

EDGE OF SANITY's Dan Swanö talks to Steve Hogarth of MARILLION

NO. 9

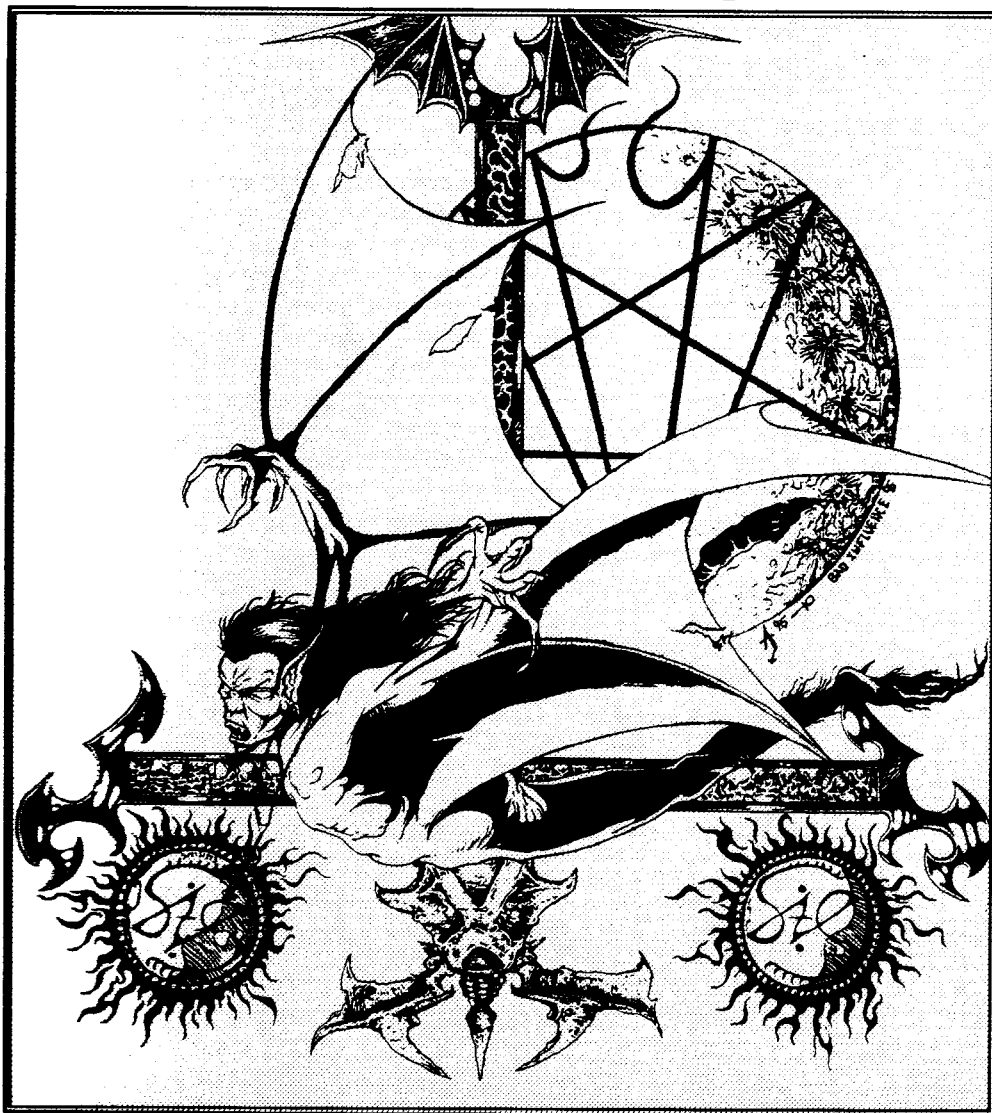
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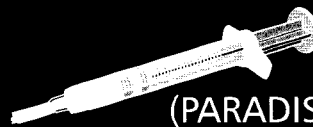
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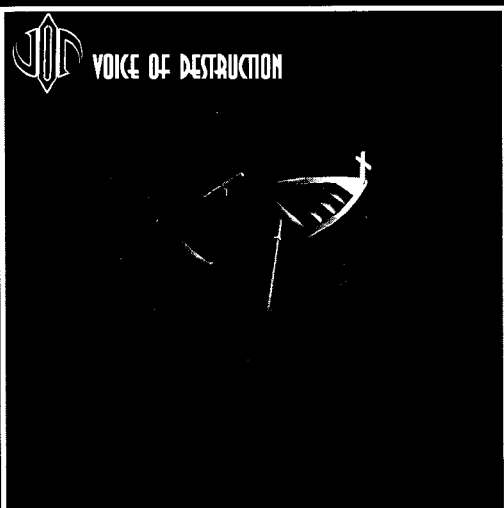
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Hello everybody!

This 9th issue will be the last one for quite a long time, cause everything seems to be getting outta hands somehow! The wholezine once started as a pure fun project, with the intention to support great underground music. And by now, only a couple years later, the amount of work we put into this mag is



pretty similar to a 9 - 5 job and it ain't no fun anymore! There's actually no sparetime left at all and this was never our main goal (at least not mine)! It turned into a pain in the ass, answering a big amount of letters every day, writing tons of reviews, listening to hundreds of CD's and demos and doing interviews and stuff... We simply need a break from it and that's why we will disappear for a while.

I can't tell you how long this break will last, but make sure not to send us any material in the meantime, cause we won't review it!

Anyway, regarding this issue, there might be a couple of changes in the layout department, but we hope you will enjoy it anyway, plus the quality of the texts will hopefully be as good as we always wanted (and never were able to get) them!

Nuff said, c-ya later!

Frank Stöver

PS.: Thanks to everybody who supported us over the last 4 years! Way too many to mention but highly appreciated nevertheless!



Open letter to a RIP OFF!

We are very **DIS**satisfied and not **PLEASED** about the behaviour of a dutch record label, which we trusted and supported in the past. These Rip Offs are not able to pay us the small amount of 200,-\$M which they still owe us for a bunch of magazines they had ordered and received. So anyone out there who is dealing with these guys, **BEWARE!!!** You might be the next!!

PLAYLIST

Thomas:

1. CRADLE OF FILTH - Vempire
2. SATYRICON - Dark medieval times
3. ORPHANAGE - Oblivion
4. ARCTURUS - Aspera hiems symfonia
5. IMMOLATION - Dawn ... / Here in after
6. CARNAGE - Dark recollections
7. DIMMU BORGIR - For all tid
8. DARK FUNERAL - The secrets of ...
9. FLESHCRAWL - Impurity
10. BOLT THROWER - Realm of chaos

Frank:

1. CRADLE OF FILTH - Vempire
2. DIMMU BORGIR - Stormblast
3. ARCTURUS - Aspera hiems symfonia
4. INFERNÁL MÁJESTY - None shall defy
5. OCCULT - The enemy within
6. SATYRICON - Nemesis divina
7. VADER - De profundis
8. VITAL REMAINS - Into cold darkness
9. EMPYRIUM - A wintersunset...
10. CRACK UP - Blood is life

Leif:

1. RADAKKA - Malice and tranquility
2. MISFITS - Re-union Tour '96
3. IN FLAMES - The jester's race
4. AXEL RUDI PELL - Black Moon Pyramid
5. THE NEFILIM - Zoon
6. HELSTAR - Remnants of war
7. EDGE OF SANITY - Crimson
8. SADIST - Tribe & Live
9. MANIFEST - Lovedienemy
10. ARCH ENEMY - Black Earth

Mary:

1. OPETH - Orchid
2. AT THE GATES - Slaughter of the soul
3. DARK TRANQUILITY - Of chaos and...
4. IN FLAMES - Subterranean
5. IMMOLATION - Here in after
6. LUCIFERION - Demonication
7. SIX FEET UNDER - Haunted
8. AUTOPSY - Shitfun
9. PYREXIA - Hatred, Anger and Disgust
10. VITAL REMAINS - Into cold darkness

Fetishists Of Sensual Darkness

When we featured CRADLE OF FILTH in our 5th issue for the first time, nobody obviously was aware of the enormous popularity growing of these youngsters, which was about to come shortly after the interview got published! Their debut album "The principle of evil made flesh" took the whole underground by storm and they did a couple of really successful tours overhere with ANATHEMA, AT THE GATES, GOREFEST, PARADISE LOST, MALEVOLENT CREATION, YADER, ANCIENT RITES and EMPEROR! Problems with the label resulted in a pretty long inactivity in terms of a new release, but now they've returned with a really massive new album called "Vampire" and we hooked up with vocalist Dani once again to keep you updated on the happenings in the CRADLE camp...

CRADLE OF FILTH

"The material is a concoction of work produced over the span of last year. "The forest whispers my name" was re-recorded to better the original; because it fitted with the storyline and because it was required of us in Cacophonous' legal settlement."

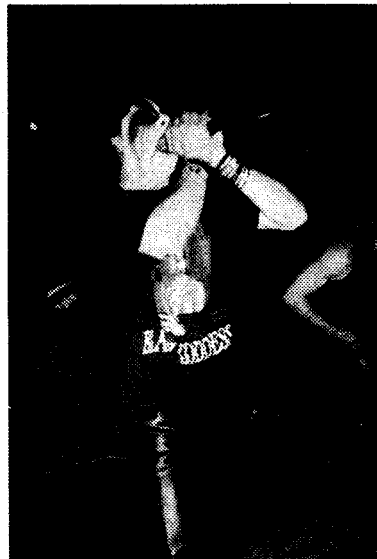
There's already been comparisons to SLAYER's "Reign in blood" record, which I can't really see (except for the

between both your guitarists and your keyboardplayer and the rest of the band? How did you get together with ex-BRUTALITY guitarist Brian Hipp then? A pretty untypical decision don't you think?

intensity), but maybe you can?

"Perhaps in "apocalyptic" comparisons - intensity is probably the best parallel drawn."

"Their personalities and hybrid greed binges for a start. Would you prefer a list? To be perfectly unbiased... they turned into rockstars and have now (after dismissal) gone NWOBHM. A good 15 years too late. As for Brian, he is no longer with the band after having extensive leg surgery following a car crash. His position has been filled by a couple of good guitarists since, but the position is still open for a full time replacement. Image and personality essential. It was a pretty untypical decision getting Brian in, I must admit... but being an american death metal guitarist doesn't dismiss the possibilities of having superb ideas and artistic temperament. He actually left BRUTALITY because he needed to exercise this "temperament" with wider perspective. He is sorely missed."



Talking of SLAYER... You are also going to contribute "Hell awaits" to the SLAYER-Tribute Vol.2 album, so did you do any obvious changes to that track? Did you make it more of a CRADLE song now?

"It has been CRADLE songed... with the obvious change of poenarian keyboards and soprano accompaniment."

Musically "Vampire" sounds a lot more matured to me, with a way better production and it seems to me that your variety of influences has even become bigger than ever before! So, have you ever seen CRADLE as a band that follows the rules of the black metal genre or did you feel limited in that category from day one already?

"I think rules and regulations are formulated by the herd mentality of others, i.e. a steady

influx of imitators rather than ground breakers, especially in the European scene, although there are still a good handful of original bands around, remaining the pillars of the scene and keeping it aloft. I am not saying that C.O.F. are especially original... but I am saying that we try damn hard to purvey a certain aura and atmosphere that is totally unique to the remaining five members. We are finally climbing out of the pigeon-hole we were pushed in by the norwegian charade."

Did you work in a different studio (or with a different producer) this time or was it just that you are more experienced by now?

"It was never intentionally planned this way, but we ended up with the same producer in the same studio. We definitely felt comfortable and I believe it was this familiarity with debauchery that instigated bettering the production, mix and melodrama of the "Principle" release."

Your whole concept also differs pretty much from the other bands and I always thought of it as a mixture between perversion, erotic and vampirism... So, do you consider CRADLE more as a unique, but extreme METAL act instead of being just another black metal band yelling about Satan and stuff like that?

"Seeing as you've put this so bluntly... I can do no better than say yes. We do align with the current scene but at the same time we distance ourselves through alternative mediums... We are not perverse (à la BESTIAL WARLUST), we are interested in beauty and the representation of that beauty. We remain fetishists of sensual darkness and massive admirers of gothic literature... a mouthpiece for the repressed, stifling sexuality of the vampyre conundrum. The

I heard about some bad blood between you and Cacophonous Records, so I was really surprised to see your newest release on this label again... What made you go with them once again?

"An out-of-court settlement agreement. In exchange for the rights to our previously recorded "Dusk and her embrace" album and termination of our extensive contract... we agreed (at the end of a 12 month legal dispute) to do this final recording for them, although in no way is the material substandard or swiftly thrown together; a huge amount of effort was spent by both parties concerned (band and record label) to bring this recording to the light - although I personally believe that the label are only being creepy-crawly for ulterior, future motives."

Is it true that you are signed to Nuclear Blast Records now for the follow-up release? Do you think a label like them is able to promote a band like CRADLE OF FILTH? I mean, do you really think your type of music should appeal to the mainstream listeners?

"No this is not true. Nuclear Blast are one of many labels interested, although one of the most efficient and tempting to date. There is a disknet possibility that they could be our future custodians... In answer to your second question... why not? They are able to promote a band like DISSECTION. And to your third... Of course, it contains ambivalent qualities; tragedy and triumph, love and death, sexuality and fetid gothicism, romance and necromance; it should appeal to the turmoil in a human soul. And regardless of this, we want world domination and awesome cosmic powers to wield as we deem fit!"

What has caused the split

Where are the other new members coming from? How did you hook up with them?

"Stuart we dug up in Devon and Damien the keyboardist was rescued from a self-consuming solo career entitled "Century's End". It is current their belief that had he continued this project, he would have become a shadow of Eric Zann."

The new release "Vampire" should feature old and new material of yours (according to the label-info), but I only discovered a new version of "The forest whispers my name"... What about the other songs, when did you write them and why did you actually decide to re-record the aforementioned song?





whole crimson rose unfurled... unrestricted and warmed by the genius of centuries of individuals dying to untie their forced-upon moral restraints."

What was the reason for the strange spelling of the album title (vEmpire instead of vAmpire)?

"It is the obvious amalgamation of vampire (spelt in the modern context) and "empire", implying a nocturnal kingdom, a dark vampyric empire rife with the children of Judas rather than those of the heavenly host."

How did you hook up with Nigel Wingrove for the cover designs and will you continue with this conceptual way on future releases?



"We have worked with Nigel Wingrove for quite some time, especially for the recently formed "Vamperotica" merchandising company. His work features quite prolifically on t-shirt designs and provides artistic stimuli to colour our musical qualities. We will continue to produce conceptualised artwork and will continue working with Mr. Wingrove as long as he satisfies our image quota (esp. on "Dusk")."

As far as I remember, you pretty much admire Bram Stoker (among others), so I was wondering about your opinion on the "Dracula" movie with Keanu Reeves and Winona Ryder... Do you think it is the best version of Stoker's story so far or would you say that it was hyped way too much?

"Coppola's Dracula is certainly not the best "Dracula" to date, that prestigious title would have to go to something like Tod Browning's 1931 version with Bela Lugosi or El conde Dracula w/ Christopher Lee and Klaus Kinski; but it certainly has been the most

ambitious adaptation with its Hollywood portrayal of lavish english and transylvanian aristocracy. Personally, I warm to the glamour and expense of this production and have enjoyed its viewing hundreds of times. Oldman is really convincing and his support cast are glamorous and amorous."



To get back to your new release... How much input did the new members already have on the featured material?

"50%."

Cronos told me, that he also contributed some spoken parts to the record, so could you tell us what he exactly did? Did you get the idea to use him because of the stuff he did on the "At war with Satan" album?

"Cronos contributed to the track "Haunted shores" on the forthcoming "Dusk... and her embrace" album, with narration a



la the "At war with Satan" intro. We had the idea of working with him into the track because we felt that he could do with the exposure and because we are all massive fans of VENOM. You could go as far as saying that VENOM were our mentors, being english etc."

Do you think the black metal scene would have a way better reputation, if there would be some more bands like CRADLE OF FILTH, who really write excellent music instead of all the wannabees, that just paint their faces and yell stupid things, because they have to hide their lack of musical abilities?



"The black metal scene would have a better reputation if all the "wannabees" (as you have eloquently deemed them) stopped being so fucking laughable and grew up. The thing is that the more seriously these children take themselves, the less "seriously" everybody else considers them. If they are going to commit something in the name of "true evil" then stop talking and get on with the wholesale slaughter. I strongly believe that an act of true evil would have them screaming for mummy and christian absolution. I also blame labels like Osmose who are only in it for the money, leaving a huge amount of disillusioned customers and fans in their wake. My favourite new bands include BEWITCHED, ARCTURUS, NAGLFAR, DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE, GEHENNA and DIMMU BORGIR; though the latter are a blend of other more established bands, they convey a unique atmosphere... actual "feeling"!"

Talking of "facepainting"... it seems that you are also trying to go in a different direction with that, cause you haven't used the typical style on the new promotional pictures anymore... What made you do so?

"Feeling like a cunt! No, honestly it is merely a conservative progression towards a natural mask of more noble gothick bearing."

What can we expect from the next full length album and when is it supposed to be released?

"Dusk and her embrace" is due for release later this year (autumn) and will reflect the sombre majesty of that, best of seasons. It will be raven haired, skipure as the driven snow, crimson-tipped... a magick, vampyric faerytale of an album, a pinnacle of our work to date."

Ok, that's about it... I'll leave this space up to you, and this interview in any way you'd like!

"Dae rest, your little heart is wounded; think me not cruel because I obey the wounded, my wild heart bleeds with yours. In the rapture of my enormous humiliation I live in your warm life, and you shall die - die, sweetly die... into mine. I cannot help it, as I draw near to you, you in your turn, will draw near to others, and learn the rapture of that cruelty, which yet is love; so, for a while, seek to know no more of me and mine, but trust me with all your loving spirit." Indulge. Desire. Darken."

Interview: Frank Stöver
Live Pics: Angela Hiller
Martin Wickler



ADORNED BROOD... All you people who bought our last issue will probably remember this name, as their demo "Wapen" was pretty much praised by me in there. Well, it happened quite a few things since then... They added a flutist to their line-up and a rehearsal tape with new material is officially available from the band's address now. Plus, they've signed a deal with Folter Records from Germany, so we decided to let Ariovist (drums) express some of his thoughts a bit more detailed this time...

Although I personally was very impressed by your demo, there's probably still a lot of people yet not knowing about ADORNED BROOD, so make sure to raise the information level for them as well a bit, ok?



"OK, here a little insight. ADORNED BROOD WAS FORMED IN LATE '93. IN THESE DAYS CONSISTING OF TEUTOBOD FROST (ONLY AS BASSIST), OBERON (DERMİN), ME AND A SECOND GUITARIST AND A VOCALIST, WE BOTH KICKED

them in early '95. In that time our music was death thrash and a bit progressive oriented. We recorded two demos. The first

like and that's the wellknown thrash, black, death and progressive metal. But we combine these influences with medieval melodies and we think, the way we mix them up is pretty new. The whole atmosphere is warlike and a bit archaic. Our lyrics are about the teutons, so we simply decided on "teutonic war metal". Besides "thrash-black-death-progressive-medieval metal" would sound pretty stupid, wouldn't it?"

Talking about your music - you've changed quite a bit since the release of your "Wapen" demo by incorporating a flute nowadays... Do you think that this instrument makes ADORNED BROOD a lot more unique? Is uniqueness more important to you than aggression?

"Of course we gain a bit more

to let the pause between this demo and the CD appear too huge. Some people could forget about us. These 5 songs are simultaneous. "Advance Trax" for the CD."

It went pretty fast with your record deal... Is it of high importance for you to establish the band on the CD / LP market really quick? Don't you think ADORNED BROOD would have gotten a better deal if you would've waited a bit longer and established the band a bit more in the first place?

"Pretty fast" is a bit overstated in my eyes. We're playing



TEUTONIC WAR METAL!

one in summer '94 (more about that later), called "Phobos/Deimos" and the actual tape "Wapen", which was recorded in autumn '95. We have done 8 gigs up to today, 5 here, in and around our hometowns, one in Berlin, one in Leipzig and our last one we did near Stuttgart. Our latest change, regarding our line-up, was about 4 months ago, when our first female flutist Illich had to leave us and got replaced by Ingeborg, who is now handling the flute. We're aged from 18 up to 24 (if someone cares...). Finally it has to be mentioned, that we play "teutonic war metal".

There's so many names for styles of extreme music around these days, that I was wondering if it was really necessary to come up with the new description "Teutonic War Metal" for your stuff... Isn't it basically all just thrash, black or death metal? Or to make it even more easy - why is it not enough anymore to call a musical style simply METAL?

"No, I don't think that it would be enough to call yourself simply a metal band. The reason behind "teutonic war metal" is to express the combination of music and lyrics in a short formula, so that even people, who are not knowing us, get a small pre-information about our style and you can save some explaining this way.



Furthermore we think that we can't be compared totally to any existing styles of metal. Of course we are influenced by the music we



uniqueness by using a flute. Nevertheless, it's not more important for us to be unique than creating aggressive atmospheres. We don't care about how to form our music, it simply comes from our souls so, we don't make a song more aggressive, when it seems that it is not aggressive enough. The same goes for the uniqueness."

What was the reason to release the new stuff officially as a rehearsal tape? I mean, there's a real full length album on its way already, so why did you waste some more tracks this way? Or will there be different material on the album?

"The reason for this rehearsal tape is simply the fact that this idea concerning the flute came after we had recorded the actual demo "Wapen". We wanted to inform the people about that. Besides it is important for us, not

together for about 3 years and during that time recorded 2 demos. The first one is sold out by now. The music was already a bit unique, well-played and the sound was also good. But the singing was horrible. That's why it won't be re-released. Perhaps there will be one or two of these songs on the CD with the new voice. Concerning that deal, why should we wait when there's a chance to produce a CD? The contract only contains this one CD and the conditions are good. Besides the guys of Folter Records are very reliable, as we know from other bands on this label, and noticed ourselves they're 100% standing behind their bands."

The whole concept of the band seems to be connected to our historical ancestors, the teutons... It sounds pretty unique in the first place, but then again people also could accuse you of just jumping on the viking trend, which is more or less the same... Would you like to comment on this and give us a few backings about your lyrical inspirations?

"Yes, our concept is really a bit similar to this viking trend. It's kinda like a propaganda against this modern life, which is much too complex, as we think. Also, the paganism is an ingredient in our lyrics. We can identify ourselves pretty well with this concept, cause we're talking quite often about it. And if



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PEOPLE WANNA CALL US 'GERMANY'S ENSLAVED' OR 'GERMANY'S HELHEIM' IT'S THEIR DECISION, WE DON'T CARE; RATHER THEY LIKE OUR STUFF OR THEY DON'T. WHERE'S THE PROBLEM? WE GET INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION FROM SPECIALIZED LITERATURE, MOSTLY AUTHENTIC HAPPENINGS AND ALSO 'THE EDDA' IS ONE OF OUR SOURCES.

Another thing that could be misinterpreted quite easily is that everything you do is connected to



Germany and it seems that you are proud of what your ancestors had achieved in the past... not really a wise decision, if you consider the fact that there's a big fascism movement (trend) in the scene right now... How do you see that?

"THIS QUESTION HAD TO BE ASKED SOONER OR LATER...! SO LISTEN, OUR TEXTS/CONCEPT IS GUARANTEED CLEAN FROM FASCISTIC MESSAGES OR SHIT LIKE THAT! FASCISM DOESN'T BELONG TO ANY KIND OF METAL!"

Musically you will probably be compared a lot more to acts like SKYCLAD or CRUACHAN with your new direction, although you sound totally different in my opinion... is that something that bothers you in any way? I mean, do you also get inspirations out of folklore music and therefore you can live with the comparisons?



"NO, IT DOESN'T BOTHER US AT ALL. CRUACHAN ARE ONE OF OUR MUSICAL SOURCES AND INSPIRATIONS AS WELL AS SKYCLAD, STORM, ISENGARD AND RARIOUS MEDIEVAL FOLKLORE BANDS/ORCHESTRAS THIS WAY WE DO, AS WE THINK, A TOTALLY DIFFERENT MUSIC THAN CRUACHAN OR SKYCLAD, EXCEPT FOR THE USE OF THE FLUTE. BUT FOR US IT'S NOT NEGATIVELY TO BE COMPARED TO THEM."

Who came up with the band's name and demotitle and what do you wanna express with it?



"ADORNED BROOD AND 'WAPEN' WERE MY CREATIONS. OUR MONICKER COULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS A KIND OF 'GRIM AND BEAR IT' IN A FIGURATIVELY SENSE. PERHAPS IT ISN'T FITTING US AS GOOD ANYMORE AS IN OUR DEATH THRASH DAYS, BUT NEVERTHELESS IT'S PRETTY ORIGINAL AND UNIQUE, IN MY OPINION. ALSO RATHER IMPRINTABLE. 'WAPEN' IS A TEUTONIC WAR CRY FOR THE FACT THAT THE DEMO ALTOGETHER IS VERY AGGRESSIVE AND WARLIKE, IT FITS VERY GOOD."



Any final thoughts or closing comments?

"THANK TO YOU FRANK AND TO ALL YOU OUTTHERE WHO ARE FIGHTING WITH US! YOU'RE GREAT! KEEP WATCHING OUT FOR OUR FIRST DIGITALLY BATTLE! 'WAPEN'! ALSO I WANT TO USE THESE LAST LINES TO REMIND THE READERS, THAT THESE ANSWERS ARE NOT VERY PERSONAL VIEWS, BUT THOSE OF ADORNED BROOD!"

ADORNED BROOD
P.O.Box 110 128
41530 Dormagen
Germany

Frank Stöver

Crimson Relic

The name might be new, but if I tell ya that CRIMSON RELIC is nothing but the continuation from DIVINE EVE, that'll probably ring some bells, huh? Well, they not only changed name and members, they also released a superb new album not long ago, entitled "Purgatory's reign" on Nuclear Blast. Old school death the way it was meant to be played... Xan told us a bit more!

What has caused the actual split-up of DIVINE EVE?

"Well, a variety of things actually. The main reason was personal problems within the band. Some of us simply couldn't get along with one another. Also some members seemed to be getting bored with the music, and wanted to play a different style. There are many other things too meaningless to list, but all in all I think everyone is happy with the split. I know I am..."

Why didn't you continue with a different drummer under the same name? Do you see a difference between DIVINE EVE and CRIMSON RELIC musically or lyrically?

"I didn't keep the name because for one thing I didn't like the name and had suggested changing it before we even split up. And second, the name was thought up by Mike, the other



guitarist in DIVINE EVE. There's not that big of a difference between DIVINE EVE and CRIMSON RELIC. The CRIMSON RELIC album is basically just what would have been the debut DIVINE EVE LP under a different name. I can say that CRIMSON RELIC crushes anything DIVINE EVE ever did!"

Why was your second demo not released through Candlelight Records as originally planned and why did it take you so long to come up with something new anyway?

"You'll have to ask Candlelight about that. I don't know, they never got back to us. Oh well, no skin off my back. That demo was supposed to come out as a 7" on Gothic and a split 7" with MORGION on Extinction Of God later, but that never happened either. One of the songs from the demo is featured on "Death is just the beginning III" and another song is featured on a compilation CD called "Deterioration of the senses" on Morbid Metal Records..."

What made Nuclear Blast sign CRIMSON RELIC without having heard anything new? Have they been interested in DIVINE EVE originally, due to the demo they put out on CD or have you played showcase gigs or something like that?

"They have basically been interested in us since they released the "As the angels weep" EP I guess. We never played any showcase gigs or anything... In fact, no one from Nuclear Blast or Relapse ever saw a DIVINE EVE gig..."

Give us some details about the album...

"The line-up is myself on guitars / bass / and vocals and Rhett Davis of the band MORGION on drums. It was recorded in Santa Ana, California with Jim Barnes engineering, who has worked with a lot of Orange County bands (MORGION, MINDROT, DYSTOPIA etc.). It came out pretty good considering the circumstances. Rhett only had like a month to learn 10 songs and the whole thing was a bit rushed, but I'm satisfied with it for the most part..."



Are you still looking for a permanent drummer or are you going to continue working with session members?

"Well, if everything goes as planned, then Rhett will be playing drums fulltime, as well as his job in MORGION. I should be moving out to Los Angeles in a few months, where I will try to find a permanent guitarist and bass player..."

Try to describe the style of music you are doing nowadays... Are you still influenced by the old-school bands or do you use more "modern" sounding stuff as well for your songwriting?

"The best way I can describe the CRIMSON RELIC album is like a mix between CELTIC FROST, DESTRUCTION and SLAYER. It's much less "swedish" sounding than DIVINE EVE was and even more old-school. To put it simply, it blows DIVINE EVE into oblivion!..."

Have you ever done any recordings with CRIMSON RELIC before the album?

"No, this album is the debut CRIMSON RELIC recording..."

Anything else you'd like to add?

"Thanks for the interview Frank. DIVINE EVE is dust, behold the CRIMSON RELIC..."

CRIMSON RELIC
c/o Xan Hammack
1206 Meadowlark
Stephenville, TX 76401

Frank Stöver

It seems that everybody knows by now that ASPHYX have reformed, but I'd like you to go a little bit more in-depth about the reasons for getting back together again? And what is Eric doing nowadays?

"Well, yes ASPHYX have kinda reformed. Theo and me are back together and we are/were always the original owners of ASPHYX. The reason was, that I asked Theo to play bass on my project called THRONE a while ago. I've been in contact with him for some years again, so it was only natural. Anyhow, Theo said yes and soon we found out that we only belong in one band together, and that's ASPHYX. The ASPHYX story is not over and it probably never will be, as long as we exist! We've started to write new songs and here we are! I don't know what Eric is doing nowadays though. I've heard that he's playing in someone else's band. Eric lost his interest. But he's in another band now, so that's cool. We wish him luck."

It was even more surprising to hear that Theo is back in the band, cause I remember that you were "throwing a lot of shit" at him in the past, when he was out of ASPHYX... So, when did you start talking to him again and how did the idea come about then? What has he done in the meantime?

"Yeah, I know that we were "throwing a lot of shit" at him and he was talking shit about us as well. Now I think that we were totally stupid. But man, how old were we back then? 18, 19? Now we laugh about it. We realized that ASPHYX never could do without Theo and that Theo never could do without ASPHYX. It may sound like a cliché, but we've all grown up now and we know it better



The dutch underground legend ASPHYX is back with a new album called "God Cries" and it features the re-union of the original members Theo (voc./bass) and Bob (dr.), so the result is obviously way better than anything they've done before! Pure ancient and brutal sounding death metal the way it was meant to be! Bob told us everything else...

now, luckily! We are not proud of what we said in the past, immature behaviour that was! We've started to talk to each other again about three years ago. We even had a project back then called CRYPT. Theo also played a while in SWAZIFIX! A real good death / thrash band. They did two demos."

Who else is in the new (old?) line-up nowadays? What about Tony Brookhuis, the original guitarist, who already contributed a solo to your '94 release... have you ever considered re-joining with him as well?

"We have a new guitarist now and that's Ronny v/d Wey. He's very good. He's from DEADHEAD. But Theo and I make all the music and record it as well. We do everything now. We never considered re-joining with Tony Brookhuis. I mean, Tony is a real nice guy, but he's not into extreme metal anymore, so it never can work out with him anyway. But also Tony is still playing music and I respect that!"

Before ASPHYX reformed, you had this project going called THRONE... How do you judge the demo you did, now after it's out for quite a while? Wasn't THRONE as satisfactory as ASPHYX or what made you quit again?

"I still like that demo a lot! Old style classic death metal! The sound on that tape may not be the best, but it fits the music, I think. But like I said before, we're only meant to be in one band and that's ASPHYX! I formed ASPHYX in 1987, so it's my brainchild. The same goes for Theo as well. Only ASPHYX feels right to do. It's our flesh and blood. We've spend years and years working on ASPHYX, so we can't just throw it away! ASPHYX became a top underground

death band, thank to our hard efforts and work. ASPHYX is in our souls! The reason I

mean, don't get me wrong, I love Martin's voice, but I always thought that he didn't fit into ASPHYX... Could you imagine that more people shared my opinion and that this fact had hurt the band's career somehow? I bet it would look differently, if "Embrace the death" would've been the real first ASPHYX album... Your comments on all this?!"

"Yes, you're right! But I didn't play on that album, cause I was kinda stressed back then. And yes, you're right about Martin. He didn't fit into ASPHYX at all! Believe me when I say that the biggest fault of my life was to ask Martin to play in ASPHYX! Really, I totally regretted my decision already after "The rack"! It was like "Oh, what have I done? This guy is not meant to be in ASPHYX at all! Yes, I know that a lot of people shared your opinion. I got letters from fans who were a little bit pissed off because Martin was the new ASPHYX singer! And maybe it did hurt our career in some way. I realized it soon after we'd recorded "The rack". It was not the ASPHYX line-up I had in mind. Everybody makes mistakes, mine was big! I take the blame for it. To be honest with you, I see "Embrace the death" as the ASPHYX debut lp! It will be released in November this year



quit with THRONE now, is that ASPHYX has of course all the priorities!"

Let's go back to the self-titled ASPHYX album from 1994 - would you agree that it represents the band a lot better than the albums you did with Martin van Drunen? I

after all! But still, Martin is a good singer, but not for ASPHYX!"

How do you judge all your previous records so far? Give us some of your thoughts from today's point of view - what was good, what was bad about 'em?



"I think they're all good! I'm still proud of them, but Theo should have done the vocals, after all! Also I really don't like the lyrics from Martin on "Last one on earth". Those are not ASPHYX lyrics! I think his lyrics on that album are stupid and don't fit the band! The music is good, but the lyrics suck! And I'm not too fond of the ASPHYX "Asphyx" album, cause there's not one original member playing on it, except for Tonny Brookhuis, who did a guest solo. It's a cool album, but it shouldn't have been released as an ASPHYX album, I think. I'm still very proud of our "Crush the cenotaph" demo from '89, it sold over 5000 copies worldwide! All in all, I'm proud of all the ASPHYX stuff! They all represent how we were at that time!"

It seems that "Thoughts of an atheist" is the ASPHYX track which you recorded the most, so I was asking myself, why you re-did it on your second demo already...?

"Cause the rehearsal version on the "Enter the domain" demo was not too good recorded and I think that song deserved a better production! Tonny and I made that song in 1988. The version on "Crush the cenotaph" is also more brutal!"

When you split-up, after the '94 album, have you still been under contract with Century Media? I mean, did they still have the option to release new material of yours or did you send them new stuff and they kinda re-signed you?

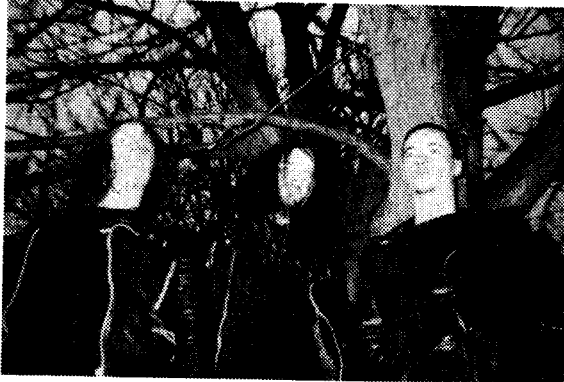
"Yes, I was still under contract. But, we didn't send them any new stuff. Robert always felt good about working with Theo and me and since we were one of the very first death metal bands signed to Century Media, it was a sure thing! And Theo and I are both happy to be on Century Media!"

But it's kinda strange that they still seem to believe in a band like ASPHYX, cause everybody is talking a lot of shit about old style death metal these days (except for the die hard fans of course), so did you notice something like that as well? Did ASPHYX had more difficulties within the last years of existence than in your early days?

"The metal scene is very trendy, as you know. Nowadays black metal is extremely popular. A few years ago death metal was the big thing. But I think the true bands will survive! And yes, everybody is talking shit about old style death metal, coz it's probably not fast enough anymore! But those people talked shit about thrash / speed metal a few years ago when death metal was popular! They hop on every trend there is. And that's a shame, coz that way, they won't notice the good bands. But I'd rather have 2000 real die hard fans, than 20.000 trendies! Die hard fans will support you any time, while the trendies drop you after a while. And yes, I also noticed that old style death metal is less popular, but maybe in that way it will be more underground again! Death metal is not for trendies or wimps! They should stay away from it! So maybe this inpopularity is not so bad after all! Also ASPHYX had some

difficulties because of all this. But we'll never quit because of it!"

The underground seems to get infected by trends every now and then (just take the big



death metal type in the early 90's and now the big black metal fashion), so how would you react if old style (death) metal would be the "next big thing"? I mean, you certainly would have more success then, but is it really worth to continue then? Among tons of trendies?

"We will always continue, coz ASPHYX is not for trendies! The trendies will disappear by themselves again. If old style death metal would be the next big thing, it would only prove that there are lots of people out there who don't have an own opinion about music! That's too bad, of course! The same goes for the trendy bands of course! Take ATROCITY for example - they are a trendy band, but where are they now? I totally despise and hate all kinds of trends! But like I said, trends / trendies will vanish by themselves again, so it will only leave the true bands, like ASPHYX!"

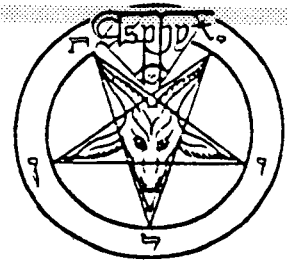
As far as I know, you will finally release the classic "Embrace the death" album (after all!), so would you like to tell a little bit about that one and why it never got released in the past?

"Yes, "Embrace the death" will be released somewhere in November. We've recorded it in July 1990 and it was supposed to be released by an english label called C.M.F.T. Productions. But somehow they went broke, so we only had the unmixed advance on a normal Maxell tape! The studio never got paid! We sent that tape (luckily I had a copy from the unmixed master) to Century Media and that's when they signed us! "Embrace the death" will be officially released now and it features the old and better versions of most of the songs of "The rack" album. Songs like: "Embrace the death" (later "Pages in blood"), "Circle of the sechuded" (later "Evocation"), "Denying the goat" (later "Diabolical existence"), "The sickened dwell", "Vault of the vailing souls", "Thoughts of an

atheist", "Streams of ancient wisdom", "To succubus a whore" (later "Wasteland of terror"), "Crush the cenotaph" and "Eternity's depth".

But there's also a new album out by now, called "God cries"... Tell us a little bit about that one also...

"For both, Theo and me, "God cries" is the ultimate ASPHYX album after "Embrace the death"! It's also the most mature and catchy album. It has the following tracks on it: "God cries", "My beloved enemy", "Fear my greed", "It awaits", "Slaughtered in Sodom", "Frozen soul", "Cutoffthroat urges", "The blood I spilled" and "Died yesterday". We've recorded it again in the Harrow Studio. I think that's the best studio for us. We did the production together with Harry Weijering. It turned out killer! The songs are a lot more catchy than they used to be! We're using just a few riffs in each song, so it stays recognizable. We've grown a lot! Lyrically it deals with the darker side of life of course. Also there are some very personal lyrics on it as well. In fact, "God cries" is a very personal album with a lot of emotion in it! It's



also totally anti-christianity! It sounds like a cliché, but some shit happened here, which proved once again that religion totally sucks! It's all very direct on this CD. Theo wrote some personal things as well. It's not the usual hell and satan stuff this time. Like I said, we've grown a lot! Theo had some family tragedies and on this album he could let his feelings go. Read the lyrics and maybe you'll understand. I think a lot of fans can recognize some situations. The sound on "God cries" is absolutely total brutal and heavy! The production really kills, I think!"

Do you still pick up a lot of the new releases that are flooding the market? I mean, it seems to me that there's already more labels around these days than people who actually

CRACK UP BLOOD IS LIFE

Melodic Death Metal from Germany in the Swedish death metal scene. Andy Classen! Position 7 in the ROCK HARD soundcheck!

THE BURNING MOON
MIDNIGHT DIMENSIONS IN FIRE CD
THE SILENT MARCH Metal from Sweden
THE FORCE CD
Death Metal from Sweden
BESEEKED SONGS FROM BLEEDING HEART
EX-CEMETARY Gothic Metal from Sweden

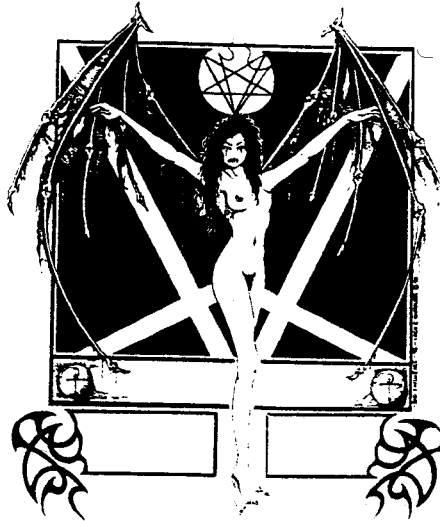
CORROSION
Distributed by SPV



buy the stuff! So, which albums did impress you lately and are there any labels around that are totally superfluous in your opinion?

"Not really. I like IMPALED NAZARENE, but that's about it! Only old stuff rules like old VENOM (total gods!), DESTRUCTION, SODOM, HELLHAMMER / FROST, MESSIAH, POSSESSED, NECROPHAGIA, SLAUGHTER, BATHORY, EXCITER, MAYHEM, OBSCURITY, DESEXULT, INFERNAL MAJESTY, KREATOR (old), NME etc. etc. The albums which impressed me lately are: DISSECTION - "Storm of the light's bane" and BESTIAL WARLUST - "Vengeance war till death". But I especially like DISSECTION alot! Also I'm totally into PENTACLE from Holland! Good old death metal! They really believe in what they are doing and their music sounds great! Hollands best band I think! About labels, there are too many, but only the good true ones will survive! No names mentioned!"

Do you think that a support tour for bands like CANNIBAL CORPSE and IMMOLATION would help ASPHYX more than the previous touring you did? In my opinion this package fits a lot better together musically and could be more attractive to real death metal fans...



"I agree with you Frank! I think this is the perfect line-up. Especially old gods IMMOLATION are cool to tour with! ASPHYX and IMMOLATION both are underground death bands from '87 - '88, '89, so that's great! We're from the same period of time! And yes, this tour should be very interesting for real death metal fans who only support the true ones!"

(well, as all of you know by now, ASPHYX weren't able to do this tour, because Theo got involved in a serious car crash... too bad, really! Hopefully you're doing better by now, mate! All the best! - Ed.)

Any final thoughts before I'll leave you? Anything else you'd like to mention maybe?

"Yes, thank a lot for this interesting interview in your magazine, Frank! Good and useful questions, great! To all the true death fans out there: Check out our new album "God cries"! Write us, stay true and faithfully to your roots and hope to meet you on our tours! Take care!"

ASPHYX
c/o Bob Bagchus
De Vlashegge 94
NL - 6951 NP Dieren
Holland

Frank Stöver

Night in Gales

NIGHT IN GALES is one of the biggest hopefuls in the german underground scene these days and their self financed demo CD "Sylphlike" is a really strong output of melodic, yet aggressive death metal... Leif hooked up with the band's bass player Tobias and came up with the following interview...

There's probably still a couple of people who haven't heard of you before, so how about introducing NIGHT IN GALES by giving us all the necessary details?

"Alright, NIGHT IN GALES was formed in May of '95 and the past and present line-up is: Christian Müller (voice), Jens and Frank Basten (guitars), Christian Bass (drums) and myself on bass. We recorded our first demo "Sylphlike" in mid September, in two and a half days in Sound Station Studio (Ratingen) with the great help of two morbid guys who never heard such kind of music. We would describe our musical style as varied, extremely melodic death metal with harmonic twin guitars and raging vocals, haha."

You originally started out as INTESTINAL ULCER... Has the line-up been the same back then as nowadays and am I right that according to your old monicker, you played typical death metal with typical lyrics? When and why did you change for a more melodic style and this "new-swedish" direction?

"In February 93 was the first musical strike with INTESTINAL ULCER, with a different line-up. We splitted up because of musical and personal differences after a final gig in December '94. In this one and a half years we had only one line-up change and consisted of: Michael Bröcker (vocals), Sascha Roth (rhythm guitar), Jens Basten (lead guitar), Christian Bass (drums / since December 93) and myself. Ah, we played melodic but I like to say more typical with deep vocals. The most people compared us with early PARADISE LOST. NIGHT IN GALES is our way of music we always wanted to be."

I guess that AT THE GATES ("With fear..." CD) and similar bands made a big impression on you, so what is so fascinating for you in this direction? Would you agree, that you're lucky, that this musical direction isn't so much present in this country? Cause it seems that in Sweden there's already more than enough of these kinda bands by now and quantity reigns over quality due to the big amount of similar bands...

"Surely we were inspired by many bands of the death metal scene, but we although like other bands very much as well. There's so many bands we listen to, that it's hard to say that we are only inspired by one kind of music. We think that we write our songs and play our very own style of death metal, inspired by the swedish scene. This is the most exciting form of death metal for me. It's a mix of great songstructures, very melodic killer riffs, strong harmonies and aggressive music. It's also the counterpart to many boring death metal bands. You are absolutely in our minds, that problem is also at the moment with the black metal boom. Nowadays every little nordic black metal band gets a high quality deal although a lot of bands from Germany probably are much more qualified than some of those noisy sell-outs."

It seems that you are still very young, so I was asking myself which bands belong to the NIGHT IN GALES faves? I guess you are not so much into black metal, although some of the reviews you've gotten so far mentioned that...

"Our roots lie in the metal genre and we are only fans of metal, grind, swe-hardcore and all that stuff. There's a few other styles but some of our faves are: EDGE OF SANITY, CARCASS, DARK TRANQUILITY, IRON MAIDEN, AT THE GATES,

NAPALM DEATH, SLAYER, DEFLESHED, RIGHTEOUS PIGS, CELTIC FROST, ASHES (USA), IN FLAMES, CROWN OF THORNS, AGATHOCLES, UNANIMATED, EUCHARIST, MORBID ANGEL and a lot of other also great underground bands...

About the second part of your question - yes, you're right. In the black metal scene are some very good bands and we listen to their music and not because one is more evil than the other. The most important thing for me is that it's good music!"

The reactions / reviews on "Sylphlike" have been really impressive thus far, so I was wondering if you did expect that? Would you like to give us some more infos about "Sylphlike" maybe? It seems that it was a clever idea to put it out on CD, cause this way you were able to escape the ordinary demo market...

"Yep, of course it's wonderful for us to read such great reviews from everywhere and that people are interested in our music and all what we do. It was a real surprise, but we also see that it's difficult, because we are only one of many other cool death metal underground bands. But I wouldn't mind to become famous and rich with our hobby one day, haha. "Sylphlike" is available since November '95 and we've sold more than 1300 copies 'til now. It wasn't planned to release it on CD, but we decided to do it after we got a good offer. But we didn't think to escape in that way from the demo swamp."

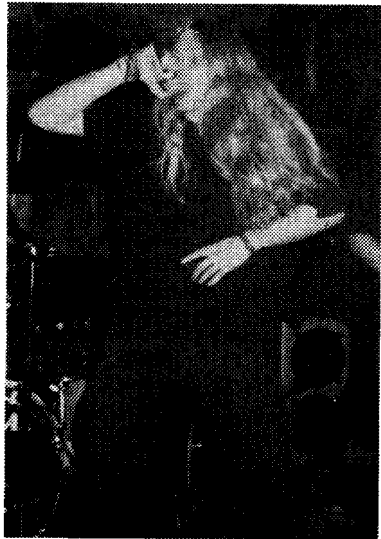


A lot of people have already mixed up your bandname with Dan Swanö's project NIGHTINGALE... Isn't that a bit problematic?

"Oh no, not problematic cause NIGHT IN GALES has its own meaning and I think that NIGHTINGALE was only a practise and no serious special project of Dan Swanö."

There's also another similarity to AT THE GATES, cause you also have brothers in your line-up, so are Jens and Frank even twins maybe? The term "twin-guitars" would fit even better then...

"No, haha. I've never heard that comparison, but you should know that Frank is 21 and Jens 18 years old, so they're no twins at all."



Tell us a little bit about the gigs you've done so far and the upcoming EP... When and where will it be available?

"We've played with ETERNAL DIRGE, REIGN, CABAL, SCRIPTORIS IRAE, DEW-SCENTED, DARK AT DAWN, DEADLOSS and many more. By the time you read this, we will have recorded four songs for a limited EP (1000 copies): "A spark in a crimson eclipse", "Razor" (two new ones), a new recording of "Mindspawn" (from the demo) and a coverversion of the mighty MAIDEN. It will be published by MMD."

Ok, maybe you can end this interview by telling us your impression on the national scene these days, future plans and anything else you'd like to add! Thank a lot and all the best!

"These days there are more and more great underground bands like DARK AT DAWN, SCRIPTORIS IRAE, DEADLOSS, CRACK UP, DEW-SCENTED (hehe!), THE CHURCH BIZARRE, DARKSEED, UNDER BLACK CLOUDS, OBSCURE DISASTER... and they are all building a new strong german underground scene. So, let's hope for better times in the future. We hope to be able to continue in the same way and that death metal will get more support than in the last years by the big and famous magazines. We are going to play live as much as possible and looking for a good deal to release our first full length CD or another MCD.

Thank you very much Leif and Frank for this interview and support. VOICES is one of the best underground zines in Germany I know and I hope you will make it further like before. Our demo-CD "Syphlike" is available for only 12,-DM in Germany and \$10 worldwide (incl. sticker, 4-page booklet,



coloured coverartwork, postage a.s.o.) We got new t-shirts too, two-sided, black high quality shirts in XL with white print. Get it for only 20,-DM or \$15. I think that's all for now. Look out for our 7" EP."

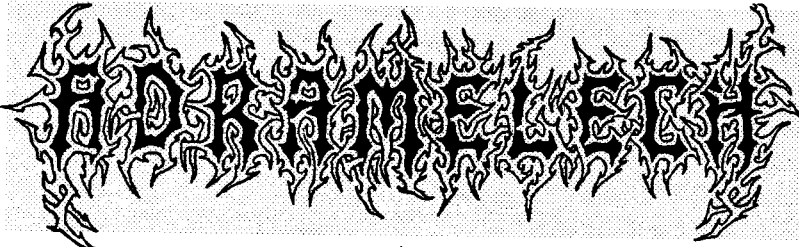
NIGHT IN GALES
c/o Tobias Bruchmann
Lohmannskath 29
46562 Voerde
Germany

Interview: Leif Jensen
Live Pics: Frank Stöver

Finish ADRAEMELECH released an excellent MCD via Repulse Records from Spain, called "The fall" and furthermore have had members from the legendary DEMIGOD in their line-up, so it was time to get some answers out of Jarrko...

I guess we should start with something that a lot of people will be interested in, the fusion of ADRAEMELECH with ex-members of DEMIGOD... Could you tell us a bit about that and if it has caused differences in your way of writing material?

"We have actually only one ex-DEMIGOD member now, as Esa finally decided not to sing on our coming album. Seppo was the drummer of DEMIGOD and he joined us a long time before DEMIGOD split up. He has played with us over two years, so it's not right to say, we are now a fusion of these two bands. Seppo has helped us with some riffs, but I am still the one who mainly does the composing work."



Do you follow a certain kind of concept when it comes to the lyrical side of things and what stands behind the band's moniker ADRAEMELECH? Are you aware of the fact that there's a progressive metal band with an album out called ADRAEMELECH?

"My lyrics are from mythology. I read books dealing with these topics and then I search for an interesting story. When I find one, I begin to describe the story with my own words. The band's name is from a

What happened to the old members, that now have been replaced - weren't they good enough for the band anymore, did they just loose interest or what?

"There have been seven members in ADRAEMELECH, from a two to five members line-up, so I don't start from the very beginning. Mikko has been the latest loss in our band, he has no time to practice anymore, cause he's studying in Tampere (90km from Loimaa) now. No one has ever been kicked out of the band because of poor musical skills, the interest to play has been the most important thing. We haven't really replaced Mikko, we continue as a three-piece."

Could you give us some info about ADRAEMELECH in general maybe, cause the only thing I know about you is that there's been a 7" on Adipocere Records and now this MCD on Repulse Records... It was actually a demo, wasn't it?

"In '91 we made two rehearsal tapes, in '92 the "Grip of darkness" demo and the "Spring of recovery" 7", in '93 there was nothing and in '94 we did the "The fall" demo, which was later on to be released as a MCD by Repulse Records. This year there is going to be our debut album, so watch out! The actual line-up is: Jari Aho - guitar, Seppo Taatila - guitar, Jarkko Rantanen - drums / vocals. It's probably Jari who's going to play bass on the album. ADRAEMELECH was formed in March '91."

Who came up with the idea to put it out on CD in that special format and what kind of reactions did you get? Has it been remixed or something like that?

"The idea was Dave's. He asked if he could do that and we were interested, so he did it. The reactions have been good as far as I know. I'm happy with "The fall" and I hope there are some others that are too! I think the CD was not remixed, but I don't know about that for sure."

It's really refreshing to hear bands nowadays that still stick to the really brutal form of death metal, cause to me it seems that everybody turned black metal or became gothic... What made you choose this direction and tell us about possible difficulties you had to face because you are not "hip" with your style...

"You know, it's not cool to play death metal anymore. Or if someone plays death metal, it's not that brutal, it's something like "atmospheric" or "mythic and depressive". I don't want to judge any band because of their music, but I think that now (if ever) death metal is not trendy! The death metal boom attracted some trend posers to death metal gigs and they bought some albums of the most successful death metal bands. Now only the true death metal fans remain! That's the crowd that has

sold their souls for this music. We have always played this kind of music and I'm not tired of it! We have never had any problems!"

Any concrete plans for your first full length album already?

"We've signed a contract and the album should already be done by the time you read this, cause we were into the studio from December 4 to December 10, 1995 and mixing was from January 5 to January 7, 1996."

book called "The encyclopedia of occult" and the others liked it, so that was it! I still like the name and haven't heard about that other band's album. But we're not going to change our name!"

If you play shows these days, will you also incorporate tracks from the DEMIGOD album or demo?

"No! Two times no! We don't play any gigs because of the poor gig situation here in Finland and also because of our line-up problems. I can't sing while playing drums and we have no bassist. And we have never played any covers since the very beginning, when we had one. I wish we could one day be only ADRAEMELECH and not "ADRAEMELECH featuring ex-DEMIGOD members!" or ADRAEMELECH, DEMIGOD's neighbours!" or something like that!"

By the way, there was talk of a possible re-union of DEMIGOD and they also did a new demo... Can you tell us something about that?

"They recorded a tape, but it was not released. The band is now DEFINITELY split-up. They all play in other projects. None is death metal, if I have understood it as it is."

Do you have any old items still for sale or do you just concentrate on your new material now?

"We have for sale some "Spring of recovery" 7"es and "The fall" MCD's and demos. That's all at the moment. The old 7" you'll get for a low price (\$2), but the MCD is not expensive either (\$5). Ask for wholesale prices, you won't be disappointed!"

Give us a few names of bands / releases that still had a big impression on you lately? Are there any new bands you admire or is it basically the old stuff?

"Repulse is going to release DEMILICH's

"Nespite" soon! That's one I'm waiting for...should be brutal! About the "oldies", I'm waiting with interest for the next CARCASS album, if there is one coming! There are very few new death metal bands who play the kinda metal I like."

Anything else you'd like to mention here before we let you go?

"I would like to mention that this is my third paper I'm writing on with my Parker pen! I hurried to tell prices a while ago, so you guys already know 'em. Order some brutal death metal from me or Dave of Repulse. Maybe this is all, Danke schön Frank! That was it, but now it's time to go sleeping, it's almost 1 a.m.! Thanks for this interview and sorry for the delay!"

ADRAEMELECH c/o Jarkko Rantanen, Rahkakuja 2, 32200 Loimaa, Finland

Frank Stöver

VENOM

Do you mind talking about your whole career and not only about CRONOS?

"Anything you want... your sex-slave and everything (hysterical laughter)"

Ok, could you first of all tell us then, how you met Abaddon and Mantas back then?

"I met up with Mantas when he was playing in a band called OBERON... there were five members in the band and me and Jeff (as he was known as back then) got talking and we realized that we had alot of the same interests. We liked the same sort of bands, you know, KISS, BLACK SABBATH, JUDAS PRIEST... And he said, well, we got this band called OBERON, but it's not quite what we want, the other guys in the band aren't really into what we're doing... But you sound like you know what you're doing! But I was playing guitar at that time, so I tried out as the second guitarist, to replace somebody else... and it was one of the roadcrew members, who was one of the HELL'S ANGELS at the time, who decided that VENOM was a better name for the band. And plus, we'd run out of places to rehearse, cause everywhere we'd rehearsed, we'd went under all the names...SONS OF SATAN and OBERON and SCHIZO... and we weren't able to rehearse anywhere in Newcastle anymore, because we used to set up the pyrotechniques in the rehearsal and blow the fuckin' places up, so we kept changing names and then stuck with VENOM! After that we had various line-up changes, we were throwing people out... When we were supposed to do our first gig, the bass player didn't turn up, so I grabbed his bass and just went for it. So, there was the original singer Clive, then Mantas, Abaddon and Cronos... we just went and did the gig. It was after, when we decided to go and do some studio demos... Mantas had written the song "Live like an angel" and he wanted me to sing it, so I did! And Mantas and Abaddon then decided that the other guy (Clive) sucked and I was the new singer, which was fuckin' really scary, but a good laugh. That's basically how that came together..."

I own a very old VENOM demo with the songs "Angel Dust", "Raise the dead" and...

"Red light fever"! Yeah, that was the first ever recording we did! That was with Clive..."

So, it's not you on that tape...?!

"Just on bass, I'm just playing bass...!"

When did you record that tape?

"That was nineteen...very early 1980 or back end of '79... one of the two, I can't really remember, I got to check the tape."

When did you decide to use this satanic image?

"Well, right from the start! I mean, that was what Mantas was saying what the problem was, that the other people he had in the band were far too geared into this sort of *New Wave Of British Heavy Metal*, you know, they wanted to sort of put a bit of make up on and wear green spandex and things and look a little bit more like IRON MAIDEN or SAXON or SAMSON. And they needed somebody a bit more hardcore. So, that's why I came in with the lyric writin', because I sort of pronounced... eh... I produced a load of lyrics straight away which Mantas and Abaddon were impressed immediately with. Basically what I was writing was... if you look at BLACK SABBATH as the "Hammer" horror of the

metal world, than I wanted to be the "Evil Dead" or "The Exorcist" of the metal world! We just pushed it a stage further! I knew exactly what I wanted to do in that

Have you ever thought about the fact how this underground scene would have developed if there wouldn't have been a Newcastle based three piece called VENOM? Would we actually have death and black metal then? When they released albums like "Welcome To Hell" and "Black Metal" in 1981/82, a lot of people called them "punks" or considered their music as pure noise! But today, almost 15 years later, when music in general has become way more extreme, their legend lives on and every new band that pops up in this scene, states VENOM's first musical steps as their major influences! So, it was perfect timing that we got the opportunity to talk to Conrad "CRONOS" Lunt, when he was promoting his new CRONOS album... But we decided to go a little bit more in-depth, what he luckily agreed on...

department. When it comes to the music, we used to do early covers, we used to do "God of thunder" by KISS, "No class" by MOTORHEAD and things like that! We used to play them at such velocity that it wasn't... you know, it was heavier than the originals, which was always sort of strange. Whenever you hear a band in the clubs or whatever, playing somebody elses songs, it's always not as good, so we used to play them three times as fast or whatever, you know. That's when we decided that the normal names of Conrad, Jeffrey and Tony had to go really, because we can't start shoutin' and screamin' about Satan without the appropriate names (laughs)!"

How did you get the idea for your stagenames? Are they based on occult books or something?

"Well, I was the last one to get mine actually, because Abaddon has been a bit of a drunken animal and he always looked like he'd be beaten people up and hittin' things, so

was quite a bit longer before I actually discovered which name I wanted, so I picked somethin' outta greek mythology. I wanted something more relevant, not just like a name out of a book. I mean, it was the same reason when we got the "Calm before the storm" album together, when we got Mike Hickey and Jim Clare... The amount of laughs we had trying to think of names for them... and in the end it was just like Fuck it, keep your names, you're not fuckin' evil at all, you're both really skinny, you're really little, you're playing great, but you're NOT evil, you know... (laughs) So, it was absolutely pointless to come up with something like Astaroth and Behemoth or something crazy like that...it wouldn't have worked!"

Did you get influenced by BLACK SABBATH for the image?

"Yeah, in a big way, but we always had a frustration with BLACK SABBATH, cause any of the SABBATH songs go along great and then all of a sudden it goes *Oh God, help me!* And we thought fuck, we just wanted to take that a stage further, you know. We were watchin' the "Evil Dead" movies and the fuckin' "Exorcists" at that time and it's probably the same difference between a lot of the bands nowadays, who sing about blood and guts and gore and then look at some of the subject matter of bands like CARCASS and that, you know. They make some of the "Live like an angel" tracks or whatever seem not as hardcore anymore and I'm sure in another twenty years time, there

will be stuff out, that will make fuckin' CARCASS sound like fuckin' Radio One material! Everything moves on. I'm still going out and buying albums and I'm still getting heavier and heavier, which is why we started in the first place, because we just got sick of all the wimps. There was all this BOY GEORGE shit comin' into the charts and it was just time to put the punk back into metal, I think!"

When you were doing interviews back then, it was quite obvious that you never took the whole thing very serious, as you were mainly joking around and stuff, so did you have any trouble with die hard fans back then because of that?

"I think I know what you mean. We were deadly serious about what we were doing, but we had one reservation and that reservation was that on every thing we did, there had to be one thing, one personal thing for the band, so that we could sit back and breathe some fresh air! We could sit back and laugh at ourselves and I think that's the main thing that we tried to do throughout the whole VENOM career! We were fuckin' deadly serious about everything we did, but I mean, for example the "Welcome to hell" album. That was really serious, the way we did that album, but on the back I had to put the quote: *If this album is scratched, warped or defaced, please throw it away and buy a new one.* And that was a personal laugh for the band! That was to say, look, yes we are into what we are doing, the three members of VENOM are all fighters, are all drinkers, are all fuckin' violent people, but there has to be a laugh in it somewhere! It's entertainment, it's for everybody elses enjoyment! It's a case of like, right we give everybody else what they want, now we have stick a laugh on for us. We did the same on "Black Metal"...the track "Teacher's pet", that goes back to my very young days of being a STATUS QUO fan, you know. It's a case of, you get in a band, you wanna do it yourself, you wanna have a shot, so you gotta have a little bit of tongue and cheek, you can't do it all a hundred percent serious, because then I wouldn't make the fuckin' music in the first place, I'd dedicate myself to the Church of Satan, you know what I'm saying? This is entertainment, this is music and we do have messages and we do have things to say, we do have attitudes, just like everybody else. But at the same time we like a bloody good laugh! So, just for our own sanity really, I think we had to just sort of remind us that we were human (laughs)!"



"Abaddon, the Destroyer" was really quite apparent, you know. And Mantas just called himself that through the god of hell. The book that the name's out is the Satanic Bible... It

When and how did you get together with Neat Records back then? Did you send them the aforementioned demo...?

"No, I was working for Neat Records!"

And was it originally just a 7" deal for the "In league with Satan" single...?

"The demo you were speaking of, with Clive singing, I was able to talk the engineer into working for free and eh... talked everybody else into working for free with my charm and managed to get the band in the studio for a couple of hours for those three tracks. So, the only thing I really had to pay at the end of the day were the tape costs. When I first started working for Neat Records, there were a lot of great bands going around, like in the clubs around here, there was a band called RAVEN, a band called TYGERS OF PAN TANG... So, I said, *I'm going out in the night times and watch these great bands, let's get things movin'!* TYGERS OF PAN TANG got signed up, a band called FIST got signed up, a band called RAVEN got signed up and I was like fuckin' grabbin' the guys leg in Neat Records, saying *Fuck and what about my band?!* It just went on from there and Neat just grew and grew and grew and fuckin' signed everything up under the sun... But it was definitely a case of having the foot in the door (laughs)!"

So, was it originally just for the 7" then that you got signed by Neat?

"No no, we did the demo and then we came in and we paid for ourselves a second set of demos. And then what we did was, we sent a tape to a magazine called *Sounds*, where Geoff Barton was the editor. Geoff loved the tracks and he put the three tracks in his playlist and then he did a review for the WHITE SPIRIT single and at the end of it he put this thing saying *...and if Neat Records get its shit together it should release a single by the band called VENOM!* So, we approached them and said, *look it's time for a single!* So, we went in... We actually recorded *"Live like an angel"*, *"Angel Dust"* and *"In league with Satan"* and we weren't gonna use *"In league with Satan"* for the single, we're gonna have *"Angel Dust"* and *"Live like an angel"*, but the record company liked *"In league with Satan"*, so..."

Is it true, that "Welcome to hell" was recorded in just three days?

"Three days - recorded and mixed!"

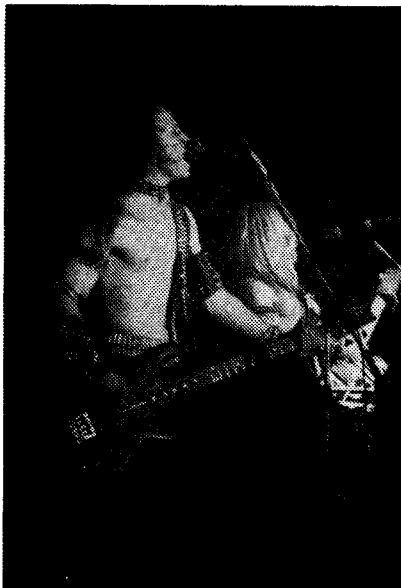
Unbelievable!

"Absolutely!"

And were the tracks from the 7" taken from that recording session...?

"No! We did them separately, we did them first. We came in and just did those three songs, but left off *"Angel Dust"* and then we got scheduled back in for a week, to come in and do the album and three days later we were presenting the tapes!"

Did you already play any shows back then?



"Just locally. We used to hire old church halls and blow them up... it was fuckin' great! But that's all we used to do, because we had to act, so to speak. A lot of the bands in the north-east around that time, you know, they had this thing in their head, that they had to pay their duce or something, they thought they had to go and play three-hundred-million-thousand shows before they could be anything... And we decided we were something from day one, so we weren't prepared to do the clubs... we weren't prepared into getting into all those typical arguments that

everybody else got into. We said fuck it! I mean, a lot of the early VENOM shows... what people don't realize is that we paid for it! The stage show costs so much and we weren't prepared to go on stage without the full stage show, so even if the promoter said *look, you only gonna get a thousand pounds* and it's gonna cost a few more to do the show, then we still put the show on! Because we wanted to watch everybody's faces, saying *what the fuck* (laughs)!"

Yeah, and you succeeded that way...

"Yeah!"

When did you go in to do "Black Metal" and why were there two different versions of the album circulating, one with "Bloodlust" and another one without...?

"I have no idea! I think that was just a record company thing. We wanted to keep all the singles separate from the albums. We always wanted to have an album and then a couple of singles, an album a couple of singles and so on... Because, we were writing that much material, nobody else was doing what we were doing, so we had so much to work with... And I think just through the cause of time, some country must have released *"Black Metal"* with *"Bloodlust"* on it as an extra... I mean, for example I'm just doing a deal now with the Japanese, with the latest CRONOS record and they are asking us for an extra track just to make it different from everybody else in the world. So, that's the way that sort of things happen, everybody just wants something a little bit special..."

When did you do the "Bloodlust" 7"? Was it before "Black Metal" or after?

"Oh, long before! In reality, we did the first session with the three songs (with Clive singing), we did a second set of demos, then we went in a third time to record the single, which were the three songs, then we went in to record *"Welcome to hell"*, we then went in to record *"Bloodlust"* / *"In nomine Satanas"* and then we went in to do *"Black Metal"*. So, it's all separate sessions."

But, there's also a track called "S.A.D.I.S.T.", which never got released...

"Yeah, *"Sadist (Mistress of the whip)"*, that's out on an album now called *"Skeletons in the closet"*. What we did was, a couple of years ago, in the old VENOM days, when we were doing records, we just went in the studio and recorded everything we had and in the days of vinyl, you only had maximum eighteen to twenty minutes a side and if you tried to put more music on than that, it just came back quiet! That's why all the early HALEN albums are fucking

less than half an hour long, the whole thing, you know. But nowadays we got CD's and don't have to worry about that, you got seventy minutes or something on there, so... All those tracks that we couldn't really fit onto the *"Black Metal"*, *"Welcome to hell"*, *"At war with Satan"* albums... what I did was, I compiled all those tracks

onto a CD, called *"Skeletons in the closet"* and released it. With *"Hounds of hell"*, which was recorded in the *"Black Metal"* session and there's another track called *"Shots shit"*, which was never meant to be a track, but because we were all sort of ex punk fans, I thought of it..."

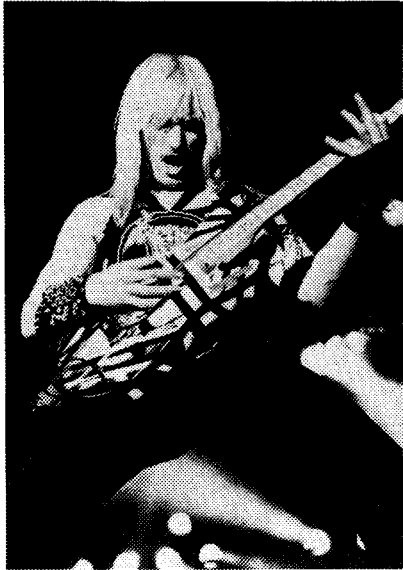
So, that is an official release and not a bootleg?!

"It's not a bootleg, no! It's an official release. It's got all the stuff on, that we didn't get a chance to release at the time, I just thought, die hard fans would be interested in hearing about the songs that we nearly were throwing away, you know."

On "Black Metal" you already had the preview of "At war with Satan", so did you already have the material finished for that album...?

"You won't believe it, we had *"At war with Satan"* before we even started to record *"Welcome to hell"*. We had *"Possessed"* before we even started to record *"Welcome to hell"*, we had everything figured out. That's how you can see the *"Possessed"* lyrics on *"Welcome to hell"*, *"Black Metal"* and *"At war with Satan"* already. We had the whole thing figured out from day one, we always said we got four studio albums and a live album and then whatever next...!"

The whole packaging of "At war with Satan" was really impressive, so did VENOM make so much money back then, that Neat were easily able to do so?



"No (laughs)! That's another story... No, it got to a stage where we were just putting a foot down. We said, *it will be packaged like this* and it was the only way we could do that, because what happened was, we saw some advertising that was done by the record company and we totally didn't like it, so we had to say, *look, here's the entire package...* I mean, there's some crazy mistakes, like on the back of *"Welcome to hell"* and *"Black Metal"* it says artwork by Magda, whoever this Magda is... I'm the guy who stook the pen on paper, I drew that thing, you know. I drew *"Welcome to hell"* and *"Black Metal"* and yet I didn't get a fucking credit for it! *"At war with Satan"* was *"The book of Armageddon"*... I mean, I've got in the house about another hundred pages, which is the entire story of *"At war with Satan"* and it was supposed to go out with a book as well. But it never did. We wanted the album cover to look as much like a bookcover as it possibly could, that was the whole reason for the sort of leatherbound sleeve etc. But then again, we went over to America and we saw the *"At war with Satan"* sleeve and it was just a plain sleeve, we went to Brazil and it was a fucking fotocopy of a plain sleeve (laughs)... Same with the *"Black Metal"* cover. The original cover... you couldn't actually read the words *"Black Metal"*, because they were embossed into the cover, but then a couple of prints later, all of a sudden, you got this big fucking white *"Black Metal"* on the front, which to me spoiled it, you know. It's the same what they've done with METALLICA's last album, they've done the same thing, they embossed the sort of two different shades of black, which is the same what we did on the *"Black Metal"* cover."

After the *"At war with Satan"* album, there's been all these "Assault" releases, the "French", "American", "Canadian" and "German Assault" if I remember correctly...

"Bollocks!" I still have no idea of how many of those were actually released. We officially agreed on the *"American Assault"*, *"Canadian Assault"* and the *"Japanese Assault"* and everything else just happened and we had no idea what was happening..."

But there's also been different versions of songs on some of them...

"Have there?!"

Yeah!

"See, I'm not even aware of that, it's really hard to keep on track..."

So, did you re-record some of your old tracks sometime?

"No, it must have been demos... it's strange. There's one thing where I think it could be... we did a *Radio One* session in England a good few years ago and we did *"Black Metal"*, *"Bloodlust"*, *"Nightmare"* and something else... I think it might be those... There's another CD called *"Radio Hell"*

and it's got WARFARE and some other bands on and that's all just from the *Radio One* sessions with Tommy Vance."

Additionally to those "Assault" releases, there's also been several different formats of the "Die hard", "Warhead", "Nightmare" and "Manitou" singles - why didn't you save those tracks for the next album?

"Because we had bloody more tracks, we had plenty songs... The way we loved things was, getting into the studio, do some work and then go out and do a few gigs and then go back into the studio and do some more work, it was a creative continuation there...you see."

In 1985 there's been this double album called "From hell to the unknown", which featured the "Welcome to hell" record and some other stuff, including the track "Senile decay"...

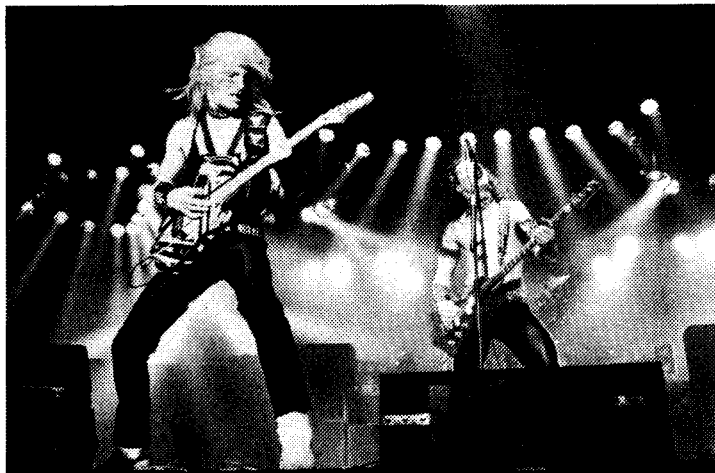
"Senile decay" should never have been released on that, that should have been kept until the "Skeletons in the closet" album. I have no idea how that got leaked out! That was my track that I wrote, that was an experimental thing..."

Was that album official?

"It was sort of official, but not official for the band. It was as far as the record company was concerned, they could do anything they want with those songs. So, if they wanted to sort of wrap them up in Christmas paper and fucking throw them in the street, they could! But we had no say in that...I didn't see the point really, I think they were trying to sell two albums with one new song!"

Would you agree that your London, Hammersmith show (which you also released as a live video) was one of the biggest events in the VENOM history?

"Ehh...no! For the simple reason that I thought there were better gigs! I really do! I mean, from all the gigs we've recorded it was the most prestigious gig, because it was London Hammersmith! But the night before, we played Birmingham and it was twenty times better and I would also say that the french and german gigs were fuckin' better. I don't... personally, as the person standing on stage looking at it, I don't think it was as good as what it had been, I wish



we'd recorded the Birmingham show... I mean, that would've been more of a highlight to me! The kids were leaping all over the place, fuckin' stagedivin', it was just manic, it was brilliant! At Hammersmith everybody was sittin' down... we had the wrong people at the wrong places... there's only like old men sitting in the frontrow and all the die hard fans were jumping up and down in the back, but you couldn't see them. So, the whole thing was fucked from

our point of view, but as far as the show went, it was pretty good!"

Yeah, it was used for several bootlegs and single B-sides...

"Yeah, we just got fuckin' bootlegged the fuck...! I think, I heard a recording of something called *"The official bootleg"*, which was not official and it doesn't even sound like it's running at the right speed... Whoever taped it, on whatever kind of shit machine, it's running really slow and I turned it off after a couple of minutes - I can't fuckin' listen to this, it is terrible!"

What do you think was the main problem with the "Possessed" album, that it didn't live up to the expectations that people had in VENOM back then?

"I don't think everybody had enough input, because when we came to record the album, nobody had any songs apart from me! And that's not the way we used to do things... Mantas was already off on his little fuckin' trip and what we used to do was, me and Mantas used to hook up and we were writing material, then would get together with Abaddon and rehearse it. But everybody was off, being fuckin' "

rockstars, so it didn't happen like that. So, when we came to do the album, everybody was looking at me, saying *what have you got?* And I just felt like... well, fuck this! So, we didn't get the chance to rehearse the tracks as well as we should have, we didn't get the chance to play any of the tracks live, which we always used to try to do before we recorded them, at least set-up some kind of mock gigs...so we could like...we found out mistakes like with *"Seven gates..."*, I mean the studio version isn't quite as fast as the comfortable speed that that song should be... maybe more on the Hammersmith video... it's a bit slower on the single. It's by mistakes like that, that you learn! So, if you can play the songs through enough, you find out what speed the track wants to be. But we didn't get the chance to do that with

"Possessed"? In my book, for me, the *"Possessed"* album would've been the demos and then we could've went and rehearsed it and recorded it again!"

Did the live double album "Eine kleine Nachtmusik" basically come out to satisfy the needs of all your disappointed old fans again?

"I don't think they were so much disappointed... what it was was, we were torn in those days, if VENOM would've come out now, it would've been a lot easier, because everybody would be like... *oh yeah, death*

metal...cool! When we were coming out, everybody was saying, *what the fuck is this shit?* So, we were like between all these professional people telling us what to do and us wanting to do what we want to do! But we shouldn't have listened to all the professional people telling us what to do, because one of the first things that was fuckin' the band up was, everybody wanted VENOM to do this big long extensive tour... and we did that in Germany, in Europe and

that... and what we did was... I think we did about fuckin' four, five gigs in Germany... all little gigs with only a couple of pyros... I mean, the show wasn't there, the atmosphere wasn't there, the job hasn't been done! That was at the turning point when Mantas was saying *ahh, fuck this and this is shit!* So, everybody was losing faith then and what we should've done is, we just should've done one gig in Germany, made it the biggest thing you've ever seen and blew the fuckin' place up and left! Which is exactly how we started doing things. But it was really difficult to know who to listen to back then, cause the whole scene was new and we tried to listen to people who've done it before, which was a big mistake! We shouldn't have stopped doing our big gigs, which is what we're doing now. We did that one gig in June 1995 at the Waldrock and there's also a controversy about the Belgium gig and it says, there's not gonna be all the pyros, I'm not gonna get all this backlines, so I just pulled it immediately! If it's not the biggest show people have seen, I'm not doing it! The only way the VENOM show will ever get back together is with the full production, that means the fuckin' bombs... everything!"

Who came up with the german title for the live album?

"*Eine kleine Nachtmusik*"...well, we always used to say that! It was one of our jokes. Everybody else might think this is a fuckin' noise, but we like it, you know. We always used to say, *yeah, I could put me headphones on at night and put "Welcome to hell" on and fall asleep and everybody was saying NO WAY!* (laughs)! So, there was this album out called "*Eine kleine Nachtmusik*" and we thought, *yeah, let's do that!* For the first time, let's just plainly steal something! Because we've been coming up with so much original stuff for years, that we decided to steal something from a great artist and just annoy everybody (laughs)!"

Did people outside of Germany get the joke about the album title?

"I definitely think the Germans did, without a doubt... We've got a great response of them, because a lot of the hardcore fans were like, *yeah cool, it is...it is nightmusic, yeah!*"

What kind of problems did you have with Mantas back then and do you regret that you did the "Calm before the storm" album after he was out of the band?

"I regret that the "*Calm before the storm*" album was done with Abaddon actually... I regret that it was a VENOM album, cause it should've just been a CRONOS album again, basically. After the live album, we should've fucked the VENOM thing up completely, because Mike and Jim are exceptional guitarists who don't have the ability to... you know, they are players, these guys like to sort of pride themselves on what notes they can play and how well they can play it, where as sort of the Mantas style is more about how much noise you can make out of your guitar and how far you can throw it across the stage! It's completely different! So, when it comes to the "*Calm...*" album, the way the whole approach came to it was, I was wantin' to get a bit more professional, because I've got these two guitarists and Tony didn't wanna rehearse enough, I thought his drums were pretty sloppy... but I really think we should have disbanded then... If you listen to the "*Dancing in the fire*" or "*Rock n Roll disease*" albums, it's more of a continuation from the "*Calm...*" thing and "*Calm...*" wasn't VENOM really, it wasn't a VENOM album..."

Was that one of the reasons why you left the band back then?

"No, the reason I left the band was, after we did the "*Calm before the storm*" album, Abaddon was playing tourmanager with a band called ATOMKRAFT and gettin'

really pally with ATOMKRAFT, so we had a situation here while we had an american guitarist and another guitarist, sitting here doing nothing with me, and we had a drummer who was halfway through Europe and fuckin' Poland with some band that we didn't even know, so we said, *fuck him, let's get a new drummer!* Then I moved over to the States and got a new drummer and there we went. So, really it's



just a case of I wasn't hanging around, I didn't see why I should hang around for this guy... he was obviously more interested in being a tourmanager than a drummer!"

You once said, that VENOM won't continue if some of the old members would leave the band, but there's still a band around called VENOM with a totally different line-up, so what do you think about that?

"Well, that's ATOMKRAFT, isn't it? That's all it is... I mean, the thing is... VENOM should have either disbanded or they should've gotten a singer who'd nobody had ever heard, because all they'd ever sounded like to me is ATOMKRAFT. I mean, the drummer and the guitarist are

irrelevant! It doesn't seem to come across that Mantas and Abaddon are playing, it's more like, *oh it's that fuckin' Tony Dolan from ATOMKRAFT singing!* They should've left it alone... I mean, Mantas released a solo album and that just shit the bed and I know Abaddon made a few contacts to a few people to make a solo album and all turned them down, so..."

Have you ever thought about doing no music at all anymore or did you start your own project straight away then?

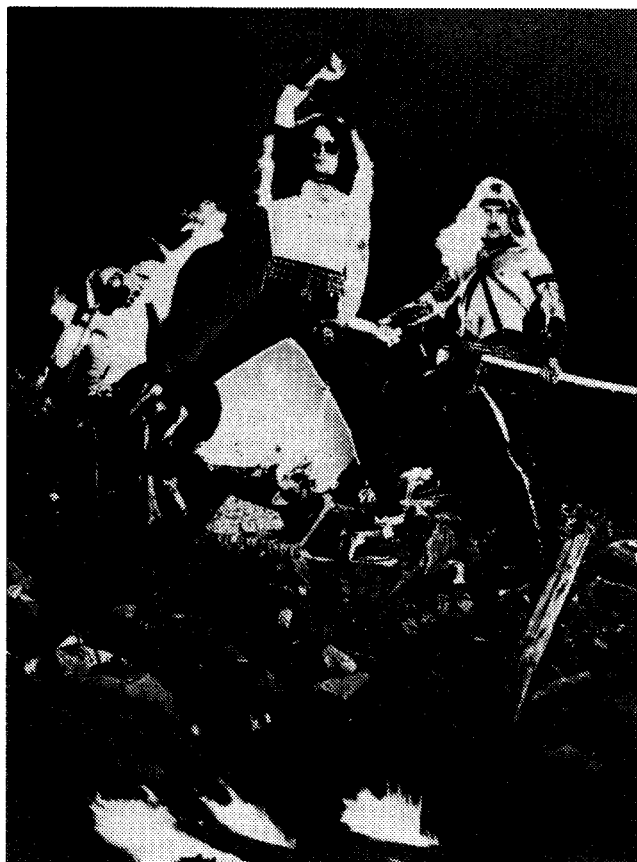
"No, we got the "*Dancing in the fire*" album runnin' straight away. We've all been doing things in between, but I've been writing songs since I've been about fuckin' twelve, so it's really difficult to stop..."

To be honest with you, I never heard the CRONOS albums, except for the compilation entitled "Venom", so would you like to comment on each of the CRONOS albums maybe?

"Well, firstly what I'd like to say is, the whole point of the CRONOS "*Venom*" album was that I wanted to... When I got together with Mark Wharton, the drummer from CATHEDRAL, basically we just got together for a jam session, just to see how things went... I've met him before and I've seen him live and thought he's a really heavy drummer, a little fat bastard, you know, brilliant... just what you need (laughs)! The last thing you need is a poser behind the drumkit... some little fat drunk always turns out to be the best man for the job! He's a lot younger than I am and when he was at school, he used to love the VENOM albums, so we started playing some of the VENOM songs and he was fucking great! He was brilliant! So, while we were in the studio, we layed them down and then the record company came up with the idea of releasing the songs, but also putting three of what would be the heaviest tracks on each of the CRONOS records... So, people who were maybe unfamiliar with the CRONOS releases (like yourself, as you've just been said) would hear this and then maybe go out and give these records a spin. Because that's been the main problem... it's a word of mouth thing, you know. The VENOM thing travelled so quickly word of mouth... I also found out through other people, because it's difficult to make this survey myself, I found out through people who were asking the questions for me, they were asking the people: *Oh, have you heard the new CRONOS album? Oh, I've heard it isn't very good... Have you listened to it? No!* See, what I'm saying? And that's the kind of situation you're getting into, people are dammin' your record and haven't even heard it yet!"

Have the CRONOS albums ever been released on CD?

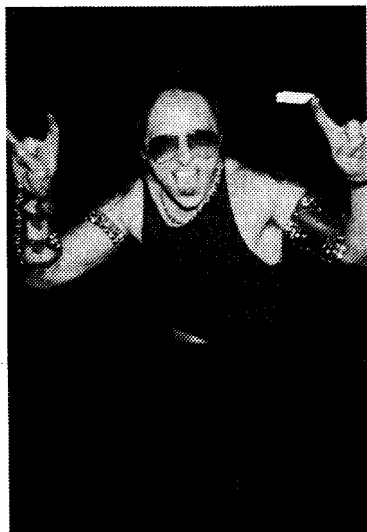
"Oh yeah! Everything's out on CD! So really, it's just a case of sticking this together, so people can hear like a 90's recording of some of the classics, some of my old songs that



I did with the VENOM boys and also some of the new stuff and maybe think, *well that's ok or that's fuckin' crap* and we're testing the water. I've been out and we've been doing gigs with CRONOS and kids came up, we did Wales... and we were playing VENOM songs the whole night and I didn't even sing them, because the kids in the crowd were on stage singing them for us. But that's what they wanted to hear, so I said, *well fuck it, if that's what you wanna hear, that's what you get!* It was great! So, this CD is a bit of a water tester you know, it's like, look - if you wanna hear CRONOS stuff, great! But if you want the VENOM stuff as well, then here it is! Give people what they want, if they don't want it, they don't have to fuckin' buy it (laughs)!"

Would you agree that people still connect your person a lot more with VENOM than the current VENOM band?

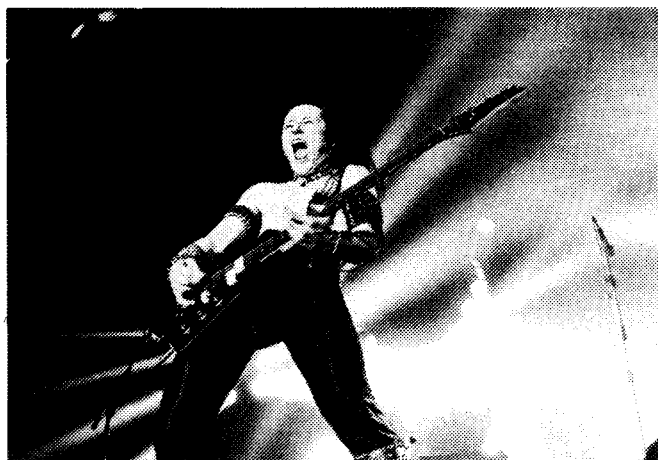
"Yeah, that's the thing! I've been spending the last five years, trying to run away from the VENOM thing and I think that's probably... I started to think about it, kinda like... *hold on a minute, everybody else is jumping on it, you know...* you see a magazine, it's got fuckin' VENOM on it and it's got my photo next to it, so instead of fightin' it, I go for it! And plus for this being back with the VENOM boys, we are gonna get some gigs together this year as well, also there's been talk of going in and recording some new material. We haven't actually started doing any of that yet, but there's certainly talk of it, so... I got plenty new material to throw out, but I want to rehearse it this time! If we're not



going to rehearse it and then say, *right, great...let's do the album, I'm just gonna say fuck you! That'll be another "Possessed" if we do that!*

Do you think you still reach some of your old fans with the CRONOS material?

"Oh, definitely! I know it by the amount of letters I get! We have the address on the CD's and people can write to us... I mean, I've had people saying to us, *that this is the next stage from VENOM and how can METALLICA go a little bit commercial and when you guys do it, you get*



slayed...VENOM sort of went slightly commercial with the "Calm before the storm" album and everybody was like *what the fuck...* And METALLICA go commercial over night and everybody accepts it, so... What works for one, does not work for the other!"

How did you get together with MASSACRE from Florida and BLITZKRIEG from the UK to sing on their releases?

"I knew all the bands. When you travel, you get to meet all these people and I knew Rick Rozz from MASSACRE really well and he phoned us up and said *we're doing the album for Earache* and they always wanted to do "Warhead"... And I said, *fuckin' great!* So, he said *will you sing on it?* And I said *yes!* So, I flew in, I flew to Florida and did it! It was great! I had a great time overthere...!"

And BLITZKRIEG?

"The BLITZKRIEG boys were here, they were at *Neat* and they were upstairs recording and I walked up when they were doing "Countess Bathory", so I said *ey, where's the mike?*"

Did you do any other sessionwork besides these two?

"Yeah, I've done WARPATH! (argh, stupid me...Ed.) They did a real punk version of "Black Metal" which is great, I loved it! Plus, instead of doing the "c'mon", they did "Hau rein" (laughs)!"

How do you judge all these VENOM tribute releases and coversongs these days?

"Bollocks!"

Did you get to hear all of them?

"Yeah!"

Do you feel honoured because of that or is it just...

"Yeah, I must admit... mmmyy is the fuckin' highest form of flattery, isn't it? So, I should be really happy about it. I tell you what, you know the "In the name of Satan"?"

Yeah...

"I think it's a bit lame, because everybody is just plainly copying the stuff. The only track that's different is "Warhead" and that's sort of a NINE INCH NAILS version of "Warhead" isn't it? The bands are

trying too hard to sound like VENOM...they even make stupid mistakes like the guy from PARADISE LOST...They did "In nomine Satanas" and there's the line "Rock'n Roll damnation" and he didn't wanna sort of say "Rock'n Roll damnation", because he thought it sounded a bit softcore, so he decided to sing "Fuckin' damnation" and I thought *oh, that's pretty mean and nasty, but what you've done pal is, you've just changed the whole meaning of the song!* Because I was damning Rock'n Roll and he was damning *fuckin'!* So, the guy must be celibate! He must just wank or something, he must never had fucking sex if he's damning *fuckin'!* I love fucking, I fuck every day! Stupid bastard! So anyway, they're trying too hard, but there's a bootleg version from Sweden..."

"Promoters of the third world war!"

"That's fucking brilliant!"

Yeah, I was totally surprised to hear that version from PINK FLAMINGOS..."Live like an angel!"...

"That was brilliant, that was...ahhh! When I was growing up, I was a big DAVID BOWIE fan and shit, you know... and ROLLING STONES and all that...and to hear "Live like an angel" and "Poison"...! I mean "Poison" is a bit like HANOI ROCKS, sort of "Poitisaan", it's really like laid back glam shit, you know, fuckin' brilliant! Because they've tried to put their own stamp on it, they've done their version of it. Like, I know you said, you're not familiar with the two previous CRONOS releases, but we've done "Bad reputation" by THIN LIZZY, we've done "Let's spend the night together" by the ROLLING STONES, we've done "Love is infectious" by JAPAN and we've done "Loss of control" by VAN HALEN! But none of them are trying to sound like the originals, they sound like fuckin' VENOM, you know. For "Let's spend the night together" I had a girl doing some of the backing vocals, you know, I mean...the ROLLING STONES did that song, BOWIE did that song and neither used girls on the backing vocals, so... You gotta put your own stamp on things. There's nothing worse than hearing a song that sounds exactly like the original! I don't think there's something clever in copying something to the latter, put your own idea into it, your own interpretation. I'm a big PETER GABRIEL fan as well and when you listen to his records and go and see him live, there's songs that he plays live, that are completely different to the records. And he says, that is the reason, that the songs are never finished! He

Markthalle Hamburg, Klosterwall 9-21		Dienstag
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says, he's never ever happy, he'll never put a song on a record and say, *right that's finished!* Because when it comes to do it live, he's come up with new ideas, a new end, a new middle section, a new riff starting the song and a different speed, you know, different attitude! So, I'd rather go with my imagination and let my mind do the work, rather than bust your nut and trying to sound like... you know, why make a copy of something that somebody else has already done and sound like that when you can buy the original, which is in nine times out of ten better?!"

I always liked that swedish tribute album a lot more than the Gun Records version...

"Brilliant!"

Because I thought that "In the name of Satan" was totally overrated because of the bands that are on it...

There's so many popular acts featured and people are praising it for that fact instead of the music they've come up with...

"Yeah, that's political... But speaking for me personally, I think the bootleg rules (laughs)! I really do! But there's another one out called EXIT-13..."

But that's not a tribute album...

"But it's got the *"Black Metal"* cover, with a smokin' joint and all that... fucking great (laughs)!"

Would you agree that a lot of the regained popularity of VENOM in the 90's is because of nowadays black metal bands?

"Yeah...the norwegian thing...yeah obviously!"

Do you like their music and attitude in general?

"Yeah! I'm going for that! I think some of the **DIABOLOS RISING** stuff is great... I like all that... **DARK TRANQUILITY**, **CRADLE OF FILTH**... I like it, I really do! I think a lot of it is crap as well, but I mean, it's early days for this new scene, it's only been going for the last few years maybe... But there's been some really interesting stuff, I'm really interested in what's going on! I got a phonecall four years ago of Abaddon, saying *do you wanna reform VENOM?* We've been talking about it for the last four years, so it's kind of coming at the right time, with the big interest in sort of all the black metal in Norway and in bands overhere and America..."

But do you really think that all these bands are really original? To me most of them sound like VENOM or BATHORY...

"Yeah, that's the problem... but if you go to a shop and you wanna buy a bottle of beer and they haven't got it, you go to different shops, see if you can get your beer, you know...and if you can't find your beer, then eventually you settle for a different one. And if these people can't get their music, somebody else has to come up with it, you know, there isn't a new **VENOM** release, there isn't a new **EXODUS** release, so these people are going out and creatin' it themselves, which is obvious! When we did the **VENOM** thing, all we had to listen to, all our heroes like **JUDAS PRIEST** and **BLACK SABBATH**, in the early 80's were shit, were dead, they weren't even giggin' anymore! So, we came out and say... it's the oldest **VENOM** cliché we used to say, we throw every band into a ball and mix it up and there you have it! You've got the **KISS** stagershow, you've got the sort of **BLACK SABBATH** attitude, you've got the **JUDAS PRIEST** studs and chains, you know... you got the punk attitude, spitting, fighting, fuckin' getting out your head. People wanted it, we supplied it! So, if people aren't getting out and making their albums and doing the right thing, then somebody else is gonna come and do it! Cause if people stop doing black metal, than maybe fucking **TAKE THAT** will get big (laughs)!"

When you got together with Mantas and Abaddon again for the Waldrock show, did you really have the same fun doing it again...

"Yeah, it was great!"

But a lot of people have accused you of just doing it for the money and not for the fun aspect...

"Well, the money didn't really come into it... I said, if the whole stage show's there, I'll be there and that's gotta be the bottom line for everything now. You know, I'm quite happy with what I'm doing right now with the **CRONOS** band, I even wanna go out and do a tour, I wanna do some italian gigs and some german and some french and I've got an english thing waiting, so I'm gonna try to put **CRONOS** on the road as well, but for **VENOM** to happen, it's the full stagershow! It's the bombs, the lights, the fuckin' stage gear, the studs, the boots, the fuckin' everything! And that's what people will get! But there's gonna be some **CRONOS** gigs



Have the CRONOS albums also been released in Japan with extra tracks?

"No, I fuckin' told them they couldn't have any (laughs)! They've just asked me, about the **CRONOS "Venom"** one here, because the track *"Let's spend the night together"*, which I said is a **ROLLING STONES** song and we made that for a video... I don't want that to be released anywhere, but they were saying *right, we'll have the recording for that for the CRONOS "Venom" album* and I said, well it's not a venomous track, so... bollocks, you're



as well hopefully...And I've got some videos on the release soon. It's called *"Access all areas"*, it's 45 minutes long and it's like everything I've been doing for the last five years! There's american shows, there's like videos full of gids, tits out and everything, fucking dope smoking... the usual life, you know...We called it *"Access all areas"*, because you get to see... you know, there's live gigs, there's stuff happening in the studio...everything...Kinda like 45 minutes of what the fuck (laughs)!"

I recently recognized that some of the earlier VENOM albums have been re-issued in Japan with several extra tracks...

"Yeah...! See, the japs, that's what I said before, they always want something special, because what happens is, the japs are always the last to get their deals together, they are the slowest people in the music business! England and Europe and America always release their stuff months before Japan and what then happens is, everybody imports into Japan, so all of a sudden the japs are saying, *fuck, if we release this record, we're not gonna sell it, because the imports have went nuts!* So, they want extra tracks, to have something special, so that people then buy theirs. If they work a bit faster, they wouldn't have to do that..."

not getting it!"

You've chosen all the heavier CRONOS tracks for the compilation, so is that the direction you are heading to?

"Well, if you listen to the three songs of *"Trunvirate"*, you know, *"Know evil"*, *"Babylon"* and *"Ye of little faith"*, you'll hear that the production has slightly changed, because we're back to a three-piece, with Mike Hickey on guitar and Mark Wharton on drums and it is going that way. When I was sitting there with two guitarists, working on songs, we'd come up with a guitar lick and then the other guy would say, here's a nice harmony and it would work great, so we'd go for it. But now that we only have one guitar...hehehe, we're not gonna put that many harmonies in, you know. It's called heads down, meet you at the end, you know! It's getting heavier again...oops! (laughs)! It feels better I must admit...it's one of the things I've always said, there's a lot of music you can sit back and listen to and enjoy and then there's a lot of music you can get up and play and enjoy, they are not necessarily the same. I mean, like for example *"Seven gates"*, it's a pain in the ass to play, but it's a great track to listen to, now *"At war with Satan"*, the section we play, fuckin' great to play it, but it's mayhem to listen to, you know. We're all like great friends with Phil Anselmo from **PANTERA**... I just got the **DOWN** CD mailed to me... and then there's **CORROSION OF**

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0 1 8 3 *

CONFORMITY...everyone's getting heavier! I love it! Have
you ever heard of a band called REIGN?"

The english one? Yeah...

"They've gotten pretty heavy, so everybody seems to be in
chunk mood, guitar only rules!"

Is it true that you've worked with CRADLE OF FILTH?

"I did a spoken part on their new album, you know like in
"At war with Satan"...a dark silhouette of a creature... I did
something like that on their album and I've got a thing
happening with the DIABOLOS RISING people for the
video "Satanic propaganda", so I might be doing
something with them as well..."

So, you are really busy...

"Yeah! I mean, the thing with bands like CRADLE is, I was
interested in meeting them, because they are very young and
I just wanted to see where they were at with their heads, to
see if they're taking a piss or whether they are serious...Dan,
the singer, it seems he really knows where he's coming
from, so all power to them! He's really into what he's doing
and that's what I was interested in. It's like what you were
saying before, you didn't realize if it was a joke or what was
happening and that's what I was trying to figure out!"

Ok, that's all.

"Cool! Thank for the interview! And don't forget to tell
everyone there's a new CRONOS video coming out and
"Triumvirate" should be out by the time you read this! And
we'll be getting some kicking going down! Cheers Frank!"

Discography:
(incomplete)

VENOM:
(with Cronos)

- * In league with Satan / Live like an angel 7"
(1982)
- * Blood Lust / In nomine Satanas 7"
(1982)
- * Welcome to Hell LP
(1981)
- * Black Metal LP
(1982)

- * Die hard / Acid Queen / Bursting out 12"
(1983)
- * Warhead / Lady Lust / 7 gates of Hell 12"
(1983)
- * At war with Satan LP
(1984)
- * Manitou / Dead of the night / Woman 12"
(1984)
- * Canadian assault MLP
(1984)
- * From Hell to the unknown DoLP
(1985)
- * Nightmare / Satanachist / F.O.A.D. / Warhead (Live) 12"
(1985)
- * Possessed LP
(1985)
- * Hell at Hammersmith - Alive in '85 EP
Witching hour / Teachers pet / Poison
(1985)
- * Eine kleine Nachtmusik DoLP
(1986)
- * Official Bootleg LP
(1986)
- * The singles 80 - 86 LP
(1986)
- * German assault MLP
- * French assault MLP
- * American assault MLP
- * Japanese assault MLP
(1987)
- * Calm before the storm LP
(1987)
- * Skeletons in the closet CD
(1993)

CRONOS:

- * Dancing in the fire LP
- * Rock'n Roll Disease LP
- * Venom LP
- * Triumvirate LP

Frank Stöver

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DEMOS

ABLAZE MY SORROW Demo '95

Looking around for more melodic death'n'black metal of the new school from Sweden? Then go for ABLAZE MY SORROW to complete your collection! These three songs might not contain the most outstanding Gothenburg death ever, but I promise you won't regret having bought this demo at all! I would love to hear more actual material from this young outfit, but in the meantime mail out \$6 (should do) to:

ABLAZE MY SORROW
c/o Brorsson
Pelle Mohins Väg 7
S - 31140 Falkenberg
Sweden

Leif Jensen

AMSVARTNER Demo 1 '95

Sweden is still a melting pot for brutal music and the amount of new releases never seems to stop! AMSVARTNER from Bygdea for example is an extremely young bunch with an average age of 13 - 15 (!!!), but they already managed to deliver some high quality stuff on their 3 song debut demo which they sent us here! Their infosheet consequently demands: "GIVE US A REVIEW!" Ok, shouldn't be a big problem, cause this is cool and really aggressive stuff, productionwise even with a little bit more dominating bass sound than what their countrymen usually come up with. Due to the fact that there's no lyrics included I'm a little bit uncertain if they see themselves as a black metal band or not, but judging them by the songtitles ("Lord Blackstorm", "The halls of infinity" and "Winter shadows") and their type of music, there would obviously be a possibility. But no... wait a minute, there's talk of death (!) metal in the info and I just discovered the symbol of "Thor's hammer" inside their democover, so I guess they are more in the viking direction. Can't believe that they are only around since early '95 and yet were able to release this quality tape with a pro-printed cover (layout/printing wise like NAGLFAR's demo by the way...), so \$5 (Europe) / \$6 (world) would be a fine investment, although they are still lacking in the originality department. But hey... this is only the beginning! Write to:

Daniel Nygaard
Box 5075
S - 91824 Bygdea
Sweden

Frank Stöver

ANGIZIA Kissarna Demo '95

This austrian based band wants to make sure not to be labeled as black metal, cause they consider their material as "individual folklore music" and recently got picked up by Napalm Records for a split-CD with AMESTIGON. Well, it's obvious that the emphasis has to focus on "individual", cause an ordinary folkore music lover would have a tough time with these five tracks, I'll bet my ass! Anyway, some of the stuff was really able to enchant my senses and it sounds incredibly unique already, although Tharaz told me that these songs are quite old by now... Himm, the majority of the demo consists of folkore elements with a grim sounding (almost black metal like) voice and some other metal elements, such as drums and guitars. Luckily ANGIZIA didn't try to come up with something in the vein of STORM, ISENGARD or the likes and their new stuff may even sound more promising, as there's supposed to be involved some more unusual instruments. Hopefully they won't drift away too much from this direction here, cause they got a really balanced mixture

already. \$6 for a simple but nicely packaged tape to:

ANGIZIA
c/o Tharaz
2164 Wildendümbach 31
Austria



ANTAGONIST Mosalk Demo MCD

Even my hometown got infected by the more extreme side of metal, but the buddies from ANTAGONIST luckily know to impress with their first demo MCD "Mosalk". 6 fine tracks have been recorded and were packaged pretty professional in a good looking and unique way. The production is a little bit thin, but that doesn't really matter, cause the sound is still good and compliments their musical abilities. ANTAGONIST play pretty complex, yet really aggressive sounding death / thrash, with vocals in the vein of Martin van Drunen. The band comes across really tight and offers some well structured, interesting songs. Only the almost Bay Area like backing shouts in "Nervous system error" doesn't really seem to fit and should be avoided in the future. Besides that, a recommendable debut release (which is limited to 500 copies by the way) and definitely worth the 18,-DM / \$16 (ppd.). Write to:

Michael Simon
Köhnenweg 12
28277 Bremen
Germany

Frank Stöver

BLOOD RITUAL At the mountains of madness Demo (Moribund Records)

This is a real death metal monster from the U.S. of A. Brutal midpaced ultraheaviness with some slower/doomier and some faster/raging ingredients in the vein of the early days of death metal, connected to bands like AUTOPSY, SUFFOCATION and the likes. The vocalist is gargling his guts out of his rotten corpse, sick in every way and nevertheless aggressive. Recommendable to die hard deathers (and to you Frank). Ask for prices.

Moribund Records
P.O. Box 77314
Seattle, WA 98177-0314
U.S.A.

Thomas Georg

BRUTAL EXPOSURE Death was always near Demo '95/'96

Belgiums BRUTAL EXPOSURE come up with primitive, most amateurish, bad sounding death metal (?) with poor lyrics and consequently manage to receive some tremendously brutal exposure in VOICES! Sorry... unknown price:

BRUTAL EXPOSURE
c/o Lenaerts Kris
Meerledorp 25B
2328 Meerle
Belgium

Leif Jensen

BRUTAL PEACE Above and beyond Demo '95

Wow, what a short but massively deadly metal portion! The Californian trio BRUTAL PEACE is out to make your ears bleed with a perfectly produced thrash'n'death 3-tracker, where they partly bring SEPULTURA and MALEVOLENT CREATION (musically!) to my mind, but still mix the aggressive riffing with moshable passages. The backing vocals even sound like Jeff (CARCASS) at "Heartwork" days and so add to their spectrum of power. Fat sound, a cool outro and lots of "fucks" (...) in their active lyrics should make you mail out some bucks (\$6 ?) to this brutal outfit! Yeah, free speech (for the dumb!)...

BRUTAL PEACE
P.O. Box 571223
Tarzana, CA 91357
U.S.A.

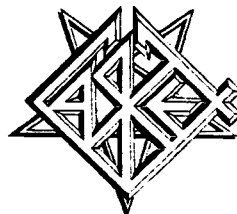
Leif Jensen

CANOPIC JAR Vision ? Demo II '95

"Progressive extreme metal"? For CANOPIC JAR (huh?!) that means thrash and death with a lot of fundamental metal riffing and major melody. Quite enjoyable, but due to the bad sound, uninspired vocalwork and partly missing musical tightness, I prefer to wait for their next release. Just drop a fair blank tape and two IRC's to:

CANOPIC JAR
c/o Ben Tremery
14 Pemberton Rd.
Bridgehill
Consett, Co. Durham
DH8 8JJ
England

Leif Jensen



CASKET Meant to be dead Promotape '96

It's weird to read all the reviews that Germany's CASKET have gotten for their previous demo "Endtime", cause there's been comparisons to old CARCASS, INCANTATION and ENTOMBED. To me, all these bands doesn't really have a lot in common, except for the fact that they could be labeled as pioneers of the brutal death metal scene. And I guess that's what all those people actually meant... CASKET have this certain feel for raw and basic old school death metal, which sounds pretty honest to me. Also the 5 songs on their new promotape "Meant to be dead" are again in that direction, so don't expect any influences from current trends here. If you are still looking for the good old metal of death, you should invest 10,-DM / \$7 here. The sound and packaging is also good, so what are you still waiting for?! Write to:

CASKET
c/o Schorsch Gerriets
Eifelstr. 17
72766 Reutlingen
Germany

Frank Stöver



CHORONZEN Demo

I'm lacking in informations about this demo here quite heavily, but at least I can tell you that it is a side-project of the Massachusetts based gothic act VEIL OF THORNS. The material featured on this tape is very industrialized and I would consider it as extremely unique, although I personally can't stand this musical genre at all! The project's only member Peter E. Williams, who's a great artist as well by the way (I used some of your stuff for this issue without permission, hope you don't mind, Peter! - Ed.), is playing around with lots of distorted vocals and effects to come up with really intense shit here! The overall basic feel of the music could be labelled as black metal with a strong emotional input and a Crowley inspired concept. Cool artwork and lyric-booklet included, but unfortunately no price mentioned. But you can experience the difference by writing to:

CHORONZEN
58 Selkirk Rd. # 2
Brookline, MA 02146
U.S.A.



CIANIDE Rage War Demo 1996

It's really sad to see how straight and brutal old school death metal has to suffer these days and Chicago's CIANIDE is a perfect example for it... Nowadays it seems that the original feeling for this kinda music has totally been lost by bands labelling themselves as death metal! And if I see that acts like GOREFEST or CANNIBAL CORPSE are still marked in this direction I'm almost ready to puke! CIANIDE, who did two albums before their label went bankrupt, are back with a really convincing 5 track demo these days and I can only recommend this one to all the TRUE death metal maniacs outthere! Musically this is really good, totally raw produced stuff with midpaced riffs somewhere between old MASTER / FROST and Canadas legend SLAUGHTER, but all in all with a way more brutal and ancient sounding death metal approach! If you are sick and tired of all the trendy stuff you get in your record store every week and if you are out for some really great timeless death metal the way it was meant to be played, you should get yourself a copy of this awesome tape. \$5 for a professional packaged cassette go out to:

CIANIDE
c/o Mike Perun
2446 W. 54th St.
Chicago, IL 60632-1558
U.S.A.

Frank Stöver

CRAPULENCE Beyond redemption Demo CD '95

Originally formed back in '89 as an AC/DC coverband and after a couple of tapes, CRAPULENCE come up with their first self financed (demo) MCD, but unfortunately don't manage to impress me at all with their funny and weird thrash metal, mainly because it totally lacks of power and comes with weak vocals and production. But that's only my personal view, so just check if you own 10,-DM (tape) or 20,-DM (CD):

CRAPULENCE
c/o Arndt Korsus
Klingenberg 40
25451 Quickborn
Germany

Leif Jensen



CRAWLING DUE
Insomnia
Demo '96

Oooh-oooh... 6 songs of grind / death metal... Not really my favourite musical style actually, but luckily the material of CRAWLING DUE comes across pretty enjoyable anyway. They are mostly playing in the midpaced direction and know how to convince with good ideas and potential without losing the extreme edge, so anyone into the more brutal side of the underground should send 8,-DM (Germany) / 10,-DM (rest of the world) to:

Heiko Langecker
Ahornweg 32
72622 Nürtingen
Germany

Frank Stöver

CRESTFALLEN
Scars of war
Demo II '96

AT THE GATES / SENTENCED - inspired melodic thrash (death) metal is offered within the second demo of the german youngsters CRESTFALLEN, and although songwriting and the vocals (quite one-directioned!) could be improved, "Scars of war" is a solid demo worth a listening for 11,-DM/\$8. I bet you'll hear from CRESTFALLEN once again soon!? Don't forget to ask for their debut demo "The season", which is more in the pure death metal vein! Contact:

CRESTFALLEN
c/o Björn Fink
Windhuker Str. 34
47249 Duisburg
Germany

Leif Jensen



CRIMSON MIDWINTER
Us mere mortals
Demo '96

A very moody, full-colour picture of a landscape was used for CRIMSON MIDWINTER's second 4 song demo release "Us mere mortals" and gives it a highly professional look. Their style of music is labeled as "Blackish Crimson Music" and whether it may fit or not, this tape comes across with a lot of varied aggression. "My crumbling aura" and "Loneliness, bitterness" feature symphonic keyboards, while the other two tracks are basically fast and furious black / thrash songs. But why do I search for words here, when their flyer comes up with the best description of all: "Blackish crimson music with spine-shrilling vocals, shredding guitarwork, heavy rhythms and holocaustic, cold and atmospheric feelings." Why do I never come up with such things? \$5 (Europe) / \$6 (world) to:

Jussi Helenius
Määrtykankareenkatu 14 as. 13
21200 Raisio
Finland

Frank Stöver

DAMNATION
Alone
Promotape '95

Oh yes, I remember the german version of DAMNATION from the "After the sepulture" compilation and here they return with an actual recording! The '95 promo includes 5 new songs and 4 re-recorded older songs, all of very solid and catchy quality. DAMNATION stand for melodic death metal (which seems to have its origin in basic thrash metal), with dark vocals. Probably nothing revolutionary new, but still enjoyable and well recorded. I just wonder if this tape will end up as a CD or if it will be sold as a demo. Ask:

DAMNATION
c/o Marcel Fischer
Lerchenbergstr. 8
99891 Winterstein
Germany

Leif Jensen

DEMOGORGON
Och döden förde dom till sit rike
Demo '96

These guys have previously released two demos under the name NOCTURNAL... Don't know why they changed their monicker, but here's their third offering, entitled "Och döden förde dom till sit rike" (forgive me if I spelled it wrong...). Musically you could call them a mixture of basic heavy metal and black metal, cause the songs are structured really simple, but come across black metal sounding due to the vocals and guitar tuning etc. Well, I guess there's still a lot of people into this type of stuff, so I better give you you their address (no price mentioned), where you can ask for the simply packaged (poor xerox cover, 8-track recording) 6 tracker:

P. Anderson
S. Bäckvägen 5a
821 51 Bollnäs
Sweden

Frank Stöver

DEPRESSION
Erinnerungen Demo IV
& Studiotracks '96

The fourth demo "Erinnerungen" by the german 2-piece outfit DEPRESSION is nothing but the 20 songs of their 3 previous demos ('90 - '93) re-recorded and put together on one tape with new intro and outro because of "the great response from their fans"! Kinda pointless idea to me, as their simple death/grind music bores me to death, but if primitive violence with stupid growlings still should make your nights, then 60min and DIN A5 booklet for 10,-DM are a fair offer! Their new studiotracks are supposed to be used for an EP, so better beware and contact:

DEPRESSION
c/o Kai Sattelkau
Markhahn 29
D - 58513 Lüdenscheid
Germany

Leif Jensen



DISBELIEF
Choice
Demo '95

This is another example of how exciting death metal can still sound these days! Germany's DISBELIEF already contributed the highlight to the recently released "After the sepulture" compilation CD (for review see issue # 8) and with this additionally released four song demo, they might be able to reach quite a lot of people, as the quality reigns supreme! DISBELIEF obviously have one of the best real death metal voices in their ranks and this dude is just pure fuckin' amazing! He almost vomits guttural sounding deep brutal vocals in the best old Schuldiner / Tardy tradition and the guitarists are

backing him up with tight SLAYEResque thrash riffings, while the rhythm section is midpaced pounding into your stomach! This band even sounded more brutal on the promotape they did in February 1995, but obviously they decided to go into a more thrasher direction, which (in combination with the voice) still sounds way more intense than many currently released wannabe tough Brooklyn type mothafuckas... DISBELIEF is death metal in its purest and most honest form and I guess there's not many bands around these days, delivering this kind of feeling in their material. This killer tape sells for 13,-DM (ppd.) at the following address and if you are really into this kind of music, you better order it:

Andy Siry
In den Edlen Weingärten 2
67596 Dittelsheim Heßloch
Germany

Frank Stöver



DORMANT MISERY
The world beyond...
Demo '95

Untrendy fast and technical death metal in the brutal american tradition with a very obscure feeling is what the northern german outfit DORMANT MISERY stands for! Four raw and very long songs (average length: 6:30min!!!) with no revolutionary value for the actual times, but surely a cool item for your merciless collection! A band to keep in mind, so drop 10,-DM to their address and blast on:

DORMANT MISERY
c/o Jörg Hartmann
Raiborstr. 27
38124 Braunschweig
Germany

Leif Jensen

ELYSIUM
Stories about time, love, life,
illusions, remembrances and death
Demo II '96

In case you remember the demoreview of a band called DISJUSTICE back in VOICES # 7, then read on carefully, because this young and upcoming five piece is now called ELYSIUM and they've done an incredible step forward with their second tape "Stories...". Meanwhile the music still owns a very melodic edge to death metal, ELYSIUM aren't focusing anymore on slower velocities, but instead offer an entertaining mixture with driving up-tempo parts and very solid growls. The heavy production and the nice poetic approach in their lyrics should lead you to get in contact with them and ask for their convincing second 6-track demo (\$6 / 10,-DM):

ELYSIUM
c/o Björn Barz
Im Hagen 17
29699 Bomlitz
Germany

Leif Jensen

EROTIC FUNERAL
Born into death
Demo '95

"BLACK SABBATH inspired rock/death/doom metal"? Sorry, the total lack of guitars might be an original experiment, but it turns EROTIC FUNERAL into a simple and uninspiring rock (punk?) band. Even the clear vocals suck, but in case you admire their double-bass-and-no-guitar idea and long for another cheap "Paranoid" coverversion for your collection, then drop \$4 to:

EROTIC FUNERAL
9319 72nd Street
Hudsonville, MI 49426
U.S.A.

Leif Jensen

ETERNAL HATRED
Vengeance from the grave
Demo '95

Remember the feature on Chicago's USURPER in VOICES # 7? Did you like those guys??? Well, if you can answer both questions simply with "yes", here's something for you again. ETERNAL HATRED is a one man project of some guy called Carcass Chris and he's not only a good friend of the USURPER guys, he also seems to be into the same kind of music, cause the four songs on this extremely good produced demo are pretty similar to what USURPER come up with. Ok, Chris uses a drum machine and that gives his material an even more uncompromising direction, cause it's fuckin' intense because of that. But don't expect grind or industrial stuff here, it's still pretty basic METAL with vocals almost in the same vein as Diabolical Slaughter's and straight forward, hard hitting structured songs! I totally liked it from the start, so I managed to get a couple of tapes for my distribution overhere, which means you can either order a copy of this professional packaged item for \$5 from Chris in the U.S. or for 12,-DM from our address (both prices include postage and packing already!) - SUPPORT!!!
Write to:

ODYSSEY PRODUCTIONS
P.O. Box 1250
La Grange Park, IL 60526
U.S.A.

Frank Stöver



GANDALF
The cradle
Demo '95

Holy shit, this is already the third demo of finnish GANDALF (what a name...) and I've never heard about them before... Well, "The cradle" makes me really curious about their past activities, cause it's absolutely great groovy death metal, that sometimes reminds me on SENTENCED (before they've turned gothic) and then again on newer EDGE OF SANITY (their more brutal stuff)! How good they really are you can find out quite easily by sending them some cash (\$4 Scandinavia, \$5 Europe, \$6 world) for this 4 song demo of the highest quality in terms of musicianship, packaging and production! Oh, before I forget to tell ya, vocalist Jani was almost invited to sing on WALTARI's death metal symphony, if they wouldn't have used the AMORPHIS dude already... Does that make you curious after all? Well, it should... So be prepared for a deadly dose of straight-into-your-face metal!

GANDALF
P.O. Box 52
00941 Helsinki
Finland

Frank Stöver

GILLES DE RAIS
Tiffanges
Demo '96

GILLES DE RAIS sounds pretty french to me, but this band here comes from Germany and was formed by ex-members of HERODEZ and BORON in early '95. Their debut demo offers seven tracks and a playing time of about 40 minutes. The sound ain't really what I consider convincing, but maybe these guys were lacking in money and so they recorded everything basically live in their rehearsal place (at least it sounds that way). Well, I've already heard a lot more shitty sounding tapes and somehow this rough recording fits their music quite good, cause GILLES DE RAIS play raw and primitive black metal in the traditional way of early DARKTHRONE / MAYHEM etc. The use of additional keyboards gives their material the needed morbidity, although a little bit more variety in the writing is still needed. All tracks mainly sound too much alike and only the closing slower song "The abyss above" stands out due to its different songstructure. Well,

10.-DM / \$6 is still a fair price, so check 'em out if you've sold your soul to the one with horns...

T.N.U.C.
Postfach 8025
48149 Münster
Germany

Frank Stöver

GODEN Return to the Reich Promo '96

Awfully entitled 5-track-promo of raw death n thrash with a simple home studio recording! GODEN will have to work on both types of used vocals (dark and clear) and better search for a deal with a decent official demo. Ask for the two precedent tapes or just wait for the next, as this promo '96 doubtlessly lacks of energy. 7.-DM or \$6 if you can't resist:

GODEN
c/o Vital Welten
Bakelsewijk 82 A
NL - 5701 HD Helmond
Holland

Leif Jensen

GRAVEYARD DIRT Of romance and fire Demo I '95

The irish (doom) metal newcomer GRAVEYARD DIRT unluckily didn't give me a hard-on, but just a hard time because they play these three featured songs so fuckin' slowly, and that was almost deadly at this late time of the night! No, seriously... downtuned melody in a heavy production, but unfortunately the harsh and partly spoken vocals aren't the most motivating and lack of vivit! That could be improved... So far, so good! 15 utmostly slow minutes for 13.-DM (Bargain?) from:

CONCRETE RECORDS
c/o Andreas Reissnauer
P.O. Box 1421
77845 Achern
Germany

GRAVEYARD DIRT
c/o Kieran O'Toole
2 Kee's Flats, Chapel Street
Stranorlar, Co. Donegal
Ireland

Leif Jensen

GUILLOTINE Demo '95

Hahaha, this is pretty cheeky... GUILLOTINE are ripping off KREATOR's "Endless pain" period completely and the song "Guillotine" even comes up with similar riffs and vocal lines than our german thrashers had back then, but I dig it anyway! Cause KREATOR decided not to sound like that anymore nowadays and people who mishear their early stuff get the chance to listen to something new in the same direction now! Unfortunately there's only 3 songs on this tape and besides the already mentioned, you'll get to hear "Tormentor" (no, not a coversong...) and "Crucifixion" and they are along the same lines, so if you think "...it's time to raise the flag of hate" once again, go for it! Address and more infos in our interview in this issue.

Frank Stöver

HARMONY The radiance from a star Demo '95

Hell, here's something for Frank. HARMONY is another uprising swedish death metal band out of the modern melodic wave, but rather incorporating traditional speed and thrash elements into their material. Although I think that they still need time to find their very own goal, I can doubtlessly recommend you to ask at the following addresses, if and for which price this

6-tracker is still available. Update: HARMONY are now called TORMENT (again TORMENT?) and are said to have their debut CD out in June through Corrosive Records / We Bite, so better beware!

TORMENT
c/o Peter Karlsson
Hackspetzsv.10
64540 Strängnäs
Sweden

Leif Jensen



HOMICIDE Self determined breed Demo '95

Being around since '87 and after having sold 1700 copies of their great last demo "Retaliation fall", the italian techno-thrashers HOMICIDE should be common to some of our readers?! The actual '95 demo shows a bit more modern shape of their technical old-school thrash, which is mainly due to the HC-type shouting of their guest vocalist! I prefer to wait for their upcoming release with a (hopefully) more suitable vocalist... in the meantime you can order this 4-tracker for \$6 from the band or from their german distribution MDD! A really hard working band, though!! Support them!

HOMICIDE
c/o Massy Allegretti
Viale Matteotti 340
20099 Sesto S. Giovanni
Milano, Italy

Leif Jensen

INSANITY REIGNS SUPREME Our path is dark and lonely... Demo '95

INSANITY REIGNS SUPREME hail from Belgium and know to impress with a beautifully packaged "Demo '95"! Sad but true, the music remains quite ordinary, but still should appeal to everyone into very dark death metal with cool melodies! Once again an item for your infinite collection of deep growing metal! Sorry but that's all the information I own and can give you, so just contact the following address:

INSANITY REIGNS SUPREME
c/o Ron
Asterstraat 16
3660 Opglabbeek
Belgium

Leif Jensen

Into Oblivion

INTO OBLIVION Into Oblivion II Demo '95

Thrashcore-non-conformists INTO OBLIVION return with a strong second demo, optimizing their midpaced, modern thrash-doom with a lot of groove and drive and even more extreme vocals! Certainly an outstanding band within the death metal cave, but then again they should work on the fact that the partly very melodic guitarwork and that raw shouting don't really fit to eachother in their case. Him, their lyrical attempt is quite interesting, but still german lyrics suuuck (quote me again, ha!!)!!! Anyhow, a refreshing german band is doing a big step forward! 10.-DM to:

INTO OBLIVION
c/o Marcus Noll
Fritz-Flinte-Ring 26
22309 Hamburg
Germany

Leif Jensen

KURB SAATUS Demo '95

KURB SAATUS from Holland debut with a powerfully sounding demo, recorded only on 2 tracks (?) and mixing melodic, mid-paced death of the obscure kind with the catchiness of SAMAEEL, which makes these 4 songs featured really enjoyable! Crunchy metal, a few female vocal-lines and a lovely booklet with the lyrics are all available for the price of DM 10,-/\$6, so what are you still waiting for?!

KURB SAATUS
c/o Erica/Hans
Nic. Beetsstr. 446
NL - 2951 XR Alblasserdam
Holland

Leif Jensen

LIVIDITY Rejoice in morbidity - Cassette EP - (Immortal Records)

I've never heard of these guys before and I'm totally lacking in infos about them also, but they are pretty obvious inspired by the most brutal form of grinding death metal, somewhere between the likes of CANNIBAL CORPSE / INCANTATION and DEMIGOD (just to name a few). The 4 featured songs on this tape come across pretty powerful and excellent produced (24 track recording!), and the band knows how to compose, perform and arrange this type of music quite perfect. It's intense, but on a higher technical level, without sounding complex... In other words, breaks are thrown in whenever the songs needs them, and the blastbeat wasn't overused the whole way through. Sounds good, huh? Well, but I'm not totally convinced anyway because they are lacking in new or exciting ideas, it's just the typical brutalizing american style of death metal and I've heard that already way too often. Plus - the coverartwork looks ridiculous! \$5 (US) / \$6 (world) to one of the following addresses:

IMMORTAL RECORDS
P.O. Box 14
76-200 Shupak 12
Poland

LIVIDITY
c/o Matt Bishop
1314 Duncan Rd.
Champaign, IL 61821
U.S.A.

Frank Stöver



LUNAR AURORA Auf dunklen Schwingen Demo II '96

In October 1995 this german fourpiece recorded a demo which was entitled "A wandering winterdream beneath the cold moon", but it was limited to 100 copies only, so not many of you might have been able to experience the musical creations of LUNAR AURORA back then. But now there's a new demo out, entitled "Auf dunklen Schwingen" and it sounds really impressing. The tape starts with an obligatory intro, which basically consists of the trotting of horses, before the opening track "Im Schutz der Nacht" takes you away on a journey into dark medieval times. The drumming is like a galloping horse and pretty much the driving force of the band, while the guitar comes up with the typical black metal tuning, but offers some excellent riffs, which sound like dark melodies. In the background of all their creations you'll hear a moody keyboard, which is appealing to the emotional scenario. The voice is really demonic and has got an evil sounding touch, but it never sounds fake. You actually could compare it to the one of Abbath (IMMORTAL) a lot more than to the majority of the current black metal

screaming wannabee kids. Next up is "Rebirth of an ancient empire", a driving track with surprising breaks, that either lead into heavy riffs or atmospheric keyboard passages. Yeah, even the bass is pretty much up-front here, which is not often the case in this musical genre. To me probably the most promising song of the tape. The third one is the titletrack "Auf dunklen Schwingen", which once again impresses with a moody and atmospheric middlesection and excellent instrumentation. "Through the corridors of time" closes this approx. 30-minutes-long release really dignifying and convinces with a big variety and (one more time) excellent emotions created on the keys. The whole packaging is not really professional (xeroxed b/w cover, no lyrics), but the music is definitely worth your money! So, if you're interested now, check out the interview to find out where and how to obtain a copy of this high quality release!

Frank Stöver



MARTYRDOM Black Stench (Demo I '94) Sodomy & Crush (Demo II '95)

Rene "Cruelty" te Vogt is living in the past (*just like me, hehe!*) and he totally worships the metal of the 80's (*what a godly taste!*), so it won't be a big surprise that his solo project MARTYRDOM musically is based on the brutal stuff out of that period. His first demo "Black Stench" from 1994 (which is not available anymore because of total dissatisfaction. Rene thinks of it as "really bad"...) featured the slogan "This tape is especially for the 'old' headbangers / thrashers and not for trendy kids!" and he even labels his music as "ultra conservative / traditional thrash / black metal" with main influences from old VENOM, old MOTÖRHEAD and old SODOM! Well, actually this would be the ultimate for my personal taste as well, but there's still a big lacking in the musical abilities to be heard on the first demo (where he played all instruments on his own) although the feeling of bands like old POISON (GER) and old VENOM is already pretty much present! His second offering "Sodomy & Crush" came out in 1995 and is a big step forward. He invited some of his friends to play on this recording with him and therefore the quality turned out better, yet keeping the primitive edge. There's even a cover of VENOM's "Lady Lust" on here and the packaging is also more professional. I can't help finding myself smiling when I found another slogan on this one as well, saying: "Special fuck off to BIOHAZARD, MACHINE HEAD and all other shit metal / hiphop / hardcore of the 90's for normal discokids...real heavy metal will survive!" (YEAH!!! Love you for that, Rene!) It's also pretty interesting to read his simple lyrics, cause the opener "The Martyrdom" blames christianity / Jesus Christ for all the misery in the world, including Rene's handicap that he has to live his live in a wheelchair... I still won't consider MARTYRDOM as a brilliant band, but the attitude and direction is more than fine to me and there's already a third tape announced for July 1996 ("Reign in the infernal Reich") which is supposed to be in the vein of "Reign in blood", "Seven Churches", "Obsessed by cruelty" and all the old VENOM albums, so beware! "Sodomy & Crush" still sells for Hfl.10 (+ 2,50 for postage) or \$9 if you're interested... Write to:

MARTYRDOM
Dankebaarsdijk 6
NL 7152 Eibergen
Holland

Frank Stöver

MINAS MORGUL Demo '96

Even in Greece Mr. Tolkien seems to be very popular and influential as you can see by this project's monicker... Well, MINAS MORGUL is a pretty new 3-piece (formed in the summer of '95), dedicated to black metal, but luckily they already manage to differ quite a lot from the masses with this debut 8-track studio recording. While the vocals are still in the typical shrieky

vein (they even compare them to the BURZUM vocals...), the music itself (recorded with a drum machine you hardly notice...) got some really impressive guitarwork, which might turn into a trademark for MINAS MORGUL in the future! Unfortunately this tape is really short (only 2 songs and an intro) and it is lacking in a good sound, although the production itself seems to be quite good... Anyway, this is at least a promising start and I guess we will hear about these guys a lot more in the future. The tape (xeroxed cover) sells for \$5 at this address:

MINAS MORGUL
c/o Vlachos Panagiotis
Manoliasas 20
16121 Athens
Greece

Frank Stöver

MITHOTYN Promo '96

These swedish dudes already got some interest from Silencelike Death and Prophecy Productions because of their previous third demo "Nidhogg", so there's obviously some potential to be heard on this 4th tape, simply entitled "Promo'96"! Well, the first thing I noticed was the "Thor's hammer" inside the cover and therefore it was no surprise to me that their lyrics are dealing with vikings and northern mythology... Musically MITHOTYN play the modern style of blackish death/thrash with incredibly great melodic guitar pieces and a raw and hateful (not shrieky) voice! The sound is not really impressing, but the material offers a lot of emotions and is definitely worth to be heard! MITHOTYN are not the most original band around these days, but still above the average, so if you would like a copy of that promotape, send 8,-DM / \$5 to:

SILENCELIKE DEATH
Johannesstr. 4
51465 Bergisch Gladbach
Germany

Bandcontact (no tapes at this address):

Stefan Weierhall
Prästgardsliden 8a
S - 595 42 Mjölby
Sweden

Frank Stöver

MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE Sad and done Demo III '95

Uargh! What a drumsound! MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE's third demo is a long and very hectic thrash (death) output with strange lyrics and surely not the announced missing link between NAPALM DEATH and DREAM THEATER (tooooo bad!). Uargh, what a drumsound! Gotta ask for the price of this 8 tracker at:

Andreas Straub
Lochau 166
95704 Pullenreuth
Germany

Leif Jensen

MORBOVIA Demo '96

The young german band MORBOVIA sadly fails in their attempt to perform devilish death metal combined with a thick atmosphere, because of the ridiculous vocals and rehearsal-like quality of the recording. If you don't trust me, then just send \$7 for their 2nd demo, but remember that keyboards, female vocals and "poetic" lyrics are available from nearly everywhere else as well these days. A dark but average time it is! Contact:

Marcus Keller
Gartenstr. 2
97509 Gernsach
Germany

Leif Jensen

MOURNFUL Demo '95

A really beautiful blue shining cassette caught my eye when I opened the cassette box of Swedens MOURNFUL. This still really young aged band (15 - 17) is already on a high musical level and the 4 songs on their debut (?) demo obviously won't satisfy doom maniacs (I thought of them as such an act in the first place because of their monicker...), but those who can't get enough of the NWOSMDM (new wave of swedish melodic death metal)... You know, aggressive vocals, melodic guitarleads and stuff like that (No, I'm not going to mention the term "Gothenburg style" this time... they are not as fast as the majority of bands there), so if you want a complete collection, get in touch with guitarist Joy and ask him for prices. Already the colour of the cassette is worth your effort...

MOURNFUL
c/o Joy Deb
Angelikagränd 55
S - 13536 Tyresö
Sweden

Frank Stöver

... and now to something completely different!

NAERVAER Demonstration '95

Remember the short feature on NAERVAER's concept in our IN THE WOODS... interview in issue # 7? Well, we finally received the first demo of this norwegian folkcore project and it's definitely for the most openminded of you only! NAERVAER is no metal AT ALL! You won't even find those type of instruments on this demo here! Their material was composed and performed with flute, cello, percussion, contrabass and some male and female singing. The overall style is really mellow and inspires you to relax completely. There's no power, or aggression but alot of inspiring atmosphere within the songs and in general it reminds me a bit on chinese music of the same kind, although NAERVAER don't sound chinese at all of course! It's just the overall atmosphere... If you dare to listen to totally different music, this could be a good choice. Write to:

NAERVAER
P.O. Box 7037 Vesth.
4628 Kr. Sand
Norway

Frank Stöver

NAGELFAR Als die Tore sich öffnen Demo '95

No, this ain't a spelling mistake, this is NAGELFAR from Germany and that's basically all on informations I have about them... So, we need to concentrate on the facts. Their lyrical concept is based on northern mythology and all the lyrics were written in german. The first track "Seelenland" offers dominating keyboards and a really insane sounding shrieky voice (the latter can be heard on the entire demo), while "Pressen der Raben" is basically fast all the way through with medieval sounding clear vocals in the middlesection. The last song is the titletrack "Als die Tore sich öffnen", the longest tune with a lyrical concept in four chapters and a moody, dark sounding slower keyboard / guitar middlepart. Fans of extreme black metal might enjoy this release, to me a little bit more atmosphere would make NAGELFAR's compositions more exciting plus they should work on the vocal department, cause extremity is fine, but it needs more to capture the listener the whole way through. The demo comes with a printed b/w cover and lyrics and sells for 10,-DM / \$8 (ppd.) at the following address:

WOD VAN
c/o Sven Dinninghoff
Mühlenstr. 100
52134 Herzogenrath
Germany

Frank Stöver

PALE

PALE Vast Demo '96

This demo starts pretty emotional in the newer MY DYING BRIDE direction, but shortly after turns into brutal underground death metal with deepest growling vocals, slashing riffs and pounding rhythms. The sound is pretty raw and basic, but fits quite perfect and gives the tape an honest overall approach. 7 songs / 30min for 8,-DM (Germany) / 10,-DM (world) to:

Heiko Langecker
Ahornweg 32
72622 Nürtingen

Frank Stöver

PANTHEON By the mist of nightfall Demo I '95

Swedish PANTHEON surely know what people longs to hear these days and so will easily please everyone into melodic swedish death and modern black metal with their 4-tracker! Unfortunately the sound is pretty weak and their songwriting is far away from being original... Hm, you choose (and lose?) anyway! I'm afraid, too many bands from Scandinavia are adopting this type of music and so will rush its "magic" to get lost really soon! Price is \$5 and a new demo is announced for fall of '96! Contact:

PANTHEON
c/o Thomas Väinänen
Bollmorav. 74
S - 13540 Tyresö
Sweden

Leif Jensen

PARANORMAL WALTZ Church of torments Demo '94/'95

Another surprisingly strong band from Portugal is PARANORMAL WALTZ, who have a similar name to one of my alltime fave bands (guess who!). Quite an old ('94) 4-track demo with somehow thrashy death metal with atmospheric keyboards and devilish vocals is offered, but I can't fully enjoy this tape due to the damaged sound of my (?) copy. Actual material would be interesting, so get in touch with:

PARANORMAL WALTZ
Rua Projectada à Rua Dr.Oliveira
Martins. 2A
2775 Parede
Portugal

Leif Jensen

PHILANTROPIST Demo IV '96

So, here is the 4th demo of PHILANTROPIST and they basically developed in the direction I was suspecting in my review to their previous demo in VOICES # 8. This german 4-piece still goes for the very catchy death metal rhythms in the vein of older DEATH, adding some very melodic and classic metal riffing, which makes their songs (four on this demo) really moshable. The vocals really have a certain KREATOR touch and work out well with their groovy and driving songwriting. Considering the production is also powerfully clear, you simply should check out this nice demo for 13,-DM / \$8. A cool untrendy thrasher!

PHILANTROPIST
c/o Thomas Kattwinkel
Feldstr.11
27313 Dörverden-Westen
Germany

Leif Jensen

POINT BLANK Demo MCD (self financed)

There used to be a band called POINT BLANK in the early 80's, but they have nothing in common with these north german thrashers here. This is a quite new and still incomplete act (they are looking for a vocalist and bassplayer by the way), and just released their first demo CD, which features four tracks of really brutal music with a SEPULTURA-like session vocal delivery by Olli from OBSCENITY. It comes across pretty intense due to its powerful production and people into the "Beneath the remains" period of the brazilians should definitely give it a try. 13,-DM (incl. postage) for nearly 20 minutes go out to:

Andreas Rabe
Westerdiek 28
26125 Oldenburg
Germany

Frank Stöver

RESSURECTURIS Evil confronting evil Demo II '96

RESURRECTURIS stand for heavy death thrash of the fair italian type, but unfortunately the programmed drumming isn't the best and a major improvement vocalwise wouldn't harm either! You could go for their second demo anyway, as it is cheap (\$5 / 8,-DM), contains nice guitarwork and mostly strange italian lyrics! Write to tomcat Carlo:

RESURRECTURIS
c/o Carlo Strappa
Via Medaglia D'Oro 73
63023 Fermo (AP)
Italy

Leif Jensen



SADUS Demo '94

Exactly ten years ago (!!) these extreme thrashers came together, released a couple of incredibly great demotapes and a self-financed debut album ("Illusions"), before they got picked-up by Roadrunner Records for their "Swallowed in black" disc. They often got labeled overhere as "KREATOR on 45" in the past, but that's history, cause not even their last record "Vision of misery" had this intensity anymore. And this new 4 song demo which was already recorded in 1994 (!!) is pretty much in the same direction again. I mean, ok Darren's voice is still recognizable, but he used to sound a lot more sick and over the top in the past. Their material might still be enjoyable thrash metal, but the once so admired intensity somehow got lost over the years. I can't help myself, but this sounds too much like a car that tries to run with the handbrake pulled! And don't call it "natural progression", cause they proved that they can do way better than this. If you miss the old days, you better check out Holland's INQUISITOR instead. This demo here can be yours for 13,-DM (ppd.) from the german distro:

CONCRETE RECORDS
c/o Andreas Reissnauer
P.O. Box 1421
77845 Achern
Germany

SADUS
P.O. Box 1107
Antioch, CA 94509 - 0110
U.S.A.

Frank Stöver

SCRIPTORIS IRAE
Shadow of the wolf
Demo '95/'96

Another new german "death-gothic-doom-metal" band with another rehearsal-like demo and once again leading keyboards and female vocals, so what?! 12.-DM for these 40 minutes to SCRIPTORIS IRAE, but I would prefer to watch them grow and search for an own path! One of these days...?! Another "average"!!!

SCRIPTORIS IRAE
c/o Ulrich Gurski
Baumgärtelstr. 20
8650. Miltnerhausen
Germany

Leif Jensen

SECRETS OF THE MOON
Unearthed Arcana
Demo '95

I guess you'll be able to find enough informations about this three piece in the interview somewhere else in this issue, so I'm gonna keep this short. SECRETS OF THE MOON come up with unique sounding, straight forward played black metal, with a touch of old school influences. Two of the songs start with nice acoustical guitarpieces and there's also a moody keyboard outro on the tape as well. The demo comes with a simple, but full coloured cover, featuring (guess what...) a deep blue sky with a bright shining fullmoon... Nothing more to be said, just the advice to check them out if you are bored of the ordinary norwegian / swedish way of black metal! Address and price in the interview!

Frank Stöver

SIREN
The calling...
Demo '95

No info, no price, no music! Great... I just love the tendency that everyone into black/dark/atmospheric/satan metal is starting his solo project! A case like SIREN is special anyhow, because every single instrument is being played at its optimum in dilettantism and in combination with those amazing vocals, gave me a perfect laugh!!! The mirror of a decaying scene! Hail the true SIREN!

Richard Neu
Johannesstr. 4
51465 Bergisch Gladbach
Germany

Leif Jensen

SORS IMMANIS
Instant termination
Demo '95

Surely not a newcomer is the german four-piece SORS IMMANIS! Considering that they are around now for 10(!!) years and performed their first show in '87 with CARNAGE (pre-PUNGENT STENCH... R.I.P., by the way!), their new tape "Instant termination" is FAR below from what you would and could expect! The fundamental type of thrash metal still rules here in four clearly produced songs, but unfortunately their new vocalist sounds like Mille (KREATOR) with a cold and can't provide the songs with the necessary aggression! Hm, although these dudes deserve respect for the fact that they didn't give up, I'm afraid this demo won't take them any further! I bet they will appreciate your helping hand, so get in touch as SORS IMMANIS have cheap prices for their 5 previous tapes. This one sells for 10.-DM (MC) or 20.-DM (CD). Old school here:

SORS IMMANIS
c/o Thomas Erlenbach
Nelkenstr. 6
85419 Manern
Germany

Leif Jensen

**SIMPLY
THE BEST**
spiral architect
SPIRAL ARCHITECT
95 Demo

There's light at the end of the tunnel and even Norway has other stuff than black metal to offer. In 1993 former members of the norwegian bands ANESTHESIA and KING'S QUEST joined forces to later come up with one of the best pieces of music I've heard in ages! As they weren't able to find a suitable permanent vocalist, they recruited a guy called Leif J. Knashaug for that job and did a recording session (2 songs) which later appeared on a norwegian compilation double CD ("A gathering..."), dedicated to progressive metal acts of the country. Well, that album was lacking in a proper distribution, so it never really got popular outside of Norway and SPIRAL ARCHITECT decided to do things on their own after all. They took the 2 songs and released a cassette version of it, hoping to get some more attention... And I tell you what... If these guys are not getting big, there's obviously something completely wrong in this fucked up business, cause their songwriting and musical abilities could easily match with talented musicians like FATES WARNING, DREAM THEATER or CYNIC!!! I couldn't believe my ears when the two songs (both between six and seven minutes long!) powered onto my speakers. There's so much going on in them, you gotta listen to them again and again to really get what's happening here! But don't expect just another weird technical band here, cause SPIRAL ARCHITECT are top notch songwriters, so the material is still easily accessible, where most other artist's stuff in this genre is heavily lacking in! The vocals are clear and unique sounding and there's been talk of a mixture of progressive metal, jazz / fusion stuff and even technical death metal (which I can't really see...) and each member of the band is just bloody brilliant on his own! Simply god!! You gotta experience their talent on your own to believe my words, I guess, so just send \$5 (for the tape) or \$20 (for the comp.CD) to the following address and discover one of the hottest new acts around these days!!!

SPIRAL ARCHITECT
Chr. Krohngat 30
0126 Oslo
Norway

Frank Stöver

SULKUS
Promo '96

You simply shouldn't miss the cool three tracker promo by the australian death groovers SULKUS, as they know to move the listener along with their debut effort, which was recorded live to DAT! So, send \$2 and postage and ask for a probably upcoming CD EP and shirts!

SULKUS
c/o Richard
P.O. Box 346
Jannali
NSW 2226
Australia

Leif Jensen



SUMMON
Fire turns everything black
Demo '95

U.S. black metal hmetics SUMMON originally have been together already between 1990 and 1992, but went separate ways to join bands like MASOCHIST and LUCIFERS HAMMER. In mid 1995 they came back together as SUMMON

and already in December of that year they recorded this 5 song demo! So, musically and productionwise SUMMON obviously belong to the experienced ones and "Fire turns everything black" is a fine example of wellplayed evil black / death metal. I also used the term "death" because their material has a certain death metal approach and only the demonic, CRADLE OF FILTH-like vocals give them a more blacker feel. Some additional keyboards create an eerie atmosphere and although SUMMON are "typical american sounding", they've come up with a really strong demo here. Don't know the price, but write and ask them at:

SUMMON
P.O. Box 24171
Lansing, MI 48909
U.S.A.



Frank Stöver

SYNCOPATE
Hideous horror and tortured
dreams
Demo '95/'96

"Ossi grind rules!" Listening to SYNCOPATE I can partly agree with their statement, as I appreciate the uncompromising and untrendy vein of their grind and death metal massacre. On the other hand, I must warn you about the dirty sound, chaotic vocals and songwriting, which doesn't sound really "professional", but I suppose it was meant to be this way! Even some melodic vocals (!) included here, so that only the extremely insane should write for prices:

SYNCOPATE
c/o Timo Köhler
Römhilfenstr. 201
98646 Gleichamberg
Germany

Leif Jensen

THORR'S HAMMER
Dommedøgsnatt
- Adv. for 3 song Demo -
(Moribund Records)

This is the first demo of THORR'S HAMMER (US) who were formed in October 1994 with the goal to play some really slooow and depressive dooomy music. To their first song they added a female singer from Norway whose beautiful voice shapes an interesting contrast to the extreme deep growling of the vocalist, who is somehow comparable to the one of the finish THERGOTHON as far as the whole sound on this demo. Also musically they are not that far away from the finish gods where as they are not out to copy them. Moreover THORR'S HAMMER do not reach the quality in songwriting of THERGOTHON yet. The second and third song is lacking in some variety. Practising with their instruments seems to be appreciated too, as the beginning of the songs are a little bit unsteady. But in the end this demo should be fine for all black/death doomers. Available from Moribund Records.

Thomas Georg

UNAUTHORIZED
Souldirt
Demo II '95/'96

You know that I really appreciate when a band sticks to thrash metal, no matter what the actual trend is and that gives me a hard time right now. UNAUTHORIZED from Holland have an amazingly professional demo cover, a fat 24-track recording and cover both the melodic and also the aggressive shade of thrash well, but unfortunately their vocalist sounds pretty uninspired and average! I'm sure they'll work on that, so remember their name and drop \$8 / 12.-DM for this 6-track thrasher anyway to:

UNAUTHORIZED
c/o Erwin Bremer
Dahliastraat 4
7906 NK Hoogeveen
Holland

Leif Jensen

UNEARTHED
Hybrid
Demo '95

UNEARTHED made an impressive step forward with "Hybrid" their '94 demo was featured back in VOICES # 7) and really deserve the attention of everyone into technical and partly melodic thrash and death metal full of aggressive groove! 30 cool minutes for \$5 from:

UNEARTHED
c/o John Hoyt
879 Holbrook
Simi Valley, CA 93065
U.S.A.

Leif Jensen

DIE VERNEINUNG
Liebe, Angst und Menschenhaß
Demo '96

It's always nice to get compliments from bands or readers, telling us that they really admire our work, cause that keeps us going...And Austria's DIE VERNEINUNG did the same when they sent us their first demo release. But unfortunately I can't express the same feelings for their stuff. The band has been formed in September '95 and this 45 minutes long demo already got recorded (live at their rehearsal place) five months later! Way too early if you ask me, cause they are neither playing pretty tight, nor did I get into their weird kind of aggressive music with german lyrics... It's pretty obvious that they are trying to achieve something totally unique and different, which is a good idea of course, but they better take some more time to develop their ideas. This recording seems to be issued a little bit too rushed for my taste. Gotta wait for their next one. It's neither death nor black metal by the way, just in case you're interested... 70 OS / 10.-DM/\$8 to:

Sebastian Adam
Zebethof 4
3281 Oberndorf / Melk
Austria

Frank Stöver

VIOLATION
Carbonized
Demo '96

A really professional packaged (pro-printed high glossy cover etc.) and produced (in a 24 track digital studio) demo we got here from another german death metal act called VIOLATION. But before you go on to the next review, having in mind that death metal demos are usually boring nowadays, let me try to tell you that VIOLATION really deserves some of your attention! This 6-piece comes up with good musicianship and basically midpaced to doomy atmospheric death metal. The vocals remind me on better times of this genre (in the early Marc Grewe / Chuck Schuldiner vein) and their material is almost catchy. I guess if you would combine the moody elements of a trendy act like CREMATORY with more basic sounding death metal elements, you might get something like this here. The keyboards absolutely fit into their compositions and instead of sounding pretty adjusted, they are giving the band's material a little bit more of a dark feeling. The only negative aspect at this stage is, that all the featured five songs were played almost in a similar speed, so a little bit more excitement is needed in my opinion. Besides that, 12.-DM (ppd.) is a fine investment here. Write to:

VIOLATION
c/o Claudia Reich
Am Lemmerlein 4
95482 Gefrees
Germany

Frank Stöver

WASTE OF ENERGY
Integration der Sinne
Demo '95

Formerly known (?) as NAPALM KÄSS and NAPALM GURKE (haha!), the german four-piece WASTE OF ENERGY debuts demowise with 7 mostly blasting songs of average death metal and two differently sounding vocalists. Unfortunately both are kinda annoying and so WASTE OF ENERGY's style of "Bavarian Hyperblast" remains totally unattractive to me. 7.-DM for their cool humor to:

WASTE OF ENERGY
Mania Action Combo
Hauptstr. 1
95659 Arzberg
Germany

Leif Jensen

THE WHORES OF
BABYLON
Promo '95/'96
(not for sale)

YES! Our strange faves THE WHORES OF BABYLON (interview back in issue # 6) are back with a good amount of surprises: First of all, they've parted ways with Candlelight Records after the brilliant "Metropolis" debut CD and are currently in search for a proper label! I just suppose it won't be a big problem to sign a new and better deal soon, because THE WHORES OF BABYLON are still extremely insane and they've parted ways with Candlelight Records after the brilliant "Metropolis" debut CD and are currently in search for a proper label! I just suppose it won't be a big problem to sign a new and better deal soon, because THE WHORES OF BABYLON are still extremely insane and combine the best elements out of metal, dark wave, gothic, dancefloor and techno to an uncomparable result second to none in their own style! The six tracks featured on this promo are actually demos to their second album and present THE WHORES in a less dark shade than before, but instead catchier and more danceable... and I FUCKIN' DIG IT! Another EP entitled "Kuman" is said to be released soon on Skyfall Records, so better get in touch with the british weirdos! Strange and strong...

CHURCH OF BABYLON
Unit 4, Lawnwood Rd.
Easton, Bristol
BS5 0EF
England

Leif Jensen

XANTOTOL

XANTOTOL
Thus spoke Zarathustra MC '95
(Witching Hour Prod.)

The polish "unique abyssic black metal" band XANTOTOL claims to follow the tradition of HELLHAMMER and SAMAEAL, so that they consequently perform very slow and very crude black metal, but unfortunately without highlights and even the production sucks really bad!!! Him... they often quote Nietzsche and Crowley, but I suppose that's no argument enough to recommend this output! So: Just another weak release for the blackhearted! Ask for prices at:

WITCHING HOUR PROD.
o/o Bartek Krysiuk
P.O. Box 145
15001 Białystok 1
Poland

Leif Jensen

VIDEOS

Dark Visions

(approx. 60min)

Here's another underground video, this time with bands from the Witchhunt label. It features six videos and interviews with AZAG THOTH (pseudo black death metal with an ultra ridiculous presentation!), DIE VERBANNTEN KINDER EVAS (really good, with intelligent thoughts), DARK REALITY (unique baroque metal, but with a poor vocalist), EXHORTATION (basic death metal; with the best produced video on here), AMON (black metal; for details see "Satanic Creeds" video-review) and WELTENBRAND (darkwave). All in all a really good idea to find out more about underground acts (musically and personalitywise), so if you enjoy watching videos, go for it.

Satanic Creeds

(approx. 30min)

This is a documentation about the swiss black metal band AMON. You'll get to see a video to one of their songs and hear a lot about their philosophy and stuff and according to some included press statements, it already had caused some controversy because of its broadcasting on a swiss TV-channel... Well, two of the members talk about their satanic beliefs and I'm not really sure what to think about them... While their guitarist seems to be very smart and dedicated when it comes to these subjects, I couldn't really help myself smiling while listening to the bassplayer's statements, which came across pretty dumb and full of typical cliches. So, if AMON are out to spread their satanic views across Europe, they better re-think the entire presentation quite a bit. At least musically it sounded interesting already... Would like to hear more about them. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of this or the "Dark Visions" video (both are with english sub-titles),

write to the following address (no prices mentioned):

Matt Vain
P.O. Box 1121
72168 Salzg. a.N.
Germany

Immortal
Masters Of Hellish Frost

(approx. 10min)

The commercialization of black metal continues... Norway's IMMORTAL are the first to come up with a homevideo, consisting of two promotional clips "Blasbyrk (Mighty Ravendark)" and "Grim and frostbitten kingdoms". The first one was filmed up in the hills somewhere in Norway, while the other clip looks pretty frosty and also features Hellhammer on drums. Nice... but it's not really value for money here! Some additional live songs or other stuff would have been more fair in my opinion.

Frank Stöver

ATTENTION!

This is a note to inform you about certain CD's which have been, and still are, obtainable in certain mailorder lists in the underground scene. The kind of CD's we talk about here are nothing but a product of greedy men. No time, effort nor dedication has been put into these products. All these CD's are bootlegs, and are made for the sake of profiting on others musical and artistic expression.

Let us hereby approach each product:

EMPEROR - "A Midsummer night's dream" CD

No! This is not the new EMPEROR CD. This CD contains a very bad recording of one of EMPEROR's live performances of their 1993 UK tour. Another sad chapter is the cover layout, which totally lacks of any visual creativity.

TORMENTOR - "The 7th day of doom" CD

No! It's not the same CD as released on Nocturnal Art. This is TORMENTOR's debut demo. Anyway, Nocturnal Art has been negotiating with TORMENTOR about an official release of the "The 7th day of doom" demo, but due to this bootleg version, it's unsure whether or not N.A.P. will release it. Yet again we can see that no serious work has been put into this product, as the cover layout is even more lousy than the previous mentioned CD. Just for the information, TORMENTOR's "Anno Domini" album has now been officially put out by Nocturnal Art Productions. The exclusive rights are owned by N.A.P. The same goes for any TORMENTOR merchandise.

MORBID - CD

No! It's not even with Dead on vocals, even though that's how it is promoted. The live part of the CD was recorded after Dead's departure from the band. That someone releases an old live recording might not harm anyone, especially not if it's done properly with real dedication, but the only dedication here seems to be money. The CD also contains the legendary "December Moon" demo (w/ Dead). That demo has been put out officially on vinyl, with permission from the old band members, by the belgian label Reaper Records.

THOU SHALT SUFFER / "MAYHEM"

SPH CD

No! It's not unreleased MAYHEM material. In fact, it's not even MAYHEM who is on the CD, it's the greek band ZEMIAL. That should be proof enough that someone is trying to make money out of a wellknown bandname. As for the THOU SHALT SUFFER material. It's songs from the demo and EP'91. These recordings will be put out officially through Nocturnal Art Productions later on.

EMPEROR - "Wrath of the tyrant" CD

No! It wasn't released by Wild Rags, even though it's stated so on the cover. This is just as much a bootleg as all the previous mentioned products. Anyhow, this CD does not look that bad cover-wise, as it contains the same layout as the original cassette version from Wild Rags.

It's up to you whether or not you choose to buy any of these products.

...LAST MINUTE STUFF:

BETHLEHEM Dictus Te Necare (CD) (Red Stream Records)

Holy shit! This is by far the most extreme album ever to emerge from the german underground! BETHLEHEM have returned with their second album, with lyrics totally in the german language and performed in the most insane sounding way by session vocalist Rainer Landfermann (PAVOR's bass player)! The musical creations of the band have become a lot (!) more exciting now, cause BETHLEHEM are far away from just being an ordinary dark'n'doomy act... This is darkest metal with a sick suicidal atmosphere! The 7 songs are so extreme in terms of expression, that you simply have to listen to the album to believe it! "Dictus Te Necare" (latin for "You must kill yourself!") is unique art in the most possible bizarre way! Theultimate album for amageeddon!

RED STREAM RECORDS
P.O. Box 342
Camp Hill, PA 17001 - 0342
U.S.A.

Frank Stöver

Christ Agony

CHRIST AGONY Moonlight Act III (CD) (Cacophonous Records)

After several cassette-only releases in their homecountry Poland, this is CHRIST AGONY's 2nd "real" offering to the black metal hordes around the globe... Once again they only recorded 6 perfectly produced tracks with a playing time of over 50 minutes! And I must admit that it turned out really impressive once again, not getting boring at all! Mainman Cezar (gt./voc.) changed members completely since the 1994 release "Daemoonseth Act II" and the material in general has become faster now, although CHRIST AGONY are still focusing on the midtempo stuff. I would consider them as an upspeeded version of SAMAEL, while in "Mephistospell" you get additional melodic vocals and "Moonlight" comes up with a BATHORY-like main riff. All songs have an often repeated chorus-line and therefore are pretty catchy. All in all this is a really impressive and aggressive record you definitely shouldn't miss! A promising band to watch out for in the future!

Frank Stöver

DEMILICH Nespithe (CD) (Repulse Records)

These finnish dudes have already managed to turn themselves into a cult act within the underground and if you pick up FLESHCRAWL's newest album, you will even find a DEMILICH cover on there... Well, as far as I know, DEMILICH unfortunately are no more around (don't quote me though...) and this album is already from 1993. But due to the fact that it never got issued officially in Europe, Repulse Records finally licensed the whole thing and re-released it with a new cover and the band's 1991 demo as a bonus on it! The band plays (played?) brutal death metal in the vein of NECRONY, earlier CARCASS, DEMIGOD and the likes, with the difference that you get a little more technical approach in their writing style instead of the grundy edge used by most of these bands. The vocals are really deep, but they fit perfectly to the music, without sounding ridiculous or something like that. The production is good and I can't really see any negative aspects here to avoid the purchase of this timeless offering... Total death!!

Frank Stöver

DEVISER Thy blackest love (Demo '96)

"Apocryphal & dreamy black metal holocaust, technical & hellish!" is printed on DEVISER's flyers... A description I can't really agree with, cause they are neither really technical, nor hellish and it's definitely not sounding like a black metal holocaust! Well, that leaves us to the dreamy aspect, which totally fits their melodic guitar pieces... They often remind me on newer ROTTING CHRIST ("Thy mighty contract" period), delivering an old school inspired style of death / thrash metal with lyrical tendencies towards the occult / black metal genre. The band has been formed in 1989, being influenced by bands like SODOM, DESTRUCTION, HELLHAMMER, BATHORY and EXORCIST. They released three tapes and a 7" previously to this already, so you shouldn't be surprised to hear a really experienced act that comes up with a professionally produced and packaged 3-song demo here. Good stuff, and definitely worth the investment of \$5. Write to:

DEVISER
P.O. Box 80772
18510 Piraeus
Greece

Frank Stöver

Incantation

INCANTATION Promodemo 1996

Although John McEntee and Kyle Severn had quite a few line-up difficulties within the past years, INCANTATION is still alive and kicking! With session-members Will Rahmer (MORTICIAN) on vocals, VOICES-contributor and ex-PRIME EVIL bassplayer Mary Ciullo on bass and Mike Saez (DEATHRUNE) on additional guitars, they managed to record a new promodemo, which unfortunately is not for sale. It's more of a pre-production tape for their third and final album for Relapse Records and to find permanent members... Well, nothing's really changed when it comes to their music though, except for the fact that everything sounds a lot more matured and better structured than in the past. There's several midtempo passages and breaks, but the brutality comes across as usual! Sometimes they even remind me on a more brutal version of IMMOLATION now... Will Rahmer's vocals do sound better here than in his main band and I'm looking forward to hear their next full length! If you're interested to join them, send your promo-package to the following address:

INCANTATION
P.O. Box 609311
Cleveland, OH 44109
U.S.A.

Fax: 216 461 8812


Frank Stöver



VONDUR Stridsyfirlysing (CD) (Necropolis Records)

VONDUR is a "new" project of IT and ALL (ABRUPTUM, OPHTALAMIA) which was formed in 1993 already. There's been a demo release some years ago when IT was still the only member of VONDUR, but now there's the debut album, featuring 17 tracks, of which 3 are originally from the ABHOR days (former band of ABRUPTUM and MARDUK). I didn't really expect a lot here, cause I never liked ABRUPTUM (except for the very early stuff) and OPHTALAMIA, but VONDUR actually do have some really strong moments! Their overall style could be seen as weird, often monotonous and fast played black metal, but luckily there's also some interesting symphonic parts in the ENSLAVED-vein and also moody piano playing. The weirdest and most untypical track on the record obviously has to be "Beitir hrufr skera djupur", which origin dates back to 1986... The guitarsound could be a little better in general, but on the other hand the vocals often remind me on the ones from the almighty DEAD, so... Whether you love or hate this album it's up to you, but it's definitely an interesting release with a great "Darth Vader / Star Wars" cover.

Frank Stöver



ANSCHRIFT:
Jürgen Hegewald
Postfach 14 45
25504 Itzehoe/Germany
Telefon: 0 48 21 - 36 82
Telefax: 0 48 21 - 6 24 80

PROGRAMMAUSZUG	
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PIC. DISCS & SHAPES

SONDERANGEBOTE

RARITIES

T-Shirts

Verkaufbedingungen:
Kann nur während Verkaufszeitung bei uns zu günstigen Preisen gekauft werden.
Wird nur während Verkaufszeitung angeboten.

Would you like to introduce you and OPETH?

"I'd guess I have to, right? Well, I'm Mikael, the vocalist / guitarist of the band. OPETH were formed in 1990 and since then we've only released one thing, which is our debut CD, namely "Orchid"."

What does the monicker mean by the way?

"We're leading spirits to the city of the moon!"

When did you pick up the guitar for the first time and was it difficult to learn? Do you play any further instruments?

"I guess it was when I was about 6 - 7 years old. I had an old fine acoustic guitar back then, but I couldn't resist smashing it, so... I got my first electric guitar in 1986 and I see that as the point from where I started playing seriously. Apart from the guitar, I am not very experienced when it comes to the riddles of other instruments, although I reckon, I manage to play some basic stuff."

What do you think are the most important events in the career of OPETH?

"The period when we started to develop our real sound. Between '91 and '93 we hardly made any gigs at all. We were just practising very hard! It was during this period that we found that sound we had been looking for. Of course, another important event for us was during the recording sessions for "Orchid!"

Can you give us an idea of how the bandmembers are personally, their characters?

"It's rather difficult to say. Shorty, we're just four blokes enjoying to play the stuff we do. We all have different interests besides the music, so I really can't say much."

What happened to your former bassplayer Stefan, why did you both decide to go different ways? Was it difficult to find a replacement and how did you find Johann?

"Stefan is now in a band called TINGOD. We parted ways because of his lack of interest for the band and for what we're about. We're still friends though, I guess. Johann had been in the band once before. We asked him to play bass on the album, which he obviously did! Today he is one of us!"

How is the relation between you and the rest of the band when it comes to writing lyrics and composing music? Are you still 95% of the band or has this particular situation changed over the last two years?

"I still write most of our material, but it has become more of a band situation anyway, since I don't usually write without them. I write all our lyrics though."

Would you compare OPETH's style with your bandmates of DISSECTION, EUCHARIST (R.L.P.) or UNANIMATED (R.L.P.) or the so-called "Gothenburg style" in general?

"Personally I can't see any big reason to compare us to those bands other than that we're all from Sweden and we all write more melodic songs. The Gothenburg scene isn't very dear to me, although most of the bands from there are pretty good. I must say that AT THE GATES has to be Gothenburg's finest!"

Obviously Candlelight Records was and is interested in OPETH, showing the right circumstances to release an album. How did the contract finally come about and what does it include for you?

"The contract is for one record / one year and the company also has got options for further 2 CD's. Actually, it is already settled that Candlelight will release our 2nd CD too! I'd say that it is a good deal for us as well, but we haven't received any royalties payment as yet!"

Do you like any of your labelmates (EMPEROR, DECOMPOSED, KORPSE, ETERNE, SOLSTICE, HAVOHEJ...)?

"I like EMPEROR, THE WHORES OF BABYLON and SOLSTICE!"

Your album "Orchid" was (for me) the first sign of life from OPETH, so did you release something before?

"No, we haven't released anything besides "Orchid!"



FLOWER POWER?!

Why did you wait that long to release your first material officially (immediately as a full-length album)? Do you want to be sure to release the best material you can? Are you not afraid being called "one of these bands of the new wave of technical, melodic swedish death / black metal"?

Swedens unique melodic deathers OPETH belong to my personal faves right now and their debut album "Orchid" is one of the strongest releases ever to come out of that country... Unfortunately their excellent follow up album wasn't finished by the time Thomas got in touch with vocalist Mikael, so this feature turned out a bit dated, but nevertheless we won't keep this for ourselves... Read on what they had talked about and check out the band's material...

Well, it contains seven adventures where two of them are instrumental. To me, it is a fine musical journey which we are very proud of and I can honestly say, that it shows the true face of the band!"

What can you tell us about the recording process of your album and how it turned out in the end (soundwise, musically...)? Are you content with the result?

"Since we worked with Dan, we know that we would be pleased in the end. The only thing that worried me was that we had never been in a studio before and therefore we weren't that experienced, but as I said, we're very pleased with the result!"

The whole layout is really strange for a death / black metal band (e.g. cover: two red hills on a black background, logo appears in a very light grey on white in the booklet, CD comes in royal blue without logo and stuff etc.). So, what is the concept behind all that? Or is it just your intention to differ from all other bands? Do you also want to reach another group of buyers?

"Most of the layout was made with intention, although there were some misunderstandings between us and Candlelight Records."

In the following, I would like to speak about your lyrics, which are really mystical and full of moods / emotions (like the music itself)... What are they about? I think everyone can understand them from a totally different point of view, so that they will get different meanings - e.g. "In the mist she was standing"?

"I try to create the perfect interplay between music and lyrics. I get an image in my head whilst listening to our songs. Because I know perfectly well what I mean with everything. Once I demonstrated this interplay to Peter and Anders and I know that they now have a different feeling playing these songs. Hey, I felt like a storyteller in front of two children. They were really fascinated!"

How was the response of "Orchid" ?

"It's better than great. I've seen nothing but the best in terms of reviews etc. I am truly flattered! The sales are going nicely too!"

Does any of your songs appear on one of the numberless tribute albums or any other compilations that are around these days?

"The only one I am aware of is the compilation CD of Candlelight Records. We are featured with "The apostle in triumph!" (and what about "In memory of CELTIC FROST" ? - confused Ed.)

Listening to your music, the swedish landscape (middle and southern parts of the country) with the vast forests, all the different lakes and brooks, the soft hills and nature in general comes to my mind, because of the mood the music spreads. Do you see your nearer environment as your main influence? How important is nature for you? What else do you see as an influence?

"Nature isn't just the biggest part of OPETH, it's our creator! "Orchid" is to me, some kinda tribute to the enchanted forest of Sörskogen! I love being amidst the nature, especially inside the deepest of woods or on top of majestic hillsides, gazing over landscapes, enchanting even the eyes of the moon! Other influences for me are deep feelings like sorrow, but I also invite the presence of sheer darkness. Musically I could state about 500 different bands that we like, but generally we listen to symphonic music, metal and classical music."

What are you doing besides the band?

"Most often I work in a guitar store!"

What do the following persons / things mean to you:

- the night and the moon
"To be found everyday, grants me pleasure."

- forests and lakes
"Our place to be above all."

- your parents
"Brought me here."

- your friends
"A chat over a cup of coffee, smoking loads of cigarettes."

- Stockholm
"A great town, but sometimes boring."

- Queen Sylvia
"Beautiful lady with german blood."

- poems
"To take us away. I love the works of Ojger and Lagerkvist."

- fairytales
"I enjoy telling and listening to them."

- literature
"Unfortunately, I can't find the time to read as much as I would love to."

- Voices From The Darkside
"In case of missing toilet paper..."

- loneliness
"At the time, great and needed!"

- music
"I breathe music."

- bands from Sweden
"OCTOBER TIDE, AT THE GATES and us."

- bands from Germany
"Speed Metal with mustaches...I love RUNNING WILD and also some HELLOWEEN, Oh, CORONER totally rules!!!" (yeah, but they were from Switzerland...-Ed.)

- Opeth
"To leave a mark on this planet."

- Luciferian
"What's that?"

- nordic mythology
"Overrated, but interesting in the right proportions."

- Hallon Drycka
"Elixir."

- foreign countries and the world
"I enjoy to travel, actually."

Do you like to name some faves?

"Well, yes! Currently I am listening to a lot of bands like FANTASY, CULPEPER'S ORCHAD, FOTHERINGAY and BANKOR FLYING CIRCUS!"

Sweden is a member in the EU (european union) for some time now...What is your opinion about the EU, have any changes

(positive or negative) occured after the accession and what will the EU mean for the future of whole Scandinavia?

"I haven't noticed any difference at all actually! Hopefully some of the things we were promised will happen!"

What are your wishes for the year 1996?

- for you personally
"Finding my space."

- Opeth
"A new CD, maybe a tour."

- the whole death / black underground?
"Wipe out all those fucking wannabees."

Now you've got the space to say whatever you want to and to end this interview. Thank you, Mikael!

"Well, thank you! I am honoured that we got to appear in your magazine! I hope that the german people will at least take a listen to our "Orchid" CD as it might put strength into their very souls!"

OPETH
c/o Akerfeldt
Vedevagslingan 34
S - 12474 Bandhagen
Sweden

Thomas Georg



"we're one of the biggest underground bands in the world!"

MARILLION

EDGE OF SANITY'S Dan Swanö talks to his main idol, MARILLION's vocalist Steve Hogarth...

Howdy Folks!

My name is Dan Swanö, I'm a recording engineer and musician with the responsibility of projects like EDGE OF SANITY, PAN-TY-MONIUM and UNICORN etc. My life took a sudden change in 1990 when I first discovered the band MARILLION. Since this magic day I've had the feeling that I've found a friend for life. A lot of you will think of MARILLION as the band that should've quit after Fish left, but... you're oh so wrong! After Fish's departure the band finally got a good vocalist (Steve Hogarth) that could match the pure genius of the other four musicians in the band. Steve's voice is so unique and he can actually sing, Fish sounded more like an alcoholic (which I guess he was...). My first encounter with the gods was "Seasons End", which was the comeback album after they threw the Fish back into the water. After the majestic opening track "The King Of Sunset Town" I was totally blown away, this was what I've had been searching for ever since I heard symphonic rock for the first time. I knew about "Kayleigh" and "Lavender" and I knew they were to GENESIS what OASIS is to the BEATLES... a xerox... but after that little, what I call "W.A.S.F.-trick", they changed their style towards something more original and on "Fugazi" you can find the doom-laden slow parts that later came to dominate the records without Fish. Listening to tracks like "Seasons End", with its enchanting lead or the beauty of "After Me" can actually take me to another world... listening to MARILLION is hypnosis for me... I'm unreachable. The spell was broken with the 1991 release of "Holidays In Eden", which

I guess is the result of a horrible meeting at the EMI boss' office. I can see the conversation taking place and I hear words like "Ok guys... you're not selling too well anymore... we need a few hit singles and then you can do some of your pathetic artrock for a few minutes... just sell a lot of records or you're out!" Well, maybe it wasn't that rough, but I believe that the five blokes were put under a lot of pressure to produce something that could top the success of the "Misplaced Childhood" singles. To me and to Steve it will always remain a mystery why the wonderful track "No one can" never made it to the high position in the charts... I don't think it ever

came into my charts at all... such a great shame. Ok... you may wonder why I am writing all this about my faves... The story is this. I was down in Berlin, doing interviews for the very MARILLIONized EDGE OF SANITY record "Crimson" and when I did the interview with Frank (the editor of this very fine magazine), he asked me if I could do an interview with STEVE HOGARTH, god himself, since he didn't know too much about religion (read: MARILLION). The moment when I said "Yes!" is something that I'll remember forever and the time from that moment until a few seconds after the telephone was giving me the dial tone again, my heart added one extra beat per second... I've never been this nervous before and it was to me what it must be for a priest to meet god... I am happy that I didn't meet him eye to eye, ear to ear was enough, believe me! The hour I spoke to him was endless and still very short. There is so much I want to know that I just couldn't ask him for the bill of VOICES.



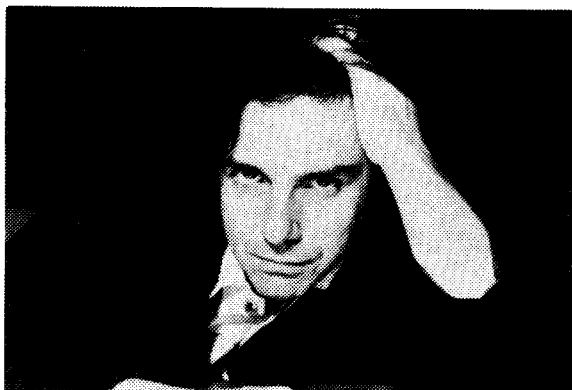
When he said, that I should come backstage at some show and we could go out and have a beer together, I nearly died... I remember the show in Stockholm 1991, when I had eye contact with him for 4 seconds during one line in "Waiting To Happen" and I've lived out of that until the day I made this interview you are about to read. I hope that I will meet all the guys one day and that I can jam with them, since I feel related to them both personally and musically. It's like we come from the same harmony world. There are so many songs that I feel that I could've written that it scares me. Ok... I will bore you no more... Here comes the interview.

How would you introduce yourself to the readers of VOICES which probably don't know much about you? Maybe they've heard about MARILLION with Fish and "Kayleigh"... I mean, what do you think they should know about you before we start doing this?

"Well... I don't know man... I'm the singer in a band called MARILLION, who sold quite a lot of records and came to Sweden quite a few times... We've released a new live album on March 25, which represents a cross section of our live music over the last 4 or 5 years since I've been in the band and it's the first official live album since I've joined the band in '89. It features music from the tours of "Holidays in Eden" and "Brave"...

So, it's not only from one show?! It's more like a collection...?!

"It's three shows actually and two CD's. One of the CD's is a complete live recording of "Brave" from La Cigale Theatre in Paris in '94 and the other CD comprises a selection of songs from two shows. One at Hammersmith Odeon in



London in '91 on the "Holidays in Eden" tour and the other one was Rotterdam Ahoy Sportsplace last year, '95... So, one of the CD's is made up of those two shows and the other one is made up of the Paris show."

Sounds very interesting, indeed!

"Well, it sounds good to me... I was there when it was mixed, I helped to mix it, I helped to master it, so I had my hands on it..."

How come you never came to Sweden on this last tour? I saw you actually played like five dates or something in Germany and nothing more...

"Well, the problem was money, to be honest... We were offered... Something very odd happened in Sweden, because we came there on the "Holidays in eden" Tour and we did... I can't remember the name of the gig we did... it was in the centre of Stockholm..."

Palladium!

"Palladium? Yeah, and that seemed to be sold out, it seemed to do very well and the one before that, we played in the centre of Stockholm as well, I think it was the Concert House and that sold well... and then we came to do the "Brave" show and they put us in this place called "The Circus" and there weren't so many people there, I think it was some kind of holiday weekend, there were only a few hundred people there and I think the promoter just got cold feet and said, well, we'll offer you this much to come with "Afraid of sunlight" and it would've involved losing quite a lot of money to come up there and do it..."

Did you do any scandinavian countries at all?!

"No, not for "Afraid of sunlight"! When we did "Brave", we went to Helsinki for the first time, I think, since I was in the band, and we played two nights in Copenhagen and we did... quite a few shows... I think we did Stockholm, we did Oslo and we did Malmo on the "Brave" tour... So, with "Afraid of sunlight" nothing, which was a shame, because I very much wanted to come there, to be perfectly honest."

One of the reasons maybe was, that "Brave" was pretty new, because it's a really heavy album to get into...

"It is, yeah! It was a big problem for everybody, that the album only really works in one piece and nobody in 1996 has got 70 minutes in a day to sit aside and do nothing else and that's a big problem, I think."

I think the movie helps a lot, because that actually gave them one more vision, you know, not only music... They could see the sound as well... and I think it's a very great movie...

"Again, if the movie would've been exploited and promoted with a bit more enthusiasm that could've helped, but what tends to happen with MARILLION is, the stuff comes out, and it's available for the people who have bought it, but it's never really been aggressively marketed to the people who haven't bought it, so most of our following comes about through word of mouth. We're probably one of the biggest underground bands in the world! It happens underground all the time."

When "Afraid of sunlight" came out, I went into the store, to see if they had anything additional, like a CD-single that came out before or something, and it was like... "Afraid of sunlight" was standing in the

MARILLION-section, like it never happened... there was no pre-promotion... because sometimes it's like "next week, we got this big...!", you know, but nothing like that happened and to me that's horrible!

"Yeah, that has to do with business bullshit... politics... because EMI had actually taken a decision internationally that that was gonna be the last album..."

So, you're no longer with EMI?

"No, we're not! We formed our own label called Intact Records which is being distributed and marketed through a company in England called Castle Communications, so this is our first time out, doing promotion with the new label. It's funny, because we actually all sat down in the Circus cafe in Stockholm the afternoon before the "Brave" show with our manager and were contemplating whether or not we should do one more album with EMI, you know whether we should let them have the next one or whether we should go elsewhere and we decided to do one more and see how they coped with it and I think that was a bad decision! We should have left at that point..."

Was it hard for you as a lyricist to go back to write this short stories when you had one "Brave"? I mean, it must be easier for you to be like a storyteller over a period of 70 minutes, than actually having to close a chapter in maybe 4 or 5 minutes, like you do on "Afraid of sunlight"...

"Well, no... not really, because I've always felt, after each album, I find it mentally very difficult to follow what I've done always, because I always want to improve somehow and after "Brave"... I mean, all five of us have the feeling that "Brave" is the best thing we'd ever done, that includes before I joined the band. The whole band felt that "Brave" was something of the band's masterwork. And after "Brave", psychologically it was a terrific wall to stare at the process of following it and the only way I get around that is, by getting as far away from it as possible and writing something completely different! And if you look at "Seasons end" and then "Holidays in Eden" and then "Brave" and then "Afraid of sunlight", you can almost see that each album is an attempt to get away from the last one..."

Sometimes musically as well...

"Yes, in every way! I think, it's something all five of us feel, that when you come to make a new record, the last thing you wanna do, is make the last one again! And so, I find it easier to write, if I

handmade when they heard about this? And what do you feel?

"Well, I can honestly tell you that I haven't heard anything Fish has done since I'm in the band..."

You're lucky!

"Part of that is because I'm not really terribly interested. And partly is the deliberate... not to emerge my own mind in his art, because... you know, ultimately I don't think that is a sort of thing for me to do and secondly of course, I'm always gonna sit down in interviews and someone's gonna ask me what they think of his solowork. And on one hand I don't wanna lie about it and on the other hand I don't wanna put him down, so I just made a point of not listening to it!"

Ok, but don't you think he should have asked Steve and Mark and the other ones for some kinda... I don't know, but did he just run off doing it? I mean, he's not credited for some of these songs musically, he's only doing the lyrics for a few of them... I mean, did they hear it?

"I don't know if they heard it, but I know that on the whole, there isn't a great deal of... how can I put this delicately... there's not a lot of love lost between them, there was a lot of bad feelings around the time that he left. I don't think that bad feeling exists anymore in the sense that I don't think they matter him or anything. But I don't think they are particularly interested in what he does and I don't think he's done anything... eh... I mean, certainly no one in the band has come to me and said "oh, I really like this song that he did or that song that he did. No one's ever said that to me!"

But he's doing lotsa MARILLION songs and that's the only thing that will make it sell!

"To all of us that feels a little bit like there's an element of desperation in that and taking the money, which is something I think we've never really done! We've never done anything that we felt was cheap. We've made quite a few decisions over the last six years that have cost us a lot of money, because we thought to do otherwise would be in bad taste. Maybe he thinks about it differently, but I don't know. It's not really for me to say."

But I don't think this record will change history, if you know what I mean. Some of the parts... he's actually changing the vocal lines, like he's doing totally unrespectful conversions... "Kayleigh" doesn't sound the same and that song is like an anthem to a lot of people, so why do it again? Why change it? It's basically "Kayleigh" with a much worse vocal line and no actual feeling in the musical things, you know...

"Yeah, I think if I'd been his adviser and he'd ask me, "do you think I should do this?", I would've said "no, I don't think you should!" But that is not up to me. I even feel uncomfortable sticking "Kayleigh" out on record... it's on the live album, but it's there because it was part of the show and it goes straight into "Lavender" which has a guitar solo on it that Steve hadn't done before and we all felt that it was a good moment..."

Do you actually do the long version of "Lavender"?

"Yes!"

That's brilliant! Cause I've heard a lot of songs that you have done, including "That time of the night", "Warm wet circles" and stuff, that were on the backside on some special limited ep's and I always feel that... when I listen to the studio versions, that's like the MARILLION I learn to know, but when I listen to the live versions with Fish, he doesn't have any respect for the original and I think you have this! I think you don't really overdo anything that Fish didn't do, you just do it and you do it better, that's fine to me!

"Well, I just try to feel them, you know, and if someone sings a song badly, it's usually because they're not thinking about what the song means! And all I ever try to do, when I'm singing what I've written or what someone else has written, is to feel it! And I get quite upset at myself if I realize halfway through that I'm not really feeling it, you know."

I mean, the lyrics must've been a horrible thing to learn also, but if you tell me you feel the songs, probably the lyrics come out very natural to you?!

"Yeah, they do!"

But anyway, it's a lot of tracks. Because the first tour you did, you only had like "Seasons end" to go back to, but there was a lot of older material as well and this "Script for a jester's tear" and all this massive tracks... I mean, just coming in from nowhere, having to learn half of the backcatalogue from a very weird lyricist in some parts, that must've been very hard!

"I'm fortunate that I've got an incredibly good memory for words and I'm one of those people who still has all the words to songs that I heard on the radio when I was a kid, some of them I don't even like! But they are all still in my mind, they stuck there and I could probably relate entire albums to you by people I hardly know, if you'd ask me to. It's one of those strange things. But I don't have a very good memory for pictures and I don't have a very good memory in everyday life, I tend to loose everything. But words, poetry, song words... I'm like an encyclopedia, it all just goes in there and stays there, so it was actually easier for me to learn those things than it might have been for a lot of people."

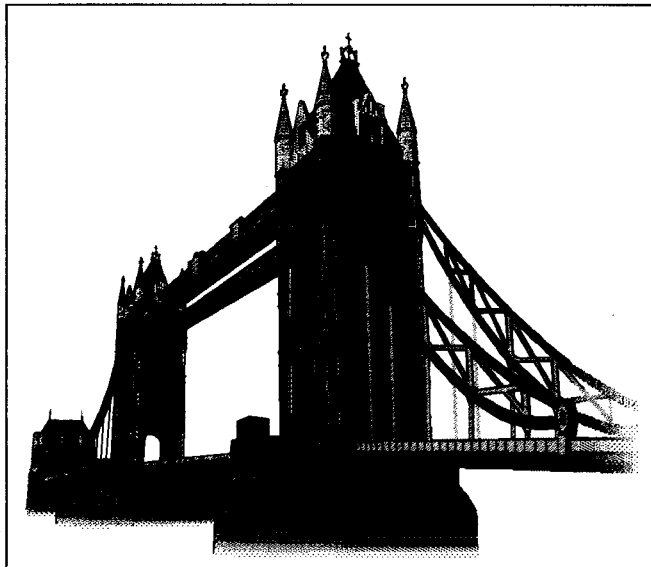
As a studio engineer I'd like to go a little bit more in-depth with your vocal style, because on "Brave" I can actually get the feeling that you have done a lot of these vocal takes together by playing... I mean sitting very close to a dynamic microphone and it doesn't sound to me like a perfect vocal take...

"No, both "Brave" and "Afraid of sunlight" were recorded with a SM58 Beta very loud and we didn't work with headphones at all..."

How did it work? No feedback?!

"No, it worked fine. You get a lot of spill from the track but Dave Meegan knows how to get rid off that. Basically what you do is, you record the vocal performance and then you run the track again and then you record the track again on another track of tape without any singing on it. You just record the spill and then you just bounce the two and you can reduce the spill almost to the same level as headphones. The vocalist enjoys to sing loud and is able to hear himself... I find it a lot easier!"

Dan Swanö



convince myself at the beginning that I'm gonna write something completely different to anything I've done before! Than I find the process of writing a lot easier..."

The former madman of MARILLION, Fish, has recently released his "Yang Yang" package, to me really horrible re-recordings of old classics, so what was the reaction of your

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APOLLYON'S SUN

After the release of "Parched with thirst and I and dying", there was talk of a possible new CELTIC FROST album, but that never happened... So, was it just because of business problems, that you weren't able to find a proper record deal, or was there more involved?

"The reasons for the annulment of the "Under Appollyon's sun" album are complex. The annulment was the culmination of a three year preparation phase for an album we envisioned to be far, far more than simply "the next Frost album". The four month sessions for "Into the Pandemonium" and three month sessions for "Vanity / Nemesis" and the work on the "Parched with thirst..." compilation had resulted in a gain of confidence in our ability to actually realize our intended experiments and our technical advances, both in a musical sense and in the studio environment. It was time to use all this to the fullest, to

released. It cost us a fantastic line-up back then. These two factors made it clear to us already in a band meeting on the 1990 U.K. tour that the "Under Appollyon's sun" project would be risky enough to possibly end the band. When we looked at each other, it became obvious that none of us was prepared to back off in favour of a "normal standard album". The prospect of doing "Under Appollyon's sun" with CELTIC FROST was so ultimately seductive for all of us, that we decided in the meeting that it was



from the very beginning already?

"There was no split. We separated in a common decision, as said before. Had "Under Appollyon's sun" been released, it would have featured Reed on drums and Curt on guitar. We had recorded demos for the album together and all still are friends to this day.

Reed and Curt haven't been members of APOLLYON'S SUN, but I did talk to them about it after the FROST termination. The earliest such occurrence was when Curt and me thought about launching APOLLYON'S

"One cannot just revive CELTIC FROST. APOLLYON'S SUN is a different band in that it was born in the 1990's and that our work reflects that time. In a very cautious way, our new band is a continuation of CELTIC FROST. However, we are different people, have a much more modern concept, and the effects of the pause between the two bands are evident. The connection lies in the fact that it allures us to see what CELTIC FROST hadn't done yet and that our sound is build upon the FROST roots. But, both music and lyrics are contemporary."

What kind of meaning does the new bandname have actually and is there some kind of concept connected with it? Where did you find the name?

"I feel more satisfied not distributing step-by-step instructions anymore as to the band's name and our lyrics. We have done that numerous times in CELTIC FROST and now feel that the purpose of our existence and our work is to inspire thought and the wish to research, rather than to provide such step-by-step directions to everything we are doing."

Are you going to use any of the songs for APOLLYON'S SUN, which you'd already finished for a new CELTIC FROST album, or will it be completely new material only?

"Our repertoire naturally centers around brand new material, along with a few CELTIC FROST songs we like. Some of them are known, others stem from the host of unreleased and unfinished material that had been amassed by the time CELTIC FROST terminated."

What about the coverversions you had in mind for the next FROST release (PRINCE, ELP and ROXY MUSIC)? Are you going to use them still?

"There are a number of choices for cover versions, some of them more recent and much

In issue # 6 we presented you "the final interview with Tom Guarrrior of Celtic Frost" well, at least we thought so... Cause the band might be buried, but Tom decided to continue with a new project called Apollyon's Sun by now by the time we did the following interview, Apollyon's Sun unfortunately didn't have recorded anything yet [except for a new version of Celtic Frost's "Babylon fell"], but there were so many questions concerning past, present and future activities, that we are proud to present you almost the whole story now.. Read on and enjoy!

prepare for an "Into the Pandemonium" - style album, only this time with even more guts and as a far more seasoned unit with rather unlimited access to infrastructure and guests needed to complete such a project. Not only did we work to record a superior successor to "...Pandemonium", but we tried to incorporate the changes that had taken place since that album's conception in 1986/87. We were confident to the extreme that, at this stage, we could pull off an extraordinary album that would change much, much more than "...Pandemonium" had already changed. Ambitious? Of course! Arrogant? With respect to our very own ability to go so far: yes. The band had been formed to explore anything, no borders considered. Now we had arrived at the level where budgets and reputation would allow all this like never before.

Points against this album were there, too: the well-known recession had led to a reluctance by record companies to work even with bands that were far more ahead than ours. And already in 1987, when we worked on the rather less ambitious and risky "...Pandemonium" album, we had experienced the struggle of our career to actually fight that project out and get it

to be "all or nothing". How much our decision to follow urgent third party business advice and shop this ultimate FROST project in the U.S. has influenced its outcome remains subject to speculation. A fact is that the U.K. was our main market and would have possibly embraced such an album much warmer. As it happened, we ended our self-set one-year shopping deadline with a number of offers, of which none would have permitted us to really finish "Under Appollyon's sun" the way we felt necessary. As said above, we hadn't wanted to record an "ordinary" album already in 1990, and now, there was no chance in our minds that we would abandon - for "just a metal album" - an album which had grown so much in the meantime and of which so much was already completed and designed. Whether we liked it or not, we stood by our original decision and terminated CELTIC FROST as of early 1993. That hurt very, very much. But I am proud we stood by our decision."

What has caused the split with Reed (for the second time) and Curt? Have they ever been considered as members for APOLLYON'S SUN or did you have in mind to start something completely new

SUN in 1993. Reed and me will very probably work together again in the future. He is like a brother to me."

How did you find the new members? Have they been in any bands before?

"After the end of CELTIC FROST, I was not sure whether or not I would ever want to be part of a band again. After CELTIC FROST's passionate and distinctive years, I had a hard time seeing myself involved in a new project.

In summer 1994, I received a call from Erol Dacic, a guitar player, about a production job. I had just begun to feel a careful and discreet urge to create music again. Our subsequent meetings exposed much shared chemistry, and I asked him to participate in a tentative limited duration studio project of mine. But when we wrote music together over a period of several months, the project developed into a band, to which we are now both fully committed. APOLLYON'S SUN's first practice session took place in late spring 1995, and we had Stephen Priestly lend us an essential hand during the first months of rehearsals."

But what have the other two new members been doing previously?

"They have previously played in separate bands of various metal styles. None of those bands were known outside of Switzerland. However, we found Dany due to the fact that Erol had seen his band perform live when playing with his own group a few months before APOLLYON'S SUN came into existence."

Why didn't you continue under the name CELTIC FROST? Would you see APOLLYON'S SUN connected to CELTIC FROST musically or lyrically in any way? What is the main difference between both bands?

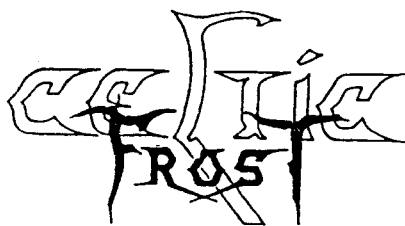
more off-the-wall than the ones you mentioned. We are experimenting with them right now to find out just how much abuse and change they can take..."

Do you mind telling us some of the possible coversongs you have in mind for APOLLYON'S SUN?

"I am somewhat hesitant to name too many details as long as we haven't made a final decision as to one or two tracks which will remain. But among the songs we are arranging right now are, for example, "Control" by TRACI LORDS, MILENE FARMER's "L Instant X" and ERIC "IQ" GRAY's "Fight fashion"."

What made you cover "Babylon fell" for the "In memory of CELTIC FROST" album? Was it just to introduce the new line-up to the public or is this song kinda like representative for APOLLYON'S SUN's musical direction maybe?

"It was simply a fun idea. As it was a cover-version, we couldn't really display



much of our own character, sort of altering the material a bit and introducing our female back-up singer Mary to the scene. As for the choice of "Babylon fell", we wanted to do "Procreation (of the wicked)" or "Dethroned emperor", but they were already taken, so we chose another old favourite."

Are there already any concrete plans for an APOLLYON'S SUN album?

"Eventually, yes. Right now, an album is the single goal of APOLLYON'S SUN, anything else is secondary. We are working towards that goal, for which most of the conceptualization has been completed. However, we expect to demo material for the best part of the year still and to start serious shopping for a deal only in late 1996."

Will you live also play FROST material? Which songs?

"Even though live shows are still a long way in the future, we are certain to incorporate a handful of CELTIC FROST songs into our repertoire. Besides the obvious "Babylon fell",



we currently rehearse "Procreation (Of the wicked)" in SEPULTURA's arrangement, "Dethroned emperor" and "Mesmerized". Further FROST material we play has not yet been publicly released, such as "Pearl of love", a very heavy, wild guitar track with double lead vocals by an opera singer and myself, or "Primeval Rapture". Both those songs have a distinctive "Into the Pandemonium" quality."

By the way, what made you return to Switzerland after all?

"Again, a number of reasons that my wife and I discussed. Some of them had to do with my initial reluctance about ever being part of a band again. We also like to remain open to any possibility in the future, as I feel equally at home in Switzerland and the U.S."

Did you follow the evolution of the death and black metal underground scene over the years or have all the bands on the tribute album been new to you? What's your opinion about their interpretations of your songs?

"I haven't followed that evolution and yes, many of the bands have been new to me. I find a number of interpretations extremely interesting, because they show me new things about CELTIC FROST's music. Others are hard to enjoy to me, as they seem to have missed the point we made with FROST entirely. In general, I feel that those featured bands will be remembered who perceive their current music as but the basis for development and maturing. Some of the featured recordings have reminded me of our very early work, and perhaps there is the occasional unusual band hidden in there somewhere."

Which band's version is your favourite on the compilation?

"I like the new version of "Mesmerized" and love what has been done to "Circle of the tyrants". Besides these two tracks, we very much dislike the CD and the disappointing and glaring failure of the record company to comprehend what CELTIC FROST was all about."

How did you hook up with Dwell Records for it? I mean, did they contact you, telling about the idea or did you hear about it when they were compiling the bands and stuff?

"I heard about the compilation through the grapevine and sent the label a fax to find out more."

Did you have any influence on the selection of the featured bands?

"No former member of CELTIC FROST was involved in conception and compilation of the album, even APOLLYON'S SUN "merely" contributed a song to a finished product. We are mere spectators and do not always agree with its content and the views expressed."

To get back in time a little bit... Did you ever regret the release of the "Cold lake" album? It was obviously a stepping stone in the band's career, wasn't it?

"Regret is not the right word, as I know that there was no way around this album. It was both, the conclusion of a very destructive phase, legally and on a personal level, and the foundation for a subsequent major re-think and re-discovery of our real line. But yes, I loathe that album with all my heart. Despite my personal feelings, however, it is an absurd fact that "Vanity / Nemesis" and "Parched with thirst..." would not have been possible without the business advantages gained through "Cold lake."

Why didn't you release the entire "Tragic serenades" EP on the "Parched with thirst am I and dying" CD? It was never available on CD before...

"The song missing is "Jewel throne", and I agree that it should have been on the compilation instead of any of the "Cold lake" songs. We obviously came to a different consensus back in 1992."

Why did you never put out the already announced "Necronomicon" album? Have you used any of the songs that were supposed to be on it later on other albums or EP's?

"No. "Necronomicon" was to be the final CELTIC FROST album and got postponed several times as CELTIC FROST matured. At the time FROST was terminated, "Necronomicon" was still a plan of ours, but no actual

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songs had yet been written for it over the years, merely a number of ideas and concepts for the album are in my archive. "Necronomicon" was to be a very dark and somber release in the vein of "...Pandemonium".

"In the chapel in the moonlight" was originally only available as a one track EP...What was the reason to make it such an exclusive release only?

"It had been recorded "on the side" during the "...Pandemonium" sessions, as a lighthearted try to do something different yet again. No particular use had at that time been solidly planned for it. It was later released as a limited issue promotional EP with a cover developed by Martin and was never available to the general public until 1992."

But why was it never released officially back then?

"It was a fun recording, a little side project we did in-between all the serious work for "Into



And how did you get the chance to hook up with H.R.Giger for the cover artwork of "To Mega Therion"? Did you know him before already?

"Reed knew him already, he lived with H.R.Giger's ex-wife in Zürich for a while. It was coincidence, as we had already secured Giger's approval for the cover before we first met Reed. Martin and I had contacted Giger very early on in FROST's existence and had explained to him that we felt that some of our



the Pandemonium". We knew that we'd be using the song one day, but at the time hadn't really decided for what. We used to record such additional material quite often."

How did you get together with all the classical musicians for the "Into the Pandemonium" album? How did you found out about them?

"The classical arranger who worked with us at the time, Lothar Krist, was kind enough to establish the necessary connections. Not all of the featured classical musicians, though, were happy at first about our "messing around" with their beloved music."

music reflected similar thoughts as some of his paintings. We had admired him since we had been kids and did, of course, not see ourselves on the same level. We were far too humble for that."

Did you meet Reed back then when you got in touch with H.R. Giger (you mentioned HE knew Giger from before already...)?

"No, we only found out that Reed also had a "Giger-connection" after he'd been with us for a while. This was totally coincidental. We met Reed through the recommendation of our Swiss distributors, who knew that we were looking for a drummer after "Morbid Tales" and pushed a reluctant Reed to try us out

shortly before he would have gone back to the U.S. for good."

When "Morbid Tales" and "Emperor's return" got issued on CD, the tracklist was totally mixed up...What was the reason for that? Did you see both EP's as one album anyway?

"That CD was put together by the record company without input by the band. We were glad that our early product saw a release

on this new format, but we would have preferred to have been closely involved regarding concept, tracklist and artwork, as we were on later albums and when Martin did the HELLHAMMER re-release with NOISE.

However, back then, our status was simply too small to have enough weight for that."

Did you ever record any demos previous to "Morbid Tales" that were spread around?

"There existed no CELTIC FROST demos prior to 1988, when we started demoing parts of albums for producers and record companies. CELTIC FROST were signed on the strength of a lengthy memo with detailed enclosures, sent to Noise Records in June 1984, to explain the proposed concept in utmost detail."

What made you sing on CORONER's "Death Cult" demo back then?

"It was a chance to look extensively at Ron Royce's very very sexy girlfriend! Besides that, they were good friends of ours for years already and Marly and me used to spend lots of time together skateboarding and talking."

Before we come to an end, I'd like to get some informations about HELLHAMMER also...hope you don't mind!

"I do kinda mind, but we'll see..."

Is it true, that there are some unreleased tracks lying around, that have been recorded in the same session as "Apocalyptic raids" and the compilation tracks?

It's not true that there are additional songs from that session. HELLHAMMER only went to record once for Noise Records and that's it. But I wonder who comes up with such rumors?"

What was the reason for the different cover artwork and packaging of the CD version of the HELLHAMMER EP?

"Martin Ain handled the re-release with Noise Records. I suppose he wanted to provide the CD with a more contemporary and professional look, especially as it contained more songs. I enjoyed his cover artwork very much."

When you formed CELTIC FROST out of the ashes of HELLHAMMER, you wanted it to be seen as a completely new band, not to be connected to HELLHAMMER in any way, but in 1985, when you were playing at the "World War III Festival", you included "Messiah" in your set list... What made you do so?

"We were still short of enough material for a live situation. "To Mega Therion" was brandnew and had not yet been heard by the fans, so we had to make do with what was around. "Messiah" was just about the only HELLHAMMER track that all of us liked and thought it was halfway playable."

Have HELLHAMMER ever played live shows?

"No. Thank god!"

Who came up with the idea for the "Necromantic Union" and what can you tell us about it?

"It was a shared idea between the band and Ike Darso, who was to become the original administrator of the "Necromantic Union". The "Union" was continued on into the FROST era but dissolved when we discovered dishonest business conduct on the part of the new german administrator. Fan requests and questions were subsequently handled by our managements, i.e. initially by New Requiem Management."

When you formed HELLHAMMER back in the early 80's, there was no real black or death metal scene... So, what inspired you to come up with this extreme music and image? And did you ever think, that the whole concept would be copied so often in the years to follow?

"HELLHAMMER was a VENOM clone; not more and not less than that."

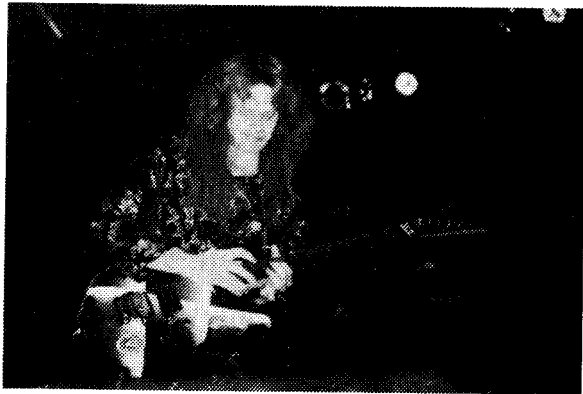
So you also got inspired by VENOM when you decided on the pseudonyms and stuff?

"Yes, as I said, HELLHAMMER was a VENOM clone."



The "Death Fiend" and "Triumph of death" demos have been recorded in one single session, but got released seperately... Why did you do that? They had some similar tracks and the same cover, so why didn't you release them on one tape only?

"We were an inept school band. Who cares?"



If you compare the quality of "Satanic Rites" with the first two demos, it's quite obvious, that you've matured in any way and that you got a way better recording quality... What has caused this big step ahead?

"The need to grow up and prove to Noise that we really worked on ourselves, as we had promised. There would have been no recording deal otherwise."

Have you never been approached to re-release the demos officially? I mean, there's already a couple of bootlegs circulating, so there's obviously a demand for it!

"No. Also, since 1991, no original masters exist anymore and neither do any negatives from HELLHAMMER photo shoots and any original memorabilia. The chapter has been closed for good for a long time."

What happened to the old members that have been in HELLHAMMER back then?

"I don't know."

Have you ever considered a re-union? Maybe just to play a few selected shows, like VENOM do these days?

"No way ever! HELLHAMMER died in April 1984. This will not change. Martin attempted a HELLHAMMER reunion in the late 1980's and failed."

Ok Tom, that's all - thanks a lot for taking the time and all the best for your future projects... If you'd like to add something to this interview, feel free to do so...

"As to the HELLHAMMER stuff: is there really concern why the hell a bunch of kids included this or that song on

shoe-string-budget demos way back in time, when there are issues that should really concern us all as the generation now inheriting the planet? What matters is responsibility towards environment and nature, the guts to make inconvenient, sometimes uncool, decisions, as to be able to earn true respect.

I would like to express our sincere thanks to those who were and are willing to listen to what CELTIC FROST had to say and what APOLLYON'S SUN is going to say. As I have said in countless interviews before: no matter how elaborate concept and music are, it is at all times the faith of the fans that makes it all possible."

Discography:

HELLHAMMER:

official releases:

"Death Fiend"
(9trk.-Demo, June 1983)

"Triumph Of Death"
(13trk.-Demo, June 1983)

"Satanic Rites"
(10trk.-Demo, Dec. 1983)

"Apocalyptic Raids"
(4trk. 12" EP, March 1984)

"Death Metal Compilation"
(feat. 2trx., March 1984)

"Metal Massacre 5 Compilation"
(feat. "Cruifixion")

"Apocalyptic Raids 1990.A.D."
(6trk. CD, Feb.1990)

Bootlegs:

"Buried and forgotten"
(3trk. Picture Disc EP)

"Satanic Rites"
(10trk.CD)

"Triumph Of Death"
(17trk. CD)

CELTIC FROST:

official releases:

- *Morbid Tales MLP '84
- *Emperor's Return MLP '85
- *To Mega Therion LP '85
- *Tragic Serenades EP '86
- *Into The Pandemonium LP '87
- *The Collector's Celtic Frost (Promo EP '87, feat. "In The chapel In The Moonlight")
- *I Won't Dance EP '87
- *Cold Lake LP '88
- *The Celtic Frost Story" CD
- *Vanity / Nemesis LP '90
- *Wine In My Hand (Third From The Sun) EP '90
- *Parched With Thirst Am I And Dying (Comp.CD) '92

Bootlegs:

*A Night In The Dark (LiveLP)

Videos:

- *Circle Of The Tyrants (Promo)
- *Cherry Orchards (Promo)
- *Wine In My Hand (Third From The Sun) (Promo)
- *Live At Hammersmith (Live Video)
- *In Memory Of Celtic Frost (Tribute Comp.CD '96)

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On the wings of the night

LUNAR AURORA is a pretty new german black metal act that already released two excellent demotapes. Their stuff is really atmospheric and eerie, just the way this music was meant to be. Due to the fact that they were able to impress me quite heavily, I contacted the band for the following interview. Whyphd answered and came up with some really interesting thoughts...

According to your infosheet, LUNAR AURORA was formed in December 1994, but judging the band by its abilities, I suppose you have been around in other bands before already... Would you like to give us some info about that past time and how you got the idea to start something new under the LUNAR AURORA monicker?

"Alright Frank, the idea to found LUNAR AURORA was born after Aran and myself left our former band, cause it was a real disappointment, like all the other projects before, too. They never conformed to the imagination we have of this kind of music and its essence. Due to that reason these bands are not worth to be mentioned any further and besides that, we didn't achieve anything. But Aran and I had to go on transforming into music what is flaming within our souls. Therefore we gave birth to LUNAR AURORA, together with Bill and Nathaniel, two old friends of mine, who



were and still are the only right members for this band."

Black Metal music is always connected with a dark philosophy and the whole concept around it is basically about satanic and/or occult topics... Was it difficult for you to find something worth to write about, which hasn't been covered already by other bands before?

"It was not very difficult for us (Aran and I do the lyrics) to find something worth to write about. This is based on our idea to express very personal experiences, thoughts, feelings etc. in black metal, which should (in connection with the music) be a key to wisdom and higher/darker spheres, cause where else could we find real strength, wisdom and divinity than within ourselves? Of course you can be inspired by the writings of others, but it's not the knowledge you got from books and it's your very own experiences that really count, and for me these experiences are worth to be written about. So,



when I am creating lyrics, it is a kind of meditation where I try to descend as deep into my soul as possible and what I discover there, I transform into lyrics. While doing so, I never think about if my words are satanic and/or occult in anyone else's opinion, because this limits me and disturbs my development."

Do you think that Black Metal needs uniqueness in the lyrical department these days or is it more important to fit this musical genre's clichés?

"In my opinion black metal definitely needs uniqueness in the lyrical department, due to the fact that this kind of music is art. Every serious artist should not limit himself by categories/clichés, because this would be the end of his

creation/art. Besides that, the more unique and individual bands exist, the more black metal itself becomes unique!"

Talking about your bandname... I guess it's latin and if I remember correctly LUNAR is the moon and AURORA is the sun... So, what's behind this, that you decided to choose this contrast?

"There is no contrast. The term for our bandname is taken from the english language and its literally meaning is "halo round the moon". In a further interpretation it means (to us) the radiation/beaming of the moon. This was also the reason to choose this bandname for the moon is the lord of the tides with big influence on every existance's life and death and bearer of a key to the secrets slumbering within our souls."

You also use the german language for some of your creations, something that has more or less turned into a new trend nowadays, so do you really think it's necessary? Why did you do it?

"No, we didn't have any problems/trouble with them and it's definitely NOT my inspiration to play black metal. I have to say that I don't care for the church/christianity, cause I am convinced that you are most distanced from things/persons if they are indifferent to you. I think to hate something means that you are closely connected to it, as if you love it, because you pay an equal measure of attention. Shortly said, there exist more important things in my life as long as they don't try to shorten the distance between myself and them... otherwise..."

Your material is pretty atmospheric, due to the use of keyboards and stuff, so I was wondering if you also prefer releases of (for example) GEHENNA or ARCTURUS instead of stuff by MARDUK or IMMORTAL? Which bands made the biggest impression on you lately?

"Basically it depends on my mood what kind of stuff I listen to. I like stuff like AUTOPSY, DELIRIUM or IMMORTAL to the same extent as music of GEHENNA for example. In general I get impressed if a band develops towards

"It became necessary for us, because it is already difficult enough to express the mysteries of our souls in our native language. So, sometimes it turns out impossible to transmit its



meaning/essence into english. The use of german lyrics results more on internal realization than on outer influence."

I wouldn't really call LUNAR AURORA a band that totally differs from the masses of other Black Metal acts these days (although I really like your stuff), but at least it seems to me that you are very much into high quality music, production- and songwritingwise... Is that your main concern?

"Yes, you are absolutely right. Creating high quality music is our main concern. We always endeavour to get that sound which (combined with the atmosphere of the songs themselves) offers an optimum possibility of expression. Due to that, a certain extent of good/clear production is necessary for us. It was natural trying to reach this with our two demos already. We also strive for development in our songwriting to reach maximum transmission."

You are located in Bavaria, a state of Germany which is under a big influence of the catholic church... So, did you already have any problems because of that (or does it inspire you to go on) in any way?



more intensity and strength, no matter if they use keyboards and stuff or not. I've heard the advance tracks of DESASTER's debut LP/CD and was really mesmerized; guitar melodies full of feeling and the impression of the whole sound and the songs are absolutely great. But also the new stuff of BEHEMOTH kills! A band I really appreciate, musically and personally, is ANCIENT RITES due to their variety of dark atmospheres and originality and due to their honest attitude."

And how about the lyrical side? I noticed Edgar Allan Poe...

"Our lyrics deal with very personal impressions, as I mentioned before already. As far as Aran told me, he sometimes took inspiration of E.A. Poe's manner of writing and his style to express dark and morbid themes. But basically there are a lot of mastery, dark pieces of literature worth reading."

Where did you get the inspirations for your pseudonyms from?

"We got inspired by the Germanic mythology and different other creations. The meaning is very personal to all of us

and we don't want to clear it up in all its facets here. Pseudonyms are an extension of identity. Worte sind Klang, Klang ist Schwingung, Schwingung ist Energie!"

Why did you limit your debut demo to 100 copies only? Do you share the opinion that Black Metal needs to stay 100% underground? How about possible deal or gig offers?

"Our first demo was not exclusively intended for sale. We did it more for ourselves to get recording experiences and contacts. Another reason is, that we

are not satisfied with it anymore due to its sound and the too little intensity of the songs, so there is no need to do further copies. Black metal will never be music for the big masses, so it will always be underground more or less. As long as black metal is created for honest and not for commercial reasons, it will reach its equal listeners, this is how it should be in my opinion. Deal offers didn't reach us yet, but if someone shows real interest, we might not refuse. I said "real interest", because it is absolutely necessary for us, that the guy who offers it, has to stand totally behind our music and attitude.

About gigs, we haven't done any yet, but we are looking for some."

Was the second demo also limited?

"The second demo is not limited."

Any final thoughts or comments?

"Thanks to you Frank for this interview, your work is highly appreciated. Keep the black flame burning inside. I am hailing all those dark and seeking souls outthere, see you beyond the lunar gates. People who want to get in contact, don't hesitate

to write us. The second demo "Auf dunklen Schwingen" is available for 10,-DM/\$7 (incl.P&P)."

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Germany

Frank Stöver

GUILLOTINE

GUILLOTINE IS A NEW BAND FROM SWEDEN, TOTALLY DEDICATED TO OLD SCHOOL THRASH OF THE 80'S WITH A FOCUS ON KREATOR. THEY RECENTLY RELEASED A 3 SONG DEMO CALLED "UNDER THE GUILLOTINE" AND GAVE US A WAY TOO SHORT INTERVIEW...

The 3 songs on the demo were obviously recorded with a drum machine, so is GUILLOTINE just a studio project or will you make it a real band? How long did you stay in the studio to record the 3 songs?

"Well, the demo was actually recorded in our rehearsal room at our own studio called "Pentagram Studio". GUILLOTINE is more like a project band. We have no plans to play live or something like that."

What made you chose pseudonyms for each member? Do they represent anything in particular or have they just been chosen for fun basically?

"Well, we wanted these names... A lot of old thrash bands used other names. So... why not?"

All of those songs are 100% inspired by the debut album of KREATOR (riffs and vocals), so is old KREATOR your main influence when it comes to the GUILLOTINE songwriting? Will there be a wider variety of influences in your future material as well?

"Yes. KREATOR is the main influence when it comes to songwriting, especially the "Endless pain" / "Pleasure to kill" albums. There will be a wider variety of influences in the future. Right now, I have four new songs and they are, of course, inspired by KREATOR, but also old DEATHROW, old SEPULTURA ("Morbid Visions") and stuff like that. And don't forget DESTRUCTION and SODOM. But KREATOR will always be a part of GUILLOTINE."

The democover looks pretty professional - was it specially drawn for GUILLOTINE or did you just

picked it up, because it fitted the title?

"Yeah, the front cover looks great. A friend of mine made it for me. It took about one week to do it... The



layout was made at a friend's home and it was printed pro on glossy paper."

UNDER THE GUILLOTINE

Talking about new songs, I guess you will have finished a couple more tracks since the recording of the demo, so tell us a little bit about them, ok?!

"Well, as I said before, we have four new tracks. Fast old school thrash of course. Some titles are: "Total Mayhem", "Antichrist", "Storm of Damnation"..."

When did the idea for GUILLOTINE actually come to live and how did everything develop since then?

"GUILLOTINE was originally born under the name HOLOCAUST about a year ago (early summer '95), but we changed the name to GUILLOTINE later that

year. I kept some old riffs from the HOLOCAUST songs and wrote some new ones as well. Those three new songs were recorded around November '95."

There's more and more bands nowadays playing this old school metal again and the fact that a couple of established companies already have shown their interest in GUILLOTINE proves me right, that this might turn into a new trend... Your comments on all this?!

"Yes, we have gotten a lot of offers, but nothing has been signed yet. We're working on a contract now... I think it will be a new trend to play old school thrash, but I don't care. We were there first, so we are not following any trend - we created it!"

How old are you guys? I mean, did you have the possibility to experience the magic of the 80's metal albums / bands back then or did you find out about all these great bands later on?

"I'm 21 years old... So I had the chance to experience the magic of the 80's! I have always liked KREATOR. Other thrash bands like DESTRUCTION came to me later..."

What's gonna be your next step with GUILLOTINE? Will you still promote the 3 song demo or are you already concentrating on a possible album recording?

"I will not promote the demo so much. I will continue to sell it as long as people want it. I will try to write more new songs, but right now it's going a bit slow... We will record the debut album as soon as the songs are finished and rehearsed."

Any final comments?

"People - order the demo (\$5)! Watch out for the album. Thanks for the interview Frank!"

GUILLOTINE
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Frank Stöver

disbelief

IT'S ALWAYS GREAT TO FIND OUT ABOUT A STRAIGHT FORWARD BRUTAL DEATH METAL ACT IN GERMANY'S UNDERGROUND, CAUSE THIS TYPE OF MUSIC HAS BECOME PRETTY RARE THESE DAYS. BUT DISBELIEF IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF A GENRE THAT MANY PEOPLE OBVIOUSLY WOULD PREFER TO SEE BURIED AFTER ALL. HA, FUCK THEM! THESE GUYS RELEASED SOME GREAT DEMO TAPES THAT OFFERED SOME REALLY HEAVY TUNES, AND THE INTERVIEW THAT LEIF DID WITH VOCALIST KARSTEN JÄGER COULD BE SEEN AS AN APPETIZER WHICH HOPEFULLY MAKES YOU A LITTLE BIT CURIOUS ABOUT THIS FIVE PIECE...

Although your name has been quite constantly present within the scene press lately, an in-depth biography about DISBELIEF wouldn't harm here...

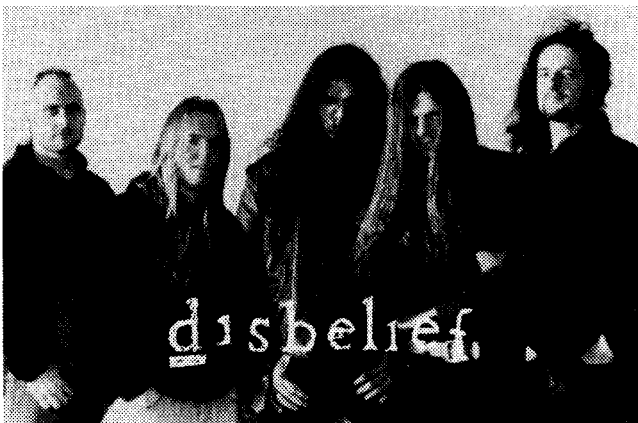
"DISBELIEF was founded in 1990. After a couple of line-up changes and the release of two demos ("Unbound" - Dec. 93 and the "Promotion Tape" - Feb. 94) the band was completed and recorded the actual demo "Choice". The resonance is very satisfying for us by now. There are some shows in the near future. In July we'll be playing in the Czech Republic and there might be the possibility to go on tour with BOLT THROWER in January, in case we have a deal and a release until then. It would be awesome, cause we're all big fans of BOLT THROWER. We'll see how it turns out..."

You were apparently quite creative in 1995, as two tapes / demos have been released back then... But even those tapes differ a little bit, introducing a tiny change of styles: "Choice" is far more groovy and modern, but still brutal as hell. Is that the direction you wanted to head for? As far as I can recall, you already released other tapes in the past... So, how has your sound been changing and which influences have motivated you to change your musical approach?



changed as we tuned the deep E-string even deeper to reach a fuller sound. You can hear the result if you compare the "Promotion Tape" with "Choice". The guitars sound even fater. To name the bands that inspired us, I don't know... maybe BOLT THROWER or MACHINE HEAD... I guess it isn't important, cause we're doing it our own way, not someone else's."

It might sound a little critical, but you have a very outrageous voice... Which are your favourite vocalists and what is your opinion about the comparisons to John (OBITUARY) and Martin (TORCHURE)



"Yes, since March '95 our sound has changed a little bit with the new line up, cause different people are creating the music now. Our old guitar player was the main songwriter before, and now it's mainly our new guitar player Tommy and our bass player Joe who are throwing in ideas that we arrange all together as a band in the end. It wasn't planned to follow these tracks, it just turned out like that and we're all happy with it. Our sound

or Martin Van Drumen (ASPHYX / PESTILENCE)? Aren't you afraid of a possible evolution like with OBITUARY, where the music is growled into the background and the reviews concentrate on the vocals (of course you are much more talented and varied than OBITUARY!!) ?

"My favourite singers with maybe the most influence are Chuck Schuldiner (DEATH),

Karl Willets (BOLT THROWER), Don Doty (DARK ANGEL) and Mille (KREATOR - "Pleasure to kill"). I don't know what to say about the comparisons, cause I don't copy any musicians... maybe I did it when I was younger. I guess I got my own style over the years. Sure, there are some influences sometimes, but that happens subconsciously. I think it's unnecessary to put my voice in the front, cause our music is only working as an entire product."

I know from Joe (hs.) that he isn't only musically active in DISBELIEF, but also in a bass big-band project... Is the rest also involved in other projects? I suppose you also have very strong non-death metal influences within your personal tastes... How much do you incorporate them into the DISBELIEF style, or do they just get wanted to keep your style "clean" and "pure"? How do you think about metal clichés?

"Except for Joe, there's just Kai, our drummer having a side project with another band, but they're having a total different style, for example like YES, RUSH etc. Referring to the "non death metal influences", I have to say that while composing our songs, we're quite spontaneous and sometimes not very DISBELIEF-like. But when the song is done and the singing is added, it turns out to become the typical DISBELIEF style again. In general we're all very open-minded to new, different sounds and after all, that's what makes the music so exciting."

Although you aren't too original musically (not a negative comment anyhow!), I still have a hard time to compare you with stylistically similar bands. How would you

personally describe your music and what do you think about all the bands you've already been compared with? How do you estimate the market nowadays, speaking about the chances for a band like DISBELIEF?

"We call our music "brutal, aggressive and emotional", which encloses everything in my eyes. Sometimes I can't really deal with comparisons, cause I see our music as independent. Our chances... I guess as long as bands like for example BOLT THROWER, MORBID ANGEL, CROWBAR, NAPALM DEATH are playing sold-out shows, I have the feeling that people are interested in our way of metal. That's what we rely on..."

Directly afterwards: I guess a couple of labels have noticed DISBELIEF due to the appearance on the "After the sepulture" compilation CD... What about new recordings or even possible record deal propositions?!

"Since our last tape some time passed again and we haven't been inactive. We have already enough material to record a CD any time. In the meantime we have a choice of than 20 songs. We'll pick the best 8 - 9 out of them to make the best out of it. We haven't got any offers yet, but we hope to get a deal soon."

As I don't own the lyrics to the tapes, I can only guess that your lyrical concept seems to be pretty simple and one-directioned. Do the lyrics

have a message anyway, or is the music way more important? What are "Colors in black" and "Choice" about? Which "Choice" do you mean?

"I've written all the lyrics and I guess that they're very many-sided. For example "Colors in black" is about a blind man and how he sees the world day by day. "Choice" is about the misuse of drugs. You have the choice between a real life and a world beyond. Life or death. Most of the time I try to slip into other people's minds, how they see things. I can let my fantasy drift."

Did you notice that foreign countries react a little reserved towards german death metal acts or how has your acceptance been so far? How do you see the actual progress of the national underground scene and which newcomers would you like to recommend?!

"Our experiences as a german band in foreign countries has only been positive. We've been getting airplay on the radio a lot and had liveshows in Poland and the Czech Republic. I don't know that many german underground bands. The most promising are SHIT FOR BRAINS and BLACKENED!"

Ok, your last opportunity to promote your band, last comments etc. Thanks and all the best!

"If somebody got curious about us, he should write to me, or in case there is a possibility to visit one of our shows. The best way to get a better picture of us is to order our actual tape "Choice" (sells for 13,-DM - Ed.). It would be nice to see you. Thanks to you Leif for the interesting questions... See you on tour!"

DISBELIEF
c/o Karsten Jäger
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64823 Groß Umstadt
Germany

Leif Jensen





When and why did you decide to put the whole KATATONIA thing on ice? Did you feel limited in the band's style somehow at that point of time?

"I decided to throw KATATONIA into a closet to "lick the wounds" more or less caused by the split and to give DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE more time and priority which I'd never considered previously. All this occurred a few months after the last KATATONIA release "For funerals to come". However, I never declared the KATATONIA "put on ice" thing and I kept doing interviews and a lot of other shit for KATATONIA's concern as well.

Due to the fact that Monsieur Blackhat has been pretty busy lately with two totally different releases from new projects, we hooked up with KATATONIA's mastermind once again. This time to talk a little bit more about DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE and BEWITCHED. Read on to find out all necessary details...

My reason for doing this was simply that I didn't want the band to fade away or even worse, to be abandoned as a band that had their good days already. The second full length album is not a closed chapter nor a myth. It's under production and will be recorded during the first summer months, to be released as the ultimate soundtrack to the dark coming autumn. It carries the titlework "Where hears goes..." and as the title reveals, this is very obscure and deep material.

Was it clear from the beginning that there would be projects of both of the involved members of KATATONIA? What's your opinion about OCTOBER TIDE?

"No, we never had any plans of doing individual or separate projects apart from KATATONIA until somewhere during the year '93 when I discovered the fact that I was gonna be forced to form a sideproject. I came up with all these dark and twisted riffs and some complex concepts which were absolutely not considerable for KATATONIA. DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE was born to be the pit where I could unleash my morbid and maladjusted music. Concerning OCTOBER TIDE, I must say I find their debut album quite similar to the works of KATATONIA with some additional touches of OPETH. Highly enjoyable music though, first class I would say."

As far as I know, DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE is a solo project of yours, so would you like to tell us, who decided to do everything on your own, instead of using outside musicians?

"Very simply explained. First of all, DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE is a unit of a lyrical and musical concept, which only deals with the adventures of my own character. EVERYTHING is based upon myself as the centre core and taken further here there both back and forth in time and space. I would be truly disgusted to show any other members my ideas and plans for their approval. I choose to stay solo, so I don't need to go through that shit. DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE is something I can pull any way I want, anytime, anyhow, without bothering about anybody else's opinion or view. I only kneel before my selfish desire! Of course I could take use of session musicians, but since I manage to do all the shit by myself, I find that convincing as a complete solo project. Also, the results are achieved by my own hands which gives me new targets to aim for. In closing words, I do not even NEED to deal with other musicians which is honestly perfect, but lonely and obviously you won't see DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE perform live on stage, what a pity..."

There's one particular track on the record, where pretty high, heavy metal sounding vocals were used... Did you sing that as well and what made you do so?

"The particular song you're referring to is called "Under the banner of the Sentinel" and those highpitched heavy metal vocals were unsurprisingly done by the metal avenger Swanö himself. These vocals fuckin' shred!! This little heavy metal outbreak has got really astonishing response and I will probably let the metal avenger contribute with some equal killer shoutings on the follow-up. Metal forever!"

I was pretty amused and confused at the same time about the songtitles of the DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE album... Is it a concept album or why did you use your monicker Blackhat for almost every title?

"Yes, "Ravendusk in my heart" is a concept album in the form of being a part of the grand concept of DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE itself. I can imagine that the first look at the album titles might sway the beholder into confusion or amusement. A second look at the lyrics would certainly exteminate all kind of confusion while amusement would sustain and open the portals to a world beyond..."

Can you tell us a little bit about the lyrical aspects of the album?

"Rather not. I didn't print them in the booklet thus I've a good reason not to reveal the lyrical aspects more than I already have. But... I will certainly print the lyrics for the next album and I might have the lyrics to the debut printed in addition later on. First I thought that these lyrics would only be meaningful for myself yet I've realized that lyrics should be printed to constitute a complete circle. Speaking for myself, I prefer to follow the lyrics in synchronicity with the music, so I would hate the person that decided to exclude the lyrics on "Ravendusk in my heart."

Where do you see the main difference between KATATONIA's music and DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE... except for the speed of the songs!?

"DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE is much more intense, raw and cruel while KATATONIA is rather calm and dreamy. Both bands are very atmospheric, the main similarity."

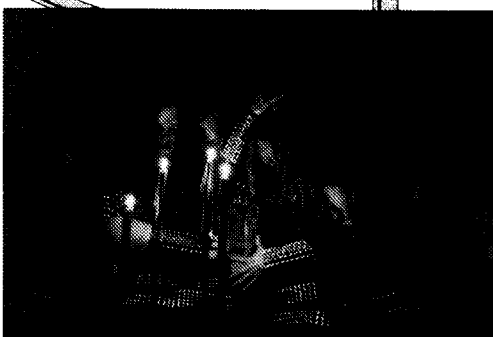
To get to BEWITCHED also... It seems that this band is more or less a kind of "all-star project" of swedish black / death metal musicians, how did you all get together for it?

"All star project of death / black musicians??? Oh well, it's just me and Vargher who do all the shit anyway. We use two other metal maniacs to complete a full line-up which is necessary as we play live and so on. I guess, I spoke to Vargher on the phone when some identical thoughts were exchanged. We felt it would be cool playing this very old school metal of the 80's in the middle of the 90's, like some sort of tribute to the pioneers and we just continued from there. Jammed, wrote a couple of songs, recorded a demo and sent it out to a few labels, but things were taking too long so, hungry as we were, we decided to enter the studio on our own to cut the self financed debut album and the adv. recording was once again sent out to a bunch of labels. Osmose called me up and was like blown to bits of the kiinnllllllleeeer advance tape. That's just about it."

I really like the direction you are heading for with BEWITCHED, but somehow it seems that this style turns into a new trend once again, as the releases of GEHENNAH, AURA NOIR, NIFELHEIM, INFERNÖ etc. prove, so are you just hopping on the bandwagon? Why did you decide to release the album now and not a couple years back already?

"Well, I didn't know Vargher that good a couple of years back and I don't think I would have done BEWITCHED on my own, so... Concerning this old school metal style turning into a trend once again. Yeah, probably, it seems to be true, but what's more important in that case is that BEWITCHED will be there to rule!! BEWITCHED is probably the best and will be the biggest band to tribute the metal of the 80's as well as making BEWITCHED a classic name for the 90's. Followers with the intention to do the same will not make it above the fifth! Only the defenders of the faith!!"

Which old bands do you see as the main inspiration for BEWITCHED?



"VENOM, BATHORY, MOTÖRHEAD, MERCYFUL FATE and loads of classic heavy metal bands. They are many!"

Was the album title chosen on purpose, to give people a hint on your other project (Diabolical Desecration...Masquerade) or did it just happen?

"It did just happen. No big deal, but a bit messy I assume. Nevermind..."

You already mentioned a MCD with 5 coversongs... Would you like to tell us more about that maybe? Was it difficult to decide on these tracks or are all members in BEWITCHED totally into these songs?

"Yes, we're all totally into these songs, but it was a hard job to select these tracks at the same time missing the opportunity to do another five song of ours. The end results turned out okay anyhow. We did VENOM's "Warhead" cause it's a fucking heavy song. We're aware of this killer-song being done earlier by those americans MASSACRE, but that didn't stop BEWITCHED from doing it again. Too bad though we weren't able to have Cronos on backing vocals!! From the early works of BATHORY we chose "Sacrifice" because it's a 100% suitable track for us. Speedy and threatening rock'n'roll! MERCYFUL FATE's "Evil" with some cool lead solos and stuff. CELTIC FROST's "Circle of the tyrants" which was a rather weak choice of ours. I wish we'd done another cause this one is a great song for sure, but it's been so "spotlighted". Last, we did a song from probably the first satanic rock'n'roll band on earth. BLACK WIDOW's "Come to the Sabbath", a true classic, very different."

Which other songs will be on it?

"Just a bonus track. An exclusively dirty version of the album track "Helcult". Check it out!!"

It seems you are keeping yourself quite busy, cause you also mentioned, that there's gonna be a 2nd DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE album and a new KATATONIA album as well... Wouldn't it be a lot easier to concentrate on one band / project only... using different influences there?

"No!!"



When you play live, is there anything special that people can expect from you? Will you play BEWITCHED material exclusively or also tracks from the other bands you are involved in?

"Of course we won't play any other songs from my other bands / projects! What made you believe that?? When BEWITCHED plays there will be all the songs from the debut album and eventually one or two new songs and a cover or two. In that case we'll have to cut down on our own songs a bit."

What exactly is SOULFLIGHT PRODUCTION? Have you started up a company on your own now or is it just a collective name for all your projects?

"It's a small label which I will run by myself exclusively for myself. In other words, I'll release my own creations in strictly limited editions to make things real collector items and hard to get kinda stuff. I was planning to release the previously unreleased 11 minute KATATONIA song "Scarlet heavens" with some live cuts, but I'm gonna cancel this plan since Misanthropy Records wants to put it out as a split 12" vinyl with PRIMORDIAL from Ireland. It'll still be very limited. The release is set for the summer. Instead I'll probably release a new DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE MCD after the second full-length has been released by Adipoere. It will only feature one song with a length of 20 - 25 minutes. As always a pure concept release. In addition I'll also print some limited editions of shirts with all different and exclusive designs. There is some interesting merchandise available right now, so send a couple of I.R.C.'s for info."

Anything else you'd like to mention?

"Buy more of my records, it's good for you and it's good for me. Thanks a lot for the space in the mighty VOICES. A pleasure indeed!"

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Frank Stöver

NEPHILIM

Stavenage-based band FIELDS OF THE NEPHILIM were a band that reached cult-status in the Gothic and later in the Death Metal scene with unbelievable speed. After their first (now rare) EP "Burning the fields" the band was still a quiet tip, but "Dawnrazor" (1987), presented with a cowboyish outfit, took the hearts of the European Gothics by storm, they came at the right time with the right music, and charismatic singer Carl McCoy with his rather occult lyrics was definitely the key to their success. In 1988 followed the album "The Nephilim", the band had found their own unique style. The single "Moonchild" was played in every Gothic disco, every little Gothic girl called herself "Moonchild", and you could see NEPHILIM fans in ragged, dusty leather trousers everywhere. A 12" called "Psychonaut" was published and that was maybe the peak of their creativity. Their last studio album "Elizium" (1990) was lacking somewhat of their original energy. Not long after that the band announced their split, a live album was published, and there the story of the most inspired Gothic bands

ends - for the time being. The rest of the band got themselves another singer and tried their luck as RUBICON, but gained only a succès déstine, and meanwhile have split up too and lead rather square family lives. Carl McCoy announced quite early he would form another band called THE NEFILIM, but a long time his fans had to wait. He appeared

This CD "Zoon" turned out quite heavy. Is that something you always wanted to do?

"Well, yes, that was something I was having in mind for a long time. With FIELDS OF THE NEPHILIM we had reached a point, where we had done everything, we had to develop. As far as the atmosphere was concerned, the band

then I might as well do it myself. I could have done this as a side project, but that was obviously something they wouldn't allow me to do, so... It's sad though, as we all were close friends, but that's life, you learn..."

Have you been aware of the great expectations your fans have for this CD?

Lost in Sumerland

with his new band at the Zillo festival in Germany in late 1993, already showing an affinity to heavy music and even Death Metal that made a lot of his Gothic fans rush out irradatedely. But still the album wouldn't come, a lot of rumors were spread about Carl firing musicians and producers all the time, he was even supposed to have become a drug addict. But now, 1996 we can finally witness the publishing of one of the best CD's I've heard in the last years, and I met a relaxed and content Carl McCoy, who is even willing to talk about his private life...

had done a great job, but in the faster parts I felt they were a bit weak. I don't like Death Metal in general, but certain aspects of it, there's a lot of power, a lot of energy in it."

Have you been aware that people were blaming you for the split, cause the rest of the band was saying they wanted to go on?

"It was my guilt, actually. But it's not something that happened from one day to another. I was putting suggestions to them, I kept saying "Why not do this or that...", but it was all coming from me, and when it's all coming from me anyway,

"Yes, I did feel that pressure for a while, but I couldn't let that get to me. It's good to have fans, but I had to concentrate on THE NEFILIM."

When you played at the Zillo Festival, you had a full set and a band, why did it take so long until the CD was finally published?

"We had problems to find a producer. Either they were good with the technical aspects of a live show, or they got it right in the studio, but it didn't work either way. We had the album finished, and we had to record it all over again, as we weren't happy with the production until now. But



it went quite quick actually, it could have taken much longer. It's not that I did nothing for two years, you don't have that in the music business, I was constantly busy with THE NEFILIM."

Are there songs that you played on the Zillo Festival, that are also on this CD?

"Well, there are probably a lot of songs in the drawer, that were good at that time, but not now, for this album. I wanted "Zoon" to mark a change, and it is a mark for me. I think it is the best album I have ever done."

When it shall show a change, why does the CD begin with "Still life" and end with "Coma", both a deathlike status?

"Because that is, from where I started out. When FIELDS OF THE NEFILIM split, I was lost somewhere in Sumerland and had to start out from there."

When it says "artwork by Sheer Faith" on the cover, that's just you?

"Yes, that's me. And my girlfriend, who's interested in the same kind of things."

Will you have your lyrics in the booklet this time?

"I have thought about that, but no. I don't like to have people just concentrating on the lines and not on the music. It all works together, the music transports the meaning and everybody can understand it, without knowing the exact words. I mean, I might be wrong, but..."

I have the impression that your lyrics are more personal this time.

"Yes, there is more of me in them."

Let's talk about some of the songs nevertheless. What does "Zoon" mean?

"It's a name, but you could translate it as "beast"."

If the song "Zoon" describes a relationship, it seems to be a sick one.

"No... I don't know..." (thinking for a while)

I don't want to push you, if you'd rather not talk about it.

"No, no... it's not that, I just don't know, how to explain... uhm... sorry, could you say that again?"

I said, if it describes a real relationship, it seems to be a sick one.

"It depends on how you define "sick"..."

Well, when you say "you only feel me tear you apart" that's even not literally spoken, very... you know... and having control over someone is not so positive in a relationship either.

"It's not having control over someone, it's rather, what's controlling me. Because

what's controlling me is much bigger than me, something very powerful."

Is "Pazuzu" your vision of Judgement Day?

"It's got a lot of that imagery in it, yes. It's also a tongue-in-cheek song." **What is that last sentence in "Melt"?**

"It is "Even angels lose their wings eventually"."

Is that your daughter saying that?

"Yes! How do you know?"

Well, I know... how old is she?

"She's ten now."

What about Nefilim, who are they, what do they mean to you?

"I've been brought up very religiously, believe it or not, with a lot of reading in the bible, and the Nefilim were something I've been interested in since I've been so small. I won't even try to say what the word means, because there hasn't been found a translation by now. It's the story of fallen stars who mate with human women and beget, well death actually. It goes back to the hebrew sources, and you will find it in Genesis and Numbers, and lots of other places. In Genesis the Nephilim are only mentioned in one sentence. A more in depth account of that story can be found in the apocryphic book Enoch in the tale of the Watchers, which was supposedly written around 300 BC. The Watchers, or "sons of god" who are interpreted as angels or stars desire the daughters of men. 200 of them step down on earth, take wives and have children, the Nephilim, who turn out to be monstrous giants. They devour all living things, even human beings, until god

astronomy, metal-working, writing on paper and so on."

Do you think your religious education has triggered your interest in the occult or rather hindered it?



hear where they've taken it from, but I don't know them."

There's bands like SENTENCED or Mathias Lodmalm of CEMETARY who tells how he's been inspired by you...

"Oh, it's positive when they say that. Would be interesting to hear them."

What kind of music do you listen to?

"I couldn't say that I listen to certain songs that I like, but I couldn't name a favourite band or so."

You appeared in a Richard Stanley movie, would you like to do something like that again?

"You mean "Hardware" (german title was "M.A.R.K. 13"), my little role, just in the beginning and the end... I want to direct a film myself, I find it much more interesting, what you can do by directing a film."

What do you do as a hobby?

"I paint, I sculpture, I take photos of the sculptures, just that sort of thing. It all belongs together, though, because when I write a song, it is like a film in my head, not only music. I have done a couple of covers for books, just illustrations, that kind of thing, but that were just one-off things."

Would you like to write a book yourself?

"Yes, I want to do a book with writing and art in it. I don't like definite plans, because then you have to let people down, but it will come definitely."

I can't imagine you at home, helping your daughter with the homework and so on...

"I am always like that, there's no difference to when I am at home. I'm constantly occupied with THE NEFILIM, and my girlfriend and daughter have been living with me for ten years, so they know how I am."

Does your daughter know, what you do and what you are interested in, like Sumer?

"Of course she knows what I believe in, and she's interested in the same kind of things, so she's obviously got something of me in her, but I don't point her in any direction. She's got an interesting character of her own, I can assure you that."

After that in-depth interview Carl told me there obviously would be a tour for the new CD, but nothing was confirmed at the time apart from a few small gigs in the U.K. and the gig at the Zillo Festival on 14 June in Hildesheim, Germany along with PARADISE LOST.

Interview & Pics: Dagmar Rath



intervenes. The sinful angels get locked up until the day of judgement, the giants get destroyed, but evil spirits issue from their bodies and cause evil ever since. But taking wives was not the only sin of these angels, they also taught human beings such "sinful" things as botany,

"I've always been searching, I don't have answers. The Nefilim have accompanied me from childhood on. And I've made certain experiences, I won't go into detail, cause everybody makes these experiences."

I think what Carl is hinting at are the kind of paranormal phenomena, that are unexplainable and called coincidence sometimes. Like dreaming of things, that come true later, or recognizing a place one has never been to - in this life. Why is Sumerian mythology so interesting to you?

"Because they were so far ahead even of the Assyrians and Babylonians, who came after them. Everybody is fascinated by ancient Egypt as the first big civilisation, but Sumer was there before them, and it's just been discovered in the last hundred years. They're still deciphering loads of inscriptions."

A lot of Death Metal bands are into Sumerian mythology too, but they probably got there via the Necronomicon.

"But anybody with a bit of sense who's read the Necronomicon would see that it's been totally made up by someone."

Of course, but it's got all the names of Sumerian gods in it.

"Yes, well, it's probably fair to say, that that inspired them. I'd already been into Sumer a long time, when I came across the Necronomicon."

Do you know, that there are a lot of (especially Death Metal) bands that have been inspired by FIELDS OF THE NEFILIM and you?

"I've been told that. There are a couple of sound-a-likes, you know, where you can

DARK TRANQUILITY

There's really no need to still introduce Swedens DARK TRANQUILITY, cause their melodic death metal more or less inspired many of their younger countrymates to come up with something similar by now... The following interview with bassplayer Martin Henriksson and guitarist Niklas Sundin was done after they had returned from their first european tour, so it is not really the freshest anymore. But on the other hand, nothing has really happened since then anyway, so...

Martin, you mentioned a company to me (where you work usually) before we started the interview... Would you like to tell us about the job you do there? What kind of relation do you have to the other guys in that company? Do they know about DARK TRANQUILITY? What do they think of it? Does it cause any problems when you need some time off, to go on the road? What are the other members in the band doing?

Martin: "Well, it's just an ordinary office work at a federal institute. It's not a steady job, so I got to re-new my contract every six months or so. It's ok for now, because I make a living out of it, but it's not what I want to do for like several years. So far I've done this for about one year. As it's a fulltime job, it does not fit our plans of touring every now and then, but the SIX FEET UNDER tour was ok, because I had a couple of weeks of vacation that I had to use before the end of the year anyway. As for the people at my work, most of them know about me playing in a band and some are quite interested in it. But as far as the music itself, no one really cares for that. The other guys in the band do some different stuff, like Fredrik is an electrician and he works under kind of the same conditions as I do, Anders works part-time at a big supermarket, Mikael is basically doing nothing, except developing full-scale alcoholism (hahaha!) and Niklas has just quit his so far promising studies to join Mikael in his quest for the state of doing nothingness."

Talking about live on the road... you've been touring Europe for the first time end of 1995 with SIX FEET UNDER and as far as I've heard, there's been some trouble... Would you like to tell us a little bit about that and how your impressions about touring in general have been? Did you like it? Or did you have different expectations maybe?

Martin: "I'm not sure what you mean by trouble, the only thing that springs to my mind is an incident at the Austrian / German border when the customs had the bus searched by dogs. Also they wouldn't let us in Austria until we had done some repair on the bus, so we had to spend the whole day and evening at the border, which of course meant that we couldn't make it to the gig in Italy that night. The second gig in Italy was already cancelled due to problems at the club in Rome, so we actually never went to Italy on the tour. Apart from that, there were no actual problems at all except for some delays and so on, which I've understood is common on every tour. I don't recall exactly what expectations we had, but in general tourlife turned out to be pretty much as one would expect, not much activity except the few minutes spent on the stage. It was a pity that we didn't get more time to look around and do some sightseeing when travelling through some of Europe's



most interesting cities. But all in all we enjoyed it and I hope to think that we made a decent impression on our

SHADES OF THOUSAND WORDS

first tour. SIX FEET UNDER and EXCIDUM were all very nice guys and professional, tight livebands."

Let's talk about something we're all pretty much interested in - music! What do you think, how would DARK TRANQUILITY sound nowadays, if a band called IRON MAIDEN wouldn't have been around?

Niklas: "Who knows? Actually IRON MAIDEN wasn't one of our favourite bands when we started (but they have grown on us since then), so I don't think they have been a very big influence for us. But on the other hand, many of the bands that have influenced DARK TRANQUILITY a lot, have themselves drawn a lot of inspiration from IRON MAIDEN. They have had such a high influence on metal music in general, so I guess that we somehow would have sounded a bit different without IRON MAIDEN, even if we don't (at least not I) listen to them so much."

I was actually pretty much surprised that you never re-did any of your old demo or 7" songs... What was the reason for it? Don't you like them anymore or is it more a situation like, those releases should remain special to those who have them, maybe?

Niklas: "Those old songs are still very good in my opinion and I wouldn't mind having them released to the public in some form in the future (I'm not speaking the general opinion of the band here). The reason for not including some of the demo or EP songs on "Skydancer" was that we had enough new material to fill an album. There were even two songs, "Soulbreed" and "The dying fragment of an elderly dream", that were written after the "...Moonclad..." songs, that never got recorded for the same reason. We simply thought that there was no time to record more than nine songs without having to compromise with the sound quality."

Nowadays the so-called "Gothenburg-style" has become pretty popular, even in black metal circles, while some years ago you seemed to have a tough time to establish

the band's unique style... Do you think it is just because people got bored of the typical Sunlight style a la ENTOMBED etc. or is there more behind it?

Niklas: "I don't really know the exact reasons, but everything goes in different movements: the "typical" style of a death metal band for example differs from time to time. Right now, it seems that the norm is to include quite a lot of melody and harmonies in the music, which wasn't the case 2 - 3 years ago. But perhaps the situation will be different again in a year or so. I can imagine, that people eventually will think that the basic rawness and power of this music style has disappeared among extensive melodies

and therefore will seek for more brutal music again. The same thing that happened with the so-called "Sunlight sound" will happen again. There will be too many bands doing the same thing. That said, the main occupation of DARK TRANQUILITY is to write quality music and we don't bother too much about what other bands are doing, so I'm not at all concerned whether the current musical norm changes or not."



Was Spinefarm Records the best offer you got back then or what made you sign with them instead of other companies? Did you regret it later on? Can you already say, that the labelchange towards Osmose has pushed the band into a more professional direction, something you could've reached with them years ago as well, if you would've signed with Osmose in 1993 already?

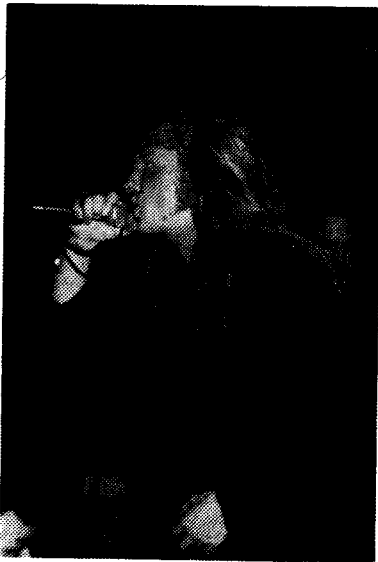
Niklas: "We did have some other offers at the time, but Spinefarm had the best conditions by far and were the most experienced label, so it wasn't a hard choice signing with them. We have never regretted this; they did a quality job with "Skydancer" and "...Chaos..." and we were aware of their limitations of mainly being a distributor and not a record label when we signed. So, there's no problem. We're satisfied with their work, but we've already noticed a difference with being on a full-scale record label. I don't know if it would be the same, if we would have signed to "Osmose already in '93 (in fact DARK TRANQUILITY was one of the bands that Hervé considered to sign when he had started the label), as they weren't as big then as they are now."

This one might sound a little bit dated, but what has caused the split between you and your former vocalist Anders and was it a natural choice to let Mikael become the new frontman or did you have auditions before he did? Where did you get Fredrik, your new guitarist? Has he been in other bands previous to DARK TRANQUILITY?

Niklas: "The replacement of Anders Fridén took place after the recording of "Skydancer", in the summer of '93 and was mostly due to differences in the ambition towards the music. We never considered another vocalist than Mikael, but for a month or so he tried to cope with both, guitar and singing and found that it didn't work out so well. Then we decided to let him concentrate on the vocals only and instead get a new guitarist. Fredrik was an old friend and had previously played first guitar, then drums in FORSAKEN, a truly excellent "Gothenburg style" band that did some great private recordings with material that

undoubtedly would have given them a record deal if they only had done some self promotion and financed a professional demo recording. Anyway, this line-up has worked out really good so far. Fredrik is a very diverse guitarist who has contributed a lot to our development, and Mikael is much more of a vocalist than a guitarist."

There seems to be a good relationship between the Gothenburg bands, as Anders is now in CEREMONIAL



OATH, Mikael used to help out IN FLAMES, AT THE GATES are sharing the rehearsal room with DISSECTION and so on...But don't you think, that all this has caused something that is similar to what once happened to bands that all recorded in Sunlight Studio and exchanged members all the time? I mean, don't you agree that by now there's already too much "typical Gothenburg" bands and that you could hardly separate them from each other musically?

Niklas: "I'm not the right one to comment on this, as I'm too much in the middle of everything to be objective, but I see what you mean, even if I don't agree. Most of the bands from here record in the same studio and so on, but I still think that the established bands - AT THE GATES, LUCIFERION, IN FLAMES, DISSECTION, CRYSTAL AGE, CEREMONIAL OATH and so on, have found their own, individual style. Of course there are some shared trademarks of sound, but one can definitely separate the music of these bands from each other. That said, there are a lot of newer bands around that perhaps haven't found their own sound yet. But that's the same in every genre of music. By the way, Anders Fridén is now a permanent member of IN FLAMES. He sings on their new excellent album "The jester race", which will be out this spring."

"Punish my heaven" was already featured on the Wrong Again Compilation CD, so what made you use it for the new album again? Is the compilation version similar to the one on the album or was it recorded long before it?

Niklas: "The compilation version was recorded about a year before the album version and doesn't differ in any major way - except that the sound is a bit thin of course. The compilation version is also slightly faster. The reason for re-recording that song was, that we liked it so much and we always thought of it as the opening song on the new album and it would be a shame not having it featured on "The Gallery"."

Getting back to the labelchange - don't you think it could cause a little bit of confusion that you've signed to a label that got popular because of black metal releases? Could you imagine that this fact has gotten you some of the acceptance within the black metal scene as well maybe?

Niklas: "It's true that Osmose have mainly been involved with black metal bands for the last years, but they have a back catalogue which includes a lot of non-black metal releases. They are currently changing the profile of the label and will branch out into other directions in the future. We got surprised as well, of course, when Osmose expressed their interest, but what matters to the band, the musicians, is the professionalism and the capacities of the label, and in this respect, the deal from Osmose had some advantages that the other contract-proposals didn't have.

So far, there haven't been any negative reactions, and I think that DARK TRANQUILITY has the same right to be on the label as any other band. We've been in touch with Hervé since the pre-Osmose days, when he released his "Miasmes" compilation tapes on his "Strangulation" distribution. And as I mentioned previously, there was a chance that DARK TRANQUILITY could have been one of the very first bands on Osmose if things would have turned out a bit differently. I don't think that we'll be getting more interest from the black metal audience just because of the label change... Perhaps someone will automatically get interested just because of the Osmose label on the back cover, and listen to the album and like it. But I doubt that people that wouldn't have bought it (if it would have been released on another label) will buy it now, just because of the label. Osmose isn't trying to "darken" our appearance or market us as something we're not, which is good!"

Would you agree that DARK TRANQUILITY's success is 100% based on the musical side of things, as you never had an image?! Was that a main goal of the band or weren't you able to come up with something that fitted the concept imagewise?

Niklas: "I have nothing against bands with an intelligent and convincing image; CRADLE OF FILTH for example manage to do their thing very well, but I don't see the reason to search for a fitting "image" just because the sake of it. I agree that we've never had something that resembles what one normally thinks about as an image. But there has always been a definite direction in the lyrics, at least during the first 4 - 5 years of the band, which at least helped to form a certain lyrical concept. Recently the new lyrics stray away from the "atmospheric" aesthetics and instead being more rough and direct. Visually speaking, we've had more or less the same appearance as any other band around at that time. I mean, bands usually didn't have an image then; perhaps there was one band out of 100 that used corpsepaint or props, but now the situation is quite different. Anyway, our "success" probably depends 100% on our music and lyrics itself and not because of any controversial or over the top theatricals (that's the way it should be! - Ed.) We're in a situation that can be compared to the one of EDGE OF SANITY, who also concentrate on the music and nothing else."

Could you tell us a little bit about the lyrics of the mini CD, as they weren't included?

Niklas: "Well, due to an unfortunate mistake, the first 2000 copies of "...Chaos..." were printed without lyrics, and most of them seem to have been sold in Germany. The lyrics follow the usual DARK TRANQUILITY pattern; not surprisingly, they're in my eyes a cross between the "Skydancer" and "Gallery" lyrics. I haven't written so much of them myself - just a few phrases in "With the



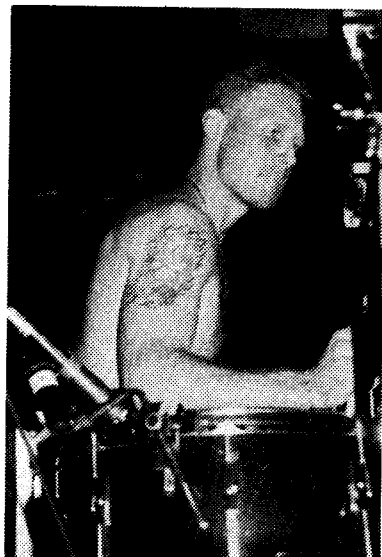
flaming shades of fall", so I'm unable to go more in depth with them right now, sorry. If anyone has bought the MCD in the faulty version, please contact Spinefarm to get a proper replacement."

Who came up with the idea to release demo material on a 7" back then? I mean, it was never promoted that much as the "A moonclad reflection" EP for example, so was it really necessary?

Niklas: "The main reason for deciding to put out the "Trail..." demo on a 7" as well was that we kept getting a lot of orders for the demo at the time (spring '92), even though it was sold out. We didn't want to print new cassettes, so when we received the offer from Guttur Records it was natural to accept. It wasn't promoted that much, but there was definitely a demand for it. The whole edition sold out reasonably fast, and the only thing that is to be regretted about it, is the lousy sound on the fact that the wrong song (1) appears on side B."

You've chosen "My friend of misery" for the METALLICA tribute CD, a pretty untypical choice, as most people totally dislike new METALLICA stuff and prefer their first three albums...Are you into their new stuff as well or what made you go for that particular song?

Niklas: "I can't speak for the rest of the guys, but personally I enjoy the latest METALLICA album, even if I very seldom listen to the band. As most of the other bands would choose to do earlier songs, it made sense to do



something different by choosing a new track. Also "My friend of misery" is a great tune that we thought we could make something good out of. In the end it turned out to be a pretty uncreative cover, as we didn't bother to come up with some fresh ideas that could make the song more "us". Anyway, we do like the recording a lot, especially the sound came out very good for the time spent in the studio."

I noticed an e-mail address on your letter, so do you think that this kind of communication might establish within the death metal underground in the near future? Are you open-minded when it comes to new technologies or does the evolution scare you sometimes?

Niklas: "I don't think that e-mailing will replace ordinary letter communication in so-called underground circles, but it can be a good tool when being in contact with magazines, record labels and other business people. There are already some zines at the internet (like the excellent "Inferno" from Holland) and within 2 - 3 years there will probably be many, many more. And the same goes for the bands. We'll probably establish a DARK TRANQUILITY internet page before the summer; not because it's 100% necessary, but because it's an efficient means of communication and it's fun to experiment with the possibilities."

Ok, I'll leave you for now - I hope you enjoyed answering the previous questions as much as I enjoyed your musical creations thus far...Feel free to end this interview in a way you like...Cheers!

Niklas: "Well, thanks for the interview!"

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c/o Mikael Stanne
Andra Långgatan 34 7v
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Sweden

Interview: Frank Stöver
Live Pics: Martin Wickler

MOONSPELL

FULL MOON MADNESS

By the time this issue hits the streets, Portugal's shooting stars MOONSPELL will already have unleashed their brandnew full length album "FULL MOON MADNESS", which definitely will establish the band somewhere between PARADISE LOST, TYPE O NEGATIVE and FIELDS OF THE NEFILIM. Due to the fact that the band was still in the recording process while we did this interview, we can't bring you any details on it yet, but hopefully the chat with vocalist Langsuyar will be satisfying anyway...

In the very beginning (I guess it was even before MORBID GOD) there's been a band called BACTHERION, which has been connected to some of you guys somehow... So, could you tell us a little bit about that, like who actually was in BACTHERION, what kind of musical style you played and if you ever released something?!

"That is a very old project our bass player was involved in and that gave origin to another band, nothing serious really to speak about... They released a demo called "The miracle of death" in 1990 I believe."

The next step then has been MORBID GOD... Could you explain us the evolution from BACTHERION to MORBID GOD, or what made you join forces when it comes to the line-up?

"There was no evolution since the bands had nothing to do with each other and they moved in two completely different areas. The line-up was choosen having the criterious of common musical tastes and friendship as any other band when they formed."

The only thing you've recorded professionally back then has been the track "Serpent angel", which you put out as a promotape, if I'm right... Why did you just record one song? Lack of money or lack of material?

"Mainly material and line-up problems. When we recorded "Serpent" we were very surprised towards the reaction it had, so we decided to start a more serious project, which could go deeper and higher than MORBID GOD. So MOONSPELL was born."

"Serpent angel" got released on a portuguese compilation album shortly after, so could you tell us more about that maybe?

"It was our very first studio effort and we still regard it as a good beginning. It was a fresh thing for the time and got us going."

At which point of time in your career did you change your monicker to MOONSPELL and did you choose it because it fitted the cultural history of Portugal a lot better or was it mainly because it sounded a lot darker and mysterious than MORBID GOD?

"For both and a lot more reasons. MOONSPELL is a name that each time more defines our convictions and musical works."

You've obviously been heavily into the black metal thing back then, cause you've used corpsepaint and a satanic image... even your "Anno Satanae" demo is a good proof for all that... But it didn't really last that long. Were you just bored of it or what made you drop the

corpsepaint, pseudonyms and changing the musical direction quite a bit?

"We are black metal fans since the early 80's, but back then all was only heavy metal and nobody cared about anything than music. We had the golden chance to live it still through our band and to incorporate it in MOONSPELL. Yet everything took a very wrong direction, we did not want to get mixed in, basically because our music is above everything and image was to complement it! We evolve on the opposite of others!"

Talking of your pseudonyms... Ares originally called himself Tetragrammaton, but that's basically the original name for "god" in the greek language, so why did he choose that pseudonym, when you were on the black metal side of things?

"I fail constantly to understand what you call the black side of things. We revere freedom as one of the highest values within our life and the band and if Ares did not identify himself with his nickname anymore, it was his obligation to change it of course, things are not so complicated." (well, but if you considered yourselves as a BLACK metal band back then, things ARE pretty much complicated and not really credible... -Ed)

Give us a few details about your one and only demo... Have the songs, that later appeared on the Molon Lave Records 7" just been taken from that? And what happened to the polish version, that was supposed to be out with a different cover? Did that ever come out? Why did you agree on a different packaging then?

"It was called "Anno satanae" and contained three simple yet melodic and fist songs: "Goat on fire", "Ancient winter goddess" and "Wolves from the fog". The first and last track were released on a 7"EP and the polish version was also released with our approval of a different layout, since we were never happy with "Anno's" original layout anyway."

Whatever happened to Monasterium Records? Is that label still alive and working?

"I think so, but you better ask them!" (ehh, I thought one of YOU guys did run that label... - Ed)

When you released your Mini CD on Adipocere Records, it was a big musical progression for the band with all this untypical instruments and vocalstyles... Was it difficult to get ahead of such things for heavy music in Portugal?

"Yes it was, but we were just very into experimenting with those kind of influences at that time and there is nothing which can not be done with hard work and patience."

You've also changed your opinion when it comes to live shows quite drastically... I remember that you weren't that keen on playing too many shows in the past, but by now you've already did some touring, so what changed your mind concerning this subject?

"Yes we have, but maybe you lost the essential point back then. We wanted to play when the conditions were gathered and avoid making a weak picture of ourselves. But when the time had come, we played and will hopefully continue to play because it has been always like this in MOONSPELL! We work and grab the chances we are offered!"

There's also been some talk about special appearances of semi-naked arabian female dancers, female singers and violine players plus several other special show



effects... Do you still have that in mind or was that idea dropped completely by now?

"We did it already and we still have the theatrical element in our live show. It is a thing that your eyes would be better witnesses than my words. For "Under..." we had a female dancer, now we have different things since it is a different album..." (yeah, I recently witnessed your impressive stagemore when you toured here with THE GATHERING! Really awesome! - Ed.)

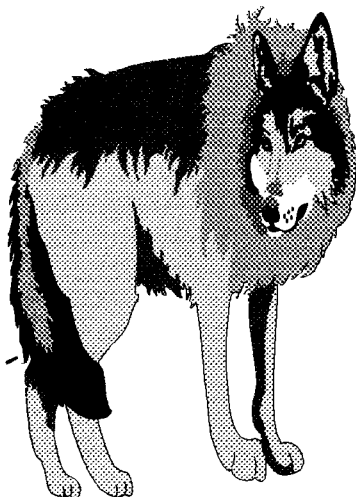
Ares once said, that the norwegian scene is pretty ridiculous... but by now you've already toured with IMMORTAL... Did you have any trouble during that tour because of that?

"Ares once said it and I agree! We did not have any problems with IMMORTAL on tour and Hellhammer is a great guy! We just do not agree with the self acclaimed norwegian musical, philosophical, theosophical, worldly superiority and that is what we find ridiculous! But we say it and don't try to follow what does not tell us anything. Many "norwegians" and other countries "norwegians" talk about trends, but I would advice an inner look before! Yet

we do pay respect to bands like MAYHEM, EMPEROR, ARCTURUS because they deserve it on the expense that they let their talent talk higher than any other thing and that is pretty rare in Norway nowadays!"

How do you judge that tour in retrospect in general? It must've been a big problem for you to play so early every night, when most kids haven't even been in the clubs...

"Promotion wise and playing wise it was a very profitable tour definitely and I do not think the early shows were a big problem. We were glad we did it as it was a great push-up in our career!"



Who's idea was it to re-release "Wolfheart" as a digipack CD with a new packaging and why did you use the track "Ateagina" exclusively for that one?

"It was Century Media's idea and a very good one in my opinion since the artwork is really killer! "Ateagina" was left from the first edition of "Wolfheart" because we thought it really did not fit there, so we just kept it for other uses."

There's also a different logo on it...will you use that one from now on or was it just a one time thing?

"It was a one-time thing because it really fitted perfectly with that cover. We use logos that go with the cover, so we will have a new one for the new album and so on..."

I'm not sure if it's just because of changing the pseudonyms or if you have new members in the band by now... Can you clear that up and give us some reasons for it?

"We do have a new member since our old guitarist left the band. He's called Ricard and he wants to use his real name... not a problem for us."

Have you already finished some material for the next album by now? Give us a few hints about the musical direction and some lyrical contents if they have been finished already!

"Yes, we are actually recording our new album. Musically it is overall more melodic, but it has a lot more power in certain parts than "Wolfheart". Lyrically I picked up some classical themes like the faustian myth for a track called "Mefisto", vampirism to poisoned gift, etc."

Anything else you'd like to add to this interview here?

"Thanks for your interest and for your support. Dive to the pulse of the wolfheart, it beats for you!"

MOONSPELL
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Portugal

Frank Stöver
Live Pic: Martin Wickler

TORMENTOR

The legendary "Anno Domini" recording, which descends from the late eighties, is at last officially released as a full length CD. Featuring thirteen compositions of well produced Black Metal art in its own unique way. Tormentor is the original band of Mayhem's "De Mysteriis..." vocalist Attila Csihar. This is no bootleg! All the rights once granted Deathlike Silence Productions are now granted to Nocturnal Art.



Prices:

Norge: 150 NOK + oppkravsgebyr
Europe: 20 US dollars
World: 22 US dollars

Tormentor "The Tyrant Of Transylvania" T-shirt (L & XL)

Norge: 140 NOK + oppkravsgebyr
Europe: 19 US dollars
World: 21 US dollars

Norge: Bestillinger skjer via postoppkrav
World: We prefer payment via IMO (International Money Order)

Coming soon:

"Anno Domini" LP (500x/with poster)- via Head Not Found
"Anno Domini" Pic. disc (666x/unique and different artwork)- via AJNA

Still available:

Ildjarn-Nidhogg "Norse" 7" ep (Eclipse 002)
40 NOK/6 US dollars/7 US dollars

Emperor "As the Shadows Rise" 7" ep (Eclipse 001) SOLD OUT!
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Nocturnal Art Productions
Box 53
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design by Stephen O. Morris

Ancient Rites

Belgium's Ancient Rites won't need a further introduction anymore, cause they've already built themselves a strong following in the underground. Their second album "Blasfemia eterna!" recently got released via the dutch Mascot label, so it was time for us to get in touch with mainman Gunther to find out all the little bits and pieces about their career so far...

What have you all done before forming ANCIENT RITES? Which bands have you been in?

"Bart (guitars) used to play in a band called RETALIATOR, which was inspired by old KREATOR and old SLAYER, Walter (drums) played in bands that never made it to live performances, while I played in acts such as ADDIX ('80), SUBVERSION ('82), SCUM ('83) and NECROPHILIA ('84). SUBVERSION and SCUM already existed before I joined and I never felt home in those bands. Things started to work out for us a bit only after we formed ANCIENT RITES. As you might know, the very first line-up of ANCIENT RITES consisted of Philip (guitars), Johan (guitars), Stefan (drums) and myself on bass / vocals. It is strange to realise that I am the only one left of the original ANCIENT RITES, which I created together with Philip. I have seen so many people come and go (as bandmembers and roadcrew), some of them are even buried... Live can be very unpredictable."

What do you think was the reason for the trouble you had during gigs in the past (with fights and so on)?

"During our very first gigs, we often were put on the same bill with acts who were opposed to metal. It happened that the vocalists of the other bands (mostly core) were insulting our audience on stage, which lead to a hostile reaction of our public, which resulted in fights. Afterwards it was ANCIENT RITES that was held responsible and boycotts followed. Nowadays promoters are smart enough to realise mixed bills do not necessarily lead to a crossover of different audiences. Usually there are no fights or problems at ANCIENT RITES gigs anymore. Only in Germany: bomb threats against ANCIENT RITES in Stuttgart, boycotts in Ludwigshafen, individuals hidden in the crowd throwing glass

(Saalfeld) or burning cigarettes and screaming slogans against us (Essen). It does not impress us, because it does not show courage, when I invited the guilty ones on stage to fight me in the open, only silence remained! Those people, who PAY to show how much they hate ANCIENT RITES seem to be a bit strange to me... a waste of money / time, lack

of brains. However, I also met similar souls who are in allegiance with us in Germany, so not everyone is hating our guts over there I guess."

How was the reaction on your debut demo back then?

"Nowadays I receive a lot of demo orders, but when we released "Dark Ritual" years ago, only a few were interested. Metal connected with satanic lyrics was very "uncool" back then, it was years before this new wave of black metal took place. We decided to continue our battle, regardless anyone or anything and since no interest was shown from any record

company, we created our own label FALLEN ANGEL RECORDS on which "Evil Prevails" was released. When the first two pressings sold out without any distribution, other labels and the underground scene started to notice us."

"After Philip's death and Stefan's firing, Johan (who never really related to the satanic philosophy of the band) decided to leave the entire metal scene. At that point Walter (drums) and Bart (guitars) already had joined ANCIENT RITES... Some time later Pascal (guitars) came in, played a few gigs with us, but showed a lack of

TOTAL BLASPHEMY

Was it difficult for you to find a replacement for Philip back then?

"Extremely! As you see, we are still a trio. We never really managed to replace him. It is very hard to find such a fanatic and dedicated musician as Philip and I am not saying this because he died... It is a pity he did not live long enough to see the result of his hard work. He was an inspiring force and sometimes when our band has to deal with misfortune, I think of him and can imagine how he would've reacted. I don't see him as my idol or anything, I always chose my own path, but we knew each other through and through and our main aim was to fight for our band. You can compare it a bit with a soldier who loses his best companion in a battle, on occasions you think back and compare situations. Since I do not believe in any form of afterlife (reincarnation, esoteric spiritual state etc.), I believe he simply returned to dust. What a waste. His time on earth was way too short..."

What kind of problems did you have with Stefan?

"Stefan was a person who did not dare to face his problems. His last gesture proved this: he committed suicide by blowing his brains out with a shotgun. We found out he stole money of ANCIENT RITES, which resulted in the fact that we could not pay the recordings of "Dark Ritual". When we tried to talk to him about it, he behaved like an angry child, who did not want to admit he's wrong. If at least he would have shown regret, we could have worked things out still, but he avoided the subject or started throwing things when we talked about the matter. He was an alcoholic. He used the money to satisfy his needs. Betrayal amongst friends we do not accept, so we fired him, like we ended our relationship with After Dark after we found out that the label owner Eric stole a huge amount of money from ANCIENT RITES. Thiefs we do not tolerate within our ranks. We accept people's mistakes, but friends like those cause more harm than the worst enemy can ever achieve! I was not happy to hear that Stefan committed suicide, but it was kind of written in the stars, it didn't surprise me at all. To be honest, it didn't touch my soul..."

How did you find out about Pascal's attitude and that he would be the best replacement for Johan?

dedication, so we fired him. For a while Frank replaced him, but he couldn't deal with our schedule and life on the road. Since we parted as friends, we decided to give Pascal a second chance. He rejoined and recorded the "Evil prevails" EP with us. He had to join the Belgian Navy though (military service still was obliged back then). We kept on growing as a band, while Pascal's priorities were no longer ANCIENT RITES. When he came home from sailing the seven seas, the last thing he cared about was our band, which we understood, so we felt it was better to part again. Recently he told me, he regrets being out of the band, but it is too late for him to join again. Too often he did not show up at rehearsals, without telling us. We are a chaos horde, but well organized when it comes to ANCIENT RITES though. Dedication is required from the bandmembers... We are still friends with Pascal, but Johan seems to have disappeared from the face of earth."



How many copies have been pressed of the "Evil Prevails" 7" on your own and why has the cover been changed in the U.S.?

"We printed about 600 copies on our own label FALLEN ANGEL RECORDS. They sold out fast, so we printed 600 more which sold out as well. Wild Rags wanted to present ANCIENT RITES to the north american underground and released 1000 copies, which sold out too. The U.S. version came with a different cover, because EP's are presented differently there, with photos on the inside and a gatefold cover. The purpose was to show the difference between the european and american release."

How many copies have been made of the split-album on Warmaster Records and have you ever been approached to re-release it?

"Warmaster released the "Evil prevails" sessions on a split LP to spread our infernal mayhem on the south american market. Only 600 copies have been released and it became a collectors item... too high prices are asked for a copy these days! Several labels approached us to re-release our old stuff, probably a compilation will be released one day. I heard there are several bootlegs circulating though, also the available ANCIENT RITES are bootlegs, which have got nothing to do with us..."

How was it to work with Morbid for the split-EP and how did it actually happen?

"When we went to Greece to play with ROTTING CHRIST at the famous Thorns Club (where KREATOR shot the "Betrayed" video clip), several greek labels offered us a deal. We were willing to record one track for Molon Lave since they were the ones investing the most in our greek show. Morbid (now calling himself Magus) always appreciated ANCIENT RITES and we felt it could be an interesting idea to ask him to play some keyboards / organ on our ancient hymn "From beyond the grave". The result is the split EP with THOU ART LORD. This release was printed twice and sold out. Sometimes it still can be found on small underground mailorders."



What made you sign with After Dark Records for your debut album?

"Years of friendship and misjudgement. We believed in signing to a brandnew underground label, run by very close friends, would be a wise decision. How wrong we were! We invested our last penny in recordings, artwork, mastertape and U-matic, while After



Dark would take care of printing and distribution... But pretty soon I was receiving complaining letters of fans, distributors, stores etc. who had sent money and orders to our label and never received anything. And after writing again, After Dark only sent a catalogue! Our contract said, we would receive royalties every three months. After one year and two months WITHOUT RECEIVING A PENNY we had a serious talk with our "friends"! When we asked about our money earlier, they always started talking about our years of friendship and that we shouldn't forget the underground spirit. At a certain point, one of the label owners came up with an amount of money, which could not be correct according to the sales. "It's the only money my partner gave me" he said. We expressed our disappointment / anger in a major zine, remaining polite. Our best friend's partner phoned us after reading the article and said why the hell we complained, since he paid us a fair amount! At this point we found out, our best friend had been stealing money from his partner in our name! Erik had been ripping off both, After Dark and ANCIENT RITES and countless others in the scene. Let's say, only half of After Dark were corrupt to the core (After Dark consisted of two people, but since Erik was a good friend, who even joined us on tours, he was the only one directly dealing with us). Ben invested most in After Dark and

decided to end the label since its reputation is burned, many flyers against After Dark, made by "victims" of the label (Erik) are circulating. Erik changed address and doesn't show his face anymore, which is wise. He had the guts to call me last week, saying he'd be distributing our second album, since he has plans to create a huge mailorder, which even spreads albums by MICHAEL JACKSON! I am totally sick of his lies and I can guarantee that having a friend like him, can do more harm than a worst enemy! We lost time and money. Erik gave the rights to Osmose to print "The diabolic serenades" on a large scale, at least they took care of a decent distribution. To

this very day, we did not receive one penny of the sales, we do not even know, how many copies have been sold on the whole, cause too many labels / distributors have been involved. Hervé said, Erik owes money to Osmose and therefore we lose all profit. It is strange to see that people are willing to betray years of "brotherhood" for money. No use in dragging him to court, several already did, he spent all the money!"

What kind of memories do you have on your tour w/ IMPALED NAZARENE?

"Tourlife is addictive. We have toured Europe and the U.K. a few times and although we often had to deal with a lot of problems, it has been a positive experience for us... It is kind of strange to see we draw larger crowds nowadays, while in the past only a very few individuals were interested in our band. I guess the new black metal explosion must have a lot to do with it. Since we always received way more appreciation outside our own country, we preferred to concentrate on touring abroad. Nowadays our status also has improved within Belgian borders, which is a small miracle considering the anti-chauvinist character of the Belgian audience. Seems like we had to prove ourselves in foreign countries first. It is important to have a good relationship with the bands you tour with, because one has to live together for a longer time in a very small place under bad conditions (tourbus)! Most of the groups we have played with, we already knew personally, which of course improved life on the road together. We headlined on the first black / death / grind / thrash festival in Portugal, sponsored by the major of Lisabon and Coca Cola, which was held in a huge sports hall, played the famous Thorns club, toured France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, England (played the famous Marquee)... Each land has its own way of expressing strong emotions depending on the cultural background. It keeps tourlife interesting..."



How did Osmose get into the picture for the re-release of your debut record?

"Osmose came in because After Dark (due to their chaotic and dishonest policy) couldn't handle printing / distribution of our albums on a larger scale. SPV received many orders and advised Osmose to take over. We did not sign any contract with Osmose though..."

Why has After Dark Records not put out a vinyl version and how did you hook up with Midian Creations for that?

"Being an undergrounder myself, I do not want vinyl to disappear... In certain countries, where ANCIENT RITES are rather known, vinyl still is important, like in Greece, Russia, Malaysia... Midian Creations is a label owned by a true friend who's into the scene since many years as well. If we had signed to Midian for our CD as well, at least things would've gone fair. Midian is strictly underground and only had the financial means to release a limited edition, CD or LP. Since After Dark only were interested in CD format, Midian had to settle for vinyl, which they preferred in the first place. If Midian had done our CD, both Midian and ANCIENT RITES would've gained a lot of money, but there wouldn't have been a vinyl version. Wim Baelus is respected in our scene and he deserves full support. We'd like to see our second album released on vinyl by him as well... If Erik had the same attitude like Wim, we all still would be brothers like in old times. A pity he had to skrew things up."

Will there be a difference in the packaging when the album comes out in Poland, U.S.A. or Asia?

"Midian Creations used a different cover, made by a Belgian artist we know very well. All other labels involved used the CD cover. Our new album could face boycotts in Asia though, because of the naked witches on the cover."

Tell us about the tours you did recently!

"Touring with IMPALED NAZARENE and ROTTING CHRIST was perfect. No stress at all! We have also toured with AT

THE GATES and SEANCE since and although the relation between the bands was very good, things went completely wrong. While touring the U.K. our tourpromoter claimed he had been robbed on the street, while carrying all the money. Our tourbus was provided by a very professional agency that works with mega acts such as ROXETTE, MOTORHEAD etc. So, when our tourpromoter claimed to have no money, our busdriver received the order from his boss to return home (Sweden) immediately. We ended up on the english streets with all our equipment, clothing for one month, tons of merchandise, without food or money in the middle of winter. We have been through the strangest situations, survival. We had to leave everything behind at the last club we played (where a bit was stolen even!) and continued our journey alone. AT THE GATES / SEANCE received support from their labels to return home safely. Of course After Dark did not help us in any way, according to their usual behaviour. We contacted the London promoter, who really was surprised to hear we had not left with the rest and wanted to continue the tour on our own, without tourbus even. We had found shelter at the home of a witch near the coast. Days of shamanism, drug cults and weirdest meetings followed. The London promoter admired our behaviour and liked the idea of going on despite all problems. We did the strangest tour possible, using public transport, busses, trains (ended up in strikes, broken cars etc.) to reach the next venues where the gigs would take place. The english press noticed us and afterwards we have been invited for a couple of more shows in the U.K. with as the highlight the Marquee! Later on we did a big european tour with VADER, MALEVOLENT CREATION, OPPRESSOR and CRADLE OF FILTH, which went down perfectly and some smaller tours in and outside of our country. It has been a very busy year!

You mentioned some problems that you had, since too many people got involved in the band's success... Would you like to tell us about it?!



"While our status is growing, more and more business people are surrounding us. It is a normal evolution I guess, but too often we are in the middle of fights between people that work with us, fights which are not of our concern. I won't mention any names, but for instance a tour promoter wanted to send us on tour, we wished to take a certain band with us (good friends), but it wasn't allowed, because that certain band had a problem with a label that was a good customer of the promoter. This promoter didn't want to insult the label, he could've faced boycotts himself, if he had burned his hands with this package. This is not about



music anymore, this is corrupted business which makes me sick. Journalists are receiving money to write good reviews, backstabbing, dirty little games, labels fighting over us, telling lies, people hanging around us like parasites, trying to get a piece of the cake... All very tiring. Believe me, these are only a few examples. I do not like the way things are going. It's hard to trust anyone these days."

Do you know any reasons why Stefan committed suicide?

"A typical case of a person who did not dare to face his mistakes. Whenever a problem occurred, he ran away from it. In the end he ran away from life as the ultimate last statement. I've heard on the day of his suicide he had a fight with his girlfriend and with his parents, who were about to divorce, but I don't really know, since we broke contact long before the incident took place. He was a weak person. I remember him throwing a glass at me when I had turned my back on him after we fired him. It was at a concert and I noticed the glass falling on the ground next to me... I turned around and suspected him. I went straight to him and at the same time one of our roadies

approached to confirm he had seen him throwing it at me. Although he was surrounded by his friends, I grabbed him and he almost started to cry. He said it was a coincidence, I let him be...pathetic and typical. I must say, he was a brilliant drummer though... We had great times together, but he managed to ruin things. Sometimes I think, he was overprotected by his family. And the alcohol problem did not really help him either."

Give us some details about that Gothic Dark band you do with Morbid and Sotiris!

"Our goth band is called DANSE MACABRE, a 7" EP is recorded and should be released soon. Several labels are interested in releasing our full length CD, which will be recorded in April. It is brilliant to do this. The three of us are heavily into gothic, but do not want to influence our main metal bands with this passion of ours, so DANSE MACABRE is our ultimate solution. Sotiris once said it perfectly: "I feel like if I'm cheating on my wife (SEPTIC FLESH) with her approval!" The members of ANCIENT RITES, SEPTIC FLESH and ROTTING CHRIST / NECROMANTIA really like DANSE MACABRE and wish us the best of luck. They also appreciate that we see the importance of keeping our metal bands pure metal, how it should be. DANSE MACABRE is a theatrical world of 19th century poems, a melancholic kind of darkness put to music."

There's a new album out from ANCIENT RITES, so feel free to promote that in any way you want now...

"Our second album is entitled "Blasfemia eternal" and was released on Mascot Records from the Netherlands. Expect dark emotions and intensity. Those who liked our debut, for sure won't be disappointed when hearing our new CD. Both aggression AND melancholy have increased, we have grown as musicians without betraying our style. The voice differs from "The diabolic serenades"...more variety can be found!"

Something else we missed out here?

"I think all is said and done, Frank. Excuse me for this huge delay, but things are beyond my control. Thanks for this interesting conversation. All the best with VOICES FROM THE DARKSIDE, EVIL PREVAILS!"

Feel free to write to the band for further informations or a huge merchandise list at the following address:

ANCIENT RITES
c/o Theys Gunther
Kraalenneststraat 11
3290 Diest
Belgium

Frank Stöver

PROGRESSIVE CORNER

Actually all the following records would have been reviewed in the normal review section, but due to the fact that they arrived here pretty late and musically were all along the same lines more or less, I decided to give them a somehow "special treatment". As you probably might have guessed already because of the headline, all these bands have in common their love and dedication for so-called progressive rock or progressive metal. First up there's Netherlands EDGON HEATH. Their already fourth album "Nebula" (Cymbeline Records / Mascot) should please all the die hard YES fanatics out there, cause the 8 featured tracks are pretty much in the vein of that band. The vocals are more enjoyable though and

sometimes there's even a little jazzy touch to be heard. Not bad! Italy's ACACIA should be familiar to some of our readers by now, cause their excellent demo got featured in an earlier issue of VOICES and here's their first full length "Deeper secrets" (Underground Symphony Records) now. Musically still somewhere between FATES WARNING and DREAM THEATER, so you can expect great songwriting here. Unfortunately the band still needs to improve a little bit more in the vocal department. Good album nevertheless. MADSWORD is another italian band, and their MCD "Evolution" (Underground Symphony Records) comes across a lot more powerful and metal-like than the previously reviewed efforts. The band sounds really matured already and proves their musical abilities by including a DREAM THEATER

cover of the instrumental "The Ytse Jam"! Impressive and highly recommendable! If you're addicted to this form of music and in need for more in-depth informations about the world of progressive music, you should order a copy of NOBODY'S LAND, a new magazine totally and exclusively dedicated to this style. It comes with 80 glossy pages and a 4-coloured cover. No price mentioned, but write to the following address for further informations:

NOBODY'S LAND
c/o Ettore Zanatta
Via Passo Sella 8
20134 Milano
Italy
Fax: 0039 / 2 / 26412676

He's also the guy involved in Lucretia Records from Italy, so ask for a detailed list of their releases as well.

Frank Stöver

Nowadays it seems pretty unusual to come up with a brutal death metal release cause black metal is the "big thing" right now and everyone outthere is talking about the demise of the death metal scene. Well, I always laughed about this and as long as there's releases like DAMNATION's debut album "Reborn..." this music will keep going! We got something more about these guys for you right now, cause Les and Bart gave us all necessary details about their activities in the past, present and future...

When you started DAMNATION in 1991, what was your main inspiration back then? Did you get influenced by the same stuff then as nowadays?

LES: "We were fascinated back then by brutal, technical death/black metal bands and their dark and blasphemous lyrical thoughts. That was music we loved, that was music we wanted to play. Some of those bands we mentioned in our dedication list on the album... For most of us DAMNATION wasn't the first band but unfortunately I had to do my military service in 1990 and so 1,5 years of my life was lost. For that reason DAMNATION was formed so late, but our tastes haven't changed since then."

When did you start playing music and what happened before DAMNATION's origin? Any previous bands / musical activities?

LES: "Personally, I started playing death metal in 1987 in a band called EVIL DEATH. It was a dark trio and the bass player was Jackie, who in '89 (after our split-up) joined VADER. Unfortunately we didn't record any studio stuff, only a few rehearsals and played some gigs. Varien played drums in a shitty thrash metal band and Bart played in CENOTAPH (POL), where he was the leader. When he joined DAMNATION, CENOTAPH splitted up."

Who was in the band back then and what happened that DAMNATION basically is a 2-piece only? Tell us something about the other (session?) members!

BARC: "DAMNATION was formed as a trio: Les - vocals / guitar, Jeff - guitar, Varien - drums. The bass was played by so many persons in a short period of time, that there's no need to mention them all. I replaced Jeff in '93. After the recording of our promo '94 we found Arthur, the bassplayer from CONDEMNATION (POL). But he was too busy with his main band and lived too far away from our town, so Les played the bass on our album. When we left the studio after the "Reborn..." session in July '95 we kicked out Varien because he had a too bad and destructive influence on the band. That was the reason why we took photos as a two-piece only. But since July '95 we have a fuckin' great new drummer. His name is Inferno and you'll hear his abilities on our 2nd album. In December '95 we also found a new bass player, Dagon. But we won't make new photos before the recordings of our 2nd album."

Why did it take you so long until you finally could come up with your first demo "Everlasting sickness" in 1993? Tell us a little bit about that particular demo!

LES: "The "Everlasting sickness" demo was supposed to be recorded in 1992, but unfortunately our second guitarist at that time, Jeff, broke his arm during a DEICIDE gig in Warsaw where he stagedived, so we had to wait half a year with it. But



DAMNATION

Unholy Death Metal!

this stuff didn't show the true face of DAMNATION anyway, cause we recorded it in a short time and so the production turned out pretty bad. We had to do it on 8-tracks with poor equipment and you can easily hear that."

Does the style of the 1994 promo differ a lot from the 1993 demo or what was the reason that you got an offer for an album then? Why not earlier?

BARC: "I think that promo '94 differs a lot from the debut demo. It's got a better production (but the same studio), we developed our style, it was more powerful, brutal and better composed. And that's the reason why we got an album deal. The promo "Forbidden spaces" got good reviews and Ludo of Evil Omen Records wanted to release our debut album, his offer seemed to be the best..."
What actually went wrong with Evil Omen / Osmose Records? And how did you get out of the contract then?

BARC: "We signed an album deal in October '94 and the recording session was planned for January '95. Before that, songs from the promo should appear on a compilation CD. But Ludo turned into a fuckin' thief. He didn't send us money for the recordings and proposed that we should pay it on our own. He wanted to give us our money back by sending us CD's. Stupid kid! This proposal made us laugh and we decided to break the deal up. We were bored with all his stupid letters in which he complained that he has money problems etc. He even stole our DAT-tape with the debut demo and promo '94. We asked him to send it back to us, but it seems that he took offence of the fact that we didn't record an album for him, like a kid... But we hope that some day we will meet him..."

You hail a lot of ancient bands on your debut album, but I mainly hear a big (old) MORBID ANGEL influence in your stuff, so do you think you will continue in this direction or will there be some other influences incorporated in the future as well?

LES: "I liked and still like MORBID ANGEL (come here! - Ed.), so it's difficult not to be inspired by such a good band. But the first band that fascinated me was DESTRUCTION, in particular Mike's way of playing the guitar, his style and technique. I've always loved that dark and heavy guitars and the vocals of Schmier. "Infernal Overkill" will always be my number one album of all times! And when somebody says that there could be some DESTRUCTION influences in DAMNATION's style, that's true. But we play more of a modern style and that could associate us with some other bands. Our second album will be a little bit faster, more brutal and dynamic with better vocals. It will still be recognizable as old DAMNATION though."

Where do you draw the main inspirations from, for your dark lyrics - any recommendable books, movies or whatever that impressed you? Other bands' lyrics maybe also?

BARC: "We are not impressed by other bands' lyrics. Most lyrics for "Reborn..." were written by Varien. On our second album Les and I wrote the lyrics. They are reflections of our dark thoughts, manifesting the absurdity of the christian faith, looking for the wisdom which is hidden in dark places of the human soul..."

There's a few intros on the album, so I was wondering if you took them out of a movie or if you did them exclusively for the band?!

BARC: "The keyboard intros were played by Les, other dark intros were taken from Current '93. So, we didn't steal them from soundtracks. On our second album, Dagon, our new member,

made some intros on the keyboard. We will also use some Current '93 again and some other mystic parts."

Les, when did you start to play in BEHEMOTH as well and was it a problem for you to switch from technical death metal to fast black metal?

LES: "I joined BEHEMOTH in April '95, when I assembled them to our rehearsal place. As a trio we

worked on the second BEHEMOTH album "Grom", which will show a new face of this band, more extreme and diabolic. I play bass in BEHEMOTH and the only problem was to learn to play the bass very good. As a guitarist, I didn't have any problems with this. As for the speed - DAMNATION has always been the faster band, hehehe! Nergal and Baal are great friends and I even formed a new band with Baal called HELL-BORD. We will record a MCD for Pagan Records. It's fast, brutal and old music from the depths of hell with dark vocals of Baal!"

Any comments on the DAMNATION album cover? Is there a deeper meaning in it maybe?



BARC: "This cover was taken from a photography made by Tom's friend in England, somewhere among ancient walls... I think that it goes with the music, lyrics and the album title. Looking at the cover and reading the title you'll start to think what "Reborn..." means. Interpretation is yours..."

You already mentioned a new album, but it won't be released on Pagan Records anymore - why? What happened? And what can you tell us about Last Epitaph Productions and the new album in general?

LES: "Pagan Records is a very good label, but unfortunately too small for our needs. Last Epitaph Prod. is Karsten Jacob's label. He's been the chief of sale at Nuclear Blast and he's also the owner of Serenades Records. This man knows how to work, he has big distribution and many contacts. And of course he's able to pay for a good studio for the recordings. Our second album "Rebel souls" will be out in September '96. Before that, one track will be released on Nuclear Blast's compilation CD Vol. VIII. We will certainly not disappoint our fans and maniacs of fast and brutal music. We want to do everything better than on our first album!"

Ok, that's about it for now - feel free to end this interview in a way you want...

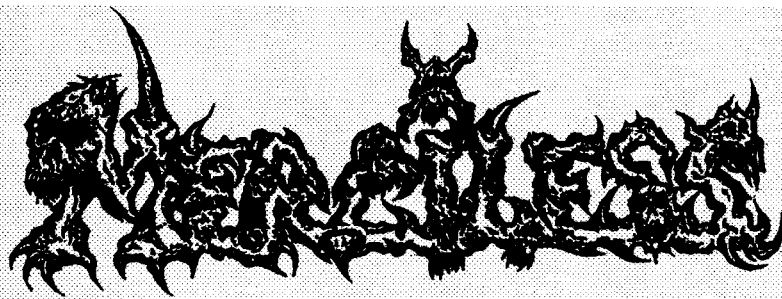
BARC: "Thanks a lot for this interview, Frank!! Hail! Believe in yourselves! Our debut CD is available from Pagan Records and from Last Epitaph Prod. will release "Reborn..." with a little bit different booklet as a license. Send \$17 for the CD to:

Pagan Records
P.O. Box 12
86-105 Swiecie 5
Poland

Wait for our second assault "Rebel souls" through Last Epitaph Prod. in September '96."

DAMNATION
P.O. Box 10
81-806 Sopot 6
Poland

Frank Stöver



EXTREME AGGRESSION

One of the best swedish bands is no more! MERCILESS have split-up and except for a really unworthy and short feature, we never had the possibility to bring you a really in-depth interview... until now! Vocalist koggua suddenly returned to the scene as a contributor to Swedens fine Putrefaction Zine and we hooked up with him for a final interview about his former band... Enjoy!

Why don't we just start with the very beginning... I noticed somewhere that you have been connected to CHRONIC DECAY before you joined MERCILESS, so would you like to tell us about that time and if you've done stuff before that already?

"How did you know that? (hehe, just call me Sherlock Holmes! - Ed.) Well, I shall try not to mess things up here. The CHRONIC DECAY that I was a member of has got nothing to do with the CHRONIC DECAY that later on released a 7" and a split-cd. We actually split-up in 1987 and the drummer took the name with him and reformed the band in another town. I think the name lived on until '94 or '95. But I came up with the name, if I remember things right. Complicated?? (nah, not yet... - Ed.)



What have the other MERCILESS members been doing before they got together actually?

"Hmm, I don't really know, but nothing serious I think. I remember something about a punk band that Karlén (bass) had before MERCILESS..."

How did you get into the picture then to replace this guy called Kalle on vocals? Why did he have to leave, what has he done afterwards and did it work out fine between you and MERCILESS from the start or did you have any difficulties concerning the musical direction, image or whatever?

"Kalle was a bloody poser (and still is!), he was not interested in making music at all, so he had to leave! The other guys knew that CHRONIC DECAY had splitted up, so they just asked me only a short time after the split. Things worked out fine from the beginning."

How did you like their first demo "Behind the black door"? Did it impress you that much that you decided to leave CHRONIC DECAY or was there something else more impressing back then?

"I liked it. It was great to hear a band from my hometown being into brutal music. As I mentioned before, I did not leave CHRONIC DECAY, we splitted up!"

How long did it take you then to write the material for the "Realm of the dark" demo? Have there been any songs finished already when you joined or did all of them get created with the new line-up?

"Well, here's an interesting detail about the track "Nuclear attack". That song was actually made by me and the guitarist from the original CHRONIC DECAY in 1985 or '86 (I think we called ourselves BLACK DEATH at the time!) But we (MERCILESS) thought it was a great song and as CHRONIC DECAY was no more, and I was one of the writers, we re-wrote it a little bit and used it for MERCILESS! The track "Realm of the dark" was the first song we wrote together. We wrote the other songs pretty fast."

Both of your demos had very little informations about when and where they got recorded and stuff, so could you tell us all the necessary details maybe?

"I don't know exactly when "Behind the black door" was recorded... it was sometime in 1987, that's for sure! The "Realm of the dark" demo was recorded in 1988, don't remember any dates, but it was recorded in the same studio where we did "The Awakening"! The name of the studio was Tuna... it does not exist anymore!"

Your second demo, as well as the first album (Inside) featured some excellent artwork - do you still remember who was responsible for it and how you got ahold of him (her)? Has he / she done more stuff besides MERCILESS?

"The guy who did that is called Wim Baclus (holy shit, what a surprise! - Ed.) I think he was pretty wellknown in the underground, maybe he still is? (yep - he's doing this great label called Midian Creations! - Ed.) He's from Holland... or is it Belgium (the latter...yes! - Ed.)? Can't remember... I personally did some art inside the "Realm..." demo cover, but I wouldn't call my stuff art, haha!"

I was also pretty much into your bandlogo, a type of logo which got copied in its style by many other bands later on as well, so who came up with that one?

"Wim came up with the logo as well. I remember when we were about to release the "Realm..." demo. Everything was finished and then Karlén suddenly received both, the new logo and demo cover! He called me and said we must re-make the whole demo cover and I thought, oh no and asked him why... But when he showed me what he had gotten, I understood!"

As far as I can remember it was your friendship to DEAD which got you the opportunity to record the first album for DSP back then... Would you like to recall all the little steps in its realization? Like, when the idea came up and how everything developed from then on?!

"I'm sorry, I'm not the right person to answer this question, because Karlén was the one that handled most of the business in MERCILESS. But DEAD had certainly a lot to do with it. Euronymous, Necrobutcher and Dead came to the studio for a couple of days when we recorded "The Awakening". Everything was cool. Well, we knew Dead before, but there were no attitude problems at that point. Remember this: all that happened before the death trend and of course the black metal trend. I can't believe it, but it's almost seven years ago! Before all the bullshit that has happened since then!"

Surprisingly "The Awakening" didn't feature tracks from the debut demo (except for "Bestial death"), so what was the reason for it that you never re-recorded them later on? Total dissatisfactory?!

"Simply because we didn't like those songs very much at that time. And not afterwards either, haha...sorry!"

Did it help you, that you already had a polish contact / fan club back then? How did you hook up with him?

"ONLY DARK? After we sent him stuff, we never heard from him again... not that I know of anyway. I can't remember what the fuck happened to him! Serious guys, aren't we? HUUUU..."

I was also pretty much surprised that "Nuclear attack" was "saved" until album numero 3... Why did you wait that long until you decided to put it on a record?

"Hmm...good question! We recorded that song twice before. On the "Realm of the dark" demo and on the "Projections..." compilation. But we were never really satisfied with any of those versions. As "Nuclear attack" is a great live track, we always played it live and we also had a new drummer, so why not make a final version?! I think it turned out great on "Unbound"."

After "The Awakening" was out for quite a while, you got featured on this CBR compilation album called "Projections of a stained mind" with two tracks... When did you record them, why didn't you stay on DSP and why was the second MERCILESS album not released on CBR then, as originally announced?

"The reason why we didn't stay on DSP was simply because they had absolutely no money for quite a while. So, we thought that CBR was a good choice, but that was a BIG mistake! The owner of CBR is a big rip-off motherfucker, not to be trusted! Well, when CBR were about to release "The treasures within", they suddenly went broke! So, they made some kind of deal with Active, who also ripped us off! We don't have a fucking clue how many copies we've sold of that record, we never received a penny for it either! It's all in the past now, and I don't even wanna think about it!"

Was there really a box of 7"es released of this compilation album or did that never happen?

"I think so... I haven't seen it personally... I'm not 100% sure... Gimme some beer instead!"

Would you agree that KREATOR had a major influence on MERCILESS or was it mainly your own personal influence when it comes to the vocals?

"Mille who? I think that "Pleasure to kill" is one of the best albums ever! So, of course, they have been a great influence along with BATHORY, DESTRUCTION, VOIVOD etc. I never planned to sing in a certain way, I just let my feelings take over, try to be as one with the music. And as MERCILESS were pretty aggressive, there was a lot of screaming! I have never been into that death grunting, which I don't think is very aggressive. CANNIBAL CORPSE type of vocals are fucking terrible, that's my opinion!"



A little later on, you got picked up by Active Records, but in retrospect you didn't really like the 2nd album "The treasures within" very much, so what went wrong with that one from your point of view? Except for the poor promotion that Active were giving you...

"It's true that none of us are satisfied with "The treasures within". Some of the music isn't that great and the sound is fucking terrible! The biggest mistake in our career was to record that album in Sunlight Studio. Maybe Sunlight / T. Skogsberg is good for ENTOMBED and DISMEMBER (I wonder if they will ever try another studio?), but certainly not for MERCILESS! I am personally satisfied with some of the lyrics on that album and would love to re-record some of the songs in the future. Because there's a few good ideas somewhere in that mess! We'll see..."

Have you never gotten any offers for a support tour back then? I mean, judging the band by live videos and pics it was more than obvious that you guys belonged on a stage!

"Nope... no tours!"

What went wrong with Stipen, your original drummer, after "The treasures within"? Why did you split-up with him and how did you get together with Peter from UNANIMATED for the job? Was he a permanent member of MERCILESS or just a session drummer until you got someone permanent?

"After all the mess-ups and trouble with different labels and as I mentioned before, no fucking tours, Stipen got tired of the whole thing and I don't blame him nowadays. Maybe we were a little pissed in the beginning, but he is a great drummer and we are still friends. Well, hehe... Karlén was messing around with Peter's sister, so he kind of knew him because of that. He was our first choice, so we were lucky (for the first time in our career). But I think Peter was a bit nervous the first time he was coming to the rehearsal place. He was actually drunk as a dog!! But things worked out anyway. He became permanent after a month or so. He's fucking great, both as a person and as a drummer!"

What did you expect when Tomas of PUTREFACTION zine offered you a deal for his label No Fashion Records? I mean, it seems that you've been friends for quite a while, so did he really help you in a way you thought he would do? Or do you think he could've done a lot better?



"As you may understand, we were pretty fed up with all the trouble we had in our past. So, we thought it would be great to have someone in our own hometown and someone we actually knew. And No Fashion's future looked very bright at that time. So, why the hell not!! And yes, he was very helpful, he actually payed a small scandinavian tour we did with ENTOMBED in May 1993. The tour contained gigs in Sweden, Finland and Denmark, but the Oslo gig was cancelled because the owner of the club or something had received death threats!! How cool is that?! I would really like to know who was involved in that! Anyway, Tomas did some major fuck-ups on the economical side of No Fashion, so he had to sell the whole thing to House Of Kicks! And they released the album, but the promotion was not existing!"

"Unbound" seems to be the best MERCILESS album in every way, concerning the coverart, production, songs etc. So, why did you split-up after that anyway? It all looked so bright for the band at that point of time...

"Yeah, we are totally happy with "Unbound". We put our fucking souls into that album. Yes, everything worked fine until the album was released... Well, it took a while to get it out, six or seven months or so! And then... nothing! Well, we played one gig in Stockholm after the release. ONE fucking gig! They promised us t-shirts and stuff, but absolutely nothing happened!! All we wanted was a small tour through Europe. I mean, we did not demand a major fucking tour with SLAYER or something! We had done all that other stuff for years, you know, rehearsing, writing songs, record albums, bla bla bla. I think we deserved a tour, just a small one, but maybe we were not hip enough?!"

Do you think that all the trendiness within the underground has killed a band like yours (and other fine death / thrash acts like SADUS, INVOCATOR etc. as well)?

"Interesting question. The answer is yes, that's my opinion anyway. It's funny, a few years ago, everyone listened to stuff like CARCASS, BOLT THROWER, ENTOMBED etc., but now they all have listened to the early black metal bands like BATHORY, CELTIC FROST, POSSESSED for ten years...!"

When you recorded the SLAYER cover for the compilation album, have MERCILESS officially been dead already at that point of time or was that the last thing you did before you called the quits?

"We were just put on ice really. We had not rehearsed for six or seven months, and then Karlén suddenly called and said *let's do a SLAYER cover!* I said, ok and then we rehearsed a couple of times and just went into the studio for a day. It turned out ok I think. Maybe we'll return again, who knows?!"

Have you been featured on other compilation albums in your career as well (except for the CBR one and the SLAYER tribute)?

"Ehh... I don't think so... let me know if I'm wrong!"

By the way, who came up with the idea to sample Tom Araya's introduction for "Necrophiliac" in your recording? Wouldn't it be better if you would've used the intro to "Cronics" instead or do a cover of "Necrophiliac"?

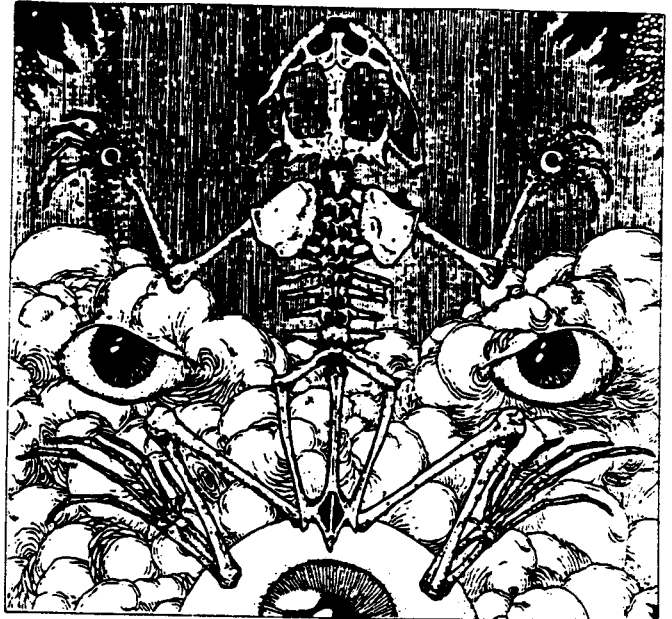
"Hrm, you are right, but we wanted some nasty words from Araya and those were the coolest ones we could find in a short time! And you were not supposed to hear the word "Necrophiliac" and ehh... what the hell, it doesn't matter, does it?!"

Do you really enjoy great new releases in the same way you freaked out on classics of the past? I never got the same enthusiasm back that I had when "Sentence of death", "Seven churches" or "Pleasure to kill" came out... How about you?

"No, I don't! It's not the same thing anymore. Maybe you and I are getting old?? Haha, just kidding! (but it's the hurting truth my friend... - Ed.) I would really like to know where all those great german bands went?? You know, bands like KREATOR (sucks nowadays!), SODOM, DEATHROW, DESTRUCTION, TANKARD etc. You were the best, man!"

What do you think turned this once so great scene into such an annoying one with thousands of wannabees, evil posing and shittalking weak musicians?

"Another good question! I think all these big mouthed, big headed wannabees shall shut the fuck up and let their music speak! And I really hate this anti-live trend. Metal music shall also be experienced on stage as well as on record. Maybe they are too ashamed or too weak to face an audience?! I've read interviews with bands who said that they don't want "normal" people to buy their cd / demo, because their music is only for true people! Say no more...!"



As I read, you had a "nice" experience on your own when you were wearing a white t-shirt... Tell us the whole story behind that!

"I thought it was a good idea to wear something different and un-trendy on stage. Because everyone wore BOLT THROWER or CARCASS t-shirts. It did irritate some people, which can be great, cause then you realize what kind of low lifes some people really are! I could sit here for two months and write about stupid, bullshitting people we have met through the years, but they are not worth it (why not? Go for it and we'll give you a regular column to write down all your experiences, haha! - Ed.)! I wonder where all the "I'll never wimp out!" death metallers went?? Is DAB a german beer (ehh... yeah, but... - Ed.)?!"

When did you decide to join-up with Tomas for his resurrected PUTREFACTION zine and what kind of goals you wanna achieve with its contents? I really like the direction you are heading to, so feel free to promote it!

"The truth is, I had nothing to do! And when Tomas asked me to join him, I thought, why the hell not?! We have at this moment released two issues (8 and 9). I think that issue # 8 was a little bit rushed out, so a lot of things could have been a lot better! But issue # 9 is a lot better, it contains bands like IN FLAMES, SKYCLAD, DARK TRANQUILITY, MORTIIS, GEHENNAH (SWE) etc. And I have a column where I write about 80's metal. People who have been around for a while like the stuff I write about, which feels great! And it can be interesting for younger people to know where it all started. Buy PUTREFACTION for hell's sake!"

Did you work for fanzines before already or is it the first time in your life? Do you think it can be as enjoyable as fronting an aggressive metal band? Would you like to do some music again in the future?

"No, this is the first time. It's alot harder than I ever thought it would be, but also a lot of fun. You can't compare the two, nothing can be compared to a great gig or the satisfaction after you've made a great song. Well, I have got some stuff going on, nothing's for sure yet...we'll see in the future!"

Anything else you'd like to add here?

"Thanks a lot for your interest. Your zine kills for sure! And remember to buy PUTREFACTION! Send me booze, rape a rat and listen to some bonecrushing metal! Aaaaaaaarrggggghhh!"

Roger Pettersson
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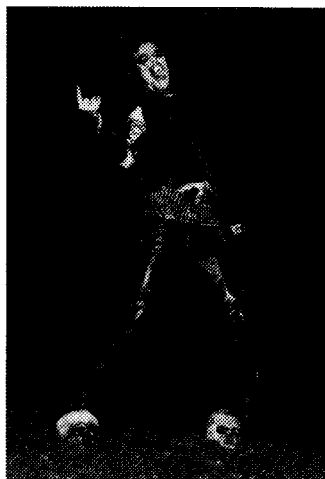


On the edge of total chaos !!!

NIFELHEIM from Sweden were one of the first bands to come up with really intense old school black / death / thrash metal in the 90's and they rarely give interviews to the underground press... So, we are more than happy to present you Mr. Hellbutcher's thoughts in this issue...

First of all I would like to confront you guys with a rumor I hear every now and then, that says that NIFELHEIM is just a sideproject of more or less known swedish death metal musicians, hiding behind pseudonyms... Would you like to clear that up?

"NIFELHEIM is NOT any kind of side project, so that rumor is totally wrong! None of us are playing in any other band except NIFELHEIM!"



What is the reason that you are doing so little interviews in underground zines? Is it because you don't really feel connected to nowadays scene and this way you try to separate from all the others or is there more behind it? Are you maybe just too lazy to do it? And why are NIFELHEIM interviews so short in general?

"We don't want to be connected to all the shit bands of today and besides that, all zine makers seem to be totally stupid kids. They have a big lack of serious questions and quality and they don't know anything about the music they are writing about. Almost all underground zines are made by posers and are read by posers, so they can fuck off!"



NIFELHEIM are mostly answering interviews for bigger and more wellknown zines."

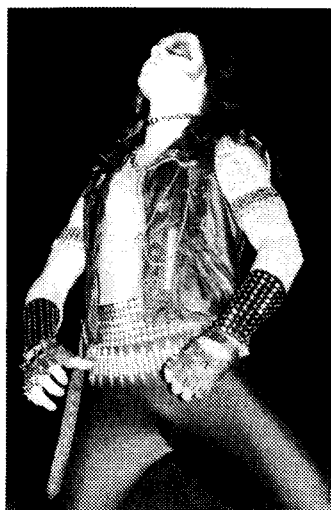
I find it rather strange and amusing to see that Necropolis Records promotes NIFELHEIM as "extreme black metal" - sounds pretty much like an easy cash-in on the current trend! Do you enjoy being categorized among the lines of a childish scene full of trendy bastards? Do YOU see yourselves as a black metal band actually?

"We see ourselves as a black metal band and we won't stop to call NIFELHEIM black metal because of a trend! It would be better to stop categorizing all the other idiot bands as black metal, instead of categorizing the true black metal bands as something else!"

It's quite obvious that you are mainly into the stuff that got released in the early 80's, when music was a lot more enjoyable, but also full of clichés... You took over those things, such as stagenames, songtitles, outfit etc. But how do you judge the fun aspect that almost every old band had as well - do YOU take yourselves really serious or is NIFELHEIM mainly fun for you?

"Fun?! Black and death metal is not some fucking joke! NIFELHEIM is the opposite to fun, everything we do is 100% serious! I do not find it funny to wear studded leather and chains or have songtitles and stagenames as we have! I know that some bands who try to play old school thrash speed metal think it is very funny with all this and I hate that! Do not connect us with such idiotic wimp bands of crap!"

Would you consider yourselves as mainly being influenced by the more popular old heroes like VENOM,



DESTRUCTION, SODOM, BATHORY etc. or is there more incorporated in your music, maybe some less known faves of yours as well?

"I would consider myself being influenced by everything I listen to. I listen a lot to the bands you mentioned, but also to a lot of other less known bands as VULCANO, TREBLINKA, SARCOFAGO, BULLDOZER, OBSCURITY, IRON ANGEL and more. I am

also a big fan of heavy metal, especially IRON MAIDEN, also JUDAS PRIEST, old SILVER MOUNTAIN, RUNNING WILD, STORMWITCH, MERCY, MOTÖRHEAD and so on."

Right now there's only a few bands playing the type of



stuff you do, like GEHENNAH, INFERNÓ, AURA NOIR, GUILLOTINE, SCEPTER and a handful more maybe, but it seems more and more are "joining the party"... So, do you think those bands play this old style again because they do it from the heart and because they grew up listening to it or is it just another sign of trendiness again?

"I guess it's just some new fucking trend!"

Are you in contact with other bands you would consider as your friends when it comes to sharing the same ideology and stuff? Or maybe just drinking buddies...?!

"We are in contact with some bands. The bands I know most are DISSECTION and OPHTHALMIA."

I know that you've been a four piece in your early stage and that you did a demo back then, but I'm lacking in in-depth informations about that period, so could you give us a few details about what was going on with NIFELHEIM some years ago?

"Between 1990 - 1993 NIFELHEIM was a fourpiece consisting of the same line-up as on the album, plus a guitarist called Morbid Slaughter, but he was kicked. In early 1993 the demo "Unholy death" was recorded and in the summer of the same year, we recorded four other tracks. Morbid Slaughter didn't play on any of these recordings. In the beginning of 1994 we got a new guitarist called Måbe who had been playing as a session guitarist in DISSECTION before John Zwetsloot had joined them and he had also been playing in a band called NOSFERATU. But this didn't work very well, because he lived very far away from our rehearsal place, so after 3 or 4 months we decided to get another guitarist. Since then we have used John Zwetsloot as a session guitarist. In the end of last year we changed the line-up (again, a very strange change actually... I (Hellbutcher) am playing drums now and Demon plays guitar and we have a new vocalist, who is no one else than Goat from the old swedish cult band SATANIZED! So now we have a steady line-up!"

Would you agree that old thrash metal, which seems to be totally out of fashion nowadays, often is a lot more aggressive and brutal than the big amount of today's crap, labeled as death or black metal?

"Of course I agree that old thrash or speed metal is a lot more aggressive and brutal than today's shit! You can't even compare today's music with bands like SODOM, POSSESSED or KREATOR... The bands of today are more like DEPECHE MODE or KRAFTWERK, playing slowly with a lot of soft harmonies, female vocals and synths, while the old bands played intense and fast on the edge of total chaos!"

Do you think that that is the major fault of a lot of the young bands nowadays, NOT to listen to thrash anymore? I mean, all the great bands that are heroes these days had their roots in that kinda music...

"I think if you don't listen to, or never have been listening to old kinds of metal, like heavy metal or speed metal, you don't know anything about how metal should sound and then you aren't capable to do metal music!"

Give us some hints about how your stagenames came to live? Any funny stories connected to their origin maybe?

"Goat got his name by It of ABRUPTUM many years ago when he joined the Satanist Horde, the rest of us have found out our own names."

How serious do you take the lyrical contents of your songs? Would you consider yourselves as satanists or is the contents more along the lines of VENOM etc.?

"Everything we do is totally serious! All of us are also Satanists!"

There's talk of a new NIFELHEIM release and also about a coversong you recorded... Could you already tell us a bit more about what's to come?

"I don't know what's to come, we are changing our plans all the time. Probably we will release a shaped picture disc as promotion for our next full length album, which probably will contain a cover of VULCANO's "Witches sabbat" plus some new tracks. We will also release a split-EP with DISSECTION."

I'll leave you here, but before I do, I'd like you to put together an imaginary "all star band" of yours... Who would you choose for guitars, bass, drums and vocals if you could take every musician there is or has been?

"If we could not choose ourselves (I'm afraid...no! - Ed.), I would choose: Steve Harris (bass), Dave Murray (gt.), Dennis Stratton (gt.), Paul Dianno (voc.) and Nicko McBrain (dr.)."

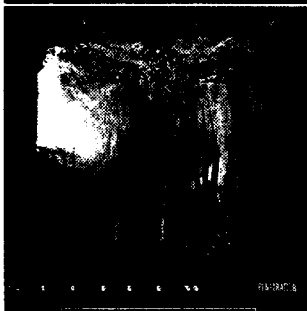
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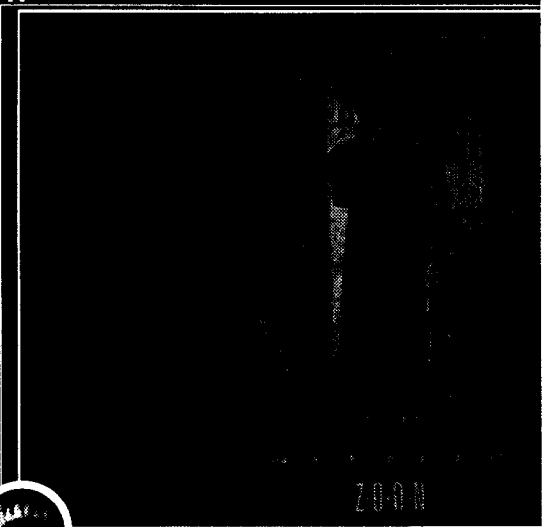


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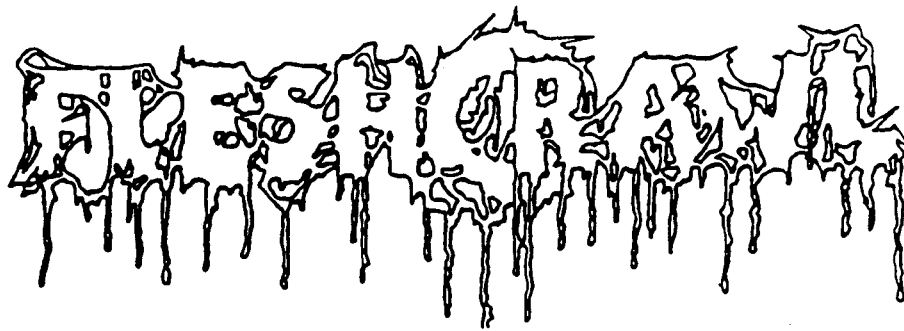
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Listening to BAD RELIGION's "Suffer" I slowly come into the right mood to introduce another feature of Germany's heaviest, FLESHCRAWL! Three albums in their history and three interviews in the history of VOICES, but what else could you expect, if a band always comes up with so brutal quality releases and doesn't give a pile of shit about current trends?! Enjoy the answers given to us by guitar player Stefan Hanus and keep supporting merciless and uncompromising bands like FLESHCRAWL! These underdogs need your helping hand, now even more than ever before... death ain't dead, ha!!!

Logical first question: what happened in the gap between your last album "Impurity" and the new output "Bloodsoul" and how have been the first reactions to your actual release?

"Well, after releasing "Impurity" in early 1994 we moved into a new rehearsal room as our former rehearsal room was totally mouldy. About one year later we took part at the EASTER BASH TOUR '95 together with KATAKLYSM, SINISTER, BRUTAL TRUTH, CATHEDRAL and DEICIDE. This was our first real "big" tour and it was very important for us to do this kind of promotion finally. Moreover we had a lot of fun and made new experiences. In autumn '95 we composed our

new material and practised for our studio-recordings. The last week of December and the first week of January '96 we spent in the Abyss Studio in Sweden to record our new CD "Bloodsoul". It was released in April and the first reactions of the international metal press are really great."

Ok, directly to "Bloodsoul": you have been in Sweden once again for the recordings of the album, why and how was it? In the meantime you have been to three of the most important swedish studios to record your albums (Montezuma, Unisound & Abyss Studios)... probably you feel that it's only possible to create your "swedish" sound if you produce up there?! What is the difference between Dan Swanö's and Peter Tägtgren's work in general? Let me



guess you'll be visiting Studio Fredman or even Sunlight Studio the next time?

"Haha, good question!! Well, I really don't know right now where we'll record next time. But I'm sure that we will go to Sweden again. We have to. Of course there are a lot of very good and very well-equipped studios in Germany too, but in Sweden there are very good studio engineers with a lot of death metal experience. They know how to create that real fat and brutal death metal sound which people call in general in the meantime a "swedish-like death metal sound". They know all the tricks you need to get that fat and brutal sound out of your pedals and out of your equipment. We like this real fat, brutal and crushing sound and we want a real fat production. So, that's why we go to Sweden. Of course we don't go to Sweden saying we want to copy the sound of "Left hand path" or whatever. We want to get our own typical FLESHCRAWL-like kind of sound, but without renouncing of that pressure, that intensity and brutality of a real "swedish" production. Dan Swanö did a very good job as studio engineer when we recorded "Impurity". First we intended to record "Bloodsoul" there too. But he was booked out and so we looked for another suitable swedish studio. We had the choice between Sunlight and

Abyss and in the end we went to Abyss. On "Bloodsoul" we managed to get exactly the sound we wanted and we are very, very content with Peter Tägtgren's work. He really did an excellent job! Next time we want to go to Abyss again. That's for sure. But you never know what will happen..."

Did you have an even more brutal and uncompromising approach on "Bloodsoul", so to say, to stand in opposition to the actual movement of bands which are drifting away from their original pure death metal? Isn't it kinda funny somehow that FLESHCRAWL manage to sound a lot more "swedish" or "finnish" than most of the current scandinavian bands?!

"Yes, you are right in some way. It's really funny, but on the other hand it's very sad, too. I'm getting bored by all these former death metal bands now wimping out. I hate these trendy shit bands which nowadays start to get more gothic or more melodic or whatever just to make some more bucks. They are killing our music! They are destroying the whole death metal scene! Of course there are still a lot of good and brutal death metal bands and a lot of them are from Scandinavia, but the trend to wimp out is at the moment coming over Scandinavia, too. This must be stopped! Otherwise the European death metal scene is threatened at its roots."

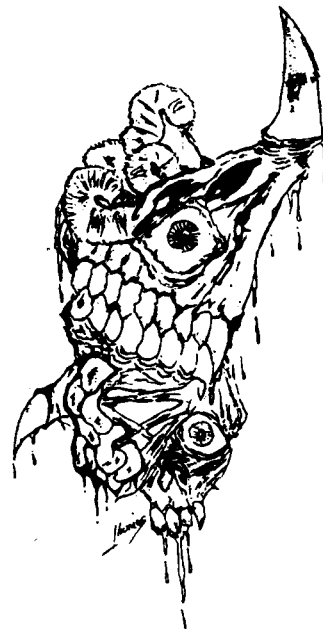
And once again you've recorded a coversong from an underground death metal band: DEMILICH this time. What's next? Didn't you ever think about doing a coversong of a song that doesn't belong to a death metal band?!

"We don't want to cover pop songs or whatever. When covering DEMIGOD's "Reincarnation" and DEMILICH's "Embalmed beauty sleep" we wanted to offer the whole death metal scene some of the best death metal songs ever composed on this planet, but not having been released on CD before. "Reincarnation" in its original version was only available on DEMIGOD's demo "Unholy domain" and afterwards on their split-LP together with NECROPSY. And at that time when we decided to cover "Embalmed beauty sleep" it had not been released on CD before, too. We didn't know that there was this DEMILICH "Nespithe" CD to be released some months later on. But anyway, in my opinion our version of "Embalmed beauty sleep" is really worth to listen to as it's typical FLESHCRAWL like and on the other side it's very close to its original version on DEMILICH's demo of 1991. I think we captured a lot of this feeling of 1991 when recording this song in Abyss."

Important topic: you went around as the opener for the last year's EASTER BASH FESTIVALS... please give us a detailed insight on how the whole thing turned out and how the communication between the bands went (specially with

DEICIDE!)... FLESHCRAWL are normally known for self-organized single shows or short touring with underground bands, so what do you prefer?

"The communication between the bands was great. We had no troubles with all the other bands. Even those guys of DEICIDE were very friendly to us. We shared our bus with those guys of KATAKLYSM and we came along very well with all of them. It was like a big family in our bus. KATAKLYSM are really good guys! We hope to meet them again. Only the organization of IMP Bremen sometimes sucked a bit. I mean, the catering, the buses, the equipment and so on was really ok and very good, but at some shows we had to start earlier than it was printed on the tickets. So a lot of our fans came to late to see our whole gig. Some of them only saw the last



two songs. That's bullshit! But anyway, that tour was very important for us and it was successful, too."

Apparently your bass player doesn't belong to the actual line-up anymore... why and have you already managed to find someone to replace him? I guess it must be pretty complicated these days to find skilled musicians in Germany who really want to play such extreme music as yours by heart... or am I wrong here?

"Our former bass player Markus Amann became more and more interested in other kinds of music. He didn't come to our rehearsals in the end and didn't care enough



about the band in general. He lost his interest in death metal, I think. So we wanted him to leave the band. In the meantime we found a new bass player. It's Dietmar Schweikart of ANNOY and he is still playing in both bands - FLESHCRAWL and ANNOY. He fits very well into the band and he likes our kind of music very much. He listens to bands like

ATROCITY and MORGOTH. I just hope that they don't wimp out, but I fear that they will... But fortunately there are still some great and brutal bands as DEAD from Nürnberg for example; and it's encouraging that R.U.DEAD? reformed again. Also some new bands as DEW-SCENTED for example are promising a lot. So, let's see what will happen.



DEATH, CANNIBAL CORPSE, GHOSTORM and so on and so he has no problems with our sound and our music."

Staying with the problematic topic: what do you personally think about the actual german scene and the uprising bands nowadays? Which were the last five albums that you added to your collection?

"I think the german scene is still alive, but it became smaller within the past two years. We lost great bands like ULCEROUS PHLEGM and NECROPSY for example. And I'm curious about the musical future of bands like

I know that death metal is NOT dead. The last 5 CD's which I bought are DEW-SCENTED "Imortelle", NAPALM DEATH "Diatribes", EDGE OF SANITY "Crimson", DOMINUS "View to the dim" (godly!!) and USURPER "Diabolosis".

Hey, two curious things: is ORCA GRAPHICS probably even more than just the realization of your CD-booklet? And what do you think about the new DISGRACE album, being a fan and friend of the older DISGRACE material?!

"ORCA GRAPHICS is more than only doing the layout of "Bloodsoul". You know, I'm a professional typograph and my sideline company is called ORCA GRAPHICS. I'm doing this company together with a friend of mine. In general we are doing the layout of CD-booklets, advertisements, live club programmes and so on on our Macintosh computers. It's pretty cool. We like that job. So, if any band wants us to do the layout of their CD - the layout is ready to be printed - just get in touch with us. It's the same address as FLESHCRAWL. If you write to FLESHCRAWL, don't forget to include an I.R.C. for a sure reply... Err, my opinion to DISGRACE's new "Superhuman Dome" CD??? Well, that's easy to answer: It's fuckin' great stuff! I like it very much! It's no longer death metal, but fortunately they didn't wimp out. They are still very aggressive and they got a lot of groove mixed in their brutality. It's a band with a very own style of aggressive music. It's worth to check it out..."

So far, so good... I think you had a curious thing to tell us, so just go ahead! Thanks a lot for your dedicated and interesting answers... please finish this interview by yourself, informing us about FLESHCRAWL's plans for the future, merchandise and all that stuff! All the best...

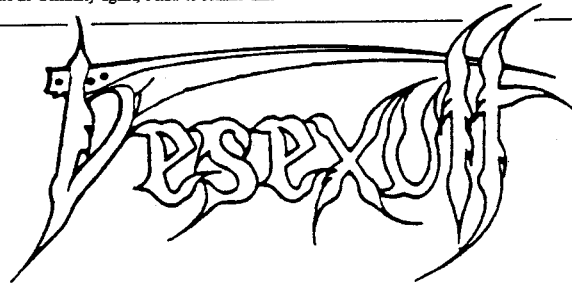
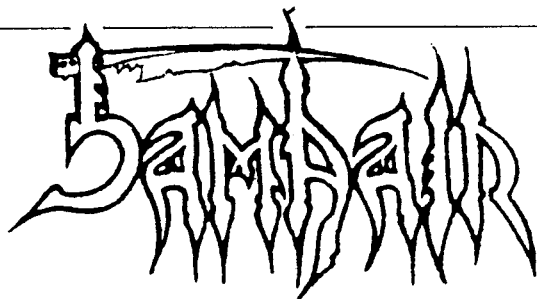
"Oh, I just wanted to tell you that little story how we managed to get this strange butchery picture on the back of the inlay of our "Bloodsoul" CD. It's a quite usual and ordinary butchery for Tunisia, but not for us living here in Europe. When I was in the Tunisian part of the Sahara desert I had the chance to take a picture of one of these Tunisian butcheries. But unfortunately, at home in Germany again, I had to realize that

this picture was too dark to recognize anything. Fuck! So, I wrote a letter to that butchery down there in Tunisia - in the french language, with the help of my former french teacher. Although I didn't have any exact address, my letter reached one of these butcheries of that Tunisian desert-city. I asked that butcher to take pictures of his butchery and asked him not to forget to put chopped off dromedary heads at those spears at the wall as it is usual in all Tunisian butcheries. He did a "good job". He also put further different animal heads at the spears at the wall (cow heads and sheep heads). I like that picture very much. I think german butchers should do the same with their pig-heads and cow-heads... The result would be more and more people becoming vegetarians. That would be good for all of us and for the animals, too... Don't you think? By the way, I promised the butcher to pay him 100,-DM for good pictures. But he didn't want the money. He wanted me to send him one pair of shoes, size 45...

Ok, I just hope you guys like our new output... It's fuckin' brutal stuff. Check it out!! Keep the death metal scene alive! Rather death than false metal!"

FLESHCRAWL
c/o Stefan Hanus
Finkenweg 17
89257 Illertissen
Germany

Leif Jensen
Live Pics: Frank Stöver



UNDERGROUND LEGENDS

Here's another interview for all the people outthere, who still have so much pleasure in listening to the ancient releases of the 80's. All older aged readers will probably remember the danish outfit SAMHAIN pretty good, as they released a superb 3 song death metal demo back then called "The Courier", which recently got re-issued via Midian Creations on a 7" EP (see review in our last issue). This band (and its follow up outfit DESEXULT) was pretty active in those days, so it was obviously a must for us and only a question of time until we found out how to get in touch with former member Esben Slot Sorensen for the following tribute conversation...

I must admit, that I hardly know anything about SAMHAIN, except for the demo "The Courier"... So, would you like to recall the band's early days maybe? Who came up with the musical direction and bandname / concept and what have all the members been doing previous to SAMHAIN?

"Phew, that's a hard one. We're talking about ten years old history here, so don't blame me if my mind isn't too clear on the details. Henk Leviathan and I started the band back in '84/'85 and released the first demo "The Courier" in August '85. The initial line-up was (besides Henk and I) Martin Hundrup - bass / vocals and Max Due - drums. We played our first gig two weeks later at the local Monody Festival (a very

popular punk / hardcore festival back then. Lots of german and dutch skins and punks went there every year, but it was stopped by the police due to violence and vandalism). We played some more local gigs and our next "big" thing was a concert in Copenhagen with KREATOR. This was in March '86. KREATOR had just released their "Endless pain" debut and were next to totally unknown in Denmark. I don't actually remember the chronology of things after that. Anyway, we released three more demos, "S.O.D.F.O.A.D.", "Fat Boys Wanna Rock" and "Pana Wichée Salitu". The line-up was changed several times with too many members to list here. We played concerts and mini tours in Sweden, Poland, Germany, Holland and obviously Denmark. The most famous bands, besides KREATOR, we achieved to play with

were PESTILENCE, INVOCATOR, EXUMER, TURBO and MEZZROW. The band as it was known "broke up" in '91. Meaning that we skipped our old material and totally changed our musical direction into a much more funky / groovy, later to become disgustingly popular, funk / rap metal style (*warrrgh!! - Ed.*). This act saw its end in '95 when we dropped the band and I formed a new band with some friends of mine. We're now playing hardcore - sort of SICK OF IT ALL (*oh nooooo! - Ed.*) meets WHITE ZOMBIE."

As there hasn't been such a big scene for brutal music back then, I guess it is pretty easy for you to tell us some bands, that had a big influence on SAMHAIN, musically as well as lyrically, isn't it?

"Wrong! The scene back then was probably as big, as it is today. Only more underground and extreme metal was definitely not something you could get in your local record store. But as Henk and I were also the editors of BLACKTHORN magazine, we were actually pretty much into the underground and had a lot of friends in other bands. But of course, early influences came from famous bands such as HELLHAMMER / CELTIC FROST, MORSURE (*holy shit!! - Ed.*), VENOM, BATHORY, TORMENTOR / KREATOR, POSSESSED and SLAYER."

You only recorded three tracks for the aforementioned demo, but I bet you had a lot more songs written back then... So, why did you never release anything else then? Tell us something about the material that never got recorded and the reasons for it!

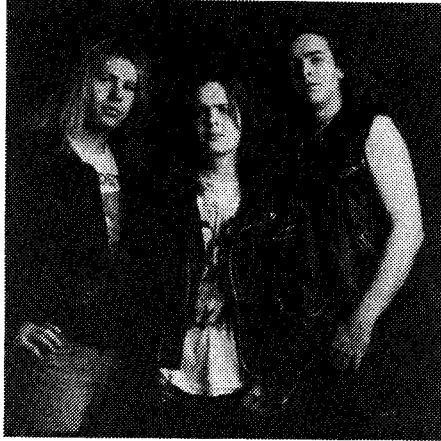
"No, actually we only had those three songs! The funny thing was, that at the aforementioned debut concert they were still our only three songs. When we had played them, the crowd was totally wild and was shouting for encore, so we played



them again. After that they were still shouting for more and after having played "Plaque Of Messiah" for the third time we felt it would be embarrassing to go on and we stopped."

Haven't you gotten any offers for an album back then?

"Yes we did. Our first close-to-get-signed episode was around '86 where the german label Noise wanted to sign an underground band. The choice was between the german band TANKARD and us - unfortunately they chose their fellow countrymen. We then appeared on two New Renaissance compilations "Thrash Metal Attack" and "Speed Metal Hell II" and were later offered a deal on New Renaissance. We had sent over the mastertape for an EP, but as the drummer and bassplayer / vocalist left the band in the meantime, the two of us left, young and stupid as we were, told New Renaissance to drop the release because we didn't wanna release something with two members no longer in the band. How fucked up can you be?!? We got a number of more or less serious offers from small independent labels, but as you can probably figure out never got anything released."



But at least you got the opportunity to contribute two of your demo songs to two compilation albums... Would you mind, talking about how that came about and if it helped to spread the name SAMHAIN around the world?

"Well, yes as I mentioned before, we were on those two compilations. Naturally it helped spreading the word about our band and for some odd reason we got a real "cult-status" in the underground."

Ten years after you originally recorded the "Courier" demo, Midian Creations offered you to put out a 7" of the material... What kind of feeling was it for you and why did you agree to do it? I mean, two out of the three tracks have previously been available on vinyl already...

"My first thought was: "What the hell kind of idiot is this?!" I honestly didn't think he would actually put it out. I just said "go ahead and do it", and so he did. But of course I was honoured. I mean, he said that the "new wave" of death metal like OBITUARY, DISMEMBER, ENTOMBED or whatever they're called nowadays, were not "true" death metal. The real thing was what came forth in the early / mid 80's and as SAMHAIN was definitely one of the true pioneers of death metal, he wanted to release a single with our first demo. When I realised this dude was serious about his project I tried to persuade him into putting it out on CD, but no way! - true death metal fans wanted vinyl, he said (oh-oh... I'm a fake... - Ed.). Yes, we did put two of the songs out on vinyl before, but I very much doubt New Renaissance will sue us for breach of contract. I don't even remember if we ever granted them the exclusive rights for these songs. I have seen it listed in Nuclear Blast's mailorder catalogue though, so maybe Midian Creations does make a bit of money on this release. We got ten free copies, that's all. I never heard from him since."

There's a big difference in the cover artwork of "The Courier" demo and 7", so how much influence did you have on the final 7" version actually?

"We had zero influence on the cover artwork for the 7". Mainly, I guess, because I didn't care about it. I believe he did tell me about his ideas and thoughts about it, and I just said "that's fine, just go ahead and do it!"

Shortly after the demo, you changed your name to DESEXULT, which probably was because of all the other bands using this name back then, wasn't it? But what has caused the change in the musical department as well?

"Right. There was an american band also called SAMHAIN. I believe it was the band which later became known as THE MISFITS, but I'm not sure (it was actually the opposite around - Ed.). Then there was also a german one. They changed their name to DEATHROW. The funny thing is, at a time we were three bands with the same name, maybe all three of us got the same thought that it would be better to change the

name - and suddenly noone was called SAMHAIN anymore. As for the musical changes; I believe this is what happens to practically all bands (except MOTÖRHEAD, AC/DC and IRON MAIDEN): you simply want to play something else, explore other styles. In the case of SAMHAIN / DESEXULT I won't call it development though."

Did you already have a completely different line-up when you recorded the "S.O.D.F.O.A.D." demo in '86? If so, what happened...?

"Well, you got me here... (Sorensen - Stöver: 0 : 1, ha!). I honestly don't remember, but if I'm not totally wrong, I think it was only the drummer who was replaced on that demo."

What kind of meaning did the title actually have? There's been two possibilities circulating ("S.O.D. Fuck off and die" and "Soon our demo finds our album deal")... Which one was correct?

"Obviously our intention was to create exactly the confusion

you describe and it really did its work. Everybody asked us "why don't you like S.O.D.?", "Why do you think you're better than them?" etc. We got a lot of attention which was the purpose. The meaning was of course "Soon Our Demo Finds Our Album Deal" - a very constructed sentence indeed. I still like to make fuzz about things. Thus I wanted to call our new band ADOLF, but the other guys in the band didn't have the guts to do it. They were afraid people would see us as neo-nazis and feared that autonomous groups would smash up our gear at concerts and so on. Maybe they're right, I just saw it as a harmless means of getting a lot of free exposure (actually a pretty stupid way to get word of mouth propaganda, my friend! - Ed.)"

What made you go for the strange spelling of DESEXULT (with a capital "E")?

"Our idea with DesExult was to create a word of our own. Des is just a weird (and incorrect) spelling of "death" (haha, just like most of my stupid countrymen pronounce it - Ed.) and Exult means "triumph", so in an awkward homemade way, it was supposed to be "Triumph of death". In order to avoid people from pronouncing the name De-sex-ult we put the capital E in the middle. (so, it wasn't really a sexual name, huh?! - Ed.) Somehow I have a feeling that we never succeeded having people pronouncing it right anyway."

Henk and yourself also did BLACKTHORN magazine in the 80's... Would you like to tell us some details about it and its evolution? Why did you stop it in the end?

"BLACKTHORN was also an era in the mid-80's underground metal scene. Without bragging, BLACKTHORN actually was the biggest underground magazine back then concentrating entirely on thrash metal. We despised death, heavy, hardcore and other metal genres which were not thrash. We achieved a worldwide recognition and even today people remember me as the editor of BLACKTHORN magazine (I work for a record company



Samhain's legendary 1986 Demo "The Courier"

and meet a lot of branch people when I'm at fairs). We stopped the magazine for two reasons. Mainly because Henk, co-editor and long time friend, over a very short span of time totally changed his personal character. I believe he kind of grew sick and tired of the way his life had turned out. He cut all connections to his "old" life, stopped socializing with the local music environment, didn't want to go to concerts, and what's more annoying: our friendship went down the drain after 20 years. I haven't seen him for four years though we still live in the same city. The other reason was that our biggest distributor (in the States) was financially involved in another magazine and he apparently felt insecure about us growing bigger and bigger, so he did whatever possible to limit our success in the States. We constantly got letters and phonecalls from shops and outlets who complained about not getting the magazine or if they were so lucky to get 10 to 20 copies, they were sold out

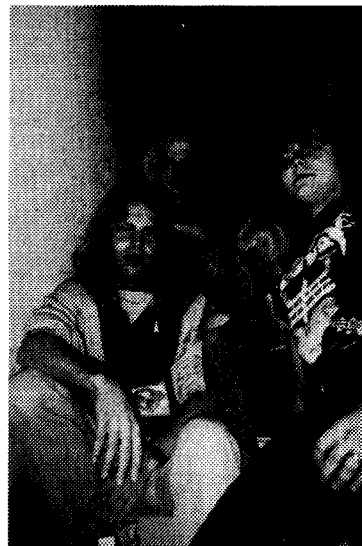
the same day they arrived. We told this to our distributor over and over again, but he kept saying that he couldn't sell more mags. His final "death stroke" was not paying us an amount of around \$2000. Not a huge sum of money, but enough to make our "spare time hobby" fold. This was back in '90 and caused the end of BLACKTHORN."

What has caused the radical change, when it comes to your musical taste nowadays? Do you still enjoy any old death / black metal demo / album you pressed back then or did you loose the feeling for it completely?

"I was never really into death metal. If people wanna call the early SAMHAIN material death metal, that's okay, but we always called it thrash metal ourselves. When my friends and I wanna have fun, we occasionally put on DEATH's "Scream Bloody Gore" or another death metal release from back then. But that's entirely for the fun of it, I really don't enjoy it. Bands from back then which I still enjoy are SLAYER, S.O.D., VIO-LENCE, FORBIDDEN, TESTA-MENT, MEGADETH, EXODUS, METALLICA and the likes. Old thrash-head, as you see (nothing wrong with it... - Ed.). Contrary to all the mediocre death metal releases from back then, you can still play those records without having to defend them by saying "well, you gotta

remember this one's from '84" etc."

I never heard the other 2 DESEXULT demo, which you did after "S.O.D.F.O.A.D.", so could you tell a little bit about



DesExult '87

them and the reactions you've been getting in general?

"I wish I still had copies of those demos. Then I would have sent you a copy. As I mentioned earlier, I really don't see why people gave us that much exposure back then. The two last demos really sucked! (well, by now I heard "Fat boys..." and I agree, hehehe! - Ed.) Still they sold around 600 copies each."

What does the title "Pana Wichée Salitu" mean?

"This was something we stole from a movie with Tony Curtis. It was about ancient indian tribes who believed in reincarnation and Pana Wichée Salitu means "my death foretells my return". If you had one of our shirts from back then you'd know."

I guess after that demo you called the quits... What were the reasons to lay DESEXULT to rest after all? What happened to the other members actually?

"As I mentioned earlier, we did a demo after "Pana..." in '91 which was never released. It was recorded in Borsing Recording as the first test-recording when we had just established his studio. Due to a lot of technical difficulties getting his equipment running and our ditto mistrust in his abilities



it took over four months to finish the demo and we ended up in the overheated discussion about the payment and he never gave us the master tape. None of the other members have made it to a record release so far, but I still see the bass player (Niller) every now and then. He's one of this city's best bassplayers (including jazz and fusion bassplayer)."

Anything else we've missed out about SAMHAIN / DESEXULT you'd like to add to this interview? Closing words...

"Well, I guess we've more or less been around the essentials now. At least I can't think of anything left out. We had a great time back then, and though we never made it big, we sure had fun doing what we did. Though this may not be the right magazine to announce this in, I can guarantee you that our new band (ADOLF, or whichever name we decide on) will kick some serious ass. We're anti-straight edge and just recorded a demo last weekend in... Borsing Recording, produced by Tue Madsen (GROPE). As you're into pure death, there's no need to send you a copy. We have fun, drink a lot of beer and occasionally play some stinking noise. That's all. Death metal may be dying, but extreme music will live on forever!"

Frank Stöver

Edge of Sanity

Swedish **EDGE OF SANITY** have just finished their first successful European tour since the release of their second album "UNORTHODOX" way back in 1992! A new album, entitled "CRIMSON", has been teased previously and it features just one 40-minute-long track, which is a musical rollercoaster ride through everything they've done so far and more! Dan Östlund informed us about "CRIMSON" and several other things.

I noticed that you've won the "Swedish Zepplin Award 1994", but honestly spoken, I never heard of that before, so could you tell us how they found out about you and what exactly happened?

"I was very surprised, cause we were like... just nominated along with TIAMAT and some other bands... you know, with this PANTERA style... and to be honest, I never ever expected anything, because Boss told me all the time, *yeah you will win it, I have the feeling and I said no way!* TIAMAT were nominated for a Grammy, which is much bigger in Sweden and I said *they will win it, because that's the way the business works. If they didn't win the big one, they will win the small one!* I don't even bother to go there, because it's gonna be embarrassing. But, he called me... like two o'clock at night and said *yeah, you won it!* And I was like *yeah, really? Why?* And he said *I don't know* (laughs)! I mean, "Purgatory afterglow" of course was a very diverse album, but I feel it's a little bit... I don't know... it's nothing really that I think is worth such a price! I would really enjoy a price for something that I feel more in my heart, like a UNICORN album... that would be great to win a price for, that would really be the top! But "Purgatory afterglow" was written... you know, we just did it, because we had to! But I think it's cool!"

You've also contributed a song to the SLAYER tribute album, but it seems that you aren't really satisfied the way it turned out - why?

"Not. The reason is... I'm not a SLAYER fan, you know, and the other guys are maybe not the best guys in the world to arrange a coverversion. So, I just told them, you release it, you come down and you show me how I should sing it and that's it, you know. I liked what I heard when we recorded it, but compared to the original, it's a slaughter... I don't like the comparison. I don't know what happened, we were just too quick in the studio, didn't have time to tune the guitars, to make a good sound... we just smashed it in, you know. It was a cheap way of having promotion for a dead year, we actually did something... a sign of life, but I don't see it like a big career move!"

Is EDGE OF SANITY still a real band or is it just another "baby" of yours with different musicians? Was it ever a real band?

"It was, for a short period of time! It was a real band, but never really to me, maybe to the others... and to the audience it was a real band... during the "Unorthodox" period... from the writing to after the tour we did for "Unorthodox", we were a real band. The first album was really confusing, because we were just taking out from the demo stage and things happened so fast, we couldn't really understand it. We formed in November and one year later we had a record deal! It was like too fast for us, because at that time, me and Benny had like one hundred projects, we played anything and **EDGE OF SANITY** was just one of them, we never cared! And for such a big thing to happen to one of these small projects is really strange. So, I guess around "Unorthodox" we were a band. But all the members have always been the same, there's no reason to change them, you know, to start messing up with line-ups and shut all over again. As long as they wanna contribute to the album, they can do it. They're not the best musicians in the world, but they don't have any demands, you know, they just play!"

Have they other projects going besides EDGE OF SANITY?

"I think two of them are playing with... one band called AROMA and one called LUCKY SEVEN... these kinda guys are not really doing anything seriously, they just play for fun! And that's not what I want

around me, I want totally serious devoted musicians, but I'd like to be the less serious guy in the band. Like in UNICORN, the other two guys are totally one hundred and one percent serious about our music and everything around it. When we were rehearsing, they bought a lot of equipment, they are really in the band and I was the one that was like doing different things and came late for rehearsals... I like to be the one. But when I'm the only guy that has situational control, I hate it! So, they are like lower forms of human beings... the only way we can work is like to plan, we record an album these days, you come here, you do it, then good bye! There's no way we can rehearse at six o'clock, because that means nine o'clock to them... it doesn't work, I've tried it!"

"...the circle is still unbroken!"

What made you pick up the guitar on your own on the new album as well now?

"I was sitting home, writing the most fantastic riffs on this NIGHTINGALE guitar tuning so to say and figured this is too hard for my next solo album and what the fuck am I gonna do with it? These other guys, they can play this stuff for their lives, but why should I throw away something, that could put some kind of revolution into our music and just make one more album without this little extra?! So, I just told the guys, *if you want me to contribute, I will play guitar too!* And I will kinda lead the guitars and you will be in the background and they were *yeah, that's fine with us, because we like the rhythmic thing!* And I'm more into the harmonic stuff, so we actually divided us in two parts and it turned out brilliant! You know, the reason why we never did write songs together is, I am the main writer and the other guys are like... not really into writing songs... they were playing and I was like... conducting them... *you play this and you play that* and now I was a part of the writing, we could jam, you know. Everyone could join, we were all playing and that was very different, that's why we wrote the album so fast, like in 24 hours or something like that. We were just sitting on the chairs with headphones, having the perfect sound, doing back ups on DAT of every second of these 24 hours. We just played and played and played... we listened to some sessions... and were like *ah this is good, we can add these parts blablabla* and the album was ready! That was the reason to put like a new creative energy into the music!"

How did you get the idea to work with an additional vocalist this time and what made you choose Mikael from OPETH for that job?

"The thing is, that I was so amazed by Mikael from the first scream of the vocal session with OPETH, I didn't really know what to do. He was totally kicking me, you know! I tried to make some death vocals before recording, to see where I was standing and I realized that some

of the parts that I had in mind would be far more aggressive and brutal and chaotic... and my voice couldn't really go the extra level! I was already on top to the normal parts, so why should the music actually be more intense and my voice was still the same? I needed the voice to go this extra step! And of course I could've added effects, distortion, did what the fuck, you know, but I wanted it to be like an extra level of my voice. And Mikael has a similar way of singing to me and he's just like the extra level. When the drums are like fastening, his voice is coming in, because I cannot take it from there, I can not do this 30 seconds screams without breathing, you know. So, he was really the obvious choice! Instead of effects, I bought like a Mikael (laughs)! I brought him in, *you do the vocals, you know...*"

Was it in some way with different characters for the story as well?

"The first idea was... I would be this guy and Mikael would be another one, but we would have been very limited in the way of writing the lyrics then... Kinda like *ahh this guy, he cannot say this, because we cannot have Mikael's vocals in the middle of a slow part.*

So, we skipped this idea when Andreas had to go home too early to be able to do any vocals for "Crimson", so I said *let's fuck this, I will do all the vocals and Mikael will do all the extreme, this more black oriented vocals!* So, that was the whole concept."

By the way, when he does his final part, when he screams this very



long "God" - was that recorded in just one take only?

"Yeah! The big problem is that on some black metal albums I did before ours, I did a sample of the guy screaming, because they wanted a really long scream, so I sampled the scream... And it sounds like an eternal scream, so I guess a lot of people that have recorded with me will say, *he this is a fake, I know how he does it, he does it with a sampler*, you know? But, the fact is that the only thing I had in mind, was Mikael's scream, I tried to simulate his way of screaming by doing a little bit on the pitchbend and shit like that and I did it for some albums. But I wanna be original for our album, I didn't want any fake, that's why I didn't start messing around with my voice. I could have sampled it and pitched it and did what the fuck, but I just brought Mikael in and I told him *do one of these weird screams* and he was... I don't know, he's impossible. I think that scream is like 22 seconds or something like that! The thing with Mikael's voice is, you would probably be very surprised when you hear the level, because it's very low. It's not like you imagine someone screaming, he's using very little air to produce like a few seconds of scream, so he could actually go on forever! So, put some oxygen up his nose and he could do an eternal scream, you know. And I thought I wanted this, that's the affect I was talking about. So, instead of buying this new fancy shit, I just brought in Mikael and he saved my day!"

Did you ever had any influences yourself, when it comes to the death metal vocal style? Any vocalists you admired or still do?

"Of course! I was totally freaking out on Chuck Schuldiner on "Leptose", he's my main idol! And I always wanted to make this high scream, that he did on "Scream bloody gore", but I never could make it. Chuck is like eternal god... and John Tardy was...

...the first time I heard him it was like, is this thing on the night speed?! It totally kicked me! So, I guess a combination of these two guys, Tardy and Schuldiner, these are my guys! And then I've heard so many... I mean, these guys have something very special with their voices and then there came a lot of bands with a vocalist that sounded like the neighbour, trying to imitate a gorilla or something like that! These guys to me are originals and I only imitate originals if I imitate something. So, I guess I haven't really heard anyone with a voice... I've heard people that have kinda invented new styles in the way of singing, like Glen Benton, that very rhythmic thing, with this high pitched backing. That was a new step and you had this guy Martin Walkyer on the early SABBAT albums, sounding like a nasty frog, or something like that. And like a combination of all these styles was my main idea. To make a very rhythmical and still harmonic growling voice, that was more like riffing than vocals!"



It's pretty unusual in this musical genre, to write a song that lasts about 40 minutes, so what made you do so?

"Once in the rehearsal room, we had a lot of tapes lying around and one of them was MIKE OLDFIELD's "Incantations", which is basically one track, but he had split it because of the lp format and the same with JETHRO TULL, they did "Thick as a brick" and it's also like one song with fragments coming over and over and of course MARILLION did it with "Misplaced childhood" and "Brave", so I really wanted to do... the "Thick as a brick" for my upcoming generation. When my son is like smoking Marijuana and wanna listen to music, I want him to listen to my album and have the same kick that I had out of this... You know, you just put your headphones on and you go to another world. I didn't need drugs, I was totally dragged by the music. Especially the MIKE OLDFIELD one... that's too much, or JEAN MICHEL JARRE with "Oxygen" or "Equinox". It was just one track, but he had this part business and we avoided this. Like "Crimson Part I - The return of the living corpse", this kinda bullshit! I think it's so stupid, because that's like a cliché for a long song, you know. All the different tracks, all the different lyric parts blablabla. I didn't wanna do that, because we did it with "Engines" and that was only seven minutes! But it was three parts and I just didn't wanna do it. I wanted to be more specific. To me it's an EDGE OF SANITY song, not a record! So, why mix it up?"

Do you want people to hear it in its entirety only? There's just this one song on the CD and you have to listen to it the whole way through, if you wanna hear it...

"I think that's the only way of making the experience. Of course you can do it just like a movie, you can skip to your favourite parts. It takes a little longer time than with a video, but I really tried all the technical possibilities to put index codes. And it was possible, but I searched through like twenty CD-players at my friend's places and no one has an index skip... It was only on the first ones that came out and it's only working for classical music. So, the only version would be to have like fifteen tracks and they could be skipped, but there are no places to do so, because the song is structured like a four minute track... There's no breaks, it's just flowing. We had to break it, because we needed to change the tape when we were recording. And you would miss the fun fact, when you put in the CD and there's only one track showing on the display. (laughs) I wanted just one track, forty minutes... that's all! If you have a pretty good CD player, you could rewind or fast forward pretty easy, pretty fast."

Did you add the instrumental outro to make the song exactly forty minutes long or was that pure luck that it turned out that way?

"No, that was strictly planned (laughs). We did it in the mastering room, but that's a european bonus, the japanese version is shorter, it's only 39:45min."

But the japanese version has a different bonus track, that isn't featured on the european version...

"Yeah, "Murder divided", but it is coming out in Europe as well on a compilation CD (*It's out now!* - *EA*) They are mastering it right now... To me it's not too much to listen to... it's just a track, you know, for the japanese people... if they wanna hear it, they can do it, it's fine with me, we've done better songs!"

Is "Murder divided" connected to the story of the album?

"No no, it's just a very basic track. Andreas wrote the music and the lyrics and he was producing it. I didn't do much, I just did the vocals, that's all I did!"

And what about this SATOR cover you also did..?

"That's very good! I'm very proud of this version. It's not really sounding like EDGE OF SANITY, it's very far away... We added a grind part in the end, of course, but it's just too Rock n' Roll! That's crossing the line. I mean, "Black Tears" was pretty close to crossing the line and this is far more commercial than "Black Tears"! It would be stupid to release that on one of our albums... it's more commercial than OFFSPRING for example! No one should mistake it for a song that I wrote... Maybe this CD will be available sometime in the future, I don't know. At the moment it's only available for subscribers... I think Black Mark has some kind of legal rights to release it and if there is ever something that they'll need it, I think they will have it! But not before the subscribers will have theirs!"

Was it planned as a concept story from the beginning already or did it turn out that way while you wrote it?

"When I first introduced the guys to my idea of the music and that I wanted it to be in this direction, I told them that it would fit with a concept lyric, because it would be very weird to change the story in a forty minute track... this way we needed to have parts and shit, so we said, *let's just write a novel* and that's what we did, trying to make it fit, together with the music! We recorded everything,



sat down and tried to fit the most perfect rhythm of the words and this time also the meaning of the words, together with the music! And it took longer than writing..."

So, the music was first?

"Always! I never write anything before, because music is like so much more important to me than the lyrics..."

What inspired you for the story? Did you see a movie or have you read a book that impressed you that much that you wanted to come up with a story on your own?

"Yeah, I saw the movie "Stargate" and got a little bit of details from that... like the eyes and the civilisation in general and we just went on from there... I'm not into this book thing, you know, like

yeah we did a musical version of this book, we just tried to write a pretty cool novel."

Could you summarize the story in a few lines maybe? Or is that impossible?

"We did it! Haven't you seen the CD?"

I have...yeah!

"It's on top! The prologue... that's pretty much it! It's a very basic story and there's no hidden messages or anything like that. It's a dying civilization and there's like, who's gonna be the next king and there's a war... We tried to be very open in the language, so that everyone... even people not from an english speaking country could actually understand it pretty easy. So, I think there is not so much to tell. It's a story about a god and a story about a girl from some weird dimension or whatever."

What is the reason that almost at the end of the story, there's a line of the lyrics in the booklet missing? It comes directly after the part where you sing "...to forever lock up your soul..."

"Oh yeah! That's boring! This could be my little secret, we could release this on a special paper and charge a lot of money! No, I guess this is something that happens all the time. We have always some problems with every release, there's some spelling mistakes, some lines missing and I think we had a lot of shit missing on some other record, like half the lyrics or something (laughs)!"

So, it wasn't intentional? Kinda like...that there's a secret behind this special part or whatever, maybe?

"Noneed! The guy who wrote the actual disc we sent to Black Mark, he had a rough time, he was under stress and my original was written in a book form, it was not typed as a lyric, it was just line after line from one side to the other and it was very hard to read which line is which, you know... like forty lines on every paper. So, I guess I have to blame myself if anything is missing. But the main thing is, that all the music is there (laughs)!"



Is the artwork connected to the story in any way?

"Yeah... it's based upon it! But the problem is, that I couldn't see it before we finished the story. I wrote him that I want this weird tube with crimson water in it and I want people in it, and it should be like a weird chamber... that's all I wanted and that's all I got! And I'm happy with it, because the other guys we used have always changed it, to make it look more than personal artwork and in some parts it didn't match with the lyrics or our main idea..."

It looks pretty untypical for such an album, this kinda artwork...

"Yeah. This guy is very untypical in his artwork, he's more of the Roger Dean school, with his choice of colours and all this and I think it's good, because if you put all our records together, you will see this one more, because it has some attention drawing colours. I don't know if it's the best cover we've ever had, I don't think it's ugly, I don't think it's like yeah, look at this, it's just a cover you know."

What inspired you to incorporate this spanish sounding acoustic guitar in the very beginning of the song? Is there any deeper meaning in that?

"No! Not really... it's not spanish, if you judge it from the instrument, it's a steel string guitar, but I know what you mean... the sound is a little bit spanish. I guess this was one of the parts, where we should... when we wrote the track, we left some blanks, that I could write myself. So, I wanted to link the parts in the best possible way and in some places it was like too boring to just go on with the riffing, we needed a break to warm up. And I just wrote this piece at home and I

just had some luck to put it down on tape. I still can't believe that it's me playing, but... it is (laughs)!"

It seems to me that this **EDGE OF SANITY** album combines every musical direction you did with other projects thus far, cause there's the typical death metal stuff, then you have the **SISTERS OF MERCY** type stuff, the doomy **GODSEND** like passages and I even discovered some **NIGHTINGALE** sounding guitar passages and **UNICORN** influences as well... Does that mean, you will make **EDGE OF SANITY** your one and only band now?

"No! No way (laughs)! The thing is, that **NIGHTINGALE** will be more like **UNICORN**, because I think that **UNICORN** will not make one more album, because it's just too long to go. There's a lot of problems coming up in the personal department. People are studying... going away, you know. Bitchable. The new **NIGHTINGALE** material will be all piano based, so it's gonna be a very different sound. I'm gonna replace the guitar from **NIGHTINGALE** with piano and I will use the guitar more as a tasteful instrument... to be there all the time, but doing more use things than doing the rhythm. That will be the piano! So, it will be a new sound for this... I guess this **EDGE OF SANITY** record may be like a dump for the things I will not use anymore in the future..."

Talking of **UNICORN**, how did you get the idea to use Anders for the cello part? A pretty unusual instrument for death metal anyway...

"He did it on "Unorthodox", he played the beginning of "Engma" and some parts in "When all is said" in '92, so he was an obvious choice, when I wanted cello. He just came by and did it... put a lot of weird distortion on it and put it through a Marshall and shit... just freaked out! I wanted something that was really out of mind, totally weird. And what could be

more weird than a fretless instrument and a totally weird guy playing it (laughs)!" So, what I had in mind came out pretty good!"

And shortly after that cello part, you ripped off **SLAYER**, huh?

"Yeah! A little bit... it's like a total **SLAYER** riff, but it has some kind of **BLACK SABBATH** feel to it, it has some kind of "Symptom of the universe" kinda groove. It can be a bit dangerous to jam sometimes, because I came up with this riff, the guys played along and... I think we played this riff for about fifteen minutes (laughs), just freaking out... having real fun for the first time in this session and it was just natural! We had to include this riff, it's so cool, it's so fuckin' unoriginal and so fuckin' stolen, we just had to use it! And we did (laughs)! Everyone's like *hah, this sounds like SLAYER*, so yeah, it's a tribute, we're like quoting **SLAYER**!"

If you are going to play live, will you play "Crimson" also?

"No! It's finished... It's just like I used to tell, when it comes to the difference of studio and live, it's like making a painting for like five months and then you have to draw it again in fortyfive minutes! It's not gonna look that good! It may have some interesting things, but if it's a very detailed version, it will not look as the original, it's totally far away! But if it's a chaotic painting, you can do it by throwing colour, it will look the same (laughs)! We will just play those rough songs on stage, where they belong, you know. The rehearsal room songs... And the tour we will do, will probably be like a back catalogue tour for "The spectral sorrows" and "Purgatory afterglow"... a kinda "we're sorry, we didn't do it before" tour!"

Interview & Live Pic: Frank Silver



CRUACHAN



Irish Folklore Pagan Metal

I totally love Irish and Scottish folk music, so it is quite obvious that I also enjoy the releases of **THIN LIZZY**, **SKYCLAD** and **CRUACHAN**, who managed to combine these elements with rock music. **CRUACHAN** from Ireland is probably one of the most extreme bands mixing these styles, so vocalist Keith was the perfect victim for our feature...

It seems to be pretty obvious to me that the members of **CRUACHAN** are not all having the same musical roots, so how did you get together in this weird line-up?

"It began a few years ago with me and Jay in a death band, we weren't really into what we were doing, so we called it a day. I was getting into folk music at this time, listening to bands like **HORSELIPS** etc. and I really wanted to incorporate this music with the normal black / death music I was listening to. My brother John had started learning the flute at this time and his girlfriend Collette was playing keyboard, so we got together and began jamming. We got some tapes made for Jay and began proper rehearsals, then one day Leon turned up at my door and asked could he join, which was weird as I hardly knew him. Our guitarist left, so I gave up the bass and went onto guitar and we recruited John Clorhossenie on bass. I can't believe I answered that question, as I always try to get out of it."

When you started out, has **CRUACHAN** ever been a pure metal or folklore act before (or a band previous to this) and then developed into this unique direction or was it this kind of mixture from the very beginning already?

"I began 6 years ago in a band called **CRYPT**. For the time we played quite black music, which was virtually unheard of in Ireland back then. I was 14 and the rest of the band were in their 20's. We broke up and some of us went on to form **MINAS TIRITH**, a band that sang exclusively about Tolkien's works. The rest is explained up above. As it happens, John C. is an original member from the early days of **CRYPT**. None of us ever played folk before **CRUACHAN**. We evolved from total metal acts."

I noticed that you did a demo previous to your debut album, but unfortunately never got the chance to hear it, so could you tell us a little bit about it? Have the songs been re-recorded for the album or are there any tracks left from it?

"The demo was recorded and mixed in 5 hours, the sound is crap, and is totally sold out. We have no plans to release it again, as most of the stuff is on our album anyway. The ones not on the album are "Seal na Fianna" (Live) and "The voyage of Bran"."

Do you think it is necessary to enjoy Irish or Scottish folklore music to get into your musical creations? Could you imagine that the average headbanger might have a tough time with your material?

"No, it's not necessary as we have proved, but obviously there are narrow minded people out there. Before we've done our first gig in March '94, we didn't know what the reaction would be from the metal crowd. But in the end, the crowd loved us and we got an excellent review in *Terrorizer*."

Honestly spoken, I think you could easily impress a lot of open-minded folklore fans in the same way as metal fans, but I guess you mainly reach a metal audience, don't you? Is it kinda frustrating or have you never been interested to reach a different crowd with your music?

"Yes, we do mainly reach a metal audience, but we are making quite an impact in the folk scene. So far we have played with **THE CHIEFTANS**, **ANUNA** and **RIVERDANCE** and the folk audiences at these concerts were amazed. We've received excellent reviews in major folk / alternative mags. This is a sample of a review by **FOLK ROOTS**, a huge traditional Irish music magazine: "**TUATHA NA GAEL**" is both stylish and provocative, bold and daring. It plays by its own rules and demands a response, if you like your Celtic rock with a sense of adventure look no further **TUATHA NA GAEL**" is money very well spent." We're not being arrogant, but

this is what the folk scene thinks of us."

Don't you think, that a style like yours, demands a big record company, willing to invest some money into the band, to make this unique mixture more known to the public in general?

"Thanks for the compliment. Yes, I agree with you. As it is, we have sold a few thousand CD's mainly through mail order or exclusive shops in some countries. This could have been trebled, if we had better distribution i.e. getting into major



This could have been trebled, if we had better distribution i.e. getting into major record shops in all the countries. Also, the average person will not order stuff through the post, they would rather buy it in their local shop. The fact we've sold so many through the post astonishes us. If we had a big record company behind us, they would give us all the promotion we want as at the moment we have none. One thing we would fear about a large label is that they might tell us to change or do things their way."

So, how do you judge Nazgul's Eyrre Production's work then? Do you just consider them as a company that is helping you to release your material or do you have bigger expectations in them?

"I think N.E.P. is doing the best a label of its size can. We have total freedom on this label - we do what we do and the label just let us get on with it, which is a perfect agreement. N.E.P. is growing slowly and I can see that soon it will be a label to watch, but CRUACHAN is growing fast and needs a proper distribution and promotion, which will enable people to get to our CD's who aren't in the underground scene. I have expectations for the band - it's just will the label be able to provide?"

To get to the metal influences in your music - what do you see CRUACHAN's basic style connected the closest to? Thrash? Death? Black Metal? Are there any bands you would name as influences? How about THIN LIZZY? Did they impress you in any way?

"I suppose the metal in CRUACHAN is a mix of all the types of metal, from black to thrash etc. The metal parts to our songs are determined by whatever folk parts we play. Our main influence is THE HORSELIPS from the 70's who were the first band to mix folk with rock music. No, THIN LIZZY has no bearing on our music at all, although they too were influenced by the HORSELIPS."

A lot of people will obviously compare you to SKYCLAD, as they are probably closest to your way of writing music... Do you see them as an influence on CRUACHAN's music or would you just say they are coming from the same roots as you do?

"Yes, a lot of people do compare us, but I think they are doing a completely different thing than what we are doing. Yes, when CRUACHAN was getting itself together, I was listening to the first two SKYCLAD albums, which I thought was the best thing I had ever heard in metal. But I loved folk music as well, I was left wanting more folk parts and it probably inspired me to fill our songs with folk parts."

Was it already clear from the very beginning that you would use a lyrical



concept about your ancestors for the band or did it just develop over the years? Could you give us an overview about the subjects you covered in the lyrical poems on your debut album?

"Yes, it was clear, myself and the band have always read and studied Celtic culture and this was the style of lyrics I wanted to do to show to other people that there is another culture out there as mighty as those of ancient Greece and Rome. Ok then, about our lyrics... "The first battle of Moytura" is about the battle which took place in the south of the country Mayo between the FirBolg and the Tuatha De Danann who were fighting to reclaim their ancestral homeland. When the battle was won, Ireland was divided between the two armies, which is what they should have done before the massacre of the battle. "Fall of Gondolin" is a song I wrote based on Tolkien's epic story in the Silmarillion, were the impenetrable elven city of Gondolin fell to the armies of Morgoth. "Cuchulainn" is a summary of his life in poetic form. "Tain bo Cuailgne" is also about Cuchulainn who was famous for his single handed defence of Ulster during the war of the Tain when all the fighting men of Ulster were stricken with birth pangs because of a curse laid on them years before, that when Ulster is threatened by an overwhelming army, all the men shall suffer the pains of birth but Cuchulainn was still a lad and so wasn't affected. "To invoke the horned god" is a ritual used to worship the god Cernunnos. "To Moytura we return", this was the second battle of Moytura which took place in the north of county Sligo. It was fought between the Fomor and their evil leader Balor of the evil eye and the Tuatha De Danann. It was won by the Tuatha De Danann when Balor was killed by the god of light, Lugh."

I was also pretty impressed by the artwork, which was done by one of your bandmembers, so can you tell us more about that hidden talent within John maybe? Has he done stuff besides CRUACHAN already?

"Yes, John is a great artist, but it's not very often that he does anything. He has painted the cover for the PRIMORDIAL album and got ripped off by Cacophonous. I don't think he has done anything since that."

Would you say that your musical evolution on future releases will differ from the stuff featured on "Tuatha na gael"? In which direction do you see the band's progression?

"Our new stuff is much better than that on "Tuatha", it's more folkly with a lot more atmospheric feeling. The vocals have improved and are more varied. We will have a lot more instruments on the next release plus the songs are heavier! Just wait till the next album and see."

Although I totally love your material, I would say that the production sounds a little bit rushed, so do you agree on that and if so, will there be a difference concerning this manner on the second album? What was the reason for the not that convincing sound? Lack of money? Lack of studio experience?

"Yes, the production does sound a bit rushed, that's probably because it was rushed! It was really a lack of money, which resulted in poor production, we only had five nights to record and mix the CD. Also the first night we arrived to do the recording, I had no distortion, so I had to go to the hospital and on the fourth night, just as I was about to start recording the vocals, I took a migraine and had to leave and had to record the vocals the next day during mixing time. On the next album we will have more money to work with, so we will have good production."

Ok, I guess we mainly covered everything by now, so feel free to add anything you'd like to this interview...

"Thanks for the interview Frank. Anyone wishing to purchase "Tuatha" should contact: Nazgul's Eyrre Productions, P.O. Box 1122, 92656 Neustadt / WN, Germany."

P.S.: Latest news - CRUACHAN have been signed by Century Media Records now!

CRUACHAN
c/o Keith O'Fathaigh
178 Killmarthen est.
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Ireland

Frank Stöver

The ultimate disappointment!

MASSACRE
Promise (CD)
(Earache Records)

I can't believe it! I can't believe that this album has been released, cause it's going to destroy the good reputation of a once so admired death metal act!

We're talking about MASSACRE, Florida pioneers of brutal music here, ladies and gentlemen and this new record is nothing but a bad joke!

When I got to hear the demo that had been recorded previously to this ten track release, I

had serious doubts already, but in the end, those versions even turned out stronger than the final recordings that are on "Promise" now! This is a totally different band!

Ok, Rick Rozz and Kam Lee are still mentioned in the line-up, but MASSACRE anno 1996 has nothing to do anymore with the awesome fourpiece that brought us the classic "From beyond" masterpiece!

Their style doesn't really sound like death metal anymore - gone are the extremely cutting riffs of Mr. Rozz, gone are the deep grunting vocals from the abyss of Mr. Lee and most important of all - gone is the killer songwriting! "From beyond" was a simple structured but totally into

your face album and I still enjoy playing it nowadays in the same way as back when it got released!

"Promise" sounds so goddamn poor, and it seems that the whole material has just been written to cash-in on current musical trends, it's simply ridiculous!

I don't know what happened to these guys... Maybe their musical tastes have changed (nothing wrong with it!) and they don't like their original style anymore, but if you have build up a certain following in this scene, you should either care a little bit more about it or at least change your monicker and start from zero again!

To release a record like "Promise" under the name of MASSACRE is just a slap in the face of every true death metal fan!

According to the CD-booklet, Kam Lee has definitely left the sinking ship since the

recordings (I'm not sure about Rick Rozz though) and there's a new guy called Kenny Goodwin playing guitar and doing the vocals from now on...

So, what is actually left then from the original MASSACRE?! N.o.t.h.i.n.g., huh?!

Oh, before I forget... Any reason, why there's this stupid CONCRETE BLONDE cover ("Bloodletting") on the disc and the credits just say all songs written by Rick, Sy and Pete?!! Ahh, enough of this now - you should simply boycott anything under the MASSACRE flag from now on, cause it's nothing but a bad joke anymore!

It ain't worth a dime! Too bad, really...and definitely not promising at all!

Frank Stöver

SOMETIMES THEY COME BACK...



CRUENTUS proving how things are getting a bit better!"

One thing that always seemed a little strange to me is that you are signed to Nosferatu, but still your album is licensed by other companies in foreign countries! So where exactly and through which companies is your record out and which are the advantages of this system?? But still you've received the most attention in Italy... Isn't that a little bit sad? Are you expecting things to change with "Tribe"?

"Tribe" has been produced by Nosferatu Records, but this label can't provide anything in the matter of SADIST, that's why "Tribe" is licensed in Europe by Rising Sun and in Japan by Toys Factory! I think the new album could surely help to get the band's name grow, but we the most important thing we need to do is touring around Europe!"

You also have several booking companies throughout Europe and a very active fanclub... I wonder what touring activities you have done so far? Which were the best and which were the worst experiences so far? Which band would you like to join for a tour and what do you expect from your first real tour with EDGE OF SANITY / LAKE OF TEARS and DEW-SCENTED?

"We toured very much in France and Holland, as well as here in Italy. We should join a tour, supporting EDGE OF SANITY this summer in Germany and then we'll be in Holland again and in France for a couple of festivals. We personally don't pay much attention about the bands we are touring with, we only care about doing our work the best we can... We only hope to tour always with cool guys."

I really think you are mixing death metal, progressive elements and atmospheric / orchestral compositions in a nearly unique way, so I wonder which could be your musical inspirations??! Isn't it a bit weird that you are promoted in Germany, saying that "Tribe" is "a must for fans of THE GATHERING and PARADISE LOST"? I see no connection! Wouldn't ATHEIST and CYNIC be a little bit closer to SADIST anyway?

"I'm pretty upset about it! I hate that kind of sound and I think SADIST has nothing to do with bands like PARADISE LOST or anyone else...! I don't really know why someone labeled the band in that silly way!! By the way, I don't care that much, I think SADIST's sound is more personal."

You seem to have quite an interesting lyrical approach, judging from the songtitles of "Tribe", so what is the general concept? What is a song like "Den Siste Kamp" or "From Bellatrix To

Betelgeuse" dealing with lyrically and are you using different languages for the lyrics (at least, that's what I derive from the songtitles)?

"Tribe" is a sort of concept album, where we all



tried to mix many different cultures and musical approaches to our basic sound... The lyrics as well fit to several old ethnical legends we studied and developed. At least, any song is moulded into an own atmosphere and that goes for the music as well."

It's clearly obvious that you are really skilled and practiced musicians, but aren't you afraid of the fact that some people could criticize lacking catchiness (I don't!) in your complex songstructures? I wonder if you also have other musical projects apart from SADIST, where you go for a different musical goal?

"When we write a song, we care very much about the feelings it gives us back, not about getting our technical skills shown all along the song. It may sound silly to you, but we just play it the way we feel it. Besides SADIST we all

work with music in some other ways. For instance, I have a studio where I'm actually producing two new projects. Peso and Zanna play in a punk cover band and Chicco is a live sound engineer. But, so far SADIST is still our main business."

SADIST
Via del Castello 25
16036 Recco (Ge)
Italy

Interview: Leif Jensen
Live Pics: Frank Stöver

Too bad that this interview with SADIST's guitarist / keyboard player Tommy had to be done via fax before Italy's techno death / thrashers went on tour with EDGE OF SANITY, LAKE OF TEARS and DEW-SCENTED, cause a face-to-face conversation would probably have been way better and more in-depth! And after having witnessed their brilliant performance I was even more blown away by their complex material. These guys were easily able to blow away the entire billing with their stage acting and skilled musicianship!! Haven't seen such an excellent live act for quite a long time and everyone who missed them, should make sure to catch them next time they will be around again!! Here's what Leif got us nevertheless...

Hi, how are you doing? I think it would be helpful if you would introduce this interview by informing our readers with a short version of the band's history so far, naming all your releases with your personal opinion about them! Were you satisfied with the worldwide reactions to your great debut album "Above the light"?

"Well, SADIST officially started in 1991, with a quite different line-up, releasing a 7" EP entitled "Black screams". That EP was reprinted in 1992 by Wild Rags Records. In 1993 the band signed with Nosferatu Records and released its debut album "Above the light". Soon after that release, the band had a line-up change angagging two new members: bass player Chicco and singer Zanna, along with the original drummer Peso and myself on guitar and keyboards. This new line up just released the second album "Tribe", licensed by Nosferatu Records once again and printed in Europe by Rising Sun and in Japan by Toys Factory."

Going back in time: Peso used to be a member of NECRODEATH, one of my favourite early thrash / death acts in Europe. Please give us a late summary about the time in NECRODEATH and their activities back in the 80's. Why did the band split-up

after that promising (M)LP and why the long silence afterwards? Musically NECRODEATH and SADIST are two really different things, so how came the decision to go for a more "sophisticated" style, instead of the pure old brutality?

"When NECRODEATH came out, things were going quite in a different way compared to today's rock / metal scene! Metal music wasn't a trend yet and life was such a hard thing for such an extreme band. Anyway, somehow it was right, cause it's a trend now what NECRODEATH was already playing ten years ago!! You have to groove and we simply couldn't play something what already had been done by thousands of bands!"

Hm, the Italian scene... Comparing it to some other European countries, it never had the best position... Do you probably know why? How has the scene changed in Italy since the NECRODEATH times in the 80's? Which Italian bands do you recommend us to put an eye on and how do you feel about the actual black metal boom / trend that is actually invading Italy??

"During the 80's Italy never had very good bands... maybe NECRODEATH and SCHIZO did something noticeable, but it was just not the right time and neither the right place to do that kind of things! Right now, besides the silly trends around, there are very good and promising bands, like THY NATURE, WILL "O" WISP,



DEATH IS CERTAIN... LIFE IS NOT!!!

CRACK UP



If you have been following the national death metal scene closely during the last years, you will surely have heard about CRACK UP! However, these very promising guys have finally managed to put out their debut album "Blood is life" and they could probably be the next surprising underground act to get established within the major national scene, so better watch out! Enough to speak about, so just follow Tim Schmetzgoke (voc / bs) through this in-depth feature...

Although the name CRACK UP has been shaking up the underground scene and press lately quite a bit, I think you should mention the most relevant events in your career so far here... and by the way, "hello, how are you?"

"CRACK UP was formed back in January 1992, when Frank (dr.), Dirk (gt.) and me (bs./voc.) started rehearsing regularly in an old garage. Half a year later we recorded our first songs in an 8-track studio to release them as the "Endless coma" demo. Our second demo needed two more years to be recorded in summer 1994 at the Big House Studio in Hannover. It was released a few weeks later and in the end we printed more than 1000 copies of "Forsaken Dreams" and got really nice reviews in many zines / mags. Before we began the songwriting for this demo, Helvin Pour joined us on rhythm guitar to give important new impulses and energy to CRACK UP. Two weeks in summer 1996 we recorded 10 songs at Andy Classen's Stage One Studio, in hope to find a good deal with the songs. Finally and after a lot of trouble "Blood is life" was released on We Bite / Corrosion in April '96. Here we are now and I'm doing really fine mementary, enjoying an interesting interview!"

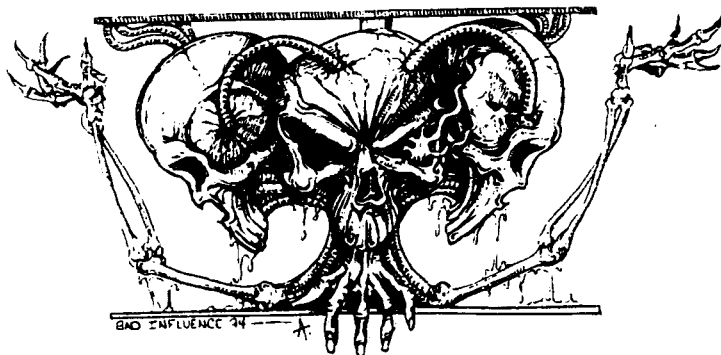
After your successful second demo it took a really long time to release your debut album "Blood is life". So why the delay and why did the arrangement with Mascot Records break down at the end? How did you get in touch with Corrosion / We Bite and what kind of conditions did they come up with?

"As we went to Andy Classen in summer, Mascot Records contacted us and showed interest. We were really fascinated by the name Mascot Records, because it was such a big label for us already. Mascot liked the new songs and we began with finding a fair deal. It all took so fuckin' long, and they always told us, they would release the CD in November... later February. In December Ed phoned me to tell us a new release date, this time it was July '96 and it really seemed like a joke to us. CRACK UP was really desperate at that time, as it was obvious somehow, that the label got doubts and didn't want to sign us anymore. We never checked out some other labels intensively, because we always believed in the deal with Mascot Records, so I began to send out new promo tapes to a few people. One of them was Schenk from Chaos Mag and he's also working for We Bite Records, so he contacted me to tell us that We Bite were really interested. The next day Thomas Issler (labelboss) phoned me and within one month we signed a contract that is way better than anything Mascot ever promised. Obviously We Bite is more a hardcore / punk label, but they are doing a great job until now. On the

other hand, we also have Andy Siry working for us, and he can do a lot too. We'll record three albums for We Bite and I hope they will make and see us grow, but I don't think too much about the future and we can only see what we expect, when we see us becoming popular in the scene. But back to the music: "Blood is life" includes 8 new songs and two demo songs that we re-recorded ("Blood is life", "Unburden", "Wounded", "Voices", "Failing", "Hatred unfolds", "Cycle of need", "Painted black", "Forever in me" and "Fading away"). I think it's all in a very brutal death metal style somehow, anyway, I hate to categorize music! It's our own definition of hard music and death metal. It's just an album with good, aggressive songs!"

Back in time: Did you already release something when you were still called ROTTING MISERY and when did you change the name to CRACK UP? Did a change of style also take place with the changing of the name? Was your demo debut "Endless coma" really so uninteresting that you don't even mention it within your actual press info???

"Our first 1992 demo "Endless coma" was released under our old monicker ROTTING MISERY, so there's one



release under that name. A few people in the scene got a copy, but really everyone told us to practise. I mean, we really were at the beginning stadium and didn't think about anything! It was more a dream to record our own songs, mainly for us. We don't feel ashamed of it, but it's not very important in our eyes. This demo really can make me smile all the time, haha. We changed into CRACK UP in summer '93 as we didn't like our old name anymore! It was such a cliché and obviously stolen from PARADISE LOST, haha. The changing decision was, that we decided

to become a four piece to improve our guitar style. It took a long time to find the right guitarist, but we're lucky now with Helvin!"

You have often been compared to EDGE OF SANITY, but although you also have very melodic guitars, I still think that this comparison is kinda weak! Which are your musical roots? Except for a couple of thrash riffs, I suppose you don't have such a close relationship to 80's thrash, eh? Is your tendency to sound "groovy" due to an unthought modernisation, or how did that develop?

"I don't like the comparison to EDGE OF SANITY too. Especially the CD is far away! If we go back to the roots, it's easy to explain: Helvin is the one who brings the thrash riffs and the other three of us grew up together. Especially Frank and me were really fascinated by all the wonderful releases and new bands! In the beginning it really was that every new death metal band was a great one, MORBID ANGEL, MORGOTH, the TERRORIZER album, ENTOMBED etc. I really bought every death metal debut album and also got interested in older thrash LP's from EXODUS, SODOM or KREATOR. We have an average of 20 years in CRACK UP, so we didn't see VENOM or CELTIC FROST like many 16-year old black metallers from Norway. Seriously, the end-eighties were a wonderful time, full of wonderful releases and may also be the time that made us form a band. I always have problems in looking for our influences, nowadays I love to listen to NIRVANA and SOUNDGARDEN too, but I couldn't tell you if they influence us. Our drummer Frank also listens to this straight-edge hardcore thing, so I think we all together bring our influences in the sound of CRACK UP. Some death metal fans might call us trendy for any reasons, but we really don't give a fuck. For us it's death metal and all of us like some grooving, it doesn't take away the aggression! I can't understand that everyone still thinks about the different elements of music and its categories. Momentary I'm listening to OBITUARY's "Slowly we rot" and it's grooving like hell!!!!"

For a young german band like CRACK UP the way up has been quite fast... how did that change your previous expectations towards your band and the attitude in general? What do you think about the actual wave of very upcoming and promising national death metal outfits and how would you define your position within this movement?

"It wasn't fast, but took us more than four years to release our debut CD! We were really kiddies when we started and bringing out a CD was like a dream for us. But we were believing in the band and it's something very special for us. We always dreamed of becoming rockstars, but never thought it could come this far, haha! We definitely want to reach something with the band, so we're always looking for the next step. We are surprised that everything runs so good now. When we recorded "Forsaken dreams" two

years ago, we never dreamed of signing a good deal in 1996. Somehow you really can't recognize that everything's so good, so the next important step would be a tour I think. Hope it will happen... we'll definitely enter the studio again in December to record our next album. But back to your question Leif, I think the chances for young german bands are really better than a few years ago. I think, the career of HATE SQUAD has brought new hopes for many bands, us included. The time when our last demo was out, there were many other professional recorded demo tapes out in the scene and the trend was more quality, so I think it's easier to put out good demos. But you can also see that too many bands put out good looking demos, but the quality becomes lesser again. It's like a cycle! DEW-SCENTED, CRACK UP, ETERNAL DIRGE, END OF GREEN...

all bands with debut (comeback) albums, it's really interesting, but we try to see only our own way. It's not too important how our position is here, but my opinion is again that the quality of the songs count the most! It's interesting to see how the different bands are doing now, but I don't want to see that as a kind of competition!"

Apparently your second demo was lyricwise a concept demo... would you dare to give a short version of the story once again? Isn't it a contradiction to have such an exact lyrical concept if the songs vary a lot in music and atmosphere? What about the lyrics on the CD?

"Yes, 'Forsaken dreams' was a concept demo, only lyrical wise! As I thought of the different lyrics for the songs, I realized that they could build a story, and so we put the songs together that the lyrics fit one after another. I only needed to change a few lyric-lines to make it all fit and together with the title and the cover it became an interesting concept, I think. The demo includes the thoughts of Mr. Anyone, with all the extremes. 'Forever in me' is more a dream of love and recognition, 'Black / Blood' is the opposite, killing a person. The person in the lyrics can't cope with reality, but always flees into the own dreamworld, full of hopes and



wishes. Discriminated and alone, nothing turns better, he/she thinks of committing suicide and killing the people who didn't understand him/her. In the end it becomes clear, that he/she's unable to kill anyone. It's only a stupid dream again... and so the cycle keeps turning. Amen... The different extremes reflect the different songs, so there is a connection I can see. The CD doesn't consist of a concept in any way, it also reflects Mr. Anyone, people like you

and me! I'm writing all the lyrics in the first person, a lot of personal stuff and experiences I'm trying to fit in the lyrics. The lyrics aren't that important, the music counts more, I think. I'm writing lyrics in a very personal and maybe confusing style and if some listener builds his own opinion and sees some of his/her own experiences again, it makes me happy. The lyrics for the CD are in the same style as the demo songs. Again I'm using many "dreams", "blood" and "black"s, but the second CD will definitely be in a different style, a lot matured."

How would you explain the current division of the death metal scene... I mean, the gap between the really big bands and the smaller bands is quite enormous!? But then again a certain middle class (speaking about the status!) is starting to establish once again... could that



be due to the fact that the "boom" of the early 90's is dying down and the scene is again starting to grow together already???

"Momentary, I'm trying to get off this genre thinking in my head! I never told anyone that death metal music is dead or bullshit. Surely, the quantity was becoming more in the early 90's but somebands always offered great albums and most death metal bands that I know from the beginning, still do fantastic albums, like DEATH, MORBID ANGEL, MALEVOLENT CREATION, BOLT THROWER or BRUTALITY. Most reasons for this "death metal is dead" statement was the enormous quantity in the scene and the turning out of some meant-to-be-death-metal-bands! Fucking all trends, BOLT THROWER or CANNIBAL CORPSE still get 600 - 1000 fans to their gigs, which shows that there's still a scene, doesn't it?! Anyway, everyone who was there when the debut albums came out: No future time can repeat these high feelings!!!"

Not such a philosophical question: which are your favourite vocalists / vocal influences and why? Which were the last 5 records you bought and your opinion afterwards about them??

"Hmm, difficult to answer that question. Referring to my own vocal style, I can tell you that it's finally influenced by no one. In the beginning days of the band, I wanted to sound like Chuck, Dave Vincent or Martin van Drunen, but each time my voice got recorded and I was able to listen to it on tape, it sounded terrible! The funny thing is, that we never rehearsed with vocals until today. I couldn't

afford to buy some boxes and a tracker to sing about, so when there was a chance to sing, I had to do it on an old guitar amp, that was much too low in loudness. The first time I could try to improve something or test different vocal styles, was in the studio, but I didn't test anything, but began with singing "Voices" from one minute to another. Of course, I had the vocals from the demo in my

mind, but the demo vocals weren't tested too. It was the same situation. For "Blood is life" it was impossible to sound the same as on the demo, maybe it was the different studio technique or simply that I grow older, but in the end I realized that the vocals sound different to the demo ones. Talked enough about influences, my personal faves in death metal are Martin van Drunen (on PESTILENCE's "Consuming impulse"), Evil Chuck on nearly all releases, of course the great John Tardy on the first OBITUARY outputs and also ENTOMBED's Nicke on "Clandestine" is great! But besides that hard stuff, I also like Warrel Dane (SANCTUARY / NEVERMORE), Buddy Lackey (PSYCHOTIC WALTZ) or John Bush (ARMORED SAINT). Kurt Cobain and Tori Amos are one of my absolute faves too, so there's many different stuff I like to

consume. I really can't find my unconscience influences here, but of course there are some. The last five CD's were: SAMAEL - "Ceremony of opposites", I always wanted to buy it, finally I got it, LIFE OF AGONY - "Ugly" positively surprised me very much, ASPHYX - "God cries" is again a very cool album, TORI AMOS - "Boys for peple" isn't that good than the earlier outputs of her, but still good! Last, but not least (god forgive me) I bought ANGELRIPPER's solo CD... it was cheaper, because used."

A small underground test: Same as with bands, quantity comes prior to quality in the world of zines... so which magazines do you personally appreciate the most? Would you stop / quit

reading a certain magazine if it reacts negatively towards the music of CRACK UP? I'm speaking about this "help me out and I'll help you out" - thing within the scene...

"The most interesting zine worldwide is VOICES FROM THE DARKSIDE, referring to death metal music. I don't like all of the bands you feature, but the whole zine and its ideology seems really honest and professional! I also like FEAR OF LIFE from Holland, it's done very good and Arco also features some interesting paintings and its creators. A WASTE OF PAPER really surprised me, it's done by a younger guy from Holland, but it's really cool! Some of the newer AS zines from Germany are well done too in my eyes, as HYPNOSIS or CYBER. These zines are more important for the german scene, I think. Besides that stuff I'm still reading every issue of ROCK HARD. I think they still do the best mag for regular informations. But no, I wouldn't stop reading a mag, just because they don't like CRACK UP! I always respect the honest opinion and a bad review brings us further than 100 good ones. On the other hand you really can't make 'em all like CRACK UP, that's stupid. Our demo review in VOICES # 5 wasn't that good, but I always liked Frank's reviews for oh so many other bands. I'm still reading VOICES and I am reading it since issue 1 (ok, I re-ordered the first 2 issues)."

Ok, thanks for your time and good luck! It's up to you to close this interview with your upcoming plans and whatever else you should feel to need to say! Bye...

"Thank you Leif, for this really interesting interview. None of this 08/15 questions like in so many other interviews! We hope to go on tour this year to promote "Blood is life". If there are some net-users reading this, our homepage address is: <http://members.aol.com/errackup> - check it out! Merchandise isn't available at the moment, but within the next weeks, we'll get some nice shirts. Relating to the price politics and for the reason you can't find our CD in the stores, it's also available at the band's address for 25,-DM / \$19 (ppd.). Thanx for all attention!"

CRACK UP
c/o Tim Schnetgöke
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Germany

Leif Jensen

PROPHECIES OF PAGAN FIRE

I'm having a tough time to recall your history thus far and the only thing I can remember is, that you put out a demo and a split-up with ANCIENT RITES... So could you tell us a little bit more about the band's early days maybe, like what you've done before ENTHRONED, who you met etc.?

"Well, ENTHRONED were formed in December 1993, when our previous bands split-up. We are brothers in black metal since 1985. After 8 months of rehearsing, we entered the studio in August '94 and recorded our first promo / demo. In September 1994 After Dark Records already got interested in us and we signed with them for one album. In December they put out a picture disc split 7" with ANCIENT RITES. The track was taken from our promotape... In April 1995 we went back into the studio to record our debut album "Prophecies of pagan fire", but After Dark Records split-up one month later, because of dishonesty of their labelmanager Erik Depoorter. Evil Omen Records from France bought the contract and finally released the album in December 1995."

Belgiums ENTHRONED came up with a really strong debut album called 'Prophecies of pagan fire' not long ago and were able to prove that raw black metal can also be created outside Scandinavia... LORD SABBATHAN OCCULTA (bs,lvoc.) gave us all the missing infos...

Which songs appeared on your demo and which on the split-up and if you decided to re-record them for the album, name us some of the reasons...

"The demo contains the following tracks: "Tales from a blackened horde", "Deny the holy book of lies", "Scared by darkwinds", "Rites of the northern fullmoon" and "At the sound of the millenium black bells". The split-up features "Scared by darkwinds", taken from the promo. We decided to re-record them for our debut album, but in new versions, so people could hear them, who weren't familiar with them yet."

How did you get in touch with Evil Omen Records and why did you decide to go with them? Haven't you gotten any other offers or was their deal to good to let go?

"Evil Omen Records already wanted to sign us before After Dark Records, but the After Dark contract seemed to be more interesting to us at that time. When After Dark split-up, Ludo "Evil" of Evil Omen Records contacted us directly and offered to buy the contract, which we agreed on, cause we haven't had any other offers at that time."

What kind of relation do you have to ANCIENT RITES nowadays? Do you respect eachother or is there some kind of competition going on between the bands in Belgium?



"ANCIENT RITES are true brothers of us. We often play shows together and they are great guys, true friends! We have a lot of respect for them and they have a lot of respect for us! No, there's no competition between the Belgian bands. Actually we only have four true black metal bands in Belgium and that's ANCIENT RITES, AVATAR, ENTHRONED and MAGIA POSTHUMA. But together we are fighting against the trendy bands in our country to keep the honour of true black



metal clean and to spread the spirit of Euronymous, the anti-trend master of black metal! Our glory is near, our war against trends eternal!"

Are there any interesting new bands to watch out for in your country's underground? I mean, except for ANCIENT RITES, ENTHRONED, EXOTO and AGATHOCLES I can't really think of extreme music from overthere...

"Of course AVATAR and MAGIA POSTHUMA are two great new bands, who reflect the true spirit of black metal. They will release albums pretty soon! They are the new black metal revelation from Belgium and their demos are just fuckin' great! Real masterpieces! I don't know... EXOTO is not a black metal band and AGATHOCLES are motherfuckers, sons of bitches, an anti black metal, hardcore band! They hate us and ANCIENT RITES and all black metal cult! They are stupid children, anti-satanic! FUCK THEM!"

Has your line-up been steady from the beginning or did you have to go through the usual line-up difficulties as well? Is it tough to find dedicated musicians in Belgium for this kinda music?

"Yes, the line-up stayed the same since we formed the band. We had a second guitarist (Nomagest) who plays in MAGIA POSTHUMA, but he has left the band because of musical differences in our compositions. It is really not easy to find good black metal musicians in Belgium, who can play well and have the true mentality and spirit of black metal!"

Although I think that ENTHRONED is still lacking in originality a bit, your musical abilities are already way better than the majority of today's black metal bands around the world, so is the quality of a song more important to you than coming up with unique ideas?

"Yes, I know, a lot of people share your opinion, but if we would play "original" music, we would fear to leave the black metal concept and we definitely don't want that! We compose our songs like we feel. Our hate and aggression comes from our evil spirit, that's all! For us it is also really important to come up with good and evil ideas!"

You have a pretty scandinavian sounding style, so I was wondering if you consider that scene as the best and if your influences are basically coming from there? Or is there a lot more to discover in ENTHRONED's musical creations?

"Once again a lot of people think like you! Of course we have a lot of respect for the scandinavian black metal scene and we like all those bands. They are the best, the kings of true black metal! But we are not really influenced by them and we don't try to copy them! We are influenced by our roots and they are: VENOM, MERCYFUL FATE, HELLHAMMER, CELTIC FROST, BATHORY, old SODOM, POSSESSED (kings of death metal), old SLAYER, old KREATOR, old DESTRUCTION and also some old heavy metal bands who reflect the true concept of evil, like KING DIAMOND, JUDAS PRIEST, MOTÖRHEAD, old IRON MAIDEN, old BLACK SABBATH and old OZZY OSBOURNE! They are all our roots! I don't know whatelse you could find in the music of ENTHRONED!"

Judging your band by the lyrical creations, it seems to me that you are sticking to the original satanic black metal ideology instead of jumping on the fascist trend which seems to be more popular nowadays... don't you? So, what's your opinion about this evolution within the scene?

Is the basic black metal music and ideology not enough anymore to impress people nowadays?

"We worship the true way of evil and satanic cult for many years and I think that is the only true concept of true black metal! Black metal is not meant to impress people, it's a cult, a believe and a mythology for true worshippers! Black metal shouldn't be used for trends or to impress people, it must stay a musical cult for the real worshippers!"

What's your attitude concerning black metal live shows? I noticed that you already played a few gigs, so I guess you like to play, don't you? What's wrong in playing live from your point of view?

"I really like black metal gigs, in particular when they are extreme! Yes, we already played a few gigs and we like to play live! We are very extreme in a live situation! Fire, nails, weapons... our stage gets transformed into a real battlefield! There's nothing wrong in playing live from my point of view."

Which other bands do you consider as friends and whom do you see as fakes or bigmouths, just destroying the scene?

"The bands that I consider as friends are the other Belgian bands that I mentioned, but also MARDUK, HELHEIM (NOR) and tons of others. And I consider the following as wimpy, fakes, trendy and bigmouths: CARPATHIAN CEMETARY from Belgium is the most ridiculous band that



I've ever seen! They pollute the image of true black metal and destroy our scene! CRUSH EM!!"

The albumcover artwork for "Prophecies of pagan fire" was done by Kris Verwimp, who already worked for ABSU or MARDUK - was he your number one choice? Did he draw the cover the way you wanted it or did you just pick a picture out of his collection for the album?

"Kris Verwimp is a friend of ours and it was important for us to choose the best Belgian artist! He got inspired by our music and lyrics when he did the cover and it turned out exactly the way we wanted it!"

Have you already written any new songs for a follow-up release? Will there be a difference in the style maybe?

"Yes, we've written 7 brutal new songs for our second album already. They are still in the true way and concept of real black metal. We are not here to change our style, we are a true black metal horde and our soul belongs forever to true evil metal!"

ENTHRONED
"The Blackened Horde"
Rue Maroquette 24
S650 Fraire
Belgium

Frank Stöver

Album and EP Reviews



ALLEGIANCE Hymn till hangagud (No Fashion Records)

Swedish black viking metal is what you get on the debut album from ALLEGIANCE, who should be already more or less known by now, cause they previously released 4 demos already (and DARKIFIED's Draupin used to sing for them on the last two). But honestly spoken, after such a period of time, I expected a little bit more and not a band that is still lacking in fresh ideas. The entire album may feature good musicianship, but it sounds way to uninspired and typical (aggressive vocals, midpaced to fast songs etc.) for this genre and really outstanding moments are really hard to find. The result is a quite boring listening pleasure... If they would improve their songwriting a bit, ALLEGIANCE could be a really good band actually, otherwise they might get lost within the amount of new releases these days. Would be a shame!

Frank Stöver



ALTAR Ego Art (Displeased Records)

Holland's unholyest, ALTAR are back with their second killing, entitled "Ego Art" and I really bet that none of their previous worshippers will dislike this mighty deaththrazer!!? ALTAR stick to their trademarks and impress once again due to an intense production, utmostly tight playing and just sheer brutality! Although I feel that "Ego Art" isn't as close to DEICIDE as their debut, ALTAR doubtlessly walk their chosen path, with a thrasher attempt maybe. Not quite an ALTAR OF MADNESS, but a really enjoyable piece of death in 10 acts. Love it or leave it!

Leif Jensen

AMESTIGON / ANGIZIA Split CD (Napalm Records)

Napalm Records is more and more becoming a quality label and this split CD, featuring two austrian underdogs, is also a really fine offering. AMESTIGON, the band of the former ABIGOR vocalist is featured with 4 tracks (playing time approx. 25min!) of raw and basic black metal, of which only "Stormlord" was already featured on their previously released demotape (see review in VOICES # 7). Still not outstanding, but also not bad either. The other band, ANGIZIA is also featured on the demotapes in this issue, so just let me add that they didn't disappoint me at all and that their new material (3 tracks) is along the same lines as the demo, which means you get some more of their really unique folklore inspired style on here. All songs come up with german lyrics (you won't recognize it though), sung with a grim male and sweet female voice and they are a fine example of the unique and creative side of Austria's underground. Check it out!

Frank Stöver



AMON AMARTH Sorrow throughout the nine worlds MCD (Pulverised Records)

Remember what we announced in the interview with AMON AMARTH in our last issue? Well, indeed, these dudes are amidst the most promising scandinavian death metal acts to date and they fuckin' stress it with this 5-tracker out on Pulverised Records from Singapore. Amazing melodic death, never boring and don't really close to DISSECTION anymore (Yes, I was probably wrong!), but still rather refreshing due to the varied vocalwork! Great sound and surely an indispensable platter... gotta find out the price but make sure to support AMON AMARTH, as they'll keep growing and growing!

PULVERISED RECORDS
P.O. Box 109
Yishun Central
Singapore 91706

Leif Jensen

AMON GOETH Call the master (Nazgul's Eyrie Productions)

I had so big expectations in these guys, as they were already often labeled as a band that follows the ancient roots of black and death metal and that is obviously something I'm always interested in! But after having heard these 8 songs here I must say that I'm totally disappointed! Yeah ok, there is a certain aspect of the musical past in their material, no doubt about it, but to me these guys sound nothing but amateurish, I'm sorry! Just listen to the voice... I mean, I always have problems with bands that do not sing in the english language (I just don't like the sound of other languages for this music), and if the vocalist already sounds pretty poor to me and additionally sings in his native czech tongue, I have to quit! Plus, the material itself didn't really move me at all as it simply sounds boring... Just listen to the ridiculous version of CELTIC FROST's "Into the crypts of rays"... No way! This is garbage to me...

Frank Stöver



AMORPHIS Elegy (Relapse Records)

It was like a relief hearing this new AMORPHIS album after all, cause I had serious doubts whether I was going to like it or not. The band announced more clean melodic vocals, recruited three new members to the line-up and always had this big (to me annoying) 70's influence... Well, luckily AMORPHIS still do sound like AMORPHIS, with the only difference, that this 11 tracker comes across even more matured and unique than their godly "Tales from the thousand lakes" opus. It's kinda like the next logical step in their evolution. The deep grunting vocals are still present and "Against widows" could also have been on the last album, although the more melodic stuff has gotten more important to them by now, while their unique composed melodies are still very much present. In the end, this combination turned out amazing and will help the band getting their major breakthrough, I'm totally sure about that! Excellent!

Frank Stöver



ANCIENT The cainian chronicle (Metal Blade Records)

A lot has happened to Norway's ANCIENT recently. They have been picked up by Metal Blade Records and recruited three new members, which means, that only Aphazel is left from the original line-up. Anyway, the addition of Lord Kaiaphas (ex-GRAND BELIAL's KEY) on vocals and Kimberly Goss (ex-AVERNUS) on keyboards/vocals has helped the band in the same way as using Dan Swanö's knowledge on the production side of things, cause everything sounds really matured on this record. The atmospheric, emotional side of their songs has increased a lot and the playing time of several songs is pretty long, so you'll get some really in-depth structured tunes here, while lyrically it seems to be a concept album about the story of Cain and Abel. All in all a really worthy follow-up, although ANCIENT are still lacking in originality quite a bit. They are "just" a really good norse black metal act! Great cover artwork by the way...

Frank Stöver

ANESTESIA Erantzun (Esan Ozenki Records)

To-the-bone thrashcore from Spain with a clear underground production is present on ANESTESIA's second album and you should better check it out if you love it wild, untamed with hectic vocals and absolutely no trendy elements! Real underground stuff here! Demand the price from:

ANESTESIA
c/o Sebas
Avda. de las Agustinas 1º E Derecha
20100 Renteria, Gipuzkoa
Spain

ESAN OZENKI RECORDS
Pilar Kalea 1 bis.
20304 Irun, Gipuzkoa
Spain

Leif Jensen

ANGELKILL Lady Cadaver EP (Enigmatic Records)

The name ANGELKILL should ring a good number of bells already, heh?! However, these american thrash 'n' doom heads did a 2-song EP for the colombian label Enigmatic which named out pretty cool! They still stick to basic and catchy metal with a certain old school feeling and additionally gave me a nice laugh with their funny lyrics! Although the sound could be better and more powerful, this little item deserves \$5 (as usual, I guess) from you.

ENIGMATIC RECORDS
A.A. 1838
Marizales
Colombia, South America

ANGELKILL
c/o Blakk
P.O. Box 371
Leclair, IA 52753
U.S.A.

Leif Jensen

ANGRA Holy Land (Rising Sun Records)

I knew that I was going to love this record after I'd heard ANGRA's already pretty strong debut album "Angels cry" back then, but I honestly didn't expect this follow-up release to be so(!) impressive!

Well, I'll better give you some reasons for my opinion, so here's some infos on the approx. one hour long piece of music, entitled "Holy Land"... It starts with a short intro, which directly leads into an uptempo headbanger called "Nothing to say", which offers a HELLOWEEN-like melody line and fantastic, sometimes classical instrumentation. You'll already notice the incredible tight and groovy playing rhythm section here, which dominates the entire album. "Silence and distance" is next, a song which starts really melancholic and quiet with crystal clear vocals from Andre Matos, before it turns into a midpaced heavy tune, backed with orchestral instrumentation. "Carolina IV" has to be the best composition on the album, cause within its ten and a half minutes playing time, it incorporates the entire potential of the band, from slow and balladesque stuff to speedy melodic metal. You will also hear an unique percussion section in here (for the first time on the album), which features congas, tambourines, triangles and several other things, that shows the band's brazilian roots and musical culture extremely good! "Holy Land", the title track is a semi-ballad with a piano part that reminds me on the one in "Get down, make love" from QUEEN's "News of the world" record, while the chorus of the song is another obvious prove for the band's special liking of KATE BUSH. The second part comes up with brazilian samba (!!) rhythms and it sounds unbelievable unique! "The Staman" is another midpaced track with an experimental middle section and "Make believe" a ballad type composition, which vocalwise could be inspired by Freddy Mercury. It starts in the "Another day" (DREAM THEATER) tradition, but continues with a much more dramatic songstructure! "Z.I.T.O." is another speedy tune with obvious HELLOWEEN influences again and "Deep blue" a dramatic and moody ballad with an opera like choir and great piano stuff! "Lullaby for Lucifer", an outro type song with sea gulls in the background, vocals once again in the Freddy Mercury vein and an acoustic guitar, closes this incredible album and I can only advice you to BUY IT, unless you can stand the fact that you will miss one of the highlights of 1996!!!

Frank Stöver

ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE Pig Iron MCD (Impact Records)

Old punk rockers ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE in VOICES? Well, I have to admit that there's a couple of these old bands, that I really admired years ago and ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE is still among them! So, I was really happy about the fact that they decided to reform these days. And here's already the first offering of A.N.L. anno 1996 but it is sooooo disappointing! Their raw style of MOTÖRHEAD meets english punk is only a shadow of what its used to be. Everything sounds so polished and not even really aggressive anymore. But the worst thing to me was to re-record "Let the country feed you"... If you think about doing a comeback in the 90's, you should either try to continue where you left off in your early days or at least come up with something extreme and heavy like the new EXPLOITED album! This is too bad, really...

Frank Stöver




APOPLEXY Tears of the unborn (self-financed)

APOPLEXY from Slovakia surprisingly managed to make my night with their debut CD "Tears of the unborn" and its 8 very (!!) melodic death metal tunes, which heavily remind me on

DEATH ("Human"/"Spiritual Healing" era), meanwhile the vocals are of a rather more stereotype death metal rough tone. Lots of acoustic medleys accompany the songs and the clear production and outstanding musical abilities make this CD to an essential item for everyone of you who infests his stereo with lame black metal in the rest of the 23 1/4 hours of the day! Probably not too groundbreaking, but I at least had a nice listening and can recommend APOPLEXY's debut without any doubts. Cheap 20,-DM / \$14 (CD) or 10,-DM / \$7 (MC) to:

APOPLEXY
c/o Andrej Kohout
Cs.armady 19/205
90701 Myjava
Slovakia
Europe

Leaf Jensen



ARCTURUS
Aspera hiems symfonis
(Ancient Lore Creations)

In contradiction to the basic and raw sounding black metal style, Norway comes up with another form of the genre more and more: a way more emotional sounding and deeper structured form of black metal on the highest composition level! ARCTURUS already established themselves as a cultist in the underground with their legendary "My Angel" 7", but it was actually the pretty limited four song MCD "Constellation" on Nocturnal Art Productions which marked the first really big step towards this new direction here. With Gamm (LILVER) on vocals and Hellhammer (MAYHEM, IMMORTAL etc.) on drums, the expectations were obviously pretty high, but with the addition of August from the progressive metal band TRITONUS (he replaced session member Samoth on guitar) it turned out even more than that. His guitaricks are amazing and could often be compared to real "heroes" of that genre, like Steve Vai, Tony MacAlpine or Vinnie Moore and the overall really symphonic, gregorian sounding material will blow you away anyway! It's really hard to describe their style, but if you take the best elements of DIMMU BORGIR, ULVER and ORPHANAGE, you might have a clue! The wait is over - ARCTURUS have finally arrived and were easily able to set new standards with this album! A milestone!

Frank Stöver

ASPHYX
God cries
(Century Media Records)

Too bad that ASPHYX had to cancel their european support tour for CANNIBAL CORPSE and IMMOLATION (vocalist Theo had a serious car crash), cause their "comeback" album is a really fine example of brutal death metal the ancient way! To me, this is the album they should have released instead of "The Rack" back then, cause with original vocalist Theo back in the band they finally sound like ASPHYX always should have sounded! Of course it's not able to top their legendary "Embrace the death" record (which will finally be released later this year), but in terms of production, brutality and catchiness, this is their ultimate offering to date! Good to have them back!

Frank Stöver

AVATAR
Memoriam Draconic
(Wood Nymph Records)

No, SAVATAGE haven't changed their current monicker back to the original one, this is a belgian black metal band using the same name nowadays. They already released a demo back in

1994 which should've sold about 600 copies, but to be honest with you, I still had quite a few prejudices about them anyway when I saw the individual pictures inside the booklet. 3/5 of the guys look rather ridiculous to me, but after I heard the almost 70min long album, I totally changed my mind at once! AVATAR's material is a balanced mixture of extreme raw black metal and atmospheric keyboard-sounds. In AVATAR's combination it sounds really incredible to me, cause they know how to create dark'n moody songstructures and don't annoy us with amateurish noise. Just listen to the album closer "The mines of moria", a majestic instrumental symphony of pure classical art! Giant! Well, and due to the fact that even Lord Sabathian (ENTHRONED) had nothing but good words about them, I guess you should add this fine record to your collection! If you can't find it anywhere, write to the label directly:

WOOD-NYMPH RECORDS
c/o Filip Elsen
Sparzaamheidstr. 31
3012 Wilsele
Belgium

Frank Stöver

BARATHRUM
Hailstorm
Eerie
(Nazgul's Eyrie Productions)

What the hell? What kind of music is this the finnish blackers BARATHRUM are coming along with on their first album "Hailstorm"? First of all you notice the strange sound, cause they do not use guitars but two bass guitars only and the production of the instruments is odd, too. The music itself is mostly played in the slow motion style without that much variety, mixed with some strange sounds/noises to let it sound more compact. So, this is not that convincing really, except for the insane vocals which are recorded with a lot of effects and mixed in the foreground. Decide for yourself if you need an album like this or not.

To the second album "Eerie" I can tell you that it is much better than the first effort, musically and productionwise. On this album every instrument can be heard clearly and the vocals are not too much upfront anymore. BARATHRUM increased in the process of writing songs also which are nevertheless on the slower side of things. The very long songs are more interesting in itself (although some riffs are repeated quite too often for my taste) and the simple songstructures are mixed with interesting sounds of a keyboard, churchbells, different vocals and voices (mostly screaming with a lot of reverb) so that they are rather enjoyable. The music releases the same mood deep inside myself as AXEGRINDER did some years back. Musically BARATHRUM are not that far away from the british legend except for their black metallish hints of course (especially the voice). All in all not my favourite record, but an enjoyable one.

Thomas Georg



BATHORY
Blood on ice
(Black Mark Productions)

Quorthon made it happen! This album was really needed to save the good reputation of BATHORY, cause with the release of his solo album, and the following weakest BATHORY offerings of all time, "Requiem" and "Octagon", he was about to ruin a legend! "Blood on ice" is the album he originally wanted to release after "Blood Fire Death" and you can hear that, cause the material marks the evolution of the band from his satanic oriented black metal days, towards his more epic sounding warrior compositions. Heavily inspired by northern mythology and movies like "Conan the Barbarian", this is an album which a lot of the modern vikings from the north will have to look up to! Even MANOWAR weren't really able to write something like this anymore since their brilliant "Into glory ride" / "Hail to England"

days! If your favourite BATHORY period has always been the time when they did "Hammerheart" or "Twilight of the gods", this item is surely a must for your collection and if you ever thought that ENSLAVED are the masters of viking metal, THINK AGAIN! This is the ultimate release (with another Kristian Wahlin artwork masterpiece on the cover!) in that direction for sure!

Frank Stöver

BEAUTY IN DARKNESS
Compilation
(Nuclear Blast Records)

It's compilation time again in the NBR-office... This latest one is dedicated to the currently pretty popular gothic inspired scene and features previously released stuff by LACRIMOSA, CREMATORY, SENTENCED, TIAMAT, HYPOCRISY, END OF GREEN, THEATRE OF TRAGEDY, CRADLE OF FILTH, AMORPHIS, PYOGENESIS, LOVE LIKE BLOOD, MINDROT, DISSECTION, and ATROCITY / DAS ICH. Some of those songs are on the bands current releases, others have been remixed for this edition. So, not really that exciting. The unreleased stuff on here comes from THERION (probably one of their best tunes ever!), SIRRAH (a new polish band in the THEATRE OF TRAGEDY vein) and IN FLAMES (from their upcoming, in Japan already released) album "The jester's race". So, all in all it is not a compilation which you essentially need, but to listen to all the stuff at once is pretty nice though... Decide for yourselves.

Frank Stöver

BELMEZ
Siechtum
(Napalm Records)

As most of you will be familiar with BELMEZ / Zwerg and his first record "Berserker", I'm gonna keep this one short. Once again Zwerg comes up with dark and melancholic music (carried by the well programmed drum computer) with sometimes straight forward guitar pieces and sometimes slow yet melodic riffs (which remind me in their mood on MY DYING BRIDE). Over all thrones the penetrating, lamenting and dying screamy singing of Zwerg. The german lyrics seem to be, as far as I can understand them, quite poetic and original. Recommendable to openminded black metallers...

Thomas Georg



BEWITCHED
Diabolical desecration
(Osmose Productions)

Don't let yourselves fool by the bandpicture and title of this release - BEWITCHED ain't another black metal band! They consider their music as "evil speed-rockin' hell metal" and that's exactly what you get! Extremely 80's inspired speed metal type stuff with blasphemous tendencies and grim vocals (shared by KATATONIA's Blackheim and ANCIENT WISDOM's Vargher) is what you get here and they do it well! Their formula might turn into a new trend within the underground, but at least BEWITCHED were able to create some unique sounding songs out of the wellknown riffsings (mainly MERCYFUL FATE) of the past. So, if you can stand twelve songs and one short instrumental in this direction, go for it! It's definitely a fine album!

Frank Stöver

BIFROST
Pagan Reality
(Nazgul's Eyrie Productions)

What can I tell you about this album of BIFROST from Holland? Although they are handled as a black metal act by some distributors, they play some kind of aggressive

midtempo thrash metal music with some uptempo parts that is heavily inspired by the thrash of the mid 80's. As this is not my cup of tea at all, I cannot give you a comparison here. I don't think that they've come up with something new, but as this style is not played that often these days and the quality of the songs / production is quite good, everybody into this musical style should check it out.

Thomas Georg

BIFROST
The wildest fire
(Nazgul's Eyrie Productions)

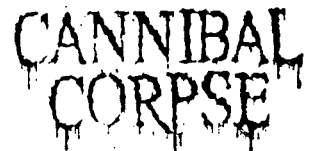
A couple of days after Thomas came up with the review of BIFORST's debut album, their follow up "The wildest fire" reached us... Hmm, the band is either pretty quick in writing and recording or the first release was already a little bit older (can't remember...), but it doesn't really matter anyway. Fact is that BIFROST were finally able to impress me with their ancient sounding thrash metal and that's something I didn't really expect after their (in my opinion) pretty average debut. I don't know, but to me everything sounds a lot more mature now, the production seems to be better, the songwriting has become more from the heart and they've obviously used the entire variety of possibilities within the thrash spectrum. The voice is aggressive, but with a certain charisma, so that it's really an easy listening and the riffing is exciting enough to keep the album interesting the whole (approx.) 50 minutes! Good sound, boring cover, but nice booklet design and an interesting musical nostalgic journey for people who still like to live in the past (like me...) Next to CRUACHAN, the best offering from Nazgul's Eyrie Productions so far!

Frank Stöver

BLACK FUNERAL
Vampyr - Throne of the beast
(Full Moon Prod.)

Before you start to complain about this band, let's have a look at the musical side of BLACK FUNERAL. These americans have dedicated themselves to the european sounding black metal, so you won't get any similarities to their satanic country mates of ABSU, PROFANATICA or ACHERON here. Their style is more based on the scandinavian raw and primitive sounding black metal. Due to the fact that they use keyboards to create dark sounding intros or for moody aspects only and not as an instrument of the highest value, all the songs sound pretty basic. They won't set new standards within the genre, but still might be able to build up a following anyway, cause they seem to have understood, that ultrafast stuff doesn't really deliver the right feeling of this music. Not bad, but not outstanding either. The reason why I wouldn't buy an album by BLACK FUNERAL myself is based upon the attitude of the main guy behind all this. He calls himself Baron Von Abaddon and continues to spread neo-nazi and fascistic paroles in his interviews... As people have accused us of manipulating the opinions of the younger readers, we will leave this one open to each one of you. Just make sure to think about it and if you are really willing to spend your money on it...

Frank Stöver



CANNIBAL CORPSE
Vile
(Metal Blade Records)

I've never been a fan of these guys, although I did respect them as a trendsetting and very influential act for many bands to come. And the first album which sounded quite ok to me (musically) was their last one "The Bleeding". But as far as I know, that was exactly the one which their die hard fans didn't really like, because of the better structured and less extreme

songmaterial. Oh well, than this one here will be their deathstrike, cause it doesn't really sound like CANNIBAL CORPSE anymore (at least not if you connect them to stuff like "Butchered at birth" or "Tomb of the mutilated")! The addition of ex-MONSTROSITY vocalist George "Corpsgrinder" Fisher may get them a couple of new fans maybe, because you can almost understand what he's singing, but the Chris Barnes - lunatics will hate him! To me CANNIBAL CORPSE have developed into another faceless U.S.-death metal band with this new album, whose style that is pretty close to the one of the famous Tampa area... They might have progressed musically, but their fans definitely won't enjoy this evolution - I'm pretty sure about that!

Frank Stöver

CARCASS
Swansong
(Earache Records)

This could probably be the farewell album from CARCASS as the future of the band is yet uncertain and it's also THE album that Columbia didn't wanna put out, because it wasn't commercial enough (hohoho!)... Well, Earache picked it up and here it is. Old CARCASS fans will obviously hate it even more than the previous "Heartwork" release as they will consider it as TOO commercial (how ironic...!) CARCASS have continued in that direction, adding even more groove to the material, which unfortunately turned out to "kill" a little bit more of their aggression. While "Heartwork" still was a really aggressive thrash album, this here sounds more like aggressive metal, special outstanding tracks not included. That's why I just "like" the stuff and not really more than that, while I totally freaked out on "Heartwork" when I got used to their development. I'm not sure if it was a good idea to put it out after all, especially not when it's really their last offering...

Frank Stöver

**IN MEMORY OF
CELTIC FROST**
Compilation CD
(Dwell Records)

It took a really long time to get this album out, but now it's finally available - the CELTIC FROST tribute album! I'm not quite sure if it was worth the wait, to be honest and I expected a little bit more in the end. But the album coverartwork looks amazing (almost Giger-like) and the material itself is brilliant anyway, so it's only a question of what the participating bands did with it... Most of them came up with pretty basic versions, leaving behind their personal style, which is a little bit disappointing in my opinion. So, bands like MORGION, ENSLAVED (NOR), CLANIDE and DIVINE EVE just recorded the classic tracks in their most original form, just adding more brutality to it. SADISTIC INTENT actually did the same, but I can really feel the old spirit in their version and therefore it impressed my quite a lot anyway. Canada's cult act SLAUGHTER just reformed for this one track here and proved that they are still able to do it properly. It's got all their typical elements, like the cutting guitarsound and Dave Hewson's unique vocalstyle and if you listen to their slower classics, their FROST influence was pretty obvious back then already. Norway's MAYHEM contributed the first recording in their brandnew line-up, with original members Necrobutcher and Maniac back in the band, but I can't really say that this sounds really promising. We'll have to wait for their very own stuff instead, I guess. INNER THOUGHT came up with a drumcomputer version of "Morbid Tales" (gives the song an interesting new feel), while GRAVE delivered the most unusual track on here ("Mesmerized" from the "Into the Pandemonium" album). Unfortunately they also didn't incorporate their own little ideas into it and Jørgen even tried to sing in this really melancholic way... I can't really see the need to cover "Dense maoabre", like CLOSEDOWN did, cause this track leaves no real possibilities for a unique interpretation. And 13's really apocalyptic (7:40 minutes) version of the old HELHAMMER classic "Triumph of death" mainly lives of the fact, that this band consists of 3/4 females. EMPEROR's already known version of HELHAMMER's "Massaca" unfortunately comes in the same poor sound as some of you

may know it already through tapetrading, so we'll have to concentrate on the two last and most promising offerings on here. One is from Tom Warrior's new project APOLLYON's SUN, a really fine version of the old "Into the Pandemonium" track "Babylon fell" with a more modern sounding feel to it, while the other is my personal fave. Sweden's OPETH did an amazing version of "Circle of the tyrants" and managed to record it in a really original sounding way, with (as usual) great vocal delivery from Mikael Åkerfeldt and some unique incorporated piano / synth parts! So, all in all, this is not really the best cover album, although it is for sure a little difficult to say anything negative about the songs in general. Each one of them is more or less a classic and the featured bands are also quite good in their own way... As usual, I just expected a little bit too much, I guess...

Frank Stöver



THE CHASM
From the lost years
(Reborn Records)

This is a really cool debut record... The band is called THE CHASM, they are hailing from Mexico and were formed by ex-CENOTAPH bass player Daniel. Previously to this they put out a pretty successful demo tape in 1993 ("Awaiting the day of liberation"), which sold about 1000 copies worldwide and a cassette EP ("Procreation of the inner temple") one year later. The band has been playing live quite a lot with several wellknown acts already and this is their first full length. Unfortunately, at this point of time, this 70 minutes long masterpiece is only available in cassette form (due to lack of money), but there are concrete plans for a CD version later on as well. THE CHASM play a very unique form of un-trendy death metal, mainly midpaced, with several melancholic elements incorporated, but not lacking in aggression as well. Their overall style is pretty hard to categorize, but it's definitely really unique and if I tell you that the material comes across feeling-wise like a mixture between canadian thrashers OBLIVEON, Switzerland's SAMAEAL, ancient death metal and doomy elements, it should at least catch your attention. The sound / production of the recording is really good and there's not a single second on the entire album that bores me! A really fine offering which you definitely should check out for yourselves! The cassette sells for \$10 (ppd. worldwide), but ask for the CD version as well... It might have turned into reality by the time this issue is out.

THE CHASM
c/o Daniel Corchado
Apdo. postal # M-2730
C.P. 06002
México 1, D.F.

REBORN RECORDS
c/o Julián Núñez
Raimón Corona # 343
C.P. 36500
Irapuato, Gto.
Fax: (525) 3 95 28 96

Frank Stöver

CONSOLATION
Brave Melvin from the southern
point
(Displeased Records)

Along with NEMBRIONIC and ALTAR, CONSOLATION seem to form the actual elite of grinding (death) metal in Holland! After the strong "The Truth" EP, this monstrous five-piece is back with the second full-length album in order to be "the most brutal band"... The info says that they succeeded, but I doubt that anybody will ever top TERRORIZER within their style! Still CONSOLATION are totally to-the-point, merciless and perform at highest speed on a respectable musical level. The vocals

are getting on my nerves here and there (not directly their fault) and the loud drums could sound a little less clinical, but that's all I can complain about here. If you want it extreme, then go for CONSOLATION!! Yes, they are fuckin' right: You don't have to be original to be good! Scored!

Leif Jensen

CRACK UP
CRACK UP
Blood is life
(Corrosion / We Bite)

After a long, long, long time, a new generation of german quality bands, devoted to death metal is finally uprising and CRACK UP surely belong to its most promising performers! The long awaited follow-up album to their great demo "Forsaken dreams" took an eternity to get released, but it was fuckin' worth the wait for "Blood is life": very catchy and melodic, but still pretty brutal death metal with a cool production... So, what else do you need??? CRACK UP sound rather swedish but with a major accentuation on groovy riffing and drumming and consequently manage to be refreshing enough within their style. Go for the interview for further info and make sure to support an upcoming band and an upcoming label. Great!!

Leif Jensen

CRISIS

CRISIS
Deathshead Extermination
(Metal Blade)

TOTAL KILLER! CRISIS must be the most ferocious and original newcomer since quite a long while. Formed back in '93 and after their self-financed "8 Convulsions" debut in '94, this monster returns with a completely mindblowing album on Metal Blade. Not only that their "alternative" music rocks and crushes with full force, but vocalist Karyn Crisis is just fuckin' incredible! She really sings sweet as a canary, bellows like a rabid dog and screams like a banshee (as the info says!) and consequently lightens this 50min album to a real experience, brutal as fuck without being death metal or whatsoever! Did you really think the BABES IN TOYLAND pussycat was extreme? Ha! I can't wait to check CRISIS out in a live situation... ULTIMATE INTENSITY!!!

Leif Jensen

CRUACHAN

CRUACHAN
Tuatha Na Gael
(Nazgul's Eyrie Productions)

I love irish and scottish folklore music (yeah... I'm a wimp!), so obviously bands like THIN LIZZY or SKYCLAD already were able to excite me in a really intense way. But CRUACHAN could also be highly interesting for all you lovers of more brutal music, cause these guys mix the folklore of the country with aggressive death/thrash! And the result is more than impressing! Unfortunately the sound of the album is a little weak, but the potential and ideas will make you forget about that pretty easy. If you're bored of all the trendiness within the underground and if you're looking for something really unique, you should check this out! Fantastic band, superb artwork, excellent debut! P.S.: Latest news... CRUACHAN have recently been signed by CENTURY MEDIA, so watch out for a new album later on!

Frank Stöver

CRUCIFER
Separation MCD
(B.T.R./Wild Rags)

Lame midpaced-to-slow thrash and death metal without highlights of any kind is what CRUCIFER's (don't mistake them for the blacker CRUCIFIER!!) third output has got to offer! Not a recommendable MCD and obviously not a "cult" band either! 25,-DM at their german distro:

CONCRETE RECORDS
c/o Andreas Reissnauer
P.O. Box 1421
77845 Achern
Germany

Leif Jensen



CRADLE OF FILTH
Vempire of Dark faerytales in
Phallustein
(Cacophonous Records)

Six songs (incl. the previously released "The forest whispers my name" in a new version) and an album length playing time is CRADLE OF FILTH's new offering to their loyal bloodsucking creatures of the night... And I would almost say that this here is even stronger than the already excellent debut album! CRADLE OF FILTH know how to write interesting songmaterial! Their stuff consists of so many breaks and different moods without sounding weird or too complex, it's just incredible! Each member of the band varies in his performance so much within each song, that there should be something interesting for everyone to discover! Take for instance the vocals - they are changing all the time, and you'll get really fast, totally shrieky screaming verses as well as lower, nearly death grunting stuff and demonic, deeply spoken passages, mixed with female parts as well! The music itself is fast, slow, moody, sorrowfilled, atmospheric, eerie and aggressive in one and the sound is just perfect! In combination with their really vampsque image, this album comes across way more evil sounding, than the majority of the satanic bands these days. An unmistakable and unique CRADLE OF FILTH masterpiece you shouldn't miss at all!

Frank Stöver

CRIMSON RELIC
Purgatory's reign
(Nuclear Blast Records)

DIVINE EVE is history, but CRIMSON RELIC continues where that band left off and "Purgatory's reign" even features the 3 tracks from the officially never released DIVINE EVE EP (only their SODOM - cover is missing!) So, anyone who's been into their old school death metal back then, will enjoy CRIMSON RELIC in the same way. There's influences from bands like early SODOM (when it comes to the primitive rawness), VENOM and early DESTRUCTION (the guitar riffs in the opening title remind me a lot on Mike's early style) and of course the typical swedish style of the late 80's, early 90's. The combination might not sound really fresh (and it ain't...), but there's still a lot of people missing that particular time of heavy music and those at least will admire "Purgatory's reign" for its honesty. Me included...

Frank Stöver

C.S.S.O.
Nagrö Låuxes VIII
(Morbid Records)

CLOTED SYMMETRIC SEXUAL ORGAN are crazy, insane, repulsive and fuckin' extreme! If those adjectives sound appealing to you, then you'll probably share my enthusiasm for this totally outstanding jazz-influenced grindcore (s)platter! "Nagrö Låuxes VIII" is packed with a good portion of humor and never really starts to become boring, but be sure to be able to face so much underground noise before you check em out! Temptatively these sick Japanese will come over to tour Europe in summer, so be there and fuckin' S.U.F.F.E.R.!

Leif Jensen

COUNTESS

The return of the horned one Ad maiorem sathanæ gloriam (Nazgul's Eyrie Productions)

Their third album "Ad maiorem sathanæ gloriam" starts with an interesting intro, the first song is played briskly with a punk-like guitar riffing, but the following compositions slow down and the punk guitarwork is even more obvious. Together with the vocals (which could be from a NYHC band in the extreme HC style) COUNTESS move consequently along the borders to the extreme HC genre, their songs are played a bit slower only. Successful is in my opinion the beginning of the fifth song called "Blood on my lips (The silent rose of sin)" with acoustic guitar, keyboard and nicely done vocals. The songs in general are partly enjoyable because of some excellent ideas, but that's too little as the constant three chord riffing is not exciting in the end. All in all I miss aggression and a darker feeling in their songs.

A bit more wider and chaotic black metal is what you get on COUNTESS' second longplayer "The return of the horned one" where the whole sound is in fact darker, but nevertheless not that intoxicating. Three chord riffs further on are dominating this album, so I can say the same to this as I said to the follow-up. Sounds sometimes more like a garage band.

Thomas Georg

DARK FUNERAL

The secrets of the black arts (No Fashion Records)

Swedens shooting stars in black metal, DARK FUNERAL finally issued their long awaited first full length album "The secrets of black arts" and I was quite surprised that it didn't come out on Blackmoon's very own label Hellspawn Records (like their 4 song MCD). Besides that, it looks sooo commercial! There's nothing wrong in having a great album cover by Kristian Wahlin, but is it really necessary to release a special digipack(!) version with single(!) full colour(!) bandshots inside? How about a more simple packaging and lyrics instead, huh?! Anyway, musically this is pretty good actually. Two songs of their MCD, "My dark desires" and "Shadows over Transylvania" are featured in new versions here (not really the best decision) and the rest of the album is high intensity full force black metal the swedish way! This is totally uncompromising stuff, mainly in high speed with a good and powerful production and the entire album proves Blackmoon's announcements right! This is more extreme than they used to be before.

Frank Stöver

DARKSEED

Midnight solemn dance (Serenades Records)

Once again an experimental ex-death metal band turns away from the brutal world of metal to enter more melodic and clean realms! I won't mention that DARKSEED got affected by a PYOGENESIS syndrome because they have far better vocals and more metallic guitars, but the companion should give you a hint. Searching for an underdog crossover between actual PARADISE LOST and PYOGENESIS? DARKSEED should be a cool choice!

Leif Jensen

DARKTHRONE

Total Death (Moonfog Productions)

Even DARKTHRONE re-discovered the glorious 80's metal scene with their new release... While their last offering "Panzerfaust" was basically an album that paid tribute to HELLHAMMER / CELTIC FROST with all the "borrowed" riffs, this new one goes another step backwards. The material in general could have been written in the heydays of early speed and thrash metal and only Nocturno Culto's vocals remind you on the band's previous efforts. "Blasphemer" (no SODOM cover by the way!) totally comes across like POSSESSED's "Beyond the gates" or (partly) "Eyes of horror" releases and there's a big similarity in the riffing and overall sound of

both records. Die hard black metal fans might have a tough time with this "evolution", but I really enjoy them more and more...

Frank Stöver

DAWN OF GODS Compilation CD (Metal Horse Prod.)

Superfluous italian death/thrash/HC compilation CD with 17 totally unknown bands without any real highlight throughout 71:07 minutes! Available through Morbid Records.

Leif Jensen

DEATHOPHOBIA Pt.III Comp.CD (Chiller Lounge Records)

I suppose the DEATHOPHOBIA compilation CD-series should be familiar to every german underground freak by now!! Well, this is the third strike and, sad but true, a tiny deception because the sound is not always worth your CD-player and also some bands are quite below average! So, good night, if they are meant to be the german elite! Ok, I won't slag off anyone here, so I better mention the positive highlights: the funny ORTH, the powerful RADIATION DUST, SANITY'S DAWN of course and the MORGOTH soundalikes ENDART. But that's almost it!!! You really should be a little bit more careful with the selection of bands for a compilation nowadays! Nevertheless, contact this hardworking label and demand the price:

CHILLER LOUNGE RECORDS
Landsberger Str. 87
80339 München
Germany

Leif Jensen

DECORYAH Fall - Dark Waters (Metal Blade Records)

The music of DECORYAH's new album could be summarized in just one single word: beautiful! This firmish outfit is probably one of the most talented ones within today's underground and their really emotional and atmospheric compositions are pretty much in the vein of TIAMAT's "Wildhoney", but with a lot more PINK FLOYD influences and way deeper. It's really difficult to find the right words to describe the feelings while listening to this moody material, but it definitely inspires you to relax and dream. DECORYAH capture you with complex songs that often remind me on atmospheric soundtrack pieces and the comparisons they used to get with DEAD CAN DANCE might be another hint here. The only negative aspect I discovered is the song "Gloria Absurdiah", which turns out to be a little bit too much over the top and also that the band tends to loose their direction in the last chapter of the record quite a bit. They are too jammy in the end for my taste and I prefer the clear structured stuff in the beginning of this excellent album. But nevertheless, this is a real jewel of a record!

Frank Stöver

DEFACED CREATION Resurrection EP (Paranoia Syndrome)

Yeah, a real death metal EP! DEFACED CREATION managed to combine swedish death metal with a somehow DEICIDE alike edge and still come up with great melodies... and it works! This 4-song EP is limited to 300 copies and should consequently appear on your shopping list of next week in case you are still lurking for the really brutal death type! Truly underground class and fuckin' enjoyable. Mail out \$6 to either the label or the band:

PARANOIA SYNDROME
c/o David Kälin
Eigenstr. 26
CH - 8840 Trachslau
Switzerland

DEFACED CREATION
c/o Jörgen Bylander
Pionjärvägen 11
83434 Brunflo
Sweden

Leif Jensen

DEFLESHED Abrah Kadavrah (Invasion Records)

If you still believe in untrendy death metal, then you simply shouldn't miss DEFLESHED's first full-length CD (and if you don't, then this is the wrong magazine for you anyway!), which is full of merciless swedish death, some great thrash riffing and amusing vocal effects! Solid as shit and heavy as fuck! As simple as that! A shame this album isn't longer than 29 minutes!

Leif Jensen



DEMONIC CHRIST Punishment for ignorance (Moribund Records)

Does anyone of you remember the all-girl band MYTHIC? Sure you do, at least those who read our issue # 3 back then, where they got featured the last time before they called the quits... Anyway, Dana Duffey, MYTHIC's guitarist / vocalist has returned with a new band called DEMONIC CHRIST, which she formed back in 1992 with bassist / vocalist Jon Vesano and drummer Scott Pletcher. They have an album out now on Moribund Records and even if the title "Punishment for ignorance" may sound hardcore oriented, DEMONIC CHRIST are everything else but that! Brutal death metal with an overall satanic / black approach is the name of the game and they really know what they are doing! Dana's vocals are really aggressive and they have matured a lot since the MYTHIC days. It sounds even more extreme when she shares them with bassplayer Jon, who delivers some additional deep gruntings. Their music in general is kinda like midpaced to fast death metal with hints of the so called "old school", but you can also here a couple blasts on the record, but they really fit in quite good. Unfortunately the album only features 6 songs and an outro, but it should be something for true worshippers of occult death metal, basic and raw. Check 'em out!

Frank Stöver

DESASTER A touch of medieval darkness (Merciless Records)

This type of band was needed in the german black metal underground to compete with the always growing scandinavian hordes after all! DESASTER raise the quality level of our scene up quite heavily and their debut album is one of the finest pure black metal releases I've heard in a long time! "A touch of medieval darkness" comes across like a deadly sword, and its production is cutting deep into your flesh! The compositions are mainly raw and pretty basic sounding and they have way more thrash metal riffs on the album than most of the other current evil worshippers around! But that's so refreshing about 'em, the entire album consists of really interesting and well-done songs(!) instead of a hundred-miles-per-hour noise inferno! The power they deliver is way more intense and the atmosphere more eerie just because it all sounds so incredible natural! Nothing seems to be fake here! And I fell in love with the vocals... This voice sounds just perfect for basic black metal to me! Didn't find anything to complain about, so you better BUY THIS FUCKER! If you can't find it, write with 28,-DM (ppd. in Germany) directly to:

MERCILESS RECORDS
P.O. Box 72
97448 Arnstein
Germany

Frank Stöver

DEVIATE Wreck Style (I Scream Records)

After a MCD, their official debut CD "Crisis of confidence" (taken over by Massacre Records) and strong touring with bands like EXCEL and FEAR FACTORY, the belgian HC-thrash band DEVIATE returns with a heavy new album entitled "Wreck Style", which unfortunately doesn't have a current german distribution! So, in case you appreciate PRO-PAIN and want to support an underdog band which easily blows away POWER OF EXPRESSION, than just drop 28,-DM to TRIPLE M or contact their label directly! Go ahead:

TRIPLE M
c/o Frank Abel
Kirchfeldstr. 7
74564 Crailsheim
Germany

I SCREAM RECORDS
Broekstraat 10
BEL - 1730 Kobbegem
Belgium

Leif Jensen



DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE Ravensusk in my heart (Adipocere Records)

Besides playing in old school metalheads BEWITCHED, KATATONIA's Blackheim also came up with a solo project called DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE, which is basically a moody black metal oriented thing (or is it KATATONIA on speed?!). All instruments and stuff were done by the master himself, except in the heavy metal tune "Under the banner of the sentinel", where Dan Swanö shows us another side of his variable vocal style... KATATONIA was better in my opinion, but nevertheless I like this album, cause it comes up with good quality music and although it might be black metal, it still sounds pretty unique in general

Frank Stöver

DIMMU BORGIR Stormblast (Cacophonous Records)

A.W.E.S.O.M.E.! DIMMU BORGIR definitely belong to the most matured and unique norwegian black metal bands these days and their 2nd full length album "Stormblast" marks a big progression in the songwriting and production department! The band obviously knows how to create emotionfilled compositions and their influences from the classical genre seem to fit quite naturally with the grim form of metal they deliver. Really melodic, almost Chopin-like piano parts and symphonic arrangements have been incorporated in a nearly perfect manner and the vocals vary from song to song, depending on the mood. DIMMU BORGIR might not have come up with a "stormblast" (therefore the album is not extreme enough), but instead with one of the strongest pieces of musical art created in Scandinavia! Too bad that they have such an unprofessional (or ignorant?) behaviour towards interviews, cause otherwise you could read a bigger feature in this issue... Nevertheless, musically they are convincing in every way! BUY!

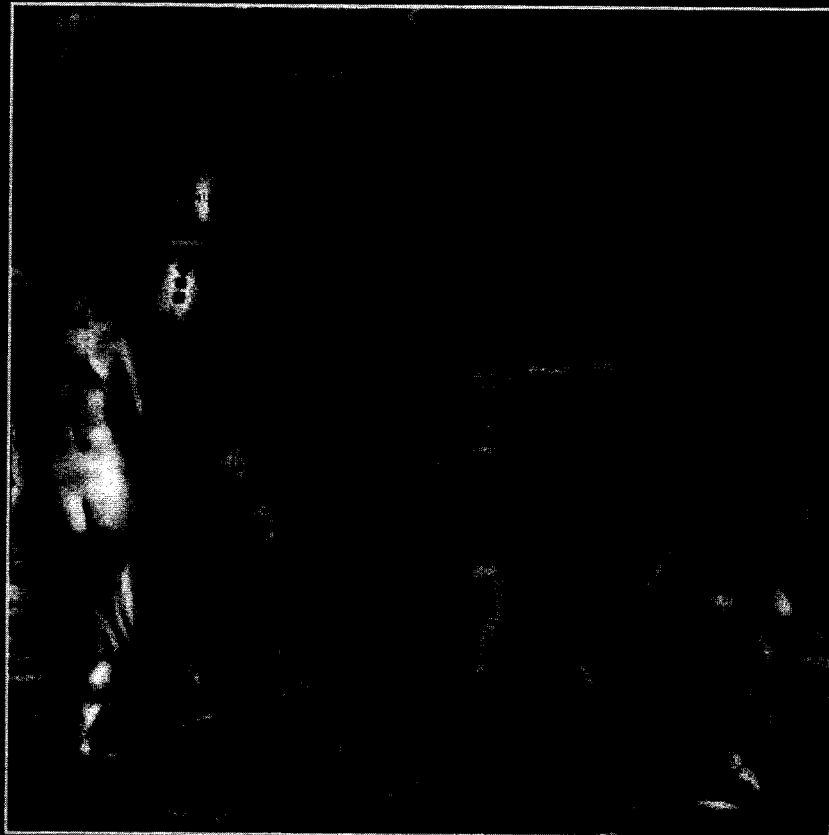
Frank Stöver

When Industrial & Nuclear mean ONE !

RAISM

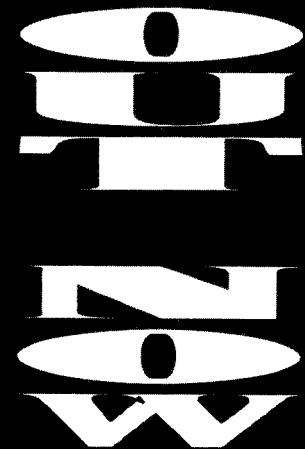
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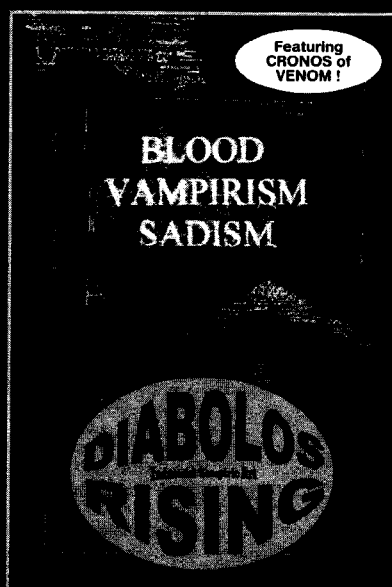


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DISGRACE
Superhuman Dome
(Morbid Records)

Dead and gone are those DISGRACE which once were said to be CARCASS little brother, but then again: long live the new DISGRACE! Fuck, how mighty these finnish dudes rock!!! Their actual style is nearly impossible to categorize (who needs it anyway?!). Because they mix a bit of everything to a compact unity of really original value. Him, "The future in Rock"? I don't know, but it's so incredibly groovy (that works here!) that I can't sit and write this review without breaks... I need to dance! Not the kind of stuff I could listen to every day, but once it plays you won't be able to resist any longer! It's a disgrace that DISGRACE are so underrated! Time for a change!!

Leif Jensen

CD's so far (which will be different pretty soon of course - see digipacks!) and the featured material was previously only available if you bought two compilation CD's ("W.A.R. Compilation" and "Satanic Slaughter") and two really expensive japanese imports (both DISSECTION albums)! So everyone complaining about the fact that there's some unreleased DISSECTION songs on all those mentioned items, can buy this one instead and get all tracks on a single release for a really small amount of money! The whole thing was completed by the titletrack "Where Dead Angels Lie" in the album version. I think it's been a good idea, so stop complaining!

Frank Stöver

DYING BREED
Repressed but not extinct
(Hiram Records)

The raw californian thrash outfit DYING BREED is out to "assume the long vacant mantle of speed metal kings" with their debut CD! Ever heard about the one and only SLAYER??? DYING BREED are surely a good band, but the monotonous vocals gotta get improved for a brighter future! THE EAGLES' "Hotel California" cover isn't that amazing either, but if you haven't forgotten about good old thrash, then contact RPM for prices and more info:

RPM Entertainment
 c/o Richard Mora
 310 4th St.2
 Hermosa Beach, CA 90254
 U.S.A.

Leif Jensen

with the infosheet where are those extreme metal influences? And be careful with naming ELENL along with DEAD CAN DANCE on the same level too early! Interesting and really atmospheric though!

Leif Jensen

sound like a total darkwave band with great, mournful vocals of majestic depth adding electric guitars and a cold drumming to their compositions. The songs are mostly really slow and sombre, although faster riffs/passages are present as well here and there to eradicate a probable fatal monotony. A long, long trip into

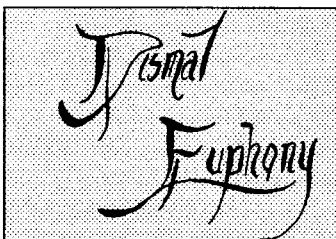


EMPYRIUM
Like an ember red wintersunset
(Prophecy Productions)

The one and only demo from Germany's shooting stars EMPYRIUM ("...der wie ein Blitz vom Himmel fiel") made them already pretty much known in the underground, but their just released debut album "Like an ember red wintersunset" is such a big progression, it's nearly unbelievable! While there's still been some obvious influences from KATATONIA back then, they have now developed their songwriting towards more unique horizons and the 5 songs on here (playing time 50 minutes!!!) are way more melodic and atmospheric. But let's go a little bit more in-depth here. The record kicks off with a medieval and symphonic sounding intro, before it goes straight into "Under dreamskies". This song is basically really moody and offers strongest melodies and a vocal style in the vein of the melodic Dan Swanö pieces. Keyboards are dominating this creation in the same massive way as the rest of the album

and a grim almost black metal-ish voice creates the needed variation for a short time. "The franceman woods in wintersilence" is a really melancholic sounding, almost dark wave influenced piece with a depressive type voice. The melody dominates in here over heaviness of aggression again, but it turns into a short, but dramatic and intense middlesection. "The yearning" is next, a song with a great opening, leading melody in combination with black metal vocals and a massive atmosphere. A short spoken, and also melancholic sounding part, gives this song a really sad feeling, before it returns to the aggressive voice again. "Autumn grey views" basically consists of deep clear, almost spoken type vocals, again backed-up with a massive wall of awesome melodies. "Ordained to thee" is the last track, but to me also their best one! It combines all the band's strong elements in one and the in a duet type way using grim and melodic vocals fit perfectly to the heaviest time on the album. Although, heavy is more meant here in a rockmusic way and not comparable to death or black metal brutality... A short and moody outro ends this godly offering and leaves your enchanted soul totally satisfied behind. If you already liked the demo (none of the songs were featured on the album), you will worship the album!!! Simply an essential emotional masterpiece!!!

Frank Stöver



DISMAL EUPHONY
Dismal Euphony MCD
(Napalm Records)

Norway still seems to be full of creativity as this 3-tracker from DISMAL EUPHONY proves quite impressively! The band consists of two females, who are responsible for clear, beautiful vocals and keyboards, as well as of two males, who deliver grim vocals and the ordinary instrumentation. Their music is so full of emotions, it's unbelievable and the songs are pretty hard to categorize. I came to the conclusion that some of their medieval sounding melodies and ideas could also be found on an old WARLORD record (remember "And the cannons of destruction have begun"?), combined with more moody black metal stuff in the GEHENNA direction and the already mentioned sweet female voices... This is just godly and I'm looking forward to hear their first full-length! If it has just a minimum of the class of this release here, it should be a KILLER!

Frank Stöver

Edge of Sanity

EDGE OF SANITY
Crimson
(Black Mark)

There's really not much left to talk about, which hasn't been covered in our interview already, so I'm just gonna sum it up here. "Crimson" is basically a one track album, but the song lasts exactly 40 minutes and is filled with so many ideas, breaks, different emotions and moods, it's just unbelievable! You'll almost get to hear Dan Swanö's entire spectrum of creativity, from UNICORN to NIGHTINGALE and from OPETH (Mikael, the band's vocalist is featured as an additional shouter here) to brutal death metal in the typical EDGE OF SANITY vein. The production is perfect and totally powerful and the packaging really unique! So, if I wouldn't have gotten a promo copy, I would definitely go out and buy the album myself!

Frank Stöver

end of green

END OF GREEN
Infinity
(Nuclear Blast Records)

I have no idea what "Depressed Subcore" is supposed to stand for, but the young german melodic slow-motion band END OF GREEN knows what it is doing, and they really do it with consideration! "Infinity" might sound a bit monotonous all in all and the vocals could be less "german", but otherwise EOG build up a really intense and honest atmosphere and should be the perfect remedy for all of you who thought PYOGENESIS have wimped out by now. Good debut!

Leif Jensen



ETERNAL DIRGE
Khaos Magick
(Morbid Records)

After a long, long silence the german death hopefuls of ETERNAL DIRGE return with a really strong second album, now for Morbid Records. NOCTURNUS are dead, long live ETERNAL DIRGE or what? At least, they rule with the same major keyboard approach and complex songwriting, just staying a little more catchy and more obscure! Enjoyable album, but only in case you are able to handle a CD-Rom! Haha... silly idea, but fortunately the Promo CD was "normal"! We don't need no CD-Rom stuff, just give us back mother LP!!

Leif Jensen

darker spheres of music and surely the best of its kind I've heard in the last couple of months! Check it out, ladies and lads!

Leif Jensen

EXCIDIIUM

EXCIDIIUM
Innocent River
(Adipocere Records)

Swiss EXCIDIIUM is a good example for a post death metal band because they are getting more and more carried away from their brutal origins by adding a BIG amount of varied styles of music to their arrangements. Their debut "Innocent River" dates from two different recording sessions and that should explain their noticeable development. Sure, they might sound more original and weird now... probably good for some of you, but I couldn't really get into the whole disc myself. So move your asses and check them out... Hey Frank, you saw them in a live-situation along with SIX FEET UNDER, so what do you think??? (zzzz! - Ed.) Imitating...

Leif Jensen

THE EXPLOITED
Beat the bastards
(MFN / Rough Trade)

Punk at its very best!!! (punk???? - Ed.) And even more, as THE EXPLOITED come up with a thrashing energy (aha! - Ed.) second to none... they didn't forget anything! What a thriller! Fuck yeah, just beat those bastards!

Leif Jensen

FLESHCRAWL
Bloodsoul
(Black Mark Productions)

FLESHCRAWL never disappointed me in any way! They always delivered brutal death metal in its purest and heaviest form and their 3rd full-length "Bloodsoul" is no exception here! It seems to me that their brutality has even increased these days and that's something which sounds really refreshing in a currently black metal dominated underground scene. The entire album comes across extremely raw and totally in your face, with a sound that has big similarities to the old finnish and swedish releases of this genre. But due to the fact that FLESHCRAWL

DISMEMBER
Like an ever flowing stream
(Nuclear Blast Records)

No, this is NOT the most dated review ever, Nuclear Blast just re-released DISMEMBER's debut as a digipack CD with two additional tracks and different pics. Well, the album itself still is the best one DISMEMBER have come up with to date, but I can't really see the need to change the pictures (the original ones have been replaced by newer promo-shots) nor do I understand why "Justifiable homicide" (from the "Casket garden" EP) was included here as well, as it was recorded a couple years later. So, that only leaves "Torn apart", which was previously featured on a "Death is just the beginning" compilation exclusively... If you don't own the album yet (is there really someone outthere missing this classic?!) this is your chance to buy a longer disc for less money. If you already have it, go for something else instead...

Frank Stöver

DISSECTION
Where Dead Angels Lie
Shape MCD
(Nuclear Blast Records)

A lot of you will probably hate this release due to its commercialized background, but I personally really like it nevertheless! First of all, DISSECTION is a great band. Period. The format is pretty cool, cause there's not many shape

EISENVATER
III
(We Bite Records)

Love 'em or hate 'em!! (I prefer to fuckin' HATE them! - Ed.) Germany's weirdest and most extreme grind metalcore band EISENVATER is striking for the third time and nowadays free from CARCASS similarities. Uargh, unaware listeners will have a deadly time checking these sickos out... I, I just adore them! Incredible album, insane art!

Leif Jensen



ELENL
Les ténèbres du dehors
(Holy Records)

ELENL's second output follows and continues the tradition of their dark debut, even adding value to the symphonic element and the intensity created by the colliding vocalworks of a sweet female and an insane male screamer! Excellent for a candlelight night! Oh, I have to disagree

once again honoured one of those acts (they covered DEMILICH's "Embalmed beauty sleep" this time), it's quite obvious that their roots are still located there! Totally beyond fashion and fuckin' heavy sounding stuff! If you enjoyed the early 90's european death metal the most, you simply can't ignore FLESHCRAWL! It's like a journey back in time where this music sounded a lot more exciting and honest!

Frank Stöver

FOREST OF SOULS
War and poetry MCD
(Adipocere Records)

Another newcomer on french Adipocere Records again. FOREST OF SOULS are also coming from France, which isn't really the leading country when it comes to music, but FOREST OF SOULS prove with their quality in songwriting that it ain't a musically dead country either. And the quality is high, indeed. Very original black/death metal is what you get here. After the mystical intro "War and poetry", the first real (long) song "The anthem of eternity" starts with a moody midtempo part. What catches the eye first, is the fact that they use the keyboard as an instrument of the same value. After an aggressive uptempo part, they suddenly change to a slower, absolutely intense and heavy part. The former aggressive and shrieky vocals change to an insane and deep grunting. Altogether the singer has a great potential of expression in all his variable styles that are based on the different moods of the songs. Listen to his great opera like singing almost at the end of the first song and the black metal screaming afterwards. Or the singing at the beginning of "Into the infinite sorrow of my mind" which is as much emotionally filled as the really variable compositions. Great riffs, melodies, a tight playing and a good production are the proof for another killer band. Can't wait for a full length!

Thomas Georg

GODGORY
Sea of tears
(Invasion Records)

Another unknown and hungry swedish act debuting on Invasion Records with a perfectly produced album entitled "Sea of tears", of course recorded in Dan Swanö's studio (same with DEFLESHED). GODGORY delivered two in one, so to say, because they bring you straight but powerfully melodic death, but then again also several moody acoustic intermezzos and even glorious leads! Probably not the latest invention, but a perfect album for your swedish death collection!

Leif Jensen

GOREFEST
Soul survivor
(Nuclear Blast Records)

Uhhh, what's this? I mean, Mr.Niceguy Frank (GOREFEST's guitar player) was already announcing a severe move back towards hardrock (yes!) to me about one year ago, but still I never expected anything like "Soul survivor"! Death Metal is no more, the music really rocks like hell and captures a very nostalgic seventies / early metal feeling which knows to convince! The godly leads, very solid drumming and outstanding production really lighten this album to a real experience! Meanwhile "Erase" came out sounding like a weak compromise, "Soul survivor" is a totally honest rocker. But as always, there is the big minus present: the vocalwork! Oh, probably GOREFEST want to keep their trademarks, but I really doubt that the old fans will like their actual music and on the other hand the mainstream metal / hardrock audience (their new market, I guess) will surely dislike Jan Chris' rough vocals! I kinda enjoy the album in general, although the vocals get on my nerves here and there... so, better forget about what GOREFEST used to stand for once and give 'em a chance again if you are openminded enough! The last confession of a serial killer... sniff!

Leif Jensen

GORGON
The lady rides a black horse
(Adipocere Records)

After a demo ("Call from unknown depths") and an sold out EP ("Immortal horde") on Wounded Love Records, the french GORGON, which were formed back in 1991, release their first full length album on Adipocere Records. Fresh and tight played black metal with some references to the wild thrash of the mid 80's roars out of the speakers. GORGON know to please with their compositions which are sometimes fast, sometimes more moderate, but always with spirit, pep and a lot of real aggression (should be something for ya, Frank!) (nah...not really! - Ed.). Especially the singer has got a totally insane organ. As the whole thing is well produced, there should be nothing in your way to get a copy of it.

Thomas Georg

Gorgoroth
GORGOROTH
Antichrist
(Malicious Records)

I don't really know what I shall think about these guys... Their demo was pretty amateurish, the debut album "Pentagram" marked a big step ahead for them and also "Antichrist" is not a bad record. BUT: I guess the main problem of GORGOROTH is the always changing line-up (only Infernus is left of the original formation), cause when they toured Germany with DISSECTION, I don't really recognized any other familiar face and the guy who was doing the vocals was pretty ridiculous. He didn't even seem to have lyrics!!! Anyway, whoever is working with them in the studio (this time Frost of SATYRICON played drums), does a fine job. The material on "Antichrist" often reminds me on a mixture of typical norwegian black metal and old stuff from the early 80's. "Possessed (by Satan)" for instance has a pretty obvious SODOM ("In the sign of evil") feel to it. Which means that GORGOROTH is another band switching their style towards a new trend again... Well, it is going to sell anyway, so whatelse can I say?! The playing time of 25 minutes for an album (!!) is a slap in the face and the cover doesn't really look dedicated either. Additionally GORGOROTH is "quoting" SODOM's "The sin of SODOM is the sign of Satan" (here: "The sin of Satan is the sign of GORGOROTH") and HELLHAMMER ("Hellish crossfire on wooden coffins" became "Total destruction on wooden coffins")... Hmm, to sum it up - musically (on albums) pretty enjoyable, but there's a lot of WAY better norwegian acts around these days and I can't help myself thinking, that these guys (this guy?!) are (is) fooling their (his) fans pretty much!

Frank Stöver

GRAVE
Hating Life
(Century Media Records)

Call me old fart, but GRAVE aren't what they used to be to me anymore! "Soulless" already announced a somewhat groovier and rockier direction of their death metal, but the great vocals still gave it a brutal hint. Now that Jorgen (vocals / bass) is gone to ENTOMBED, guitar player Ola took over the vocals... and that's the first problem, because they sound quite harmless. Within their new style, GRAVE remain clearly behind ENTOMBED's and PUNIENT STENCH's last albums (closest comparison I can give you!) and it's really sad to notice that they've now completely skipped the fast parts from their songs! "Hating Life" is ok to listen to, but doesn't convince me at all, so that this review came out pretty direct... (not as direct as it would've turned out, if I would have written some lines about this crap! - Ed.) Argh, I suppose they'll get overated reviews everywhere else!?! Anyway, how much groove can we really stand? I'll go back to "Into the grave" now! Hey, just call me an old fart!!!

Leif Jensen

GROPE

GROPE
The Fury
(Progress Records)

Heavier METALLICA / MESHUGGAH going industrial! Strong second album by the talented danish extreme outfit GROPE, but not really my cup of metal! A neutral "check it out!"

Leif Jensen



HEAVENSHORE
Between human and divine MCD
(Repulse Records)

HEAVENSHORE is a new act from Spain and this 4-song MCD is their first release I was able to get my hands on, so I can't really tell you if they ever recorded anything previously already. Anyway, the first thing I noticed is something I have to complain about, cause the sound on here is not that convincing and doesn't really compliment their strong compositions at all! On the other hand, this is pretty exciting material, musicwise very dark'n'moody atmospheric sounding doom black/death metal with really strong melodies, keyboards / piano pieces and vocals in the KATATONIA vein (in their track "Heavenshore" they completely sound like these Swedes by the way!). Pretty surprising if you hear that the vocalist usually growls in the death/grind act HAEMORRHAGE! To me, this is obviously one of the strongest releases to emerge from the spanish underground and with a better production these guys could make it really big! I'm looking forward to their first full-length album!

Frank Stöver

HYPOCRISY

HYPOCRISY
Abducted
Maximum abduction Shape MCD
(Nuclear Blast Records)

Their last album was already a big creative step forward for Sweden's HYPOCRISY, as they managed to leave behind their typical swedish death metal meets DEICIDE style with it nearly completely. More uniqueness and variety took over instead and "Abducted" is to me the almost ultimate continuation. An excellent, really fat sounding production gives their way more emotional and groovy songs the right packaging and it often reminds me on slower EDGE OF SANITY meets CARCASS ("Heartwork" period) with some SLAYER riffs thrown in every now and then. Moody parts, like in the excellent "Roswell 47" or "The arrival of the demons (Part II)" go hand in hand with straight forward headbanging stuff and makes this album really exciting and interesting the whole way through. Their additionally released 4 song shape MCD features two tracks from the album, plus one unreleased tune ("Request denied"), which comes across with massive melodies and an overall PINK FLOYD (!) feel and the KISS - cover "Strange ways" ("Hotter than hell" record), which turned out quite disappointing as they basically left it the way it was, not adding the typical HYPOCRISY style to it. Nevertheless, this band turned into a really serious one by now and I'll bet it's only a matter of time until they'll have their big breakthrough!

Frank Stöver

HYPOCRISY
Penetralia
(Nuclear Blast Records)

Not only DISMEMBER's and BENEDICTION's debuts got re-issued, also HYPOCRISY's first full length saw its re-release as a digipack with extra tracks. Musically it was still very unoriginal typical swedish death metal. But compared to the other two just mentioned albums, this is really worth the money anyway, cause it features two

tracks from HYPOCRISY that only were out on compilations before ("Life of filth" and "Lead by satanism")! So, this is your chance to get them on a real band release after all. It sells for a special price and is limited to 2000 copies (same with DISMEMBER and BENEDICTION!).

Frank Stöver

ICED EARTH
The dark saga
(Century Media Records)

This is probably THE pure METAL album of this issue! ICED EARTH have always been good for strong releases, but "The dark saga" could be their ultimate one to date! Strongly produced melody oriented METAL with hints of WICKED MARAYA and SANCTUARY and tendencies to old FORBIDDEN-like thrash ("Violate"). I could go on praising this album for hours, but I guess everything has already been said, so anyone into good old (not dated sounding) METAL, should immediately get a copy of it! Awesome!

Frank Stöver

IMMORTAL
Battles in the north
- Limited Edition -
(Osmose Productions)

This is basically the same record as the ordinary release, but it's got the band's old 7" EP as a bonus and a different deluxe packaging and cover. If you didn't have the 7" or if you are bored to put it on for only the 2 tracks, this could be your alternative. In other words, this is a release for the die hard IMMORTAL fans and collectors only!

Frank Stöver



IMPALED NAZARENE
Latex Cult CD
Motörpenis MCD
(Osmose Productions)

This band simply is a phenomenon! When they played with CANNIBAL CORPSE etc. on their last tour, people were always running after Mr. Luttinen, asking for autographs and stuff and it also seemed that a lot of the kids have just been coming to the shows because of IMPALED NAZARENE's appearance on the bill... Oh well, can't really understand that, cause I don't like their evolution AT ALL! In their early days, their extreme hyperspeed stuff sounded pretty original to me and in combination with their shocking image they managed to get pretty popular within the underground, but now it really gets boring to me. Except for the fact that every release gets a little bit more s/m oriented and less chaotic, there's no big difference in all their stuff. Ok, they have discovered MOTORHEAD's rough rock'n'roll type shit as well by now and incorporated that in a few tracks, but hey...is it really necessary to suck money from the people by releasing two really (!!!) short releases, instead of one normal???? I doubt it...

Frank Stöver



IMPRECATION
Theurgia Goetia Summa
(Repulse Records)

Finally there's another release in Repulse Records' "Resurreceries" (IMMOLATION, HETSHEADS, DARKIFIED...) and this time it comes from the Texas-based three-piece

IMPRECATION. The album features their never before released Promo '94, the "Sign of Baphomet" 7" and the band's "Ceremony of the nine angels" demo (both from '92). For all of you who haven't heard this band before, let me tell you that IMPRECATION do sound like a mixture of the really heavy brutal death metal stuff a la ROTIREVORE or INCANTATION, in combination with the blasting madness of PYREXIA or CRYPTOPSY, plus some midpaced black metal stuff (where they are coming from lyrically). The vocals switch between deepest growling and the more hoarse black metal style, while musically there's only very little of the darker musical genre to be found (except for some morbid keyboards every now and then and more basic riffings), but due to the fact that all original items are not officially available anymore, this might be interesting for some collectors of you. Surprisingly the sound on the oldest recording (the demo) is the most powerful, while the other stuff comes across pretty weak sounding. So, hopefully the already announced first "real" full length album will mature in this direction quite a bit. For lovers of the extremest only!

Frank Stöver

INCUBUS
Serpent Temptation
(Nuclear Blast Records)

Blasphemy! For god's sake, how can it be dared to re-release INCUBUS' masterpiece of a first album "Serpent Temptation" from '89, changing vocals, re-recording guitars, altering the sound, giving it a new cover and (worst of all) changing song titles and lyrics? Forget it... you better keep searching for the old LP version to experience Scott W. Latur's scary vocals and to be blown away by a really raw record!!! I simply had to pick up the original again, because I was missing something, as for example the lyrics of "Incubus" (now re-titled as "Abductions"?): "You are the victim because you betray us. You've got no place to hide. You can't destroy us, we'll crank the decible high. Our sound can never die! die! die!" Fuckin' tight! Adieu INCUBUS!!!

Leif Jensen



INFERNAL MAJESTY
None shall defy
(Displeased Records)

How do you recognize a classic album? It's quite easy to answer - it sounds as powerful and fresh nowadays as almost ten years ago. And exactly that is the case with "None shall defy" from Canada's INFERNAL MAJESTY! This album was already able to drive me crazy back then and it still is! Tracks like the incredibly heavy opener "Overlord", the titeltrack "None shall defy" or the fast "S.O.S." still remain classics of SLAYEResque thrash metal and are really difficult to top, even in the 90's! This album somehow was overlooked in the late 80's, probably because of the pretty stupid image of the band (they looked like thrash metal posers), but the music has always been killer and it was one of the best decisions to come up with an official re-release on CD now, cause INFERNAL MAJESTY's reputation as an influential band got spreaded word of mouth quite extensively over the last years. Even if you already own the vinyl version, you should think about adding this CD to your collection also, cause it features both tracks from the band's "Nigrescent Dissolution" promo demo as a bonus!!! (What else do you need?) Better looking (less embarrassing) pictures maybe? You get them! So, if you consider yourself a "true(how I hate this word...) fan of this musical genre, you gotta buy "None shall defy"!!!

Frank Stöver

INFEST DEAD

INFEST DEAD
Killing Christ MCD
(Invasion Records)

It's an open secret that INFEST DEAD is another project of Mr. Swanö, so I won't give away any secrets here (it's even mentioned in the info). Musically this is heavily inspired by all the Tampa bands and especially DEICIDE and MORBID ANGEL come to my mind when listening to the 6 songs (11,5 min), although INFEST DEAD use a lot more blast parts. Technically and productionwise quality stuff (as usual), but in terms of originality this is not going to win a prize... But if you also bought stuff like LUCIFERION etc., you can easily buy this here as well. It's definitely not worse, only way too short!

Frank Stöver

...and now to something completely different!

KURTZWWEYL
Kurzweil mit Kurtzweyl

"Lebendige Musik des Mittelalters im
Figuralspiel Euboeischer Spitalists des
11. - 15. Jahrhunderts"
(Verlag der Spitalists)

This is something totally different and really unusual for VOICES FROM THE DARKSIDE. The music of KURTZWWEYL has absolutely nothing to do with metal! But they may be very interesting for dark souls into black metal and original, atmospheric music. And of course for everybody who is out for medieval moods. Cause the music they play comes directly from the glorious days in the middleage (13th - 15th century), played with instruments and arrangements which are based on the possibilities travelling medieval musicians had. So KURTZWWEYL use e.g. bagpipes, lute, clavicymbalum, portative, lute, xylophone, kettle drum, flute, pipes, trumpets and other strange instruments that are modelled like original medieval ones. With that and pseudonyms like

LANFEAR
Towers
(self financed)

Surprisingly interesting progressive power / speed metal band from Germany! LANFEAR add a perfect portion of variety (ballads, keyboards, violin) to their virtuously played melodic metal and should deserve to find a decent distribution / label for their self financed debut. Only the vocals look a bit pale and faceless from time to time amidst the might of the instrumentation! However, an underdog band worth your supporting 30,-DM / \$20 for a copy of "Towers" (playing time: 60min !!!). Go ahead now:

LANFEAR
c/o Markus Ullrich
Heilbronnerstr. 123
74831 Gundelsheim
Germany

Leif Jensen

"Max Lienespegel", "Barbara von Protzheim, das eheliche Spielwip", "Bruder Ingbrand von Altanberg", "Lorens, das Tanzwip", "San Pustarbak von Coltrane, der mutige Herold" and "Herr Walter von der Pfirdewilde, der Spilman" they outspit yourself fivehundred years back and give you an idea of how life had been those days. The sound on this CD is equally impressive like the instrumentation. It was recorded in a defuncting church from the 11th century. Ultra life atmosphere! The songs themselves were arranged with regard to traditional presentations of Walter von der Vogelweide, Oswald von Wolkenstein, Adam de la Halle, Guillaume de Machaut and others. So, if you like to try something different, take this one, it's great. It is available for 36,-DM (ppd.) at:

VERLAG DER SPIELBLUTE
Langloosenweg 14
64385 Reichelsheim
Germany

Unfortunately they accept German Marks only, so if you order from another country than Germany, ask for the price first. And ask for the mailorderfee.

Thomas Georg

KREATOR
Scenarios of violence
(Noise Records)

No, this is not already a new KREATOR album again, it's "just" a compilation of their past activities. It features 16 tracks, including 2 previously unreleased brand new ones ("Suicide in swamps" and "Limits of liberty"), 2 live recordings from 1988 ("Ripping corpse" and "Tormentor") and several remixed versions. So, even if you already own the entire back catalogue of KREATOR, you are forced to buy this here as well, if you want a complete collection. Honestly spoken, I would prefer to go for the classic albums like "Endless pain", "Pleasure to kill" or "Terrible certainty" instead, cause after that, they lost too much of their original aggression to me. But it's up to you...

Frank Stöver

KVIST
For Kunsten Maa Vi Evig Vike
(Avantgarde Music)

A moody cover for a simple packaged CD (no real booklet nor lyrics or pics of the band), but the musical side of things is extremely promising! KVIST is another norwegian band whose members dedicated their souls to the black metal genre. But, before you start screaming that we already have more than enough of those kinda bands, make sure at least to listen to this superb debut release! KVIST have managed to compose pretty atmospheric, keyboard laden symphonic black metal and its high quality really blew me away! There might already be several bands that are doing this majestic form of black metal, but KVIST is for sure not worse than any of them, so give them a chance! Excellent one!

Frank Stöver

LEGENDS OF METAL VOL. 1
A tribute to JUDAS PRIEST
(Century Media Rec.)

It really was about time that someone finally came up with a tribute to JUDAS PRIEST compilation, cause there's so many worse bands getting honoured this way, that it would've been a shame to miss out the masters of metal here! Anyway, the participating bands could be seen kinda like as the who is who in metal these days and the PRIEST songs themselves are nothing but true classics anyway, so what can you expect here?! The ultimate album?? No, not really. It's a brilliant record, no doubts about it, but some bands unfortunately didn't really manage to get the real original feeling across in their versions. You might call me a fuckin' nationalist now, but to me all the german bands did the best jobs by far: HELLOWEEN ("The Hellion"/"Electric Eye"), GAMMA RAY ("Victim of Changes") and RAGE ("Jawbreaker") delivered some excellent interpretations. TESTAMENT ("Rapid Fire"), RADAKKA ("Night crawler"), U.D.O. ("Metal gods") and SAXON ("You got another thing comin'") came up with versions fitting to their original style and it turned out pretty good, while FATES WARNING ("Saints in hell") and LIONS SHARE ("A touch of evil") weren't really able to impress me. But the most disappointing feature to me comes from DOOM SQUAD, an "all star" project, consisting of John Bush & Scott Ian (ANTHRAX), Gonzo & Joey Vera (ex-ARMORED SAINT) and Jörg Fischer (ex-ACCEPT), who did a quite uninspired version of "Burnin' up". The most aggressive track was contributed by ex-STEVE VAI vocalist DEVIN TOWNSEND ("Sinner") and MERCYFUL FATE's version of "The Ripper" is a really unusual offering, featuring KING DIAMOND mainly with normal vocals! All in all it is a real pleasure to listen to this album (comes with lyrics to all the songs and a great cover artwork!) and I'm already looking forward to Part Two!!!

Frank Stöver

LOBOTOMY
Against the gods / Nailed in misery
(Thrash Corner Records)
Lobotomy
(Chaos Records)

LOBOTOMY should be known to almost everyone by now, cause these Swedes have been around so long already... They released a couple demos some years back, when swedish death metal had its heydays, but never got signed up. Too bad, cause by now they are probably having a tough time to establish their matured sound. Compared to the re-release of their old stuff on CD via Thrash Corner Records, the new stuff sounds a lot less brutal and death metal like. Their current direction has a lot more aggression and thrash influences and also some similarities to the late ENTOMBED material. The vocals sometimes tend to sound a bit hardcore-like, so no more deepest growling here. I'm not sure who's still going to buy stuff like this, but at least LOBOTOMY are able to convince in terms of quality. The album is good for what it is, but there's so many similar releases out these days, that they once again have to face the facts, that this might be too late again... Too bad, really. If you have missed their swedish death metal days, you can get the CD with classic stuff from the following address (no price mentioned, sorry):

THRASH CORNER RECORDS
P.O. Box 577
Las Piedras, PR 00771
U.S.A.

Frank Stöver

MALEVOLENT CREATION
Joe Black
(Pavement Music)

As far as I've heard, MALEVOLENT CREATION is history by now, but still here's a "new" album... Well, actually it's more a compilation CD of three previously unreleased new tracks, which are in the same vein as their last full length, three (horrible) techno re-mixes of songs from the "Eternal" album, a demo version of "Genetic affliction", their cover of SLAYER's "Raining blood" (originally only available on their self released live cassette EP) and two demo tracks from their legendary 1990 demo. If you enjoy MALEVOLENT's intense mixture of SLAYEResque speed, TERRORIZER-grind and brutal death metal, you can also buy this album as well, but I would prefer to go for a "real" record instead. Plus I would've loved to get their entire demo tracks on here and not only 2/3... Oh well, you can't always get what you want.

Frank Stöver

MAKINA
Anabiosis
(Rockotitan / Sony Mexico)

Who the fuck is MAKINA? Well, quite a capable mexican techno-thrash/death metal band in the vein of early SINDROME or NOCTURNUS with less keyboards and some unconventional aspects such as spanish lyrics for some songs. Their songstructures are kinda wildly complicated, so a probable straighter approach wouldn't hurt! Unluckily their vocalist is also a bit dull and monotonous, so that I prefer to wait for their new / third album "Millenium" (out now in Mexico and South America through BMG Mexico!) to make up my mind properly about MAKINA! Saludos compadres mejicanos!!! There is something going on overseas!

Leif Jensen

MASS PSYCHOSIS

MASS PSYCHOSIS
Necroporno
(Advance of MCD '96)

After a more or less disastrous excursion on the german (major) label Koch International, New

Jersey's MASS PSYCHOSIS decided to go their own ways again and the first offering will be this 6 track MCD with brandnew sick shit! The style hasn't changed, but they even got more extreme and twisted than on their past releases, mainly because of the way more intense drumming of "new" guy Matt. Just listen to the opening track "Zombichrist" and you'll know what I'm talking about. This is like a fist in your face! Gory death metal on a high musical level, with insane vocal delivery from all these psychos! It's time for the rest of the world to recognize their talent after all, so you better get in touch with them and ask for the MCD as well as for a merchandise list in the "war and peace" length!

MASS PSYCHOSIS
P.O. Box 267
Keyport, N.J. 07735
U.S.A.

Frank Stöver

MASTER'S HAMMER
Slagry
(Kron-H / Osmose Prod.)

BEWARE! All of you who lick their fingers for a new output of MASTER'S HAMMER should read on first to be warned not to buy the third album blindly! "Slagry" has NOTHING to do with the former great releases of this band. MASTER'S HAMMER became a duo in the meantime, Franta and Viasta are the only ones left of the former line-up and both decided to work with samples and other digital stuff for the future, leaving behind the traditional instruments. So, this has obviously nothing to do with metal anymore. Most of the songs are absolutely boring, stupid and ridiculous, consisting of strange sounds / "rhythms" and in most cases are made out of well-known songs e.g. Rock'n'Roll music from Chuck Berry (in a really shitty version; is this music?), Guisepppe Verdi's "Nabucco" (one of the better doom songs) or an old czech folk christmas carol which was arranged like a military march (get yourself a big laugh...). Only the opener, which is the re-done "Sabre dance", taken from an opera of Aram Chacaturjan, and the last song, which brings back memories on old releases, are enjoyable. If you've got the chance to have a listen in your local record shop, do it, have a good time, amuse yourself and put "Slagry" back to the shelf afterwards.

Thomas Georg



MAJESTY
The crown of scorio MCD
(Teutonic Existence Records)

Anyone outthere remembering the finnish doom/death band ATER? Well, we had a demo review back in issue # 5, but due to the fact that I didn't find it that impressing, I won't blame you if you don't remember them either... Well, the band is history by now, but guitarist / vocalist Marko came up with a new project called MAJESTY (not the most original monicker actually...), dropped the deathly influences completely and turned 100%ly into a melancholic doom act. Although I'm not a fan of doom metal at all, I have to admit that this change was definitely for the better and that MAJESTY have gotten a certain charm with its style. It's really melodic and atmospheric, the sound is brilliant and the vocals are almost opera like (Marko partly sounds like a tenor!). The additional use of a violin gives the stuff a really nice'n'depressive edge and therefore the whole item turns into a must-have release for doom lunatics (MCD \$10). The band's '95 demo (4 tracks, 35min) is also still available from the band's address for \$5, so I better give you two contacts now:

MAJESTY
c/o Marko Hautamäki
Välitie 6 a 4
61100 Peräseinäjoki
Finland

TEUTONIC EXISTENCE RECORDS
c/o Twan Kreeft
Grotiusplantsoen 23
NL - 5121 TR Rijen (N.B.)
Holland

Frank Stöver



MARDUK
Heaven shall burn... when we are gathered
(Osmose Production)

Their last album "Opus nocturne" sold about 15000 units, so I guess we can consider Sweden's MARDUK as one of the bestselling black metal acts around these days. "Heaven shall burn... when we are gathered" is their latest offering, a 35 minutes long (short?) intense black metal inferno in the typical MARDUK vein. Luckily the line-up problems didn't hurt them at all and I would even say that the vocals on this record here are a lot stronger than before! The variety in the songwriting also seems to have become more important again after all (I found "Opus nocturne" a little bit too monotonous after all...) and MARDUK do good, when they throw in slower material like "Dracul Va Domni Din Nov In Transilvania" as well. The production is great and the intensity unbelievable, so this album might turn into their major breakthrough, although I can't really hear new elements in the stuff, but what the heck - black metal in its purest form doesn't really need that! A fine offering once again!

Frank Stöver

MELEK-THA
Astrum Argentum
(Adipocere Records)

This is EVIL, EVIL stuff (hohoho) out of France, but no real music. The two guys involved in here (one of them calls himself "Lord Evil" [hohoho part 2]) take samples from horror / splatter movies and other similar sounding stuff as the background for their nine long "songs" with wicked titles (hohoho part 3), as e.g. "Evil conjuration", "Supreme evil", "Tabernack of hatred" etc. Conceded that their compositions deliver a lot of atmosphere and tension (especially in the twilight of a candle... uuh-oo, wasn't there a movement behind the wardrobe, did I hear a scraping noise in front of the door... oops, who's under my bed by the way...), but I prefer real music with more alternation instead. It's too much the same all the way through (75min). For black hearts into MORTIIS, PAZUZU etc. (even though they are not comparable to them) this soundtrack may be interesting. In any case, nothing for feeble nerves... Advice: All you guys into horror movies make a competition out of it, who guesses first which movie / scene the different samples were taken from?

Thomas Georg

MOCK
Vinterlandet MCD
(Hammerheart Records)

This norwegian band unfortunately is history by now, but Dolk (one of the guys) has a new project already called KAMPFAR, so watch out for that! MOCK were formed in 1992 and considered themselves as a viking metal band. They recorded a 4 song demo ("Cold winter") and this MCD here. It's a shame that they didn't get any further, cause the two tracks on here (plus a more or less spoken intro type song) were really promising. The overall feeling reminds me a lot on the early KATATONIA stuff, although MOCK are not really comparable to the Swedes, cause they don't work with this dominating guitar melodies. This is more basic and raw sounding, but still really good. \$10 /

15.-DM is pretty expensive for the little playing time of this MCD, but it seems that quality always has its price! Write to:

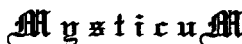
HAMMERHEART RECORDS
P.O. Box 277
NL - 6300 AG Valkenburg
Holland

Frank Stöver

MÖRK GRYNING
Tusen ar har gått...
(No Fashion Records)

Where the fuck come all these great bands from these days?! MÖRK GRYNING is a swedish 2-piece, once again dedicated to black metal... But their material is really impressing and comes along with a strong emphasis on memorable guitarleads (the opener is pretty catchy therefore!) and keyboardmelodies, while the vocals are really mean and the songs themselves are basically fast, not sounding monotonous though. Their musicianship is way above the average and with this (unfortunately pretty short, 33min.) album they will definitely already be considered as another swedish elite band! Really amazing!

Frank Stöver



MYSTICUM
In the streams of inferno
(Full Moon Productions)

Norway's MYSTICUM are one of last remaining real cult acts from that country, haven't had an album out so far, but that luckily changed now with the release of "In the streams of inferno"! And these guys really deserve your attention, cause MYSTICUM don't follow the path of the typical black metal bands! They are actually the most unique sounding act right now, cause I haven't heard any other band of that genre incorporating industrial sounds into their music and that gives their material a new dimension of extremity! Really intense and uncompromising stuff, but neither too monotonous nor without feeling and always keeping the black flame of Norway burning deep inside their hearts! Obviously an item not to miss out.

Frank Stöver

NASTROND
Toteslaut
(Napalm Records)

More and more black metal underground acts get signed and swedish NASTROND is among them by now as well. The band was able to build up a pretty strong underground following already due to the release of their "From a black funeral coffin" demo and "Digerdöden" 7", something I never really understood, cause to me they are just another typical band for this kind of music. In other words - raw swedish black metal, with a good vocalist and all other necessary elements. Collectors of devilish music will buy this one as well to complete their collection, while the more critical listeners will probably go for something more unique and impressing.

Frank Stöver

NECROPHOBIC
Spawned by evil MCD
(Black Mark)

These GALLS are even more slow than METALLICA when it comes to writing new material!!! Unbelievable! Their debut album came out in 1993 and up to now they only were able to deliver ONE (!!!) new song, namely "Spawned by evil"! It seems that guitarist David Parland spends a lot more time with DARK FUNERAL these days than with his main band. Anyway, NECROPHOBIC also have become a lot more black metalish with this new track here, but it doesn't affect them in any way, cause somehow it fits to their overall style. The other 3

songs on this MCD are covers from SLAYER ("Die by the sword"), VENOM ("Nightmare") and BATHORY ("Enter the eternal fire") - all of them are classics, so I just can tell you that NECROPHOBIC's versions turned out pretty cool and I respect the band for their good taste! But hey, we want a new full length now!

Frank Stöver

THE NEFILIM
Zoon
(Rebel Records / SPV)

Carl McCoy is back! The main man behind the great and influential gothic / darkwave act THE FIELDS OF THE NEFILIM finally managed to release the long-awaited album of his new project THE NEFILIM! And you could call this a return with a vengeance, cause he never ever came up with so extreme and heavy material before! THE NEFILIM is basically a more metalized version of his past activities and tracks like "Xodus" or "Penetration" could easily compete with many of today's death metal releases in terms of heaviness! PARADISE LOST for instance sound more darkwave oriented nowadays than the stuff you'll get to hear on "Zoon"! I doubt that all his old fans will like this new direction, but on the other hand there's obviously a lot of new ones getting into it, and they are mainly the ones reading magazines like ours! You gotta check this out! One of the biggest surprises of 1996 for sure! KILLER!

NEOLITHIC
For destroy the lament
(Adipocere Records)

After the successful re-issue of the "The personal fragment of life" Demo '93, Adipocere decided to release as well the official debut album of the polish death/doom hopefuls NEOLITHIC. Good choice, I must admit! NEOLITHIC come up with a lot of oportune elements: major harmonies, very varied vocals, keyboards etc.etc.etc. The production is clear, so just go ahead and give 'em a try! Probably not the most outstanding and surely not a "new dimension in music" (info), but a fairly and atmospherically sad metal album! Congratulations!!

Leif Jensen

NME
Unholy death
(Moribund Records)

NME have been a really influential band on many of today's extreme acts and their "Unholy death" album's already considered a classic. This here is the re-release of that album, with several additional bonus tracks. Some of them are basically just remixed versions of wellknown tracks, then there's their "Machine of war" demo and a cover of VENOM's "In nomine Sathanas". Early VENOM is probably also the closest comparison to their really chaotic stuff, while the voice often reminds me on the INFERNAL MAJESTY dude. So, all in all, this is good old stuff for the nostalgic ones. All younger people should watch out for new material pretty soon as NME have recently reformed!

Frank Stöver

NON FICTION

NON-FICTION
It's a wonderful lie
(Steamhammer / SPV)

NON-FICTION luckily didn't break up! But they lost the thick and tragic atmosphere of "Preface" and although "It's a wonderful lie" is a very enjoyable album with great vocals by Alan Teocchio, it should be an open secret that it surely isn't NON-FICTION's optimum! A sign of life, though!

Leif Jensen

NORDIC METAL
A tribute to Euronymous
(Necropolis Records)

I was a little bit disappointed about this compilation album in the first place, but mainly because of the fact, that I was expecting a tribute album with MAYHEM covers! The only MAYHEM cover on here is the almighty "Deathcrush", which you'll already know from OPHTHALMIA's latest album. The rest of the stuff is partly known and partly previously unreleased material. I'm gonna give you a list of the more interesting unreleased tracks here, for example ABRUPTUM's "De profundis mors vos cousingent", MYSTICUM's "Kingdom comes" and "In your grave" or rehearsal versions of EMPEROR's "Moon over Kara-Shehr", THORN'S "Aerie descends" and MAYHEM's "Pagan fears". The rest was contributed from official releases by MARDUK, MAYHEM, DISSECTION, EMPEROR, ENSLAVED and ARCTURUS. So, all in all, you'll find a lot of the more established nordic bands on here, paying tribute to the one and only Euronymous! A really fat booklet with several liner notes and partly unreleased pictures completes this album, which could've turned out more interesting, but still is a good one to have! At least it is an anti-Grishnack compilation, so it has my full support!

Frank Stöver

OCCULT
The enemy within
(Foundation 2000)

What a great album!!! Dutch underground heroes OCCULT come up with an incredibly strong follow up release to their "Prepare to meet thy doom" effort from 1994! Perfectly produced (Harris Johns / Music Lab Studio, Berlin!), this album features black/thrash metal (with an emphasis on the latter) in its purest and obviously best form! The band is a fuckin' tight unit, now probably even more than in the past and creates their own form of aggressive metal, not joining the masses of all the wanna-be-evil ones these days! This is a bunch of top-notch musicians, with a tendency to re-live ancient metal in their own compositions, and especially the guitarwork often comes across pretty EXODUS ("Bonded by blood") or METALLICA ("Ride the lightning") - like, while the shared vocal duties of main vocalist Sephiroth and additional female shouter Rachel, gives the material an even more blacker and aggressive approach. An extremely powerful record, which is definitely not trendy at all and if you are sick and tired of all the clones outthere right now, you better go for it! Awesome! BUY OR DIE!!!

Frank Stöver

OCTINOMUS
On the demigore
(Full Moon Prod.)

I'm totally lacking in informations about this band/project here, I don't even have a country of origin. But in fact of their names, I guess Sweden could be the answer... (don't quote me though!). Their overall style is pretty much known by now - it's this really intense form of fast black metal with a totally over-the-top shneky vocal delivery. The playing time of the majority of the songs is quite long, but I find this too monotonous anyway, cause I heard similar songwriting and albums way too often by now. At least their musical abilities know to impress and the most outstanding tracks are probably the really symphonic oriented "Into the shadows" and "Beyond salvation", while the last 3 tracks on the record at least come up with a much better production / sound (they have been recorded separately). 60 more minutes for the black souls to worship...

Frank Stöver

OPETH
Orchid
(Candlelight Records)

By the time I write this review, Swedens OPETH have already finished the recordings to their follow-up album, but due to the fact that we received this release here shortly after issue # 8 got released, we'll give you some thoughts on it anyway. OPETH are to me (and probably to many others as well...) one of the most underrated swedish acts to date and I can easily agree with the sticker slogan on the unique looking album cover: "The best of the new swedish wave of extreme metal. An utter masterpiece!" OPETH are aggressive (the vocals almost come across pretty black sounding), but not comparable to any other act around these days. If you consider, that this 7-tracker offers you 65 strong minutes, you can already imagine how deep structured the band's material is. They really know how to capture your emotional side (just listen to the incredible piano piece "Silhouette"!) and mix strong, sometimes melancholic melodies with a touch of KATATONIA - esque guitarsounds and mpidaced to fast, never before heard, aggressive material! All this turns into a strong weapon in OPETH's struggle for recognition and they actually should be able to succeed with it! A strong production and catchy heaviness will easily impress and finally make you buy this monstrous release! Check out the interview for more details about them as well...

Frank Stöver

OPETH
Morningrise
(Candlelight Records)

Did I just mention a new OPETH album or what?! Ha, shortly before deadline, the advance cassette of their second offering "Morningrise" reached us and I can only tell you that they managed to go even deeper with their songstructures this time. There's only 5 songs on the album this time, but the playing time is even longer than on "Orchid". Many slow, moody parts have been incorporated, several acoustic parts can be heard as well and the entire records is so full of melancholic emotions combined with aggression, it's almost unbelievable! I better not talk about a way stronger follow-up right now already, cause I'm still so much carried away, I need a little bit more distance to the just heard stuff, but it's more than obvious that OPETH have once again created a masterpiece and this is probably one of the most unique and dedicated albums ever to come out of Sweden! KILLER!!!!

Frank Stöver

OTR PRODUCTIONS:
DANGER - Nightmare
THE CHURCH BIZARRE - The closed chapter MCD
IT'S INNER CORE - Comp.Vol.I

The new german label OTR PROD. kicks off with three not fully convincing releases, but step by step: The big MERCYFUL FATE fans DANGER have a musical tendency to teutonic metal and although the vocals are fuckin' mediocre, their debut came out quite amusing, among others due to their rip off lyrics ("Mercyful Fate" speaks for itself and "Evil nightmare" is stolen from TROUBLE, as examples!)! THE CHURCH BIZARRE is a promising gothic metal newcomer with all those popular stylistic elements you love so much. Weak melodic vocals, but solid music! Last and least is the "IT'S INNER CORE" compilation, full of lame hardcore without highlights! What about getting in touch with the label directly by yourself? Sampler and MCD sell for 20,-DM, the DANGER CD for 25,-DM.

OTR PRODUCTIONS
c/o Otto Raab
Frankenstr. 13
91052 Erlangen
Germany

Leif Jensen

OVERKILL
The killing kind
(Concrete / Edel)

Wow, OVERKILL are back! After a couple of weak releases and just when you thought you would get rid of them, these classic power thrashers return with a really strong album conveniently entitled "The killing kind"! The fresh guitar section really works and Blitz's vocals (good as always!) are now even enriched with entertaining backing vocals... Hm, and although OVERKILL are quite "modern" here and there, you certainly can't call them trendies or whatever! The first half of the album clearly blows away the more laid back second half and definitely fits the monstrous energy they catch on stage! So, welcome back!

Leif Jensen

PAIN PRINCIPLE
...until someone loses an eye
(self financed)

The name PAIN PRINCIPLE should ring a bell by now, at least if you followed the tour reports on the last DEATH european tour, cause their hired bass player Bobby was no one less, than this band's four stringer. Additionally to that, a couple might have heard their "Unhappy hour" demo, which got pretty good reviews overhere as well. After all, here's the band's newest offering, a CD with 8 all brandnew tunes (well, he demo's title track got re-recorded...). Their style hasn't really changed since the demo days and I'm still surprised that I manage to get into their really modern sounding thrash. There's still an obvious influence from newer PANTERA in the stuff and that's obviously not my favourite type of band or music at all. Anyway, maybe Florida's PAIN PRINCIPLE were able to add a little bit more interesting elements to their creations, so that it doesn't sound as boring as the fucking "cowboys from hell" tend to sound for quite a while... They have a much wider range of outside influences and that makes them quite interesting and more unique sounding in the end. The style(!) of singing for example still brings WHITE ZOMBIE to my mind, while the voice is more into that PANTERA vein. I don't know, maybe I'm completly going nuts by now, but I like this record. If you're openminded enough to accept other extreme forms of metal, and not only death and black metal, you should give them a chance. Don't know the price at their address, but you can get it from ours for 25,-DM (ppd. in Germany). For more infos write to:

PAIN PRINCIPLE
P.O. Box 141251
Orlando, FL 32814
U.S.A.

Frank Stöver

PARAXISM

PARAXISM
Xism Excursion MCD
(Crawfish Records)

Jukka from DISGRACE finally managed to put out another release on his Crawfish label. This time he came up with something by finnish PARAXISM, whose name I've already been aware of for quite a while, but this is actually my first experience with their music. The band has been around for quite a few years by now (since 1991 to be exact) and as far as I know, this is their first offering for the CD market... Well, first of all I need to tell you that the name mini(!)CD seems to get a whole new meaning nowadays, cause "Xism Excursion" comes in the same small size as ADRAMELECH's "The Fall" MCD...! Anyway, there's 3 tracks featured on here and they pretty quick brought AMORPHIS' second full length album to my mind. The reason is quite simple - PARAXISM incorporate similar influences in their material, which means you get groovy and tight played rhythms, a 70's like organ / feeling and leading guitar melodies combined with a brutal voice. The production is really powerful and the stuff was able to move my lazy ass, so feel free to get in touch with one

of the following addresses for a copy (no price, sorry!):

PARAXISM
c/o Sami Kokko
Munarinie 2 D 14
40520 Väskylä
Finland

CRAWFISH RECORDS
Brahenkatu 7
20110 Turku
Finland
Fax: + 358 21 23 30 280

Frank Stöver

PENTACLE
Adv. of The fifth moon 12"EP

Hollands PENTACLE are progressing in an almost frightening way these days! Their newest offering is this 5 track EP with four brandnew own compositions and a cover of HELLHAMMER's "The reaper" and it turned out to be their best release to date! Warnes' vocals developed into a way more aggressive direction and the music itself became more powerful and intense. In my opinion they even sound more ancient nowadays than ever before and their obvious love for old HELLHAMMER / FROST riffs is still very much present. But PENTACLE are far away from just being a clone band of Switzerland's finest. They easily managed to come up with a totally unique, really hard hitting style, which consists of a lot of old elements but sounds totally fresh nevertheless. The addition of a second guitarist was a good choice as they are now able to come up with more interesting guitar stuff. So, all in all, you shouldn't miss this release, even if you didn't like them before, you gotta check this out! You'll be positively surprised, guaranteed!

Frank Stöver

PITCH SHIFTER
Infotainment
(Earache Records)

No way! PITCH SHIFTER aren't wimping out, just breaking new ground, as always! Forget all other soulless industrial bands, PITCH SHIFTER remain the only band within their style (?) which succeeds in mixing programmed coldness with danceable rhythms. "Infotainment" surely isn't as dark as previous outputs, but certainly equally amazing! Obey PITCH SHIFTER! Godly! P.S.: 20 minutes of the CD (track 0) are an interactive CD-Rom track... what a shame! The world keeps turning!

Leif Jensen

POSSESSION
Eternally Haunt
(self financed)

It's been quite a while since we've heard from Kansas based power death / thrashers POSSESSION the last time (issue # 4 to be exact) and back then they just promoted their 3 track demo MCD "Unnameable suffering". Well, after a lot of trouble with Metal Merchant Records, they finally managed to have their first full length released on their own and it features ten tracks of old school inspired heavy aggressive thrash with additional death grunts thrown in every now and then. The band managed to stay away from current so called "modern" influences and the entire album brings back a lot of nostalgic feelings to me. If you hate all the BJOTURA HEADS of the 90's and their way of playing aggressive music, go for "Eternally haunt" instead - it's worth your attention! The CD goes for \$13 (US) / \$15 (world) at the following address:

POSSESSION
P.O. Box 3031
Olathe, KS 66063-1031
U.S.A.

Frank Stöver

RADAKKA
Malice and tranquility
(Century Media Records)

You should know it by now - Leif and myself are wimps! When we discussed the subject, who's going to write reviews for which release, he only agreed that I was gonna do the RADAKKA one when I would praise it like hell! No big deal, cause the melodic heavy metal of these guys knows to convince an old man like me even more than the majority of noise that gets here all the time. RADAKKA write catchy tunes, with excellent vocals, strong hooks and a lot of energy and power in the riff department, so don't expect some AOR softrockers here... The entire album kicks some major asses and I wouldn't mind if these guys would tour overhere pretty soon! You could either put them on a power metal bill or also in a more melodic oriented package. They would steal the headliner's show for sure! If you can stand melodies in-between all the brutality, you should check these guys out. It's a smoker of an album!

Frank Stöver

RAMP
Intersection
(Untao Usboa Edicoes Rec.)

Hey, what a surprise! RAMP from Portugal sound like a metal band of thrash origin which dares to incorporate very modern alternative and minorly industrial influences into their complex songs... Complex due to the over-the-top-of-the-top musicianship and PANTERA / MESHUGGAH-like guitar perversion! Although RAMP don't really suit my personal musical melting pot, "Intersection" is loads more than just listenable and easily establishes them as the most internationally compatible and promising non-death band from Portugal I've heard so far! Too bad I can't provide you with further info (just blame Frank! Ha!)... Remember their name: RAMP!!! Good ballad section also!

Leif Jensen

RIOT
The brethren of the long house
(Rising Sun Records)

I respect these guys for the fact that they never gave up and kept going with their melodic power metal, no matter how often their albums got compared to their legendary "Fire down under" release. "The brethren of the long house" is once again a fine offering, with really strong melodies, good vocals and a concept story around the indians. Musically RIOT continue here exactly where they left off on their last record "Nightbreaker", so if you enjoyed that mixture of melodic heavy metal in combination with obvious influences from dinosaurs like PURPLE / RAINBOW and the likes you can buy this here straight away. A fine coverversion of GARY MOORE / PHIL LYNOTT's "Out in the fields" and two really strong ballads ("Santa Maria" and their interpretation of the traditional "Shenandoah") complete this disc in a good manner. So, if your ears can stand some melodies, this might be a good one to pick up.

Frank Stöver



ROTTING CHRIST
Triarchy of the lost lovers
(Century Media)

It was about time for greek ROTTING CHRIST to finally get the chance to make a big step forward in their career and I think, signing to Century Media was the right decision here. I mean, if you listen to their stuff, you will easily notice that they fit into the label's concept and judging them by this new album here, a tour with labelmates SAMAEL and MOONSPELL would musically and attitude wise fit perfectly! The material is mainly midpaced, based on emotions, but with the essential needed heaviness and keyboards are only there to strengthen several parts and not because for the sake of it. That's the way death/black metal should be composed!

The 9 songs on the album are pretty much of the same quality and it's difficult to name any highlights, but the fast (almost KREATOR like) "Archon" and "Shadows fallow" (with its great middlesection) are two songs that stuck into my mind... I'm pretty curious if ROTTING CHRIST will be able to follow their labelmates now when it comes to establish themselves within a more mainstream oriented audience. And I wonder how long they will stick to their original logo...

Frank Stöver

SACRED REICH
Heal
(Metal Blade Records)

Three years after the weak "Independent" album, these nice thrash monsters are back with a real independent thrasher for Metal Blade entitled "Heal". SACRED REICH managed to mix, in a balanced way, midpaced songs with faster tracks which go back to their own roots and consequently gave me an easy listening. Additionally the OINGO BOINGO cover ("Who do you want to be") and a probable hit song ("Ask Ed") force every metalhead to watch out for SACRED REICH once again! Just smoke and rock on, guys!

Leif Jensen

SADIST
Tribe
(Rising Sun Productions)

After the really impressive debut album "Above the light", Italy's SADIST were having a tough time in my opinion, in being able to top that record. But they didn't make the mistake to copy their successful formula with "Tribe" - it's actually sounding alot different now! First of all, they've got a new vocalist (which isn't a real problem) and changed towards a way more technical direction! If you listen to the opening track "Escogido" you will know what I'm talking about. Well, the band does not continue the whole record in this extreme way, they additionally prove once again that they are also able to compose cool classical and atmospheric sounds (like on "Above the light"), so that some of their old fans will definitely also like this one as well. But I guess, SADIST might be more appealing nowadays for people who freak out on ATHEIST, CYNIC and the likes. Check it out, really aggressive nevertheless!

Frank Stöver



SATYRICON
Nemesis Divina
(Moonfog Productions)

I hate nothing more than talking about "elite" bands in the black metal scene, but considering the fact that there's so much trendies around these days (most of them don't know anything about the real feeling that is needed to play this kinda style, nor do they know how to handle their instruments) I decided to separate SATYRICON from the crap by labeling them as an "elite" band! Their newest album "Nemesis Divina" is black metal in perfection! They don't seem to care about stupid rules, that have been set up by even more stupid kids and released a record instead, that is highly professional in every way! It starts with a unique yet morbid looking coverdesign, excellent production and over-the-top musicianahip. SATYRICON don't make fools out

Frank Stöver

SECRET DISCOVERY
A question of time
(Gun Records)

Germany's ex-dark waver SECRET DISCOVERY discovered (what a fitting word here...) the metal genre and incorporated several

heavy elements to their style, which sounds pretty good to me. Musically they are somehow in the newer PARADISE LOST direction now, plus they've managed to come up with some really catchy tunes you won't get rid off, after you heard them for the first time ("Hello Goodbye" and "Colour my life"). Don't know their earlier stuff, but at least this one is totally promising and I hate myself for being late when they opened up for MOONSPELL and THE GATHERING not long ago... Should've been a good one!

Frank Stöver



SEThERIAL
Nord...
(Napalm Records)

If you belong to those black metal worshippers, that consider MARDUK and DARK FUNERAL as the best bands from Sweden in that direction, you better think again, cause SETHERIAL are out to conquer! Their debut full length "Nord..." offers new dimensions in extremity in every sense of the word! SETHERIAL are faster than the ones mentioned, but they are also a lot more variable in the songwriting department! For example, "Over det bladtäckta nord" is a 14 minutes long (!!) highlight on the album, which includes several tempochanges, all kinds of moods and even some medieval sounding melodies, while "In the still of a northern fullmoon" is a really deadly (and also 12 minutes long) offering. But these guys can also write more compact and basic, as "I nattens färm" (the fastest tune) impressively proves, while "Mörkrets tid" is a really technical one with an acoustic middlesection and "För dem mitt blod" combines everything in one. SETHERIAL to me combine the best elements of EMPEROR (vocals, atmosphere) with the intensity of DARK FUNERAL and the musical abilities of IMMORTAL on one album. Unfortunately they overuse the fast elements quite a bit, but if they are going to work on that and throw in some

of themselves just by playing in the most fastest possible way. They rather concentrate on real dark sounding compositions and it obviously doesn't really matter to them, if that needs to be created by untypical elements. Twin-guitar harmonies (!), keyboards (that are sometimes sounding pretty symphonic and on the other hand tend to reach an almost medieval style) or dark vocals (that are not really in the typical black metal standard vein) can be heard in the seven excellent songs. Satyr's voice is lower and more mean sounding than the ones of his more shrieky fellows. It's difficult for me to name a special song, but one of the highlights on this album is definitely "Mother North", a majestic hymn-like composition, which sounds incredibly melodic in parts and when they speed things up, even a comparison to DISSECTION could come to mind. "Du som hater gud" on the other hand has gotten one of the finest piano parts I've heard for quite a while and should please all those of you who admired the more classical sounding tracks on the latest SIGH effort "Infidel Art". All in all, this is one of the strongest releases by a norwegian band and SATYRICON definitely belong to the top! Next to EMPEROR, DIMMU BORGIR and CRADLE OF FILTH one of the best black metal bands of all time! BUY!!

Frank Stöver

more breaks to give the whole thing a more interesting approach, they could turn into Swedens deadliest weapon! You have been warned!

Frank Stöver

STEEL PROPHET
Continuum MCD
(Brainstorm Division)

Still as charming as old FATES WARNING / QUEENSRÿCHE and still totally underrated! STEEL PROPHET kept rocking and that's worth your support! 5 essential tracks for your power metal collection, what else can I mention? Just go ahead and buy this honest underdog item!! Now!

Leif Jensen

SUDDEN DEATH
Focus of disease MCD
(self financed)

Fuck yeah! These guys know how real brutal death metal should be played! Their overall style sounds pretty american to me, and I guess acts like older DEATH, MORBID ANGEL or stuff like that might have had quite an influence on their powerfully produced energetic compositions. The vocals are deep growling, but with class (David Vincent, LUCIFERION etc.) and their abilities shine through really clearly in the five featured tracks. SUDDEN DEATH might not be original, but they at least were able to deliver some excellent pounding brutal death metal in the way it was meant to be played! Killer! 18.-DM (ppd.) to:

Markus Raneberg
 Am Fischteich 7
 49477 Ibbenbüren
 Germany

Frank Stöver

TENEBRARUM
Blood and tears
(Voodoo Records)

Looking around for a pagan metal band from an exotic underdog country? Then go for TENEBRARUM from Colombia and their CD "Blood and tears", which includes 12 raw songs of modern black metal with shrieky vocals, keyboards, violin and guest female appearances. Very basic and crude music with a decent sound, but surely only recommendable if you have a certain exotic bonus to give away! The CD sells for \$18 and don't forget to ask for further info about the dedicated scene in Columbia... mi patria! Contact:

HORRENDA VISION ZINE
 c/o Jesus Claros
 A.A. 1430
 Popayan
 Colombia

VOODOO RECORDS
 c/o David Rivera
 A.A. 96005
 Medellín
 Colombia

Leif Jensen

THA-NORR
Wolfenzeitler
(Nazgul's Eyrie Productions)

Without any intro the german THA-NORR start their work to spread their dark and unholy black metal in the northern vein that varies between midtempo and uptempo parts. The simple songstructures, packed in a good production, contain a lot of atmosphere completed with some piano and flute passages, a dark but clear melodic voice, atmospheric keys and the great screaming of the vocalist. This album is an easy one for every soul into this genre, provided that he/she is not oversaturated with this style. So here we come to the only negative aspect I can hear, it is basic stuff and not really an outstanding release in these hard times. Enjoy it or not, I do...

Thomas Georg

THERGOTHON
Stream from the heavens
(Obscure Plasma / Avantgarde Music)

This one was released back in 1994 already and as it was not reviewed in here in the meantime, I see it as my duty to do this now. THERGOTHON are hailing from Finland and are handled as a cult-act nowadays. They deliver us some megaslow, ultra depressive, atmospheric and EXTREME (!!!) black/death doom metal. The sound of the heavy downtuned guitars crawls like a thick wall of dark and cold mist out of the speakers, carried by the heavy rhythm of the drums. Combined with very extreme slow, deep grunting vocals (I've never heard a voice like this before), some great clear vocals and a strange sounding keyboard here and there, these guys create one of the most depressive pieces of music ever. If you are in an extremely bad mood, listen to this album and you'll feel way better afterwards. Simply a must for everybody into dark and doomy music. KILLER!

Thomas Georg

the fact that this was only their demo!). They are packed with a heavy dose of keyboards, which is creating the enchanting atmosphere for the nice female vocals and the additional grim male vocals. All the songs are really doomy with a touch of medieval times. But it's not a surprise if you get to know, that TUMULUS are heavily into the northern mythology and stuff. All this might not really sound unique in the first place, but that's probably due to my inability to find the right words for my feelings here. Just pick up this split-CD and find out for yourselves what creates the magic around their music. If you are into doomy atmospheric dark creations in the vein of EMPYRIUM or KATATONIA (although TUMULUS do NOT sound like them!), you should order a copy for \$17 / 23,-DM (ppd.) from the label's address:

HAMMERHEART RECORDS
P.O. Box 277
NL - 6300 AG Valkenburg
Holland

Frank Stöver

ULTIMATE SWEDISH
Slash and burn Vol.1 -
Compilation
(System Shock Records)

A pretty interesting compilation is "Ultimate Swedish", an album (as the title already suggests) exclusively dedicated to the Swedish death metal scene. I can't see the need to include wellknown songs from UNLEASHED and UNANIMATED's latest albums, but maybe they are just on there to draw the people's attention. The rest is pure underground stuff, from bands as SCARS (3 aggressive thrash songs, featuring Max Collin of LOBOTOMY on vocals!), BLOODSTONE (2 songs), CELESTIAL PAIN, NOCTURNAL OBSESSION (2 songs), ACELDAMA and A HELL ON EARTH (all with a pretty modern sounding Swedish death / thrash style) plus EDICIOUS (with almost hardcore oriented vocals) and the weird and doomy sounding THE MARBLE ICON. The cover sucks big time and addresses of all bands should have been included, but besides it's a good overview about what's going on in Sweden right now.

Frank Stöver

UNITED

UNITED
No IQ
(Metal Blade Records)

The energy of the early 80's thrash combined with a 90's attitude is surely present on the 6th album by UNITED from Japan! Considering their decade plus experience, "No IQ" is a solid metal output but surely doesn't mean "the return of true metal" (ever heard of the godly RADAUKA?!). Although I miss real highlights, it's good to see that UNITED always kept thrashing!! So thrash on...

Leif Jensen



VADER
An act of darkness MCD
(System Shock Records)

Sothis MCD
(Repulse Records)

The darkest age - Live '93
(Arctic Serenades Records)

De Profundis
(System Shock Records)

VADER MANIA!! Four(!!!) releases from Poland's answer to MORBID ANGEL reached us lately. The first one is a MCD with two songs

on it. One brandnew, typical VADER track "An act of darkness" and a conversion of DEPECHE MODE's "I feel you", a pretty unusual song but at least pretty dark sounding. Good stuff, but approx. 7 minutes for 10 - 15,-DM is a little bit expensive to me if you consider the fact that the title track is also featured on their new full length... You better go for that instead. Next one is the re-release of VADER's "Sothis" MCD via Repulse Records. Some of you might already know this here, but it comes with a more improved looking packaging and also features a bandpic on the back. Typical and strong material and a cover of BLACK SABBATH's "Black Sabbath" can be heard... The third record is a live album, which must've been recorded in the band's very own country (according to the talking in-between the songs... I didn't understand a word...). VADER are playing almost the entire debut record (except for "One step to salvation" and "Final massacre") and the sound quality is ok! It's pretty raw sounding, but never as poor as a bootleg or something. As an encore you'll get SLAYER's classic track "Hell awaits", so this should make you buy it in the end! I'm only a little bit worried about Arctic Serenades Records, cause who the hell is BADER and why does the album have a title like "The darkest age" (on the promo CD)???? Weird...really weird... Last, but not least, there's the already mentioned new full-length album "De Profundis", which finally saw its release overhere as well. To me, this one is obviously the record I would spend my money on, as it features 9 brandnew VADER tracks in their typical MORBID ANGEL meets SLAYER vein. Good production and coverart should make your decision a lot easier.

Frank Stöver

VITAL REMAINS
Into cold darkness
(Peaceville Records / MFN)

Really brutal, yet not noisy or poor sounding death metal albums are pretty hard to find these days, so something like LUCIFERION's "Demonication", MORBID ANGEL's "Domination" or this new one here from VITAL REMAINS give me a kick again and brings back the strong admiration I used to have for this type of music before it turned into a way too overcrowded mainstream phenomena! VITAL REMAINS are for sure not out to conquer the music business with some stupid crossover of several influences from outside, this is just basic, straight into your face death metal in its purest and most blasphemous way! I totally like these guys for sticking to their guns and delivering uncompromising heavy music. They easily managed to top their debut album and if you prefer stuff in the VADER, MORBID ANGEL direction, with a touch of uniqueness, you should put "Into cold darkness" on your list as well. You will be as much positively surprised by the record, as I've been by the featured conversion of CELTIC FROST's "Dethroned emperor"! Really cool record!

Frank Stöver

VIRGIN STEELE
The marriage of heaven and hell
Part II
(T & T Music)

Next to RADAUKA, ANGRA and ICED EARTH, this has to be the METAL highlight of this issue! VIRGIN STEELE have been around for more than ten years by now and always managed to deliver some excellent and unique products! Their symphonic oriented melodic metal is not comparable to any other band around these days (although there's some deaf people comparing them to MANOWAR...) and you will easily recognize them among hundreds of releases! Vocalist and main composer David DeFeis has got one of the best voices in this genre and you would definitely agree here, if you would catch them live somewhere! It's always an exciting experience, believe me! This latest album here, is part II of their "The marriage of heaven and hell" opus and continues where part I left off: From the speedy opener "Symphony of steel" to basic headbanging tracks like "Twilight of the gods", ballads like "Strawgird" or symphonic pieces like "Prometheus the fallen one" and hymns like "Victory is mine" this album leaves you completely satisfied in every way! I can't help myself comparing VIRGIN

STEELE's evolution along the lines of a good bottle of wine - the older they are, the better they get! I'm just scared how they will sound in another ten years - should be ULTIMATE! This here is at least another milestone in the history of steel (e)! And I won't accept lame excuses why you are NOT going to buy it! Fuckin' ace!!!

Frank Stöver

VOICE OF DESTRUCTION
Bloodriver
(Morbid Records)

Although I have really been trying it, I simply cannot get into the extreme crossover featured on the debut CD of the ex-death band VOICE OF DESTRUCTION from South Africa! "Crossover" because they mix elements from all metal genres to a very original wall of sound! Great Academy Studios recording (PARADISE LOST, ANATHEMA), refreshing songwriting and an amazing infosheet, but unluckily not my cup of music! Give 'em a try, it could work out for you, at last. Wasn't Schmier THE voice of destruction anyway? Ha!

Leif Jensen

WARPATH
Kill your enemy
(Steamhammer/SPV)

Although I still think that "Massive" is WARPATH's best output so far, I was pretty much blown away by the new album "Kill your enemy", because it is as uncompromising as ever before and points out clearly that these german brutal thrashers do have their very own style! These fast songwriters introduce a new vocalist who basically follows the guiding line of the precedent albums and didn't lose a fuck of their extreme musical aggression. The CRO-MAGS crossover version "Sign of hard times" isn't as convincing as their previous coversongs ("Black Metal" - VENOM and "Race war" - CARNIVORE), but still sounds enjoyable enough to be a fair feature on their 4th album. Hm, you could probably criticize that WARPATH are somehow one-directioned (the lyrics surely are!), but that would at least mean that fans of the early albums will like "Kill your enemy" as well?! No mercy!

Leif Jensen

WINDHAM HELL
Windows of souls
(Moribund Records)

This is already the second album of the american WINDHAM HELL who were founded back in 1986. The main inspiration for their music they gather through activities in nature, especially rock and mountain climbing. And when you listen to their songs, you easily notice that they are heavily inspired by classical music too, as they process plenty of different themes in each song. Their musical style is a very complex form of death metal with a lot of technical guitar pieces, their abilities on their instruments are simply amazing (listen to the cover version of Vivaldi's "The summer" - brilliant, gigantic). Besides the great guitar lines you get a great drumming with plenty of heavy double bass passages and an absolutely sick deep brutal gargling voice here and there. If you enjoy totally uncommon, dark, epic, brutal, technical but nevertheless catchy death metal, this CD may be something for you.

Thomas Georg

WIND OF THE BLACK MOUNTAIN
Forced into Blasphemy 7" EP
Sing thou unholy serpents
(Moribund Records)

Unfortunately I cannot tell you that much here, as every song has a different sound and the tape isn't labeled enough that I can clearly say which songs belong to the EP and which to the CD. But the last songs are the better ones, so they should

TORMENTOR
Anno Domini

(Nocturnal Art Productions)

What can I still say about Hungary's cult act TORMENTOR, which hasn't already been said before a thousand times? Well, these guys came up with some of the most unique forms of ancient black/death/thrash and presented us two excellent demos in the late 80's before they called the quits, what turned them into a legend. Their second demo "Anno Domini" which is now officially available as CD and LP via Nocturnal Art Productions from Norway, also featured the track "Elisabeth Bathory", which the younger ones outthere at least might know in its version from DISSECTION! Besides, vocalist Csihar Atila can be heard on MAYHEM's "De mysteris dom sathanas" album, but I like his vocalstyle here slot more! Musically TORMENTOR were pretty hard to categorize, but if you can imagine a more classical inspired guitarstyle in the early DESTRUCTION / CORONER direction, combined with the aggression of old KREATOR and the evilness of early MAYHEM (Dead period), you get pretty close, I guess. Their music was never reached by any band of the 90's and therefore this re-release is more than justified, especially when it comes with such a professional looking coverartwork and design in general. Unfortunately I only knowthe prices of the CD-version (\$20 in Europe, \$22 rest of the world), but if you are into vinyl, write and ask. It's definitely worth the effort.

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Frank Stöver

TUMULUS / MOCK
Hymns and dirges / Cold winter
- Split CD -
(Hammerheart Records)

This split-CD originally starts with TUMULUS, but due to the fact, that we already mentioned MOCK a couple pages earlier, we thought it might be a good idea to let you know, that their participation on here ain't as strong as their MCD! Actually, I find these 4 songs (it's their demo) pretty average and typical scandinavian sounding. Plus the production of the bass drum is really annoying (it partly almost sounds like a drum machine), so we better take a look on our countrymates' demo and don't waste more space here. There's some bad "rumors" circulating about TUMULUS, but honestly spoken, I don't really care and I'm not the right person to judge that either, cause musically they are simply amazing! I rarely get to hear so emotionfilled and strong compositions (especially if you consider

be from the CD. WINDS OF THE BLACK MOUNTAIN play a kind of black metal with a lot of intros to the songs. There's a great potential of moods, called forth by the simple midtempo guitar-riffs in connection with an emotional keyboard that has an equal position as the guitar. Further on small acoustical pieces help to increase the atmosphere. The vocals are in the typical black metal direction, but not that high-pitched and nicely done. Enriched with some other voices, screams (of women) and whispering vocals the mood is nearly terrific. More is not to be said here, I better wait for the complete result of the album. Everybody who is interested after these few lines may order the EP or CD from Moribund Records.

Thomas Georg

WITH US OR AGAINST US Compilation (Napalm Records)

The fact that I'm not so much into this compilation album by Napalm Records has nothing to do with the featured bands, cause you'll get to hear unreleased / demo stuff by ABIGOR, SUMMONING, SETHIERAL, UNPURE, KOROVA, NASTROND and BELMEZ. It's more the way it has been "thrown together"... The quality ain't the best in some cases and it all looks pretty much like an easy cash-in on previously recorded material from (by now) more or less established signings. So, I can only recommend this one to the die-hard fans of the aforementioned acts, as the material basically is pretty good. But a more professional compilation in the vein of the A.B.M.S. release would've been more impressive...

Frank Stöver

TOO MUCH STUFF WILL KILL YOU...

We once again got so much material for this issue, that we could have filled the entire mag just with reviews, but that might be a little bit boring, so we crammed in as much as we could in the regular review section and instead of simply ignoring the rest, here's all that what didn't fit anymore...

ALGOL - Entering the woods of enchantment (Effigy Rec.) It might be unique to play DEATH metal when you come from Norway these days, but besides that ALGOL is a pretty boring and uninspired act of this genre. *** **ANGER - No compromise MCD (Lucretia Records)** Italian death / thrash 3-piece with tendencies to rip off KREATOR ("In submission"), annoying vocals and grind passages... *** **ANNIHILATOR - Refresh the demon (MFN / Rough Trade)** Did you enjoy Jeff Waters' previous albums? Then you will also enjoy "Refresh the demon"! Nothing has changed... even the riffs stayed the same... It gets boring by now... *** **A.C. - 40 more reasons to hate us (Earache Rec.)** Oh shit! 42 tracks of total grind/noise chaos... incl. a cool coverversion of MANOWAR's "Gloves of Metal" (feat. Phil Anselmo on guest vocals!!)... For the sickest only! *** **AS DIVINE GRACE - Romantic bestitude of faded dawn MCD (Folter Rec.)** Never heard of this Finnish fourpiece before... Musically obviously in the early AMORPHIS vein with deepest growling vocals and melodic harmonies in the guitar department... **CEMETARY - Sundown (Black Mark)** Swedish CEMETARY once again delivered a high quality record with great artwork from Kristian Wahlin, but they should after all try to get rid off the PARADISE LOST /

TIAMAT similarities. They are still way too obvious. *** **CRYPTIC CARNAGE - And another kingdom was born (Folter Records)** Pretty atmospherical stuff here from a german five piece act... Musically somehow connected to melodic and experimental black / viking metal acts and in all manners the label's best effort to date. Worth checking out! *** **CUSTARD - God of storm MCD (self financed)** A 4-track MCD from a new german melodic metal act called CUSTARD. Good musicianship, decent production and songs that often bring a more basic BLIND GUARDIAN to my mind. I'll bet they will even have a lot more to offer in the future, so make sure to remember their name if you are into this kinda stuff. No price mentioned, but I've got an address for you: Christian Klapper, Dtingelstr. 76, 44623 Heme, Germany *** **DEAD - Wanted for kinky sessions 7" (Folter Records)** German porno grinders DEAD managed to unleash another sick 7" release. 3 tracks in the typical death / grind style are featured on this yellow piece of vinyl. Fans of NECRONY etc. can easily buy it (as usual)! But if you consider yourself as someone respecting females, you better search for some different stuff... Write to Folter Records, c/o Jörg Schröder, Wörther Str. 25, 10405 Berlin, Germany *** **DESECRATION - Gore and perversion (Artic Serenades)** And another band that pretty much enjoys the CANNIBAL CORPSE way of writing when it comes to the music and lyrics. This ain't the italian techno death metal dudes (they actually changed their moniker into D-FORM), but a useless Wales outfit here, annoying us with their gore'n'guts crap... *** **THE FLESH - Storming the heaven's gates MCD (Artic Serenades)** Some members of FUNERAL come up with "high memorable extreme death metal with jazz and funk influences" (according to the info), but I would prefer to label them as brutal death metal with four way too long songs (between 7 and 11 minutes!!). Who's going to buy all this?! *** **GAMMARAY - Silent miracles MCD (Noise Records)** Time to get sentimental... GAMMARAY released a four-track EP with old

'n new ballad type material. Luckily this ain't the ordinary cheesy stuff. It's mostly pretty epic sounding bombastic material which you might enjoy. *** **HELLOWEEN - The time of the oath (Raw Power / Castle)** Honestly spoken... I didn't really follow HELLOWEEN's career anymore after the "Keeper..." albums, but at least this new one here sounds really great! Excellent guitarwork, great melodies and even Andi Deris (voc) seems to fit. If you enjoyed older albums of these german melody speed metal fore-runners, this might be something for ya. *** **INQUITY - Serenadium (Emanzipation Productions / Die Hard Music)** Well I wouldn't really call this record "a milestone in death metal", like it was written in the infosheet, but nevertheless this is a fine brutal death metal offering from a more or less establish danish band. Previous to this, they put out a reh.tape, two demos and appeared on several compilation albums, so you can't really call them a new band anymore. The material on "Serenadium" was recorded in the wellknown Borsing Recording Studio which already guarantees you a fat and crushing sound. The songs themselves are played really tight and should still appeal to all real death metal fans that are still around these days. They combine everything you expect from this type of music: deep and brutal vocals, a heavy pounding rhythm section and an interesting guitar massacre! The potential of the four danish dudes is quite obvious, so give the album a listen... *** **JUDGEMENT DAY - Cir-Cum-Cis-Lon of the Mar-Tyr (Effigy Records)** This is basic and extreme death metal made in the Netherlands. Musically quite enjoyable, but neither the production nor the originality is that convincing... *** **LIFE AFTER DEATH - Life After Death (Rising Sun Records)** Do you remember Gorzo, the drummer of ARMORED SAINT? Well, he's got a new band together called LIFE AFTER DEATH and they are soooo godly, believe me!!! The only "problem" is, you gotta be into THIN LIZZY, cause that's exactly what they are about! If Phil Lynott would still be among the living, his stuff could sound like LIFE AFTER DEATH's debut! Brilliant!!! There even a

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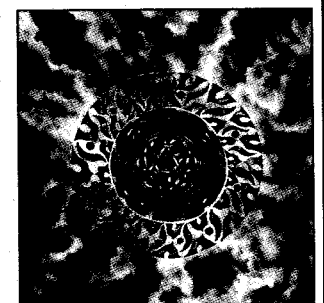


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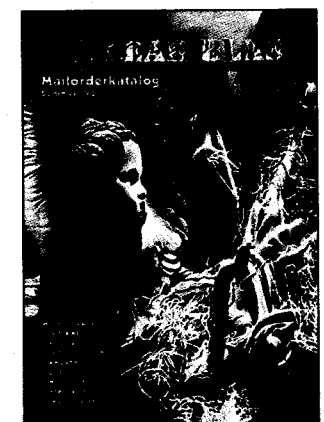
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LIZZY cover on the record... *** **MOMENTO MORI** - *La danse macabre* (Black Mark) Believe it or not, this is my first MOMENTO MORI experience and I have to admit that I really enjoyed what I heard! Classical inspired metal with a vocal delivery from Kristian Andrén (TAD MOROSE), full of atmosphere and excellent guitarwork! Sometimes there's even the spirit of old vocalist Messiah Marcolin present... Enjoyable! *** **MORTAL DISCIPLINE** - *Child of retribution* (Schindermusic) Atmospheric gothic / death metal with a vocal delivery from Karsten "Zwerg" Breitung (ex-EMINENZ, BELMEZ) and drumwork from Jan of ETERNAL PEACE... Not bad, but it lacks in a decent production... This project band split-up by now, so... 25.-DM (ppd.) to: Olaf Martin, Salomonstr.1, 09481 Scheibenberg, Germany *** **MORTICIAN** - *House by the cemetery* (Relapse Records) MORTICIAN are still one of the most brutal, but also one of the most stupid sounding death metal band to me. The vocals are just ridiculous deep and the music is lacking in excitement. Only pure dump and monotonous brutality. Just listen to what they did to CELTIC FROST's "Procreation (Of the wicked)" and NAPALM DEATH's "Scum"... Give me another one... *** **MY GARDEN** - *Neon Lights MCD* (Artic Serenades) I was expecting a little bit more unique ideas from an exotic band like MY GARDEN (they come from Turkey!), but it's nothing more than typical doom / death metal with all its clichés... *** **NODE** - *Ask MCD* (Lucretia Records) Progressive power thrash somehow similar to late INVOCATOR and the likes. Powerful produced, great packaging. Good stuff! *** **OUTRAGE** - *Life until deaf* (East West) Can't remember how many albums these Japanese dudes put out by now, but they still sound like a really aggressive version of METALLICA. Not bad... but also not worth to spend your hard earned money on. *** **PANTERA** - *The great southern trend* (East West Records) After the totally disappointing "Far beyond driven" release, I didn't really expect that much from PANTERA anymore, but there's some really good tracks on

this new album. Straight into your face with killer riffs and sheer aggression, but unfortunately there's only a handful of them - the rest gets on my nerves ones again... Too bad! *** **PAN-THY-MONIUM** - *Khaooohs & Kon-Fus-Ion* (Relapse Records) The final chapter of PAN-THY-MONIUM doesn't really differ from their previous releases... 2 very weird, looong tracks with jazzy saxophone and piano parts, a moody instrumental and one minute of played (track # 4). If you like your death metal played in a different way, check it out... *** **PARAGON BELIAL** - *Hordes of the Darklands* (Folter Records) Grim and primitive black metal, played by a new German three-piece called PARAGON BELIAL... Well, their vocalist used to be in BETHLEHEM, but that doesn't make PARAGON BELIAL better... Still pretty average sounding stuff here. *** **RAGE AND THE SYMPHONIC ORCHESTRA PRAGUE** - *Lingua Mortis* (GUN Rec.) This one deserves your full attention, cause German power metalheads RAGE recorded an album length MCD together with a symphonic orchestra! The material should even appeal to a lot of black metal fans, who claim to be into classical music, as well as to fans of the band, cause all featured songs on here are previously released RAGE tracks, but in these new versions! Very atmospheric, dramatic, bombastic! Excellent experience! *** **SARCOPHAGUS** - *For we... who are consumed by the darkness* (Pulverizer / Die Hard Music) This Chicago based four-piece has been around since the early 80's already and I could even accuse them of jumping on each trend there is, cause they started out as a hardcore band, switched to death metal later on and are now on the black metal side of things... But who gives a fuck anyway as long as the music is pretty good?! SARCOPHAGUS sometimes sound like a mixture a brutal technical death metal a la MORBID ANGEL, with the grinding aspects of CARCASS and the atmosphere and vocal delivery of today's black metal bands. A really interesting mixture, good playing abilities and lyrics in English, Spanish, Norwegian and German! I dig the album and you

should at least check them out if you're bored of getting the same Scandinavian style over and over again... The only negative aspect here is the short playing time (again)... *** **SEPULTURA** - *Roots* (Roadrunner Rec.) Oh shit... I already disliked the evolution SEPULTURA were making with their last record, but due to the fact that there's been talk about them getting back to their roots, I was curious to hear this record. I must have misunderstood something, cause except for the album title this is even more disgusting than "Chaos A.D."... SEPULTURA discovered noise and some more hardcore elements and some traditional Brazilian stuff (like they used to do in "Kiaowas" already) and incorporated all that into their stuff... I wouldn't really call this structured songs, cause it's mainly pure noise... The first single "Roots bloody roots" is quite listenable though... *** **SERENADE** - *Let loose the beauty within / TORMENT* - *The rabiance from a star* (Split CD) (Artic Serenades) This one actually features two MCD's on one CD. The first part comes from SERENADE, who deliver typical doom / death metal (not really that impressing to be honest with you) and the second part comes from TORMENT, who unfortunately have a weaker sound, but at least better songmaterial. They come up with thrashy black / death metal and I'm looking forward to hear more from them in the future... Best band on Artic Serenades so far! *** **SERPENT** - *In the garden of serpent* (Radiation Records / NBR) Project (?) band of Piotr (THERION) and Lars (ex-ENTOMBED), where they worship pure doom rock in the old tradition. *** **SICKNESS** - *Verbrannte Erde* (Folter Records) Another east German outfit that obviously got influenced by the shared vocal delivery of earlier CARCASS. Musically these guys are a lot more groovy and incorporate very little grind passages. But it comes with a stupid war concept once again... *** **SILENT CRYING** - *Compilation* (Noise Records) Not really the stuff we actually talk about in VOICES, cause it features ballads only, from several melodic metal bands like GAMMA RAY, VIRGIN STEELE, STRATOVARIUS etc., but

the overall idea behind it is really worth to be supported - "Ban the bomb" is the subtitle and as you can imagine all participating artists have united to voice their opinion against the French president Chirac's nuclear testings! *** **STRATOVARIUS** - *Episode* (Noise Records) Another strong speed melody metal album by Finnish STRATOVARIUS. If you are into HELLOWEEN meets MALMSTEEN type music you should go for it. *** **THIS EMPTY FLOW** - *Magenta Skycode* (Avantgarde Music) A really interesting Finnish three-piece (feat. ex-members of THERGOTHON by the way) but only if you can stand a totally motionfilled record somewhere between MARILLION, DEPECHE MODE and THE CURE. No growls or metal here! *** **TORQUE** - *Torque* (Mascot Records) New band of some remaining members of the Bay Area thrashers VIO-LENCE... Never liked them in the past, nor do I like their 90's thrashcore... *** **WARDOG** - *Scorched Earth* (Metal Blade Records) Here's another goodie for all you grandfathers of metal... Do you remember the name Tommy Gattis? Well, how about the bands DEUCE or TENSION then, huh?! They did a fantastic album called "Breaking point" in the mid 80's... Got it? Yeah, this guy has been around for ages by now and here's already the second album of his new band WARDOG! The stuff he comes up with is still excellent power / thrash / speed or whatever-you-wanna-call-it metal with his unique sounding vocals on top! If you miss this out, you're lost! Wait for the re-release of the band's debut via Metal Blade also and hopefully a CD edition of "Breaking point" after all those years... *** **WARLORD U.K.** - *Maximum carnage* (Nuclear Blast) Old school death metal sideproject of BENEDICTION's new drummer Neil, featuring Dave Ingram on vocals as well. Not really convincing, but at least there's a coverversion from SLAYER ("Raining blood") included. But... kill the lousy singer! ***

Frank Stöver

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