

METAL GLORU



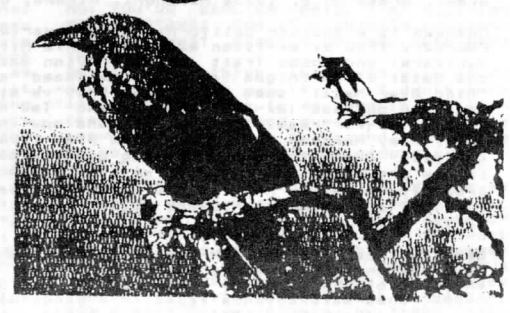
SEAS
EVEN

RED HARVEST

Psychotic
Waltz

Count Raven

MIDASTOUCH
MACHINERY
LIZZY
BORDEN



HI THERE!

And welcome to the fourth edition of Metal Glory. As you can see, quite a few things have changed since the last issue. I hope you find these changes as positive as I do, and that it will further the interest in my magazine. I'm still looking for more people that are willing to sell some copies of the magazine, so don't hesitate to get in touch, ok? Support the underground, you know!!! Else than that, please send me your comments on the magazine, so I know how to improve it. Other fanzine editors and traders are more than welcome. Back issues are still available for \$3 each (no.1 is \$2, 'cause its not worth more).

METAL GLORY, C/O ERIK SONTUM,
STOVNER SENTER 32, 0985 OSLO 9, NORWAY.

DEMO PLAYLIST - ERIK SONTUM

1. Mystic Force - Take Command.
2. Oblivion Knight - Forgotten Realm.
3. Psychothic Waltz - Demo '88/Promo Tape '90.
4. Ghost Story - Seeds Of Destruction.
5. Machinery - Demo '88.
6. Icad Earth - Enter The Realm.
7. Red Harvest - Psychotica.
8. Steel Prophet - Inner Ascendance.
9. Ignorance - Demo '89.
10. Machine - Demo '89.

ALBUM PLAYLIST - ERIK SONTUM

1. Watchtower - Control And Resistance.
2. Trouble - Trouble (1989).
3. Arcane - Debut album (both demos, now vinyl).
4. Forbidden - Twisted Into Form.
5. Sanctuary - Into The Mirror Black.
6. Foxtrot - A Shadow Of The Past.
7. Vicious Rumors - Vicious Rumors.
8. Toxic - Think This.
9. Oliver Magnum - Oliver Magnum.
10. Xenatrix - Shattered Existence.

Anesthesia, the premier power metal outfit based near Oslo here in Norway, have once again had a small delay in the recording of their new demo. Bassist Lars Norberg sent me a "rough mix" of one their later tracks, just to whet my appetite. And I must say he succeeded. The track (which used to be known as "Future Fight" in the past), sounds a lot better here than on previous live occasions. And if the rest of the demo is anything like this, I would go as far as saying that Artch finally looks set to get some major competition from a fellow Norwegian band. I originally intended to feature Anesthesia in this issue, but will hold that back 'til the next issue appears. In the meantime, send them a letter and find out if that demo has (finally) been released. Write to: Anesthesia, c/o One Way Management, P.O. Box 176, 1321 Stabekk, Norway.

Deterrent, the German techno-speedsters interviewed in this very issue, now have their first t-shirts available at the cost of \$11 each. They come in L and XL sizes. Write to: Deterrent, c/o Markus Weckermann, Graf-Stauffenberg-Strasse 47, 4504 Georgsmarienhutte, West-Germany.

Serpent, featuring Metal Glory's own Hein-Frode Hansen, have now released their first "real" demo. I only got a two-track rehearsal recording in time for this issue's deadline, so I can't judge the band on the final result (the sound quality is not the best, ok?). The songs are called "Casualties Of War" and "Trapped". The latter having some cool high-speed riffing. The tracks are more techno than the last tune Hein-Frode sent me (called "The Fear"). The vocals are average. I'm afraid, so this might hinder their progress in the future. No final verdict, of course, but the demo will of course get a full review in the next issue. Contact: Serpent, c/o Hein-Frode Hansen, Plutoveien 19, 5500 Haugesund, Norway.

Power Packer no.2 (vol.2) has just appeared, featuring such luminaries as doom gods Trouble, German power metallers Rage and Japanese act Loudness. Plus interviews with Swedish doom contenders Count Raven and the latest addition to the ever-growing progressive scene in Texas, Praeognition. The review section is bigger than ever and the 'zine (as usually) comes highly recommended. Send \$1 (US) or \$3 (elsewhere) to: Power Packer, 11216 Oakwood Drive, Dunkirk, MD 20754, USA.

Last issue's album rave Witchhammer, have now officially released their debut album, entitled "1487". The reason behind this mysterious title is that this was the year "Malleus Maleficarum" (a book) was released. This title means Witchhammer in English, and the book told people how to find witches and torture them. The debut album features nine songs and is an absolute must for power/speed freaks (I second that opinion - ES). Witchhammer looks set to play a band contest in August, the first prize being a record deal. But as Per Ståle (vocal) says: "If that deal isn't good enough, we won't accept it". Their latest material is said to be more technical and aggressive than the material on "1487", and includes titles such as "Touch Of An Angel", "Peace Cures", "Deliver Us From Evil" and "Waltz". The "1487" album is available for \$11 from the band's new contact address: Witchhammer, P.O. Box 407, 1701 Sarpsborg, Norway.

Metal Execution #3 out now! Includes Oliver Magnum, Crush, Valhalla, Salem, No Rules, Thanatos, Medieval Death and lots of others. Mainly written in Greek, but not only. Buy... or die of ignorance! Only \$3 from: Metal Execution/Soldier Of Steel, Grevendon 6, 15234 Halandri, Athens, Greece.

Mesheen is a Southern California-based quartet that formed in February 1988 by ex-Tyton members Ronnie Mitchell/Joey Scott (guitars) and Bobby Trait (drums). Tyton was once signed to the Metal Blade/Enigma label and released an album entitled "Mind Over Metal" some years ago. They've since added Bruce Drummond on bass (ex-Shady Blade) and Ted Michael Heath on vocals (ex-Fortress. Is this the band now known as Elliot?). Until now, Mesheen have refused to play live, opting instead to fully concentrate on writing quality material. The band is now preparing for their first studio demo (which will be probably be out by now...) and interested parties should get in touch at: Mesheen, P.O. Box 20141, Fountain Valley, Calif. 92728, USA.

Death Attack is a new "thrash only" radio show in Oslo, Norway. Its on the air every Wednesday from 11 to 12 pm. Editor and host of the program, Andre Hansen, would like to receive demos/rehearsals/advance tapes from bands wanting airplay on the show (death/thrash/power). All bands submitting material will receive playlist. Please write: Death Attack, c/o Andre Hansen, Søndre Rød 19B, 0752 Oslo 7, Norway.

Disjecta Membra

Of all the bands featured in this edition of Metal Glory, I feel Disjecta Membra have the most special and unique sound. Granted, the "regular" metal fan would most probably dismiss them as wimpy, psychedelic weirdos. But the openminded among us will no less be extremely thrilled at hearing some of the best instrumental material around today, based on influences from the seventies and so much more. Festus filled me in on what this band is all about.

MG: HOW DID DISJECTA MEMBRA FIRST COME ABOUT AS A BAND?

FE: In the beginning... there was a session! We only started playing for fun. Because we had no vocalist, we worked out some ideas of powerful instrumental music and learned knowing the extreme potentialities of the non-vocal sound. Then we played a party-gig with the material we had at that time, and were astonished and delighted about the very good reactions. So we decided to continue working as an instrumental band in a very "independent" way. Since the spring of 1987, the line-up has been: Marcus Mutz on drums, Fritz Verlager on bass, Gert Sprick on keyboards and Michael "Festus" Geis-thor on guitars.

MG: DO YOU BELIEVE YOU HOLD ANY APPEAL FOR THE AVERAGE METAL FAN, OR ARE YOU STRICTLY "SPECIAL APPEAL"?

FE: Our music is (generally) meant for all music lovers, but firstly for our own personal fun. We're overjoyed that there are people who like our music and we try to give them a part of our feelings. Its sometimes a powerful sound we do, but it is meant for all openminded people.

MG: WHY DON'T YOU HAVE A VOCALIST IN THE BAND, AND WILL YOU EVER CONSIDER GETTING ONE?

FE: We started without a vocalist and found an independent and interesting style. We grew together as a band with this style. If we were to integrate a vocalist, it would no longer be Disjecta Membra, but another new band.

MG: DESPITE NOT HAVING ANY VOCAL PARTS, DO YOU TRY TO CONVEY ANY "STORIES" WITH YOUR SONGS?

FE: Our songs mostly have no special stories. It conveys only feelings that create "films" inside the brain of a listener sometimes. And everybody is free to see his own "film". We only try to open some mental doors by using elements of psychedelic music.

MG: WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF BEING AN ALL-INSTRUMENTAL BAND?

FE: The strength is that we're very free in creating music. We don't need to use traditional song patterns and are free to break many musical "rules". On the other hand, we can't "write" songs. We create them. Sometimes we need a very long time to get a song into its finished form. It is more difficult playing colorful instrumental music than vocal music. Everybody in the band is the "frontman". We're a band, and people can see that.

MG: WHY DO YOU USE ONLY GERMAN AND LATIN SONG-TITLES?

FE: We don't, we use some English. If we had enough songs, and knew enough languages, we'd use all we know. The titles are not that important to understand the music. Some of the titles are only fantasy words and impossible to translate. They just belong to the songs because they came about when we wrote the material.

MG: TO MY EARS, YOU SOUND A LITTLE LIKE FELLOW GERMANS ELOY. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS BAND AND WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU PREFER LISTENING TO YOURSELVES?

FE: I know Eloy, and I like them. Maybe we sound a bit like them because they also have long instrumental parts. We are very different in what we're listening to ourselves. Marcus listens to Slayer, Gert to Deep Purple and Fritz likes Col-houn Conquer. I hear all kinds of "good" music of all styles and from all times myself.

MG: DO YOU BELIEVE YOU'LL EVER GET TO RECORD AN ALBUM, AND ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ACHIEVING COMMERCIAL SUCCESS?

FE: There are people who like our music and would like hearing it. We made our tape for them. If they want a record, we will perhaps make one. If we were to play music for commercial success, it wouldn't even sound like our stuff.

MG: CAN YOU DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DISJECTA MEMBRA CONCERT, AND THE KIND OF BANDS YOU'D LIKE TO PLAY WITH?

FE: During concerts, we are only actors... in front is our music. We don't do any special stage-acting or wear special outfits. We just try to play in an honest way. So we are the same people on-stage as we are off-stage. At first, people are mostly astonished at us. But after around three songs or so, they understand what we do. And those who don't like it go outside. When we play with other bands, we prefer to have to deal with openminded people - to learn to know each other and change experiences/have fun. The music they play is not very important, because it's only music and nothing more!!!

MG: HAS ANY FURTHER PLANS ALREADY BEEN MADE ABOUT THE BAND?

FE: At the moment, we're preparing some gigs. We have twelve songs and want to do a lot of concerts. The next tape might be a live record with some of our other songs. We'll try to get a good recording for it. We'd like to play gigs in all countries, even in Norway. So clubs and organizers, please contact us!

More about the mentioned tape can be found in the review pages in this issue. I don't think I have anything more to add to what has already been said, except that if you're looking for something new for a change... Disjecta Membra certainly fits that description. Write to: Disjecta Membra, c/o Marcus Mutz, Nordring 8a, 4830 Gutersloh 1, West-Germany.

UNDER THE OAK

UNDER THE OAK MAGAZINE ISSUE ONE IS OUT NOW! FULL INTERVIEWS WITH SOLITUDE AETURNUS, BROCAS HELM, MERCY, HELLBASTARD AND DESTINY. FEATURES ON COUNT RAVEN, SORCERER AND SAINT VITUS! PLUS LOTS OF REVIEWS... TOTAL METAL, JUST \$2!

ALSO, UNDER THE OAK ISSUE TWO IS IN THE WORKS! INTERVIEWS W/ REVELATION, COUNT RAVEN, SORCERER AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!

UNDER THE OAK, 30 DEARNFORD AVENUE, BROMBOROUGH, WIRRAL, MERSEYSIDE L62 6DY, ENGLAND.

Psychotic Waltz

Oblivion Knight

One of the absolute best "newcomers" in progressive metal just has to be Psychotic Waltz. Previously known as Aslan, they have so far released two brilliant tapes. And now, they're working on their first real album. This San Diego-based quintet consists of Buddy Lackey (vocals), Dan Rock and Brian McAlpin (guitars), Ward Evans (bass) and Norm Leggio (drums). Norm had the following on his mind... (except one question, answered by Buddy Lackey).

MG: HOW/WHERE/WHEN DID PSYCHOTIC WALTZ FIRST GET STARTED?

NL: The band started in '86. We were together for a year, then we got Buddy in the band. We've had this line-up since. So you can say that we started in summer 1987.

MG: CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR CURRENT STATUS WITH RECORD LABELS?

NL: Most labels turned us down. Except one that started out in San Diego just recently. It's a little independent label called Sub Sonic, and they already have distribution set up. We are the 1st band on the label. And we, together with the owners of a local underground record shop called Blue Meannie and Rich Thoapson, have started this new label.

MG: WHAT KIND OF DISTRIBUTION DEALS ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

NL: Abbey Road and Caroline are interested in distributing. Plus friends of Sub Sonic and myself all over the world. Our label is behind us all the way!

MG: SO, WHEN WILL YOUR DEBUT COME OUT?

NL: Our 1p/cd will come out in July. It will contain 12 songs in all (including all tracks from our latest demo). We'll also record "Spiral Tower" from the Aslan demo, plus many new ones. We've just started recording and we have practically our 2nd lp written, which will soon be going over in our third lp material. The exact release date looks like July 28th in the US and a couple of weeks later in Europe.

MG: CAN YOU TELL ME SOME MORE ABOUT THE ACTUAL RECORDING OF THE ALBUM?

NL: We used the same studio as we did on the second demo, a San Diego studio called "The Studio". We'll produce it ourselves (as always), with Mike Harris as co-producer. We used Mike on the first demo, when we were called Aslan.

MG: YOU SEEM TO HAVE KEPT A REALLY LOW PROFILE CONCERNING INTERVIEWS ETC. WHY?

NL: We don't get asked to do many. Plus sometimes it takes us too long to do an interview because we handle everything ourselves. But in the past three months, we have done lots of them.

MG: WHAT WAS THE REASON BEHIND CHANGING THE NAME FROM ASLAN TO PSYCHOTIC WALTZ?

NL: The name Aslan was never trademarked and another band was signed using that name, so it lost all "Heavyness focus". Plus Psychotic Waltz was a name that we all agreed on and felt suited the band. So we took the name from an old song we made when we were called Aslan, which we still play in our set.

MG: DO YOU THINK PROGRESSIVE BANDS ARE DOOMED TO COMMERCIAL FAILURE, DUE TO THE FACT THAT THEY ARE "PROGRESSIVE"?

NL: No, Rush have had hit songs. So have Jethro Tull, Pink Floyd and Yes. They've all been played on the radio and they're all very "progressive". Even Metallica gets airplay.

MG: HOW WELL DID YOUR SECOND DEMO SELL, AND ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH IT MUSICALLY?

NL: We've sold 1300 copies (none left). Most of them were sold in San Diego, but around 600 were sold in Europe. I'm happy with this, but I hope we sell 13000 copies of the album. Musically there are always some little things that I listen to and think I could have done better, but nothing major bugs me out. I'm happy with the fact that every time we go into the studio, something gets better.

MG: DO YOU HAVE MUCH LIVE EXPERIENCE AND HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU NORMALLY DRAW TO A PSYCHOTIC WALTZ GIG?

NL: Yes, we do, but I still don't think we play enough live. The shows usually have a cool atmosphere and everyone gets into it. We usually draw around 500-600 each show, the handful of people that see us are pretty much die-hard fans!

MG: YOUR SECOND DEMO CONTAINS A LOT OF MULTI-LAYERED VOCALS. HOW DOES THIS COME OVER IN A LIVE SITUATION?

NL: Buddy sings with a harmonizer live, and some of his vocal parts are sequenced. But eventually, we'll get 3 black girls to sing back-up vocals as the rest of us are too involved with our instruments. But we usually come off good in a live situation.

MG: I DETECTED SOME VERY STRANGE EGYPTIAN SOUNDING PARTS ON YOUR LATEST DEMO. IS THIS MEANT TO BE EGYPTIAN AND WHAT IS IT THAT INFLUENCES YOU?

NL: I do not know if it is Egyptian. As far as influences go, I'm influenced and inspired by something every day. Maybe something happened to us that day and it just came out that way.

MG: CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE LYRICS FOR YOUR LATEST MATERIAL?

NL: Our favorite is our last song called "Nothing". Once a friend and myself went to the top of a mountain at about 1am to see a meteor shower. We reached the top and watched the shooting stars and then I felt a sense of motion. Not within myself, but with the whole planet. I actually felt earth's motion through space. I can't explain how microscopic I felt. I was astounded at the concept that all of us are all rolling around uncontrolled on this bent little ball through the universe, and I felt no guarantees about fate or life itself. I felt we could be here as a result of correct conditions and situations, and maybe not as a creation of God. Therefore, we might not be as significant as we think we are. We're all just microscopic dots on a microscopic dot in a never-ending void. On that mountain, I felt my true size - I am nothing!



MG: NOW THAT THRASH AND GLAM SEEM TO BE ON THE RETREAT, IS PROGRESSIVE METAL THE NEXT "BIG THING"?

NL: We don't know. We have always just played whatever we felt like basically. I think the whole thrash and glam things are out of hand. That's all there seems to be these days! There's nothing but a handfull of different bands.

MG: ANY SPECIAL COMMENTS OF ANY KIND?

NL: Yes, we hope to be touring soon. We are also looking forward to release our debut album. I'm very proud of the cuts on the album and hope to perform them in front of you. Also, thank to all the underground pirates that have supported our cause!

MG: CAN YOU GIVE ME SOME DETAILS ON THE MERCHANDISE YOU HAVE AVAILABLE?

NL: Right now, we're in the process of making new t-shirts/stickers, and finishing our album. If you have any questions, please write to our record label: Sub Sonic, 916 Broadway, El Cajon, CA 92021, USA.

Besides the answers for this interview, Norm also sent me a special promotional tape including four tracks. Two of these are new songs that will appear on their debut and are entitled "Another Prophet Song" and "Strange". They are easily as good as anything from their demos and it looks like the album will be one of the definite highlights of 1990! The tape's cover is really beautiful, depicting the already familiar Psychotic Waltz jester floating in the atmosphere of a fantasy world, while a skeleton hand holds on to an hour-glass. The album cover will also be made by Mike Cliff, the man responsible for the promo-tape cover. Anyway, I think that's enough talk. Now get down to some action instead, and support this superb amalgamation of true progressive talent. Send letters, go to their gigs and order their album in local stores!

Oblivion Knight is one of the truly few bands in the underground that can justify being called "legendary". This highly competent progressive formation started out back in 1986, when Steve Sexton (the band's bassist and driving force) and Chris Camp (guitars) got together. After spending a year in their native Alabama, the guys decided to take a trip to Texas to find the rest of the band's original line-up. They hooked up with Ken Ortiz (drums, ex-Syrus) and Mike Soliz (vocalist, previously in Militia and soon-to-be member in Assalant and Watchtower).

They joined the band on a project basis and recorded a brilliant four-track demo in 1987 (This demo and their new one are both available through Demolition, see below for address). I sent off some questions to Steve, but as the deadline was drawing near, he unfortunately did not have enough time to give any lengthy answers.

MG: EXACTLY WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE OBLIVION KNIGHT CAMP?

SS: I guess being a project band, we do not have any permanent members. I'm sure we'll ask Chris (Collins, ex-Dream Theater) to sing on the next project (as he did on "Forgotten Realm", see review). John Artch is a very good friend of mine and that's the main reason why I haven't asked him to sing for us. I guess I do not want to put him on the spot, but I must admit I'd love working with on a future project. Chris and Mike are both great vocalists. Chris suits our style better, but they're both easy to work with.

MG: DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIFIC GOALS IN MIND FOR THE BAND'S FUTURE?

SS: Our desire is to make each project sound completely unlike the one before. We don't want to settle on just one style.

MG: WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS TOWARD BANDS HAVING A CERTAIN IMAGE?

MG: I think it's up to the band deciding whether or not to have an image. Some bands might not find it necessary. An image could possibly prevent a band from exploring new directions.

MG: HAVE YOU HAD MUCH REACTION YET TO THE "FORGOTTEN REALM" TAPE?

SS: The response has been real positive. We feel this demo is much better than the first one. No labels have contacted us yet, but we'll still continue writing whatever we feel like. If the labels are not interested, we'll just remain an underground band.

MG: HAS IT HINDERED THE BAND'S PROGRESS MUCH NOT HAVING A STABLE LINE-UP?

SS: Yes and no. It always helps to grow on stable things, but working with different musicians enable you to broaden your ideas.

MG: DO YOU HAVE ANY NEW RECORDING PLANS ALREADY SET UP?

SS: We plan to wait a while before recording the next Oblivion Knight tape, as I'm involved with a couple of other projects at the moment. One is sort of a jazz-fusion/new age/metal instrumental project, which I'm writing with drummer Keith Ciaramella (who played on "Forgotten Realm"). We hope to include some guest appearances from members of Dream Theater and Watchtower, among others.

MG: YOU'VE BEEN AROUND FOR A FEW YEARS NOW, SO YOU MUST SURELY HAVE SOME CONTACT WITH OTHER UNDERGROUND BANDS. IS THIS CORRECT, AND ARE THERE ANY LOCAL BANDS JUST STARTING THAT ARE ANY GOOD?

SS: I'm good friends with Keith Menser in Mystic Force, Doug Keyser in Watchtower and Mike Portnoy in Dream Theater. They're all cool guys! A few young bands are now starting to form in our local area. There is a thrash band called LOD that's pretty good. These guys are very young, so they should develop over the next few years.

MG: YOU'VE EARLIER SAID THAT OBLIVION KNIGHT STANDS FOR "THE KNIGHTS OF ARMAGEDDON". WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU MEAN WITH THIS?

SS: I don't think the world will exist such longer the way it is. I don't know if it will come to an end in my lifetime, but slowly and surely, life as we know it is coming to an end. We'd like to be known as modern day prophets.

The "Forgotten Realm" tape is as far as I know only available at: Demolition, c/o Oliver Jung, In der Dille 42, 4709 Bergk-Runtha, West-Germany. If you want to get in touch with the band for other reasons (like showing your support in a band that really deserves it!), please contact: Oblivion Knight, c/o S. Sexton, 402 Massee Drive, Dothan, AL 36301, USA.

SIEGES EVEN

With their second album already recorded and awaiting its release, I thought it was time for an extensive interview with this highly original German quartet. The "Life Cycle" album moved a few heads and gained them a healthy, but mainly underground, following. Now is the time for a second step towards their quest for fame (as they're obviously not very concerned with the fortune part of things). Oliver (bass) explains their views on the following subjects.

MG: AS ALL OTHER BANDS DO, CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF SIEGES EVEN?

OL: I first met Markus in 1983, at the time I had just moved to Munich. Since then, we've stayed and worked together, despite some changes in line-up. We were called Sodom at the time and we recorded a demo under this name, but that is not worth mentioning! In 1984, we made a second demo that's not worth mentioning, either. These two tapes were just sort of a band's first steps. In 1985 - when we recruited my brother Franz on drums and Franz Herde as our singer - the Sieges Even project started becoming more

serious. In the summer of '89, our vocalist had problems combining his work and Sieges Even. So we had to let him go and started looking for a new vocalist who would fit us and our style. The result was abominable, so we just had to get Franz back in the band. Fortunately, he re-joined us. We immediately made the unofficial "Corridors" demo, in order to find out what our new songs would sound like and we were very satisfied with the results. The only thing left then was to find a great studio with a competent engineer, but that was no problem. During March and April 1990 we recorded our second album, entitled "Steps". This will be released around September.

MG: WHO PRODUCED THE ALBUM, AND ARE YOU TOTALLY SATISFIED WITH THE END RESULT?

OL: We produced the album ourselves to have a guarantee and total control that our own, personal ideas would be realized completely! We just refused having a producer, as we feel we know the songs best ourselves. We had about 32 days in which to record it, and it was absolutely necessary as we worked about 12 hours a day for 4 weeks to get all the things done in the right way. Now, we're satisfied with it in every possible way! The sound engineer is a great and competent guy who could easily transform our ideas into small pieces of artwork (at least, that's my opinion). We worked in a great studio and the album was digitally mastered. So you can expect a CD with bombastic sound, probably capable of killing your speakers (no joke!!!). It has so much power in the sound that we might have problems pressing it on vinyl without losing any dynamics (loss in lower frequencies). But anyway, the sound on the cd-version will be a killer!

MG: CAN YOU REVEAL WHAT WILL BE ON THE ALBUM AND WHAT THE COVER WILL LOOK LIKE?

OL: As a cover, we'll use a surrealist painting by a female German artist, that will be chosen from several weird moti-

We are now reflecting upon this problem! We'll solve it.

MG: HOW WOULD YOU COME RE THE SPV LABEL TO A MAJOR COMPANY AND WHAT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR CURRENT RECORD DEAL?

OL: At the moment, we're satisfied with the SPV label. And we have a great relationship with C.D Hartdegen, who really encourages us and stands behind us. And that's all we want at the moment. If a label like EMI say they want you to become one of their bands, they put a lot of money into you with tours and promotional work. That makes everything a bit easier for a band. But it would be too concentrated on the aspect of money, and I'm not sure I would like that. So we'll keep our contact and contract with SPV. Our philosophy is doing things step by step - starting with small steps and increasing the size slowly. This process takes time! SPV is now trying to set up distribution deals in Asia and USA. In Japan, everything seems to work well. I think the new album will be released in Europe and Japan, and possibly Asia and USA (but I'm not completely sure).

MG: WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE WITH THE NEW ALBUM AND WITH THE BAND IN GENERAL?

OL: We hope to establish ourselves as a good, talented band. Apart from that, it is also important to sell an acceptable amount of copies of the new album. The only problem is that there is much prejudice towards Sieges Even, because "it is a talented band, but too hard to sell to the public". To me, that's absolute nonsense, as the people that have heard "Steps" immediately asks if we can sell it to them. That's a paradox, isn't it? I think "Steps" is well worth becoming a small success!

MG: WOULD YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF AS BEING A POLITICAL BAND, AND DO YOU THINK SOME PEOPLE MIGHT BE PUT OFF BY YOUR LYRICS?

OL: Yes, I'd say we are sort of a political band. We watch, hear and reflect



serious. We did some gigs in Munich and went into the studio again to record the "Symphonies Of Steel" demo tape. It got some great reviews. Again we played some shows here and there. But we wanted to improve further and become more professional, so we had to kick out our second guitarist at that time. The first great step forward now (March '87) can be seen on the "Bootleg Cassette" we recorded. The reaction was quite pleasant, and we sold around 500 copies. Towards the end of 1987, we went to Switzerland to help our friends Drifter with the backing vocals on their first album. Their producer, Kalle Trapp, already knew our demos and asked if we would like to do an album with him. Some weeks later, we made the "Repression & Resistance" tape. We gave this to Kalle, who set everything up with the SPV label. The deal was finally signed in February 1988. Soon after, the "Life Cycle" album was recorded in Germany, with Kalle Trapp as the producer. The album was released throughout Europe, and sold around 7000 copies in Germany alone. Again, the reviews were great and we received mail from all over the world, which made us feel quite enthusiastic. But with the release of this album, we also got some problems. A tour was lost and it took time to find a new one and start writing material for our

ves. On side 1 will be a 27 minutes long epic concept song called "Tangerine Windows Of Solace", that is subdivided into six parts. The statements we use in our lyrics will not be as explicit as on the first album. We try to speak in a more poetic way, using lyrical pictures and metaphors to give messages. You have to read between the lines mostly. The music has also changed completely! We use more different sounds and try to vary the arrangements of our songs, so the record won't let you get bored at all! Another cardinal point is that we've integrated more "groove" in our material and play a perpetual change of soft and hard/techno parts. I think that is one of our main characteristics today.

MG: EXACTLY WHAT INSTRUMENTS ARE ON THE ALBUM AND HOW DO YOU PLAN ON INCORPORATING THESE INSTRUMENTS LIVE?

OL: Apart from our regular instruments, we used violins, piano and synthesizers to give the music a bit more "colour". Since we can't play these instruments at all, we had to get some outside help. On piano, we had a studio-musician who has already played with Curt Cress on vinyl. We also invited Markus' guitar teacher to play a guest-solo-duel with Markus on the "Tangerine..." track. The problem is obviously how to do this live on stage.

on things going on in the world and get inspiration to our texts from it. But as I said earlier, you have to read between the lines to understand our attitudes. We use a lot of ironies for example, and try to present our opinions in a sophisticated manner. Some may not understand our lyrics, and they'll probably be put off. We try hard to produce good texts, because for us music and lyrics weigh in at about 50:50. Please, if you buy our album, read the texts while listening in order to get the best effect out of it! We've only had positive reactions to the lyrics so far, and that tells us we are on the right way with our concept. Someone buying a Sieges Even album wants to reflect on both music and lyrics, and that makes us proud, as it's the quality that makes them like us - and not some cheap effect. That's the way it has to be!

MG: WILL SIEGES EVEN EVER HAVE A "MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH" OR ARE YOU SIMPLY TOO SPECIAL IN STYLE?

OL: Everybody (don't mind what this may say) regards us to be too special to have a breakthrough, so what can I say??? We're waiting on a miracle!

MG: YOU ARE OFTEN ASKED VERY "SERIOUS" QUESTIONS IN MAGAZINES BECAUSE OF YOUR LYRICAL APPROACH. BUT MUSIC, AFTER ALL,

IS MEANT TO BE ENTERTAINMENT. DON'T YOU FEEL PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE MUSIC AS A MEANS OF ESCAPING REALITY FOR A WHILE?
OL: For me, our music is like religion. If I listen to a new track, I can easily close my eyes and begin to dream, isolate myself from what's happening around me. Despite the fact that our music is meant to be serious, I feel it can still be entertainment as well. I do not think it is contradictory. If a person wants to flee reality 100%, he'll have to go to a disco and dance to "plastic bands" like Milli Vanilli. In fact, this is not our style of life! Perhaps you're right and perhaps not - I don't know!

MG: DO YOU FOLLOW THE HAPPENINGS IN THE PROGRESSIVE METAL SCENE AND ARE YOU IMPRESSED BY ANY BANDS IN PARTICULAR?
OL: I'm absolutely not up-to-date on the progressive scene, and therefore I can't tell you about any specific bands. The only comment I wish to make is that for me, it's disgusting seeing such bands as Liege Lord, Helstar and Nasty Savage losing their contracts and that bands like Watchtower and Dream Theater hardly sell any albums at all (personally, I find it too good to be true that they even managed to get signed to some decent record labels in the first place. I think the progressive scene will have a renaissance soon - EB). I regard this as a symptom for the development in the progressive scene.

MG: DESPITE MUCH SUCCESS IN THE UNDERGROUND, BIGGER MAGAZINES DON'T HELP YOU OUT MUCH IN THE WAY OF INTERVIEWS. WHY?
OL: The bigger magazines just set other priorities (letting the money do their talking). The major record companies all finance these magazines by advertising etc. So it's quite logical that the magazines will feature the bands on those same major labels. And I don't need to tell you how SPV compares to the majors!

MG: WHAT KIND OF CHANGES DO YOU BELIEVE WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE GERMAN METAL SCENE AS A RESULT OF RE-UNITING WITH EAST-GERMANY?
MG: I refuse making any pre-conclusions on this one. I regard this interview as a great chance of making new friends, so I'll keep a low profile concerning this question!

MG: DO YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER PLANS, LIKE DOING A VIDEO FOR THE ALBUM OR SO?
OL: That's an important question we ask ourselves every day. Perhaps we will make a video for the new album, but that will be a very low-budget affair. I can't see a reason as to why not making one, as it would surely help us out in the future. It all depends on whether we receive any money from SPV or not. As far as touring is concerned, we're trying to set something up for autumn '90. But that's once again a financial question. What I would like is to have all kinds of Slages Even merchandise. If anyone would like helping us out here, please write us (again waiting for a miracle!).

MG: ANY LAST COMMENTS YOU'D LIKE TO ADD?
OL: Excuse me?! I'm knocked out by now I'm sold-out-of-comments. I could give any cliché phrase like "buy our albums", "worship me or die" or "Die Hard". But we all agree that this is something to be avoided, don't we?

And with those wise words, the interview reaches its conclusion. But I am still compelled to say "buy their albums", as I sincerely mean that! Some other titles that might appear on "Slages" are "Corridors", "Dialogues" and "Act Of Acquiescence". Their contact address is: Slages Even, Kurparkstrasse 39, 8000 Munich 70, West-Germany.

POWER PACKER

POWER PACKER is reborn! Issue #1 (Vol. 2) is out and includes interviews with OVER KILL, MYSTIC FORCE, MACHINE, OLIVER MAGNUM, EXMORTIS, POWERMAD and SORCERER. Also this issue includes a demo/album review section featuring bands from power to doom to rock to thrash and to death metal. A fanzine for everyone! To order your issue send \$1.00 (\$3.00 elsewhere) to POWER PACKER. If more info is desired than just write.

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MG: ONE THE "DUE" ALBUM IS A SONG CALLED "BACK ON THE ROAD", WHERE YOU SING ABOUT THE PAST OF ELEKTRADRIIVE. IT STATES THE BAND STARTED IN 1981. WHAT HAS HAPPENED BETWEEN THEN AND THE RELEASE OF THE NEW ALBUM?
SI: The starting point was really 1981. The name back then was Overdrive and we had a different line-up (another drummer and a second guitarist instead of key-boards). We changed the name to Elektradriive in 1983, because a band from Sweden released an album under the name of Overdrive. Soon after, our first single was released on the Italian indie label Saoko Records. The songs on it were "Let It Survive" and "Brainstorm". Our first album was "Over The Space", released in 1984 on the Discotto label. It got good reviews from critics (90 points in Metal Forces), but very few copies were sold because there was no interest in heavy music in Italy at that time. After two years of crisis, our second album "Due" was released.

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MG: WHY DID IT SO LONG TO RELEASE "DUE" AND WHY DID YOU CHANGE TO A NEW LABEL?
SI: Because the label handling "Over The Space" went bankrupt, and the band dissolved from a big lack of moral support! We were left totally alone, and this was very bad for us. Luckily for us, in 1987 some people started showing interest in the band. And we realized that many fans here in Italy hadn't forgot about us. So we thought it was about time for a reunion, and started writing the material for the "Due" album. The first tune that came out was "A Man That Got No Heart", which I first recorded on my own 8-track machine playing all instruments myself, with a different vocal arrangement from Elio. We started the recording sessions in July '88 and continued recording 'til May '89.

MG: HOW WOULD YOU SAY ELEKTRADRIIVE'S MUSIC HAS CHANGED OVER THIS TIME?
SI: Our musical style has changed a lot since the first single for many reasons. In the beginning, we were more into the likes of Judas Priest and Iron Maiden. When we got a keyboardist, we changed a lot. This can be heard on the single. On "Over The Space", there was yet another change in direction with very fast songs and weird, spacey keyboards. Elektradriive was being called the first "space metal band" because of that. With "Due", I think we've reached our final dimension. No more changes!!! Seriously, I think we are really into the AOR thing and that the new songs we're working on are very, very good.

MG: DUE MEANS "TWO" IN ITALIAN, BUT HAS SEVERAL MEANINGS IN ENGLISH. WHAT DO YOU MEAN WITH THIS TITLE?
SI: "Due" stands for number two, as this is our second album. But the meaning we intended with the title (in English) was that the album really was due to all the people that never forgot us and the debut album. The second meaning is referred to in the title track. This is about the solicitations that modern youth got: to work, only to think about work, having a good job and a good family, a pre-packaged mind etc. And this is "due" to politicians in all countries that still look upon rock 'n roll as being satanic.

MG: IS IT IMPORTANT TO THE BAND HAVING MEANINGFUL LYRICS?
SI: It is an Elektradriive prerogative! Since our first single, "Let It Survive" (which was about vivisection), and the song "Clash Of Titans" (which was about the arms race) on our debut album, we'll always put at least one serious song on each album. I don't believe that artists would write about such subjects to only increase their success. I believe that all major rock stars writing lyrics about serious subjects really are interested in what they're singing about.

MG: THE SONG "A MAN THAT GOT NO HEART" DEALS WITH THE SUBJECT OF CHILD ABUSE. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE A SUBJECT LIKE THIS TO SING ABOUT?
SI: There are many strange things happening in our society these days, child abuse being one of them. We are upset by the indifference of people on this subject. We're not the first people writing about this, but we hope that it can help some people in one way or another. It's hard to believe there exists such horrible men! A child is like a jewel and it should be impossible to hurt them.

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MG: WOULD YOU SAY THAT ELEKTRADRIIVE IS A WELL-KNOWN BAND IN ITALY NOW?
SI: We aren't not that well-known. Recently, we were voted the sixth best band in an important Italian magazine. This was because of our new album. Many journalists are writing that we're the best Italian hardrock band, something we feel honored about. We only regret that we have not been promoting Elektradriive outside our own country for so many years. As far as the general public goes, we're not that well-known. Partly because the bad distribution and promotion by Minotaur. In fact, you still can't find the album in many shops. We've sold about 2000 copies in Italy now, but feel we could sell at least 10000 with better promotion.

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MG: HAVE YOU DONE MANY LIVE SHOWS YET IN ITALY?
SI: We have done more than 30 gigs, the most important was supporting Manowar in December last year. Shy and Sabbat also played that night, but many people said that we were better than these bands. We then went on a small promo-tour in Italy in support of the album. Everywhere we play, the audience is very enthusiastic.

MG: ITALY IS NOT EXACTLY KNOWN AS HAVING MUCH OF A HARDROCK TRADITION. IS IT HARD STARTING AN ITALIAN HARDROCK BAND?
SI: It is very hard, as Italian kids do not buy Italian bands. Some years ago, hardrock and heavy metal was not selling at all, not even for the foreign bands. If you don't have a major label backing you up, it's impossible to make a living out of being a musician. Noone seems to believe in Italian bands. We've sent the album to all the major labels. They say "Yeah, it's a wonderful album. But you will not sell."

MG: DO THE ITALIAN MAGAZINES ETC. SHOW MUCH INTEREST IN ITALIAN BANDS, OR ARE THEY JUST INTERESTED IN FOREIGN BANDS?
SI: We must thank the two major Italian magazines, HM and Metal Shock, for giving us precious help in the last months in every edition of those magazines. As I said before, many Italian journalists say we're the best bands around. Local radio stations have also been helpful to us. But naturally, most stuff is about foreign bands. As far as nation-wide tv is concerned, you have to spend a lot of money in order to get on it.

MG: ELEKTRADRIIVE WAS THE FIRST ITALIAN BAND TO GET A FIVE-K RATING IN KERRANG. DID YOU RECEIVE A LOT OF ATTENTION BECAUSE OF THIS?
SI: That was a very good surprise for us as it happened when we were planning the future of the band. It gave us the push to find contacts all over Europe, especially concerning record deals and for playing abroad in the future. A big distributor in England ordered 300 copies of the album because of that review. It was really an honor being the first band from Italy to ever get a five-K rating in a magazine like Kerrang!

MG: THERE WAS SOME TALK ABOUT A DISTRIBUTION DEAL IN EUROPE WITH THE SEMAPHORE LABEL. CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT THIS?
SI: Minotaur was a disaster for us. The album was not even distributed well here in Italy. So, after that review in Kerrang, we decided to find another distributor. Semaphore wanted our album, and a few days later we signed a deal with the label. We're sure they really believe in us and will help us a lot all over Europe. It's the first time an Elektradriive product is being distributed abroad, so we are very excited about this. At the moment, there are no news about a record deal.

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MG: WHAT KIND OF GOALS DO YOU HAVE FOR THE FUTURE OF ELEKTRADRIIVE?
SI: We've always felt that the band can achieve more success outside Italy than within. We can tell that by all the letters we've received after that review in Kerrang. We feel we are a little under-evaluated here in Italy, especially by the public. Maybe we just need getting better known abroad by selling more records before we can gain some recognition here in Italy. However, right now, the most important goal to us is finding a major record deal!

You can write the band through: Elektradriive, Via Spano 33 - 4, 10134 Torino, Italy.

N I C O L L E B L O K

INVOCATOR

Invocator was first brought to my attention by a tape-trader I know. He recorded the band's first demo, entitled "Genetic Confusion", for me... and I loved that demo. So when I heard they were about to release a new one, I sent them some questions about their past, present and future. Jakob Schultz & Jacob Hansen answered.

MG: FIRST OF ALL, WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT LINE-UP?
JS: The line-up is me on guitars, Jacob H. on guitars and vocals, Jesper M. Jensen on bass and Per M. Jensen on drums. We've had a lot of changes, but we think this is the line-up that will last. It's just the ultimate line-up, we've never been better!

MG: WHAT HAS THE REACTIONS TO YOUR MATERIAL BEEN LIKE THIS FAR AND HOW MANY COPIES DID YOU SELL OF THE FIRST TAPE?
JS: As for sales figures, we've sold about 600 copies of the first tape and around 300 copies of "Alterations". And it's only been in sale for two months when I'm writing this. The reactions I've heard are mainly positive. We've had some negative reactions, but only minor ones. Some people say they prefer "Genetic...", but I think everything is better with the new tapes: the sound, the songs, the leads, the vocals... everything!

MG: ANY REACTIONS FROM THE RECORD LABELS YET, AND HOW ABOUT RELEASING A SELF-FINANCED ALBUM?
JS: No. Well, we received a few offers from smaller companies, but it's hard for these labels to offer what we want. That's too bad, as we really want to record an album. But we shouldn't hurry signing a deal, only to regret it later. We are now planning to play in different European countries. No plans for any more recordings yet. I don't think we'd ever send out a self-financed album. It would be hard to spread it worldwide. The best thing for us would be to have a good deal with a company that has worldwide releases. Some bands get scared they will not be signed about six months after a demo release. So they say "yes" to the smallest companies who can't really help the band, or release an album by themselves. I think it's dangerous to do such a thing.



MG: HOW WOULD YOU COMPARE THE NEW MATERIAL TO YOUR FIRST DEMO TAPE AND WHAT BANDS WOULD YOU SAY INFLUENCES INVOCATOR?
JH: Well, the material on "Alterations" is very strong and more aggressive, combined with some death parts. At the same time, we've grown a bit more technical. The lyrics are about different feelings. "Alterations" is about the far too many questions you ask yourself sometimes when you're in a crisis situation. In the end of the song, you come to the conclusion that life is not worth living (that's nice - ES). "Occurrence Concealed" is about corruption and politics. "The Persistence..." is about losing your best friend or your parents. "Pursuit..." is a "hate & anger" song to all narrow-minded people. We've also speeded things up, as a natural progression. Influences can't just be pin-pointed. Everything influences me to write a song, like if I have a very strong experience which touches me. Musical influences go from death metal to more melodic stuff.

MG: ANY SPECIAL COMMENTS ON MERCHANDISE OR LIFE IN GENERAL?
JS: We still have "Genetic Confusion" for sale, but not for very long, as we don't have many copies left. "Alterations" is for sale, and we have six different stickers available. We hope to get some money for new t-shirts. The demos come with quality-printed cover with lyrics and stuff. The stickers are also the best quality colored vinyl. Free stickers with every letter. Buy our demos... spread our name... and try to catch us live. Hope to hear from a lot of people!!!

Although I don't find the "Alterations" as much amusing as "Genetic Confusion", I think a lot of people will. They seem to be serious at what they do, and I think everyone into the Slayer/Kreator style should show some interest by writing to them (remember the free stickers) or order the demos for \$6/DKR40 each. Their address is: Invocator, c/o Jakob Schultz, Torvegade 7 - 2.tv, 6800 Vardø, Denmark.
H E I N - F R O D E H A N S E N

MASQUERADE

The first tape I received for this issue was a pleasant surprise in the shape of a great, new power metal band calling themselves Masquerade. They're not all power, but also incorporate a fair share of melodic metal touches. Sounding at times not completely unlike Crimson Glory, I just had to get some more information on them. Noud Smeets (guitars) fills us in on what's happening with this Dutch band nowadays.

MG: CAN YOU TELL ME HOW MASQUERADE FIRST GOT STARTED AND DEVELOPED INTO A PERMANENT BAND?
NS: I left a Belgian group called Lionspride in December '87 and began writing material for an instrumental demo. On this tape, Jack Kraal played drums and Ronald Klatt played bass. We were offered the chance of doing a "live show" on a local radio station and recorded a show with a guest vocalist. But the master-tapes were stolen, and the gig was never broadcasted. Nevertheless, the audience were really positive towards the band, so we decided forming it on a more permanent basis. After several changes, Richard Muermans joined as our permanent vocalist and we recorded our first demo tape. He had previously been in Avalon, along with Jack Kraal. Avalon split up for several reasons, Richard leaving because of management disagreements.

MG: THE MASQUERADE STYLE OF MUSIC IS VERY DIFFERENT TO THAT OF AVALON, WHO PLAYED MORE "SYMPHONIC" MATERIAL. DO YOU FEEL A BAND PLAYING MELODIC POWER METAL HAS MORE OF A CHANCE THAN A BAND LIKE AVALON TO BECOME REALLY SUCCESSFUL?
NS: Avalon's style of music was very commercial, and thereby more accessible for a wider audience than Masquerade. On the other hand, there are not many bands around playing the same kind of music that we do, so we do have chance of making it. We're aiming more towards the whole European market than only the Dutch. Because there are so many limitations in Holland, it's hard to evolve and improve the band.

MG: YOUR VOCALIST, RICHARD, RECENTLY LEFT THE BAND. WHAT WAS THE REASON BEHIND HIM LEAVING THE BAND, AND HAVE YOU FOUND A REPLACEMENT YET?
NS: Richard is not into heavy metal anymore, and wants to do more commercial stuff. We respect his opinion, so we let him go. We're still good friends and we keep in touch with him. We're looking for a replacement at the moment, but it's hard finding the right person. We're not in a hurry, though, as we want a vocalist with a certain amount of quality. It all as to be perfect.

MG: WHAT KIND OF LYRICS ARE YOU DEALING IN AND HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE LYRICS FOR A SONG?
NS: Mostly, our lyrics characterize what goes on in our own minds. "Prisoner Of Consciousness" is about a man who knows he will be killed by the Mob. They've put a hitman on him, who haunts him everywhere. At the end of the song, he does not even know if it's fact or fiction. "Surrender" is one of Richard's wet dreams. "Masquerade" tells the story about a woman pretending to be something she's not. For us, she represents the whole Western Society and the way we feel it is developing.

MG: WHERE AND WHEN WAS THE DEMO RECORDED AND WHAT HAVE THE REACTIONS BEEN LIKE?
NS: It was recorded in a studio called Joe's Garage on just an 8-track machine in three days. It was originally just intended as a promo tape, but we've sold around 400 tapes this far. We wrote to a couple of record companies and they were very enthusiastic about it. Some of them are now waiting for more material from us, which will be recorded soon. That's all I can say about it!

MG: DO YOU FEEL IT AS A DISADVANTAGE BEING A DUTCH BAND INSTEAD OF AMERICAN OR BRITISH?
NS: Well, in Holland we don't have many indie labels willing to risk money on new and unknown heavy metal bands. That is the major problem of the record companies: they are only interested in earning "safe" money and are not willing to accept the risks that come with investing in unknown bands. At the moment, there are many Dutch bands who think they'll be major stars in no time, but are both musically and technically crap. There are some good bands as well, like Elegy and Perfect Strangers. There is a very unhealthy struggle among Dutch bands. Instead of helping each other out, many bands try to knock others down.

Masquerade has also done a promo video for "Prisoner Of Consciousness", but it's not for sale to you and me. And there is also a possibility that the newer material they look set to record will also be released as a demo. In the meantime, read more about their first demo in the review pages or send your dollars right now (6 dollars, that is) to: Masquerade, Putstraat 216, 6131 HH Sittard, Holland.

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MACHINERY

Machinery is a band I've yet to see interviewed, despite having released a brilliant four-track demo back in '88 which offered an almost perfect blend of melodic power metal and progressive thrash. In fear of the band might have broken up I sent them the following interview to find out if they were still alive and kicking. Read on and find out what Machinery has been up to lately, courtesy of drummer Art Gallery.

MG: HOW DID MACHINERY FIRST GET TOGETHER AS A BAND?

AG: Well, the band started about 3 1/2 years ago. I had been looking to do something really different than just playing the same old cover tunes. I met Chet and his brother (who's no longer in the band), and the three of us put things together. We had a different singer and bass player. Danny joined on bass about six months later. Danny then brought Tom in on vocals. He came to rehearsal one night, sang 3 lines and just blew us away. He was so great we were all just laughing so hard we could barely play. See, the one thing we lacked until then was a good singer. And when Tom came down, it was like a big weight being lifted from our shoulders.

MG: YOUR DEMO SEEMS TO BE QUITE A CLASSIC IN THE UNDERGROUND SCENE, BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY REAL INTERVIEWS WITH THE BAND SO FAR. WHY IS THIS AND HOW MANY COPIES WERE ACTUALLY SOLD?

AR: We've been getting a lot of good press in the US and some European magazines. But sometimes it's hard, because we do all the work ourselves: promotion, booking shows, dealing with record companies etc. So whatever press we get, we have to work our asses off for. We've sold over 4000 copies, and still counting! Musically, it was done in 12 hours for \$500, and we only did it to so we could get some shows. But somewhere along the line, people started asking for copies. And when it started getting good reviews, we decided to release it a real demo.

MG: CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE LYRICAL TOPICS ON THE TAPE?

AR: I'm glad you asked! Tom and I are the lyricists. As far as the subject matters go, I think the two primary topics are social/political and personal/emotional - such as frustration and depression (sorry, no love songs). "Fool's Paradise" is a very personal song for me. Originally, the verses were written as a poem. It is about depression, self-doubt and loneliness, stuff I think everyone can relate to. I happened to bring it over to Chet one day and he and I had been working on some music that just happened to fit in perfectly. Tom just belted out the choruses, and it was done. "Divide And Conquer" is a political song that Tom did the words for. It's about how war and violence always seem to pop up somewhere for some reason or sometimes for no reason at all. "Bite The Hand" is more like a social commentary about how people can be lulled into submission and end up settling for things that are really bullshit, even if they aren't happy with it and because they don't have the guts to work for so something more and go up against the system.

MG: THE LYRICS ON "WOLVES" SOUND VERY RELIGIOUS. DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL VIEWS ON RELIGION AS A PHENOMENON?

AG: This is a subject I don't get asked enough about. "Wolves" is about how religion is probably the biggest business in the world today and that, at least in the US, people exploit it and use it to get wealthy at the expense of poor, old women and uneducated working class people who scrape to make ends meet as it is. I think religion, on an organized level, does nothing but segregate and divide people against each other. The fundamental belief of organized religion is that "We're right - we know the truth, and everything else is wrong". Starting with that assumption, it can create many problems. There has been more killing throughout history in the name of religion than anything else, and unfortunately it seems to be getting worse. Just look at the Middle East. I think it's everyone's right to believe in their own hearts whatever they want, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else and they don't try to push it down someone else's throat. I think religion should be a personal thing, kept in your own heart... and not the wallet!

MG: WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELVES MORE AS A POWER METAL BAND THAN MELODIC THRASH, AND WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THIS KIND OF CATEGORIZATION?

AR: I think one of the sad things about the music business is that everything has to be broken down into little categories. But I suppose it's the only way to really have an idea of what you do. I know Danny doesn't like the term "thrash", but personally I like it. To me, thrash and speed metal are two different things. Thrash is raw, powerful, and sometimes fast/sometimes chunky and driving. And in our case: melodic. I see speed metal as more confining, in that everything is "speed". Power metal is a term that's been used more and more to describe us. I think of power metal more in terms of old Priest and Iron Maiden, both of which have influenced us greatly. So I think an adequate description would be "melodic power thrash metal".

MG: WOULD YOU ALSO CONSIDER MACHINERY TO BE PROGRESSIVE?

AG: In a certain sense, yes. Only because we write material that will challenge us as musicians. So we have some odd time changes and some very progressive-sounding parts, but we always try to keep a level of accessibility. I love certain progressive bands because I am a musician, but the average listener can't always relate. So you have to maintain a proper balance.

MG: A DEMO REVIEW IN METAL FORCES COMPARED YOU TO METALLICA AND QUEENSRÛCHE. ARE THESE BANDS AMONG YOUR INFLUENCES AND WHAT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS COMPARISON?

AR: I guess it would be very hard for a metal outfit in the nineties without being influenced a little by Metallica, but I think our influences are more like old Priest, Maiden and Kiss. Tom and my biggest influence was the Beatles. It is a

compliment with such a comparison to me as I think that both bands are great. "Operation Mindcrime" was a masterpiece and one of my all time faves. Tom gets a little sick of hearing the QueensrÛche (Tate) and Maiden (Dickinson) comparisons. But I think if something new comes along and is good vocally that to compare it to Tate is like saying it's the best. It kind of goes back to what I said about labeling things, people need to compare things so they know what they're getting into.

MG: WHAT KIND OF LABEL INTEREST DID THE '88 DEMO GENERATE, AND DON'T YOU THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME TO MAKE A NEW ONE?

AG: In the past months, interest from labels just seemed to take off. First, we were contacted by a major label (which I won't mention), then another and a couple of indies. We are in the middle of a bunch of showcases right now, so hopefully something will work out. We just got out of the studio, recording a new demo for the record companies. We've discussed releasing it or just waiting it out to see if we land a deal. So far, everyone who has heard it loves it and says it blows the old one away. Since the first tape, we've written a ton of songs. So it was tough deciding which songs to record for the new demo. In the end, we took four songs that are very different from each other in order to show the variety of our material. But right now, I don't know if we'll be releasing it to the public. Musically, the new material is more challenging and lyrically it tends to follow the lines discussed earlier. We've branched out in all directions. The fast shit has gotten faster and the chunky shit has gotten heavier. We've got a few slower tunes now that are very melodic, but still very heavy. I think we've matured greatly as both song-writers and musicians.

MG: WHAT CAN BE SAID ABOUT THE CONNECTICUT METAL SCENE?

AG: The Connecticut scene sucks! The bands you name (Fates Warning, Radium) are part of a handful of good bands. I can only mention three or four more, but basically there is no Connecticut scene. The club owners all got greedy, charging too much for half-ass clubs and half-ass bands, and people stopped going. It's just as easy for people to drive into NY to see a band. But I also think it's good for bands not being from NY or LA. It gives a breath of fresh air and allows us not to get sucked into the same old, lame crap. We (the above-mentioned bands) all grew up away from a scene. So we developed our own interests and influences that allows us to have a different perspective on the music we play. When I'm listening to the first two Fates Warning albums, I hear Connecticut. It relates to the images and influences I grew up with. Now that they've gone through some changes, they sound different and you can hear other influences in them.



MG: DO YOU HAVE A LOT OF CONTACT WITH THE OTHER CONNECTICUT-BASED BANDS AND DO YOU GET TO PLAY MUCH LIVE?

AG: It's hard not to have contact with other bands in such a small area. Everyone shows up at the few shows here in Connecticut. And besides that, we have at one time or another, before Machinery, played with a lot of them. We play live as much as we can, but there are no places to play here. There is one club called Toads, but you can't play the same club every week. We play out of state and we've been trying very hard to get something going in NY. But being from Connecticut, you automatically have two strikes against you. Basically, all the clubs care about is how many people you draw. And I can't blame them. And if you're from Connecticut, they say nobody will go all that way to see a local band. So you don't even get a chance.

MG: DO YOU FEEL THE SUCCESS OF BANDS LIKE GUNS 'N ROSES AND WHITE LION WILL MAKE IT ANY HARDER OR EASIER FOR MORE POWERFUL METAL BANDS, LIKE YOURSELF, TO BREAK THROUGH?

AG: I think there's plenty of room for everyone in the music business. I don't really think they're metal bands as such as they're rock bands. But that would be labelling them, so I guess I shouldn't say that. Personally, I'm not into those bands, but I can't see why someone couldn't like Slayer and Guns 'N Roses. The only thing I have to say is I wish they'd stop playing such wimpy crap on MTV's Headbangers Ball here in the US. They play that stuff all day, so if they're going to have a metal show, they should play real metal.

MG: THE NAME MACHINERY SOUNDS TECHNICAL AND PROGRESSIVE. WAS THIS ONE OF THE REASONS YOU CHOSE THAT NAME?

AG: Progressive, technical. I like that! But the real reason we chose the name - Chet actually came up with it - was that we felt we sounded like machinery: grinding, crunching and chugging along.

Machinery is simply put a brilliant band, and I hope to feature them again within these pages. As for now, they're putting together a list of their merchandise (I think \$5 will be enough for the brilliant '88 demo). Show your support in a truly superb band and mail your stuff to: Machinery, 337 Weber Street, Stratford, CT 06497, USA!

THE PLAGUE - Issue #5 out now! Includes interviews with VOIVOD, TESTAMENT, HELSTAR, KILLING TIME, PESTILENCE, DEAD ON, INTRUDER and X-PIRACY. Also, lots of album & demo reviews. Send \$3 (USA) or \$4 (overseas) to: The Plague, c/o Dan Hinds, P.O. Box 2038, Eugene, OR 97402, USA.

DEATH MISSION

Norwegian thrashers Death Mission have gained a healthy following after having released the "Why?" demo in '88/'89. And with the release of their second tape "The Ultimate..." (see review), I thought it was about time Metal Glory did an interview with these guys. After a lot of problems with their line-up, they have now hopefully stagnated at Tomas Eian on vocals and guitars, Erlend Waide on guitars, Johnny Klyve on bass and latest addition Jørgen Nordlie on drums. Johnny answers the questions about their past, present and future.

MG: FIRST OF ALL, HOW DID DEATH MISSION GET STARTED AND HAVE YOU HAD ANY CONTACT WITH ANY RECORD LABELS YET?
JK: Death Mission was formed in the winter of '87 by me, Erlend and a guy named Morten Enger on drums. We played in two separate bands but since none of the two bands had a complete line-up, we decided to form a new band together. (For some info. on their early days, please check out MG #1 - ES). We haven't sent any demos to record companies this far, but we will send some copies of "The Ultimate..." quite soon. So we'll just have to wait and see. We don't have any plans for further recordings. Maybe in the beginning of '91.

MG: ANY CHANCES OF RELEASING A SELF-FINANCED ALBUM AND CAN YOU GIVE SOME INFO. ON THE MERCHANDISE YOU HAVE AVAILABLE?
JK: We haven't really thought much about that, but I guess it would be cool. Anyway, we don't have enough money yet, so I can't say much more about it. I would've had all the stuff on the new demo on an album, as of now. We haven't written any more songs since "The Ultimate..." demo. The demos are available for \$5 each and we have some t-shirts which cost \$8. We're planning to make some new t-shirts, which will hopefully be out quite soon. We also have some live videos, if anyone should be interested.

MG: ANOTHER REGULAR QUESTION NOW. WHAT ARE YOUR INFLUENCES?
JK: Hopefully, we don't get too influenced by others. So I wouldn't name any specific bands. Of course we get influenced by somebody, but not directly. Not even Metallica (I'm having a hard time believing that one - ES). We like bands like Sepultura, Testament, The Cult, Faith No More and Death Angel. We all write the songs, but until now all lyrics have been written by Tomas and me. I guess our new material will be in the same style as on "The Ultimate..."

MG: HOW HAS THE BAND PROGRESSED FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND DEMO TAPE?
JK: I think we've progressed a lot since "Why". I think the two tapes are totally different from each other and that the new tape is much more professional. The riffs and lyrics are better, the melodies, solos, vocals... everything! Well, it is up to each of you out there to make up your own mind, but everybody who's heard the tape so far have noticed a different style on it. I would say we're a different band now than Death Mission was in '88. We haven't had the new tape out so long yet, but it seems like it will sell a lot more than the first one. So far, we have sold a couple of hundred here in Norway. We haven't done much promotion outside Norway, so we will just have to wait and see what happens.

MG: YOU'VE HAD SOME PROBLEMS IN FINDING A SUITABLE VOCALIST, RIGHT?
JK: That's right, but we had even bigger problems in finding a new drummer when we fired the old one. Anyway, in July '88 we fired our old vocalist/guitarist Tore Aurstad. We wanted a good guitarist who could sing as a replacement, instead of two different persons. It is not an easy job finding people like that here in Norway, but after having tried out a couple of guitarists, we played at a talent contest. One of the bands there featured Tomas and we talked to him and gave him the "Why" demo. When we met him a month later, he wanted to join the band. We tried him out and it worked out! He hadn't sung in a band before, so the re-recorded vocal work on the "Why" demo aren't that good. But he's a lot better now!

MG: YOU RECENTLY PLAYED WITH NORWAY'S INFAMOUS DEATH METAL BAND MAYHEM. HOW DID THAT EXPERIENCE TURN OUT?
JK: It went quite well, I guess. But it wasn't a "big thing" for us to play with them, 'coz they're not playing the kind of music we like. I will absolutely not put the band down in

any way, but I have to say I know a hundred other bands that I like much better. I don't believe we're their biggest fave band, either! But I'm sure they're good at what they do. The guys are cool and we wouldn't have anything against playing with them again.

MG: A LOT OF NORWEGIAN BANDS DON'T REALLY DO MUCH TO PROMOTE THEMSELVES. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE REASON FOR THIS?
JK: I believe that the only chance underground bands have to promote themselves is through the fanzines, so you're really helping us a lot, folks!!! So I think it's a pity that Norwegian bands don't expose themselves in the underground scene. Maybe they don't what chances they have?! I don't know.

MG: BACK TO THE DEMO NOW, WHAT CAN YOU TELL ABOUT THE LYRICS ON "THE ULTIMATE..."?
JK: It starts with "The Longing's Suburb", which I wrote the lyrics for. It is about how people can destroy other human beings by giving them the blame for something which they haven't done. In a way, psychologically destroying someone. It is based on a real story which happened here in Norway about a year ago. A young girl disappeared and some people blamed her father and said he'd kidnapped, raped and killed her. It got too much for him, so he decided to move back to Spain, where he was originally from. The police never accused him of the crime, so it was just "normal" people that destroyed him! I guess it's quite difficult for a parent to lose his child, and then get the blame for it! It's unbelievable how sick some people can be. I wrote "All As One" after seeing a film about a real story from the seventies, which was about a "nice" and educated young American man that went crazy and started to rape and kill young girls. The hunt for him went on for several years. He died in an electric chair last year after having been in prison for about ten years. The third song is "Siege Of Mind". Tomas wrote the lyrics for it, so I don't know much about it. It deals with surgery within the brain of a girl - lobotomy. He saw a film about it (I don't remember the title) and got the idea to write about it. The last track is "Into The Ultimate Pity" which I wrote the lyrics for. It deals with how bad a lot of people are treating the elderly in our society. We "loved" them when they built this country, but now they're "useless". This is a slightly political song. It's so weird listening to the politician's when they're talking about how good they will treat the elderly, but in real life they don't care much about them. A lot of people are talking about how rich this country is and that we have nothing to worry about. But then, why must so many people suffer? I guess this isn't the "thrashiest" of subjects, but I know a lot of people out there really care and think about this. You know, we're all (hopefully) going to be old one day!

MG: A LOT OF BANDS WITH "DEATH" IN THEIR NAME HAVE RECEIVED SOME NEGATIVE REACTIONS IN THE PAST. HAVE YOU NOTICED ANYTHING LIKE THIS, AND HAVE YOU CONSIDERED CHANGING YOUR NAME?
JK: Not as I can remember. But I know that a lot of people out there put bands down because of their names. I think it is pretty stupid, as a band should only be judged on the music they play... not their names. The fact that you have got "death" in a name does not have to mean Total Death Metal! We've had this name for several years and got known as Death Mission. I think we'll lose some fans here in Norway if we changed it. And since we all like the name, we'll keep it!

MG: ANY OTHER NORWEGIAN BANDS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND TO THE READERS OUT THERE IN THE UNDERGROUND?
JK: Well, we don't have any bands here at all, but some of the bands I think are worthy of a listen are Equinox, Decadence, Cadaver and Red Harvest.

This is definitely a band to look out for in the future. The new demo is a vast improvement over the "Why" tape, and they sound tighter and more original. Although the vocals can be a little uninspiring at times (like the mispronunciation of "ultimate"). But that's a minor problem, 'coz it's a great demo overall. It's available for \$5 from: Death Mission, P.O. Box 128, 1930 Aurskog, Norway.
H E I N - F R O D E H A N S E N

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 - 6 - Ripping Corpse - Splattered Remains
 - 7 - Armoured Angel - Wings Of Death
 - 8 - Leprosy - Brutal Occupation
 - 9 - Mystrez - Delirious Desert
 - 10 - Never Sleep - Crime Don't Pay
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ALBUMS REVIEWS

SPECTRAL INCURSION - EP (75/100, 4 tr.)

This ep is a self-financed affair from this Massachusetts-based trio consisting of Arthur Melonas (vocals/bass), Steve Lytle (guitars) and Jay Frasca (drums). 1st tune, entitled "Ralls" sets the atmosphere right, with a song that shows some similarities to experimental thrash outfit Anacrusis. Especially the vocals are much in the same way on a few occasions. "The Other Side" takes more of a conventional metal approach, while "Beneath Your Lives" is a bit thrasher in execution (despite some nice, Malsteen-oriented guitar soloing). They display a very varied range of influences and have a lot of interesting breaks and some intense, short bursts of guitar playing. "Last Of The Torment" is the most memorable track on this release, also with some Anacrusis vocal similarities. This ep has a very strange sound (not necessarily bad, just strange). The black & white cover is of the tacky, early Void style, but the album itself is a very interesting piece of work and with a great and multi-faceted musical deliverance. Spectral Incursion is obviously a very talented band, and given some more time and a decent budget, they will undoubtedly continue to develop into an even better outfit with a real chance of making it. As for now, this ep is great (and original) listening worthy of your attention. Please contact: Spectral Incursion, c/o Steve Lytle, 190 Kingsbury Avenue, Bradford, MA 01835, USA.



HEXX - QUEST FOR SANITY

(Wild Rags, 75/100, ??:??, 5 tr.)

This mini-album has been out for almost two years now, but since it was sent to me, I feel I have to do a review on it. Despite of the brilliant cover artwork, I didn't actually know anything about it other than it was fast and heavy. So, I was in for a pleasant surprise. I needed a little time to get into all the speedy riffs and harsh, growling vocals, but it started to grow on me after a few spins on the turntable. The short acoustic opening on "Racial Slaughter" sends it off on a calm note, but not for long! Hexx delivers a melodic death approach that can best be described as furious thrash, but with obvious death-inspired vocals. Perhaps a little Slayerish on some occasions, but not much. "Sardonicus" is more reminiscent of Forbidden in some ways with some multi-layered vocal work used to good effect. "Mirror Of The Past" is also a very good song, technical and moderately brutal. The two remaining songs (called "Fields Of Death" and "Twice As Bright"), sound slightly anonymous compared to the others. They are both ok, but you get this feeling that something is still missing. This mini-album was a lot better than expected, and I'm looking forward to the next full-length offering from the Hexx camp (to be released this summer). They've also released a new 12" called "Watery Graves" on Wild Rags, also produced by John Marshall of Metal Church. The album's title is "Morbid Reality". This mini-album is distributed in Europe by Semaphore.

ACRIDITY - FOR FREEDOM I CRY

(Vertigo, 80/100, 32:33, 6 tr.)

This Texas-based thrash quintette should be familiar to most of you already. They released a demo in '88 called "Countdown To Terror", which gained the band a lot of interest (like all other Texas acts). Acridity is perhaps one of the less inventive bands to come out of that state, but their Testament/Metallica style of thrash is well worth your attention. The tape/album starts off with "Beyond...", opening calmly to develop into a highly respectable melodic thrash workout. What

Acridity do better than most other acts around is their ability to write not only memorable choruses, but to blend the lyrics naturally into the songs. Some of the riffs are a little predictable, but they still manage to come across as more than "yet another Bay Area band". Best song is undoubtedly the title track, a heavy mid-tempo song that would do even Testament proud. It has excellent riffs and a neat, natural flow to it. Had all the songs been this good, Acridity would be one of the best thrash acts around. Unfortunately, some of the songs are a bit ordinary, such as "Lethal Idol" and "The Verdict". Darin Carroll's vocals are great, sounding both brutal and melodic whenever required. This is perhaps not the best debut I've ever heard, but it is most certainly recommended listening for those still searching for the next "big thing" within thrash metal. Distributed in Europe by Semaphore.

NUCLEAR DEATH - BRIDE OF INSECT

(Wild Rags, 15/100, ??:??, 12 tr.)

What goes round in circles and says nothing but "blurr, blurr, blurr"? Correct! The debut album from Nuclear Death does. Besides the lousy sound quality and disgustingly childish cover, this band is so full of cliches and so empty-handed in the song-writing department, that I had to suffer my way through the whole album. The 15 points awarded is because they had the guts to release this shit, not because of their musical skills. If you're into total noise-blur and death, this might have some purpose in your life. Personally, I find lyrics about tortured/mutilated children immature, and I understand why people say nasty things about heavy metal when stuff like this is being released. A totally useless album that should've stayed in the studio closet. Distributed in Europe by Semaphore.

THUNDER - BACK STREET SYMPHONY

(EMI, 95/100, 49:11, 10 tr.)

Six months ago I witnessed Thunder's second gig and was blown, without warning, into the stratosphere by a band of such storming, cataclysmic rock 'n roll proportions that they've had me hooked ever since. Now comes a veritable tornado of a debut lp. Packed with ten raw, powerful, gutsy, footstomping songs exhibiting the class and sensibilities of the nineties allied to the feel and groove of the seventies (both the mighty Led Zeppelin and Free are distinct influences). "Back Street Symphony" is simply the best album I've heard since my fave raves Magnum released "Wings Of Heaven" in 1988 - though don't look for any musical similarities. Thunder follows the tradition of pure, undiluted hard rock from the heart, as pioneered by the likes of Free and Bad Company, yet with the vastly improved technology of today they have produced a recording of such pristine quality that even my adv. tape sounds as if the band were playing live in my living-room. Thanks to Andy (forget Duran Duran) Taylor's spot-on production a host of guitar riffs, big, big drums, Danny Bowes' powerful (but never overstretched) vocals and Luke Morley's frequent bursts of free flowing, heart wrung axe-work, rush through the speakers with the intensity of this year's winter hurricanes and it's well nigh impossible to control the resistance to dance. The likes of "She's So Fine", the title track itself and "Dirty Love" send my arms whipping about my head in a syn-copated frenzy, as my feet tap against the living room hearth, in time for Gary James' insistently infectious rhythms. Even the quasi-ballads "Don't Wait For Me" and "Loved Walked In" have a clearly defined drum track behind the masses of soulful guitar and heart-string vocals. There is not a duff track to be found, just sheer unadulterated excellence from beginning to end. Forget the saying, in this case lightning will most definitely strike more than once!

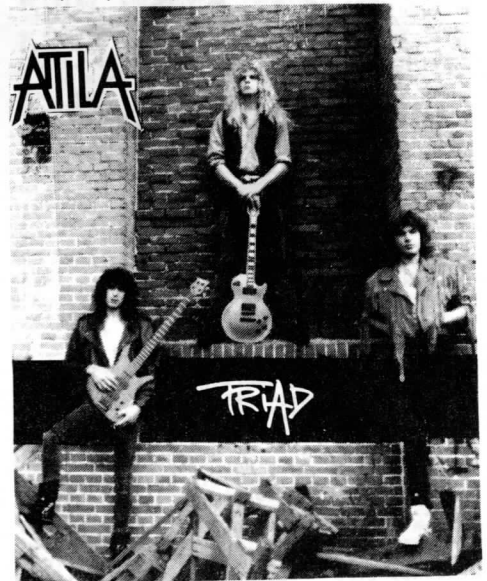
L Y N G U Y

RIFF RAFF - EP

(Masque, 65/100, ??:??, 5 tr.)

Totally unknown to me, this US hardrock three-piece, Riff Raff is from California and consists of Robert Hall on guitars, Kevin Peace on bass and John O'Rourke on drums. All members also contribute to the vocal work. Riff Raff has many influences and cannot be classified as just "hardrock". As the opening tune "Blackboard Jungle" progress, it's quite obvious that this is a band with their own ideas. It's a mid-tempo number with a really weird chorus that I'd like to refer to as "progressive blues". Unfortunately, all tunes are not that great. But the more Dave Lee Roth-inspired "Bad Man" and "Now I Run The Show" are very

good, too. The last two tracks, called "Out Of My Dreams" and "Hot Lovin'" are a bit anonymous and in the case of the latter song, also very cliched. And that brings me to the following conclusion: Riff Raff is an obviously talented band, but still too young to fully explore all their ideas in a professional manner. I really liked some of the songs, but find the ep not to be recommended. Partly because they will probably be a lot better with their next release, and because I think a lot of other bands are more deserving of your support. Distributed in Europe by Semaphore.



ATILA - TRIAD

(65/100, 59:35, 13 tr.)

Dutch trio Attila has taken a dramatic move here, releasing a self-financed album with 12 songs (cd-version contains a bonus track), with a running time close to one hour. They have also made two videos, for the "The Hungers" and "Lost In The City". The band's line-up is Herbie Vanderloo on vocals/guitars, Arjan Michels on bass and Ton Holtweg on drums. Attila delivers straight-forward metal, with some rock 'n roll influences here and there. Sound quality is a lot better than what is usually associated with a self-financed affair, but some of their material sounds a bit too cliched for my liking. The first six songs (which is a concept story entitled "Myth Of The Ancient") sound good in my ears, hinting at some serious Iron Maiden influences in the guitar department. The vocals are not quite as they should be, with some pronunciation problems from Herbie (like most other Dutch and German singers). And his voice is not that special, either. But some songs, like the aforementioned six-part "Myth Of The Ancient" and "Bite The Bullet", shows that Attila do have some interesting concepts. I feel that the album had sounded a lot better if some of the tracks had been dropped, but after all, you get a long album instead of a short one. The cd-version can be obtained for \$17,50/DH30/10 pounds, including postage and packaging (album prices not listed). Contact: Attila, c/o A. P. Gijbertse, Soesterweg 132, 3812 BD Amersfoort, Holland.

ALIAS - METAL TO INFINITY

(Flame Records, 80/100, 43:26, 11 tr.)

From this unknown label comes the second album from American power metal quartet Alias. They've recruited a new vocalist in the shape of Carl Hayden, and this is a major improvement to an already good band. Songwise, they have also improved a great deal. Some up-tempo tracks, like "Ultraviolence", and ballads, like "Fantasy", really show a band with much promise. "Alpha-Omega" brings back memories from Sacred Blade's "Of The Sun + Moon" album, while other tracks contain shades of Fates Warning and Oblivion Knight in them. But overall, they've more in common with the likes of Mystic Force and Crimson Glory. "Metal To Infinity" has a lot of variation and many great songs, but you still get the feeling that something is missing. It might just be the low-budget production that has given the band a rather "thin" sound, so it would be interesting to see how labels such as Roadrunner or Metal Blade could help out on the band's sound. It is the heavier tracks like "The Mirror" that really are

SEMPITERNAL DEATHREIGN - SPOOKY GLOOM
(Foundation 2000, 70/100, 6 tracks)
This Dutch band is heavy, and I do mean H-E-A-V-Y! Long, slow and gloomy songs, with some fast death metal parts mixed into their doom/death style. The vocals are dark, growling from-the-throat noises, and can be a little annoying sometimes. I liked the album, although its not major news. The track "Devastating Empire Towards Humanity" slowly creeps forward in a drugged tempo (with a few death parts in-between). Its very long, perhaps too long. Best song is "Creep-D-Rama", but its a shame the chorus only appears one time during the whole song. Instead of an endless doom part, they could've used the chorus again! A must for people into the likes of Nocturnus, Autopsy and Paradise Lost.

HEIN - FRODE HANSEN



KAGE - STATE OF MIND
(Egak, 65/100, 12 tracks)
Kage is an Arlington-based quartet who have now decided to finance their debut album themselves. It's called "State Of Mind" and should be available when you are reading this. What best can describe this band is the word "variation". Not that they're original in any way, their songs aren't just totally alike one another. That also means the song quality goes up and down a bit. At their heavier moments, they're great. A track such as "Darkness Descends" really kicks major ass! But they also possess glam-inspired cliches like "Talkin' Trash", which does not do anything good for the band. "Lock The Doors" is an ok "traditional" metal tune, while another song (don't remember which one at the moment) sounds not unlike Great White. "State Of Mind" is too traditional to make any big waves, but Kage is obviously a very talented band. I just don't all their songs (the ones that are glam/sleaze-inspired). If you like regular American metal with anthemic structuring, I'd say you would find this band interesting. But at the same time... don't expect too much, as it has all been heard before. Kage first started out in 1984, so don't expect them to change much, either! The "Demo '89" tape is also still available (thirteen tracks or so, most not on this album). "State Of Mind" should be available for \$8 in cassette format, while the cd-version is \$12. Please get in touch at this address: KAGE, P.O. Box 2406, Arlington, VA 22202, USA.

CHROME MOLLY - SLAPHEAD
(MFN, 80/100, 44:41, 11 tracks)
Record companies can be sooo deaf at times. When I reviewed this album in guise as a professional journalist for a well-known European metal magazine, all I had was a dodgy advance tape that the clarity of the album no favors at all. Now I have the vinyl, and the blessed thing is in danger of outwearing my already over-loaded turntable! Chrome Molly - a guys from Leicester, England - have unleashed a concentrated and exciting potpourri of red-hot, raw rock, high-flying in it's clearcut abrasiveness, power, passion, anger and, at the same time, inventive-ness and fun. At one turn, they are passively accepting a ruinous government or shouting to the heavens against the tv-evangelists. Yet they're equally capable of laughing hysterically at disco fever, or flying off on a brief nostalgic journey through acapella harmonies straight from the thirties! Personally, I believe many rock fans will find "Slaphead" hard to accept, 'coz "the Mollys" have dared to experiment a bit, and departed from the usual Macho Metal conventions. However, this is without doubt the most impressive waxing of their career to date (see accompanying feature for details). And it reveals a new, intense maturity. Both musically and cerebrally, that takes this album a big step above the "party 'til ya drop" attitude etched across so many metallic offerings. A challenging and worthwhile release - I admire them for it.

LYN GUY

BEYOND - NO LONGER AT EASE
(Combined Effort, 50/100, 14 tracks)
Beyond is nothing but a quite ordinary hardcore band with socially-aware lyrics

etc. I think they're from New York, but I don't know (as I don't have a bio). It has average songs and average musicians. The vocalist "sings" (screams like crazy is more like it, actually) in the same, boring high-pitched way (and not sounding anything like brilliant high-pitched vocalists like the ones in Toxic, Witchhammer and Confessor). This absolutely didn't help on my interest in Beyond! I find this boring, although true hardcore fans might like it. But what on earth do I know???

HEIN - FRODE HANSEN

MONDOCANE - NECRODEATH/SCITZO...
(Metalmaster, 65/100, 10 tracks)
Mondocane is a project band with various members from Necrodeath and Scitzo, plus a few more people. Unlike these people's own bands (which are fast-as-hell-death-metal), Mondocane is more a thrash band, with double-bass drums and guitars that you can actually hear what's being played on. The songs themselves don't seem to be too serious, as the titles are not exactly deep-going. But they are nice, anyway. "The Inevitable Free-Jazz Blood-bath" and "Mad Mario F B Cars U Wrecked" are just a couple of good examples. My fave track has to be "Couldn't Take Any-more Shit". Don't ask me why, though. A cover tune by The Exploited is also present. Not that I was particularly thrilled about it. Overall, an ok album. But its not like it will change music as we know it. The album's musical qualities have been dragged down by some ultrafast (and unnecessary) parts in some of the songs. The album can be obtained for \$12 (Europe) and \$15 (rest of the world), at this address: Mondocane, c/o Alberto Penzin, Via Carnazza Le Terrazze Pal. 11, 95125 Catania, Italy.

HEIN - FRODE HANSEN

CASINO STEEL - CASINO STEEL
(Sonet, 10/100, 10 tracks)
I forced myself to listen to side one on this album... and I felt really sick! 10 songs that all sound alike each other and no fun (I think this will be the one and only album we will ever get to see from this label, don't you?? - ES). How can an artist respect his work when he comes up with such a boring and un-musical album? And what do the record labels publish inside their heads, since they publish this stuff??? And what can have inspired Mr. Steel to write such dumb lyrics used "They don't make outlaws like they used to do". I know the "big magazines" like Kerrang and Metal Hammer have given this album a thumbs up, but what on earth do they know???

HEIN - FRODE HANSEN

DIO - LOCK UP THE WOLVES
(Reprise, 70/100, xx tracks)
I'm not slugging this album completely (something of a trend these days). There is no point in telling you that Dio is back on the top, either. Dio's fifth solo album is very much like his previous albums; competently played, some songs that are good (and some that aren't) and everything done so many times before. I would hesitate in writing Dio completely off. Aerosmith made a gigantic comeback some years ago, didn't they? The D'n D style is there (but perhaps less obvious than before??). "Wild One" and "Born Of The Sun" sound best to my ears, reasons unknown. I believe the album will hold my interest a bit longer than "Dream Evil", but it won't be on my turntable in a few months time, I guess. To save some space and to wrap things up: Dio's band may have changed, but not the man himself. Expect the expected!

TREDEGAR - TREDEGAR
(Nibelung, 75/100, 9 tracks)
This album was originally released about three years ago. Under the Tredegar monicker are ex-Budgie members Tony Bourge and Ray Phillips, so the NWOBHM influences shown here are only to be expected. "Duma" opens the album in a powerful, authentic way, while "The Alchemist" is more mid-tempo and has some balladesque parts in it. "Way Of The Warrior" is a bit rockier, sounding like a rough moment from .38 Special. The sound of the album has me thinking about the feel and power of Warlord and Sacred Blade. "The Battle Of Bosworth" has a neat medieval intro, while "Which Way To Go" is a good melodic offering. Last track is "Sabre-dance" (better known as the Roadrunner cartoon theme tune). Its really psyched-out in it's full orchestration and most certainly unheard of so far from a metal band. Overall, I'm really glad that this album has now been re-released (and remastered), as it deserves your attention more than most other bands around. There should be more bands playing stuff like this, and its a shame Tredegar does not exist anymore.

JIMMY RYAN - FINALLY
(Feedback, 40/100, 9 tracks)
This will only be a short review, as it offers little new to the world of guitar albums. Jimmy Ryan is not totally metal, but also mixes in some funky and bluesy influences, most notably shown on "Grand Central". This was actually the only tune that I can say grabbed my attention. It does contain a lot of variation, but

it is still instrumental! I used to be a big fan of these guitar freaks. Now I'm fed up, sick and tired of the entire NGM scene.

AGONY COLUMN - BRAVE WORDS...
(Big Chief, 75/100, 13 tracks)
Ever since I read about these guys in a Wild Rags issue, I've been hoping to hear them. After all, being labelled "hell-billy death" demands something unique on the band's behalf. This is their second album and is called "Brave Words, Bloody Knuckles". Their songs are all excellent (but the band is still not "my style of band"). Agony Column can best be described as kick-ass rock 'n metal with death vocals. The vocalist had me hallucinating W. Axl Rose singing an (old) Celtic Frost tune on the title track. The songs that I really like here are the thrashy ones, like "Angel Of Def", "No Time To Kill" and "Crime & Punishment". The pure rockabilly anthems, such as "Hillbilly Blues", might be fun live, but here they are just a waste of vinyl. Another track they could do without is "Hole To Hell". The world really needs stuff like this, creating havoc in a style so far unheard of! After the likes Of Faith No More and Soundgarden etc. have lost their novelty value, you can rest assured Agony Column is the next band in line for world domination. Be amazed!!!

A'LA ROCK - INDULGE
(Nibelung, 40/100, 12 tracks)
Headed by David Feinstein (ex-Rods), the band formed in 1988 and "Indulge" is the first album from the band so far. According to their biography "this great hard rock album can compete with any of the big names around today". Unfortunately, this is not the case. Sure, they've got some catchy tunes. But I still don't like them. This is just another party band in my book, with no "substance" to sink your teeth into. If I were to party, I'd pick an album I really like. Not an album as filled with cliches as this one. Admittedly, the band is not entirely my style, so I might not have the credibility to say this. Listen to it with an open mind and make up your own ideas of it. As for me, I don't think I'll listen to "Indulge" anymore. Distributed in Europe by Semaphore.



KORZUS - PAY FOR YOUR LIES
(Devil Discos, 70/100, 6 tracks)
Korzus is a Brazilian band originally formed in 1984. Since then, they have appeared on a compilation album and released an ep and an album on their own. "Pay For Your Lies", however, is the band's first release with lyrics in English. So I guess you can call this a new start for the band. This mini-album is the last for the Devil Discos label, and Korzus has now been picked up by the Brazilian representatives for Roadrunner and Metal Blade (the people that brought you Sepultura and Ratos De Porco). Korzus is basically a regular thrash band, with obvious Bay Area influences. Some of the tracks present on the album sound more like "South Of Heaven"-style Slayer and some places have my thoughts going to Overkill's "Years Of Decay". The sound is quite good, although the vocals are a bit deep in the mix. This spoils the ep a little, but not much. The tracks are good, thrashy numbers and although they are not innovative, they're still enjoyable! The last track on "Pay For Your Lies" is a cover version of Black Sabbath's "Under The Sun", and it naturally sounds a bit different than the 3 other tunes. As this mini-album was probably a very low-budget affair, I think Korzus will be even better on a bigger budget. And on the right label (the one they've just signed to?), I believe Korzus will have chance of enjoying some success in US and Europe, as well.

SLIDER - THE SLIDER PROJECT
(Feedback, 50/100, 12 tracks)
Slider's review could be (more or less) the same as A'la Rock's. The main difference is Slider's obvious ZZ Top influence. The material is a bit better, and there are a few more original ideas shown here, but it is ultimately not as good as it could/should have been. This "band" is only a project, headed by a session-player called Bob Fortunato and the owner of NY's Zig-Zag Records, Arnie Goodman. Among the guest appearances on the album are John Gallagher (Raven) and Bob Falck (Battlezone/Overkill). Plus a few old "blues legends" I've never heard of myself. What is left to add about the album? Nothing much really. If you like traditional blues-based hard rock, there is a possibility you might like the album. If you're not a big fan of the style, just forget you ever heard the name Slider. You won't miss out on anything!

ke this album as good as it is. But the ballads are still very much ok, as well. I'd like to think of this album as yet another step closer to excellent. Alias obviously deserves something better, and a bigger budget and more powerful label would probably do miracles. If you like straight power metal with some melodic touches and high- to mid-pitched vocals, buy this album and discover a very good band with an even better future. Distributed in Europe by Sema-phore.

ELEKTRADRIIVE - DUE

(Minotaur, 93/100, 46:51, 9 tracks)
This Italian band is totally mega! The only reason I don't give them 100 points is because I strongly believe that with "Due", Elektradrive hasn't reached their top yet. Elektradrive presents very pleasant melodic rock songs. All songs have perfect arrangements and good compositive details, which can only be discovered if you listen several more than one time to the record. Elektradrive is slightly influenced by Rainbow, and vocalist Elio Maueri sounds a bit like David Coverdale in a couple of songs. More details to be found in the Elektradrive interview in this issue!

N I C O L L E B L O K

NIHILISTICS - BAD.. DIRTY... HATE

(Visionary, 0/100, 11 tracks)
Last issue's slag was intense Mutilation and this time around it's Nihilistics. These guys have to be the most ignorant and narrow-minded people I've ever heard about. They even claim to be better than other people. And the lyrics aren't even worth the paper they're printed on! Anyone who makes fun of handicapped people are real sick. I wonder if they would do such things if they had this closer to themselves, like in their own family?!! "Murder With The Axe" is even worse. In this one, they repeat the words die, hate, chop and kill no less than 64 times (I counted them). No, do not waste your money on a pile of shit like this! Distributed in Europe by Sema-phore.

H E I N - F R O D E H A N S E N

AIRDASH - HOSPITAL HALLUCINATION

(Diablo, 85/100, 8 tr.)
One of my contributors sent me a recording of an Airdash 12" and I really liked it. A week later, the album landed on my desk. And it's even better than the 12", and certainly the best Finnish band I've come across so far. Airdash, in my book, is probably the best new thrash act to emerge since the likes of Forbidden and Mordred. And Airdash have more in common with Mordred besides both being a great band. Both bands write strong and catchy thrash tunes with a funk-based edge. Take "Youth Hostel (Burial Side)" for example, an immediate tune with galloping riffs and a great rhythm. "Jungle Jim" is more of a mid-tempo piece with some interesting drum parts and nice instrumental passages. "Vengeance Through Violence" (the 12" tune) is an intense, up-tempo tune with chugging bass lines. I could describe each song, but the main message would still be that this album is a very strong offering, especially from an unknown label like Diablo. Production is strong and clear and the album does not make Airdash sound like Bay Area replicants. Forget all your prejudices towards bands from Finland, coz Airdash will rightfully prove you wrong. These guys will be picked up by a bigger label and move onto such bigger things. That's a promise! Distributed in Europe by Sema-phore.

Redrum

REDRUM - SHUNNED BY ALL

(Redrum, 90/100, 13 tracks)
After having released three demos during the last few years, Redrum have finally recorded their debut album. But it's not on vinyl yet, though. Because of the big lack of intelligence within the record the record industry, a great product like this remains unreleased. But have no fear, it's available on tape. Sadly, the band has now broken up and only drummer Michael J. Parisi remains. The thirteen songs that are featured on the album are mostly taken from Redrum's two latest demos: "Disarm And Survive" and "Evil's End". The material is great Bay Area-style thrash with excellent performance. Opening track "Frontline" reminds me of Zwohite at the time they had female vocals. The vocals bears close resemblance to the ex-Zwohite lady all over the tape. And that's great, as they both have good voices! Songs like "Disarm And Survive", "Power Corrupts" and "H.I.A." are simply fantastic. They are so catchy and aggressive that any thrasher

would get down to a mosh. A great advantage is the inclusion of some memorable choruses in some of the songs. This way, people remember the songs and will be able to scream along on gigs. The lyrics are a bit weak and deal a lot with war. When a band has seven songs dealing with the same subject, you will get the impression they are lacking inspiration. The song "Greenhouse" has the most interesting lyrics. This one tells the story of the misuse of our planet. Another small problem is that most of the songs are bit short. But all the tracks, with the exception of "D.T.L.", are of a high quality and has "class" written all over them. No record companies showed interest in Redrum, so it's advisable to order the album now. In case it won't appear on vinyl. It is available for \$6 in the US and \$8 in the rest of the world. Contact: Redrum, P.O. Box 417687, Sacramento, CA 95841-7687, USA.

H E I N - F R O D E H A N S E N

THE BIG F - THE BIG F

(Elektra, 50/100, 10 tr.)
The big magazines have been giving this album very good reviews, but I can't understand why. This three-piece Los Angeles band plays hardrock/blues like thousands of others... with one exception. The Big F got a deal. It's an ok album, with a couple of good songs like "Doctor Vine" and "Kill The Cowboy". But I can't say I'm too excited, as I can't seem to separate the different songs from each other. If you sit down and read a magazine while listening to it, you will not notice any differences between the first and the fourth song! Another thing is that the first 2 songs have exactly the same drumbeat. People into blues-based hardrock may like it, but for me it got boring after 2-3 songs. Buy another album instead, there are other albums out that will kill this one!

H E I N - F R O D E H A N S E N

VARIOUS ARTISTS - SURGERY OF THE POWER

(LM/Fireball, 9 tr.)
This is a compilation of Italian bands, put together by the Fireball Management Company. The brain behind this project is Antonio Ferro, also known as editor of Metal Underground. Flight Charm (see MG #3) is the first band out. On their ep they sounded a lot like Iron Maiden, but this song is more commercial and has heavier use of keyboards. It's a good song, but I preferred the sound they had on the ep. Zip Fastener is more guitar-oriented on "Your Identity". It reminds me of Nasti's "Downtown Dreamers". Witch-hunters is one of Italy's better bands, judged by "Deadly News". It's well-bred metal with a powerful sound and better than average vocal work. More please. I think Babylon is strictly for glam fans, so I didn't like them much. Hydra takes more influence from the Swedish AOR scene which has been so successful in the last few years. The vocals are not that great, but the band sound interesting. H. Kristal has the honor of opening the album's second side with "The Prayer", a traditional power metal outing that has me wanting more of the band before passing final judgement. Wizard is next up, with a simple and catchy hardrock track that is too ordinary to grasp my attention for a length of time. Then it's the absolute highlight of this album: Arpia. This trio blends some power and doom metal touches to their lengthy epic "1783" and manage to create a style that's both interesting and highly enjoyable. Unfortunately, the operatic vocals are sung in Italian. The album closer is Canada's "Don't Throw Your Heart". It sounds extremely pedestrian and is best forgotten about. "Surgery Of The Power" gave me a couple of pleasant surprises and comes recommended to people into more than one style of metal with a curiosity to the Italian scene.

DANIEL L. DALLEY - POWER

(Dalley, 85/100, 41:03, 7 tracks)
Let me first state that I'm not of those persons that are into the NGM movement, but this 21-year old guitarist took me by surprise. He is really good! This instrumental debut sounds very refreshing. Daniel L. Dalley has written, produced, arranged and conducted "Power" himself. Next to electric and acoustic guitars, he also plays bass on the album. The bio says he is a classical metal guitarist and that he's influenced by Al DiMeola, Uli Jon Roth, Bach and Vivaldi. The name that first came to my mind when listening to it was Yngwie Malmsteen, though. What else can I say? Daniel is not a pupil of the Mike Varney school and everybody into guitar-music should listen to this one! Daniel's contact address is: D. L. Dalley, 103 N. Wood Av., Suite #17, Linden, New Jersey 07036, USA. Distributed in Europe by Sema-phore.

N I C O L L E B L O K

MR. NASTY - .38 CALIBER KISSES

(Screaming Skull, 70/100, 11 tracks)
Mr. Nasty present themselves as a sleazy glam rock band on their debut album. To me, they sound an awful lot like Faster Pussycat, but then a bit better still. Even vocalist Dee Dee Sweet can be compared to Faster Pussycat's Taine Downe. The songs on the album are what you'd be

expecting from a band like this, with phrases such as "Die My Hare", "Kandy Luv" and "Love Rocket". Please, pass me by with this kind of lyrics! I'd like to mention one song, though. "Rag Doll" is a bluesy ballad that could've been taken straight from an Aerosmith album (but it is not a cover of the Aerosmith song by the same name). It's a real nice tune. Mr. Nasty can become a rival to Faster Pussycat! Distributed in Europe by Sema-phore.

N I C O L L E B L O K



PENEDEMA - NARCOTIC RELIGION

(CMET Records, 60/100, 7 tracks)
British thrashers Penedema should be a well-known name for anyone in the underground scene. They released a demo some time ago called "Widespread Epidemic", and have now released their debut album. I had high expectations toward this album, but I must honestly say I was disappointed when I heard it. The songs are too alike each other, so it's difficult to separate them (with a few exceptions, that is). This is mainly due to Ian Maxwell's vocals, which are very annoying. His vocal range is very limited, so he sings in the same tone all the time and varies little. The tape I got of this had an extremely bad sound, so it's hard to review it fairly. But I did find some tracks that worked out, like "Critical Condition" and the middle-paced thrasher "Non-Existant", where Ian's vocals were acceptable. Listen before you buy!

H E I N - F R O D E H A N S E N

AWARE - A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

(Ironface, 80/100, 12 tracks)
This hardcore band surprised me a lot with this record. Most of the songs are straight-ahead hardcore with socially-aware lyrics etc. I'm not a great fan of this type of music, but after having given this album a couple of spins I really started liking it. With such songs as "Make It Work", "Number Seven" and the title track, they really bring hardcore into a new aspect, with riffs 'n rhythms you don't often get to hear within this style. "Number Seven", strangely enough, reminds me a bit of a Living Color song. The beat and guitar lick are very much alike that band, but the 'corish vocals of Sean Markus is possibly holding the band back a bit. His voice gets a little annoying at times, but this is a minor problem. Another thing is that the songs are too short. Overall, a good album I'm sure HC fans will like. And perhaps some thrashers too? Distributed in Europe by Sema-phore.

H E I N - F R O D E H A N S E N

SCATTERBRAIN - HERE COMES TROUBLE

(In-Effect, 85/100, 11 tracks)
Ludichrist have changed name and style. This album is really special, because it contains so many various styles in one. If I had to describe them, I'd say they are rap/funk/heavy metal. It reminds me of Red Hot Chili Peppers, but not quite as commercial. The songs are both funny and serious, and are well-written in a sarcastic way. "Here Comes Trouble" is a blues/funk song, while "Earache" in my ear is a rapper! The over-the-wall "Down With The Ship" is a bit strange. It has stolen riffs from Metallica, Aerosmith, Led Zep and Van Halen, and have mixed it together with some own ideas. They have also re-arranged "Mozart's Sonata No.3", which sounds cool and works just fine. I really liked this album, due to its original approach. It is not often that lyrics make me smile, but songs like the title track and "Don't Call Me Dude" are just bound to do that! If you're looking for some party music, get hold of Scatterbrain. Distributed in Europe by Sema-phore.

H E I N - F R O D E H A N S E N

BAD YODELERS - I WONDER...

(Running Rec., 75/100, 10 tracks)
Bad Yodelers is a totally unknown band to me. I don't know anything about them, except their silly name! This lp surprised me a lot. I was expecting a hardcore band, but this is more like a power metal version of The Cure. The voice of Terrence D.H. is melodic, and he sings well most of the time. But sometimes, he is so out of tune that my ears hurt!!! It doesn't have to mean he can't sing, he just has another note than the guitars. The title track is my fave, and is a truly weird song. "Wait" reminds me a little of Testament guitar-wise. They've incorporated many different styles here, sometimes it works... and sometimes not. The thrasher "Without Lies" ruins the album a bit and the bass drum sound is not the best I've heard. Overall, it's an original album from Bad Yodelers (how on earth did they get that name???) but it could still be improved. Check it out!!!

H E I N - F R O D E H A N S E N

Lars Eric Mattsson

LARS ERIC MATTSSON - NO SURRENDER
(Black Dragon, 70/100, 13 tracks)
After the release of their self-financed single in 1987 and some compilation appearances, Lars was still unsigned. Then he decided to release yet another self-financed offering, an ep titled "Can't Go On Without Your Love". After another 6 months of waiting, he signed the dotted line with the Black Dragon label and began work on his full-length debut album, called "Eternity". "No Surrender" is his second full album, containing the same stuff (more or less) as previous L.E.M. releases. Lars has a distinct Malmsteen style, but is yet again a couple of steps behind "the master". The album opens with some great, up-tempo stuff in the shape of "Tear Down The Border" and "Lady Luck", but the interest starts to fade as "No Surrender" goes on. There are a few instrumental pieces that are ok, but the background vocals are really bad. Tosse Jansson's vocals are mainly ok, but he does suffer a bit from a limited range. So its very much an album that is spoiled because of uninspiring vocal work. The songs are more interesting than on "Eternity", but the longer Lars keeps on doing the same thing, the more boring it gets. But, its still an ok album!

MALICIOUS INTENT - SHADES OF BLACK
(Resistance, 45/100, 13 tracks)
This self-financed outing can be looked upon as a classic case of an interesting album spoiled by horrendous sound quality and lack of identity. The tunes on "Shades Of Black" dates back to 1987 and the band has now apparently changed a lot in their style. Malicious Intent tries hard to come up with some innovative ideas. Sometimes they succeed... sometimes they don't. As the band states in their letter "Not all people like music played in such a heavy and butcher-like fashion". I must admit the low rating reflects more on the overall presentation and sound than what I feel towards the band. But I cannot recommend an album that is painful to listen to. They have some Voivod influences, so fans of that band might find this album of interest (their newer material is said to be more like modern-day Voivod). They might have a hard time finding a record deal based on "Shades Of Black", but I really hope to hear the band again - but they need a bigger budget to play around with in order to fully implement their original approach. A wait and see situation! The album can be obtained for \$10 from: Malicious Intent/Resistance Records, #18 - 43rd, Toronto, Ontario M8W 3P6, Canada.

ST. ELMO'S FIRE - POWERDRIVE
(Black Dragon, 75/100, 8 tracks)
St. Elmo's Fire is a quartet that has so far released three albums, including the one called "Powerdrive". They play fairly cliched melodic metal (no keyboards), but has some great songs that lift this slice of vinyl above the status of "average". The band consists of Zane Lazar on vocals, Jeff Jones on guitars, Aaron Smith on bass and Kris Gustafson (should that be Gustavson, instead?) on drums. Their previous albums, entitled "St. Elmo's Fire" and "Warning From The Sky", enabled them to tour with the likes of Y&T, Nightranger and Leatherwolf. This means that a lot of people will already have heard about the band (except most European fans, that is). The title track and "Isolation" are my personal faves on the album, but all songs are good. This album will probably appeal to all people into more melodic metal, but it will not change the world as we know it. Pleasant surprise, even better next time???

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LIZZY BORDEN

Earlier this year, Lizzy Borden visited the UK in order to play a club tour that traversed the length and breadth of the country. Having been an avid fan of his country, since 1985's "Menace To Society" album, I naturally snatched the opportunity for a chat with this most fascinating, and intelligent, man.

MG: WHY CALL YOURSELF LIZZY BORDEN?
LB: You know, I thought about writing a long answer for this, but there really isn't one. It just popped into my head some day. I knew about the legend, but basically we were just looking for a name for a band, and I was looking for a name for a character, and it just popped into my head. Nothing really triggered it either... I don't know where it came from.

MG: ON THE "MASTER OF DISGUISE ALBUM", YOU ARE NOT USING YOUR AXE LOGO. ARE YOU NOW TRYING TO GET RID OF THE ASSOCIATION WITH THE AXE MURDERESS?
LB: Well, unfortunately, I borrowed the axe. But I had my own story. The first album, "Love You To Pieces", was about a guy who killed his girlfriend... and he did not even use an axe. But I used an axe onstage, though I haven't done that since 1985.

MG: YOU HAVE ASSUMED A NEW PERSONA WITH EVERY ALBUM YOU'VE DONE. ON "MENACE...", YOU WERE THE GANG LEADER AND ON "VISUAL LIES" YOU WERE OBLIVION - A SILVER CHARACTER THAT ESCAPED FROM INSIDE A TELEVISION SET. THIS TIME YOU SEEM TO BE MORE OF A "PURE ROCK FRONTMAN". WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOU YOURSELF IS THE "MASTER OF DISGUISE"?

LB: Its a little bit of that. Its a bit more normal than compared to Oblivion, but this is kind of a darker character. The stage show we're doing now is stripped down to nothing. We come over here with nothing but our guitars. Either it was that, or wait another year... and I said "NO". This darker side allows me to do a lot of stuff that is more normal on stage. It is a character thats a little "Phantom Of The Opera"-ish.

MG: IS "MASTER OF DISGUISE" A CONTINUATION OF THE CONCEPT SURROUNDING "VISUAL LIES"?

LB: No, this is a departure, because I didn't want to make "Visual Lies, Part II". This was a solo record, and I had total freedom in every way. I wanted to do something I hadn't done before, and make it more theatrical on the album. I have kind of done a total reverse - the album is more theatrical than the show. The themes are on the dark side of every topic that I talk about.

MG: MUSICALLY, "MASTER..." IS A LOT MORE DIVERSE THAN ANYTHING YOU HAVE EVER DONE BEFORE. WAS THIS INTENTIONAL?

LB: Yeah, being as I was the sole writer on the album, I wanted to translate my own influences from the seventies into the nineties. So I've got some kind of recognisable thing now and when you hear the record from here on in, you will recognize that I'm putting my own stamp on it. So yeah, it was intentional to make Lizzy Borden Music, instead of just music.

MG: YOUR LAST EXPERIENCE OF THE UK WAS BEING BOTTLED ON THE READING FESTIVAL IN '87. HOW HAS YOUR FIRST PROPER TOUR BEEN IN COMPARISON?

LB: As far as Reading is concerned, when I was going onstage a band called Gypsy Queen were coming off drenched with what was in those bottles. I figured we would get the same, but it didn't get anywhere near that. I didn't get what at all, and I consider that a success. This tour is something we should have done about seven years ago, but the money just weren't there. It still isn't there!!! Its been going good, although we're still trying to break ground, since many people still haven't heard Lizzy Borden. I really did not know if we could do something over here, but so far the audience has been

great. Except for London. Its like they are just standing there, saying "entertain me". So you have to work so hard to get them to have fun. In the end, they have fun... you say "see ya later" and they say "where are you going...". Its a tough deal when you get audiences like that, but if you can crack 'em, I guess thats when you've won!

MG: WHEN I SPOKE TO YOU AT READING, YOU SAID YOU'D HAD THE BEST AND WORST EXPERIENCES OF YOUR CAREER SO FAR, NOT ONLY BEING BOTTLED, BUT ALSO TO HAVE SHARED THE STAGE WITH YOUR IDOL, ALICE COOPER. HAS ANYTHING HAPPENED SINCE THEN TO SURPERCEED THAT?

LB: I can't remember if we played Japan before or after that, but it was unbelievable - kind of like the Beatles movies that you see. We had to run to the train, run to the limo - we had around five hundred fans chasing us... We would go to the hotel and find three or four hundred fans there waiting for us - the kind of experience I always thought rock 'n roll was about. It was kind of neat to get a taste of that.

MG: WHAT CAUSED THE LAST BAND TO SPLIT, BECAUSE YOU DESCRIBED THE RADING LINE-UP AS THE PERFECT BAND?

LB: It was, it really was a perfect situation. But every member at that time had been struggling for success for five or six years - and then to get none - it is an uphill battle all the way. People were starting to give up and I could see that. I started getting second thoughts, too. Who needs the hassle when they can just join a trendy band? I can guarantee that if I put out a regular album, it'd be real easy getting signed. But I'm not into that.

MG: WITH 6 ALBUMS TO YOUR CREDIT, DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE ESTABLISHED ENOUGH AS A MUSICIAN AND A TALENT IN YOUR OWN RIGHT TO HAVE A MAJOR DEAL?

LB: I have thought about that same thing over and over again. When we started the attack on signing wasn't happening. That is why the independent labels were starting to emerge as a force, because they were signing all the bands the major labels didn't want. Right after we signed, the major labels decided to pick up on what the independents were doing, so we kind of missed the boat. I've been putting the forces into trying to build the independent side of things. And as long as they give me enough budget, I can make a record that sounds like a major label record. But it would be such easier on a major label.

MG: AN AMERICAN RELIGIOUS LEADER BY THE NAME OF JOHN O'CONNOR RECENTLY DESCRIBED HEAVY METAL AS MUSICAL PORNOGRAPHY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME, IT HAS BEEN DISCOVERED THAT ROCKING TO A HARDER BEAT MAY HELP TO FIGHT CANCERS. DO YOU THINK IT IS IMPORTANT IN MUSIC TO HAVE A BALANCE OF BOTH GOOD AND BAD SIDES?

LB: I think you need to have a positive and a negative side in everything... I live my life like that. If you have all negative, its not entertaining. And if you have all positive, it would be a bit - I don't know - sickening. The second song on the current album is called "One False Move", and its probably the darkest song I've ever written. But the lyrics are pleading for some kind of help, so there is both positive and negative in it. You've got have both sides of the spectrum, I think.

The night we met, L. Borden were about to head off to the Continent in support of new labelmates Tigertailz (now there is a mismatch - ES), having combined the UK visit with a shift from Roadrunner to Music For Nations. The next Borden project is to record album number seven, a back-to-basics offering, or so I'm told. All we can do now is wait, and hope that he leaves considerably less than 3 years between visits next time.

L Y N G U Y

RADIUM

Radium will not be presented to you as the "next big thing", as the band have to make some minor changes before they will fully convince the record labels. But it's still a relatively new band and they are most certainly on the right track. This is the tale of the band, as told by vocalist/guitarist Mike Livingston.

MG: WHAT SHOULD WE KNOW ABOUT RADIUM'S PAST?

ML: I formed the band in April 1988. The first four-song demo, entitled "Psychic Attack", featured three tracks that I had already written, plus a nine-minute instrumental which was the first joint band effort. The songs on "Telepathic" are the first ones written as a band. The only line-up change came at the end of '89, when we replaced second guitarist Rob D'Antonio. He wanted to "go commercial", but the rest of us wanted to remain heavy and progressive. Our new guitarist introduced the band with a package as professional and expensive as possible. So we decided to record only two tracks instead of recording many half-done titles. The promo material swallowed up a lot of money. It took from May to December to pay it off, by playing a lot of gigs. But we killed 2 birds with one stone, as we gained much live experience that way.

MG: YOU SEEM TO HAVE KEPT AN EXTREMELY LOW PROFILE OUTSIDE YOUR OWN COUNTRY SO FAR. WHY IS THAT?

AE: Honestly, we just haven't thought about the possibility to introduce ourselves to other countries. And I also think you must gain recognition in your own country before you can break through in other countries.

MG: WHY AREN'T THERE MORE SUCCESSFUL GERMAN BANDS PLAYING MELODIC METAL, AND DO YOU THINK THE SUCCESS OF BONFIRE LATELY HAS MADE IT ANY EASIER FOR THE LIKES OF CROSSROADS?

AE: Melodic metal is an American innovation, I think. They have the advantage of being original. Maybe the German bands don't dare to play melodic stuff out of fear of being called posers or something. Presently, German bands prefer playing thrasher metal. I think they prefer working on their own. I don't know any German answers to Bon Jovi who takes a band like Skid Row on tour. However, bands like Helloween, Scorpions and Bonfire have opened doors for other German bands indirectly.



MG: WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE THE RELEASE OF "TELEPATHIC"?

ML: We haven't received any serious label offers at this time, but a few labels have requested our latest tape through the mail, as a result of the positive press we've received. We hope to be signed before we have to release a third demo. If we do record a third demo, it will only be for the record companies to hear our latest material. We've managed to play with some cool bands in our home state, like Wargasa and Hades (before they broke up). If our press coverage and live shows are not enough to get us signed, we might consider releasing our own album or compact disc. We would include some songs from both demos.

MG: WHAT MERCHANDISE DO YOU HAVE AVAILABLE?

ML: Right now, we're selling both demos for \$5 each. We have t-shirts available for \$10 and a band newsletter for \$1. We also have some live videos, if the fans are interested.

As the interview ran a bit short, I sent off some additional questions. These didn't arrive in time for the deadline. So if you'd like to find out more about the band, please write them yourself. Write: Radium, c/o Mike Livingston, 17 Spin-drift Lane, Guilford, CT 06437, USA.

HEIN - FRÖDE HANSEN

Hey. YO NORWEGIAN THRASHERS!!! I'm KLUKE from METAL MELTDOWN 'zine here in America...what be up on your 1/2 of the world? I need Norwegian mags to trade ads with. I also need more info on your country's BRUTAL bands...no whimpy shit. If you want the latest copy of MM, send three U.S. dollars to the address & it gets AIRMAILED over within 5 days after I get the letter. If you want to become an MM distributor in Norway, ask for info & I'll send you details. THRASH INSANE! SUPPORT THE SICK!!! C-YA. \$1.5 (US/CAN) *\$3 (EUR) *\$5 (ELSEWHERE) Write: METAL MELTDOWN, P.O. Box 824, Severna Park Md. 21146, U.S.A.!!! Ave Speed! Rege Thrash! Hail Fury!

CRIME ACADEMY

A couple of days before last issue's deadline, I received a tape from a Danish band by the name of Force Majeure. After having released that issue, I felt the short review wasn't quite enough for such a talented band. I sent off for some more information and found out that they (now calling themselves Crime Academy) had gone through some drastic changes. Jesper Schmidt, guitars, tells us whatever happened to the concept of Force Majeure and what the band has been up to lately.

MG: FIRST OF ALL, CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT HOW THE BAND FIRST STARTED OUT AND DEVELOPED INTO WHAT IT IS TODAY?

JS: Well, we started out in 1984 under the name of Anthem. A Japanese band had an album out under that name, so we had to change. Morten Nielsen (drums) and myself are the remaining members from those days. We got the name Apocalypse and a separate singer (our bass-player back then used to sing, as well). We recorded a four-track demo in 1984 called "Out In The Night", which really stinks! We had an average age of 15 and the music was typical and unoriginal heavy metal. We never used this demo for promotion (too embarrassing), but it resulted nevertheless with two tracks on a compilation album called "Metal Outlet". This was recorded in April 1987. This album never hit the streets, however, due to a cheating record company. But it gave us some underground publicity. On this album, Peter Thorslund (bass) had just joined the band, and being without a vocalist, we borrowed "Charlie" from the band Maltese Falcon. What happens then??? Well, a Swiss band "steals" our name... and we went on in secrecy with no name and no singer for about a year. Then we got our previous vocalist Per Onink and changed the name to Force Majeure. Then things started happening fast, and we entered the M&I Music Center with Robert Falcao (both the studio and producer has been used by King Diamond/Mercyful Fate in the past). Fortunately, the demo turned out successfully. I don't know if it can be called a "public success" (so far), as it hasn't sold more than 150 copies. But the primary goal of the tape was not to sell it, but to give us a record deal. We have since sacked Per Onink, as he wasn't the best vocalist around and we had Michael Denner (ex-King Diamond/Mercyful Fate) as one of our guitarists for a while. As you can see, we've now taken the name Crime Academy.

MG: SO, HAS THE DEMO LEAD TO ANY LABEL INTEREST?

JS: We only got replies from around 50% of the companies we contacted. Mostly "no's", but Noise and Black Dragon showed some interest. However, nothing came out of it. The closest we got to signing a deal was with a Dutch label called Ivory Tower. They invited us down for negotiations, but it turned out to be a bullshit company, with no good studios/producers etc. The guy running the label had a home studio and wanted to produce it. But he hadn't any experience with heavy metal bands. Besides, he was a non-smoker. Smoking was forbidden in the studio area and that was the definite goodbye to Holland! His knowledge to heavy rock was frightening: "Europe? I've heard about them. They're Swedish, right?". The underground seems to like us a lot more than the labels. We are currently in touch with a German label, but nothing has been settled yet.

MG: THE TRACKS ON THIS DEMO ARE VERY DIVERSE IN STYLE. DON'T YOU FEEL FANS WILL COME OUT A BIT CONFUSED AS TO WHAT FORCE MAJEURE (NOW CRIME ACADEMY) IS ABOUT?

JS: Yeah, it can be a bit difficult to tell the band's musical style from the tape. We also had a fourth song, entitled "Kingdom Fall", to be included on it. It's a very fast, head-banging kind of tune in Helstar/Mercyful Fate style, but it was left out because of bad vocals. Our music is very diverse, but we always seem to end up on something progressive or speedy. So we won't come up with any really thrashy or commercial metal tunes, although we respect both these styles of music.

MG: IN MY EARS, YOU SOUND A LOT LIKE GERMAN SPEEDSTERS SCANNER (THE "HYPERTRACE" ALBUM). DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS HERE, AND WHAT KIND OF LYRICAL STYLE WOULD YOU SAY FIT YOUR MUSIC?

JS: As for Scanner, we haven't actually heard them! Nowadays we listen to a wide variety of styles. If we should mention any specific bands, it would be Dream Theater, Kansas, Helstar, Fates Warning, Artillery, Queensryche, Crimson Glory, Flotsam & Jetsam and old Saga. I'm glad you asked me about "lyrics being suitable for our style", because that is very important to us. It would've been weird hearing AC/DC singing Queensryche lyrics. Or what about Dream Theater singing about fast cars and leather??? As we like to consider ourselves a little abstract/epic/spacey, we try to fit our lyrics to that. Taken that into consideration, "Victims Of Society" is not a very typical song for us. It deals with the "lost bricks" of society; old people sleeping on benches and things like that. "Technical Solution" is about our hi-tech society on good and evil. When will a computer do your work, your breathing and control your feelings? Will man be left as cold, passive shells - while technology rules? It raises an interesting question. In other songs, we try to hide the meaning of the lyrics behind some sort of "cover-story" and leaving some small hints here and there.

MG: CAN YOU GIVE SOME INFORMATION ON THE UNDERGROUND SCENE IN DENMARK, AND HOW CRIME ACADEMY FITS INTO IT?

JS: The Danish metal scene has a big problem; there are only around 8-10 vocalists that can actually sing! Your only hope is to have a youngster popping up with the voice of G. Tate. So you might find that as a solution to why few Danish bands get any recognition. Power metal is not "in" these days. We used to have Metal Cross, but they've broken up now. We have also worked a lot with Jackal and are good friends with Artillery. Peter, our bassist, plays on their forthcoming "By Inheritance" album.

MG: DO YOU FEEL IT AS A DISADVANTAGE BEING DANISH?

JS: Funnily enough, no! The heavy metal business seems to be fair in one way; if you deserve it, you'll break through. No matter what country you're from. If you don't make it, you are just not good enough yet. We won't use our nationality as an excuse.

Crime Academy are currently recording some more material for the aforementioned German label, so we just might get to see these guys in vinyl form soon. Based on their musical skills and never-say-die attitude, I certainly feel the band deserve it! Write to: Crime Academy, c/o Jesper Schmidt, Sadeleagerporten 2/316, DK-2650 Hvidovre, Denmark.

RED HARVEST

Red Harvest is one of the latest additions to the evergrowing list of great Norwegian bands. They were formed around summer 1989, when members from Arctic Thunder and Anesthesia had got enough of the problems in those bands and decided to put a new project together. A couple of months later, Red Harvest recorded their first three-song demo tape which was called "Occultica". Despite some technical problems with the recording of the tape, response on it was good and the band started playing live shows wherever and whenever they could. In May 1990, they entered the studio again and came up with a great new tape called "Psychotica" (see review pages). The following interview with the band's two guitarists, Jan F. Nygaard and Jimmy Bergsten, is the result of several talks during the last few months.

MG: CAN YOU TELL SOME MORE ABOUT HOW THE BAND ACTUALLY GOT STARTED AND WHY THE ORIGINAL VOCALIST LEFT THE BAND ONLY A COUPLE OF DAYS BEFORE YOU ENTERED THE STUDIO TO RECORD YOUR FIRST DEMO TAPE?

JN: Well, we were all dissatisfied with the situation of the bands we were in at that time (summer '89) and talked about forming a new band, starting from scratch. We kicked the vocalist out because his attitude didn't fit in with the rest of the members. He started skipping rehearsals for one week at a time, and we just couldn't go on like that. So we got a guest vocalist, Tarjel Van Ravens, to sing on the tape. But he didn't have time enough to learn all three songs, so he ended up doing just two of them (those two being "Embrace Of Misery" and "Spirit Of The Serpent"). Jimmy Bergsten, present vocalist (and guitarist) handles the vocals on the last track, entitled "Beneath The Mask". The tape was recorded in a sound-engineering school, so we are not completely satisfied with the sound quality of it. The recording ran smoothly, but the mixing could've worked out a little better. We didn't send it to any record companies, because we wanted to do another tape. We sent it to some radio stations and sold some copies at concerts etc. and the response on it has been very good.

MG: WHAT DOES THE NAME RED HARVEST SYMBOLIZE, WHERE DID YOU GET THE IDEA FROM (IT SOUNDS LIKE STEPHEN KING'S "CHILDREN OF THE CORN" TO ME), AND WHAT TOPICS DO THE LYRICS ON THE "OCCULTICA" TAPE DEAL WITH?

JN: We had a lot of different ideas for a name, but couldn't agree on any of them. Jimmy and Cato Bekkevold (drums) wanted to call the band Face The Facts, but Thomas Brandt (bassist) and myself refused to have that name. We agreed on Red Harvest simply because none of us disliked the name. It did not have a deeper meaning of any sort, but it can be taken as a statement about the state of the world: You reap what you sow... and a lot of blood is being spilled around the world. The lyrics are about different things. "Beneath The Mask" deals with the city government here in Oslo and all the corruption that has been uncovered within it recently. "Spirit Of The Serpent" deals with religion and stuff like that, which get pushed on to you by a lot of fanatic people.

MG: WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE FIRST TAPE AFTER NOW, AFTER IT HAS BEEN OUT FOR SOME TIME?

JN: Despite the response being good we're not that satisfied with it now (the tape's great - ES). We don't really consider it "us" anymore. We had another vocalist, and you can't promote the band by using outside people.
JB: We didn't have any high hopes finding a great vocalist, as there are no people like that here in Norway.

MG: YOU HAVE JUST COMPLETED WORK ON YOUR SECOND TAPE, CALLED "PSYCHOTICA". CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE/WHEN IT WAS RECORDED AND WHAT PEOPLE SHOULD EXPECT FINDING ON IT?

JN: It was recorded in six nights... first three nights and then another three. The guy mixing it had a major hangover! I'd say this tape is much more representative of Red Harvest than the first tape. This is the style in which we'll continue writing, perhaps even more "special-sounding". We didn't record "Psychotica" to become millionaires, we'll wait with that for a while. The main purpose is just to spread the Red Harvest name around the world and make people familiar with our music. And it's much easier getting gigs when people have heard your material.

MG: DO YOU HOPE TO GET A RECORD DEAL, WITH A NORWEGIAN OR A FOREIGN LABEL?

JB: Yeah... or we wouldn't have played at all! I don't think there's a point in playing if you don't have any goals for the band. No, we wouldn't sign with a Norwegian label. They are too afraid of signing metal bands. As for now, we'll have to wait and see what happens after the demo has been out for a while. If we don't get a deal, we'll make an album by ourselves. We believe in the band enough to do such a thing. But we don't know if we'll record yet another tape first or not.

MG: WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM A RECORD DEAL?

JB: We won't sign the first thing we get offered, simply because it's an offer. We're looking for a serious company that are willing to support us, both musically and financially. And we will never sign a deal that says we have to do things the way the company wants it.

MG: WHATS IT LIKE BEING A BAND JUST STARTING UP IN NORWAY?

JN: If you have quality material and are willing to promote the band, it's no problem to reach a certain level. You don't necessarily need to have a demo out. If you've played some good gigs, people start giving you a chance. We've done some shows that we're happy with, but it all depends on the sound system. Some people have mentioned that our material is too diverse... they don't really know what to expect from us. We take that as a compliment. The guys in Mayhem call us a glam band!

MG: HOW WOULD YOU LABEL RED HARVEST AND WHO INFLUENCES YOU?

JN: Progressive metal. But we play a lot of styles. One song is metal, the next is thrash, some are progressive and some material might even border on hardcore. We play everything.
JB: Influences right now are Queensryche, Faith No More and The Cult. We've also received some criticism for leaning towards hardcore on a couple of occasions. Call us "psycho-metal", so we can claim to have come up with a completely new style (this discussion ended up with the term "progressive core-funk", so your confusion should be complete by now!).

MG: DO YOU BELIEVE YOU WILL (EVENTUALLY) BECOME A GOOD VOCALIST (GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE BAND'S FURTHER PROGRESS)?

JB: Yes, I've come this far on my own. And with lessons, I will probably get even better. I'll start taking lessons when I get back from my holiday. I must learn how to sing more "controlled" on my own part, so it doesn't hurt so much when I'm doing it.

MG: ARE THERE ANY UNKNOWN NORWEGIAN BANDS YOU THINK ARE ANY GOOD?

JB: Jungle Medics is a band I think will get a lot more recognition than now. They play funk-metal, like a rougher version of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. By the way, they have just released a single.

MG: WHAT ARE NORWEGIAN METAL BANDS DOING WRONG?

JB: Many bands suffer because of their seriousness. They decide to play a certain style of music and stick with it, so they don't play what they really think is fun to play. They don't have any joke songs or anything, their humor doesn't shine through and the music ends up as something "sad" and grey. Humor should be the driving force behind any band. All bands just seem to follow the Metallica-trend these days. We just play the music we want to play ourselves.

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OF DISGUISE ALBUM",

great. Except for London. Its like they are just standing there, saying "entertain me". So you have to work so hard to get them to have fun. In the end, they have fun... you say "see ya later" and they say "where are you going...". Its a tough deal when you get audiences like that, but if you can crack 'em, I guess thats when you've won!

MG: WHEN I SPOKE TO YOU AT READING, YOU SAID YOU'D HAD THE BEST AND WORST EXPERIENCES OF YOUR CAREER SO FAR, NOT ONLY BEING BOTTLED, BUT ALSO TO HAVE SHARED THE STAGE WITH YOUR IDOL, ALICE COOPER. HAS ANYTHING HAPPENED SINCE THEN TO SURPERCEED THAT?

LB: I can't remember if we played Japan before or after that, but it was unbelievable - kind of like the Beatles movies that you see. We had to run to the train, run to the limo - we had around

MG: WHY DOESN'T ANY OF THE NORWEGIAN LABELS SIGN BANDS THAT ARE REALLY HEAVY?

JB: They are too conservative. Before they sign a band, they have to be sure that they will sell at least 50000 copies. Equinox had a complete package. They had already pressed 700 copies of their debut album and had started selling them in the record stores. They need to sign a band and really give them maximum support.

JB: Equinox has shown other bands that you can do things on your own. Most bands didn't think about doing self-financed albums until they did it and only tried getting label deals, now they will perhaps start doing something like this themselves.

MG: BACK TO THE "PSYCHOTICA" TAPE AGAIN NOW. CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT THE LYRICS ARE ABOUT ON THIS ONE?

JN: The first song is "Face The Fact". It states that people will have to face the facts sooner or later. You know, the world has to change, people must start thinking things over and stuff like that. The lyrics for "Acid" were written in fifteen minutes. It's a joke song about a trip Thomas (bass) took into the woods. He ate some poisonous mushrooms and was knocked out! "Sane In Solitude" is about how a person thinks he is the only one around with sane thoughts and ideas, while all other people (in his eyes) are doing things in a wrong way. "Faithful Unto Death" is an attack on religions (especially Islam) that tells you killing is ok and says you have to kill all people not into their own way of thinking. The last track, "D-F-Song" is a typical Jimmy-tune. It's an all-out attack on everyone and everything. We also attempted to fit in as many "f#cks" as we could in the lyrics. The day we don't enjoy playing anymore is the day we give it up!

MG: DO YOU FEEL THERE ARE ANY LIMITS FOR THE BAND THAT MIGHT HINDER YOUR FURTHER PROGRESS?

JN: Not really. We evolve with each new song we make and become more diverse than what we already are. We don't avoid using songs because they're in this or that style. I'm very happy to be part of this band, and we really believe in what we're doing. We're not a perfect band - at least not yet - but we're doing the best we can!

And that concludes my first in-depth look at Red Harvest, a band that knows no boundaries in the art of having fun. They are quite serious about having fun, actually! Once again, I asked you that this band can really make it. Send them the \$5 asked for their latest tape and you'll get a pleasant surprise. They don't sound like the next Metallica - thank god! Write to: Red Harvest, c/o J. Bergsten, Ravnkollbakken 57, 0971 Oslo 9, Norway:

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CROSSROADS

DOOM SNAKE CULT

When I received this band's professional two-track tape, it didn't take me long to realize that Crossroads is one of the absolute best newcomers in the melodic metal scene. And as I find most German bands very cliched, I wanted to investigate this high-class unit with their fresh and catchy sound. The band has been playing with their current line-up for about 2 years, with only two members having had some experience in other bands. Despite this relative lack of experience, they have already managed to clinch a deal with EMI/Electrola and the debut album is currently in the works. Crossroads' bassist, Axel Ellerhorst, was the subject of the following questions.

MG: FIRST OF ALL, CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE AND WHEN YOU RECORDED THE DEMO, AND WHY ONLY TWO TRACKS WERE INCLUDED?

AE: We recorded the demo in May '89 at Studio Mohrman, Witten (where Risk recorded "Ratman", for example). The colored info. sheet, a video etc. belong to the demo, too. We wanted to introduce the band with a package as professional and expensive as possible. So we decided to record only two tracks instead of recording many half-done titles. The promo material swallowed up a lot of money. It took from May to December to pay it off, by playing a lot of gigs. But we killed 2 birds with one stone, as we gained much live experience that way.

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AE: Honestly, we just haven't thought about the possibility to introduce ourselves to other countries. And I also think you must gain recognition in your own country before you can break through in other countries.

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AE: Melodic metal is an American innovation, I think. They have the advantage of being original. Maybe the German bands don't dare to play melodic stuff out of fear of being called posers or something. Presently, German bands prefer playing thrasher metal. I think they prefer working on their own. I don't know any German answers to Bon Jovi who takes a band like Skid Row on tour. However, bands like Helloween, Scorpions and Bonfire have opened doors for other German bands indirectly.



MG: MOST MELODIC METAL ACTS SEEM TO CONCENTRATE ON WRITING LYRICS CONCERNING LOVE AND THINGS LIKE THAT. DO YOU THINK IT IS POSSIBLE FOR MELODIC BANDS TO WRITE MORE SERIOUS LYRICS?

AE: Our own lyrics reflect our personal feelings and things happening around us. If a "Cross" has something serious to say, there will be a song with serious lyrics. But we're not looking frantically to tackle a "hot" problem. Perhaps "Sign Of The Times" from the demo is a good example of this.

MG: YOU WON A METAL HAMMER FESTIVAL IN DECEMBER '89. CAN YOU TELL ME SOME MORE ABOUT THIS FESTIVAL?

AE: The "Metal Hammer Newcomer Festival" takes place every year around Christmas. In 1988, it became the starting point of success for Pink Cream '69. We'll have to wait and see if our victory in the Rockfabrik, Ludwigsburg was a lucky thing for us too.

MG: DON'T YOU THINK IT WOULD BE SAFER TO BUILD A FOLLOWING IN THE UNDERGROUND BEFORE SIGNING A MAJOR DEAL?

AE: The underground scene is very important to me. A major deal might guarantee a financial background, but it does not guarantee any fans.

You might not like many melodic metal bands (like myself), but there are no rules without exceptions, right? And you'll probably get to hear these guys on the radio, so you'll have to take a stand... whether you like it or not. Most of the major companies seem to sign many boring bands these days so I would like to thank EMI for making a good choice on Crossroads. If you'd like to contact the band yourself and find out some more about them, send your letters to: Crossroads, P.O. Box 1141, 2945 Sands, West-Germany.

Doom Snake Cult is/was a fairly unknown band to the underground until they signed a record deal with Torrid Records in late '89. In the last few months, the band has been very busy putting their debut album together (which is out when you are reading this). Read on for some more information on this weird-thinking band, as I give you the answers told me by guitarist Neig and bassist Pwal.

MG: HOW DID YOU GET TOGETHER, AND WAS BEING IN A BAND SOMETHING YOU DREAMT ABOUT AS KIDS?

NE: I grew up with Black Sabbath, and I desperately wanted to be like them when I got older. We've been friends for 10 years already, so there can't be any changes in line-up. We are kind of a cult, you might say. That way, we reflect our name in a true way.

MG: YOU'VE RELEASED ONE DEMO. HOW WAS THE RESPONSE TO THAT TAPE AND HOW MANY COPIES DID YOU SELL?

PN: I can't tell, it's a secret. So there!!!
NE: We got rid off almost 600 demos. We sold about five! The rest we fuckin' had to give away. No, seriously, the response has been enormous. We've sold ten times as many as we believed we would sell.

MG: HOW DID THE DEAL WITH TORRID COME ABOUT, WAS IT BECAUSE OF THE DEMO AND HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BAND?

NE: Yes, because it did so well. Also, because we sound so unique. Tribal puke metal!!!

MG: HOW IS YOUR LATEST MATERIAL COMPARED TO THE DEMO?

NE: It's slower and heavier. Nice & bizarre!
PN: Some new songs are: "Sorrow", "Love", "Frozen Doll Land" and "Carnival Freak".

MG: WILL THESE BE INCLUDED ON THE ALBUM, AND WHAT SUBJECTS DO YOUR LYRICS DEAL WITH?

NE: The album will be/was released in April. All the songs mentioned will be on it, plus "Doomed" which is about being cursed by a god (now that's something I know how to relate to... honestly! - ES), "Tribal Seance", "Enchanted Cerebral Forest" and "Fertility Rite". "Sorrow" is about struggling for success in the games of life and "Love" is about peace in a fucked-up world. The rest you'll have to figure out by yourselves! There are a lot of hidden meanings in the lyrics for you to discover and ponder upon.

MG: CAN YOU GIVE ME SOME INFORMATION CONCERNING YOUR SONGWRITING AND MUSICAL INFLUENCES?

NE: I write most of the stuff. Acid and life are about all our influences. Like hippies for the nineties!
PN: Some of our musical influences are St. Vitus, Sodom and Trouble. Our lyrics are just weird stuff that go through our twisted minds.

MG: HAVE YOU PROGRESSED A LOT OVER THE YEARS?

NE: No, we just do what we do. I don't know if we can possibly make it even heavier, but we'll keep trying! We do not have to change our style. So never wimp out!

MG: WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE WITH THE BAND AND THE ALBUM?

NE: Simply cruising around the world and drink a lot of beer with some cool people. Also perhaps meeting some interesting girls and the Lord Of all Ganja Buds (don't ask me. I don't know what the hell this is - HFH. Neither do I - ES).

MG: CAN YOU GIVE ME A REASON WHY PEOPLE SHOULD BUY THE DOOM SNAKE CULT ALBUM INSTEAD OF ANY OTHER BANDS' ALBUMS?

NE: Hopefully because it's different from everyone else out there. Personally, I'm sick of hearing the same old stuff!!! I want something new. The only new band that I think is totally cool is White Zombie. They are definitely my favorite band. Original and heavy as fuck!

MG: NOW, OVER TO SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. WHAT DO YOU IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

NE: Get stoned, eat a huge feast and then fuck (Interesting life: food, alcohol and girls! - HFH).

MG: ANYTHING ELSE YOU'LL LIKE TO ADD TO THE INTERVIEW?

PN: Dig Love!
NE: Come see us in July on tour (in the US). The live shows are even heavier than the record is. Plus you could help us trip out. So I hope I'll see you soon, hopefully! Peace.

Yes, they do sound like hippies for the nineties to me, with peace, love and sex as their topics in their songs. They sure sound like a bunch of weird guys! Well, the album is out. So it's up to each and every one of you to find out if they are as original as they say they are. One last note... can anyone tell me who this god of the green ganja buds is, and why he should smile upon me? And, if you're interested, they have some t-shirts too for \$10 at the following address: Doom Snake Cult, 372 E. Tropicana #226, Las Vegas, NV 89109, USA.
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I will not waste much space on introducing you to this excellent band. Just read the interview and you'll get all the info you want. Vocalist Christian Lindersson answers.

MG: YOU GOT YOUR ALBUM DEAL DIRECTLY AFTER HAVING RELEASED YOUR SECOND DEMO, "INDIGNUS FAMILIUS". CAN YOU TELL ME SOME MORE ABOUT THIS DEAL?

CL: Well, we signed a five-year contract with a Swedish company called Thunderfeet Records, and so far they've treated us very good. They really believe in the band and have put a lot of money behind the production of our forthcoming album. We began recording in mid-May and will be in the studio for a month or so. It is scheduled for release in August/September. A guy named Kevin Paige will produce it.

MG: WHAT SONGS WILL APPEAR ON THE ALBUM AND WHAT KIND OF TOPICS DO YOU DEAL WITH LYRICALLY?

CL: I honestly can't tell you which songs will be on it, because we haven't decided that yet. I guess we all agree on "How Can It Be" and "A Devastating Age" from "Indignus..." and "Social Warfare" from the first demo. There will also be at least one new song, titled "Into The Garden Of Mirrors". This one is very representable of Count Raven. However, nothing is final at the moment. We have so much new stuff that has come about since the demos, and it's hard to choose which songs that will make it. All the people that have written us seem to have their own fave tracks, so maybe we should have recorded a double-album instead... ha, ha! Anyway, if we decide to cut off some of the new material from the album, you will not be disappointed. It will be just as heavy and slow as on the demos. All our lyrics deal with reality and actual subjects, reflecting what we think about the world we're living in, historical events and personal experiences. We do not want to limit ourselves to a certain image or anything, like so many bands do today. We're down-to-earth people and not pretentious in any way. Musically and lyrically, there will not be any radical changes from the demos... the only difference being a much heavier and thicker sound. I guess there will be one or two bonus tracks on the cd.

MG: SO YOU ALREADY HAVE ANY PLANS FOR A SECOND ALBUM?

CL: Yeah, the cover is already decided, as is the title. I will not tell you more about it at this time! We've got so many new songs that some of them not appearing on our debut album will probably appear on the second album instead. More than that, we don't have any plans except staying in the business for a long time...



MG: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE NAME "STORM WARNING" FOR THE DEMO, AND WHAT DOES "COUNT RAVEN" REALLY MEAN?

CL: Count Raven doesn't symbolize anything. But we've been told that there is a character in one of Edgar Allan Poe's stories called Count Raven. But we didn't know that at the time we chose that name. We just thought it sounded original and a bit mysterious, you know. The reason behind the album and a bit called "Storm Warning" is that this was the band's name when Danne and Wilbur founded it back in 1980. Now that we have changed our name to Count Raven, the old Storm Warning fans can still relate to the band through the title of the album.

MG: HAVE YOU ALREADY DECIDED WHAT WILL BE THE ALBUM'S COVER?

CL: Yeah, it will be a close-up photo of Wilbur's left foot! Nah, just joking... Actually, we have an old oil-painting by an artist called Valdej Leal that we are going to use. It's a great, gloomy cover that goes well with the album's title.

MG: YOU'VE BEEN CALLED BLACK SABBATH CLONES FOR A LONG TIME NOW. WILL THIS ALBUM HELP YOU GET AWAY FROM THIS COMPARISON?

CL: Not really. You see, people always say what they want to say, anyway. We don't care that much about it anymore. The music we do is nothing but a natural process for us although we are aware that our influences shine through now and then. The truth is, we're proud of our influences and the music we make. We all feel this is the only way we could ever play... slow, honest and powerful!

MG: DO YOU THINK B. SABBATH WILL SURVIVE ANOTHER FIVE YEARS?

CL: Well, you ought to know the answer to that one, Erik... Never Say Die! (I just wish I could share your optimism on that one, Christian - ES).

MG: BESIDES THIS BAND, ARE YOU INFLUENCED BY ANY OTHER DOOM METAL BANDS?

CL: No, our main influence lies in sixties/seventies bands. Like Hawkwind, Budgie, Hendrix, Sir Lord Baltimore, Nazareth and Uriah Heep etc. But some of us do listen to bands like Saint Vitus, Trouble, Witchfinder General, The Obsessed, Solitude Aeturnus and Pentagram.

MG: WHY ARE THERE SO MANY SWEDISH DOOM METAL BANDS, AND DO YOU THINK ALL THESE HAVE A CHANCE OF SURVIVING?

CL: I don't feel there are that many doom metal bands here. The only ones I know, except Candlemass, are Mercy and Sorcerer... and a great band from Gothenburg called Stillborn. They're very slow and heavy, but I wouldn't call them doom. I haven't heard anything by Mercy, but I feel both Sorcerer

Count Raven

and Stillborn are more than able to get recognition.

MG: WHAT CHANGES WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE DOOM METAL SCENE AND WHERE WILL DOOM EVOLVE IN THE FUTURE?

CL: Please, I don't want to discuss this "doom" thing anymore. You should be asking the guys in Candlemass these questions! You see, we have never considered ourselves as being a "doom metal" band. Some of us have been playing this style of music since 1980, long before the term even existed. When a band is labelled as "doom", people expect to hear a cheap Candlemass copy or something. Personally, I think that Count Raven is more original than that. I wouldn't mind seeing some more bands in this genre of metal, as long as they're being honest about themselves and their music. I'd hate to see it turn into a trend, though, like what happened with thrash a couple of years ago. Ah, yes, I can see it now: "Despair Metal", "Misery Metal", "Pain Metal". Ha, ha, ha!!! By saying this, I would only be flattered if, say in a couple of years time, a new band came up being influenced by Count Raven... Who knows, maybe they will be labelled as "gloom metal" and being slagged off as Count Raven clones! Nah, let's get serious here. One band that I think will become mega is Solitude Aeturnus, because they're great! I also hope St. Vitus will get some proper recognition. They do not deserve being as underestimated and ignored as they have been for such a long time. God, I love that band!

MG: BACK TO THE ALBUM AGAIN, WILL YOU GET TOUR SUPPORT FROM THE LABEL AND THE CHANCE OF DOING A VIDEO OR SINGLE?

CL: Yes, we will tour in Sweden in September and a European tour after that. I do not know if we'll go as headliners or as support for another band, since our tour manager is sorting out all the details at the moment. There has been talk about doing both a video and single, but as for now we are concentrating on the album itself.

MG: DOES THE LABEL HAVE ANY INFLUENCE CONCERNING YOUR MUSICAL DIRECTION?

CL: No, none whatsoever. We feel we have 100% control over what we're doing. Of course they have some ideas and give us suggestions, but the as far as the music goes, the band will always make the final decisions.

MG: AS ALREADY MENTIONED, YOU HAVE RELEASED TWO DEMOS. HOW MANY COPIES WERE SOLD OF THESE DEMOS AND WILL THEY BE AVAILABLE AFTER "STORM WARNING" HAS BEEN RELEASED?

CL: We didn't actually sell many copies, we just gave them away to various 'zines and some other people that wrote us! I soon found out that it was quite expensive, so unfortunately I can't do that anymore. After the release of the album they will not be available, because we would not sell many albums then, would we?! We've got some copies left, though. For 4 pounds/\$6, you'll get both demos (including covers) on one quality cassette, plus some stickers and shit.

MG: ON THE "INDIGNUS..." TAPE, THERE ARE SOME FEMALE VOCAL PARTS (SOUNDS LIKE IT, AT LEAST). CAN YOU TELL ME SOME MORE ABOUT THIS?

CL: Female vocal parts?! If you're referring to the intro, I wouldn't consider that as vocal parts in terms of singing, since all she's doing is weeping! Wow, total disharmony! No, you're probably referring to the mid-section in "Noone's Hero", right? Well, that's me! It came about when we were just playing around with the vocals during the mixing. Its a chorus that has been pitched up to twice its normal speed. You should've heard it the first time we did it. It sounded like a choir of 150 three-years-old children singing! It sounded a bit too spaced out, so we had to sack 149 of them and kept one as a memory!

MG: WHAT OTHER KIND OF EFFECTS/INSTRUMENTS DO YOU SEE COUNT RAVEN TRYING OUT IN THE FUTURE, LIKE VIOLIN, FLUTE OR PIANO?

CL: Its funny you should ask, as Danne knows how to play all these instruments. So we might use some of these on our new material. I can also tell you that Wilbur has bought himself a strange bass effect pedal that he will use in the studio. And Danny will use some keyboard background harmonies, like on "Indignus Familius".

MG: YOU SEEM TO HAVE A LOT OF INTEREST IN THE UNDERGROUND. WHAT MAKES IT SO INTERESTING, AND DO YOU THINK YOU'LL STAY "UNDERGROUND" FOR SEVERAL ALBUMS?

CL: Yes, I really hope so! Our music is not what you might call hit-oriented, and we'll never do anything in that direction, either. The underground scene is very honest about everything most of the time... supporting each other and so on. I think it's great! It has helped many bands like Count Raven to reach a much wider audience. And I love reading the underground 'zines, as I prefer reading about new and interesting bands rather than having the likes of Quireboys and Pretty Boy Floyd five issues in a row!

MG: SO HOW MANY 'ZINES HAVE CARRIED COUNT RAVEN FEATURES?

CL: I don't know, to be honest. I know we've had some demo reviews in 'zines from Sweden, Denmark, Holland and Germany. But I haven't read them. That's the sad part about it. I mean they could at least have the decency to send me the reviews, after I have sent them the tapes. As for interviews, we have done one for the UK 'zine "Under The Oak" and one for the US 'zine "Power Packer". Mind you, Norway is not very far from Sweden. So you better send me a copy of this issue!

And with that nice physical threat, we'll have to leave the guys alone for a little while. Until August/September that is, when "Storm Warning" will bring them to new heights. In the meantime, you could do far worse than investing in those high-quality demos. You wouldn't want to miss out on some of their material, now would you?! Write to: Count Raven, c/o Christian Lindersson, Frihetsv. 40, 175 32 Jarfalla, Sweden!

D E M O S

R E V I E W S

MASQUERADE - BEHIND THE MASK (3 tracks, \$6)

Formed about two years ago, this is Masquerade's first attempt at gaining some label interest. The Dutch four-piece includes Richard Muermans on vocals, Noud Saets on guitars, Ronald Klatt on bass/keyboards and Jack Kraal on drums. The band first started out life as a one-off project, but after playing support for the likes of Helstar and Crimson Glory, they gained so much praise that they decided to form the band on more permanent foundations. Crimson Glory is also the first name that springs to mind when I'm listening to the tape. Masquerade play a brilliant style of melodic power metal, with clear riffing and high-pitched vocals. All the songs on offer show the makings of a band that most definitely deserves the attention of the listener (and the record labels). Sound quality is generally good, without being excellent, and the band's playing abilities come across rather well. Opener "Prisoner Of Consciousness" is a fast track, always remaining melodic and with a nice overall feel. "Surrender" is the inevitable stab at commercialism, although it is still heavy and moody enough for my tastes. The last track is "Masquerade", probably the best track on this tape. It has got some memorable guitars, but it could've gained even more with greater use of backing vocals. This is a highly recommended tape for the power packers! Write to: Masquerade, Putstraat 216, 6131 HH Sittard, Holland.

ANCIENT REIGN - FAIL OR PREVAIL (3 tracks)

Despite being Norwegian, Ancient Reign is a new name to me. They were (at the time of recording) a quartet looking for an additional guitarist (which has now been found). Recording line-up consisted of Eirik Moseng on vocals, Geir Horn on guitars, Morten Steen on bass and Lars Sørensen on drums. The "Fail Or Prevail" tape contains three lengthy songs in fine power metal tradition. It offers a lot of variation: slow and fast parts, acoustic parts etc. The song structures are not in the usual verse-verse-chorus style, so the tape demands more than one listen before it can be fully absorbed. But it grows with each successive listen and is not too progressive for the average listener. The vocals are good overall, but a bit thrashier than the band's sound might indicate. They could've been a little better in the acoustic parts, though. Sound quality should also have been better, but I've often heard worse. I think my fave comparison Fates Warning could also be used here, as some of the riffs and overall sound hint toward that found on the "Night On Brocken" album. As I said earlier, Ancient Reign is not very progressive, just well-played power metal with tight, powerful riffing and pounding rhythms. Song titles are: "Who Is The Fool", "Sinister Fate" and "Sentenced To Die". They already possess the talent, and will hopefully get the experience, to go on to greater things. This is metal for the masses..... hopefully! Write to: Ancient Reign, c/o Geir Horn, Ravnkollbakken 15, 0971 Oslo 9, Norway.

REVELATION - THE DIFFERENCE (6 tracks)

This Revelation is neither the American nor the Norwegian band. They hail from Holland, a country that so far has not exactly set the metal world on fire. Sad it may be... but ultimately true. Revelation will probably do little to alter this, but they are surely good enough to investigate a bit closer than most other Dutch bands. The band formed early 1986 and has maintained their original line-up consisting of vocalist Marc Shouten, guitarists Jose Carcoba/Patrick Laan, bassist Ed Seuren and Frank Iliopoulos handling the drums. Their first tape, entitled "Towards The Galaxy" and also featured on this tape, was recorded in 1987. Two more years passed by before "The Difference" appeared. It's a promo tape only, so the buying public will not get a chance to get hold of it (at least not through the band). Revelation covers a lot of ground musically, but basically stays within the borders of more melodic power metal. There's a lot of melody evident in their material, although some of the songs are still not quite catchy enough. The faster tracks, like "Savage Queen", are really good, and holds more promise for the band's future. The ballad is also very good. It is just that Revelation's sound is like that of a lot of other bands. I don't think they will get an album deal with this tape, but I'm sure that Revelation will improve even more with their next demo tape. It is not essential listening, but quite good. Write to: Revelation, c/o Dennis

Buschman, D.C. Rezelmanstraat 26, 1761 CE Anna Paulowna, Holland.

ASPHYX - MUTILATING PROCESS (2 tracks)

This tape is an advance of a 7" single that should've been available for quite some time when you're reading this. Asphyx, if you do not already know, is a Dutch death metal outfit that has previously released two demos: "Enter The Domain" and "Crush The Cenotaph" (the last tape is possibly still available for \$5). I do not really want to give Asphyx a final verdict, as I'm not a fan of the rather typical death metal vocal approach. But the band obviously has some interesting sides, such as the doomy openings on both the tracks, "Mutilating Process" and "Stream Of Ancient Wisdom". The sound quality is as good as a vinyl release should be and the band seem confident in handling their instruments. I would like to think of this band as more doom than death metal (with the exception of the vocals), and think the band would have a lot more on offer had they found another one. An interesting blend of musical styles spoilt by the growling sneers of the band's vocalist. However, it must be said that this is one of the better death metal tapes I've heard. After all, I managed to sit through it for several listens without going completely mental. Write to: Asphyx, c/o Eric Daniels, Ciaballoof 195, 4876 BN Etten-Leur, Holland.



CRYSTAL MYTH - IN CHRIST'S NAME (3 tracks, \$6)

Crystal Myth was a band I knew nothing about until I received this demo tape, recorded in the summer of '89. The vocalist performing on the tape, Fran Merzigan, has since been replaced. Remaining line-up is Brian Hutchings and Tion Derrick on guitars, Dave Price on bass and Rob Dulaney on drums. They have been together since October 1986. As the title indicates, we're apparently dealing with a white metal band, but nothing like Stryper I may add. No... Crystal Myth is a fully-fledged power metal band with some doom touches to their sound. They are hard to compare to any single band, although names like Savage might send your thoughts in the right direction. The tape opens with "Death From Above", a slow to mid-paced track with some heavy guitar work and mid-ranged vocals. The band could almost be classified as "light doom". Kinda like Iced Earth, perhaps? Although the vocals are more "regular" than the Florida-based band. The name Crystal Myth itself also indicates a medieval touch, something titles like "The Keeper" and "Dragon's Breath" do little to alter. Ending this review, I would like to say that I needed more than a few listens before I really took a liking to the band. They do sound a little basic at times - song structures could be more adventurous and the guitars a bit more complex - but the tape eventually starts to grow on you. I expect even better stuff next time from this already competent outfit. Write to: Crystal Myth, P.O. Box 271, Worcester, MA 01613, USA.

VOX POPULI - SELFISH CREATION (1 track)

Vox Populi is a so far unknown English quartet who sent me this one-track tape in order to spread their name around a bit. I didn't exactly get a lot of info.

on the band, but the line-up reads as follows: John Cook on vocals/bass, Michael Storrice/Lee Pearce on guitars and Bruce Davies on drums. The "Selfish Creation" track is a lengthy tune displaying a wide range of influences from power metal to thrash to doom. The track opens with a mid-paced intro containing some rather "controlled" vocals, the mid-section slows the song down to more of a Candlemass-type of thing for a moment (complete with church bells, I may add) before it speeds up with some high-energy riffing. The musicianship is quite good, especially the guitars complement each other well, but that's not to say the rhythm section is bad in any way (a bit ordinary, perhaps). The only complaint I have is that the vocals could be more intense and powerful. The voice of John Cook is good, but is not fully exploited on this tape, I guess. A welcome newcomer that may develop into something really special. If you want the demo, just send the band a blank tape and an IRC (or 30p in English stamps). Write to: Vox Populi, c/o John Cook, 117 Alice Street, South Shield, Tyne & Wear, England.

INVOCATOR - GENETIC CONFUSION (4 tracks, \$6)

This is the first demo from this Danish band, who's since released a second one called "Alterations". Invocator sounds like a mixture of Metallica and Kreator, formed in the right way. "Genetic Confusion" was recorded with the old line-up, when Otto (bass) and Simon (drums) were in the band. Now they've been replaced by Jesper (bass) and Per (drums). You see, line-up changes is something very usual for Invocator. So we shouldn't be surprised if they'll have some changes again. The tracks on this tape are "Dismal Seafage" (?), "Insurrected Despair", "Restraint Life" and "The Scars Remain". When "Dismal..." starts, it may remind you of Metallica, but that has nothing to do with it when it continues. Also "Restraint Life" has a wonderful intro with classic guitars. No, this will not remind you of anything, but it really kicks! Well, the production is very, very good, as I have never heard such a clear sound. The demo also contains a band photo and includes lyrics for all the songs. The second demo tape is also available for \$6 and you can also get a black t-shirt with white print for \$10 (or the equivalent in your own currency) from the same address. You will also get free stickers with your order. Write to: Invocator, c/o Jacob Schultz, 6800 Varde, Denmark.

D E M O

MANIAC - DEMO II

(3 tracks, \$6 Europe/\$7 USA)
Formed in late '86, this Spanish quartet has already released two demos: "Heroes Without Names" and this three-track tape simply called "Demo II". This review is based upon both tapes, however. Maniac's



line-up consists of Jose Luis on vocals/guitars, Daniel on guitars, Anon on bass and founding member Salvador Parra Jimenez on drums. Maniac play straight-ahead thrash most of the time, but also have some power metal touches. They sound very powerful, but I feel the songs aren't quite strong enough to really have me raving about the band. The guitarists do a great job most of the time, and Jose Luis' mid-ranged vocals are ok, too. He goes higher up on a couple of occasions, and mostly remind me of the Sieges Even vocalist then (but that's the only likeness between those bands). I think perhaps Overkill would be the best single comparison. Some of the songs would have benefitted a great deal with better production, because some of the background vocals have a tendency to drown in the tape's mix. Overall, this demo is a lot

better than expected from any Spanish band. I think that with some more song-writing experience, Maniac will develop into a very good band. Write to: Maniac, c/o Salvador Para Jimenez, c/Barcelona 13. B, Algeciras 11203, Spain or to Gerald Mittinger of The Answer (address to be found in the 'zine section).



P.O. Box 7604
Riverside, CA 92513

SILENCE - PEACE BY PIECE (4 tracks)

This English band was featured in Metal Glory no.2 and if you read about Silence there, you might ask what they're doing in a "metal" magazine. The reason is actually quite simple, I like the band! It is not often that I'm into total wiffness and "acceptable" music, but I think this band has some good sides to them. Silence is a three-piece that has released no less than three demos prior to this. The band members are Dave Manks on vocals/bass, Robbie Csik on guitars and Mark Cunningham on drums. I am not going to bother you with lengthy descriptions of the band (as most of you will probably hate the band). But for the more melodic listeners looking for something "wifpy", this might be exactly what you are looking for. They are now hoping to record for an ep, which may be released sometime this year on the Voltage Records label (This ep will also include Harlequin, Aurora and Threads). Open-minded 'zine editors should get in touch, as the guys are very helpful, but thrashers should definitely stay away! Write to: Silence, c/o Phil Gent, 26 Bartle Drive, Baildon, England.

WITCHMASTER GENERAL - DISCONTENT (4 tracks)

Witchmaster General are back with their second demo. The line-up has remained the same, and they're still stuck in the depths of Canada's capitol. If you have had the opportunity to hear their excellent first demo, "Winds Over Salem", you won't be disappointed with this one. The band has retained that crunching power metal style. Other than the poor production, this is my only complaint. The music doesn't appear to have progressed that much. However, if AC/DC could keep the same style after all these years who am I to question W.G. There are 4 songs on offer and all of them (with the exception of "White Sand" which is another awesome guitar piece) offer a barrage of time changes, crunching guitars, adequate drumming and very good solos (an improvement from last time). Overall, this is a very good follow-up and should help them gain much interest. Both metal and thrash fans should enjoy this very much. P.S. Move to Toronto, guys!!! Write to: Witchmaster General, c/o R. Chase, 1173 Meadowlands Dr. #8, Nepean, Ontario K2E 6J5, Canada.

TREVOR LAMAS

DEATH MISSION

DEATH MISSION - THE ULTIMATE... (4 tracks, \$5)

Death Mission is rapidly shaping up to become one of Norway's premier thrash bands. Since their last demo, entitled "Why", Tomas Eien has improved his vocal abilities tremendously and the band has moved away from the Metallica tag. The "new and improved" Death Mission is now more technical and offers a lot more variety than in the past. Their new demo opens up with a short intro (taken from a fifties/sixties album), and launches into "The Longing's Suburb", an up-tempo thrasher in true Bay Area fashion with more controlled chorus parts and powerful mid-section riffing. Lyrically, I find the band a little strange and incoherent. It's not always easy to follow the lyrical meaning through their songs. But that's a minor complaint, really, as the music is really great. If you heard the "Why" demo (and didn't like it), I beg you to give Death Mission a second chance. This is an excellent example of how much a band can improve once they've gained some live- and song-writing experience (the "Why" material really sounds a lot better live than on tape now, as well). "All As One" tells the story of a mass-murder, while "Stage Of Mind" revolves around lobotomy. "Siege..." is more technical than the rest, including some nice stop/start riffing. Unfortunately for the band, it reminds me a bit of Metallica. "Into The Ultimate Pity" is the last tune into full of new ideas, but still quite enjoyable. A recommended tape for all thrashers! Write to: Death Mission, Box 128, 1930 Aurekog, Norway.

PYROMANIA - THE AWAKENING

(6 tracks, \$7/DM10)

When I received this tape, I must admit to having started off with a close mind. After all, a band from France called Pyromania doesn't exactly sound like "the next big thing". How wrong could I be! The band started as long ago as 1983 in Strasbourg and has maintained the same line-up all the way! Oliver Eck on vocals/guitars, Chris Stern on bass and David Eck on drums/keyboards. They have released one tape prior to this, called "Spirit Of A Nightmare", in 1987. This tape was recorded in 1988 and leaves me wondering why they haven't done any more recording work since. Pyromania puts a lot of effort into creating a unique and original sound - and they succeed! The flyer I received with the tape states "when heavy sound meets Yes, Rush and Marillion... and I can agree with that. Fans of Dream Theater and the likes will definitely love this band! The songs on "The Awakening" are long, epic numbers with a lot of different moods and musical themes. They basically have a very melodic (and British!) sound, but can be just as powerful as metal music demands when going for a heavier approach. There is not much vocal work on the demo, but that's ok as the vocals are not nearly as interesting as the music itself. Some song titles to what your (progressive) appetite are "Corollon Larethian" and "Radium Pulsation". The best stuff I've ever heard from a French band and one of the most interesting tapes I've got in a long time. It could be a bit catchier, but that's a very minor complaint. This tape belongs in the collection of every open-minded trader. Order now! Write to: Pyromania, 13 Route de Bussang, 68470 Fellingier, France.

BEYOND - STAIRCASE (4 tracks, \$5)

This is the Toronto-based band's second demo that I know of. However, I believe it may be their fourth (There's nothing like exact information - ES). These boys are the best unsigned thrash band in Toronto. I've seen them play live a few times and they've blown me away each time. Previously a four-piece, they're now a trio featuring Paul Garvey (vocals and guitars), Sean Weisner (drums) and new bassist Mike Myre (replacing Paul's brother Sean). Their previous "Framed Insanity" demo absolutely smoked, reeking of the Bay Area. This time, Beyond has slowed things down and the absence of a second guitar has actually cleared up the sound a lot. The only drag is the poor production by Brian Taylor, which is a surprise. Anyway, the music again is powerful, melodic, ripping thrash. All four songs will leave you musically satisfied. Mike's bass-playing is up-front and bottom-end heavy, blending at times well with Sean's explosive drumming, and at other times with Paul's killer riffs. Paul's vocals are less unique this time around and he sounds like Mr. Hetfield. But it works really great with the music, so who gives a f**k anyway?! The lyrics are excellent and really make you think about them, without being too obvious. The tape is being distributed by ex-Slaughter drummer Ron Summers' Epidemic Productions. Between him and M.E.A.T. magazine, it is only a matter of time before the Toronto bands explode on the worldwide scene. And expect Beyond to lead the invasion! Write to: Beyond, c/o Epidemic Productions, 1920 Ellesmere Road, Suite 104, Box 363, Scarborough, Ontario M1E 2W7, Canada.

TREVOR LAMAS

Wicked Angel

WICKED ANGEL - TORTURED BY POWER (6 tracks, \$6)

I reviewed a Wicked Angel promo tape in the last issue, containing most of the songs on this tape. The funny thing is, it sounds better this time around. It's still in need of some more adventurous playing, but since Jeff Oppen handled all guitar, bass and vocal parts by himself, that's quite understandable. This Canadian trio(?) plays straight-forward heavy metal the way it first started out and became popular. "The Beast", which is the tape opener, is a catchy, heavy tune, unfortunately with cliched lyrics. And that tells a lot about the rest of the tape, as well. Judas Priest is the no.1 comparison here, but Wicked Angel are still a long way from the term of "clones". One interesting note in the latter I got from Jeff was that he did not feel the packaging of a demo should be mentioned in a review, since it's only the music that counts. I do agree with that statement, but record companies always examine a band's presentation of themselves (and they are normally the people you want to impress with a demo). If a band put a lot of money into full-color covers etc., it indicates a band that's willing to sacrifice everything for the band. Besides, if you pay \$5 or so for a tape, you want it to look good as well as sound good. If you like your metal in the same style as you did 5-10

years ago, this tape comes highly recommended. If you feel you have gone in a different direction since then, you'd be best of finding another tape. Write to: Wicked Angel, c/o Jeff Oppen, P.O. Box 2032, Windsor, Ontario NBY 4R5, Canada.

BLACK VIRGIN - FORBIDDEN AND FREE (3 tracks)

Black Virgin's debut album should be out by the time you're reading this, and the only reason I'm doing this review is to warn you about it! I've seldom, if ever, heard a band so unoriginal and utterly boring. A few NWOBHM influences and some very basic thrash riffs are coupled with a voice that makes Lemmy sound melodic. The songs go straight-forward, but without any direction, and leaves the listener in a state of apathy. I can't really believe that they've ever received any positive reviews (especially not from Power Packer, which I happen to like a lot). The line-up of this New York-based trio is Kenny Lienhardt on vocals and guitars, Joe Cerna on bass and finally Cathy Burke on drums. They've obviously been around for a couple of years, and I think that any band should have progressed way beyond this stage in such a long time. Should you still choose to write the band, don't set your hopes too high! Write to: Black Virgin, 65 Hillside Avenue 8BA, New York, NY 10040, USA.



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PARALYSIS - LIVE STRUGGLE (4 tracks, \$5)

These Dutch speedsters should be known by most of the Metal Glory readers by now. Their "Trivial Round Of Life" demo has already secured them a good following, but I don't know if this tape will help them any further. "Live Struggle" is, as the name suggests, a live tape. And as with most other live tapes, the sound quality really isn't that good. The drums are very high in the mix and the vocals are too low and controlled. Of the four songs on the tape, two are taken from the "Trivial..." tape and two are taken from a forthcoming demo to be called "Arctic Sleep". The tape's first track is "Powers Of Old", which contains a riff that sounds like a blatant rip-off of Arcane. I know this is not intentional and it only lasts for about two seconds, so it doesn't really matter very much. It's straight-ahead speed, but always remains melodic. "Roman Struggle" and "Admonishing Famine" are the songs taken from the "Trivial..." demo, in my opinion the best tracks on that tape. And they sound just as great here except for the sound quality, of course. Especially "Roman Struggle", which is even more aggressive here. The other new track is "Special Operation Executive", a more technical song than the rest of Paralysis' repertoire. It has a lot of breaks and changes, and makes for some interesting listening. It also has a very catchy chorus, and will probably sound even better on the forthcoming "Arctic Sleep" demo. If you have no knowledge about the band so far, I suggest you do something about it. But, instead of recommending this tape, I'd like to recommend "Trivial Round Of Life" instead (still available for \$6?). Or you could always wait until "Arctic Sleep" is released. Write to: Paralysis, Graafjansdijk B-134, 4554 LC Westdorpe, Holland.

OSIRIS - INEXTRICABLE REVERSAL

(4 tracks, \$5/DM10/HFL10, 3 pounds)
With a demo title like that, I guess you already know what kind of band this is. Their biography says something about the band being in a Voivod/Mekong Delta style, and I'm tempted to agree after some listens to the tape. Osiris is a Dutch five-piece, based in Kempen (there's also a Norwegian Osiris). The members' names are close to unpronounceable, so let

us move on the music. It takes some listens before you can get into this kind of metal, and when you finally do, it's very hard to notice all the stuff that's happening. That's why Mekong Delta is a fair comparison. "False Insinuation" opens with an intro of some chirping birds before a mid-paced technical attack sets in, demanding the full attention of the listener. There really is a lot of different breaks and tempo changes on this one, but very little to actually remember the songs by. "Mass Termination" and "Agony And Hate" continues their obvious quest for innovation, but it's the last track which I really like! "Christopher" has more of an instant appeal with really fast, no-compromise guitar runs and an almost doomy chorus. It is perhaps more in the Watchtower vein (no, it is not as good as Watchtower), and makes me very happy that at least one Dutch band can stand up to international competition. Osiris obviously needs some more time, but is already now worthy of closer examination. Write to: Osiris, c/o R. Bronwasser, Elzenstraat 38, 8266 BH Kampen, Holland.

EXCEED - DERANGED HALLUCINATION

(4 tracks, \$5 Australian)
Australian thrash quartet Exceed formed as late as June 1989 when John Podolski (drums) and Tony Kirk (guitars) joined forces. Soon after, John Bray was added on bass and a few months later, Andrew Norris became their vocalist. In January 1990, they entered the studio and came out armed with their first demo. In contrast to many other debut demos, this is a highly professional effort (both musically and in terms of presentation). It has a clear, powerful sound and includes both lyrics and a band photo. All tracks are of good quality and offers much variation in speed and overall feel. But unfortunately, it offers little in the way of new ideas. Exceed are not one of the fastest band around and that helps them managing to keep a melodic feel, even when going at full speed. But most of the time, they play perhaps a little slower than most other thrash outfits. I'm not an expert on musical technicalities (far from it, actually), but sometimes I feel I must give the drummer some credit for excellent work. The drumming on this tape aakes for some very interesting listening, and the drums are normally what I pay the least attention to. The rest of the band is very competent, as well. "Deranged Hallucination" is a very good first attempt from a band in such an early state of development, and I'm sure they will come up with a more unique and individual style in the time to come. The band also has t-shirts for sale at \$15 each, and posters are available for \$3. Write to: Exceed, P.O. Box 979, Dickson, A.C.T. 2602, Australia.

R.I.P. - FEEDING FRENZY

(5 tracks, \$10/5 pounds)
First of all, I'd like to point out that the demo's very long which justifies the rather high price. R.I.P. is a Swiss band formed in early '86 and "Feeding Frenzy" is their first tape so far, I believe. It's very professional in appearance and includes full-color cover and photo, in addition to lyrics. The first thing you notice when listening to this demo tape is the immature vocals which really is a shame, considering their obvious musical potential. Fortunately, this vocalist is now out of the band. R.I.P. tries hard to sound original - and they succeed. But being original is not always the same as being great. Their progressive style has few memorable parts, so there's certainly room for improvement. The best songs are "Alien" and the 11-minute instrumental "A Human Disease". "Alien" because it has the only memorable chorus on this demo, and "A Human Disease" for incorporating a lot of novel ideas. A song like "A Human Disease" with a good vocalist and interesting lyrics would qualify for an album deal in my book. What shall I say? I think R.I.P. is a good band in many ways, but I can't really recommend this tape for the price they're asking for it. But when they find a new vocalist and records some new material, I'll be the first in line to hear it. A classic case of a great band failing to do their best? If you're into new ideas, you can take a chance on this tape. If not, don't waste your money. Write to: R.I.P., c/o C. Dörner, Dorfstrasse 88, CH-8954 Geroldswill, Switzerland.

Disjecta Membra

DISJECTA MEMBRA - DEMO '90
(5 tracks, DM10/95, \$7 overseas)
The latest Disjecta Membra offering contains over 40 minutes of psychedelic visions. The real name of this demo tape is "Physikalismeteorikologionismus", and that's a fitting title! Disjecta Membra

is among the few bands that truly can be described as progressive, combining elements found in thrash, jazz, funk and speed (and everything in-between) to make sure it sounds as original as humanly possible. All tracks are instrumental, but manage to fully capture an atmosphere seldom found in the metal world. From the opening moments of "Tango", through the likes of "Der Schrage" and "Der Indische Tischler", you're hurled into a realm like one you would expect finding in the mind of a Pink Floyd fan. The musicianship is of course faultless, displaying what are probably some of Germany's best overall musicians. Is there anything wrong with this tape? Yes, some improvements could be made. I would not suggest getting a vocalist as it would not sound right, but by adding some dialogue, I think it would improve the atmosphere even more. And in order to gain more interest, they really have to come up with some English titles. Personally, I like to know what a song title really means. Sound quality is very good, but overall demo presentation just a little above average. Still, the tape is wholeheartedly recommended to all people on the lookout for the next Pink Floyd (or just on the lookout for something very special). Great band, great tape, great future! Write to: Disjecta Membra, c/o Marcus Mutz, Nordring 8a, 4830 Gutersloh 1, West-Germany.

ZAP - DEMO '89

(5 tracks, \$4 Europe/\$5 overseas)
Behind the rather childish name of Zap hides an Italian quartet with some interesting ideas. They formed around a year ago, when the members parted company with their previous bands. Their line-up is Willy on vocals, A. Bove on guitars, Indio on bass and Dave C. on drums. They are not easily categorized, but they're more metal than thrash. The music is heavy and slightly technical, but has some catchy parts in all songs. Willy's vocals are perhaps the most individual aspect of the band, with a very strange phrasing technique reminding me of Voivod. And song titles like "Psycho Dance" does little to alter it. You have to be patient with this tape as you will eventually grow to like it, provided you're into original/weird stuff. As their biography says: "go from present heavy metal to the psychedelic extreme". When I first received the tape, I was a bit hesitant. But after having listened to it for a couple of weeks, I must say that it gets better the more you listen to it. There is a lot of variation in speed and style, good song-writing and musicianship and the overall feel of the band is very pleasing. Not completely a killer tape, but quite clearly one of Italy's best bands! And I'm sure they'll be even better after some more time together. Write to: Zap, F. Intravai, Via del Lavoro 60, 40127 Bologna, Italy.

MOSHALL

MOSHALL - END OF DISCUSSION

(3 tracks, \$6)
Moshall is a thrash outfit from Denmark formed in May 1988, with members from Gefion, Helfield and Manifest. Today's line-up consists of Christian Poulsen on vocals, Bo Lund and Peter Andersen on guitars, Niels Bodker on bass and Jakob Schlein on drums. The tape also features some keyboard parts, played by Andre Andersen. It took quite a few listens to really get into this tape, but it grows better and better as time passes. Opener "Institution For Criminal Psychopaths" has a nice acoustic intro and build-up. The vocals are not quite as good as the rest of the tape, although they're still much better than "average". Moshall leans towards bands such as Mezzrow and, most importantly, Mids Touch in their structuring. The sound quality is very good, but the production has given the band a little "light" sound. The demo can probably best be described as melodic techno-thrash, but without being overly progressive. "To Your Fate (You're Bound)" show perhaps best that Moshall has some great musical talent within their ranks, but still need some more work on creating a truly unique sound (not exactly the easiest task for a thrash act these days). The next song, "Scream For Mercy", unlike the title suggests, is the most accessible track. It's more streamlined than the other tunes, and is more like calm Testament in approach. It's a nice power ballad with great guitar

solos that should raise some A&R eyebrows. Moshall is a band to watch - not completely without flaws - but well on their way to success. Write to: Moshall, c/o Earthquake Management, attn: #sten-gaard, Haraldsg. 51, 2. tv, 2200 Copenhagen N, Denmark.

STONE SOLDIER - DEMO '88

(3 tracks, \$6)
From the opening moments of this tape, I just knew I'd love it. The tape contains three straight-ahead power metal anthems in traditional fashion: catchy tunes and heavy riffs, and vocal work that borders on thrash. "Invincible Metal" is first song out, displaying some fine, brutal backround vocals in the chorus section. "Self-made King" is more of a mid-tempo number, featuring some nice guitar solos and powerful drum rolls. It does sound a bit similar to fellow Americans Armored Saint in style (see article), but Stone Soldier is original enough to make it on their own. "Society Of Victims" starts off on a thrasher note and has more in common with the likes of Defiance and Overkill. All songs are great and leaves you with the impression that this is a band that (sooner or later) will get the attention of the record companies. There is not much more to say about this tape, except that it comes highly recommended to all fans of power/thrash with a classiness edge to it. Write to: Stone Soldier, 20920 Community St. 1, Canoga Park, CA 91304, USA.

ABBY JAYE

ABBY JAYE - DEMO '89 (II)

(3 tracks)
This tape is the second one I've received from Abby. It contains two new songs and one old. And I just have to tell you now what I told you the last time around (no. 3): this lady has major talent. The production could still be a little better, but the songs are great pieces of work! "(You Can't) Fight The World" has more of a blues-based sound than the likes of "Burn Up The Night" and "Down To The Wire", both from the previous tape. It's as catchy as most of the stuff you can find on MTV, and I can't really see a reason why it's not already there. The next track, called "Don't Surrender", is a song that only needs a listen or two before it sticks in your mind. Last song is "Can't Say Goodbye", easily as good as the other songs on offer. Overall, this is another quality offering from this New-York based artist. But it does not exactly show any real progress from the first demo, either because melodic metal is rapidly becoming cliched territory or because the first tape is not that easy to improve upon. If you liked the first one, you will also like this tape. If you haven't heard Abby Jaye at all, what are you waiting for? Write to: Abby Jaye, c/o DTM/Daniel Monaghan, P.O. Box 7303, Grand Central St., New York, NY 10163-6028, USA.

SUCCESS - SEXX MACHINE

(4 tracks, \$5)
As of late, I've been getting more and more into glam (we're not interested in your personal problems - ES). While I've always respected the music, I hated the glam look and attitude. I still feel the look has got to go, but the music's become more pleasing with all the shit metal and thrash releases I've heard. Success has been a hot topic around here, amongst the glam scene. While the L.A. bands have become such too "corporate", this band appears to have grasped the essence of glam rock: sleazy, cheesy and bluesy! I've never seen them live, but based on this tape... that will change. Every song is heavily blues-based, but they don't wimp out like Warrant or Poison. Rather, the music retains a healthy dose of heaviness. They remind me of modern day Aerosmith, except for Saxx Creed's vocals, which are similar to if Peg Wee Herman sang metal. But they do amuse



me and keep the music enjoyable. Lyrically, the band need work. While two of the songs, being "Headbands And Heroin" and "Asleep In The Garbage", deal with good topics, "Sex Machine" and "Bow Wow" are brutal. "S.M." is fun, I guess, and actually not that bad. But the "Bow Wow" chorus is... well, read it: "...She's A Bow Wow Woof Woof, She's A Bow Wow Ruff Ruff..." (thank you, I've had enough-ES). Strange as it may seem, this is my favorite song musically, sounding a bit like Living Color! Oh yeah, the production is excellent. I foresee them having great success! Write to: Successx, c/o HEAT Communications, P.O. Box 35, Station D, Toronto, ONT. M4A 2M8, Canada.

T R E V O R L L A M A S

INVOCATOR - ALTERATIONS

(4 tracks, \$6/DM10/DKR40/3 pounds)
 Invocator hails from Denmark and should be a familiar name amongst thrashers in the underground. After their release of "Genetic Confusion" in autumn '89, they quite quickly built a name for themselves through 'zines and mags across the world. After having some problems with the line-up, they found some new members (see interview) and recorded "Alterations" during November '89. I was really looking forward to hear their new demo, as I loved their first. But did it live up to my expectations? Well, not quite! "Genetic..." was in the vein of Kreator and was really great, but on this tape they try to be more aggressive and have added a death metal feel to the songs. The songs run rather straight, with usual thrash/death drum beats; bass drum-snare-bass drum-snare in a much too fast manner. The drums are very high in the mix, so on the fast parts you only seem to hear the drums and vocals. The bass and guitars are too far back in the mix. This makes the tracks very similar and I had a hard time in separating the songs from each other. But as I understand it, this is the way Invocator wants to play. I have to admit that it's not as bad as it sounds like. I just feel (personally) that the music presented on this demo is hardly original. But as far as death metal goes, I am sure a lot of fans will love this tape. It's fast, furious and Jakob Hansen's raw and aggressive vocals (reminds me of Mills in Kreator and Travor in Sadus) are very cool, although I liked them better on the "Genetic Confusion" outing. Anyway, the lyrics are very good and intelligent material. They handle serious subjects, not your average "hamburger-on-the-corner" lyrics. I think they've spent a lot of time on the lyrics, and I'd like to give them credit for doing that. Write to: Invocator, c/o Jacob Schultz, Torvegade 7, 2 tv., 6800 Varde, Denmark.

H E I N - F R O D E H A N S E N

THORAX - BORDERLINE

(4 tracks, \$5)
 I wasn't very lucky with this demo tape, as all the band info. I received was in Dutch. The five-piece have been slugging around since 1982 and they've apparently released a tape called "Crusaders Of Steel" prior to this one. The sound is tight and good, but their cliched metal approach leaves something to be desired. Of the four tracks here, two are quite good and two are rather anonymous. The first song, entitled "Damned Berlin", is undoubtedly the best one: strong chorus and nice hooks. Melodic, yet still heavy enough for most of us. Last track, "Hammer And Nail" is also a good one in the typical Euro-style, but the likes of "Computer City" and "Actuaris" are, to be honest, not good enough to get near a record deal. Not with a good label, at least. I'd like to recommend Thorax to rethink their style a bit and try to come up with some more songs like "Damned Berlin". It can't be their goal to sound like a thousand of other bands, can it? They possess the ability to play well, who wouldn't after having been together for this long?! Not a complete disaster, but not much to appreciate either. Write to: Thorax, c/o Poweraid Management, Alexanderstraat 19, 4551 GL Sas van Gent, Holland.

SYSTEM DECAY - DECAY AND DESCENT

(5 tracks, \$6/DM10)
 System Decay is a German band that came together in May 1987. They've since developed their sound into something truly unique. This tape, recorded in April/May '89, contains over 50 minutes of all-new ideas. They put a lot of emphasis on having meaningful and unclitched lyrics and coupled with Claudia's extremely innovative vocals, they are not easily put into any category in the metal world. The vocals, sometimes thrashy and sometimes bordering on folk/opera, are a bit immature at some places, but that can probably be traced back to lack of experience and studio uncertainty. Still, Claudia is one of the most interesting vocalists around these days, and show a great deal of promise for further releases. System Decay's influences would probably take up an entire page and include all kinds of bands, from Pink Floyd and Kate Bush through to Candlemass, Sieges Even and Metallica. The lengthy songs have a lot of changing moods and rhythms in them, mainly controlled, but with some thrashy

outbursts from time to time. Also worthy of mentioning is the good vocal interaction between Claudia and Wolfgang/Gotz (as shown in "Insane", one of my personal faves at the moment). Despite their long running times, the songs never get to be boring. It's hard to describe what System Decay sounds like... they simply must be heard! It's a great band worthy of your respect for exploring new musical territories, whether you like them or not! Write to: System Decay, c/o Gotz Adler, Im Maierbruhl 31, 7800 Freiburg, West-Germany.

MYSTIC FORCE



MYSTIC FORCE - TAKE COMMAND

(4 tracks, DM12)
 Baltimore's finest strikes back with yet another killer release! After the brilliant '87 demo and the two-track "Blind Vision" from 1988, they've now slimmed down their ranks to a highly professional four-piece. Drawing influences from the best power metallers of this world, Queensryche/Fates Warning/Cripton Glory, they've come up with a unique sound that cannot be unsigned for much longer. "Take Command" is first song out, a truly stunning piece of music. After a short acoustic intro, the song goes straight to the heart of the matter with superb, technical riffs and a voice belonging in the Geoff Tate/Midnight League. Bobby's vocals are perhaps the best around today in any unsigned band. Great tempo changes and melodies are incorporated in the best possible way. Then it's "Awakened By The Dawn", my own personal fave. It starts off with some heavy frums and is a more controlled tune with nice backing vocals and great guitar-playing. How can a song like this not lead to a major label deal? It's a sick world we're living in. "Immortal Souls" was also featured on the '87 tape, but has now been given a new lease of life. Yet another melodic intro with acoustic guitars, reminding me of none other than seventies' pop-gods Styx! Perhaps the track that best shows Bobby Hicks' vocals talents. The rest of the band is Rich Davis on guitars, Chris Lambach on drums and Keith Manser on bass. All very talented musicians. The tape rounds off with "Silent, But Deadly", an instrumental that first sounds a bit like Candlemass before the speedy guitar takes you into the realm of true NGM workouts. With a lot of different breaks and changes, this is one of the better instrumentals I've heard for quite some time. "Take Command" contains over 20 minutes of sheer power metal brilliance and is simply a tape you cannot afford to miss out on! The band is now planning the release of a limited edition album and a new two-track tape, called "Shipwrecked With The Wicked". In addition to this, they're also negotiating with a major label. All info. and merchandise is available through Killer Productions, P.O. Box 28452, Baltimore, MD 21234, USA (if you're American, that is). All other nationalities, write to: Mystic Force/Demolition, c/o O. Jung, In der Dille 42, 4709 Bergk.-Runthe, West-Germany.

RECALITRANCE - DEMO

(4 tracks, \$4)
 I had never heard of this band before a penpal of mine started raving like mad about them. They were formed in January '89 by drummer Mike Stovick and guitarist Sean Echevarria. Their line-up was completed by Mike Smith (guitars), Bill Allen (bass), and Mike Klein (vocals). All these members have since quit or have been fired. The present line-up consists of the two founding members, plus Chris Howard on bass. The demo they sent me was recorded before the other members left the band. The music on offer is 1-

ke a death metal version of Voivod. All the tracks are complex with lots of different moods. The opening track "Craving Death" shows them at their best with melodic (if I can call it melodic) guitar parts, as well as some furious thrashy parts and some Voivod-like riffs thrown in just for the fun of it?! Another good track is "Destined To Die", which is very similar to "Craving Death", but with a catchy chorus planted within the song a couple of times. The two remaining tunes were not that noticeable, more like ordinary thrashers. This demo tape was very difficult to get into because of 3 different things: the vocals, the production and the lack of song structures. Mike Klein's vocals sound a lot like the singer in Epidemic (see MG #3) and I do not think he suits the music. But luckily, he's no longer in the band. Production is not the greatest around, and one of the guitars is buzzing like a chainsaw way back in the mix. The songs are ok, but they're confusing due to lack of any real structuring. They really must try to arrange their songs better. But after listening to the tape around five times, it really hit me. This is the type of music that needs time to grow on you. But as the bio. states, this is only a showcase of their early work. The newer material is said to be even more complex and better structured than this demo. They're currently preparing an album's worth of material and hope to find a label to spread their music throughout the world. They're striving hard to differ from the norm, but fail on this demo tape. But order this demo and judge it yourself. Every band deserve a chance to be heard. Write to: Recalitrance, 1625 Beulah Road, Vienna, VA 22182, USA.

H E I N - F R O D E H A N S E N

BLACK RITUAL - ENCRACHED UPON

(6 tracks, \$5)
 This is Pittsburgh-based Black Ritual's second offering, "Evil Madness Dwells" being the first. As opposed to the majority of thrash demos, "Encrached Upon" is a professional effort, recorded on a 24-track machine. It sounds clear and powerful, but the band is still in need of something more. The tape has its fair share of memorable/moshable moments, but not nearly enough to get close to a record deal. They are neither clones nor original and that makes them sound like a lot of other bands. The vocals sound raw in an unnatural way, but they manage to stay acceptable throughout the tape. It's straight-ahead thrash most of the time, with some more mellow moments from time to time. Side one is what I'd like to call average, but the second side is much better, especially the songs "Admission Pain" and "You'll Suffer". You can feel the pain in these tracks! Black Ritual has put a lot of effort into this tape, but I feel more originality is in order before they're ready to fight the world. It's a good tape, but not good enough! Another tape from Black Ritual is now being put together under the name of "False Pride" (release date unknown, but is probably available when you are reading this). Write to: Black Ritual, c/o Joe Mellon Jr., 428 Eden Park Blvd., McKeesport, PA 15132, USA.

DARKTHRONE - CROMLECH

(3 tracks, \$6)
 This is the Norwegian Death metallers Darkthrone's third offering to this dark and evil world of ours. And I must say it's a big improvement over last year's "Thucandra" tape, which I didn't like at all! They're still a heavy and evil band, but this time the songs seem to be more structured. Ted's (vocals/guitars) vocals are a little more acceptable than Gylve's were, but it's still deep throat stuff! What surprised me most was that when they're not racing away in the fast and furious parts, they actually bring some original ideas into the death metal concept. Gylve's drumming is complex and unusual in the slower parts, but comes too upfront in the mix. And the guitars too low. So the tape suffers a bit because of that. Songs like "Septicernal Past" and "Accumulation Of General Ration" works fine. The only complaint I have is... why do these bands insist on using titles that noone understands? So, all you death metal bands, put away your Oxford Dictionary and use your own vocabulary. Death metal fans will love the tape. Darkthrone has now signed a four-album deal with the Peaceville label and their first album should be out by January '91. Write to: Darkthrone, c/o Gylve Nagel, Nestvælfeltet 1A, 1400 Ski, Norway.

H E I N - F R O D E H A N S E N

BOURBON - STRAIGHT

(4 tracks, DM9)
 With a name like Bourbon and a demo titled "Straight", I think most people had expected something like the Georgia Sattellites. But this West-German quartet operates in the field of melodic speed. To a certain extent, such bands as Blind Guardian could be used to describe their sound, but Bourbon sacrifices speed for melody more than most other German speed outfits. It is certainly a good choice, but not always successful. Flat production and partly unoriginal vocals really

really spoil a tape that has some nice features. There are some good, technical guitar parts here, and the diversity of their material make up for most of it. But a song like the closer, "I Just Wanna Find You" is too derived from the aforementioned German school of speed to awaken much interest. And the guitar solo on this one sounds like a Halloween rip-off. This is the band's first tape, so improvements will surely be made. It is not the best tape I've heard lately, but still has some redeeming features. Write to: Bourbon, c/o Christian Sauber, Talpromenade 10b, 8510 Firth, West-Ger-many.

CONFESSOR - COLLAPSE
(3 tracks, \$6)

Confessor should be a familiar name to most of you by now. After having received some interest from Polygram after the '88 demo "Uncontrolled", they've now decided to release yet another masterpiece of doom. The Polygram interest is still there, so it shouldn't come as a surprise if they are already signed by now. I find "Collapse" just as good as "Uncontrolled". Perhaps not as immediate, but still an excellent showcase for a unique band. "Collapse" contains three tracks, all very slow and heavier than Candlemass will ever be (no other comparisons made). "Collapse Into Despair", "Alone" and "Condemned" are the songs on offer, the latter one being my personal fave, due to the extreme vocal work of Scott Jeffreys. On this track, he "speaks melodically" rather than sing, similar to what Fish used to do in early Marillion days (but in an extremely brutal/harsh/raw fashion). Musical comparisons would have to be early Trouble, but it's nothing more than an influence. Confessor is one of the truly few doom metal acts that have created a sound that could be called their own. The sound quality is very good and helps out the band a lot in bringing over their complex and technical rhythmic patterns. Needless to say, this tape is a must for all doom fans, and simply can't be ignored at the record company offices. Despite the rather high price, do yourself a favor and get this tape now! The "Secret" and "Uncontrolled" tapes are also still available for \$6 each and they have some cool t-shirts, as well. The "skull" design is \$10 and "alter" design is \$13. Write to: Confessor, P.O. Box 49091, Raleigh, NC 27629, USA.

CHERRY ST. - DEMO
(3 tracks, \$6)

The band was formed in California (L.A., where else?), but all band members are from Detroit. Cherry St. have appeared together with Guns 'N Roses on Headbanger's Ball in the US, where they talked about the "pay to play" thing in Los Angeles. Ken Anthony has been raving over this band in a couple of magazines, but I can't understand what all the fuzz is about. This is a quite ordinary hardrock band with no special charm or appeal in their songs (at least not on this tape). Roxy Dahl (vocals), Tom Monroe and Taz Bangs (guitars. What a stupid artistic name!), Jaime Scott (bass) and Slam (?) on drums, should return to their rehearsal room and write some memorable songs that stick in your mind days after! The opener, "Hellraiser", is pretty much a bad version of Britny Fox, and this goes for "Lickety Split", too. If this is big news in L.A., I'm starting to worry about the future of glam and hardrock (no silly comments here, Erik, ok?!). Closing number "The Walk" is not too bad, but it is like dancing with handcuffs on your legs! If you like your music very plain and ordinary, contact this band. Write to: Cherry St., c/o Tim Mathews, 13782 Cherry Street, Suite 6, Westminster, CA 92680, USA.

HEIN - FRÖDE HANSEN

MEDUSHA - NICE LITTLE STORIES
(4 tracks, \$FR10)

This is the Swiss quartet's first studio effort (they have previously released a live tape entitled "More Than Ever" then featuring female vocals). "Nice Little Stories" was recorded in October '89 and I hope for the band's own sake that they have progressed a lot since then. There are four up-tempo speed metal tracks on offer here, none of which really sticks to my mind and invites to repeated listening. It's all in presented in the typical Euro style, with some apparent influences in bands like Not Fragile and Blind Guardian (Mania, Running Wild and Helloween etc.). There are also some similarities to Dutch speedsters Paralysis (the difference here being that Paralysis sounds interesting and manage to come across in a convincing manner). All the songs are basically ok to listen to, but that's no longer enough. There are so many great bands out there waiting to be signed, and a band like Medusa will not stand a chance. That may sound harsh to the band, but it's the truth! Medusa need to rethink their musical approach, and start coming up with some ideas of their own instead of just following the trends. Write to: Medusa, c/o Alex Moser, Entensmoos, 1718 Rechthalten, Switzerland.

DEAD HEAD/LETHARGY - DOUBLE LIVE DEMO
(11 tracks, \$4/HFL10/3 pounds)

This tape is a bit strange, as when Lethargy split, two of the members formed Dead Head with some members from other bands. I don't know why they've chosen to include the old band instead of concentrating on new material, but I'm not complaining as Lethargy in fact is much better than Dead Head. I'll write about Lethargy first. Their line-up consisted of Tom van Dijk on vocals/guitars, Ronnie Vanderwey on guitars (these two later formed Dead Head), Tjerd De Jong on bass and finally Monkel on drums. It is very hard to describe their style, 'coz they incorporate so many different styles. They have furiously thrashy parts, slow parts, extraordinary mega-slow doom parts (check out the middle section in "The Road Not Taken") and death-like vocal lines. "The Wicked" and the aforementioned "The Road..." both opens with riffs and vocals very much alike Sepultura's "Inner Self", before both speeds off in old Kreator-like parts. "The Road Not Taken" has to be the best song with it's epic approach, and a lot of tempo changes that keeps the listener interested throughout the song. The vocals are very raw. As their bio. says: "...with a voice from the grave". Of course, it's not the best demo I've heard within this style and there are a few things which could have been done better. It's recorded live (although the sound is pretty good) and there are some feedbacks here and there. Another thing is the structuring of the songs, which is not so good. It's just a bunch of riffs thrown together, so it sounds a bit unfinished. Now over to Dead Head. I expected this to be better, as they should have learnt from the mistakes they did with Lethargy, but boy was I wrong! This was a big disappointment. Dead Head turned out to be a poor death/thrash band in the style of Slayer and old Kreator. It goes one-two-three-aaaaarrrrrrggghhhhhhh and full speed ahead. I just hate it when bands play so fast. Meaningless speed is presented by hundreds of bands, including this band. They also sound a bit "loose" in their songs. I'll stick to Lethargy. Some of the few, slow parts are acceptable, like a catchy riff in the beginning of "Chosen By Faith", but that's about it! Why can't bands like Dead Head see that only the original and special bands will survive in this business. The market's had enough of bands like this. If you want to order this tape, do it for Lethargy's sake, not for Dead Head. Write to: Dead Head, Leuwerikstraat 11, 8262 AH Kampen, Holland.

HEIN - FRÖDE HANSEN

MAELSTROM - DEMO '89
(5 tracks, \$5)

Maelstrom is yet another quality outfit from New York. They formed in the fall of 1988 and the fact that all band members are under the age of 20, make this effort all the more admirable. They deliver a mixture of thrash and death, but you can always hear what's going on. It sounds like death because of the vocals, and thrash because of the high-quality music. It starts off with a King Diamond style intro (including obligatory church organ and eerie voices). At the end of the intro, it's all quite brutal in deliverance. However, Maelstrom does not just go 200 mph, but keep a melodic edge to their mayhem. And they also slow down once in a while (as shown on "Bloody Remains"). "13 Within A Circle" starts off on a Slayeresque note, but with a real sense of direction within the song and several time changes. Not just a total blur, if you get my meaning: "Childhunt"

has a very interesting mid-section with great bass lines and a five second drum solo, before the demo launches yet another aural assault. The demo is highly professional in appearance and includes lyrics and band photo. And coupled with 28 minutes of great music, you could do far worse than to invest your cash into Maelstrom. If only the vocalist could've adopted a more melodic style, I'd say that Maelstrom is ready for some serious action. Write to: Maelstrom, c/o Gary Vosganian, 357 Richard Str., West Hempstead, NY 11552, USA.

TRYX - DEMO '89
(3 tracks)

Yes, Erik, I know you don't want glam in your magazine. But when they send me tapes like this to review, what am I supposed to do? Send them back?! What can I say about Tryx? I love their music and totally hate their looks! But I have always had the rule to judge a band by the music, not their looks. And song-wise, Tryx have succeeded in writing 3 fantastic glam songs, unlike Cherry St. (see review on this page). Tryx have some very catchy songs/melody lines, although they do sound a bit like P..... (I won't mention their name, due to Erik's hatred for the band). This is absolutely one of the best glam bands around and I think the band deserves a record deal now! "A Lot To Learn About Love" opens the demo, and it totally blew me away. As did "Cross My Heart". "Hold On" is a bit too ordinary for my liking, kind of like Bon Jovi goes glam (and I hate Bon Jovi!). So, though they look like chicks with... in their red, pink, blue and purple hair and dresses, their music is worthy of a listen. Glam is here to stay, and other styles of metal should try to accept it. Maybe that is too much to ask for? Write to: Tryx, 7507 Sepulveda Blvd., Suite 13, Van Nuys, CA 91405, USA.

HEIN - FRÖDE HANSEN

YOUNG TURK - TRAIN TO NOWHERE
(11 tracks)

This Miami outfit was formed in 1986 by vocalist Rhett O'Neil and drummer Rick Kaos. Soon after, guitarists Monte Hess and Michael Alexander joined. Bassist Billy Delivers completes the unit. The demo on offer is a very professionally made tape with glossy cover (and tape) and consists of eleven hardrock tunes. Their style reminds me of Skid Row and Cinderella. Most of the songs are very good, but there are always a few let-downs, like the ordinary "Take A Chance" and "Tequila Sunrise". But this is only a minor setback, as the excellent songs "Sophisticated Lies", "Love Me Like A Suicide" and "Ms. Satellite" contain the most memorable riffs I have heard in a long time. The tape has some Guns 'N Roses-like acoustic songs, too, and they work very well. Overall, this is a very good demo. But they should have reduced the number of songs featured, as the tape seems to go on forever. And the vocalist should try a bit harder, as he was out of tune sometimes. Apart from that, he does an excellent job (especially on "Sophisticated Lies"). I don't have the price for this tape and I don't know if they will answer your letters. So if you are wise, wait for the album. Write to: Young Turk, c/o Neon City Productions, P.O. Box 48, Cortland, NY 13045, USA.

CORPORATE DEATHBURGER - CORPORATE GRAVE
(7 tracks, \$4/NKR25)

First of all I wonder where they got the name from? It sounds cool! They're from Trondheim (Norway's self-elected metal capital, which has produced such wacky acts as Tin Drum, TNT and Stage Dolls).



MAELSTROM

Personally, I think the Barock area is where all the good bands come from! Equinox, Witchhammer, Loader and Arch. But C.D. is not anything like that city's other acts. They play a mixture of metal/punk and thrash with terrible vocals. The vocalist tries hard to sing in an English punk accent, but fails as his voice gets on my nerves after 2-3 songs. The music isn't that bad, although I'm not a fan of punk rock. "The first, The Best & The Rest opens this demo, and it is the best track here, as it shows the roots of the band. This goes for "Terror on Terror II", but this song tends to go on forever (meaning it's too long!). The lyrics are very socially engaged and depressive. It is too bad when bands sing about nothing but all the shit that happens: war, starvation, pollution and tv addiction are some subjects. I will not advise them to sack their singer because he suits the depressing lyrics. He sometimes remind me of Johnny Rotten (don't know if that's meant as a compliment or an insult?), especially on "Sinsack!". The riffs are a bit ordinary, so it gets a bit boring. People into punk/hardcore will probably like it, but this really isn't my kind of music. Write to: Corporate Deathburger, c/o A. Dahle, Sjetnehaugen 42, 7081 Sjetne, Norway.

HEIN - FRÖDE HANSEN

IGNORANCE - WHY

(4 tracks, \$8/4 posts)

Ignorance formed over two years ago in Nottingham, and they have so far released three demos. They've played with such bands as Sabbat, Toranaga and Metal Messiah, as well as several headliner dates in the East Midland area in England. But enough of their story, let's get down to business. Ignorance's sound is not very original and tends to be very influenced by the US crunch/thrash metal city no.1, the Bay Area in San Francisco. Bands like Testament and Metallica pops up in my mind when I listen to it, and although they're not ripping off any, the musical arrangements are very much alike these bands: acoustic guitars, pounding drums and interesting bass lines. My fave song on this tape has to be the thriest & most aggressive one, entitled "Hallo And Goodbye". The guitars sound very heavy, and there is some nice bass-playing from Stef. "Why" is more like a mellow thrash song. It's long and I guess a bit boring at the end with it's verse - pre-chorus - chorus structure. It could've been a shorter. Then there's "Pain With No Name", which is great. This one features a very original and special section in the middle of the song: bass guitar, double bass drums and keyboards! But Ignorance don't seem to care, as they pop up here and there. "Raging Sine" starts off with only bass and drums. The bass guitar is once again presented in a fine manner by Stef. It reminds me a bit of Testament's "Trial By Fire". I must give some credit to the band's rhythmic section for being tight throughout the tape, creating some fine moods and rhythms. The vocal work, courtesy of Neil, works better than most other British vocalists, and suits the music fine. Overall, this is a very good demo and Ignorance is worthy of some attention. Although they're not the most original band around, I think they are much better than many signed bands. When Blammer can get a major deal, I'm sure Ignorance can too. Do yourself a favor: get this tape (and read more about Ignorance in this issue's interview). Write to: Ignorance, c/o Steve John, 44 Castle Boulevard, Nottingham, NG7 1FN, England.

HEIN - FRÖDE HANSEN

BAROCK - ROCK LIKE THE AGE OF...

(6 tracks, \$7/DM10)

Firstly formed as Avalanche Danger way back in '79, the band changed their name in 1988 after appearing on the "Teutonic Invasion" compilation album. This tape is also from '88, but a new one should be out when you're reading this. I think the Barock monicker is very descriptive of the band's sound, their style of metal is very much influenced by classical music, something made all the more apparent (and interesting) with the use of violins. The Malsteen comparison is almost bound to be made, and I feel Barock stand on their feet even after a compar-

ison to the Swedish guitar-slinger. Of the six tracks on the demo, four are instrumental. But it is the vocal tracks which really make this a happening demo. The melodies and vocal lines really fit in perfectly with the music, but the lyrics themselves are rather cliched. Song titles like "Take A Shine To Heavy 'K' Metal" does not exactly do much to further my enthusiasm for the band. The instrumental tracks sound like most other instrumentals nowadays: technically good and no longer very interesting, as you have heard most of it before. "Avalanche Waltz" is a calmer tune much by the same lines as Malsteen, while "March Of Progress Guitar" sounds like something from Joey Taffo's "Out Of The Sun" album. Despite it's flaws, this tape is highly enjoyable. And as a new demo tape should be available by now, I wouldn't hesitate in asking you to send the band a letter. Write to: Barock, c/o Thomas Czigan, Im Birkengrund 10, 8050 Offenbach/M, West-Germany.

REACTOR - DEMO '89

(4 tracks, \$6)

Most Canadian bands I've come across are very special and, mostly, very good. The band called Reactor does not fit completely into this category. They are well above your average thrash band, but that special "something" is still missing. It has perhaps something to do with the vocals, which I did not particularly like for some reason or another. Reactor have a slightly techno-way of playing, with a clear sound and well thought out structuring in the songs. Judging from this tape they are striving for originality, and they partly succeed! I know they've received some rather good press in other mags, but I can't find myself praising this band into the skies. They have some weaknesses, and they have to get rid of these if they are to survive. First of all, I found the songs anonymous and not very catchy. There are some brighter moments, like on "Nosferatu", that leaves me wanting to hear more, but overall it is not what I'd call the first division of thrash. And the vocals should also be worked on. They just sound like so many other bands around that it detracts much from what Reactor seem to be about. They have the technical ability to play some great stuff and should be a serious contender within a year's time or so. The demo gets a small recommendation under hesitation. Write to Reactor, P.O. Box 1093, Station B, Montreal, Quebec, H3B 3K9, Canada.

Bishop Steel

BISHOP STEEL - DIE TO LIVE IT

(10 tracks, \$7)

Bishop Steel is an American unit with a penchant for diversity. The songs on the tape varies from the pure power sounds of "We Came To Rock" to more hardrock & blues-inspired tunes, as well as ballad-like numbers like "Don't Turn Away". It reminds me a bit of Armored Saint's excellent "No Reason To Live" (without the faster parts, I may add). Most of the 10 tracks are justified in their appearance and are very good, although the tape had benefitted a little by excluding a couple of tracks. The main criticism I have on "Die To Live It" is the flat and lacklustre production, which kills a lot of the band's power. Despite the diversity of the songs, Bishop Steel offers little in the way of originality, with a typical American sound. There are many bands playing the same stuff as this, but few that really sound interesting. I think Bishop Steel is one of those few. I must admit that I didn't like the tape much for about a week's time after receiving it, but repeated listening revealed an act that holds much promise. It certainly beats the living hell out of the Guns

'N Roses-type of bands. Since the band's 1986 inception, they've released an ep entitled "Rock The Nation" and a single called "Hold On". They've also had their fair share of line-up problems, so I do not if these products sound anything like "Die To Live It". If you're (mainly) into mainstream metal with some melodic touches, Bishop Steel could be for you! Write to: Bishop Steel, P.O. Box 414839, Kansas City, MO 64141, USA.



Written wholly in English - professionally printed with tons of underground thrash-core-death bands!!! Interviews: Transgression - O.L.D. - Incubus - Immolation - Insaniac - Napalm Death/Carcass - Accused - Angkor Wat - Groovy Aardvark - Leprosy - Pestilence - Bunt Offering... articles and stuff on Carnage (ex M. Onslaught) - Legion of Death - F.U.C.T. - Eviction - Gammicide - Uncle Scam - Deranged - Skeleton - Pandemia - Oblivion - Dr. Shrinker - Social Mayhem - Abomination - C.K.N. - Tyrannicide - Desexult - Wounded Knee - Social Disease - Megamosh - Jenzone Pepperone... Grind Core dept w/Deathcore - Sick - Disastrous Murnur - Sadistic Noise - M.A.D. - Violent Noise Attack - Bööd - Quorton and more - Zyklon B - Funeral Bitch - Doom's Day - Stygian - Bhopal Still - Syndrome - The Plague - Macabre - Not us - Unified Field - Extremity - Depression - Dept C - Dissection - Torment - Nocturnus (ex Morbid Angel member) - Assorted Heap - Bitter End - Fanic - Emils - Maticide - Autopsy - Decomposed - Moshim - Decimation - Arcane - Young Blood - Skeletal Earth - Genetide - War - Desecrator - Digos Goat - Maze - No Rules - A.S.W. - Acridity - Revenant - Hysteriah - Insane - Yesod Malkut - Excidium - O.F. Chaos - Idle Threat - Xyster - Sadistic Sex - Tribulation - Deadly Manover - Morbid Dscapitation - D.I.Y. - Mad Poltergeist - L.W.S. - Attaxe - Asphyx - Angel Death - Ronald Ruck - Deadlock - Death Mission - Thrashing Rage - Convulsed - Delention - D.I.S. - Brandamage - Wardance - Killer Elite - The Spudmonsters - Knetic Dissent - Metal Duck - Reverse Peristalsis - Masacre - Atrocly Exhibition - Sliced Pimples - Vietnam - Deceased - Invocator - Demolition Hammer - Usurper - Mezzrow - Melissa - Extrema - Vomit - Disaster Area - Scum - We Bite report... news! news!! News!!! More demos reviewed, zines, all addresses! Ads Spaces... Glossy Paper!

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FLOUNDER - TABLEUVIVANTI

(7 tracks, \$3)

Those of you remembering last issue will probably also recognize the psychotics known as Flounder. This is the Finnish's band fourth demo in 1 1/2 years and they are still very young (15-18 years old)! I desperately tried to describe them in the last issue... but I probably didn't get it right. And I assume I will not do any better this time around! This demo tape opened with a Voivod-like riff, so I thought they might have changed into something more structured. But, no such luck... They still play as weird as hell and with tons of time changes within the songs. It's almost impossible to get into it. Back in '85, Watchtower were way before their time. Perhaps Flounder is that too, and this is the future of music. If that's the case, then the world will be a pretty confused/psycho world. Some of the titles here aren't even proper words, but signs and symbols. Anyway, I could go on forever. But I think it's better if you just sent them \$3 and make up your own mind about this. Write to Flounder, c/o Timo Vaananen, Tahme-lanvaltatie 78 A2, 33250 Tampere, Finland.

HEIN - FRÖDE HANSEN



TRADE MAFIA

Lets get right into it. ISSUE #5 is here. Over 50 pages of Metal fill these pages. Again, glossy cover on the outside, and a smooth, three column laser typeset layout on the inside. This issue includes interviews with Testament, Wrathchild America, Oliver Magnum, Rage, Nuclear Assault, Powermad, Watchtower, Nitro, Kage, LA Guns, Dead On, Intruder to name a few.

Other features include over 70 demo and record reviews, a new fanzine section for you to see what other 'zines are on the scene, a brand new news column with some of the latest information about some of the best underground and label bands around. As if that wasn't enough, there is a trading section for all you tape traders (audio AND video) out there. Had enough? Well, there is plenty more to say about the photos and other features, but you'll just have to find out for yourself! Each issue is \$3 payable to ANDREW FREDRICK at the following address: 711 EAST ALTON, APPLETON, WI, 54911.

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PSYCHOTHIC WALTZ - DEMO '88

(4 tracks)

Psychothic Waltz is a band now starting to get a good reputation in the underground, and I can see why! This tape is pure quality, both in terms of music and overall presentation. They play progressive power metal, and this demo is the best I've heard since Secrecy's outrageous "Like Burning One's Boats" (see last issue). Psychothic Waltz have produced a tape with four great and catchy songs, while remaining original and technical. "And The Devil Cries" opens the tape and shows how flexible the drummer is, with many strange and complex rhythms. Lyrically, it deals with the misfortunes of gambling. "Successor" is next, and this is my fave song, containing both power and melody. It starts off with a "classical" intro before it switches over to a weird beat on the drums and a special effect on the guitars. It sounds like the they are flying around my room... cool! Buddy's vocals are very impressive and show a lot of talent and potential. His voice varies from screaming high-pitch tones to being melodic and touchy, as shown on the brilliant ballad "Halo Of Thorns". "I Of The Storm" is the least impressive of the four tracks, but its still a very good song. This is a very impressive demo tape and just has to get the band a deal. If not, the record companies are definitely total idiots! Psychothic Waltz should have a 12-track album out by the time you're reading this (more info. in this issue's interview) available from: Psychothic Waltz, 1345 Groveland Terrace, El Cajon, CA 92021, USA.

HEIN - FRÖDE HANSEN



SAHARA - DEMO '88/'89

(6 tracks, \$10)

Sahara, a California-based band, started out in 1987, formed by the classically-schooled Diane Arens and Phil Woodward. Diane had previously played in Warlord, who released three albums. They agreed that their songs could best be performed by a female vocalist, and that made the Swedish-born Liz Vandall join the band (soon followed by the band's rhythm section). Sahara's first demo was released in 1988 and their second in 1989. Their demos impressed me! Sahara has a powerful, melodic sound... and sounds original. At least, I couldn't find another band to compare them to. Liz Vandall's vocals are good, and Phil's guitar licks are impressive, too. The keyboards are not too much upfront in the mix and it gives the rhythm section enough space to operate within. One of the tracks here, called "Wasteland", was chosen to appear on the Concrete Foundations compilation and a video clip has also been shot for it. At the moment, they have around 20 songs ready. And with a good manager in Paul Sutter and a great relationship to the major magazines, I think the future of Sahara looks bright. I can surely recommend their demo tape. Order it now! Write to: Sahara, P.O. Box 93-1869, Hollywood, CA 90093, USA.

N I C O L L E B L O K

SNYPER - SOMETHING ILLUSIONARY

(4 tracks)

This is Snyder's second demo (I think-MFH. I believe its their fourth or so, actually - EB). I received a copy with extremely bad sound quality, almost like a rehearsal, so its hard to review it. The songs are basically great, but the vocalist is terrible (The drummer sings on some tracks, and the guitarist took care of the rest - EB). This is because their previous vocalist left the band, and as a suicidal solution they decided to do the vocals themselves. I would advise them to get a new vocalist before their next demo. On the other hand, the music is good, experimental thrash which sounds like a mixture of Voivod and Metalica. The instrumental "Coprophilia" proves this, with lots of tempo changes and acoustic guitars. "Belligerance" is more reminiscent of Norway's own Death Mission in the opening parts, but turns into a fine thrasher bearing no resemblance to Death Mission at all later on in the song. Snyder must find themselves a vocalist and record this demo again. With a good vocalist, they'll have more of a chance of being signed.

HEIN - FRÖDE HANSEN

EXEC JUSTICE - TRUE LIFE...

(6 tracks)

Exec Justice dates back to the year 1983 and this tape has been out for some time now. So Exec Justice might have improved a lot from then to now. I liked the demo very much in the beginning, but the interest didn't hold for more than a week or so. There are decent tunes here, but they have no catchiness. Granted, "True Life Is No Pleasure" is in the progressive vein, but its still possible to get the songs memorable. Just look at Watchtower, Toxic or Slaves Even. Most songs go for a bit too long and the vocals are only of average quality. The instrumental parts are actually the best on the tape. They are not over-the-wall in the quest for progression, either, and manages to keep a style accessible for most people. They possess some experimental ideas, but something is still missing!!! There are many techno-bands down in Germany these days, so you just have to be perfect. The demo tape is not as bad as you might think from this review, and I feel many people will like them. But if they're looking for a record deal, they would have to come up with better material than this. Write to: Exec Justice, c/o Rik Bernhausen, Bergstrasse 36, 5927 Erndtebruck, West-Germany.

CHARNEL LEGION - DEMO

(5 tracks, 4 pounds/\$8)

On first glance, I thought: "Wow, finally a British band that puts an effort in their band". The cover is professionally printed, with colours on both sides! But when I inserted the tape in my deck, I was shocked. The sound was terrible...

and I do mean t-e-r-r-i-b-l-e! It sounds like a rehearsal. Even my own band, Serpent, manages to get better sound with a (mono) cassette-player when we rehearse! Seems like they spent all money on the appearance of the tape and didn't have anything left for producing it. Music-wise its also a quite disappointing affair. I gave it a few listens, and it just got worse and worse each time. The tape had some highlights, like the opening riff on "War Crimes" and some parts off "Nameless City". Their major problem is their drummer, who is not able to keep straight rhythms and were off-beat several times. My advise to him is either to start learning how to play or give up on drumming. I'm not saying this to be cruel or anything, but a drummer I know almost destroyed this tape when he heard it! The vocals are also pretty weak and annoying. My advise to the band overall is to try making better songs next time around and use more money on production, instead of on the tape cover. Write to: Charnel Legion, c/o A. Garnham, 2 Hexham Close, Ipswich, Suffolk, England.

HEIN - FRÖDE HANSEN

WILDEE - BABY NAKED

(5 tracks)

This is an Italian band playing melodic rock/metal in the style of a thousand or so other bands. They formed in '89, and features Luca Lombardi on vocals, Rudy Costa on guitars, Ray Sperlonga on bass and Marco Fabiani on drums. The rest I know are that they've been touring East-Europe and that Warner Bros. have shown some interest in the band. Don't ask me why, though, as I find the tape extremely average. I mean, how can a song like "Medical School Dropouts" be of interest to people with their ears intact. Yeah, it does sound catchy. But its been done so many times before that you start wondering if heavy metal has outlived its usefulness. Their short bio. describes them as a mix of Dokken and Motley Crue, so if you like those bands, Wildee might be of interest for you. As for myself, I don't identify with stuff like this anymore! Write to: Wildee, c/o L. Lombardi, Vai G. D'Avarna 21, 00151 Rome, Italy.



OBLIVION - FICTION OF VERACITY

(6 tracks, \$6)

Three of the songs on this tape were reviewed in our last issue, but since that was an advance tape, I find it just fair to review this once again. After having released three demos (of various quality), Oblivion have certainly developed. Their last tape was death-oriented, but this one is nothing like that. The drastic change of direction is only for the better. One song on "Fiction..." is as good as all songs on the last demo combined!!! The music is complex, yet with melodic guitar-lines. Just check out the intro on the title track. Its the best

on the tape, and has a running time over 8 minutes. The instrumental, "Access To The Acropolis", works better than most other bands' instrumentals. Another cool melodic piece is "Imminent Regenerator". But don't think Oblivion have wiped out or anything. Its still heavy and crunchy thrash, its just that it didn't hurt the band at all to include some melodies (at least not in my eyes). The only drawback (as mentioned last issue) has to be Stéphane Picard's growling vocals, which I don't think fit in with the band's musical style. It may have worked on their previous releases, but not on this one. Many fans will probably disagree with me on that one, but I still feel Oblivion would be better off with a more melodic, high-pitched vocalist. Anyway, its still a fantastic demo and I loved every minute of it, so don't hesitate in ordering the tape. Oblivion are currently negotiating a recording deal, after they split from Mean Machine Records. Write to: Oblivion, c/o S. Belanger, succ. Jacques-Cartier, P.O. Box 21004, Longueuil, Quebec J4J 5J4, Canada.

HEIN - FRÖDE HANSEN



MACHINE - DEMO '89

(3 tracks, \$5)

It seems like the NY area is packed with talent these days. We have the brilliant Coldsteel leading the way in thrash and Maelstrom showing us some high-quality death. Now we have Machine, a brilliant outfit blending traditional power with a modern, thrashy sound. The tape itself is one of the most professional I've yet to see, including band photo, full-color cover and lyrics. The sound quality is faultless. All three tracks combines raw power with gigantic hooks, the opening track "Mechanikill" being one of the absolute best songs I've heard so far in 1990. "Pillage" is more mid-tempo and a bit less adventurous than "Mechanikill", although it has some great guitar workouts giving it a great boost. Last tune is "Misery (Loves Company)", more down-tempo than the previous tracks in the opening section, but soon delving into a high-speed approach, before the end sees some classically-oriented guitars beautifully incorporated with their heavier parts. What else can I say??? The band does not really come up with any new & innovative ideas, but they possess their own identity. I think perhaps Black Sabbath can be mentioned as a possible influence, but Machine plays a lot faster than that. It didn't take me long to get hooked on this tape and I feel Machine has the ability to become very successful in the future. If there is room for only one more "traditional power metal" band in the world today, you'll have to look good to find a better choice than this band. Highly recommended for all people reading this review, thrashers and keyboard fanatics alike! Write to: Machine, 190 32nd Street, Brooklyn, NY 11232, USA.

MEGORA - THE FOG

(5 tracks, \$7)

Megora is a band formed out of the ashes of Spit, another Swiss band. This is the first demo from the band so far, recorded with the help of Poltergeist's V.O in a 24-track studio. The end result looks professional, but most importantly, they have some musical talent on display here as well. Its very Bay Area-oriented, but they've retained a certain European flavor. You might have heard all the ideas on "The Fog" before, but its all executed well and has some interesting breaks and riffs. The songs are varied in style and this also helps the band sound like someone to remember in the future. But they also need to work more on finding a sound and style that could be described as their own. "The Fog" is perhaps more melodic than the likes of Defiance etc., and must certainly rank as one of Switzerland's more interesting bands around these days. I feel I must give a special mention to the bass-player here for some great work. Other than that, I think I can call this tape a worthwhile investment. Write to: Megora, c/o T. Scherrer, Baselstr. 43, CH-4222 Zwingen, Switzerland.

THERIAC - CLAUSTROPHOBIA

(5 tracks)

They started up in 1987, wrote a couple of songs and appeared on a compilation tape. That's about all the info. I have on these guys. The line-up is Marco on vocals/guitars, Bas on guitars, Frank on bass and Harry on drums. They play speed in the style of old Slayer, maybe a bit faster. The songs, with the exception of the title track (which is pretty good),

are average. The reason the title track is better is perhaps because they don't play 230 mph on it. Its more like an ordinary thrasher with many time changes. "No Fantasy" isn't that bad, either, but the snare goes chaka-chaka-chak most of the time and it doesn't have such variation. Only the slow bridge towards the end passes my demanding taste. There is really nothing more to say, except that fans of old Slayer/Kreator should write them a letter to get a copy. Write to: Theriac, c/o Marco van Hulst, Hogevecht 187, 1102 H7 Amsterdam, Holland.

HEIN - FRODE HANSEN

PREMONITION - DEMO '89

(4 tracks, \$4 US/\$5 overseas)
Hailing from Texas must be a big advantage for this band. The state is known for producing a lot of great underground faves, like Arcane, Watchtower, Solitude Aeturnus, Acridity and Gammicide. These bands can be related to the word "quality", and so can Premonition. They formed in September '88 with Kirk Andrews (guitars) and Rodney Mullins (drums). Their line-up was later completed by vocalist Chris Ortiz, bassist Trey Williams and guitarist Johnny Nuckols. A year after, they recorded and released this 4-track demo to the public. As said already, the band can easily fit among the other Texan bands, their style being complex and progressive thrash. And they deliver the goods with true talent! The band sounds tight and the songs are great. I had some problems swallowing the songs in the beginning, but after a few more listens, the tape grew better and better. Vocalist Chris has a very "screaming" voice, and that may put some people off. But, that's up to each listener to decide for himself. People into techno-thrash and complicated song structuring will probably find this tape very good and original within its style. They could be described as a cross between Watchtower (although not as complex) and Death Angel. Best songs are presented on side 2: "So Heavenly Bound", containing an unusual spoken piece in the mid-section and "Destined Fate" with a very interesting and catchy chorus. The tracks are great lyrically too, especially "Self-mutilation". This song explains the band's view on drug abuse. I think that Premonition is definitely a name we will hear a lot more of in the future, and I'll advise you to buy this tape now! Write to: Premonition, c/o Johnny Nuckols, 424 West Park Row #272C, Arlington, Texas 76010, USA.

HEIN - FRODE HANSEN



HYPOCRISY - TRUTH OF DECEPTION
(5 tracks)

I can't seem to find all the stuff that was sent me from Hypocrisy except "Truth Of Deception" itself, so I do not have any background info. here. Whats on display here is what I'd like to call "traditional thrash". It contains some very infectious riffs and is professionally presented, but it also sounds a bit too Bay Area to score many points on originality. Opening track "Let Me" is a good example of this. The intro riff sticks in your mind the first time you hear it, but the song itself (although its good), does not exactly set any new standards in the realm of thrash. Side two's opener "Creeps Upon You" is even better, mainly because of the high-speed soloing and angry vocals. There is also a neat echo effect on the vocals on this one. "Home In Hell" starts off with a dialogue piece and an accompanying drum roll and evolves into yet another ordinary thrasher. By that, I mean a great song seriously in need of finding some more original ideas to really move the record labels' heads their way. As Hypocrisy is a trio, I think I will advise them to find a second guitarist. Perhaps some new blood is what they need to get that special "something". The band isn't bad in any way (far from it actually), its just that there are too many bands like this. As for now, I think the tape is worth getting for ordinary thrashers, while more progressive-oriented people should wait for the band's next offering. Write to: Hypocrisy, 99 Janwall St, Annapolis, MD 21403, USA.

BRAINDAMAGE - KINGDOM OF MADNESS

(5 tracks, \$4 Europe/\$5 rest...)
Italy's Braindamage is starting to get their name around the world because of this demo tape. The five tracks it contains are all thrashers of the ordinary kind, with the exception of a few parts here and there. It's a concept tape, but I haven't been able to fully understand the story so far, despite the fact that the lyrics are well-written. And this is a major plus. The music is good too, but the drums are sometimes out of place, if you get my meaning. Its like they don't fit in with the guitars. This may be due to the drummer's lack of talent, but it could also be because of the production. Some of the songs are partly good/partly boring, like "Towards Theasy". The chorus and middle section are great, but the verses doesn't work out too well. This also goes for "Running On Ashes". Don't get me wrong when I present the tape in a partly negative way, because I really like it. It's just that I feel a responsibility to the readers to give them an objective view on the demo (How could a review ever be objective??? They are not supposed to be objective - ES). The tunes that work out are "Braindamage" and the title-track itself. The vocalist has a cool voice, but he sings with an Italian accent. However, it does not bother me too much. Braindamage is currently in the studio to record their debut album, which will probably be called "Hands Of The Living God". I'm looking forward to hear that one and I really hope the band will send me copy (despite this not-so-good review). Write to: Braindamage, c/o Planet Of Storms, Via Padova 14, 1410152 Torino, Italy.



HUMANICIDE - IMPRESSIVE INCISION
(4 tracks, \$4)

As this tape has now been available for over two years and the band are currently preparing for a new one, please don't use this review to make up your own mind about the current state of Humanicide. A new tape to be called "A Day In The Life" will include 9 or 10 songs and will be recorded in a 24-track studio shortly after writing this. It also looks like they'll make an album sometime in 1991. Humanicide were earlier known as Death Wish and Crimson Blade, and released a tape entitled "Death Machine". "Impressive Incision" is a fast and brutal offering but I still found it to be melodic in a strange way. Vocally, the tape is a bit too hardcore-ish for my own liking, although they do fit in well with the music. There are not that many slower parts in any of the songs, something I feel lets the tape down a bit. Due to the master tape being worn out, the quality of the sound also leaves a lot to be desired, but I must admit having heard far worse than this! My own fave of the four has to be "Nukeatrix" with some great backing vocals and more hook-oriented style. But its not exactly listening for the weak of heart, thats for sure! I don't feel that this tape is to be recommended as it is, so I'd advise you to check out their new tape instead. They possess musical talent, its just my own taste that a bit removed from this particular style of brutal thrash. Write to: Humanicide, c/o Jeff Madden Management, 914 East Lytle St. #3, Murfreesboro, TN 37130, USA.

SACRAMENT - DEMO
(4 tracks, 3 pounds)

England seems to be catching up with the rest of the world by producing many good metal bands recently and Sacramento is no exception. Formed about a year ago, they recorded their debut demo in Nov. 1989. The band consists of Gas Bellamy/Chris Lloyd on guitars, Dave Lloyd on bass and Aynsley Dickinson on drums. Their vocalist, Sime Rose, has left the band in order to join Demi Annesia (now signed to Peaceville Records). Sacramento's songs are dangerously close to those of Metallica, some parts even bordering on plagiarism. Like the mid-section of "Time To Die", which bears close resemblance to "Orion", even down to the solos and bass-lines. This was awfully annoying,

but hey... they ain't that unoriginal! They have some own ideas, too, which is great. The 11-minute epic "Day Of Judgement" is a fine example of that. Lots of tempo-changes and great riffs. The high-pitched vocals of Sime Rose towards the end are extremely cool. Its a shame they have lost him, as he really had a voice to do this stuff. The melodic and acoustic "The Sacrament" was remarkably well-played. A big drawback here is the production of the tape, which does not work as well as it should. The "tightness" in the band sounded a bit loose, but what can one expect from a demo recorded four months after a band's inception. But the music itself is very good (with the exception of some Metallica-like riffing), and with a running time close to 30 minutes, the tape is well worth the money asked. Write to: Sacramento, c/o Aynsley Dickinson, 25 Church St., Royston, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S71 4GV, England.

Metal Invasion

c/o Günter Thieme - PSF 27
Waldenburg 9613 - Germany
phone - Waldenburg 687

Metal Invasion
german fanzine

DECADENCE - DEMO '89
(3 tracks)

This Oslo-based band first came to my attention when I saw them on a local satellite-tv channel a while back. Recorded in December 1989, the demo isn't well produced (when you take into consideration it was done in a 24-track studio). The band aren't too happy about it, and I understand why. The demo opener, "The Conqueror", is an ok thrasher. Not the best music on this earth, but certainly not the worst either! "Lies" is, on the other hand, very good. It reminds me of latter-day Kreator material, slower and more technical perhaps, but just as aggressive. Last track out, "Eat Shit And Die", is as good as the first one, but nothing too special. What makes the tape a stressening listen are the uninspiring and monotonous vocals of Lars Augustad. But as I understand it, the band is now looking for another vocalist, allowing Lars to fully concentrate on his guitar duties. My advice to the band would be to develop more songs in the style shown in "Lies", and get a proper vocalist. The band might have a chance then. They are planning to enter the studio in Aug. '90 to record a new tape, so ask for it when writing the band, as this tape is only a promotional effort. Write to: Decadence, c/o Humlev. 11, 0870 Oslo 8, Norway.

BATTLEFIELD

BATTLEFIELD - TIME TO RETHINK
(4 tracks)

With t-shirts of Fates Warning, Mordred, Toxic, Hades and Psychotic Waltz covering their bodies, I was expecting a band playing an extremely progressive form of music. I was wrong... partly. You might already be familiar with the Battlefield name, as they released a mini-album some time ago to critical acclaim in most magazines. The mini-album, called "We Come To Fight", included five tracks. They've been around since the beginning of 1987, but are still on the lookout for a good deal. "Time To Rethink" is a highly professional effort, including full-color cover and band photo, lyrics and a well-produced sound. The vocals, courtesy of Connie Ernst, are extremely melodic and suits their melodic speed approach like a hand fits a glove. Closest comparison would have to be the girl in System Decay (see review elsewhere). The title of the demo refers to the world's current state concerning the environmental problems, certainly separating them from the usual gore/death/torture approach used by so many bands today. The vocals might put some people off, but I urge you to give the band a try, as I really believe they are good/original enough to really make an impact on the metal scene. They mix fast and slower parts in a natural way and always emphasize on retaining good melodies/vocal lines. All songs are very good, although the lengthy title track is in a class of its own. What I would like to hear now, is the band doing a ballad just to confirm my thoughts that they are capable of gaining "broader appeal" and not limit the band's image to being "yet another German speed combo". Unfortunately for the readers of this magazine, "Time To Rethink" is only meant as a promotional tape. Write to: Battlefield Management, c/o P.M. Fischer, Wilh.-Lachse-Str. 14, 7149 Freiberg a./N., West-Germany.

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CITY KIDDS - DRESSED TO KILL
 (3 tracks, 2 pounds)
 When some bands (no names mentioned!!!) start making a lot of money, many bands will follow in their footsteps and use the same kind of images and gimmicks. I have to tell you that City Kidds is one such band. Their glam rock style brings nothing new to the world and I seriously doubt they will ever break out of Wales. Don't get me wrong, because they're not that bad. In fact, their songs are good and, most importantly in this style of metal, catchy. But the quality of bands in the Los Angeles area are "not of this earth". This is probably due to all the money circulating here, and it will be hard for a band like City Kidds to compete with something like that. "Street Tease" is a good AOR song with keyboards and "Tonight", plus the title track, are more in a regular glam/sleaze vein. The backing vocals are too weak, while Jamie Kall (just another mainstream glam name) tries hard to sound American. He has now left the band, and I hope they've found a more suitable dude to replace him. The band will record a new demo called "Atomic" in June '90, on which their guitarist Mick Vallance and bassist Stevie C. Bright will handle the vocal parts. Good luck with that tape, guys, I hope it'll be better. I doubt they will send me a copy after this review, but anyway.... Write to: City Kidds, 11 Drysgol Road, Radyr, Cardiff, United Kingdom.

HEIN - FRODE HANSEN

St. Vania

ST. VAIN - ACTA SANCTORUM
 (4 tracks)

Despite seriously needing a new band name, I cannot find much more to criticize on this tape. In contrast to many other German bands in the style of Blind Guardian, "Acta Sanctorum" has a brilliant sound quality and all songs are actually worthy of vinyl appearance. Their sound is slightly original, although they have nothing that can be called truly innovative. Other band that springs to my mind are Scanner and Angel Dust, the first of these being the closest comparison. The more I listen to it, the more I like it. And I can't say I've found a fave track, either. They have some up-tempo songs, like "Black Widow From The Orion" and a great ballad called "Rose". "Wild Century" is a "retrospective view to the emotional events in this century" and contains some interesting ideas. They also have some Halloween-ish tendencies, but those are barely worth mentioning. They are good enough to stand on their own. I also like many of the guitar parts shown on this tape, like the calm opening of "Wild Century". This song is a bonus, so I don't really know if it will be on the tape you might purchase yourself. There is not much more to say really, as quality speaks for itself. If you're into any of the afore-mentioned bands, this

will be a great addition to your library of melodic speed/power tapes. Write to: St. Vain, c/o S. Hieronymus, Am Fort Elisabeth 15, 6500 Mainz 1, West-Germany.

MALICIOUS ONSLAUGHT - THRASHED BLACK
 (6 tracks)

Malicious Onslaught describes themselves as "Black Thrash". I would just call the band ordinary. Despite a running time on 35 minutes and the band having been together since 1986, I can't find much to say about this band that hasn't already been said about all other thrash bands. The demo opens with a brutal scream that has no purpose, as the first song opens with a short and melodic guitar intro. The rest of the tape is more or less 200 mph rifferama, with a not-so-good sound quality to boot. The songs are basically ok, I guess, but I expect something more from a band that's been together for so many years. Is anything separating them from the norm? I don't think so. There are a couple of more melodic parts, most notably on "Third World Away", which are good. But the growls of an incompetent vocalist does not exactly help the band out. They've hopefully progressed beyond this point by now, I certainly hope so. As there are just three members in the band, I'd like to recommend an additional guitarist and a more melodic, separate vocalist. Some new blood is well in order to fully get Malicious Onslaught off the ground. Write to: Malicious Onslaught, 25 Stony Point, NY 10980, USA.



STYGIAN - SECONDS 'TIL DEATH
 (6 tracks, \$6)

All people with respect for themselves have already heard about Stygian, and it was really no surprise that their first tape, "Earthly Homicide", sold no less than 4700 copies. Now they're back, with a vengeance! "Seconds 'Til Death" is one of the most professional tapes I've ever come across and sound quality cannot be faulted. Responsible for the production: There none other than David T. Chastain! There are three new songs on offer here, the latter three being the ones that appeared on "Earthly Homicide". The new material is even better than the old tunes. The containing more "drive" and power. The band is still fast, heavy and infinitely memorable. The latest addition, vocalist Gary Golwitzer (ex-Wrath), does a highly convincing job and retains the feel of the vocals heard on "Earthly Homicide". The band's song-writing has, to use some cliched terms, matured immensely. Stygian have moved further away from the early Metallica tag and I don't think they will stay an unsigned underground band for such longer. Someone, somewhere must have the intelligence to pick this band up... now! Write to: Stygian, P.O. Box 476933, Chicago, Ill. 60647, USA.

MORTIPHOBIA - INCOMINY BELOW
 (3 tracks, \$4)

Here we are, then. A short bass-solo and a storm of lyrics, and the tape goes on and on. Yes, Mortiphobia's demo is in my cassette-player. First song is "Citadel Of Souls", second is "Beyond The Abyss" and the third one is "Grotesque Deformities". Well, "Beyond The Abyss" is not exactly a song. It has music, of course, is very slow and perfect if you want to relax. But the vocalist is whispering on it, not singing. Mortiphobia plays death metal in the style of Therion, and they play very slow. But I like them! This is their first (and only) demo so far, released in January 1990. The band recently went through a change in line-up and has now taken the name Eviseration. They were once known as Memento Mori, then as Mortiphobia and now as Eviseration. I'll not be surprised if they changed their name again tomorrow, calling themselves Apocalypse or something like that. The band members have a lot of practice and possess their own instruments, and this helps a lot. Don't forget that Sepultura just bought their own equipment. Anyway, if you want to buy their tape just send them the \$4 asked. Or a blank tape and 2 IRC's for a taster. Write to: Mortiphobia/Eviseration, c/o Jared Davinson, 66 Evergreen Cr., Kitchener, Ont. N2M 4J4, Canada.

D E M I

SAVAGE THRUST - EAT 'EM RAW
 (6 tracks)

Savage Thrust have been around since '85 and is yet another great offering from the city of NY. The band have released two tapes prior to this one, and is also featured on a compilation album from the New Renaissance label. The tapes have sold in excess of 3000 copies. "Eat 'Em Raw" is meant as a promotional release, and the band hope to tour Europe when it will be released as an album. According to my information, the album has already been picked up for distribution in Mexico. In the meantime, Savage Thrust hope to record some new material this summer.

"Eat 'Em Raw" is more like thrash than traditional power metal, but has enough variation not to be thrash only appeal. "Acid Bath" even has some parts bordering on doom metal. Overall, their sound and style is not that original, but the songs are good and the sound is full of punch and power. They've certainly got catchier material here than on the demo they released in '87. "Eat 'Em Raw" and "Seed Of Deon" are both great tunes and have crunchy riffs delivered convincingly. As the tape is longer than the average demo, it can ultimately sound a bit monotonous. But that really depends on how many demos you listen to in a day. For a "regular" fan, it won't be a problem at all. For 'zine people, it might cause some minor irritation. But this is a good tape, no matter what! Write to: Savage Thrust, P.O. Box 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302-0002, USA.

CREEPSHOW - DEMO '89
 (3 tracks)

Through the pages of Power Packer, I was made aware of Creepshow's existence. The Maryland-based trio sent me their first, and so far only, tape and I'm quite glad they did. They started almost six years ago, then calling the band Purgatory. A couple of years later, they changed to Sinister, before settling on Creepshow. The band's line-up is now Andy Gibson on vocals/guitars, Louis Strachan on bass and Bill Ewald on drums. Creepshow plays a thrash/power crossover sort of thing, with some similarities to the first two Metal Church albums. Andy's vocals are very similar to those of David Wayne and they have also got some musical ideas in that direction. They have some brilliant moments, like on the opener "Death Toll" and final cut "Raised Under Fire", but I feel the songs could have more variation (like incorporating some slower, acoustic parts and more "melodic" vocals on a couple of occasions). But the demo stands as a safe investment, and a great first attempt (I'm not completely sure it is). The band is very close to being great, and I'd love to hear how the band develops in the future. If they could just come up with some more varied songs and get one step away from the obvious Metal Church influence, I'd say we have a band destined for a bigger future. They possess great potential and the tape comes highly recommended. Write to: Creepshow, c/o Bill Ewald, Rt 1, Box 427AA, Grasonville, MD 21638, USA.

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IRON LIGHTNING - DONT FEAR THE DARKNESS
 (4 tracks, \$5 Australian)

November '87 saw the birth of the band called Iron Lightning. The quartet from Brisbane recorded this, their first tape two years later. Further plans for the band is to record a self-financed album, that will probably to appear towards the end of this year/early '91. Judging from the cover artwork on this tape I was expecting something far more brutal than this. Iron Lightning is more like power metal than thrash, with an obvious penchant for melody. The tape production of the tape kills a lot of the band's power and does not exactly help the (overall) ok songs. Australian bands seem to steer away from pure plagiarism, and this band is no exception. There is nothing really special or innovative to find here, however, so I doubt they will attract much label interest. The vocals on "Dead On Arrival" have an Australian phrasing to them, while the guitar-sound is cool and weird. But the overall impression is let down somewhat by average vocal work and the songs should have been more adventurous to fully grab the listener's attention. Iron Lightning do have some good ideas, but they are simply too few and far between. An ok tape, but nothing too special. Write to: Iron Lightning, c/o G. Bryant, 188 Oxley Road, Graceville, Queensland 4075, Australia.

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DISTURBED - DON'T EXPECT ANY MIRACLES
(4 tracks, \$5)

The title of the demo says "don't expect any miracles". I'm glad I followed their advice! Their biography states "what is art to one man is crap to the next". Ok, I think that very much sums up my overall impression of Disturbed. No, it's not that bad. It's just that the majority of their riffs are 200 mph stuff that flies around in all directions at all times. This makes the songs lack a sense of a direction and you're beginning to wonder if this was the purpose of the tape - to have people dazed and confused trying to figure it out. Disturbed have previously released an album, entitled "Disturbing The Peace". As I'm not familiar with it, I can't make a comparison. I'm sure the band is great in many people's eyes, but the tape just didn't do anything for me. They obviously know how to handle their instruments, so I think they should find a more melodic style (not necessarily meaning "commercial") and evolve on the strong elements they already possess. The tape is professional in appearance and if you're into bands like Leproc, you will probably like them. By the way, the band is much better on the few occasions they slow things down a bit. Write to: Disturbed, P.O. Box 6001, Minneapolis, MN 55406, USA.



UNDERGROUND EMPIRE

c/o Stefan Glas
Seufzerweg 5
D 6792 Ramstein - Miesenbach 1
West Germany

**FANZINE &
DISTRIBUTION**

TOKKATA - THE WAITING
(4 tracks, DM10)

Tokkata is a German band that started up in December 1987. The year after, their first demo, called "The Exodus", was recorded. But the band has since changed their style, so they recorded "The Waiting" in order to give people an idea as to what they're about. The Tokkata line-up is Thomas Barthelmeis on vocals, Mario Hahn/Jörg Gratz on guitars, Helmut Barthelmeis on bass and Bernhard Winter on drums. Their style is extremely progressive, and more than a few ideas hint towards Sieges Even. I could go as far as saying that Tokkata is the first band that has managed to clone S. Even well. There are a thousands of tempo changes and breaks present, several sound fx and some dialogue pieces. The title track is great and hi-tech, and so is the tape's last track, "Death Dreams". "Money Rules" is a bit more ordinary in the opening, but soon develops into yet another piece of techno metal. By now, you must be thinking that this demo is close to perfect. Well, there are a few things I have to point out. First of all, the vocals are not quite strong enough. I said "not quite", meaning that they'll probably be good enough next time. The second (and major) complaint is the tape's appearance. The cover "artwork" looks like it has been drawn by a four-year-old and the tape is just a black tape with amateurish labelling. This makes the price seem high, and might scare some people off. But please, if good progressive music is your main concern, this demo is an essential purchase. Write to: Tokkata, c/o B. Winter, Bei der Kiesgrube 13, 8727 Zeuzleben, West-Germany.

MESSIAH - IN THE FLESH/LOOK...
(5 tracks, \$6)

Messiah is an American band that I have seen in several fanzines. As the reviews have been positive, I decided to check them out myself. They sent me two tapes, the first being the "In The Flesh" demo, which has been out for quite a while already. The second, and more interesting tape, is an advance tape entitled "Look Unto The Cross". I won't say much about "In The Flesh", other than its well-played tape containing cliched thrash. "Look Unto The Cross" is much more experimental, containing some Spanish guitar intros and cool dialogue pieces. I'd still say the band needs some more work before they're ready for a full-length album, but at least they're progressing in a healthy pace. My main problem with Messiah is the vocals, courtesy of Stephen Harris. They're not very inspired, and can best be described as average in their style. It seems like Messiah is a band whose time has not yet come. Their songs need some more "hooks" in them and some better vocal work (including better use of backing vocals). I may sound very negative here, as "Look Unto The Cross" is a good attempt at something slightly new. But as far as "In The Flesh" goes, I can't recommend it. The only interesting piece on it being a cover version of the "Green Acres" theme tune. But as is the case with all joke songs, it has limited appeal after a few listens. I'd like to give the band respect for trying hard. Next tape/album will probably be a lot better (especially with a new vocalist). Write to: Messiah, c/o S. Harris, 1319 Brandt St., Greensboro, NC 27407, USA.

WENCH - STONE COLD
(5 tracks)

This NY-based band was presented briefly in MG no.2 and is now back with demo #2, called "Stone Cold". The first thing you notice is the cool cover artwork and new logo (courtesy of bassist Ally Gamble). But the most important thing here is surely their music. Wench lies between the power and thrash tag - always melodic in a brutal way. Yana Chupenko's vocals may be a bit too harsh and growly for some people, but I find them better here than on the "Sumus Quod Sumus" tape. "Forced Labor" is a total thrasher with a kicking rhythm and a neat, emotional guitar solo in the middle. It packs both melody and raw power and convinces me that this band won't have any problems taking over from where Ice Age left off. "Thea" is a short and strange tune changing from the calm to ruthless and back again several times. Not a song that deserves a vinyl release, but different it is! Musically, Wench has many similarities to Ice Age and Megadeth, but they do stand on their own. As the tape only landed on my desk one day before the issue going to print, I haven't been able to listen to it as much as I'd like. But I feel it safe to say that Wench has improved upon "Sumus Quod Sumus" and you could do far worse than spending some dollars on this quality offering. They'll be signed! Write to: Wench, P.O. Box 1242, Jackson Hts., NY 11372, USA.

THE RECKONING - ABSENCE OF MIND
(5 tracks, \$4)

Yet another NY-based band, this one. In the years the band have existed, they've come up with three demo tapes, "Threads Of Reality" in 1988, "Immoral Majority" in 1989 and "Absence Of Mind" from 1990 (all demos contain five tracks). Regular thrash is their game, with not many own ideas incorporated. Although the end result is a little better than this rough description. The members of The Reckoning are Scott Cowlich on guitars, Dave Holton on bass (both these are also credited as vocalists) and Shane Holleran on drums. "Absence Of Mind" is a professional effort, containing both photo and lyrics. The sound quality is also very good and enhances my overall impression of the band. But the songs are not good enough to warrant a record deal. The one exception being "Reflection", containing a neat intro and interesting bass-lines coupled with enough breaks to maintain interest. It goes "techno" towards the ending, and if they come up with any new material like this, I'll say they have a decent chance after all. But the rest of the tracks on "Absence Of Mind" is after all just "another collection of thrashy tunes" (I'm beginning to get fed up with thrash these days, it seems). Anyway, if

you want the tape, send the band \$4. If you want all three tapes, send \$10. Write to: The Reckoning, 548 Gardner Road, Horseheads, NY 14845, USA.

EXTREMA



EXTREMA - REHEARSAL 24.2.89
(9 tracks)

Originally known as Killdozer way back in 1982, they changed their name to Extrema shortly after and have since been getting much praise for their brand of thrash. Despite this tape only being a rehearsal, it has sold 1000 copies (and is no longer for sale). Extrema first got my attention when they appeared in Eldritch Assemblage, so I figured they were progressive in one way or another. They can be called technical, perhaps, but progressive they're not. But that does not mean they're not any good. It was just something else than what I had expected. Needless to say, the quality of tape could be better, but the songs still manage to shine through (most of them, anyway). Extrema are not near the Bay Area style, but concentrates more on melody and innovative riffs. Best songs here are "And The Rage Waits", "Prepare For The Shellshock" (despite its uncomplicated structuring) and "Metal Thrust" (good leadwork, and a title that is too cliched). There is a Dead Kennedys cover tune here, too, in the shape of the legendary "Too Drunk To Fisk" (I remember this song from when I was 14 or so and had no hair at all!). Its an ok version, although I'm not into that particular style of music anymore. Extrema have now recorded a new promotional tape (with 4 songs) to be sent to various record companies and I wouldn't be too surprised if the band finally got that much-wanted deal. But I still feel Extrema could be even better and more original. This tape is sold out, as mentioned, but letters are still welcome. Enclose 4 IRC's for 4 newsletters. Write to: Extrema, c/o H. Salvini, Via Lettuada 31, 20135 Milano, Italy.

SHANGHAI - PROMD TAPE
(2 tracks, I think)

When I wrote a band called Black Treasure, I received a tape from Shanghai instead. And I wish they hadn't sent it!!! The band has been spreading its disease since August 1986 in the shape of extremely boring plod metal. The band members are Eric Boulton (vocals/keyboards), M.S Daniel (guitars), Mick Marple (bass) and Ricky Montrose (drums). After having existed for so long, they should at least have come up with more original ideas. I have seldom heard music that sounds so out of date. Eric Boulton does his best Ozzy Osbourne impersonation, but it does little to help on their pedestrian sound and style. According to the letter that was sent along with the tape, Shanghai have already released an album called "Yesterday is Tomorrow". Even worse, the band has started working on another one. If you're still into the NWOBHM movement and feel we're still in 1981 or so, you will probably feel they're terrible anyway! Write to: Shanghai, c/o Kunstler & Konzert-Management, Kasselstr. 16, 7320 Soppingen-Faurndau, West-Germany.

Thunderbolt

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SCARLATYNA - THE ART OF METAL (2 tracks)

As the band members say themselves, this was done without a "proper" vocalist, so the end result is not very exciting. The tape was intentionally made in order to get a decent vocalist, but no luck thus far. So it can be questioned whether it's fair to judge the band, but I'll do it! The production is not good (recorded on a 4-track machine) and the straight metal tunes does not leave a positive impression, either. There are some interesting lead-work accents, but the rest is very cliched. None of the two tracks have many original ideas, despite many breaks and changes. But they'd probably sound a lot better with another vocalist and more professional sound. Scarlatyna is now a three-piece, that first started up in February 1986. So if you take that into consideration, the song-writing really should have hit another level by now. Anything else to add? No, I guess not! You can safely forget about Scarlatyna for now, perhaps they'll improve sometime... Write to: Scarlatyna, c/o Michael Rinn, Frankfurter Str. 26, 6330 Wetzlar, West-Germany.

OBLIVION KNIGHT

OBLIVION KNIGHT - FORGOTTEN REALM (4 tracks, DM12/\$6)

If you have already read the Obl. Knight interview in this issue, you'll already know that this review will be a highly positive affair. Chris Collins was perhaps the best choice around for the band and the intensity of his voice shown on the vocal tracks here sees another dimension than that found on the '86 demo by Majesty/Dream Theater. Partly being marketed as a great band in the vein of Watchtower, I must say I disagree! There is more on this tape sounding like Fates Warning than the Texan gods, something which is further apparent when you consider Steve Sexton's (song-writer/bassist) relationship to John Arch (no need for telling who he is, I believe). Now, please don't get me wrong! Obl. Knight is more themselves than anything else, and their sound is most certainly their own. The superb sound quality really enhances the tape and makes the intricate riffs come alive in a certain way that is not often heard on demo tapes. Song-wise, there are no let-downs. All tracks are great in their own way and contains a lot of variation. Acoustic parts are used all over to great effect - I can't really find anything wrong here!!! That would probably have been wanting several more songs, but that can't be considered a "fault" in any way, could it? I can't see a reason why these guys haven't been signed a long time ago. They should have been huge by now! Due to the band's financial problems, the tape can only be obtained from the Demolition, not from the band. Oblivion Knight - the band taking off from where "Awaken The Guardian" left off! Write to: Demolition, c/o D. Jung, In der Dille 42, 4709 Bergk.-Runthe, West-Germany.

ANESTHESIA - THE HOUR OF ZERO (4 tracks)

This is the German Anesthesia, not the Norwegian band. They've been around for about eight years now, and are currently preparing for their debut album. So far, this tape has sold over 400 copies. But I don't really know why it has! Do not get me wrong, the tape is ok. The songs are good when you're listening to them, but you forget all about them the moment they're finished. So there is no incentive to get back to the tape once you're through listening to it. They're threading the border between thrash and power metal and offers little new to the genre in general. The songs lack "punch" in a way, and the production is not to blame for this. There is no stand-out track on the demo, either, to really get the tape going.

KILLPOWER - CATALYPTIC WORLD (4 tracks, \$5)

This is apparently this NY-based band's second tape. Not having heard the first one, I can't make any comments on their progress. But I doubt they have improved at all, as things can't get much worse than this. Some bands (Killpower, among others), should stop and listen to what they are doing. They should evaluate the material they're working on as objectively as humanly possible, and ask themselves two basic questions: is the band doing something vaguely unique, and are the songs actually any good? Killpower has to get "no's" on both these. Ultimately, they end up as extremely generic thrashers slugging around in the third division of average, unoriginal thrash. I've given the tape a fair chance, but I can't really find any redeeming features on any of the songs here. Killpower is a band that will simply have to beg me for another chance to prove themselves. This tape is not recommended to any sane person (but it would have been great as a joke!). Write to: Killpower, c/o Joe Dejahanty, 7 Lewis Drive, Stony Point, NY 10980, USA.

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AXE MINISTER - EVIL GROWS (6 tracks, \$6)

Yet another professional American tape, that also shows a band with potential. I don't think they will totally blow your mind with this tape, nevertheless you're bound to enjoy it! The songs are great and the band packs plenty of power. If you have heard Radium (see interview in this issue), you'll have an idea as to the musical style of Axe Minister. Not as technical, but just as good! Axe Minister has been around since 1983, performing (mainly) around the area of St. Louis. After a couple of line-up changes and a change of direction, bassist Keith Voegele took charge of the vocals. Rest of the band now includes Bret Weirich and Dave Price on guitars, and Lee Skyles on drums. They've incorporated some nice intros and effects, and this helps in maintaining interest throughout the tape. "Ballad Of The Homeless" is my own fave on "Evil Grows", but is no ballad at all! Despite all these positive comments, Axe Minister are not perfect. I believe they will have to come up with something more innovative in order to get signed. The thrash/power genre is filled to the brim with excellent bands already (and not all of them have been signed yet). Some more individual ideas and Axe Minister could've been a killer band. As for now, they're just close!!! "Evil Grows" still comes highly recommended. Write to: Axe Minister, 316 Carmel Woods, St. Louis, Miss. 63021, USA.

DECIBEL'S STORM

This is a new French metal magazine! 32 pages, written in English and edited in high-quality printing!! Features interviews with Massacra, Merciless, Coroner, Mayhem, Lars Eric Mattson, Trust, Burnt Offering, Sweet Lips and Loudblast.

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Bands wanting coverage, contact: Frank Arnaud, Poste EDF de l'escalillon, chemin bellevisto, 83200 Toulon, France.

Distributors, contact: Jerome Casseri, Le Plan, 83440 Fayence, France.

MORTAL TRACE - CHRISTIAN TERROR (4 tracks)

As Mortal Trace has now undergone some changes in their line-up and no longer feel this rehearsal tape to be representative of the band, I don't feel right about writing them off completely. But that doesn't necessarily mean I can't slag this tape off! Mortal Trace sounds like an ordinary death/doom act. Death vocals, and both death and doom music. If you think about bands such as Dream Death, this can be an interesting mix. But you have to be nothing short of excellent to pull it all off in style. I don't think Mortal Trace has come that far. The vocals are truly abysmal, and sound like a cat being strangled. And as this is a rehearsal tape, the quality of sound can be described in a similar way. The instruments sound muddy and can't be distinguished from one another. "Christian Terror" just bored the hell out of me. Its not often I'm this negative, but some bands simply deserve it. Try again

with new songs, better sound and songs that are more interesting, ok? Write to: Mortal Trace, c/o E. Berge, Oberweg 11, 3449 Laudert, West-Germany.

RED HARVEST

RED HARVEST - PSYCHOTICA (5 tracks, \$5)

This is the second outing from Red Harvest so far, and its a major improvement over their already excellent "Occultica" tape. There is more variation within the songs and they've managed to blend several styles into one, powerful direction. Even the rough vocals of Jimmy Bergsten have evolved, but I still feel that they can hinder the band's progress further into the future (something the band members themselves deny, of course). Fave track has to be "Faithful Unto Death", a number that packs extreme power and has a killer chorus (if you can call it a chorus, that is). "Sane In Solitude" has a cool stop/start opening, while "Acid" totally deletes 95% of the thrash competition (and this was, or still is, a joke song!). This was a slight hardcore influence at times, but not so much that it becomes annoying in any way. It just helps the band even further in creating a sound that can be called their own. I would hesitate in calling the band progressive, yet they're still fairly technical and rely on some intricate riffs. Forget the fact that I know these guys, and cannot be considered very objective. Red Harvest is a band that deserves your attention. Its as simple as that! I wish that Norwegian labels would start picking up on something that can be described as "new", instead of signing average thrash acts like Equinox. Support this superb band, they're bound to make a serious impact on your aural system! Write to: Red Harvest, c/o J. Bergsten, Ravnkollbakken 57, 0971 Oslo, Norway.

ELDRITCH ASSEMBLAGE

(Previously known as METAL OVERDOSE), has its first issue (actually second) out now!!! With a totally professional lay-out, improved printing (A4 format), and new goals, this is a fanzine not to be missed by anyone seriously interested in the underground (It's written in English). It features many, long and in-depth interviews, with bands like; Titan Force, Blind Illusion, Revelation, Extrema, Aftermath (AZ), Dorsal Atlantica, Heir Apparent, Oblivion Knight, Transilience, Prophets Of Doom, Disjecta Membra, Salem (JAP). A huge special feature on the scene of the premier metal state of Texas can also be found in E.A., which includes many articles on Texan bands, and a few interviews (with Process Revealed, WatchTower, Chris Orloski-editor of Gray Matter 'zine, and Ron Jazombek). Of course, there is much more to find in it, like the tons of articles/reviews on new bands, the numerous show reviews, the fanzine ads, etc!!!

For your copy, just send three U.S. dollars (\$3-cash please), to the following address: Manolis Papayianakis, Solomou 35, Halandri 15233, Athens, Greece. (That price includes postage). When writing along, please give us your current 5 fave demos and records, so that we may be able to make a reader's chart.

STEEL PROPHECY - INNER ASCENDANCE (6 tracks, \$6)

Most of you are probably familiar with this band already, as they have released a brilliant tape earlier. The Steel Prophecy line-up now includes Rick Mythiasin on vocals, Steve K. Blackmoor/Jon Paget on guitars, John Tarascio on drums and Vince Dennis on bass. "Inner Ascendance" is an improvement over the "Visions Of Force" tape, mainly because the tracks are better laid out and the vocals more interesting. Threading the same ground as the likes of Crimson Glory and Mystic Force, the band still stand their ground proudly. Steve Blackmoor is a great songwriter and an invaluable asset to Steel Prophecy. "Sleep Of Dispair", just as an example, sees some high-pitched majestic vocal work coupled with brilliant guitar licks soaring to the skies. The end result must surely be that a major deal is imminent. The band originally formed in Connecticut (which might explain any F. Warning influence present here), before moving to Los Angeles, California. And with all the labels and representatives present there, they'll probably be out with an album in time for the next issue of this magazine (next issue will of course contain an in-depth interview on these guys). Lyrically, the band also has some very interesting subjects. "Nihilism's Spell" deals with abandoning moral and traditional principles as a means of reaching a higher form of existence, while "Technocrime" is about how technology is rapidly changing the world. All six tracks are brilliant in their own rights, and that's all there is to it! For all people into progressive power, this is one of those tapes you'll play over and over again. Order it now! Write to: Steel Prophecy, c/o Tru Star Entertainment, 12226 Victory Boulevard, Ste. 150, N. Hollywood, CA 91606, USA.

MIDASTOUCH

Midas Touch is a band that most of you will no doubt be familiar with already. Personally, I found their debut album a little confusing, but it had a certain "something" which made it very special. That "something" is called potential. In a time when 98% of all bands sound like one another, these Swedish youngsters tried to inject new ideas into the dying thrash scene. I sent off some questions to the band and the vocalist, Patrik Wirén, (finally) answered.

MG: FOR THE FEW UNINITIATED READERS OUT THERE, CAN YOU GIVE A BRIEF RECAP OF THE MIDAS TOUCH HISTORY?

PW: Bosse (drums) and Patrik S. (bass) formed the band in the summer of '85, together with a guitarist named Thomas. Shortly after that, Lars joined on guitars and a year later they found me. At the end of '87 we decided to do a demo. It resulted in "Ground Zero", which was sent to a couple of record companies. After just a week of waiting, Noise phoned us up and said they wanted a deal. So, we signed a five-year contract in the beginning of 1988. Then Thomas left us, and we found a new guitarist, Richard, who is still in the band. In the summer of '88, we recorded a new demo called "Largen-rehearsals". Mostly because Noise wanted to hear our new material, but also for some radio stations. In September, we started working on "Presage Of Disaster" in Berlin. It was released in March '89 and here we are...

PW: Yes, we were unhappy with the sound on "Ground Zero". We also got a new guitarist, Richard, after we did the demo and he is one of the main reasons why we've progressed so fast. Thomas, the guitarist that played on the demo, wrote most of the songs on it. So the changes came naturally.

MG: DO YOU STILL PLAY ANY OF THESE SONGS LIVE AND IS THERE A CHANCE THAT ANY OF THESE WILL APPEAR ON A FUTURE ALBUM?

PW: No, we don't play these songs anymore. Not live or when we rehearse. They belong to the past, so you won't find them on one of our albums.

MG: WHAT THRASH BANDS AROUND TODAY WOULD YOU SAY INJECT NEW IDEAS INTO THE MUSIC SCENE AND WHAT BANDS SHOULD START LOOKING AT THEMSELVES AND DISCOVER WHAT THEY ARE REALLY DOING?

PW: I'd say that "Death Angel" injected some new ideas with their "Frolic Through The Park" album (and managed to follow it up nicely with "Act III" - ES). I would also like to mention Voivod for doing something new in the way they mixture different styles of music and comes up with something totally original. I won't mention any names of who just rip off other thrash bands. That would take too much space. Probably they'll realize, sooner or later, that what they're doing is not good enough.

MG: HOW MANY COPIES DID THE "PRESAGE OF DISASTER" ALBUM SELL AND DO YOU HAVE ANY REGRETS ABOUT THIS ALBUM TODAY?

PW: It sold about 15000 copies, and that's ok. Surely there are things on it we would have changed today, but we'll probably say the same about our next album a year after it has been released. You're never completely satisfied with a record.

MG: WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR NEXT ALBUM, THEN?

PW: It's too early to tell, except that the album will be a lot better than "Presage Of Disaster" is. We don't know when we will record it, who will produce it or when it eventually will be released.



MG: ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE NOISE DEAL SO FAR?

PW: Yes, we are. We've had ads. in all the big magazines and a lot of airplay. I don't know what it's like in the US, but in Europe they've supported us very well. Noise is a good company who cares about their bands in a way that I know a lot of companies don't!

MG: BEING A THRASH BAND, DO YOU THINK IT'S AN ADVANTAGE OR A DISADVANTAGE NOT HAILING FROM THE BAY AREA?

PW: I don't believe it matters where you come from. If you are not good enough, your band will fail. And if you're a good band, you should have a chance no matter what country you come from.

MG: THE SWEDISH THRASH SCENE SEEMS TO BE ENJOYING MODERATE SUCCESS THESE DAYS, WITH BANDS LIKE HEXENHAUS AND MEZZROW. WHY IS SWEDISH THRASH NOW BEING MORE SUCCESSFUL?

PW: I think it's because Swedish thrash is good and that the bands have class. Most of these bands rehearse a lot before they record their material in a studio. This makes Swedish thrash as good as German or American thrash. Demitron will hopefully be the next Swedish thrashers to succeed outside our country. They're doing their own thing, mixing thrash, hardcore and pop music! There are so many bands around that try to sound like Slayer and Testament, and that's boring!

MG: A LOT OF PEOPLE (SOME MAGAZINES, ACTUALLY) HAVE SAID MIDAS TOUCH DOESN'T HAVE AN INDIVIDUAL SOUND. DO YOU FEEL THE SAME WAY?

PW: Definitely not!!! I think the main reason why magazines write stuff like "they sound like Kreator, Slayer and Voivod etc." is that we're a new band and they want to give all the readers a clue as to what it's all about. So they're trying hard to find influences. And of course they will find some, even though they're not that obvious.

MG: THERE'S A GIRL SPEAKING RUSSIAN ON THE TRACK "ACCESSORY BEFORE THE FACT". WHERE DID THAT STRANGE IDEA COME FROM, AND DO YOU USE ALL THE ALBUM'S DIFFERENT SOUND EFFECTS LIVE?

PW: Roy, the producer, came up with the idea and we thought it would suit the song perfectly. The girl who's doing it is a Russian girl we met in Berlin while mixing the album. Well isn't that unique?! I don't think we'll use so many effects on the new album. And we never use these sound effects live, 'coz we really don't need them. We just let the music do the talking.

MG: YOUR SOUND CHANGED A LOT FROM THE "GROUND ZERO" DEMO TO YOUR DEBUT ALBUM. WERE YOU UNHAPPY WITH THE FINAL OUTCOME OF THIS TAPE OR DID YOU JUST FEEL LIKE CHANGING YOUR DIRECTION?

MG: WHAT KIND OF BANDS DO YOU LIKE LISTENING TO YOURSELVES, MAINSTREAM THRASH OR MORE TECHNICAL/PROGRESSIVE ONES?

PW: Some of the bands we enjoy listening to are Metallica, Slayer, Testament, Voivod, Megadeth, Coroner and Exodus.

MG: WILL THERE BE A VIDEO TO FOLLOW UP THIS ALBUM'S RELEASE AND WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON MUSIC VIDEOS IN GENERAL?

PW: Hopefully, we'll be doing videos for one or two of the songs. What kind of video it will be depends on what songs we'll be doing it for, but it will be classy, and different from other videos. I think most music videos are very boring (some exceptions being Voivod's "Tribal Warfare", Faith No More's "Epic" and Metallica's "One" video).

MG: JUDGING BY THE LYRICS ON YOUR DEBUT ALBUM, YOU SEEM TO BE UPSET WITH THE STATE OF THE WORLD. DO YOU FEEL THAT SONG LYRICS, IN ANY WAY, CAN HELP PEOPLE CREATING A BETTER WORLD?

PW: Of course, I am upset with the world. Aren't everyone? There is so much shit going on and everything is corrupted in one way or another. Yes, I think that lyrics can change a person into a more thinking individual.

MG: DO YOU FEEL IT'S POSSIBLE FOR THRASH ACTS TO START WRITING MORE POSITIVE LYRICS WITHOUT LOSING SOME OF THE "PUNCH" IN THE SONGS?

PW: There are thrash bands that are writing positive lyrics, although most of 'em write about get drunk, like Gang Green, Tankard etc. I think that's pretty cool. We might put a "positive" song on the next album, simply because it's a part of life. As there are also sad and depressive things. It is just so much easier to write about things that upset you. I feel that happy lyrics sound pretty silly most of the time and that aggressive lyrics suit aggressive music. Just as happy lyrics belong to happy music.

Not much information here on their future plans, but things are evidently working out fine for Midas Touch. If their new album is still shrouded in mystery when you're reading this, why not take a listen to "Presage Of Disaster" instead (unless you already have it, that is). Or check out some of the other great Swedish thrash hopefuls. Both Mezzrow and Hexenhaus have some new product out these days, entitled "Then Came The Killing" and "The Edge Of Eternity" respectively. Both these albums can be found on the excellent Active label (best known so far for releasing two Candlemass albums, but also Artch, Excalibur and Hexenhaus' debut album "A Tribute To Insanity"). If you want to get in touch with Midas Touch yourself, they handle all inquiries personally. It may take some time, but send them a letter at: Midas Touch, c/o Patrik Sporrang, Bysmedsv. 29, 74030 Bjorklinge, Sweden.

Angeline

Angeline is a new band from Sweden, who (for a change) does not sound like Europe clones, like so many of the other Swedish bands. The members of Angeline are Sigge Sigvardsson on vocals, Jocke Nilsson/Janne Arkegren on guitars, Uffe Nilsson on bass, Tobbe Jonsson on drums and Per Astrom on keyboards. Most of the band members are still very young (17-18 years old), but they are ambitious and ready to take on the world. Vocalist Sigge answered the following questions:

MG: YOUR CURRENT LINE-UP HAS BEEN TOGETHER SINCE JUNE 1987. WHEN WAS THE BAND FIRST FORMED, AND WHAT MEMBERS HAVE BEEN WITH ANGELINE FROM THE START?

SS: The band started in 1986, and the original members were Tobbe, Jocke and Uffe (with a singer named Mikael Alstrom). During the spring '87, they parted company with the vocalist and another singer, Lars Carlstedt, then joined the band. In June '87, I replaced Lars as the band's vocalist. The line-up was completed in the winter of '87/'88, with Per joining the band. Jocke came up with the "Angeline" name. We're aware that it's a girl's name, but we think it's an excellent band name, as well. It came from a Paul Sabu song (but I do not know if the song is called Angeline or a song featuring a girl named Angeline).

MG: IN THE END OF '88, YOU RECORDED A SIX-TRACK DEMO CALLED "THE LEGEND". IT STRIKES ME THAT THESE SONGS ARE QUITE LONG (SOME OVER 6 MINUTES). DO YOU WRITE LONG SONGS ON PURPOSE?

SS: No, we don't write such long songs on purpose. It's just a thing that happens. Perhaps the normal three minutes isn't long enough for us to really express ourselves.

MG: WHEN I FIRST HEARD "THE LEGEND", I WAS GLAD TO HEAR YOU DO NOT SOUND LIKE EUROPE CLONES, BUT TRY TO CREATE YOUR OWN SOUND. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR MUSIC AND INFLUENCES?

SS: First of all, I'm glad that you don't see us as Europe clones. I think that a lot of Swedish bands (especially in England) is being written off as Europe clones just because they're from Sweden. I can't see the point in doing that and I think it's unfair. It's quite difficult to describe what Angeline sounds like. We all have different favorite bands, but we all like hard rock. I think you can say we like everything from Slayer to Pink Floyd. We're influenced by all bands, but perhaps mainly seventies' metal. It's too difficult to point out any main influence.

MG: A COUPLE OF THE SONGS ON THE TAPE, LIKE "WARRIORS" AND THE TITLE TRACK HAVE SOME INTERESTING LYRICS. CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT THEY'RE ABOUT?

SS: "Warriors" is a song about war and the feelings you have in a war situation. It's about a young man, drafted into the army and sent out into battle. He doesn't know why the battle is going on, wonders about the reasons why and whether his life is worth anything to the government. "The Legend" is more of an old tale about a man that, after having survived his home village being massacred, gathers an army in order to lead them to revenge.

MG: ARE SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO YOUR BAND?

SS: In a way, yes. But not every song has to contain a political message. When I write a song with a message, it's always things I'm concerned about I pick as subjects. I'm not in a position where I can change things, so the only chance I have to get my point of view heard is through writing lyrics about it.

MG: THE COVER OF THE DEMO SHOWS A UNICORN. IS THERE ANY SPECIAL REASON FOR THIS, A SPECIAL MEANING?

SS: The cover was done by a girl named Elisabeth Sandkvist, who also lives in Ljusdal. She had free hands to do whatever she wanted, and came up with three different suggestions. We picked the unicorn, and it has since become something of a trademark for us. The mini-album we're currently recording will also have a unicorn on it. But this time, a guy called Jonas Granberg, has done the cover artwork.

MG: IS IT A HANDICAP LIVING IN A SMALL TOWN LIKE YOU DO, SO FAR AWAY FROM MAJOR SWEDISH CITIES, AND WOULD YOU CONSIDER MOVING IF IT HELPED YOUR MUSICAL CAREER?

SS: It's obviously more difficult to make it when you're living in such a small town. Most bands that break through are either from Stockholm or Gothenburg. But so far... so good. If it comes down to it, we most certainly would move.

MG: BY THE TIME THIS INTERVIEW IS PUBLISHED, YOU WILL HAVE A SIX-TRACK MINI-ALBUM OUT. ARE THESE SONGS THE SAME AS THOSE ON "THE LEGEND", AND CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE SONGS CLOSER?

SS: Five of the six songs on the album will be new ones. The opening song will be the opening song on the demo, "Keep It Up" (in a re-recorded version). It's a straight-forward song about the changes in Russia, since Gorbachev became president there. "Chains Of The Needle" is a heavy song dealing with drug addiction. It has a "scream-for-help" type of lyrics. Then there's stay, which is a simple song about breaking up a relationship. "Freedom Song" is about that you have to do something with your life, instead of just letting it fade away. "Leave It To Me" is a typical, chauvinistic song about a man who picks up a woman. And with great confidence, he says "leave it to me, baby, and we'll have great sex tonight!". "Home... Street Home" is about the millions of homeless people living on the streets. We are not actually finished with the recording work yet. We started in autumn '89, and decided to start all over again in February 1990 because we didn't think the recordings until then were good enough. But we think we'll complete the works in May and it will be released in July. It's difficult to predict, but we hope the time schedule will go as planned. The recording takes place in Ljusdal Ljudlabs, the studio where we also recorded "The Legend". It will be produced by ourselves and released on a local label that has released records since 1979. It's been down for a few years, but they're now starting it up again.

If you're interested in their new mini-album, "The Legend" tape (no prices given) or just want to show your support in the band, please write to them at the following address: Angeline, c/o J. Sigvardsson, Martensgatan 9c, S27 00 Ljusdal, Sweden.

N I C O L L E B L O K

IGNORANCE

When I first listened to this English band's "Why" demo, I was totally blown away by it. Although the band's style is not the most original around, they perform it better than most other bands. With their crunchy guitar sound (which is sooo heavy), they can't fail (more info. on this excellent demo in the review section). Now read what guitarist Steve John had to say.

MG: WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE BAND?

SJ: Neil Duthie (vocals), Niki Beric (drums) and Marcus Stone (guitars) formed the band when they were in school. But it was only 2 1/2 years ago, when Stef Brooks (bass) joined the band, that it started getting serious. I joined the band around 1 1/2 years ago and, since then, the band got more serious about going "big-time". There have been no changes in personnel.

MG: YOU'VE RECORDED TWO DEMOS SO FAR. WHAT HAS THE REACTIONS BEEN LIKE FROM THE PRESS, PUBLIC AND THE LABELS?

SJ: The "I'm Off Home" demo sold around 50 copies. The "Why" demo has sold about 200 so far and rising. The letters from people who have bought the tape are ace! We got good reviews in both Metal Forces and Kerrang and have also had some coverage in Raw and Metal Hammer. We've had a lot of interest from a big independent label which was looking very promising. But it fell through due to apathy from their other offices. They have now renewed their interest and offered us a deal. We're also negotiating with a big US independent label which looks like being the deal we're going to take. I can't disclose any names before we sign a contract, but you will know soon!

MG: SO WHAT ARE YOUR FURTHER PLANS NOW?

SJ: When we sign the deal, we hope to go to L.A. to record our debut album, before touring in America and then coming back here (England) to tour. We haven't thought about Europe yet, but I hope we can come over there to play some gigs as soon as possible. When we record the album, it will contain all four songs from the "Why" demo and five or six new ones.



MG: OBLIGATORY QUESTION TIME: WHAT ARE YOUR INFLUENCES?

SJ: We have different and wide-ranging musical tastes, some of which are: heavy metal, funk, thrash, rock, jazz, popular and classical. Overall favorite bands are Queensryche, Kings X, Metallica, Living Color, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Testament. Our lyrics are influenced by day to day events, like drug and alcohol abuse, money, emotional hassles, the advance of technology, arcade game addiction and all other sorts of shit!

MG: WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE "NON-DEMO MATERIAL" THAT WILL SHOW UP ON THE ALBUM?

SJ: The songs we are writing at present are very different from the demo material, 'coz we feel the need to keep evolving and progressing. Hopefully, when we are ready to record the album, it will contain lots of different styles. We will still stay heavy, though - no wimp-outs here, man! We've got two new, funky songs and one really heavy, but quite commercial ballad-style of song. The songs still need to have lyrics for them, as Neil likes to take some time with lyrical ideas.

MG: DO YOU HAVE ANY MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE TO THE FANS NOW?

SJ: We don't have any t-shirts yet, as we invest most of our money in musical equipment, recording and alcohol! The demos are both still available for 4 pounds each.

MG: ANY FINAL COMMENTS TO THE READERS?

SJ: We'd like to thank all the people and fanzines that have written and shown interest in us. We would also like to say thanks to "Neighbours" for being a wonderful tv programme. A big thank to the guys in Sabbat for being cool and helpful. (The list goes on and on, but I won't bother you with such details - ES).

Well, any band that credits "Neighbours" for being a wonderful tv programme is my kind of band. I would advise you to get hold of their demo before it's too late, 'coz when this band signs a deal, they will blow the metal world away with their music. Send your money to Ignorance, c/o Steve John, 44 Castle Boulevard, Nottingham NG7 1FN, England.

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DETERRENT

It took me a long while before I got into Deterrent's "Obey Today" demo, and I still find it a bit cliched at times. But some of the ideas displayed on it, especially on "Beyond The Wall", left me thinking that this is the kind of band that learns from their initial mistakes and will eventually grow to something of even more interest. So I had Markus Weckerman, Deterrent's vocalist, tell me more about the band.

MG: CAN YOU GIVE ME SOME INFORMATION ON HOW DETERRENT FIRST GOT STARTED AS A BAND?

MW: Gocken (bass) and Nico (guitars) established the band in October 1987. In December of that same year, Frank (guitars) and Sacha (drums) found their way into it. I knew all these guys from before, but at this time I was vocalist/bassist in another local band. I jammed with Deterrent sometimes, and ended up in the band early 1988. At that time, we only tried to play as hard as possible and had a strange, hardcore-like sound. Shortly after, we started writing our first "progressive" songs, like "Legacy Of The Dead". We also made a song that we still can't play without doing any mistakes, called "Atomic Disaster". In June '88, we played our first gig in a small club with about 50 people. We continued writing on new material and played some more gigs, before we recorded our first demo, "Obey Today". For being a first tape, I think it has done well. Some friends say we're avant-garde metal. It is possible that we're getting more avant garde or psychedelic now. Our new material sound like that.

MG: WHAT'S UP IN THE GERMAN UNDERGROUND SCENE THESE DAYS?

MW: My look on the scene does not only include metal stuff. In the "independent rock" scene, there is a great new, local band called Torn Velvet. Another really interesting/strange band is Disjecta Membra. They play instrumental music, drawing influences from seventies rock and thrash, among other things (They're interviewed in this issue - EB). Scaffold is another progressive band, playing in the same style as Dream Theater. I think they'll be very successful!

MG: YOU HAVE MENTIONED THAT DETERRENT HAVE HAD SOME PROBLEMS WITH UNDERGROUND FANZINES. CAN YOU EXPLAIN THESE PROBLEMS?

MW: In late '89, I sent out over 60 demos to various 'zines. And 'til May 1990, I have only received five demo reviews in return. Most of these fanzines used to push smaller bands in the beginning. These bands have grown and become successful, and the 'zines seem to have grown with them. It seems as if most fanzines have forgotten about the smaller bands. I feel this a shame, as smaller bands are really dependent on them. We wanted to collect demo-reviews from many fanzines before we started getting in touch with labels. We have just started contacting them now.



MG: YOUR LYRICS ARE MAINLY ABOUT WAR. WOULDN'T YOU SAY THAT THIS HAS BECOME A RATHER CLICHED SUBJECT, AND WILL BANDS NOW STOP WRITING ABOUT THIS NOW THAT THE EASTERN BLOC IS OPENING UP AND THE THREAT OF WAR SEEMS MORE DISTANT?

MW: Perhaps it has. But I feel you cannot tell enough about war. War is the most dangerous "toy" which mankind has. As a bad excuse, I can tell you that the lyrics for the songs on the demo were written in '87 and '88. The songs are more indirect than what you might think. "Seductive Madness" deals with a neo-nazi and the question of why people never learn. "Obey Today" is about the compulsory German military service and it's contradiction to the German constitution. "Legacy Of The Dead" tells about the problem that young Germans are sometimes treated as nazis, whether its true or not! I think there will always be wars to write about. East vs. West is not the only conflict in the world. In "Beyond The Wall", we sing about the Berlin world. Many people will now find this out-of-date, but there are many people that are frightened at the thought of a re-united Germany. There are still some nazi idiots left, you know!

MG: GIVEN TIME AND MONEY, WHAT THINGS IN THE BAND'S HISTORY WOULD YOU HAVE CHANGED TODAY?

MW: I would re-mix the demo and do the vocals again. When we recorded it, we checked the vocal sound for four days. All I sang was "Obey Today". After that, I was a bit bored. So on the fifth day, I just sang all the songs and said: "that's it. I won't do it anymore!".

MG: WHAT HAS DETERRENT BEEN UP TO LATELY AND DO YOU HAVE ANY KIND OF FUTURE PLANS?

MW: We've written three really good new songs. They're called: "Selenious Acid", which is about drugs. "Got Stuck" is about the ego-trips of mankind (This is my personal fave of our new material) and "Mortal Flesh", which tells how a man is only a small part of the whole world. Further, we did a live-recording in April 1990. We will make a live-tape with 6-8 songs, which will probably be out in late summer.

Contact the band at: Deterrent, c/o Markus Weckerman, Graf-Stauffenberg-Str. 47, 4504 Georgsmarienhütte, West-Germany.

HOLY SOLDIER

As you have probably already read the album review section, you must have seen that I was very impressed by Holy Soldier and their debut album. This was reason enough to check this white metal band out a little further. Holy Soldier was formed in January 1986 by guitarist Jamie Cramer and bassplayer Andy Robbins in the Los Angeles area. As with most bands, it took some time to find a steady line-up. But finally, Michael Cutting from San Francisco became their second guitarist, Steven Patrick from Memphis their vocalist and Terry Russel, also from Los Angeles, the band's skin-beater.

All members of the band are christians and they want to deliver this message through their songs. They call their own style of music "a melodic, harmony-filled brand of reverential metal", and I think this description fits really well. Vocalist Steven Patrick, as an example, has a strong voice (trained for singing opera for a couple of years) and sings ballads as easily as the really heavy tunes. Steven claims Ann Wilson of Heart and Robert Plant to be his major sources of influences. Because of the band having two guitarists, the sound on their album is very powerful, especially on "See No Evil" this excellent twin-guitar sound can be heard perfectly. The band as a whole states as diverse influences as Dokken and The Beatles.



During the first years of their career, Holy Soldier mostly played in the Los Angeles area, and managed to gain a large following due to their spectacular live shows. Tommy Russel, for example, plays a drum solo blindfolded, before hitting the skins with a plastic baseball bat! Holy Soldier then got the nickname "L.A.'s best unsigned band". Carrying this nickname for a couple of years could, and turned out to, be very frustrating. The band wanted a record deal, but being "white metal" made this search even harder than for "regular metal" bands. Recently, the quintette could at least shake off this nickname. They signed a record contract with Myrrh Records, a label for christian bands. About the years they spent waiting for this contract to come about, they say "We learned patience, and to bear each other's burdens. We all got closer together spiritually, and we had the opportunity to write and grow as musicians. Now, we're really ready!".

Holy Soldier's self-titled debut album was produced by David Zaffiro, the guitarist of fellow white metal band Bloodgood. The engineer, John Hanlon, is best known for his work with RED Speedwagon and Eric Clapton. These guys are also a very image-conscious unit. They got themselves some neat uniforms in soldier-style, made by none other than Ray Brown. Ray has also such luminaries as J. Priest, Bon Jovi and Motley Crue as his customers. These five "soldiers" also look good, and with a little help (from above?), they can follow up Strypker as the no.1 christian metal band. Holy Soldier - a band not for "believers only"! Contact the band at: Holy Soldier, c/o DHM Enterprises, P.O. Box 7000-222, Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274, USA.

NICOLLE BLOK

OLIVER MAGNUM

I think it's a waste of time to introduce you to America's hottest Power/Progressive-Metal Outfit OLIVER MAGNUM 'coz you should already know this band since their first demo appearance in 1986! For those who don't, take your pen and one IRC and write for information/merchandise list to

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SANCTUARY

CHROME MOLLY

The Seattle area nowadays seems to be a breeding ground for good hardrock and metal bands. You need only think of bands like Queensrÿche, Hair Apparent, Metal Church, Fifth Angel and Heart. And of course there is Sanctuary, the band mostly known for having Dave Mustaine helping them out on their debut album "Refuge Denied" and for vocalist Warren Dane's extremely long hair! Now they've released their second album, called "Into The Mirror Black", on Epic Records and have received rave reviews all over. Before talking about this album, though, let's check out the band's past history.

Sanctuary's birthdate marks the beginning of 1985, when guitarists Lenny Rutledge and Sean Bloss started making music together. In these months, musicians walk in and out of the band. But after a while Jim Sheppard (bass) and Dave Budbill (drums), stay as permanent members. The quartet had problems with finding the right singer, and went on without one for a while. Warrel Dane (vocals) was at this time in another band (also Seattle-based). After having heard him sing at a gig, the guys in Sanctuary decided to "steal" him from this band, and Warrel let them... In March '85, the band recorded their first demo, including the songs "Battle Angels", "Die For My Sins", "Soldiers Of Steel" and the Jefferson Airship cover-tune "White Rabbit". A second demo was made in June the same year, and it was this tape that got it's way to Dave Mustaine. Megadeth were playing a Seattle-gig, Warrel went there, and managed to find out at what hotel they were staying at. To make a long story short, Warrel got to meet Dave and let him listen to the demo. Dave liked it and said he wanted to produce their album.

The only problem was... they didn't have a record contract! "No problem", said Mustaine, "we will work something out". Dave convinced his manager that Sanctuary had potential and that he had to finance the recording of their debut album. Dave produced it, and also played guitar on "White Rabbit". The album, called "Refuge Denied", was released towards the end of 1987. The band's musical style is power metal, claiming themselves to be influenced by bands like Black Sabbath, Savatage and, of course, Megadeth. The vocals of Warrel Dane are highly controversial: this dude has a fantastic voice!!! But at times, he screams like King Diamond. You either love him... or hate him. Either way, the album sold well, and the band toured the US as support for Megadeth themselves. They toured Europe in the spring of '88 and also appeared on the Aardshok festival that same year. Their gig was very impressive and highly professional. Sanctuary themselves say that this was the gig that impressed themselves the most, as they had never before played in front of so many people, and the audience was very enthusiastic.

After this tour, things were quiet around the band. The original manager wanted the band to change into a more melodic direction, so they found themselves a new management deal in Los Angeles. Their second album, "Into The Mirror Black" was recorded in this city. This time, they used Howard Benson as their producer (mostly known for his work with Bang Tango). The sound of Sanctuary mainly stayed the same, but the songs on the album were a lot stronger than on "Refuge Denied" and the production was much better. Lyrically, the band is not in the "I Love You" style. On their first album, the songs were mainly anti-religious. Lenny Rutledge said about this: "I hate those hypocrite tv-evangelists and religious sects".

The new album, "Into The Mirror Black", also has some interesting lyrical contents. Take "Epitaph" as an example of it. This song deals with the church, god and death. Warrel Dane wrote it after his father's recent death. "Eden Lies Obscured" is about the never-ending search for a perfect world, while "One More Murder" deals with the problems of street-gang violence in the major cities of USA. "Seasons Of Destruction" is about the recent development between the East and the West. Sanctuary is definitely a band with a vision. Shortly after the release of this album, Sanctuary went on their first headlining tour through the US club scene. No European dates given, so far...

N I C O L L E B L O K

GARAGE

The second issue of Garage is out now. Garage Fanzine covers the full metal scene in the UK and abroad, from glam to thrash and from underground bands to worldwide names. This issue features interviews and major articles on FAITH NO MORE, THUNDER, THE ALMIGHTY, AEROSMITH, PHANTOM BLUE, GAMMACIDE, SKID ROW, ONSLAUGHT, HORSE (LONDON), SENSELESS THINGS, SLAMMER, JERSEY DOGS, QUIREBOYS, MARSHALL LAW, STATUS QUO, MAX PENALTY and many more. Issue 2 is professionally printed on 40 A4 pages, with quality photos and graphics. As well as loads of album/demo/live reviews, there are 'zine ads, a huge 'zine mailing list and a ginormous metal crossword. For your copy, send £1.00 (UK) or £1.50/\$2.00 (overseas) to:-

GARAGE FANZINE, James Potter, 37 Chestnut Rd, Kingston-Upon-Thames, KT2 5AP, England.

Way back in '85, a young British band named Chrome Molly released their debut album on Brit indie label Power Station (also responsible for allowing young guns Little Angels their first steps to major success). Called "You Can't Have It All...Or Can You?", it was full of anthemic, crotch-thrusting metal and a good dose of healthy party spirits. I found myself irresistibly drawn to the lads' mickey-taking, cocksure rock 'n roll bravura and actually saw the band live a number of times over a period of two years. However, the release of the less vital "Stick It Out" in 1987, saw me heading off in search of musical pastures new. The Molies "we're-gonna-party-and-if-you-don't-too-fuck-off" attitude had become somewhat boring. I hopped off the bandwagon just as - to all appearances - things began to hot up for the 4 lads from Leicester. The newly formed IRS label attracted the band with what was, by all accounts, a very attractive deal.

But as is often the case, all was not what it seemed. Rather than allowing their new signings to record a new album, IRS chose to remix and repackage "You Can't Have It All..." and a single - written and produced by Jim Lea (of Slade) - that never even hit the shops, due to a dispute between IRS and the distributors. So despite getting the support slot on Alice Cooper's 1988 UK and European tour, Chrome Molly had no fresh material to promote, and feeling thoroughly disillusioned with their situation, subsequently asked to be released from the recording contract.

Then - silence. Until an advance tape of "Slaphead" - Chrome Molly's new album on Music For Nations - popped through my letterbox screaming loudly for recognition. During the two months since, I was made aware that Steve Hawkins (vocals), Nic Westall (bass), Mark Godfrey (drums) and latest addition Tim Read (guitars) were still strutting their stuff. I have grown very attached to their comeback offering, discovered that live they're every bit as potent as the record indicates. So I re-established my acquaintance with Steve and Nik through a lively interview session one evening, just prior to the UK release of "Slaphead". Though the lyrical contents of the songs are far more intense than of yore as people the party spirit is still strong. And their will to succeed is even stronger. The recording of "Slaphead" was made possible by a lucrative publishing deal with EMI, though the band actually chose to take the course of hawking the finished product around to unsuspecting companies until they were offered a deal.

NIK: We spent five months from start to finish, and consequently it's a much more honest album than anything we have done before. Its got no record company saying "...don't you think you ought to..." or "whats the single going to be?". There are 3 or 4 tracks now that they're arguing about being the single. I think with hindsight, the record labels should leave bands alone a bit... ask the question why they signed the band in the first place! Probably because they think it is a bloody good band, so why spend six months analyzing and trying to change them.

STEVE: It has taken us all this time to grow up, really. We were so naive when we first went into record deals that we accepted everyone in the business knew what they were talking about. There is no compromise in Chrome Molly now. We're playing what we like doing, and we're happy with it.

MG: HOW COME YOU CHOSE SIGNING TO MUSIC FOR NATIONS?

NIK: They've very much got the attitude. If you think it is right, we'll go with it and back it. If it fails, you were wrong - not us. If it is a success, you were right and we'll back you the rest of your career. If you think about a label like MFN, thrash wouldn't really have happened without them. STEVE: They're the only label without the weight of the majors in this country who know how to handle heavy metal. And they let us do what we want. How many labels would let a metal album be released with that cover and such a title? Its so anti-metal!

"That cover" depicts a shaven-headed youth from behind which is actually Steve - sporting a haircut about as controversial as Dan Reed's well-publicized new, bald look. What triggered such a drastic change from the shaggy haired, spandex lad I remember?

NIK: We decided we'd have a band where there were no rules, and I think Steve is probably braver than all the metal singers with hair down to their knees. You've got to get a reaction, and what he's doing now is a lot more shocking than the standard curly perm.

STEVE: They all got their clothes from the same shop and out they go. Spray it on and out they go - rock singers! There's too much uniformity. Long hair is supposed to make a statement, but everyone has long hair these days. So you're not making a statement, are you?!!

The album itself is as much a statement as Steve's slaphead haircut. With not a party anthem in sight, it covers diverse and sensitive subjects such as child abuse, tv evangelism, trained and untrained killers and the current state of society. Heavy going perhaps, but if you're to play powerful why not sing about something powerful, as well? As Nik said "the world ain't such a great place to be, really". However, C.M are still far from above "taking the piss".

NIK: The track "Red Hot Rock" is pure pistake. Its just like this is the latest fad, you know - Rad Rock.

STEVE: The blues intro is like (assuming a bored tone as he speaks) - going round again and we're playing this - and all of a sudden, bang! We're gone, in comes the brass section, and we're away.

MG: TALKING ABOUT THE BRASS SECTION, CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE ADDITIONAL MUSICIANS AND EFFECTS YOU USED ON THE ALBUM?

STEVE: We used the guys that go out with Beautiful South now (UK chart popsters in case you're wondering. No wonder he's laughing!). Now thats a rare combination. And thats not wimpy. They kick ass that brass section - they really rock it up! We also used some samples from tv and radio clips, there is just a different attitude to it than we had before.

NIK: It was a blend, really. The guy who produced it had never produced a metal album before, so we made it heavy and he made it different. What made bands like Led Zep so great were that they had the nerve to do something different. In the end of the day, thats what I'd like to say to everybody: For God's sake, have a go! Contact address: Chrome Molly, c/o Angst Appreciation Society, P.O Box 267, Leicester LE3 9AU, England.



Out of Los Angeles comes a lot of bands putting image over musical talent. But there are always exceptions, and Stone Soldier is one of them. So I decided to give them a chance to introduce themselves to people that still haven't heard of Stone Soldier. Jim McDonald and Dan Sindel, the guitarists, had the following on their minds.

MG: WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF STONE SOLDIER?
 JD: Dan and I met in high school and began jamming together on and off. Later, we decided to form a band. After sifting through what seemed like a million of idiots, we found some good players. It was about a year after that we found Josey Lopez (drums) and Paul Puljiz (bass, ex-Legion). In looking for a vocalist, we were impressed a lot by Julian Mendez, then singing in Heretic. We got together, and it worked out perfectly! Ultimate compatibility!!!

MG: HAVE YOU HAD ANY INTEREST FROM THE RECORD COMPANIES SO FAR, AND FAILING TO SIGN A LABEL DEAL, WOULD YOU CONSIDER PUTTING OUT A SELF-FINANCED ALBUM?

DS: We have received some offers from various labels, but somehow they just weren't right at the time. We're very adamant about the band's artistic freedom and don't want anyone to change our sound or energy. Putting out a self-financed album would be nice, but it is still a little unrealistic. And you still have to find distribution. We do have a few home-produced videos done by our friend Craig Holmas. They have a real raw feel to them, which is perfect, rather than having some slick production aimed for MTV.

JM: Unfortunately, we're lacking the funds right now to make an album ourselves. As for what songs would be included is hard to say, as we have so many. We'd have to fight over it for a day or two.

MG: WHAT INFLUENCES STONE SOLDIER AND YOUR LYRICS?

DS: Day to day events and attitudes. We do not write about dungeons and fairy-tales. There are enough people living in a fantasy world, so we write about the world around us without being too political. It's more of an inner-self attitude and motivation... get off your ass and achieve your goals. That's what Stone Soldier is about!

MG: WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE L.A. SCENE THESE DAYS? I HEARD THAT BANDS ARE STARTING TO PROTEST AGAINST THE "PAY TO PLAY" SITUATION. IS THIS CORRECT?

DS: The L.A. scene is pretty fuckin' hokey. If a band protests against "pay to play", they are given a 12:30 slot on a Wednesday night and are told "Well, it won't cost you anything!"

JM: To me, the L.A. scene needs a kick in the ass. A lot of good metal bands are suppressed. And not only in the "pay to



play" bullshit arena. But in the clubs themselves, the clubs would rather have pg-13 rated bands that all look like girls instead of facing any sort of "violence" at shows when heavy metal bands perform.

MG: IS IT AN ADVANTAGE OR A DISADVANTAGE BEING AN L.A. BAND?
 DS: Both. The advantage of course is that all of the music business and the clubs are here. But the trends in this town change like the weather. One month it's new wave glam or some other shit etc. But the metal scene, even if suppressed, will never die!

JM: No, it's been a disadvantage being stuck in L.A.

MG: WHAT LOCAL BANDS DO YOU THINK ARE ANY GOOD?

DS: Mx Machine and Erotikill are some of the bands that are worth checking out. Right now, there's a whole new breed of kids going for the thrash/speedcore scene.

MG: YOUR LOGO HAS A VERY "SPECIAL" LOOK. WILL YOU CHANGE IT, IN ORDER TO AVOID NAZI ALLEGATIONS?

DS: No. Because if you compare our logo to a nazi ensignia, you would see there are no direct similarities (Are you sure about that? - ES), nor are we nazi. Nobody called Chevrolet Nazis for their "SS" line of cars, which meant Super Sport. Our "SS" stands for Stone Soldier, that's it!

JM: There are no reasons to change it. It's a very strong, bold logo which represents us. It's so stupid. For instance, a friend of ours can't wear our t-shirt to school, but can wear a t-shirt glorifying satan five days a week.

MG: WHAT BANDS HAVE YOU BEEN COMPARED TO IN THE PRESS, AND IN ORDER TO FEEL ABOUT DIRECT BAND COMPARISONS?

JM: We've often been compared to Metallica, Metal Church and Armored Saint among others. I don't feel we sound like any of these bands, but hey, at least we are being compared to good company!

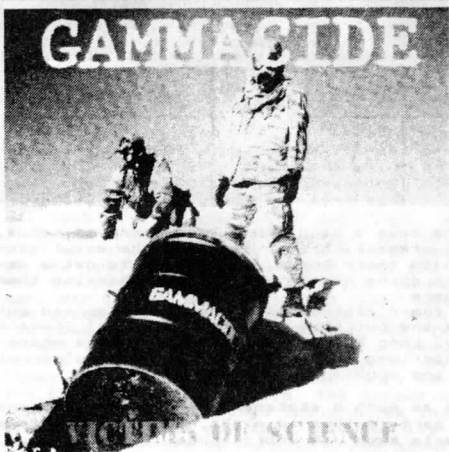
DS: I feel very strongly that we do originate our own sound, and we all have heavy personal sounds and styles. But there are times when you can pick out some of our influences.

MG: YOU'VE STATED IN AN INTERVIEW THAT YOU COULD WRITE SONG LYRICS IN 5-6 MINUTES. DON'T YOU FEEL THAT THE LYRICS WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN BETTER HAD YOU SPENT SOME MORE TIME ON THEM?

JM: I think it's best to persevere until the end when the ball is rolling. When it clicks perfectly, why stop? Not all our lyrics are written that quick. If we hit a creative rut, we come back to it and give it some time.

The demo costs \$6 (see review. An interesting note here: two of the songs have previously been released, but then with the vocals of John Bush of Armored Saint). T-shirts are \$10. More information from: Stone Soldier, 20920 Community St. 1, Canoga Park, CA 91304, USA.

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