

REMNANTS OF REASON

ISSUE 3

\$2 BY MAIL



INTERNAL BLEEDING

MYSELF AM HELL

SIX FEET UNDER

IN AETURNUM

HYPOCRISY

IN FLAMES

GARDENIAN

IMMOLATION

AMSVARTNER

DYING FETUS

PISSING RAZORS

THE MILWAUKEE METALFEST

PLUS TONS OF REVIEWS!

LOOK FOR PISSING RAZORS TO PLAY HONOLULU ON
THE 10TH AND 11TH OF DECEMBER, 1999!!!

DON'T F**K WITH TEXAS!



"CAST DOWN THE PLAGUE" IN STORES NOW. 100% PURE GRADE-A TEXAN METAL!

"Robbie Flynn, you may now sit down and let the new masters
of bludgeoning nineties metal show you how it's done."

-Brave Words and Bloody Knuckles

For the latest news, give-aways and
free MP.3 files, check out our
website at www.noiserecords.com!



12358 Ventura Blvd., Suite 386
Studio City, CA 91604
Internet=www.noiserecords.com
email=contact@us.noiserecords.com



PISSING RAZORS

Contents

News.....	4
SFU.....	6
Immolation	8
In Aeternum	11
Gardenian.....	12
Dying Fetus.....	14
Myself Am Hell.....	15
Hypocrisy.....	16
Internal Bleeding.....	19
In Flames.....	21
Amsvartner	24
Pissing Razors	26
Reviews	28
Vault Reviews.....	38
Indie Reviews	40
The Milwaukee Metalfest	42
ZINE REVIEWS	46

Remnants of Reason

Issue 3 - November, 1999

EDITOR

Evan Howell



reezon@geocities.com

Suffocation - Pierced from Within
 Myself Am Hell - The World I Died For
 Cryptopsy - None So Vile
 Sleep - Sleep's Holy Mountain
 Blind Guardian - Nightfall in Middle Earth
 Cannibal Corpse - Bloodthirst
 Hate Eternal - Conquering the Throne
 Dominus - The First 9
 Slapdash - Actual Reality
 White - The End Records Compilation

Current Spins

Next issue!

Arch Enemy, Turmoil,
 Children of Bodom,
 Hate Eternal, Cannibal
 Corpse and more!

Sepsism - Purulent Decomposition
 Pissing Razors - Cast Down the Plague
 Offenders - We Must Rebel
 Nothingface - An Audio Guide to Everyday
 Atrocitiy
 Abramelin - Abramelin
 Crowbar - Broken Glass



CONTRIBUTOR

Derek Haderman

Remnants of Reason is published up to four times a year. All written work and logos are copyrighted 1999 EvanHowell/Remnants of Reason. Join the RoR brigade and visit one of the largest metal databases on the web at <http://www.geocities.com/~reezon>. Subscriptions are \$5 for three issues. If you've read this far then maybe you pay a little too much attention to detail, hmmm?

Straight from the horse's mind...

With the ink still drying on issue 2, you might be wondering how the hell I got this done so fast. Well, it's not without sacrifice, but as most of it was mental and intangible, most people don't notice too much of a difference except for maybe the excessive chatter and run-on sentences. Seriously though, I'm happier than a pig in slop that things are moving along so well. I initially started out with the idea that this would be the first issue on newsprint at 32 pages, but that quickly got tossed, and I actually had to stop adding stuff lest I end up with another thesis like last issue. As always, I have a ton of thank yous, but I have to recognize a few people first because without them, this issue would have been much, much harder. First, Derek for the PR intie and the reviews, Saori, my lovely bride to be, for helping in all aspects of the zine, My family for their support from the other side of the world, Bob Miller and Matt Parry for being true friends and always listening and giving advice, Anders Nielsen for tons of stuff, Ken from Anacrusis for the binary help, Matt, Justin and Myself am Hell for a place to crash and more binary help, and Deb Yamaguchi for creative influence. And now to those in the biz... Thanks to Bob at Metal Blade, Jon at Earache/Paris PR, Liz at Nuclear Blast, Joker at Necropolis, Carl at Relapse, Jason at Pavement, Debbie at Mazur PR, Rachel Martinez, Eddy Garcia and Pissing Razors, Karl at Plastic Head, Earl at Root-O-Evil, Brian at MIA, Gordon Conrad, the other guys in Crucible, Nik, Karl and Silvara, Matt at Century Media, Steve at Noise and all the other publicists I deal with daily! I'd also like to that everyone who ordered issues 1 and 2, especially the repeat offenders. Special thanks also to Alex Rivera, Yukiko Seno, Chris Forbes (for advice!), Profane and Criminal (for the Appleton experience!), Eric Hochberg, and last but not least, Rob Carpenter for always being a true supporter of metal and this magazine, thanks, my friend.

Don't forget to hit the RoR website at <http://www.remnantsofreason.com>. There are over 125 band pages up there with tons more info than I could ever describe! Send all correspondence, money, bribes and material for review to

Remnants of Reason
 c/o Evan Howell
 2440 Campus Road #455
 Honolulu, HI 96822

AD RATES

Full page (Back Cover).....	\$125
Full Page (Inside Front/Back).....	\$100
Full Page (internal)	\$80
Half Page (internal).....	\$50
1/4 Page (internal).....	\$30

news

Pro-Pain's new album, Act of Strength is doing well, and the band finished a month long tour in June.

Napalm Death finished a North American tour this summer.

Chile's Criminal played this year's Milwaukee Metalfest in support of their Dead Soul release which Metal Blade has recently picked up for distribution. Criminal also played a few dates around the festival, the first one marking their debut north American performance.

Black Mark Records recently opened up a North American office in NYC. Maybe now it'll be easier to get those early Edge of Sanity albums...

Dave Lombardo finished up one monster tour with Grip Inc., and if my sources are correct, he'll also be heading out on the road with Testament in the fall. I also hear that Testament may hit Hawaii, but who knows, right?

Vader, the Polish gods of metal have left Pavement and signed to Metal Blade. In other news from the Vader camp, longtime drummer Doc reportedly had to cancel several dates recently due to either family or health reasons. His incredibly difficult position was supposedly filled more than adequately by the Yattering's skinsman.

Calvin Robertshaw left My Dying Bride for personal reasons, and in other lineup changes, Nick Barker is now in Dimmu Borgir as a permanent member, and Adrian Erlandsson has left The Haunted to fill the Cradle throne.

Chuck Schuldiner's Control Denied is finished, and it was after this fateful recording that Chuck discovered that he had a tumor in the back of his neck near the brain stem. We all wish Chuck the best and hope that this isn't anything too threatening.

Covenant have changed their name to Kovenant, and their new opus should see the light of day soon.

Kataklysm have a forthcoming release this year, but it's anyone's guess as to whether or not the "Northern Hyperblast" will return strong or not.

Voivod are beginning to work on a new album, and were recently joined on stage by none other than former vocalist Snake. Snake gave Eric Forrest the thumbs up, especially cool as Eric has just recovered from a pretty serious car accident.

Skinlab/Pissing Razors to play in Honolulu December 10th and 11th, 1999!

On the local front, Skinlab and Pissing Razors are scheduled to come to Honolulu on December 10th and 11th, 1999 to play with Crucible and Broken Man. Check the Remnants of Reason website (www.geocities.com/~reezon) or email reezon@geocities.com for more info.

CRUCIBLE Info

www.crucibleworldforce.com

c/o Derek Haderman

P.O. Box 235662

Honolulu, HI 96822

For bookings or other information call (808) 942-4676



"Heavy as hell, and just rife with enough anger and darkness to scare away the sun, [Skinlab] can be described as an industrial metal hybrid perfect for late night listening..." - RoR Issue 2

Available at Tower Records - Keeaumoku

Oppressor have officially broken up, but since 3/4 of them were involved with Soil, it's more like they changed priorities.

Doug Cerrito joined Hate Eternal, and their new album Conquering the Throne is out through Wicked World and it just smokes!

Reissues - I've seen reissues by Manowar, Nasty Savage, a bunch of other Metal Blade bands (check their site!) and hopefully Manic Impressions and Screams and Whispers will be reissued soon.

Tiamat's new opus Skeletal Skeletron should hit stores October 12th, 1999.

Look for the Root of all Evil Records' Roots V comp later this year. Supposedly a track from the band High on Fire (comprised of former members of Sleep) is on there.

Wisconsin's Talamasca played the Powermad '99 festival and should be out next summer. They also have recorded a version of The Whisper from the Rage for Order album which will appear on an upcoming Queensryche tribute disc.

Since so much has been made on these festivals (not by the bands, I assure you), it looks like there's going to be a multitude of these events in the coming year. With catchy titles like: November to Dismember in Texas (Nov. 5-6 1999) and Mayhem in May in LA (2000), you can be sure that eager fans will be emptying their pockets to catch 6 billion bands in one place. Capitalism rules.

Mercyful Fate are currently on tour in the U.S. which will last through October 20th.

New Peaceville Records artists include Katatonia and the mighty Opeth. Katatonia's fourth album, Tonight's Decision, is done and should be out as you read this. Opeth are just about finished their fourth album, Still Life, which should be out in October.

Manowar will begin their first full length tour in years on October 7th in Columbus, OH. Supporting them will be labelmates Six Feet Under. Also set to tour are SOD, who will kick things off in Philly on October 22nd.

Iron Monkey have split up and have released this official statement: "Iron Monkey have split up. You don't need to know the reasons why. It's none of your fuckin' business. Get over it." That's Iron Monkey (RIP) for ya.

You're probably reading this after the fact (or during the show!) but Morbid Angel are set to headline this year's first annual (high hopes) Texas Metal Festival. The band will also play select dates around that time and area.

DARKANE'S RUSTED ANGEL! - One awesome album that is only available in limited areas, but check **Relapse** for this **WAR Records** MUST HAVE!

CANNIBAL CORPSE

Bloodthirst
In stores 10/19/99

RECORDS

© 1999 METAL BLADE RECORDS INC.
Info Hotline (800) 522-7548 • www.metalblade.com
For a free catalog write to: Metal Blade Merchandise
4025 E. Chandler Blvd. Ste. 70-D7, Phoenix AZ 85048

© Six feet Under ©

Formed by Chris Barnes and Allen West, Six Feet have just released their third album, *Maximum Violence*. Their best work to date, *MV* is also the debut of new guitarist Steve Swanson. I'll let Chris explain the rest.

RoR - So, first off, congratulations! Bob (Gilmore, Metal Blade publicist) was telling me that Maximum Violence is his favorite record of the year so far. So how do you feel about it?

CB - I'm probably more psyched, man. I've worked on it for six months, and took a month to put it together, so I'm just waiting to get the crown reaction, you know? I'm kind of anticipating that, for that's my whole purpose, really.

RoR - So there have been a few changes since the last album, Allen West and you formed the band together, and now he's gone. Steve Swanson came in, and the word is that he was able to reinvigorate the whole band.

CB - Yeah, it pointed us in the direction that I wanted to take it, even when Allen was in the band, but it just wasn't able to go that way before. Allen just wasn't the guitarist that could do the stuff that I wanted to do. And that was just to inspire me in the way that I was used to being inspired in the past, which was by getting aggressive. I wanted more aggressive music, you know. It finally just hit one night at rehearsal, and he just left the band. We had been talking about Steve joining at that point anyway, so we gave him a call, and he was able to learn 17 or 18 songs in three weeks. Which was fine, but it was when we started to write new material that he really kicked in and wanted to work on where we were going. This was something that was new, because before no one in the band wrote except for Al. I wrote all the lyrics, but Al wrote all the drum parts, so Greg and Terry never even wrote anything. That's also why this album sounds so different, there's really a whole new writing situation.

RoR - Didn't Allen kinda worry that since he was already in Obituary that the material would sound similar?

CB - He didn't really care, dude. To be honest, that was the whole point. He didn't even care enough to make this stuff diverse from what he was doing in the other band. He wasn't putting 100% into SFU, and he couldn't, because he's just not that kind of person. The way I and the other guy's see it, and what he told us was that to him it was just something to do for fun, and to get out and get girls, and drink beer. So, we told him, that's not what we're about, and we told him that it was pissing us off, and to think twice, but he was like, "Fuck it, I don't need anybody telling me what to do." And we really weren't, we were just saying to think about it. We were all willing to put our all into it, and he wasn't.

RoR - You also write the lyrics after you hear the music, so if you're not inspired by what you're hearing, then I would think your job would become a lot more difficult. Was this what happened with Warpath? Those lyrics seemed a lot different than what you usually write.

CB - Yeah, the music I get first, and that's definitely what drives me in my lyric writing. The lyrics for Warpath were just what I was hearing at the time. Some of it's real good, but for the most part, my feeling is that Warpath is an incomplete album. Steve was the missing link though, and this album represents that. He really helped me to take this to the next level. He brought a different style into the band. He's got a much faster picking hand, and he's got a more aggressive style, more intricate. Terry and Greg writing helped with the heaviness as well, it allowed me to dig in and get brutal.

RoR - Why Criteria, why not Morrisound?

CB - Well, we've recorded at Morrisound many times, and we've pretty much exhausted the sound that you can get from there. We had recorded our *Alive* and *Dead* E.P. down there, and it was really cool. It also seemed like such a new band for us, that we wanted the production to be new and fresh. It was also an excellent environment. Great staff, great rooms, there was just a really great vibe being there, and that's the way it should be. I think that it turned out exactly the way I had pictured it.

RoR - And you also co-produced with Brian Slagel?

CB - Yeah. We like working with Brian because we respect what he has to say. To be in a studio and to be critiqued on stuff that you've been working on for six months, you have to respect the person. And not only as a person that puts out great music, but as a person as well. It definitely made it a lot easier, and it gave us an advantage.

RoR - I guess that it would be difficult. Were there any changes that you guys came to blows over?



CB - [laughs] - No, not too much. You know, even when it comes up once or twice that you should try something else, if you don't know the person, how do you know that he knows what the fuck he's talking about other than the stuff that he's done? Like I said, since we knew him personally, it made it a hell of a lot less painful! [laughs]

RoR - Well, it could be kind of cool too, since he's the owner of the label, and if he goes "Hey, I want you to try this", there's no worry about budget concerns!

CB - Well, it wasn't even so much stuff track wise, it was more in the mix. Things like adding reverb, or panning the vocals to the side, or brightening the guitar riffs. Little things that we may have overlooked because we're used to hearing what it sounds like in rehearsal space.

RoR - Do you find yourself getting more involved in the production of the albums?

CB - I've always been involved in it, just I'm getting more experienced with it now. I can actually break it down a little better, break it down so that I know how that has to be made, what we have to look for. I know to kinda lay back now and let things flow, not worry so much, because before I would almost take things too seriously. The more you do things the more you learn!

RoR - One thing that I noticed in talking to you is that you seem like a really easy going guy, and to know you only from your lyrics, one would definitely paint a completely different picture!

CB - [laughing] Well, you know, people always say that Stephen King seems like a pretty nice guy, you know! These things really have nothing to do with your everyday life, it's just something that you do almost to find solitude and solace within yourself. It's like a meditation, but out loud.

RoR - What about in live delivery? Do you feel the same enthusiasm singing the more political lyrics as you do with the ones that may be less personal?

CB - No, I guess I just feel that some of the things on the last album don't hold up as well because of the music just kinda gets on my nerves right now. It's mostly because this stuff that the stuff that we just got done with rips all of that album to shreds! It's just kinda hard to listen to listen to Warpath now, because I can honestly say that Maximum Violence is the best creation that I ever put my heart and soul into. We always try and do that 100%, but this time was a little different.

RoR - One other thing that I wanted to ask you about was the press. I've read so many articles with you and about you where you just seem to be the bad guy. It seems to be a pretty consistent in a couple of magazines, and whenever I come across something like that I wonder if it's the unbiased truth, or maybe something of a more personal nature. Is there just bad blood?

CB - [sighs] I just recognize people that are full of shit, and I don't compromise my feelings because I have to do an interview with people that I know don't give a flying fuck about what they're doing other than promoting their own beliefs. I don't agree with pushing propaganda down people's throats, especially when some of these people are completely out of touch with what's going on. I have certain impressions of certain individuals and larger magazines.

RoR - I don't think that anyone likes to read something bad about themselves or the work that they've done. It seems that you don't comment on a lot of what was written, and unfortunately, a "No comment" is often perceived as a sign of guilt. Do you not comment because you don't want to engage it any further?

CB - Oh man, it's not even that. I don't mind a bad review from those people, because all the fans know that these certain magazines don't even know what the fuck they're talking about! The kids are wiser than those magazines. The kids are smart, and when they see a bad review of one of my records there, the kids actually take that as a good thing! It's been going on for ages now, it's almost a positive thing now! I try not to worry about it anymore. Honestly, I just don't give a good interview to those people,

because I'm always on my guard, and they never ask me good interesting questions. It's frustrating, but you know what, they're gonna say what they want, but I'm always going to be here. The whole thing is, that these motherfuckers are so weak, that they come up to me and apologize to me in person, like "Oh, c'mon, can we go have a drink together?", and they expect you to go have a fuckin' drink with them! I fuckin' tell them straight to their face, "Fuck you! I don't drink with a fuckin' piece of shit." They just don't get it, man. They just don't have any self worth, they're vampires, most of them in these big conglomerate type magazines. I don't like dealing with them, and I don't make it a secret either!

RoR - I guess whenever you're outspoken about something, you make yourself an easy target...

CB - An that's cool, but they're also going to be a target of mine! I can take criticism if it's done by people by know what they're talking about.

RoR - You guys did one cover on Warpath, and you recorded three songs for MV, and I guess I was wondering why you decided to choose those particular songs.

CB - Oh, I guess they just come up at times that are real natural. Just to do songs that you've always enjoyed, to do them in your own style, you know. Try to make them more interesting than the original versions. Like, I'd rather hear someone cover a Sabbath song, but done in their style. Like Madonna covering Sabbath, it's almost a creepy thing. I think that War Machine fits real well into the flow of the album.

RoR - Anything you want to wrap things up with?

CB - Just thanks to all our fans in Hawaii, hopefully we'll be able to come and play there. Thanks to fans everywhere, and thank you for a real interesting interview!

The Chris Barnes Hawaiian Experience...

Yeah, my wife and I got married on the Big Island, in Kona. I loved it, you know, but I was kinda freakin' out after some one told me to watch out for island fever (a somewhat mythical view, much like Hawaii being a paradise to live in, that people suddenly freak out after living on the island for a while. Maybe it's true, but I've yet to see it personally!). A buddy of mine lived there for about 6 years in the 70s, and he just woke up one day schizin'. He got up and left like a \$100,000 condo in Waikiki, just packed up all his shit and took off. That's island fever, man. I loved it though, man. It was so beautiful. We drove around the whole island, and what was cool for me is that one side of the island has flowing lava, and is like a desert, and the other side has like rainforests and shit. We never even made it to Honolulu, just the airport. Which was cool though, since it was our honeymoon and all we wanted to do was hang out and find some good herb. Never found any though. Funny story though, I had brought like

a half kilo of some killer, and I'm used to flying with herb, but I had forgotten that Hawaii was a quarantine island. So they played this tape on the plane, and I thought "Fuck, I'm screwed", so I flushed the whole thing. But it was cool,



because I'm thinking that it's Hawaii, you know, Kona buds. So, I get off the plane and there was no check, I couldn't believe it. I didn't find any buds for like 5 days, well I did, but it was fake, I got ripped off. But anyway, in Kona I found some that was totally high priced, but at that point I was like, whatever. So, goin' to the beach one day, in the middle of the lava flow, there's this kid carrying like an armload of this fresh cut buds, right. Everyday I had a hundred dollar bill in my pocket for just such an occasion, but not today. I only had twelve bucks on me, and dude wouldn't do anything for me. Fuck dude, I'm a hippie, everyone that meets me for the first time knows this, and these guys were just totally trippin'. It sucked, I'll tell you, fuckin' stingemeister, but other than that, a killer time...



It seems like Immolation have been around forever. Releasing *Dawn of Possession* in 1991, they seemed to virtually disappear until 1996, when *Here in After* was put out. Well, not that long of an interim this time, and *Failures for Gods* is well worth the wait. Dealing with the dark, FfG may be the band's proudest moment. Vocalist/Bassist Ross Dolan tells the tale of the band.

RoR - You guys have been one of the main bands that I remember as leading the way for the "new" American death metal sounds in the nineties. You've released go great albums during your career, but that career has also spanned almost 10 years. What happens in between each album that dictates such a hiatus?

RD - Well, I can tell you the reason for the delay between the first and second album, which was like 5 years. Yeah, we know that's a little ridiculous, and believe me, it wasn't planned that way. Basically, it was due to the fact that we were on Roadrunner for the first album, and we split from RR in 1993, two years after the first album was released. So for about 2 years, we didn't have a label at all. That really limited us as to what we could do. We weren't completely inactive at that time, we did play a lot of shows in the U.S., South America and Puerto Rico. We also did Canadian dates, Milwaukee and a few other fests here in the U.S.. Again, there's only so much that a band can do without a new album or a label behind you. Also during that time we released *he Stepping on Angels* CD, which was something that we did to let people know that we were still around. So, the label thing played the main part in that 5 year delay. Once we signed to Metal Blade it was just a matter of months before the *Here in After* album was released. I mean, we had booked studio time before we even signed, and the whole album (HiA) was done before we signed anything! We weren't too worried about it, since we had started the legal stuff,

but the album was done first, and I think that's pretty unusual [laughs]. So that explains the time period between *Dawn of Possession* and *Here in After*. The time period between *Here in After* and *Failures* was only about three years, but what most people don't realize is that *Failures* was actually recorded last year (July, 98), and the reason for the delay this time as the artwork. We use Andreas Marshall for every album, and we wanted to use him again because we love his artwork. Unfortunately, when we were finished recording our album in July, he was already booked solid until the end of the year. So we couldn't even start on our artwork until December. And because we have the full cover piece, and the inside piece, and all the little icons inside, it took him a while to do everything! Metal Blade didn't have everything until February.

RoR - But still that turnaround time doesn't seem very long to me!

RD - Oh yeah, once he has everything, has all our ideas, it takes him a couple of weeks. So, he got all our ideas in December, so the first piece was done in mid-January, the second piece was done in February, and the icons were done in about another week. So he's really pretty quick once he gets started, but he's pretty busy, he doesn't just do artwork, he also does work in film over in Europe. So that's the story with that, we really don't take 5 years to write 8 songs, you know [laughing]. I mean, we do spend a lot of time on the writing process, but not that long!

RoR - It's interesting to me though, you spent a number of years looking for a new label, and to me THAT'S when I think you would have lineup changes, but once you signed to Metal Blade, and things seemed more secure, you switched drummers.

RD - Craig (Smilowski, former drummer) never really contributed anything to the band, and it

got to the point where he wasn't even practicing, you know. We all work full time jobs, and here Craig was getting a free ride. He wasn't working, he wasn't doing much of anything. All we really ever asked of him was that he practice his drums, get them to the point where we didn't have to worry about him in the drum department. But he didn't even do that towards the end, and we just started to feel that we were carrying his weight, and we didn't have to do that.

RoR - And this is the type of music where you need a really strong drummer...

RD - Exactly! He was an amazing drummer, I can't say that he wasn't an amazing drummer, and he was also a cool guy, but when you're in a band situation, you all have to work equally to succeed. So when one person slacks so much, the others are picking up that slack. We knew Alex from before, and he was the first person that we asked, and the only person really. Craig actually left by taking a mini-vacation and never coming back! He never called us, and we didn't know what was going on. So we just got Alex, and he actually found out through other people that he was out of the band. We're totally happy with the situation now, because Alex is just like a machine.

RoR - And his approach to the band is better in regards to practicing, contributions?

RD - He's into it 100%. He's always down there practicing every night, I mean, he's a drummer, he loves to play drums, he doesn't need to be forced. Craig almost had to be forced to play his drums, and I think that's ridiculous.

RoR - Was it always that way with Craig? I mean, did he just burned out?

RD - No, in the beginning, he was real gung ho, but just after a while, he just started to slack

more and more, and I guess he felt that his position in the band was so secure that he could get away with murder. He was definitely wrong, because even though we're real easy going guys, you can only take so much. We're totally happy with Alex though, he's gone way beyond what Craig ever did, and he's proved to us that he's serious about this.

RoR - One interesting thing is that when you take a look at metal, you all have all these different sub-genres, and most of them are divided by sound and location, where a certain area tends to have a certain sound associated with it. The European sound is definitely different from the American, but the New York and Florida death metal sounds are somewhat similar, even though they're separated by a pretty big distance. Why do you think that American death metal sounds so different from the stuff that is coming from Europe?

RD - I don't know, but that's a good question. I think that the reason that a lot of the Florida bands sound similar is not because of the bands themselves, but because a lot of them chose to record at Morrisound. So, they all used the same producer, and they all wanted the same sound. So even though the bands may have their own individuality, but they end up all sounding the same. I think it's important for any band to have their own identity, that's why we always tried to do something different. That's why for the first album we went to Berlin and recorded with Harris Johns. We felt like he could do something a little bit different for us, which I think he definitely did. I don't think that Dawn of Possession sounds like anything else that came out around that time. And then with the Here in After album, we pretty much took a gamble and went to a studio in New Jersey. We actually far from happy with the production on that album, musically we think that it's a good album, but production-wise, it lacked

in a lot of areas, especially the drums, and some of the guitar work was lost. But, you live and learn, and the price was right for the time, it was close to us, and we liked the atmosphere of the studio. It was the first solo production job for that guy, and it was a big gamble. And again, for this album we tried something different, and we went to Millbrook Studios and worked with Paul Orofino, and we're totally happy with the end result. Again, Paul wasn't a death metal producer, but he'd produced a lot of classic stuff. Dee Snyder, Blue Oyster Cult, and we felt that a good producer could bring the best sound out of any type of music.

RoR - I would think that by this point you would also be clearer as to what type of sound you're going for.

RD - Exactly, we pretty much know what direction we want to go in musically, and in terms of sound. We know what we want, it's just a matter of getting the right person, and we're real happy with what Paul did for us on this album. It's produced well enough so that you can hear the drums, you can hear the guitars, but it's not overproduced and mechanical sounding. It also sounds kind of dirty, and has the feel and atmosphere that we wanted to capture.

RoR - I agree with you in terms of the studios making the bands sound similar, but there's also something more basic in terms of the guitar playing. I don't know if it's dissonance, or minor chord use (hey, I'm a drummer! - Ed), but there's something about the guitar work in Immolation that inherently sounds different than many other death metal bands.

RD - Yeah, I know what you're saying. The way that Tom and Bob play, they use a lot of dissonance in their playing, just the way that they play is very unique, very strange [laughs]. So that definitely adds to the sound and feel to

the songs. They also do a lot of layers, playing different keys and octaves at the same time, which makes it sound less one-dimensional.

RoR - You guys have been around for like 13 years now, do you feel like you have preset roles in the band, or are you constantly shuffling things around to make it different?

RD - No, we know that each one of us is good at a certain thing. We all contribute equally though, when you hear the finished product it's the result of all four of our inputs. I guess my strong points would be the lyrics and arrangements. Musically, I don't really contribute too much musically, but I can listen to something that they bring to the table and know whether it will work or not [laughs]. We all have a really good ear for that because we've been together for so long and we know what we want. I think a lot of time is spent on the drums, because the drumbeats can really make or break a riff. You can have a really dark guitar riff, and with the wrong drum beat underneath it, it'll just make it sound completely happy! So we really rack our brains when it comes to the drums. It's a good thing that Alex has a lot of patience, you know. Which is another good thing about Alex, he's always willing to try something new, which is something that we were looking for in a drummer. In fact, this time when we were in the studio, we made a few changes in the studio, which was a first for us. We usually like to go in totally prepared, but there was this part in the second song that just was not happening. It worked out for the best though.

RoR - Is Immolation the type of band that would write say fifty songs, and then weed through and pick twelve? Or do you stick with one song and hone that one until it's ready?

RD - We're definitely not the type of band that writes tons of songs and then sorts through



them. We have eight songs on the album because those were the only eight songs that we were able to write. We spend a lot of time working on the songs, we don't just write stuff and say, "O.K., this is cool". We write a song, and then try to work up most of it before we move on. We make the songs that we write 100%, and those are the songs we use. I mean, it was nice to have more stuff to choose from, but we're just not that type of band.

RoR - I think that the songs that you write are pretty intricate as well, so it would take a fair amount of time to digest them...

RD - Yeah [sighs], I think that the material on the new album is actually less intricate than the Here in After album, there was some wacky stuff going on there. People have told us that they liked the album, but that it took them a long time to get into it. I understand that, because even working on the songs, it took me a while to get used to them! As wacky as they are though, they all flow and they have certain dynamics that make them work. I think that this album may sound intricate, but it's definitely more straightforward than the last one.

RoR - I wanted to ask you about the lyrics. You have a certain theme that you base a lot, if not all, of the lyrics on, and I wondered how you came up with new lyrics, and how they pertained to you as an individual.

RD - Basically, if anybody reads the lyrics, they can see where we're coming from, and where we stand on the whole idea of religion. We get asked this a lot. We've done tons of interviews in the last few weeks, and people ask us if we're pessimistic people, or if we have a lot of hatred towards people who are Christians. We don't, we don't hate people. We hate that people allow themselves to be manipulated to a certain extent by religion. Again, these are just personal feelings that we, as a band, agree on. That's why we can keep writing about the same topics, we can relate to it. We were all brought up as Catholics, and I for one went to a Catholic high school, Tom's parents are religious. So it's not just something that we're writing with out of the blue, it's something that played a part in all of our earlier lives. It's also something that we feel strongly about, and as I said, they are our personal feelings, people don't have to agree with us. We're not out to influence or change people's minds, but we are putting these ideas out on the table. I think a lot of people can relate to them if they read the lyrics. We definitely spend a lot of time on the lyrics to make them dark, and yet at the same time intelligent. The whole idea of a heaven and a hell, a god and a devil, it makes for a nice children's story, but at this point in my life, religion plays no role. It's a little farfetched to me that people still let this play such a huge role in their lives. I mean, we're in 1999, and there are so many other things that are going on in the world, and people are still all hung up on this idea of religion. It's absurd to me to believe in something that doesn't exist. I mean, it would be nice to believe that there is something out

there, but I'm more of a realist, and I have to have some solid proof, you know? [laughs]. So I try to focus on the things in my life around me that are important, like my family, my friends, my day to day business.

RoR - I figured it was something like that, I didn't want it to seem like a baited question, I just wanted to see what angle you would come from. Now, I don't feel like your lyrics are blatantly satanic, but when a band does play the "Satan" angle, they're also drawing in a lot of kids, which is sort of the other side of the coin. You guys seem to want people to think for themselves.

RD - Exactly, and that's the problem, most people don't think at all, they just go with the flow. I guess it's just a lot easier for people to live with something that they've been brought up believing. It was probably around the time of my senior year in high school that the turning point came for me. From that point on, it pretty much took the path that I'm on now. And it's not any kind of radical path, it's just my beliefs. We're not a satanic band, we've never, ever claimed to be a satanic band. I always bring that up in every interview, because Satan was something that was created by religion, and... it's silly.

RoR - Well, the title reiterates that as well, if you had called it Failures for GOD, that is a lot different than Failures for GODS.

RD - Right, it encompasses all gods, people who worship and allow themselves to be controlled by these "gods". The title actually means two things, obviously, the failures for gods, the people are failures for believing and worshipping these gods, and the gods themselves are failures because they never deliver what they promise. An if anything is delivered it's on a very shallow, superficial level, it has no substance to it.

RoR - You guys have been together for a long time, and if you look back over the career of the band, I mean, what do you think?

RD - We're real happy! We feel real fortunate to still be here. Obviously it's been a real long time, and I guess that the fact that had this longevity, it's amazing. Because when we started, it was a fun thing for us. We never planned on releasing albums, we never planned on touring, we never planned on doing any of this stuff! We got together because we were fans of the music, and we wanted to write some heavy stuff. We recorded a demo, and sent it out to some people, and then all of a sudden, we're getting mail from all over the world, which to me was like, mind-blowing. Then the whole thing with Roadrunner came along, and we couldn't believe that we were recording an album. The bottom line is, we're just fans like anybody else. We're still big fans of the music, we're all freaks, we got out to the record store, try to pick up the new stuff. I don't think that's ever changed, and that may be why we're still around, because we still love doing this. I think that if it ever got to the

point where we didn't enjoy it, we wouldn't do it anymore. We all work full time jobs, but we all look forward to playing the music, going out on tours, doing interviews. Anything band related is something that we take total pleasure in doing. We never look at it as something that is a pain in the ass, or a job to us.

RoR - And then the future?

RD - Well, we want to try and get the touring for Failures done right away, because we want to get the next album done by the end of the year. Completely finished and possibly recorded. At the least written, that way we can do some of the European festivals in 2000. For the next album we're going to push further and write something that's even darker than the last album. We'll see!

IN AETURNUM

One of the things that truly bums me out is that most of the cool bands are from Sweden. This is for a couple reason, A. I'll most likely never see them, and B. When doing interviews I have to get up at an ungodly hour, as Hawaii is 12 hours away from this metal mecca. So, early one Sunday (what, you think I was in church or something?) David Larsson called me up to chat about his new album, and the conversation kinda went like this...

David - Hello, this is David from the Swedish In Aeternum (is there a Dutch In Aeternum?).

RoR - Hi, this is the American Evan, I'm really tired right now, so I hope you can bear with me until I wake up.

DL - [laughs] - Sure, sure. That's OK, I've been drinking for quite a while.

RoR - So, the album is out, how do you feel about it after some time?

DL - It feels good! We're still satisfied [laughs], even though we could have made some different things with the record-

ing, put some more time into the vocals. All in all though, it's still a good album.

RoR - I was pretty surprised when I first threw it in, because most of the stuff I get from Necropolis has a really raw production to it. It makes more sense when I read the influences that you're not a typical black metal band, so in that regard maybe you weren't limited in what you could experiment with. Would you consider yourself a black metal band?

DL - Not really, I mean, the lyrics, they are Satanic in a way. So, if you go by the lyrics, it's black metal, but, if you go by the music, it's more death metal. I mean, we grew up with all the eighties bands, so that has made an impact on the music as well. I mean, we don't sound like the Norwegian black metal bands like Darkthrone or something. We listen to a lot of the old stuff like Sodom and Celtic Frost. All of those bands have put an impact on the music, so it's definitely more death metal.

RoR - Well, it seems like all of the black metal bands have like a code of honor which forbids them from recording anything half-decent. Everything sounds like it went straight to a tape player. The production is really good on Forever Blasphemy, and I guess for some reason I didn't expect that.

DL - It's still dirty though!

RoR - Well, it's different than what usually comes out of Studio Fredman. Usually anything out of there has certain characteristics that you can peg. I actually didn't know until I looked at the credits who produced it...

DL - So then we succeeded! We wanted a different sound, but we actually used the stuff

that they had in the studio. We wanted a really heavy sound on both the guitars, bass and drums, you know, and we didn't really want it all that clean. As you said, most stuff from that studio sounds the same. I'd say that our guitar sound is very dirty, very raw, the way it should be. We came to the conclusion that the sound is a mixture of old Destruction and old Mercyful Fate, that's the best way that I could describe it.

RoR - Looking over the history, it seems as though you've been around for a while, but as with many bands, you went through some serious lineup changes. You almost reformed the band from scratch at one point, what happened?

DL - Yeah, well, we started the band back in 1992, and we released some rehearsal tapes in 1993. After that, people came in and out of the band, I'm actually the only original member. The second guitar has been with us since 1994, and the bass player has been with us for two years, and the drummer one. But the music is still the same as what it was in 1992 or '93, it's mostly the vocal parts which have changed. It wasn't me that sang on the other recordings. We actually used some very old riffs on the album, and they're dated from like '92 or '93. So I wouldn't say that we started from scratch again. I should explain this better. Our second guitar player, he used to play the drums. We did a mini-CD in 1997 called And Darkness Came, where he did the drums. He actually did the drums from 1994 to 1998, but then we got a new drummer because he didn't want to play the drums anymore. That's the reason for having a new drummer. The new guy who plays the drums, he fits into the band very well. He's very young, but that means that he has a lot of years ahead! [laughs] It feels very good now. We just toured for three weeks, and the bass

player, he gave up a job that he was applying for to go tour, so I think that shows dedication. The drummer was still in school when we were on tour, so he just took off. He's finished with school now, so he's unemployed and he has a lot more time.

RoR - So how did that tour go?

DL - Oh it was good, even though some shows were complete crap! Very few people, but some places, like Italy, Hungary, Slovenia were very good. France was also very good, but we didn't get to play two shows because we came so late to Vienna, that was total shit. We got along with the other bands very well, but Benediction was also on the tour, and they're like pot smoking hippies. They didn't have anything to do on that tour, they were just complete fuckups. The other bands were great though, Immortal were good guys, Ritual Carnage were very good guys...

RoR - Well, why would a band like Benediction be on the tour with you guys, they don't seem to fit that bill.

DL - Yeah, yeah, it's complete crap, because when we heard about the tour, there was no talk about Benediction. They had actually cancelled because they didn't have a drummer. When we did the first show in Holland, they showed up and were like "We're going to be on this tour." No one expected them there, because they had cancelled. They played some real crap death metal, you know. It was quite funny, because a lot of people came to the shows just to see Benediction, which is weird to me, since their music completely sucks! Most people hadn't heard us, which was a bummer, but we got a good response from most people, they were headbang-



Cont'd on page 45

GARDENIAN

RoR - So how are things going for you guys?

T - It seems to be going pretty well so far, we've been getting splendid reviews everywhere. People are buying the album so far!

RoR - It's kinda weird, I was really into Two Feet Stand (again, thanks to Rob) back in '97, but then it seems that you kinda faded into the background until now.

T - Oh man, we had some problems with the record label and everything. They (Listenable) couldn't get the album out, you couldn't get it anywhere. That was the first thing, and then they didn't do any promotion for us, there were no tours at all! It just sucked really! They were too small, that's the first thing that we noticed. We didn't get any sales statements or anything like that. In the end we just wanted out from the label. We tried to leave them for one and a half years.

RoR - And then Nuclear Blast were waiting to pick you up?

T - Yeah, well Niklas toured with In Flames (for Whoracle), and after that we decided that we wanted to change labels. We started to talk to Earache, Century Media, Metal Blade and Nuclear Blast, Nuclear Blast waited to see the price for us from Listenable, and ended up buying us for like \$250,000 DM. That made us feel pretty important.

RoR - I have to say that Two Feet Stand has some real Gothenburg elements to it, do you feel that Soulburner has more of your own sound this time?

T - Yeah, definitely. We tried to get rid of the In Flames sound, but still have the melodies in it. That's pretty hard to do, since we come from Gothenburg, you know! We've been round for like four years, so we didn't try to take the In Flames sound exactly. In fact, we tried to sound more like At the Gates in the beginning. That was too much melody, so we really didn't know what to do on the first album, we were totally green really. On Soulburner we tried to mix the sound of all of the different influences that we listen to. Try to get more of a heavier sound like Nevermore, something like that. We pretty much into that stuff right now, Nevermore are one of the world's best bands!

RoR - That must change the approach to the drumming then (at this point I must admit that I wasn't sure which Tim/Thim I was speaking with - Ed).

T - Oh yeah, it is, but Thim has always been good on drums. The thing is, he always tried to do more on drums than he needed to, so on

this album we tried to get him to do only what was needed, and still have some death metal elements. It was pretty cool to listen to him when he recorded it, but it also took like four days. He had a high fever the first two days. Everybody was sick when we recorded the album actually. When I recorded the vocals I would sing for like half an hour and then lay down because my head hurt so much.

RoR - Where did you guys record Two Feet?

T - We went to studio Fredman, but this time we wanted a heavier sound, so we researched quite a few different places, but then ended up at Fredman once again! This time all of the equipment was ours though, and this time we also knew what sound we wanted. Last time Fredrik



was never there at all, I think out of 11 days he was there like one day. This time though he really took the time to create the sound that we wanted. We basically got the sound on our amps before, so it wasn't that difficult. I think that we got a heavier guitar sound than on Two Feet Stand.

RoR - I know that Niklas was with In Flames for a while, was that supposedly a permanent decision at the time?

T - No, he was only a session member for a while. They asked him to sign a contract with them, but he didn't want to. They weren't really a band, more like a group of individuals, and he didn't want that. He thought that Gardenian had a good thing going with the new songs, so he decided that he didn't want to be with In Flames anymore. That was not permanent AT ALL! This was good because Niklas is very good at music and it's kinda hard to find a good guitarist as well.

RoR - Have you guys done any shows for Soulburner yet?

T - We've done one here in Gothenburg. It's like a huge party every year, and we played in this big square in a tent. We played like 6 songs and it went over really well.

RoR - It's kinda strange because it seems like almost every major Swedish band has released an album in the last couple of months!

T - It's like that! We tried to release our album before anyone else, but we didn't succeed, we're actually like the last ones [laughs]. Nuclear Blast didn't want to release us and Hypocrisy, In Flames and Covenant all at once! I think they also wanted to wait with our album because they felt that it was something special, with all the clean vocals on this album and everything.

RoR - That's true, why the shift to clean vocals?

T - We wanted to do something new, and at first we recorded a demo tape back in '97 where we had a friend sang some vocals for us. It was just an idea in the studio, but it sounded very good and we wanted to keep that idea for the rest of the songs as well. I tried to do the vocals myself in the studio, but I haven't sung clean in like 2 years, so it was quite hard! So Niklas suggested that we call Erik, who did the vocals on that demo. So he came down to Gothenburg from Norway on one day's notice, so that was pretty good. He sang five songs in six hours, without having heard them before, it was quite amazing!

RoR - Well, he didn't have the flu [joking tone]...

T - That's right! But he definitely had it when he went home! It was pretty cool working with him on these songs, he had never heard them before. Well, he had heard Deserted, because that was on the demo, but that was the only one.

RoR - Will you take care of the vocals yourself live?

T - I'm doing them live myself right now. We tried to get Erik to go with us on the tour, but we leave next Friday and he's got to be home with his wife, and she's expecting their child, so... I'm trying to do the vocals myself, I've been practicing a lot. Erik's a big boy though, and he's got long hair, so I think that he would look very good on stage.

RoR - So who are you touring with again?

T - Hypocrisy, Covenant, Evereve and Brimstone, I think.

Cont'd on page 45

STUCK MOJO

HVY1



STUCK MOJO AT THEIR VERY BEST...LIVE!

15 HARD-HITTING MOJO CLASSICS RECORDED LIVE ON THEIR "RISING" WORLD TOUR
AS WELL AS THE 2 BRAND NEW STUDIO TRACKS "REBORN" AND "MY WILL".

"HVY1" FEATURES LIVE VERSIONS OF TRACKS
FROM THESE AVAILABLE STUCK MOJO RELEASES:



RISING



PIGWALK



SNAPPIN' NECKS



CENTURY MEDIA RECORDS
1453-A 16TH STREET, #324 • SANTA MONICA, CA 90404 • WWW.CENTURYMEDIA.COM



It's hard enough for a band to make it in this day and age with tons of label support, let alone on their own. Well, Dying Fetus are a testament to hard work, being one of the few truly underground bands to earn a sizeable following and to be known as one of the highlights of any American festival. Releasing their penultimate work last year, *Killing on Adrenaline* is aptly named, being one hell of a sonic ride. Fueled by hate, society and "a healthy sense of humor", Dying Fetus have managed to keep things together despite many percussive obstacles. Bassist/Vocalist Jason Netherton has this to say... "I'm very surprised that we are still together, when we started out we had such mad energy and dedication. After years of problems with drummers and shit we came across Kevin our present drummer, who brought the long sought talent we needed to compliment the song writing. We came so close to breaking up like in '95 when we were at the lowest point with no drummer. The high point was when "*Killing on Adrenaline*" came out in 1998 and we finally got to the Milwaukee Metalfest and everyone just gave us a great response. So far my part time hobby has turned into an ok little career." Part-time hobby? If that's the case, then the rest of us need to pack our shit in, for few bands possess the sheer ability to not only write incredibly difficult songs, but to perform them flawlessly as well. Again, let me say that all this is done almost completely independent of label support, Dying Fetus only recently signing to Morbid Records. "Why Morbid?" one may ask. Well, being troopers of the underground, DF have learned a thing or two about the music business... "It's about the same at the underground level as it was years ago, except when we started there was no internet really. It still takes a full on grassroots underground mailing campaign to get peoples attention. "Major" labels sometimes don't help the underground when they

just suck up bands and use them for a couple of albums and then drop them... This is what happens when they sign bands that haven't generated the credibility that comes from working the underground for years before you get a label deal with an honorable label, and that is about 1% of all greedy record labels. The festivals are cool, except for the ones that again bleed money from the little bands by making them pay, that's just not cool. Those bands should just be able to play, especially since they're playing in the morning sometimes." So maybe know it makes a little more sense as to their label decision, Morbid being a smaller, yet seemingly fair label based in Germany. With all the horror stories out there, it seems that Dying Fetus are making out OK, with Morbid taking over the "grass-roots" campaigning that the band took care of for so long. With a decent budget allotted to the band, Morbid can also be thanked for making *KoA* the War Machine that it is. Add in the fact that the band is actually receiving royalties (almost unheard of!), is this a sealed deal for the future? "(*Killing on Adrenaline*) was a one album deal, we are taking it one at a time right now, and so we will look at our options for the next one from a variety of different sources. Our past record sales have increased by the way, and we have released all of our albums on our own label, Blunt Force Records." So Morbid

has helped the "world's hardest working band", adding to the rapidly growing fanbase by delivering the goods, but all of this would be moot if it wasn't for the simple fact that Dying Fetus write some of the fastest, technical, catchiest songs around. On their own, they've managed to separate themselves from the pack of brutal bands out there who manage to sound like Amtrak going off the rails early one morning. So how do they do it? "Simple, we just place songwriting above everything else. The process is a long and careful one, 'cause we want our songs to be as perfect as possible, to flow from beginning; to have all the riffs built on the same theme and remain in key. That to us is a well written catchy song, and that is what we like to hear. Production is critical as well, and we obviously strive for it in the studio."

Killer songs, killer sounds, killer lyrics, not one to idly stand by and watch the world turn to shit, Jason tends to wear his beliefs on his sleeve. Of course, whenever you feel strongly about something, you draw controversy to yourself, and one may begin to wonder as to the mental balance. Of course, this is also death metal, and while I doubt that Chris Barnes or Macabre actually live the life they describe, I for one, have to ask whether this is for release, or meant to maybe provoke a little thought?

"It's a little bit of both, I take my political beliefs very seriously, but at the same time death metal is a release for me and it's kinda funny in many ways. The themes I have started to introduce in the lyrics are certainly meant to provoke thought, I am not trying to preach, I just want people to wake up to the world around them and what's really going on politically and economically in the new world economic order." Well, one way to get people outside of the metal community is to call yourself Dying Fetus, a name that I've been casually throwing around. Now, while you or I may not even think twice about a band being named Dying Fetus, there are quite a few "radicals" out there masquerading



Cont'd on page 45



Ah, the obligatory intro. I could start to spew rhetoric about how great these guys are, or the fact that certain Publicists always seem to catch their shows at the festivals, but I'd rather just sit back and let you, the listener, buy their excellent second CD and make your own opinions. Fresh from their recent Metalfest performance, I caught up with Justin to find out what the boys have been up to since I last interviewed them for Issue 2...

RoR - So what the hell have you guys been up to since we last chatted? Any crazy performances or anecdotes you'd like to share?

JK - Well, we just finished our 2nd cd titled *The World I Died For* (see review in this 'zine) and the CD release show is set for October 9th. Right after that we're going to put together our set for the San Antonio Metalfest Nov. 5th and 6th. At the moment, we're contacting clubs between NY and Texas to see if we can book a few shows on the way out and on the way back. We've also just finished updating the web site that everyone can check out at www.myselfamhell.com. At one of our last shows at CBGB's we were almost done with our set when a beautiful blond appeared from the bar and came forward to the stage. She was looking to come up so I stopped playing and took her hand and pulled her on stage. She started dancing around me and grinding behind me and then she danced in front of me and moved my bass out of the way. I stopped playing and just stared at her for a second before she just grabbed my head and started kissing me. She stopped, turned around, got off stage and walked back to the bar. I stood there for a minute before I realized that we were still on stage and that everyone else was still playing so I jumped back into the song, ended the set and went and found her. Turned out to be quite a night...

RoR - What's up with Adam's hair? Did he have to sell it to afford that fancy new drum kit?

JK - Yeah he was looking for a little extra cash and the pimping wasn't going along too well because it was cold out and the mayor was cracking down on prostitutes, so he chopped off his hair and sold it on EBAY to the highest bidder. Went to a bald guy in Tibet... The Dalai something or other I think!

RoR - Have you played any other shows since metalfest? Wrote any new songs? Done any new covers? Is Matt moving around more in practices now?

JK - Yeah Matt's really starting to get comfortable up on stage now and he's really building his stage presence. He should be great in San Antonio, but we'll find out at the two shows we're playing before we leave. We're playing at CBGB's again in Oct. and then our CD release show. We're working on *Altar of Sacrifice* by Slayer because I've never heard anyone play it and I'm looking forward to growling "Enter to the realm of Satan". I'd really like to make the song more satanic and heavier than it is and I think growling will accomplish that. And the last song on *The World I Died For* is a cover of *Tornado of Souls* by Megadeth off of *Rust in Peace*. We sped it up and growling really makes the song seem more bitter and vengeful and Matt shreds on the solo, he really nailed it perfectly. Right now I'm working on a new song that I haven't titled yet and Ron just showed me a few riffs that he's stringing together. I have some lyrics that would be perfect for it, so I think the song will be *Chances to Kill*. It's pretty "out there" subject matter, but I'll talk about that later.



Exorcism of God - deals with getting God out of people's lives and forcing them to take responsibility for their own actions rather than using God as a crutch when they have problems.

One superior aspect to the band is their lyrical content. Dealing with the dark yet written in an intelligent matter, you never know just how the blasphemy will be served up. I let Justin take the soapbox to try and dissect some of his thoughts on his writings for the new CD. **I Remain** - about a medieval sorcerer basically gets fucked after a thousand years of rotting in his grave.

Cowardly Demise - Christ denounces God while being crucified and admitting that everything he'd said are lies and then he proclaims

From Death I Arise - about an immortal serial killer who's only goal is to kill billions and wipe out mankind.

The World I Died For - Christ develops an ego while on the cross and thinks that everyone should worship him for the sacrifice he's basically suck and treat him like a joke, so he condemns us all to live, die and burn in Hell for not paying him proper homage.

his torturer his new lord before his torturer brands him a coward and kills him.

Of course, these are just thumbnail outlines of the songs, they're more complex and twisted...naturally!!

Well, the Hebrew school thing really sucked, kind of like kids who had to go to catholic school after real school. We learned a lot about religion and all the hypocrisy that exists within each one. I used to have a great time

Myself Am Hell is:

Justin Klenosky - Vocals, Bass
Matt Klenosky - Lead Guitar
Ron Tichenor - Lead Guitar
Adam Romanowski - Drums

P.O. Box 416
Merrick, NY 11566
<http://www.myselfamhell.com>





Unless you've been living in a cave or have out at sea for the past 5 years, you already know that Hypocrisy are by far one of the most important bands in the history of metal. A musical genius, studio wizard Peter Tagtgren called me on Memorial Day to chat about just about everything, from his new album to his drumming background. One hell of a cool guy, Peter and Hypocrisy definitely deserve our respect for creating yet again another milestone in metal with their latest release.

RoR - Well, when I think of all of the stuff that you have worked on, everything has been done and done well. Have you always been an over-achiever, or someone that can set their mind to do anything and get the job done?

Peter - Yeah, I think that goes for anyone! I've been playing in bands since 1983, so things didn't happen overnight. But it was a cool challenge I had (with Phil from MC), because the stuff that I had going on in America didn't go that well. I knew that the only way to make it was to go back home and use my friend's studio, get my ideas down on tape.

RoR - Do you still find inspiration from bands that you listen to?

Peter - Of course, bands that I record influence me, not completely, but some things get stuck in your head without even wanting them. Anything I listen to influences me in some way, and the more that I write the more that things that I listened to in the past influences me more. I don't why, but it feels that it's turning out that way.

RoR - Do you think that's because things are ingrained more when you're younger, that you're more impressionable?

Peter - I don't know, I think I get more in balance with myself somehow. I think that I have more self-confidence, you know, trusting yourself more with writing. I mean, when the first Hypocrisy came out, the idea was just to be brutal. I've always been into brutal music, since I was a kid. You know, whatever was the most brutal, that's what I was listening to. Now it's not just about that, it's more about just creating good music, that I like.

RoR - That's sort of what you said before when you talked about the slower material on Abducted...

Peter - To make the first two albums was a challenge. To make the most brutal album, ever. I was very inspired by Deicide, Morbid Angel, those bands. Then I wanted to try and develop by throwing in melodies while still keeping it heavy and honest.

RoR - To me, while I remember all the material, what stays in my mind are like the solo for A Coming Race, the more melodic stuff.

Peter - Yeah, I think that the strongest side of Hypocrisy is the slower, depressive side.

RoR - I have to ask you about the tracking order for The Final Chapter. Was it intentional to alternate between fast/slow, fast/slow?

Peter - Yeah, kinda, because we had six fast songs and six slow songs. So were like "OK, how the hell are we gonna put this together?" I mean, two fast songs then a slow, a slow then two fasts? Finally we just decided on fast/slow/fast/slow... Then I put the lyrics to the order, because it's three chapters, you know?

RoR - Did you have the extra tracks (released on the live album) done during the same recording session?

Peter - Uhhh, let's see. The Beginning of the End was supposed to be on the Abducted album, but it never made it, because we didn't think that it was good enough. The song Fuck U was just me and Lars writing a punk song, you know, like The Exploited, which we wrote in like 96 or 97. Time Warp and Until the End were done as like a pre-production demo for the new album. We wanted to put those songs on the live album just so that people could have something extra to listen to.

RoR - Well, I think it's definitely an incentive to buy the album, because I know that a lot of people are down on live albums. You know, they feel that they've heard it all before, and better on the studio version.

Peter - You know, I think the opposite though. In Europe, we have a reputation of being a better live band, because everyone says that we're so much better live.

RoR - I guess I could see that if you've seen a band, you can get the live album and relive some of the feelings that you had when you saw them, but...

Peter - You can just crank the stereo [laughs]

RoR - What happened to Matthias at the Melt-down, I heard food poisoning???

Peter - Yeah, that was the worst gig ever in our whole career, it was totally shit. You know, we had just put out a good live album, and that was the first show to prove ourselves, it just went shit. First of all it went shit because he didn't show up, and also because I haven't played the melodies that I was playing that night for almost three years! So I was trying to find the melodies

WHILE

I was playing, because I didn't have time to practice. He got sick the same day we got on the plane. I told the audience straight out, "This is going to suck, but it's better than cancelling".

RoR - And then you did shows in other areas afterwards?

Peter - Yeah, New York and Philadelphia. The show in NYC was really cool, because then we had kind of found ourselves, got used to the three piece lineup. It sounded much better then.

RoR - That's cool, because people seem to forget that bands are human, and that they get sick or hurt and then can't play...

Peter - Yeah, I was pissed as hell though. I was like "puke on the plane, motherfucker!" But he was like two hundred kilometers from me so I couldn't grab him.

RoR - You guys should be playing some festivals in Europe now...

Peter - Yeah, in Europe, we have some big festivals lined up, we played the Dynamo festival last weekend. That was totally sick...

RoR - We have a couple of big festivals in the states, but why do you think that there is such a bigger following in Europe?

Peter - I have NO idea. The United States is a much bigger country, you know. Maybe it's just too spread out. I mean, Germany is a small country, roughly the size of Florida. In Germany we sell almost twice as much as we do in America, so I have no idea at all.

RoR - Is it possible for you to separate your roles when you go in to record a Hypocrisy album as producer and as a player?

Peter - When I produce Hypocrisy it's hell, because you can't just switch off after 8 hours and go home and relax, which is what I do with other bands. It's easier to get distance with other bands because I don't get so involved. You have a totally different view with other bands, it's easier to become creative, relax, try to bring the best out of the musicians. But when you sit there yourself, punching yourself in, playing guitar, feeling yourself stinking, then it sucks. Plus you think about it 24 hours a day.

RoR - So when you are recording other bands you approach it as a standard work day?

Peter - Yeah, exactly, because I want to be creative. 8 hours, you know, that's enough, and then you lose your creativity. So, I mean, when I'm there by myself, I can't leave after 8 hours, there's no way. And I just sit there until my woman starts calling, asking me if I died.

RoR - Since you see so many bands coming through in the nineties, and you're writing a new album, do you try to be innovative, or do you just accept that everything has pretty much been done already?

Peter - I guess when I write music I just follow my heart. The most important thing is that I like it myself, basically do my shit for myself.

RoR - It seems as though you've changed your sound considerably since the first days, what are the responses that you get from fans?

Peter - Well, Hypocrisy is a band that grows for every album in terms of sales and response from people. OK, you may lose some older fans, because some people think that you are selling out, or they don't like the way that things are going, and that's cool, I can understand that, but for me, I don't care anymore. I'm just in it for myself. OK, if we had done the same thing for every album then we wouldn't be where we are right now, and I wouldn't be happy with it! I would probably have quit a long time ago. Also, if you release the same album twice in a row, there are no surprises. At least when you get a new Hypocrisy album, it will be different from the last one. It doesn't matter if it's a big step or not, it will be refreshing. OK, you might not like it, but at least it's different!

RoR - One huge change I noticed was that the production on The Final Chapter was real gritty as compared to Abducted, which had a real, uh, clean production.

Peter - Yeah, that's one thing that I wanted to change with The Final Chapter, I wanted to have it more raw, in your face. I wanted a very dry, but heavy sound. You know, Abducted is almost

overproduced to my ears, so I went for a real dirty album.

RoR - So, looking at the change between those two albums, how would you see the change between The Final Chapter and Hypocrisy?

Peter - I would say that as songwriters we've developed a lot more. The vocal style is a lot more dynamic as well.

RoR - Is that something that you wanted to do as a vocalist, and naturally progress into?

Peter - I'm very picky about not doing the same thing twice. I've always been like that, it must just be the way that my brain works. The thing with production, well, maybe some people can say that they can tell that it was recorded in Abyss studio, but I don't think that you can put on two albums recorded there and say that they sound exactly the same. Like certain other studios have their signature sound. I hope that bands come to Abyss studios and know that they will get good quality. I'm not saying super quality, but I would never just throw up a couple of microphones over the drums and say "OK, let's go." What I do, I do 100%, and the rest is up to the bands.

RoR - Do you put a lot of your own personal views into the production jobs? I mean, if someone came in and said that they wanted to have the same production as the first Bathory album, would you try to talk them out of it?

Peter - Yes! That's one thing I'm kind of alerted to, you know, when people say "I want to sound like this album". It doesn't really happen that often though, usually we just rig up the drums and start soundchecking and if the sound is good we keep on going with the guitars. A lot of bands say that a certain album sounded killer, and that's why they came here, but they don't want that sound, they just think that I can do a good job. It's very rare that someone says that they want to sound like a particular album.

RoR - I ask because I find that some of the black metal bands go for a sound that's tried and true, but I feel that you lose a lot of your identity when you do that.

Peter - Not only that, it becomes boring I think. It's like putting something on repeat, you know.

RoR - Well, that prompts the question, do you think that it's worth it as a band to try to be innovative, or to just try and be yourself?

Peter - I think that people should trust themselves more, not look around so much at what other bands are doing, just follow your heart, that what I always do nowadays.

RoR - Would you consider yourself a workaholic?

Peter - [laughing] Yeah. I mean, I live two hundred meters from my studio, you know! It's hard to not go down there.

RoR - Could you see yourself doing anything else?

Peter - No, not really...

RoR - Then you're one of the lucky people who find what it is they love to do in life.

Peter - Yeah, that's why you have to take care of it, not get spoiled or get into it for the money...

RoR - Well, you've got to be just reinvesting everything that you get now into the studio for more equipment.

Peter - Yeah, exactly! I'm not a rich person, all the money goes into the studio, and I think that's another reason why my sound is developing for everybody. I get new equipment which allows me to do a better job for them!

RoR - Well, I know that people were relieved when The Final Chapter wasn't so... I guess some of the main things that kept it going were



the Metalfest, and the fact that Lars and Mikael began to help with the songwriting...

Peter - Yeah, you know, I don't want to be the pilot of the band, I want everyone to help out with everything, you know, planning the release, all the other shit that comes with being in a band.

RoR - Well, it kinda seems like you need one person with strong direction to lead the band where it needs to go.

Peter - Yeah, I've noticed that also, there's always one person who knows where they want the band to go, who stays during the whole recording to oversee everything. I guess that's just a natural aspect to a band.

RoR - I think without that person, the band may not be able to go as far.

Peter - Well, that's what was so cool with KISS, you know. They always shared the whole thing. But, if you have four different wills, you know...

RoR - With all that you do, do your other projects, such as Pain, or The Abyss, become a break from Hypocrisy? Do you think that all of these bands represent different facets of your personality?

Peter - Well, The Abyss is long gone, since we all feel that we can top Summon the Beast, and we're going to leave it that way, not try to make money off of it. I think that yeah, they are all part of my personality a little bit, I've always been a black metal band, we've always been black metal fans, so The Abyss just started off with me and Lars switching instruments and jamming. Pain is just me fucking around in the studio with computers and stuff, trying different things.

RoR - To some people it's pretty surprising that you are equally adept at drums and guitar (frustrating to me :). What's your background, when did you pick up drums?

Peter - I actually started on drums when I was like 9. That's actually what I consider myself, a drummer. A guitarist I am not, I just write music and then I have to play it [laughs]. I enjoy writing music because it's a challenge. I always want to do better songs every time I write. I have to learn to play guitar more while I'm writing because things always become more complicated. I'm not a person who sits at home practicing and practicing you know. When I was a kid I used to practice drums like six, eight hours a day. But when I became eighteen I kind of lost interest and started playing guitar. If I want to play drums, I usually just put on some tapes and play along with headphones. There are so many albums that I can just play along with without even thinking about it. Like most of the Dio albums, like The Last in Line.

RoR - Since you now do so much, and you're a pretty recognized guy in the metal scene, does your personal life ever get intruded upon?

Peter - No, not really. I live in a very small village, so if I were to get cocky here I would probably get beat up! Especially when we're on tour I try to walk around and see what people have to say, if I didn't want to get bothered I would hide backstage! There are so many bands that I see that just hide backstage, I mean, life is supposed to be fun, go out and enjoy yourself!

RoR - So do you still get enjoyment by seeing bands play? Because for some people it just becomes a job, and they get tired.

Peter - Yeah, and when that happens, I think it's time to throw the towel in.

RoR - So do you ever get burned out?

Peter - Yeah, I can get burned out of ideas, but as soon as I get burned out then I get re-inspired again. Especially after I complete an album, I think "How the hell am I ever going to write a



song again?" but then one or two songs pop up right away. When you least expect things, that's when they happen.

RoR - Well, when you look over all the what make you things that you've done, particularly proud, or bring back some special memories?

Peter - Usually the Marduk albums, because we're very good friends. I was actually the roadie for them at Dynamo last week. I was like "Hey, you guys just relax", and I went up on stage and plugged everything in. So when they walked up on stage I just handed them the guitars and then walked off. I mean, they are really super cool friends, and we always get shitfaced the first day they get to the studio. So the next day we're just sitting there shaking with a hangover. That's usually how we start the recordings.

RoR - So now that's the new album is done, what are your feelings on it? How would you describe it to someone who has never heard it before?

Peter - I would say that with The Final Chapter I was almost 100% happy, and with this one I am 100% happy. I think that it has a very good sound, the songs are good, the performances

are getting better on every album that we do. So I think that this is the best album.

RoR - So you were re-inspired by them, were they re-inspired as well?

Peter - Yeah! Because it became a challenge to write songs, you know, like for all of us. The most important things are the songs. You don't have to be the best musicians, but as long as the songs do something for me.

RoR - Do you trash a lot of songs? Some bands write like 50 songs, and then only keep ten...

Peter - Uh, well, we wrote 20 songs and then kept ten of them. I'd rather put more time into making sure one song is good then to go to the next one and the next one.

RoR - Lyrically, which direction did you go in?

Peter - Oh man, I'm someone who sees lyrics as a necessary evil. I've never been a big fan of lyrics, books, writing, stuff like that. I've always seen my vocals as a second instrument, and for me, the words don't mean as much as the music. I think that the music can say much more than the words. I'm not saying that I like all instrumental music, but for me the music is the focus of my listening.

RoR - Well, as much as they may not be a focus, the lyrics to The Final Chapter tied together to be complete story, and seem pretty damn good to me!

Peter - Yeah, but I really don't feel comfortable having other people read my lyrics because I don't see myself as a lyric writer. I don't feel that I'm good enough to publish it, and then all this hype comes out "Wow, the new album, I want to see the lyrics", and I tell them that they don't have to see them because they suck! The only reason that I don't print them is because I think that they suck. Then people ask me why I'm singing them, and I have no fucking idea. For me, the vocals are like one big solo line from a guitar. It's just a melody or a progression.

RoR - About your solos, I was wondering, how thought out are they, some of the ones on the last couple albums are incredibly melodic...

Peter - I do a lot of punching when I do solos, because I want to find the right vibe. Sometimes if it's a fast song I want to do a Slayer like solo, or if it's a slow song I want to put more feeling into it, insert a melody. For me, I don't write it before I go into the studio, I write it as I'm recording it, jamming until I find the right notes I want to use.

RoR - So are there any US dates at all this year?

Continued on Page 44

Internal Bleeding

Driven Conquer

Internal Bleeding saved my life...

Well, not literally, but let's just say that I was at a particularly low point one average day that I received a package from Pavement Music. With much trepidation did I open said package, only to find *Driven to Conquer* being today's jackpot. More familiar with the history as opposed to the music of the band's first two discs, I threw DtC in and pressed play. The world would never be the same. Again, a bit melodramatic, but this album just fucking starts, and before you can recover, the disc is done, leaving you with the urge to go and kick the living shit out of that neighbor who continues to blast his Prince back catalog. Seeing these human capacitors live only reaffirmed what I already knew, that Internal Bleeding are one hell of a force to be reckoned with. I tracked down bassist Brian Hobbie to find out more information on what is sure to be this year's answer to the need for brutality.

RoR - Not to be incredibly predictable, but let's go back to the beginning. Since you've been in the band since almost day one, what were the band's expectations back then? How have they changed over time, and what were the factors? How have your playing styles changed, and is this due to experience or just wanting to constantly improve the IB sound?

BH - Our expectations are pretty much still the same from when we started, we just want to keep on going and put out albums. But after a while you need to be more involved with more than just that. Our style has definitely changed sound wise since we have had Wallace, Frank and Anthony. Working with different people always changes things a little bit, but sometimes for the better, or worse. Wallace turned out to be a rapist, now in prison for like 15 years or something, Frank became a corrections officer for the state of Maryland, and Anthony had problems with drugs. Just got out of jail for possession of heroin and crack. When we got Ray and Guy into the band, we had a new start with better ideas and it helped in a lot of ways.

RoR - The *Extinction of Benevolence* is advanced as compared to *Voracious Contempt*, but the leap between TEoB and *Driven to Conquer* is enormous! Several things changed between those albums, such as band members, and you also used a producer who seemed to really capture the sound. What do you think was the most important factor(s) in this latest evolution of IB? Was this shift in sound something more experimental, or a direction that you wanted to go to in the past but were limited?

BH - To be totally honest with you, I hate the way both VC and TEoB came out, due to lack of experience and luck we suffered though. Going to Brian Griffin (*Broken Hope*, *En Sinfonia*) in my opinion, saved this band for putting out a great sounding release. *Driven to conquer* would not have sounded like it does if we still had the other guys. Frank and Anthony were really into it at first, but in time just lost interest. Wallace was just there! So we used him as a vocalist for a while, just to get things going. Ray and Guy did an amazing job with their abilities to record and sound sick.

RoR - In talking about the lineup change, most people agree that Guy was the ultimate replacement for Anthony (it's not really hidden), but it's not as plain that the band was ready to part

Anthony and Frank left (again, I know, sorry!), and to why you chose

these two guys whose styles on the surface may not have fit what the IB sound WAS, but have worked out better than most fans could have expected...

BH - Well, Anthony's sound was really starting to suck and he did nothing about it. His settings and some rack shit he used at the time were retarded, and he thought it sounded cool. Guy joined the day we kicked Miola out, and his rig is insane. Frank's first dream before IB was to be involved with law enforcement, and he found it five hours away in Maryland. I will say that both of them did do a very large amount for this band. Miola music-wise and Frank networking-wise. Too bad they had to leave. Towards to end too, Frank almost ended Miola's life a couple of times, and we wouldn't have stopped him either.

RoR - How has the reaction to the new material been? You had an incredible performance at the *metalfest* this year (even with only one bass drum mic'd!), and I can see that you're playing quite a bit live, when's the IB world domination tour going to happen? As a musician, what are some of your most favorite tracks to play live?

BH - *Metalfest* was fun for me this year man! I have a good time every year. It gets me the fuck out of New York for a couple of days and I get to hang with my correspondees. Bill played amazing and tight, his drumming to me that night was sick. We've been playing a lot of out of state shows lately and the practice helps. Me and Ray were all over the place just going nuts for the crowd. Right now, us and *Broken Hope* are planning a tour and dates are now being set up for US and Canada. We're looking for two more bands to go out with. Beginning of Octo-



ber through mid November. Six shots in Dallas, Rage, Slave Soul, and Invisible are my favorites so far, but I pretty much enjoy playin' the whole CD live if we had more time. Still have to play old shit, but were practicing some different old songs at home.

RoR - Along those same lines, the energy that you guys emit from the stage is incredible, and is also (especially in a festival situation), a deciding factor in whether or not the crowd will appreciate one band over 3 or four others that are on other stages. When did you realize that crowd interaction was key in a band's live charisma?

BH - The band goes sick during any show we play. During big festivals, that's when you have to put on a real sick show and play your fucking heart out no matter what. Us and Dying Fetus have definitely built up our Metalfest fanbases over the years of playing the fest over and over again. We've played against Six Feet Under and a couple of other big acts in the past and I didn't let it discourage me, I just have a blast playing every year or for as long as it lasts for now.

RoR - Just in hanging in the general vicinity of all the brutal NY bands this year, it seems like most of you guys support, rather than compete, with each other. Is this indeed the case? Was it always this way? Why do you think that certain areas tend to breed a particular style of music, and it that really so? It seems like there was the Bay Area sound, the LI/NY brutal sound, and the Tampa areas sound, but then Cannibal and Malevolent moved from Buffalo there... Do you think that a particular area cultivates a sound?

BH - The scene is supposed to be all about support. There are bands that we support and get the same back. Fleshgrind, Disfigured and Dying Fetus are a few to name. The different sounds from the USA and world is what makes the music more interesting. To me, you need the different sounds to grow as a musician. If you think that you can write original songs and listen to only one style, it's not going to happen. The NY, Florida, and Bay area sounds is what made the underground what it is today.

RoR - I like the idea of putting a photo-timeline (and the audio thank you list) as part of the CD, what was the impetus behind that?

BH - Well, it was our way of showing thanks to all the people who have supported us through

out the years. Not many bands do that these days. We're grateful that we can this. The audio thanks list made life easier. More room in cd jacket for lyrics and info.

RoR - Sometimes I interview bands, and I ask what they listen to, and these guys that play like the most brutal stuff are like, "Oh, I like to jam to ABBA a lot...". What bands influence your playing? I know you guys did some Sabbath covers at the end of TEoB... What are the backgrounds as far as the other guys, you know, "Bill got his first drumset after beating up the school bully at 5..."? What's your all time favorite record?

BH - A ton of heavy bands for starters. The earlier bands like Sabbath, Maiden, and basically anything that was underground at the time that I could get me hands on, all those bands were my education. Everyone in the band listens to death metal and a variety of different music and styles. Right now, I have Hatebreed in my CD player, and next week it could be Mortician, Pyrexia, my friends band R22, or even the Beatles if I feel like listening to them. I know you ask if I have 1 a favorite album and to be totally honest with everyone I just don't. I listen to so much shit I can't decide. Everyone's backgrounds are pretty much, mmm, lets see how should I put it, pretty boring. It's all the same shit when it comes down to were we came from. All of us grow up in NY except for Bill who lived in Rhode Island for a short time.

RoR - It seems to me that while certain cities aren't as violent as they were in the eighties (I grew up in Philadelphia from 70-89 and it seems a LOT better now than it did back then), the US as a whole is a more angry, dangerous place. Why do you think that is? Why are kids growing up without any conscience to hold them back from knocking off the corner grocer? I mean, we probably all wanted to kill at least 25% of our high school graduating (or not) class, but something held us back... What do you think did?

BH - Kids these days need to get their ass kicked more by their parents!!!! They're ending up in jail and guess who has to pay for them to live, US and it's bullshit. My dad would have put me though the wall if I ever pulled the shit that generation X thinks is fun today. They are the people that decided to party one night back in the back of their father's car in the early 80s and had kids 9 months later. They created these

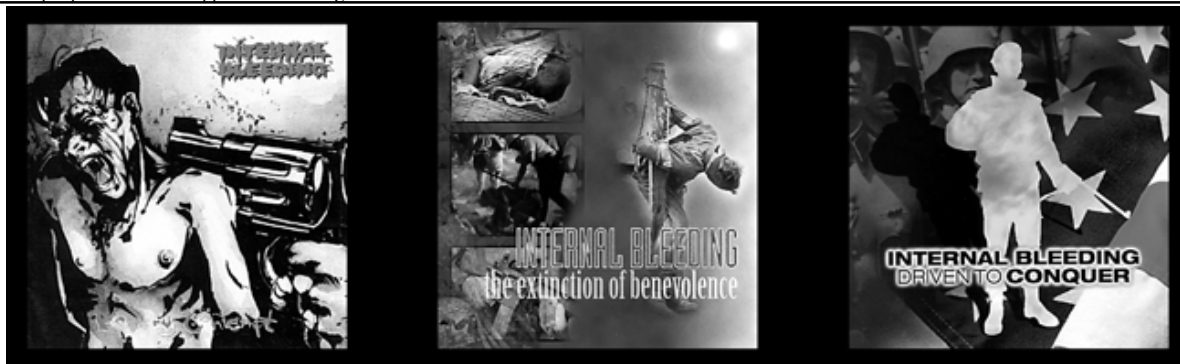
people, they should be held responsible for their actions if they can't do the job.

RoR - What's the most remote place that Internal Bleeding has played? And if you could play anywhere, who would you play for, and who would you take as an opening band?

BH - The opening band would be Disfigured for helping us in the time we needed it. The place would be South America, cause I hear they're fuckin' insane for death metal, and they're true fans of this music. The longest place we have traveled to is California when we were on tour in 96.

RoR - What's next for IB? Is there another monumental leap in store, or does this sound represent Internal Bleeding for the coming Millennium? Have any plans for the last hours yet?

BH - Touring with Broken Hope is now in the works and we're looking for a new label for the next album. Thanks for the interview Evan and everyone should buy this 'zine and support the underground, cause it's the only one we have. Stay Brutal from the guys in Internal Bleeding.





Although I had heard Lunar Strain, it wasn't until I got a copy of The Jester Race (thanks Rob!) that I realized the true genius of these Swedish upstarts. Fusing the melody of say, Priest or Maiden, with some heavy ass riffs, The Jester Race was a revelation in metal to me, and is still one of my favorite albums. Whoracle came and went, more accessible than TJR, but not making as much of an impact in my eyes. Commercially though, Whoracle brought the band much acclaim, but also dividing the band due to their increased popularity. So, in a sense, In Flames has been reborn, and Colony proves this perfectly. Still holding the foundation of what the band created, the newest opus is also a more energetic offering than 1997's Whoracle. A had a million questions for vocalist Anders Frieden when I had the opportunity to talk with him, but I tried to stay focused, and discover the inside story behind one of the originators of the Gothenburg Sound.



RoR - So how are things going for you? Tons of interviews today?

AF - Yeah, I'm doing a bunch today, like 20 or something like that. One of those days that will run really long for me [laughs].

RoR - I actually just got your album in the mail yesterday...

AF - Well, at least you have it! I was talking to another guy and he hadn't received it yet.

RoR - Yeah, and it seems different, but maybe not that much different from Whoracle. Because, to me, from The Jester Race to Whoracle was a big jump, and I don't hear that on Colony just yet. Is that because Bjorn did a lot of the writing for Whoracle?

AF - Yeah, that's a big part of it, I guess. He's done a lot of the writing for the new album (Colony) as well. We love the work on the Whoracle, and we want to take it to the next level, but we don't want to change it too much. So there are some of the elements in there, and also, if we changed too much, no one would follow! I think that we stayed true to ourselves though, and that's the main thing, but also to our fans and our roots. There are some bands that really changed their sound to a totally different direction, stop screaming, start singing. A lot of bands are turning into goth types of things. We know what we want, and we are very happy with the new album. A lot of people have said what you stated, that it sounds similar, but I think that's because you haven't had a chance to listen to it too much. When you start to get deeper into the album you find that most of the songs are pretty different but still In Flames, you know?

RoR - That's true, I have only been able to run through it a few times, but it does appear that you guys have matured, the songs are written better, there are more parts to them...

AF - We've definitely gotten better as a band, since we have toured a lot. Now we also have a really strong rhythm section in Daniel and Peter.

RoR - I never really thought that Johan and Bjorn were necessarily "bad" at what they were doing, but I do see the difference now in that Daniel is a stronger drummer. Did Bjorn begin to feel that his performances weren't up to par on the drums?

AF - No, he's actually a really good drummer, but we had a interim guitarist (Niklas) who left, and when we realized that we needed a new guitarist I guess we noticed that Bjorn wasn't really all that happy behind the drums. When it was time to rehearse, or when we asked him to go rehearse on his own, he really wasn't into it. So, it was a natural choice to use him because he is a guitarist from the beginning, always writing songs for us. And now, it's a totally different band, he's always happy! Johan left because he was tired of it, he really didn't want to tour that much. The rest of us saw that we could take In Flames to a higher point, and he couldn't put 100% into the band, so he left. So, the rhythm section wasn't bad before, but now it's a lot stronger. Bjorn wasn't maybe able to be as creative as he liked, but that was just in the end, it's hard to describe in English.

RoR - I know you weren't in the band back then but I just wondered if you could verify for me that it really is Daniel Erlandsson who's playing drums on 3 of the 5 Subterranean tracks (Anders Jivarp plays on tracks 3 and 5).

AF - Yeah, Daniel did play on the Subterranean E.P., he should be credited on there. (I looked again, and for the life of me I can't see if Daniel is - Ed.)

RoR - Well, I guess it's good that I'm talking with you because I had a bunch of questions about the lyrics. I know that there's a story that you and Niklas (Sundin - Dark Tranquillity) have been building up over the last few albums. Maybe you could clarify some of it for me. Like TJR deals with a dying race which is transplanting themselves, is Whoracle the aftermath and Colony the rebuilding?

AF - On The Jester Race, I played around with the idea that we should step away from ourselves and really look at where we are going. Because everything was, and is, going really fast, and we're lending more and more of our minds to machines, instead of taking control ourselves. For instance, when I went to school, in math, I had to learn how to calculate with pen and paper only so that we would know how to do it. So now, instead of that people are using calculators only. That's sort of what I was writing about, and at the end, there are only a few people that are in control and it becomes very dangerous. So, if The Jester Race was a warning, Whoracle was what happened when that metaphorical city on wheels (the cover of TJR) rolls over you, or past you. I keep going back to the same story, but I wanted Colony to be an episode of it's own, not just part 3. This time, the title wasn't all that thought out. I had a few different titles that I showed to the band, and we chose this one because it's short, it's memorable, and it ties in with the past, the present and the future, because we always try to colonize things, you know? The songs on Colony aren't about a person, or a thing, but my view on ordinary day life, so to speak. Like when I talk to people or listen to the radio, what

I hear, watching TV, how I see it. And then also playing with the future a bit, because I like to think that way, about what will happen. I think that the lyrics are easier to hear this time. I also want people to think about them for themselves, to come up to me and say "Hey Anders, this is what I think when I hear your lyrics..."

RoR - Why do you think that we as humans feel the need to colonize, or that our space just isn't enough? I know that overpopulation is a big problem now...

AF - Yeah, we want to conquer the moon now! Well, man has always been an explorer, he's wanted to conquer new things. You know, if you've read a book you don't want to read it again, you want to read another one. That's a stupid example but I don't think that we want to repeat ourselves, we want to be kings. The ones that conquer the moon will be king of the moon. So we have this innate urge to explore, to conquer everything.

RoR - Well, it seems like that fits a certain type of person in present day, and most of those people are the leaders, or the people in power, but there's also a type of person that's are completely content to live in a cyclical pattern. Do you think that people are told that these daily "grinds" are good to try and keep them pacified?

AF - [Slowly] Yeah, I think that's it's a common thing nowadays, that's part of what I'm talking about with lending our minds to machines. We do what we are told because of what we have around us. You go to work to get money so that you can buy food, buy whatever, there's no goal in life. You're right, there are some people that could explore, but there are also a big mass of people that aren't, lazy, but I think you know what I'm getting at.

RoR - Well, in the states, the basic principle is supposed to be individuality, which of course, should mean that going against the norm should be more accepted, like say, being a singer in a death metal band as opposed to a farmer. Of course, that's not the case, but I wondered what that was like in Sweden, and if your family or community supported your choices for your life.

AF - Well, in a certain way it's tough, like in the beginning when you don't earn any money and you want to practice a lot. When you have to go on tour and you can't take vacation from work. It becomes either the music or you get sacked, you know? For me personally, I have one goal and that is to take the music as far as I could and to live from the music. So far it's gone really well.

RoR - You also helped engineer and produce Whoracle [agreement], you have some affiliation with studio Fredman, right?

AF - Yeah, I work there, and now we just recently moved and I am the co-owner of studio Fredman. We built a new studio, so we have two control rooms, and a lot of recording rooms.

But on Colony I tried to be only on one side of the process, because if I want to be producer I can't be as focused on the performance aspect. Then I have the real producer on one side and the band on the other. So this time I wanted to just be more of a band member then in the middle [laughs]. It helps in a way though, we recorded a lot things by ourselves and we've done this a few times, so we pretty much know what we're doing.

RoR - Well when you look at TJR and Whoracle, do you find things that you are really happy about, or things that you wished that you could change?

AF - Both of course. Even if I'm really happy with Colony now, in a year or two I know that I'll say "Oh, we could have done this or that." When we released The Jester Race that was the maximum for us at the time, we couldn't do any better. When we did Colony we took everything that we learned in the past and used it to our advantage now. I mean, we're more experienced now, and we've all gotten better at our instruments, but nothing in particular do I think that we should have done something the other way.

RoR - I guess it's sort of a rhetorical question because I know that you've rerecorded two tracks off of Lunar Strain for Colony, and I was wondering why you chose to do that now?

AF - The Lunar Strain and Subterranean albums are out of print, the record company (Wrong Again, now WAR - Ed.) won't press it anymore. So it's a hard time for people to find them. Maybe they will do another pressing in the future, but I don't know, and I don't know why they won't! I think there's a big demand for them, and everytime we play live, we play those two tracks. So we wanted to give it another touch with a better sound, and we altered the arrangement a little bit, so there's something for the new people and for the older fans.

RoR - I guess as an artist, if Nuclear Blast can't buy your titles, and Wrong Again Records won't repress it, how do you feel about people that make copies of those titles because it's the only way they can get them?

AF - [laughs] Well, it's both bad and good. I mean, I'm a normal person as well, so I'm standing on both sides of the line. We worked with it, and I feel that those that made it should get something from it, since we put so much work into it, but we're not at the level yet so that it will hurt our sales. Also, if they can't find it, and they don't have our newer albums, it's a good promotion, for they can find the new titles in stores still. I really don't know how I feel for sure, but of course if everyone was doing it... [laughs]

RoR - I guess it doesn't differ that much from tape trading in the old days, except back then you would get a really shitty copy, which would then force you to go buy the album (which was also about \$7 new on vinyl!) to hear a quality

recording. There's just so much stuff that's out of print that I want and it sucks to pay \$30 for a copy...

AF - We have this MP3 stuff as well on the internet, but still, if I like the band I want the CD so that I have the whole thing. So, if it begins to spread too much, it could harm the whole thing, but today I don't think that it's reached that level. I know it hasn't here in Europe, but I don't know about the states, since I hear that you guys have much better internet connections over there. Only some places in Sweden can we even have a connection in this time.

RoR - So what's life like in Sweden for you...

AF - [interjects] Rainy! [laughs] No, I don't have a life, I work all the time. I love it though, because this is what I choose for this time. I have a life, of course, but if it isn't In Flames, I work in the studio on the weekends, meet other bands, hang out with friends, drink [laughs].

RoR - You must be a pretty recognized guy by now, do you ever get stopped on the street by fans?

AF - Yeah, it happens, you know, weird places. At some point they demand too much, because if you don't have time they get... "They get", it's not like that but sometimes people get angry because they think that I don't want to talk to them. But I DO want to talk to them, because it makes me happy, but sometimes there's no time. People can get mad and then



think I'm a fucking rock star [laughs]. That's no good.

RoR - Well, a lot of times people in your position are idolized, and it's forgotten that you can be just a regular guy. You might feel good, you might feel bad, maybe you're sick... It also takes a lot of courage for some people to go up and talk to their "idols", and if that person doesn't really feel like shooting the shit they could take it as a heavy rejection, you know?

AF - Yeah, I know. I really like to talk to people though, especially when we're on tour. Then you have lots of time to talk, but just before the gig, you don't have that much time, and then after the gig, you're really tired...

RoR - So you guys are doing a bunch of festivals this summer?

AF - Yeah, and we're also doing the Milwaukee Metalfest, which will be our first show in America! The whole band is really excited about that. We're definitely come back to Europe and we have a big tour here in September, that's with Dark Tranquillity, Children of Bodom and Arch Enemy.

RoR - [semi-joking] So you still get along with DT? I know that you sang on the Skydancer album, and you write the lyrics with Niklas.

AF - [laughing] Oh yeah, I actually just had Mikael here today. We talked a little bit. I also talked to Niklas today as well, there great friends, I see them every week.

RoR - One thing about both of your bands is that the lyrics are much better than your average metal band. Are words something that you've always been interested in, or was the job kinda thrown your way in the early days as an aspiring vocalist?

AF - I feel that the music and the lyrics should go hand in hand, you should feel something when you read the lyrics. You should have lyrics that totally fit the music. It's not that I have read Dark Tranquillity's lyrics and came up with something better, or vice-versa. We're not competing [pauses] because we've won already! [laughs] Seriously, though.

RoR - So you've done a video for Ordinary Story?

AF - Yeah, it's done. It just needs to be copied to the original and then sent down to the record company.

RoR - And what kind of play do you think that the video will get?

AF - Nothing! Seriously, it's not that much. Maybe in Japan and Europe there will be some rotation but not really that much. I don't know why Nuclear Blast doesn't push it harder. They may not have the budget, or they don't feel it's necessary, I really have no clue. All I know is that Nuclear Blast in the states is doing really well for an independent label. That's what I've only heard though, because you guys (the states) are so far away!

RoR - So could In Flames be the band to bridge the gap between the mainstream and the underground?

AF - Well, some people say that we're doing that already! I don't really believe that we are, but these days there is a big image thing. Either to look like a monster or be a fashion statement, and I think that we are more into the music than the image.

RoR - I guess if you were into image you couldn't hire any ugly band members then...

AF - [Laughs] No no no... Of course, we are concerned with the way that we look, but the music is always more important. There are just many bands, and you know what bands I am talking about, and they've only gotten there because of the image.

RoR - If Nuclear Blast came up to you and said "Look, we have a chance to really push this think into heavy rotation, but we need you to change your vocal style, you have to sing clean", would you do it?

AF - No. I've actually heard that a lot before, and it won't happen. What's the point? We've said very clear that we won't bow to any trends. We've been doing this for such a long time now, and even when the focus was on the Stockholm thing we were still doing what we do now. You never now though, maybe some day I will knock my head and become some arrogant bastard, no, I don't think so!

RoR - Or, people can just get used to your vocal style...

AF - [excited] Yeah yeah yeah! But not to say that I won't start to sing clean, I'm not afraid of doing it, but at this point I don't see why I should. I do what feels good so, I wouldn't want to do what doesn't feel right.

RoR - Cool. Well, I know you have a ton more interviews tonight, any last requests?

AF - Yeah, bring us to Hawaii! [laughs]. Just thanks to everyone for the support, it's all of you that have made us what we are today.

RoR - Well, we wouldn't have done it if you hadn't of made great music, so...

The In Flames European tour starts from September to the end of October, with the band planning to record their new album by the end of the year!



Amsvartner

As most zine editors can tell you, once the novelty of receiving the first couple of rounds of "free" stuff wears off, you're left with the arduous task of reviewing basically 3 or 4 different albums which have been rehashed and redone under the guise of a new release. After a while it starts to become increasingly more difficult to distinguish between what is really good and what just doesn't suck. All this is exactly why Amsvartner's latest release, *Dreams*, was such a kick in the ass. In my opinion, a truly original release which defies categorization, *Dreams* is by far one of my new favorites, an album that I feel can stand the test of time to become a metal classic. What makes this even more of an accomplishment for the band is evidenced by Metal Blade's recent reissue of *The Trollish Mirror*. A decent release in it's own right, TTM may be the precursor to the material found on *Dreams*, but the change wasn't just a natural progression from the E.P. to their full length, it was more of an evolutionary leap. Mutating the sound to incorporate older rock, some funk elements, and even jazz (yeah, I know what you're thinking now), the result is not as outlandish as it sounds, rather, something almost organic in sound. Guitarist Jonathan Holmgren explains where the changes came in. "I can understand that you see our musical progress as an evolutionary leap. We were pretty young when we got our record deal and the E.P. sums up what we did before then. At the point after the recording of the E.P. we felt pretty bored with the old material and we wanted to try out some new ideas so we found a totally new way of writing songs together as a solid group. At the same point everybody in the group also started to listen to different kind of music, especially Daniel, who stands behind the jazz parts of the album (check out "Medicine Man"). The "funkified" parts comes from our bassist Albin, who bought a new bass and started to take lessons from Peter "Funkmaster-Flex" Starefeldt. I think he got some really interesting ideas out of that. The rock and heavy metal influences basically come from me and the weird rhythm parts come from Alfred. To sum it up, we kind of started from scratch as a band when we wrote *Dreams* and we felt we had totally free hands to express ourselves for the first time. We didn't limit ourselves to play just in one direction that we maybe did earlier, without realizing it!"

Whatever the reason, it works for me. At this point, you may be a bit curious, or a bit turned off by the band fusing different styles into their metal. Don't worry, by no stretch is *Dreams* as off the wall as *Cynic*, nor as watered down as other newer bands which shall remain nameless. In any regard, the band members have also matured as musicians, evidenced by their performances on the disc.

"We really got better on everything when we worked on the material for *Dreams*. And at least me and the twins (Albin and Alfred) had played together for about five years, and therefore I see us as the heart of the band. And I think we're starting to feel confident and really proud of our music for the first time right now. When we had an idea for some years ago we felt it hard to do it the way we really wanted it, but now we can do (not whatever we want, but) a lot more. It takes time to learn to know each other as musicians, which we didn't really do on earlier releases. Now we know we're starting to get there and our ideas come out very easily and spontaneous, which feels good. Now we can go on from there and the next album will be in the same style, with me and the twins as the main

force of the band. Hopefully we can express ourselves even better on the next album."

Express themselves even better? With *Dreams* still seeming new to listeners and continuing to find critical acclaim, does the band find the album dated already? Most artists finish one work, and then once it is completed, it becomes almost painful to review it, finding the most minute flaws and boundaries to break for their next project. Is this something that is driving Amsvartner to continue their work? "I'm still very happy with the album. That's a good sign! It was about 10 months since we recorded it and I usually get sick of our recordings after a month. The only thing that I'm not to happy with is the last instrumental song. It just feels like a song that makes the album long enough. But I think you can see it as a simple outro. My favorite songs are the first three ones and "Turn the Light Away" a song with a great and raw chorus, we have done nothing like that before. The best song to play live is "The Predator" and I think that is the "hit" of the record." The band may feel that way, but to myself and others, the album is as close to perfect as such a young group can get, and I have to wonder, with all of the obvious influences out there, does the band

ever find themselves writing riffs that are already recorded? "Yeah, that has happened, but you can't help it. You can't help being influenced by other musicians either. I don't care much about this. The only thing that matters is that you do what you feel like and you put your soul into it. The listeners will hear if you do that. Most of the time a band looks up to another band and some bands copy the style right of others works out their own thing out of it and then it's OK I think. I don't think everything has been done. But when something has been done successfully it will be repeated over and over again until your sick of it, but here and there something new and fresh can pop up. Not often but it happens. There is no band or artist that is totally unique, everyone is influenced by something."

Maybe so, but one aspect of music that can't be copied is the raw emotion that a band puts forth in their songs. As a band writes songs, they become more personal, and capture the overall atmosphere of the band during that time period. So what about



Amsvartner? Just where was this band during this time, and what is it that gives such a level of sadness and anger to Dreams?

"I think a lot of that mood comes from Marcus's lyrics, but the music and the cover also lifts up this sadness and anger. Our albums reflect the mood we're in at the time, and when it's a cold winter outside and you work your ass off in school, you don't always feel that happy. But when started to get finished with the album it was summer again and then you feel free and happy, and I think "Kattla" (Title stolen from Astrid Lindgren's "Broderna Lejonhjärta") describes that feeling pretty well, both the music and the lyrics. So we don't write angry songs just to have an "evil" image as a lot of bands do. If we feel good we write happy songs as well. Otherwise you're not true to yourself and the music will tell."

The lyrics, another element which gives rise to a ton of questions. Written primarily by the elder Johansson, each track on dreams tells it's own story. The obvious is to ask whether these individual songs are all written from dreams, but I'd rather let Marcus explain for himself. "My source of inspiration is basically books that I read, and things that I can relate to. For example, "The Predator" started out as a freaky idea in my brother's head (he thinks that I eat way too much chicken), which was, what if YOU were the prey in a world of giant chickens so that you were the hunted? Well I thought about that and out came the lyrics for The Predator... I guess that the older you get your way of looking at things changes, and therefore my way of writing lyrics has changed. I always want to express how I feel and the way I see it, and my way of putting it down on paper has also changed. I wrote the lyrics for Amsvartner before I joined the band. For both the demo and the E.P. me and Daniel helped each other out with the lyrics, but for album Dreams, Daniel felt that he didn't have the will to write anything besides "Funkyman" so I wrote 'em all. The songs all tie together in Dreams because all of them (except Funkyman) are Dreams created in my head."

I've talked a bit about the musical leap that was taken between the E.P. and the album, but I have to also mention the change in Marcus's vocal style. Less "black metal" than the debut, Dreams also sports some clean vocals, not rare nowadays, but distinctive in that for one of the first times they really fit here, and don't seem to be thrown on as an afterthought. Ironic, to say the least. "The vocals are an important part of the Amsvartner sound, and we've always had our ideas about using clean vocals in some parts. When we play live I'll take care of those parts, and in the future I think that I'll try to do the clean parts of the record myself. On the album we thought about the clean parts last of all, and my throat wasn't OK, so we used Henke to do the clean vocals."

One point that is usually brought up when speaking of the band is the age of its members. Averaging around 18 for this last recording, it is pretty impressive, but fairly irrelevant as well. "We have heard things as "I didn't like them that much, but hey, they are young and will probably be something when they get older". Sometimes I get pissed off, but most of the time I don't care much. But some of it is true, I can't deny that we actually get better as we age. Sometimes I wonder if it had been better if we had stayed low until now, but there are always good and bad things about starting early." So speaks Jonathan, one of the "younger" members, but how does this affect elder statesman Marcus, who, at 24, is by far the most "mature" member of Amsvartner? "The only negative thing about the difference in age is that we can't all go out together and take a beer. The positive thing is that we all know each other so well because we've been together for almost all of our lives. I and my brothers fight some, but it'll never turn into something serious. I can tell them what I feel without being afraid to hurt



them, I know that they can take it. All of us basically like metal in any form, I don't know if I have to say anything else. Of course, all of us like different kinds of music, but what ties us together is metal."

Hanson they're definitely not, but the band has undergone some growing pains, recently shifting the guitar slot around when founding member Daniel Nygaard left the band. "He (Daniel) got less interested in heavy music, as well as the whole metal scene and when we recorded "Dreams" he got more and more interested in recording, rather than playing music. So he decided to leave the band and started to focus on a career as a sound technician. We have no hard feelings and believe that this was the best way for both parts. I don't think we will change that much. We found the basics of our sound when we did Dreams and we will continue from there so don't expect a big change like between the E.P. and the CD. In Amsvartner we always write the songs together in the rehearsal place. We start to jam on a riff or a rhythm that one of us has come up with so therefore we credit all the band in the booklet. I don't sit at home and write a song and then give it to the rest of the

group. I rather have an idea in my head and then we work it out together in the rehearsal place. We had a replacement for Daniel for about half a year and it worked out very good. But some weeks ago he (Kalle Lundin) told us that he didn't have enough time to focus on the band with all of his energy. That's sad because we wrote some great new songs with him that probably will be featured on the next album. Maybe he will help us out on gigs and future recordings if we can't find a guy that can give 100% of his soul to the band." And so the band begins to look to the future. With no created boundaries, I asked both Jonathan and Marcus (respectively) to try and predict what the band will accomplish in the coming millennium... "I hope we gets the chance to tour Europe sometime in future, but that depends on how good the album will sell I suppose. We will gladly play a gig anywhere, anytime. But the future looks bright and nothing is impossible. You can for sure expect a new album next year! Hopefully we can record it by the end of this year. Thanx for the support, and keep your eyes open!" (J) "We'll continue to play metal, maybe we'll take one more step forward and try to evolve our music even more with aggressive and melodic parts. At the moment we're trying out a new guitarist, so hopefully we will be able to go out and play some. The main idea now is to finish the material for the next album." (M) So, the band may already be in high gear, but Dreams is still one of my current faves. The disc may be a little tougher to find in the US, but trust me, it's well worth the journey.

Derek Haderman (guitarist of CRUCIBLE) was lucky enough to talk with Eddy Garcia (drummer of Pissing Razors) over the phone recently about the happenings of one of the world's heaviest bands... Pissing Razors.

Derek: Eddy, I just want to say that you are a monster drummer and I am glad you guys are persisting with what you are doing.

Eddy: Thanks Bo, we will definitely be around for a while!!!

Derek: Well you guys are originally from El Paso, Texas right? How is the music scene there right now?

Eddy: There has never really been a strong music scene here. There's a lot of talent here, a lot of good players and good bands too!!! There's just not a lot of clubs that let bands do originals. Especially on the heavy side. There's just not a lot going on.

Derek: That makes it kinda hard for bands that spend a lot of time practicing but don't make any money playing their own music. It's like a lot of bands lose money by staying involved with their music. You know what I mean bro?

Eddy: Yea, definitely! That's why me and my brother opened up a club back in the day. Back then the clubs only allowed cover bands. At the time we would play at those clubs and play covers, but also play our own stuff. But then we opened up our own club and catered to all the original bands no matter what it was punk, heavy metal whatever, as long as it was original. So we did that for quite a few years, and it really kick started the music scene in El Paso. But, I didn't want to be a club owner, and my brother moved to New York so I got out of the business.

Derek: Yea I know what you mean, that's a big responsibility. Next thing you know you are not even playing your drums any more.

Eddy: Exactly, that's why I had to get out of it. After the first year I just said, "Dude I gotta get out of this, I don't wanna be a club owner."

Derek: That's funny bro! So in the beginning, you played guitar in Pissing Razors right?

Eddy: Yep, I played bass in this other band before that.

Derek: I noticed on your new CD "Cast Down the Plague" which definitely kicks ass that you are given credit for writing most of the music.

Eddy: Well, I come up with most of the riffs, but as a band we put the songs together and make it happen that way.

Derek: So do you guys just jam or do you go in with tapes or how does the song writing process go for Pissing Razors?

Eddy: Well we go in the studio with ideas but basically we just jam it out you know?! We start



with a good riff then work on a good change and then next thing you know we got a good song. I don't use tape recorders or anything like that, too much hassle.

Derek: Well how did the European tour go with ProPain, and Iron Monkey?

Eddy: Well, last year it was killer. This year we played a bunch of countries we never played before so it was kind of up and down. Some shows were super killer, some were really lame, you know? Overall, it was a really good tour.

Derek: What were some of your favorite countries on the tour?

Eddy: I would have to say Yugoslavia, before they started bombing it. Nuts shows!!!

Derek: Did you guys ever feel vulnerable on the road?

Eddy: No, there were like 20 of us and whenever situations broke out, they were handled immediately.

Derek: Well I know you guys are taking a month off from touring, what kind of stuff do you like to do when you are at home?

Eddy: It's good to just hang out with my friends and go out and drink a few beers, you know?

Derek: Yep! Are you taking a break from your drums right now as well?

Eddy: Well, yea a little bit. I play about a half hour to an hour every day just to stay in shape.

Derek: Is everyone in Pissing Razors married right now?

Eddy: Joe is the only one that is married right now.

Derek: Is that why Matt Lynch had to step down from the throne of the guitar player slot in Pissing Razors?

Eddy: Well Financially, it's hard. We all have a lot of bills but Matt has two daughters and a wife as well so he just had to quit so he could be closer to them and the whole situation.

Derek: That's respectable. It must be tough, because you guys are kind of huge but record

Pissing

labels make most of the money from CD sales right? You guys know how hard it is to keep going, it's not easy.

Eddy: It's not easy, but you know it never has been. If we would have started doing this for the money we would have quit a long time ago. But that's not why we do it you know? It's what we love to do and we are being given the opportunity to play every day. That's all I ever wanted. The next goal is to actually make a living at doing this.

Derek: How is Noise Records treating you? Are they taking care of their end of the business?

Eddy: For the most part they are down with us and believe in our band. They have kept us on the road and we really can't complain you know? At the same time, I wish we maybe could get on a bigger label that could get us on a bigger tour such as the Ozzfest. But it cost's like \$50,000 to get on the tour. It's a buy on.

Derek: No shit!?!?

Eddy: Yea, it's a catch 22 you know, the label complains that we are not selling records like

some of these more commercial bands, but right off the bat these bands get on these huge tours and have videos and a shitload of promotion behind them, so of course they are gonna sell records. Some of the smaller labels can't seem to understand we our sales are not as big. It's like well, we don't have a video, we have not been on some huge tour and of course not as many people have heard of us.

Derek: Well speaking of all these newer rap/metal type bands I just heard the new Machine Head album, and it sounds like they just totally changed their style to sell records. Not even aggressive anymore!!! How do you feel about this?

Eddy: Well... I think Machine Head started out being innovators as far as the whole heavy music scene. But now they are just following trends. It's too bad, but who knows they might sell more records doing that. But if that's really what they want to do... more power to them. But I really don't think that's the case. I think they have been washed through the Road Runner corporate machine and are being influenced by what the record company executives say. I know it happens to us... it's like people are telling us to wear mask's and stuff like another one of their band's and it's like no fuckin way, that will never happen!!!! Some of these labels black mail you into doing stuff you don't wanna do or they pull your tour support from under you. As far as us, that shit will never happen, I would rather say "fuck you, just drop us off the label."

Derek: Right on bro!!!! That's good to know



man, like I said I was cringing when I heard some of that shit.

Eddy: You know Machine Head "Burn My Eyes" sold 400,000 copies!!! So it's not like they had to sell out. "The More Things Change" is even better and they sold even more records. Now this new one is out and it's like wow...

Derek: Well tell me what it was like touring with Iron Monkey through Europe? I heard they just broke up!!!

Eddy: Yea, I'm not surprised. It's really too bad, they are all a real good bunch of guys. Unfortunately, their singer is lame dude. He left those guys hanging so hard.

Derek: I heard they didn't even do the show in Lithuania?

Eddy: The singer bailed out because he was sick. Well the Russian shows got canceled so we had 4 days off. He went to the doctors and they told him to get off the bus get in a hotel room, take this medicine and you'll be fine. Instead he opted to go home from Poland. So these guys jammed every night without a singer.

Even when we got back to England he was supposed to meet the band there, but again he just left them hanging. I told the guys they should of just replaced him. They are all a bunch of really good guys, we had a really good time with them it's just too bad the singer is weak.

Derek: Well I hear you guys are gonna be touring with Crowbar and Skinlab on the west coast is that right?

Eddy: Ughh, no... well actually I gotta call the guys from Skinlab and find out what's goin on. We might be doin a few dates with S.O.D. in October. There's also a possibility of going out with Fear Factory in Europe in late October but everything is really up in the air right now, I need to solidify all these things this week.

Derek: Well getting back to your new record "Cast Down the Plague" I noticed that there are some pretty tasty little guitar solo's on the album which is a definite change from your first record where there were none. How did that come about?

Eddy: Matt Lynch definitely knows how to play solos no doubt about that. The first record was more of a thrash/punk/groove direction so there wasn't much room for solos there. When we started writing the new record we decided to leave a little more room for a few solo's and it turned out pretty good.

Derek: I was stoked about that. The solo's are short and sweet and he gets in and out shreds it up a bit but doesn't over do it. Eddy: Yea it's gotta be thought out. Derek: What bands do you

listen to these days.

Eddy: I listen to the demos bands give me and check out a lot of new bands. I dig the new Testament, Nothing Face... as a matter of fact we just did a show with Testament in San Francisco.

Derek: Who is playing drums for them right now?

Eddy: Dave Lombardo

Derek: Wow, I didn't know that. By the way, I know you guys do a hell of a lot of the metal fest's. Are those good? I mean I heard by the time the band's get up there it's like the drumset is just beat to a pulp and it's hard for the band to sound any good.

Eddy: Yea we played a few of those fest's. It's hard the sound in all of the rooms is horrible. We played the big room and there just wasn't enough P.A. for the room. But you know there are like 4000 people so it's killer. It's kind of not fair to the fans because it doesn't sound good. Everybody sounded like shit. Kind of disorganized too. Everything ran behind and the

soundman didn't know what he was doing. But by the time we got up there were about 500 die hard fans still waiting for us and the thing just went nuts man.

Derek: That's killer, those were probably people who were just there to see you guys. I know that when you guys come to Hawaii, the show is gonna go off big time. You have a lot of fans here in Hawaii.

Eddy: Cool man, which island are you on?

Derek: Oahu, there is 1 million people here. There hasn't been a good show since Pantera, Slayer, and Sepultura back in 94/95. So this place is ready to explode for a couple bands like you and Skinlab. How have the last two years for Pissing Razors been since the release of the first record?

Eddy: It's been killer. We got to see the states and Europe, made a lot of friends and it's cool to see the more you get out there the more people come out to the shows. The more people get to know who the band is and it's a cool feeling. You know I'm 33 and I have been doing this for a long time and it's pretty exciting to see that people are hearing our music. Oh, by the way we are gonna be on a Pantera tribute record. I think Crowbar, Boiler, Soilent Green and some others are on the record.

Derek: That's killer! Which song did you guys do?

Eddy: We did Domination.

Derek: No way, how did you guys deal with that heavy solo in the middle?

Eddy: We just did our own thing. We didn't even know the song. But we had like 3 days off between Europe and US so we just learned it with our new guitar player. So then we had like 1 day off, we went in to the studio, learned the song in the studio and recorded it.

Derek: I love that chunked out middle section dude!!!

Eddy: ha, ha, ha yea me too, and we did some different stuff in there as well.

Derek: So, who is your new guitar player?

Eddy: Cesar Soto, alias Achmex. [We call him that cuz] he's Mexican but he looks like he is Arabic or something you know, ha ha, ha.

Derek: Well Eddy, my phone is blinking so that means it's goin dead. But as soon as you can give us a date when you and Skinlab are comin out here the sooner we can blow this thing up.

Eddy: Well bro, like I said I gotta solidify the whole thing with Steve from Skinlab and when we can both do it. I will call you next week and let you know how it's looking but I am really

Cont'd on page 44

REVIEWS



Amen - Amen
1999 Roadrunner Records

Let me just state for the record that I think that this is utter crap, Ross Robinson being the Brendan O'Brien of the hard rock world. The fact that he's not only involved in this project, but that he liked the band so much that he signed them to his own mini-label only adds to my dislike for this disc. One more thing I can't get over is that former Wrathchild America/Souls at Zero drummer Shannon Larkin is playing on this album, until I remember that his previous band was indeed Ugly Kid Joe. I guess that this is considered "angry", with vocalist Casey "Chaos" (who is also responsible for all the music and riffs on this sonic abortion) snarling like a third rate John Lydon as his band throws around plenty of power chords for everyone's enjoyment. You know what though, this'll probably go gold in the states, with teenage girls and big pants/chain wallet guys eagerly awaiting when they can start pseudo-moshing to this tripe. I remember when Roadrunner used to sign some awesome bands, now it's seems that they're just breeding groups for Ozzfest. Lovely. This is already recycled.

Amduscias - Amduscias
1998 Blackend Records

Metal Blade seems to have the exclusive distribution rights to all of the Blackend stuff in the states, which is fortunate for us, even if we do end up getting these albums a couple years after their initial release. What's the problem with that? Well, for some albums, Amduscias being one of them, the sound can seem a tad dated, this E.P. sounding like standard Norse black metal circa '97. Yeah, that's only couple of years, but as metal styles shift so rapidly, to stay on the cutting edge, especially in something as volatile as black metal, things have to sound fresh. That's my opinion anyway. So, Amduscias is another BM album to throw in the stacks, or is it? There are some cool guitar moments, but for the most part, I find it pretty uninspired, not really breaking any new ground or adding anything special to the scene. The fact that this band is from Japan is kinda cool to me, but they've managed to clone an established sound, rather than create something new, and coupled with a pretty thin production, I'm outta here.

Amsvartner - The Trollish Mirror
1997 Blackend Records

I'm actually hearing this E.P. for the first time after being enthralled by the group's Dreams full-length, and I'm glad that this is the case. I say this because had I heard this first, I would have focused more on the primitive black metal elements rather than the progressive metal un-

der-tones that flow throughout this release.

Not as focused nor as inspirational as Dreams, The Trollish Mirror nonetheless holds its own power, being an over the top spectacle of guitar lines, frenetic drumming, and frost-laden vocals, not bad for a group of guys with an average age of about 16 here. The bottom line is that this is an exciting 22 minutes of music, rife with creativity from a band that is rapidly becoming one of my favorites to hear. I know why this is, Amsvartner incorporating a lot of breaks, and a healthy sense of melody, but it's also thanks to drummer Alfred Johansson, who plays in a style similar to Reed Mullin of 80s era C.O.C., having a reckless abandon and the chops to guarantee that what he attempts will succeed. This results in a lot of halftime/ double-time changes, maybe frustrating to some, but to me, it works because while it breaks things up but maintains the overall flow of the song. Fuck, I just like it because it's a young band who decided to play from their heart instead of taking the easy route and forming a carbon copy of a popular established band, which is what we need if metal is to truly "return". Seek these guys out over what's presented to you in the local mall, you'll be happy that you did.

Arch Enemy - Burning Bridges
1999 Century Media Records

It was only a few years ago that Black Earth became one of the most sought after indie albums of all time, it seems. Intelligently using the old supply and demand law, Wrong Again Records only released a paltry amount of this platter, forcing most people to import and pay high prices in many areas of the world. It was a secret that wouldn't last long, with Century Media "discovering" this band of musical geniuses and giving them a deal. The result of this initial union was Stigmata, a highly technical affair which pleased many young guitar virtuosos, but was a trifle disappointing for those of us who had experienced the power of the debut. Talking to Michael Amott provided some illumination into that recording, and I think that it's definitely safe to say that Burning Bridges rectifies any weaknesses in the AE armor. While not as all out brutal as BE, or as technically driven as Stigmata, a happy medium is realized,

uncompromising, yet as wise and experienced as it should be. I'd place a lot of the refocusing of the group back on drummer Daniel Erlandsson, a gifted individual who helps define what metal drumming is. His powerful base allows the brothers Amott freedom to explore, yet reminds them when it's time to come home from arpeggio heaven, if you know what I mean. In heralding the rhythm section, one has to also mention bass wunderkind Sharlee D'Angelo, who is also responsible for this solidity.

Now, there are some true moments of stadium rock here, where the solos are the spotlight, and I almost hear flashes of Rush or Cheap Trick! It's not as apparent as on Stigmata though, and Liiva's vocals are once again strong (apparently he was sick while tracking the last album), a good thing as his work helped define what I consider the Arch Enemy sound. He experiments a bit as well (if that is indeed him, promo discs don't have the full credits listed), a welcome change, not as outlandish as before. You may have noticed so far that I've hardly mentioned the Amott's playing, an interesting fact as Arch Enemy is truly a guitar band! Well, what needs to be said, besides the fact that the elder Amott is responsible for penning some of the greatest songs in death metal history. Chris may be the young one, but his playing shows plenty of flair, knowledge and excitement as well. I, for one, am glad to see the boys back in form after their "sophomore slump", and can easily peg Burning Bridges as one of my favorite releases of the year so far.

Atomic Bitchwax, The - The Atomic Bitchwax
1999 MIA Records

Groovy, oh so groovy, TAB consisting of Ed Mundell (Monster Magnet), who apparently remembers that he used to play some pretty cool shit before selling out with Wyndorf (c'mon, Space Lord?) It's still a it too "retro", sounding like a bunch of stuff that's been done all thrown together, but still kinda cool, main catalyst being Keith Ackerman's hyper drumming. It's just all so 70s, really bowing a lot to Hawkwind, which is the main influence I'd say these guys have, yet I just couldn't put my finger on it for a while. Weird to see that they do a cover of Core's Kiss the Sun, as Core are now labelmates with these guys. Obligatory references are made to Fu Manchu and other bands of that ilk, although they're nowhere near the vicinity of Kyuss or Sleep. That may give you some indication of where TAB chose to roam. A healthy "eh" out of me, finding this OK, but kinda drab. It'll resurface when I want to hear something like this and get played over the other 15 bands that have released works in this genre lately.

Blotorch - Blotorch
1999 Wicked World Records

For some reason, I really expected Blotorch to be some kind of punk record, with the mis-

spelled name and industrial tinged graphics. Imagine my surprise (if you will) then when what burst from my speakers was the record that Dark Tranquillity should have released instead of Projector. And that's not even the best part, Blotorch just really shredding across a multitude of styles, basing things in the melodic death realm, but also drawing from some brutal death and black metal influences as well. I have absolutely no information on this band, other than that they're from Holland, which adds to a certain air of mystery and in fact, allowed all prejudgments to be vacant. Strongest elements are the keen riffs (very DT influenced on many tracks, as I mentioned), the spot-on drumming, and some serious paint-scraping vocals. It sounds like someone's running a cheese grater along his vocal chords (shudder). Things stay along the midpace, occasionally slowing things down, or hitting blast territory. Some truly raunchy intro samples are a bit of place, but definitely had "shock value", which is why these are placed there. Much like Soilwork's first effort, Blotorch is instantly recognizable, but may be open to too many comparisons (Dark Tranquillity vs At the Gates for Soilwork). It doesn't matter to me though, as I find enough to keep me interested here, and I really didn't like Projector. Full on recommendation from me on this one if you get into the post-Gothenburg melodic sound.

Burnt Offering - Walk of the Dead
1998 SOD Records

Whoa, what a blast from the past! Burnt Offering being around for quite a while, and recording this opus for the newly formed SOD Records. And the resulting sound? Classic, classic death metal, sounding like these guys were frozen circa 1987 and just released upon a crowd discovering metal's "retro" years just now. Well, these walk the walk, spitting out monster riff after monster riff, Hal Shore's throaty vocals being from that beefy rock background, more like shouted words than throat grinding madness. What makes this work are the riffs and the bashing caveman style with which they're played. An interesting note is that there is NO double bass on this album, blasphemy in this day and age. But it works, Mitch being creative enough to fill in the spots, but there are a couple of times where some mid-paced material screams for the double kicks. Cool to see someone going against the norm though, and who the hell would have thought to sample Sling Blade for their latest record? Here's also a perfect case where the music makes the packaging makes the music, Petagno's horrific cover totally capturing the vibe that the band was going for, a horrifically, crispy good time. Things get a bit redundant towards the last few tracks, but a killer disc to throw in and just bang your fucking head to, I must say.

Candiria - The Process of Self-Development
1999 MIA Records

I caught my first glimpse of Candiria through their set at the March Metal Meltdown. Completely impressed with their off-kilter approach to some grinding death (complete with stop/start beats and an off-time feel to the whole thing), I immediately ordered their first two albums. It was then that I discovered that Candiria live and Candiria on record are two completely different entities. Where live the band eschews most of their jazz elements and concentrates on the sick, twisted and heavy material they have, their recordings find the band in a much more experimental frame of mind. Now, this is pretty cool, but it does break the flow sometimes, while at moments achieving pure brilliance. They succeed in melding all of their many influences, but I find myself skipping whole tracks at times. But, of course, this makes the insane grind parts that much heavier, and had the entire album consisted of them, the impact would have been diminished. But, in a nutshell, this is the problem I'm having with The Process of Self-Development, totally digging the older songs that are redone here (Temple of Sickness, Elevate in Madness) along with Mathematics and some other things. What I'm not liking is the heavily pervasive rap element, which just smacks of the Beastie Boys for some reason. Regardless, Candiria are a band that I can allow a few deviations from, for when they hit it, it's dead on. Plus, the band is comprised of stellar musicians, especially the multi-talented Kenneth Schalk, who decimates his drums with the greatest of ease. This is from Brooklyn though, and while I don't like it, the rap sections do make some sense. It's just a bit too mainstream for my liking... Final analysis? It's not straight metal, The Process... deviating even further from the main paradigm, but if you want to hear some jazzed out fusion metal, these are the kings. Postscript - I guess that certain aspects of rap can be viewed as a modern extension of jazz in the 70s, both beginning as a musical outlet for individuals in the urban areas, it's just not my choice of stimulation. Much respect for this band though, and I look forward to their impending world domination.

Centurion - Arise of the Empire
1999 Scarlet Records

If you're pressed for time reading this review, I'll cut you a break and tell you what this sounds like in 5 words, by the book power metal. I think that these guys were a bit hit at metalfest, for everyone kept talking about their set. As for me, I don't even know if they played, and if they did, I certainly was off watching something else, as I really don't get into this particular brand of heaviness. And it is heavy, but just chock full of cliches for me, and the vocals... The sirens of victory are always the kiss of death in my opinion, destroying any chance that the cool riffs had of winning me over. I just can't do it, these vibrato notes only succeeding in pissing me off. Which kinda sucks, as I really like some of the chord progressions. It's weird, I can get used to many different styles, but not these harpy shrieks. Sorry guys, I know you can play, but I'm getting

a headache. There are some positives, some of which being the best of Maiden and even Rush revamped for the 90s, maybe the vocalist can be mixed lower next album.

Core - The Hustle Is On
1999 MIA Records

Here's another one from the same school of stoner rock where I placed the Bitchwax. Core are relatively infamous in small circles due to their Billy Anderson produced, Atlantic released album Revival, which people seemed to love, but was obviously not meant for mainstream America. Well, the boys have returned, this time releasing their work on the smaller but meaner Tee Pee/MIA Records. Immediately looking at the artwork (reminding me of Sleep's original Jerusalem cover, which reminded me of Bakshi's Wizards), you can tell that more artistic integrity was kept this time around, and the music seems to support that theory. I call it stoner rock because that's the definite impression that I get, Core producing sounds from a rig that I'm sure includes a Les Paul, vintage tube amplification, and most likely a "Big Muff" distortion pedal. Get the idea? Well, as I felt with the Bitchwax (I'm actually reviewing these back to back, which may be a mistake), it's OK, but an album that I'll only be hearing at certain times, like late on Sunday evenings when I'm burning the midnight oil. So while it's a bit tame for the tastes of the seasoned metalhead, there are some times when you want to throw in something else besides raging death, and Core can fit the bill quite nicely. Very inoffensive, you can play it for your family at Thanksgiving. Although don't drop LD 50 as one of the song titles to your cousin the biologist, heh heh.

Daeonia - Craven
1998 Candlelight Records

Many people consider bands such as My Dying Bride and Paradise Lost "Doom" metal. I disagree, feeling that there's a much heavier gothic flavor in these bands, evoking imagery that pertains to white shirts with puffy collars, make up, vampirism, you know, all those romanticized ideals of a perfected land gone by. So, with an appropriate definition, and some comparative bands named, I'll refresh what one can expect when listening to an album such as Craven. Don't even bother with lighting, lest it be by candle, for these carefully written chords were created to squeeze the joy out of anything in life (which is where the ill-fitting "doom" reference can come in), albeit these guys probably don't have that much to be happy about anyway. Vocally, this is one sad dude, spinning yarns of things lost, things regained for a short period, things dying, etc... I think you get the picture, Daeonia just being one hell of a depressing band, except I tend to find a lot of this overblown and pompous, shattering the illusion of sincerity. Maybe these guys do crave the black, for the chord progressions are pretty damn good (I burst into tears on numerous occasions), building into some climactic sections

complete double bass support (all right!). In listening to this one a few different occasions (all in different scenarios), I found that I got into the album's first few tracks, but always lost interest around the same point, Autumn (track #4). Just a little too much synth here, it's OK, but man, I could hardly hold back from the skip button. My overall impression? Reminds me of a souped up Simple Minds, and not to be heard if you have any desire to remain in high spirits. So, you're probably ready to send me hate mail right now about my refusal to claim that this is doom metal. Well, maybe I'm just a stubborn bastard, but I don't think it's doom, case closed. Write if you want to debate it further, but man, you better have some good arguments...

Dark Tranquillity - Projector
1999 Century Media Records

The mighty Dark Tranquillity make their move to superlabel Century Media and produce one incredibly mundane album. Now, I'm not the only one to notice the alarming style change that many bands undergo after signing up with CM, but I'm not going to stick the label with the blame here. For instance, check out Cryptopsy's latest release and tell me they went soft, and Arch Enemy had recorded Stigmata before laying their signatures down. This leads me to believe that bands decide to "mature", and then pick CM as an appropriate label to shift to. A shame really, as older DT material contains some truly classic moments in the realm of melodic metal. I have to admit that my patience for the band has waned over the years, as Skydancer is by far my favorite, with The Gallery coming in a close second. I never really got into The Mind's I like I thought I should, and after hearing three seconds of those melancholy male vocals, I'm ready to give up. When they retain their roots, things come together, but there's too much pomp in this circumstance for me to ignore. Am I disappointed? Not really, as I didn't expect all that much after The Mind's I, but it's hard to see bands do this... I wish I could pick out the 15 awesome minutes of this disc and leave all the crap out, but life's not exactly fair, is it? Actually, I just wish that they'd ditch the new co-vocalist and get back to some serious ass-kicking, but that's just my opinion.

Deeds of Flesh - Path of the Weakening
1999 Unique Leader Records

Brutal fucking death metal. And that's all that really needs to be said, Deeds of Flesh being a band content to play a solid 30 minutes of technical, blastbeat infected hate. This kinda sounds like Suffocation squared to me, being better produced and having almost more stops and starts per track than the past masters. The production is key also, making Path of the Weakening more than a train wreck presented in a the higher registers. Joey Heaslet is back, delivering a furious performance that is tighter than imaginable. This is actually a pretty tough

review to write, for what can you say that hasn't been said a billion times already. How about, you like brutal death metal, huh, do ya punk. Then, if you don't already own this you have no idea what is going on. Killer artwork just adds to the gotta have status.

Ebony Tears - A Handful of Nothing
1999 Black Sun Records

Just when I think that I'm destined to hear nothing but garbage for a month, fate intervenes and furnishes me with some truly spectacular music. I didn't get the last release by Ebony Tears, but you can bet your bottom dollar that I'll have it before the week's end! Evoking images of the best aspect of the Swedish Scene while incorporating personality, A Handful of Nothing is 30 minutes worth hearing. There are obligatory references to be made, At the Gates and Arch Enemy among them, but while there are some real melodious moments, AHOtN contains some real frenetic passages that lean more towards the newer breed of Swedish metalheads than the "Gothenburg" era. The violin track doesn't too much for me, but hey, we only killed 1:20 with that, time more than made up for on the remainder of the album. Don't let the fact that Ebony Tears is being promoted as a two-piece, as recording drummer Richard Edlund just kicks the shit out of his kit here. DO yourself a favor and listen to Ebony Tears, it's a good'n.

Endless - Beauty, Tears and the Setting Sun
1999 Pavement Records

Interesting disc here, Endless playing some sort of a mix of doom, death and punk! Doom? Where! Oh, that's in the vocals, and those melancholy guitar lines. Death? I don't believe it! Oh yeah, sounds like these guys are tuned down to A, we've got some requisite double bass and some gnarlish vocals. Punk? Yeah right! Well, I hear a certain "I can't quite play this part but I'm gonna go for it anyway!" mentality, especially with the drumming, which is certainly a punk ethic if I ever knew one. I guess Beauty, Tears... piques my interest because it spans so many sub-subgenres, but it also kinda bores me at the same time, the whole thing just sorta on cruise control, especially vocally. OK, those string sections make me want to euthanize my second oldest cat who has leukemia, but I'm only in my basement crying about 20 minutes a day. So while I appreciate someone making another record which panders to the "gothic" individual, it's a really hard task to do without coming across completely pretentious. Morgion somehow got away with it, but they also really live the life (irony, folks), and I don't know about Endless just yet. OK, I'm being kinda harsh, but this is an album that I'm glad the review is done for, cuz I doubt that it will EVER be played again, unless I lose another kitty to the great purina famine. PS - I don't like cats.

Enthroned - Regie Sathanas
1998 Blackend Records

Metal Blade just sent this to me, about two months after I received Enthroned's latest album. Basically an E.P. of old and new material (plus a cover of Sodom's The Conqueror) made as a tribute to their former drummer (who chose to kill himself rather than live in a world full of Christians, why didn't he just move to Utah?), RS is black metal to the extreme. Meaning: guitar riffs from hell, blastbeats from beyond and vocals out of the void. Never been the biggest Enthroned fan, but they do have their following, which means that once again I may just not recognize talent when I hear it. I guess I just get sick of hearing the same damn riffs over and over again with no break to the monotony. Well, a couple of the tracks don't follow that format here, with Walpurgis Night actually being a bit slow, surprising, as Towards the Skull-throne of Satan seemed to have one drum beat for the entire album! Satan Never Sleeps (which is why he's so evil) is a track from the band's Morbid Death days, and the thrash influence back there totally shows. Weird, but probably my favorite track on the album. Their cover of The Conqueror isn't all that bad, but as Expurse of Sodomy is by far my favorite Sodom opus, it's hard for me to judge fairly. So, I'm still not the biggest Enthroned fan, and I probably will never be, but Regie Sathanas is by far their most interesting work for me. And at almost 30 minutes, this E.P. isn't that bad of a bargain. "Conqueror, conqueror!"

Face of Anger "Faceless"
Noise Records 1999

Well... when I heard this was another Andy Sneap production I couldn't wait to hear it since Sneap has produced some of my favorite records in the last 2 years in Skinlab and Pissing Razors just to name a few. From the first chords of the title track "Faceless" I was treated with the thick bottom end and wide open roomy placement of the percussion in the mix that I have grown to expect from Sneap. However... once the vocals come in and after several listens to this disc I realized that an excellent production is only half the battle. Stylistically I am not sure where this band is coming from. Definitely not metal, not hardcore... maybe it's just rock & roll. As far as the vocals they are bluesy, and he is trying real hard to find some melody line, but kind of comes off whining a lot with frequent overuse of vibrato in his voice. Kind of reminds me of Jello Biafra without the anger and true sense of chaos that Biafra brings forth. As far as the riffs, almost every song has some form of an E-G progression with little or no dissonance ever in their song structure. And for a band with a name such as Face of Anger these guys don't even seem a little bit pissed off to me. I bet these guys are a very tight band but there doesn't seem to be very much risk involved in their music at all. I checked out their band photo just to see where these guys are coming from and sure enough, the bass player is wearing an Adidas T-shirt and the singer is wearing some real neat Nike wrist bands. Faceless... definitely!!! This CD is highly recommended

for someone who is just learning to enjoy heavy music without all the true aggression, chaos and mayhem that I demand but didn't get from this CD. - **Review by Derek**

Gardenian - Soulburner
1999 Nuclear Blast

While Gardenian's first offering, *Two Feet Stand*, was a kick ass album, it had a couple of strikes against it. For one, the resemblance to *In Flames* at the time was a little more than passing, and for another, it was incredibly hard to find! Well, here comes *Soulburner*, and with a nice Nuclear Blast contract in hand, you can be sure that every store in sight will have multiple copies in stock. As for the *In Flames* comparisons, the band feels as though they've evolved beyond that phase, and I sort of agree, but... It's really hard to escape your roots, and as vocalist Jim Kjell put it "Hey, we are from Gothenburg!" This leads to an incorporation of melody, resulting in a sound that has been made popular by *In Flames*, but also part of what is Gardenian. While the band has strived to create song which are more power metal in nature, the biggest push towards that goal is definitely the addition of Erik Hawk (ex-Artch) on "clean" vocals. Now, I really don't know if I get into this new trend at all (it destroyed my latest *Dark Tranquillity* listening experience), but it works for the most part here, only being slightly annoying on *If Tomorrow's Gone* and *Tell the World I'm Sorry*. I really prefer Kjell's style much more I guess. Taking the package as a whole, *Soulburner* is a much more mature album, many steps removed from *Two Feet Stand* in many ways. Definitely more accessible, I predict Gardenian filling the space between the ultra-melodic and the ultra-brutal Swedish Metal scenes. I could be a real shithead and say "this is for fans of *In Flames*", but that sucks, both for the listener and the band, as Gardenian have definitely strived for something different here, even if guitarist Niklas Engelin was in *In Flames* circa the *Whorace* tour. I also have to state that whatever the band did on the last two tracks is worth the entire price of admission here, somehow creating a soundscape of sadness that knocked the wind out of me. Their first definitive statement, *Soulburner* is a success for all parties concerned.

God Dethroned - Bloody Blasphemy
1999 Metal Blade Records

Platter number three for these heretics, and while I completely got into last year's *The Grand Grimoire* immediately, *Bloody Blasphemy* has required a little extra time to sink in. The major elements of TGG are still here, and if anything, *Bloody...* is even faster and more intense than that release. I'm really not sure why I find fault with this release, it's just that like *Children of Bodom*'s last release, it's good, but something is definitely missing. The performances have all improved since the last outing, especially in the drum department, undead pulse initiator Roel just decimating everything around

him. The guitarwork is slick, vocals sick, and the production dead on, but I'm left kind of dry. Granted, I did start to lose interest after a few tracks on *The Grand Grimoire*, and there is quite a bit of good material here, perfect if you're a "hit" listener. Me? I like to hear an album in it's entirety, not fast forward or press stop after the first couple of tracks, which is what I guess I find happening here. The strongest parts for me on the album are when things slow down a bit, as in the midsection of *A View of Ages*, or during the truly remarkable *Soul Capture 1562*. Introduction of some weird vocals on opener *Serpent King* are way off the mark in my opinion, but hey, at least they're experimenting, I guess. I know I'm being really critical here, but I'm just a little disappointed overall by this album. I do like the bald look though, and I'd give money to know how "Beef" got his moniker. Unless it has something to do with "Boogie Nights", in which case I'll just keep thinking that it's cuz he works for the Dutch meat trade.

Godflesh - Us and Them
1999 Earache Records

Listening to *Godflesh* is more of an all-encompassing emotional experience than say, a casual affair. Something about the truly menacing riffs, mechanistic rhythms, and Broadrick's slithering voice create the perfect companionship for darkness in the city. Maybe I feel this way because I used to spin *Streetscleaner* quite a bit when I was in my angst period ('89, Philadelphia), but it just seems to fit. The *Godflesh* attack isn't as threatening as it once was, but with each album brings new advancements to the trademark sound, as close to the idea of "Industrial" as you'll hear from a major label these days. The last platter I really dug by these guys was *Songs...*, partially because *Brain* was on drums (in place of *Machine*), and if *Earache* hadn't sent this to me, I doubt I would have picked it up. Why? Well, I don't listen to this brand of pain as much anymore, but in hearing *Us and Them* (aptly titled), I can see why *Godflesh* still has reason to exist. Once on, it's really hard to do anything else except be absorbed by the music (yes music), encased within. Yeah, there are break beats, and some other "funky" stuff, but if you need something to listen to completely clear your mind, check this out. Whew, wiped me out just listening through it once!

Hate Eternal - Conquering the Throne
1999 Wicked World Records

Possibly one of the most anticipated underground releases this year, *Hate Eternal* boasts guitarists from two of the greatest extreme bands, *Morbid Angel* and *Suffocation*. Erik Rutan may have an impressive resume, having worked with *MA* and *Ripping Corpse*, but by no stretch did he choose to rest on his laurels, instead creating possibly one of the most extreme albums ever. It's Rutan's show, he having conceived, created and produced this ball of sonic fury. Seriously, the album just flies into

motion, and just when you think it can't get any deadlier, it does, kicking into overdrive and laying waste to just everything. Well, Rutan may be the main dude here, but the presence of one Doug Cerrito is also very known. Cerrito is the man, having written almost all of the best *Suffocation* material, and having these two in the same band is cause for some alarm. The guitar work, even for a layman such as myself, is some of the best I have heard, at times sounding almost like keyboards, which must be due to some kinda dissonant harmony interplay, or something like that. These two guys are among the best, if not THE best guitarists out there, so you know that not only is it going to be fast and furious, there's gonna be depth and control as well. As crazy as the guitar work is, it's all held together by a combination of talent and the insanity that is HE's rhythm section. Remember the first time you heard *Altars of Madness*? You were impressed, right? Well, it's pretty common to hear some insane drumming now, but I swear, you have to witness Tim Yeung to believe that some of this is possible. Barely in his 20s, Yeung is set to sit among the legends of the genre with this under his belt, just blowing through some of the fastest, most intricate shit you can imagine without even breaking a sweat. Almost too much to absorb in one sitting, *Conquering the Throne* is a huge accomplishment for the band, and what could have been a superstar side project is thankfully instead what appears to be a band ready to do some serious damage. Highly recommended and hereby named the deathgrind album of the issue.

Hypocrisy - S/T
1999 Nuclear Blast Records

These are the hardest reviews to write, because how do you place the new album from one of your favorite bands in the same league as all of the other crap discs that fly by every day? Well, it's a tough job, but someone's got to do it. Want the review in a nutshell? The album fucking rules, stop reading and go buy it. Want me to go a little more in depth? Well, Peter and company have officially become an institution with this release, providing the metal populace with three back to back incredible metal albums. Existing in the middle of the *Abducted*'s sterility and the dirty crunch of *The Final Chapter*, *Hypocrisy* is possibly the best way to present the band. Written more as a complete band than previous works, this disc showcases the obvious talent (and influences) that go into making a band of this caliber. I'm not sure why, but I've read that the band has described this disc as being the black album for *Hypocrisy*, and in trying to read between the lines for this one, I'd say that statement signifies the rebirth of the band (they almost split 2 years ago), their opportunity to shine in the fickle spotlight of the "mainstream", and that this album is also comprised of many moods, ranging from the bleak to the chaotic. Themes that were hinted at before are accentuated here, perhaps due to raised confidence or maturity. Lyrically, well, one gets glimpses of subject matter, clarified a little by hefty track titles. I know, it's everyone's wish

that we can read these in their original form, but evidently Tagtgren really doubts his creative abilities in that department, so we can only wait. The vocals are less subhuman this time, staying more in the midrange of Peter's spectrum. Less demonic than the past, but very fitting for this material. When I think about this as a whole, it seems a tad slower and more refined than TFC, yet certain sections contain some of the fastest pieces since the debut (check out Time Warp). In my opinion, this is still Tagtgren's show, but no problem there, as Peter is easily one of the best songwriters in music, period. In any regard, this is easily my favorite heavyweight disc this time around, never leaving my player unless by absolute force. For further listening enjoyment (and to get an idea where some of the "new" Hypocrisy sound comes from) check out the Pain album, another masterpiece.

Iced Earth - Alive in Athens
1999 Century Media Records

Iced Earth pretty much epitomize power metal in the 90s. Having released album after album to a growing audience, the Florida based band has made a huge jump and relocated to the new metal capitol of the U.S., Chicago. In the interim before the next full length, we get this, an excellent live album which is by no means any filler for the masses. Over two hours in length, my only complaint about this may be that it's just so fucking LONG! But that's necessary, as most IE tracks are over the 8 minute mark, little epics all their own. And then all 16:23 of Dante's Inferno kicks in, and even Iron Maiden are awed by these usurpers of the throne. OK, I'm laying it on a bit thick, but that's my mood when I hear Iced Earth, it's meaty, powerful, metal music. Even the "ballads" are strong, putting a tear in everyone's eye (and more reminiscent of Caress of Steel era Rush than anything else to me!) and a million lighters in the air. They were smart to do this in Athens, as the crowd (yeah, I'm sure it's boosted) know every freakin' word in all the lyrics. And the band? They sound stronger than ever, with Matthew Barlow's vocals really working here, being perfect for the new material as well as his interpretations of the older stuff. The mix is Awesome, and those twin guitars work their magic everywhere. Brent Smedley also puts in a great job behind the set, and the drums sound just HUGE. Studio quality (and not to be cynical, but probably "fixed" with technology), Alive in Athens is worth it, just to hear the Iced Earth perform all their classics as they play them now with excellent clarity.

In Flames - Colony
1999 Nuclear Blast Records

Is it me, or have all of Sweden's heavyweights released albums all in the same month? While some have disappointed (Dark Tranquillity), I'm pleasantly surprised by the return to form that In Flames have taken here. I say this for while I felt that Whoracle was a good album, it was a huge letdown for me after the brilliance

of The Jester Race. Some of this may be that the band had less opportunity to work on the Whoracle songs, but I think that it was more the fact that Whoracle caught the band in transition, with longtime In Flamesians Glenn Ljungstrom and Johan Larsson leaving the band after that album's recording. Niklas Engelin from Gardian stepped in, but left to be replaced by drummer Bjorn Gelotte, who was responsible for a lot of the new material. This change was for the best, as the band's intensity has been upped a notch by new skinsman Daniel Svensson (ex-Sacrilige). The movement towards the pop realm is still taking place, but I have to hand it to In Flames for keeping the faith in the vocal department, because to my ears, that's the main factor keeping this band from the mainstream limelight (well, and maybe that lightning double bass work). Changing the vocals could have made things "easier" for the band, but thankfully for us fans, they don't seem to have any intention of this in the near future. There's no real point in trying to describe what Colony sounds like, for In Flames is one of those rare bands that you compare other bands to, not vice-versa. To attempt it anyway, I guess the core sound is an updated Iron Maiden/Judas Priest sense of axework, tuned down to B of course, Frieden spitting out his venomous vox with a sense of power and clarity. Which is a good thing, as his lyrics are once again as intelligent and thought provoking as we've come to expect. Expanding on his conceptual ideas given earlier, it's more like reading a book than a metal lyric sheet. Anders explains his ideas in the interview better than I ever could, so I won't butcher the points he's trying to get across. Another picture perfect Studio Fredman production doesn't hurt this opus either, all instruments strong and mixed well to clarify the attack. I have to say this much though, my immediate favorite song on the album is their 1999 rendition of Behind Space, an awesome song done justice by this confident new lineup. No doubt this is partially due to previous knowledge of the song, but it is a little scary to think that the older stuff may sound more powerful than what is more recent. The whole album grew on me exponentially though, and I have no doubts that this disc will be spun long after the cows have gone to pasture, an occurrence which is becoming rarer and rarer as my album collection grows. So, while there are some interesting points in the album (a little organ line pops up at one spot), In Flames are back to business, totally ready to conquer the world this time around, and I for one wish them the best of luck.

In Extremo - Weckt die Toten!
1999 Metal Blade Records (Dist)

Bursting out of central Europe like a second rate Skyclad sung in German, In Extremo certainly have something going for them. Complete with a bunch of guys who play traditional instruments (both old and new), Weckt die Toten! (if I were still in high school this would certainly be known as Wacken mie Offen) is kinda dancy in a folk way, probably great for the English Garden, but for normal listening, it's kinda flat.

What's funny about German Power Metal is that it always skirted this line, and it wasn't until last weekend that I figured out (finally!) what it was. I was listening to Blind Guardian's Imaginations from the Other Side album when that musical interlude comes on (song #3), and my girlfriend is like: "It sounds like a renaissance fair". It sure did, and THAT'S the influence that always made those bands have that element of cheese to me, those sections reminding me of badly dressed skinny guys running around with swords and a lot of fake blood. Do you like the human chessboard? Then you may think that In Extremo is El Supremo, but I can't wait to finish this review and get on to something new. Oh yeah, the whole thing is sung in German, which will either add or detract, depending on your particular inclination. Dis Musik Really Sucken!

Internal Bleeding - Driven to Conquer
1999 Pavement Music

Oh yeah, this album just fucking starts, no warning shots, and no pity throughout the whole running time of this monster. Much like Dying Fetus (I'd call these two peers), Internal Bleeding play brutal American Death Metal, complete with incredible guitar work, some truly sick grind vocals, and of course, drum acrobatics from hell. The Addition of Guy Marchais (Pyrexia) has appeared to have twisted this band even further, leading to an interplay between him and Pervelis which competes with the best of them out there. "New" vocalist Lebron has a true gut-wrenching style, I mean, he's got to be sponsored by Chloraseptic. Swirling guitar lines, nicely accented drum patterns, and did I mention that this was fast?! A requisite for bands such as this, regular blast beats almost seem to be too slow for these guys, who have obviously enough confidence in their abilities to be able to come up with some innovative shit at Mach 3. I never thought this would be the style that caught my attention the most, but this is yet another album that has been in heavy rotation for the last few weeks. A buy or die if you can appreciate anything brutal out of the state of New York. Last track is contains a 13 minute verbal "thank you" to make sure that no one was forgotten. 8/13/99 - Just wanted to add that I caught these guys at Metalfest (after Dying Fetus no less), and they just blew everybody else off the stage. What impressed me the most was the energetic display from these guys given the incredible technicality of their songs. In my humble opinion, one of the top groups in the genre.

Kreator - Endorama
1999 Pavement (Dist)

For a period of about three years (1986-1989) Kreator were, no holds barred, my favorite band. Pleasure to Kill is a milestone in thrash metal, as is it's successor, Terrible Certainty. I still throw on Flag of Hate to get moving at certain times. Extreme Aggression was the start of the decline of the band in my opinion,

finding it a bit too by the numbers for my tastes. I skipped *Coma of Souls* for years, and have never even heard *Renewal*. Cause for Conflict found the band reinvigorated, but then *Outcast* found *Ventor* back on the throne, and the band faltered yet again. Weird, because *Outcast* co-incidentally found *Coroner's* T. Tommy Baron in the band. Well, here's *Endorama*, and upon playing the first few tracks, I can safely say that this sucks. *Kreator* now vying for the *Spinal Tap* of 1999 award. I can't believe that two classic bands were ruined to make this piece of slop, *Endorama* being completely sappy, and further humiliating because there are actually some halfway decent hooks on this album, completely destroyed within seconds by some meaningless chorus or rock play. I completely give up, and you know, I wouldn't have touched this with a ten foot pole had *Pavement* not sent it to me. Yeah, there are moments of what *Kreator* used to be, but why should I sit through 15 minutes of garbage to get there, or make allowances anymore for this once incredible band? I don't, nor will I, *Endorama* being the final chapter in the book of *Kreator*. I swear, seeing that logo on this album makes me angry.

Lab Animals - Silent Weapons for Quiet Wars
1999 Digital Dimensions Records

The obligatory preface for this review will also serve as a warning to those who any like their music crammed full of distortion: This ain't metal. In fact, Lab Animals remind me of "industrial" as it was perceived at the beginning of the decade, with some late night rave madness thrown in. Now, I've never been to a rave, but I've seen one on TV, and if that is an accurate representation (I'm joking, folks), then Lab Animals know what to do when the 'X' starts to kick in. All fine and dandy, but when I'm listening to this at 9 AM on a Thursday, the effect just isn't there for me. I do dig the *Evil Dead 2* samples (one of the greatest movies, ever), and that throws in a point or two, because if it's dictated that you have to have samples, make 'em good. But, after a few tracks, my interest wanes, and I'm skipping around to find something of interest. Hey, if post-industrial dance music is your bag, this is probably good stuff, or it's derivative schlock. Either way, it all kinda sounds similar to me, so I'll leave you with that description and state for the record that I could probably find another time to hear this, but most likely *Silent Weapons* will become another promotional beer coaster while I spin the new *Deeds of Flesh* album.

Lake of Tears "Forever Autumn"
1999 Black Mark Productions

This album begins with a cello intro. which made me expect something weak to follow. However this record is actually very enjoyable and something different to mix into your collection. Some keyboards and some slight atmospheric elements. Definitely melancholic but in a uniquely catchy almost sing along style. The production is thick and the bottom end provides

enough depth which helps to add dimension. Some of the melodies seem to have ancient Celtic origin and this album is heavily based in sorrow and ebbing darkness. I would describe this album as a cross between some *Metallica* type ballads mixed with Cat Steven's folk style vocals with a touch of Sabbath gloom. The artwork is very corny and some better artwork may have really helped this record. The grim reaper in the forest with a damsel worshipping him has been done a thousand times too many. Still the music is what matters right? Although this stuff is really not my cup of whiskey, this album probably hit's the spot when you are bummed out. Rejoice in sadness and sorrow with *Lake of Tears*. - **Review by Derek**

Limbonic Art - In Abhorrence Dementia
1999 Nocturnal Art Productions

I first heard Limbonic Art on one of the Black-end compilations, and much like *Diabolical Masquerade*, their latest release far surpasses anything that exists in their back catalog. Major player *Morfeus* is credited with being the "Keymaster" here, and I guess I'll let that slide, as IAD contains some truly monumental synth passages, deserving some serious accolades. There are so many keyboard layers here that some might argue that they're the main focus. Maybe, and with the drums also being programmed, the feel is definitely electronic, but it's performed in such a way that I'm not turned off by it. Limbonic Art is basically *Morfeus* and *Daemon*, a two man band that probably don't tour that much, instead spending most of their time perfecting these highly sequenced songs which I would say, are among the elite in the atmospheric black metal scene today. They aren't short compositions either, most tracks being around the 7 minute mark, the whole disc coming in at a whopping 70 minutes. Not much in the way of filler here either, all 9 tracks just ripping along at an inhuman pace. I did drop the term atmospheric, but I guess that term is a bit open to interpretation, Limbonic Art being first and foremost a black metal band, just using symphonics to elevate the music above solid grating guitar tones. An excellent release, in my oh so humble opinion, perfect for getting the blood moving on a sluggish winter day.

Lorde of all Desires - The Scent of Malevolence
1999 Root-O-Evil Records

Essentially the flagship band of Earl Root's Root-O-Evil burgeoning record label, Lorde of all Desires play black metal of a distinctly European flavor, yet reside in, of all places, Eden Prairie Minneapolis. The cool thing though is that while the music has the cold yet appealing ambience of those frosty BM bands, Lorde didn't choose to just join a particular movement. Instead, Load throw in elements that differentiate them (for me) from many other apers. Production seems to be a key factor in a lot of these recordings, with feelings that anything overproduced goes against the black code of honor, a limiting development

which hampers some otherwise good discs for me. Well, this isn't done with mirrors, nor is it recorded in a cave, *Malevolence* having a really bleak feel, yet everything is discernible, much to my liking. I'm still a layman in matters such as these, but I'd guess that lots of compression and reverb were the helping hands here. A testament against those that said that the states could never produce a killer black metal band, Lorde of all Desires pay a lot of attention to song structure, building some masterful tunes which run longer than the average 3 minute mark, allowing songs to grow and the listener to become accustomed to each track (essential in more atmospheric black metal) without boredom setting in. I hear a couple of different vocal styles here, with a faint nod towards *Cradle* in areas (but not too blatant), but overall, I think that Load have managed to create an album which stays true to the form, yet builds on the foundation that they were given. There are either a couple problems in the mix or the mastering, where a couple of the instrumental tracks are louder than the rest of the disc, but when considering that this was released through a true underground label, I feel bad about making comments like that. Always a big hit at the American festivals, I can see Lorde of all Desires rapidly becoming a hot commodity in the black metal circuit. Closes with an eight minute acoustical guitar piece, now that's something I haven't heard in a while!

Metalium - Millennium Metal
1999 Pavement Records (Dist)

Just what I needed, more power metal. Not that I hate this stuff, but I just get so exasperated with having to listen to so many of these albums that I begin to start breaking into volcanic howls of the valkyrie whenever I hear those power chord crescendos. But, I guess that if I have to hear it, at least Metalium do it right. You want gut-busting operatic vocals, twin guitar attacks from beyond the black hills, double bass drumming to announce the coming of the apocalypse, *Millennium Metal* (Chapter 1, please) is just what the doctor ordered. Some all stars present here as well, Chris Caffery of *Savatage* and Mike Terrana (it's pronounced Ing-Vay...) being just a couple of them. It's professional, it's German in scope, and it just begins to bug the shit out of me. At this point, what else can I write, for if you like this brand of metal (*Iron Maiden* taken to new exponential heights), then you'll probably love *MMP1*, but, if hearing these guys kinda makes you snicker, then there's nothing here to necessitate becoming a Teutonic metal convert, not even the dual sword cover.

The Mist - Gottverlassen
1997 Repulse Records

I remember way back when, Jairo "T." was a band called *Sepultura*. He had some sort of disagreement as to the direction of the music, and was reported to have left to form a band "more along the lines of *Motley Crue*"... Well, if indeed that was the case, he sure as hell ditched that idea along the way, for *The Mist* resides in that realm of punchy, powerful metal,

Brazilian style. On the surface, things are pretty straightforward, and Gottverlassen could be another album which is spun a couple of times and then hits the recycle pile. Depth does exist however, most notably in the guitar work, which adds dimension to the songs, and lifts them from the standard “chug-chug” foundry where most bands feel content to reside. The production is good, don’t know why the word “punchy” keeps coming to mind, but it is, with the lower elements (bass guitar and bass drums) given the proper accentuation, keeping things from getting to muddy, while retaining those low frequencies. The vocal work of Marcello Diaz is pretty interesting, being more of a deathly origin, yet every word is discernible, two great tastes that taste great together. Things do start to drag a bit towards the end, but with a running time of almost an hour, that tends to happen. Summing up, a strong guitar album that should appeal to fans of mid-paced powerful death metal, yet with a commercial enough edge to bridge that “gap” that’s there.

Mortician - Chainsaw Dismemberment
1999 Relapse Records

I’d say that by now, Mortician are pretty much the most infamous death metal band, and I’d claim that for a few reasons. One, most people seem to absolutely hate them, calling their riffs crap tuned down as far as possible, and masked by too many horror movie samples. Hey, at least they’re trying to be original! While I may not be able to throw on Chainsaw Dismemberment at any given point in the day, I appreciate it’s existence as the anti-musical statement of the month. Granted, some of it is too much, but hey, it’s Mortician, and you get what you pay for. Sub-vocalist Will Rahmer has the lowest voice I’ve heard, and I was fortunate enough to witness him give an impromptu vocal lesson to my friend Justin (Myself Am Hell) in the Ambassador bar this past August. Watching these guys, this isn’t a joke to them, they live the life, and I give credit for that. The other main complaint is the use of a drum machine, which makes sense, but then again it doesn’t. People complain that drummers sound like machines on some albums, and yeah, we’d all be flabbergasted if someone was playing these rhythms (which someone did at metalfest), but the machine doesn’t sound half bad to me this time. I don’t know why I like these guys, it going against everything sensible, but I do, Mortician being the aural equivalent of the thousands of gore movies which are released each year all packed into one solid punch. You Mortician fans know who you are, and we all agree that this is probably their best work to date. Something completely meaningless if you can’t stand the band. That’s OK, I think the new Backstreet Boys is coming out soon, hope you enjoy it. As for me, I’ll stick to the brutal. I still get a chuckle every time I hear the phrase “Hacked up for Barbecue”. Seriously though, I think that these frequencies are so low they could kill whales and shit.

Mortification - Hammer of God
1999 Metal Blade Records (Dist)

You’ve got to give credit to Mortification, I guess, for no matter what, they keep slogging it out, releasing album after album of mediocrity. Some riffs are cool here, but for the most part, a lot of this stuff is just rehashed older material from better bands. I almost feel bad for these guys, because they obviously put a lot of work into their material, a lot of it just doesn’t come across very strong. My opinion? The band is hampered by a low budget, and by the fact that every song has to do with new Christianity, something that tends to rub a lot of metalheads, including myself, the wrong way. I don’t know, it could be worse, I guess, Mortification at least being consistent. The more I listen I do see some growth, I just think that the band should cut half of the material released here out, which would still have produced a 32 minute album. Don’t care much for Rowe’s spoken gruff vocals either, although I do dig Bowen’s guitar style, and the tracks that he adds to are among the best on the album. For some reason I don’t want to completely slag this, but it does come off as ultimate cheese. C’mon, Daniel was a mosher? Ugh. Mortification - Australian for disciple...

Necrodeath - Into the Macabre
1999 Scarlet (1987 reissue)

Classic Italian thrash metal, I can vaguely remember Necrodeath from back in the day, at least I think I do, their name and sound being vaguely familiar. Of course, this may be due to Necrodeath sounding very, very similar to old Sodom and many of the other German thrash bands of the mid eighties. Kinda like a super-charged Show No Mercy, Necrodeath is pretty cool, sporting some really good double bass for the time. It’s marred a bit by the cavelike production, but it’s all good. Call it the original black thrash attack, Necrodeath (of or relating to death death) also having a name which is just too funny, kinda like the Necronomicon ex Mortis in Evil Dead (roughly translated, book of the dead of the dead). Classic stuff.

Obscurity - Damnation’s Pride
1999 Scarlet (1986 reissue)

This sucks, plain and simple. I don’t know how Obscurity are now grouped in with the masters of the late 80s, but that’s the marketing plan, something that baffles me. Well, it seems like we’ve got yet another reissue to throw out, and while the sound gets better on the second half of the disc, it’s just fucking boring! Straight ahead playing, spoken word lyrics that sound like Romper Room, forget it, hit stop and save a little bit of your life. It also sounds like they spliced a drum machine with real drums in certain sections, ah, fuck it, go get In the Sign of Evil if you really want to hear some old school black thrash.

Old Grandad - The Final Upper
1999 MIA Records

The only reason that one could even begin to call this metal is the tone of the guitar. Other than that, everything about The Final Upper (songs, lyrics, overall feel) is punk to me. And snot nosed punk at that, Old Grandad finding the most juvenile things just hilarious, reminding me of myself in high school. Well, I’m way past that now, so for me, Old Grandad has almost nothing to capture my attention for more than 30 seconds. The playing is sloppy, the songs primitive, just another run of the mill album. Except, there are a few moments where Old Grandad find their niche, and it’s in the slow, sludgy passages that inhabit the midsections of their longer tracks. Of course, there are also long ass tracks that just don’t go anywhere, making this album (which should have been around 30 minutes) over an hour in length! There are some moments, but for the most part, this will hit the stacks and sit, because at this point, I just don’t want to slog through 30 minutes of crap to get to a couple of good ambient minutes.

Pissing Razors “Cast Down the Plague”
1999 Noise Records

Hailing from El Paso Texas, these boys definitely know who they are and what they want to do. It’s difficult to believe that this album was released within a year of their crushing debut given the fact that they have been touring nonstop since it’s release. 13 killer tracks of aggressive rhythmic monsters produced by Andy Sneap. Most of the songs are heavy medium paced railed out killers with rhythms that turn themselves inside out. It appears that Eddy Garcia (drums) wrote most of the music which makes sense since most of the music has a chunked out percussive attack. Garcia can play guitar and bass also, which might explain how this record was done so quickly. Lyrically, this album addresses issues that directly affect their lives, such as betrayal, jail time, liars, and other things you might expect an up and coming band to be going through. Joe Rodriguez also delivers a hell of a walloping on the vocals which adds to the sense of power and struggle which this band seems to bring forth. I was also pleasantly surprised to see that Matt Lynch (guitars) busted out some cool solo’s on this record, since there were none on their debut album. The solo’s have a bluesy feel to them but also give you that out of control feeling that takes you away. Check out track 8 “Forever”, for a great example of this soloing style, or track 9 “Away” which features some ultra brutal riffing and percussive gauging by Eddy Garcia. Having just completed a major European tour as well as the Milwaukee Metal Fest Pissing Razors are at a critical point in their career where although their fan base is huge, they are not making a whole lot of money. Because of this, Matt Lynch (guitars) unfortunately had to quit the band in order to spend time with his family back in Texas. Luckily their guitar tech Caesar Soto stepped up and is doing a good job, so the Razors are still cutting. With bands like Pissing

Razors still providing good heavy chunked out metal, it is reassuring to me that it can be done in a way that tributes the metal influences, without including all the bullshit rap elements and corporate athletic sportswear attire on stage.
Review by Derek

Regurgitate - Effortless Regurgitation
 1999 Relapse Records

Regurgitate are one of the cult grind bands, having been around for quite a while and releasing "music" similar in scope to early Carcass or Napalm Death. Before I give my healthy opinion on this album and the grind genre in general, let's give the specs. 63 tracks in 56 minutes, and that ladies and gentlemen, may be all the information you need to make your decision. No, these aren't slow, drippy love songs, nor are they well thought out technologically superior odes to Satan. What this really is are raw, naked ideas. Riffs created and presented almost one at a time. Why do this? Why just take the first thing that pops into your head and throw it on tape? Well, maybe you prefer Delacroix to Picasso, but they're both artists, aren't they? One choosing to refine and present a masterpiece of time, talent and love, the other warping perceived conception and forming a new sphere of influence. The question then just comes down to the type of stuff that you want to hear. If 10 second blasts of noise aren't your bag, or having to sift through 3 tracks to catch an incredible riff, don't even try Regurgitate. But, if you dig primal screams, raw intensity and naked aggression, this is a veritable goldmine for you to discover. For me, I left this stuff at the door a long time ago (with the first Napalm/Carcass releases, along with Larm, Heresy and others of that ilk), and it doesn't do for me what it once did. I can still appreciate what is being done here though, and there ARE some truly inspiring moments here, I just am a little more refined in my old age though I guess. Something to be said for raw creativity though, and at least this drummer (Peter from Face Down/Entombed) is really playing this shit!

Riot - Sons of Society
 1999 Metal Blade Records

And they just keep going, and going, and going. Mark Reale has kept Riot alive for over 20 years in one form or another, keeping core members, adding new ones here and there, and SoS is no exception. One of the core elements that have kept Riot together over the last ten years (besides Mark) is the phenomenal rhythm section of Pete Perez and Bobby Jarzombek. Yeah, they sound familiar, because they're also 2/3 of Spastic Ink. These two are monsters, Jarzombek keeping things interesting almost all of the time, laying back on the slower, "ballad" tracks. Riot is always a mixed bag for me though, always digging a couple songs on each recent album, but finding them not strong enough to carry through the whole hour of material. It's definitely the faster double bass oriented stuff that I find appealing, but I could totally do without

those aforementioned three hanky 80s style ballads. I have to say this for Riot though, if someone needed a prime example of a "classic" metal band, Riot would work just fine. All the elements are here, guitar pyrotechnics, amazing solos, and Mike Dimeo belting out tales of fantasy straight from the gut. A bit too cheesy for me most of the time, but hey, it's Riot, and if I have to make allowances to any band, this is the one. You could do a whole lot worse for your money.

Samael - Eternal
 1999 Century Media Records

Now I finally understand where they were going with the Exodus E.P., Eternal just being a ghost of the brilliance that existed on Passage. Similar to Rotting Christ, modern Samael holds no relation to it's previous incarnation, no being a synth, techno band which kinda sucks. Now, I really liked Passage, and it filled a definite spot for me, but this is just lame, rehashing the same songs as that album, which makes the entire thing end up sounding fake. The "Hoo, Ha" choral lines in the first 30 seconds of the disc are an early warning that this is flying nonstop towards the land of eternal cheese. If you want to hear a near-perfect display of orchestrated metal, get Passage, and leave this thing the hell alone. I was looking forward to this too, and my disappointment can be felt across vast galaxies, spanning multiple planes of existence, blah blah blah...

Silentium - Infinita Plango Vulnera
 1999 Spikefarm Records

All it takes is hearing the first 10 seconds of Solicitude, with it's morose piano set over a soundscape of rain, and you know exactly what you're going to hear throughout the album. Or do you? I ask, because while Silentium seems like pretty straight ahead doom/dirge metal, there's something here that catches my interest. It may be the use of the Citharas (a relative of the harp), which gives an orchestrated feel to the album. There's also some double bass (percussive, not stringed) thrown in, always a welcome addition. But alas, there is always a weak link, and Silentium's is in the vocal department. Sometimes coming across as a disciple of the My Dying Bride school, sometimes from the Hetfield realm, Matti's vocals just don't match the overall tone the music has to offer. Some of the more deathly growls work a bit better, as do Tina's siren-song delivery, but neither can really elevate this aspect of the album enough for me. I guess the words "picturesque", and "beautiful" can be thrown around, but again, that's not what I'm really looking for in an album. Looking over the pictures though, the band appears pretty young, meaning that they may grow into something pretty grand in the near future, hey, I'm always optimistic. My abstract? Fairly meaty dirge metal with some good use of dynamics, almost sabotaged by standard vocals.

Taetre - Out of Emotional Disorder
 1999 Die Hard Records

Oh yeah! It seems as though I have to slog through like 20 mediocre discs before something like this jumps out and grabs me. After the requisite 40 second intro (some say mood building, I of the ADD generation say distracting), things kick off and continue along for the duration. Not as balls out as Carnal Forge or Naglfar, I'd still put Taetre up there in the same dimension as those bands, accenting the power rather than the melodic. Yet these songs don't appear chord based, as a lot of other metal albums do, lightening the atmosphere but still keeping the pace and power, get me? I guess the whole package is that new school Swedish Death, just a tad more accessible, which isn't always a bad thing you know. The title refers to how the record was created. Interestingly enough, the most "emotional" track on the album is the ripping cover of the Stones's Paint it Black. Overall, a really good blend of all the Swedish flavors, but I'm kinda bummed about the short playing time though.

Tartaros - The Grand Psychotic Castle
 1996 Necropolis Records

Psychotic is certainly right, this album being the sounds from your worst nightmares (or Tim Burton's daydreams). Now famous for his ivory work with a touring Emperor, Charmand Grimloch released this platter a couple of years ago, and the folks at Necropolis are kind enough to have re-released it as a teaser for the pianist's next opus. Based mainly on keyboard work (of course!), TGPC also has some standard black metal guitar and vocals, made interesting by the swirling soundscapes present. The album is a tough listen, but totally cool, really giving one the feeling of being let in on something truly secretive, and fairly evil. I mean, the closing track reminds me of something akin to Clive Barker. Try this as an analogy: most black metal is to Tartaros as Stephen King is to Clive Barker. Stephen King writes some good, creepy stuff, but you know in the end that it's fiction. Barker, on the other hand, writes excellent, creepy stuff, but sometimes I wonder if he knows something we don't... Lovecraft was like that as well. I know I'm off the subject a bit, but this disc is just really eerie, I guess. This means that it may not spin as much as others, but I'm still really impressed with it. Better than average production courtesy of Greighallen adds that special flavor, culminating in a superior prelude to the next Tartaros release.

Today is the Day - In the Eyes of God
 1999 Relapse Records

Today is the Day is an exhaustive experience. Coming close to their potential on 1998's Temple of the Morning Star, TtD finally give birth to the monstrosity that we feared they were carrying within. A lot of the credit has to go to new drummer Brann Dailor, for this guy puts

in a performance that's way above the call of duty, peppering every evil-tainted riff with more insanity. It fits though, drawing and swirling around Austin's tortured screams and tales of terror. Not for the weak, In the Eyes of God also sports some truly horrific good packaging, courtesy of Paul Booth, who has put to canvas what one may honestly call a morbid vision. Better use of atmospherics here surround the listener in an aural pummeling. Yeah, lots of metaphors here, but I feel allowed, as this album to me just represents pure evil, an evil that is not blatant or shown, but something lurking below the surface. To sum it up in one word, depravity, that's what I hear. And while it's not the happiest thing to throw in the tape deck, something draws me back to this time and time again. Worth the risk, if you dare.

Tree - Our Day Will Come
1999 Wonderdrug Records

Interesting, very interesting indeed. One of the main things that Tree remind me of is skate metal. I can't peg just why, but these tracks remind me of some of the Texan hardcore that was out circa 1985. Sure, the guitars are heavier, and the overall production is a bit meatier, but lyrically, we're back there, and the vibe of the thing is this free-for-all type atmosphere where you've got four guys just going for it. Vocals are a bit soulful, not quite as abrasive as days of yore, but to paraphrase Napoleon Wilson, "There are moments." A bit primitive perhaps, but I can easily pick out some killer riffs on the first few spins, tracks like Cemetery being a prime example of that hooky soul-core (NOT emo-core) I so speak of. One cool surprise: First time I played this I noticed that the final track was the same playing time as the album. I thought to myself, "Oh great, another 32 minute blank song." But instead, track 12 is the whole album, sans indexing. First time I've ever seen that, and it's a pretty cool idea. Not exactly my cup of tea, but it's OK, a punky, rocky ride through rural America, complete with backing vocals. For some reason I'm sure that this comes across better live.

V/A - 4-way Blockade
Root-O-Evil Records

Great idea to include 4 bands on a compilation such as this. I will go ahead and call this metal-core for the most part. The 4 bands... 612 Crew, Opaque, K and Lowdown. The way I will deal with this album is simple.... Opaque fuckin Rules!!!! Opaque proves my theory that you can make up for average production with kick ass song structure and inferno-psycho-destructo energy. Track #8 "Crossing" wakes this CD up in a fuckin' hurry with chunked out dry gutted guitars with some very creative half time tempos and time changes. Hats off to vocalist Mike Gravow who sounds as pissed off as I feel... I can relate dude!!! Determination to crush all who stand in their way, this shit made me grab a beer. That's my fucked up way of knowing when music is aggro enough, oh yeah it's 9:00 am. If you guys ever wanna play in Hawaii just

let me know, we'll set some shit up!!!! Keep on killing it!!!!!! - **Review by Derek**

V/A - Never Give In: A Tribute to Bad Brains
1999 Century Media Records

I bet this seemed like a good idea at the time. With Tribute albums being all the rage, I guess someone felt that it was time to pay homage to one of the greatest hardcore bands in history. The thing with Bad Brains was that they lived the life, and they also made sacrifices. Basically banned from their home of D.C. due to a dispute with a more powerful dude in the scene (I guess they caused a little Fugazi), the displaced Bad Brains went on to create some of the most memorable music in the scene. OK, tributes can be cool, but who the hell decided that Moby should lead this thing off? His cover sucks, and honestly, I was ready to throw the disc away in disgust after hearing that track. Things pick up a bit with Ignite and Skinlab, but there are so many fucking stinkers here that it's abasing. It also goes to prove that good production does not a band make, as the Bad Brains were also very adept at their instruments, something not to be said of all the artists here. Now, I'm not going to point fingers and blame, but even the once mighty Entombed embarrass themselves here with their just horrible version of Yout' Juice. Are there any winners? Well, Vision of Disorder's Soulcraft has some of the sound, and some of the vibe, as does 16's Right Brigade, but then Sepultura kicks in and ruins everything. I say stay away, but I bet this sells a ton of copies to kids that have never even heard the originals. You want to honor the band? Re-release their older, hard to find albums like the original Rock for Light along with this brown nugget.

V/A - Roots IV: Zoso
1999 Root-O-Evil Records

The fourth compilation in only about a year, Earl Root has once again managed to compile some truly eclectic bands for this issue's Roots compilation. Including quite a few ROE roster artists such as Lorde of all Desires, Impaler, Le' rue Delashay, Plan E and the 612 Crew, Zoso also features long lost tracks from recent recorders like Fleshgrind and November's Doom. All I can say for these, outside of there being some really killer tracks you won't find anywhere else, is that if approached with an open mind, any of the Root-O-Evil compilations should remind you of the days of yore, when compilations had 20 bands that all sounded different in both production and style. Pretty cool stuff, and even Impaler live on this disc sounds tighter than ever, woo-hoo!

V/A - White
1999 The End Records

Well, I must admit that this is actually my introduction to any of the bands on this label's roster. Not to say that I haven't heard excellent things about Mental Home, Sculptured or Epoch of Unlight, for I have, just until now I have not

been able to listen to their fine tunes... OK, that stated, I'll just state for the record that if this is any indication (and be a sampler, it should be an excellent representation!) of what The End has to offer, I can see a lot of my hard earned cash going towards their back stock in the near future! The real bonus is that most of these tracks are not yet released, giving the listener a real glimpse of what's to come from this excellent indie label. While I really like most everything on here, there are some definite faves, Mental Home being one of them, Stained being a classic track that sunk it's razor hooks into me from minute one. Sculptured also rank high, but their use of horns doesn't work for me, and while I appreciate the try (and the Ozzy-esque clean vocals), points do come off. Most History's 11 minute The Gleam of Midnight Sky/Smell of Tears is an epic, and it carries, although it tends to repeat itself as well. The Agalloch track is full of emotion (actually, most of the 9 tracks here are), full of despair yet not without anger. Mistigo Varggoth Darkestra reminds me a bit of Limbonic Art (a good thing!) and is a bit pompous, but still pretty killer. Actually, the only track that I was a bit disappointed by was the Epoch of Unlight. Now, it's a good track, but I was expecting something extraordinary from the press that this band has been given, so when it came up only better than average, I was a bit let down. You know what, I'm really nitpicking here, being a true fucking critic, because honestly, this compilation kicks ass, and for the absurd price of like \$3 for this, you have to get this to hear not only new cutting edge metal from the states, but from around the world as well!

War - We Are War
1999 Necropolis Records

Well, well, well, it seems that Blackmoon really burned some bridges on this one. Not sure the exact story, but it seems that after signing a deal with Necropolis, Blackmoon felt that War should be promoted through his own label. I guess legal issues don't mean much in the satanic realm, but it just seems a shame that music has to be overshadowed by things such as this, for this is sort of a cool balls out thrash record. Yeah, it claims to be Satanic, War being the band to unite All and It into a machine of despair to Christians everywhere. Can't we all just get along? Anyway, We are War continues where the Total War E.P. left off, replacing It and skinsman Peter Tagtgren for In Aeternum's David Larsson (who informed me that he plays guitar on this album, not bass as is labeled) and Hypocrisy drummer Lars Szoke. Some pretty big changes, but the overall feel stays pretty true, War having a sound that contains early Slayer, old Sodom, some Kreator, you know, the good stuff. The album is sort of, the songs pretty derivative, but overall it's OK. Not great, mind you, but a halfway decent disc to throw in if you need to pound a few beers in a short period of time. I'm not sure if I agree with replicating everything when going retro (down to the ultrathin guitar tone), but 1,000 bands can't be wrong, can they? I'm riding the fence on this one, not sure if it's the monumental thrash achievement

it should be, or another hunk of badly produced riffs. Sodom's Bombenhagel closes things off, which is one of my least favorite songs off of the album that marked the beginning of the end of my Sodom phase (sorry, Expurse of Sodomy was THE apex of their career). Maybe not the best choice, as All is a spanking clean carbon copy of Angel Ripper, but I guess it really drives the point home. Maybe it's just the fact that most of the songs fade out just when they're getting started that puts the final nail in, who knows.

White Skull - Tales from the North
1999 Nuclear Blast

All you have to do is read the title and you get a pretty good idea of what's going on here, White Skull playing good old fashioned German power metal underneath what I would assume to be Norse myths put to song (I guess titles like Asgard and Viking's Tomb also give me a hint). Whatever the case, I find this type of stuff pretty damn cheesy most of the time, this being one of those moments. Makes me want to raise a tankard and grab a comrade-at-arms for some battle, but that's not really appropriate in my tiny apartment. Blind Guardian does it better, and with all of the stuff I have to hear daily (and that's HAVE to hear, not want to hear, this isn't going to stick around that long. The final nail comes from the vocals, which (especially on the "ballads") sounds like gibberish. Eh, fair, but nothing all that special, sounding more like a band that was signed to cash in on a current fad. Glad to shut this one off.



Chum - Dead to the World
1996 Century
Media Records

Chum hit the shelves at a time where Century Media seemed to be branching into the more experimental side of themselves, Dead to the World being much more of a heavy "alternative" album than metal. As always, when I say "alternative", I mean the old meaning, not the mainstream pap the media is trying to pawn off as something other than the norm, meaning that Chum has some allure for me. The strongest elements here for me are Lancaster's very distinctive style (he actually sings most of the time) and Chris Nicholas's more tribal rhythmic patterns. The songs are pretty strong, in fact it was hearing Stepping on Cracks on a compilation that lead me to find this album, but there are definite "hits" here, some tracks begin noticeably stronger than the rest. Similar to another West Virginia band, Karam to Burn (Nicholas went on to play with KTB shortly after the release of this album), Chum appeal to the softer side of the extreme. An oxymoron, I know, but that's the case, as I tend to spin Chum when I want a break from the venomous thrash. It's funny though, while this is considered the low end of things for me, to another person who may really get into "alternative" music, this is probably really heavy. Think of Dead to the World as from the cranky uncle of the hardcore family and maybe you'll have a good description. In the end, Chum have just delivered a better than average album which should appeal to fans of Century Media's more "accessible" side. The fact that you can buy this CD direct from CM for some outrageous price like \$2 should also be more incentive to seek this out before it disappears forever.

Crowbar "Odd Fellows Rest"
1998 Mayhem Records

Even though this record is a 1998 release, it is still their newest and since Evan didn't review it I just had to do it. Does the animal, walrus gigantica mean anything to you? Fuckin huge and fat as fuck, some of the riffs on this album just sit on you and leave you feeling like you just got the shit kicked out of you. No it's not technical, and no it's not fast. However, if you are looking for some slow-mid paced super deep depressing music with a positive twist this is the album for you. A look in to a dark dimension without getting trivial or genre limited this album shows the experience and maturity that Crowbar has reached through years of endurance and suffering. I will admit that this album took a while to grow on me because of the fact that their previous album "Broken Glass" was so much more aggressive and angry, that when I picked up "Odd Fellows Rest" I had to downshift a bit. But after about 20 listens I adjusted and just slowed down with it. Hey man, it's hard to play that slow and that tight!!! This album

is definitely Black Sabbath influenced but still drips with the original sound that Crowbar has forged on their own. - Review by Derek

Cryptopsy - None So Vile
1996 Wrong Again Records

I'm telling you, for a small label, Wrong Again had some of the greatest bands, ever! Between In Flames, Arch Enemy, Eucharist and Cryptopsy, these guys had it made. Unfortunately, because of their size, most of the classic albums released are long since out of print, NSV being one of those, along with Subterranean, that I had been waiting to get for some time. Well, thanks to Yukiko, because it was only through her that I was able to get the Japanese version of this classic CD. While not quite as over the top as Whisper Supremacy (I guess), None So Vile is about as extreme as they come, a Tasmanian Devil of a record that flails and roars in every direction at once. A hydra of sound, if you will. A four-piece for this recording, it's actually guitarist Jon Levasseur who holds this thing together, drummer Flo Mounier holding a complete "go for it" attitude with regard to the beats and anti-beats he issues forth. Basically a decipherable wall of noise, None So Vile's production is a billion times better than their debut, thanks to knob-twiddler Pierre Remillard (Oblivion). Cryptopsy are notorious now for their approach to controlled chaos, and that element is definitely here (check out Slit Your Guts), but they were even MORE infamous on this release due to frontman/gorehound Lord Worm. I'd call this guy a Gutturualist rather than a vocalist, his emanations being of the epileptic sort that would scare the shit out of anyone at fifty paces. I've also been told that most of this type of music is completely unmemorable, with no melody. Well, I wholeheartedly disagree, None So Vile holding some of the MOST remarkable riffs and solos I've heard in extreme music. This is a classic for those that can deal, and until it's released, it may also be one of the harder discs out there to find. Well fucking worth it though.

Hades - Resisting Success
1999 Reissue by the band

I think that the coolest thing about this reissue is that main man Dan Lorenzo sent it to me personally! Why is that so cool? Well, I guess I've got to state for the record that I was a Hades fan since about 1989. I actually went back to Hades from Watchtower (Tecchio's next endeavor) because everyone said that Hades were pretty damn technical. Well, they weren't Watchtower technical, but that turned out to be a good thing, as the music of Hades stood the test of time, sounding perfectly at home with most of what is being released today. The sound is a bit thin, but this remastered disc sounds about a billion times better than the factory cassette that I got 10 years ago! Maybe it's also that I'm from the east coast, but Hades were a legendary band, gone by the time I found them, but the legends of their shows were always carried through the minds of the tri-state area metallers who had experienced their concerts. OK, this may be a

bit too much reminiscing, but that's what this album does for me, reminding me of a time when metal was about craftsmanship and songwriting, not just image and good production. It's also always interesting to hear a seminal band like this today, and catch all the riffs that have been so graciously "sampled" and fused into modern songs. If you hear this for the first time today, you'll swear that Hades ripped off a hundred bands, until you look at the original release date, that is. And when I listen to Resisting Success as an adult now, yeah, it is damn technical, just reserved enough to allow the songs to be controlled, not one catankerous guitar lead after another. Do yourself a favor and pick this up to hear some of metal's early roots. And while you're at the shop, why don't you pick up their latest release, Saviour Self, just to see how ten years can or can't change a great band.

Non Fiction - Preface
1990 Fictitious Records

After the fall of Hades, songsmith Dan Lorenzo went on to form Non Fiction. At some point along the way, Hades vocalist Alan Tecchio left Watchtower and moved back to NJ where things started to really come together. Their first album, Preface is quite a departure from both Hades and Watchtower. Based more in slow metal and bluesy rock, the album has a real slow, heavy feel to it, one that really kicks a lot of ass in places. There are times that don't work (the too-shuffly I Hate to Tell You), but for the most part, Preface succeeds as a solid, ballsy hard metal disc. Lorenzo has kept some of the technical riffing from his earlier days, but Non Fiction is definitely more accessible, something that helped the band. Alan's vocals aren't as high as before (or later), which is good also, for while I think he has a lot of talent, the air raid work on Control and Resistance has me running for the door at times. I would dare say that this album pays more tribute to Deep Purple and a lot of the heavier 70s bands (you know, the ones that created Trouble) than standard metal, which is fine by me, being diametrically opposed to most of the extreme stuff that I listen to and love daily. I guess it almost forces me to mellow out without pissing me off. CD reissue by the band has a bunch of extra tracks, some from the In the Know album, some from earlier demos. Pain - S/T

1996 Nuclear Blast Records

First introduction to mastermind Peter Tagtgren's solo outing was hearing "Learn How to Die" on DIJT IV. In further proof that I can't tell jack about an album at the "listening station", I felt that was the only strong track on the album. Of course, we all know that familiarity plays a huge part in these observations, but hey, I was probably coming off a night of some high quality cough syrup. Anyway, I finally went out and got this a few weeks ago, and I find myself playing it more than the latest Hypocrisy release! Fav song for me would definitely be the opener, which achieves the feeling of sadness while keeping the juggernaut of power underbelly right there. There are a couple of slow spots, but just a couple, amazing as the album's

33 minutes just rips along, in fact, the disc stops before I know it, coaxing me to replay the little sucker. So why am I playing this more than Hypocrisy's S/T release? I'm not sure, but I'm really digging the sound, which reminds me of Hypocrisy's more experimental moments, yet is much more industrial based. Pain the album gives a little insight into what Peter is trying to do at those times, and while they do work when incorporated with death metal, I really appreciate that this album was made the way that it was. Remember also that this is a solo outing, and I'd say that really only Pete and Swano; have the ability to pull off all performances so adeptly, making an album where respective pieces are done as well, if not better, than as if the other members had attempted them. I guess part of this is due to Peter's being a drummer first, before a guitarist, which means that his drum parts are convincing, as well as challenging. Just score another victory for this man, as Pain is one of the finest moments so far in a musical career which will hopefully last much, much longer.

Pyrexia - Sermon of Mockery

1997? Pathos Productions

No real surprise here that Pyrexia have a sound similar to Internal Bleeding or Suffocation, as Long Island appears to breed some of the sickest, most twisted metal out there. No real surprise that this is just incredible either, as now IB guitarist Guy Marchias was in Pyrexia before his current appointment. And no small thanks to him, the guitarwork just shreds, intertwining the most technical of riffs around some killer breaks. Vocally, nothing to special, your usual guttural power death, but rhythmically, Pyrexia is a monster, the band sounding syncopated on even the more straight material (of which there is few). A bit heavy in the production, but Sermon of Mockery can easily be used as the definition of brutal to anyone who may ask. In answering my own question as to why I find this particular lineage of death metal so appealing, I'd have to say it's because of the myriad of tempo changes, all of which keep you amped to the music. Slow, moshing parts are full of power, building to a climactic blast beat section before slowing it down again. This is a truly devastating album.

V/A - Slatanic Slaughter II

1998 Black Sun Records

The second Black Sun installment serves as more proof that Slayer were gods, and that there's really no point in trying to update these classic tracks. I say this, because the tracks that "make it" here are the ones that are done pretty much true to form, not straying from the original ideas. That's not to say that covers should be done exactly as they were originally recorded (pretty boring), but to distort a song beyond recognition for the sake of shock value ruins it for me. One exception though, as Luciferion's excellent update of Chemical Warfare (done at double speed) rocks. There are some surprises here, one being Anathema's really nice job with

Read Between the Lies, and Benediction's spot-on Necrophiliac (except for those killer drum breaks). Vader, Cradle of Filth and Malevolent all do superior jobs (as expected), but I'm disappointed by Sinister's incredibly thin Praise of Death, just sounding like it was recorded in a basement. The worst moments? Oh, there are a few, one real low being Lier's in Wait totally fucking up Angel of Death. The first thought that comes to mind is "How DARE you?!". Sounding like they're tuned to A, it just sucks. Sloppy and all over the place. The drum break almost succeeds, but... Coffin Man's Epidemic is pretty chunky, but again, the drum breaks are fucked with. I guess it just goes to show that Lombardo is Lombardo, and as evidenced, only a handful of drummers have the chutzpah to replicate him. The MC/Vader double shot is well worth it though, showing what a band comfortable with the material is capable of. An ambitious undertaking, SS II rides the line between being worth the pricetag or not. I guess I'd say go for it, because the songs that work are strong, even if some do attempt to mess with the kings.

Dead Horse - Peaceful Death and Pretty Flowers

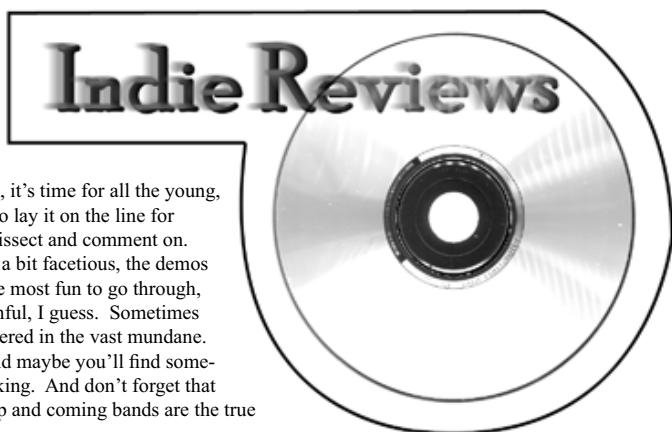
1999 Relapse Records (1991 Metal Blade original)

I can't believe the positive press that these guys got since day one, because, to tell you the truth, I just didn't get it back then. Sure, I heard the infamous demo, and the really strange debut record, but I guess there was just way too much going on back then in my scattered high school brain. Now that I'm older, I can really appreciate the band for the experimental entity that they were. Like a lot of bands in the early 90s (Anacrusis and Epidemic come to mind), Dead Horse were signed to Metal Blade during their "sign all interesting young bands" phase and then promptly dropped off the face of the earth in 1992. Peaceful death lies a lot more to either extreme than the debut, having either wicked double bass metal sections, or less pronounced slower dirge patterns. Hiiga's voice is more scoped in the core (hence the "horse-core" self-description) of things, which along with the band's blatant disregard for "the rules" kinda reminds me of a skate punk mentality. Well, Relapse, being the fine purveyors of music that they are, have reissued both Dead Horse albums, and let me just say that the discs sound just fucking fantastic. I had Peaceful... on an old factory tape, sounding completely different than what I can uncover in the binary version. The curtain of ignorance has been lifted, and only now can I fully embrace that which is "horse-core", check 'em out and I'm sure you'll agree. Here's a ready-made quote for you to put on the cover sticker... "[Dead Horse] manage to effortlessly fuse a myriad of styles into their own eclectic compositions. A definite gem from the vault..."

Suffocation - Pierced from Within

1996 Roadrunner Records

Remember way back in time when Roadrunner used to put out good albums instead of worrying about fashion? Well, Suffocation was a label mainstay for many years, delivering two albums (after Human Remains) which were creative in scope but suffered miserably in production. Most people gave up on the band (myself included) until this, easily one of the brightest moments in Death Metal hit the shelves. Eschewing the then typical Dan Seagrave cartoon art for a more refined, completely eerie landscape cover, you knew change was in the air. I don't how, but Scott Burns must have learned a few new tricks since Breeding the Spawn, for the band just sounds so fucking incredible I can't even compare this to the past. Clarity, expert technicality put to tape, Pierced is Suffocation's intense vision refined and amplified. Frank Mullin's vocals are more defined, allowing the power to remain while being decipherable. I'd have to say that besides the excellent recording, Pierced also benefits from the addition of Doug Bohn on drums (yeah, I always give credit to the drummers). The guy is a monster, completely comfortable with blast beats, keeping the double bass to a minimum, throwing it in when it's actually completely necessary, instead of relying on it as a crutch. It's so forsaken at times that you may wonder if it's not by choice, until you hear his feet just fly on the final two tracks. The whole thing is perfect, a momentous occasion in metal, and a definite must have any death metal collection. I'm serious, I think it's that good. If not just to hear the amazing guitar work or just to see where most of today's death metal bands got most of their ideas, check this shit out.



OK, once again, it's time for all the young, hopeful bands to lay it on the line for yours truly to dissect and comment on. Nah, I'm being a bit facetious, the demos are probably the most fun to go through, or the most painful, I guess. Sometimes a gem is discovered in the vast mundane. Well, dive in and maybe you'll find something to your liking. And don't forget that most of these up and coming bands are the true underground.

Discern - Revive and Rebuke
1998 Independent Release

Let's pretend I didn't read the liner notes or the accompanying bio, what would I think of Discern? Well, for the most part, the music's pretty good, being of the grindy death that we all know and love. Similar in some respects to other more famous American death metal bands, Revive and Rebuke does sport a killer production job, better than average, pretty damn chunky actually. The playing is better than decent as well, with some meaty drums and chug guitar. Good, but all fairly by the numbers. There are some moments of experimentation, but they don't seem to fit with the overall sound of the album. The "funky" break at 0:39 in Love had me going "What the?!", and almost succeeds, but the bluesy jams just don't work for me. One cool thing though, the entire album (except for leads) was written and performed by one guy, Bill Fraser. Most one man bands sound like one person, losing the interplay that comes from having multiple personalities, or from a weakness on one particular instrument. In this area, Bill has done an excellent job, as it sounds like a full band playing (the studio is a wonderful place), but it's still not great, and unless the novelty of a one man band is your thing, it doesn't make the disc a gotta have. The second thing I noticed (that I don't think was in the bio, unless I totally missed it), is that the lyrics are all of a completely religious nature, citing the bible after every track (ala Believer). It's weird, I still defend that anyone can play death metal, but I do have a tendency to get turned off by highly religious lyrics. Not because of a knee jerk reaction, but because of the constant years of my dealings with born again people and their struggles to have me see "the error of my ways", which is that I have my own personal beliefs. Not that Bill has done this, but on a personal level, I must admit that I lost some interest in Discern after reading the lyrics. For the future, I'd like to see more of the thrash and death grind element, and less of the blues. 20 minutes

Send \$10 to: Discern 11408 Audelia Road
#4778 Dallas, TX 75243 USA

Ditch - water
- 3 song demo
1999 Independent

Promising debut from this Illinois band, if only they didn't worship faithfully at the altar of Korn. So much so that it's hard to figure out if the band was just heavily influenced, or decided to just blatantly rip the band off. Maybe not as downtuned, but the rhythm/production paradigm is pretty damn similar to my ears. Well, I don't appreciate that aspect, but it's done really well, Ditchwater's demo definitely worth major label attention. Major label, mind you, not the indies, for only today's mall youth would stand for this ethical breach. So, I'm impressed with the product, yet wish that the band have come up with more original material. The term "Metal fluff" comes to mind.
Sandra Bee Mgmt. 16310 St. Louis, Markham, IL 60426

Divination - Obsessed
1999 Independent Release

Finally, Pennsylvania is breeding some hot up and coming bands. Heavily Schooled in the art of brutal death metal, Reading's Divination deliver the goods on this 5 song release which is hopefully a portend of what's to come. It's pretty easy to draw comparisons to Morbid Angel or Cannibal Corpse here (I also hear some Internal Bleeding), ignoring the hundreds of other bands which are out there influencing each other, as those two heavyweights are responsible for a lot of what's brutal out there today. Well, Divination show their influences, but also seem to have some grasp on what they want to accomplish. There are moments here which really prove to me that Divination are willing to take some chances and may be able to succeed, something that is akin to winning the death metal lottery these days. Musically, we get brutal death, stun guitar and pummeling drums, sounds that come together just fine as a backdrop for Matt McCullough's grinding vocals. A couple of tracks are stronger than others, but overall, I just plain liked the disc, something a lot more important to me these days. I played it repeatedly, and found the hooks that are definitely present. A band to watch for.

Contact: Divination at 413 South Street Reading, PA 19602 USA

Myself Am Hell - The World I Died For
1999 Independent Release

Ah, just the disc I was waiting for at Metalfest this year, and for once I'm not disappointed. You may have read my review of their 1997 S/T in issue two, an album which was good, yet paled in comparison to when the material was performed live at the Metal Meltdown. Well, any problems I had with disc one are rectified here, as MAH have managed to not only write some truly technical riffs, but have arranged and performed them perfectly as well. Performances are tight, yet not stiff, as guitarists Tichenor and Klenosky lock into each other to form a solid base for their impressive lead work. I'd lay money that these guys sit in their hotel room and practice before a show. In fact, it's blatantly obvious that all these guys are technically proficient, something common in guitarists, but fairly rare in drummers. Creating patterns not confined to standard bashings, Romanowski supports the songs, but makes sure that he is noticed as well. From listening and seeing these guys again, I'd say that this man's drum inspirations are based in fusion, making things more interesting. And then we come to the vocals... Usually the weakest link in any band, how many times have you heard a cool song, only to spit beer when some tinkerbells starts to wail incessantly about dungeons and dragons? Well, be assured that you won't find that here, the younger Klenosky (he of the fangs) belting out some frighteningly intelligent lyrics (hey, you're shattering my conceptions, metalheads are supposed to be dumb!) at frequencies which balances power and grind. The subject matter may be considered "blasphemous" to those that still attend Sunday school, but read between the lines to get a complete understanding. Light years better than their debut, The World I Died For is a musician's paradise, hampered only slightly by the fact that this disc was self-produced, and lacks that \$50,000 Andy Sneap sound, which may bother some who need that extra layer of gloss (which also serves to mask unoriginal songs played by the numbers, I may add), but think of this as the demo which will get these guys signed, for that's my prediction here. I await the day when these guys can finally record on a budget representative of their abilities.

Contact: Myself Am Hell at P.O. Box 416, Merri-
rick, NY 11566 USA

Magnum Carnage - Demo
1999 Independent

I'm actually having quite a bit of trouble thinking about things to say for this one. I can't really peg where Magnum Carnage lie, but things that come to mind off the top of my head are King Diamond and Cradle of Filth. Kind of a stretch, but since the Cradlers (or the Filthy, if you prefer) claim to be influenced by Merciful Fate, maybe it's right on. Actually a one man

band, Magnum Carnage is Kai Laigo, a 20 year old guy from Hawaii, and overall, I'm damn impressed. The vocals need some work, as the King Diamond influence may be a bit too on the sleeve, but overall, the songs are damn catchy, Dragon's Lair being my favorite of the two. The drum machine is a bit too much at times, but as it's especially hard to find competent musicians here on the island, I'll forgive it for now. This was a tape given to me to show the progress from Kai's first CD, and given the direction that is being taken, I'm really looking forward to see where Magnum Carnage goes from here. Write: Kai Laigo,

NDE - Fix
1999 Independent Release

The first thing that I noticed about Fix was that it's packs a pretty good punch for a demo release, and after hearing the first 5 seconds, I put it away to hear when I had the proper time to absorb it. Well, here I am, and let's just say that I'm totally glad that I waited. The first few tracks are the strongest to me, and it makes me wonder if the band threw their older material towards the end of the disc. I think this because a couple of the later songs (especially Burden) just smack so much of another band that I can't take it. At some point, NDE transforms into Pantera's little brother, and I can't figure out why, as the first few tracks were so damn kick ass. Well, lots of gruff vocals (which do sound like Anselmo pretty much throughout), lots of killer double bass work, the riffs are heavy, the production spot on... So, while I have a serious gripe about the last third of the disc, NDE gave me enough interest during the first 10 minutes that I'm anxious to see where they end up once they shed the "curse of the influentials". CDs are \$10 shipped, payable to R. Reinard at: NDE P.O. Box 2297 Streetsboro, OH 44241 USA

N.Y.F.B. - No Excuse for the Weak
1999 Independent Release

OK, what have we got here, another hard rock album passed to me under the guise of being something heavier. Yeah, Chris Espitia's vocals enter the realm of metal once in a while, and there are some trademark solos, but to me, this is another boring rock album. Some southern influences here, but other than the guitar work, everything comes across to me pretty mediocre, and things seem to just get slower and slower after a couple of tracks. This is a prime example of what is wrong with the CD age, anyone can just hit a recording studio and produce their own CD.

As a demo, this isn't bad, but if I had bought this in a store, I would be sorely pissed, everything one dimensional besides the occasional guitar highlight. By the numbers arrangements and freshman era lyrics don't add a damn thing here.

I don't want to completely trash this disc, but it really pissed me off listening to it, and for all the wrong reasons. The only reason this is actu-

ally reviewed is because the band took the time to send this to me...

Send a \$12 money order payable to Chris Espitia
56 Jefferson Street, Jackson, TN 38301 USA

Profane - 1001 Proof
1998 Independent Release

Profane lies in that area of metal that I guess would be best called "metal-core". Elements that exist are a strong sense of power, groove (not a bad word, kids), and cohesiveness, mandatory if a band is to succeed at this type of thing. What separates Profane from the rest of the bands out for me is their sense of dynamics, slowing things down a bit, getting a little quieter, which makes the impending crescendo that much more aggressive. There are some serious similarities to Pantera and Sepultura present on the disc, but that's also not unusual in a first release, band usually finding their own identity on the second release. Vocally, it's that barely restrained fury, sounding like Kurt is barely holding back the floodgates. Live, this guy's a madman, owning the stage, spitting out his venomous tomes as if possessed. Just the topping though, for Profane are tight, executing stop/start rhythms which prove their ability to work as a band, reading and feeding off each other to create some serious crunch. While I dig the whole CD, I really get into the melodic breaks that the band throw into the middles of certain tracks, such as Out of Reach. Excellent job on both the performance and recording levels, 1001 Proof sounding much better than the average independent release. Definitely look for these guys in the future. Send \$12 for the CD to: Profane, 226 S. Willow St., Kimberly, WI 54136 USA

Talamasca - Projection
1998 Independent Release

Whenever I hear a disc like this, it's hard not to draw comparisons to bands such as Fates Warning, for Projection has a sound that is so familiar in that regard. Yet Andy Parades has managed to write an album's worth of material that may prompt memories of those bands while having enough of their own personality to maintain interest beyond a few tracks. This is high-quality, 100% dyed in the wool progressive metal, something not many bands choose to do today due to the almost complete lack of audience outside of the diehard fans and musicians, and also because of the immense talent it takes to pull off songs of this caliber smoothly. Being a fan of progressive metal, I'm at a definite advantage here, able to appreciate the dizzying guitar work and high pitched "power" realm vocals, but I can see where a neophyte may be a bit thrown off. No concessions are made here, Talamasca sticking to their guns through the whole disc, not offering any straight-ahead

material or power ballads to attract any of the mainstream. It's for this dedication to the form that I dig Talamasca, and it seems that after this year's Powermad festival most people agree with me. This material is a couple years old, the band hoping to release another album sometime in 2000. Well, I'm looking forward to it, the band hopefully taking their past to a new level and snagging a budget to up the ante on a truly great start. Contact Andy Parades at: P.O. Box 441, Appleton, WI, 54912-0441 USA

Twisted Tower Dire - Advance tracks
1999 Independent Release

An interesting name for a band, but a moniker that does evoke imagery that certainly fits this style of music. If you're thinking progressive metal, then take the prize, for that's exactly what we have here! Basically four advance tracks from their now released The Curse of twisted Tower CD, I'm fairly impressed with what the band is presenting. Granted, the field of prog metal is one of the hardest to conquer, it taking a keen mastery of instruments meshed with the ability to write a catchy tune. So, how do TTD rank in the scheme of things? Pretty good, reminding me of Crimson Glory's Transcendence at times, something from France at others. Meaning, there are times that this is just spot-on, and others... Well, I did cringe a couple of times at some missed vocal spots or guitar harmonies gone awry, but the instrumental track The Valkyrie Death Squadrons (Oy Vey!) is just incredible. In the long run, I think that TTD have a couple more hurdles to jump, but are pretty damn close to a superior product. Twisted Tower Dire: 10021 Scenic View Terrace, Vienna, VA, 22182 USA



Well, after much procrastination, it's finally time to sit down and write up my completely disjointed thoughts relating to this year's metalfest. Well, where do I begin? Metalfest really started off with me catching Wisconsin's Profane and Chile's Criminal up in Combined Locks, WI. Where the hell is that? Look on a map, for all that's important is that both bands kicked serious ass, and Profane are definitely a band to look for in the future. Fast forward 24 hours (and night #2 of no sleep), and we get to me calling up my buddies in room #324 who are otherwise known as the band Myself Am Hell. Some of the coolest guys in the biz, their drum-



mer Adam greeted me at the door with a cold beer and their newest release, *The World I Died For*. After a few hours of prep time, we were set to go pick up our "press passes". Now, I know that these things are incredibly complicated to plan and execute, but there HAS to be a better way to accommodate the hundreds of people who were forced to wait outside as Billy the security guard employed his power over us helpless rock star types. It was, in no other words, a true fiasco. Other than that (and having to deal with this each and every time one entered the door), the venue was incredible. A huge center,

the Milwaukee Auditorium beats the competition hands down. With four stages this year, I knew that it was going to be even more difficult to catch all of the bands that I wanted to see. Well, let the music begin. Early in the day is always kinda dreary, and Friday was no exception. I tooled around "Vendorville" before catching Kittie, the first band for me of the fest. Nothing special, Kittie had the distinction of being an all girl group who had, among other props, a blowup doll on stage. The music did nothing for me, reminding me of college age bands who are doing this strictly for kicks. With Kittie off the stage, Chicago's Lungbrush stormed the stage. I recognized quite a bit off their *Old School New School* release, and was impressed by the fluid drumming, but there just wasn't that much power there. I missed Bongzilla to see these guys, and I wish that I hadn't. Getting a little bored, I went back to the Relapse table and ended up going to see The Dillinger Escape Plan with main man Gordon Conrad. Impressive as always, TDEP just ripped through their set, surprisingly similar to what I witnessed at the Melt-down earlier this year. Strange as they have a full length coming out later this year. I stuck around for a bit of *Today is the Day*, but this band is almost too powerful for me, and at that juncture, I opted to take a break. Well, it was back to the main place of business (Bruce Hall) to catch Skinlab tear the place up. These guys are good, and managed to really throw a lot of energy into the huge hall. I swear though, the weirdest shit happened during their set, one guy jumping up on stage and standing there banging his head for a good 15 minutes (not realizing or caring that he looked moronic) before security got him off. Then there was the guy who ran up and grabbed on of the mic stands from the stage and whipped it into the audience. No less than 20 people chased him completely out of the auditorium. That over, Candiria were set to take over. My favorite performers at the MMM, I was way looking forward to seeing these guys again. And disappoint me they did not, Ken Schalk again leading the band through some of the most off kilter rhythms heard in "loud rock"

today. Candiria on record may get a little too experimental for me, but live, they dominate. I caught a bit of The Gathering, but they started to put me to sleep, so I took off. It was a quick jaunt over to Juneau Hall to catch some of Impaler, and then I ventured up to the Relapse VIP room to eat taco bell with Cradle of Filth (OK, not WITH them, but at the same table, heh heh.) I believe that I met up with Jon from Earache and his wife Laurie from Thirsty Ear around this time, because the next thing I remember, we were all watching Neurosis. This was the first time seeing this band for me, and simply put, they are amazing. The visuals are otherworldly, adding to the wall of sound that this band produces. Sound problems brought me back to earth, just in time to realize that I was missing In Flames! Running over to Kilbourne Hall, I spotted the guys from MAH, who informed me that I had missed a good ten minutes of the set. Incredibly pissed, I moved up to the front and watched one of my favorite melodic bands go through some songs of *Colony*, *Artifacts of the Black Rain*, and the newly revamped *Behind Space*. A good set, but something was lost in the small room, In Flames really deserving the main hall, in my humble opinion. This is about where I started to flag on Friday, ending up in the Ambassador bar for a couple beers before bed. This also marked the first time I've ever seen a bar run out of all of their alcohol, thanks to the hard drinkin' dudes in Internal Bleeding, Dying Fetus and crew.

Saturday

Although Saturday was the longer scheduled day for music, I actually caught more acts on Friday, as I offered my services to Myself Am Hell as roadie extraordinaire, and I actually thought I might get some journalistic work done while I was at the metalfest. I'll cut through the pregame warm-up and go straight to the shit. Myself Am Hell were the first act I caught on Saturday, and I was lucky enough to have stage seats for this event. Running through a 20 minute set of their self-described speed-death

metal, MAH were, as always, true professionals. Their newer material demands some pretty intense concentration for the band, and while their heightened technicality may be a bit of a challenge for some listeners, I was totally psyched to witness their new material live. Look out for these guys in the future. Once my period of indentured servitude was fulfilled (just kidding), I ventured upstairs to catch Exhumed's new bassist make himself puke into a human skull. Greeeeeat. Other than that, it was what we've come to expect from these Bay Area gorehounds, strong, grinding songs delivered in style. I was more impressed with their performance at the Metal Meltdown, but I don't think this was any fault of the band. Heading back downstairs, I noticed that I only had a few minutes before Dying Fetus were scheduled to hit the Kilbourne area. Entering the room, I saw that Japan's Defiled were on. This was a bonus, because I had heard some pretty good stuff about these guys. Not sure why though, as the blast sounds just didn't do anything for me. Much like Krisiun, if the material isn't familiar, nothing is decipherable. Well, at least I managed to get up front during the course of their set. That over, Dying Fetus began to get ready for their slot. Upon just walking over to the drums, DF drummer Kevin Talley was greeted with a huge ovation. These guys are definitely Metalfest heroes, common consensus being that if you could only catch one non-headlining act, these guys were it. Anticipation began to build though, as it became evident that one of the bass drums was not going to behave. Minutes ticked away, and the ever competent soundmen just couldn't get it together. Finally, John Gallagher looked over, said "Fuck it, let's play", and the show began. Simply put, these guys are incredible, blasting through a good chunk of their Killing on Adrenaline album as if it was old hat. Second guitarist Brian Latta had left the band due to time constraints, but his replacement was their longtime tech Sparky Voyles, and if anything, the whole sound was tighter. All eyes were on Talley though, as even a 50% kick drum impediment couldn't stop his assault. At one point, his hihats kicked open completely, forcing him again to structure his playing style around faulty metalfest gear. In the end, it just didn't matter, and DF walked away the King's of Metalfest. No sooner were the Fetus off the stage that round two kicked in with Internal Bleeding. While being two distinctive bands, DF and IB share the same incredible technicality and stage presence, with DF setting things up for the kill, and IB just dragging the bloody carcasses all over the floor. Internal Bleeding has undergone some big changes recently, but they're all for the better, Driven to Conquer being one piledriver of an album. All their material comes across on the same level of brutality live though, guitarist Chris Pervalis and vocalist Ray LeBron working the crowd into a frenzy, much to the chagrin of the "security" guards present. More incredible drumming, more energy expended. Exhausted, I chose to

skip Monstrosity to go catch Criminal again in Bruce Hall. The turn out was pretty good (everyone was recovering from Internal), and I was once again fortunate to see the band rip through the stuff of Dead Soul. Because of the time problems, the minute Criminal were done, Nile were scheduled to go on. I managed to catch a couple of songs from these maniacs before having to find some people for business back in Bruce Hall. If ever a band picked the perfect name, Atrocity was it, for that's exactly how I would describe their set at Metalfest. Puffy shirts billowing, they ponced their way through such classics as "Shout", by Tears for Fears. Packed house though, which just beguiles the fuck out of me. This next hour block is kind of a blur, as everything finally caught up with me. I remember running upstairs to catch Profane run through some of their 1001 Proof material in the Relapse room, then running back to Bruce to catch the last few songs from Immolation. The lighting was incredible for these guys, almost making me feel as though I was at a real concert instead of a metal convention. Next thing, I'm on stage watching Cradle of Filth. Not particularly interested in hearing Dani scream like a newborn hellbeast, I was totally psyched to be able to stand ten feet from Adrian Erlandsson and watch his obvious professionalism in person, finally. I understand his decision to leave The Haunted for the overblown Cradle, but watching this band on Saturday, I wonder if these guys are in a downwards spiral. The band managed to find a new guitarist who looks as if he's 12 (he actually may be 12), and on stage, the poor guy looked lost. The sound was decent, the songs were Cradle, and the hall was packed, but it makes me wonder what the fuss is all about. The band may just be in transition though, we'll find out when the new "From the Cradle to Enslave" single is released. Another flash of light, and I'm back in Kilbourne watching Mortician. Cult, yeah, that's the word, Mortician obviously able to find a guy who could play those insane computer rhythms which are present on the releases. Low, guttural, horrific, but all in a good way, Mortician are one of those bands you love to hate, but also hate to



love. About his point, it was getting pretty near the end for me, but I decided to head upstairs to the Relapse stage one last time to catch Pissing Razors. I felt sort of bad for Eddy Garcia, as he had to make do with a less than perfect drum kit which had been battered by 100 drummers before him, but the band made good with what they had, raging through a set of their ultra heavy crunch. This was my limit though, as I could barely hold my head, so the exit was found, and I was left to reflect on another 48 hours of metal ingested. A success to me, I'm glad that Metalfest not only took place this year, but that it happened at the Milwaukee Auditorium. So, until the next monstrous event, I take my reprieve and remind all of you to make it to the next March Metal Meltdown. Shit, I might even be there myself.



I just want to again the people that made this metalfest so much damn fun! Myself Am Hell for the couch space and backstage access, Carl Schultz and Gordon Conrad for the keys to the Relapse Room, Jon and Laurie for the accessories, and of course Profane/Criminal for the pre-festival festivities. This is stuff from which legends are made...

Hypocrisy cont'd from page 18

Peter - Well, they're talking about the Texas Grindfest, but I'm not sure if it's going to happen.

RoR - Any last requests?

Peter - Well, I just hope people enjoy the album!

Pissing Razors cont'd from page 27

looking forward to playing in Hawaii with you guys.

red giant
ULTRA-MAGNETIC GLOWING SOUND
CD \$12

"THE SOUNDTRACK FOR THE COMING MILLENNIUM. SPACE ROCK OO D ON HALLEICINOGENS. HAWKWIND MEETS HELIOS CREED WITH THE HEAVINESS OF BLACK SABBATH. APOCALYPTIC IN TONE WITH A PSYCHEDELIC MELT."
FLIPSIDE

THE ATOMIC BITCHWAX
CD \$12 / LP \$10

"...POWER TRIO MADNESS, HEADING SPACEWARD WITH NITROUS TANKS FULLY LOADED."
ALTERNATIVE PRESS

FEATURING:
ED HUNDELL - MONSTER MAGNET
KEITH ACKERMAN - 3-SLAP ROCKET
CHRIS KOSMICK - X-GODSPEED

GORE
CD \$12

THE HUSTLE IS ON
A BLISSFUL PSYCHEDELIC JOURNEY INTO THE NEW BREED OF ACID ROCK.
"IT'LL MAKE A HENDRIX FAN TO AN MCS FAN DROOL ALL OVER THEMSELVES"
HAMMERHEAD

CANDIRIA
PROCESS OF SELF-DEVELOPMENT
CD \$12

THE NEW ALBUM FROM BROOKLYN, NY'S MUSICAL INNOVATORS.
ONE OF ROLLING STONE'S 10 MOST IMPORTANT
HARD AND HEAVY BANDS RIGHT NOW

AN URBAN METAL-FUSION BORN FROM GROOVE HARDCORE, HIP HOP AND JAZZ

INDECISION
RELEASE THE GUR
BRUTAL - HONEST - UNCOMPROMISING HARDCORE FROM BROOKLYN, NY
CD-TWELVE BUCKS
13 NEW SONGS
PRODUCED BY ROGER HUNT (AGNOSTIC FRONT)
INDECISION HAS BEEN A WARRIOR FOR YEARS, RELENTLESSLY TOUGH AND CONSTANTLY COMMITTED TO THE HARDCORE SCENE
» METAL MANIACS »
INDECISION'S UNPARALLELED DEVOTION SIMPLY MAKES THEIR CONTEMPORARIES LOOK LAZY
» IN EFFECT »

MIA RECORDS AND MIA/TEE PEE RECORDS
315 church st. - 2nd fl. new york, ny 10013 ph] 212.966.9664 fax] 212.966.1287
info@mia-records.com www.mia-records.com www.teepeerecords.com

also available on MIA RECORDS - KARMA TO BURN - WILD, WONDERFUL PURGATORY

Gardenian Cont'd from Page 12

RoR - That's a pretty varied group, do you think that situation is better than touring with groups that are similar in style?

T - That's a tough question, because they're all good bands! Actually, we were booked to go on the In Flames tour, but they are mad at Niklas because he didn't sign the contract. It was a big argument back then, so even though they asked us to tour with them, they called two months later and said that they picked Arch Enemy instead. It was weird, but it's really good to be going out with Hypocrisy instead. They're a bigger band than In Flames in Germany, which is where we are going. They're also really good guys, all of them.

RoR - So what do you see in the future?

T - Well, tour, and then record some new songs to top this album!

Dying Fetus Cont'd from Page 14

as the moral majority who may have a thing or two to say. With bands interjecting sex and religion onto their famous T-shirts, the heat has been turned up for many a band. Have the band had any negative experiences as a result? Well, not so much as the others it would seem. "I guess sometimes people have given us strange looks, but overall it's just looks, no legal shit thankfully, although we have had angry parents call us up yelling about how "we can send there kids (our)shit", and I have heard some fans complain of harassment in schools as well as from police for sporting our bumper stickers. Otherwise it's not so bad..." With all of the time that it takes to write, record, promote and tour one's albums, I was pretty surprised to find that Jason was in the middle of final exams when I contacted him. How can these guys possibly find time to do anything else besides feeding the Fetus? Well, besides the day jobs (requisite for almost all bands), and Kevin performing a tour with Suffocation, Jason somehow finds the time to study a combination of International Communication and Relations. Hectic, to say the least, but the band moves forward, being a highlight for both the New Jersey Meltdown and the Milwaukee Metalfest (they received an ovation for plugging in their equipment!). With Killing on Adrenaline still making a huge impact, the band are waiting to start writing new material (one was performed at Metalfest), looking to the start of the new decade to release the next opus. Looking over the band's life, they've accomplished more in the last few years than bands may ever do. What's left for DF to conquer, and honestly how long can these guys keep the

incredible energy and innovation up? Asking a band "What does the future hold" is always difficult to answer past the next few weeks, let alone the next few years. One thing is for sure, we won't see Dying Fetus struggling to walk up a flight of stairs at the "Masters" of Metal festival with Venom...

"We'll definitely throw in the towel before we begin to stagnate like certain other older death metal bands who have just begun to suck. I hope we can get a few more albums out, we will see, I never thought we would be here today so we can only wait..."

Contact Dying Fetus through their website at: <http://www.dyingfetus.com>

In Aeternum cont'd from Page 11

ing and screaming, so we must have been doing something right!

RoR - You were saying that some of the material on Forever Blasphemy was like 5 years old?

DL - Some of the stuff is very old, like The Pale Black Death is from 1996. But we added some guitar parts and solos, so it's not the same anyway. The song Spawned to Crush was on the mini-CD, but as a different version. On Of Unhallowed Blood, you have some stuff from '92, '93, but that's one of the newest songs. I think Majesty of Fire, Of Unhallowed Blood and When the Vultures Left are the newest tracks on the album. It's just some riffs that are very old!

RoR - So what songs on the album would give the audience some hint as to where the band is going?

DL - We're going in the same direction as before, I mean, we still have the brutality and

heavy parts, but we have grown as musicians. I think the next album will be similar, just more brutal. I'm also going to work on the vocal parts more. Now we have booked studio time in The Abyss Studios for December. We have two weeks this time, when we only had one before, so I couldn't really do anything spectacular before. We have one new song which is going out on a 7". It's basically the same thing as what's on the album.

RoR - So, I'll wrap this up, any last words of wisdom?

DL - We hope for more touring possibilities. If the album sells enough, we may go to the US and do some shows. They talked a bit about bringing us over, and that would be fun for us. Maybe we could get together with Sadistic Intent, or Usurper for a tour. I can say that if we go the US that we will kick your ass, steal you women and drink your beer!

ZINE REVIEWS

Not to shove this in just anywhere, but honestly, I was going to completely drop this section, except that I was sent some pretty killer zines that I had to just talk about. So, if you've got a zine, send it, cuz if this gets any smaller, I'm gonna have to put this column out of it's misery!

Bite the Bullet - Issue #2

A half size xerox job, Bite the Bullet also has the dubious honor of being the first nonstapled zine I've received. This means, don't lay it down in front of the fan, as I did (hey, it's freakin' hot in Hawaii!) lest the pages blow all over the room. The pages also aren't numbered, which meant that I had to figure out the layout by hand. Kinda funny, but also time consuming. Other than that unfortunate incident, BtB is put together well, and issue 2 has interviews with Goatsnake, Agathocles, Pessimist and others. Throw in some comic book and video game reviews and it's fairly broad coverage. Only a buck, so you can afford to be smart and staple it yourself! Bayers rd. RPO Box 22148 7071 Bayers Rd. Halifax, N.S. B3L-4T7 CANADA

Death by Metal - Issue #5

Death by Metal is what I would consider an "old school" style zine. What I mean is that editor

Paul Sanchez has created a pretty good looking product using what looks like the old reliable "cut and paste" method. Some pretty good interviews in here, Deceased, Incubus (yes, THAT Incubus!), Internal and Desperate Corruption to name a few. Some interviews with zine editors is a nice touch, and the review section is pretty well written and meaty. A lot of dead space that could be consolidated to save money on printing, but as the mag is free for readers (with a couple of bucks for postage), you're getting an interesting read. Throw a couple of Washingtons (\$2) to: Death by Metal c/o Paul Sanchez P.O. Box 1331, Plainview TX 79072 USA.

Metal Core - Issue #27

The longest running fanzine in America, Chris Forbes's Metal Core is an institution. Kind of a different feel to the mag this time around though, as there is only one band interview, with more emphasis on the industry here. A good thing to me, as we get insight from the editors of Worm Gear and Metal Mafia zines, the second half of his Lisa story, plus tons of demo and record reviews. The mag is free (but don't forget postage), so to get into the action talk to Chris at: Chris Forbes P.O. Box 622 Marlton, NJ 08053-1109

Midwest Metal - Issue #21

Another high roller, this is sadly the last issue of Midwest Metal, as Tom has recently become a father and wants to spend more time with his family. An admirable act, although we'll be sure to miss his zine in the future! This final issue has some great commentary, and some reprints of older interviews from out of print issues. Interviews with (among others) Merciful Fate, Black Sabbath/Dio, Emperor, Siz Feet Under, Gene Hoglan and tons of reviews. The mag is free, but don't forget to enclose the \$2 for stamps and hassle. T. Tom Vader PMB 406 120 Broadview Vill. Sq. Broadview, IL 60153

**REDEFINING SOUND
FOR A NEW GENERATION**

KOVENANT

CONTROL DENIED

SATYRICON

ANIMATRONIC

**THE FRAGILE ART
OF EXISTENCE**

**REBEL
EXTRAVAGANZA**

♣ NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA ♣

P.O. BOX 43618, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106 **www.nuclearblast-usa.com**

caroline

MYSELF AM HELL

FROM THE SHADOWY CORNERS OF INSANELY EVIL MINDS COMES THE FUTURE OF HEAVY METAL. 'THE WORLD I DIED FOR' THE CRUSHING NEW RELEASE FROM MYSELF AM HELL IS A POWERFUL BLEND OF TECHNICAL SPEED METAL WITH HELL-ON-EARTH DEATH VOCALS.

"TRULY TECHNICAL RIFFS ... ARRANGED AND PERFORMED PERFECTLY ... A MUSICIAN'S PARADISE"
RoR #3



'THE WORLD I DIED FOR' - 5 POWERFUL
NEW TRACKS + 1 BONUS COVER TRACK
\$7 US, \$8 WORLD

'MYSELF AM HELL' - 5 TRACKS OF
BLINDING SPEED METAL
\$7 US, \$8 WORLD



T-SHIRT - FULL COLOR, DOUBLE SIDED (MYSELF AM HELL
CD COVER ON FRONT, IMPAIRED SKULL LOGO ON BACK)
LONG OR SHORT SLEEVE, L AND XL ONLY \$15 EVERYWHERE
WELL CONCEALED CASH, MONEY ORDER (MADE OUT TO CASH)

MYSELF AM HELL
P.O. Box 416
MERRICK NY 11566 USA

WWW.MYSELFAMHELL.COM

New from Metal Blade Records Inc.



MERCYFUL FATE "9"



© 1998 METAL BLADE RECORDS INC.
Info Hotline (800) 533-7548 • www.metalblade.com
For a free catalog write to: Metal Blade Merchandise
4025 E. Chandler Blvd., Ste. 70-07, Phoenix AZ 85044

SIX FEET UNDER
"Maximum Violence"

IMMOLATION
"Failures For Gods"

GOD DETHRONED
"Bloody Blasphemy"

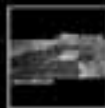


THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN CALCULATING INFINITY



Photo: Jason Pedersen

A psycho overload of adrenaline-soaked intensity! New Jersey's DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN unveil *Calculating Infinity*, an unprecedented, lethal hybrid of metal and hardcore. A colossal cacophony of soul-searing vocals, pile-driving riffs, unorthodox percussive punishment and scattershot speed.



See Inside: Under the Rising Guard MCD 55 - RR 6456

CD 512 - RR 6427



COALESCE
0:12 Revolution...
CD 58 - RR 6426



BRUTAL TRUTH
Goodbye Cruel World
Double CD only 512 - RR 6425



NEUROSIS
Times of Grace
CD 512, LP 512 - RR 6415



TODAY IS THE DAY
In the Eyes of God
CD 512, LP 510 - RR 6424



ADORAPHOBIC WOMBLES/
CONVERGE
The Pascher Diaries
CD 58 - RR 6408



NASUM
Inhale Exhale
CD 512 - RR 6404



Order direct by calling
1-800-303-0606

International credit card hotline
1-717-397-5616

Information hotline
1-717-397-5706

Online catalog/ordering active ordering
www.relapse.com

