

REMNANTS OF REASON



ISSUE 2

DAWN
VADER
GRIP INC.
CRIMINAL
CRUCIBLE
WITCHERY
ANACRUSIS
ARCHETYPE
CATHEDRAL
ARCH ENEMY
SPOCK'S BEARD
AMON AMARTH
MYSELF AM HELL
THE METAL MELTDOWN

ALBUM REVIEWS

PREPARE FOR PUNISHMENT



WITCHERY

NR 034 - WITCHERY - NEW DISC

Still doing the "W"? A handful of covers and a few originals served up by Sweden's Ultimate Metal Band! Produced by Andy LaRocca, with guest artwork by Rick Nielsen, WITCHERY once again prove that they are today's greatest metal band by far!

9/10 - ROCK HARD MAGAZINE

Voted Best Newcomer of 1998 - SLE FINLAND

"...the tastiest like this side of a Traci Lords Movie"

- SOD MAGAZINE

"Witchery is the true Maiden of the Next Millennium"

- EUROPEAN METAL PRESS



WAR

NR036 - WE ARE WAR CD

Members of DARK FENOM, IN AETERNUM, HYPOCRISY, and VOMIT return with a GOD SLAYING BLACK METAL HEAVEN! ANATOMY PRODUCED BY PETER D'AGOSTA (HYPOCRISY) AT THE ARTS STUDIO... A 666 INSULTING BOMB BURST THAT FLOODS THE WORLD WITH THE FORCE OF 10,000 WITCHERYERS! WAR IS TODAY'S MOST INTENSE BLACK METAL BAND... THE HEAVY FOR THE 'COMMERCIAL' RECORD LABELS WHO HAVE CHAIN STORE DISTRIBUTION.



IN AETERNUM

NR038 - FOREVER BLASPHEMY LP / CD

Sweden's IN AETERNUM rises in the ways of blasphemy and attack with a BLACK / DEATH METAL MASTERPIECE! FEATURING A STUDIO FREEMAN PRODUCTION (As the GATES) and a style that is described as a more SPEED-CASIN DISSECTION, this monumental massacre is set to take the BLACK / DEATH METAL scene by storm! A MUST FOR ANY TRUE BLACK METALIST!

"...Possibly one of the best albums of 1999"

- PUNISHMENT MAG

"...One of the best metal releases of 1999" - ROCKHARD



TARTAROS

NR037 - THE GRAND PSYCHOTIC CASTLE CD

CHAMPION OF EMPEROR BRINGS FORTH A PSYCHEDELIC BLACK METAL MASTERPIECE! THE LAST IN ISSUE WITH A NEW LAYOUT AND 2 BONUS TRACKS! INCLUDES A TRACK FROM THE THRILL!



DEATHWITCH

NR035 - MONUMENTAL MUTILATIONS CD

Members of DISSECTION, SACRILEGION and RINE MALE have created a fitting follow up to last year's THE ULTIMATE DEATH! Once again recorded with Andy LaRocca, and mastered by James Murphy, DEATHWITCH brings forth the ultimate! Got it now!



ABOMINATOR

NR031 - DAMNATIONS PROPHECY LP / CD

Australian Cannibal Metal featuring Dimeon Bloodstain (Ex BUSTAL WASTES!!) RAGE, SATANIC, and totally blasphemous, ABOMINATOR unleashes the FETTER SPIRIT ANTHEM with over 50 minutes of HELLRAISING BLACK METAL. DESCRIBED AS MORBID ANGEL ON PCP, THE AUSTRALIAN HEAVEN IS OPEN YET 10 TRACKS OF PURE F400000 ARMAGEDDON!!! ABOMINATOR...AUSTRALIAN FOR METAL!

STILL AVAILABLE:

USURPER - SKELETAL SEASON LP / CD

The latest Bone-Crushing Cult Metal Slab from Chicago's most hated band! NR032



WITCHERY - RESTLESS & DEAD LP / CD

Brilliant Metal featuring members of THE HAUNTED, MERCYFUL FATE, DYSMEMBER, ARCH ENEMY, SEANCE, SATANIC SLAUGHTER, & MORE! NR029

#13 - Top 15 Metal Releases of 1998

- METAL MANIACS

9/10 - Album of the Month - TERRORIZER

6/6 - METALLIAN MAGAZINE

10 FUCKING SAVILLS! - SOD MAGAZINE

10 x DYNAMITE - ROCK HARD

All CDs \$14 US / \$16 Overseas • All MCs \$10 US / \$12 Overseas.

SPs available through MERCULUS RECORDS, MICROPOLIS, P.O. Box 14815, Fremont, CA 94539-4815, USA. Fax: 510.623.0927, E-mail: mercurius@mercuriusrecords.com CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE: www.mercuriusrecords.com

ORDER DIRECT: 1.888.666.0922

Notes from a deranged mind...

Well, here we are once again, a fresh issue to have and to hold. A lot has happened since issue one, but I'll be damned if I can remember what those things were. Well, for one thing, the kind people at various record companies have kept me in the light with regards to the happenings in the biz, good friends have kept me occupied, and work hasn't killed me yet. This issue is quite a bit larger than the first one (with a decrease in text size, so get your reading glasses!), so hopefully you'll have more to read until the next iss. And speaking of the next issue, I've already got about 10 interviews done, so look for #3 really, really soon (think geological time). Also have to say thanks to the numerous people that have helped me in this undertaking. Again, thanks to the family, Matt, Eric and Saori, for all their infinite patience and help. Special thanks to Carol for the computer (helped 600%!), and to Bob for those killer pics from the metal fest (and for sitting through 16 hours of death with me...). Also, a huge thank you to all the bands, including: Jensen and Witchery, Gus and Grip Inc., Anton and Criminal, Frederik and Dawn, Peter and Vader, Chris and Archetype, Lee and Cathedral, Johan and Amon Amarth, the dudes from Myself Am Hell, Mike and Arch Enemy, Nik, Karl and Silvara (for passing out the flyers!), and Honolulu's own mighty Crucible. I do want to take a moment to thank all those in the biz for their support, and for helping me avoid too many pitfalls along the way! So, in no particular order, huge hails to: Bob Gilmore at Metal Blade, Joker at Necropolis, Joy at Pavement (you rock!), Jon Paris at Earache, Carl at Relapse (I want that Arktyk!), Gordon at MIA, Earl "The Root of All Evil" at Root O' Evil, Earsplit Liz and Paula at Nuclear Blast, Karl at Plastic Head/Blackend and Matt at Century Media.

Also, big thanks to Ken, John and the Remnants of Anacrusis for their help, Wilhelm of the "unofficial Dawn Page" for use of the Dawn pictures, Alex Rivera for offering to pass out the mag through Mexico, Chris Forbes for being such a stalwart of metal, and a huge "rock on" to Anders Nielsen for all the discs, the stickers, and for just being the coolest guy that I met through the page... Also, again want to send a big dose of support to Rob Carpenter. You are *still* the man of whom metal legends are written.

OK, until next time, enjoy the issue and be sure to drop me a line if you have something you'd like to express! Bands and labels, feel free to send material to the following address:

Remnants of Reason
attn: Evan Howell
2440 Campus Road, Box 455
Honolulu, HI 96822

Oh yeah, be sure to check out the website, which has over 125 individual band pages, complete with info and album reviews.

<http://www.geocities.com/~reezon>

reezon@geocities.com



Contents

Witchery.....	4
Criminal.....	6
Grip Inc.....	8
Vader.....	11
Crucible.....	14
Arch Enemy.....	17
Amon Amarth.....	18
March Metal Meltdown.....	21
Highlights in Metal Drumming.....	23
Cathedral.....	26
Archetype.....	29
Dawn.....	31
Myself Am Hell.....	35
Anacrusis.....	38
Spock's Beard.....	40
Reviews.....	44
Indie Reviews.....	54
Zine Reviews.....	55
Vault Reviews.....	56
Next Issue.....	62

NEWS

Well, a lot certainly has been happening in the last few months. **Iron Maiden** has gotten Bruce Dickinson and Adrian Smith to rejoin, and should be releasing something soon. Nick Barker left **Cradle of Filth** some time ago, and is now filling the tour drum seat for **Dimmu Borgir**. **Nuclear Blast** has released a slew of new albums from such heavy-weights as **Hypocrisy**, **In Flames** and **Children of Bodom**. I've got the new platter from **Six Feet Under**, and it totally kicks ass. **Metal Blade** has also let loose the new **God Dethroned**, an plan to reissue a whole crop of old albums, **Manic Impressions** and **Screams and Whispers** from the mighty **Anacrusis** being a couple of those. **Covenant** had to cease and desist their recording when Nagash began to have problems with his vocal chords. Rumors that they spit in the wind to find a replacement are completely false... **Black Mark Records** seems to have an office in the states again (didn't they have one before?), so look for releases from **Lake of Tears**, **Necrophobic** and **Bathory** soon. Ever hear fo Gary Gilmore? Well, he's pretty famous (do your homework), and Norman Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* is based on his life. Seems as though he's also the focus of a new film named *Cremaster 2*, and features Steve Tucker (**Morbid Angel**) and Dave Lombardo on the soundtrack. Earl Root's **Root O' Evil** compilation #4 is out, and is titled Zoso. As eclectic as ever, listen and learn as to who's up and coming on this blooming label. **Century Media** is set to release a whole slew of stuff, most notably the new **Merauder**, **Arch Enemy**, **Dark Tranquillity** and **Tiamat**. Oppressor officially broke up, but as 3/4 of them are playing in **Soil**, I think they're just changing names! It may be a little late when you read this, but the Milwaukee Metalfest has been moved outside due to the huge turnout. I really hope it wasn't because of the wrestling. Check out the wesite (<http://www.metalfest.com>) for up to the minute info. Speaking of that time of year, **Relapse** is having their super special tour beginning right after that extravaganza, so make sure you book a couple extra days to see bands like **The Dillinger Escape Plan**, **Morgion** and other **Relapse** greats in a more intimate venue (where you can be annihilated!) **Karma to Burn** should have a new album out soon, all instrumental, as they should be anyway. **Carnal Forge** are no longer on **WAR records** (hence why they never got my interview...), word is they're shopping for a new label.

Witchery

Formed from the ashes of Satanic Slaughter, Witchery was conceived to shed the excess and capture the true essence of Heavy Metal. Released to an unsuspecting underground, *Restless and Dead* earned numerous perfect reviews and was judged by many to be one of the best albums of 1998. Further evidence of the magnitude of their success was shown as they were recently awarded the "Best Newcomer" award from Suomi Finland Perkele, the largest magazine in Finland, a country that definitely knows it's metal. Never resting, Witchery have just released the eagerly anticipated *Witchburner* E.P., which contains cover songs by Accept, W.A.S.P., Judas Priest and Black Sabbath. On this release, the band pay homage to just a few of their influences, also adding two new tracks and the now infamous *Witchburner* single, which just happens to be the three minutes that started it all. With plans to tour and performances booked at numerous summer festivals, the domination of the world is close at hand. Put your fingers in the air and do the 'W' as Jensen tells his tale of a band that was born in the night.

RoR - The birth of Witchery from Satanic Slaughter is pretty well documented, but I was wondering if you could go into some detail about the SS breakup, and what had happened to the *Witchburner* EP.

PJ - Well, Satanic Slaughter was formed back in 1985, long before I was a member, as I had my own band at the time. One day Paul from Necropolis Records asked me if I knew of a band who deserved a deal.

I contacted SS, and Ztephan Dark, who was the founder, mustered the troops to record an album, minus one guitar player. He asked me to be a member, specifying that I should not take a leading role, as he never liked my kind of material. I had no problem with that, except that after a few weeks nothing happened, so I began to write songs. Actually, I wrote like 3 or 4 in the same rehearsal! Ztephen, who used to be a guitar player, now decided that he wanted to sing, except he felt

that anyone could sing on a black metal album just by relying on the proper studio effects. So, he was quite surprised when we got into Unisound Studios and he found out that it wasn't that easy to sing after all! That was when Toxine, who was a guitarist, grabbed the lyrics and shocked us all by displaying his vocal talent. Naturally Ztephen was quite disappointed, as he was the founding member and now wouldn't be on the first album! It would have ended there, except that Paul called me one day to say that a movie company was interested in having Satanic Slaughter on the *Gummo* movie soundtrack. We decided that we should do it, so I wrote this half-assed black metal song entitled *Infernal Halls*, and another track, just for fun, called *Witchburner*. We recorded these both in one day and were all surprised at how *Witchburner* came out, since I had wrote it in less than an hour, and we had only rehearsed it like 3 or 4 times! It was then that we made plans to record another album with songs along the lines of *Witchburner*, also choosing to cover four tracks from eighties bands. Well, two weeks prior to this recording, Ztephen fired us all from the band, explaining that he didn't like the new direction, and that this was never what he had envisioned for Satanic Slaughter. Thus, Witchery was born. We realized that we couldn't put out a MCD where four of the seven tracks were covers, so *Witchburner* was put on hold and I began to write material for the *Restless and Dead* album.

RoR - *Restless and Dead* is by far the most critically acclaimed album of 1998, and the entry in many reviewer's playlist. With Sharlee also playing in both *Mercyful Fate* and *Arch Enemy*, and

you in The Haunted, will Witchery begin to become more of a focus than those other bands? Do the other members have other projects that they're involved in, and do these ever cut into "Witchery time?"

PJ - Yes, other projects do cut into "Witchery time", but we all have what we consider our main bands. Sharlee has some other projects, but I know that Witchery is his #2 priority. Toxine and



Richard (Corpse - Guitar and Solos) do not have anything on the side, but Mique has a metal techno thing called RhocaGil that he does just for fun. We're 100% serious about this band, and do not consider it to be just a project, but The Haunted is my main band. They count on me there, and I was one of the founding members of that band, so there's no way that I would back off from my obligations with them.

RoR - There's an old-school feel to Restless and Dead, but it also seems as though this diminishes the further into the album that one gets. Was this something the band was going for, or just a figment of my grand imagination? Are the covers a means of citing your influences in your writing, or do the riffs just come into your head?

PJ - For the first part, I have never really reflected over this, and if there is something there, then it was something subconscious. We didn't focus on sounding like a band from the eighties, we just wrote music that fucking rocked and put a smile on your face. We never waste time thinking too much about whether this is a good album or not. If it kicks ass, then it's good enough to put on the album. Both Restless and Dead and Dead, Hot and Ready were written in two weeks! I don't know what my influences are, because I've been listening to this type of music forever, and it's all in there in the back of my head somewhere. I just move my fingers, and out come these riffs. I'm not sure how it all works.

RoR - It seems as though most people need to "pigeon-hole" bands into a certain sub-genre, for example, what's being dubbed the "retro-thrash" movement. Do you think that this limits the listening potential for groups, or help to better define their sound? What do you think of when you hear the term "retro-thrash"; would you want Witchery to be labeled that way? Also, did you have a specific idea that you were going for with the packaging? How important do you think the image of a band are to sell a record today?

PJ - I think people want to have labels on everything just to make themselves feel on top of things. I think that it damages the bands, because they might feel that because people call them this or that, that that's the way they should play. Fuck that. I know that people have a hard time finding out what to call Witchery, well, we call it "R'n'D"! We don't sound like a typical retro-thrash band because they usually copy everything from one band, from the solos to the cover art to stagenames. We might have a lot to do with the eighties scene, but we take what we want from whatever bands we want, and try to make something new with it. Image and packaging have always been important to catch the buyer's eye, look at Cradle of Filth or Marilyn Manson, for example. Cool pictures sell, nudity sells, oldest "trick" in the book. I don't think there's anything wrong with a visually strong band, good pictures and packaging might make the difference for a band that has great songs, etc. Plus, it's more fun to buy a cool looking album than dull one!

RoR - With regards to songwriting, I would think that one of the caveats of writing material for different bands at the same time would be the overlap of style. Do you ever find that material you write for The Haunted sounds like Witchery material, or vice-versa? Is it difficult to keep the separation between the two bands, and what do you consider to be the differences between the two? I also wondered why you don't seem to perform solos

on the albums.

PJ - That's because I think that solos are gay! No, I've never been able to play a solo, I've just never bothered to learn how. I've always found it more important to know how to write a song. When I write music and riffs I always write them for Witchery. It's easier, less pressure, more fun for me, and I avoid getting writer's block that way. Every now and then there's a riff that sounds more like The Haunted than Witchery, so I keep it for them. When I have written about 3 or 4 Witchery tracks I normally have enough material to write a new The Haunted song, so The Haunted actually benefit from me being in Witchery! There are also two other songwriters in The Haunted, and there's less chance of the two bands sounding similar just because of me. As for differences, The Haunted is harder and angrier than Witchery, who have a more Rock and Roll approach. Witchery aren't that bothered if something isn't tight or played exactly, as long as it has that crushing feel to it. As I said before, Witchery needs like 2 weeks to complete an album, where The Haunted uses up to 7 times as much time in the studio to record and mix.

RoR - So, let me ask a little about some of the Witchery-isms, such as the 'W' finger salute, who came up with that? How about Ben Wrangle, and where can people meet the Witchery woman? Will she be making a new appearance on Dead, Hot and Ready?

PJ - I came up with the salute. Sharlee and I were up burning the midnight oil one night during the recording of Restless... That's when we came up with all sorts of crazy shit, including the cover art, Ben Wrangle, etc. No, we have to find a new girl for the next one. We have to outdo ourselves, you know? I'll have to look around though, as I don't know where I will find such a beautiful girl!

RoR - Please tell me that this isn't your sister that we're all lusting after now...

PJ - [laughing] no, no, no. If you come to Gothenburg you can see where she works. She's a "woman of the night", if you will.

RoR - You're on a pretty major label with The Haunted, and Merciful Fate is on Metal Blade, I was wondering why you went with Necropolis with Witchery. Is it easier to release an album on a smaller label?

PJ - As I told you this relates back to the Satanic Slaughter days, but we wouldn't change for anything. Necropolis has given us their undying support from the start. They see their chance to grow so they're working their asses off for us. That's more than what you can say about some other labels. Also, what other label would allow a band to put out a couple of albums a year! Necropolis are, and I know I speak for all of us, the best and hardest working label that we have encountered.

Witchery INterview continued on page 59

Criminal



Ready to take a little stroll down memory lane with me? Think back to around 1987, and you may just remember the band Pentagram from Santiago, Chile. Bearing no relation to the US doom band of the same name, this Pentagram became infamous for a particularly intense brand of death metal, so much so, they are no considered to be one of the originators of some of that kick ass Swedish sound that was made so popular. Time marches on, and 1999 finds me opening the Criminal disc, and it was with eager anticipation that I played Dead Soul. While the sound has progressed since those days, and Anton is no longer responsible for penning all of the riffs, the magic that was Pentagram is still here, updated for your listening enjoyment. So, if you're like me, you may have wondered just what the heck had happened down south in the last ten years...

RoR - So maybe you could go into the history of the formation of Criminal from Pentagram.

Anton - Sure, well, at the time that I was in Pentagram I was really into the whole underground-type death metal thing. You know, Possessed, Kreator, Destruction, Celtic Frost, and I just wanted to do something like that. At one point I got a little bored of the whole scene and the whole cliché though. I actually just got sick of the whole situation, knowing that I wasn't going anywhere that way. It was very difficult at that time to put out records or anything like that for us. So, that's why I quit Pentagram, but I always wanted to play music. I can't imagine my life without playing music. I started looking for musicians, finally found Rodrigo, and we started to write some songs. This was a different thing, because in Pentagram I wrote all the songs, and here there is more cooperation. Some of his influences, and the other guys' influences come in as well. Now I'm not solely responsible for what goes into Criminal. By the way, we also got a little older, and when you get a little older you start to open your mind a little more. Not be so one dimensional in your tastes. I started to listen to a lot of industrial music, all kinds of music really, and I think that shows in a way in Criminal's music.

RoR - Yeah, I think from a fan's perspective, they would like to see the band continue down the same road, to consistently produce the same material. From a band's perspective, they need to grow, and it's not really fair to ask them to release the same material again and again.

Anton - Sure, that's what I was saying to a guy today, he asked me what I thought of people that wanted me to out the same thing out all the time, and I said that I don't care for them. It's cool that you like my music, but if you only like one record, then that means that you really don't like my music as a whole, just that album. I have to keep moving, to try new things. The next Criminal album will be different than the last one, and if people don't want to deal with that then... [laughs] I'm sorry but I don't care...

RoR - Unfortunately, I don't have the first Criminal album, could you contrast the first one and Dead Soul for me?

Anton - Well, first of all, there's the production. The first album we actually put out independently first, and got picked up by BMG after it was finished. We did that album with very little money, I had to borrow some to get it done. We also didn't have very much time in the studio, which wasn't very good anyway. So, the production is not so good, but the style is, and I would say it's more on the thrash end of things. There are a few songs that are really good, and that people like a lot. I think that we progressed a lot on Dead Soul, we made it sound better, and I think it more diverse, especially with my voice.

RoR - Do you think that the new producer (Vincent Wojno) had a large part in altering the sound?

Anton - I think that it was more that he helped us to find the sound that we were looking for. When you don't have much money, you just in with the equipment you have, into the studio you can afford, with the engineer there, and you make the best out of it. But you know, it ends up sounding like what the studio is like, and what the gear is like, not like what you wanted it to

sound like. So when you start having choices, of instruments, and the sound board, etc., you can achieve the sound that you picture in your head.

RoR - I might be wrong, but weren't you at some point going to school to be a sound engineer?

Anton - Yeah, I was. How did you know that?

RoR - Well, I used to help a friend of mine with his magazine, and he had printed an interview that you did in one issue which is like 10 years old now. So, I still had the magazine...

Anton - [laughing] - Pretty cool, OK. Actually, I finished school for recording. I went to do my internship at a recording studio, which pretty much sucked, you know. Then I went down to work at a TV station, taping all the soap operas, and I thought, man, I didn't go to school for five years for this! So, I quit that job, and now I have my own business. I have an import CD store, so that's pretty cool! That's like one of the best jobs you can have!

RoR - So now, with the store and your engineering experience, you can pretty much take an active role in all areas of the band.

Anton - Sure, I like to have control of every part of it, because when you start to give away the control to other people, you never really know if they are aiming at the same goals.

RoR - So, are you happier with the sound on Dead Soul, assuming that you had more time, and a better producer?

Anton - Yeah, but in a way we were still pretty naive when we went into the studio with Vincent. We thought that this gringo would come along and make us sound great, but then we realized that, for one, we would really have to work hard on ourselves, and that you really can't do magic. There's only so much that you can do in a studio, and we were still sort of in the position that I mentioned before, so we got the best out of the situation, but maybe not the best that we were looking for. It's a learning process though. The first one we did all by ourselves, the second one we kinda trusted completely a foreign producer, and the next time around we will do a co-production thing. That way we keep the control, but use the knowledge and experience of the producer.

RoR - I would think that with how well the record's doing, the label you're recording on will give you more control to get the exact sound you're aiming for.

Anton - Well, it's all a question of money, really. The record label has never tried to take away our artistic freedom, but if you want a top producer, you have to give him \$30,000! And that's not something that we can afford right now.

RoR - The material on Dead Soul was recorded about two years ago, and so it's being distributed in the states now. Is that album still doing well for you?

Anton - You know, down here, down in South America, we're pretty much done with all the promotion. We toured and did these big shows like the Monsters of Rock with Slayer. We toured a lot of other countries down here. We're busy working on our next album right now, you know. So, while we're down

here doing the promotion in North America for Dead Soul, we're working on our follow up. It wasn't really our fault that it took so long, the negotiations between BMG and Metal Blade started like June of last year. It took months to negotiate, and then months to release the record, that explains the delay. It's frustrating. It's frustrating, because even before we recorded Dead Soul, all that material had been ready like a year before. BMG made us wait, saying that it wasn't the right time, or that they weren't ready. We actually put out a live E.P. in between just to keep people happy. But to see now that Dead Soul was recorded like 2 1/2 years ago and is just coming out in Europe and the States, we know that we have to do it faster next time. Otherwise we're going to get old waiting for things to happen!

RoR - One thing I noticed about the production was that a lot of the tracks significantly differ from each other in terms of the guitar tone, etc...

Anton - Yeah, that was really Vincent's choice. They weren't recorded at different times, it was something that came about during the mix. For each track we did a completely different mix. We EQ'd the guitar all over again, and since we used different tunings that had an influence as well. I agree with you, and that's actually something that I don't like about the record, but it doesn't always have to sound the same all the time.

RoR - Well, it gives each of the songs individuality, but in terms of the flow of the album, it is noticeable.

With the delays, and now knowing that you're working on the next album, are you going to tour the U.S. and Europe for Dead Soul?

Anton - Actually, we have someone in the states who's working on getting us a tour, and that is something that we want to do. At this moment, flight tickets to New York or Miami aren't that expensive, so that is something that we could afford even ourselves. I think that we will still get some support from BMG and even from Metal Blade if it's a good tour, if it makes sense. What BMG wants us to do is to get out of South America to record the next album, and then use that as a chance to do a tour for Dead Soul, which is a good idea if you ask me.

RoR - So just hold off...

Anton - Yeah, do a tour of Europe or something for two months, then when we're done, get into the studio and record the album.

RoR - What's the scene in Chile like now? I guess I have a snapshot of what it was like ten years ago, but I assume that a lot has changed? Is extreme music more accepted there now?

Anton - Back when I was in Pentagram, there were very few people that listened to that stuff. It was pretty much the same when we started Criminal in 1991, but since then, it's grown so much. Now, every band that comes to Chile can draw like 3,000 people. You have radio stations that play metal, and you have fanzines that look like glossy magazines. Everything is getting real professional, and of course, that's because this music is more

Continued on page 58

Grip Inc.

What can you say that hasn't been said already about these guys? Everyone knows how they formed, Dave Lombardo vacating the drum seat of his previous band to join forces with some heavy hitters as almost a musical retribution. Their debut, *The Power of Inner Strength*, was an album which is strong still, but one can almost sense the existing shadow of the past which looms over that release. Their second opus, *Nemesis*, is the most experimental of the albums so far, guitarist Waldemar Sorychta delving into the wide world of effects and tunings to create a truly interesting and powerful record. For 1999, the guys in Grip give us their all once more, with *Solidify* being one hell of an album, full of dynamics and range to reward the fans, who seem to sense something good when it comes around. Having hired a new bassist, which may be a major step for the band, Gus Chambers gave me a call from the mostly sunny state of California to discuss a couple things that have been going on with him lately.

GC - So I'm down here in L.A., where are you at?

RoR - *I'm in Hawaii...*

GC - (incredulous) You're in Hawaii?! You're a lucky man!

RoR - *So is Hawaii on the tour, I mean, if you go to Japan, you should stop here, it's halfway in between...*

GC - I'll tell you, is we only played Hawaii, that would be alright with us. We actually are playing Japan later in the year, but when, when, we don't know.

RoR - *Hawaii is just never on any tour schedules, is that because it's so difficult to get bands out here, or that people feel that there isn't a large enough fanbase out here?*

GC - What it might be is it might be promoters, venues, or whatever. It is an extra wad of money just to fly a band there, put them up and stuff, when they could just fly them straight to Japan, bang. If you have enough money on your budget, then yeah, you could play there, but nowadays it's pretty rough.

RoR - *So who would be in charge of renting the equipment, would that be the promoters?*

GC - Yeah, the promoter is supposed to take care of all that, it's all in with the price and stuff like that. Like here, they might take KISS, or someone like that, but someone on our level, I don't know.

RoR - Well, Quiet Riot just played here, so I don't know...

GC - (laughing) Could they pull any people in there?

RoR - *So when one of your albums are done, and someone were to sit you down and have you listen to the CD, what are some of your feelings?*

GC - In regards to *Solidify*, I'm actually very happy with the way that it came out. The artwork on the front is very minimal, and the reason that we wanted to do that was that we wanted to get away from something that many bands seem to do, and that's to sort of hide behind computer generated dragons and whatever. Over the top covers, right. So we wanted to go for something more organic and we just put our ugly faces on the cover and

keep it pretty simple, just let the music do the talking. You know, we're not trying to sell any kind of image. We are what we are, and this is what we look like. It's more of a back to roots feel of marketing things. You know as well as I do that a lot of image stuff with Marilyn Manson and Rob Zombie is all just duff, all this Alice Cooper type stuff, but the music doesn't really say anything to me. What we wanted to do was to basically bring things back to focusing on the music.

RoR - *So, in terms of sound, this sounds like the heaviest Grip Inc. release.*

GC - Right...

RoR - *Now is this because of the production, or where you guys are in terms of playing together...*

GC - Well, in looking at the albums from the first one, to this one, the first one was a real angry, thrash, in your face, drums mixed up front, a lot of monotone singing. On the second one, we sort of branched out with more atmospherics, with more moodiness. With this one, it was a natural progression by the way, it seemed right at the time to make this kind of music. We did detune on a couple of songs, to make it heavier, darker, you know, emotional. I actually approached the singing with a lot more feeling, with a lot more emotion in my voice, used a little bit more range than I did on the other ones. I lot of people have come up to me and been like "Hey man, you've been taking singin' lessons, why didn't you sing like that before", and the answer is that it wasn't right for before, but it feels right now. There's certain times when you can do certain things in this business, and I think that the progression of Grip is a reflection of real life, and it felt right to write this album at this time. The evolution of it is natural, real, and a reflection of real life. I could go on forever... (laughs)

RoR - *It's interesting for me to watch it from the beginning, since at first the group was touted as a "supergroup", with Dave Lombardo from Slayer, and I didn't know if you guys felt that you needed to work away from that on the first album. You certainly proved that it was going to be nothing like, and then on the second album, you took more chances, but here, on Solidify, it feels like you are your own group now.*

GC - See, what we had to do was that we had to prove ourselves to a lot of skeptics due to the whole Slayer thing. When I first met Dave, and I first started jamming with him, like 7 years ago,

I told him that I wanted nothing to do with trying to reincarnate, or copy Slayer. I mean, that would have just put the lid on the coffin. I told him, when we get to our third or fourth album, I want to branch out, and push the boundaries. A lot of bands get a formula, and they keep rehashing that again and again, which is not creative, and it's not challenging as a musician, or to the fans, either. And that's basically what Grip is all about, we don't like to be stuck in one, frame, structure or format. I think that this one shows that we've matured, and grown tighter as a band too, which takes quite a while to do. Plus, I must add, the missing element that wasn't in the other two albums was Stuart Carruthers. He really added a lot of character and groove to this album.

RoR - So how did you hook up with him?

GC - Well, we actually were supposed to audition him once before after Jason Viebrooks left, and we had a tour to do, so we auditioned all these guys, because we didn't want to cancel. But we made the mistake of going with this guy Eric Glass (sp?) and he just did not work out. So, Devin Townsend actually called up and said that he knew the predicament that we were in, and said that there was this bass player in Vancouver, Stuart Carruthers, and said that if he didn't have a bass player already that he would take this guy. So we knew that we had to jump on it. And he's a really down to earth guy, no ego. And his playing style just really fits. He actually wrote one of the songs on the album!

RoR - Yeah, I noticed that. I also noticed that this was the first release, where except for the instrumental, that Dave wasn't credited with co-writing any of the tracks. Was he concentrating more on just being a drummer this time around?

GC - Yeah, you see the thing is, we have Waldemar do most of the songwriting, even on the old stuff, we're the main writers. And I'm not saying that we're the <leaders>, but we create the stuff. We give it to Dave, and usually there's a scratch or skeleton drum track on it, and we say "do what you gotta do". He got credited because he actually did more than an average drummer would do. But on this one, we went into so many different timings, and some polyrhythms and stuff like that, I don't think he's ever recorded anything like that, with those kinds of patterns. So he really had to concentrate on what he was doing to get what we were looking for. It worked, and it was a challenge for him, because it wasn't just the same old double kick, torpedo legs, snare and cymbal, he started grooving.

RoR - Well, he got to be happy with that. He's every drummer's idol, but if he had stayed in Slayer, he would have just burned himself out, which I think is what happened on Seasons...

GC - Of course! I bet he's so sick of playing that double kick thing, I mean, he's had enough of it. He also proved that he can do it, and that he's pretty much the best guy, except for maybe Gene Hoglan (Hoglan was actually a huge inspiration for Lombardo's double bass playing, Gene being a roadie for Slayer and coaching Dave's playing during the making of Hell Awaits). I mean, on this album, we do have a couple of rippers in there, you know, to say "we're not done yet!"

RoR - Well, that was something that I found interesting, you don't seem to follow the trends, for example, the album covers. Metal Blade album covers seem to follow a set design. Also, with listening stations so prominent, it seems that a lot of bands

need that first catch song in there, and while the opening track on Solidify is a heavy one, Amped would have been my choice for a balls out opener.

GC - Well, you see, that's what we do. The songs are all written individually at certain stages of the construction of the album.

Now, the key to this, is that we try and make the album flow as a whole. A lot of bands make the mistake of putting their best two songs first, and then the rest of the album is like blahhh...

We like to have a lot of dynamics in there, start out a little slow, peak it up a bit, etc. I know with CD players, it's easy to skip ahead, but with albums you had to play them through! Our idea is to take you on a journey, with the dynamics and the flow of the album. Another thing with this one is that we didn't make songs that jumped out at you right away. A lot of albums that people make, they say "This is a great album, as soon as I put it on it hooked into me", but if you listen to it another ten times you're bored with it. What we try to do is give it some longevity, so that every time you put it on you hear something else.

RoR - So are you guys based on the four corners of the globe?

GC - Yeah, I live in an igloo in Alaska right now! Actually, I'm kind of a rock and roll gypsy, I don't really live anywhere too long. I did live in L.A. for a long, long time, but I got really burned out with it. I been living in Germany for like the last 12 months, pretty close to Waldemar, and I think that actually made the album so tight. But yeah, Stuart lives in Vancouver and Dave lives in L.A. And that won't change, because we have a good chemistry, and a good working relationship. When we're not together, we're writing, sending each other tapes. So when we do get together, we're excited to get jamming and do all this stuff, it's really productive. In that three week period, we get a lot more done than bands that get together three or four times a week! Another aspect is that when we're done we take the recordings and go back to our homes and listen to them not as musicians, but as people who would buy the album. It's important to separate yourself from it sometimes, you lose the spontaneity.

RoR - Also, with Waldemar, with his production, he's constantly exposed to different sounds and influences.

GC - Well, actually, he's pretty good at separating himself when we go in the studio, he goes in as a guitar player. We do bill him as a producer with Grip, but actually it's produced by Grip, because we don't really need a producer, we know what we want. A lot of bands NEED a producer because they don't know how to format their songs.

RoR - The titles, I assume you title them?

GC - Yes.

RoR - And they have...

GC - Meanings?

RoR - [laughing], I KNOW they have meanings, but should I take them as face value interpretations, or look deeper.

GC - Well, with The Power of Inner Strength, When we all first met, I thought, we've all been beaten up in this industry, and

you have to really have this power of inner strength to survive. In anything you do actually. Now, when the first one came out, there were a lot of skeptics, not so much in America (yeah, unfortunately there were - Ed) , but there were a lot of people comparing us to Slayer, saying that it was a really weak effort, etc... So, for the second album I named it Nemesis, because Nemesis is the goddess of revenge. So, the album was our revenge; this was your nemesis. But Solidify, a lot of people think that Solidify is based on our finally being accepted, and our being tighter as a band. That's not exactly what it means. I named it Solidify because we all come from different parts of the world, different cultures, different musical backgrounds. What we do when we get together is that we take all this and solidify it into the Grip sound. I'm not a heavy metal singer, I'd call a heavy metal singer a guy (or woman?) who's up in the high C register (makes noises uh ahhhhh), you know, traditional. I'm more of an aggressive, emotional singer, and that comes from my punk background. Dave's from a thrash background, Waldemar's from Despair, and Stuart's from, Stuart's from... {pauses} I don't know where Stuart's from.

RoR - Stuart's from Vancouver!

GC - {laughing}, Right! He played moose music! No, you know, there's no leader. I mean, a lot of people still say that it's Dave Lombardo's band, and that doesn't bother me at all, but without one person in this band, we wouldn't be able to create what we have.

RoR - Well then who's decision was it to put the "Featuring Dave Lombardo of Slayer" stickers on Nemesis?

GC - That is a total bullshit fuckin' thing man, and I mean, I'm in their (Metal Blade's) office now man, but I was pissed! You know why, because that was a completely negative thing to do! I mean, we're our own band, we're trying to find our own identity, and when people do that... ..people go "Uah!, there's only one Slayer!" And then people that DON'T like them, they won't give us a chance based on that! So it sort of backfired.

RoR - I guess I could almost see that on a first album, for recognition's sake, but you guys did prove that you were your own band by the second release.

GC - Right! We don't need to do that anymore, we shouldn't have done it the first time, but that wasn't our decision.

RoR - So you would fight this time if it was deemed necessary to put a sticker on Solidify?

GC - Absolutely! I mean, we have nothing to do with them! I have nothing against them (Slayer), I wish them the best of luck, but I think that they actually need to grow. They are maturing, but at a very slow rate, but anyway...

RoR - OK, OK, so how do

you feel that touring alters your songs, overall sound?

GC - I like it because it makes everything more edgy, and more raw. I like that have that rawness, I don't like to have it too polished. I like that edge, man, that intense feeling. Sometimes I go see bands and their sound is just too perfect for me, real over produced. And it's funny because a lot of guys will be like "How are you going to produce this live?", because there's a lot of textured guitar in there. Really, Waldemar's the kind of player that can actually overdub stuff into his rack system and play two things at once, so it can all be reproduced. There's also no sampling except for on two songs. But the last one, Bug Juice, I gonna see how good Dave really is on that one! {laughs}

RoR - From what you've said, having a more solid rhythm section now with Stuart should help a lot as well.

GC - Absolutely! He's the backbone, and it gives Dave a lot space to do what he's gotta do instead of having to compensate for lack of presence. There's a lot more groove in this one, which is a good thing.

RoR - So if you had your choice, would you rather play a smaller venue, or a larger, festival type arena?

GC - I like club stuff, I like to generate the energy, and sweat on people! I don't like to hide behind lights, and barrages of security men behind barriers and such.

RoR - Do you have any part in the decision for who your opening bands will be?

GC - Yeah. Well, actually, the business is getting so political, and there are so many bands out there, so much competition. But, I find it very important, we all as a band do, I should say, want to go out with younger blood that need exposure. Bands that are hungry, and that are good. I'd rather go out with someone like that than a band like say, Overkill, for example only.

RoR - So then the obvious question, if it was your choice, who would you take out on this tour?

GC - Oh, my god, that's a hard one, because there are SO many bands out there... There's a band that I really like, there a bit of the thrash, but they're really good, they're called The Haunted (bravo! - ed). I like some of Pro-Pain's stuff, I like Meshuggah, and I like the new Flotsam and Jetsam a lot. But my favorite would be Michael Jackson and Madonna!

RoR - But then who would you have first?

GC - I think they'd be havin' each other while we were playing.



Continued on page 61



To say that these guys were gods of metal might seem a bit pretentious...

...but when one takes into account the consistency with which Vader produces some of the most brutal death metal ever to surface, there really seems to be no other to classify them. With 3 full length albums and a handful of other releases, Vader have unleashed yet another hour of madness to honor their fans, this time in the form of a live album. While Vader is no stranger to this type of release (witness *The Darkest Age* - '93), *Live in Japan* has the distinction of being one of the tightest releases, complete with a sound that takes full advantage of what modern technology has to offer. With my goal since this thing started to get an interview with this seminal group, it was a complete surprise to have Joy from Pavement phone me up out of the blue with an offer I just couldn't refuse...

RoR - It seems like you guys are always on tour; have you had a pretty good break since the last one?

Peter - Oh, we had like a three month break after the last tour. So, with this tour we start like a new season for the band.

RoR - You guys actually start tomorrow night (agreement), did you as a band have to do anything to get back into shape for touring?

Peter - No, to play live is our life, it's why we're here. To play live is a destination for a death metal band like us.

*RoR - And you're one of the few that can definitely pull it off, if *Live in Japan* is any indication...*

Peter - You like it?

RoR - Oh yeah. What's so impressive is that, if anything, the material is played even faster and tighter live.

Peter - Well, it was recorded in a special place. It was the first show on the Japanese island for us as a band, but the response over there was so great; you can hear it on the album, so it was a big surprise for us, to play Tokyo for the first time and to have such a great response from all the maniacs over there. The sound is so good is because we could record it 100% live, but in order to make it in the right way, we took it back and mixed it in the studio. This was the first time that we could record a live album with a multi-track recorder. So it was still 100% live, but the sound is good, the way it should be.

*RoR - Let's talk about *Kingdom* a little bit, what inspired you guys to do the remixes on that album?*

Peter - The remixes were nothing like a new path for Vader, it was just something that happened. The first idea was to record the unreleased tracks from the *Black to the Blind* session, because of the pressure from our Polish maniacs, to record *Kingdom* for the Polish territory. It was a problem to put just two songs on a CD, so I prepared one new song (*Kingdom*) for that album, and we redid *Breath of Centuries* (originally on *Morbid Reich* and *The Ultimate Incantation*). But that was still not enough for a CD. In our opinion it was enough, but for our producer, for the guys responsible for selling the CDs it was only 15 minutes, and that wasn't enough. Maybe they were right, it's a lot of expense for 15 minutes. We had the two remixes, and we

decided to put those on as well. It's not like Vader themselves, but the master tape from *Black to the Blind* was used to make those songs, so it's still Vader's spirit, even if it's not exactly metal music or not like Vader the band's creation, know what I mean?

RoR - Yeah. It could also be used to open up people to music other than the extreme stuff.

Peter - Yes yes!

RoR - So you guys have been recording for over 10 years now...

Peter - Uh, actually, we started out in 1983, 1984 or something like that. But we started in a different reality, because we came from Poland, and in 83-84, it was difficult even to record a regular demo tape. So, to record the first demo tape we had to wait until 1989, and to record the debut album until 1992, almost 10 years! That's why when we appeared as a metal band many people thought that we were another death metal band in the death metal trend. But that's regular with people that don't know the history of the band, so I guess we were just another one. Most importantly, I think it's the feeling and the music (that's important), and we still follow the same way, we're still a death metal band. Of course, we still evolve, we still want to prove ourselves, but we're still Vader, and if we do something new, it'll still be fast, it'll still be Vader.



*RoR - Well, no matter what you release, it does sound like Vader. For *Black to the Blind*, you cranked it up a notch for speed and intensity. Was this a conscious decision for the band, or just what you felt like writing at that particular time?*

Peter - You know, in general, in talking about our evolution, in the beginning, we wanted to be extreme, to play an extreme kind of music, which means as fast as possible. It's not like a kind of competition in speed, but we still want to be extreme and interesting, not just create a fast beat, you know? *Black to the Blind* is different in comparison to previous albums, like the songs are more simple, maybe in a way less technical, but not something

that we can't play live. The music is the music, and it all has a certain feeling and expression. We just create in the way that we feel at the moment. So *Black to the Blind* is a fast album, the fastest album in our discography until now, but it's different and it should be. It would be stupid for us to copy ourselves. This is another album made in our way, different than our previous ones and different than anything that we are going to record.



RoR - When you made your cover album (Future is the Past) you cited a lot of influences. I was curious, I hear a lot of Sodom in the Necrolust era, I was wondering if this a way for people to get an idea of how the Vader sound developed?

Peter - Well, we made that because we wanted to put out for everyone the bands that influenced us musically in the beginning, and to put some bands who started this way. Who started to play the extreme metal music, thrash metal, death metal, black metal then, and don't exist anymore. Like Dark Angel, those kind of bands. Also, we did it to show how some of these bands have changed, because bands like Sodom, Kreator, today they sound nothing like what they did when they started. So if people only know those bands now, we wanted to show how important these bands were in the beginning. Bring those bands in to show the new generation of metal freaks. Personally, I was thinking about recording such an album before, but we never had the time to do it. After the recording of *De Profundis* we knew that we were going to have a kind of break between *De Profundis* and the next album so we figured it was a good time to do that type of album. By the way, we put all the covers that we had done from variety albums before on that recording, that's why you can find Black Sabbath or Depeche Mode's cover on the same album. So we put all the songs from the different compilations, like the *Satanic Slaughter* tribute album. The Japanese edition of *The Future is the Past* also had a song of a pretty famous Polish heavy metal band, Kat. This is a pretty unknown band for the rest of the world, but this band was pretty important for Polish metal freaks and also for me, for they started a kind of metal fever in Poland. So that song appeared on a tribute album for Kat which was released only in the Polish territory.

RoR - Are there other Polish metal bands coming out now that you would recommend for people to check out?

Peter - You mean bands that should be "discovered"? You know, this band named PSA, they're important for us, maybe because they are the first band that played heavy metal, but I don't think that they are so important that they should be "discovered" by people outside of Poland. It's hard to understand to people not living in Poland, there's a distance in time. Now maybe Poland is almost the same as other European countries, but 10, 15 or 20

years ago it was different, so we needed all that time to become the same as other countries. So it was hard to get new records, so everything that was new in heavy metal was kind of a rebellion in Poland, but it wasn't anything new for people in America or Europe at that time.

RoR - Well, hopefully working with Pavement will help, for now your distribution has increased like 600%...

Peter 600% {laughing}, I hope!

RoR - Well, let's just use Hawaii as an example (which is a little different), 6 months ago you could find maybe one import, but now every major store will have almost all the titles (Borders surprisingly stocks everything that Pavement re-released).

Peter - I think that now is the time, right now, today, is the time for Vader, more than say two years ago. We are a band, and every band, even the best bands, need promotion. There are so many bands all over the world, so promotion and distribution is so important. And not just thinking about it as business, just to tell the people what kinds of bands exist. So we're happy, and the last two years have been a big change for Vader, and we're in a much better situation now.

RoR - And your also now headlining this Death Across America tour...

Peter - {laughs} Yes, so this is the first headlining tour for us over here in America. Hopefully not the last one! {laughs} This is like the fourth trip to the continent, so I hope that it will become something regular. We usually play a lot and since 1993 we play like 100 shows a year, so we have good experience playing live. This is our destination, we need it. It's also good to know that people need it as well.

RoR - Another aspect that I wanted to talk about is the artwork, it seems to be a pretty integral part of Vader. How do the artwork and lyrics tie into the music for you?

Peter - Of course, the music is still the most important, but this is the art, and the art is also the artwork... Maybe it's hard to explain the overall feeling through only the songs, so with the artwork people can also see what we mean. That's why we pay so much attention to those details. We'd like to make it as good as possible

RoR - Also on a personal level, does it also tie in more with personal beliefs of the band?

Peter - Sure, sure, of course, each song is written and composed, and you can find something personal in that, but some of it is hard to understand because it's personal. So on the *De Profundis*

album we tried to put something like an introduction for every song written (sorry folks, this isn't on the Pavement re-releases, check out the discography on the web page to read them) by the author. Not to explain everything, but to close up the source with those few words. Also to show the way if someone is interested in the "why", you can just take a book, watch a movie, whatever. We want to make people hungry for knowledge.

RoR - Well, and having a deeper meaning behind anything you do brings it to a higher level, I think.

Peter - It gives it a kind of positive energy, and a kind of hope for many people that hear us. It's hard to explain but this is just power, energy, also for us as a band and for everybody that can really feel it. This is music that is something more than just the music, you know?

RoR - Well, it becomes more like a way of life for many people...

Peter - Definitely!!! This is our life.

RoR - So, in your lives, is there room for other things besides Vader, or does the band encompass 24 hours a day for you?

Peter - {laughing} Almost... Well, it's being a leader in a band, it takes almost all my time, I don't have much free time for myself. Because the band is not just touring, and playing, it's also practicing and composing, interviews like this, etc... So, it's just a way of life. Especially now, because this is what I was dreaming about before, to have this as a job. So this is now the only job we have, and we can be professional, 100% of our time into creating for the band.

RoR - So, when you re-do tracks, is this because you felt that you could update them, or that maybe you weren't happy with the sound from the past?

Peter - You know, to be honest, don't ask me as composer, because after each album is done I wish that there was something I could change. They're just like a piece of time, but a piece of time filled with emotions, energies... So it's better just to let it be. On each album that we record (or tracks that are redone), it sounds a little bit different, but it's still Vader. It's still recorded with 100% of our abilities. That's also why I couldn't tell you which one I thought was the best, because all of them are important to me. Of course, the Black to the Blind album may be the most adult album in sound, but just because we are more experienced, and have better abilities now. But I couldn't tell if it was better in feeling, because it's not like we prepared more for our last album than the first one. I mean, we recorded the first album with the same passion as the last one. We also got more money to record the last one. Personally I like all of them.

RoR - One interesting thing is that when you do re-record older tracks, they don't sound out of place in terms of the writing, yet the newer material sounds much different, know what I mean?

Peter - Well, it wouldn't be good to copy ourselves. We want to put the new ideas in the new songs, but we also don't want to lose the way that we started in the beginning. We want to stay Vader, a fast brutal band, but we also want to put new interesting ideas in. That's why the next album will be a little different, maybe out something that will be a surprise for you, for every-

one, but still Vader.

RoR - I guess I was curious about the new line-up, it seems that each full-length brings a change...

Peter - Not big ones, but we got a new guitarist, the Mauser from Christ Agony. He was the bass player there, but he's played guitar with us for 1 1/2 years. So, he's new.

RoR - I was wondering, since you write all the music...

Peter - Yeah, yeah, but we're still a band. I'm the leader of course, but we're still a band, and the final result depends on everyone. So, even though I'm the main composer in the band, the changing of each person will change the final result also.

RoR - So how do you feel about your touring companions? Do you see those bands providing energy and new ideas to Vader?

Peter - Yeah, you know Gorguts, I've known of this band for years, and I guess they had a break or something (they were reformed after 5 years off), but their first album sounded was still good, and it's nice to tour with them now. We know also the guys from Cryptopsy and Divine Empire, because the singer (Divine Empire) is Jason Blachowicz from Malevolent Creation. We toured Europe with them (MC) 3 times so it's good to be touring with them again, it's a good package, pretty heavy.

VADER - Selected Discography



The Ultimate Incantation
1992 Earache Records



The Darkest Age '93 Live
1993 Baron Records



Sothis
1994 Baron Records



De Profundis
1995 Conquest Records



Future of the Past
1996 Pavement Records



Black to the Blind
1997 Pavement Records



Live in Japan
1998 Pavement Records

*There are some discrepancies as to who released some of these albums, I tried to be as accurate as possible and my apologies if a mistake was made!

CRUCIBLE

Hawaii, thought by some to be the ideal vacation spot, and by others, home. While it may only take an hour to drive across, the island of Oahu has much to offer in the way of diversity, but diversity, covering a small sphere of influence. Take that as you may, but to be a band from Honolulu, and a local band at that, takes an intense amount of drive. It's exactly this which carries the band Crucible forward. Formed by guitarist Derek Hademan and vocalist Mike Ching from the remains of the band Epidemic, Crucible is a rising force in the way underground metal scene here. With one self-produced album and a European tour in their resume, Crucible are set to make the next step forward in their quest for world domination. I got a chance to talk to Derek and Mike after practice one afternoon, and here's what they had to say about the past, the present, and the future of Crucible.

RoR - Rumor has is that you joined Epidemic after one jam, and that half the band took off because you were too serious about the project...

Derek - Well, I met Mike one day while surfing with some mutual friends, and later that night one of those guys came up to me at work said that Mike's band was looking for a guitarist. So I went down there and fuckin' jammed with 'em, and that was basically it. But these guys were playing just like a couple cover songs, which I said wasn't going to work.

RoR - What kind of cover songs?

Derek - They played some Metallica, off Kill 'em All, and some fuckin' Jimi Hendrix...

Mike - It wasn't even a band...

Derek - In the beginning it wasn't even a band. These guys had a gig a month after that first jam. I asked them, "You guys are gonna play a gig with these songs?". So we chucked it all out, and most of the band went with those songs. The first week, the rhythm guitarist left because he was all pissed off, then Stevie, the drummer left, because it was too serious, not fun any more. I mean, we were practicing a lot, and some guys don't want that, so they left. Then Stan (Hardjadinata, the drummer who plays on most of Unshattered - Ed.) came in, and he knew a lot of Sepultura. We clicked then, because at that point I was really into them, like Arise, Chaos A.D.. That was like '97, so things got serious real quick, and we released the CD less than a year after we were together.

RoR - So you guys would just jam and write the material, or did you (Derek) bring in riffs?

Mike - We came up with like two songs a day! We had the whole album in like two weeks...

Derek - ...and then we just worked on refining it. Overcoming and Unshattered, I wrote those two songs in one week, and I put everything down, guitars, vocals, over a drum machine and gave these guys the tape. You listen to those two songs and it's a total different direction. Citizens was written at a point when the band was just me and Gary (, bassist who left during the recording of



Mike and Derek live in Holland

Unshattered), what was up with you at that point Mike?

Mike - I don't know, I just don't think I was "officially" in the band.

Derek - We had another singer at one point named Drew Tucker, but he started working at a strip club every night. So, we never really made any decisions, but Gary and I kept writing songs. We actually recorded it onto a CD, where I did drums and guitar, and did vocals and the bass. It sounds totally cheesy, but it's pretty classic. When we redid Citizens, I wanted it to be a real heavy, heavy song.

RoR - I hear a lot of At the Gates in that, so, with all your influences, when you approach songwriting, I know that you're not thinking of a certain player in mind, but what kind of sounds or riffs are you going for?

Derek - For me, I just like bands that have a good sound, I don't care who they are. I want a good guitar sound, and a good drum sound, you know? I just like things really aggressive, I mean, I get into some of the doom stuff, but I can't see sitting down and writing it.

RoR - Well, you can hear that on some of the production on Unshattered, for the first two songs are produced more "in your face" than some of the later ones...

Derek - I don't know, as far as influences, my influences go way

back. In 1986 I was into nothing but hardcore bands from the United States, I wasn't really into the English stuff. Bands like S.S. Decontrol, Tales of Terror, Condemned to Death. I really got into C.O.C. up until the Animosity album, after that, I didn't really get into them. I come down here a lot and just jam out on my own, just hang out for a while. Basically, when I write a riff, I try to think of the riff as a big dragster, with fat ass tires just peeling out [makes noise]. That's what I want our music to sound like, that you're blown away by the power, the adrenaline. On the first album, some of the songs have that, but I have some other ideas too. So, I may play a riff, and it sounds good, but if at the end it doesn't do anything for me, I throw it out. We throw out more riffs... I mean, just today, we came up with like fifty riffs, and maybe two or three of them, maybe, we'll keep. For me, life's been a big adrenaline thing for me, in the stuff that I've done, so I want to make sure that the music captures that. Crucible was going in a fast direction when we were in Europe, and people saw us as a fast band, but I think you'll find that this next album is going to be mostly slow and heavy. Just a lot of groove and anti-groove, a lot of halftime shit. It'll be an album that will be enjoyable to listen to, still a challenge, but not as much so as the first one.

RoR - How about you, Mike? Do your vocals sound the same as when you were in Epidemic, or did you find new influences which may have altered your style?

Mike - When I was singing with them, I didn't really know anything, I didn't really know what I was doing. So, just from practicing, just from going out on tour my style changed.

RoR - Was this something that you've always wanted to do?

Mike - Oh yeah, totally! When I was younger I always wanted to be in a band, but I never really thought that it would happen.

RoR - But then all of a sudden you're in the studio, laying down tracks.

Mike - It was weird at first, and hearing them now, I know that I could do them much better, the next album will sound much better, more powerful. I got influenced a lot by bands that we've played with live. I have a lot more self-assurance on stage as well.

Derek - When we went in to do Mike's vocals I remember it was like 9 A.M., and everything was done except the vocals. I remember that Mike was like kinda there, but real amiable, you know. I needed him pissed off, so I was like, "Dude, this is important, I need you on this...". By the end of the session it was on, but the first couple of tracks that we did...

Mike - It was pretty much like two takes and that's it!

Derek - I think Mike's vocals are real good on Unshattered, and on the chorus of There Is No Cure... I mean, they're all good, but as compared to what he can do now...

RoR - It's a lot of pressure, especially live, all eyes are on you...

Mike - Yeah, it is. I try not to think about it too much... I used to be kinda shy, but after I got used to it, I kinda know what to do, how to have good stage presence. Sometimes I get so into things that I miss a couple lines, whatever... [all laugh]

RoR - Maybe you could talk a little about being a heavy metal band in Hawaii.

Mike - Kinda sad I guess, there hasn't been that much lately.

Derek - Well, we do have some pretty big things coming up. The HUI (a major surf company), is putting out a video, and they're going to use some of our music in it, and they're HUGE!. That really helps a lot of bands, and I'm not saying that we're going to "make it" because of that, but it helps. They also want us to start doing parties and stuff. I think the club scene in Hawaii doesn't help metal, but the parties really do, the parties are awesome.

RoR - But people are buying the stuff, so there have to be people here...

Mike - There are people here, but there's just no place for them to get together.

RoR - So how hard is it to find musicians here in Hawaii then?

Derek - It's really hard. We've been back for three months and we've been trying to find people to play. I think things are coming together though, as far as that goes.

Mike - Everybody here is laid back, they don't really care, I guess.

Derek - Well, the last show we played here was right before we left on tour, and it was packed! There were a good amount of people in a small, small room.

RoR - I think that there might be an advantage though. In Hawaii, there are a lot of different things, but usually only one or two, and those things have a pretty loyal following.

Derek - We do get that, and there are people that do respect that. Then you get mags like Terrorizer that review us, and you know that if we were from L.A., they'd probably just think "Oh, another band from L.A.", but since we're from Hawaii, it shows that we have a lot of heart, to play something different and maybe not as accepted by large groups.

Mike - I think that people may give extra attention since we're from Hawaii, and find it hard to believe that there's metal here.

RoR - Would you want to be different? Would you want the metal scene to be larger here?

Derek - Oh yeah, definitely! It would just be lots more fun.

Mike - There are other bands out there, there are a million people here, you know!

Derek - There are a few other local bands that have their own style. There's a small scene and it's growing, and it's positive. As far as the scene, and the band, I think we have some good opportunities waiting for us. People in Europe are definitely anticipating us coming back in the summer of 2000, and that's going to be crazy.

RoR - Well, it seemed as though there were a few places to play, and that bands would come from outside the island, but I don't really see that now.

Derek - I think that the last big band that I saw was Ozzy. Before that it was Slayer, Sepultura, Pantera, but that was like 1994 you know. I think that it's just really expensive for bands to come to Hawaii and play. One of the problems that I find here is that people don't really help each other out the way they should. The only band that I would really mention, because they helped us out, is Broken Man. Those guys have helped us out with a lot of stuff.

RoR - Wasn't Kili (Kaohu) in Broken Man when he went on tour with you?

Derek - Exactly, he also helped record 1/4 of the album, and he joined the band when we toured Europe. When he got back from that, he had to help his mom out with their house, and that's pretty much where all his money is going, so he pretty much had to step down. So those guys have been really supportive of us in a lot of different ways. A lot of bands are out there just talkin' shit, just acting like kooks, you know. There's a punk scene here, but it's really a younger scene, since those guys play their punk kinda light. They don't play heavy hardcore like the east coast. It's like happy punk rock. We've kinda shuffled a bit in the lineup, but that can always help you, I think. There have been a couple fly by night guys that have come in, but, they come and go. When Kili was in the band, he contributed a huge part, so we think fondly of him, and remember him...

RoR - You make it sound like he died!

Derek - No he's still going with Broken Man.

RoR - So I guess you guys aren't living off your music yet...

Mike - No way.

Derek - [snickers] No. I mean, we sell CDs and shit, but we're still yet to make money. Between this studio, the cost of our first album, the tour, we're uh... [all laugh]. We're still waiting to break even, let's put it that way.

RoR - Well, you put the album out yourself.

Derek - Yeah, I fronted all the money, and we sell a bunch locally, and Repulse is selling some in Spain, but we really don't have any distribution yet. People buy it, it just needs to get out so that people can hear it. There's some radio support...

Mike - Yeah, 1240 AM, KNDI play it on there, but it's after midnight.

I



RoR - What about the internet, that's a good way to get noticed.

Derek - Yeah, we actually have a great web site right now. Well, not great, but it's pretty good! I just looked at it again last night. You can order our stuff through it, and we've got some pretty sweet deals. You can get like a killer tour shirt, CD, stickers and 2 posters for like \$25. What's important for us is that if we're going to do something, then we're going to do it right, and that it'll be good quality. The band is all that matters to me right now. When I die, I want to know that some kid is on a skateboard...

RoR - Humming Unshattered...

Derek - Yeah! Hummin' one of our songs and saying that fuck, these guys gave it their all, they lived it. That's the thing, we're just regular guys, and we're not getting paid to do it, in fact, most of us are paying to do it.

RoR - You guys are what labels would call "self-supportive", as you put out all the merchandise yourselves, and also made your way across a European tour...

Derek - Definitely! That was a lot of pressure as well. The tour we did was a lot of pressure. We were driving ourselves in this van through snow and terrible conditions and some pretty heavy deadlines. I was sick as a dog for like two or three shows. We brought our own amps, I brought two half-stacks, two heads and two guitars, all on my own. So if we get any help at all on the next tour, that would be great! I mean, we'll deliver too, we're not one of these fragile bands that will fold. We'll just plug in and jam. I'm really looking forward to our next album and tour. We're going to record on two inch tape for the next album. Unshattered was a little "crispy" because we went to ADAT, and that'll be fixed going to tape. We've got about 1/6 of the album written now, so give us five or six months and it'll be out. I think that the greatest thing that we have to offer is that we are ourselves, and that we can push a lot of energy in a live situation.

RoR - And then I guess to wrap things up, anything else you want to add, things people should be on the look out for?

Derek - Just, I want to thank everyone that has helped us out on the tour, and that have supported us. If people want to drop us a line, I usually write back within a day, so go ahead and write a letter or email us, whatever you wanna do, you'll get an immediate response. And, if there's anyone out there that wants to help us out with distribution, contact us, we're accessible, and we're here for the long haul. The name Crucible means extreme test, and that's what we've taken, getting this thing off the ground.



Crucible - Unshattered
1998 Unshattered Records
Available locally or through the website:
<http://www.crucibleworldforce.com>

For more info write to:
Crucible
c/o Derek Haderman
P.O. Box 235662
Honolulu, HI 96823-3511

Arch Enemy

The road to hell is paved with good intentions...

So they may say, but for once in a lifetime, good intentions give birth to something fantastic. Case in point, Arch Enemy. Beginning its existence as a possible reformation for Carnage alumni Johan Liiva and guitar god Michael Amott, Arch Enemy rapidly became a powerful entity all its own. Recorded with little preparation, *Black Earth* was unleashed to an unsuspecting public. A near-perfect blend of power and melody, the twin guitar attack of the Amott brothers, propelled by the ample rhythm section of Liiva and Daniel Erlandsson (himself a younger brother of another famous Swedish Drummer) re-invigorated what some considered a stagnating genre. A little more than two years later, and we find Arch Enemy finishing their **third** album. With such rapid success in such a short period of time, and with the core rhythm section back again after a replacement team for the second opus, how does Arch Enemy feel about their position, and in retrospect, are there things that the fabled 20/20 hindsight could have avoided? The mastermind himself Michael Amott gives his views...

"I am pretty happy with the way everything has turned out so far with Arch Enemy; there's really not anything I would want to change. I mean, obviously it was a major setback when we lost our drummer (Daniel) there for awhile. Everything happens for a reason though, he is back, and the new line-up is our strongest ever."

For many groups, a vacancy in the drummer's seat may mean nothing more than finding another speed demon, but for Arch Enemy, that role is much more demanding. Erlandsson's touch is integral, especially evidenced in the difference in sound on *Stigmata*. Listen to opener *Beast of Man* as compared to the rest of the album, and it becomes quite clear that while The Amott's may hold the gift of craft, it's Erlandsson who provides the necessary power and direction for the band. With Erlandsson gone, and Liiva relinquishing bass duties to concentrate on the vocals, the rhythm section from Chis Amott's former band, *Armageddon*, were enlisted. Excellent players in their own right, this collective chose not to mimic the sounds of *Black Earth*, but took a new direction in their sound. Many felt that this was a watered down version of what the band had been, and began to postulate that this may be the fault of increased pressure surrounding their move to a "major" underground label.

"There wasn't any pressure to speak of coming from the Century Media label, for we weren't signed to them when we recorded the album. To tell you the truth, the "*Stigmata*" album was a bit of a disappointment for us. Not sales wise, we just feel that in retrospect we should have made a more intense album. I think that the "*Black Earth*" album (our debut) has got more energy and a cooler vibe. Johan was ill when laying down his vocals and some of the arrangements are kind of boring to me. Daniel also had some problems at the time that prevented him from dedicating 100% to Arch Enemy. Obviously we have rectified all of this on our 3rd album "*Burning Bridges*", which will be out sometime



this year...

When Daniel re-joined the band, We actually went in and recorded 2 additional tracks: "*Beast Of Man*", which is in my opinion the best song on the record and a song called "*Diva Satanica*" (only available on the Japanese version of "*Stigmata*"). Basically we got a lot of energy and enthusiasm back when Daniel came back; his playing is vital for Arch Enemy I think "*Stigmata*" would of sounded quite different had he played on all of it. For better or worse, we live in a chaotic world, and *Burning Bridges* finds Arch Enemy with yet another bass player, this time around none other than Sharlee D'Angelo, who also divides his time between *Mercyful Fate* and *Witchery*. In contrast, this marks another opus with the legendary Fredrik Nordstrom manning the production helm. What factors affect these decisions? "When it was decided that Martin was out, Sharlee was our first choice for a new bassplayer, I already knew him so it was no big deal to call him up and ask him if he was into it... he was already a fan of the band, so it was perfect. He did an absolutely fantastic job on the new album.. we are very pleased. Working with Fredrik Nordstrom is really easy and he gives us the sound that we want... The production on our new "*Burning Bridges*" opus kicks ass! The guitars are perfect! I don't really see the "*Stigmata*" album as a transition album... Yeah, it has got a lot more melodies and leads than the debut had... also a bit of a progressive twist at times...these are all elements that you will hear on the 3rd album as well, but in combination with the aggressive and brutal feeling of the first album. The title of our new album kind fits with whole vibe of the album...I wrote most of the lyrics during and after a very down period in my life, '98 really sucked for me on personal level and I just let the words flow on this album... now everybody will know how pathetic I am.. haha!!!!!"

On the topic of melody, Arch Enemy really introduced Michael's brother Chris to the world. Having cut his teeth with the highly progressive outfit *Armageddon* (3/5 of whom appear on the

Continued on Page 60

Amon Amarth

It doesn't seem that long ago that Rob picked up a copy of Sorrow Throughout the Nine Worlds...

Both impressed by this debut, the name Amon Amarth sat in the back of our heads, recalled into action upon seeing the release of Once Sent from the Golden Hall. An incredible album, Once Sent takes the band's influences (In Flames, Dissection to drop a couple names...) to a higher order of magnitude on all fronts. Propelled by Martin Lopez's precision kit work and some truly memorable guitar lines, the Swedish Sound would never be the same again. Having the good fortune to be contacted by AA leader Johan Hegg (the fearsome looking blonde guy), an interview was born. Already in the can, Amon's next masterpiece The Avenger is set to hit the shelves later this year, and to tide you over till then, read all about what makes this band tick...

RoR - A couple of quick questions about Once Sent... I'm a little confused, the bio says that Anders Hansson left the band after the recording, but he's not credited as playing on the record. Did he play on the record? Or were all guitars recorded by Olavi?

JH - Actually he is credited on the album, only in very small letters. On the back where all the credits are written it says "rhythm guitar on this recording by Anders Hansson". So yes he played on the record, but we felt he didn't really have a major part in the band from way before then, so we decided to not include him as a bandmember on the album.

RoR - Sorrow Throughout... Was recorded at the Abyss studios, but you first chose to go to Sunlight for Once Sent, why? What happened with that original recording that made you consider it unusable? Did you have to completely re-record the album at The Abyss? It seems that Metal Blade was very supporting if they allowed you to re-record a debut for them! Whose decision was it to re-record?

JH - Where shall I begin... We chose the Sunlight Studios because it's in our home town, and we figured Thomas Skogsberg could do a good job for us. But it was completely fucked up, A more accurate question would be "What didn't happen with the original recording", because from the very start everything went wrong. When we first entered the studio, we said to Thomas that we were prepared to rent a really good drumset for the recording.

But he told us that the one they had (a really crappy one by the way) would do, and that no one would be able to tell the difference. It was out of tune, and they rigged the microphones in less than an hour, which secured a really crappy sound. We pointed this out to him and said we wanted a better sound, but he just waved it away, telling us that they would fix that in the mix. We believed him of course since the man is kind of a death metal legend.

When we got to recording the guitars. We once again told Thomas that we were prepared to rent really good amplifiers ('cause we don't like that crappy Marshall sound, you know). But once again he told us to save our money, and go with the Marshall that he had there. Again the sound didn't turn out the way we wanted, but once more they told us that they would fix it when mixing.

Anyway, we got to the mixing, and it still didn't sound good. So we got to do a re-mix of the album, but it still sounded like shit. Realizing that he'd done a shitty job, Thomas began to accuse our drummer of being untight, and the guitarists of not being able to play their instruments. That's when we got really pissed off. We sent the tape to Metal Blade, and told them that we could not release this crap, and that we wanted to re-record the whole thing in another studio, and they agreed to it. We had after all not spent so much money on the Sunlight recording.

RoR - You set to enter The Abyss studios pretty soon to record The Avenger. What made you decide to go with Peter Tagtgren again? Were there any other producers that were considered?



JH - We've worked with Peter on both the MCD "Sorrow throughout the nine worlds" and "Once Sent...", so we know he's capable of doing a good job. Besides we didn't want to mess around with this recording like we did last time, by choosing a studio, and an engineer we've never worked with before. After a bad experience like that, you sort of go with what you know. Also Peter is a very cool dude, easy to work with. Always listening to, and open to ideas that we have or get during the recording. Always ready to try new stuff. So we never even discussed going to another studio this time.

RoR - There have been some lineup changes since the last album. Will the overall style of Amon Am-

arth change? I ask because the addition of Martin Lopez seemed to elevate the intensity a notch or two, and I wondered if listeners could expect another positive change like that? I know that it's almost impossible to say before recording, but how do you think that The Avenger will differ or be similar to Once Sent? Have the new members been in the studio before?

JH - First of all Martin has left the band, and is now playing with his other band Opeth. I agree, his drumming on "Once Sent from the Golden Hall" is exceptional. I'm not sure what kind of change the listeners can expect this time, I only know it will be different from the last album. A lot more of an old death metal mood to it all, at least I think so. Our new drummer, Fredrik Andersson (ex A Canorous Quintet), is perhaps not as technical as Martin is, but he's more powerful than Martin. Still Fredrik is a very good drummer, and we're glad to have him in the band. About studio experience both Fredrik and Johan Soderberg (the new guitarist) have some studio experience.

RoR - I also noticed that Olavi wrote every track but one on Once Sent. Sometimes this poses a problem in that if one person is the only writer, the sound may stagnate. This was definitely NOT a problem on Once Sent, but will Johan shoulder some of the writing, or is it by choice that Olavi does most of the writing?

JH - Well, on that track he had help from Hansson. It's an old song from our debut demo "The Arrival Of The Fimbul Winter" and was originally recorded in 1994. Since then Olli has created all music, or shall I say riffs, and then we all take part in putting the songs together. The thing that worries me is not that the sound may stagnate, Olli is always trying to find new sounds, and new ways of creating songs, but that this makes us pretty slow song writers. However, Johan is beginning to help creating music, and he is much more involved in that work than Hansson ever was. So I think this won't be a problem in the future.

RoR - Your vocals are incredible! How difficult is it to reproduce all of that energy and emotion live? You also seem to have 3 or 4 different voicings, which serve to play as different characters, and it works really well. Do you keep this style for the newer material?

JH - I manage pretty well to keep the energy when we play live, although it's tough on my voice. And of course when you record in a studio, you can record on two channels, which allows you to breathe more, enabling you to give more. But I've always made sure that I can sing everything live before recording it. I have to be able to perform on stage with the same energy as on the recordings. Also I try to "sing" my screams and grunts, and I plan along with the other guys where my screams are going to be high pitched or low pitched. I guess that's why I seem to have 3 or 4 voicings. I think that's quite important, since I feel it makes the music more interesting. It's kind of boring to listen to dark growls for like 5 minutes that don't change in energy or intensity throughout a song. Still I think the main reason that I can sing as I do is due to the amount of beer I pour down my throat, which is quite a lot actually.

RoR - To most people it seems (especially in the states), denouncing Christianity automatically ties a person to Satanism, where there are numerous other religions today and throughout history. Your lyrics are obviously not satanic, rather surrounding a Viking History. Maybe you could explain to the unenlightened what this

history means to you personally, and why it is such an integral part of Amon Amarth. Are there any texts or information sources that you could recommend?

JH - It's the same over here, the Christian values are perhaps not as obvious in Sweden as in the states, but it's about the same here. Personally I think that within Christianity in general there is no room for people who think differently. It's kind of a controlling religion, which makes it fascist. Most Christian people have no respect for other peoples beliefs whatsoever. They try to force feed us with their hypocritic religion through medias such as TV, radio, movies, newspapers etc. All who still persist on being free thinkers, or chose some other belief (or no belief at all for that matter) are stamped as satanists, or followers of satan. All that is not Christian is regarded as evil, for Christians that equals "Satanistic".

Personally I'm not Satanistic. I don't believe in Satan, because as I see it, to believe in Satan you have to believe in God and Christ, and I don't believe in them either. I'm Pagan in the sence of reclaiming the old Gods, my ancestor's Gods. They are closer to my view of life, much more interesting as characters, and they don't condemn anyone. I refuse to accept a God that can't accept humans being human. The main reason I started writing lyrics about it, is that when we started out as Amon Amarth, back in '92, most bands in our genre were writing lyrics about either blood, guts, mass murder, corpses or Satanism. We figured we needed our own approach to our lyrics, and since Norse mythology and old northern sagas had been a main interest of mine for several years, we said "let's write about that". At first it was only supposed to be for the first demo "Thor Arise", which we never released due to poor sound quality. I wasn't really satisfied with the lyrics on that demo, so when we recorded our second demo, our only released one, I had written better lyrics based on the northern mythology. The other guys thought the lyrics were cool too, and since they also were more or less into this Viking stuff, we stuck to it.

About texts or books to read on the topic, I can recommend "The Edda". Of course this book is written down by an Icelandic Monk some where around the 9th or 10th century, so there are some obvious attempts from his side to draw parallels between old sagas and myths and Christianity. Still, you get a pretty good look into the Norse Mythology. However this book is written in verse, so it may be difficult to understand everything in it. Then there are some sagas that are really cool, for example "The Saga of Egil Skallagrimsson", which is an old legend about one of the last heathens on Iceland, who never converted to Christianity, even though lots of kings and priests tried to get him to take the baptism. And then there is the "Njala", also very difficult to read since there are lots of names everywhere to keep track of. There are of course some more, and if you're not into reading books, there is a danish cartoonist (whose name I can't recall at the moment) who has made a comic book series called "Valhalla". These books are extremely cool, and really fun to read. There are also two movies that I would recomend to anyone. Both are made by the Icelandic director Hrafn Gunnlaugsson. The first is called "The Raven Flies", and the second is called "The Shadow of The Raven", which is sort of a sequel.

RoR - Once more, just for the record, could you explain "The Friends of the Suncross"?

JH - Well, the "suncross" is an old symbol of the sun, it's on the cover of the MCD "Sorrow...". It has become sort of our symbol, and when we say "Friends of the suncross" we basically mean all our fans. The song itself however it refers to us in the band, sort of.

RoR - Does Metal Blade have any plans to bring you guys over to the states, and are they going to re-release your Sorrow MCD?

JH - It would be really cool if they'd buy the rights to it from Pulverised Records, that way perhaps more people would be able to get it. I understand it's quite hard to come by as it is now. Still I don't know if they're interested in doing so, it's almost 3, 5 years old, you know. About tour plans for the states I think we'll be coming over there with the new album, in autumn or winter or something, at least they're talking about arranging a tour for us over there. We surely hope to come over there and kick some ass on stage, but we haven't heard anything new about it yet.

RoR - What do you think influences the Amon Amarth sound? Is it something written, specific music or just life in general?

JH - I guess that's a question for Olli, but I know it's lots of things. It can be something he hears on the radio, sees on TV or reads, that gives him a special feeling. It doesn't necessarily have to be a band or anything, or music for that matter. The main influence though is beer, and boozing in general. Man he can sink 'em. Here's a guy who once drank a bottle of vodka and a six-pack of beers (and I mean 1/2 litre beers), and then he went to our favourite bar in Stockholm to drink more.

RoR - It seems as though many bands today don't interact much with each other on a daily basis, even living on opposite sides of the country. How do you think this affects a band in terms of songwriting, performance, cohesiveness?

JH - Just look at the Gothenburg scene here in Sweden. You got Arch Enemy, Dark Tranquility, In Flames and so on, and they all seem to rip from, or borrow from each other. Since this style of music is very popular, even here in Sweden lots of bands from our area try to copy their style. Even though we play a totally different kind of death metal, we're still compared to these bands, which I think sucks. I can't speak for the states, but here in Sweden the scene used to be pretty cool. Everybody went to gigs regardless if it was a big label band with a couple of albums in their back, or if it just were a couple of demo bands. Nowadays there are very few gigs organized here, at least in the Stockholm area, and when there is a gig most people pay money and then just stand and stare like some fucking frozen statues. Bands used to help each other, now they just fight in some sort of jealous rage. Personally I don't care much about the Swedish scene today, it's still alive, but it sure as fuck ain't kicking. As I see it, the kids who play today don't drink enough beer. They fucking don't know how to party, everyone tries to be so fucking evil all the time. I mean, we play death metal, but it's still just Rock 'N Fucking Roll. Most of the new bands try to be more evil than the next, man it's all fucked up...

RoR - What do you see around you in the metal community that

Continued on page 58

earsplit

Issue #24 - Summer/Fall 98



The "dated" issue featuring interviews with STUCK MOJO, GODFLESH, CRISIS, V.O.D., NAPALM DEATH, GENITORTURERS, THE CRYSTAL METHOD, MEGADETH, BRUTAL TRUTH & MORE!

Issue #25 coming soon!

Look for interviews

iron maiden

System of a Down

Slipknot

Machine Head

Puya

Pro-Pain

Hypocrisy

In flames & oodles more...

\$2.00(US) \$3.00 (World)

Address:

Earsplit
Attn: Liz Ciavarella
P.O. Box 142
Congers, NY 10920-0142
earsplit@aol.com

MARCH METAL MELTDOWN

Welcome to Asbury Park N.J.! Rolling into town early one Saturday morning last March, the only signs of life were the roving police cruisers, and the gathering hordes of die-hards who made it from all over to catch the first (and hopefully annual!) March Metal Meltdown. A huge pay-to-play concert event, and the smaller cousin to the legendary Milwaukee Metalfest, this event had the makings of something truly huge, and I just had to fly my ass off this tiny island to catch it.

First, a small word on these “festivals”. Over 100 bands spanning three stages in a 36 hour period isn’t exactly the best way to catch a group you’ve never seen live before, but in terms of notes per dollar, you can’t go wrong. Akin to a convention of head-bangers, this is the best way to just allow sensory overload to take place while catching site of some of metal’s finest peruse the performing acts. For myself, I live in the middle of the Pacific, and this was an excellent way to snatch a peek at bands from all eras of metal, and to finally put faces to names for many people with whom I have corresponded.

But enough of that, on to the show! Just to set the tone, imagine Asbury Park as a summer town way past Autumn. Completely devoid of charisma, one wrong turn led us straight to the boardwalk, an area populated by more strip clubs per square block than Honolulu, which says something! Expecting something built this century, I was pretty surprised to find the “Convention Center” resembling an old factory. After some crossed wires, I finally convinced the back door guard that I was indeed “press”, and was quickly ushered in with my super-sweet Jack Koshick signature V.I.P. laminate! Once inside I quickly regretted the idiotic decision to leave my jacket in the car, for at about 30 degrees in a building which MUST have been a converted aircraft hanger, I quickly became a human popsicle. Still somewhat disorientated from my flight, I tried to grab a program and decipher some semblance of a schedule for the day. Not being one who’s very good



Mike and Eric of Cryptopsy

at multi-tasking, I was faced with the heinous chore of split second decisions regarding what bands to catch, who to miss, and when to try to schedule interviews (yeah, right!). Due to an act of something, I missed the entire

Friday show, meaning that I didn’t get to see Hypocrisy, Dying Fetus, Dehumanized and a slew of others who evidently put the et al. back in metal! Realizing that my task of choosing was near to hopeless with my brain in the state it was, I readed over to the Relapse stage in a state of near-panic. The kind individuals that they are, Mr. Schultz went so far as to slid me his press conference list to help with bands that were slated for an hour in the “box” (the press room was about 25 sq feet). That done, I ran into Wykked Wytch, who were scheduled up pretty soon in the

Convention Hall. Not having made it through to that area yet, we decided to go check it out. Basically an arena setting, this spot had the dubious honor of having the best sound, which, added with the fact that quite a few choice bands were scheduled here, and that it was kinda toasty in comparison, made it the main spot for this writer. Being the first band I really saw, Wykked Wytch did nothing to impress me. Add in that they only played for 15 minutes tops, and this was a very depressing start, indeed! What was strange though was that the plug was literally pulled on them, and later I heard that this local band was having all sorts of difficulties stemming from the fact that the lead singer refused to have sexual relations with one of Phila’s main promotors. If that is indeed the case, then my disdain for humanity has increased ten fold, and I have to give WW another chance at a later date! Ready to brave the cold once more, My trusty photographer Bob and I geared up to brave the icy hell that was the Relapse stage once more to witness the aural explosion which is the Dillenger Escape Plan. Intense, that’s a word that comes to mind as I watched these five guys just blow through their 20 minute set. The energy given off was enormous, with vocalist Dimitri tearing his vocal chords to shreds, especially when his mike cut out, and the man continued to be audible over the cacaphony which masqueraded as his musical backdrop. Now knowing that this capable 5 piece can reproduce their recorded sounds live, I eagerly await the impending next release.

The next few hours were a blur, as many of the bands were either of little interest or unknown to me, so I took it upon myself to window shop, blowing a nice chunk of money on those elusive CDs which almost seem to be on back order. Making the rounds, I had the pleasure to meet a lot of really cool people, including the unstoppable Earl Root (Root of all Evil Productions), Andy from Breath of Night Records, and Jon Paris from Earache. My cup overflowing with new digital, I realized that I couldn’t feel my feet, and headed over to the convention hall to see Shango. Hype abounded for this gansta metal band, as they had a booth for themselves, and appeared to be quite a thing locally. No idea why though, as though they were quite a stage presence, complete with two mafia backup singers (man, everybody rips of Cradle of Filth!), the songs were completely forgettable. Oh yeah, they pulled the plug on them as well. ROR tip #1 If you’re a band at the meltdown, remember to put out so that you can have the full 20 minutes. Skip ahead to Myself Am Hell, the first performance which really caught my attention. Obviously having some technical difficulties not of their own doing, they still managed to pull off a pretty impressive set. Hearing a sound which evoked memories of bands such as Testament and Vicious Rumors mixed with inhuman vocals and inventive drum work prompted me to speak the band and produced the ONLY interview of the day. Next stop, Candiria. A name that has been





passed to me quite regularly, I had never heard these guys, and was more than a little excited to finally get a chance to catch their act. After a brief warmup, the band just exploded with their highly creative blend of hip-hop, metal and jazzcore. While the entire band stood out, I kept finding myself drawn towards the absolutely incredible percussive skills of Ken Schalk.

Completely at home behind the kit, Schalk displayed complete authority over some complicated material, driving the entire band with a powerful performance that shamed me back to the metronome. With a new full length coming out on MIA Records this summer, you know I'll be waiting with bated breath for it. The most memorable performance of the meltdown for me.

Exhausted, it was time for some food, meaning back to the meat locker which housed the Relapse Stage. Spotting the line, and beginning to shiver, I wondered if maybe I was being conditioned for buying toilet paper in Russia. Hey, the inner warmth of those damn good \$2 fries was so worth it. Refreshed and renewed, we made our way over to watch Exhumed finish their set. Self-proclaimed "gore-metal", and it shows. Not particularly impressed, I recognized some of the "songs", but it seemed as though this was the general fate for most blast bands, as the sound system just couldn't handle what the bands were dishing out. A lot more respect for the band after reading the discourse in *The Grimoire of Exalted Deeds* #14 though. With the next act I wanted to catch being Cryptopsy who were slated for around 8, we braved the darkened amphitheater and wound up seeing part of Whiplash's set. Mixed feelings about this band, for while I've never gotten into their sound, they are one of the originators of thrash, and considering that they played the same stage some 13 years ago, you just have to give them credit. Didn't carry away too much except that I remembered that Tony Scaglione was in Slayer for a minute the first time Lombardo left, and could never figure out why.

Time clicks away, and the eighth hour draws near. Realizing that the stone floor in the Relapse area is just literally sucking the life out through the soles of my feet, I begin to stomp in circles like some demented neanderthal. I stopped when I realized that several people had begun to join me in this ancient pagan ritual to Podos, the ancient Sumerian good of foot doctors. Figuring that I could buy something to warm me up, I leadfooted my way back towards the merchandise stands. Realizing that not even Cradle of Filth offer anything in a nice wool tube sock, I settled for a \$20 shirt emblazoned with a rubber flaming demon, perfect for the balmy climate where I reside. Nice and toasty, it was finally time for Cryptopsy. Witnessing the extreme technical problems Bloodstorm were undergoing (no guitar in the drum monitors), their drummer began to rant and rave, something about not being able to play under these conditions, whoa. This led me to wonder, why in the hell were Cryptopsy, Gorguts, VADER and Napalm Death slated to play this stage? Between the entry level kit, ho-hum amps and the obviously frozen soundboard, I

wondered if anything would be decipherable. Fear not, for the instant those crazy Canadians took the stage it was obvious that these guys could play on Muppet equipment! Amazing from opener Defenestration to the final bashes of Slit Your Guts, Cryptopsy reigned supreme. Not so new Lord Worm replacement Mike DiSilvo ruled the stage, ripping around and delivering a vocal performance straight from the river Styx. As with many of these bands, it was just amazing to see the complicated Whisper Supremacy material performed almost note for note as the recordings. While all musicians were exceptional, Flo Mournier was a true spectacle all his own. With temperatures even colder now, a half stripped Mournier was literally steaming after each song. Eventually he'll reveal where a normal can order his bionic limbs, but until then, we'll just have to watch in awe. In a heartbeat, their set was over, and it was time to get more fries. Entering the line once more, I was almost immediately asked for the 10th time if this was the line for the fries, imagine my surprise to turn and realize that the questioner was none other than the illustrious Mr. Tagtgren! Barely suppressing the urge to give away my place in line, I managed to hold a time compressed conversation regarding all things metal. More warm grease in my belly, I leapt the ten feet back to the stage to try and decipher just what in the hell Gorguts were playing. Drawing mostly from their recent Obscura release, the 1/4 original band played circles around themselves. Obviously in their own sphere of influence, the magic is lost on me, but I can see why the band is so heralded, as they definitely entered a new dimension of sound that night.



Vader, roughly meaning father in Dutch, is a apt moniker for this seminal death metal unit. While some bands just don't come across live, these guys were born for this, and watching them set up, the crowd began to literally swell with anticipation. Even knowing that the band would start with Sothis, the explosion of that opening riff still blew me away. The impact lessened

somewhat by the nearly inaudible bass drum sound, the entire set was an incredible experience. Focusing more on material from the last two full lengths (due to the 30 minute set length), Vader proved to all why they are the pentultimate act in metal.

That finished, it was only a matter of waiting to get backstage to finish the phone interview that I had begun with Peter the week before. After clearing up a few things, Napalm Death hit the stage. Again, why these guys appeared on the Relapse Stage is beyond me, but N.D. made the best of a bad situation, managing to dish out some pain through tracks new and old. Realizing that we had seen as much as we could see in one day, it was back to the car to make the trek back to Philadelphia. Reflecting over the day, high points would definitely have been Candiria, Cryptopsy, Vader, and meeting a ton of cool people who also live on the heavier side of things. So, until Milwaukee, I remain your trusty reporter.

I don't know how many emails I've answered which all basically boil down to asking the same question, mainly, who do I consider to be the best drummers in death metal. Sometimes I'm asked for THE best, or the top ten, or the best albums, etc... Now, this question has been answered in a few different forums, but being the person I am, I like reading different opinions, and since so many people have asked, I figured I'd throw in my two cents on this subject. What are MY qualifications, you ask? Well, besides being a die-hard metal fan, I've also played the tubs about since Reign in Blood came out, and until a few years ago, drums were THE most important thing for me in music. I've since learned the beauty of the song, but some inventiveness behind the kit is essential, and in the age of cloning, it's still good to pay homage to those that inspired. So here it is, my not so humble opinions on some people that I believed to have changed the art of drumming in the metal realm. This account is of course very limited in that I only cover albums that I have heard, and there are of course literally tons of albums that inspired me. This will lead to some anger and resentment from certain people that may have felt that say, Igor Cavalera deserved mention, or Ventrator, or Ringo, whoever. Well, if they're not in there, I guess I didn't agree. Take this as you will, but if you read with the understanding that these are people that have impressed me over a wealth of drummers, then maybe your interest will be piqued to listen or re-listen to some of these albums. So, in chronological order here are:

MY TOP TEN JAW DROPPING MOMENTS IN METAL DRUMMING...

1. Slayer - Reign in Blood 1986 Def Jam Records

One of the greatest albums of all time, Reign in Blood also features the infamous double bass work of Dave Lombardo. Glimpses of his ability could be seen on previous Slayer releases, but it wasn't until here that the world could see just how incredible he really was. I think it's safe to say that the drum break in Angel of Death raised the bar for future drummers, and was I think a jaw dropping moment for everyone, not just those pesky drummers! In looking back, I guess Lombardo just pretty much epitomized speed metal drumming, examples being AOD (all of it), the long Peart-like tom fill in Altar of Sacrifice, the intro to Criminally Insane, and the pace increased Post-mortem. Just an awesome album overall, this is THE one to own, period.

2. Dark Angel - Darkness Descends 1986 Combat Records

Ah, master Hoglan, please step forward and receive your accolades, for they are well deserved from the very start. Former Slayer roadie/drum tutor turned pro, the profound effect that Gene had on Dark Angel is simply amazing. Need proof? Then just check out Merciless Death from We Have Arrived, and then throw on the D.D. version. Always pushing the envelope, Hoglan managed to create most, if not all, of the ultra-fast double bass guys out there now either first hand or by association. Just crank the opening to Death is Certain, Life is Not and I guarantee your jaw will hit the floor faster than a sack of lead. Black Prophecies also gives us the kick/snare doubling patterns which sound so damn cool. It's known that Hoglan is still the double bass god, and Darkness Descends is the first place to hear where it all began. One of the first albums I memorized the drum tracks for.



3. Watchtower - Control and Resistance 1989 Noise Records

I first heard Dangerous Toy on the Doomsday News 2 compilation, and was completely blown away by Rick Colaluca's drumming. He was really the first guy I had heard incorporate fusion into metal drumming. Everything he (and the whole band) did was so incredibly off the wall. Stop/start changes, odd time signatures, it's no wonder they thanked Rush in capital letters

in the liner notes. Colaluca was also one of the few players to utilize electronic percussion on these albums, lending an even greater robotic-ness to the album. Considered a wank-off album to many, you know they were doing something right, and for those that get into this type of thing, the rewards are plentiful. A dissertation for the avant-garde drummer, or something pretentious like that. So what's **the** jaw dropping moment here? Hmm, have to say the middle of Instruments of Random Murder, where he has an epileptic seizure, but still manages to keep steady time.

4. Morbid Angel - Altars of Madness 1989 Earache Records

Shit, I remember when this came out, I would just play the intro to Chapel of Ghouls (familiar from their last demo) over and over. Really inventing the blastbeat to me, Pete Sandoval is incredible, stressing his joints to the point of torture to provide some of the fastest drumming the world had seen. The path here can be seen from his work in Terrorizer, but it's not until he joined the Morbid guys that his doubles really took off. I'd credit Pete for influencing most of the guys that immediately followed him (Asheim, Maschiewicz, Doc) on tape, for I would doubt heavily that Altars didn't have the same profound effect on them as it did on the rest of the world. Providing the base for Azogthoth's monster riffs, Sandoval just excretes power at every turn. While his work on Blessed are the Sick, Covenant and most recently Formulas Fatal to the Flesh are all felt to be better, Altars of Madness made me want to play fast, faster than I thought possible, making it the most essential of the Morbid Angel albums for me. My TMJ kicked in after 30 seconds here.

5. Atheist - Unquestionable Presence 1991 Metal Blade Records

The true definition of a maniac, Steve Flynn defined a whole new class of drummers with his "controlled chaos" approach to playing. Really demanding attention on their Piece of Time debut, I still feel that his playing on this release was and is godly metal drumming. Again, apparently heavily influenced by jazz, Flynn and new bass recruit Tony Choy (ex-Cynic) formed one deadly rhythm section, leading to unfollowable yet all-consuming passages on tracks like Mother Man An Incarnation's Dream and the titular piece. Most of the opportunity for Flynn to stretch out is thanks to riffmeisters Burkey and Shaefer, who constructed a wire framework for the band to stretch out in. Sadly, Flynn's last known recording, he nevertheless left a legacy for us drummers behind, forming for me the basis with which to compare future work, and provided many bruises on my psyche, most notably

being the freaky title track.

6. Anacrusis - Manic Impressions
1991 Metal Blade Records

I get into this album pretty heavily elsewhere in the mag, but it really deserves mention yet again, because Chad Smith gave me a lot of inspiration to play not just quicker, but **tighter**. Interjecting subtle nuances such as dropping out bass drum quarters during the faster sections, or pulling off that totally inhuman section in Idle Hours, Chad is the man, a whirlwind of technicality and precision. There are several points on this album where I just throw down the sticks, but I'd have to say that I still can't figure out what he was thinking when he tracked Explained Away. Check out point 1:53 in the song where he just completely turns the beat around, and that, ladies and gentleman, is my jaw dropping moment.

7. Death - Human
1991 Relativity Records

Now, Death had always had good musicians before, but this was a monumental leap for Evil Chuck and his horde. Obviously pissed about the way that Spiritual Healing and the resulting tour went, Chuck assembled some of the best hired guns in the biz to make a supreme technical metal album. While the songs are good, it's Reinert who steals the show for me, just ripping though some of the fastest and most fluid double bass patterns I had yet to hear. His use of doubling (from 16th to 32nd notes) in opener Flattening of emotions is jaw dropping, causing drummers to seriously re-evaluate their chops and hit the woodshed. Reinert was also a schooled musician, who took advantage of his rudimental skills and fusion ability to create a memorable performance. Essential.

8. Dream Theater - Images and Words
1992 Atco Records

Yeah, this album is complete cheez whiz, but I don't care, for it has some of the most calculated drumming in **rock** since Peart, and is still one that I play along to over the hundreds of other albums out there. After a fairly underground release, and a three year hiatus, Dream Theater acquired new pipe master James LaBrie and proceeded to take the world (well, Japan), by storm. As polished a sound as is possible, it's painfully obvious what D.T. were going for here, down to Portnoy shirtless in overalls in the booklet. Someone along the way though, someone forgot to mention that to sell pop records, you had to write pop SONGS! With only a couple tracks under the 7 minute mark, it was actually quite amazing that this stuff got on the radio, which is actually where it caught my attention. The word progressive always comes to mind here, as Dream Theater remind me of a very polished Fates Warning, or Queensryche circa Empire. Again, while all these guys are incredibly impressive showboats, the drums were the focus for me, orchestrated to perfection, not one beat misplaced, a very cerebral performance indeed. Hampered at times by a nasty triggered snare, Mike P. still manages to throw things into no man's land, whether by reversing beats or doing some pretty cool polyrhythmic stuff, you are guaranteed that it'll be interesting. Seeing this performance live really solidified what I already knew, that this guy had a monster ego with the chops to back it up. Now I've got to fucking say jaw dropping again, because I thought it would be cool to do, but after typing jaw

dropping 7 times, it's totally stupid. Oh well, jaw dropping moment is around minute 6 in Metropolis, or the whole beginning of Learning to Live.

9. Cynic - Focus
1993 Roadrunner Records

Long delayed, byb the time this album was finally released in 1993, all of the Cynic members had become known as masters of their instruments. Metal mercenaries, Tony Gobel had played on the first Monstrosity album, Paul and Sean were on the Human album, and of course, Tony Choy had lent his hands to Atheist and Pestilence. All the outside work must have opened new doors, for Focus is one of the most experimental metal albums I've ever heard. Following Iron Maiden's lead, Cynic decided to incorporate guitar synths, while also setting precedent in the vocal department. Forced to give up the growling vocals for which he was known, Masvidal opts to produce a dreamy, love it or hate it sound which is just laden with effects. Put this all together and you have a late night Berklee jam session where something was definitely put in the punch. Heavy eastern influences in the songwriting, something that would severely limit a drummer who wasn't up to the task. Fortunately, this is Sean Reinert, who takes the off-time structures and forms a percussive base which amazes me to this day. Polyrythms, double-stroke rolls, rudimental fills, and some killer double bass work almost makes me think that I'm listening to Billy Cobham at times, Reinert's that good. Sadly, this album was too much for many people, and Cynic broke up shortly after. 1999 update: Shawn Malone, who played bass on the album, has just released work under the moniker Gordian Knot with Reinert on drums. JD Power moment: Sentiment, or Uroboric Forms.

10. Meshuggah - Destroy Erase Improve
1995 Nuclear Blast Records

This came highly recommended to me from quite a few sources, but honestly, I had no idea what to expect the first time I threw this in. Years later, I just have to conclude that either Tomas Haake is not human, or accept the fact that he can just think in a way that most people cannot. Really the first person I've heard in metal incorporate what I call the 3 under 2 style of drumming, meaning that Haake successfully plays along to whatever screwed-up rhythm the guys create with his bass drums, while keeping consistent time on the backbeats. Essentially this ends up sounding like half notes over triplet eighths most of the time, and tends to lose most people in the process. Again, the whole album is amazing from start to finish, with excellent performances by all, yet Haake makes this album the incredible platter that it is. More advanced than Contradictions, and less chaotic than Chaosphere, Destroy... is a fine example of true innovation. Now, I could be predicatable and say that Future Breed Machine contains the jjjjjaw dropper (man, I am SO sick of typing that), but I'd say that it hit me during Soul Burn, where he just comps for like 4 measures, taking no prisoners. OK, I'm done! Got any albums you recommend? Then for goodness sake, let me know!

reezon@geocities.com



S.F.O.
MAXIMUM VIOLENCE

7/16/99

www.mp3.com/sfu



© 1999 METAL BLADE RECORDS INC. • Info Hotline (805) 522-7548
For a free catalog write to: Metal Blade Merchandise 4025 E. Chandler Blvd. Ste. 70-D7, Phoenix AZ 85044
www.metalblade.com



Few can deny the influence that Cathedral has had on the metal scene. Formed as the ultimate doom band, and quickly rising to evolve into a multi-dimensional musical excursion, Cathedral has always managed to provide the listener with something different. After numerous changes involving the usual problems (record label disputes, resulting line-up changes) and their last studio effort being a rushed affair, the future of Cathedral was questioned by some. Of course, Gaz and Lee have never backed down from a challenge, finding yet another way to enhance the Cathedral sound on *Caravan Beyond Redemption*, their latest release. An aural swirling of all of the past sounds, intertwined with a healthy dose of the "new", *Caravan* is an album which is complicated in theory, yet flows about as naturally as anything can? Just what the hell does that mean? Well, let's just say that's there's so much going on here that multiple listens are a necessity, a task made easier given the greatness of this LP. Their best work to date? Decide for yourself, and while you're at it, read on and see what Lee has to say about politics, spirituality, and the *Caravan Beyond Redemption*.

RoR - Man, so it's got to be late afternoon for you over there?

LD - Yeah, it's like tea time kind of thing.

RoR - I just woke up, so I might not be my usual perky self. I heard that you guys played your first shows in Ireland this past weekend. How did those go over?

LD - Oh, it was fucking brilliant. I mean, after all these years, in like both the bands I've been in, I've never done a show in Ireland. That was also like the one place that I've really wanted to go; I've got a lot of Irish blood in my family, you know. I just felt like a lot of my roots are there, and I love the country a lot. It just seemed impossible for us to get shows there, we were supposed to go there like five years ago, but we had some problems with the line-up of the band at the time, so we couldn't go over. This was the first concrete chance that we had to go over again, and it was brilliant, you know. We did two shows, one in Dublin and one in Belfast, and the kids were just really into it. We were surprised, we didn't know what to expect, I think that the kids are just really hungry for music over there. It was a really positive experience for us.

RoR - Do you think that not as many bands get to play there because of politics?

LD - Maybe. I don't know if some bands are scared to go there. I don't think that's the case though. I think it's quite expensive to go over there and play, because you have to get a ferry, and the hire a van. I think finances may be the main reason then. I mean, we went there to play music, we went there to be at one with the kids, to join people

together no matter what their religion or politics. We don't like the idea of being over there and there being segregation, where we're on one side and the audience is on the other. I mean, we don't like that in any situation. Especially with Ireland, I really abhor the situation over there, I really hate what's going on, it's not fair what's happening to such a great nation of people. If we can make light of that situation in any way by playing our music, then we're more than proud to do so.

RoR - Well, it seems that music and art has always been a way for people to transgress boundaries.

LD - Music speaks greater languages than politics in a lot of ways. It's a great way of bringing people together of all races in all parts of the world. Especially in one country that's divides by something that's so futile as Christianity, or whatever you want to call it. I mean, there are a million other motives as to what's going on in the situation as Ireland as well. We just like to go over there and break down all the barriers, allow people to share common ground.

RoR - How has the new material been in a live situation?

LD - It went over well. It's hard to compare it to our older stuff in those shows, because we haven't played there before, but on the rest of the tour the new stuff has gone over really well. I think that it fits in really nicely with the older material. Compared to our previous album, I think that this material is a lot stronger than what was on *Supernatural*, and for that reason alone I feel that it fits in better.

RoR - What happened with Supernatu-



ral? It just seems like an album that was completely different than anything you guys had done before.

LD - Er, well, basically it was just rushed. It was almost forced out of us. We had an obligation to do it at that moment in time, but we should have just refused to do it, taken more time just to sit back and think about it some more. We just went in and recorded it though, without any real pre-planning at all. I mean, we had been touring for a year solid, we came back, and then had about four or five days off to recover from a year's worth of touring! I mean, our heads were in a fucking mess, and then we had like literally one week to get together and write an album from scratch, because the week after that we were booked into the studio. So we created a complete album from scratch ten days after coming off of that tour. It was pretty hectic, and I'd say 99% of the lyrics were written in the studio, like ten minutes before the songs were recorded. If we had spent quite a bit more time working on it, then I think it would have been a much better album. We really needed like another two weeks to get things a bit tighter, work on melodies a bit more, and then spend a bit more time in the mix. With this album, Caravan, we had a lot more time to prepare the songs, to work on melodies, different atmospheres and things that we couldn't do on the last album due to time restrictions. We're no means embarrassed by Supernatural, or ashamed by it, we just think that if we had had a bit more time it would have been a much stronger album.

RoR - Would you ever consider going back, if you had the time, and remixing it? Or would you say that Caravan shows what you would have liked Supernatural to sound like? I

LD - Well, there's really no point in doing that now. I mean, the album's done, and people know the album for what it is. The album is part of our history, it's there, and there's no point in changing it after the event, really. I just think that we've just done a better album really with Caravan, it's just much stronger material, and it represents the band a lot more. It represents a lot of our different characteristics from our previous albums and adds something new to it.

RoR - This line-up seems to be the most stable, why all the changes in the past, and do you feel that you've finally found the right people?

LD - Previously, when we were on Columbia in the states, it was a pretty chaotic situation. When Adam initially left, we decided that we no longer wanted our drummer in the band, but we had obligations to fulfill. The only way that we could keep going was to ask people from other bands to help out so that we could keep going until we found a stable line-up. By the time we found members that weren't on other bands, that we thought would be stable, we actually got dropped from Columbia, and those other two guys were living in Chicago. So it was impossible for us to keep people from America in the band, so then we had to change the line-up again, and get a fully stable English line-up, which is the line-up that we have at the moment. I think that the longer you play with individuals the more that you'll gonna feed off each other, or what to expect from each other, and that will make the band gel, or concrete. Our only letback on previous occasions has been that we haven't been able to rehearse on a solid basis since we all live so far apart. One of our main problems on our previous records has been lack of preparation more than anything else. Now things seem to be coming together a lot more natural.

RoR - Have you ever spoken about adding a second guitarist, maybe live...

LD - No, because I think that we've too far with being a four piece. It's something that we don't rule out, but it's something that we don't give too much time of day thinking about. We've just gotten used to being a four piece, and to each other. Why rock a boat that's floating?

RoR - So I guess that Gaz still comes up with most of the riffs?

LD - Yeah, Gaz still comes up with the majority of the riffs, but like I said, this time was more of a four-way team effort than it has ever been. The songwriting, the melodies, the arrangements, most people in the band had something to say at some point about them. It's definitely a natural progression, you get to know each other, and your own limits. Leo and Brian have really fit nicely into what this band is about. Their playing has greatly influenced our playing. We were very disheartened before, because it was just me and Gary left, we'd lost our deal with Columbia, and all we were hearing was bad news for months and months and months. So when the two new people joined the band with a different musical approach than the previous members, it gave us a breath of fresh air, because they were so enthused about joining a band that was semi-established.

RoR - Man, so what kept you going during that down time?

LD - The music, our belief in the music. Our major dream when we first started Cathedral wasn't to be on a major label and sell a million records, that was no way what we were thinking. Basically our aims for the band is the same as when we started, just make the records that we want to make. The fact that we were actually signed to a major label was a bonus, it wasn't something that we expected. So the fact that we got dropped wasn't the end of the world, because it wasn't what we had intended for the band in the first place! The only thing that was bad was that it fucked up all kinds of business relations horribly. When that kind of thing happens it just puts a hold on the band, it can destroy many a band, but we were strong enough to carry on, believing in what we were doing.

RoR - In looking at Caravan, at the title, the artwork, the lyrics, how does it all tie together for you? Should it be construed as a thesis on the downfall of humanity?

LD - Uhh, God, it's just about life in general, you know? I mean, the things that are classed as acceptable, or normal in everyday life really disturb me in many ways, confuse me in many ways. So I like to put that sense of bewilderment into the music sometimes. Also, over the years Cathedral has established a style in it's lyrical content which has been vaguely realistic, but in many ways esoteric with it. I like to kind of interpret things in my own individual way, I don't like to be so outright and straightforward. There are a lot social commentary in the lyrics, but I don't like it to be so black and white. Music is first and foremost about entertainment more than anything else. Entertainment with something to say are two things that go hand and hand together, but also, there are other things that are inspired by day to day trash culture. These may be from films, or alcohol, whatever. I mean, I may enjoy watching a real trashy horror movie from the 60s or 70s, and if that's taking up a bit of my time then I'd like to incorporate that into the music as well.

RoR - Well, how would you describe yourself?

LD - Why should I describe myself? I guess I don't really think about it all that much I guess. I'd like to think that I'm a free-thinking person. I'm by no means a perfect person, I make fuck-ups just like everybody else, and I'd be the first to admit it. I think I'm relatively sociable, I think I'm relatively generous, but I can a real pain in the ass, just like everybody else. I think that I have a conscience that I'm happy with. There's still that eternal question mark over everything that you do, I mean, I'm still searching for some kind of spiritual satisfaction, and I guess I won't know what that is until I find it. But then I don't think that we ever do find 100% spiritual satisfaction, so...

RoR - Well, that's sort of the point of life, isn't it? To keep searching.

LD - Well, exactly, because there's always a question mark at the end of the day, nothing is ever completely proven. There's always something that leads to something else. Life is an adventure, and a spiritual journey, and who's to say where it ends, or where it began, really.

RoR - Do you find that you still enjoy music as much as a spectator?

LD - Of course I do. That's still my main enjoyment in life, I go down to London nearly every other week to check bands out that I'm into. I still get as much of a buzz as I did when I was 15/16, really. I still go to small gigs, club gigs are my favorite. I'm still not into mainstream music, and I don't think I ever will be, to be honest. But I'd still rather a band in a shitty little bar then to go to Wembley Stadium and see, I don't know, whoever. I still get a buzz from seeing underground music. I still like all the extreme stuff, I just find that I'm a lot more open to more music the older I get.

RoR - You also have your own record label, Rise Above. When you see a band live, what would you look for to decide whether you would sign them? What should a band possess to interest you?

LD - It's hard to pinpoint in any kind of specific way, because each band that we sign has something different. I mean, a lot of the bands that we have contain a similar element, but first and foremost, I have to really enjoy the band, enjoy the music. I'm not going to sign a band that I think might sell a ton of copies if I don't like the music. I would never do that. I don't know, a display of their own character, really, something individual. A majority of the music that we have put out in the last few years has been more in the stoner kind of doom vein, but I think each individual band stands out on their own. It's great to have influences from all these bands from the seventies, but if you don't add your own ingredient to it, I think it misses the point. Obviously, presentation is very important, the way that you present yourself on stage, your artwork, the name of the band.

RoR - In terms of artwork, Dave Patchett's artwork has become pretty integral to Cathedral.

LD - Oh yeah, well, I mean, I think he's a genius artist anyway, but I think the music we create fits really well with his stuff. It's

almost become synonymous with what we do, to see Dave's artwork with one of our CDs. He influences me a great deal as well, in the fact that the ideas for all of the artwork are mine, but when I see the finished painting it triggers off a lot of ideas for lyrics that originally came from my head in the first place. But the way that he interprets the ideas are pretty amazing actually. If I tried to explain to any other artist my ideas, I think that they'd have a very difficult time figuring out what I was trying to say. He can actually reproduce exactly what I have in my mind, which is a good relationship that we have that's lasted nine years.

RoR - So what do you think that Andy Sneap brought to Cathedral?

LD - I think that we kinda said to him before that we'd like this album to sound more like a four piece band, rather than just guitars and vocals, with the drums and bass mixed lower, which I think happened last time. We wanted to sound like a band playing together. I think that Andy pretty much separated the sounds in the right way to make it sound like a band playing together, and he brought out really the best performances from us. I think that was his main point, the performances, because most of the creative ideas, the samples and such were our ideas in the first place, he just got the actual studio sound for us, and getting the performances right. He had a lot of time, and a lot of patience with us in there, he's a very cool guy to work with, we'd definitely consider working with him again.

RoR - Well he sorta makes sense, because while he's associated more with producing bands like Machine Head, his roots are in Sabbath, which is one of the earlier doom bands.

LD - Yeah, well he loves old Trouble and Sabbath, stuff like that. He's the same age as us, which is different from the last guy we worked with. Kit (Woolven) was like 55, and he's a great guy to work with, but this time we wanted someone a bit more from our age group. So I think that he had a pretty good understanding of what we were about, he had heard our music before. In fact, he actually almost joined the band about four or five years ago.

RoR - So where is Cathedral headed in the future?

LD - What have we got going on, hmm. Well, we're off to Japan in a bit, then we're off to Australia. Then there's a video coming out over here... We're set to record some new tracks for an E.P. pretty soon, and then we'll probably start on a new album towards the end of summer. And, lastly, I just want to say hello to all our fans, thanks for listening to us, stay heavy and stay true!



Cathedral
Caravan Beyond Redemption

1999 Earache Records

<http://www.earache.com>

Archetype

Hailing from the Cleveland area, Archetype proudly carry the torch of American progressive metal. Displaying a true sense of finesse and conviction, the band also manages to incorporate additional styles, forming an end result which defies being labeled. Distributed by the band's managerial team, Hands of Time is a 4 song excursion into the mind of one Chris Matyus. The chief songwriter and driving musical force, Matyus has assembled a stellar cast to perform the difficult songs which challenge yet don't alienate. Conducted via email, this interview with Chris serves to illuminate just what makes this group tick.

RoR - Could you talk a little bit more about the transition from being an instrumental band to what Archetype has become with Chyle? Was he given free reign in regards to how the vocal lines and lyrics were created? How has his role in the band evolved in terms of songwriting?

CM - We basically went from an instrumental band to a complete band over night! Once Chyle sang the first line to "Visionary" at practice, I knew he was the perfect fit. Finally we had the right man for the job and everything about Archetype changed. The music now had meaning, our CD could get done on time and we knew things would only get better. In the studio, Chyle did "Visionary" and "Arise" with only a few rehearsals of each then "Dissension's Wake" and "Hands of Time" unrehearsed!! With what we accomplished in the studio in such little time, I knew we had the beginnings of something good. With the addition of our second guitar player, our live show is continually improving and we can finally gel as a full band.

As far as lyrics go, I have written them all to this point. Since I write the music also, I can really relate to what the songs could be about so things go faster this way. I usually sing (quite horribly) over the music and give a tape to Chyle. Once he gets that, it doesn't take long before he has them mastered! In the future, others probably will be involved with lyrics and possibly music. For now, everyone likes what I am doing.

RoR - When I hear Hands of Time, I could easily see the progressive connection, namely with bands such as Fates Warning or Dream Theater, but I was pretty surprised to read that you were also into bands such as Morbid Angel, or Emperor. Where do you think those influences fit in? As time passes, do you find your songs leaning more in one direction than another?

CM - The only death/black metal influence is in an occasional semi-growl! I really don't get influenced by this style of music even though it is one of my favorites. When I started writing songs, they were a lot less heavy and more basic than what I write now. I have kind of "topped off" with heaviness and complexity and I don't see a change in writing any time soon. I will always enjoy writing clean and heavy parts together and the music seems to be very consistent.



RoR - I was also wondering if you felt that sometimes you had too much exposure to one band. For example, I've heard people complain that sometimes no matter what they write, it sounds like Maiden, since they inundated themselves with their albums all through their childhood.

CM - This is one area that I am thankful for. I was a Judas Priest fanatic when I first started playing but my tastes changed dramatically in college when I became very involved in guitar. From Rush, to Coroner, to Dream Theater to classical, I was always getting into something new. Now I love death/black metal and new age music. This wide range of styles and influences has helped my writing to maintain it's diversity.

RoR - It's obvious that all of you have a healthy musical background, with yours being in classical music. I guess I was wondering if you would consider yourself a songwriter that writes more from his head, or his heart? I guess it's odd to find 4 technical players that add emotion to the songs, and thought maybe that's where some of the classical training may have come in.

CM - When I start writing something new, it is definitely from the head. I will think what has been done and what new things I can do. Keys, meters, tunings etc. all play a role when I start writing. From there, it becomes more natural or from the heart as you say. Sometimes I hear parts in my head and other times I just sit down and play something that fits well. Never once have I tried to put a song in a generic structure with verse, chorus, verse etc! Whatever I feel should come next usually does. My classical training has led me to be almost to analytical after I have composed something. I will constantly rearrange parts and drive myself mad half the time. Although, in the long run, this helps maintain each song's originality. After I present a song to the band, each player adds their own "flavor" to their part. I'm very glad to have guys in the band who can take something I create and help it become better.

RoR - With one or two bands being an exception, it seems that

the general public isn't too keen on accepting what's termed "progressive metal", yet those bands often form a smaller, yet more closely knit, fan base. What would you do if in the future, if you had to make a decision between keeping complete artistic control, or moving to a larger label where your sound may be altered?

CM - Simple, keep all artistic control. I have put so much time and effort into this music that if someone told me to change it, I would lose it! Whoever wanted to change it probably is after a quick buck and you would be out of a contract sooner than later. If the music is good, yet not widely accepted, you just have to wait for it to catch on. If you can get good promotion and publicity, you don't need a big label anyway. I feel the music of Archetype can become very well known and liked since it can appeal to many different people. I wouldn't even call it "progressive metal" anymore. Although it will do for now, that term has become very misused and nobody has even been able to categorize "Hands of Time"!

RoR - Tendonitis is a big problem for a lot of guitarists, and it appears that you went through a tough time with this ailment, and that you recovered. Do you have any idea what, besides just playing too much, may have caused this? What steps did you take to get better, and is this still a problem for you now? Do you have any tips for prevention?

CM - Tendonitis is a very scary ailment! I got it from classical guitar and lifting weights (not a good combination) and had to stop playing for a while. I had to do various exercises and use ice on my left wrist every day for about four months. Slowly I got back into playing and have been able to play electric guitar fine and do very light classical guitar. Every once in a while I get pains in my hand and wrist telling me to let go of that insane chord shape! It's hard to prevent but warming up fingers hands and wrists with some light stretches will help. This helps circulation and strain.

RoR - Does the band plan on staying in the Akron/Cleveland area? Cleveland is the city where Rush got their first American show, if I recall correctly. Is it still a place where bands can get good exposure?

CM - We will stay in Cleveland until we have the opportunity to maybe move elsewhere. Right now it's good but too cold in the winter!! Exposure for a band like us is hard. Other bands who play more popular styles can get some decent exposure here. I personally don't think that people here are very into original bands. They want to see cover bands more and this drives me crazy! Our style will get noticed so much faster in Europe than in the US, let alone Cleveland, so we will continue to play local and a few out of state gigs and wait to eventually go to Europe in the fall.

RoR - Now that Archetype is a stable 5 piece, what are your future plans? Where can we expect Archetype to be in a year, two years?

CM - Hopefully we will get noticed by a good record label soon.

We have several hundred promo cd's out now and are getting great response in Europe. We definitely will come to Europe whether it be in the fall or sooner and do a small tour with the help of our managers at Intromental Management. Once we get a deal, I can't wait to start recording our full length album. If you like "Hands of Time", just wait until you hear our other songs!!! We have about 20 more songs and will have to pick and choose for an album! I hope we can become a very well known band and judging by the way people like us so far, it doesn't seem too far off! If all goes as planned, you can expect us to be playing in your city in the years to come!!!!

RoR - Any final comments, or things that you'd like to add?

CM - Thanks to everyone who has expressed positive views about us and our music.

See you down the road!!!!

Be sure to get in contact with Archetype either at their Website:

<http://www.archetype1.com>

or Intromental Management's web site:

<http://www.intromental.com/archetype>

Archetype - Hands of Time
1999 Intromental Music

These are the discs that keep me going most of the time. After hearing 30 discs worth of unholy black metal, popping in something Archetype is truly refreshing. Residing in the Fates Warning/Dream Theater branch of the metal tree, Hands of Time is an excellent example of what progressive hard rock can offer us. The recording techniques employed here give the album more of an operatic, jazzy feel, which may be due to choice, or what the studio had to offer. Whatever the case, the sound isn't compressed and flat, allowing the guitar lines to breathe and accentuating the dynamics with which the songs are created. The mastermind behind this whole project is guitarist/songwriter/lyricist Chris Matyus, who writes some truly scientific stuff, but exploring many spheres of influence and sound other than metal. Don't get me wrong, there are some scorching moments, driven by the drummer Keith Zeigler's keen polyrhythmic sixth sense, where they give the elders something to sweat over. But, my ultimate thoughts would lead me to classify this as progressive metal, more similar to DT than Fates. Chyle's voice may hold some of this, for while his voice is strong, it tends to be the straw which tips the scales (to mix a couple metaphors). At any rate, with outstanding musical performances on all fronts, at all times, this is a good band to check out to hear what's going on in other areas of the underground.

Dawn

Epic, that's the only word I can think of to try and describe Slaughtersun. Rivaling the mighty Opeth in terms of vision and scope, Dawn have created an hour's journey into the extreme beauty of metal. On ice for a spell, Frederik has taken the remnants of that line-up and added some new blood, forming the new generation of a band which demands your undivided attention.



RoR - So what's going on with Dawn, I heard you had some recent line-up changes?

F - Yeah, what happened was that I moved off to Stockholm one and a half years ago, and the drummer, Jocke, he started to work at Sunlight Studios. We had some plans to continue Dawn when we moved, and then Henke (Vocalist) also moved out here a few months ago, but Jocke then told me that he's not going to play anymore because he had to work at Sunlight fulltime. So, he's working at Studio Sunlight now. After that, about a month ago the ex-drummer from Dark Funeral called me up and told me that he was interested in playing in the band. I said, why not, we can try it, and it worked out really well, he's even better than Jocke. So, that was kind of a great thing for the band. I was kind of surprised that he was so good.

RoR - And then he pulled over the guitarist from that album as well?

F - Yeah, a guy called Henrik, so it's Tomas and Henrik from Dark Funeral now play for Dawn.

RoR - So you lost Andreas?

F - Yeah, because he didn't make the move, and he's very far now from Stockholm. So we had to do it this way, because we have to rehearse and stuff. He's still a good friend of mine, but it had to work out this way because he didn't want to move.

RoR - And so how long has the new line-up been together?

F - Whew, about six weeks, I guess.

RoR - Six WEEKS?!

F - Yeah, so it's quite new but it works out really good.

RoR - You've been the principal songwriter?

F - I've written all the stuff, except for a few arrangements that the other guys are coming up with.

RoR - So would you foresee a big change with this new line-up?

F - Yeah, of course there's gonna be change. It's going to be quite a busy year, we'll find out what we're going to do next.

We'll try to find something new, it will definitely be something good.

RoR - When you listen to Slaughtersun now, how do you compare it with your earlier work? Are there aspects of the sound that you have seen change for the better, or things that you'd like to bring back to the Dawn sound?

F - I'm satisfied with all of my releases that I have done. It's fun to listen to the first demo. But yeah, there's a huge difference from the first demo to the Slaughtersun album. We'll definitely continue with those changes.

RoR - So do you find yourself incorporating more classical music into the newer material?

F - The new stuff will be more melodic stuff, more epic stuff than the Slaughtersun. With Slaughtersun, some parts were slow, and some parts were sad and melodic. So, there will probably be more melodic stuff, but in an epic way.

RoR - That's something I wanted to ask you, Slaughtersun is a melodic album, but the whole thing is just really intense. Did you capture the feel that you were going for?

F - Yeah! I think it's a good combination album, where there's atmosphere and emotion. In the future, I'm going to change the riffs, try and do something really, really new with the guitars. Because I'm really into guitar playing like 110%, you know. So maybe, there will be some solos, that would be a major change.

RoR - Why haven't you incorporated solos before, did you feel that they didn't fit the music?

F - It fit, but we had some discussion as did we actually need solos, and we decided no, we didn't. So, we didn't think that it was needed, but we think that now it would be a cool thing to put into the newer material.

RoR - Well, it's interesting that you bring that up, because in listening, I don't really notice that there aren't any solos in the songs. Another thing I didn't really notice until looking at the booklet was just how long a lot of the tracks really were. But to shorten the songs would be detrimental, I would think.

F - No, I mean, the main thing about is that people have asked me why I made such long songs, and I just say that it's quite simple. The riffs are so long, that the songs come out very long. If you listen to the first song on the CD, the arrangements are quite simple, but if you listen to just one riff for one time, that one time is quite long. They are not short riffs, so they make long songs!

RoR - Well, I for one like long songs, and I would have noticed if they had been say, cut in half. Why do you think that people notice when tracks are three to four minutes in length?

F - Some people think it's good, and some people think it's different. I think that it's only when you look at the times that you see just how long the songs are. When you listen to the album, the whole thing goes through like a red light, from second one to minute 59, you know?

RoR - Well, the album almost seems like one idea split into individual tracks, which makes it flow really well.

F - Well, I hope people think so. That's the main thing. Musically, it's a concept album, because it has like a red light through the whole thing I can sit down and listen to the whole thing at once. That's the best thing to do with a long album, because there's so much riffing...

RoR - And you've toured on this, right?

F - Yeah, well, we've had quite a lot of discussions about touring. The major problem has been that all of the band didn't want to tour, we all have work, house or family, things like that. Now it's gonna change though. We're going to tour, do lots of promotion, meet people. There's gonna be a major change now.

RoR - That sort of leads to the question of how much of SlaughterSun would you play live? That's a lot of material!

F - We would probably only play like 5 or 6 songs of the album live. That's almost an hour right there.

RoR - Is that ever a problem with stamina, especially for the drummer?

F - No problem at all! He's into to drumming 110%, and he's such a good drummer, he could probably play for two or three hours if he wanted.

RoR - Plenty of albums are melodic, but SlaughterSun is different in that there's a very emotional quality to it. What is it that makes SlaughterSun so different in that way?

F - I think it's different because I wanted every single riff to be really, really good, and really epic and emotional. When I'm doing riffs, I try to get the best out of it. I make a riff, and listen to it for like two weeks, and if it's good after two weeks, then I skip the riff.

RoR - So you have an idea of what you're going for, and then you assemble the riffs. When you go in to produce it, do you tell the producer (Peter Tagtgren in this case) "This is the sound that I'm going for", or does he have ideas of his own?

F - [sighs] When I go into the studio, especially with the mini-CD and the SlaughterSun album, it changed so much. I'm really into

the sounds, the drum sounds, the guitar sounds, the bass sounds. I'm really into the equipment stuff by myself, and with Peter's help it was so easy to work. So I have of ideas when I go into the studio of how I want it to sound. The guitar sound on SlaughterSun is really epic, it doesn't sound like a typical black metal guitar record. There's not as much distortion on the second guitar, it's like what a 70s rock band would do.

RoR - So I guess you were happy with Peter from the past? Was there any discussion about using anyone else?

F - We were quite satisfied with Peter's work, and I knew that he could do something that I wanted him to do. If you compare the drum sound with other records, the snare drum sounds more like an 80's snare drum. We used both analog and digital equipment for the album, and most of the bands that record in studio

Abyss are using digital equipment. That's another thing that makes it different.

RoR - What's interesting to me is that he has producing albums for a while now, but they don't have a signature sound, say like the Sunlight guitar sound in the late eighties.

F - All studios have a signature sound, until they change their mixing table. If one band, say Dimmu Borgir, is popular, then kids will want that sound. Peter listens so much to the band, so it's really up to the band as to what they want to sound like. The major sound is simple, because when bands from Norway come to Sweden to record, sometimes they can't bring their own equipment, and they have to use the studio's stuff. We used our own equipment, which will make our overall sound different. There's always going to be something that tells you that it's Abyss Studios though.

RoR - Could you do me a favor and translate the first two titles for me?



F - Na Solen is When the Sun Sets Forever, and the MCD is Sorrow Flew on Black Wings

RoR - I also had a question about the album covers. When you lay them all down next to each other, they're all pictures of a sunrise, I wondered what the idea was behind each cover? Who came up with this theme and will we see it continue in albums to come?

F - The idea for the first album came up while we were rehearsing. A friend of mine is a photographer, and he had been doing a lot of that stuff, in springs, and summers for covers of magazines and stuff like that. I met him, and he asked me if I needed something for a cover, and I told him that we needed something with an atmospherical touch to it, like sunsets or something cool. He had like fourteen or fifteen pictures that he showed me, and it fit the music right at that time. It came out good, so we thought about it for the next album as well.

RoR - So it is sort of a theme?

F - I don't know, yeah, I think so... I don't know what's going to be on the next one, it all depends on the lyrics and everything.

RoR - Going into the lyrics a little, I kind of gather that Henke's probably not the happiest person.

F - No, definitely, well, it depends on where you have him. It depends on where you have me as well. Sometimes I'm happy, sometimes I'm not happy. Henke's such a person, that he's up and down, like everybody else, but he always writes lyrics when he's down. Kind of simple, actually. Actually, I think most people in Sweden are up and down because of the weather, it really affects you.

RoR - Are you guys pretty close outside of the band?

F - No we are not. We just play together.

RoR - Because it seems like a project you take very seriously, not something that's a passing fad. So, how would describe yourself personally, do you go the pubs a lot, hang around?

F - No, I don't. Well, sometimes I go out, I have fun. Like when I'm here in California, I'm going out, meeting a lot of people. But when I'm home I'm into my music 110%. When I'm touring, I can meet people and have fun, but when I sit down to write lyrics or riffs then it's different. I don't know what it is, but when I sit down and write music I don't need people so much. So I don't go out too much then.

RoR - Well, it seems as though many people don't do in their jobs what they really want to do, so they need distractions. Did you always know that this is what you wanted to do?

F - Yeah! When I grew up my brother was really into music, and we listened to a lot of music together, played together. He played until like ten years ago, and I just decided to continue. We got ourselves a record deal back in 1992, and then we started to release albums, and now here I am in California! So, I think that I'll continue for like, twenty more years [laughing].

RoR - Could you see yourself doing anything else? What would you be doing if you didn't have music?

F - Yeah, definitely, because I'm not living on my music. No one does, you know. People think that they're living on their music, but it's only bands like say, Entombed, that yeah, they're living on their music. But bands like us, playing black/death metal, we don't earn any money. All the money that I do earn I spend on equipment.

RoR - So Dawn's a non-profit organization...

F - Exactly, because it's not about making money anyway. All the guy's in the band have jobs, but work extra to save money so that they can play. What I'm doing is I'm working at a travel agency. If I wasn't into this music thing, then I'd probably be working at some music store, or for a record label. That's what I'm going to do when I retire, live here in California and start a record label!

RoR - You were saying that your brother influenced you growing up. So what generation of stuff were you guys listening to that influenced you?

F - Well, he listened to a lot of 70s rock. I wasn't into that so much, I was more into KISS, and all that crap that everyone was listening to. I think that KISS is a really cool band, actually, but it was more like Diary of a Madman, and Saxon, especially that were like the first albums that I heard. So I never really listened to Black Sabbath, I started listening to Ozzy when he came out with his albums, Blizzard of Oz and Diary of a Madman. The albums with Randy Rhoads were real inspiring for Dawn today, because they're so good.

RoR - So were you trained at all musically, or did you learn to play by ear?

F - Well, the guys that I play in Cranium with, they're all old friends of mine. We had the band Cranium together back in like 1985, and the bass player's father was a jazz musician, so I can kind of say that we had lessons back then for like five years. Yeah, I had lessons, I just don't take them anymore!

RoR - Because I was wondering about the classical aspect, if that was something that you brought with you from your past, or if it was something that you recently discovered?

F - The acoustic guitar was something that I started with and then continued to play. That's something that's going to be on the next Dawn album, those acoustic parts.

RoR - How important is folk music in Scandinavia? I mean, there are folk songs from the U.S., but since the country is so young, the heritage isn't as engrained yet.

F - Yeah, I mean folk songs and classic things are big in Sweden. It's kind of a natural thing for everyone to hear there. There are a lot of classic bands. My mother and father played a lot of that when I was growing up.

RoR - We talked a little bit about what's going to happen in the future for Dawn, but where are you in terms of new material?

Are you taking a break from songwriting now? Are you going to tour for Slaughtersun before you start anything new?

F - We're going to tour Slaughtersun actually. That's the main thing for September, if it all works out. We have to find a bass player actually but we may just use a session player for the tour.

RoR - Maybe you could give Emperor Magus Caligula a call (bassist for Dark Funeral), no I'm just kidding. Is it really difficult to find musicians in Stockholm, or are you real particular?

F - [laughing] Yeah, maybe that would work, but he's also doing the vocals, so... It is difficult, and I didn't expect that. It's been almost two years since I moved up, and I've been talking to people, putting ads up. I've tried out so many guitarists that just don't fit my type of guitar playing. It's kind of hard to find someone who fits my type of style. It's not about just playing, it's the band, and you have to get together and play. You have to be great people who have a common goal for the band. Most people with touring just would rather give up the band, and you have to give 110% to the band. The guys that played before, they weren't into it 110%. We lost Lars, who was a really good bass player, but he didn't want to do tours, etc... We had to do some changes. We'd been playing together for eight years, and we needed to move forward with the band. There have been lots and lots of problems on Dawn, we had so many band member problems, we skipped a tour with Cradle of Filth back in 1996, due to the drummer leaving the band the day that Henke accepted the tour. We found Jocke like a week or two after the tour was over. Everything moved really fast since then, but he wants to be an engineer, and found this great job up in Sunlight Studios, which is just a

block from where I live today. He earns a lot of money now, so I understand him in one way, but in another I don't.

RoR - So where are you guys going to do the tour?

F - It'll be on the west coast of the states, which will actually be the first tour that we've ever done! It's gonna be great fun, they're setting it up now. We should play San Fransisco, L.A., etc... Since I had so much trouble with Dawn, I put it on ice and I've been working with Cranium again. There's going to be a Cranium release on August 31st, but after that, we'll start the tour.

RoR - Looking say fifteen years down the road, how would you want Dawn to be remembered?

F - When I'm talking about Slaughtersun, I want people to think that it's a good album ten years from now. I want it to be a timeless thing. For example, Altars of Madness was released ten years ago, but it's always good. I want to see if people feel like that!

RoR - Any last comments?

F - I just want to say that we are definitely back, we're not on ice anymore. We're going to tour and do everything else to rule this fucking world! That's exactly what we're going to do now.

Hands of Time has taken it's stand ...

ARCHETYPE



CD - ARCHETYPE - IMP003
"Hands Of Time"

DISTRIBUTION:
VOICES @ WONDER

Skt Jorgens Alle 7 c.g. 1.th.
DK-1815 Copenhagen V
Phone: +45-33210135
Fax: +45-33240495

The Ohio-based band Archetype takes you down a path yet untravelled flowing through melodic and guitar-based progressive spheres.

A band for the future...and for today!

The originality shown in every aspect of the music - guitars, bass, drums, vocals - proves to you, the listener, this hasn't been done so efficiently before.

Already people have compared this band to lot of major acts, even some stating that Archetype sounds as "Iced Earth going progressive".

The catch is, Archetype is rather undefinable - a band with an attitude, creating a musical world of it's own.



MANAGEMENT/BOOKING/INFO:



P.O.Box 1268
DK-2300 Copenhagen S.
Phone/fax: +45-32876295
<http://www.intromental.com/archetype>
E-mail: archetype@intromental.com

Myself Am Hell

Myself am Hell caught my attention at the Metal Meltdown. I'm not sure if it was the riffing, the drumming, or the overall attitude, but whatever it was, it sure made me want to go over and find out what the hell these guys were all about. As luck would have it, the only place to conduct something resembling an interview was outside in the freezing cold. It was pretty funny to hear my teeth chattering when I was transcribing this, and the answers are a bit incoherent at times, but... I tried to get the most info I could, which was difficult based on the natural excitement of the band, and the fact that my mind had vapor lock. Make of it what you will, but these guys play a pretty good show, and if you want to find out more info on 'em, check out their webpage (<http://www.geocities.com/~myselfamhell>) or see them for yourself at this year's Milwaukee Metalfest! Answers are marked MAH if I just had NO idea who had answered my feeble question...



RoR - So, you guys were at the Milwaukee Metalfest, how does this festival compare to last year there?

MAH - Well, that one was a lot bigger. There were like 1000 people there and here, what, maybe two, three hundred?

RoR - Well, that's the thing, I couldn't make it last night, but there just don't seem to be that many people here... (it was around 5:30 on Saturday, half the attendees didn't show up it seemed till like 7)

MAH - Naah, we played Milwaukee in a room twice the size of today, and it was just packed!

RoR - You look around here though, and I mean, the whole city is just dead.

MAH - Yeah, it's a summer town, it's all boarded up.

RoR - So, the inevitable opener, a little history, you know, where you guys are from, etc...

Justin - Well, we're from Long island, Matt and I are brothers, Ron and Matt went to college together, I wrote lyrics for the band but wasn't a player. Adam we met at a New Year's Eve party, he was air drumming to Metallica, so I was like "Hey, there's some guy playing drums over there!" He's (Adam) actually from Poland...

RoR - Man, the sound today was just terrible I thought, this was actually the best room (Convention Hall), but you couldn't hear much of anything.

Matt - Yeah, my equipment kept cutting in and out, and after every song I was running back looking for this loose wire. I finally found it by like the third song. They were all pissed at me cause we lost a song.

Justin - Yeah, when we got up there the guy was like, "Guess what, your twenty minutes just started... Now." It was like "Shit, set up!" And then after twenty minutes they were like "Cut it, cut it!"

RoR - Well, it didn't sound too bad, quality wise, especially compared to some of the earlier acts I saw in there.

MAH - Yeah, that's all in the playin'. [laughing]

Ron - No, we were up there just hating the amp sound, it just sucked.

Adam - There were some technical problems, which you can't really do anything about.

Justin - I heard a lot of bass and drums, so I ended up having to turn it down, but, that's a live show. It's not your basement, you're not practicing, expect the unexpected.

Matt - I couldn't really take the time to fix my sound.

Adam - But, we are sort of used to this, we live as a band in one house.

Matt - Yeah, we have a house, and we soundproofed the basement, it's our studio.

Justin - We bought a P.A. system, it's all set up, we go through a four-track so we can hear what we just put out.

RoR - I take it you usually get more time to prepare at live shows then...

Justin - Oh yeah, here, we had like a minute, so we got up there with 5 songs that we had prepared and we were like, let's just play 'em.

Adam - Yeah, it would have been cool to have more time, but at

the end the guy was like "Cut it". We asked for one more minute, but the guy was like "Cut it, cut it". (And they did just cut it, being witness to an early ending for more than one unhappy band)

Justin - Yeah, Wykked Wytch got cut hard. But, I was like, you should have thanked them for cutting that shit off!

Ron - Well, they were telling us that band after us didn't show up yet, so I was kinda hoping that we could finish that last song at least, but nope.

MAH - Yeah, the band before us got cut after two songs, and they had traveled all the way from Milwaukee. Like 800 miles, and after two songs they got cut.

RoR - How did you guys become a part of this? Did you just send a demo in?

Justin - No, we went out networking, and this guy was like, you have to play Milwaukee. That was like two years ago, and when I called up, they were booked solid. The next time it came around, I called like eight months in advance, told them that Brian from Internal Bleeding gave me their number, and they were like, "Hey, as long as you give us a thousand dollars, you can play." So you pay in advance, and then they send you twenty tickets, which you're supposed to sell for fifty bucks a piece to get your money back. Man, we went out to Milwaukee and we were out on the corner hawking those tickets like pimps! When we signed up for here, it was the same thing, but they gave us the tickets like two weeks beforehand. I mean, I paid in like November.

Matt - Ask us a good musical question!

RoR - OK, you must have had some influences which helped define your sound, what are they?

Justin - No, we just lock ourselves in our basement and just play, fuck 'em.

Matt/Justin - Well, we grew up listening to Slayer, (old) Megadeth, Metallica before they sucked, Testament. Then we moved into the heavier stuff, like Death or Sepultura.

RoR - Well, I also heard a progressive edge to the songs, who added that aspect to the playing?

Matt - Well, I guess that's me, because everything we played I wrote. We try to incorporate a lot more into our songs.

Ron - We both went to music school, and he (Matt) went through a lot of jazz, so we'd be pretty bored if we just played real straight. We try to keep it on that fine line between... Justin - They taught me how to play, so... I had never picked up an instrument, and then they were like, play bass.

RoR - And this CD in my

hands is your first release?

Justin - Yeah, one thing, we did it in **December** of 1996, so, it's not as old as you would think.

RoR - So, you're shopping for a label right now with this?

Justin - Yeah, but I think the underground is not picked up by labels, at all.

Matt - Everybody seems to put things out themselves now anyway, so...

Justin - And how many record companies are in there right now, three? You've got Relapse, who only seem to specialize in short song noise bands...

Matt - We have a nice rejection letter from them.

Justin - Well, Milwaukee got the name around, so people were asking if we were coming here, and now they're asking if we're going back to Milwaukee this year, so I think we're getting exposure. It helps to play the big festivals, we could play a thousand shows in New York, it's not going to do anything for us, you've got to get OUT. That's why we're trying to hook up with a lot of other bands, to get out there.

RoR - So, 20 minutes, 5 songs, you have some of your own equipment to set up, how do you do it?

Matt - Well, that's where we ran into problems. We set up in three minutes, and then I'm having problems in the first song, and I don't know why!

Justin - Well, it was easy for me, I walked in and the guy's like "You're going direct", uh, OK.

Adam - Well, I set up the drums, and then I sat behind them, and I just see this mountain in front of me. I usually set up everything really low, so it was a nightmare.

Matt - Well, at least most of the people that we spoke to thought it was good. It's tough to believe, but, whatever.

RoR - What do you think of them booking all these old school bands.



Justin - Oh man, I can't wait to see Vicious Rumors. Actually, the guy just walked by us on his way to the press room.

Somehow the topic of me living in Hawaii comes up, and after remarking that I'm just fucking freezing, someone makes the comment that they'd hate to be playing on the Relapse stage.

RoR - It's freezing out there! Are you guys used to playing in this type of weather? I

would think that your fingers would fall off!

Justin - Well we have played some cold shows.

Ron - Yeah, we have played a few...

Justin - But when you're up there and the hand cramps up, it's bad...

Matt - It feels like little rocks hitting the strings.

RoR - Well, especially on the Relapse stage, I mean, they've got Vader and Cryptopsy up on the Relapse stage...

Adam - Vader's going to play the Relapse stage?

Matt - They're gonna hate that.

RoR - OK, I have to stop and ask you about the teeth (Justin's teeth are filed down, leaving very sizable cuspsids...)

Justin - Oh, after a show one night I saw this girl that had it done. I went up to her and asked her how she did it, and evidently this guy she was sleeping with did it for her. So, I had her introduce me to this guy and I called him up, set up an appointment, and got em filed. he also makes coffins, but he was not making them at the time.

RoR - So what's your local scene like now?

All - Cover bands, all cover bands.

Matt - Well, we just got the tranny rebuilt in our van, so we can start traveling again.

Justin - What I want to know is, where the fuck are the porn stars?!

Matt - There in there, \$15 for an autograph...

RoR - ...is THAT what that big line is? I thought it was for pizza. Actually I pissed because I came here for the wrestling, and that was only last night.

Ron - You also missed Hypocrisy then. What sucks is that their second guitarist got food poisoning and couldn't play (more on that next iss - Ed.).

RoR - Sorry to digress, but back to the songwriting, you (Matt) write most of the material?

Matt - I wrote everything on the CD, but were trying to even it up more now. So, if you thought that my stuff was progressive, Ron's is even more so, since he has the fusion/jazz background.

RoR - That's cool, because it seems like a lot of songwriters seem to follow trends, not incorporating any other styles into their songs.

Matt - Well, one thing I find weird is that you hear a band like Korn on the radio. Now, to you and I, it's not THAT different from a lot of other metal, yet if we tried to get our stuff on the radio, they'd be like forget it.

RoR - Anything else you want to say that hasn't been spouted out already?

Justin - Check us out at the Milwaukee Metalfest, we'll definitely be there!

RoR - OK, then just for me, sum up the band in 10 words or less.

Matt - Um, We Rule man!!! [all laughing]

Justin - [pauses, seriously] We've killed a lot of people... and you can't prove it. (Too bad that's 11 words! -Ed.)

Matt - We actually had to come up with something in 5 words, what was it?

Justin - Wanted in 5 states, murder.

Matt - Check out the website at <http://www.geocities.com/~myselfamhell>, there are a lot of flames and stuff.

Justin - Oh yeah, and I also want to say to any idiots that read Metal Nightmare #2, Myself Am Hell is not grammatically incorrect. It comes from Paradise Lost, Satan said it after coming out of the lake of fire and giving this big speech, then ending with "I myself am hell..."

LORDE OF ALL DESIRES
"The Scent of Malevolence"



Enslaved by a Long Binded Gentle
 The Union of Death
 The Intoxicating Wishes
 Delicate
 Whence Chosen Comets
 The Ultimate Cosmos
 Suspenseful the Act of Surrender
 The Censoring of Words of Honor

Root of all Evil Records
 636 N. Snelling Ave
 St. Paul, MN 55104
 ROOT@ROOTOFALLEVIL.COM
 http://www.rootofallevil.com
 TOLL FREE * 1-888-663-2070

ALSO AVAILABLE:



Root of all Evil Records
 636 N. Snelling Ave
 St. Paul, MN 55104
 ROOT@ROOTOFALLEVIL.COM
 http://www.rootofallevil.com
 TOLL FREE * 1-888-663-2070

Anacrusis

Manic impressionS

As you may remember, I promised you the second half of the Anacrusis history this issue. Well, as usual, time hath conspired against us once more, but I have been able to fulfill half of the promise given. In thinking about it, the last two albums in the history deserve their own space, as each was a genre defining album in it's own right. I've provided my own view on this masterpiece later in the article, but to try to put into words what this band managed to achieve in 53 minutes is pointless. In short, go to Metal Blade's website, order the disc, and hear for yourself why this band defined the term underrated. So, for now, I leave you to read the words of bandleader Ken Nardi, the guy to be held responsible for this madness. - Evan

As we were nearing the end of the summer of 1990, we were facing the two biggest changes in the band's history so far. One being our first line-up change, the other being our decision to sign directly with **Metal Blade** for the next album. When Mike decided to leave the band, the last thing we wanted or needed was someone to come into the group and upset the musical identity that we had been working so hard to establish. Chad Smith was our immediate first choice. He had gone to school with Kevin and Mike and had been the drummer in my previous band, **Heaven's Flame**. In was, in fact, Chad who had introduced me to Kevin after our band had broken up. He had always stayed in touch and had followed the progress of **Anacrusis** since its inception. We knew Chad felt we had strong material and a lot of potential. He felt he could add a lot to the band, and we agreed. Chad had always been an extremely disciplined musician, whereas the rest of us were mostly self-taught and by no means virtuosos on our instruments. Chad felt that by giving us a more solid foundation, we could concentrate more on our playing, and ultimately, the songs would come across better. This would prove to be true, especially on the newer material we had been working on. Shortly after we returned home from our three-week tour opening for **D.R.I.**, we had begun to write for what would become the next album. It was at this time that I began using a drum machine to assist with my arranging and recording. Not only could I quickly try many different ideas, but it also made it very easy to achieve a descent drum sound and thus, good sounding demos. I also knew from working with Chad in the past that he would have no problem pulling off anything that I could come up with on the drum machine. One exception to this would however be the weird, very syncopated patterns that make up the chorus of *Idle Hours*. This was one of the first things I wrote using the machine, and quickly learned that writing something that

by

Ken Nardi



sounds interesting is one thing, but a human being actually being able to play it is another. So Chad re-worked it a little and after much practice, it became, I think, one of the coolest patterns in any of our songs. The great thing about having a drummer with Chad's abilities in the band was that it opened many doors, creatively. What Mike possessed in speed and energy, Chad more than made up for in discipline and technique. His seriousness about his instrument made us all look much more closely at our own playing. At times it was a little intimidating, but definitely made us a much tighter band in the long run. I always felt one of the best things about **Anacrusis**, was that musically, all the members were very much on the same level. Often with heavier bands, there would be a fantastic vocalist or guitarist, and the rest of the act would be built around showcasing one member's talent. In **Anacrusis**, we always tried to write and arrange the songs in ways that would let each instrument stand out. Our strength would be in the songs as a whole. By making the riffs themselves more complicated, this would make the musicianship stand out more than a boring ten-minute guitar solo for example. We would often be referred to as a 'technical' or 'progressive' band, a title normally given to musicians of a much higher caliber. **Rush** or **Yes** for example. We had always tried to use the arrangements or instrumentation in different ways to try and make the material more interesting and varied. The first songs written for **Manic Impressions** were *Paint a Picture*, *Explained Away*, *Idle Hours*, and *Tools of Separation*. Anyone familiar with **Screams and Whispers** will recognize the latter as being from that album. Actually this song was fully recorded during the **Manic** sessions, but didn't make the final cut. This was due to time constraints during the final mixing where we had to decide on finishing *Tools* or *Far Too Long*. We felt that the overall 'feel' would suffer more without *Far Too Long*, and waited to re-record *Tools* for the next album. Another thing we knew early on was that I strongly

wanted to include a song by my favorite band, **New Model Army**. I had recorded a demo of their song *I Love the World* from the **Thunder and Consolation** album released in 1988. NMA had been my favorite band for a few years and I wanted to pay homage to them with a cover of one of their songs. *I Love the World* seemed like a great choice due to its tempo and feel. Over the years many people (many not



knowing it was a cover) have referred to this as our 'best song'. I, for one, would never disagree. We spent September and October working on new music and, figuring we usually did our best work under pressure, we went ahead and booked studio time for January. The remainder of the songs were written over the next couple of months. *Manic Impressions* was recorded in Jan.-Feb. 1991 in Lake Geneva, WI at Royal Recorders Studio. Royal Recorders was a definite step up for us. It had been used by many big artists, most recently **Queensrÿche** had mixed *Empire* there. By choosing to record at a time of the year when most big artists preferred Rio or some other more enjoyable climate, we were able to get a great deal on recording time. The studio was very state-of-the-art with digital machines and a computer-controlled, fully automated mixing console. We were in Heaven, but not for long. One mistake we made was to assume that with all this great 'stuff' we were using, we couldn't possibly screw this one up. Unfortunately, we were very wrong. The recording went pretty well at first. Chad laid down all his parts alone, playing only to special "click" tracks he had programmed for each song. One thing we were careful about this time was keeping the tempos consistent. Where as on the first two albums it was like, "O.K. let's hurry up and get these drums done so we can start putting down guitars" (which made most of the songs on these albums **much** faster than originally intended), this time we wanted to avoid speeding things up too much. This had a lot to do with why many people felt the album had a very mechanical or cold feel to it. Another thing we learned later was that no matter how much planning goes into the finding the "right" tempo, until the songs are performed live, you really don't get a feel for what the best tempo is. Almost everything on the first two albums was too fast, but after playing songs from *Manic* on tour, a couple of tunes like *Something Real* definitely could have used a little kick in the seat. It's like when your writing a song your thinking of it from a certain point of view, but when you are performing it, you might be concentrating on it from a completely different angle and suddenly the 'groove' you thought you heard ain't so 'groovy' anymore. Dig? After the drum tracks were finished (about a day and a half, go Chad!), I recorded my rhythm parts, then Kevin, the John, all taking about a day each. Next came the 'clean' guitar parts, solos and vocals. One of our greatest fears as a band was that someone would come in from the outside and start telling us what to do or how we should sound, so when it came to the people we worked with, we had a tendency to stick with the familiar. In this case we decided to use the same engineer from the *Reason* album. We had become pretty close friends and had always blamed the sound of *Reason* on the lack of good 'stuff' we got to use while recording it. Even though his intentions were good, his lack of experience working in the digital format caused many problems. We recorded all the basic tracks over the first ten day period, the plan being we would take a week off to get away from the repetition of hearing the tapes over and over, and return a week later to finish over-dubs and mixing. It was at this time, while running off rough mixes to take home to listen to, that we started to notice some problems. There were very noticeable "punch-ins" (where you "punch into" record mode while playing along with the tape to fix mistakes.) Some sections of vocals sounded like they had been recorded one word at a time over a three-month period. There was digital distortion. (digital tape does not compress the sounds that peak over 0db like analog tape, and distorts instead)

What I did on my Manic Tour

by John Emery



After the release of *Manic* in the summer of 1991 Kevin managed to squeeze us in on the tail end of the Rust in Peace tour with Megadeth. By now Chad was in the band and we did eight shows with Mega-Dave and crew. Arriving in Knoxville, TN, as Anacrusis and Chad's brother Matt as roadie and a sound man, we entered the venue through the back. Megadeth's stage manager asked us "Where's your crew?", meaning road crew. We answered, "You're lookin' at it..." He was astounded. Next was Birmingham, AL (huge audience for us as well as New Orleans, LA). The doors were opened during our line check which was frustrating. Mr. Mustaine henceforth allotted us a half hour sound check each night. It was so cool. We were used to plugging in, tuned or not, and bashing out 40 minutes of slop or not, all depending on the day, the audience and our moods. After that we kicked proverbial booty in Memphis, TN (where someone blew up a condom with which we play soccer with on stage), our hometown, Tulsa, OK, Wichita, KS and Oklahoma City, OK. It was really awesome to play theaters instead of clubs for a change, although the monitor mixes were non-existent, so it was really dead sounding on-stage. Kenn lost one of his shoes at a gas station on the road and we walked back down the on-ramp to get it because he had only brought one pair on the tour. During this time *Manic* was to be released with WB distribution so we made it a point to check every record store we came across to see if it was readily available. Sometimes.

We had a couple of headlining shows, one at Blondie's in Detroit, and another at The Thirsty Whale in Chicago with Cyclone Temple. The opening act at Blondie's left the stage to party, so we had to push their gear off to the side so we could play our set to half the people that were there for them. Hence, they were outside partying with them. The house sound guy in Chicago kept coming to the side of the stage to signal that we only had so much time left to play. I told him to "eat me", and that we had a contract. He threatened our sound man to pull the plug. Good show anyway.

We then landed eight weeks with Overkill and the Galactic Cowboys that spanned the country. "Blitz" called it the Anagalactikill Tour in an interview. The marquees at almost every venue had us billed as the second act, and this was what we understood the package to be. But the Cowboys were a Geffen band, so we got bumped and played 30 minutes or less every night. The crowd response was less enthusiastic than had been on previous tours, even though we were much tighter and had more progressive songs to showcase. It seemed like we were playing to fellow musicians at times until we got out west. This was also the first tour that didn't cram us all into a minivan. We had rented an RV which allowed us a certain amount of comfort and spread us out a little more to lessen friction. In theory this sounds good, but in practice it wasn't. Halfway through the Sierras the engine on the RV ceased to be. Literally in the middle of nowhere. I don't even want to repeat the cost of towing a full-sized RV with a trailer full of equipment as well. We were brought another RV which had several mechanical problems and only lasted until Houston, TX. The third one was abused by our second driver whom we sent home on a bus from D.C. to L.A. because we could no longer afford to pay him. Poor guy. We left Boston for home and didn't stop until Illinois where the electrical system fried, forcing us to hard-wire the headlights to the battery. Only problem was that we wore the battery out and the lights were so dim that a state trooper saw us and we were forbidden to drive any further. Talk about frustrating. So we sat at a truck stop and argued until the sun came up while our wives and girlfriends waited a couple hundred miles away.

Continued on page 61

Spock's Beard

Throw on the latest release by Spock's Beard, and you may be pleasantly surprised. Then again, maybe you'll just sit back and go "What the hell?!?", which is pretty much what I did the first time I threw *Day for Night* in. Expecting some killer progressive metal to blast from my stereo, I instead was welcomed with a track suitable for any AOR station. I immediately gave up, but the hooks were already in place, and I found myself wanting to hear songs again to reinforce my strong views on this matter. After a few listens, I was perplexed. *Day for Night* definitely wasn't metal by any stretch of the imagination, and my fault in reviewing the album was that I was in a total metal mood. That might sound really stupid, but it's not. I threw out my preconceptions and gave the disc another spin, and while it's still not my favorite thing this month, I do find myself craving its familiarity when things need to slow down a bit for me. So when an album provides me with a love/hate relationship, it makes me wonder just who's behind the creation, and find out I did. I got a chance to speak to main SB man Neal Morse just before the guys took some time to play their new material out, and here's what he had to say to me very early one Friday morning...

RoR - So how are things goin' for you?

NM - Good man, good. Just spending a little time with my kids before we go out on the road on Sunday.

RoR - So where are you guys heading out to, is this your first leg supporting Day for Night?

NM - We're doing Baltimore, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, [speaking faster] Detroit, Grand Rapids, Chicago, Minneapolis, Milwaukee. This is really our first American tour, is what this is. We've done west coast dates and all, but we haven't done anything on the east coast yet.

RoR - Where are you guys based out of, are you all in the same place?

NM - L.A., essentially, although I live outside of Nashville. Everybody else is in L.A.. So I fly out there to rehearse and record. I moved from L.A. about 4 years ago. So when we started, it was all L.A. guys. So then I moved, for various reasons, personal reasons and things, but we kept on. I go out there and kind of coordinate things. I mean, my parents are out there, so I'll go out, visit the folks, work on an album. Also, up until recently I was doing roadwork with Eric Burdon, so if I was out there for an Eric Burdon show I would stay a little extra and work on some Spock's Beard stuff. You know, where there's a will there's a way basically.

RoR - Well when you guys first started Spock's Beard, were you as involved in outside groups or projects?

NM - Well, when we first started, there wasn't any money in it all. Now there's a little bit of money in it, but not enough to live off of. You know, just the reality of it is that you have to do other things to make ends meet. Especially if you have a house payment and kids to support, which most of us in the band do.

RoR - Well, the fact that you kept it going makes it apparent that you would like Spock's Beard to be your main job.

NM - Oh yeah, we want it to be. We're working on it, and we're hoping that it will be. It just depends on what happens, and if not, I mean, we're really happy just doing the music that we love to do. I mean it's a drag when you come away from a gig and

you haven't made any money. That's not a good feeling. But we didn't start this thing for the money, that's something we need to remember.

RoR - OK, the band name, where did that come from?

NM - Oh, Alan (Morse, brother and guitarist) and I were hanging around, at I think Mammoth Mountain, California. Anyway, he came up to visit me, and we were just having one of those weird nights. You know, where all these weird people were coming up to us and saying all this bizarro stuff, god, I can't even remember what they said. All I remember is that he turned to me and said [in a really stoned voice, it seems - Ed.] "Man, this is a really weird night, it's like we're in a parallel universe. It's like Spock has a beard, man. Oh, wouldn't that be a funny name for a band, Spock's Beard?" I forgot about it, and then years later when we were voting for names Al snuck that name on there, and it really shocked us all when it won! We were all like, are we really going to call the band Spock's Beard? It was pretty out there, but it won, so we had to.

RoR - It's kind of fitting, I guess. You have the logical meets the illogical thing goin', because a lot of the music is calculated, but then the songs flow, so you have both sides of the brain going.



NM - Whoa, there you go. Hey, you know, I never thought of it like that!

RoR - You're pretty much classified as a progressive rock band, do you think that kind of turns some people off before they even give it a chance?

NM - Oh, it may. I mean I know that it does. If Spock's Beard gets a shot with listeners, we appeal to a wide variety of people. You know, metal guys like, and song oriented people like us, because it's a real song oriented thing. We just have a wide range of fans, not just progressive people. But it's just like everything else, it's just a matter of getting out there and getting the exposure and getting heard. That's just always the challenge in this day and age.

RoR - You guys are all obviously talented, and you let loose on a few tracks, but otherwise the playing it a bit less over the top than other releases I can think of. Do you guys consciously hold back and play more for the song, and was it always this way, or would you say that older material showcased your talent a little more?

NM - I think the material on Day for Night is a little more song oriented. Which some people of course like better, and some people of course don't like as much. I think that this album is a little easier to play than some of our other albums, depending on which section, for there are some difficult sections. But I think, for example, Beware of Darkness has more difficult pieces on it. That's just what we did at that point in time. It's funny, I think people have a different impression, because I think that most music is generally kind of a spontaneous thing. That's what came out of you at that point in time, and people make it mean all this stuff. Basically, maybe it doesn't sound good, but we're just a bunch of guys that with each album look at it as a new project, and go "what do you guys think, do you like this". Just kick it around and go for it. It's not planned well really, we're just flying by the seat of our pants...

RoR - So I'd assume that you write a lot of this and then bring it to the other guys, or did they have material to add in?

NM - No, generally I write the stuff and demo it up in my project studio, then we will sometimes do things exactly as I arranged them, or sometimes we'll change them a lot. It really just depends on how badly I've botched it in the first place [laughs].

RoR - Again, was it always this way, because if it wasn't, then did your moving affect the writing process at all?

NM - Well, it's the way it's always been so far. I don't see that it has.

RoR - Sound-wise, I don't know if you were going for this, but I hear a lot of different sounds which originated in older progressive bands. For instance, the bass totally reminds me of Chris Squire. Were you going for this, or am I continuing to read too deeply into things?

NM - Well, you know, I've always really been into that bass sound, and Dave (Meros, bass) has really taken it to new bizarre levels. I mean, he's really getting into it, he's really getting into his sound. On the road, he's bringing all these effects boxes, bass

pedals, and a bass keyboard that he plays in certain parts. I think he sounds great, and I'm really into it.

RoR - So are you guys are really into the technical aspect of recording as well?

NM - I'm not so much. I kinda leave that to other people. Basically, when we're recording, Nick... Nick actually miked the drums on this one, so Nick's been doing some engineering. We recorded at Kevin Gilbert's old studio in Pasadena, and I kind of left the technical aspect to those guys.

RoR - You guys have a lot of layering. Live, do you multi-task, or just concentrate on the vocals?

NM - No, I do all the piano, electric piano and synth parts. Ryo does the Hammond and mellotron parts. I also do some of the acoustic guitar stuff, so yeah, I'm moving around between some instruments, but it's not that complicated, it's not too much. It's difficult stuff to pull off live, but we pull it off really well. If people are into it, then they should come see us, because I think it's a good live show.

RoR - So where do you see Spock's Beard in the future?

NM - I don't know man! I hope we continue to make great records, and make records that we really like. I hope that we conquer the universe! I mean, no one can really tell what the future is going to be, that's what we're all working towards. I mean, I think that this is going to be a great year for Spock's Beard. As far as the next album goes, I have no idea what it's going to be like.

RoR - Do you get bursts of inspiration then, or is an album something that is pieced together over time?

NM - No, it's more of a pure inspiration sort of thing. Sometimes I'll hear some of these pieces all the way through at one time. I'll just be like "Where's the hand held tape recorder", and I'll just sing the whole thing all the way through. So, I can never tell, we may just take a whole new approach to the next album.

RoR - Well, what kind of stuff are you listening to now?

NM - I don't know! I mean, I listen to alternative radio quite a bit. I like Ben Folds Five a lot, and I like Stone Temple Pilots a bit. I like a lot of the singer/songwriter people, I like Sheryl Crow a lot. I don't know, I like some of the Dream Theater stuff.

RoR - When listening, so you find yourself focusing on one particular performance, or do you listen to the song as a whole?

NM - Well, I'm more of a song oriented person, so I listen to the song.

RoR - I ask because there was a period of time when I would only listen to the drums, and now I'm going back and rehearsing a lot of what I missed song-wise in older material.

NM - Yeah! That's so cool, isn't it? I love when that happens! That happens with Spock's Beard stuff. I'll work with stuff for so long, and then I'll rehear it, and it's not that I didn't know that the part was there, but I'll be able to hear it as a whole.

RoR - Listen to it more as a listener than in a critical sense.

NM - Yeah, instead of like, some crazed, insane worrier. I'm responsible for this stuff more than anybody else is. I don't think that anybody else sweats the little things as much as I do. It's like, if the record sucks, it's really on my head. I was really nervous about this last one, I was having a lot of trouble deciding what order the songs should go in. The guys were all "Oh, just relax, it doesn't matter that much what order the songs go in", and I was just like freaking out. I'd change my mind every day, and go back to mastering, I was just crazed, man!

RoR - You couldn't just take a break from it?

NM - No! I couldn't take a break from it because the powers that be needed the master by a certain day. And if they didn't get it by then they would have waited until September to release it. So I HAD to make these decisions by a certain day. It isn't always, but this time it was tough.

RoR - Well, with some of the higher profile stuff that you were all involved in recently, did you find that any of that interfered with this album?

NM - I don't know, I don't know. I don't think so. I usually think that too much time and too much money spoils the product. You know, too many chefs spoils the soup, or something like that.

RoR - Well, do you think that you could second guess yourself so much that you would end up turning the whole thing around?

NM - That's what I think. I think that if I had an unlimited budget that you would probably just have to put me in a straitjacket. You know, I have to just declare things complete, because you can keep working on stuff forever! I mean, nothing's ever like perfectly in tune, or has the right emotion, just the way you want it. I can never get a vocal all the way through, just the way I want it. And I can't just go in a day later and punch in the things that I don't like, because it usually doesn't match up.

RoR - Well, you don't get the same feeling...

NM - Yeah, you don't get the same feeling! And I can sing the whole thing over and go, yeah, I got that part right, but now THIS part isn't as good as it was the day before. So after a while, you just have to tell yourself that you're tripping out, and that's it's fine, move ahead.

RoR - And I guess take it as a learning experience, because if at the end you find things that you should have done, there's always the next album.

NM - Yeah, that's what drives you nuts though, because you're never going to make THAT album again. You're going to be stuck with that vocal performance FOREVER, or until you do a live album, or recut it like twenty years from now. It's pretty intense, when you think about it that way, so I try NOT to think about it that way!

RoR - So do you think that you think too much period sometimes?

NM - Oh yeah, I definitely do! I mean, I was watching a video tape of some of the making of my parts on The Kindness of Strangers album, and you hear me singing, and it sounds fine. But then I'll stop the tape and say that it sounded a little bit flat, and try it again. And I know that I did that ALL DAY LONG, you know?

RoR - You must get burned out. Do you keep your takes, or record over them?

NM - I record over them. No, I'm really afraid to keep them. A lot of people work that way, but I have to have just one vocal on tape, because if I have more, then I'll want to keep different pieces for different sections. It would be a nightmare in mixing.

RoR - Any last requests, or pieces of the puzzle?

NM - No, just thanks to the fans, man! We appreciate 'em, come on out and see the shows! Tour dates are up on the Spock's Beard page: <http://www.spocksbear.com>

<http://www.remnantsofreason.com>



Have you been to the Remnants website?

If not, then you've been missing out on some great stuff.

Over 125 individual band pages complete with reviews

Information on back issues of RoR

News, playlists and more!

Updated regularly, it's one stop shopping for everything metal.

Remnants of Reviews

Well, here we go again. If you picked up the last issue, then you may notice a big change here, namely, I am no longer rating the albums on a scale from 1 to 10. In fact, I'm no longer rating them at all! Before you go screaming for blood, hear me out. There are numerous reasons for me deciding to do this. For one, I'm such a kind hearted person, it was incredibly difficult for me to dish out anything less than a 5, which means that there's a curve on the ratings already. Add in the fact that I may be hungover, pissed, happy, sad, on crack, who the hell knows what when I'm reviewing these, and the bias is increased even more! The way I figure it, my ample descriptions are enough to get you to either shell out the cash or head for the door. I could write an book on this, but let's just leave it at this: by reading what I have to say about these discs you should get a pretty fair idea of what I like, and of what I don't like. From that, extrapolate your likes and dislikes and then make an educated consumer decision. You know, kinda like Consumer Reports for metalheads!

Abominator - Damnations Prophecy
1999 Necropolis Records

I've been putting this review off for quite a bit, most of the reason being that I never really wanted to throw it in the player, always finding something else first that I wanted to review. Well, it's the 11th hour, and I'd better find something to say about this pretty damn quick, so, here goes... Much like an essay question, Abominator state what they intend to do (destroy everything considered "holy" by a certain group called Christians), sonically accomplish this, (the album is raw, brutal, and honest to its black metal roots), and finally, recap everything that just happened (with a nice organ outro). Final grade? definitely an A for effort, but I'd have to have Abominator take the time to recopy some of their material for that gold star. Yeah, it's fast, it's unholy, it's ugly, but I don't really like it. There do seem to be two schools of thought on this, one being that you have to record things in a cave to keep it "real", but I think that as we reach new levels in technology, it's cool to move forward as well. One could compare this to only using tube amplifiers to make a stoner rock record, and I guess that's valid, yet when these records are put out this way, a lot of them tend to sound the same. The mighty desecrators don't pretend to be anything else though, gotta hand them that. So while I'd rather throw in something else, maybe you're from that school of which I spoke.

Amorphis - Tuonela
1999 Relapse Records

The first question on everyone's mind will be, of course, is this as good as Elegy, and while in time it may prove to be, for now, my answer is simply, no. That said, you can either leave now, or finish the review to see what fantastic journey Amorphis has decided to take us on this time. No longer are they the folk-death band who spun the world with Tales from the Thousand Lakes, or the pop metal sensation who blew open doors with Elegy. Instead, the band has now morphed into a quasi-alternometal unit, almost completely leaving the death at the door, choosing to chance both old and new fans by incorporating such "kiss of death" tactics as layering saxophone and sitar over thick distortion (Dream Theater, King's X, anyone?). Yes, some of this doesn't work, but most of it does, and when it does, it all kicks into place. Keyboards are kept to a minimum except for the aforementioned monstrous overdubs (ironically, the only "metal" instruments played on the album), providing reinforcement in contrast to the guitar/synth symbiosis present on Elegy. Pasi's clean vo-

cals are stronger here, and amazingly, those growls of doom which work so well on Greed are his, Tomi opting to focus solely on guitar duties this time through. So while it doesn't have the same initial impact as earlier works, and the band appears to shop at Wet Seal now, I'll still follow these guys, for while it may not always be spot on, you can be guaranteed that the ride will be an interesting one.

Amsvartner - Dreams
1999 Blackend Records

Original, innovative, refreshing, all words I could use to "review" Dreams, but instead, I'll just try to put into words the trouble I'm going to have pigeon-holing this outstanding release. Making a monumental jump from their previous E.P., this young (average age: 18) Swedish band manages to draw from so many different types of music it's not even funny. I guess I wouldn't call these songs "complicated", for they're quite easy to interpret; yet they are, for if you look closely at the amount of material in each track, you'll see what I mean. This leads me to believe that the songwriting is a step above average, and I say this because for as much as things jump around, things always sound linear and coherent. Going back to the monumental leap I mentioned, if you listen to The Trollish Mirror E.P. and then throw this on, you be hard pressed to believe that this was the same band. Similar in some respects to Eucharist (another incredible band), the emphasis isn't so much on blackness, or power, but on a dispaying of raw emotional feel, creating a full sound (read: epic). You have to realize too, when I say "emotional", I'm not talking about emo-core, or any kinda crap like that, rather on the overall gut-wrenching feelings one has when listening. Another aspect to the band that I must point out is that all of them have truly distinct playing styles. Alfred and Albin Johansson (drums and bass, respectively, and also twins, by the way) having almost a 70s rock feel to their playing, keeping things confined to what the songs require, yet taking a very liberal approach. Guitarists Nygaard and Holmgren wisely hold back the mega-distortion, having more of a "natural" tone. The elder Johansson's vocals may be the only area which may seem in the realm of the ordinary, yet when placed in contrast to the rest of what's going on, they definitely seem eclectic in comparison. The whole thing just smacks of a band not afraid to take chances, and amazingly, the whole thing works! What more can I say, except this is definitely one of the best releases I've heard this time around, and I highly recommend it to anyone into the more "organic" Swedish sound, as in Dawn, Eucharist, and just has to be heard to be understood.

Apollyon - Diaboli Aratia
1999 Full Moon Productions

Clocking in at only 19 minutes, this is a pretty short E.P.. Factor in that three of the five tracks are either pre/inter/post lude pieces, and you realize that there are only two real songs here. Needless to say, that puts major emphasis on those two tracks, for if they suck, then the band will seem a cheat, but, if the tracks present are godly (as in Vader's Sothis E.P.), then the band may be remembered forever. For me, Apollyon fall pretty much in the middle of those two extremes, which may be a cop-out on my part, but that's just the way I see it. Sure, When Coldness Wraps this Suffering Clay is a whopping 8 minutes in length, and does to it's credit contain some real interesting pieces, but is that enough to warrant it's existence? Maybe, for I can see that these boys are going for evil, and that's exactly what one feels here. The production is kept raw, yet not "cave-like" as many of the contemporaries feel is necessary (I don't agree). Vomit vox aplenty here, the icing on the cake I suppose. I could pass pass on much of the rest of the material here though, especially tracks 1, 3 and 5. Momento Mori is also pretty cool, leaving you, the reader, to decide whether or not to try out what Apollyon has to offer in

their 12 musical minutes. Keep the name in mind though, for if these guys are this creative for a full length, they may fill a gap that Arcturus and the like seem to have left open for now.

Apophis - Heliopolis
1998 Morbid Records

To be honest, I really wasn't sure what to expect with this one. With an incredibly cheesy cover, and starting the album off with an Egyptian influenced intro, things were looking grim. A very pleasant surprise then when the main riff from The Serpent God kicked in, for it seemed that Apophis had something special in store for us listeners. Heliopolis manages to mix quite a few different elements together, ending up with something that sounds like I say it, original. The recording's kinda weird, not bad, but sounds a little muddy, a little too dark. Doesn't detract too much though, as the "experimentalism" more than makes up for it. Real use of melody here, but not something from the book of In Flames or Arch Enemy. Vocals are definitely on the gruff side, but offset the guitar-work well, and keep the album away from being mistaken for a Swedish export. Technically adept, these guys can also craft an effective song, so that whether a zillion notes are flying around, or a riff is accentuated, a groove is kept, capturing instead of alienating. So bypass the cover and imagery and listen to the multi-faceted Heliopolis, for each time it spins, you'll be sure to hear something new.

Black Funeral - Moon of Characith
1999 Full Moon Productions

A series of sonic experiments conducted during the midnight hours, Moon of Characith can best be described as an ambient beckoning to the dark side. The basis for many of these tracks are dreamy looped samples, most noticeable ones being of an organic synth quality. "Vocal" work ranges from whispering voices to a subdued siren song of sorts, all substantially creepy. This could almost fit into late night NPR programming, if the overall feel wasn't as dark as it is. The band, comprised of two individuals, obviously school themselves in this genre, reminding me of some earlier works by Brian Eno and Dome. Not something I'd throw in at any given point in the day, Moon of Characith is never-the-less perfect for what it is intended, solitary lightless listening, or "as an opening gateway toward the reverse side..."

Blind Guardian - Nightfall in Middle Earth
1999 Century Media Records

Man, epic is just the most appropriate word I can think of here, Blind Guardian composing one hellacious monster of a metal concept album. Based on Tolkien's The Silmarillion, Nightfall is over an hour in length, 22 tracks, 11 of which are intros, and just so damn German in execution, it may rival or even surpass the "classics" such as Helloween's finest hours. Seems like power metal is the drug of choice these days, and if anyone deserves to reap some of the rewards from it's newfound commercialism, it's these guys. The sound ranges from folk to speed, but there are some serious constants throughout, most notably being the godly vocal work by Hansi Kursch. One of those who rarely notices this aspect of an album, I'm doubly impressed by the fact that on this opus, Kursch is the absolute focus for me, his performance dripping with emotion. Nightfall also has the distinction of being one of the first German Power Metal albums in the last 10 years to make my heavy rotation list, seldom leaving my disc changer. Musically, a sonic interpretation of a renaissance fair, an album that demands you raise a mug of ale and sing along. Obviously a labor of love, the band spent almost two years preparing this with producer Fleming Rasmussen. Well worth it to my ears, for the production really captures the band's obvious ability to compose and perform this particular brand of metal. Highly recommended

Bongzilla - Stash
1999 Relapse Records

Still unable to say the name without breaking into a fit of laughter (not unlike me on certain green paths), imagine my surprise to find myself actually craving the mighty Bongzilla! Unable to abate my hunger for this slab of Sabbathian riffage, one could say my habits have taken on a gluttonous bend. How to describe the Bongzilla experience? Well, it will be different for everyone. Some may feel joy, some may feel a touch paranoid, but all will succumb to the wrath of Bongzilla! As for me, anything which touches on what Sleep has accomplished in the last 7 years deserves my attention, and while the vocals may harsh the throat more than your average dose, the conviction with which this is performed leaves me no choice but to relish it's existence. Master knob turner Billy Anderson must also be thanked, for he has kept the purity which is the Bongzilla sound there, increasing the potency while filtering the unwanted. Excellent sludge rock, baked to perfection, but, I also have this sneaky suspicion that these guys might smoke pot. If that's the case, then I will burn this disc, because drugs are bad! Bad, I say! And also, well... because... Shit, I lost my train of thought.

Borknagar - The Archaic Course
1999 Century Media Records

Majestic, that would be the only way to describe Borknagar's third release. Built upon the experience of their first two albums, The Archaic Course is a whirlwind tour through the minds of some very talented individuals. Plagued by interminable line-up changes, founder Oystein Brun has assembled yet another stellar cast of Scandinavia's finest to perform their particular brand of symphonic metal. "New" vocalist Simen comes over from Arcturus, which was also home to previous Borknagar throat Garm, who's now back in his main unit, Ulver. Yeah, it's a bit of a soap opera (I guess these guys are from the nomadic tribes...) but even if it's only for this release, the B'nagar crew reign supreme. Just rife with classical and orchestral overtones, The Archaic Course is a joy to hear. A relatively short album (really about 32 minutes of song), it's over pretty quick, but not before you're just floored by what's encoded on the disc. Built around a "standard" black metal riff base and steady double-bass, TAC is fleshed out by swirling keyboard layers (I hear a lot of old Yes in there) and Simen's incredible clean vocals. Able to express a wide range of feeling through his voicings, he really adds an emotional facet to the music, and to me is now an integral part of the band's sound. The requisite growls are still here, but are used only when appropriate. For an album such as this, that's definitely not every track. More accessible than a lot that's out there, bolstered by another excellent Woodhouse production job. The psychedelic influences are best heard on Winter Millennium, where the keyboards are so familiar, yet the overall sound is something original to me. Closes with an ambient "rain in the woods" track. The perfect background for a lazy Sunday? You be the judge. A success on all fronts, this has become a highly recognized album, and for good reason.

Carnal Forge - Who's Gonna Burn
1999 WAR Music

Kicking off the new year with 10 killer tracks, Carnal Forge blaze a trail of hate which forces everyone to move aside or be charred to a crisp. Fueled by a strong feeling of hate, Who's Gonna Burn follows Defleshed's path of intensity, then completely obliterates it by forcing the strained vocals of Jonas Kjellgren into your home. Seriously, three seconds, then you're in the middle of a sonic shitstorm. Things may let up a "tad" on closer Confuzzed, but the aural hell found there more than accounts for any decrease in speed. It's easy to approach burnout, both as a performer and a listener in this genre, but Carnal Forge know when to say when, coming in for the kill and leaving you gutted on the floor before you can call for help. I guess this'll be lumped into the whole NWOSDM sub-genre, but man, this really deserves it's own place on the shelf, for Who's Gonna Burn is sure to be influencing bands for years to come. One to

get, that's for damn sure.

Crematory - Act Seven
1999 Nuclear Blast Records

Before I go ahead and just rip this thing to shreds, I have to state a couple of things. One, I really, really, don't like this particular brand of pretention, finding it a tad morose, and a trifle boring. Two, Crematory have been doing this sort of thing for a long time now (album seven, of course), and are probably masters of this by now. Lost on me though, as I try to get into, and the opening track does kick things into gear a bit, but it all sounds kinda rehashed from things once done better. The guitar sound being decent, but lost underneath the numerous goth keyboard layers, and those dichotomous death/I'm so sad I could die vocals. I guess if you're a big Moonspell, Evereve or any one of those other "to die for" bands, then this'll be worth your while. Me? I'm ready to yank it throw on some Carnal Forge to clear the atmosphere. Thy cheesy cover doth not help either, I am afraid to say.

Criminal - Dead Soul
1997 BMG Records

Originally released in 1997, Dead Soul is finally coming to the North American shores thanks to distribution by Metal Blade. Discovering that the band hailed from Santiago, Chile, I immediately made the connection with a band which existed in that area about 10 years ago, Pentagram. Well, call me your psychic friend, because guitarist/vocalist Anton Reisenegger is none other than the driving force behind that seminal death metal band. Part of what made Pentagram so killer was their guitar sound, and some of that is indeed carried over into Criminal. Actually the band's second release, Dead Soul is still very much a metal album, although they hold more in common with the Bay Area sound (Machine Head, Skinlab) than any past affiliations. With production courtesy of Vincent Wojno, you can be assured that this is a full frontal attack on the senses, with no note left untouched. The sound kinda makes me think of a beefy Helmet at times, but there's absolutely no mistaking the riffs penned by Senor Reisenegger, which are the high points of the album for me. I guess you've got a pretty clear idea of the guitar sound now, so overlay some truly raspy vocalizations which are powerful yet enunciated, set over a solid if not a tad unoriginal rhythm base and the basic mold is set. The songwriting really is dichotomous, which works well at times, but becomes a little too derivative of the aforementioned influences (or are they an influencee?). Add this to the fact that Wojno felt that each track should be mixed differently (hence a completely different sound on each song) and you've got an interesting album at hand. Worth it just to hear some of those awesome riffs taken to the nineties. Look for a new album from these guys soon.

The Crown - Hell is Here
1998 Metal Blade Records

Opening off with what's basically the opening riff from Sodomy and Lust, I almost didn't even give The Crown a chance, which would have been somewhat of a loss for me. Surviving past the first 3 minutes of blastbeats, Hell is Here really begins to open up into an eclectic hybrid of pre-discovered songs. Existing as a frankenstein of sorts, fusing metal, classical, and country (!) into what amounts to a real punk album, this album sounds almost as if it was recorded 10 years ago, deemed to crazy to release, and then shelved until this year. Akin to a Amtrak driver all coked up, songs fly off on tangential bursts of speed, suddenly slicing the tempo and introducing a new melody. Really weird, but more often than not, it works, although when it doesn't work... I definitely prefer the writing style of guitarist Marko Tervonen, who I'm assuming is the catalyst behind this bastardization of styles, over bassist Magnus, who appears to carry the punk approach. Also spot him sportin' a nice ol' Rickenbacker (Lemme 5, anyone?), so I have a pretty good guess as to his major influence. Also appreciate the band more when they dish out the madness at less than 6000 RPMs, but as Janne Saarenpaa is credited with playing

"real drums" on the album, I guess they're pretty committed to the whole hyper-punk speed thing. Some real positives include that no two tracks sound similar, so if one song doesn't catch your fancy (or one RIFF, for that matter), chances are it'll be gone before you can say Unquestionable Presence. Production-wise, again, a real punky feel, not as heavy as it could be, and the drum sound is a bit thin, making the ultra fast snare rolls sound like a paper drum being attacked. Overall, a pretty interesting album which doesn't allow itself to be pigeon-holed, appearing quite familiar yet managing to attain a certain degree of originality, and for this, I recommend it.

Crucible - Unshattered
1998 Unshattered Records

If ever a disc warranted, no demanded, repeat listens to fully comprehend it's scope, this is the one. Creating some of the most realized, yet off the wall riffs, Derek Haderman leads his crew though almost a full hour of the heaviest music I've heard emanate from the island. So why the need for repeat listens? Well, while the opening tracks grab you by the throat, many of the middle tracks contain more than is immediately apparent, things better discovered under the influence of headphones, I might add. For me, one of the band's true strengths lies in the interplay between Haderman and Kili Kaohu (who performs drum tracks on roughly one third of the album). Check out the title track, Overcoming or the At the Gates inspired Citizens to see what I'm talking about. Vocally, I'd say that Crucible leans more towards a hardcore approach, in that Mike Ching's delivery sticks to the forceful, rather than straying to the experimental (no pagan elves singing in the background on this one...). Add it all up and you get Hawaii's finest delivering their first studio effort to mass appeal. Expect great things from these guys, as tour experience has given them more solidity and greater breadth. One of the better independent releases I've heard or seen in some time.

Diabolical Masquerade - Nightwork
1998 Avantgarde Music

Blackheim does it again. Not content to rule the metal universe with one band (Katatonia), here he enlists the virtuosic skills of producer cum drummer Dan Swano, to make one awesome album. Truly gothic in it's packaging (both musically and physically), Nightwork effectively blends the bleakness of the past DM releases with Swano's sense of harmony and craftsmanship. While this is Blackheim's baby, and Swano is only credited for production and percussion, it's obvious to see where he has influenced this recording, I mean opener Rider on the Boney has so many Swanoisms it's not funny. By no means is this a complaint, for while both songwriters on their own are capable of masterpieces, it's the interplay between these two that makes this such a killer disc. Using guitar and keyboard layering to build atmosphere, Nightwork could be seen as a descent into hell, or lunacy, depending on your personal inclinations. Things really come to a head on The Eerie Obzidian Circuz, which sounds kinda like Mr. Bungle all hopped up on crack. The first Diabolical Masquerade album which really demands attention, not intended to demean the other releases, but just because of the quality job here. Not much more I can say except that if you miss old Edge of Sanity, or are in any way a Swano or Blackheim fan, get this, I guarantee you won't be disappointed.

Dimmu Borgir - Spiritual Black Dimensions
1999 Nuclear Blast Records

As with Emperor's latest opus, expectations ran pretty damn high for this one. Could they continue what they began on Enthroned, or were they just a flash in the pan? Have their egos taken over, have side projects and an amost revolving door policy towards band members taken away from the magic? Well, I can't answer all of these questions, but let's just say that no new ground has been broken here, but man, have they made what they already had really spectacular. While sounding almost like the second part to their previous album, Spiritual is a little crisper, and it seems to

be a lot faster. The only real experimentation I can hear is in the vocals, which of course feature I.C.S. Vortex of Borknagar/Arcturus fame. I also hear a distant nod towards Vortex's old work in the keyboard work (and I guess that he also played bass for them during their tour), which is interesting, making me wonder if he brings musical ideas as well as his amazing voice to these recordings. Shagrath's decision to drop guitar duties to concentrate on vocals doesn't seem to have too much of an effect here to me, but new guitar recruit Astennu (Covenant) is a fretboard maniac, helping Silenoz rip out some black metal riffs of death, if you get my meaning. A worthy follow up to a great album, full of emotion, darkness and black castles. Now, if they only keep a steady line-up to progress further... Note: It seems as though the media isn't picking this up as heavily as other releases (fickle), which surprises me, as I actually want to hear this album from time to time, opposite of how I feel about some of the other big "hits" that have passed through my player this time around.

Dying Fetus - Killing on Adrenaline
1998 Morbid Records

This release is a little older than most of the others reviewed here, but it's just so killer I had to stick it in here! Hyped as one of the main New Wave of American Death Metal bands, Dying Fetus play a souped up brand a death similar in style to a lot of those Florida bands that were and are so prevalent. Dying Fetus may write some pretty technical stuff, complete with flashy guitar licks, good use of bass, and lightning speed percussion (yeah, I know, sounds familiar!) but there's something that pushes them to the forefront of the listening stack. It may be the production, which chooses to emphasize the highs, including a nice 'pop' snare attack, the fluidity of the guitar lines, which is damn impressive, proof to me that these guys spend a lot of time in the practice room. There's an air of the band not taking themselves too seriously, most evidenced by the lyrics, most of which encompass some pretty juvenile yet really angry reading material. Not really a problem though, as the vocal styles only range from the sickly grunts to a few interspersed intelligible lines. Sticking to the music, Dying Fetus deliver their magic poison at Mach 3, decimating anything and everything in it's path, fueled by the limbs of Kevin Talley, who is simply put, freakin' amazing. Letting the double bass fly with ease is old hat these days, so Talley treats us to some excellent use of ride/hi hat patterns, rapidly switching from the bass drum to close out an accent on the hats, I guess he's the Dennis Chambers of Death Metal! An incredible album that deserves some serious attention, hopefully these guys won't move to Montana and start a cult before the next album can come out.

Emperor - Equilibrium IX
1999 Century Media Records

This record has got to be released to some of this biggest hype ever, and to judge from the reviews so far, Emperor have succeeded once more in dominating the world of black metal. Well, after much deliberation, I have to agree, for while nothing new has been thrown forth, the mighty Emperor just can't seem to produce anything less than epic. This is also a difficult review in that there's just not much one can say about Emperor, besides the fact that they are master songsmiths, dedicated to the craft of the blackest order. What's improved here? Well, the production DOES seem to have been adjusted, allowing more separation between the instruments, most notably the drums and keyboards. There's still some blurring of lines during the speedier sections, but it seems almost impossible to avoid that in this genre. There's also quite the buzz about the lack of emphasis on keyboards here, supposedly the band going for a more "organic" death metal approach, placing the guitar forward. I have to disagree, for while the riffs reign supreme on many tracks, the album would be flat without the orchestrated layers placed above. Ihsahn's vocals remain similar to previous ventures, with maybe a tad more experimentation on The Source of Icon E, which is a definite nod to King Diamond. What did I expect? Well, I wanted to see Emperor push it to the next level, as they had on Anthems... That didn't happen, but they did manage to make another killer record of the same caliber. That may not say a lot

for Emperor, but is the apex of existence for every other band out there. Definitely recommended for purchase.

Enthroned - The Apocalypse Manifesto
1999 Blackend Records

Major improvement here, and a good thing for me, as I seriously did not get into their previous offerings. Don't know if it was due to a session drummer stepping in on Skullthroned, but that album seemed as though it was set on autopilot and let loose to fly wildly in the night. Greater control, better song structure, and some dynamics lead me to like this album more, but the whole thing is still a bit too raw for me. Keeping things real by recording the album in the treble hemisphere, Enthroned play some unholy black metal, quality stuff for the fanatic, but a bit too frenetic for me after 30 minutes. I prefer things a bit less tinny, something with some meat in it, making this my worst nightmare in terms of production, as the mix emphasizes the higher register. Less apparent during the slower sections, but since a great deal of the album is blastbeat central, a heaping dose of cymbals and snare dominates the forefront. So, while it's leaps and bounds above their previous work, still not to my tastes.

Gamma Ray - Power Plant
1999 Noise Records

Kind of a sad letter accompanied this release, basically amounting to an urgent plea to try and convince everyone that Gamma Ray is not part of the whole "retro-thrash" movement. Well, to most of us, there's no need, for both Gamma Ray and Noise records are pretty much synonymous with German speed metal, whether it be from 1987 or 1999. Of course, this may or may not be a good thing, for I must admit, I never really got into the whole Maiden-extension thing (Helloween, as a prime example, and yes, Gamma Ray), opting for things with a heavier feel throughout. I definitely missed something though, for while I STILL don't dig a lot of the newer stuff coming out, getting a lot of this stuff in the mail made me break out the old tapes and vinyl to give it another chance. The verdict? I missed out on some kick ass stuff at the time, but as evidenced, most of it ages pretty well, so whether you're spinning The Keeper of the Seven Keys or Power Plant, majestic, melodic metal is the name of the game, something at which Kai Hansen excelled at writing for both bands. Almost coming full circle, Hansen is back on vocals (see the pre-Keeper Helloween releases), filling the shoes of the departed Ralf Scheepers. Some really good stuff within, but man do I hear riffs from the memory banks flying all around. Most blend well with the rest of the song structure, but more than a few make me wonder "from what particular some did that originate", a pet peeve of mine. More than a few passing references to both Priest and Maiden, but as they are pretty much the originators of this branch of tree, it's to be expected. As with the Blind Guardian, it took a few spins to get this into my system, but once in there, I was definitely hooked. Only problem I have here is that I can only handle about half of this in one sitting, the most memorable tracks being one through four... But hey, that's still a half an hour's worth of material, about what most death metal bands are putting out now! Brought into the nineties by the crystal production, Power Plant still suffers from those horrible (in my opinion) eighties cover art blues that plagued so many albums throughout history. This Powerslave knockoff by IM alumnus Derek Riggs is just bad, which would have just reinforced my bias against this sort of product had I been choosing what to get in the shop. Hopefully this won't stop the rest of the world, as Gamma Ray have been around for quite some time (at least main man Kai), perfecting their brand of metal for the masses. Pretty much a self-produced effort, it's cool to read the liner notes, which have a personal feel throughout. Good stuff from one of the metal elders...

Grip Inc. - Solidify
1999 Metal Blade Records

Continuing the growth exhibited on Nemesis, Grip Inc produce another excellent album, this time demanding that they be seen as their own band.

I'll agree here, as I'd almost say that Slayer sounds more like Grip Inc now than G.I. ever sounded like Slayer. Now before I get shot for dissin' the mighty Slayer, just relax, Reign in Blood changed my life at 16 when it came out, just like evvveryone else, it's just time to let Lombardo lose the chains of that era, and for us to view Grip Inc as a separate entity, which in fact it always was. The layout of the album in terms of track to track dynamics is pretty similar to the previous album, mixing up tempos and varying the mood enough to keep attention past spin two. Again, it's the production that makes this album just so dang heavy, one of the thickest guitar sounds since the famed "Sunlight" days of yore. New bass addition Stuart Carruthers really fills out the sound, and according to the band, really allowed the music to grow. Sorychta is a guitar god, best witnessed on his just hallowing riffage during the mid-section of Lock-down, a prime example of beauty though darkness. The expanse of tonality and rhythm also allows Lombardo greater freedom for experimentation, which gives rise to some really freaky, yet powerful drumming. As I stated before, he definitely has his own style, whether it be the way he approaches his beats, or the timing of his fills, it's always Lombardoized. Another improvement is in the vocal department. On this release, Chambers (who was schooled more in the punk realm) using a more varied approach to his vocal patterns, performing good clean vocals on more than one occasion (Human comes to mind...). Yet again, Grip Inc prove their worth as a quality metal hybrid, fusing power and precision with dynamic and melody. One of the first quality records to emerge in 1999. In case you were curious, the title refers to the band combining their environmental and musical backgrounds to "Solidify" the G.Inc sound.

GWAR - We Kill Everything
1999 Metal Blade Records

Well, here they are again. GWAR, scumdogs of the universe, or something like that. More a theatrical troupe than a full-fledged band, GWAR rely heavily on costuming, posturing and attitude rather than true skill to deliver a bunch of half rate punk and metal rip-offs. Sure, it's funny in a juvenile sort of way, but I guess I get tired of the whole thing pretty fast. Music's OK, artwork better, the whole package? I'll pass, thank you very much. Musicalis Simplisticus, perfect for every junior high kid that wants to piss off their parents.

Hypocrisy - Destroys Wacken Live
1999 Nuclear Blast Records

Well, we all know the story now, how Hypocrisy was all set to call it quits, but how one show at the Milwaukee Metalfest last year saved us all. Even though the guy's got one of the hottest studios in the biz now, Tagtgren and crew deliver us not one, but two new Hypocrisy platters this year, the first being this live opus. Spanning all five studio albums, Destroys Wacken delivers excellent sound and more than adequate performances of what could easily be termed Hypocrisy's Greatest Hits. As to be expected, the sound is awesome, filled out by second "live" guitarist Mattias Kamijo, who allows Tagtgren's solos to ring true without losing that rhythm guitar foundation which is crucial here. Why deem the performances only "more than adequate?" Well, it's all there, almost exactly as on disc, yet it may seem just a tad uninspired to me. I also keep hearing the accusations of "if they didn't practice enough", which springs to mind as I try to rate the drumwork. Szoke can play, but definitely comes across stronger in the studio, evidenced by his propensity to speed things up a tad while dropping off half of the killer fills from the record. So, while it's truly cool to hear the new material live, it's the older stuff that benefits the most from this '99 update. Left to Rot and Pleasure of Molestation coming to mind most, and prove to me again that I like Peter's multi-dimensional vocals much more. Of course, finishing up with a double shot of Killing Art (my fave from Abducted) and The Final Chapter doesn't hurt this much either! As an added bonus, we're given 4 "extra" tracks, which, based on the way Hypocrisy albums vary, could have all been on The Final Chapter. Apparent on each one is the signature guitar

sound of the last album, yet 3 of the 4 tracks highlight Peter's clean vocal stylings. Time Warp is pretty speedy and technical, vocal delivery being in a more shout style, while Til the End does indeed pick up right where The Final Chapter left off. Requisite "punk" tune Fuck U is OK, lyrics a bit less than I'm come to expect, I guess. No matter though, as album closer Beginning of the End is a scorcher, wrapping things up with class. I do hear a few ideas repeated on these 4, which does happen sometimes with Hypocrisy material, but I mean, the guy practically writes all the stuff himself. New album "Cloned" should fix all that, as bandmates Szoke and Hedlund have evidently picked up a larger portion of the writing responsibility. We can now only wait.

Impaler - It Won't Die
1999 Root-O-Evil Records

Having existed in one form or another for close to 15 years, Bill Lindsey's Impaler is shock rock at it's finest. Wrapped in an image that harkens back to the days of UHF (horror movie central), It Won't Die rocks along through it's ten tracks, giving us little stories of Witches, Zombies and other little beasties. High points would definitely be the title track, Grave Robbers from Outer Space, and Santo vs. the World, which revels in it's Dead Kennedy's like simplicity. One trade off that usually occurs when emphasis is placed on the image is that the music performances tend to suffer, and here is no exception. Guitar withstanding, there's nothing special going on here, most tracks chugging along with a certain garage recording feel to them. While New guitarist Brad may not be a master of modes, I dig his overall tone and feel. In a time-less planet, this would be the epitome of shlocky punk-metal, but today, it seems a tad dated. Still heaps o' fun though, and you gotta hand it to Lindsey for keeping his fight against the norms going for as long as he has. It also sounds like these guys are having a good time, which has to count for something.

In Aeternum - Forever Blasphemy
1999 Necropolis Records

Assembled to destroy anything that resides within the light, David Larsson and his horde pack quite a wallop here indeed. Comparisons to the whole lineage of Sweden are inevitable, as I hear traces of Naglfar, themselves indebted to Dissection, yet musically, there's so much here I hesitate to categorize. In scrutinizing the performances, what really stands out are the guitar lines, threatened at times by Larsson's vocal delivery, which threatens to overpower at times. I guess it's here that the Naglfar comparisons come in, for the vocals remind me of Jens Ryden's performance on Diabolical, capturing the same emotional force that was also presented there. Well produced, but a little lacking in the mix. The drums tend to be a tad in the background, dimishing the unrelenting attack a tad, but this by no means compromises the overall picture. It's interesting to see the two paths taken from the whole Gothenburg, or what's now the NWOSDM sound, where bands like In Flames have kept the melody, yet compromised the assault, and In Aeternum and others accentuating the speed and power while keeping the core sound.

Krabathor - Orthodox
1998 Morbid Records

Pretty well known in the European Death Metal scene, Krabathor dish out a strain of metal, that, as reports go, becomes more powerful with every release. This is being my introductory record from this Czech band, I won't be able to comment on the growth since the last disc, but I can safely say that what we have right here is a serious slice of death, all wrapped up and ready to maim. Smashing out of the gates with the title track, Orthodox cruises along pretty steadily, changing the tempo at appropriate time as to not demolish the listener. Songwriting is courtesy of the axemen, with Chistopher's tracks being a tad more technical and atmospheric, Bruno's relying more on a vicious power attack. Vocal duties are split between the two, but I'll be damned if I can find a difference between them, both guys spewing forth the same brand of grinding hate.

Lyrics deal with political issues, or topics deemed “dangerous” by the band, but in reading them, there may be some things lost in the translation, only evidenced by having the sheet in front of me, since I would never be able to tell based on what I hear. The band is also down to a three piece here, and opted to record with only one guitar, so that solos are played over bass only, giving more of a realistic live feel. Production is good, with enough effects on the bass so that the sound isn’t “empty” during these times. Another aspect I like is that the songs don’t all blend into one big mess, Krabathor branching out more towards the end of the disc, using keyboards appropriately at given times. Not sure what else to say except this is quality straight ahead death metal, done by guys who’ve been around for almost 15 years.

Le'Rue Delashay - The Court Composer
1999 Root-O-Evil Records

Here’s one for all you horror movie freaks out there. Dig the soundtrack from Dawn of the Dead, The Gates of Hell, any Argento movie? Well, take that band (Goblin, among others) and strip off the percussion, then you’re pretty close to what lies here. They compare this to the orchestrated pieces of black metal albums, and I guess I hear that, but it’s more like meloncholy, eerie piano and synth music to me. Cool to have something like this to throw on when you don’t feel like gettin’ the old adrenaline going. Reminds me of the old Hammer movies that used to come on Saturday afternoons. Love the guy’s expression on the cover as well, kinda like a psychotic Terry Bozzio.

Lungbrush - Old School New School
1999 Pavement Records

I don’t know why, maybe it’s because I had just gone through about 60 albums that all had the same sound, but Lungbrush just totally hit me with a left hook straight outta New Jack City. Pretty much typical urban assault dosage paradigm, but man that just crunchin’ guitar tone laid over Salinas’s new school drum sound just grinds it through. And It just keeps on gettin’ better and better. I can imagine that these guys put out a vicious vibe live, cuz I’m practically outta my chair shadow boxing when this thing starts to groove, and that’s often. The title must refer to the old school ideas melding with the new school delivery and sound, for that’s the best description I can give ya. Vocals remind one of good ol’ N.Y.C., complete with quasi-positive lyrics for a negative world. Some interesting breakdowns in a few tracks lend to what is original on this album. This is a sound I relate to that broad spectrum from Biohazard to Leeway, or are those just all the N.Y.C. metal core bands? In any regard, one of the better releases I’ve heard lately in this untapped (for me) genre. If feel like stepping out of your killing shoes for a while and putting some mosh back in your life (before it was a taboo word of course!) then let Lungbrush scrape you clean. The moniker does evoke nice imagery I must say...

Manowar - Hell on Stage Live
1999 Metal Blade Records

The self-proclaimed “kings of metal” do it again, releasing another live album to please their hungry horde of fans. One of the hardest working bands in the biz, Manowar are constantly touring the world, performing over 2 hours shows almost nightly at probably the loudest volumes in the world (they do hold a Guinness World Record for this). Evidently, Manowar shows are true extravaganzas, rife with the unexpected, and several things which have become staples of every show. Never seen Manowar live? Either have I, but if this disc is an inkling of what occurs, then we’ve both missed an epic power metal presentation. Mixed way up front, and damn loud, Manowar rip through almost all of their classic tracks over 2 CDs, leaving no one standing. I have to hand it to these guys, as they evidently live the life they so proclaim, playing with more gusto than most bands half their age. Live shows always sport lots of solos, and here’s no exception, DeMaio performing not one, but two of his infamous bass solos here for your low frequency enjoyment. After a

debut some time ago, Scott Columbus is back in the drum department, pummeling out some true power. Of course, the ultimate test of a live album is making you feel like you’re there, screaming with the crowd at the end of every track, and Hell on Stage does this pretty well. Crank it, and convince your neighbors that you’ve got the Manowar boys over for dinner.

Marduk - Panzer Division Marduk
1999 Osmose Records

Whoa! Looking for a half hour of the most blasphemous, chaotic warfare noise ever made? This may be just what you’re looking for, Marduk just decimating speakers left and right with one solid album’s full of hate, aggression, evil. The cover depicts a tank ready to roll over anything in its way, fairly indicative of what’s contained within, I would say! These also have to be some of the least metaphorical titles in existence as well, with tracks like Christraping Black Metal and Fistfucking God’s Planet making no bones about what these boys are up to. The whole thing is just one big adrenaline rush, and evidently one of producer Peter Tagtgren’s favorite things that he has recorded. The last thing I’ll say will be something to the weak, weed yourself out, for you’re no match for the fury contained in P.D.M., shit, I don’t even know if I am, having noticed certain facial tics which developed after numerous listens. Do not listen with a heart condition or under the effects of heavy machinery.

Mercyful Fate - 9
1999 Metal Blade Records

What’s amazing is not so much the fact that these guys reformed after a 9 year absence, nor the fact that they have put out 7 of their 9 releases since 1993, but that the band continues to surpass their previous efforts with this release. While last year’s Dead Again was competent, I much prefer the material that exists on 9. Mike Wead has really engrained himself as part of the M.F. sound, and works to update Shermann’s classic eighties riffs into something that could be deemed retro, but is so slick and sounds so good, it’s obvious from which decade it was born. I can’t believe how fast this stuff makes it out either, 9 being recorded about two months before it was released, a true testament to the prolific nature of this band, and probably also related to wanting to get this on the market before the summer festivals. For whatever the reason, expect nothing less than the best from these guys, this line-up being the strongest since the beginning. I can still pick out which tracks were penned by the King, and tend to prefer the more intricate Shermann material, but it’s all good, and after snagging the opening slot for Metallica this summer, the Fate just may become a household name again in the coming millennium.

Morgion - Solinari
1999 Relapse Records

Sadness, despair, brilliant packaging, all fused together to form a competently done, albeit somewhat dreary, release. Upon first listen, Solinari didn’t do all that much for me, but I recognized that these guys belong to the Paradise Lost and My Dying Bride camp, groups which I pull out only in certain moods. Well, it made it’s way back into the player a couple more times, and I actually began to appreciate the forced pace (the word plodding comes to mind) of the album. For me, this album was perfect one rainy Sunday night, a time usually reserved for gearing down and preparing for the mental anguish which accompanies each Monday morning. As is the curse with Gothic Metal, themes do tend to seem a bit pompous and skirt the line of pretentiousness, but Morgion appear to have studied the great albums of the past, and as I said, created an above average composition. As I also stated, the complete package is quite amazing, from the epic production to the striking artwork. A bit cryptic in the lyrical department, but from what I can discern, somewhat “dark sidish” in nature, you know, left hand path and all. I guess the only thing that may bother me is the similarity to another Orange County group, Mindrot. A lot of the album sounds a tad too similar to the slower sections of Dawning, but hey, since Evan Kilbourne left for Save Ferris and

Mindrot dissolved, someone has to fill that substantial musical gap! This album depresses the hell out of me, but since I believe that's the intention, it's a success. So, while a bit heavy-handed at times, and not the most original release, it has its strong points, and as a band, Morgion certainly know their craft.

Mystic Circle - Drachenblut
1998 Morbid Records

Man, this album pisses me off. It's not enough that these guys have to SOUND exactly like Dimmu Borgir, or any others of those ilk, but they decide that they should LOOK exactly like them as well. Although it would be kind of a cool movie, the Single White Female of the black metal world. Picture it: Dimmu Borgir are broke, their latest album only sold 25,000 copies, and they have to pay for all the fake blood they ingested. After putting out an ad to share their practice space, the guys from Mystic Circle show up. Everything's cool for a while, till riffs starts to mysteriously sound the same, sequenced effects are erased, all the corpse paint begins to end up in the M.C. locker, and one guy shaves his head (you can start to picture it, can't you?). The name Hecate Enthroned is put on the table and it finally comes to blows. Who will win? Do you care? All I know is that these guys are thoroughly content to slog through someone else's riff graveyard, which doesn't do all that much for me, especially if I'm given such strong visual cues as to their master plan. They should have called themselves Doppelganger. Only saving grace is that the drummer's name is Aargon, which means he's reeeally noble, or eats caramel candy while he types.

Napalm Death - Words from the Exit Wound
1999 Earache Records

Now, I must admit, I haven't been much of a Napalm fan since Scum, stopping in only to catch a few tracks each on the last few albums. They have their following, and I grant them that they have excellent skills and chops, but, like Fear Factory, it's just not something I can usually sit through til completion. So, this is the part in the review where I go "it was like a shotgun blast to the head at point blank range, I couldn't put it down, it was better than Cats, I'll never be the same again!" Er, not quite. Now, granted, this is the first N.D. platter that actually gets better as the album progresses, with the first couple being my least favorite (but still pretty killer). Exactly the opposite of the usual pattern! Of course, the Napalmisms are all here, with the Deathsters having one of the more notable guitar tones in the biz. The crunch is killer, fueled by a see-though Colin Richardson production job, which if anything, is maybe a tad too sterile. Barney's in good form again, after the in-and-out shuffle that happened a while back. In fact, the whole band sounds a little reinvigorated, offsetting any huge changes in song structure the boys could have done. Of course, there are a few things that Napalm do that I'm not too crazy about, for one being the powerful, yet blocky, drumming of Danny Herrera. Similar to Andy Whale (ex-Bolt Thrower), he's good at what he does, but it all sounds a tad forced, no smoothitude. They also have this tendency to break into a blast section when it's completely appropriate. Sounds good, but it's expected, and a tad drole at times. In a nutshell, if you're a Napalm fan, this one's at or above par with the past few achievements. Never heard o' these guys? Well, then this is the perfect place to get thrown into the fray.

Nevermore - Dreaming Neon Black
1999 Century Media Records

Not much of a departure here for Nevermore, even with Tim Calvert (ex-Forbidden) replacing the "Cannibal"ized Pat O'Brien on guitar duties. Somewhat of an average of the last two full-lengths, Dreaming Neon Black captures the mood of the S/T with the technicality of "Politics", yet falling a little flat in between the two. I'm not sure if Nevermore is shooting for a broader fan base, but with this, their most accessible release to date, they may have hit the mark. That's saying a lot actually, because the guitarwork here is as technical as it gets, matched by the off-

the-wall percussive permutations of Van Williams. Lyrically, more poetic infusions from Dane, this time breaking one storyline into individual songsC delivered in the usual style, yet harkening back more to the Sanctuary days than recent years. So with all the positives, I find it strange that while I really get into the album while listening, I take almost nothing away, which makes me wonder just how long it'll stay in rotation. I also may be a little harsher than I should, since I expect so much from this great band, and this album is definitely up to par, but I was hoping for them to jump it up a notch. Once again produced by Neil Kernan, which may be a con within a plus, as his overall production, while outstanding as compared to other groups, tends to make each Nevermore Release sound similar to others. Actually, the overall sound reminds me of the In Memory E.P., with less of an emotional attack.

Plan E - Songs for a Rainy Day
1999 Root O' Evil/Solardisk Records

Here's another review that I wrote and deleted somehow, which is a true pain in the ass. I know that I did review this one rainy Sunday night, and was quite impressed as to what this Finnish group was up to. Recorded in Tico-Tico studios (where fellow countrymen Sentenced produced their Amok LP), one interesting aspect to this album is that there are no guitar parts, rather, like Cop Shoot Cop, there is a "hard" and a "soft" bass guitar. This leads to a pretty interesting sound, one that works for me. The overall sound is definitely more "alternative" than metal, but as the title suggests, these are songs for certain times, and when I say alternative, I don't mean something you'll be hearing on a syndicated radio station anytime soon. Songs vary quite a bit from track to track, some sounding more experimental, some reminding me a bit of Joy Division for some reason. I really like what's going on here, even if things are a little more to the left of what I usually prefer.

Postmortem - Repulsion
1998 Morbid Records

This is a strange album, one that, for me, is pretty hard to classify. Kind of a mix of standard death, altermetal, and some of that streetcore stuff that's been spring' up. Hence the problem with having to try and describe some of these albums, for while it's not ORIGINAL (for nothing really is...), it's sounds a heck of a lot different than most of the stuff being pumped out. The album starts off a little rough, with more of the emphasis on crunchy mid-groove before starting to move off into new directions, which is exactly where I wished the band had concentrated more. There's sort of a slick image feel to the whole thing, yet the album touches on so many different sounds, it's hard to fault it too much. Vocals are kinda grindy, a little typical, but fit pretty well with the overall feel. I'm almost tempted to say that they sound close to a dirtier Pantera, but then nobody would listen to the album, which would be a shame, considering that there's some interesting stuff going on here. The rhythm section isn't very flashy, but fitting for a band who decide to cover Sin City I guess. Overall, not much to remember it by, but it fills that market of aggressive mid-paced stuff that seems to be a huge void nowadays...

Rotting Christ - Sleep of the Angels
1999 Century Media

Man, I HATED this first couple of times that I spun it, for it just sounded so pompous, so contrived. I may have been having a bad week or something, because over the last couple of weeks I've all but completely reversed my opinion. So different from their first works (regarded as essential by a legion and fodder by some), SotA relies heavily on keyboards and atmospheric layers to provide the backbone. Sakis's trademark vocals are in place, and the production that was found on A Dead Poem is retained, but no more should Rotting Christ be considered a black metal band, nor do I think that they would want to be. All grown up now, the band comes across as a not quite first rate goth-metal act, only stifled by the complete absence of dynamics in any of these tracks. Highlights would be the guitar sound, and the overall mood of the album, but it's a

cold, rational listen, not enticing or inciting in the least. Not quite a new direction from these Athenians, but it appears that a little more time (and possibly a name change) is required to achieve the goals that I assume the band has set for themselves. A fair to better effort, but not a masterpiece by any means, if anything, a little dull.

Roadsaw - Nationwide
1999 MIA Records

Don't want to cubbyhole MIA, but this is the second just kick ass hunk of rock they've thrown my way so far. Belonging to that Kyuss (the masters), Fu Manchu and old Monster Magnet school of sound, Roadsaw owe a hell of a lot to bands like Hawkwind and Skynyrd for inventing seventies guitar rock. The whole thing has got this redneck vibe to it, which I think is a tad ironic, seeing as the band is evidently from Boston. Doesn't really matter where they hang their hat, as they've got the southern-fried Sabbath thing together, which melds well with the whole atmosphere. Organ sections highlight some of the slower material, kinda dragging you through their vibe. Definitely not for those who only oscillate between Deicide and Cannibal, but if you want an album which'll keep you guessing from track to track, look no further than Roadsaw. I guess some of it tends to drone, irritating if you're not in the mood, but those moments are short-lived in comparison to the album as a whole. It does make you want to jump in the cab and drive cross country, that's for sure. This is one that would have benefitted by existing on vinyl.

Sacramentum - Thy Black Destiny
1999 Century Media Records

I really like the idea of Sacramentum, technical guitars, precise drum work, brutal vocals, etc... My only problem with the band is they still sound too much like Dissection to ignore. Why I'm more lenient with some bands (i.e. Soilwork) I don't know, maybe it's because Thy Black Destiny also sounds a hell of a lot like their previous release, The Coming of Chaos. Granted, the sound is a little tighter, and the material's faster, but the whole thing exudes this whole "been there, done that" vibe that seriously detracts. Some lead work does surpass the one dimensional Dissection clone status, but overall, not something I'll be grabbing first in the stack. Too bad, as there's some cool stuff here, but I just can't justify getting this over something else, unless you really want everything that comes from Sweden. Cool artwork notwithstanding, go for Defleshed as the NWoSDM pick.

Skinlab - Disembody: The New Flesh
1999 Century Media Records

No surprise that Rob Flynn vouches for this band, as Skinlab belong to the same area, both aural and corporeal (the bay area) as Machine Head. Other references can be thrown around, but for the most part, Skinlab holds a sound pretty much their own. A lot of credit can be given to skin-basher Hopkins, who interjects some groove and fury to move the band out of the 4/4 zone. Opening with So Far from the Truth (previewed on last year's Eyesore E.P.), a track which kicks the album off in high gear, yet drops the ball on the chance for a nice one-two punch with Know Your Enemies, a bouncy little ditty which sounds almost like it could be on the West Side Story soundtrack (albeit a tad heavy, I guess). The album quickly recovers, and I'm just left to wonder if I'm missing something as to that track's weakness. After hearing a multitude of bands provide this brand of musical assault (Neurosis, Tool, etc.), my acid test is that you must be able to provide a feeling of complete sonic envelopment, exactly where these boys just shine. The sound comes across as an industrial/metal hybrid, perfect for late night listening, and even more effective with headphones, thanks to production courtesy of Andy (Stuck Mojo, Machine Head) Sneap. Lots of intra and intersong dynamics as well, alleviating the need to swap discs mid-way through playback. Heavy as hell, and just rife with enough anger and darkness to scare away the sun, Disembody is another good release from a band who seem pretty confident in their sound, as even replacing both guitarists didn't seem to alter the overall product too much. Not exactly a huge leap forward, but an extension which will make previous fans very happy.

Sleep - Jerusalem
1999 London Records

Man, you will either love this or absolutely hate it, that's for damn sure, also making this review more a description of what lies here. Here's the idea: 3 ultra stoners, who became slightly infamous for their brilliant (in my opinion) Holy Mountain LP, decide to make a 52 minute song which could serve as the perfect soundtrack to your next black light affair. Really similar to Sabbath in sound, Sleep is first and foremost a guitar band, and in that arena they certainly excel. Again produced by Billy Anderson, prepare for a sonic drenching, for the tone is so heavy, so thick, it eats like a meal. Granted, this album only hits the player at certain times, but for those times, it's perfect. Besides, how many albums are there out there like this? Now available almost everywhere, get it and prepare to just veg out with your favorite substance for your journey to Jerusalem. Highly Recommended

Soil - Throttle Junkies
1999 MIA Records

Not wasting any time at all, Soil follow their El Chupacabra E.P. with a full-length platter of foot-stompin', head-bangin' hard rock. As, with the E.P., influences cited would be those of a southern nature, ranging from Skynyrd to Keenan-era Corrosion of Conformity. In dissecting things a bit, riffs definitely provide the initial hook, and the song structures keep interest over numerous spins, but it's definitely Ryan McCombs soulful vocal delivery which elevates this band into the stratosphere. Just straining with emotion, McCombs brings in a soulful bluesy influence, again resembling Layne Staley on some of the more emotional tracks (say what you will about AIC, the guy can sing!). Albini's less is more powerhouse production doesn't hurt either, but the band was just as strong on their E.P., proof enough to me that these guys can rock on their own merits. And rock they do, sounding a bit stiff at times, but not a real surprise as 4/5 of the band's background is death metal. This is a small critique though, as the power learned in the past just wrecks any negative points one may chalk up. Growth of the band is evident as well, as newer tracks such as Damning Eden are a little fuller than anything previously written, showcasing dynamics a bit more. In thinking about it, a lot of this material could easily be slipped into the mainstream (our loss, their gain), but time will only tell as to what fad will surface next (my bet's on polka-rock). Highly recommended by myself and most I know that have heard this.

Soilwork - Steel Bath Suicide
1998 Listenable Records

Critically acclaimed, I had been hearing about this release for quite some time before I finally got it for myself. Let me only say this, I've heard about 40 different albums in the last couple weeks, and this album is by far the best things I've heard in months! Steel Bath Suicide lived up to all my expectations, including the ones I built upon hearing the inevitable comparisons to personal favorites At the Gates, Arch Enemy, In Flames, etc... In fact, Soilwork do sound so much like those aforementioned bands it's obvious where the influences are, but with ATG gone forever, Arch Enemy exploring new directions, and In Flames plagued with personnel changes, Steel Bath Suicide is a godsend for those of us who never expected another melodic masterpiece from the land of frost. To describe the sounds (and compare), vocally, a perfect replica of Tompa's performance on Slaughter of the Soul. Musically, an amalgam of AE's Black Earth, The Jester Race, some old Priest, old Maiden, basically what defines the old "Gothenburg Sound". Not that you'll hear any complaints from me, for I just think this album kills! Along with Gardenian, Listenable Records has another excellent group on their roster, and with this being their first release, I see great things for Soilwork, for they are already masters at songwriting, creating melodic tracks of monster riffage interwoven with just the right amount of keyboards. Apparent, but not overpowering, the different layers intertwine to form the perfect combina-

tion of melody and punch. As I stated, one of the better albums to come out in quite some time. Trust me on this one, if the influential bands are in your collection, you can't pass this one up!

Spock's Beard - Day for Night
1999 Metal Blade Records

Never underestimate the power of promotion. Similar to how Phil Anselmo can get deals for bands, Dream Theater's Mike Portnoy made it his mission to mention this band in EVERY interview done with him. Lo and behold, here they are, signed sealed and delivered to the door. Guns for hire, the outside job list is impressive. Keyboardist Ryu Okamoto played with Clapton, drummer Nick D'Virgilio played on the last Genesis album, etc... So, they're awesome musicians, but do they write interesting songs that may pass for metal? Hell no. Singer Neal Morse's vocals are way in the pop zone, and honestly, I don't think these guys would consider themselves metal in any shape or form. I do hear a lot of old progressive rock in there, from Gabriel-era Genesis to Yes (sounds JUST like Chris Squire on bass at times), Kansas, etc., making it interesting, but still kinda flat. So, while I'm not too excited, for what they do, they at least do it well. And hey, maybe a peppy progressive rock album was just what you were looking for! I envision happy college students grooving to this in their dorm rooms sipping Sprite and planning a sit-in. No thanks, been there, but of course I had Clandestine on.

Tellurium - LV426
1999 Root-O-Evil Records

First things I noticed about this disc were the cover art, and the fact that this mini-CD was named for the planet in Alien(s). Pretty cool stuff within, as Tellurium deliver a mechanized metal dance machine of sorts, sounding at times like a beefy KMFDM. I guess you could pull in references to Skrew, Monster Voodoo Machine and Malhavoc as well, for LV426 nods towards all those groups, utilizing a truly pummeling rhythm track (electronic, of course), as the foundation for some meaty riffs. Samples galore, and grindy vocals round out the overall vibe, which is armoured dance hall warfare, perfect for a dark, dismal Saturday night. FYI - Tellurium is a transition element usually found with gold and silver. Just thought you'd like to know.

Turmoil - The Process Of
1999 Century Media

Powerful, capable, and extremely pissed off, Turmoil continue down the path of enlightenment with another quality release. Advancing the sound and ideas put forth on their From Bleeding Hands opus, this group of Pennsylvanians come through with 12 tracks of socially aware music. Probably termed crossover, or metal-core, I'd throw Turmoil on the hardcore side of the fence based on ethics, song structure AND delivery. Yeah, the guitars are chunky, providing a "metal" feel, but c'mon, this is hardcore, well-produced, thicker than 10 years ago, but still hardcore. Quite a few names thrown around with these guys (Snapcase, Hatebreed), and I'd say that's fairly appropriate, as this stuff all gets my blood boiling at around the same temperature. So while one can debate as to which realm the musical attributes may lie, vocally, there's just no argument, Jon Gula regurgitating a lifetime of anguish in every line of prose in true NYHC fashion. You can just feel this guy's pain, displayed over a solid battery of noise which manages to demolish without overpowering or losing a sense of groove. Most tracks stay near the midpace, yet the album doesn't mind slowing things down on Impending Doom Theory, which skirts the sphere of consciousness inhabited by bands like Neurosis. And speaking of which, I do catch a few samples here and there, but nothing like the aforementioned A/V beast, and absolutely no tribal drumming, which sends me towards the stop button in a true Pavlovian response. I also really like the guitar dynamics which are reminiscent of early Sonic Youth during a few numbers. Experimentalism such as that knocks a record's grade up a notch or two for me... Nice and angry, perfect for those mornings where you hate the world and yourself to boot.

Usurper - Skeletal Season
1999 Necropolis Records

More than a few spins into this disc, and I'm still not sure what to make of it. Kicking off with a two minute foray into blastbeat heaven, I quickly surmised that I was in for 8 tracks of pain, but lo and behold, Usurper pull a fast one and settle into a severe chug-a-thon. Basically sounding as if it was recorded in a cave circa 1984, Skeletal Season definitely pays homage to the founding fathers of black metal, most notably Celtic Frost. What's cool is that it's not a carbon copy, yet rather an extension of what that band accomplished back then. Eschewing the fancy-pants production techniques that most black metal bands are shooting for now, these guys form a sound roughly equivalent to an uneven ball of wax warbling out of control through the fourth dimension (time, that is...). Yeah, this is definitely an album that would have benefited by existing on vinyl. Not that anything is lost on the CD format, but I miss that crackly sound that would accompany something this dark, this muddy yet clean. More points in their favor would be the freaky Hawkwind guitar lines, and the fact that the drums are all around the beat, something you don't hear too much nowadays. Not sure if this was the sound that Usurper were going for, but man, did they get it, complete with that whacked out snare sound, definitely cool. As I said, I hear a bunch of old Frost, especially on the spoken word type vocal parts, but I don't remember those guys tuning so low. Good atmosphere to the whole thing, even if it does get a bit plodding at times. Dig that woodblock!

Vader - Live in Japan
1999 Pavement Records

"I'm just not a big fan of live albums...". How many times have you heard people (even yourself) express that very sentiment? More often than not, most likely, and who could blame us? For especially in the realm of extreme metal, there wasn't much to convince us that a soundboard could accurately capture the sound quality, the energy, the overall feeling that one was indeed in the audience that very night the tape was rolling. There were a few, but recently, a whole slew of live albums have come out, some decent, some a bit lacking, but then there's Vader. I think this album finally answers the question of why this Polish band of maniacs is, and will always be, at the forefront of the scene, for whatever the band does, they do it 150%, putting in superhuman effort to make for a memorable performance. A key aspect of Vader's live show is their use of intros, which succeed, even on CD, in temporarily building the dam which holds the mounting anticipation. The floodgates blown wide by the opening of Sothis, you really have no choice but to be a captive listener. Focusing on the last two full lengths, it's obvious that this band can more than ably reproduce their studio sounds live, in fact, it's yet another arena in which they dominate. The sound here is excellent, everything caught in high detail, and the mix? Well, the drums are pushed up a tad high, but that would be a petty argument for any release, and given that this drummer is Doc, there's even less room to complain. Comparable to the live Rush documents, not much (if anything, really) changes for the live set, but the energy here, and just hearing the tracks reproduced perfectly with just the right amount of the "live" edge, makes this well worth it. No argument about the set list choices either, as Vader mix the ultra fast Black to the Blind material with the fretboard manics of tracks Blood of Kingu and Crucified Ones. One more note, I also have to hand it to the Japanese audience present that night for providing the perfect forum for Vader to perform their set. Overall, a stellar release. The perfect place to hear some of the best tracks from Vader's back catalogue, and live, no less! This is the one that will bring these guys to the masses.

Various Artists - ID5
1999 Century Media Records

One cool thing about compilations is that many labels are pretty much giving 'em away nowadays, meaning that you can get almost 75 minutes of "quality" music for like \$5. That's 10 cents a minute (no, just kid-

ding). Anyway, Century Media is the leader in this marketing push, and lo and behold, here's the 5th installment in their now famous Identity series. If you've ever picked up one of these before, then you know what to expect. Basically, these are recorded songs off of most of CM's roster, nothing really out of the ordinary (hence the low price). But, if you wanted to check out a couple of tracks by a band you didn't want to drop \$15 on, then pick this up. I'm not going to go through each band, but I'd say that standouts would include Skinlab, Cryptopsy, Katatonia, Old Man's Child, Blind Guardian, Opeth and Angra's modern Maiden sound (this is a new signing for CM, and these guys fucking rock!). You really don't have much to lose if you're at all interested in a couple of these bands. Check the CM website for more info...

Various Artists - Relapse Slayer Compilation 1999 Relapse Records

To many, Relapse Records are known for their heavy hitters (Amorphis, Neurosis), to others, their grind (Nasum, Agoraphobic Nosebleed). Well, to me, they're known as the label that doesn't seem to discriminate, signing bands from all fields, the only common ground being that they all excel in their particular medium. All bands of the spectrum are represented on this sampler, ranging from new tracks by the heavies to other more obscure acts in the Relapse catalog. Judging from the tracks selected, this year is going to be killer for these guys. The new Neurosis track is so damn thick it runs out of my headphones. Today is the Day continue to annihilate, and even Bongzilla look to dish a pile of whoop-ass to unwary listeners. Of course, we also get some tracks from bands that are proven killers, Soilent Green, Nile and The Dillinger Escape Plan all turning in a few from their latest releases. Definitely something for everyone here, and charging like only \$2 for this, it's worth it just to hear the love 'em or hate 'em Mortician take on Celtic Frost.

Various Artists - Roots III (A Trilogy) 1999 Root-O-Evil Records

The only consistency on Earl Root excellent underground compilations are that whatever's on there, it's guaranteed to be something unordinary. Most compilations put out are an easy way to hear a majority of the label's signed or distributed bands. Not that there's anything wrong with that, it's just that a lot of labels tend to sign acts that are very limited in scope, making it more of an example of a sub-genre. The Root-O-Evil comps are a tad different, and remind me of the underground of old, complete with professional "joke" songs, badly recorded basement demos, and a "major" act or two thrown in for good measure. Really experimental in that Earl throws in noise tracks after death metal after spoken word singles, forcing anticipation to grow towards the completion of one song, as you can only guess as to what will hit you next. Standouts for me include: Impaler's live version of Graverobbers from Outer Space, Usurper's noisefesty Soulstalker '96, the majestically pompous Lorde of All Desires, Swordkiller (complete with their poseur hell intro), Brian Bart's nod to Praxis, and The Coup de Grace's awesome 80s power metal Grave World track. Overall, another killer comp from a guy who has been deeply mired in the underground for longer than most people have been listening to metal. Worth the mere pittance he charges for these things.

Various Artists - WARDance Compilation 1998 WAR Records

Man, I used to just hate compilations. Granted, it is a cool way to hear a bunch of new bands inexpensively, but the drawbacks are so great sometimes that they're usually not worth even that investment. Realizing this, many labels have tried a few different approaches: lowering the cost (Century Media); offering a TON of songs (Nuclear Blast); or giving us rare and out of print material. War Dance definitely falls into the third category. Since most of WAR's (formerly Wrong Again) back catalogue is out of stock, this is really the only way to hear excellent older tracks from In Flames, Eucharist, Naglfar and Cryptopsy. The quality of artists and the songs they chose is also above par, solidifying that this comp is a

must have. Opening with the out of control Blades, we also get Enslave the Astral Fortress from the hard-to-find Vittra release. Newcomers Carnal Forge (Who's Gonna Burn should be available now) really tear it up with their particular brand of speed death, very impressive and one of the shining moments on the album. Darkane is another band to look for. Featuring percussive artiste Peter Wildoer (Arch Enemy, Armageddon), July 1999 and Convicted are excellent tracks, building lots of anticipation on this end for their Rusted Angel debut (out in February 1999). If you haven't yet heard Eucharist, here's the best way to listen to the monumental leap they have made between their last two releases. One of the best records to come out in the last two years, Mirrorworlds is a masterpiece, here represented by the album's opening track. Wounded and Alone, a rare track from the W.A.R. comp is also good, yet suffers from poor sound quality. This problem also affects other tracks, giving the album a peak/valley sound experience which can get a trifle annoying. It's worth it for the aforementioned In Flames though, as until it's re-released, you can't find the Subterranean E.P. **anywhere**! Arch Enemy's Losing Faith is one of the bonus tracks from the Japanese version of Black Earth, and is pretty colse to the sound of that album, albeit not quite as strong. The Dimension Zero track is unreleased, but I can't fathom why it wasn't put on their Penetrations from the Lost World E.P., which only clocks in at 12 minutes! In Thy Dreams' Forgiven Sins is another one that impresses me heavily. Coming from the NWOSDM school, they're a band to look for. War Dance closes off with an alternate version of The Juggernaut Divine (from Crossing the Rubicon). More great drumming, although it doesn't sound all that different from the album version. All in all, a downright excellent compilation featuring some of the more creative and talented bands out there today. You can't go wrong (again) here!

Vim Patior - Magni Nominis Umbra 1999 Blackend Records

What's most impressive to me isn't that this band are from Poland, or that they play black metal which isn't a complete rip-off of every other band, but that they use programmed drums on this album. Yeah, you can tell on a lot of the rolls that this is a machine, but the fast parts stay clean, not becoming one huge snare blur, which happens on quite a few albums I could name. What's the sound? Well, it's black metal, written and played OK, complete with keyboards, chanted background vocals, and lots of manic riffing. It's produced well (by Andy Bomba of Black to the Blind fame), and mixed so that things are blended well. Do I like it? Well, sure, I guess. There's nothing really new going on here, and I most likely won't be itching to hear this again anytime soon, but don't hold that against it, I just hear a lot of stuff. So why should you get this over the other 100 albums released this month? I don't know, maybe think about the fact that they do come from a place where it isn't exactly easy to make an album, especially one that sounds as good as this does. If I was still rating these albums I'd give this a 3 out of 5, since it's fair, but not excellent. The album seems very long also, and the running time isn't that great, which tells me something as well. Whenever I find myself using the word "well" over five times in a review is a sure indicator that I had trouble writing a review. If you take the bad connotations out of mediocre, then that's the best word. At least the album is consistent. The more I write the worse this is coming off so I'm going to quit here.

State of Independents...

Yeah, these guys might not be signed yet, but that doesn't mean that they should be unheard! What defines a band as "independent"? Well, it really has nothing to do with living at home, but rather that they've put the product out themselves. That now clear, read on and try and pick out the next big thing.

Apotheosis - Demo '98

Here's the very reason why I'm not even going to try and lump all these demos or independents together. It seems like demos come from one extreme to the other, and the packaging and production of Apotheosis is definitely at the bottom. This wouldn't be a bad thing (I'm not prejudiced against xeroxed labels, I mean, look at my mag!), except that I can hardly hear what's going on songwise, and that's too bad, for what I do hear is pretty cool! The bio says that Anthony Prieto was a session guitarist for Mortician, so comparisons there are already made, except apart from the opening horror sample, there's not that much to compare, Apotheosis separating themselves by having a few more hooks to their songs. Sure, vocalist Ozzy's deathly vocals can be compared to Will Rahmer's, but he's also got this Gardens of Grief era At the Gates shriek which is pretty powerful stuff. Evidently trying to raise consciousness through their music, they may just get there, for tracks like The Quest and Deceiver have some interesting things going on, but like I said, the production makes it hard to decipher some of the more grinding parts. Definitely a name to keep in mind though, for of all things to have to remedy, production is the easiest.

Write:

Apotheosis
c/o Ozzy Maldonado
70 A. Greenwich #325
New York, NY 10011 - apotheosis666@hotmail.com

Capstone - Uearthed 1998 Independent Release

Real interesting mix of styles here, as Capstone jump in style from Rage Against the Machine, 311, Tool and a few others, forming a dense hybrid of sound. When treading waters wuch as these, a band really runs the risk of sounding completely fake, something Capstone must have realized, for, like last year's Ultraspank album, there's enough heaviness to keep me interested. Uearthed is an appropriate title, as this CD had disappeared into the recesses of my (anti) room some time ago. What I had remembered about the disc before the recent rediscovery were the Morello-inspired guitar histrionics, and the twin vocal work present on all tracks. In fact, it's exactly this interplay that draws the most attention. E.J. Prophet throws down the "hip-hop" vocals, a direct contrast to Michal's melodic, soaring style (here's where the Tool reference makes the most sense). The songs are good, the production excellent, the energy intense, all combined, one of the better albums I've heard in this remote outskirts of the metal world. Only area I'd like to hear some improvement in is in the rhythm department, as you have to have these guys louder in the mix for this type of stuff. An obvious success with me, given that it's a personal crusade of mine to destroy 311 (hey, they're like the ONE band that has played Hawaii like 6 zillion times, why is that?!). Check out their page at <http://www.capstonemusic.com>
Myself Am Hell - S/T
1996 Independent Release

The first band to really catch my interest on Saturday at the Metal Meltdown, Myself Am Hell blend equal parts speed and death on their

self-titled 5 song CD. Just what the hell does that mean? Well, the speed's in the song structures, which contain healthy guitar riffage inspired by bands such as Testament and Vicious Rumors and the death takes form in Justin Klenosky's vocals, best described as severe grind, American style. Rhythmically, the disc straddles the line, with near-constant streams of double bass, yet a slightly progressive touch at times. With a basic description under your belt, I guess you're ready for my thoughts on the disc. Overall, it's good, and I like it more after repeated listens, but I almost sense a band getting comfortable with themselves in the studio, for quite a bit of the cohesiveness and progression that I heard live doesn't really jump to the forefront on the disc. This may be due to the production, or lack of infinite time to lock everything together in the studio since this is an independent release. Performance-wise, the guitar work is strong (to my layman's ears) especially in the solo work. Lyrically, it's pretty grim stuff, lurking in the darker side of consciousness, delivered in true demonic fashion. To me, the combination of all this works well, for I do hear the speed metal influences, which also make tracks a bit more memorable. So while I consider this a good release for the time it was done, I'm anxious to hear some newer material now that the band has had more time to acclimate to each other in studio and live performance situations.

Myself Am Hell

<http://www.geocities.com/~myselfamhell>

Silvara - Search Within/Ignorant I Demos 1998/1997 Independent Releases

A pretty impressive young band from California, Silvara put forth a convincing performance of technical metal on their recent Search Within demo. With the band citing influences such as Carcass, Morbid Angel and Dream Theater, expectations run a tad high, and after a few songs, I guess I'm pretty convinced that they've studied hard. Better than average production doesn't hurt, either, allowing the instruments to be unique sounds, something that's sometimes just not happening on demos. Throw in some deathly grows, odd-timing, and a sweet guitar sound and what unfolds is a solid release. Only weak spot I can hear is maybe in the drum department, which may be a function of the recording or then again may not, as instrumental One Fret, Two Fret does feature a drum solo... Not a bad job, but some of the songs warrant some strong double bass work, and it didn't seem to be there yet. These songs were recorded in 98 though, and as *bonus* demo Ignorant I shows, the band definitely improves in a short period of time. As the band agrees with me here, stating that the first demo is not nearly as technical or well-written (although instrumental The Journey) is pretty cool. Biggest change I can see between the two is the adoption of a harsher vocal styling (much, much better now) and the drumming HAS improved between the two. Overall, the second demo is much stronger, for while there are a few cool moments on the first one, it's completely blown away by the later work. Worth your dough if you want to hear some new metal, American style, and I for one look forward to hearing more from these guys in the future.

Contact info: thebandsilvara@hotmail.com <http://members.tripod.com/~njanos>

Silvara 611 Isla Place Davis, CA 95616 USA

Checkin' out the Zinery

Well, here they are ladies and gentlemen, my peers. Although I may not be able to say that just yet, I feel a certain empathy towards all those tireless individuals who feel the masochistic need to wring word after word from their keyboards. We do this for a reason folks, why, I'm not sure, but here's just a small sampling of some of the zines that have crossed my path lately. Support 'em, for even if the info isn't everything you want, at least they're getting rid of some deadfall in the process! Oh yeah, I'm always up for trading 'zines, so if you want, send me a copy and you'll get one in return. 'Aint life grand?

Earsplit Issue 24

Let me take a moment to introduce the evercool Liz Ciavarella, Nuclear Blast wonder publicist and fearless editor of Earsplit magazine. Quite a beefy issue if I do say so myself, chock full of interviews with the likes of: Stuck Mojo, Godflesh, Crisis, Vision of Disorder, Napalm Death, The Genitorturers, Brutal Truth and more. Throw in a buncha reviews, a commentary on the nasty use of animals as stage props, and we've got ourselves a winner! Nice "across the spectrum" work also, as these guys write about all things, not just those that be metal.

Write: Earsplit Magazine
P.O. Box 142
Congers, NY 10920-0142

Hell Frost VI

This one's definitely pretty well known, and for good reason, as Joe Headcrash puts quite a bit of time, money and effort into this fullsize, newsprint zine. Issue VI has lots o' interviews with: Avenger, Cannibal Corpse, Cradle of Filth, Deeds of Flesh, Demonic, Goatwhore, In Flames, Incantation, Nifelheim, Nile and more. Write him, because I bet issue VII is already out...

Hell Frost
9933 W. Argonne Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53222

Intellektual Spew Issue 5

Another real quality mag here. Bart and Jeff as a team have compiled a ton of information for the underground masses to ingest. Well-written reviews covering most types of extreme music can be found aplenty, also ranging from the well known labels to the more obscure. Good, simple layout stresses function over form and at 64 pages o' newsprint, that means plenty to read. Interested in hearing what ...And Oceans, Arch Enemy, Assuck, Avulsed, Incantation, Mental Home, Sculptured and a bunch of other bands have to say? Then write Bart at:

P.O. Box 785
Cookeville, TN 38503

Mainstream Resistance Issue 1

Not a bad first issue, doubly impressive since they've got a real professional air to the whole thing, what with it being newsprint and a subscription option already (optimism is great!). Only two pages of ads to get in the way and tons of interviews with the likes of: Anthrax, Oppressor, Drain STH, Nile, Cryptopsy, Crowbar, Fear Factory, Lid, Broken Hope, Earth Crisis, The Haunted, Pissing Razors and Sepultura. Review section is a bit thin, but understandable since this IS the first issue.

Contact: Mainstream Resistance
12334 Scarcella
Stafford, TX 77477

Metal Core Issue 26

With the honor of being the longest running metal fanzine in America, Metal Core deserves your support. Chris has been through thick and thin of the scene (I remember #4 from 1987), and knows his stuff. Only criticism I've heard over the years is the layout, which is a tad dated compared to the Macintosh graphics presented in other zines, but hey, is not the information what it's all about? Get Metal Maniacs if you want a pin-up shot of Shagrath for your closet, cuz Chris ain't gonna change for no one. Interviews with Soilwork, Metalion of Slayer magazine, Metal Blade head honcho Brian Slagel, Necrovore, Destructor, and Joe Head-crash from Hellfrost zine. No price given but write him for info.

Chris Forbes
13 Carriage Lane
Marlton, NJ 08053-1109

Metal Nightmare - Issue 2

Straight outta San Diego, Tom Wren's Metal Nightmare has the honor of being not only a cool zine, but also the one which enflamed Myself Am Hell's Justin Klenosky so much! One thing that separates MN from the pack is that Wren divvies his space between that which is new, and that which is not. Meaning, expect half the interviews to be with the "elders" of metal. All that and lots of reviews, of course. Issue 2 has interviews with: Iron Maiden, Razor, Ablaze My Sorrow, Death, Witchery, Marduk and Exciter (yeah, and more).

Tom Wren
Metal Nightmare zine
P.O. Box 420195
San Diego, CA 92142

Silence Diary Autumn '98

This one caught my eye because it seems as though they're paying a lot of attention to graphical detail, forming what appears to be a really cool metal newsletter from the Czech republic. You'll find interviews with: Cryptic Carnage, Anata, Abigail, Aurora Borealis and a buncha reviews...

Marek Husarik
Vikova 3
628 00 BRNO
Czech Republic
<http://www.mujweb.cz/www/silence>

Worm Gear Issue 8

One of the better written mags out there, and I'm obviously not the only one that thinks so. I really like Marty's style of writing, and his interviews tend to dig a little deeper than the average line of interrogation. Tons of reviews, most of which are inspired, damn impressive considering the amount of time that must be given to this task. Interviews with: The Chasm, Mysticum, Consono, Dark Moon, Death Squad, Judas Iscariot, Carpathian Forest, Megaptera and Choronzon. 64 pages of newsprint to enjoy.

P.O. Box 426
Mayfield, MI 49666

From the vault...

Ever “rediscover” a record in your collection, and just want to tell the world about it? Well I sure do, hence the need for this section. Think of these as albums which I unburied this time around to get me through those long hours spent at the computer being the misanthropic type of dude that I pretend to be...

At the Gates - Slaughter of the Soul
1995 Earache Records

What makes an album perfect? Well, all the clues needed to find the answer to that question can be found on *Slaughter of the Soul*. One of the most aggressive albums to come out in years, it's also one that I also keep coming back to, and once on, can't turn off until the entire album is finished. Fredrik Nordstrom and studio Fredman have again managed to help create some of the greatest guitar tracks on tape. From start to finish this album is a monster, propelled by Adrian Erlandsson's understated but incredibly solid percussion foundation upon which layer after layer of guitar is placed. The final strike is courtesy of Tomas Lindberg's vocals, which while reminiscent of Mille Petrozza from Kreator, just seem so much more brutal here. Every song is a keeper, and the two acoustic tracks (5 and 11) add, rather than subtract, as they sometimes can. You can take my word for it, if you haven't heard this album, get it, for pure and simple, it is excellent. Unfortunately, this is also their Swan Song, as the band split to form different groups (The Haunted, etc...) after this tour.

Blackstar - Barbed Wire Soul
1997 Peaceville Records

Having expected Blackstar to have some semblance of Carcass, from which of the band members came, I was initially shocked and disappointed to hear the opening guitar riff. This stuff is anything but death metal. The thing is, this stuff is catchy! More of a NWOBHM/80's guitar rock sound, the songs are crafted with the hook in mind, and some of them do indeed succeed. Also left behind with Carcass are Walker's trademark vocals. Granted, this change was not completely out of the blue, as *Swan Song* was not entirely the definitive Carcass album by any stretch of the imagination. I can only imagine that the idea was to leave behind Carcass completely, and form a band with no ties and in that regard, this record is a complete success. Unfortunately, name recognition does play a major role in record buying, and fans looking to this as the next Carcass album will be let down. On it's own merits, *Barbed Wire Soul* is a strong rock metal album, with riffs that will haunt you for days, even if the album is a little hard to take seriously at times (most notably the saxophone on songs 4 and 8). Kudos though to Peaceville for continuing to put out eclectic metal!

Cryptopsy - Blasphemy Made Flesh
1994 Displeased Records

Ah yes, the album that started it all. From the far, far north comes Cryptopsy, ready to dismember all that stand in their way. Canada is most definitely the land of the unholy blastbeat, and in this arena of speed, Flo Mounier holds the highest order. His legs made of pistons, Mounier is the driving force behind this wall of power, held together by string pluckers Langovin, Thiebault and Levasseur. Of course, top off the madness with resident goremeister Lord Worm's guttural vocals, and we're all in for some serious pain. Yeah, Kataklysm and others also play the hyperblast, but Cryptopsy are the ones that introduced “the beat” to me.

“The beat”, of course being the double kick blast beat which just knocks the shit out of everything. The production is not as clear here as it will get on subsequent albums, but idea-wise, there's just heaps here to chew on. One thing that gets me is how clear everything is, even at mach one. You always know what's going on musically, diametrically opposed to the vocal performance, which is barely one step removed from true mania. Lord Worm has this awesome belch which just makes everything sound so, evil. Not above belting out a killer scream now and again, the Lord is in control here, telling his morbid tales to us again and again. Mix this all up with the infamous “beat” and a classic is born. Re-released by Displeased records and now available to the masses. Tendonitis anyone?

Blind Illusion - The Sane Asylum
1988 Combat Records

A one album supergroup of sorts which is now known for being the band that 2/3 of Primus were in, this is sort of a one man show. The album starts off strong, but songs begin to run into each other, causing one to lose interest pretty early on. That's a shame, because there are some good moments here, most notably the musicianship on *Blood Shower* and *Smash the Crystal*. You can hear both Les Claypool's future and Larry LaLonde's past (being fresh from *Possessed*, the seminal Bay Area death metal band) on the album, but ultimately, it lacks the punch needed to create the epic that it could have been. Production may have been a key problem here, as it suffers from the same lack of bottom end that many 80's albums had.

Dark Angel - Darkness Descends
1986 Combat Records

Well, what can one say besides the fact that this is an obvious masterpiece, and should be included as one the top albums that every metalhead should own. Not only the debut performance of living drum legend Gene Hoglan, *Darkness Descends* also showcases some incredible guitar performances from Eric Meyer and the mighty Jim Durkin. Basically spweing out Slayer riffs at 78 RPM, DD raised the bar for hundreds of aspiring musicians who would choose to try and emulate these Californians. But as good as these riffs are, it's really the delivery, incorporated with the fact that every song just kills, that makes this album so classic. Unfortunately, this was also the last album with Don Doty on vocals, who would have legal trouble which would lead to his ultimate replacement for the next LP. Too bad, really, as Doty's vocal style was a healthy ingredient for the *Dark Angel* sound, powerful yet clear vocals matched with a healthy scream that could be heard for miles. This album, among others, was recently re-released by Combat, only bonus really being that I finally got the lyrics, which I had been missing for 13 years. Having been barren of the written word since day one, I had NO IDEA that Hoglan had written 75% of the lyrics here. This is a real boon, as tracks like *Death is Certain* take on a whole meaning to me now! Not as advanced as either *Leave Scars* or *Time Does Not Heal*, the words are still as academic as ever. If you don't have this on CD, it's most likely worth getting, and if you are someone who has never heard this, you must get this, now!

Dawn - Slaughtersun
1997 Necropolis Records

There are a lot of bands out there, many of which play in similar styles, or have the same vision. At the end of the day though, only one band will be remembered for being “the one”, and I argue that in the realm of extreme epic metal, Dawn is the hands down winner. Similar in some regards to the mighty Opeth (not quite as extreme, in my opinion), Dawn utilize time to their advantage, creating songs of advanced length and structure, due in some part to the riffs brought to life by Frederik Soderberg, the man also responsible for much of this masterpiece's existence. The third one's definitely the charm here, for while hints of greatness were tapped on the first couple releases, for me it's *Slaughtersun* where everything else is just ripped, gutted and left for dead. From the opening seconds, you know this shit is going to be epic, and it just doesn't let up until the hour is done. If you need some sonic imagery, think along

the lines of Dissection kicked up a notch, with vocals reminiscent of Naglfar's Diabolical (which was released **after** this, I must add), tracks allowed to breathe, many coming in at the 10 minute mark. This shit is fast, also, Jocke drilling out solid blast and doubles for most of the album, yet not so much that your mind shuts down (as is the case with some extreme material). The recorded sound may be part of the reason for this (read the interview), for things aren't in the abrasive realm, instead, the guitars have a warm, familiar quality to them, interesting for a record in this genre. A true listening experience (forget the cliché), Slaughtersun is not for the faint hearted.

Dimension Zero - Penetrations from the Lost World
1997 WAR Records

O.K., I think it's finally about time to address this whole "supergroup" thing, for this is the perfect example. How many records are we going to see with the sticker "Consisting of members of numerous bands you love..." before everyone realizes that not all of this stuff is worth putting out? Let's see, we have Glenn Ljungström and Jesper Strömblad of both In Flames and Hammerfall, Hans Nilsson of Crystal Age, and Fredrik Johansson from Dark Tranquillity. A teaming of this magnitude should deliver the goods, and I was way excited to get this. Enter problem number one. I live in Hawaii, where I have to mail order all of the cool stuff, so I have to take some shots in the dark. Boy, was I surprised as all hell when I realized that I had spent about a buck a minute on this fine purchase, four minutes of which is jazz noodling. Does everything that comes from these guys' hands get recorded? I just had to get that off my chest, and when I stated that this was the perfect example for extraneous material release, I was actually wrong, for Penetrations from the Lost World actually kicks serious ass. The melding of influences from In Flames and heavier sources is apparent, and the first three tracks travel along at breakneck speed, throwing in the occasional masterful guitar solo. The riffs are killer, the drumming spectacular, and the vocals more than decent, so why does this piss me off so much? Maybe it's the fact that these could have easily been bonus tracks on Whoracle (or actually, could have probably replaced some tracks on that album), but maybe then, the genius would have been overlooked. Overall, complaints of the running time aside, this is a really good disc that will serve to fill many hours in 12 minute increments of brilliance. I realize that this review is somewhat schizophrenic, but I had to balance the strength of the three songs with the running time and price of the album.

Karma to Burn
1997 Roadrunner Records

Rob once said something to me that holds pretty true. If you hear about a record, and the cover catches your eye each time you see it in the store, get it, it's probably genius in waiting. My latest "discovery", West Virginia's Karma to Burn is one such gem that I regret not picking up from day one. Pretty much signed to Roadrunner by a fluke (evidently a friend of the band managed to bend the right ear at RR Records...) Karma to Burn never planned to have a vocalist. John Garcia from Kyuss fame came in for a while, but that was ditched. After the label's threats to cancel the project, the band grabbed J. Jarosz, who wasn't what you would describe as a frontman by any stretch. Forced to improvise, my ears find the illicit marriage of these two entities pure art, for personally, I feel that the vocals are an integral part of this album, filling out another tier of sound which really completes the named tracks. On the flip side though, it's also pretty easy to see that KtB could easily survive as an instrumental trio, as evidenced by the numbered tracks (six, eight, thirteen) which just soar in emotion. This has been unfairly lumped into the whole "stoner rock" genre, which just pisses me off, as that just serves to denigrate and alienate potential listeners. If I had to compare, the names Tool, Clutch, Kyuss and Wig all come to mind. Good cover of Joy Division's 24 hours further shows their area of expertise, as this is all pretty emotional stuff. Honestly, just buy it if you like any of the things I just said, you won't be disappointed. Rumor has it that Garcia may be involved again which would be interesting to hear.

Solstice - Solstice

1992 Century Media Records

Featuring Alex Marquez and Rob Barrett from the Malevolent Creation, Solstice seemed to me at the time as just another Floridian death outfit, more than willing to forsake structure for speed. Well, it only took me seven years, but I finally managed to pick this up (it's long since out of print), and can now begin to appreciate why this group made the impact it did. Sure, speed is the name of the game, but "they just do it so well". Actually, if I hear anything, it's more of an older thrash crossover feel to it, reminiscent of some of the New York bands which existed in the late eighties. Fitting that they would then choose to cover Carnivore's S.M.D. (Suck My D*ck) for those that don't go for acronyms... Of course, this poison's born and bred in Florida, so technicality and guitar heroics hold high court, driven mercilessly along by Marquez's furious double bass work. Hey, anything with an Ed Repka cover's got to be cool, right? Not too original in its execution, it's still recommended to have something besides M.C. or Decide which is representative of the whole genre. Sound-wise, production is courtesy of Scott Burns and the Morrisound establishment, so you know it's top-notch. Vocals are gruff, yet not as burpy as some of the other throats in the genre. Grows on me more and more over time.

Voivod - The Outer Limits
1993 MCA Records

After Jean-Paul Theriault left the band, everyone was wondering what direction Voivod would go. Angel Rat was light years removed from their previous releases, a seminal pop-metal album for the masses. While this was an awesome album, I as well as others were hoping for a return to the cybermetal offerings of the past. How lucky we are, for The Outer Limits is an excellent combination of the two styles. The juggernaut power of the mid-career albums is paired with the sharp songwriting skill of Angel Rat in 54 minutes of brilliance. The theme here is obvious from the cover, aliens aliens aliens, but the tone (unlike say, Hypocrisy's Abducted) is in a campy, 50's vein. The guitar is heavily delayed and full of effects, and once again is allowed to venture outside the song due to the strong, thick bass sound. The production is excellent here, every note is clear, showcasing the musical talent involved in the band. Snake's vocals, while not the robotaut he was, are closer to the past than Angel Rat. Another positive point here is the variance of style which is always present. The songs span horizons, there's no bleeding of material here. Case on point is the album's highlight, the 17 minute Jack Luminous, which flows smoother than most 3 minute pop songs. Voivod have done it again here, and with the exception of the recent Phobos, this may be my favorite Voivod album.

Amon Amarth Continued from page 20

you wish you could change? What positive things would you reinforce?

JH - Well, here in Sweden you have to go to a state controlled liquor store to buy beer and booze, it's like we live in a fucking communist dictatorship. I'd make it legal to moonshine, and sell beer and alcohol in ordinary supermarkets, because nowadays you can only buy light beer and cider there, you know kids stuff. Other than that I guess the taxes are too high, but I guess that people complain about that all over the world. Also I would get rid of Christianity as state religion, and re-instate the old Gods instead. At least our ancestors had some balls, nowadays it's like Swedes try to be as non-offending as possible.

RoR - If you could pluck a band from obscurity and exchange them for a band currently famous at the moment, who would they be?

JH - I don't know. I don't think I've heard any good new bands lately.

RoR - That's it! If you have anything else you'd like to add, final comments, please feel free to do so. Thanks tons for the interview, good luck to you and the band!

JH - Thanks for the interview Evan. Be sure to buy our next album "The Avenger", which will be out in May/June, I think (perhaps July in the states, I'm not sure). Meanwhile check out our homepage for updates and a lot of other crap, the address is www.amonamarth.com. See you on tour. Cheers!

 Criminal continued from page 7

accepted now. There was a time when Territory by Sepultura was in heavy rotation on the most popular radio station in Chile, so I guess that tells you something.

RoR - It's probably surpassed the U.S. in terms of acceptability, since there's really no radio or television support anymore for a lot of this stuff.

Anton - Yeah, I know.

RoR - Do you think that the scene has spread out past Santiago, or is it still pretty much centered there?

Anton - Well, you know, Santiago has like one third of the country's population... [laughs] But we have played a lot of cities [in Chile], which is great, since they don't get to see many bands, and it's harder for them to get the CDs.

RoR - Your influences in Pentagram were drawn from Slayer, Kreator, and some of the older, heavier stuff. You said that you branched out into other genres, what type of stuff have you been listening to lately, and how has that changed your songwriting?

Anton - Well lately, I'm listening a lot to metal, because that's my job [laughs]! In order to work at an import store you have to keep up, but I'm actually into a lot of the Scandinavian bands like Arch Enemy, The Haunted, Illdisposed. I know that's all metal, but I like to listen to Strapping Young Lad, I like that very much, and I also like the other solo projects from Devin Townsend. And then I also listen to a lot of older bands, like Queen.

RoR - So how did you come to open up an import store? Was that something you eased into or did you just decide one day to open one?

Anton - It was like a situation in my life where I had to choose very well what I wanted to do. I didn't want to live with my parents forever, but I still wanted to keep the lifestyle that I had, to keep playing. I needed to find a job that would allow me to do that. I couldn't go to an office and cut my hair, and then work from 9 to 5, because if I needed to go on a tour, I couldn't! Since the only thing I knew a lot about, besides the sound engineering, was metal. So, it was a very good option. So I worked for a while in another store which was the only store pretty much around here. I learned how to do the records and all the important shit, then borrowed the money and went for it. I've had it for over three years now, and it's allowed me to live the way that I want to.

RoR - Do you see Criminal becoming big enough that the two would have to compete for your attention?

Anton - In a way, it already does. There's only one other person that works with me at the store, and it's something that takes a lot of time. For example, sitting here doing interviews all day, sometimes it's a little difficult, because I still have to give attention to the store. I've managed to do it pretty well I think. I mean we've been away for ten days to tour, and it hasn't been a problem up until now. Of course, I'm married, and wife is just getting her degree in psychology, so she'll start working, and that will make things easier for me.

RoR - What would you like Criminal to accomplish in the future?

Anton - Well, we have to make one more album for BMG. We want to make a great album, like always, but we also want to move on after that. We really want to be able to tour the main markets for this music, like Japan, the States, or Europe. For that, we really need the support of a real pro metal label. I guess the goal is to get signed to a label like Metal Blade, or Century Media. I think our next album will be the demo to shop around to labels.

RoR - And then any last remarks?

Anton - Not really, just that I'm glad that our album is finally out in the States, and that I hope that we get to play there soon!

Witchery continued from page 5

RoR - Let's talk a little bit about touring. You've played a few shows so far, are there any other plans to tour Japan or the U.S.? I also heard that Adrian (drummer for The Haunted) had to fill in for Mique at the Finnish metal awards ceremony, what happened?

PJ - The touring comes down to having to make sure that no one has anything else to do with their other bands. We did play in Helsinki, where we received the "Best Newcomer" award from Suomi Finland Perkele. We are confirmed to play Wacken and we just got back from headlining a two day festival in Finland. Mique didn't play on those shows because he has a chronic stomach disease. He'll get better, but we're also scheduled for the Milwaukee Metalfest (they're headlining the Rave Stage) and maybe a 2 week U.S. west coast tour, and I don't think he'll be able to play those shows, it will most likely be Adrian. The Haunted were actually scheduled to do a tour of Japan opening for Arch Enemy, but we only ended up playing two shows before we were taken off due to management problems.

RoR - With Mercyful Fate and now Arch Enemy commitments, what is Sharlee's future with Witchery?

PJ - I don't know about Arch Enemy this summer, because they want to play summer festivals as well. I guess there has been some talk about them getting a new bass player, because they knew from the beginning that Sharlee was a busy guy, but I don't know all the details. You'd have to ask them [laughs].

RoR - On some of these festivals, I see that you're slotted to play in both The Haunted and Witchery on the same day. Sharlee has the same situation with Mercyful Fate, is it difficult for you to make the transition or keep up the energy levels?

PJ - No way! Hey, no problem. If King Diamond can do 2 shows in a night, and he's like 45, then I surely can!

RoR - So at what stage is Dead, Hot and Ready in?

PJ - Actually, I'm going to see the guy who's mastering the disc tomorrow to put the final samples on tomorrow, and then we're done. I know that Necrolord has completed the cover art, so everything is pretty much Dead, Hot and Ready to go!

RoR - Any bands making an impact that you'd currently recommend? Anybody to watch out for?

PJ - Defleshed's Under the Blade! If you haven't heard that album you're either stupid, metal challenged or a Michael Bolton fan. It's the best album to surface in years!

RoR - Any closing thoughts you'd like to add?

PJ - Do the "W"! Born in the Night, kick ass and get drunk. Metal!!! Thanks to everyone who has supported us in any way. Get in touch with us at witchery@bigfoot.com, it's always cool to hear what people think. Cheers!

Check out the Witchery home page at:
<http://www.bigfoot.com/~witchery>



Witchery - Witchburner
1999 Necropolis Records

I swear I already reviewed this, but as it is, I can't find it, meaning that here I am at noon on a Saturday afternoon, completely hungover, forced to come up with something original to say. This might lead you to believe that I'm giving this a bad review, and if that's what you're starting to think, get those thoughts out of your head **right** now, for this is Witchery we're talking about here. In the true spirit of the band, let's forget the formalities and just bullshit about the album for a bit. Spin it once and I guarantee you'll get the same impression as I did, 5 guys just totally metal, and loving every minute of it. Read the previous article to get his philosophies, and if you just read it, fuckin' read it again, for his ideas are key to understanding what these guys are trying to do. You're worried about this only being a seven song E.P., with four of the songs being covers? Again, read the article. These guys aren't doing this for money, they're not covering these songs to be "cool", they just love playing music. This is really an album for fans by fans, know what I mean? Accept's Fast as a Shark rips, as does their totally amped version of Sabbath's Neon Knights. WASP's I Wanna Be Somebody is done supreme justice, and the mighty Priest's Riding on the Wind rounds out the covers, all four getting me through a nice portion of this dehydration spell I'm currently in. Proving their workaholicism, we also get three more songs, two relatively "new", and having a bit of history to it (that's right, read the article). In any regard, The Howling is new and yet so completely familiar, 100% Witchery-core, just balls out metal, and probably the strongest of these three songs. Executioner kicks ass as well, leaning heavily on early Slayer in the riff department, but when these guys take a riff, it's Witcherized. Uh, except that one chorus piece "borrowed" from Praise of Death, heh heh. It's all this and more, for the album's closer is the song that started this whole thing going. The titular track, Witchburner is a rawer deal in comparison to the rest of this, but what a cool fucking song! Ah, in my opinion these guys can do no wrong. Don't blink though, because Witchery are set to demolish later this year with Dead, Hot and Ready...

Arch Enemy Continued from page 17

Stigmata album), Chris appeared to bring quite a bit of melody to the group for their second outing. Being the elder by many years, what kind of influence does Michael feel that he had on his younger sibling? "I know that I have influenced him to start listening to heavy music, and I gave him his first guitar and showed him the basics of what I do. He has totally turned into a guitar freak, and a player in his own right. We have a similar vibrato and tone, but I think it's quite obvious as to who plays what on the records, but then I'm a guitar freak too!!!"

Not just an older brother, the older Amott also has distinction of being the main force behind Arch Enemy, as well as main songwriter for his other band, the Spiritual Band. Including guest appearances on several albums, this type of productivity can take its toll on the average human, leading to confusion between bands, but then again, we're not dealing with the ordinary breed here... "My role in Arch Enemy is the biggest one I have ever had in a band. I'm the main songwriter and I arrange the music, co-produce it, put the album's artwork together, answer the mail, do the interviews and license the finished product to our labels through my own Savage Messiah Music company. When it comes to writing, most of the Spiritual Beggars music comes out of our rehearsal jams, (whereas) the Arch Enemy material is written at home by me and Chris, sitting around playing guitar. I write a lot of music for Arch Enemy in frantic bursts of inspiration. It's weird really, because listening back to the records I have made it always feels weird, like, "Wow! I wrote/played

To tell you the truth, the "Stigmata" album was a bit of a disappointment for us. Not sales wise, we just feel that in retrospect we should have made a more intense album.

that!!" It's strange. I'm definitely one of these people who works better when under pressure, so give me a deadline!"

The only pressure the band has now is living up to their past two releases, both highly accepted and revered in the metal community. With the group on Century Media, one can expect great things for these guys. While there aren't any plans to tour the U.S. as of yet, look for a re-release of Black Earth through Relapse, and a stronger promotional push for Burning Bridges. Riffs are already ready for the fourth album, securing the fact that Arch Enemy are here to stay, truly excellent news to hear. So when it's all over, and the obligatory ending question is asked, Amott's philosophy of music and life shines through. "The fans are everything, you are the music, we are just

Burning Bridges
1999 Century Media Records



I just got this in the mail, and I'll properly review it next issue, but let me just say now that after the first few introductory spins, Burning Bridges appears to be exactly as described before. While not quite as heavy as Black Earth, much of the trepidation that appeared to be on Stigmata is gone. Liiva's vocals are stronger and more dynamic, Erlandsson's drumming excellent as always, and the guitarwork... Just go fucking buy it already.

GRIP INC.

Grip Inc. Continued from page 10

RoR - Oh, OK... That would be something to see. I guess being able to pull any band onto the tour would do a service to those bands that are on smaller labels and can't promote as heavily.

GC - Exactly, although I would rather be on a smaller label, for they do what they can, and are more personal. They won't break their bank for you, but they will do what they can. I think if people know what's going on, they'll come to the show anyway. I like to do interviews with smaller fanzines and underground mags because the people aren't looking at mainstream mags anymore, they're fed up with Bush and Snoop Doggy Dog.

RoR - So, you've been pretty happy with Metal Blade so far?

GC - Yeah, except for the sticker incident!

RoR - Well, were they pretty responsive when you approached them about it?

GC - Yeah, but you know, they explained it like "Well, we just wanted to make sure that we sold it", and I was like fuck that, sell it on the power of what it is. I'm a bit of a rebel in that kind of thing, I don't like living in anyone else's shadow, and if only ten people like us then only ten people like us, but it's for the right reasons. But overall, they've been pretty good.

RoR - OK, words of wisdom, please.

GC - Real music for real people. Keep the faith mate!



Anacrusis - Manic Impressions
1991 Metal Blade Records

I reviewed this album for the site before I ever met Ken, and suffice it to say, I believe that I now understand what the band was trying to do with this album. Many of the questions I had were answered, and in some respects, my original review now seems a bit dated. However, if I tried to review the album now, I would lose the feelings which were contained in that review, which is why I'm choosing to present it as it exists on the website. If I were to add anything, it would certainly be that I have a great deal more appreciation for what was accomplished by these very talented individuals. The sound may not be for everyone, but for those that it touches, an imprint is made for life. Read on and decide for yourself...

Tortured Soul Kenn Nardi and crew entered a Wisconsin Studio in the winter of 1991 to create one of the finest records ever. There are several big changes here, most noticeable being the excellent, cold, mechanical production, and the addition of Chad Smith on drums, who couldn't misplace a beat if he tried. These two factors make this an incredibly tight, focused album, something that was lacking on the first two. The guitar tone is mostly treble, which allows Emery's bass to just cut right through, which is to the benefit of all who hear, as his performance just blows me away every time I listen. Another reference to Voivod, as both bands made the step to DDD on their cyber-releases (Nothingface). What else can I say, the first three notes of the album are indicative of what is contained within, an aural buzzsaw, unrelenting until the final hi-hat fade closes the album. Lyrically, incredibly depressive, as madness and life (usually the former resulting from the latter) are explored very personally, with Nardi's delivery brought up a notch on both ends, his clean vocals becoming more pronounced as are his shrieks. A guitar tech-fest, exchanging the hyper looseness of Reason for razor sharp riffage. I usually find that perfection is attained at the cost of emotion, but that's not the case here, as you just feel the pain contained within. A mathematical trip into an intricate mind, Manic Impressions is the culmination of 4 extraordinary musicians in the first half of their finest hour. If you ever see this, buy it, period.

Anacrusis History Continued from page 39

and many things would have to be redone. Although I was acting "producer", I, and the rest of the band, had pretty much kept quiet while the basic tracks were being laid down, leaving this task to the engineer. This is when we learned the hard way how important it is to begin with good "sounds" rather than relying on effects and processing in the mixing to fix problems. So now we were faced with a big problem. We decided to return to the studio without our engineer to complete the album. In all fairness to him, I feel the problems we had were as much to do with a lack of communication on our part as with anyone's ability. One of the best things about *Manic*, is that even though I still did most of the writing and arranging, it was starting to become more of a group effort. John was beginning to contribute quite a bit lyrically, and musically, and Kevin was beginning to devote more time to his solos, and also contributed many great riffs. One of my all-time favorites is *Explained Away*. This song was based around a piece of music Kevin had. Add John's lyrics, my melody, and great drumming, and what resulted was a nice combination of everyone's creativity. I feel this song (and later *Driven*) best sums up what we were trying to accomplish musically. From mellow vocals to screams, from intricate syncopation to thrash, this song has a little of everything we did. Lyrically, we continued to journey further inward, digging deeply into the issues that we (and most everyone else) dealt with on a day-to-day basis. As **Anacrusis** continued to play a greater role in each of our lives, the lyrics began to reflect this, becoming an important outlet for much of the frustration we were dealing with at that time. So, we spent the next few days after returning to the studio sorting through the songs and fixing as many of the noticeable 'glitches' as time would allow. Some were smoothed over, but many were not. At one point we had considered re-tracking all of the guitar parts, as I hated the sound of them (and still do) but we decided to use the time and money remaining to complete vocals and solos and to try and salvage a decent mix of what we had. In usual **Anacrusis** fashion, we ended up running out of time and finished with about three songs mixed. This led to us scrounging up enough money to buy another 12 hour block of studio time, and Chad and myself making the 10 hour drive back up to Wisconsin, mixing all night (literally falling asleep at the board a couple of times) and then turning right around and driving back to St. Louis all in one shot. This was not the best way to end a recording session, but at least we had completed the album. Well, almost. Actually we had also recorded *Tools of Separation* to be included on Manic, but when our mixing time was running out it came down to *Tools* or *Far Too Long*. As I stated earlier, I felt that *Far Too Long* would add more depth to the album as a whole, so *Tools* was never mixed. We did, however, record this song again in 1993, this time for our last album. All in all, I feel this album was our most technical and experimental. I personally think the final mix is much too bright, but it is also very clean sounding, overall. This was an exciting time for us, as we began to mature, both personally and musically. This would definitely continue on our next and final album, *Screams and Whispers*.

Check out the Official Anacrusis website at:
<http://www.geocities.com/~cheffboy>

Making it's way to print next issue...

Hypocrisy

The main man himself talks about the new album, how change is good, and recording the Mar-duk albums while hungover and shaking...

In Flames

I had a pretty sweet talk with vocalist Anders Frieden, and he filled me in a bit on the In Flames sound, his lyrics and more.

Six Feet Under

A pretty outspoken guy, I talked to Chris Barnes about the exit of Allen West, his views on metal "journalism", and his excursions to our island paradise.

In Aeternum

One of the coolest people I've talked to, David Larsson (also the rhythm guitarist for the latest WAR album) has an ample sense of humor. The album kicks ass, now you just have to wait to find out the method behind the madness...

Amsvartner

School is definitely out for these young Swedes, who have assembled an album to shame many of the seasoned vets out there. What's it like to have three brothers in a band? You could ask Hanson, but these guys are much, much more interesting. Trust me on that one.

Children of Bodom

Having a 12 hour time difference between myself and Scandanavia really sucks, but it can make for some interesting conversations. Drunk as a skunk, Alexi nevertheless provided me with 45 minutes of choice material, most of which I deemed fit to print.

Immolation

Ever wonder why Immolation takes so long in between releases? Are they really Satanic? Am I running out of witty clips to suck you into the next issue? Maybe, but I guarantee that all the secrets of the universe are unlocked in our banter. You'll also see that these guys work pretty hard at their game, and that Ross is actually a pretty cool guy, as evil as he looks from his photos.

I also should get back my Dying Fetus and Carnal Forge interviews. Add these to the usual stack of reviews, newsbits, and columns, and yup, Issue 3 will be bigger than life.

FEAR REALIZED...



NEUROSIS

TIMES OF GRACE

Oakland, California's **NEUROSIS** consummate their 13 year evolution with a bold new work: *Times of Grace*. An introspective war cry, *Times of Grace* lures with its vivid rhythms, strikes with a siege of emotion, and consumes with abysmal force.

CD \$12 - RR 6419

Also Available: Through Silver in Blood CD \$12 - RR 6938

today is the day
IN THE EYES OF GOD

TODAY IS THE DAY absorb negative energy and spit it back in your face with the subtlety of the world's end. If the millennium indeed brings the downfall of humanity, *In the Eyes of God* will be the funeral march for the masses.

CD \$12 - RR 6424

Also Available: Temple of the Morning Star CD \$12 - RR 6964



RELAPSE
RECORDS

RELEASE

1-800-303-0606

Order by credit card toll-free! Operators are available Monday through Friday, 9am-8pm EST, or order online at

www.relapse.com

Info Hotline: (717) 397-5706 • Fax: (717) 397-9381 • E-mail: Relapse@relapse.com

For a massive catalog/magazine full of the best in metal, hardcore, grindcore, industrial, experimental, ambient, gothic, noise recordings, merchandise and interviews, write to: RELAPSE RECORDS, P.O. Box 251, Millersville, PA 17551, U.S.A. Please note: Personal checks will be held 3-4 weeks.

NEW FROM METAL BLADE

MANOWAR "Hell On Stage Live"



NEW DOUBLE LIVE CD

includes a limited edition 3rd bonus CD, available while supplies last.

GWAR "We Kill Everything"



The newest release from the masters of mayhem.

CRIMINAL "DEAD SKIN"



Extreme metal from Death Row Records, also on Island & Island. Produced by Bruce Fairbairn. (Black Box Music)

GRIP INC. "SOLIDIFY"



The police-provoking new release from Dark Sanctuary & Co.

FLOTSAM & JETSAM "INTERNATIONAL SELECTION"



The latest release from these metal masters.

BLACKSTAR RISING "BARNED WINE BLOOD"



New release featuring original members of CRUICIA & LACRIMA.

THE CROWN "HELL IS HERE"



And new Black Sabbath metal from Sweden. Originally known as THORN.

SPOCK'S BEARD "DAY FOR NIGHT"



The world's top prog progressive rock band.

HECATE ENTHRONED "DARK REVENUES"



New Dark World.

COMING SOON

SIX FEET UNDER "MAXIMUM VIOLENCE"

IMMOLATION "FALLURES FOR GODS"

MERCYFUL FATE

GOD DETHRONED "BLOODY BLASPHEMY"

NEW
MUSIC
THAT
WILL
PICK
THE
FLESH
RIGHT
OFF
YOUR
BONES



© 1999 METAL BLADE RECORDS INC. • E-Mail: MBR@metalblade.com • Info Hotline (800) 533-7544
For a free catalog write to: Metal Blade Merchandise 4035 E. Chandler Blvd. Ste. 70-07, Phoenix AZ 85044
www.metalblade.com

