

REMNANTS OF REASON

ISSUE 4

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CANNIBAL CORPSE
DEMONS AND WIZARDS
DANIEL ERLANDSSON
HECATE ENTHRONED
EPOCH OF UNLIGHT

HAVOC IN HAWAII

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Those that kept me sane...



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Remnants of Reason

Issue 4 - March, 2000

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

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Current Spins

Soilwork - The Chainheart Machine
 Malevolent Creation - The Ten Commandments
 Vio-lence - Oppressing the Masses
 Cannibal Corpse - Bloodthirst
 Anacrusis - Manic Impressions release show 1991
 Agent Steel - Omega Conspiracy
 Agoraphobic Nosebleed/Converge - The Poacher Diaries
 D.R.I. - Dealing With It
 Eucharist - A Velvet Creation
 I.N.C. - The Visitor (finally got this on CD!)

Contributors

John Hyttianinen, Matt Parry

Remnants of Reason is published up to four times a year. All written work and logos are copyrighted 2000 EvanHowell/Remnants of Reason. Join the RoR brigade and visit one of the largest metal databases on the web at <http://www.remnantsofreason.com> Subscriptions are \$5 for three issues. I have nothing more to say so it's time to leave the small print area, thank you for your patronage.

My first thoughts when writing the intro for this issue are "How the hell did I get this all done?!" Seriously though, the last few months have been both the busiest and most exhilarating time of my 15 year metal career. Derek and I promoted our first major concert, hosting 15 people and managing to stay sane. Issue 3 went was put out in November, resulting in a complete barrage of discs to review, some awesome, most OK, some horrific! And oh yeah, somewhere in there I got married, another whirlwind time of friends, family and mass, mass consumption of alcohol. My brain hasn't yet recovered completely, but as I wanted to have another issue ready for the March Metal Meltdown, I pushed a little harder to get this ready for Jersey. Unfortunately, I'm not making it this year, even though irony would play the fest being held 20 minutes from my home in Philadelphia. I will be at the L.A. fest though, so be sure to look for me there. You may or may not notice a couple of things that seem different this issue. For one, I've included an ad for Remnants of Reason distribution. That's right, I have a growing mail order catalog which offers titles listed there, as well as more added all the time. So bands, if you want to be added to the list, write me and we'll work something out.

And now to the thanks list: First and foremost, my wonderful wife Saori, who doesn't even realize how much support she gives at every turn, whether it's taping the concerts, or proofing the zine, she's always there. Also, thanks to Derek and Mike Ching for the musical support and for staying metal all the way. Gracias to the buds Matt and Eric for good times and hours wasted being vidiots. I've made some pretty good contacts through email, some of which have become pretty good friends along the way such as Anders and Nik (good luck at Berkeley!). Thanks to all the tape traders and people that wrote the website. Then those in the biz: Thanks to Steve at Noise USA, Jon P. at Necropolis, Gordon and Carl at Relapse, Matt at Century Media, Bob at Metal Blade, Liz at Nuclear Blast, Debbie at Mazur PR, Full Moon, Hammerheart, Seasons of Mist, Spitfire, and Root-O-Evil Records, Frank Harthoorn, Ken Nardi, Steev, Snake and Skinlab, Eddy and Pissing Razors, and also Cesar Palanco, Thilo and Robert Funcannon for all of their help with the shows!

Send all correspondence, money, bribes and material for review to:

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AD RATES

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 Half Page (internal) \$65
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All the news that fit to print...

Cryptopsy are busy writing material for a new album, and look for Displeased to re-release None So Vile sometime this year.

Gorguts should be releasing the follow up to Obscura this year as well.

Look for a "Best of..." from Malevolent Creation soon.

Substance D and Face of Anger both played the November to Dismember fests. S.D. guitarist Michael Parnin may collaborate on producing the next Pissing Razors album. Noise has also released all of the Celtic Frost reissues (minus Cold Lake, heh heh) which were annotated by Mr. Thomas Warrior himself.

The Crown's new album "Deathrace King" has been recorded and is set to blow away last year's awesome Hell is Here release.

After winning a Norwegian grammy award, Kovenant were banned from a late night television appearance as the band were deemed "Too violent and generally unfit for the show's breed of TV viewers." Way to go, guys.

Erik Rutan is producing the new Krisiun album "Conquerors of Armageddon." Rutan also took some time to fill in as Morbid Angel's touring guitarist over the holidays. Talk about a workaholic!

You can check out the review later in the issue, but I had to mention the supergroup release by Bloodbath. Only 25 minutes long, it's a collaboration between Dan Swano, Blackheim, Jonas Renske (Kata-

tonia) and Opeth's Mikael Akerfeldt on vocals.

The lords of shock Impaler are getting ready to hit the studio and record what it tentatively titled "One Nation Underground."

Savatage signed to Nuclear Blast Records.

Most everyone has heard about Chuck Schuldiner's brain tumor. Evidently, he went through the surgery OK and is recovering well. If you want to send money, cards or other items to his mother, you can at: Jane Schuldiner, 609 E. Citrus Street, Altamont Springs, Florida, 32701.

Soilwork's second LP "The Chainheart Machine" is out and kicks major ass.

Agent Steel has been reformed with a new vocalist and their latest release Omega Conspiracy just rages!

Chicago's Usurper have completed their forthcoming long-player "Visions from the Gods", which contains the demo of the same name as well as new and live tracks. The band will also return to the studio later this year to record an album of all new material. Bad news for the band: Bassist/Necromancer Jon fell off a two-story roof and broke his nose, shattered his heel and ankle, and also broke his wrist. The band is still set to continue practicing, taking a two week hiatus. Hail Satan!

Long Island's Myself Am Hell recently played Castle Heights with fellow scenesters Internal Bleeding. Look for

Myself Am Hell as they tour from the Los Angeles metalfest back home to New York later this year.

Witchery is talking about touring the states this year in support of their Dead, Hot and Ready LP.

In Aeternum have finished writing material and are planning to record in The Abyss studios with Tommy Tagtgren (Peter's bro) at the helm.

Emperor just released their "Emperical Ceremony Live" video through Candlelight Records.

In the Nevermore camp, Jim Sheppard suffered an injury that almost ended their tour. Basically tearing his index finger off through a car door mishap, Jim was still positive, continuing to play with his other fingers. Whoa.

Remember Ratt? Well, they were set to tour this winter, even coming to Hawaii for a few shows, but as the singer decided to QUIT THE BAND, they cancelled. A pretty sweet press statement from Bobby Blotzer summed it all up as evidently Stephen couldn't think straight due to all of that "smokin' weed". Then why does Bongzilla do OK?

Original drummer Craig Nunenmacher is back in Crowbar, and the band are set to play some shows in Hawaii this March.

Local Heaviness...

Corrosion A.D.

Check out Ahfoon and his mixture of old and new metal every Sunday from 7 to 9 PM on KPOI FM 97.5. Yes, it's mainstream radio, but Ahfoon's got his heart in this, and what better place to start the infiltration of the airwaves than Hawaii's #1 radio station?

On the more alternative front, check out KNDI 1240 AM late at night for stuff to really scare your parents...

Crowbar...

By the time you get this the Crowbar shows will be underway, but be sure to read next issue for the Havoc II write up featuring tropical thrash legends Crucible!

Local bands, send me your news to be included in future issues...

Island Vinyl...

Local thrash legends Broken Man are finished recording their new album which should be released soon.

Also in the can: Infection's debut album and Machine's What Are You Looking At, their second LP and first for the newly reformed New Renaissance Records.

Look for Crucible to record their follow up to Unshattered this summer

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DISPLACEMENT

One of my favorite metal drummers, Daniel Erlandsson has an extensive resume in the Gothenburg scene. Not only did he play on both landmark Eucharist albums, but also lent his considerable talent to In Flames on their fastest material off of Subterranean. This is all without mentioning his current job as skinsman for Arch Enemy where his display of power is matched perfectly with his adeptness at creating what may be the perfect drum parts. It's Daniel's "feel" which I admire, and is also something which one cannot learn from others or lessons, but must discover themselves. Read on and see what makes this essential metal drummer tick...

RoR - I guess I'd like to be real original and go back to the beginning with you. How did you get started? I know that Adrian is your drummer, did you just pick up the sticks when he wasn't there? What I'm surprised about is that your playing style is much different than his. Was this due to differing musical influences? What's the age difference between the two of you?

DE - Adrian was the one who convinced our father to buy the first kit that we had. At this time I was no more than 6 and Adrian was 12. I didn't really start playing until I was around 12 or 13, and when I did, Adrian had just moved from home so I had the drums all by myself most of the time. Adrian was involved in playing punk and then moved on to thrash some years before joining At the Gates. I started directly with death metal in Eucharist, and this could be how we developed such different styles.

RoR - How did you build up your speed? Was that an initial goal when you first started? I noticed that your playing appeared to become much more solid between A Velvet Creation and Subterranean. Is this due to production, or experience? Do you have to "keep in shape" to maintain your double bass, or is that something that comes naturally. Do you have any secret tips that you would pass along to a young drummer that wanted to play as fast as possible in a short period of time?

DE - Basically I started with adjusting my technique from playing with the heels down to playing with them up. From then

it has always just been about practicing. I don't consider myself to be that fast, and Arch Enemy's songs aren't as demanding on double bass speed as the early Eucharist stuff was, for example. At the time when I recorded A Velvet Creation, the band (Eucharist) hadn't rehearsed for at least 6 months, so during that time I had taken a break from playing. When I did the Subterranean tracks I had another band (The End) going on at the same time. This, of course, led to more practicing. From my own experience, I gain a lot more speed on double bass from rehearsing with an entire band than just practicing on my own. **RoR** - Do you have any preferences for equipment? A certain setup that you feel accentuates your playing better? (for example, you may have a 7 piece set with a double pedal so that you can reach the hi-hat better, or have two ride cymbals, one on either side, you can't use 2B sticks but 7A's are too light, so you turn them around? Etc...). How has your setup changed over time, and does it change based on situation? Have you ever had to play a show on some promoter's kid's Muppet set? I ask because I've seen quite a few drummers have to play on some really weird sets...

DE - The kits that I've used for practicing have been standard or 6 piece kits with a twin (double) pedal. What usually changes when I'm playing live with Arch Enemy is the addition of one more bass drum, which works great for me. I mean, you won't have to worry about pedals sliding away and it also looks better. I've been using 7As because of their lightness and sensitivity but I've just changed to 5Bs mainly because of getting more power without hitting harder. I've been pretty lucky so far concerning the kits I've used on the shows. Of course, there have been some incidents but I think that most drummers or a lot of drummers have had to put up with a lot worse.

RoR - What are your thoughts on the double pedal/2 bass drum controversy? Have you ever used a double pedal? Some people feel that you can't get the same sound from a double pedal as you can from two bass drums, and that double pedals are harder to play... How do you feel about triggering the bass drums live or in recording? If you hear a drummer "cheat" on a record, do you mind? Or do you wish



Daniel Erlandsson
of
Arch Enemy

that they had practiced a little more before recording?

DE - Triggering is something I'm surely going to use more frequently for at least live shows. This is just for "being heard" on the fast parts, as the drums tend to get drowned out then. Triggering for recordings is cool too if you're going to play fast, but I still prefer the sound of real drums. So maybe a combination of triggered and "natural" drums is the best solution. I've always used one bass drum with a twin pedal of recordings, mainly because of practicing on a setup like that, but also to make sure that the left and right feet sound alike without triggering. I don't pay that much attention to if a drummer cheats or not, I mean, eventually, they're going to have to prove themselves live. With the computer programs available today, anyone could sound like Pete Sandoval, but it takes the original to do it live.

RoR - You have done some session work, do you find that more difficult than recording with bands that you've practiced with? What is the easiest way for you to build your drum parts? Would you rather have a live person there showing you, or have them record it so that you can create it later, or some other way? Do you ever find yourself coming up with drum parts that seem very familiar to past work that you've done? What do you do to spice them up? If a song calls for a drum pattern which may be your only weakness, do you view it as a challenge, or try to change it so that you can play a pattern that is one of your strengths? What if you were limited by time? Were you ever in a band situation where the band wanted you to play a style that was completely the opposite of how you would normally play?

DE - The first Arch Enemy album had a real session feel to it. Michael and I had only rehearsed alone 3 or 4 times before recording it, so basically all of the fills and breaks were made spontaneously. I just had fragments of ideas for each song, but it turned out OK anyway. For me, this is a great way to work, just improvise while playing, eventually something good

will (hopefully) come out. I like to try out new ideas all of the time, playing in different bands is a great way to do that, just to see things out of another perspective and learn something out of that gives you more versatility. Besides the metal bands that I'm playing with, I've also played with both rock and pop bands, and that was a great challenge musically. Basically playing without twin pedal or double bass used to feel like a handicap, but that has all changed now.

RoR - I'm just using this because it's an example I know, but what do you think when you listen to Stigmata? Do you think about how you would approach the songs? Assuming that you play them live, how do you play them? Do you play them the way that Peter did, or do you adapt them to fit your style? And why? Do you think that people expect to hear them a certain way, or that they want to hear them the way that YOU would play them?

DE - The other guys in Arch Enemy are pretty unsatisfied with Stigmata for different reasons, but mainly they think that it could have been more intense or whatever. However, I love this album because of it's gloomy and dark atmosphere, but if I had played on it, it would have sounded different. Anyway, I adapt the songs we play from Stigmata to fit me and my style. I mean, when you're on stage you've gotta do your own thing, that's what it's all about!

RoR - Looking back on your studio work? What do you remember most about some of those recording sessions? Were there any horror stories? :) Any especially good things that happened? When you hear your playing on earlier recordings, what do you think? Do you think that there are any beats in there that you may have created or inspired other drummers to use? Do you have a certain beat that is like your trademark beat?

DE - There are always some recordings that you're not 100% satisfied with, and I guess the first Eucharist album fits into that category, but I can still listen to it without crying... I mean, I know I'd have done it at least twice as good today. I always think about what I could have played in a better way, or what I shouldn't have played and so on. I guess that's a typical dilemma for the ambitious one! I don't think that I have any trademark beat, if so, it's in the "ear of the listener". However, I would've

liked to have been the one who invented the "daddy" beat (papapapapa), I mean the blast beat on Suffocation's Effigy of the Forgotten.

RoR - What do you think that the main role of a drummer in a metal band is?

DE - To make the best out of the riffs and doing it in your own way.

RoR - What do you think that everyone else thinks that the main role of a drummer in a metal band is?

DE - Delivering the fastest double bass drum beats ever?



MICHAEL AMOTT ON DANIEL ERLANDSSON:

RoR - I think we may have talked about his before, but to me, while I respect both drummers, not having Daniel Erlandsson in the band changed the overall sound completely!

MA - That just goes to show how much drummers mean in this type of music.

RoR - Well thank you very much! [both laugh]

MA - People tend to focus a lot on me and Chris, and I guess this band is pretty guitar orientated metal, but we couldn't do any of this without Daniel or Johan's vocals. It's when everything comes together that the sound is really defined. You can't really jam this type of music though, it's pretty formulated and it's pretty strict. So it's composed, but when we rehearse it everybody puts their feeling into it. The material just comes to life when everyone plays it.

RoR - One thing that I noticed about Black Earth is that it doesn't seem as though Daniel isn't playing that much, but when you listen closely, there's a lot of fills and breaks in there, they're just played so that nothing dominates or gets in the way.

MA - I know, Daniel is what I would call a pretty tasteful metal player. Whereas Peter (Stigmata) was very into the idea of being a technical drummer, and that's what he focuses on, Daniel focuses on the songs, and what suits the riffs. He plays a little bit of guitar himself, and he's very into the riff. For example, if a riff or a whole song only requires a really basic drum beat he'll go with that instead of trying some kind of fancy cymbal thing just to make it sound more technical. So he's actually pretty mature in that way, even though he's only like 23 years old.

RoR - I've heard you say that he's the best drummer that you've ever worked with.

MA - He is because he's so versatile and easy to work with. He has absolutely no sort of "drummer ego". He'll just record his drums and let me mix the album without worrying. We credited him as a co-arranger on the Burning Bridges album because he brought so many ideas into the songs with his drumming. He's definitely a very important part of Arch Enemy now, that's for sure. We've actually signed a contract now with him where he can't leave us!



If by now, you are unfamiliar with the name Cannibal Corpse, stop reading right now, go outside, (that's right, outside), and go buy at least one of their earlier albums if you have any desire to hear where 90s Death Metal began. There will be some argument as to who was there first, but all I know is, when *Eaten Back to Life* came out in 1991, I was floored. It took a while for the true meaning of the band to sink in, but these guys get just better and better every album, something that means to me that if there ever is a metal hall of fame, there will no question as to their entry. Having a more straightforward yet quirky style, I wanted to speak to Paul about his band, his style and his life as a Cannibal Corpse... Of course, not everyone you call is always in great health, heh heh...

PM - Yeah, I was pretty hung over earlier. It figures, you know, Brian Slagel is in town, and when he comes in we all go out. Now I usually don't drink much at all, and when I do it's just beer. So we start to do these shots of buttery nipples, and then I end up drinking white russians, and I've haven't had one of those in years. I also play ice hockey, so I had gone out and drank after playing before the binge, so the next thing I know I'm waking up going "Man, I feel like complete hell!"

RoR - It's weird though, if I only drink beer I end up with a wicked headache.

PM - I'm the opposite. I'm just beer now, I've had my bad experiences with the harder stuff and I try to stay away from it. For me, buttery nipples is kinda like a wimpy drink to me, but I was drinking the white russians which has got vodka...

Since I don't drink any of that stuff anymore, I'm usually only drinking the better beers, Guinness and Newcastle... So, it just hit me hard when I woke up, fuck, I hate that feeling. So, here I am feeling like crap, can't get shit done... Actually, I thought it was going to be worse because I woke up at eleven for an interview, and I had only gotten a few hours sleep, and I did feel like utter hell. It was much better than I thought, made some decent sense I think...

RoR - How long have you guys been located in Tampa now? Does that feel like home now?

PM - Oh man, 1995 I guess we moved. It kinda feels like home. I guess the longer you're here you get more used to it. But to me, home will always be Buffalo, because my whole family is there, I grew up there. How could you not feel that is not your home? It is weird, it's just a completely different place, the climate, the people... So in a way I'm still adapting, I feel that it's not my town. I don't know if I'd ever really think of Tampa as home though.

RoR - Well, I grew up in Philadelphia, and while it's not as dramatic as Buffalo, when I lived in Florida I really missed the change of seasons.

PM - Totally, that's a big thing. Yeah, it's great being down here in Florida when it's January and killer weather, but I totally miss the seasons. Every time I go back up north to visit my parents it's just killer. I

really enjoy the fall or the spring, and I can't imagine having grown up and not experiencing snow.

RoR - I asked because if you look at the recorded history of the band it's almost split right in half now, with the first 4-5 years being situated in Buffalo and the last 4-5 in Tampa...

PM - Yeah, the move did kinda happen in the middle of our career as of now. It was like, once we got to the point after *The Bleeding* where we were going on tour and making a living we just kind of stopped and said, "Man, why are we just stuck here?" I think, ultimately, it was the winters that got to us, because I remember the winter right before we went on that tour was horrendous. It snowed in October, and then the last snowfall was in April. It was like 6 months of winter, and it was a terrible winter! I was just sitting there thinking to myself, "Here we are at home on our downtime, and we're just stuck inside because literally we could not go outside!" It also made more sense because the studio we were using at the time, Morrisound, was located down there, so it just made more sense.

RoR - But then Chris left pretty soon after that, right?

PM - Yeah, [slight laugh] I guess it was right when we started to record the first album down there, which was supposed to be *Created to Kill*, but which became *Vile*. Yes, that's when we gave him the boot, so I guess it was right after we moved that all of that stuff came to light.

RoR - Well, according to the press there was lots of bad blood about that. Is that still there? You guys are both on the same label, don't you ever run into each other?

PM - I guess a lot of things were said, and we haven't seen the guy since we've kicked him out. We had a lot of problems in the past... I mean, bottom line was his performance, which we weren't happy with, and that's the main reason why we kicked him out. We did have some major problems with him throughout the entire history of the band though. Major things that almost got him booted after even *Eaten Back to Life*! It was just a lot of stupid shit, but our one guitarist wouldn't go through with it, and we wanted it to be a unanimous decision. So, when we finally did kick him out it was like a huge weight had been taken off of our shoulders. We felt like we didn't have to deal with him on a personal level, and we were getting George in on the band level, with his performance. Things were said by us, things were said by him... We hadn't seen the guy in four years until last month! I mean, we hadn't seen the guy, talked to the guy since we booted him. So, he was being real cool, and at that point, we're not going to go up to him and start something. We were playing the Wacken festival in Germany,

and they were playing like right before us, so it was inevitable that our paths were going to cross. But he just came up to us and was being totally cool "Hey guys, it's good to see you guys, it's been a long time..." and yeah, we were friends, there were a lot of good times. It was a bitter break though, and we never really resolved the problems that existed, and that still exist in our minds. It's tough to just kinda let things go, I mean, I could just sit here and talk all day about this stuff, which I don't want to talk about. But we could still just be like, "Fuck him." Like I said though, he was being cool, and he wants to tour and shit, and he was asking like it was the old days, so we broke the ice.

At this point, we were just glad that he wasn't in the band, and all of that shit was in the past, so what is there to really be mad about? It was just holding grudges if we were still mad, but I don't ever think that things will be like they used to be. Yeah, he was like, let's hang out, let's go on tour... but when we thought about it, we were like, we don't really want to tour with Six Feet Under, we don't think it would be the right bill for us. And then we were thinking, it's better not seeing him all of the time. We've had a great time without him, and it helps not having to see him or deal with him all of the time. I'm sure everything is all over, and I'm glad that we talked to him after we booted him, but it's still a weird situation.

RoR - Well, I know from a fan's perspec-

if you listen to all three of them, you think to yourself "Man, this guy is irreplaceable!" I mean, he can do the Barnes stuff with ease, he can sing like Chris, mimic it perfect no problem, but if you listen to George's stuff you think to yourself, "Who is out there than can do this?" He's so smooth, his speed, you listen to any death metal/black metal band out there, and it seems like no one is doing the speed vocals anymore like Slayer in the late 80s. It seems to me that everyone wants to play really fast, but that they cut the vocals in half. To us, we thought that the music should be fast, but that the vocals should be just as fast and intense as well. So George has the speed, the screams, the range, everything, so if you listen to him and think (although this would never happen) that what would we do if he left?

It would be very hard to find somebody that could sing this stuff.

RoR - A lot of people are surprised because not only have you existed for 9 years, which is a pretty long career for an extreme death metal band, but it just keeps getting better and more extreme. How much longer do you honestly think Cannibal can continue to progress?

PM - It's definitely been a long time for us, and

we do sometimes think to ourselves, "How much longer can we do this?" I guess we can go on as long as we want! Because we're maturing and fine tuning on every album. We're just getting better as we go, so yeah, we never thought that we'd be together this long, but I can see us going on for quite some time. There doesn't seem to be an end in site right now, and we still want to be playing this type of music, we love it, and it would be kinda cool to have it be like "Oh yeah, Cannibal Corpse, they've been around for like 20 years!"

RoR - It's cool, because when I pull out *Eaten Back to Life* I can remember when my buddy Scott got that in the mail from



tive that when Corpsegrinder replaced Chris everyone thought, "How can he do it?!" because Chris was such a personality. So he had to really prove himself on the first album, but I bet know people can't even picture anyone else.

PM - You really can't, and that's a really good point. I mean, everyone was a Barnes lover, and thought that the band was great at that point, so we had to prove to the label, the fans that Chris Barnes did not equal Cannibal Corpse. So when Vile came out there was a sigh of relief that yeah, we were as good if not better. Of course, we thought it was better, but now we're on our third record with George, and

Metal Blade around Christmas vacation in 1990. I mean, back then we didn't know what to think. It was extreme for the time, the name, the imagery, but now people can almost take it in stride. There's almost no shock value anymore to us as fans, but to everyone else if you say you're listening a band called Cannibal Corpse...

PM - Yeah, I guess you're right, after a while it's going to lose its value to the fans and to the people that listen to the music. But to the people out there that have no idea what death metal is, and think that bands like X and Y are the heaviest thing out there, when they DO hear bands like us I think that the shock value is still there!

RoR - Your moral majority seemed to peak for a while there as well, mainly because of your scene in Ace Ventura. It seemed that Jim Carrey requested you guys especially?

PM - That's how we got to do the movie, he's a fan of death metal and of Cannibal Corpse. He was also on Arsenio Hall and mentioned a few other bands as well, but I can't remember who they were now. He requested us to the movie, and that was awesome for us. We were like, "Hey, we're going to be in a movie, that'll be great exposure", because we expected that some people would be seeing it. The fact that it obviously did so well, it was like shit, just think of the millions and millions of people that saw that movie, and they all had to be subjected to 45 seconds of Cannibal Corpse! Just think of the "normal" people that just have no clue, and they have to sit through and watch us. It helped us out a little bit, I think we have picked up some new fans because of that, people have told us on the road "Yeah man, saw you guys in Ace Ventura, that's how I got into you guys." So it did what it was supposed to do.

RoR - I love that look you gave when Jim jumps on stage, [Paul laughs], how many time did you have to do that? Are these guys always running around yelling "cut, cut!"

PM - I don't know, we did it a couple of times. We were there like two days filming all day, so I can't remember a lot

of the specifics, but I do remember being there watching some of the scenes that he was filming. He'd mess up his lines and start swearing and everyone would start laughing... It was funny, a lot of it I had to make sure that I wasn't paying attention to everything around me when I was playing because it's real easy to just stop and start laughing. It takes a lot of energy to uh [sarcastically] pretend that you're playing for real.

RoR - Well, I guess the real reason for this interview, and I haven't really brought it up, is that you guys have a new album out. Easy things first, you guys made a

just reinvigoration of the band by these changes?

PM - Slightly, I think with Pat in the band and the songs that he contributed really helps. Plus, we're always progressing as a band and becoming more confident in our playing and our songwriting ability. When we started writing the songs we just thought that we had some killer songs here, and then when the lyrics started coming together well... We also have the experience now, we've been in the studio before, we know how to prepare, so this time everything just kinda came together at once. To top it all off, Colin just did an incredible job, and that all makes for an amazing CD.

RoR - For me, when the name Colin Richardson comes to mind I think of a lot of classic albums, but I've read some press (don't you believe it) that had certain bands stating that they weren't happy with his work. Maybe it's mainly Fear Factory when they decided to go techno, but did you have any problems with his ideas whatsoever?

PM - That seems pretty crazy, I haven't heard anything bad about him at all. We were just fans of what he's done in the past. I know that Pat and Alex and Jack were always unhappy with the guitar sound. In looking

at it, I'm not the guitarist, they have the ears for it, so they knew that Colin could get that crushing guitar sound. Pat is a big fan of Carcass, and Jack loves Heartwork, so they were fans of what Colin has done. We just knew that he was the man to do it. We had never heard any BAD productions from the guy, you know! Maybe it had something to do with the techno direction causing problems, but Colin is just a great guy who does great work.



big change and decided not to go back to Morrisound.

PM - It was a little bit of a change, we decided to use Colin Richardson and went to a new studio. I guess we felt that it was time to change after going to Morrisound for so long, to try and give the album more excitement, so to say. We were really interested in using Colin, and we wanted to go somewhere where he would be totally comfortable, and I don't think that he would have been a huge fan of Morrisound. We believe that it worked out great, Colin did an amazing job, and we think that it's the best sounding Cannibal album to date. My drum sound, the guitar sound, it all came out excellent.

RoR - The whole thing does sound like you cranked it up another notch. Is that

Why did I do that fill?!

Usually it's not too bad. Usually I try to work out all of the glitches before we even record. Now as I'm getting better and more confident it comes a little bit easier. The changes are easier now. I'll go back and listen to a lot of stuff that I've done in the past, and I'll wonder "What the hell was I doing?" I think that just the fact of our youth made everything a little more spastic back then, and we definitely play things a lot better now. The stuff that I did for Bloodthirst, that's what you'll hear when we play those songs live, and I'm pretty happy with what I did. I'm always open to an improv or two on fills, I don't feel that you have to do everything exactly the same as on record all the time. For the most part I've played everything that I wanted to play on the last three records. I've come a long way and simplified my style more. I know what I want to play now rather than creating a part, playing it for two years and then going "Whoa, what the hell, I shouldn't be doing that!"

The History of the style...

I guess the intent was for the speed, so that was the way I played. It was like, take somebody who's not a drummer and throw them behind the drum kit, and if they have rhythm and maybe no musical background, they're just going to be doing what's comfortable for them. It may be completely unorthodox, it could be completely against what is taught, but that's the way that I look at how I drum. I definitely have my own style, and it's a FEEL style more than anything. It's not a machine style, say like someone like Pete Sandoval. The guy is an amazing drummer, an incredible drummer, but he's very easy to imitate, if you can do the speed. I look at my style as being very unorthodox. I know a lot of drummers that can imitate other drummers very easily, but when I look at myself I wonder how I ended up playing in this style, but like I said, I never had any musical background so I just sort of ended up with this style. I made stuff up as I went along, and we had that option with the speed, because there was nothing like this for us to follow from before, so we had to create a style of music as we went along. I look at myself as a very unique drummer in a way.

The Speed, The Endurance...

It just comes down to practicing

with the band. I was never really one to practice by myself a lot. I always felt, as we all did, that when we started that we were all pushing each other to play faster and to keep going. Before we knew it, we could do it, mostly because we were up there every day playing and trying to better ourselves, building the stamina. There were a lot of times that we'd be playing and I'd have to stop halfway through and just thought "Man, there's no way, there's no way!" And when I look back at it now I think that it was simple, and wonder why I had problems, but that was the whole gradual process of building up your stamina, and how to reserve your energy. At first when you're learning you'll go all out and release all of your energy right away, which means that you won't be able to make it through the whole set. It just took a few years of constant playing and the determination to WANT to play that way that helped me do it. I've never done anything special like trying to eat right or work out, we just kept doing what we were doing. I still really don't, but just finally after years of doing it and learning how to reserve the energy I can go up and play 18 songs a day every day. Obviously I'm not in as good shape as I was when I was twenty when I started, but I couldn't do when I was twenty what I can do now at thirty one!

The Endorsements...

I've got a couple, nothing major. A couple of companies are helping out. Basically I approached them, because I'd assume that you'd have to be in like Metallica for Zildjian or Remo to approach you. Those guys would be handing you stuff because of the status that you hold. We don't hold that much status, so it was really just a matter of calling a few places and finding the companies that are interested. A lot of what you see put down that I play is to let people know what types of drums or cymbals that I use, but I may or may not have an endorsement with that particular company. For instance, I play a Tama Granstar that I got right before we recorded The Bleeding that I was able to get a 50% deal from. Nothing for free but a company that I always used so I worked something out with them.

Axis - The Death Metal Pedal?

I have them, I play on them and I think that they're amazing! I think that people want to know what we use, and I have no problem endorsing those pedals to anybody. Really, they make such a big

difference, so much of a difference that I couldn't even believe it at first. I was using some decent stock Tama pedals, not the Iron Cobras or anything, but they were pretty decent, and I think that I recorded The Bleeding with them. I was turned on to the Axis pedals by Dave Culross when he was in Disgorged who were from Rochester, NY. Being from Buffalo, we ran into them live a few times, and Culross was just an amazing, unknown drummer back then. Alex actually hooked Phil from Malevolent Creation up with Dave when MC needed a new drummer. Anyway, he was working at a music store, and he told me that he had these Axis pedals at home and how amazing they were. I didn't think much of it at the time, but I think that when we were in the session for The Bleeding I went into Thoroughbred Music down there and saw the Axis pedals there. I went and hit all of the pedals there against the wall, just a couple of kicks you know. Well, you hit this Axis pedal and the thing just did not stop. All the other pedals would be dead in the water and this Axis pedal would just be going! It made me buy the pedal on the spot, because I thought that these pedals had to be amazing based on what I saw. I bought them and then brought them home after we finished recording to try them out at practice. These pedals were so smooth that I was actually playing over myself because I was so used to having to play so hard! It took me a little while to adjust but once I did... I know that everyone is using them now in all of the death metal bands. Honestly, I couldn't imagine using another pedal. I used DW's for a while, I think I used them on Butchered and Tomb, and I actually just wore them out! I wore out the sprocket so much that the chain would slip off. I could have bought a new sprocket but in thinking about it, I just kinda gave up on them. That's when I bought that Tama kit and got those stock pedals, so honestly, I was just as happy with those stock pedals as I was with the DWs!

Jack Koshick Presents...

Say the name Jack Koshick and you'll likely get a slew of responses, ranging from those that are grateful and those that are eager to spew hate at the man. Whatever your feelings are, you have to admit, it takes a lot to put on a metal festival, and no matter how commercial they may seem to get, the Milwaukee Metalfest is thanks to guys like this who can somehow merge capitalism and extreme music. Let's face it, only a select few metalheads chose to get an Economics degree in college, leaving the rest of us trying to rely only on common sense to stay ahead in their metal ventures. With a layout cost in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, I sure don't have the capital to front a major festival, and after reading this interview, maybe you too will agree that good ol' Jack may be one suit who is in for the long haul. Yeah, the sound always sucks for a lot of the bands, the weather can be unreliable and there are tons of cancellations, but these are also METALFESTS, and for myself, that's reason enough to get on a plane for 12 hours to get to the mainland. RoR - Maybe you could tell me a little bit about who Jack Koshick is, and why you decided to start the Milwaukee Metalfest?

JK - Sure, well, I've been producing concerts since 1973. I was on the ground floor when the punk explosion happened, and I was in on the ground floor when the metal explosion happened. When the punk explosion happened I was an agent in London working for a company called International Talent associates, and we brought a whole bunch of the punk bands over to America. Then I ended up managing the Exploited, U.K Subs, Broken Bones, Blitz and Discharge here stateside. Then a friend of mine, Jon Ditmar, who now owns a company called Pinnacle entertainment, told me, "Jack, the money's in metal". Well, he had this band called Talas, and I started doing Talas shows. Mike Faley, who's know the president of Metal Blade was managing Talas then, which was like, oh, 1892? Then Ditmar booked the first two Metallica tours, which I bought dates on, and things just grew from there. I've done everything, I've worked as a manager, I've worked as an agent. Right now I also work for the World Wrestling Federation, I've been with them since 1995. Let's see, in 1986 I opened a club called the Odd Rock Cafe here in Milwaukee and did that until 1989. And in 1987

we produced the first Milwaukee Metalfest and it just grew from there. The Metalfest became a labor of love, and it certainly takes a lot, it's at the top of my plate really.

RoR - So, if you look back to the '87 metalfest, and then think about what just went down in '99, how does it compare?

JK - '87 was magical. There were like 15 bands in one afternoon with King Diamond headlining. Trouble played the show, Napalm Death were on the bill. It worked, it made money, it was exciting, nobody had ever done it before, so it just progressed. Every year I try to make the metalfest bigger and better, put a twist on things, so it wasn't just repetitive.

RoR - Well, this year was by far the biggest...

JK - Well, 12,000 people over two days, I never thought it would get this huge.

RoR - When is it going to get too big? Will it ever just become too out of control?

JK - You know, it's always been the Woodstock of the underground, because of the type of music played. This music will never become mainstream, you know. This is music that doesn't get the radio airplay, this is the music without the pretty boys and the MTV videos. The crowd is limited, so if you're asking me if the

metalfest is ever going to get too big then I would say no.

RoR - Do you find that attendance ebbs and flows over the years, or has the event always increased in popularity?

JK - There were a few years back in the early 90s when metal was really hurting. When Guns and Roses was at their peak then metal was at its peak, which was the early 90s. Then boom, a major drop-off, a big decline. You saw all of the bands in the amphitheaters are now playing in bars. Metal's coming back now. It's real interesting, because when wrestling is hot, so is heavy metal, it's always been that way. So the to are sorta like gauges you know?

RoR - Do you think that's just because of the correlating fan base?

JK - Yes, when I first started working with the WWF my core audience were 17 year old males, and that's what we target our advertising at. Now it's at the point where you shoot after the families and now upwardly mobile yuppies have accepted wrestling and are attending. So wrestling at a peak right now, and hopefully it will get bigger. Metal has also grown, which is another reason that I intertwined the two together this year.

RoR - And then I guess if you're targeting 17 year old males then the porn star thing just falls right into place...

JK - There you go!

RoR - Have you gotten any negative feedback from those additions?

JK - Uh, not so much the wrestling. The negative feedback received has not been from the metal community as much as it's been from the local communities. You know, "What am I doing trying to corrupt the children in their town?". We had the Governor's office (of Wisconsin) trying to stop metalfest this year. They violated their contract with us at the Wisconsin State Fair, it was a real mess! I mean, we're still in litigation with it. What gets me is that they pulled the plug because they didn't like the names of some of the bands. They didn't like the fact that there were going to be porn stars (fully clothed,



mind you) there.

RoR - But that IS all first amendment stuff...

JK - Sure, and they thought that we were just going to roll over and play dead. So we took it to court and we went as far as we could, we beat them everywhere, but after getting pummeled in court, they finally plead sovereign immunity, which says that the state can't be sued. So they hid behind a 150 year old very unpopular law in the state constitution.

RoR - But, in a way, considering the heat, the auditorium seemed like the perfect place.

JK - Yeah, but the auditorium was also politically connected as well. With me suing the state, the city didn't want to get sued. So because I was a regular renter at the auditorium they said rent to this guy but fuck 'em. Well, they didn't say fuck 'em but probably stick 'em. The Milwaukee Auditorium ended up costing me \$81,000 more than the state fair park would have. As a result, metalfest in just hard cost, lost me \$66,000 on that one show. If it wasn't for the work that I had done for the WWF, I mean, dude! This thing fuckin' laid me out! Well, I shouldn't say that, but it certainly hurt. This Milwaukee Metalfest cost close to \$300,000 to put on this year. I went in there because I wasn't going to let the show not happen, and these guys treated me like a second class citizen.

RoR - So what is the future then for Milwaukee? Back to the Eagle's Ballroom?

JK - Oh, there'll be a Metalfest XIV, but now, we won't go back to Eagle's. Part of the reason that we moved in the first place was that we had just outgrown there. We couldn't have fit 12,000 people over two days in there with no Air Conditioning. People would have been dropping like flies... The arena worked fine, but I've got to come to sort of understanding before we go back there.

RoR - How did Asbury Park work out, other than it being the other extreme, temperature-wise?

JK - My biggest complaint about there was the temperature in that main room. In fact, only the theater was heated, the big room was warm because of the body heat. The fire marshall came in and said that all the doors had to be unlocked and open, which

let all of the heat out!

RoR - So, demographically, you're choosing areas based on what, just being the four corners?

JK - Sure, you know, for years, San Antonio for years was the #1 metal market in the country. New York, well, you've got 40 million people living within 100 miles of the Atlantic Ocean. Then L.A. is just a natural...

RoR - A few more historical questions then. Was metalfest always pay to play?

JK - No! It became pay to play when we expanded the event. You see, everybody in the world wanted to play the metalfest, and everyone has. With the exception of say, Metallica and Ozzy, I mean Korn's played it, Venom, Megadeth, Slayer, Fear Factory. What happened was that the cost of putting the show on became overbearing. A few years back, metalfest almost became extinct because I went on a streak where I lost money five years in a row. Everybody thought I was crazy but I kept doing it, and it ended up that it was costing me like \$600 a band. I had always been putting bands in there, but all of a sudden it became impossible to have it be the event that I wanted without making it pay to play. All the little bands that are trying to get exposure would have been dropped. Which is bad because every year bands get signed at the metalfest. It's a great place for bands to network, and it really does help the good band's careers. Like Vile or Darkmoon got a deal with Music for Nations...

RoR - And the deal is that they get tickets in exchange for the \$1000 they pay?

JK - Yeah, I'm asking them to sell 20 tickets. Also, the tickets are \$55 apiece, and I sell them to the bands for \$50, so they can sell them all and have \$100 to pay for gas, travel expenses, whatever. Plus they get all access laminates that they can use a souvenir, they can put down on their resume that they played the metalfest, and if they went to the show as fans, then 5 or 6 guys would have spent almost \$350 just to go as spectators, so for a few hundred more they can play it!

RoR - So if a young band wanted to play one of the festivals, what would you suggest would be the best things for them to do? What do you require from bands, do you have to hear them first, or just to register?

JK - You know, what most bands do is that they try and get in early to get a good slot. Try and sell the tickets to your friends, because then at least you have a built up fanbase there. A lot of these bands will go and book their way out there, try to get gigs on the way there and back. I would suggest to try and do it as cheaply as possible, you know, get the tickets and sell them right away. As for what they have to send, with the check we ask them to send a bio, and tape or CD. Every year we're sending money back, like this one guy, he sent in a tape, and the band was just him doing everything on a DAT machine. I sent his money back and told him, "You can't play, they'll eat you alive! I don't even want your money." So I sent his money back, I think that we sent like \$7,000 back from bands that just didn't cut it.

RoR - One thing that I always hear criticism about it the sound quality. It's got to be difficult to do sound for so many different bands, but haven't you guys learned things in the past 13 years?

JK - Well, I mean we've got good systems... Quite honestly, the bands that sound the best are the bands that bring their own soundmen with them. Unfortunately, those are only some of your bigger bands, but the guys that we have doing the sound are guys that work with metal groups all year round though. We try to get the best representation, but it's tough you know?

RoR - So, to close things out, if you could describe the metalfest to someone that's never been there before, what would you tell them?

JK - Well, like I said, metalfest is the Woodstock of the underground. It's hard to describe, it's something that you really have to experience. Everybody that you see on your metal chatrooms though are going to be there. You can put a face with the name, a lot of networking, a great place to meet people. And where else can you go and see all your favorite bands at one time?



IT wasn't too long ago that Arch Enemy came out with their last opus, *Stigmata*. Featuring more intricate playing, and accentuating the guitar more than on *Black Earth*, *Stigmata* was an album almost best seen as a transition. Arch Enemy are back once again, this time with the fiery *Burning Bridges*, and are set to light the world ablaze with their guitar pyrotechnics.

RoR - So how are things going with the new album?

MA - Pretty well, I think. We haven't done any shows or anything with the new album, we did the Dynamo festival, but basically we're just waiting for this tour that we're doing in Europe with In Flames and Dark Tranquillity to start.

RoR - How do you feel about *Burning Bridges* hearing it now?

MA - Well, I actually listened to it today since I hadn't done interviews in a couple of weeks and I thought that I'd better refresh my mind as to what it sounds like! I'm still happy with it, I think that it sounds pretty good, it's definitely our best effort as a band so far. I was really happy with the first album as well, and then of course *Stigmata* was a really hard album to write and also to record. We ran into a lot

of problems with the line up and everything. So that didn't turn out the way that we wanted it to, but everything just felt so right for this album. Everybody is really happy and dedicated to the band now, I think that they've all realized that we've got something good here now.

RoR - It was interesting because you kinda pulled over 3/5 of *Armageddon* on that album (*Stigmata*), was that out of necessity or did you feel that those musicians would add the dimensions that you were looking for at the time?

MA - I basically just needed people! [laughs] It was at a time when Daniel (original Arch Enemy drummer who has since rejoined the band) wasn't able to commit to Arch Enemy full time. [laughs again] not that he needs a full time commitment, but he couldn't go on tour with us when we had some European dates and a Japanese tour lined up in 1997. He just said that he had some personal stuff with his family that he had to take care of, so I needed someone fast. So I did find another drummer, but Martin, the bass player on *Stigmata*, was actually in Arch Enemy before he was in *Armageddon*. He played on the first Arch Enemy show that we ever did, and all of the *Black Earth* shows.

RoR - But he wasn't used for the recording of *Black Earth*...

MA - He wasn't involved THEN, but he got involved directly after that. Johan, our singer, was supposed to do the bass as well, but he just wanted to concentrate on vocals live. Johan can play the bass, but he's not like a fantastic bass player, so it's better that he concentrates on only vocals, I think.

RoR - How difficult was it for him to come back into the band?

MA - Well, once he was away from Arch Enemy we did a little mini-tour at the end of Holland and Belgium, and ironically as a support act we had Eucharist (the band that Daniel was in at the time). So we did like 6 shows, and I was just blown away, because I had forgotten just how good he really was. I was just sitting there every night watching him play the drums thinking "God, why isn't he playing with me?" So, that was kind of irritating, but we also realized then that we got along really well. There were never any hard feelings when he left the band, I guess that I was slightly irritated since it was bad timing when he left, but things were fine then and I just asked him if he would be interested in coming back and he was.

RoR - Were there hard feelings between you and Peter then?

MA - Not from our side, no. I don't have any feelings about that at all, actually. It was initially just for some shows, you know, but Japan went really well in '97, so he asked if he could become a permanent member then. It didn't look like Daniel was comin' back to us, so we said yeah, and then we went again and recorded the Stigmata album, which you know I was kinda disappointed with. There's no hard feelings from our side of the story, though, we're all happy guys. I don't know, I can see where he'd be a disappointed that we dropped him...

RoR - I think it works out for the best though, he's in Darkane now, and I think his style fits that a lot better.

MA - Oh yeah, definitely. Actually, I thought that the drumming was the best thing about Rusted Angel, his drumming has improved a lot.

RoR - Touring-wise, do you tour with other bands besides Arch Enemy?

MA - Well, I have another band called Spiritual Beggars, which is more of a 70s influence, it's quite different really. We release albums on Music for Nations over here in Europe, so I do both bands at the same time really. It's just a matter of seeing what's happening on the schedules.

RoR - How does that affect your family life?

MA - Well, I don't really have a family anymore. I have a daughter, and she's with me quite a bit when I'm not working. No, it's impossible to keep everything, [begins to laugh], something had to go! I can't stop playing you know.

RoR - Well, if you track your career, you started out just as the guitarist in a couple of bands, then Carcass, then you formed a couple of your own bands. Now, not only did you start Arch Enemy, but you run a label, do your own distro, I mean, when did it start to become a profession for you?

MA - When I realized that everyone was ripping me off! No, it was basically out of necessity because for a couple of years after Carcass I really didn't feel like starting a band that sounded anything like Carcass. So I started to explore another

side of my playing which is this Sabbath/Deep Purple side, but then nobody gave a shit about that band, so I had to start taking things into my own hands. I came from a situation in Carcass with a manager, and a record deal and all. You didn't have to do anything, they just gave you a ticket and said where you were going. All I had to do was play guitar, which was very nice, but I didn't even know where I was! I kind of like having more control as well. It's given me a lot of experience dealing with people. Sometimes it's hard, because I deal with some people that I have absolutely no idea where they're coming from as far as business. Now we've just signed a management deal for Arch Enemy and Spiritual Beggars with Sanctuary Management, and they handle Iron Maiden and Helloween. So we've gone with them now so maybe things will be out of my hands now. But things had really gotten too big to do everything 100%, and I've got to focus more on the music side of things.

RoR - There's a lot of mystery about Black Earth, like how it was recorded in two weeks, and if so, it's pretty amazing, since that's an album that I think helped really define the Gothenburg sound.

MA - The funny thing about the Black Earth album, I wrote the whole thing, and some riffs were riffs that I had wrote for Carcass. Like the main riff for Bury Me an Angel, that was something that Bill and I used to rehearse in Carcass, but it never got used. So I had these little bits and pieces lying around, but the whole thing came together really easy. I rehearsed like 4 times with Daniel and then we went in and recorded it, then people came in and did their bits. The album WAS recorded and mixed in like 10 days altogether. What's also funny is that the first time that everybody met was at the photo shoot for the album a couple of months later because everybody lives in different parts of Sweden. It really surprised me though how well that album came out. I'm easily as proud of the Black Earth album as I am of the Heartwork album.

RoR - Did you put a lot of thought into the tracking order of Black Earth, because that album is pretty incredible in that just when you think it can't get any heavier, it does!

MA - [laughs] Yeah! I think that the track listing is really important overall, and I think that we fucked up a little bit that way on Stigmata, but I really like the track listing on the new album. I'm really into

track listing, I can spend like days thinking about it, I make like demo tapes of various track listings and all...

RoR - Somebody was asking me about the cover art for Burning Bridges, because they felt that it was pretty scary! I hadn't really thought about it too much, but I guess it could be perceived that way, although it certainly doesn't bother me any. What do you think about that?

MA - I don't know, I don't think it's scary. I guess it could be seen as sinister, that eye is kind of creepy. But that's not manipulated it or anything, but that's the way that the picture came out. A girl that I know that did the layout for the album came back with the whole booklet in like a month, so it's all her idea. With the cover, I don't think that she thought that I'd accept that, but the first time I saw it things just felt right, it had the right vibe. We went for like a completely white background this time as opposed to the more black stuff that we had in the past. We'll probably go back to the black stuff in the future though!

RoR - What was the deal with the mask themes for the first two albums? And what was up with Peter's face on the Stigmata band photo?

MA - I really love the first Arch Enemy cover, I think it's one of my favorite cover that I've ever had. About the masks, I don't know. We had these masks of our faces made which looks pretty cool. As for Peter, yeah, it looks like he's had acid poured on his face, but that was done before we knew that we were going to drop him from the band, it was the idea of the layout guy who did the layout.

RoR - Well, he must have been kinda bummed!

MA - Yeah, [laughs], because he didn't see that until after the album came out, so maybe he thinks that we did that on purpose... That's pretty bad though, I know.

AMON AMARTH

Well, they've done it again. Presenting 7 more tales of Viking heroics, Amon Amarth have put together another epic album, this time named after a mythical sword, The Avenger. With a small shift in the percussion department, Amon Amarth are, if anything, more solidified in their approach, magnifying the power and sharpening the attack. With Once Sent... still making it's way into my player, The Avenger was an unexpected treat, and a source of pride for the band.



RoR - So, you had The Avenger in the can for about six months now. This gives you some time to think about everything, so how do you feel about the album?

JH - I think it's a very good album, we're all very pleased with it. We managed to create a more brutal and more direct album that we've done before. In a sense, not have so many peaks song-wise like in say, Victorious March, but on the other hand have a more even quality to the songs. I think overall that we did a very good job with it.

RoR - I think that it's a good extension of Once Sent in that you managed to capture the fury and emotion, but you also managed to cut out a lot of the excess, focus things better.

JH - Exactly, it's not so much fussing about, more straight to the point. It's catchier and easier to get to as a listener.

RoR - So how is it performing those songs live?

JH - I think actually that these songs are more popular than the older ones since they are catchier. People are going to be able to bang their heads more to these songs. We've played them live and people have enjoyed them so that's really cool.

RoR - And you've also got a new lineup solidified as well...

JH - Yeah! We've had some lineup changes since the last album. Just after recording the last album our rhythm guitarist Anders Hansson left. It was kind

of a joint decision actually because honestly, I don't know how much longer he would have lasted in the band if he hadn't of left. He was sort of losing interest in the band, he had a newborn son, and he also wasn't really keeping up with us as musicians. No hard feelings, I mean, he's still a good friend, but when we looked at things, he was basically still at the same spot as when we first started in 1992, and you can't go on with a member that's not progressing. So after the last tour we hooked up with an old friend of ours, and he worked out really well, so we decided to keep him in the band. Then in August Martin decided to leave the band, but continued playing with us until November, when we called up Fredrik Andersson, who played the band A Canorous Quartet. They had just split up and he was really interested. We had to break him in on the new songs and everything, and then just headed out to the studio.

RoR - So did Fredrik just try and adapt Martin's style, or is this more Fredrik's style that we hear on the album?

JH - On the songs where Martin had already decided how to do the drums he had to adapt to that style, because those songs were very much built around those rhythms. But on the songs that where Martin hadn't decided what drum beats should be there he had freewill, even though Olli, who creates most of the music, is very confident in what he wants. So

he gets the last word always, well, almost always.

RoR - I only bring that up because if that is Fredrik's style that we hear on The Avenger, then it's not all that different than Martin's!

JH - Not really, I'd say it's more powerful, he's harder hitting. You should be able to hear it on some songs, but maybe it's not that evident.

RoR - It's harder to tell in a recorded situation, rather than seeing someone playing it live. I guess you would say that Martin had a jazzier touch, or a lighter touch?

JH - Definitely, he has a much lighter touch. Actually, if I had to compare them, I would have to say that Martin is one of the best drummers in the metal scene here in Sweden. He's very technical, and he's also begun to play harder on the drums as well. Fredrik is more straightforward and harder hitting, which I think suits our style of music better. I think it brought the energy level up a notch. We never asked

Fredrik to come in and play like Martin, in fact, we had to hold Martin back because he did so much technical stuff that the sense of the song was lost. I think that's mainly why he left us, because he wanted to play more technical, and with Opeth he can do that.

RoR - I like the whole package on this album, especially the artwork on this one...

JH - Yeah [sighs], well, I was very satisfied, at least with the cover on the last one (Once Sent...). As far as for the inside it was a bit drab perhaps, but the last album we basically did everything ourselves. On this one we did our own version first and it didn't turn out very well. They handed it over to this professional guy and I think that he did a really good job. If you ask me though, the cover for The Avenger gets a bit boring for me, because I've seen it for quite a while. The cover for Once Sent is more intriguing, and speaks more to my mind than this one, even though I think that he did a very good job, and the booklet is excellent. Basically, Once Sent is more personal since we did it ourselves.

RoR - I checked out your website again yesterday, and it's looking pretty good!

JH - We're actually going to change it a bit. We were talking about redoing the whole site, because we're not really happy with it now. The idea is good, but it doesn't really work with all screen sizes. I guess we're thinking about doing a new website, but keep it in the same vein. It's Ted who's doing all this stuff though, so I'm not quite sure what he'll end up doing.

RoR - In looking over everything on the site and the albums I could sum up the theme of the band as Vikings, beer and tattoos.

JH - [laughs] Yeah, I guess you've pretty much got the whole point of it. [laughs again] No it's true, but actually I only have one tattoo, but that's because all of my money goes to drinking! No, seriously, it's very expensive tattooed here in Sweden, and I want to have something special as well. I'm looking for motives all of the time, but I guess I'll have to wait and see what happens.

RoR - Well, you have a big tour coming up, so maybe then...

JH - Er, a big tour? OK, we are playing later in December with Morbid Angel and God Dethroned. We were supposed to play in the Baltic states, Estonia and Latvia, but unfortunately that was cancelled because Edge of Sanity couldn't make it.

RoR - So any interesting tour stories from the last tour? Any horror stories?

JH - [laughing] how much time do we have?! OK, well, I can tell you this one. To get to the tour we had to fly down to Amsterdam, and we were supposed to meet the band Naglfar at the airport, since they were also on the tour with Brutal Truth and Deicide. They come from up north (Umea), and the Northerners are supposed to be hard on the booze, so we figure "Hey, these guys ought to be



fun". So when we got to the airport, it was like 7 in the morning, and we were totally drunk, and of course they turned out to be totally sober! So we were sitting there drinking thinking "What are these guys wimps or what?". So we got on the plane, and as soon as the drink cart came by we started drinking beer and whiskey, cognac, vodka, whatever. We drank a lot of booze, basically, and we were totally giving these guys in Naglfar a really hard time. They're really nice guys, but we just kept yelling "Naglfar" all the time. So finally one of the guys in the band said that perhaps they should drink something, so he called the stewardess over, and asked her if he could have a beer. So she's like "No, we're out". So then he asked for whiskey, and again, she's like "We're out". The same thing with Vodka, and everything else, so he finally says "What's up, how come you're out of all the booze?!" So she turns to us and just points. We had drank all of the alcohol on

the plane. We finally get off the plane, so of course we have to wait outside in the arrival hall for the tour bus. There are all of these families and stuff, and we're just like totally piss drunk. Ted was so drunk that he couldn't even stand up, so he went over and sat down on his guitar case. So all of a sudden he just starts to puke on the floor in front of like 25 or 30 people waiting for their families or whatever. So he's like spewing his guts up and we grab him and all of our stuff and got the hell out of there. To end it, we finally get to the bus, and I get on with the remains of this bottle of whiskey that I had bought in the airport store. I get on and sort of throw myself down on the seat next to somebody. I'm kinda like "Hey, drink some of this", and the guy next to me is like, no, sorry alcoholism runs in my family so I don't drink any hard booze. Well, it turns out that was Glen Benton from Deicide! He was totally cool about it, but it was a pretty funny story. I think that those guys thought that we were pains in the ass, the typical Swedish first timers on the road.

RoR - What kind of takes up your day now? How much time does the band take up of your life?

JH - Well, music takes up a large part of everything, but I have to work, otherwise I can't live! I have this real expensive apartment that I bought, so I work as a phone sales manager. I sell meat and dairy products to supermarkets. It's a job where I'm pretty free though. I finish at 4 PM, so I have all of the evenings free. I haven't really done much work lately lyric-wise, but we rehearse three times a week, and I try to write stuff when I have the inspiration, but that's hard most of the time.

RoR - A lot of musicians try to practice outside of the designated rehearsal time, but I guess that would be pretty hard for a vocalist, unless you were to sing in the shower or something!

JH - Well [laughs], I have a really nasty habit of singing along with music when I'm at home, but it's nothing like when I sing with the band. It's something I enjoy doing though!

RoR - We talked about this before (issue #2), you have like four or five different voicings at least on the albums. I wondered how you come up with those ideas and practice them.

JH - I don't know. I try to sing, more than scream or grunt, actually, but keeping the ferocity of the death vocals because I feel that it fits the feel of the music. Lots of people have told me that I have a very different death metal voice than other bands that they have heard. That's up to other people to say, of course, but then they ask "how come", and the truth is I don't know! My major vocal influences are like Tom Araya and James Hetfield, but I don't think that you can hear that when I sing...

RoR - Not too much, no [laughing].

JH - I want to sing more than scream and grunt, but it is what it is, I guess. The different voicings give more dimension to the music, different intensities, etc.

RoR - You're writing some pretty epic tales, so to just kinda grunt it out in a mediocre fashion would sort of diminish the point!

JH - Exactly. Always when we're creating music or writing lyrics, feeling and emotion is very important to us. We work a lot with that. We also work a lot so that the lyrics go hand in hand and fit the music. I've had some help, but pretty much I've written all of the lyrics for all of the songs, and the last thing that I worked on was actually three songs at once that are a trilogy. Unfortunately, doing concept stuff, either as a whole album or as three songs are very, very difficult.

RoR - This might be a really stupid question, but do you write everything in English or do you write the lyrics in Swedish and then translate them?

JH - It depends, sometimes I write in Swedish when I'm talking about emotions that are too complex for me to describe in English. Usually though I'm fairly good at writing in English right away. Sometimes I feel that I lack the vocabulary in English to be really creative, because I can't come up with the right word right away. I end up coming up with the same word over and over when I should probably use a synonym for that word.

RoR - You mentioned a few things about work and the band, I wondered, since you've obviously gotten older and more "mature" since the band's inception, how has the meaning of the band changed for you? Do you foresee ever having to make a decision between the band and other

responsibilities?

JH - When the band first started out I viewed it as a good hobby. It was fun to do and since everyone carries aggressions, it was a good way for me to get rid of mine. It was also something that I enjoyed doing. As soon as we started to get recognition and move forward I began to think that perhaps this could be something. When we finally signed to Metal Blade I couldn't believe it, because to me, Metal Blade was Metallica, and Slayer! Suddenly we're on the same label and it was just unbelievable because it's been such a dream of mine since I was a kid. I've always been interested in performing and believe me I have embarrassing pictures of me singing along to Elvis when I was like 6 years old! But even back then I listened to metal, for one of my earliest memories is from when I was like 4 or 5 years old. My friend and I used to sneak into his brother's room and listen to his albums, and the guys was a big KISS fan, and we'd listen to KISS or Black Sabbath on LP. And that's sort of how I got into the whole metal thing. As for having to make a decision about the band, of course it will come some day, but luckily now I have a job where I know that they support me. For instance, we're going on a tour in December, and usually nobody gets any time off in December because it's the most hectic month. In my case they made an exception.

RoR - You had mentioned that people in the scene there were a little too jealous. Has that changed for the better at all?

JH - Not really, in a sense maybe, and the old times do seem to be coming back, but there just aren't enough gigs anymore. I'm not sure why though, because if you organize a gig, there will be lots of people who will come. A lot of the bigger bands in Sweden charge money to play, where we usually only ask for free beer if we're playing

in Stockholm. But then again, if we're playing somewhere else, we only want free beer and someplace to sleep! Perhaps in a year or two we'll ask for 2,000 crowns or whatever to play. But for now we want to be fair. Unfortunately, most of the gigs that are possible to get are in youth clubs where no alcohol is allowed. Actually, in some places, if they know that you've been drinking you can't in.

RoR - Any other late breaking news with the band? Any new material you're working on?

JH - We're are working on new material right now. We have the basic structures for three songs, and we'll see what comes out of that. We want to work really intense because we've already booked Abyss studios for August 2000 to record the next album.



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caroline ELL

ASK me two years ago what I thought of Hecate Enthroned, and my reply would have been a blank stare. Being introduced to these English Extreme Metallers through the Blackend 3 compilation, my immediate bias was against the very CoF style vocals, but as time marched on, I realized that I really appreciated the sense of atmosphere that Hecate had created to offset their speed. I was one of the few who gave credence to this group though, most dismissing the band due to vocalist Jon's past affiliation with the Cradlers (and his knack for sounding A LOT like Dani, I admit). Perusing the band's history, there seem to be quite a few line up changes, more so than average, each year almost seeming to bring someone new to the fold. Recently releasing their third full length, *Kings of Chaos*, Hecate also unveiled a new keyboardist and vocalist, as well as a refined sound which appeared to eschew some of the black metal element for a more brutal attack. Looking for answers, I ask new frontman Dean if this was this less keyboard oriented death metal path was one that Hecate Enthroned was headed down all along. "No, to be honest I'd say this album was the last thing to expect from Hecate Enthroned. 'Upon Promethian Shores' had elements of death metal in it, as did 'The Slaughter of Innocence'. To me 'Dark Requiems...' went in a more black metal approach and the new one has a big death metal influence in it. I'd say this is because Jon got kicked out and myself and Daz joined. Obviously when new people join a band they bring some of their influences in, and both myself and Daz actually prefer death metal to black metal. Things like this are never intentional. When we write, we don't think it has to sound a certain way, we write what we feel. But yes, I do agree that this album is more guitar orientated than keyboard orientated. As for the future.....who can tell?" In remembering my first few listens of *The Slaughter...*, one thing that impressed me quite a bit was the drumming, which although quite normal for a black metal release, just seemed incredibly fast to me for some reason. Well, *Kings of Chaos* continues that trend, with the whole band sounding just lethal. Now, I ask, just what the hell happened?! "Bob will be happy at that! [laughs] Yeah, I think this album is a lot more ferocious than previous records. I think the main two reasons are the production and new members, obviously the music too. The production on it is a lot heavier



sound- ing with the guitars doing a lot of the forerunning. We're very happy with the production. Pete has done a great job and it's likely we will be using him for the next one too." Hearing the new material leads me to wonder where the band gets their ideas. As most extreme metal bands seem content to stick to their respective sound and perfect it in terms of speed and intensity, others look to branch out and create something with a different sound. So just what makes Hecate tick? Obviously there are things from the past which helped influence and shape *Kings of Chaos*... "To be honest we are all into different styles, but metal is our main style that we listen too. Personally I even like stuff like The Beatles, Adam and the Ants, The Who and some classical as well. But I don't think any of these have influenced me; maybe Adam Ant will be in influence on the next album in terms of vocal patterns. I don't agree with the 'faster' thing. Obviously some bands do that (Marduk probably the best example), and if they want to do that, fine. But we feel the music is more interesting to vary it a bit. Speed black metal albums are for the most part, boring. As for the lyrics, well they are all anti-Christian,

not really satanic though, if you understand me. Some are personal thoughts, some are like stories... 'Deceiving the Deceiver' is a personal song and a story. It starts off by saying 'you can't control me, I am stronger than you' which goes into 'I'm going to use my strength to destroy you'. 'Perjurer' is about all the lies and hypocrisy in Christianity. It's all anti Christian! I have chosen not to include lyrics on the CD cover, rather I have chosen little 'snippets' from each song. Just to give a rough idea of what we stand for. Why bother telling the fans what they already know! Plus I like people to come up with their own ideas..." If there was ever a recurring demon associated with Hecate Enthroned, it would be the comparisons that people incessantly made to Cradle of Filth. In the beginning, there were some striking similarities in the vocal department, and since Jon was in Cradle for a hot minute, people could make the connection. While Dean can obviously sing in that style, he also has a healthy death growl as well. Is it finally time to bury the Cradle references now that Jon has left? "Obviously with Jon out of the way we are going to lose all the Cradle comparisons as Jon was the main reason for it in the first place. I actually think the music on the older albums is more like Emperor than Cradle. When I sing, I do what suits the music written. If the riff is more death metal, I will probably use a death metal voice, same with black metal. A fine example of this is on the song 'I Am Born'. The music is quite different and strange, so I used a different/strange voice. And when I'm thinking of these things, the last thing in my mind is the fans. As long as I am happy with it, I don't care. But obviously if people like it, it is an added bonus."

In my secluded corner of the world, The



Slaughter seemed to get a larger push and have more staying power than it's successor. I may be wrong on this but it seems that Dark Requiems may be considered the "lost" Hecate album?

"Dark Requiems...' has actually sold more than 'The Slaughter...', so I guess it could have something to do with your location. We expect (both label and band) the 'Kings of Chaos' album to sell even more. It's good that Blackend are pushing this one more, they think very highly of this album and they know they have a good product. And personally I love doing all the interviews and stuff. So we are working well together." For myself, when I think of England's music scene, the great Rise Above stoner rock invasion immediately comes to mind, with only a seeming handful of other bands gaining my notice. Of course, this has to do with my location and the fact that the Scandinavian scene is so dominant, but it leads me to ask, what is the music scene in England like now, for it doesn't seem to be a particular hot spot for death and black metal. "The scene in England is not that great really. We do have venues to play, and we have some great bands and some good magazines. Venues want a lot of money to play though, and we have very few great bands (a name to watch is Akercocke) and the magazines are quite scarce too. We probably have the best doom scene in the world though. A lot of bands miss England off the tour schedule because we are an island and it's not cost effective. And the only place they play anyway is London, which is over 400 miles away for me. On the continent things are much better. It was one of the first things I noticed when we toured, everyone seems to be much more genuine over there." Which leads to the end of today's interview, but as I feel that the band has succeeded in shedding some of the past similarities to other English bands, I ask Dean what he would like to say to those who didn't believe. "I'd say approach with caution to everyone! Most people have this idea that we are a Cradle clone; we are not!!!! We have a very different sound now. Only a deaf man would not notice..."



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EPOCH of Unlight was a band that I had heard much about, yet hadn't actually heard. After receiving the excellent White compilation from The End records, I finally got to hear what I was missing. Hailing from Memphis Tennessee (yes, home of Graceland), EOU play some pretty extreme shit. Whether you want to dub it black metal, death metal, either way, these guys have a healthy future ahead of them. Wanting to know more, I tracked down drummer Tino LoSicco over email right around the cusp of the year 2000 to see what he could tell me...

RoR - I've got a brief synopsis of EOU's history, but I was wondering if you could fill in the gap between What Will Be Has Been until now. There were some lineup changes and you toured with Monstrosity, DB and Samael, right? How did that work out for you, and please don't hold back from telling some road stories about missing clown white facepaint or cheeseburgers!

TL - What Will Be Has Been was released in October of '98. That was around the time that Randy, our second guitarist and vocalist quit. He had told us earlier that he would be leaving the band soon and would try to stay until a replacement was found. Pierce, our bassist, quit a month prior because of time constraints due to his marriage and the birth of his son. His departure was unexpected, but his brother (identical twin actually) came in and filled his position immediately. As far as a replacement guitarist is concerned, here we are over a year later and we are still stuck as a three-piece. You can well imagine the lack of available talent or interest in this style of music in the area of the country!

The tour was a very educational experience. First and foremost all of the bands were very cool guys and we got along well with them. (Contrary to popular belief, the guys in Dimmu are pretty cool.) I think what we learned was that you never hire someone to tour with you in your band unless you know them really, REALLY well. Serious character flaws have a way of surfacing when you spend 10 hours a day in a van with someone. Also, you realize just how much the taint of big industry has trickled into the underground scene. Often,



s l o t and even meals were sacrificed due to the monetary-oriented agenda of the tour manager. One time, the tour manager started the show an hour before doors were scheduled to open. Let me tell you those five kids that were out front really got their money's worth!

RoR - Also, elaborate on how you developed your sound. It must have also been tough to keep the band going in Memphis? Maybe it was exactly the opposite, but from what I've heard from people that have gone to school there, it's not exactly a Mecca for metal? How did the scene build up over the years?

TL - Well, in all truth you're pretty much talking to the scene here. There are really no other bands that even attempt to play anything remotely like death/ or black metal (or any other METAL for that matter). Occasionally, I new rap-metal band will pop-up claiming to be the heaviest thing around. Those usually breakup in 6 months. The few of us that have kept the band going all the years just have an appreciation for the music and enjoy playing it. I guess you could say since

it satisfies us on that level we've been able to keep things together prior to the recent recognition we have gotten on this tour.

RoR - I bought "What Will Be Has Been" after hearing rave reviews from all over, but when I first heard the disc for myself, I was quite surprised at the production. How did this sound develop? Was it a combination of desire and funds at the time? It threw me off a little at first, but I actually love it now! What's funny is that it parts of the album totally remind me of Rush's Caress of Steel, especially their track "The Necromancer".

TL - I actually got an email recently from someone that said something similar in regard to the Rush comment which is very (cool) to me because I totally dig Neil Peart. Our "sound" I would have to say just developed from all of our interests. When we first picked up our instruments we were playing thrash and things naturally progressed from there. I guess evolving tastes may have contributed to it as well...always searching for something new to listen to that pushes the envelope at the time. Plus, I think a lot of bands have forgotten that the true art of writing a good song is making it memorable. Then if you can add the intensity behind it you really have something special. A recording budget also limits you in the recording process. We did the full-length in less than a week. Looking back I would have liked more time.

RoR - As far as new material since that album, how do things compare with the older stuff? Any horn sections or arias thrown in there now? Where are you in terms of the new album now? What was the track recorded for the independent file you mentioned? When you look at WWBHB now, how do you feel about that album?

TL - Sorry, I will not butcher a song by throwing a trombone solo in the middle of it. The five new songs written are just a natural progression from where the last disc left off. Hopefully, the combination of melody and intensity will present itself in more evolved way. The drumming is still fast with plenty of grind and double bass work while the guitars are more hook oriented. We were never



contacted again for the independent film so at this time no track will be released for it.

I'm fairly happy with the album as a whole. I think it represented the best we had to offer given the time, budget, and natural disasters that occurred during the recording sessions. The printing error has finally been fixed with the second pressing so I am pleased in that respect as well.

RoR - As a drummer, I'm constantly playing albums for other people and saying "here, listen to this guy", and you are definitely someone who no one believes is really playing the drums. With so many people triggering things and punching in nowadays, how did your recording experience compare? It looked like things were done rather quickly, and I wouldn't think that you leaned on electronic wizardry too much. I talk to a lot of younger drummers who are trying to build up their speed quickly. Of course, time and patience are critical factors, but do you have any wonder tips that can cut through months of frustration for them?

TL - I wish I did. If so I would have used them myself. It just takes time (I've been playing twelve years now.) All I can recommend is listening to everything that Gene Hoglan has ever recorded. The progression in his own playing style is educational and has given me a good deal of inspiration for my own.

As far as triggering goes, I totally support using them live. Most clubs are ill-equipped for micing extreme metal drummers. Plus, since you're a drummer, I'm sure you can relate to the fact that you don't care for someone moving your kit around just to better position a mic. I like the fact that triggering live gives you at least a little control over your sound and helps the kicks to be heard.

I am totally against computer manipulation within the studio. At one point on the tour I had a very eye opening discussion about that topic in Florida. What I don't get is all of these so called heavies in our music digitally alter their drum tracks in the studio. If you can't play them right at that speed...then you can't play that fast. Slow it down and try again. An article in Metal maniacs focusing on drummers really pissed me off because they listed a few guys that are known to have had help in the studio as the leading drummers in death metal. What's good about record-

ing here is that none of the studios in town even have the capabilities for altering drum tracks like that.

RoR - Along those lines, a lot of flak is given to extreme drummers for a lack of creativity in their drum parts. I disagree, as I'm sure you do. How do you approach songwriting from your end. I know that you also write the lyrics, and was wondering if these two elements tied in together at all. You cite Brian Lumley quite a bit for your lyrical influence, when did you start reading him?

TL - For creativity I again cite Gene Hoglan. Along those lines you have guys like Hellhammer and Sean Reinert that extremely inventive and even innovative in their approach to drumming. Personally, there have been many times I write the music to fit a certain drum pattern that I have been working on prior to that. The



lyrics are finished after the music. I like each song to first have a mood set by the music itself...and then try capture that in word. Most times the words are actually in the form of a story. I've been into Brian Lumley novels for almost 10 years. The man's horror and vampiric themed writings completely crush Anne Rice and Steven King and his adaptation/interpretation of the Cthulu mythos is unparalleled in any books that I have read.

RoR - Since I'm writing this on the first of January, 2000, I'm gonna have to ask you some Y2K (man, I hate that term) questions. First though, I know that you're heavily involved in science. How do you reconcile the two?! When I did my masters I hardly had time to do anything else, let alone play in a successful band! Where are you with your studies now, and I assume that you must have a pretty under-

standing advisor!

TL - Actually I think they both complement each other. In science we are lead by quest for knowledge. The lyrical themes often involve quests (however, abstractly). Plus they are both extremes forms in themselves. The branch of engineering that I'm working on my dissertation for is relatively new and somewhat pioneering. At the same time the nature of underground music is to be the freshest, most extreme available at the time....with a constant focus on evolving sounds.

As far as my advisor goes he was very supportive of my decision to tour. (luckily, he has a somewhat vague connection to the performing arts.)

RoR - So, in terms of Y2K, I've got a lot of personal feeling about this, but what's your overall take on it in terms of consumerism Vs science?

TL - Uhhh, you know the expression if you can't say anything nice don't say anything at all? well...

RoR - I guess that's all for now, please feel free to add anything in that you would want people to know about, including what the band has slated next (if you haven't already mentioned it) and any other prophecies or words of wisdom.

TL - Thanks for the interview and the interest. Epoch of Unlight is scheduled to play the March Metal Down in New Jersey. We are planning a few short mini-tour runs (like 4 or 5 shows) over the next three months. Currently, new material is being readied for a new album and tour this summer. YFLHD!

GOREFEST

Those of you who lived through the early nineties in a world of death metal must certainly remember Gorefest. Releasing some of the heaviest releases for the time, Holland's Gorefest are most remembered for the False/Erase double shot, as well as re-releasing the first live Death Metal album, The Eindhoven Insanity. Their last two works, Soul Survivor and Chapter 13 saw the band moving away from the speed of their earlier works, yet still retaining the heaviness and lyrical approach for which they had become known. These were tough releases for those of us (including myself) who were weaned on the band's past frenetic attacks, but upon taking the time to really listen to these albums (and to let go of the past), one can really see the huge progression that Gorefest had taken. Possibly their most experimental album, Chapter 13 is deeply rooted in the primal elements of metal but undeniably fused with a healthy dose of, what else can I call it, but rock. Initially giving this album a hasty and not altogether great review (OK, I panned it), speaking to guitarist Frank Harthoorn (an repeat listens) has allowed me to see the error of my ways, and to also expand my mind a little more. The group has since disbanded, but as I view Gorefest as one of the forefathers of the death metal scene, I asked Frank to go back through the history of the band (as much for me as anyone else). So, sit back, relax, and read about the first part of the origins of the Dutch band once known as Gorefest as written by founding member and guitarist Frank Harthoorn...



The Beginning...

Basically, we started out as any other band. I met Jan-Chris in a bar in my hometown and we started talking about our mutual obsession at that time, which was Death Metal. JC was in a hardcore band at the time called Sjolmord, but what he really wanted to play was Death Metal. He told me about this, and we decided to form a band, right then and there. I had just begun to pick up a guitar, and JC asked me to find out how to play Sodom's Obsessed By Cruelty, which I did. I then taught him, and thus this became the first DM song we both could play. It would remain so until about 3 months later, when we found a guy called Alex, who was a guitarist in a lot of local scene-bands. Another month, and Marc became the drummer. We now could start writing our own songs. Alex and I wrote all the music, while JC took care of the lyrics. Both JC and me, and to a lesser extent Alex, were very much into horror at that time, and it seemed logical to us that was to be our choice of topic, lyric-wise. This is also where the name Gorefest stems from. We had a couple of handles before that, from the generic (Abhorrence), to the highly original (Leprosy), to the downright weird (Condemned Heretics - we got rid of THAT one quite fast...). I first thought of GoreZone - well I stole it

from the mag. But when reading the mag, I came across Gorefest, which we all liked a lot better.

Now, from the moment JC and I started this band, we wanted not only to play brutal as fuck DM, but also to become more or less famous while doing it. Not a particularly profound reason for starting a band, but hey, we were young, and wanted the world - or at least a small part of it. In order for this to happen, we needed two things: a fanbase, preferably a big one, and a record deal, as quickly as possible. We recorded our first demo called Tangled In Gore about three months after Marc joined, and it came out remarkably well. Since we weren't the best of musicians, we thought we shouldn't try and write stuff we couldn't handle, but instead write songs based around VERY simple riffs. That way we wouldn't waste too much time recording them, and still have a respectable demo. Which it was, I guess, since we sold quite a few of them at gigs and throughout the underground. About two months after this came out, we got a call from Foundation 2000 records, saying they were very interested in doing a record. This made us very happy, since this confirmed our belief we were doing something right. We

also felt we needed a stronger position in the underground, because at that time, just about everyone and his nephew were starting Death Metal bands. Remember, this was '89, and DM was starting to get pretty big in Europe. So we signed the deal, under one condition: that we'd get to record another demo before we did the actual album. F2000 agreed, and somewhere in '90, we recorded the Horrors In A Retarded Mind demo, which got even better response than the first one. With the 8 songs that comprised both demo's, one cover "Death's Mutilation", and a song we've never released, called "Bloodsoaked Vow", we did a huge amount of gigs in Holland, Belgium and Germany. So much, in fact, that we didn't really have time to write much new material, so by the time we went into the studio for Mindloss, we only had one new song to record, beside the demotracks.

Also around this time, JC had become slightly bored with the whole horror-thing. He felt he had something more to say than the usual gore-stuff, and frankly I was thinking the same thing. On top of that, there were a couple of bands who were doing that shit so much better than us, like Cannibal Corpse and Obituary, for example. The major change in lyrics came

after we did a few shows with Carcass - when it comes to gore, you just can't beat the masters. Carcass were taking these lyrics to a completely different level, with so much flair AND a great sense of humour, that we just said, to hell with it, let's do something different. This resulted in Mental Misery, the only 'new' song we recorded for Mindloss. So anyway, that's the, if slightly overlong, explanation for the fact that on Mindloss, there's 8 (demo)tracks dealing with gore, and one which, well, doesn't. The cd-cover, by the way, is a piece of work made by the guy who printed all of our shirts. The base on which it stands is actually the bottom of a refrigerator. I think it was inspired by the lyrics to Mental Misery, with some details reflecting some of the other songs. I always liked that cover, even though a lot of people didn't. People were referring to it as "some guy's school project for arts and crafts class; which he failed". Interestingly, Kerrang! magazine, who have always had a particular disliking for us, thought it was about the only redeeming factor for that CD. 'A vaguely interesting cover-concept', if I remember correctly, is what they called it.

Out with the old...

Around the time we were recording Mindloss, it became apparent to Alex he couldn't combine Gorefest and his daily job anymore. He had a high-profile job at a powerplant. (At the job interview, he was given, among other things, a book about certain aspects of the job, and was told to give it a thorough readthrough. Alex's reply to this was: "Well, if you'd have taken the time to look at the author's name, you would have found it's actually ME who's written the damn thing in the first place". Clever guy, our Alex.) Apart from that there was growing tension between him and JC. Marc, JC and myself were all around 20, Alex was 28. JC had somehow gotten the feeling Alex was trying to 'take over' the band, or something. Anyway, Alex thought it would be best for him AND the band that he'd quit, which he did. So, we needed a new guitarist, and we needed him fast. Initially, we thought of Stephan Gebedy, whose band, the near legendary Thanatos (now reunited!) had just fallen apart. Stephan was quite up for it, but JC knew this other guy called Boudewijn - or Mr.B, as I shall



refer to him from now on, as it is easier, and also what he is known as to virtually every band we've toured with. Mr.B was also from our hometown, and had played in several local bands. He had two things going for him: he was of our age, and had virtually no Metal background. Now a lot of people would call this a serious drawback, but we felt he could bring in a whole new viewpoint to songwriting. Within two weeks we were proven right. Not only was he more easygoing than Alex, but the guy was simply brimming with ideas. In a couple of days the both of us wrote 4 songs that were miles better than anything we'd done before. All was going well, but then Marc started slacking. JC and I demanded total dedication to this band. JC had quit his job, I'd given up my studies. Mr.B's only goal in life was to make music. We had our first European tour coming up, with New Jersey's Revenant, and we really couldn't use this. So JC and I had a meeting with Ed Warby, whom we knew through Stephan. We basically told him we were going to give Marc one more chance, but if he fucked up on tour, the job was his, if he'd want it, of course. Anyway, the tour went well, but Marc just couldn't cut it. You could see he hated touring, and he really missed his girlfriend - which is cool, up until the point it starts interfering with your dedication to the band. On the last day it came to blows between him and Mr.B, so exit Marc, and enter Mr. Ed Warby. Now, up until then we had never actually heard Ed play. We were told by Stephan he was an excellent drummer, whose band at the time, Elegy, just was going nowhere (this was of course way before Elegy made it big in Japan...). So

there we were, kind of worrying how to 'work in' this new drummer. How little did we know. If anything, Ed taught US how to play our own songs! Here's this little guy, whom I've only spoken to once, saying, "Look, I've listened to the demos a couple of times, let's try some songs, OK?" -insert rehearsal session, a flurry of arms and legs behind the kit, lots of gazing in awe from us, and happy faces all around. Ah, so that's what these songs are supposed to sound like!! The sheer exhilaration of that moment is one of the best memories I have from 10 years of Gorefest, and from that point on, I knew this was our definite line-up. If anyone left, the whole thing would fall apart, just like that. As a matter of fact, I've spoken to JC about this very same thing a couple of weeks ago, and he basically said the same thing. Ed unknowingly saved this band from blowing up in its own face. For which not everyone will be thanking him for, I'm sure...

Still a Gorefest...

That whole name thing came up now and again every two-and-a-half-years. JC always thought we should change the name, because you just can't go very far with a name like that, people won't really take you seriously. In retrospect JC was probably right, but I was always against it. Scared of changes, I guess. Don't know about Ed, but I think he always liked the name. His opinion on anything became quite important down the years, as he's always been the one who could explain his views best, without losing sight of the bigger picture. So if he was in favour of keeping the name, and he'd talked to JC about this, you could bet that name wasn't going anywhere. Thinking about it now, it might have helped us, but somehow I doubt it. Coming from the Netherlands, it won't really make a difference, most people will never take you completely serious, anyway.

I'd say that False is the ONLY release which really appeals to the DM fan. Mindloss was too generic for many DM-fans, and with Erase, most people thought we'd lost the Death in our Metal, so to speak. And they were right, I guess. But False... JC and I were still HUGE DM-fans, Mr.B had just discovered it, and was having a great time putting all his ideas into this

The "False" dmfan...

type of music which was basically new to him, and Ed just wanted to PLAY DM. Though he wasn't as much into all of it as JC and I were, I do remember him being hugely into Autopsy and Entombed at that time. So really, it was just a couple of friends playing and having fun with the music they loved. Exactly what any young band should be doing. And you can even strike out young in that last sentence. This was really the main reason why this album sounds like it does, or did, at the time, anyway, though there were other things, too. Colin came back to work with us, and he was a lot happier with this material too. He was actually a pretty good friend of the band at the time, and we valued his opinion quite highly, so it was really cool to get his thumbs up as well. He'd just finished working in L.A. with Fear Factory on their first album, and met his current wife there. When he came over he really missed her, which resulted in extremely long, and very expensive phone-calls, so we made him let her come over too. I mean, a plane ticket or a \$2000 phone bill... Anyway, Colin happy, everybody happy...

We recorded in a small studio, located only a 4 min. walk from the beach, and since it was a great summer, every time 'real' problems arose we'd put everything down and went for a swim. Sometimes we didn't even need problems, we'd just do it! Now this may sound like everyday life to you (I live in Hawaii - Ed.), but for most North-Europeans this is considered a holi-



day, to be worked for, very hard. So there we were, a whole month at the beach, apart from the weekends which were spent at home to get seriously drunk, recording an album which we knew was turning out to be pretty good, with Colin Richardson, and we weren't even paying for it! Well, obviously in the long run you DO pay for it, but we were quite convinced we'd sell enough copies of it to cover those expenses so who cared. We certainly didn't. Which attitude, believe it or not, I still hear on False. It sounds good and it fits? Let's record it!

The Eindhoven Insanity...

...one big adventure. We did most of our touring in those days. False was received extremely well, and everybody seemed to like us; well, not everybody... While on tour with Decide(!) in Stockholm, someone had planted a bomb just

outside a security door at the venue, which went off during our set. Fireworks, we thought. Really INCREDIBLY loud fireworks. We, like the real men we were, and, indeed, still are, just kept on playing, and only later found out this whole security door, a reaaally massive, huge door too, had almost been blown out of the back-wall, about 15 metres (hey, we use the metric system, sorry!) from where we were playing, with only a flimsy curtain between us and that thing (the bomb that is, not Glen Benton). I still wonder why no one made us stop playing, but no one was hurt, so that was OK. There had actually been several bomb threats from some animal liberation front or something, who hated Benton because of some comments he made in some magazine about his, shall we say unusual interest in small furry animals, but I always suspected their tour manager - who wasn't of the Decide-entourage, posted those threats himself, in order to create more buzz around that tour. Hearing him referring to Benton as a 'nice little money-maker' kind of strengthened my ideas about that. The day before all this we had actually met that Euronymous guy, who, about 8 months later would be killed in a freak accident involving his best buddy trying to help him shave in about 30 different places. Of course then he was very much alive. Small man, in a cape, with some sort of dagger hanging from his belt. He obviously had some kind of beef with us, since he had gathered a small army of kids around him, and was giving us some sort of Evil Eye. Maybe it was a Spooky Glare, might even have been a Curious Wink. Anyway, JC and Mr.B went

outside a security door at the venue, which went off during our set. Fireworks, we thought. Really INCREDIBLY loud fireworks. We, like the real men we were, and, indeed, still are, just kept on playing, and only later found out this whole security door, a reaaally massive, huge door too, had almost been blown out of the back-wall, about 15 metres (hey, we use the metric system, sorry!) from where we were playing, with only a flimsy curtain between us and that thing (the bomb that is, not Glen Benton). I still wonder why no one made us stop playing, but no one was hurt, so that was OK. There had actually been several bomb threats from some animal liberation front or something, who hated Benton because of some comments he made in some magazine about his, shall we say unusual interest in small furry animals, but I always suspected their tour manager - who wasn't of the Decide-entourage, posted those threats himself, in order to create more buzz around that tour. Hearing him referring to Benton as a 'nice little money-maker' kind of strengthened my ideas about that. The day before all this we had actually met that Euronymous guy, who, about 8 months later would be killed in a freak accident involving his best buddy trying to help him shave in about 30 different places. Of course then he was very much alive. Small man, in a cape, with some sort of dagger hanging from his belt. He obviously had some kind of beef with us, since he had gathered a small army of kids around him, and was giving us some sort of Evil Eye. Maybe it was a Spooky Glare, might even have been a Curious Wink. Anyway, JC and Mr.B went





up to him, they exchanged some words, and then parted, not as friends, but neither in hostile spirits. I really don't know what they talked about, as I had already retreated to the dressing rooms (I hate children), but seriously doubt if anything could have resulted in a bombing. Still, since then I've heard so much about this incident, it could have been anyone. Fact is, it's a great story - one that made the headlines in my part of the country ("Local Band in Satanist Bombing?" - Seriously!) - and it's nice to tell once in a while, or at least my version of it.

We did loads more shows around that time of course, there was the 1st Full Of Hate tour in Germany, with Grave, us, Cannibal Corpse, Carcass, and Death, which for us more or less resulted in our first and only North American tour, supporting Death, on their Individual Thought Patterns tour, which also featuring Canada's Sacrifice, by the way. Can't say I remember much of that one, except that Death were REALLY cool to us. We could travel on THEIR bus, which was so cool on their behalf, and they'd let me steal their beer, which is probably why I don't remember too much of the whole experience... After that, we had a day off, and went on tour with Samael, who were still quite satanic at that time, but fun guys nonetheless... In between this all, there was of course Dynamo. When we heard we made the bill, that was it. We already knew about the US, but this just was the icing on the cake. The show itself was one of those once in a lifetime experiences, of which there were actually quite a few in those days. The reasons for taping and releasing that show, the very first Death Metal live CD, I think - are all on the sleeve, and all are true. There is however, ONE overdub, that being about the whole lead in Glorious Dead. That thing was so completely out of

tune (Mr.B later told me that during that lead, someone turned up his monitor level almost to PA-level, at which point he forgot how to play the lead), it wasn't even funny anymore. I've only played that CD once, coz I've heard enough bad playing as it is, but it sure is a nice thing to remember that show by...

The Dutch Death Metal Scene...

To be honest I'm probably more up-to-date with what's happening now in the Dutch scene, then when I was still in Gorefest. Because we weren't located in the city, we weren't really part of the whole scene. Sure, we knew there were a bunch of other bands, but we never hung out or anything. We were usually too busy with ourselves. The only band we were kind of friends with were The Gathering, the rest we couldn't be bothered with. Later I heard there was quite a lot of animosity towards us from a lot of Dutch bands, most of which was probably rooted in jealousy anyway, but at the time we were just doing our thing, not caring about anyone else. Most of those bands, including us of course, haven't survived. Sinister and God Dethroned are doing pretty well, and The Gathering have gone their own way, which cannot be called Metal anymore, and that's pretty much it. The rest of the DM world was doing pretty good at that time. There always seemed to be some kind of tour to get on, or a festival to play. Loads of DM-bands peaked around that time, and most of them will tell you that those were the best days. Which, I guess, they were. Definitely our best days, anyway...

Erasing the Past...

Erase is actually not really one of my favorites, that one. There's some cool riffs in there, and maybe 2 or 3 reasonable songs. Some of my worst stuff is on there, as well. There's a couple of reasons why I don't really like Erase. For one, the production kind of, well, sucks. Colin was supposed to be working with us again, but all of a sudden wasn't available anymore for a long time. Now we could've waited for him, but we really wanted to have a new album out as quickly as possible so we wouldn't lose too much of what we'd built up with False. In hindsight we should have waited, of course. We could've used the time to write some more, better, stuff. But, we didn't, and asked Pete Cole-

man, who helped us mix False, to handle production.

Recording took place in a small town in Germany, where there was literally nothing to do but get drunk with Sodom's Tom Angelripper, whose favorite bar was just around the corner. It was during these recording sessions we started to have our first, er, disagreements. JC had some problems at home with his girlfriend, but hadn't told us about that, so we just thought he was being an asshole. On top of that, when he started "singing", it sounded like shit. He'd become a big Glenn Danzig fan, and was obviously trying to sound like him, but it just stunk. And that wasn't the only thing which sounded like crap. I don't know what we were on while making the guitar sound, but boy, it was bad. In the studio, on top volume, it sounded OK, but when we came home after 5 weeks, and played the tape, you could actually see all of us turning quite, quite pale. But, with all the crap sound, and shit-vocals, it was to be our best selling cd. Which probably says more about the buzz we'd created with False, than the actual music on the record. I still like Low, Seeds..., To Hell..., and the ending of Walk..., but that god awful title song, and the even worse God-dess..., my god, what were we thinking... Best thing about this album is probably the drums, which Eddie recorded in a different studio, before we went to Germany, while still in high spirits. . Come to think of it, the whole thing would have probably been a lot better if we'd recorded all of it in that studio. Too bad that was the more expensive of the two studios, and we were such a slow recording band..

Expelling the excess...

That was JC's idea. He thought it would be a wise move to start making a step away from Death Metal. We were still





very much a metal-band, just not very Death anymore. (The metal plate with the logo cutout is an actual thing. About 30" by 30", and heavy as fuck.). Now while I wasn't too sure about the whole walking away from DM thing, I really liked the simpleness of the idea. As a band, we were always abstracting our own music, always stripping the songs down to the essentials (It might not sound like that, especially on False, but believe me, we've thrown away more music than we've actually recorded), so this oversimplifying of the artwork kind of fit right in. The title should have been written on the plate, in white chalk, but someone forgot, and they later put these cheesy looking silver lettering on it. I never really liked that GF-logo much, nor did I care much for the actual abbreviation, but this was JC's little artistic outlet, so we kind of let him.

I don't think Nuclear Blast were too happy with it, though I have no recollection of them actually objecting to it. I do remember them trying to get us to use another drawing by Mid, the guy who did the False cover (and a lot of Napalm Death stuff, by the way..), but when JC got something in his head, it was pretty hard to talk him out of it. We later did use that Mid-piece as one of our last shirt-designs.

Starting with the Erase tour, we began dropping the tracks from the first album from our live set. They were written by what was essentially a different band, and they just didn't feel right anymore. We liked this idea so much, that from then on, every new album meant scratching the one that preceded the one before, if you follow... Basically, with every new album we just wanted to play the new songs,

and because we had to, a couple of older ones. We could have done a greatest hits set every night, but that would have almost been cheating, coz we couldn't get our hearts in the old songs, which would mean people would have paid money to see a band that did not give them 100%. More like 50... You know, we actually tried playing Confessions Of A Serial Killer on the Soul Survivor tour. The intro went alright, but when the real song kicked in, it somehow fell flat. It just sounded like shit, really, so we quickly got rid of that idea. With

Chapter 13, we played almost exclusively new songs. We went on tour with Judas Priest, and thought, well, this is a totally new audience, half of them have probably never even heard of us, why play old songs when the new ones are so much better? No one will miss 'em. I know quite a lot of fans felt cheated when we started dropping songs off of False, but then who wants to see a band playing music they don't enjoy anymore? Anyway, while it was, in my opinion, an honest decision, it was probably a very stupid one as well. Word travels fast, and as soon as people knew we weren't playing old stuff anymore, we lost about half of our audience. Thankfully, we at least gained some new fans with the later albums, but with every show, there'd be less and less people. Things were definitely taking a turn for the worse.

13 Sole Survivors...

Soul Survivor almost killed the band. In fact, we had agreed on splitting up after we'd finished playing all the remaining shows that were booked. Personal differences were just being blown right out of proportions. JC's paranoia had come back, he was convinced Mr.B was doing all kinds of things behind his back (when in fact, the only thing he was doing was working his ass off, and trying to cope with JC's behavior.); I just didn't care anymore. Then we did one of our last shows (we thought) on this big festival we have here in Holland, the Lowlands-festival. The tent was packed, about 6000 people, and all this aggression and frustration came out onstage, and it was one of the best shows we'd ever done. When it was

over, we were actually smiling at each other, which hadn't happened in a long while. We'd completely forgotten how good it could be to play in this band. So a few weeks later we sat down, talked about a lot of things, and more or less made peace with each other. Then we made this plan to just start writing new material, try and find a label that was willing to sign us, and just take it from there. If it wasn't to be, then OK, at least we'd tried. Writing this album was thrilling. We had nothing to lose, there was no pressure from anyone at all, and we'd just experiment with stuff. It felt like the False days all over again. Except that we were 6 years older, had a lot more experience, and a lot more interests, musically and otherwise, so we'd draw influences from everywhere, even from our own old stuff. There's actually one or two riffs from those days that we'd never used that could finally be turned into songs (All Is Well is one of them). We also wanted this to be our heaviest album yet, and experimented with downtuning even lower than we normally did, from B to A, Bolt Thrower style... A lot of the enthusiasm we had on False, I can hear back on Ch13, the 'this sounds cool, let's use it' mentality. 'Smile' for instance started out as a piss-take on Korn, but we liked that riff so much, we turned it into a song. 'Serving The Masses' contains our tribute to The Who, FS2000 is my personal ode to AC/DC, and Nothingness even lifts directly from Loss Of Flesh from our own first album. Like you said, it's certainly our most varied release, and while there's no way you can call it Death Metal, there's more of 'the old' Gorefest on this one than on either Erase or SS. It's definitely my favorite album (my personal Gorefest top-5 consists entirely of songs from this one...) and the one which I still listen to regularly. I actually listened to this back-to-back with False the other day, and couldn't believe how relatively 'light' False sounded compared to this one. Anyway, I guess you can tell by now I really like this album, and it makes me sad there's only a few people who even bothered to give it a chance.

Some Changes...

In Europe, Ch13 was released through Steamhammer/SPV, a very specific metal-label. Though nowadays they seem to concentrate on slightly 'older' bands like Overkill, Motorhead and of course the mighty Priest, in the 80s they were responsible for releasing some of my all-time favorite albums, like Destruction's

Infernal Overkill and Eternal Devastation, and the first Metal Church (ah, those were the days...). So I don't think that was an issue. Also, we didn't deliberately set out to make this such a different album, this just happened while writing it. As I said, we'd almost broken up, so from our point of view, we were kind of living on borrowed time anyway, to coin a phrase. (wasn't that a Diamond Head album?). We'd just write what we wanted, and this is what came out. The past, to us, was just that. There were hardly any fans left, so in a way, we were starting from scratch. Might have been a good time for a name-change, actually...

I [also] hadn't heard a decent JC-vocal since False, and had serious doubts I would ever again. But he really surprised me. What also helped a LOT, was that Ed took a lot of time coaching JC through the whole singing process. He kind of sculpted JC's ideas into an actual shape which could finally be labelled 'vocal lines'. I know this doesn't sound very positive towards JC, but that's not my intention. I think he did a really good job on this album, to the point where his vocals actually contributed to most songs.

The Press, The Fans, the final album...

Most reviews were good. The people that got it really seemed to like it, and most people that heard it found it much better than Soul Survivor, which it is. But, by this time, the majority of people that used to listen to us frankly couldn't care less if we released something or not. On top of that, there were so much albums being released, and ours just didn't stood out enough. It really doesn't matter anymore, of course, because it was to be our last album. And as far as last albums go, this one, to me, is nothing to be ashamed of. It's honest, well played, diverse, and as heavy as anything we've ever done. I'm proud of it, and I'm sure the rest of us is, too. Everyone of us has their own reasons and explanations [for the split], and all of them are probably true. Actually, if it was up to me, we'd still exist, I guess. One of the major reasons for quitting was actually very simple. We'd ran out of ideas. There was nothing more to be done for us as a band. Chapter 13 was the best we could do, and if no one picked up on that, then there was no point in going on. All things come to an end. This band had come to its end, simple as that.

Where are they now?

Mr.B is studying classical guitar, and doing very, very well in that department. Ed still does the occasional job. He's just finished recording his parts for part 2 of the new Ayreon CD, heavy/prog/metal, and if this is your thing I strongly advise you to check it out, it's awesome. JC is doing his own thing with a local guitarist. I haven't heard it, but since he's very much into Marilyn Manson, NIN, Rob Zombie and such, it wouldn't be strange to assume it sounds something like that. I myself aren't doing anything, really. Watch a lot of movies, spend a lot of time at my favorite watering hole, listen to music, and that's it, basically. I'd love to start a new band, or join one, but just haven't met the right people, I guess. JC was the only one with a family, he'd become a father in '95. Ed & Mr.B both had a girlfriend, and I was the only single one during the whole time. None of us had jobs, Gorefest was our job, we were living off of it since '93. Going from dedicating all of your time to a band, to nothing, is something else, I'll tell ya.

The memories remain?

Yes, very much so, although it's been almost two years since we split up, I still think about it a lot, which is what happens when you haven't got much else to do, of course, ha-ha. But I'm very glad to have been part of this band, we did so many cool things. We released 5 CD's, got to tour half the world, did some amazing shows, played the Dynamo-festival twice, went on tour with some of my favorite bands, like Carcass (twice), Death (thrice), and Judas Priest (for two months, woohoo!). Met a lot of great people, saw some of the best looking women I've ever seen, and even touched some of them, ha-ha. All in all, best 10 years I've ever had. And I'm only 30!

Reunion in sight?

Ed has categorically stated never wanting to spend time onstage with JC again, while JC has said something similar about Mr.B. We actually got asked to reform for a benefit-show for Chuck a couple of weeks ago, but had to decline, because of this, er,

slight animosity between some of us.

Final thoughts...

There's not much left to say, but thanx to everyone who enjoyed our music in any kind of way. If you haven't heard it, try to get a hold of Chapter 13. I like it, so there's no reason why you shouldn't. OK, maybe there is, but you know what I mean... If anyone wants to contact me, about anything, my e-mail address is frank209@zeelandnet.nl. Cheers!



DEMONS & WIZARDS

What a surprise to pop in this disc and be greeted by two of the major talents in metal today. A true meeting of the minds, Demons and Wizards is exactly the way a side project should be, blending enough of the elements for which the respective parties had become famous with something new to add to the artists catalog. Iced Guardian, Blind Earth, whatever it is, it works, and fans of either of the band's previous material should find plenty to interest them here. I got the chance to talk to Hansi Kursch one morning to find out a little more about the history here.

RoR - So I guess you're calling for Demons and Wizards today...

HK - That's what I heard, yeah [laughs]...

RoR - How's that project been going so far in your opinion?

HK - Oh, it's been going really well. It hasn't been released yet, but it will be out here in Europe the last week of January. Then well see, but the reactions have been really good so far and we feel really comfortable listening to the album still. So I can't say anything bad except that it was a good experience, I'm anxious to do it again and do a better one!

RoR - The whole idea behind this was not just a one time project, but something that you guys could do when you had down time from your other bands?

HK - Exactly, and I DO have a lot of down time in Blind Guardian. I'm not in charge of all of the basic arrangements and orchestral sections, so unless that's done I'm out of work. I just start once there's a good base already, and then I start with my vocals and maybe adding another melody here and there. That takes far less time, so I'm out of artistic work for a lot of the time, during the last year especially. So it was a good opportunity for me and it will be in the future!

RoR - That was one of my questions, the other guys in Blind Guardian don't have

any objections to you doing a side project?

HK - No, definitely not. I do my full time job with Blind Guardian, and honestly, I never would have come up with the melody lines that I used in Demons and Wizards without Jon's music, so there's no bad vibe in between the band members. Also there's no one that's blaming me for using something for Demons and Wizards that I could have used for Blind Guardian, that's out of the question. It's the same for Jon as well.

RoR - Can you explain the writing process for this album to me a little more? It seems like you two wrote the album on two different continents?

HK - Yeah, Federal Express was very helpful here. We were using analog audio tapes to present our ideas to each other. Jon started writing some basic riffs down, and then arranged some drum patterns and guitar melody lines which he would send to me so that I could start working on the vocals. This would go back and forth and at a certain point we were done the basic songwriting, and then we decided that it was time to have a meeting at Jon's house in Indiana, which was the case in June (1999). Jim Morris was there as well so we did sort of a pre-production there in Jon's house which turned out so well that we decided to do the whole production in Florida during summer to be done with the album by September. Somehow we were able to manage it! The idea came up because we did a first song here in the Blind Guardian rehearsal room while Jon was here doing promotion for Iced Earth. Jon visited my wife and I then, and while just sitting around having a

lazy day, we were kidding around, not knowing what to do, when we suddenly ended up in the Blind Guardian rehearsal room. Jon and I were jamming together and came up with a whole song that you could say that we wrote face to face. That was the point when we came up with the idea of doing something together at a certain point, but after that it was impossible to do things in the same way, so we had no choice but to use audio tapes.

RoR - But I mean, you guys toured together, and I'm sure that on was very familiar with your vocal style, and you're familiar with the way that he writes songs. Things do sound different here on this project...

HK - I hope so! [laughs] That's the always done by the opposite influences that the other guy has. In talking about vocal things, I'm influenced by Jon's writing style or opposite his basic arrangements are influenced by my vocal style. I know that Jon did have a lot these ideas years back though, even before Iced Earth he had some of these ideas fixed. He had the ideas for Tear down the Wall and he just set it somewhere in his desk and thought that it might be good to have me do some vocals for it. It turned out to work really well so I think that it was the other guy [in Iced Earth?] that was in charge of making the music sound the way that it did, which I appreciate because otherwise then Demons and Wizards would sound too close to either of the two separate bands.

RoR - Iced Guardian...



HK - [laughs] You're not the first, and you certainly won't be the last person to suggest that as a band name. I think that a lot of people really expected us to call the band that. I think it would have been too cheesy though!

RoR - What's cool about this release for me is that for some reason, I got this in the mail and then it disappeared for a couple of days, so when I pulled the disc out in its generic black wrapper, I couldn't remember who was in this project. Of course, I immediately knew as soon as the music kicked in, but I got to experience it without a real bias, something that's pretty rare these days.

HK - That's really good! Unfortunately most people don't have these opportunities, either they know by the cover or by the promo sheets that's it's the Iced Guardian project. I would like to listen to it without have hearing it before, but of course I can't, so I envy your position!

RoR - There seem to be more extremes here? A couple of tracks are real burners, and then the ballads are incredibly drawn out and emphasized...

HK - Heaven Denies is that scorcher, and that's one of my favorites as well. I mean, I like them all, but even with Blind Guardian, if it turns out to be a rager, it somehow makes it very attractive always. If I had to do a whole album this way I think it would be very boring, but to have these elements in there I think is just amazing.

RoR - I agree, if you don't have anything to put in to contrast things, it can get pretty monotonous.

HK - Yeah, there is one album though [laughs], I'm sure that you know it, Slayer's Reign in Blood, that contains nothing else besides speed and aggression, and I love it. So there is a chance to do this in an accurate way, but it's very difficult, and I guess that you have to be in that mood the entire time, and usually that's not the case for either Jon or myself. You run through different experiences in the songwriting process, and through different times, so it's rather logical that the album has a high variety of musical moods.

RoR - You named the album Demons and Wizards. There's gotta be a Uriah Heep influence here, right?

THE TOLKIEN FACTOR

ONE of the major influences, both noticed and stated, is that of J.R.R. Tolkien on Hansi Kursch. Regardless of the band basing the entire story line of their epic Nightfall in Middle Earth on The Simarillion, the author's work pops up in almost all aspects of Hansi's work. It was a bit of a digression, but I wanted to delve a little deeper into what magic this man holds for him.

RoR - Tolkien seems to be a pretty major influence for you. Your bio mentions that you consider yourself more of the wizard here.

HK - I may be the wizard, maybe the demon, I don't know! Tolkien is my main influence for writing lyrics, especially for Blind Guardian because it fits so good. I probably wouldn't if the music didn't recommend it, but it does always. It's like, Andreas has a very fairy talish, melodious style in his arrangements and single parts, so that always brings me into a misty world of inspiration. In a lot of cases, it turns out that Tolkien is the only way to go.

RoR - When I envision Tolkien I think of sort the medieval or renaissance periods.

HK - That may be the reason, Andrea is kind of like a medieval type of songwriter, if he's going songwriting or anything guitarwise. He also is very influenced by Irish Folk, and that somehow has a connection to Tolkien.

RoR - How do you think that Tolkien ever came up with his ideas? How does someone have such an imagination?

HK - Hard work, if you see all that he has done over all of years as an author, it's not a big amount of output, but he just believed in his ideas and in his linguistic style. He created this whole world, and he tried to make it as logical as possible, that's probably the reason.

RoR - He seems to be a love or hate type of author, a lot of people just cannot get into his style.

HK - Oh yeah, and then they cannot get

into Blind Guardian! I've experienced that several times, people who refuse to listen to Blind Guardian, or even worse, listen to it without really listening to it, and because they hate Tolkien, they hate Blind Guardian! Which is OK to me, because there are a lot of Tolkien fans who are into Blind Guardian because they like the lyrics, and from that, started dealing with the band. I'm sure that they like the music, but they first became aware of the band because of the lyrics. So there's a group that we can't reach because of it, and there are some that we reach for only that same reason. I don't get it though, especially the people who have a completely different view of Tolkien in general. They think that it's just another sword and sorcery epic, which it is not. At least not to me, but they seem to only figure out the warriors and the axes and the slaughtering! That's how some people describe Tolkien to me, and I wonder if they have ever written anything that the man had written down, or are they talking about Conan? Some people recommend his work as high fantasy, and that's the way that I see it as well. Even if you just see the simple story, it is so detailed, whether you like it or not, it's done in such a professional way, you can't compare it with anything else.

RoR - I think that he set the bar for that entire genre, everything that's done now in that realm seems to be influenced by him in one way or another. Do you think that he even would have cared if people liked it or not? I know that he wanted to eat, but didn't he mainly write these stories for his children?

HK - Oh yeah, he did it for his children. If you look on the Simarillion, for example, it has published by his son long after his death. He only published The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings while he was living I think. Of course he also published short stories in magazines, but as far as I know it was not a lot, and The Lord of the Rings was not an overnight success. It was sometime in the sixties when it became a smash hit. He probably wouldn't have cared, because he wrote it for his own entertainment.

HK - Oh, definitely, for both of us in all three bands. Jon is a big Black Sabbath fan and he's a medium Uriah Heep/Deep Purple. I'm a huge Deep Purple and Uriah Heep fan, I always have been, so that must be an important influence here. It's also a huge influence to the members in Blind Guardian and Iced Earth in general.

RoR - One thing that I wanted to compliment you on is also one of the main reasons that I'm interviewing you, and that's your singing. I'd say that the vocals that you do here and with Blind Guardian are not only the only traditional power metal vocals that I can get into, but that I really listen to first and foremost. I'm not a vocalist, I'm not a lyricist, I'm a drummer, so vocals are usually the LAST thing that I listen to. Nightfall in Middle Earth was probably the first metal album where I focused on the vocals more than anything else. Do you have any idea why your vocals are so different than the rest of the power metal guys out there?

HK - As far as for my style, I can't explain it, because it's more personal than most of the other vocalists out there. There are some guys out there that I really appreciate, but mostly they seem to sing without an intention, and I always have a raging intention with what I do in songwriting. That's what catches some people, and does not attract other people, but that's my style and I can't change it! It's probably personality, which is a lack of talent in some vocalists, who pretend to be somebody that they are not. I mean, there are way too many Bruce Dick-ensons and Rob Halfords and Michael Kiskes out in this world, and you hardly need more than one! If there are 20 or 50 and they're all on an album, then they try to feature the classical education that they probably don't have, so I try to go the other way, and whatever I've trained in any school, I try to not bring in to the album. I just try to bring in what the song deserves. Most people forget that, they think that singing means to prove something and I believe that singing means to support a song. That might be the difference.

RoR - That would make sense. You also said that you interject a lot of emotion, so if it's an integral part of the song, then that would accent it, instead of if it's trying to dominate.

HK - [laughs] Sometimes it's the music that is overplayed, and I'm in the back-ground, especially in Blind Guardian, but that's fine with me!

RoR - Do producers ever try to mix your vocals more to the forefront?

HK - Well, we did on Nightfall, definitely. We're working with so many people in Blind Guardian, that it becomes a very democratic clan, where everyone has their mark on the music, so it becomes very difficult to get more space for vocals on a Blind Guardian album! Everyone agrees that the listener would like to hear the vocalist up front, but they can hardly say farewell to any of their instruments, and I agree with that. It became better and better with each album, but there were more tracks from album one to the last one. I wouldn't mind if the next Blind Guardian album sounds exactly like Nightfall. We have like 6 songs written already, pretty interesting stuff I think. Some songs like Nightfall, and some like Imaginations, so I'm in a really good mood. It might take



four or five months more, because we just started seriously some weeks ago, but we'll start working again this week, and I'm confident that we can get twelve or thirteen killer tracks by the middle of the year and then do a production that might be done in early 2001.

RoR - Would the lyrics be built around one concept again?

HK - I doubt that I will. Not on the next one, because it took so much time to do it on Nightfall. I was so limited by the story then, it was fun, but it was so difficult to introduce the music and the vocals that would fit together. Sometimes it turned out to be almost a catastrophe! I still don't know how we managed it, because it was a

really hard time even in the studio. Everything was getting close to the end except for the lyrics, which were like 70% done, but the last 30% took me like two or three months to complete. I won't spend that amount of time on the next one, but I will on the album following that, which will be another story based on Tolkien again.

RoR - To go back to Demons and Wizards, Jon did all the guitar work and bass work on this? Was this done for ease or consistency? Because I know that you play a mean bass yourself...

HK - All of the guitar work was done by Jon outside of the guitar solos, which were done by Jim Morris. Jon did the bass parts both for ease and for consistency. It was on who wrote the songs, so it would have taken 2 or 3 days more for me to come up with a part that would have been only 70% as good as Jon's. He can play far, far better and his style in doing rhythm guitar is unique, and to follow his speed is almost impossible!

RoR - Also, Mark Prator is the logical choice for the drums. He works at Morrisound, right?

HK - He became the logical choice, because the guy from Jag Panzer was not able to manage it in time, so we were in personal trouble because we had booked the studio already. We couldn't move the time forwards because my flight was already booked as well, so we needed someone professional who could do it in a short time. Jon was also very pleased with Mark's playing on Something Wicked and The Dark Saga, so he was the perfect choice. He did this in one weekend, and he also did another album at the same time. I think that he had sort of a hard time, but he did a great job.

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REVIEWS

A.C. - It Just Gets Worse *1999 Earache Records*

You may have caught A.C.'s Seth Putnam interviewed by Barbara Walters late last year. If you didn't, you missed the revealing of what is to be called "The A.C. Paradigm". What it boils down to, according to Seth, is that each A.C. album, while managing to sound like dogshit, is really completely premeditated, with the major influences of the band being sonic terrorists such as the great Einstürzende Neubauten and Throbbing Gristle. In other words, it's the destruction of a system through music, aural armageddon, if you will. Being the "expert" interviewer that she is, Ms. Walters didn't shy away from A.C.'s lyrical content, citing directly from songs such as "Women: Nature's Punching Bag" and "I F@cked your Wife" to prove her points. Believe me, it was worth it just to see that alone. In any regard, after realizing that this album is a brilliant attempt to stage a musical coup, I have to say that it is by far the greatest album I have ever heard, and that A.C. is gay. You know, now that I think about it, maybe it wasn't A.C. on 20/20 but Ricky Martin, I can never keep those two separate. Incredibly sexist (but morbidly funny at times) and offensive lyrics set to the worst grindcore you've ever heard, but I get the idea that the band would think that this is a positive thing.

Abaddon Incarnate - The Last Supper *1999 Seasons of Mist*

"These Irish are playing Death Metal the way it was meant to be raw, brutal and evil..." Why did I cop out and start this with a direct quote from the CD sleeve? Because in having to describe this, I can't seem to collect any rational thoughts, this "album" being one of the most chaotic and disjointed, yet bone-jarring releases this issue. The names Morbid Angel and others that helped establish the Florida sound are thrown with reckless abandon when trying to sell this album, but to me, it sounds like Cryptopsy's None So Vile with a ton of distortion. So much so that most of the rhythm tracks are undecipherable, melodies (used loosely) popping up on the lead guitar tracks. But even there, whew, is it ever crazy. The vocals even remind of the great Lord Worm, and while it's a valiant effort, only Cryptopsy seem to be able to hold things together, The Last Supper falling just way the fuck apart almost

consistently. Yeah, it's super fast, but almost to the effect that I'm just wondering what the point really is? I can pick things out once in a while, but unless you're in a drunken stupor, you usually want to know where you are, right? As Rob would put it, you gotta have the headbanging groove! So, OK, some cool moments, but unless you felt that None So Vile was way overproduced, I can't see why the hell you would want to listen to this. These boys must drink a lot of coffee.

Agathodaimon - Higher Art of Rebellion *1999 Nuclear Blast Records*

A-goth-odaimon would be a more appropriate moniker, the band even having an old church and graveyard on the cover. Musical constructs based on styles made famous by people in black trenchcoats, Higher Art of Rebellion is cooler than it ought to be, as I find myself trying not to look at the band shot and just enjoy some true metal hooks. I like that the guitar dominates the keyboards here, usually not the case in these albums. We've got the evil elf vocals making their destined appearance though, these usually fair woodland creatures all pissed off by the trolls I suppose. These are at least offset by clean and spoken word sections though, overlapping and joining forces to offset the ravaged throat. A lot of this sounds just like simple chord progressions (which is one reason the hook factor works so well) beefed up with superior production and Casio undertones. The drums are mixed way back though, not too apparent, but noticeable. Things slow down to ballad land midway through, becoming a little cheesy for my tastes, but things pick up again. An album that I'll just throw on when I want some dark ambience in the background, but not something that I'd throw in my walkman at the gym, know what I mean?

Agent Steel - Omega Conspiracy *1999 Candlelight Records*

These days, it seems that everyone is so eager to return to the "glory days" of metal, most notably, what is being labeled thrash metal. Well, not that I even want to dare to compare Agent Steel to anything retro-thrash, since they've been around since 1984, but while hearing this album, a whole slew of memories surrounding my late eighties SPEED metal days came flooding back. Remember knowing that fine line between speed and thrash? It was there, for bands like Kreator were certainly thrash, while Xentrix was not. This dif-

ference is best exemplified by Omega Conspiracy, an album so tightly written and executed that even Bruce Hall's higher shrieks can't deter me from loving this album to no end! Bernie Versailles (known more recently for his work in Fates Warning) and Garcia form the mandatory twin guitar attack, yet manage to stay away from intensive maidenisms, instead issuing forth a constant buzzsaw of heaviness so killer, I can't even describe it. The rhythm section is exactly how it should be, powerful and supportive, yet not overpowering the main six string elements. Lyrically, X-files material here, the band speaking of behind the scenes things from which you can draw your own conclusions. To put it simply, there are few albums that I review which would have made me grateful to buy, and this is one of them, more amazing to think that this is an album made by a band who just went through a 10+ year hiatus.

Agoraphobic Nosebleed/Converge - The Poacher Diaries *1999 Relapse Records*

This record, although quite, insane, is fucking brilliant. Starting off with nine new tracks from A.N., this split CD just shoots you into the stratosphere, sucking the life out of you and then dropping you back to your own reality with no remorse. Psycho-core, that's what I'd call it, Agoraphobic's maelstrom of sound just revolving around chaotic riffing, vocals from hell, and the most insane drum programming I think I've heard. Besides when things kick into 2000 beats per minute, this is so convincing a job that I really forgot that this was a machine rather than some 18 year old kid hopped up on methamphetamine. Nine tracks set for stun, and that's just the first half! As nuts as A.N. are, Converge bring things down to a more humane level, yet that's only by comparison, as these dudes are also not from planet Earth. Scraping hardcore with some really nicely timed fast double bass, Converge also add an almost alternative (think back ten years) element to the music, just adding a good sense of atmosphere, letting things breathe a bit before ducking their heads for a renewed attack. Awesome shit, guaranteed to pulverize your grey matter. Psychotic, scientific, insane...

Agressor - Medieval Rites *1999 Seasons of Mist Records*

Much like Hawaii, people seem to have the same opinion that France doesn't have

a death metal scene. Well, maybe the land of bread and cheese did throw Trust our way, but they've more than redeemed themselves with *Agressor*. Yeah, they've been around for a long, long time, and experience does count for something, because *Medieval Rites* covers the entire map as far as songs go. We have black metal, raging choirs and horns (a bit too much at times), balls heavy guitar riffage, and some severely twisted grind sections (courtesy guest drummer Kai Hahto from Rotten Sound). The way that the songs differ from each other almost makes me wonder about the time frame taken to write this album, for it could almost be a greatest hits package of a band which has gone through many transmutations. Shit, we've even got folk interludes thrown in, but where the record succeeds for me (besides the awesome guitar sound) is that most of the time, the extra elements aren't glaringly obvious, which means that they're used sparingly and effectively. Because I don't know about you, but when a song has a flow only to be disrupted by some falsetto from hell, or a keyboard hit thrown waaay too high in the mix, I cringe. Final analysis, an album which appeals to me on all levels, not easily classified into a neat pocket, and a disc that is replayed instead of shelved when the endgame is reached.

Amon Amarth - The Avenger
1999 Metal Blade Records

Back for the attack, these Swedish metallers have honed their Viking inspired mayhem further, shedding the more progressive elements which were present on their last release and concentrating more on the power and aggressive emotion for which this band has become known. Most of the change in this is due to the change in the drum seat, Fredde (ex-A Canorous Quintet) being more of a power drummer, where Martin Lopez (now in Opeth), had an almost jazzy feel at times. Nothing is compromised, thankfully, the band still writing the same breed of staccato riffs and melodious thunder. It's not much of a departure from *Once Sent in that regard*, Amon Amarth choosing not to deviate from something that works, but that's OK at this point. I will say this though, the final track, *Legend of a Banished Man*, is easily my favorite thing that AA has done so far, just being the best representation of what I think that the band is trying to accomplish through their music. A tremendous finale to a strong album, Amon Amarth have once again proved their worth in the metal scene, fortifying their position at

the top of the food chain. Bravo.

Babylon Whores - King Fear
1999 Necropolis Records

The first thought on everyone's mind is definitely "What the hell is Necropolis doing signing the Babylon Whores?!" Well, I felt the same way, but after hearing *King Fear* a few times, it's a pretty gutsy, but brilliant, move. Simply put, this is a completely kick ass hard rock record. Babylon Whores, while almost a household name, are an enigmatic band for me, as this is the first offering of theirs that I've had the chance to hear. I can almost draw comparisons to Foetus, Rockabilly with distortion, thick Big Black and other bastardizations of 50s rock. Not the best description, I know, but for something that so dangerously straddles the line between what used to be considered "alternative" (Siouxie and the Banshees, the Sisters of Mercy), this album has got some serious balls to it. The guitartone is key here, being meaty and well to the forefront. In fact, the whole thing has got a real live feel to it, seeming almost like a live experience rather than a recorded one. More suited for those into Gothic hard rock than precision death metal, *King Fear* is an excellent introduction for me to this infamous band.

Bloodbath - Breeding Death
1999 Century Media

Let's open this review up with a little personal association. I'm gonna say a name (well, not really), and you're going to see if you can list how many independent projects this person has to their credit. OK, ready... set... Blackheim (Anders Nystrom), tick tick tick... Done? Try... Mikael Akerfeldt... Now here's a harder one, but not impossible - Jonas Renske (hint, he usually sings or plays drums). And for extra credit (this should be a snap), Dan Swano! Proving a small point, it's safe to say that at least a couple of those guys had you saying to yourself, "Again?!" Well, it's pretty widely known that Sweden contains some fairly prolific musicians, and here are four of them to delve into the recesses of their collective psyches and deliver some hideously good death metal straight from the early 1990s. Given the mainstream treatment by our good friends at Century Media, Bloodbath reminds me first and foremost of Left Hand Path era Entombed, especially the closing of *Furnace Funeral*, which is eerily reminiscent of the title track of the big E's first album (which is exhumed directly from

Phantasm's awesome minimalist score).

15 minutes in length, this is obviously not meant to be the definitive statement on retro death, instead, it just seems like 4 guys having a good time writing some old school Stockholm Death Metal. So, you're probably wondering, "great, but does it do the job?" Hell yeah, it does, especially for me since I've been going through this weird Morbid Angel/Malevolent Creation phase, music from halfway around the globe which exhibited parallel growth for a brief period. My only complaints are the same as always, I wish that whoever is responsible for the "image" just wouldn't try so hard, and just let the music speak for itself, which is does just fine. Dark, relatively simple riffs are crushingly heavy, drumming shying away from the constant double kick which infests itself in everything now, instead used only as a powerful undercurrent on the midpaced sections. There are some keyboards, used in place of a lead guitar during the last minute or so of the E.P., which is effective, but sort of goes against what the rest of the album is doing. Eh, I'm being picky though, Bloodbath being another spike on the belts of these Swedes, and seriously, have you heard anything from any of these guys that HASN'T been good?

Cannibal Corpse - Bloodthirst
1999 Metal Blade Records

To try and explain how much I like this album, let me just say that it was one of the first albums that I received to review for this issue, and it's one of the last to get reviewed. Why? Well, honestly, I didn't want to review it until I felt that I had absorbed everything that it had to offer, and finally I just came to the conclusion that I never will. There are many reasons why this could be considered "the" new era Cannibal album, if not their best to date. For one, Colin Richardson just gave this thing the production from hell, everything sounds crystal clear and heavy as can be. Pat O'Brien is now a permanent fixture in the band, and the songs are more intricate than anything I've heard before. I believe that the change in studios gave the band new life as well, as all performances are fast and furious. The songs, like the album, are short and to the point, yet the running times seem perfect. Get in, decimate, get out, that was the main objective here, and it works. Fisher's multi-platform vocals are in fine form as well, everything just coalescing into in molten ball of metal. The first Cannibal album that demanded repeat listens for me, and if I had a list go-

ing, this would be on the top ten for 1999, easy. A safe bet for any death metal fan, forget the past and what you think Cannibal Corpse is all about, otherwise, you'll be missing one of the best death metal releases to come around in a while.

Canvas - Canvas
2000 Metal Blade Records

Christ, another potentially awesome album just completely ruined by the singer. I'm really getting sick of this inverted intestinal tract excuse for vocals, I mean,, really sick of it... It's such a shame here, since the riffs and rhythms are seriously in sync, laying down a wicked groove base for this atonal adenoid throat to just shit all over. Which is what I envision, some fucking "modern" artist taking a masterpiece, and then deciding that his smelly feces would be the perfect topping. Well, it's not, this Canvas completely ruined. Hey, remember, the "vocalist" was the one who killed Iron Monkey (another great band gone to waste), don't let this happen again. There's something good here, shoot the vocalist and focus less on shock appeal. Just my not so humble opinion, and we know how wrong I can be according to mass majority, but man, this makes me want to throw my CD player out the window, and I can handle most anything. Another thing, why is it cool when nonmetal bands completely steal riffs (I find myself going "Hey, cool, Slayer!" or something similar) but when metal bands do it it's blasphemy? I smell.... Godflesh! (Track 10)

Cea Serin
Independent Release 1999

I could use this review to stage my argument about there really aren't any demos anymore in the CD age, each release by a band automatically being called an album, but I won't. In reality, Cea Serin may be a project between only two mere mortals, but there are so many godlike qualities about this disc, to call this a "demo" of things to come would imply too many negative things to me. Yes, the requisite drum machine is in place, which does detract at times for a "human" skinsman like myself, but the programming is done really well, having almost the feeling of a live performance. I hear traces of (of all bands) Tool mixed in with the power metal stylings, but that's only on the opening 2 minutes, Cea Serin managing to weave effortlessly in and out of sounds without sounding like a cut and paste album of

influences. At one point, I thought that things reached Dream Theater Images and Words levels, and then I had the realization that Jay Lamm here realized the potential of Seventh Son of a Seventh Son (imagine if that album was as kick ass as Piece of Mind) and almost delivered what Iron Maiden attempted over a decade ago. Heavy use of guitar heroics and keyboards, something that could easily become cheesy but manages to remain true here. Maybe a bit mainstream for some tastes, but as for crossing musical boundaries between progressive rock and metal, Cea Serin are doing an excellent job.

Centurian - Choronzonic Chaos Gods
1999 Full Moon Productions

If you're looking for a gentle album rife with dynamics and tempo changes, you're reading the wrong review. Basically an attack on everything holy and all five senses, CCG is a mind-numbing trip through some pretty disturbing moments in time. Much like Marduk's Panzer Division, Centurian basically stick with one tempo, fast as fuck, and pummel out 9 tracks of death metal hate with no fluff or strings attached. Is it any good? Tough to say, as I feel like a war-torn refugee after hearing just a few tracks at a time, which is proof complete to the band that the album is a success I'm sure. The consistency of the tempo 99% of the time does have an advantage in that when there are breaks (as in Misanthropic Luciferian Onslaught), it's that much more effective. Kind of hard to review after hearing say, the latest Lake of Tears, but if you need an album to psych you up for kicking the shit out of that trailer park loser that's been sneakin' in the Airstream and banging your wife while you're out working the night shift bussing tables at Bob's Big Boy, look no further, your incentive is here.

Coalesce - 0:12 Revolution in Just Listening
1999 Relapse Records

Where does Relapse find these bands? Another hardcore/noise hybrid, Coalesce spew out the hate while tweaking the sounds of music into something akin to Dillinger Escape Plan, but more centered on planet Earth. Parts have that smoky New Orleans flavor, but the meaty vocals keep my interest, as opposed to the raspy cat meows often found on these discs. Lyrically, weird journal poetry going on here. You can't pick it out when Sean Ingram is tellin' 'em, but reading them?

This guy is coming from somewhere pretty bizarre. Cool though, tales of the adult playground set to some powerful, memorable metalcore songs. One downside, the album, like this review, is incredibly short at only 24 minutes. Worth it though, as I hear things on this disc that I haven't yet have the pleasure of experiencing before, many sounds coalescing into a killer disc. Much of this is thanks to the riffmeisters here, and James Dewees chaotic yet focused drumming.

Con Anima - The Book of Riddles
1999 Scarlet Records

This can't be for real, almost sounding at times like a compilation of Sesame Street songs sung by the Count. All the elements are here for a gothic metal album, but this is laughably bad, mastered strange, so that certain tracks are softer than others. I get so many of these discs that I'm starting to be able to tell what's pseudo-epic and what is total cheese. There's shades of King Diamond around, but not done very well. It would be so easy to just totally trash this, but I can find some things that almost redeem the album, this is quickly buried though under mountains of pretension. Having minute "interludes" between each track doesn't help, and in the end, I'm just glad the album is over. My final verdict would be that this is yet another album killed by the vocals, that, and that I really hear a lot of riffs reused from past, better albums... I apologize if this is a cover album that I'm unaware of, or if this is a re-release of something from 5 years ago, but I'm going under the assumption that these should be all "originals", and if that's the case, I'm playing name that riff quite a bit while listening.

Control Denied - The Fragile Art of Existence
1999 Nuclear Blast Records

Finally, it arrives, Chuck Schuldiner's crowning achievement of all that is metal. The buzz for this disc was huge, TFAOE supposedly being THE album to herald in the millennium and lead as the new face of metal. Wrap this around Chuck's discovery of a brain tumor and how could this not be a complete victory for "Evil" chuck and the boys? Well, honestly, I HATE Time Aymar's vocals, this whole album being one gigantic tease to me, existing as a "not" Death album that could have been. I know, average stupid metalhead's knee jerk reaction to something new. Err, maybe, but "power" metal vocals have

always bugged the crap out of me, ruining many a metal experience, and here seems to be no exception. I can't argue though, the musicianship is absolutely superb, but something also seems flat, the guitars just kind of being there, not leaping out as they should. Richard Christy's drums (yes, incredibly played, even overplayed) are way to the forefront, sometimes detracting from the overall picture (as they did at times on TSoP). Yes, he is an incredible drummer, and hopefully there is no feeling of having shoes to fill anymore. Maybe it's in the mix, but the wrong things seem accented at the wrong times. Every time I play this, and yes, it is growing on me with time, I just ask myself, "Why don't I like this as much as I should?" Maybe my senses are dulled by too much death metal, but in the end, I'll take Death. No disrespect intended, the record's just not catching on yet...

Crawl 420 - Severe 1999
Independent Release

I've heard quite a few good things about Crawl 420, and after hearing their Severe release, I can sort of see where that hype is coming from. Sporting a heavy, down-tuned sound, Severe sticks to the mid-paced material, something which is almost the most effective speed in a live element. It's a good record for an independent release, for if this had been a major label offering, I probably would have been less lenient. I say this incredibly shitheaded comment because the production is OK, nothing special, leaving things kinda flattened throughout the disc, no dynamics really present. The "New Jack Metal" element is also here pretty strong (no, I'm not gonna drop band names), something that immediately turns me off from a lot of albums. Not that bands can't play this style, it just kinda takes the metal out of it for me, especially that rubber band bass sound that's so prevalent nowadays. Dan Miller's got the delivery down as far as vocals, staying gruff and aggressive throughout, as do the rest of the band, but somehow I feel that these guys are ten times better live. Again, I fault the production (we all forget that not every band can get Andy Sneap behind the board), but even that's not bad, it just doesn't make me want to kill like it should. I will say though, after hearing this, I want to see these guys live to see this metal groove in action, and that's a good thing.

Darkane - Rusted Angel
1999 WAR Records

You've probably noticed by now, but I'm one of those rabid fans that calls the record store to make sure that the new releases are ready the Tuesday they're put on the shelves. Needless to say, this puts quite a bit of pressure on the artists in question, because not only am I expecting something great, the anticipation involved makes me almost hypercritical. So, when Rusted Angel's release date came and no disc was available, I was not happy. In a brilliant move, the band actually sent me a personal copy of their disc, something that not only am I honored by, but guaranteed extra special attention from yours truly. Well, the disc appeared, and I spun it, and spun it, and spun it. I taped it, I made a copy for the practice room. I have one in my car, and all my friends now own it. Simply put, the album is just fucking incredible. Comparisons can be drawn, and if put in a corner, I'd name Darkane the cantankerous bastard child of Arch Enemy and Meshuggah, yet born mature and wise way beyond their years. This is of course due to the experience of these musicians, coupled with my opinion that these guys have a true gift for writing outlandishly technical and memorable speed metal. The guitar work is melodious, a given since these boys are from the land of Lingonberries, but one can't deny the almost mechanically precise quasi-offtime riffing/percussion which just flies around this entire affair. Darkane got a lot of attention (and rightly so) on the WarDance compilation, offering two tracks which appear again on Rusted Angel, yet in a completely different way. Amplified in scope, and benefitting from the addition of one Lawrence Mackrory on vocals, July 1999 and Convicted are par for the course here. Meaning of course that the whole album just picks up and moves, not bothering to rest until the end, all pieces of the puzzle falling into place seamlessly. Mackrory's performance is also to be commended here, as he easily switches between roughly 6 voices on each track, something that could be annoying, yet here acts as another instrument of madness, the music taking the life from your body and the vocals dragging your husk of a corpse throughout the dirt. Short classical interludes alleviate some of the tension, but not for long, the album quickly reverting to it's honed attack on the senses. The band also made a wise decision (in my oh-so-humble opinion) of going to Danne Bergstrand's Dugout studios over Studio Fredman or The Abyss. Not that I have anything against those fine establishment, but Bergstrand is more adept at capturing the

controlled chaos of releases such as this (witness Destroy Erase vs Chaosphere), pushing every nuanced note into the forefront. I listen to this and easily think to myself, "This is the album XXX should have made", only leaving the names of about ten bands out of respect. Perfectly balancing the midpaced guitar melody of the Gothenburg Sound with the fury of the NWoSDM, Rusted Angel is easily one of the best albums of 1999, highlighted by strong musical performances from all five fronts. I could go into the small details, such as Wildoer's inspired cymbal work, or both guitarist's killer solos, but instead I'll just leave you with the simple statement that Rusted Angel blows away anything I've heard in the last 6 months, hands down.

Defender - They Came Over the High Pass
1999 Necropolis Records

Kind of a weird release for Necropolis to put out, until you see that Defender is Philip from Cranium's power metal band. The vein is supposed to be like Manowar, and Iron Maiden, and musically. It could be, but the vocals are nowhere near what they need to be to even draw comparisons. They're also so dominant that the slightly off tune words are the main focus, drowning out the riffs, not what's to happen. So, some of it is pretty cool, but most of it is not, really reminding me of that Hammerfall vibe (I hate Hammerfall). Good bass work on Dragon, and a cool main riff and a sweet solo section on City in the Clouds, but not much else to keep me interested here, another power metal release which can almost be saved by the guitar, yet buried by the vocals. PS - To hear where the Maiden influence is, check out Maze of the Mountain, almost a note for note rendition of Transylvania.

Demons and Wizards - S/T
1999 SPV Records

Weird for me to start to write this, seeing the review I wrote for Control Denied directly above. Obviously I must not hate all traditional power metal vocals, for Hansi Kursch's voice is one of my favorite's in the biz, so it must be something else... In any regard, exactly what I dislike about The Fragile Art of Existence becomes the highlight of my Demons and Wizards

listening experience. Drawing the name from the Uriah Heep album from the early 70s, DW runs the gamut of emotion and sound, bursting out with opening scorcher Heaven's Denied, slowing things down to ballad territory mid-album. Yeah, it sounds like a formula, but as with any good paradigm, go with what you know and not only will it come out perfect, your confidence and performance will just get better. In all honesty, all I really have to do is drop the fact that Jon Schaffer wrote music here that rivals and may surpass his Iced Earth masterpieces, and I think you get a clear picture as to the power this disc holds. Obviously, I like the record quite a bit, and if the idea of Blind Guardian crossed with IE sounds interesting to you, then do you yourself a favor and give a listen.

Dillinger Escape Plan, The - Calculating Infinity
1999 Relapse Records

Much like the title states, TDEP have tried to tackle the impossible, and I'd say they succeeded. I've just listened to this about 4 times in a row now, and it's safe to say that my brain is much, remembering bits and pieces of this experience to write down. Where Dillinger have grown is in their incorporation of styles into the melee, some jazz, breakbeat and other such nonsense entering in at opportune times. In thinking about it, TDEP were the perfect band to open for Mr. Bungle, their schizoid brand of hardcore reaching into the depths of something dangerous, something genre-breaking. Listening to this is like experiencing a seizure amplified through hallucinogens and speed. Anything is fair game here, for as soon as you find solace in familiarity, the rug is pulled, and you're sent reeling into whatever strange cartoon dimension the band deems fit for that moment in time. The final moment of brilliance occurs for me about a minute into "The Running Board", where a Voivodian riff sneaks in somehow, but is so perfect, so right, I just have to smile. Whatever it is, these guys are the kings of a form of music that is gaining popularity, and at this moment, Relapse owns the market. Try this on for size, I dare you.

Dismember - Hate Campaign
1999 Nuclear Blast Records

If I can say one positive thing about Dismember, it's that they consistently put out a solid product. Which, of course, sounds

much better than the sentence that I was going to start this review out with (Death metal's least innovative band has once again given us their version of Clandestine...). Since day one, I, among others, have tagged Dismember as a complete Entombed clone, and maybe they were, but since Entombed have taken the right hand path as of late, maybe I should give more credit to Dismember than I do. At an rate, Hate Campaign sounds to me just like 1997's Death Metal, even having a cover which is reminiscent of that last opus. IN fact, I could probably swap these two records during playback and not even blink, as if the band has taken their last album and shuffled the riffs around. I don't know, I'm trying to be patient here, and the sound is sufficiently heavy, but since I wasn't too impressed with Death Metal, I'm not exactly doing cartwheels to Hate Campaign. There are those that know and love the Dismember sound though (hey Rob!), and for them, this should be a solid follow up for the band. Let's leave it like this: much like Bolt Thrower, Dismember have found their niche, and while Entombed may have dug the hole (unlike BT), Dismember is the new landlord now and probably forever.

Eclipse - Dorscharms Venomous Colours
2000 Blackend Records

This has the ingredients for something big. The music is symphonic, melodious black metal from Poland, the inhuman drumming is adequately supplied by computerized limbs, stage names are present, the masters from the past have been studied, an unreadable logo... You'll probably agree with me, but the difference between a cook and a chef aren't that severe, they both follow the recipe, right? But the chef adds that certain zest, that flair which distinguishes their dish from the average layman in a home kitchen. This is the main reason why there is, say, Emperor, and a million Emperor clones, instead of the other way around. Which isn't to say that you have to create some grand dish out of leftovers to form the new, but we should know that this is something familiar, yet so tasty... Metaphors aside, I'm just really trying to prove a point as to why most bands are good, yet not great, Eclipse being in the former category. The album is good, a definite 6 out of 10, with epic layering of keyboards, but there's something missing, maybe it's just all a little too processed to my ears, lacking a sense of soul (yeah, I know, it's black metal, Beelzebub's got 'em all in

his black bag, just like in the deal) which would make the emotional attempts more convincing. It's there at times, and this is a debut, so maybe conquest is on the close horizon for these two once they manage to locate the right drummer a little more feel to things.

Electric Wizard - Supercoven
1999 The Music Cartel

In line with Rise Above, TMC is rapidly becoming known as a stoner rock connoisseur's record label. Finally releasing Electric Wizard's Supercoven here in the states, us 'Mericans can finally hear what all the fuss was about (I've been waiting to hear this for over a year, it seems...). Was it worth it? Eh, maybe, for that devil-may-care attitude rampant in so many "stoner" bands is here (yeah, I know, stupid classification, but I really like saying "stoner" like 50 times in one review). Kinda reminds me of that freewheeling Monster Magnet release, 25...Tab (I'd love to see the faces of those mallrats who bought 25 and just went, "Hey, this isn't anything like Space Lord!!!") in it's dream state and just refusal to go anywhere in less than 10 minutes. Long, long extended jams (4 tracks, 1 hour) which aren't the greatest display of instrumental or vocal prowess, but evoke that 70s Sabbath feel (don't they all?) which the youth of today are just screaming for. I swear, when I start seeing ads for these compilations on late night TV, I'm packing it in. "Hey man, is that Stoner Rock? Well then pack...a...bow!!" Anywho, Supercoven is good, albeit more of the same atmospheric drone that is either just what you want to hear (you know, black light upon velvet poster) or incredibly irritating. I dig it, just because I can throw it on and space out, but it can get a bit annoying to hear "Supercoven!" screamed for two minutes straight. These guys are at the top though, and while not in the same league as Sleep (for me), they know their stuff.

Engine - Engine
1999 Metal Blade Records

I got both Jim Matheos's and Ray Alder's solo albums at roughly the same time, and to me it's pretty interesting to see the completely different approaches the two men take. While Jim's Away with Words is more of a jazz-tinged new age instrumental album of sorts, Alder has grabbed onto the "newer" style of bands like the Deftones to produce a "hip" hard rock album which has the ability to break big in the main-

stream. Obviously, I'm stating that this album has sell out appeal, so why should anyone give it the time of day? Well, for one thing, when these guys decide to do something, it's gonna be good no matter what it is. I always scratch my head when veteran musicians "play down" and school the younger kids, thinking that it's mostly for the surefire bucks that this prefabricated stuff will rake in, but Engine seems a little different, the band exhibiting a little more soul into the songs than other bands I can think of. The entire thing is pretty accessible, focusing on those start/stop rhythms and heavy guitar that's so popular on the TV these days, which makes it ear candy, but it's also got some mean hooks in it. It's good, don't get me wrong, but the more I listen to it, and looking at the band's choice of apparel (straight from your local mall skate/surf shop), I wonder what's really going on here. I missed the chance to interview Ray to see where his head was at, and I'd really like to give the guy who created some pretty memorable albums with Fates Warning the benefit of the doubt, but I can smell big business all over this thing. An album definitely made for the mainstream generation.

Entwine - Entwine
1999 Spikefarm Records

The band's choice to cover Depeche Mode's *Enjoy the Silence* is pretty representative of what direction is taken here, Entwine playing moody, atmospheric gothic metal. For what it is, it's OK, just a bit pretentious and "Simple Mindy" at times (witness the annoying keyboard bells on *Veiled Woman*, kinda like the cheesiest parts of LoA's *Ugly*). Not that I don't like any gothic metal, I'm just a bit more particular when it comes to this style, meaning that an album has to be pretty strong to seem worthwhile to me. The proper degree of emotion is displayed I guess, but there's not enough guitar or strong drumming, and too much keyboard and whiny vocals (which are way too prominent). Definitely NOT the album I'll be pulling off the shelves to get my depression fix.

Fister - Phrenum
1999 Plastic Head Distro

How many albums must come out which are just ruined by shitty vocals? I know that these angst-alterno albums warrant some sort of screams in the forefront, but anything but this, please! I can tune out most of the time, for there are some really cool moments here, but when the yelps

kick into high gear, fuhgetaboutit. I dig the jazz fusion towards the end, and the drumming has some phenomenal moments, but overall, too close to screeching weasel vocals here (not the band). Potential is present, but for now, something that pains me to have to sit through for it's duration. Urban minimalist pastel cover hurts more than it helps here also. For some tastes (most notably those that would like to see Korn, Tool and a bottle of nitric acid thrown in a blender), but not for my seasoned palate.

Gathering, The - Superheat (Live)
2000 Century Media Records

Not only am I amazed that The Gathering have released yet another album so soon after their double *How to Measure a Planet*, but also that this is the first CD I'm reviewing that is to be released in the year 2000. Man, does time just fly by, which is funny considering that listening to *Superheat* puts me in a very reflective mood, as this melancholy, expressive disc just hangs about and lingers for hours around you. What's weird is that I feel that The Gathering hold more in common with bands like The Cranberries and The Sugarcubes now then anything I've been listening to lately, and not just because TG happen to have a female vocalist. There are a few bands out there (Neurosis around *Souls at Zero* is one of them) where listening to them is more a revelatory experience than just cruising to some tunes in your car. *Superheat* is one of these, emotionally demanding and enveloping, yet not sappy as it could very easily be. The band has been around for quite some time, and with the addition of Annette's vocals early in the history, The Gathering was transformed into something that was not only accepted, but revered by many hardcore metalheads. I could also say that it's one of the few things that your chick can dig as well, but that's pretty self-explanatory isn't it? So, ten songs equals 65 minutes of tube amplified, angelic vocalized euphoria for your listening enjoyment, forming yet another live album that only sounds live because the crowd is heard once or twice. Not sure that I really miss the hiss and pops inherent in older live recording, but this newfound sterility in the "live" recording process does leave an element to be desired. Still a monumental recording documenting a long majestic career.

Hangnail - Ten Days in Summer
1999 Rise Above/The Music Cartel

Another great album from a band with a horrible name. Hangnail pull together all of their influences to produce an organic, trippy stroll through the lazy 90s. You gotta believe that when a band puts down "Fibes Drums" instead of "percussionist" that they're livin' the 70s life, and that's exactly what's going on here. More Fu Manchu than Kyuss in the music department, the vocals do smack of John Garcia at times, but also make me think of Chris Cornell and even Pat Dubar (Uniform Choice/Mind Funk) at times! The whole thing is heavy and grooves well, making the repeat listens more than bearable, but a true joy. Pretty indicative of what TMC is releasing lately, but that's definitely a good thing, as I've yet to hear something from this upstart label that has disappointed. The album's named after the time spent recording the album, if your curiosity had the better of you.

Hecate Enthroned - Kings of Chaos
1999 Blackend Records

Another year, another Hecate record, or so it seems, the band appearing to be incredibly prolific in their black metal dealings. A closer look reveals that Kings of Chaos also serves as the unveiling of almost a new band, with original vocalist Jon out of the picture. Since the ex-Cradle bassist carried with him many of the Cradle comparisons, it would seem to me that I could leave these biases at the door, but I can't. This is one of those weird situations where I had heard the album a few times before interviewing the band, but since I've been listening to this many time more since then, I've discovered things I hadn't earlier, which will explain any discrepancies between the review and the questions asked in the interview. I know that the band feels differently, but this still sounds just like CoF to me. I've always liked what I'd heard from HE, and this is no exception, but for those that had the beef before, this won't change your mind any. The keyboards are downplayed a tad here, letting the riffs breathe more, except for that little techno ditty that pops in towards the end. As I alluded to in the interview, the drumming is fast and furious, but most notably in the double bass work, for the snare blasting is all over the place, rushed, sloppy and offtime. So, I'm left in a quandry, I like the album, and I still hold fast that the band has managed to update their sound a bit, but the more I listen, the more I can see that no real lateral movement was made away from a set style. Believe me, I almost pulled the interview out of this is-

sue since my views had changed so much since asking the questions, but I figured that people may want to learn more about this band, and I also wanted the band to have a platform to express their views...

Indecision - Release the Cure
1999 MIA Records

For some reason it's really not strange to me that Agnostic Front's Roger Miret produced this, as I feel that Cause for Alarm was really one of the first really metal hardcore albums. The lines of distinction have been sufficiently blurred in the last 10 years between these once separate styles of aggressive music, but listening to a "core" band such as Indecision, I can't help but smile at all of the metal present here. Part of this is just in the riffing, for the total anarchistic delivery brings me back to the days of my NYHC youth, weaned on bands like Bold, Youth of Today, but also those that started to delve into a heavier sound, such as the Cro-Mags, the Crumbsuckers or Leeway. There's a fury here though, a definite sense of youth-felt injustice towards the world, something that tends to be diluted with age in many bands, a self-inflicted lethargy creeping in, allowing the mundane and safe to be somehow acceptable. Well, Indecision aren't prey to this, just rocketing through an onslaught of classic meets futuristic riffs. I say this because while this is unmistakably 90s core, the roots of yore are tapped with abandon, upheaving a goldmine of nostalgia into the modern material. Overall, along with bands such as Turmoil, Indecision are surprisingly high on my list of must have albums, the intensity boiling from within. Rather than break down the album into what the vocals are like versus the riffs versus the drums, let's just imagine the band as a complete unit, creating a listening experience which tries to describe the lives of 5 individuals viewing a completely fucked-up world of deceit, and choosing not to relay this information though video or the written word, but rather through sound. One of the most dedicated bands to the scene, Indecision demand your full attention.

Interzone - Cydonia
1999 Utopian Vision Music

To some, the name of Rob Urbanati is synonymous with Sacrifice, a pretty seminal thrash band that developed into something pretty substantial before their early 90s demise on (surprise!) Metal Blade Records. Why the sarcasm? Well, I

juts think that Metal Blade signed a lot of really killer bands in that time (Anacrusis, Dead Horse) that just went NOWHERE then, but are completely revered now! Well, chalk Sacrifice up there as well, for their classics Forward to Termination and Apocalypse Inside rank up there with the better "thinking man's" thrash albums. Sacrifice may be gone, but talk of his impending Interzone project has been hot, and finally, here I have it. More rockin' than Sacrifice, Interzone sticks to the midpace, but it just brutal in it's intensity. Urbanati has created another monster here, with plenty of hooks and turns to keep the most demanding metalhead listening. Also present is that voice, that freaky deep enough yet thrashy voice that only maybe Urbanati and a few others could muster up. Nothing too extreme, but immediately recognizable to me. Almost best described as Heavy Rock, Interzone has that "retro" feel that so many bands are going for now, but look at the resume here and you know why this breaches those waters, for this guy's been around since the beginning of it all. Contains a very weird cover of Bjork's Army of Me, only fits because it's fairly different from the original!

Iron Savior - Interlude
1999 Noise Records

I hate to slag something as well put together as this, but Iron Savior just sounds like every other freakin' power metal album from Germany. The similarities between Interlude and Gamma Ray's Recent PowerPlant are just way too there, and unsurprisingly, Kai Hansen is here on guitar. Another thing that kinda sticks in my craw is that this is a supposed "live" album, yet the whole thing was mixed and engineered elsewhere, and the drums were also rerecorded, what gives?! I'm no idiot, I know this is prime Teutonic thrash, but Interlude sadly offers absolutely nothing for me to prompt it spinning longer than absolutely necessary. Throw in Piet Sielck's requisite piercing vocals and I'm outta here. I hate Hammerfall, so this may be some indication to you where I stand in this whole retro-thrash movement. Accompanying video track proves what I already know, that these guys can play, yet it's pretty boring stuff live.

Karma to Burn - Wild, Wonderful Purgatory
1999 MIA Records

The story behind KtB is an interesting one, ranging from the band getting signed

through a series to crank calls to the induction of their "vocalist" only upon the threat of being dropped. Well, whatever happened to work together to create their self-titled album was truly magic, for Karma to Burn is still up there with Kyuss' Sky Valley as one of the greatest rock albums in my collection. As much maligned as the vocals were, they worked there, J. Jarosz's weird sing-songy voice adding a special element to tracks that truthfully were strong enough on their own instrumentally. Well, KtB is back to their initial plan, with MIA releasing their instrumental opus stateside along with the 4 song E.P. that Roadrunner had canned in the past. Will and Richie return (guitar and bass, respectively) along with new skinsman Rob to finally show the world what they have to offer musically. What's my take? Again, there are moment where everything just clicks, but for the most part, WWP is more of a crusty rock album made by humans, where the debut was an ethereal experience created by gods. To me, this is all dependent on what the guitar is doing, because when the riffing is basic or kinda bluesy (20, 28) things are a little plain, but when the tone kicks in 29, all you want to do is lie back, relax and just be enveloped by the music. Granted, I haven't had the time to let WWP be absorbed to the same degree as it's predecessor, and I also had expectations for this record (always bad), I still prefer the sound that was reached on the debut, something by which I'm reminded when the last four songs burst from my speakers. An solid release from an incredible band, yet not reaching the immortality status for me.

Le'Rue Delashay - Musick in Theory and Practice
1999 Root O' Evil Records

The master composer is at it again. Much akin to the Tartaros projects, Le'Rue Delashay creates classically based (I believe) compositions which can really serve as the backdrop to the darker side of any renaissance festival. I think it's kind of cool though, all this stuff still reminding me of the classic horror movies from the sixties and seventies they would show on Creature Double Feature. For the most part, think of the creepiest aspects of symphonic music, then throw in some industrial mayhem at times for good measure, and you've got a pretty fair idea of MiTaP. It's a pretty short album, with several blank tracks before the "hidden" bonus, which is a scrapingly done rendition of something, I don't know what. It sounds like an engine

that threw a rod barreling down I-95 with Bartok blasting from the tape deck. Another fine display of this man's ability to add overtones to any project. Says here he's available for hire on your next album, just make sure you fly his makeup person in as well.

Leadfoot - Take a Look
1999 The Music Cartel

Yee-haw, the south will rise again. Well, I'm being a bit optimistic, because if Leadfoot is any indication, the next wave of southern fried rock is pretty damn boring. Of primary interest to me because of ex-C.O.C. members Karl Agell and Phil Swisher, Leadfoot just didn't deliver the goods. Things get better after a couple of tracks, but for the most part this reminds me of like Blackfoot, or those other sideline bands that had some cult appeal, but really just didn't add anything to the scene. I do get misty eyed at a few times when Agell hits those vocal notes that are so reminiscent of his outstanding work on Blind, but that's about it. Sum it up and what have we got? Naked chicks, a shirtless Swisher, trucking references and a thinly masked analogy about fellatio, all of which just screams white trash. Not for me, but if you wish that Skynyrd were still around, this may suit you just fiiiine.

Liquid Tension Experiment - 2
1999 Magna Carta Records

The first Liquid Tension Experiment caused quite a stir, showing that a couple of the boys in Dream Theater were capable of interacting with different types of musicians to create music outside the realm of the very structures DT albums. A year later, the second time around shows an even greater shedding of boundaries and a greater foray into the unknown. Opening track Acid Rain is a real burner, also the liveliest moments on the disc, for LTE2 is really a jazz nouveau album, complete with requisite trips to Latin influences, world percussion and ballad land. It's always cool to see people break out of their shells and "experiment" a bit, but sometimes things can seem a bit contrived. Overall, I dig LTE, throwing it on when I want to hear something different, but I also grew up in a household that readily embraced albums such as this, so my tolerance may be substantially higher than the average death metal maniac. I hate to use the old "If you like Dream Theater" benchmark, but it fits here, especially since ivory

tickler Jordan Rudess has now got the DTs. So, if you're like me, and find James LaBrie the weak link in the Dream Theater world, maybe Liquid Tension is just right for you. Having bass/Chapman Stick god Tony Levin (King Crimson among numerous others) never hurts either.

Lock Up - Pleasures Pave Sewers
1999 Nuclear Blast Records

Holy shit! I guess when the best decide to throw a one-off together, you can only expect top rate material, and that's exactly what's delivered here. If I had to peg a couple of reasons why this kicks so much ass, of course I'd say the riffs and Nick Barker's incredibly tight poundings, but it's Hypocrisy's Peter Tagtgren who once again that he is the most important man in metal today. Relegating himself to "only" performing vocals (as well as producing this magnum opus), his performance is just incredible! Exhibiting more range than I remember on past works, he just fucking dominates everything here. Napalmer's Jesse Pindato and Shane Embury both send out the fury in terms of manic axe work and memorable riffs, but it's still Peter's vocals that send things over the top. Most surprising is that I was completely not looking forward to this, another "super group" outing. Man, what an idiot I can be, Lock Up being one of the most outwardly intense albums I've had the pleasure of listening to this month. An easy recommendation to those that crave something akin to Hypocrisy on speed.

Moonspell - The Butterfly Effect
1999 Century Media Records

Moonspell is another one of those bands that I have a lot about, yet have never really listened to. I have Irreligious, and have played it a few times, but nothing ever really stuck out for me. So The Butterfly Effect is in my player, and what do I think? Well, it's been played about ten times, and I still don't have any strong feelings about it one way or the other. I will say this though, TBE is yet another release to solidify my opinion that Century Media is marketing in on the metal raver, whoever that may be out there. Along with Samael's Eternal, this is one of those mid-paced industrial tinged metal albums which seems more suited for late night, drug induced clubs than say, a '67 Camaro on the twilight dusted highway. It does seem that Moonspell have incorporated more bite into their "attack", but for now, I'm not as addicted as I should be. Who

knows, this could be a slow burner though, for I have the feeling that when the dust settles, I may be spinning this one to wind down after a day of grind. Things do pick up a bit on a couple tracks, and the musical performances are above perfunctory, but certain elements just shoot the whole thing to the ground for me. About as gothic as it gets baby, so if that's your scene, tune in, drop out and become one with your eyeliner and vampirific self. I'm, uh, [cough], riiight behind you [sarcasm].

The Obsessed - Incarnate
2000 MIA Records

I can't believe how much I'm just loving this record! A collection of rare older tracks and what I believe are B-sides, Incarnate is just a record full of solid fucking groove and some truly awesome guitar-work. It's just amazing to think about all of the bands who are trying to do what The Obsessed have so obviously already accomplished. I can hear the seeds of Kyuss, early drug induced Monster Magnet, everything that was once holy in "stoner" rock. The sound, the fury, the emotion, add this all together to the fact that Wino lived as he wrote, in a world of depravity and gritty riffs. I can't explain in words what I feel, or how this album reaches in and grabs my soul, but believe me when I say that this is an album waaaaay worth owning.

Odyssey - S/T 1999
Utopian Vision Music

I guess you don't need to hear for the millionth time that I was really looking forward to hearing this album, but damnit, I was! Luck befalls me again and a package from Utopian Vision came with this little nugget inside of it. It's good for Danny Boy that I've just been listening to the Magna Carta back catalogue that was just sent to me, for Odyssey is much more akin to that brand of prog rock than the last 25 Cannibal Angel cover bands I've heard. Relinquished to only vocal, keyboard and drum duties here, the guitar tends to stick more in the power realm, dishing out some gated chunk, yet the Kansas/Yes inspired keyboard passages which lie on top really work to air things out, killing any potential for monotony. Also of note are Swano's vocals, which never once hit the death growl which has been his bread and butter (apart from Nightingale) for the last 10 years. This "album" is more of an extended E.P., since it only clocks

in at about 20 minutes, but there's enough here to satisfy even the most "prog"-matic consumer. You can always count on something interesting from Dan, and this collaboration with two creative outside forces is a solid addition to the vaults of Swano. *Odyssey* ends up being not as dynamic as *Moontower* or as insane as *Nightwork*, but something which may bring prog rockers more into the metal sphere of influence.

Penance - Proving Ground
1999 Independent Release

Penance is a band that should by all accounts be a household name for any self respecting doom fan, but if not, I'll give you a few hints. Remember the band *Dream Death*? Well, in the late 80s, *Dream Death* released an album that my friends and I agreed was way ahead of it's time. Unfortunately, it was released on *New Renaissance*, a label known historically as a major rip-off, and *Dream Death* dissolved. Penance was the next incarnation, and right before their first album, drummer Mike Smail was asked to add his considerable talent to the Cathedral roster. Yup, that's him behind the kit on the sludgiest of them all, *Forest of Equilibrium*! Ring any bells yet? Well, after a debut released on *Rise Above Records*, Penance went on to offer us *Parallel Corners* through *Century Media*, and if you haven't heard that album... Fast forward a few years and a few lineup changes to *Proving Ground*, and we see these unstoppable doom monsters have given us another Sabbath coated slab, this time entitled *Proving Ground*. It's pretty obvious to see where the Penance sound comes from (I could say *BS IV* and be done with it), but there's more going on here, and let me tell you, it's not easy to put out a convincing crust album, otherwise the 30 other bands trying to do so this month would all succeed! So what makes *Proving Ground* so right? Most of it is thanks to Terry Weston's perfected guitar sound, so thick you feel this just ooze out of the speakers. Mike Smail lays down the groove here, breaking out where appropriate, but content to really lay back in the pocket most of the time, essential in a paradigm such as this where excess is neither necessary nor desired. Solid bass frequencies here, albeit a tad buried in the mix, the complete opposite of the dominating factor, namely new recruit Butch Balich's vocal delivery, an aspect of the album which definitely had needed time for me to acclimate to. Mixed way up there, his voice is not what I would think would fit this style, sounding

at times almost like Brad Divens of the defunct *Souls at Zero*. After time though, it all makes sense, and once I get it, I can't imagine anyone else in here. A crime that these guys aren't hounded by labels, Penance are back to give us another helping of that dark niche of metal left vacant when the greats such as *Kyuss* broke up.

Rapture - Futile
1999 Spikefarm Records

I had to listen to this album before it finally clicked, but *Futile* is one of the first albums I've heard to pay homage to the mighty *Opeth*! I can say pay homage and not copy here, because usually I'm the first one to scream "plagiarism!", but it took me several listens here to get the references. Petri Eskelinen's vocals are very, very reminiscent of Mikael Åkerfeldt's, maybe even too much so, for that was the final piece that fell into place here, but that's the greatest single comparison. *Rapture* really utilize layering well here, allowing passages to breathe due to accentuation of the single notes rather than the power chords that are present lower in the mix. This is essential to me for building the overall feel of each song. I could say that there were soaring leads here, but they aren't used as a lead guitar would use them, instead, the constant leads are an integral part of each track. So while *Rapture* may not be striving to reinvent the wheel, they have definitely impressed me in the songwriting department, creating 46 minutes of sad, yet hopeful, music which should hopefully serve to equally depress and inspire the gothic crowd. Much more highly recommended than other albums in this category that I've heard this time around, *Spikefarm* is rapidly becoming a reputable sub-label for this specific brand of metal.

Red Giant - Ultra-magnetic Glowing Sound
1999 MIA Records

I must say, I've received a lot more "stoner rock" in the last 3 months than I ever could have hoped for, but without a doubt, *Red Giant* is my hands down favorite of them all. The perfect combination between *Monster Magnet's Spine of God*, *Tab* and *Hawkwind* (which of course, was a main reason for *MM's* inception), *UMGS* may take quite a bit from their influences, but I just can't seem to get these tracks from my mind! Blame most of this on my love of the echoplex and all that it represents, but when I need my fix, *Red Giant* just calls out to me like a siren song. OK, a bit

over the top, but with all of the bands out there getting recognition and ultimately disappointing me, I was really surprised at how much this album stuck. Vocals are a bit similar to *Scott Hill* at times, making me remember the mighty *Fu Manchu*, but *Red Giant* manage to put their stamp on the sound. A cool, trippy psychedelic rock record, something I would throw on in the middle of a late night highway excursion.

Seven Foot Spleen - Enter Therapy
1999 MIA Records

Seven Foot Spleen may have been schooled in the same classroom as *Soilent Green* and *Eyehategod*, but where those two bands were close to the front taking notes, *SFS* were the troublemakers slackin' in the back. Not to say that there isn't some interesting material here, it's just a bit too plodding most of the time to be enjoyable. I do have the same complaint about *Eyehategod*, these guys relying too much on turgid atmosphere and sand-grit vocals rather than individuality in their songs. They up the ante at times, picking up the pace and throwing things around, but those awful "Hi I'm Froggy from Our Gang" vocals are always there, never changing. I dig the work ethic here though, this album recorded over three days and smacking of a DIY attitude, hey, even the pig with shotgun genitalia is cool in a freaky RE sort of way. I guess to put it positively, *Enter Therapy* is better than I thought it was going to be, sounding way too sludgy for me at first, but it's still not something I can see myself ever wanting to play again.

Sodom - Code Red 1999
Pavement Records

Sodom are another band that I would equate with *Kreator* in terms of my metal timeline, both bands being high school favorites of mine circa 1986. Well, *Kreator* certainly has "progressed" in the nineties, becoming more of a pomp affair while *Sodom* have rekindled fires which for me had long since died down. In all honesty, I never really got into anything by this legendary thrash band past *Persecution Mania*, which means that I've yet to be captured by what are now considered to be classic albums *Agent Orange* and *Tapping the Vein*. Well, I can't compare to what those contain, but *Code Red* is one fucking scorcher of an album. German thrash at it's finest, *Code Red* also carries the distinction of having the first *Sodom* album (that I'm familiar with) with some crushing

production. Yeah, I missed the technological advancements on the other nineties albums I'm sure, but shit, it doesn't matter anyway, since I'm just blown away by this album, period. All performances are killer, but I have to stress that the guitar and drum work is just massive here, and perfectly content to just thrash away, masquerading the technicality within as "simple" and effective song structures. Bottom line is that this is one of the tightest, most enjoyable thrash albums I've heard in some time from start to finish, staying in the speed zone most of the time yet knowing when to slow down and just crush things from time to time. Nice to see the guys back in my heavy rotation list after 12 years.

Stuck Mojo - Hvy1 (Live)
1999 Century Media

With the demise of the mighty (at least in terms of sales) mojo, the guys at Century Media have offered the last hurrah from this southern US band. First off, it's a live album, but as I've discovered recently, live no longer means "live", as all this stuff is sent back through the studio, making the sound quality so crisp, yet also blocking the performances into a nice little box, creating a safe atmosphere. So, the sound quality is good, so how's the music? Well, if you're a SM fan, then this is probably what you want, only different in that the performances seem a little stripped down for the sake of the live atmosphere. This probably won't win over any new fans, but I can only really listen to about half of Pigwalk at a time, so I guess it's pretty consistent. This though, is the downfall of SM for me, as the whole "rapcore" style isn't my thing, and after a few tracks, EVERY song starts to sound the same. I hear opening riffs and think "didn't they already play this?" To spin things positively, this metal hybrid is definitely one of my least favorite, so the fact that I can get into some of Stuck Mojo's material has to say something for the band. Addendum - OK, I guess that Stuck Mojo have **not** broken up...

Substance D - Addictions
1999 Noise Records

I was a little slow to warm to this one, instantly turned off by everything about Substance D. Being the open minded reviewer that I am, I forced myself to listen to this disc about 7 times in a row, and by george, after about spin 4 things got much easier to handle! Spin is actually an ap-

propriate word to use here, for this band is prime material for that bastard glossy rag, being of the image and appeal necessary to even be considered as material there. I guess that's what initially turned me off, but I have to say, the music (which is the most important factor) is pretty damn heavy. Kind of like a downtuned Pantera (tell me that riff on track 4 isn't a dead copy of Cowboys from Hell), Substance D also has a fair degree of "angst" present, most noticeably stemming from Todd's vocal performance. It all boils down to pretty good metalcore, maybe striving to be a little more mainstream in its appeal than it needs to be. Lots of effects and experimentation here (again, most noticeable in the vocals), which may or not float your boat. I'd say, if anything, it's the vocals that are this album's weak link, the guitar and drums sticking in my memory banks, leading me to pull out the disc from time to time, immediately wanting to reshell the album when the vocals come in. They could grow on me through time, (hey, I can take Watchtower, so this should be cake) but as of now, a severely limiting factor on enjoyability.

Swordmaster - Moribund Transgoria
1999 Osmose Records

There are certainly some major inconsistencies that I notice while I'm reviewing. For instance, I didn't really get into the last Sacramentum, yet am just loving this new Swordmaster! I only bring this up because besides the fact that both bands share the same drummer (Nicke Terror), the core sound is very similar to me. I guess that Swordmaster wins in the execution department, Moribund Transgoria having that sense of purpose that Sacramentum just never seems to attain. Very melodic in nature, yet also thrashy enough to be considered part of the NWoSWDM. It never really enters that hyperblast state where say, Naglfar excels, but is much more mobile than In Flames to me. Just a happy fucking medium for me, filling that gap between the over the top blast that I crave, and heavier than the melodic emoswede works of art that last for life. A kick ass album from start to finish, full of memorable guitar lines and aggressive drumming, what more could one ask for?

Testament - The Gathering
1999 Spitfire Records

Nothing I heard about this record could

have possibly prepared me for what came exploding from my speakers. If you thought you knew what Testament was about, be prepared for a reeducation. Twelve plus years into their career, Testament have yet to reach their apex, and this record only serves to reinforce their validity in the underground scene. Eleven songs. Five of the most gifted and respected musicians. Absolutely fierce music. On this record, their 13th overall (counting EPs and live recordings), Testament have gathered (pun intended) not only ex-everybody guitarist James Murphy to add his classically inspired leads (although, their not as prevalent as on "Low"), but also fretless bass god Steve DiGiorgio. But what got me all hot under the collar was the addition of ex-Slayer drummer Dave Lombardo to the fold. I hold fast the saying that a band is only as good as their drummer, and while original Drummer Louie Clemente was competent in his own right, what every Testament record needed was a good kick in the ass, drum wise. And boy, did they get it. From the opening chords of 'D.N.R.' to the stomp to the near death metal "legions of the Dead", to the double bass ferocity of album closer 'Fall of Siplestone', its Lombardo that drives this record, almost as if he were daring the other four members to keep up with him. I dare say, this is his best drumming since "Reign in Blood". Peterson's riffs have never sounded so vibrant, and Chuck has never sounded as fierce as he does here. Thrash, dead? I think not. If you think you've heard brutal, and if you wrote off this band along time ago, have a seat, your gonna get hurt. An essential release, and one of my top picks for 1999. Hell, one of my top picks for metal in general! Buy it. Steal it. Just get it. - Review by John H.

VA - Holy Dio
2000 Century Media Records

The conundrum of the tribute album, do you want the bands to put their own flair on time honored songs or do you want the highest form of flattery, imitation? If all the bands just imitate the original artist, why not just buy the originals? The covers on Holy Dio definitely conform to the flavor of the originals, and are done extremely well. If you are a fan of early power metal this is a great album for you. If you're more of a contemporary advocate then you may still get a real kick out of bands like **Fate's Warning** doing "Sign Of The Southern Cross" or **Jag Panzer** covering "Children Of The Sea". The album is good, it has great guitar work, and

every vocalist sounds eerily like Ronnie James Dio. The album is so reminiscent of this great artist that you may dig out your ancient Dio black light tapestry and put it back into service after its' nearly twenty year stint in the garage!

V/A - Rise 13
1999 Rise Above Records

You like stoner rock? Then this CD is either mandatory or completely redundant for your collection. Why the two extremes? Well, if you already own most of the material from the Rise Above catalog, then you won't find anything new here, but, if you're like me, and haven't yet purchased those expensive imports, then this disc is the answer to your prayers. I know that The Music Cartel has re-released a lot of these albums stateside, but with a lot of these bands being "risky" to me (as I'm not a "to die for" stoner rock fan), this comp gave me some idea as to what I could expect from the roster. Immediate standouts are Unida, which is ex-Kyuss' John Garcia's new band, and the rocking Orange Goblin track Quincy the Pig Boy. Some other slow burners are Hangnail, Solarized and Electric Wizard, with sHeavy and Goatsnake disappointing slightly. This may just be due to the track selected, but after the immense buildup on Goatsnake, I just didn't see what the big deal was. I would have liked maybe a little more info in the liner notes, but hey, it's a bargain sampler, and judging from this (and from checking out the website), Rise Above is for the stoner aficionado, chock full of great bands to blow our heard earned cash on.

Vital Remains - Dawn of the Apocalypse
1999 Osmose Records

This album fuckin rules, and I'll try to explain why. Yeah, it's unholy black metal, played incredibly fast, with true demonic overtones. But it's also American, which means that it takes the best elements of what the states had to offer in terms of brutal death grind. Falling prey to the old "is it black metal, is it death metal" syndrome, I get confused, then remember that I don't have to be one of the legions of automations who has to classify everything. Well, then it's just kick ass extreme shit that'll put hair on your chest and bust a goat wide open at 50 paces. After the obligatory "mood heightening" intro, things just kick into gear at 2000 BPM, produced to sound inhumanly fast (how do bands just keep getting faster?!), yet backpedaling at

the perfect time to just decimate everything with mid-level (but what used to be thrashy) annihilation. Really nice layout really fleshes out the overall vibe of evil here. New vocalist Thorn also fits the tone perfectly, his deathly growls meshing with the background shrieks without being another "queen of the harpies" festival. Musically, there's tons going on, most songs being past the 8 minute mark and not as repetitive as is usually the case with longer tracks. Still, the riff is the key, and here, while the guitar is low in the mix at times, the riffs are worthy, way worthy. Dawn of the Apocalypse is right, Vital Remains raising the bar for the year 2000 through an hour of ultimate darkness through sound.

Willow Wisp - Delusion of Grandeur
1999 Full Moon Productions

Very strange album here, Hollywood's Willow Wisp at times emulating black metal crossed with Marilyn Manson, all marked by strange musical interludes and a keen sense of gothic vampirism. Sometimes it's hard to keep up with the album's frequent fluctuations in tempo between tracks, but the complete schlock rock imagery of the whole thing is kinda catchy. What I can't figure out is whether or not this is to be taken seriously, the band seeming to have a sense of humor about the whole thing, kinda like a Mr. Bungle take on black metal. Not an album to play on a sunny day, Willow Wisp impress me by not limiting themselves to one particular sound while pushing forth their definite ideals through sound. Club music for the devil.

Zao - Liberate te ex Inferis
1999 Solid State Records

Steve Joh from Noise Records turned me on to this, and for that, I can only say thanks! Zao (besides being one of the few cool bands that starts with a 'Z') also have the distinction of being one of the few Christian Metal bands (check out local boys Theocracy A.D.) on the circuit today. Rather than blatantly try and push ideas as most religious bands so (whether they be satanic, pagan, Christian, etc.), Zao have instead wrapped the story of Dante's Inferno deep in metaphor, leaving it to the listener to decipher this intricate conceptual piece. Impressive lyrically, but that's nothing compared to the craftsmanship apparent in the musical side of things. Dynamically superior, Ltel ranges from acoustic interlude lows to unabashed

heaviness in minutes, all without falling prey to the killer clone disease which many bands seem susceptible. The whole album plays like a caged animal throughout its duration, interesting throughout for me. I think that some of the appeal is the almost Voivodian use of guitar work, layer upon layer of strange chords and twisting notes wrapped together over a primordial display of percussive bashing. All this under some of the most twisted vocals I've heard in a metal core record recently, words obviously ripped from the bowels of hell, the warning apparently given from one who has experienced that from we which we should be saved. My interest piqued, Zao have pushed themselves to create something which makes this listener very, very happy.

How do I even begin to write about one of the coolest times I've had musically? I mean, where can I start? Conceived through our mutual desire to see heavy metal bands come to the island once more, Derek and I pooled our collective resources and put on a show that all of us island metalheads should remember for a long time to come. It was a chance for everyone to literally come out from the woodwork and see two top of the underground acts in a small setting, probably for the last time, as both Skinlab and Pissing Razors are set to graduate to the next level in the upcoming year. As there is so much that happened, and I'm still reeling from that extended weekend, let me just take the easy route and walk you through this one day at a time. Here it starts, the official journal of one man's take on Havoc in Hawaii...

THURSDAY

Things were busy from the start, with last minute arrangements to be made, added to the fact that even though our jobs were promoters this weekend, first and foremost, we were also a band, something we had to keep in mind as the alcohol began to flow and sleep became a much desired luxury. First stop, the airport to pick up the first wave of metallers, San Francisco's Skinlab. Already debarked when we got there, all it took was loading the equipment and getting everyone to the hotel. Being lucky enough to have right hand man Luke (the van) and Leilani (carseat) proved essential, as Bassist/Vocalist Steev Esquivel was traveling with family. Everyone in that party successfully checked in, Pissing Razors soon arrived at the hotel while Luke and I ventured to the all too convenient Friday's which was to be the main headquarters for the weekend. Cheap beer, greasy food, a dream come true for most road dogs, I'd say. After a few rounds, everyone who was up for some action that evening made their way to the bar, and after some introductions, the plan was set in motion. The objective? Why, Golden Dolls Showgirls, of course. By the time we got there, we were all buzzed enough that GD became more of a regular bar, where instead of oil paintings on the wall you had beautiful naked women in motion. It's pretty hard to believe the amount of alcohol that was consumed in such a short period of time, you just have to witness it for yourself, but let's just say that new

HAVOC IN HAWAII



The promoters hanging with Skinlab and Co. in the harsh Hawaiian winter

friends were made, nothing serious was broken, and everyone had a good time. The night ended at about 6 AM, when everything lights up in Honolulu, the cue for all to call it a night, especially since we had things to do starting at 8 AM the next morning.

FRIDAY

Things got off to a smooth start, considering the fact that most of us were extremely hung over and suffering from lack of sleep. After several hours of running around getting last minute pieces of equipment together in the cold, drizzling rain, it began to pour. Now, when I say pour, it's not like your usual rainfall, which tends to last a couple of hours, for it was a torrential storm all fucking night. Of course, rain in Hawaii also means traffic, which was already horrendous due to several weekend events. We still managed to get everything together though, and the show kicked off right on time. Hawaii's own thrash legends Broken Man took the stage set to conquer. Themselves a part of the legendary late 80s Bay Area Thrash scene, Broken Man played a solid 40 minute set to an inspired crowd. Having never had

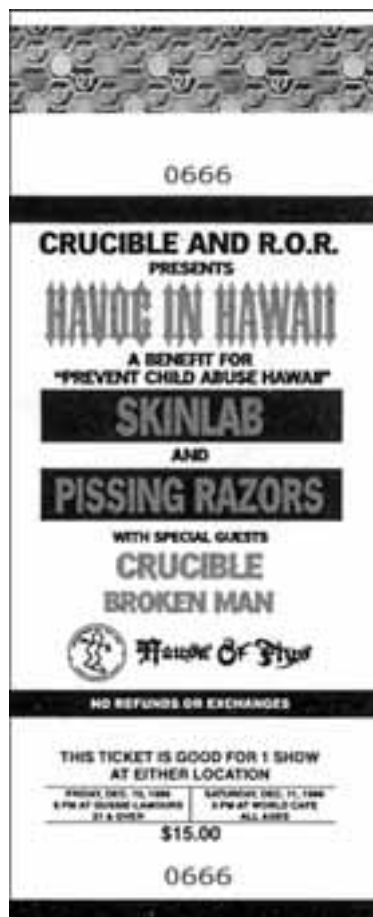
the chance to see these guys live before, I was impressed at the band's overall sound, reminiscent of the past while embracing the sounds of the present. We (Crucible) were on next, and while this is my own band, you'll have to ask those that were there about our performance, but I will say that we felt really confident about our performance, and were told by many a person that we astounded the visiting musicians, many of whom were surprised that a band such as ours even existed in Hawaii. OK, I'm being a bit egotistical here, but I think that after the amount of work that went into our show, we deserve a slight pat on the back! Anyway, our set included 3 songs from the Unshattered debut and four new tracks that we've been working on for the new album. Next up, from El Paso Texas, Pissing Razors! Andy Sneap production or not, these guys have to be seen live to be believed! A touring war machine, nothing would stop P.R. from attempting to rule this night. Solid riffing, incredible drumming, and Joe Rodriguez's vocals, so spot on... Simply put, this is a band that relishes

and just dominates a live situation. As playing Hawaii was special for the band, they treated those that were lucky enough to be there to three new tracks from their upcoming new album. To my ears, the same stripped down to essentials power crunch of Cast Down the Plague is still employed, but they've managed to become even more lethal. I tell you, from the opening notes of Mass Corruption to the ending breaks, Pissing Razors were perfect. Leaving the stage, there were a few minutes to catch one's breath, but then Skinlab appeared. I've had the pleasure of seeing Skinlab several times this last year in all types of venues, and while their live show translates well everywhere, I think that little old Gussie L'Amours was the perfect venue to highlight Skinlab's intensely layered, ambient metal attack. Comfortable on stage and with each other, the band works as one entity whose intent is to build upon a theme to an impending climax, a paradigm that worked well here. Most of the set was based on the last album, which makes sense as both axemen were more involved in that recording, but it was also cool to hear songs such as When Pain Comes to Surface or Paleface from the debut. Even Pito Wilson from Brujeria made an appearance, as did a bastardized version of Sweet Leaf, which found Steev Esquivel and Paul Hopkins switching their bass and drum duties, respectively. At the end, I was left feeling inspired, not just because we had succeeded in presenting one of the heaviest shows the island had seen in years, but because all of us metalheads got to be united and listen to what we love face to face with those that presented the music, all brought together by excellent an excellent sound and light show. We left that night exhausted, to try and drink ourselves to sleep once more. But this reprieve was to be all too brief, Saturday morning already in motion, bringing another day of bands, beer and rain.

SATURDAY

Awaking to the sweet sounds of my fucking alarm clock, it was time to start the day with more shuttle runs and problem solving. The funniest thing I heard all weekend was by Steev Esquivel, who turned to Derek and I after the shows were over and said "I can't believe you two were the only promoters involved, usually there's a whole group of 20 guys running around!" Picturing that as the tone for the day, here we were again, getting to the World Cafe again all too early to set

things up. And as before, the altogether too cool guys in Broken Man were already there setting things up in style. A matinee show, before we knew it, it was time to start things off. While the crowd might not have been as large as the night before, those that were there more than made up for the sparsity by ejecting a tremendous amount of energy. Broken Man started things off with a roar, feeding off the energy from the night before combined with the crowd that had already formed in the pit. Proving their veteran status, Broken Man were in fine form, from the Bay Area Thrash influenced riffs to Kili



"The Fillmaster" Kaohu's power-drenched drumming, they were all over it. Well, it comes time to brag and boast again, for today as well, we felt that the show was a success for us. There's nothing like hearing a roar after every song, it definitely puts a smile on this drummer's face. And then... Pissing Razors. I can't believe how amazing this band is live, everything so perfectly timed, from the first second to the closing fades. What was different from Friday? Not too much, although the band seemed (if humanly possible) to exhibit

even more energy than the last show!

Eddy Garcia demands your attention, filling Cesar Soto's riffing to immense depth, all rounded out by that superior bottom end, courtesy Rick Valles. Another successful domination for the Razors. Time passing so quickly, I barely had time to eat one the downright tasty burritos courtesy of Surf Taco before Skinlab was up. Feeding off the energy from Friday, the band was pumped to play, and gave the hardcore fans in attendance the show they wanted to see. The sound was a little more focused, and the band seemed to be firing on all cylinders, and when those killer double bass sections kick in, nothing more needs to be said. And then, it was over, time to celebrate with a little madness, ending in an all night celebration with Cesar Soto joining the Honolulu Marathon for that first crucial mile, coaching them along with chants of "You're running the wrong way!" 15 minutes of sleep on the coach, and then the airport runs began. My final opinion? One of the best times I've had with some of the coolest guys in the scene, Havoc in Hawaii was the start of something special here in the islands.

THANK YOU

These concerts were a tremendous undertaking, and I just want to take a minute to thank all of the people that helped to make this possible. First of all, thanks to Derek for having the faith to do this project with me, and special thanks also to Matt Bower, and Steve Joh for all of their support in this. Big thanks to Saori for all of her help with everything, and also to Matt Parry for his ideas and working the door through the entire show Friday. Leilani also rules for being the "banker" and working the door Saturday, Mike Ching for all his help here and Ahfoon at Corrosion A.D. Thanks also to those such as Eric H. who helped with the shuttling, and to all of Broken Man for their support and for letting all of use abuse their equipment. Also, I'd like to recognize Eric Daguio for his commitment to the band for these shows. Finally, thanks to Kai, John and Igor for helping to spread the word and generate ticket sales! Remember, these concerts are for **you** as much as anyone else, so write in with your suggestions as to who you'd like to see out here, and also, don't forget to support the metal scene in Hawaii, it is what we make it!

SENTENCED

SENTENCED



Crimson

Finland's finest return with their most accomplished album to date. Crimson features a rich mixture of uncompromising songs wrapped in dark and dismal themes.



SOILWORK
The Chainheart Machine

Leading the Swedish "Gothic" metal scene, Soilwork returns with their most mature and powerful album to date. The album features a mix of heavy metal and gothic influences, with a focus on melody and atmosphere.



BLOODBATH
Breeding Death

Brutal, old-school death metal from this supergroup featuring Mikael Åkerfeldt (Opeth), Jonas Renberg (Anthrax) and Anders Nyström (Arch Enemy). The album is a tribute to the classic death metal sound.



WINTERS BANE
Heart Of A Killer

The first album from Eric Burdon (Judas Priest), now available with all new artwork and layout, remastered and including a bonus CD of live and demo recordings.



the GATHERING
Supernatural

The first live album from Finland's first recorded in their homeland featuring songs from their last three albums. Includes a bonus video CD-ROM track for "Ultimate".



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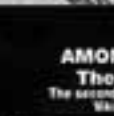
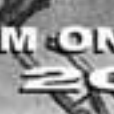
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