distro thing happening, though, under the moniker Live Yet Dead Productions. They've got some videos of AMORPHIS, BROKEN HOPE, CRADLE OF FILTH, DEATH, DIMMU BORGIR, HYPOCRISY, IN FLAMES, EMPEROR, MONSTROSITY, OBITUARY, SUFFOCATION, VADER and many, many others! Get in touch with Matt Brown at PO Box 165702, Miami, FL, 33116, USA.

Electric Wizard

Come My Fanatics...
(Rise Above)

This is the most sludge-filled Doom I have heard in quite some time. Like other bands such as SLEEP, Electric Wizard take the 'SABBATH mentality a step further. This disc is almost torturing at times because of its slowness. This is the album to listen to after 50 bong hits coupled with deep depression. Slow and sick.

IRON MAIDEN

An interview with Janick Gers and Bruce Dickinson

By Jeff Kent

Promethean Crusade: Maiden was just voted the number one Heavy Metal band in Britain, did that freak you out a little bit?

Janick Gers: See, I don't pay any notice to that kind of shit because if you do then next year when you're not number one it's bad. I don't see music as

competitive, but it's very pleasurable to know that people respect us as the number one HM act, that was really nice, but I don't take too much stock in it. It's also nice because it had nothing to do with us, the television station went out independently and audited everything and said you're number one and we said yeah, we fuckin' know we are (laughs). It's nice but it's not a be all and end all for me, we just go out and play our music. If we're number one, great if we come back next year and are number ten well then fuck 'em (laughs).

PC: There's a lot of young kids out there, I mean I've been a fan since '84 and the last time I went to a Maiden show there were little kids there that weren't alive when I saw the band for the first time.

JG: We did Brazil in the end of December playing to 31,000 people every night at festivals and there were kids, 11 year old calling our names and stuff as well as people 40 years old. So if there really is a conception of an audience there, we still hold on to our audience. I think there's been a big fashion change here in America, there's a big grunge thing and everyone kind of hops on what MTV is throwing out, but to our credit we never followed that we just carried on doing what we do and I think because of that there's a kind of integrity about the band. We never threw in a crap ballad or something like that just to try and get more sales you know and they know that they won't be sold short. I think that's really important, this band will never sell out that way, it can't be done. I think there is a lot of young kids coming to the gigs all over the world and that's healthy.

PC: How's writing working out with six people in the band, are you teaming up or are you each doing your own thing?

JG: We've already started a little bit of writing, we've got a few songs together already and it's quite exciting stuff. We've got ideas all the time, we're always putting ideas together you never know what it's going to end up like at the end of the day and that's what I like.

I don't like it when it becomes calculated, I like the spontaneity and I think it comes from all over the place. I have no objection to writing with anybody, so it's an open book for me **Bruce Dickinson:** I've been writing with Adrian already and little bit with Jannick. Once we all get together in a rehearsal room we'll just start jamming. It'll all just happen; it's how it always happens. We have more songwriting firepower than at any time in the band. The vibe within the band is just so on at the moment and I think it will remain so. This is the same kind of atmosphere that we had on Number of the Beast, it

really is, it really is that good. I think we can do the greatest IM album there's ever been.

PC: Will you be going away from keyboards and guitar synths to back up the sounds now that you have the third guitar?

JG: I was brought up playing with keyboards, I didn't play a whole lot of guitar before Maiden.

With Gillan we had a keyboard player and with White Spirit we had a keyboard player and also with Fish, with Bruce it was just guitar. I have no objections to using whatever we need, whatever sounds good to me I'll use. It's not a question of moving away from keyboards. If you think that a nice keyboard would make that better then use it by all means I'm not against anything, personally. I think there's going to be a lot of texture with the three guitars, there's already

maybe three or four guitar parts on each track doing different things but we couldn't play it live before. Take LED ZEPPELIN, there's a guitar army there, but only one Jimmy. If you had three more Jimmy's there you could play all the other parts and make it sound even better.

PC: I saw that some travel agencies in England are putting together package tours to go to the Paris show.

JG: Which is weird, actually it's quite exciting [at this point a young female hotel employee enters the and says "hello" like she's used to seeing rock stars interviewed in the stairwell, Janick makes the appropriate tongue wagging gesture for a man of his occupation]. Yeah so if you're you really want to see us you can do that or you can wait 'til next year and see what we plan to be a very, very big show. We didn't want to get bogged down with people calling this a

reunion tour. We're not going to Japan or Brazil or the rest of South America. It's basically a taster tour across America; a taster tour across Europe and the tickets in Europe are going crazy. We did really well on the last tour as well and we're in a situation where no one wants to be called Heavy Metal. I have no objection to whether people call this music Heavy Metal or Rock n Roll, whatever you want to call it, it doesn't bother me because it is what it is.

PC: As far as I'm concerned there's only good music and bad music.

JG: Exactly, exactly. I think all people especially the media put things out there and say they're cool and then six months later it's not cool anymore and everyone's written them off. I've never followed that, you

write they'll look at the audience and think, "I wonder what they'll like?" And they write music they abhor that their audience will like.

PC: That or the record company tells them what they should write.

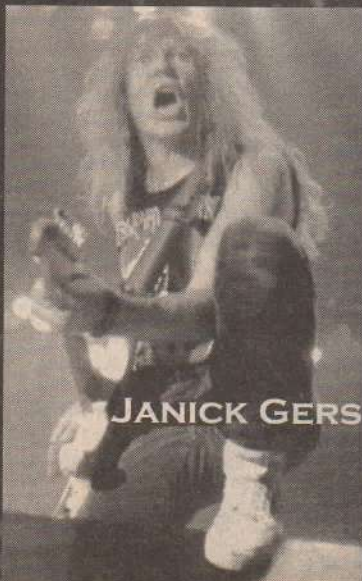
JG: Right. What you become in effect is a parody of what you were because the reason you were big in the first place is because you wrote what you wanted to write. You wrote with feeling from your heart and that's what Maiden has done, we've obviously had record companies say well if you did this or that perhaps you'd sell more records, but we're not interested in that. We'd rather do what we do with the integrity that we have and have longevity, be still around this amount of time.

PC: Have you been following the press in the U.S. with the recent events in Littleton Colorado?

BD: Yeah, I'm sick and tired of listening to people trying to defend the NRA. You can almost tell from the kind of suit and tie the guy's wearing as he comes up that he's going to say well we need more research into why this violence is happening. When someone questions him about the availability of guns he gets very defensive. If people don't have guns and don't have high explosives, people don't die its real easy. But that's too much of a mental leap for people to understand, but it's tough to slaughter 26 people with a bread knife. The degree of ducking and diving being done by the NRA is pathetic and sad. Moses or Charlton Heston, whatever he's calling himself leading the faithful is just dreadful. I can't understand this bullshit about the right to bear arms, I'm sorry I don't get it. This could be the last topic before lawmakers get voted out of office by a population that's completely pissed off with the crap that gets foisted upon them. Bill Clinton's impeachment case in point and now on to something far more important that a blow job, a high school massacre. So we'll see what happens.

JG: Yeah, it's not just the States it's all over the world. I think people that start blaming music and MARILYN MANSON or whoever else they're blaming are wrong. It's not music, it's a social problem, and America and the rest of the World needs to realize there's a lot of alienation going on with the kids. People are sticking their kids in front of the telly all day so they can get on with their own lives; there's a lack of responsibility among parents. The fact that you can just go out and buy a gun, so that if you lose your temper with someone you don't punch them you shoot them, you know that's a social problem. It's got nothing to do with MARILYN MANSON or OZZY OSBOURNE or JUDAS PRIEST or anybody; it's got nothing to do with music.

Continued on next page



Continued from previous page

PC: People are going to keep blaming music though.
JG: You can't blame music, it's passing the buck. Movies, I'm not too sure, I don't know, there's a lot of violence in movies and I personally wouldn't let my kids see those kinds of movies that I know are available to young kids now. I don't think if you are watching movies that it's going to make you go out and shoot someone, but I think if you have a mind that isn't fully developed perhaps you might not be able to see the difference between reality and something that's not real. Musicians don't have the answers, man we just have the questions; we pose the questions. We're not that kind of band anyhow, it's just two hours of fun if you come to our concert, we want you to have fun we want to take people on a ride, a roller coaster ride of our songs which can be quite thematic in content.

PC: There are more kids that go out and pick up books after listening to Maiden than pick up guns, but it's not news that someone bought a book.
JG: Of course, but when something like this happens you've got to blame somebody and it's quite easy to blame a Rock band, but it's just stupidity. If you tell me because you listen to a lyric by MARILYN or OZZY, you're gonna go out and shoot someone then I can't equate with that, the guy's got to be a bit mad anyhow. I'd preferably ask where he got the gun from where'd he get the idea to make the bombs, did he get it from the internet? When it talks about the info highway being so great, well it's great if you have the intelligence to deal with it, but if you haven't it's fucking dangerous.

PC: When I first got onto it I noticed that for every one thing you read that's good and smart there are about ten stupid things that are just wrong.
JG: It's scary, but you can't really do anything about it. It's like the Hydrogen bomb, once you invent it you can't just put it away now and we won't play with it. It's there we developed it now you've got to have the intelligence to interpret and deal with it, that's a big deal. You can't get in there and censor the internet it's a very gray area. So you've got people with minimal intelligence and dubious ideas able to get on there and that's material that wasn't there before to someone who's a bit edgy and a bit mad.

PC: He wasn't smart enough to go to the library and find it, but he can surf the net and have it delivered right into his room.
JG: Exactly. He's lazy sitting at home on his computer. Also with computers I find they can be quite alienating I don't know if I'd let my kid play on it all the time. There's a time and a place for everything like TV and all of that, it's down to parental guidance, that's what we're lacking it's certainly not MARILYN MANSON. I don't think.

PC: How much has the internet changed the way the band operates?
BD: Ooooooh welllllll ahhhhhhh, to me the internet not the message it is another medium. And in the 70's bands pressed their own singles and started their own record labels and it was a revolution, then 4 years later everyone was doing it and all the major labels had

assimilated it and they all got out. Well, now here's the internet and gradually the big labels and big companies are all buying up the web. The web is being bought whether you like it or whether you don't. What I see happening is like everything else, if you want to use it you're going to have to pay for it. And the majors and the big independents will all be selling stuff on the web and the little guys who started it in the hopes that it would be their savior are going to end up on the equivalent of cable access channel 49.

PC: Then they'll go back to pressing their own singles.

BD: Well, they're going to have to because that's the only currency that has any value, but I doubt they'll do that. For us, because we're a big band and because we're very internet friendly, and we spend quite a lot of time on internet research, for us it's probably going to end up being OK. We'll keep on top of it and we'll be able to make the band stronger and more

independent. I don't think the internet is the huge savior...

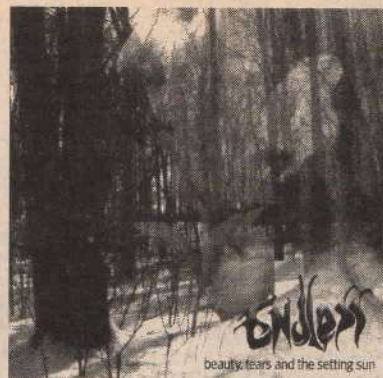
PC: Do you read the Maiden newsgroups?
JG: I've logged on once in a while and I'll tell you what I think. It's as if you could read all the letters of all the people you know and you could listen in on all the telephone calls and hear what's being said about you and I think it just makes people paranoid. In fact I know people that are in quite major bands who resorted to tactics of recording people talking in an attempt to find someone talking about them and then when they found something, becoming so paranoid about it that they can't really function properly. And the internet can have that kind of effect on you. I'll go on the internet to do interviews and hear what people have got to say, but you've also got people who are supposedly Maiden fans, but they're really not and they just go in there to rile everybody up. I'm too busy living life to sit back and read what other people are saying.

PC: You see people bickering over words in song lyrics and their hidden meanings.
JG: Exactly, and it's not really my cup of tea. I'll tell you that I find it humorless, the humor thing is really difficult to get across on the internet. You say something you think is funny and nothing happens.

PC: It just sits there, mocking you.
JG: Yeah, you're like come on that was brilliant. I remember hearing a radio interview with Ritchie Blackmore when I was a kid and the interview ended with him saying, "I'm the best there is."

And I thought what an arrogant twat. A couple of years ago I saw a documentary on him and in that interview the guy asked him about it. He said what actually happened was that he paused after saying, laughed and said, "Nahhh, I'm just kidding," but they cut then end off it. It's amazing how you can edit things to make people look a certain way and it's the same with the internet. People ask me a question and I answer with a joke and I'm rolling on the ground laughing, but it doesn't come out as funny.

PC: You've actually got to write, "this is funny."



Endless *Beauty, Tears and the Setting Sun* (Pavement)

These Canadians play a style of Death Metal which weaves in between the cliched and the mediocre. The music is not necessarily "bad", but does not offer anything new or mainly anything to catch one's attention for any great length of time. The riffs feat neatly between those conjured up by old favorites such as older ENTOMBED and *The End Complete* era OBITUARY, all the while with a rhythm section whose main purpose seems to bore rather than to excite. The vocals are nothing to write home about either. The best thing I can say about Endless is at least they are true and not selling out to baggy pants Metal!

Unholy Cadaver *Demo Number One* (demo)

This disc is probably one of the most impressive demos I've heard in a long time, not only in production and packaging, but their songwriting skills are great, too! Unholy Cadaver plays a brand of dark Metal that is difficult to classify, since they amalgamate their influences quite well. As a whole, the band composes Blackened Epic Metal with a Death-like edge. A lot of the music is brooding like BLACK SABBATH, but intricate melody and multiple BATHORY-ish vocal tracks (ranging from Black Metal shrieks, to operatic, choir-like tones) allow the band to transcend to another level of evil-edged Melodic Metal! The band also changes things up by utilizing EDGE OF SANITY's unpredictability, allowing you to become comfortable with their soothing passages, only to bludgeon you with speed and rage the next second. It definitely keeps you on your toes! They definitely have a European bite to their music, which is odd, since they are a Bay Area band. Looks like MINDROT is going to have some competition in the field after all! Absolutely essential listening. Send \$7 to: Unholy Cadaver, 3278 20th Street, San Francisco, CA 94110 or e-mail unholycadaver@mindspring.com.



Infinifxion

Eternal Crucifixion (demo)

From Georgia comes this brash three-piece Death Metal outfit, and I am quite impressed with their abilities as musicians. Amazing technical guitar work in the vein of classic 80s Heavy Metal (i.e. IRON MAIDEN, MERCYFUL FATE) combined with the brutality of modern Death Metal always makes for a great combination, and Infinifxion prove this without fail. Five songs of near-epic length (the shortest clocking in at 5:10 minutes & the longest being 7:29) proves that the band is skilled in songwriting, for each track is loaded with massive shredding and FORBIDDEN-like melody. Unfortunately, the guttural belching from the vocalist blemishes the tape's charm, as is perfectly evident in their rendition of MAIDEN's "Phantom Of The Opera", which makes the song sound like it should be on a Dwell Records tribute album, but aside from that, the band really smokes! Infinifxion, c/o Sean Simmons, 121 Lake Terrace, McDonough, GA 30253.

Mortiis

The Stargate (Earache)

Nearly three years in the making, Norwegian, GoblinKind-visaged composer Mortiiis blesses the world with his greatest epic journey yet! Not to be confused with the Kurt Russell/James Spader movie about Egyptian Aliens, Mortiiis' latest masterwork is more of a culminated exploration of mind, imagination, contemplation, and reflection. Each track is a self-contained emotional quest through youth, knowledge and experience. Enrapturing operatic vocals imbue each track with a sense of spiritual freedom and childlike naivete, though ominous percussion gives an impression of impending danger and probable disaster. As a composer, Mortiiis leans towards the lucid yet eloquent, for only genius can birth such sophisticated grace and emotional texture, all the while capturing and enslaving ones attention with charming, simplistic melodies. *The Stargate* is a necessity for humble self-realization and actualization!

The Obsessed

Incarinate (Southern Lord)

Since The Obsessed's catalogue is now out of print, this album is received with open arms. It is comprised of tracks that were previously rare or unreleased so Southern Lord is to be commended! The Obsessed may be a name that is not too familiar to some, but to true fans of SABBATH/Cannabis-inspired Doom Metal, The Obsessed wrote the book. Basically, they are the grandfathers of bands such as ACID BATH, DOWN, and even CATHEDRAL. Why they have never become more popular is indeed a mystery, but makes this album all the more worthwhile. The guitar work is the most crusty, nasty, sludge-filled splendor this side of BLACK SABBATH, and Wino is indeed an icon. Perhaps one day he shall be the next Lemmy. This album is recommended to all fans of Doom, and furthermore, to fans of The Obsessed and ST. VITUS (Wino's other band). Think of this as an Instructional booklet on "how to play Doom", taught by the best. To top it off, there is an excellent cover of SKYNYRD's "On the Hunt", paying tribute to one of the greatest Rock bands of all time. *Incarinate* is destined to be a classic.

Whiplash

Messages In Blood: The Early Years (Displeased Records)

Displeased has really taken a shine to this somewhat lost Bay Area-type Thrash band of the 80s. Not only have they reissued their entire catalogue from back in the day, they've managed to dig up this release, which compiles two of their early demo tapes as well as two live performances from 1985. Definitely geared towards diehard fans of the classic 80s Speed-Thrash movement, this album will not appeal to the aggro-influenced New Jack Rock kids of today, who think that "if it doesn't sound like MARILYN MANSON or KORN, it sucks!" *Messages In Blood* has an identical allure to albums such as EXODUS' *Bonded By Blood*, BLOOD FEAST's *Kill For Pleasure* and METALLICA's *Kill 'Em All* and *Ride The Lightning*. This is a great collection of Old School Thrash that really takes you back in time to an era when Metal bands were completely focused on the music and having a good time with the fans, rather than worrying about how many albums their marketers can sell! Only recommended for the Old School devoted!

Beyond Dawn

Electric Sulking Machine (Peaceville)

This album is aptly titled because the music has an inherent sulking nature to it. Listening to this album at times is like listening to depression... to someone wallowing in their own self-pity. No, this is not a Doom Metal album. The most arduous task imaginable is trying to scheme up a way to classify this disc for it is so far out of the "norm." Fans of Indie Rock would love the artsy experimentation from these Norwegians. In some aspects, the music can be classified as Pop in that the songs are simple and catchy, but it is hard to imagine the masses being able to comprehend it. These Pop songs are crafted in deep electronic and minimalist guitar work. *Beyond Dawn* cannot be insulted for, their sound is unlike any I have ever heard, but be forewarned, this is only for VERY open ears.

Hangnail

Ten Days Before Summer (Rise Above Records)

This band truly had me fooled. Had I not read their bio, I would have assumed that they were from the land that produces the whiskey-inspired, sick grooves that we all love - the land known as the South! It turns out that, like fellow Brits, BAD COMPANY in the 70's, Hangnail has managed to fool us and turn our heads at the same time. This is great, Bluesy Hard Rock, and I can't help but say once again...with a Southern, Dixie Land groove. Perhaps Hangnail excels so much because it seems like it comes naturally for them unlike many bands who try too hard to capture this essence of Hard Rock feeling. The best description of Hangnail is to take the classic sound of a band such as AC/DC, add to that the 90's style groove of DOWN, and finally mix in the trippy sounds of ACID BATH or KYUSS. Hangnail is surely a surprising discovery and won't disappoint those who love the mixture of booze, parties, and loud Rock! Crank it up!



Candiria

Process Of Self-Development (MIA Records)

This band definitely suffers from Multiple Personality Disorder, even more than MR. BUNGLE, though Candiria sticks to the realm of "song-writing" rather than playing whatever noises they feel must come next, as in the case of BUNGLE. Candiria is, in a word, eclectic, and would do John Zorn proud. On one hand, the band can put out the most vicious NY Street Core this side of EARTH CRISIS or SICK OF IT ALL, and on the other, they have the amazing ability to present very colorful Hip-Hop/ Street Jazz, which sounds heavily influenced by STANLEY CLARKE or QUINCY JONES! Yes, *Process Of Self-Development* can be a bit difficult to handle to an untrained ear, but given a few spins, one can begin to collate the order that dwells within Candiria's diversity. Definitely designed for the unjaded of taste!

Skourge

End Of View (Stagnant Blood Records)

Texas spawned this kick-ass band of 80s Death Metal inspired maniacs named after one of my favorite Transformers (leader of the Sweeps, watch the movie!!). Anyway, *End of View* is eleven songs of manic Old School laced bedlam, with influences ranging from POSSESSED, TERRORIZER, and DECEASED to the grinding frenzy of INTERNAL BLEEDING, PUNGENT STENCH and MALEVOLENT CREATION. This is definitely not an album for those whose impression of Metal is what they see on The Box, but then again, is any album we promote really meant for those people? This is true underground-spirited madness for fans of the genre by obvious fans themselves! Prepare for the annihilation of your soul! Contact: Skourge, c/o Brian Smith, P.O. Box 634, New Caney, TX, 77357 or call 281-689-0709.



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Engorged
Death Metal Attack 2
 (Razorback Records)

Prior to even listening to the disc, I knew immediately that this was going to be a fun disc, simply because the album artwork pays homage not only to horror films, but to G.I. Joe's arch-nemesis organization COBRA. In fact, they are so enthusiastic about the group that it is reflected in song titles "F.A.N.G." and "Cobra H.I.S.S." As well as their own names: guitarists Cobra Commander & Major Bludd, bassist Zartan and drummer Destro, with backing vocals by The Baroness and Crimson Guard. Their lead vocalist calls himself Akkad: I can only assume it is a reference to the producer of the *Halloween* and *Superman* movie sequels. But enough of the glamorous image, you want to know about the

music. Well, quite honestly, the band plays a Mulligan Stew of extreme Metal, saturating the CD with Grind, Crust, Hardcore, brutal Death and traditional Heavy Metal. Most notable resemblances can be drawn to REGURGITATION, EXHUMED, classic CARCASS, MORTICIAN, SPAZZ, BRUTAL TRUTH and EXTREME NOISE TERROR. This is definitely a band that would fit nicely on Relapse's roster, what with their obvious penchant for the extreme. And besides, how can you go wrong when John Saxon is mentioned right on the album cover (though he had no connection with the recording, outside of his classic film influence)! Write to: Engorged, c/o Ultra Deluxe Inc., 625 SW 10th Ave., PMB 274, Portland, OR, 97205-2788 (c o b r a 6 6 1 3 @ h o t m a i l . c o m) / (cobracommand666@webtv.net) or Razorback Records, c/o Billy Nocera, P.O. Box 321, Farmingville, NY 11738 (Wnocera@aol.com).

amazing how vocalist Mike Tirelli has captured the essence of Ronnie James Dio's raw but eloquent singing ability and molded it into an aural lead pipe, which he drives deep into your skull. Interestingly enough, Holy Mother's cover of "Holy Diver" is a driving, faithful homage and ignites that fire within, making you want to incite a riot, much like the original! It is sad, however, that the band's material is not presently available in the US, aside from a couple mail-order companies, because it's this kind of passionate rage that can easily revitalize the American Metal scene, given the opportunity! In the meantime, you can get on the label's shit at: P.O. Box 22 02 11, 45067, Essen, Germany. Or you can write the band to find out how you can join their legions: P.O. Box 169, Selden, New York, 11784.



Holy Mother
Criminal Afterlife
 (A.B.S. Records)

How can anyone not like this band? They represent the best of DIO, JUDAS PRIEST, and their own streetwise flavor, making every release a pummeling, pure Metal shredfest, with a sound equivalent to that of a back alley brawl! *Criminal Afterlife*, the band's third installment of crushing, adrenaline-pumped fury, sees the band continuing on their warpath, destroying all who will not swear allegiance to the power of Metal! It's truly



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Tru-Dat
(self-titled demo)

Your average happy Rock band you might hear on the radio someday. Funny lyrics but songwriting needs to mature a bit.

Mucupurulent
Horny Like Hell
(Sub Zero)

Very, very brutal Death Metal equating lust and death. Like having sex in a mortuary. These guys think about sex way too fucking much! Belching vocals atop sludgy, grinding guitars. Musically not bad at all, but vocals make one want to vomit.



Regurgitate
Effortless Regurgitation
(Relapse)

Holy fuck is this disgusting! This is the sickest Grindcore in existence. Sounds a lot like early CARCASS. 63 songs in 55 minutes beats out DROGHEDA, but then again, these guys have BENUMB and NASUM to compete with! A new standard in Grindcore has been set.

Splinter
Sew it Shut
(demo)

A more melodic and musical NINE INCH NAILS... good stuff! Thanks include Natalie Portman, Kate bush, Trent Reznor, Christopher Walken, Christina Ricci, and Edgar Allen Poe. Poignant, intelligent lyrics and dark, but unbrooding, theme throughout. Not Industrial at all, not too Gothic, and highly artistic. Get in touch with Splinter at: <http://members.tripod.com/~trybalfish/index.htm> or splinter90@aol.com

Drogheda
(Extremist)

Grindcore. Fast. Brutal. Intense. Unrelenting. But 26 songs spanning 50 minutes tends to get boring. If this stuff never grows old for you, though, don't hesitate to get in touch with Extremist Records at: 808 Renninger Rd, Akron, Ohio, 44319.

Obscenity
Demo-Niac
(Morbid)

The coolest thing about this re-release of Obscenity's demos and early material is the ENYA sample at the beginning and end. It's a nice juxtaposition of serenity and chaos. Not the best Death Metal in the world, but it is respectable.

Dementor
The Art of Blasphemy
(Repulse)

Old School, extremely fast, and brutal Death Metal with overtly anti-Christian theme. Nothing out of the ordinary, but if you're looking for some Christian-bashing tunes and you don't like Black Metal, this is the disc for you. Damn, this disc is fast as fuck!

Abhorrence
Ascension
(Wild Rags)

Better production and a fine-tuning of execution would enhance Abhorrence's Black-Metal-meets-Death-Metal sound. They have an Old School SLAYER meets SEPULTURA sound and show promise.

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S.O.D.

Bigger Than The Devil (Nuclear Blast)

This disc is a BLAST! If you've been waiting with baited breath (what the hell does that mean anyway?) wait no more because they're baaaaack. Scotty, Billy, Charlie and Danny set their sights on a number of targets and fire away with sarcasm and wit usually unheard of in Metal. That's what makes these guys so refreshing in a world of ultra-serious Metal musicians who are either growling about Satan or noodling away on their expensive guitars. They plant their tongues firmly in cheek and have a great time at everyone else's expense. Have you ever wondered what KING DIAMOND would sound like at the drive through? Haven't we all? Check out "King at the King". And "Celtic Frosted Flakes" brings up a good question, for what did happen to Celtic Frost anyway? The guitars buzz and crunch in that excellent NYHC way that Anthrax made so popular, and speaking of Anthrax, one of their old tunes, "Imitation of Life", makes a thinly disguised appearance here as "Aren't You Hungry?" Lastly, the cover is a scathing attack against one of the greatest Metal albums of all time, or is it? Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. ~Jeff Kent

This is such a touching release. It's one of those CDs that can be enjoyed by the whole family—young and old. The love, tenderness, and care these four upstanding lads have for American society is both commendable and unprecedented in today's harmonious and elegant Thrash scene. Moving ballads of Mike Hutchence and Phil Hartman are beautifully crafted and orchestrated with such skill and tact, you'd think they were personal friends of the band. "Make Room, Make Room" and "Aren't You Hungry" gracefully display the band's concern for the world's hunger and surplus population, much like Scrooge's sympathy in Dickens' novel. Everyone remember Pete Steele's emotionally stirring aria, "Kill All the White People"? "Kill All the Assholes" follows in the same vein—very moving in a dramatic sort of way. "Shenanigans" intellectually discusses the positive effects of alcohol on young men in the beautiful city of New York and how that fine, upstanding gentleman, Howard Stern, became involved in the little tryst that befell these angelic boys. Just as all parents should make their little children view the movie, *South Park*, for its moral and ethical teachings, so too should they purchase for their young ones this wholly educational and spiritually uplifting disc. ~Tom J. Hughes

Dragging their sewage-strewn heads from the rodent-infested gutters of New York returns the nation's reason for political correctness, the Stormtroopers Of Death! And this time, they're back for good (so they say)! Contained on this platter of new material are 25 more things that piss the band off! Like their classic debut, the album's music is largely comprised of Hardcore-styled Thrash-Punk Metal, but since Danny Lilker had spent such a great deal of time in BRUTAL TRUTH, elements of Grind pop up now and again. While this album may not go down in history as an instant classic (like its immortal studio predecessor *Speak English Or Die*), fans will flock to the album, because who can really get enough of S.O.D.'s brand of moshed-up satire and sarcasm?



Yes, we may cling to our "Pre-Menstrual Princess Blues", "Kill Yourself" and "Chromatic Death", this new era of Stormtrooper madness breeds such jingles as "Kill The Assholes", "Free Dirty Needles" and "The Ballad Of Michael H." (a sobering tribute to the singer of INXS, yeah right! S.O.D. knows you don't pay homage to someone who commits suicide, no matter who they are!!!) There are enough musings of anarchy on this disc to keep the government in uproar for years, and Tipper Gore will probably try adding an 11 Commandment to keep America's apparently ignorant youth safe from more of the world's "demoralizing evils", which will simply state "Thou shalt not S.O.D.!" Well, good luck to her, because as long as the government continues to restrict "freedom" in order to control and contain "morality", S.O.D. will always have a reason to return and spit right back in their faces! ~Mark Morton



Athena's Enlightenment

Testament *The Gathering* (Spitfire)

Fierce. A one word review would have to be just that, fierce. This is the album that METALLICA should have made after releasing *Justice*. It has all the complexity of *Puppets* and all the power and speed of *Kill 'Em All*. *The Gathering* is fast, hard and, thanks to Dave Lombardo, incredibly tight. These tunes come fighting out of the speakers as if the band can't play them fast enough, but they can, riding right on the edge of chaos. Controlled chaos, this is the calling card of James Murphy who plays



the guitar like it's an extension of himself. After an hour or so, you'll need to catch your breath before listening to the whole thing again and listen you will. I couldn't stop playing this disc and the first words out of my mouth for weeks were "have you heard the new Testament?" I don't know if being dropped by Atlantic fueled the fire for this release, but whatever it is that Chuck Billy and the rest of the guys did to prepare for this disc worked. ~Jeff Kent

Holy fucking shit on a stick. This is the most savage, ferocious, and kick-ass-to-the-fucking-core piece of Thrash Metal I have ever heard. I'm not familiar with Testament's older material like the rest of the PC crew, but I can honestly say that as far as I'm concerned, when 1999 comes to a close this will be the album that all of us Crusaders are gonna remember as the epitome of Metal in the precursor to the millennium. I'm speechless. I firmly believe this is all there is to tell. Anyone who has anything bad to say about this album deserves an ass whipping courtesy of every true Metalhead in the world. ~Tyler Pursel

Holy fucking mother fucking shit!! SHIT!! Damn it! Fuck! Man, does this disc kick ass! Every time I listen to it I just wanna go out and buy bigger speakers to handle the sheer power, intensity, and energy harnessed by the sonic boom penetrating my ears! FUCK!! Even now I can't take it...just when I thought Testament could not top the heaviness of *Demonic*, the genius of *Practice...*, or the mastery of *The New Order*, here comes this juggernaut! Shit! Does this disc groove! Holy hell does this disc kick ass! I've actually read a negative review of this release and I think that the dude is on crack! Damn am I fuckin' floored by this release! From the moment I slipped it into my CD player I knew I was in for some spectacular sonic fireworks! Not a single bad tune exists on this staggering effort and it will forever stand as a defining pinnacle in Testament's career and firmly secure them in the annals of Metal's history for as long as humanity exists! If there exists a heavier, more intense, and talented Thrash band than Testament, shoot me now and end it all because I don't think I could handle it! Fuckin' A does this disc kick so much ass! OK, I'm done now. No I'm not... Holy mother fuckin' shit this disc fucking rules!
~Tom J. Hughes

Now, I could go on about the band's all-star lineup, but you already know about that, as well as their individual prophetic achievements. I could tell you that *The Gathering* has allowed Testament to achieve a new level of heaviness without transcending completely into the realm of Death Metal, but I won't. I will tell you, however, that Testament is the most consistent Bay Area band that knows what its fans want, and delivers it to them with untiring avail! Chuck, Eric and company have always been about the fans, and although the album really has no songs that stand above the others, they've composed the most well-rounded, completely Testament album of their career since (perhaps) *Practice What You Preach*. Elements of all their classic works appear herein, from the social-consciousness of *The New Order*, adding the technical songwriting mastery of *Practice What You Preach* and *The Ritual*, to the raw, aggressive, demented smorgasbord of shred that illuminated *Low* and *Demonic*. This is Testament at its caustic vigilance, totally spellbound by its fans' needs and delivering the goods at a time when Metal needs a good, swift kick in the ass to get it back on track, and see what formula made it great! Many hails to the Legions Of Death!! ~Mark Morton

Finland has become a breeding ground for great musical talent in recent years. Bands such as *IMPALED NAZARENE* and *SENTENCED* have helped to put this tiny country on the map of Metal. Children of Bodom are taking hold of the flame, and with their debut album proved to be an intense hybrid of the Classic Metal sounds of old and a newfound 90's Thrash tenacity. The end result is one amazingly fluid and original band. Now with the release of *Hatebreeder* they must live up to everyone's expectations. Not only do they deliver, but they manage to outshine any preconceived notions that we all had. Bands like Children of Bodom unite us all in the cause. Alexander was great to talk to, and of course, knew his Metal! Read on...

Children Of Bodom

By Chris Hawkins

Promethean Crusade: How's it going? Are you guys on tour right now?

Children of Bodom: No. After the release of our second album, *Hatebreeder*, we've done gigs here in Finland. In the summer, it's festival time so we're doing a few Finnish festivals and ones all over Europe. In July, we have a trip to Japan with *IN FLAMES* and *DARK TRANQUILITY*.

PC: Yeah, I heard about that...

CoB: Yeah, a proper tour is not until September. It's gonna be like 35 gigs or something. We are doing only two or three gigs a week now.

PC: That's still a lot of shows. A lot of bands over here only play once a week and they are still considered to be "on tour."

CoB: I think Finland is not such a big country, and Metal is so big. On the charts, there are many Metal bands, like Finnish Metal bands...

PC: Like *SENTENCED*...

CoB: Yeah, and *STRATOVARIUS*, and *AMORPHIS*... Bands like that.

PC: Are the album charts like Pop charts or specifically Metal?

CoB: No, it's the official Finnish album charts.

PC: Wow, Metal is big over there!

CoB: Yeah, it's very important, and it's easier nowadays to get Metal on TV and radio shows. People are very into Metal. It's kind of a national thing here in Finland.

PC: I wish it was like that here. Metal is really underground except for the mainstream Mall-crap like *KORN* and *LIMP BIZKIT*.

CoB: That's what I've heard. Also, I heard in America, bands like *CANNIBAL CORPSE*, like Death Metal, are very big, but bands like *HAMMERFALL*...

PC: Yeah, Power Metal and more traditional stuff does not go over as well.

CoB: *HAMMERFALL* is very big in Europe. They are selling hundreds of thousands of records. I always wondered why a band like *MANOWAR*, an American band, is not so big in the States.

PC: They're not really, it's sad and very strange. *MANOWAR* plays only a few selected shows here, but they do sell out.



sad because it's only for those older than 18. Many Metal people are young so we prefer shows where everyone can come. 90% of people who buy our albums are underage. There are not so many places to play, though, so we have to play some club shows too.

PC: What's the crowd reaction like?

CoB: It depends. In Northern Finland, it is better because it is a crazy place with many bands. I think Southern Finland like here in Helsinki is not as good. The raging audiences are up north.

PC: The new album is great. The production is killer.

CoB: Thanks. It's better because we had much more time to write music and arrange. The first album, we did it in a hurry. We recorded in a week, mixed in a few days, and that was it.

We're happy with it, but it could have been better. The second one is much, much better.

PC: The end mix is a lot cleaner and crisper.

CoB: We had much more time to think about what we were doing.

PC: How do you approach writing songs?

CoB: Our singer/lead guitar player, he dos all the music. When he writes a new song, everything is ready and he brings it to us. Then everyone arranges it a little bit, but I'm very happy with the way it goes.

PC: It sounds as if it is very thought-out.

CoB: Well, it's been working so far. We have

all played different kinds of stuff. I think it's very important to play different styles.

PC: What other types of stuff do you play or have you played?

CoB: Well, I've played Jazz and Improv. It helps with forming new ideas even in Metal. One thing I've never been trained in is Classical.

PC: Back to the new album... aside from the production, it seems more straight-forward Metal.

CoB: Yeah.

PC: Is that what you were going for?

CoB: We were going for more thinking behind it, more arranging. Actually, I cannot tell you what the third album will sound like. The aggressive style will remain in the future.

PC: The solos are amazing, by the way.

CoB: I also feel that the keyboard is now more its own instrument like the guitar now.

PC: True. In Finland, is there more funding for the arts/music?

CoB: No. They support sports and stuff like that, but not so much art.

PC: In America, when funds need to be cut down for the budget, it's always the arts that suffers.

CoB: Yeah, in Finland, sports get a lot more money.

PC: It's pretty sad that it has to be like that.

CoB: Yeah, but it hasn't affected our sales...so far!

PC: Are you guys ever planning to come to the U.S.?

CoB: Nothing for sure. We have festivals and European tours lined up but nothing for sure after that.

PC: What are your thoughts of Metal in the next millennium?

CoB: I don't know...

PC: Do you see us going through a Renaissance for metal?

CoB: Yeah, hopefully. There's so many different styles now. I think basic Heavy Metal, though, is coming back strong.

PC: Let's hope so!

CoB: Yeah

PC: I heard you guys do a W.A.S.P. cover live? Which one?

CoB: "Hellion"

PC: That's off their best album!

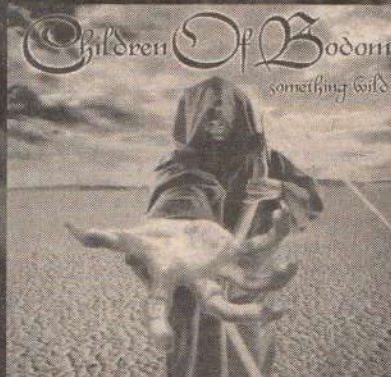
CoB: Yeah, we've been playing that song here in Finland and we played it at Wacken Open Air in Germany.

PC: Are there any plans to record that?

CoB: Actually, we have. It was for a tribute which never came out.

PC: So will we ever get to hear it?

CoB: Perhaps if you see us live.



INTERNAL BLEEDING

By Tom J. Hughes

With as many line-up and label changes Internal Bleeding has undergone since their 1991 inception, I can think of no better title for their latest offering than Driven to Conquer. Its raw, yet fresh sound can be attributed both to Brian Griffin's excellent studio craftsmanship and Chris Pervalis' undying devotion to the band. As evidenced by his very animated mannerisms during a press conference at this year's Milwaukee Metalfest, Chris, Internal Bleeding's founder and guitarist, has a burning desire to preach the word that Death Metal is far from dead... and Hardcore fans beware: you might actually be a closet Metalhead!

Promethean Crusade: So I was talking to this guy, who will remain nameless, and he told me that Death Metal is dead. How would you retort against that?

Internal Bleeding: That's fuckin' pathetic! I don't even wanna hear it. That guys a fuckin' idiot! Death Metal's not dead! If it was dead, people wouldn't be coming up to me, people wouldn't be buying any albums, my record company wouldn't call me to tell me that the album is selling really well. That's

ridiculous, man! Just because somebody goes to a show and they don't play in front of 500 or 1000 people every night. I'd rather play in front of twenty people who are totally into it than 1000 people who are just standing there with their arms crossed and staring. I don't even wanna hear that crap. Death Metal is dead when nobody goes to any shows whatsoever. We've played shows where there was like only ten people there, once in a while, but that doesn't mean it's dead. That's ridiculous. If it was, record labels wouldn't be signing bands because they're trying to make money. Believe it or not, that's what they do. So if they're signing bands, it's obviously selling. Just because he couldn't make it in Death Metal and now he wants to play Thrash [referring to a previous conversation before the actual interview started ~ed.]...

PC: I think it also has to do with his musical tastes, because now he plays Thrash, and I think it's a phase he was going through.

IB: I can't understand how somebody can go from playing something so totally heavy to something weak. Snap your fingers kind of music. I can't see it, but if somebody else can do it, fine. I'd be embarrassed to be on stage. It's like, 'Hey look, I used to play stuff that was so damn heavy, now listen to this!' I couldn't do that. Unless it's a totally different genre, like, I will eventually have a Jazz quartet. That's what I love; Jazz is what I love! It's not in the same league; it's something totally different.

PC: So you would never do a BROKEN HOPE to EM SINFONIA type of thing? [for clarification purposes, BROKEN HOPE still exists and is still heavy as balls. EM SINFONIA is another band Brian Griffin of B.H. formed to express himself in a more melodic and mournful fashion ~ed.]

IB: No. Internal Bleeding, when that dies, eventually, sometime it is going to, I don't know when- Death Metal will last forever- but then I will do the Jazz thing. But right now Internal Bleeding is the only thing I want to do. I don't want to be in any other bands, I don't want to be in any side projects, I just want to play and manage Internal Bleeding. That's my fate; that's what I want to do.

PC: So you're happy with the new one?

IB: Very much, yeah. It sounds really good, better than our past two albums. I'm not gonna quote numbers, but it shocked me how much it started selling.

[Enter Chris Forbes of Metal Core fanzine]: Hey Chris [Chris Forbes hands Chris Pervalis a copy of the new Metal Core], just wanted to let you know the new one... wow... just... amazing... [he clenches his fist and shakes it and flexes his big muscles] Wow, I love it.

IB: See what I mean?! And he hates us! [Chris walks away handing out more copies of his 'zine] It's really scaring me that people are saying that. It means so much to me, too, that people are loving it that much. But Chris Forbes is the man.

PC: So you say the albums selling real well and everyone's loving it, where is the line between selling out and just selling more great albums that reach a bigger audience?

IB: Well it's a double-edged sword. There's people that are saying things about us already because we got rid of the [he growls really low here] gruh gruh gruh vocals. You can still consider them Death vocals, but they're not typical; too many other bands are doing that now. We replaced them with a really, really pissed off sound- like you came home and found your wife fucking the mailman. Exactly what we want is now on the album- exactly. But you

can't please everybody, and you're always going to have a certain percentage of people who say bad things about you no matter how many records you sell. As far as a magical number that makes you a sell out, there are none. It's a natural thing that happens, and it's usually the people who have liked the band from the beginning. And I can understand that because even I'm guilty of it, myself.

PC: I think we all are, actually.

IB: CARCASS is an example. I loved *Symphonies of Sickness*. *Necrotism*, I fuckin' love, it's their greatest album. I like the *Tools of the Trade* EP that came out after that. And then I saw *Heartwork*... I saw the album cover and thought, uuughhh... but maybe they progressed a little. I heard it and I'm listening to KREATOR... what the hell happened!! Without doing anything I said that they were sell outs. I'm guilty of that. I don't like *Heartwork*; I don't like *Swan Song*. I just wish they would've taken their music that next step... pushed it a little higher. It just had so much more. Like with *Necrotism*, there was so much in it that was great. They had a lot of beautifully thick, chromatic melody and stuff like that, and then they abandoned it all and went to diatonic, happy-sounding melody... it threw me for a loop.

PC: So are you gaining a lot of fans with the new one?

IB: Yeah, we're getting a lot of fans from the Hardcore scene.

PC: Hardcore!?

IB: It's great! I love it! I'm not complaining. I was just telling somebody else that I see the two scenes coming together.

PC: OK, hold on a second. You were in Jersey [March Metal Meltdown in Asbury Park, N.J.] right? Didn't you notice this big rift between the Hardcore people and the Metalheads?

IB: But you wanna know what's funny? HATEBREED. I love HATEBREED. They are a "Hardcore" band and blend in with the other Hardcore bands. If you go up to them and ask them what they are, they'll say Metal. I find that funny because all the Hardcore kids who listen to them are going, 'Metal sucks!' They're Metal. They are fucking Heavy Metal. It's so funny. EARTH CRISIS, the same thing. I love EARTH CRISIS, but they're not Hardcore, they're

Metal. Hardcore is AGNOSTIC FRONT, Hardcore is...

PC: What about BIOHAZARD?

IB: Metal. They're Metal fused with some other stuff. They still have a little bit of the original Hardcore. What I think Hardcore is it's nothing like what it is today. When I liked "Hardcore" it was bands like AGNOSTIC FRONT, TOKEN ENTRY... bands like that. That's totally different; they didn't have dance riffs and things like that.

PC: So what defines Metal, then?

IB: Sonic weight. That is how I define Metal. Any music that has sonic density and weight. I can't describe the weightiness, but you know it when you hear it.

PC: Like chunkiness?

IB: Not necessarily, because Black Metal isn't chunky, but it's still Metal. There's just something about it; it has this sonic presence. I can't put my finger on it.

PC: So you're saying that Hardcore doesn't have this sonic heaviness to it.

IB: No, Hardcore today does. Hardcore today is Metal. I don't care what anybody says.

PC: So you're saying that there's no difference between Metal and Hardcore.

IB: No, there's a difference, it's just that-

PC: It's just that Metal encompasses Hardcore-

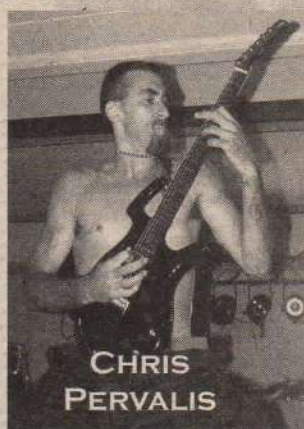
IB: Right! Right! A lot of people are saying we're the band that's bringing the Hardcore scene and the Metal scene together and it's scaring me. I don't like that on my shoulders because now I gotta live up to that. I love the challenge, but it scares me because I just want people to be into what I do. As long as they don't put me on a pedestal I'm fine. I'm a human being- nothing more.

PC: You're just a human being that plays music.

IB: Right. It's equally an honor to be a fan and a musician, too. Any musician who says he only plays for himself is lying. Every musician wants to be heard and every musician wants to be known.

PC: You want to be heard, then, but not exalted.

IB: Right! I'm just a schmuck that likes to drink too much Diet Coke.



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Darkthrone

A Blaze in the Northern Sky
(Peaceville), 1991

If ever there is a band that represents the true essence of evil Norwegian Black Metal, then that band is the mighty Darkthrone. *A Blaze in the Northern Sky* is Darkthrone's first Black Metal release featuring Nocturno Culto on guitar/bass and vocals, Zephyrous on lead guitar, and Black Metal legend, Fenriz, on drums. On this disc Darkthrone utilize garage-band-like production with manic vocals and raspy guitar tones to create a very simple, yet amazing work of pure Black Metal. Darkthrone, along with BATHORY, MAYHEM, and EMPEROR were the founding fathers of Black Metal and should be worshipped within its unholy shrine. It's sad today that most of the younger generation of Metalheads who listen to "True Black Metal" go no further than DIMMU BORGIR and CRADLE OF FILTH. People today should realize that if it wasn't for bands like Darkthrone, these bands you hear today that are so great wouldn't exist. Long live Old School Black Metal!!!!

Poison

Flesh & Blood
(Capitol), 1990

I know I'm gonna get a lot of shit for reviewing this, but I really want you to hear me out before you berate me. We need bands like Poison to enter the arena of Metal once again. They generated so much fuckin' response from people- positive and negative- and they forced people to get into the scene. They made you buy, not only their albums, but albums from other bands you might not have bought otherwise simply because they were propelling a sound people enjoyed- and wanted! Gone now are the days that people bought Metal for its melodic and Rock riffage. Gone now are the days that people bought Metal for its fun and majestic guitar solos. Gone now are the days that people bought Metal... period! Come on guys, this music is fun! It's melodic! It's powerful! It's moving! No one's pissed off and pouring blood all over themselves, no one's praising the name of Satan or Odin and burning down churches, no one's slitting their wrists or wallowing in self pity, and no one's growling indiscernibly into the microphone. Sure, the Glam scene had its share of drug, alcohol, and sex problems, but the music had a soul, the music had heart, and the music had a following. C.C. Deville is one of the best soloists I've ever heard in my life, Bret Michaels' lyrics and voice are some of the most memorable of my childhood, and Poison as a whole was very influential and got me into the

more heavier and extreme shit. I live and die by the underground scene (please don't take this review the wrong way), but there is such a thing as being too underground. Sure, I don't want (nor do I expect) the masses to fully appreciate (or should I say exploit) the sheer talent and passion inherent in the budding and overcrowded, under-recognized underground scene, but we do need more bands to be recognized in the mainstream media (besides those talentless shitheads, KORN and LIMP BIZKIT, just to name two) so as to propel the underground and make it more recognizable to those who would benefit from its fruits. I know for a fact that bands like ICED EARTH, SAMAEL, IN FLAMES, THERION, AMORPHIS, ANGRA, the GATHERING, and a fuckload of others would gain bigger followings if people would just KNOW that they fuckin' existed! The continuing popularity of bands like PANTERA, TYPE O NEGATIVE, OZZY, and IRON MAIDEN is greatly needed and immeasurably necessitated, furthermore though, we need the resurgence of an entire new generation of bands to keep the faith alive. We need these bands to inundate the market with sales, and this can only be achieved through charismatic musicians with a penchant for writing and producing larger than life music to coincide with their larger than life egos.

To go over the top without forgetting about the art (yes, folks, behind all the make-up and hair-spray are four human beings who knew how to play music, and quite well at that!) is what bands like Poison did. They propelled Metal into the mainstream and their demise pushed it further into the underground. I'm waiting for the wheel to come full circle and look forward to the day when Poison Jr. take the stage and rock a whole new generation of fans into the record stores.



Morbid Angel

Blessed Are The Sick
(Relativity / Earache), 1991

1991 was a glorious year for Death Metal. ENTOMBED took us down the *Left Hand Path* to *Clandestine*, DEATH made us all feel *Human*, and SEPULTURA crawled out from *Beneath The Remains* to give us *Arise*. But it was Tampa Florida's Morbid Angel that showed us all how blessed we were to be sick! *Blessed Are The Sick* reveals Morbid Angel to be at a turning point; whereas their (official) debut, *Altars Of Madness*, is a stunning execution of unadulterated speed and chaos, *Blessed...* displays the band taking a more structured songwriting approach. *Blessed...* took the speed of *Altars...* and added the element of a slower hook-riffery that truly gave the songs a sinister feel. The songs on *Blessed...* have an uneasy feeling to them, always teetering on the brink of going over the edge, but the listener is always pulled back at the last moment. Another major step forward from *Altars...* comes in the vocal department. David Vincent, once a mere vocal clone of KREATOR on *Altars...* now had dropped down a register or two (and continued to drop with each successive album), as well as using more of a roar than a rasp, which added a feeling of foreboding to Morbid Angel's sound. Although Pete "Commando" Sandoval's greatest moments were still to come (I believe *Formulas Fatal...* to be Pete's crowning achievement, the drumming is just stunning), *Blessed...* shows Pete's versatility, the fills are impeccable, and nothing is out of place. The seeds were planted on *Blessed...* that grew into the unholy drumming machine that he is today. And what would Morbid Angel be without the leads? While Azagthoth was chaos, Brunelle was stability; where Azagthoth was lava, Brunelle was ice (take note of Brunelle's charmingly cold acoustic piece "Desolate Ways" - simply breathtaking). It is this dichotomy that elevated the album into something more than just another Death Metal album. On *Blessed Are The Sick* Trey Azagthoth broke out of the pack and established himself as a true mastermind in the world of Metal (as well as recording my favorite song of all time "Abominations"). While everyone was trying to catch up to DEATH, OBITUARY, and KREATOR, Morbid Angel raised the bar to a height that Death Metal has yet to surpass. If you do not have *Blessed Are The Sick* in your collection, put this 'zine down (it will be there when you get back) and RUN- do not walk- to the local record store and get it. If they do not have it in stock, DEMAND THAT THEY ORDER IT FOR YOU!!!!!! and don't leave the store until it arrives.



As you may or may not already know, this segment of the magazine deals with evaluations of classic albums from years gone by, which are still very close to our Steel hearts. The purpose of this is to enlighten and familiarize you, the reader, with bands and albums that held a great influence towards the solidifying of Metal within our souls. Normally, our focus is to stick with out-of-print or long-forgotten releases by our favorite bands, but this time around, I would like to begin the segment with an introduction (or reintroduction to some of you) to some truly great albums that were recently reissued by **Noise Records** for American consumption. It is truly a pleasure to acquaint you with these albums, because I feel that **Noise** also realizes the importance of making hard-to-find Metal albums available to the devoted Brothers of Metal stateside. So without further ado, I present you with four masterpieces by the renowned German Melodic Metal band, **Running Wild!**

Death or Glory

Originally released in 1989, *Death or Glory* continued Running Wild's journey of self-expression and musical growth that was only hinted at with 1988's *Port Royal*. Yes, the band's trademark lyrics glorifying the age of Piracy & buccaneering (intertwined with the call-to-arms anthems of Metal and Youth) are prominent as always, but their musical ability has transcended from the standard, ANVIL or W.A.S.P.-like power-chord frenzy to a more experimental, IRON MAIDEN inspired progression. The songs still possess simple structure, but they have become more textured with dexterous guitar fills and leads, which result in very rich, almost regal compositions reminiscent of GAMMA RAY's *Heading For Tomorrow* or MANOWAR's *Hail To England*. Eternally favorite songs from this album include the epics "Riding The Storm" and "The Battle Of Waterloo." Not only has Noise reissued this great slab of Metal, but the label has specially included four bonus tracks: "Wild Animal" (no, not a take on a certain band's "Fuck Like a Beast" standard, actually the lyrics are quite prophetic and tell us to live life simply and follow our hearts), "Chains & Leather" (an ode to the raucous behavior of Metalheads and the untamed adrenaline-based power they wield), "Tear Down The Walls" (one man's revelation to the unfairness of Life) and "Stortebeker" (which recounts a legendary Danish seaman's life; it's lyrically similar to IRON MAIDEN's "Alexander The Great"). Forever a highly influential album on the European Power Metal movement (although 1987's *Under Jolly Roger* remains many fans' favorite), *Death or Glory's* legacy can be heard today, echoed in works by IRON SAVIOR, PRIMAL FEAR, HAMMERFALL and STEEL PROPHET.

Blazon Stone

1991's *Blazon Stone* was a bit of a return to Running Wild's speed-induced youth, and despite lyrical tales of history's famous (and infamous) dignitaries, the album parallels any of MANOWAR's releases in that it praises and superfluously promotes the enduring spirit of Metal and acts as propaganda for its preservation. Although, musically, the album is a step and a half backwards for the band, it is easily forgiven, given the albums aforementioned intent. This minor adjustment in sound could be due to the fact that Rock'n Rolf Kasperek frequently changed personnel in order to keep his vision intact. The only real stand-out track on this disc is the oddly hypnotic "Rolling Wheels" (which depicts life on the road), but the album is definitely necessary listening, especially as a True Metal history lesson. The bonus tracks on this release are "Billy The Kid"

(does it really need an explanation?) and "Genocide" (which is a saddening reflection upon Euro-Americans brutal, senseless slaughter of the Native Americans). The only thing I found confusing about this reissue was that when Noise/Circle Blue

initially reissued it back in 1995, these bonus tracks were included, as well as a 14' track called "Dancing On A Minefield" (which is about Rolf's ire towards nuclear power & the politicians who support it)... weird, huh?

Pile Of Skulls

Sucking you in with a mesmerizing keyboard intro, 1992's *Pile Of Skulls* exhibits more musical growth which was abandoned on their previous release. All pirate lore fanatics can put their minds at ease, for after nearly ten years of corsairisms, Running Wild have finally recorded a song about Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. And yes, it is a song of epic proportions, breaking the eleven minute barrier which easily makes it comparable in sound and length to IRON MAIDEN's "Rhyme Of The Ancient Mariner" and HELLOWEEN's immortal "Halloween". *Pile Of Skulls* also displays a side of Rock'n Rolf previously only rarely seen, namely his political views and opinions on Man's deterioration and rape of the natural world (definitely in a classier style than BATHORY's latter releases *Requiem & Octogon!*) If that wasn't enough, his interest in otherworldly visitors peeks through on "Sinister Eyes". But fear not, Metal Buccaneers, there's also plenty of sea-worthy Metal to keep you satisfied, so don't worry, Rolf just needed to get some things off his chest, as we all do

at one time or another! *Pile Of Skulls* set the tone for Running Wild's future releases *Black Hand Inn* (reviewed below) and *Masquerade* (which was reissued, but sadly, only in Europe) in that many of its songs are self-contained thematic stories, though the majority of tracks average out at five minutes. Notable songs on this one include "Whirlwind" (a JUDAS PRIEST-ish Speed/Thrash romp), the headbanging "Roaring Thunder" (which resonates of *Under Jolly Roger's* "Raise Your Fist") and "Treasure Island" (because I'm a sucker for epics!). Noise's gracious bonus tracks for this one include: "Beggar's Night" (a call-to-arms against oppression which definitely ties in with the Metal-hearted), "Hanged, Drawn And Quartered" (no, this one isn't a cover of CANCER's catchy little "hit," it actually is another war cry in opposition of those who would rather see you dead than understand your beliefs-also very Metal-minded), "Win Or Be Drowned" (a declaration of one's undying devotion to a cause until it is won) and "Uaschtschun '92" (which is a re-recording of one of *Port Royal's* little ditties).

Black Hand Inn

Black Hand Inn, originally released in 1994, represents Running Wild's first attempt at a conceptual piece. While some of the tracks are directly based on the central theme of a hill that is haunted by the ghost of an alleged Satanist, others are loosely linked through lyrical subtext regarding ignorance, apathy, and seafaring adventurers. This album also represents the comfortable niche Running Wild have carved for themselves as a full-on, steadfast Power Metal band. Little musical evolution has occurred since the inception of this release, and does it really matter? Running Wild have achieved the same plane of existence as MANOWAR, and as long as they keep releasing whole-hearted True Metal, they shall always have a dedicated fan base! Quite an interesting song (that doesn't really tie in with the album's central theme) is the 15+ minute epic "Genesis (The Making And The Fall Of Man)". It tells the tale of an Alien race that came to Earth 450,000 years ago to mine a mineral that would restore their home atmosphere... and they ended up causing everything you read in The Bible; the song is a very intriguing read! The bonus tracks included with this reissue are "Dancing On A Minefield" (Tadah!! Funny how things work themselves out like this!) and "Poisoned Blood" (which is about the ignorance of drug dealers spreading the AIDS virus).

In closing for this Running Wild expose, I would like to express my appreciation to Running Wild and all of their past and future ventures! Metal is Metal, and Running Wild will continue to champion its honor with unyielding devotion until the band's essence finally joins with the Metal force (see Obi-Wan Kenobi's death in *Star Wars: A New Hope* or Optimus Prime's demise in *Transformers: The Movie* for details), eternally strengthening our Faith!



Mark,

I saw your 'zine reviewed in the October issue of *METAL MANIACS* and received a free copy with my last order, and I'm interested in obtaining another issue. Enclosed is a money order for \$2.00. Keep up the excellent work!

Crystal Howard
Charlotte, NC

To P.C.

I have just read P.C. Vol.2 #1 and I think it's the best 'zine I've ever read. I was hoping you could send me Vol.1 because I can't find it in the Cleveland/Akron area. Keep up the excellent work! Hopefully in the future I can find out how to receive more P.C.'s.

Mark Wagner
Copley, OH

Hi. Read about your 'zine in *METAL MANIACS*. Was enticed into sending for it but never got around to it 'til now. I've started to pick up some smaller 'zines as the larger ones can't seem to fulfill my need for all things Metal. I think sometimes I'm more excited receiving a new (old) whatever 'zine in the mail than a CD. There just never seems to be enough to know and how can I go wrong for like \$4 (CAN)? I've never read enough on *CEMETARY - Sundown* is truly Godly and in regular rotation in my CD player. *ANGRA* are also great, good to see that Century Media picked them up. I won't have to pay \$30-\$40 for their CDs anymore. Have you checked out *CANADIAN ASSAULT* yet by Dale Roy? He's moved to Pennsylvania recently [*Apt 1 6318 Bingham St., Philadelphia, PA 19111 -ed.*] and has a really cool 'zine. Good, lengthy interviews. Anyway, I'm sending for issue #1. Are there more? Let me know subscription rates. Long Live the Loud.

Gregory Kelly
Stanley, N.B., CANADA

Hey Mark!

I've read through all the issues of PC, and I'm quite impressed! Usually I don't read zines because either the writing is juvenile, or the layout is horrendous. But you do an awesome job with both! The interviews are excellent, and the reviews are to the point and well written. A lot of time was put into the layouts, and it is so refreshing that other people put some pride into their work. I would suggest upgrading to a glossy cover as soon as you have the funds - I've been amazed at the number of people who bestow instant respect upon zines just because of a glossy cover. The only other constructive criticism I have is not giving credit to the album reviewers. I eventually came across your explanation & discussion of this in responding to a letter. After reading that I have an understanding of why you do that, but I think it's more helpful to the reader to identify the writers. One can then put a review in context of other reviews that reviewer has written, and understand the reviewer's stylistic preferences and tastes. For instance, if a death metal freak hates a power metal album, I can take his review more lightly. Everyone has such varying opinions on albums, so I think it's impossible to have a "universal review" for any album. Realize that I'm just picking on something minor, and in general I think your mag rules. I know you will have continued success with it! Talk to you soon!

Robert Fecik, Editor
Transcendence Magazine
P.O. Box 12107
La Jolla, CA 92039-2107
rfecik@yahoo.com



To all at Promethean Crusade:

I don't know if you guys ever get any letters like this and you might think it's weird that I took the time to write this, but I felt it was necessary to tell you how Fucking glad I am to discover an underground zine that has the same feelings on Metal as myself. You guys are true Metal in every sense of the word. You never forsake Metal while keeping an open mind to other music. You're not hypocrites. Once I read your *MANOWAR* review in Volume 2 Number 1, I felt the same surge of power as I do from *listening* to *MANOWAR*. Not enough people take them seriously enough but it seems to me that you know the truth. *MANOWAR* is for real. Metal is for real. Promethean Crusade is true Metal. If there was ever a *MANOWAR* of magazines, you are it. I've always thought *THE GRIMOIRE* was the best underground zine (because it is so fucking hilarious), but now I have found a new king. I am also grateful that I always find your zine free (at the Troc [*a local Metal venue here in Philadelphia -ed.*]). This proves to me that you are all about the music and not the money. I know how people can be fucking greedy in this scene. I am in a Black Metal band (*SOLACE IN THE SHADOWS*) who has not yet (*really*) broken into the scene, and already we've discovered someone bootlegging our old demo. We've been turned down for shows because the promoter wants a band that will "draw" a big crowd. In these situations lesser talented bands get to play because they can convince more of their friends (who may not even be into extreme music) to come see them. **THIS KILLS THE SCENE!!!!** Luckily there are enough people who truly care about the music to keep it alive. I guess I just want to thank you for being an organization who cuts the bullshit and gets straight to the *MANOWAR*.

Matt Moore
Havertown, PA

Hi Tom,

I should have written much sooner but a hectic work schedule, family life and my hobby of brutal weight lifting (*NOT* bodybuilding), I simply got sidetracked. The second issue was outstanding. As with the first. From cover to cover a 'zine us Metalheads can truly appreciate. Excellent interviews, editorials, and reviews again giving us a fresh and intelligent look at Metal in an exceptional layout. I failed to mention in my previous letter that the unique feature of "Toga Party" is something a lot of us need to piece together our love of Metal. As I write, I am listening to *COUNT RAVEN - High on Infinity*. A Doom masterpiece. The godfathers of Doom of course, are *BLACK SABBATH* and I think they were so instrumental in igniting a fire of dread and darkness that is the basis of much Metal today. Please send me issues #3 and #4 if available and keep me on the subscriber list. Let's keep it alive. Thanks. Metal 'Til The End.

Steve Harrison
Orlando, FL

Tom, Mark, and Co.,

I got the latest Promethean Crusade a few days ago and was very excited by the new "look." I liked the color scheme and band photos on the cover a lot better than the illustrations on the first two issues. My only question is, why did it take you so long to send it? You (Tom) said that it was due out in April. This is June! [*We will make no apologies save one: we are trying very, very hard to stay on schedule and it is our utmost goal to satisfy our readers. For further clarification, visit our web site and read about the trials and tribulations of running one's own magazine. -ed.*] I hope you weren't offended by the comments I made

in my last letter. I'm pointing out a few mistakes. I made a remark about people who worship fictional (to me, anyway) gods like Cthulhu. I can't believe that anyone would consider H.P. Lovecraft's stories to be anything but escapist fiction. The *GAMMA RAY* was informative and excellent. Kai Hansen is one of my all time favorite guitarists and songwriters. The songs he wrote for *HELLOWEEN* were always better than the other member's contributions. I hope I can find *Power Plant* in one of those music stores I like to shop at when I make my next shopping trip out of town. My biggest gripes about the new issue involve certain comments made by Mark and one of your letter writers [*George Pacheco, South Dartmouth, MA -ed.*]. While I can appreciate Mark's opinions in his editorial, why did he continue his editorial in the *STRATOVARIUS* review? I would have preferred that he stuck to the content of the CD at hand. Also, I despise for reasons too complicated to mention in a brief letter, wrestling, porn, radio, and anything Jim Carrey or George Lucas put their names on. The mere mention of these subjects makes me cringe. If you start doing wrestling articles, for example, I will never subscribe to P.C. and will throw away any issue I'm sent. I'm going to keep Vol. 2, No. 1, mainly because I like *GAMMA RAY*, but keep P.C. a Metal music 'zine. I may not care for all the types of music you include in your 'zine, but as long as it's Metal I won't deny their place in it. In your interview with Gus of *GRIP INC.*, he said, "we did a tour with [*THE CLASH*] in 1978." Who is "we"? Certainly not *GRIP INC.* I'm assuming it's Gus' old band, but do you expect me to know everything about him? I like that all of your pages are cut straight this time (or the printing wasn't crooked, whatever) and that you're using just one type of type, so you are improving. However, there was a layout problem on page 57 and the "n" was missing from Sandusky when you printed my hometown. You still have a few kinks to work out, but your green status is fading. Later.

James Reed
Sandusky, Ohio

Dear People of Promethean Crusade,

I just read the editorial by Mark Morton and all I can say is, you tell them pie face! You got the crust! You hit the nail on the head about the music industry! It's not only happening to Metal, it's also happening to Country music! I have been a Country fan for years and I'm sick of radio and their format! Because of Promethean Crusade and especially Tom J. Hughes, I have been enlightened to some of the Metal music (and I must say I enjoy listening to some of it) and have come to understand and appreciate that there is a lot of good stuff out there, just like in the Country music industry. I also wrote a letter to my Country music magazine to let them know how I feel about the music industry after reading an article about a polluter of Country music, *GARTH BROOKS*. Keep up your good work and maybe you can start doing a magazine for us Country folks! Sincerely,

Susan Hughes
Albrightsville, PA

Mark (and the rest of PC),

Hey guy! I sent an e-mail to PC about a week ago using the aol e-mail address, and since I haven't heard anything back I thought I would try this one. My previous e-mail contained mainly ramblings about how great I thought PC was - I received it with an order I had placed with HOLEINTHEWALL.COM, and despite the cover having the guys from DIMMU BORGIR on it I gave the mag a shot, and like I just mentioned I thought it was pretty good. I've never been much of a fan of the "darker" Metals: Black/Goth/Dark; whatever you want to call it, but I did notice plenty of bands in the Jan/April '99 issue that I like: ANGRA, GAMMA RAY, BLIND GUARDIAN, PLATYPUS, MAG 9, SOLITUDE AETURNUS (from right here where I'm writing from in the middle of Dallas/Ft. Worth - WHOO-HOO!), WORLD OF SILENCE and IMPERIAL RAGE to name a few. My main musical tastes are Progressive Metal and Neo-Prog, and agree with the writers of PC that music today on the radio basically blows chunks. I'll admit that parents and the like had the same reactions to the Hard Rock/Heavy Metal that I grew up on in the mid-80s (I just turned 30), but at least you could sing along (though loudly) to IRON MAIDEN, TWISTED SISTER, RATT, Y&T (one of the most underrated bands ever!), etc; I'm not sure what you can do while listening to the likes of MARILYN MANSON, KORN, LIMP BIZKIT and INSANE CLOWN POSSE... but it sure ain't singing!!! Do you think any of those acts can

spell M-E-L-O-D-Y? Anyway... I'll get off my soapbox. My previous e-mail asked about issue availability - I think the newest issue should be about out. I would like to grab the first two issues of PC from last year and put in the order for I guess the next two issues (I think that's how ya'll do it). I wanted to make sure how much to send before I wrote the check. If you could get back to me with that info I would greatly appreciate it, because Promethean Crusade is one cool magazine... and like I mentioned on the other e-mail, the reviews are great! I seriously doubt that all of the issues of *CIRCUS, HIT PARADER* and *RIP* I read in the 80s had as many record reviews added together as the Jan/April '99 issue of PC had by itself... great job, people! Thanks....

Michael Rosser
Grand Prairie, TX

YO! I love this issue of P.C. I can't pinpoint it, but for some reason this issue seems so much more "put together" than it's predecessors. Not that the others were bad - I don't want it to sound that way. I noticed right away on this issue that the cover looked amazing - very, very "professional." The articles are great. (I still don't know how you manage to get that many interviews, reviews, and articles together!) If P.C. has come that far in 3 issues - I wonder what the future holds??

M.
Prospect Park, PA

Greetings and salutations. Recently received the three issues of your 'zine you sent out. I just wanted to drop you a line and say "thank you." I also greatly appreciate your offer to continue sending them to me while in my current situation... I can't thank you enough. Just want you to know that I totally dig your 'zine. Look forward (with great anticipation) to receiving the next issue. Once again, thank you so very much!!

Christopher Soucy
Concord, NH

"...Filling every need
A man who's tough as steel
With power and with speed
As the music that you feel
Thrashing till you drop
But there is no pain
You can never stop
It's like thunder in your brain..."

~ Omen ~
"Kill On Sight"

Hey, I just read a review from your magazine of my CD. [...] Just wanted to say thanks a lot, glad you liked it... and it's definitely good to read a review from someone with a background in music. I am a music major, as well (I did a little profile reading, heh)... and it's cool to know that someone can actually hear that we're more than just a "random riff here and there" type of a band. Hail!

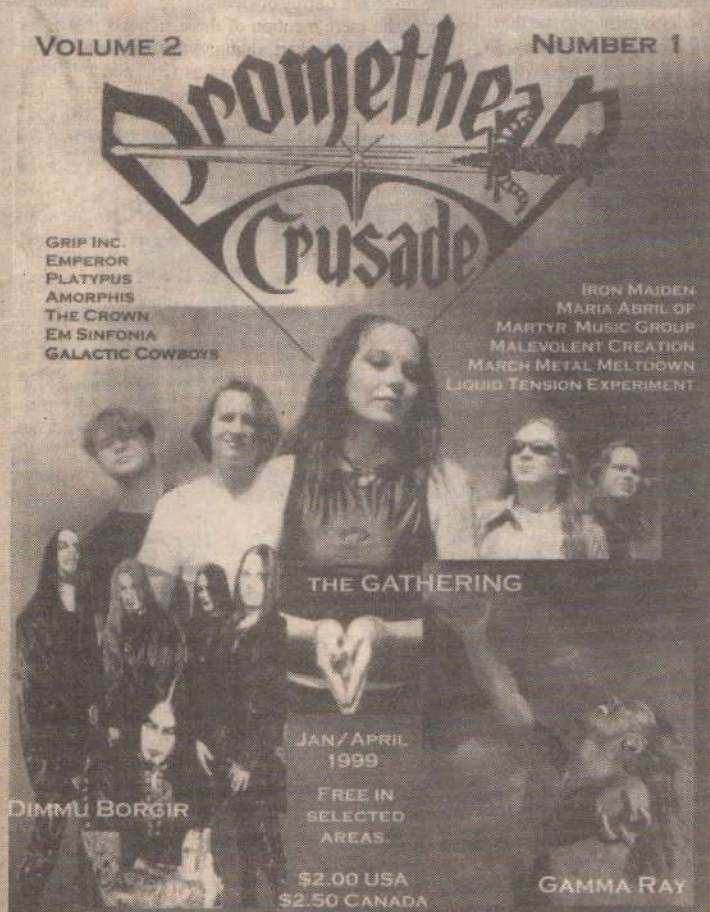
Joe, Noctuary@aol.com

"I recently received Volume 2, Number 1 of Promethean Crusade along with an order I had placed with NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA. The magazine is clearly among the best of its kind. Are personal subscriptions available? I could not find any information in the magazine regarding this. Thanks."

Promethean Crusade is \$2.00 per issue via subscription through the mail. This covers the cost of shipping and handling. Issue # 5 will be out in December of 1999, and we will be printing issues #6 - #9 in 2000. Just send us a check for the appropriate amount with respect to how many back / future issues you would like to receive. Please be specific!! Make all checks or M.O.'s payable to TOM J. HUGHES!!

Promethean Crusade
c/o Mark Morton
119 King Street
Pottstown, PA 19464, USA

E-mail: cokeman@bellatlantic.net



Fates' Ana

Mark Morton:

MANOWAR - Entire Catalogue: Do I really need to give you another reason why they are the greatest Heavy Metal band in the universe??

1. CRIMSON GLORY - *Astronomica*
2. DC COOPER - (self titled)
3. VIRGIN STEELE - *The House Of Atreus: Part I*
4. QUEEN - *Sheer Heart Attack*
5. HEDNINGARNA - *Karelia Visa*
6. ANGEL CORPSE - *The Inexorable*
7. LEFAY - *The Seventh Seal*
8. *The Spy Who Loved Me* (soundtrack)
9. ARCADIA - *So Red The Rose*
10. W.A.S.P. - *The Crimson Idol*

Chester Ney:

I don't really get to voice my opinion very much about the Metal Scene because my work doesn't entail any writing at all. I make the pages of this publication visually appealing. I don't listen to a massive amount of music, and my CD collection consists of about 17 CDs. While designing this magazine I happened to be listening to an Adam Sandler CD I had just purchased. I must say, he is one of the most hilariously outspoken, comical individuals I have ever had the honor of listening to... I recommend you get one of his CDs. I also find the English language quite restrictive and am constantly making up my own words, here are some recent additions to my vocabulary...

Clamoric - *to be on edge about something or someone, agitated.*
Buttockquis - *the act of being an ass (from the root buttocks); jerk, flaming idiot.*
Eclipical - *utterly awe inspiring, to dwarf, intimidating. (from the root eclipse)*
Runkus - *derriere, ass, buttocks, rear end, the origin of bull shit.*

Keith Sullivan:

1. HYPOCRISY - *Destroys Wacken Live / self-titled*
2. THE CROWN - *Hell Is Here*
3. TESTAMENT - *The Gathering*
4. STRATOVARIUS - *Visions of Europe*
5. CYNIC - *Focus*
6. HAMMERFALL - *(All when I'm drunk)*
7. MERCYFUL FATE - *9*
8. MORBID ANGEL - *Blessed Are The Sick*
9. DEATH - *The Sound Of Perseverance / Human*
10. MORGOTH - *Odium*

Chris Hawkins:

1. PINK FLOYD - *The Wall*
2. IMMORTAL - *At the Heart of Winter*
3. W.A.S.P. - (self-titled)
4. SATYRICON - *Intermezzo II*
5. ACID BATH - *When the Kite String Pops*
6. SOLEFALD - *Neonism*
7. IRON MAIDEN - *Piece of Mind*
8. PESSIMIST - *Blood for the Gods*
9. MONSTROSITY - *In Dark Purity*
10. DARKTHRONE - *Soulside Journey*

Tom J. Hughes:

DREAM THEATER *Falling into Infinity, Awake, and Once in a Lifetime*

1. IN FLAMES - *Colony*
2. JIM CUDDY - *All In Time*
3. TESTAMENT - *The Gathering / Souls of Black*
4. LIQUID TENSION EXPERIMENT - *LTE 2*
5. EXTREME - *Pornograffiti*
6. GODGORY - *Resurrection*
7. the GATHERING - *Mandylyon / How to Measure a Planet?*
8. RHAPSODY - *Symphony of Enchanted Lands*
9. DISARRAY - *A Lesson in Respect*
10. STEVE EARLE - *Shut Up and Die Like an Aviator / The Mountain*
11. G3 - *Live In Concert*
12. PISSING RAZORS - *Cast Down the Plague*

Vahak Janbazian:

1. INCUBUS - *Science*
2. SYSTEM OF A DOWN - (self titled)
3. DEFTONES - *Adrenaline*
4. SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE - *Diary*
5. RADIOHEAD - *OK Computer*
6. VISION OF DISORDER - *Imprint*
7. CANDIRIA - *Surrealistic Madness*
8. PAYABLE ON DEATH - *Fundamental Elements of South Town*
9. FAR - *Water & Solutions*
10. JOHN SCOFIELD WITH MEDESKI, MARTIN & WOOD - *A Go Go*
11. PEARL JAM - *Live on Two Legs*
12. SKELETON KEY - *Fantastic Spikes Through Ballons*
13. TOOL - *Aenima*
14. JULIANA HATFIELD - *Only Everything*
15. STAG THICKET - *Six Shooter*

Jeff Kent:

1. IRON MAIDEN - *Live After Death*
2. METAL CHURCH - *Masterpeace*
3. GUIDED BY VOICES - *Do The Collapse*
4. CHRIS CORNELL - *Euphoria Morning*
5. LOS LOBOS - *This Time*
6. MR. BUNGLE - *California*
7. HOVEN DROVEN - *Groove*
8. THE MAGGIES - *Homesick*
9. TESTAMENT - *The Gathering*
10. V/A - *A Tribute To ACCEPT*

Tyler Pursel:

1. MORTIIS - *Crypt of the Wizard*
2. EMPEROR - *IX Equilibrium*
3. MY DYING BRIDE - *Gods of the Sun*
4. DISSECTION - *Storm of the Lights Bane*
5. DIMMU BORGIR - *Spiritual Black Dimensions*
6. ENYA - *Memory of the Trees*
7. DARKTHRONE - *Under a Funeral Moon*
8. BORKNAGAR - *Archaic Course*
9. ULVER - *Kveldsfanger*
10. ARCTURUS - *La Masquerade Infernale*

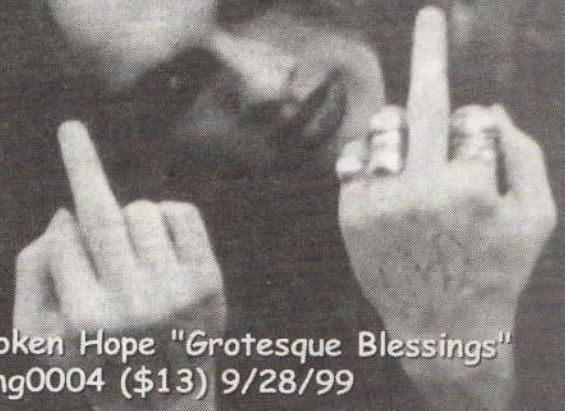
Martyr Music Group's thought for today:

When you're having a bad day and it seems like people are trying to piss you off, remember that it takes 42 muscles to frown but only 4 to extend your finger and flip them off.



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"Suspension of Disbelief"

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"In Mournings Symphony"
*features Brian Griffin of Broken Hope



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Touch the Sun

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IT IMPOSSIBLE TO HEAR
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1985 & Peach Fuzz Gillan-Clear Air Turbulence, Scarabus, Accidentally on Purpose & Cherkazoo and Other Stories
Uriah Heep-Sonic Drigami, Sea of Light, Spellbinder

