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DEATHLIKE CELEBRATION

Issue 8, May 2000



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EDITORIAL

Agonising the dead... this phrase from old Sadistik Exekution track cannot leave me when I try to make another editoreal for Ledo Takas. This time it could be more like a necrologue, but nah... It is not worth it. Though it is true that I write it the last time for Ledo Takas. Yet contents shall prove that it is something I can be proud of. In spite of many readers claimed that #7 was the very best, never to be over-come (at times I started to believe that myself), this is definitely better. I did not want to make it less interesting or less motivated. There is no big deal to keep it the same. I want to get a bit closer to perfection, so here you are with even more carefully prepared issue. It has taken me rivers of sweat & blood, believe it or not. But now I feel I have completed the mission that this evergrowing monster (the magazine, that is) was demanding from my creative ego.

Speaking of contents, yes – it is much rawer and to the metal point. Yes, it has influenced me – I started to pay more and more attention to the most extreme bands of the scene. But a few truly brilliant seekers of the spiritual music are not abandoned – no. In other words, you may name this issue the long awaited gathering of favourite artists. Another portion of them. Quite a few of the bands were supposed to be featured earlier, but ended on the last Ledo Takas only. I am proud to feature them all, anyway.

I am satisfied with the 'non-musical' (as someone named it) articles once again, even though it is a shame not to prepare at least three-four extras. But agree that such gem as Lycanthropy (hail Vyttas!) is worth them all...

You should also notice a silver disc, compiled and enclosed together with the magazine. I bet it is a perfect proof that Ledo Takas has moved forward once again. The bands are both known and upcoming, and do wait for your reaction. In my opinion, they are the ones that have something to offer for the scene.

Umm, let's better talk about the future projections.... Yes, the king is dead, but then it is time to hail the new one! Ad Arma! Prepare for total war. That is the name of a new magazine, which will partially replace Ledo Takas in the nearest future. Some traces of it you may find in this issue already. I mean all the contributors who have helped me with Ledo Takas #8. It will be the base of Ad Arma!, with quite a few people contributing, and the main co-operation will be shaped among Baltic States (Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia) underground writers. The new magazine will be simultaneously issued in local languages, and distributed in these countries, not forgetting about English version and world-wide distribution, and maybe even Russian version too, for that abandoned by the world country. It is certain that the new magazine will also include a soundcheck cd. It is certain that overall printrun of it will reach around 3000 copies per issue. It is certain that first issue will be printed and available for sale from 13th September 2000.

You still have some time to ask about advertising and soundcheck cd rates, but be really quick. With such a front of dedicated people Ad Arma! should smash. Ok, enough of free advertising, and bye bye for the true fans of Ledo Takas. See you in hell.

About the ad rates and soundcheck cd participation in a new Ad Arma! magazine ask at: ledo@takas.lt
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Thee Old Grumpy Uncle



Instead of any presentation I just thank a lot both Stephen and Attila, who permitted me to print their great conversations (published in *Metal Maniacs* this year, and *Nightwalk* in 1997 respectively) with Gylve, aka Herr Nagel, aka Frank Amarillo, aka Fenriz of Darkthrone. Both were done in person, one of them by phone. At first we go with a recent talk provided by Stephen, who has also done the following introduction...

by Stephen O'Malley and Attila Máté

- In the second track? Jesus, the second track is the only track I wrote and I can tell you that I did not think Burzum at all. It was just Hellhammer going on in my head. So I do not know. People are saying lots of... well... things like you just said. [laughing] *Killjoy* from *Necrophagia* said he heard some Slaughter [from Canada] in there. Sure, I love Slaughter, but there was really no inspiration from them on *Ravishing Grimness*.

- Sure, it is not so intentional; it is just stuck so deep in your blood it is coming out again, right?

- Well, I guess you are influenced by some old stuff you like. We basically are influenced by the 80s anyway. I do not know why. Actually, we always had some melodic [aspects] in our style, but we have not been like Hellhammer before and were not really expecting [to be so] now. I have quit doing melodic stuff and now it seems like *Nocturno Culto* has taken that and is doing more with it.

- Why had you quit?

- I am sick of making melodies, and when *Nocturno Culto* makes melodic stuff it is a match made in heaven. Then I can just keep cranking out grim rock and roll. I made at least one riff on that which I would not have had the guts to stand for seven years ago, but now I feel like I am old and can really stand for that grim rock and roll stuff. People from the states seem to be misunderstanding that "grim rock and roll" term, but when I say that I am thinking about the first Bathory and shit like that. *Venom*-ish stuff.

- *Motörhead*.

- Well, sure. I still say that *Ace Of Spades* is one of the best black metal albums ever released. [laughing]

- I do not understand why people are afraid of the term rock and roll. I think it is just the commercial aspect which is frightening to people, not the sounds.

- It depends on where you come from. If you

have been ignoring *Motörhead*, which I definitely did because I was all cooped up in the underground stuff, it is really great to check that stuff out and go more in that direction now. Whereas other people who have maybe always been into that more rock and roll stuff do not really understand about going around the bend of the extreme and then on the rebound coming back to that. But we are old school anyway, that is what we want to do. I find that the new school is really dominant in the market now so it is sort of a fucking charity to release old school stuff for the few that are still into it.

- Do you have any interest in new black metal at all? There are definitely a ton of bands releasing material these days with characteristics which are not so appealing.

- I might have heard my dose of flowery stuff lately but, if we are talking about Darkthrone, we just have the same influences as we had in 1991, that was what our decision was. That was where we wanted to go, to just do that primitive shit. It is easy for us. We have already been through the normal evolution of a band - starting to play, getting better, getting good. We were like technical death metal [at first], but we just took the decision to go primitive. So for us it does not really matter what the hell has been happening the last few years [in black metal]. Celtic Frost and Hellhammer and old Bathory inspire me, and *Nocturno Culto* is inspired by old Bathory and old Bathory. So we are not going anywhere, man! [laughing]

- What about old Bathory, though?

- We never said we were original anyway! We just wanted to pay heed, to hold the torch. Remember the song *Take This Torch* by Razor? That is metal, man.

- Fuck yeah.

- I am actually going to play that song tomorrow on my thrash metal night here, Norway's only thrash metal DJ.

- That is something else I wanted to talk

about - you have said a lot of Americans are getting the wrong idea about you using the 'rock and roll' term, I think a lot of metal people are also scared of the fact that you are a DJ over there. But what does that entail? People do not realize that being a DJ can mean playing whatever kind of music, you know?

- This has been turned around totally. I never had a single job DJing electronics stuff. Never. I was only ever a DJ for thrash metal nights that I was putting on. I first started them about 1996 back at my place; there was a lot of thrash metal for me from like 1994 on. I feel a lot of that has a lot more energy than black metal too. And then the whole revival came [instigated in part via *Panzerfaust* - SO'M] and I felt that I had to make some parties for the thrash metal people in Norway, so it is a great thing but that is really what I am doing. I know how to beat-mix shit but that is just like putting tapes together for friends and stuff like that. But I am an enigmatic motherfucker, you know, people are scared of me. The Enigma. You cannot fucking pin me down, man. I have so many interests.

- Well, why should you be able to be pinned down?

- Because that is safe, and that is why people do not get scared any more because everyone is scared of the unknown. But I have unknown talents. [laughing] The Green Lantern!

- Speaking of DC Comics, what were the *Lex Luther* and the *Ebola* things?

- That is something I just mentioned in one interview and it got blown up. I just gave the name *Ebola* to Anders from *Cadaver* because he was doing some weird electronic stuff, and I was DJ *Lex Luther*. But I used that for all the tapes I made, and I still want to be a DJ, but now I want to play a hyper eclectic style, which is basically anything goes. No direction at all. Just mess people's head up. But I guess people are not ready for nights of hyper eclectia, or 'eclectism', I guess it is called. I'm unpredictable but Darkthrone is not unpredictable.

- Yeah, you are absolutely right.

- We want to be predictable. We basically try to make the same album all over again but [since] we use different studios at different times in our lives, I guess it turns out [that] we cannot make the same album [by doing that]. We want to be the Ramones of metal but we cannot fucking seem to do it!

Now please be so kind to jump over another interviewer - Hungarian one. I think Attila has made a great job back in 1997 in Elm Street, and since his issue #1 was not so widely spread - here is another opportunity to read it over again. Fenriz was as ever talkative!

- Can you tell us about your name Fenriz, because I know it is from northern mythology. Sometimes it is written Fenris. What is the difference?

- There is no difference, just in English it is written with 'z' and in Norwegian - 's'. I took the name as my legal name many years ago. I had to fight to get the name because the people in the office told that it would be bad for me to have this name, because people would think bad of me when they hear the name. But I told that I knew everything about it and I still want to be called Fenris and I took it with 's' as in Norwegian. It does not matter to me whether you use 's' or 'z', it is the same.

- Is that your real name? Do you sign official

I do not think much needs to be said to introduce this band. Basically, when you talk about Darkthrone, you can speak their name in the same breath of symbolic and musical reference as metal godz such as Celtic Frost, Autopsy, Kreator, Nihilist, Bathory, Mayhem, and Morbid Angel - all bands who built huge foundations and made long-term impact on underground metal. Cults. Briefly scanning Darkthrone's career verifies their Satanic permanence: the initial brilliant true black metal album, *A Blaze In The Northern Sky*, the untouchable cold masterpiece and personal #1 *Under A Funeral Moon*, and the ultra-raw burner *Transilvanian Hunger*, whose impact on the black metal underground was probably the most complete of the band's titles, stillbirthing literally hundreds of groups in the mid 90s. *Panzerfaust* was the unshaken epoch (and grandest nod to precursors Celtic Frost), probably the album responsible for spurning the reborn interest in the band amongst the newer fans who never heard them the first time around - and the subsequent rip-off bands further down the line. *Total Death* was perhaps the most disappointing Darkthrone release initially, but in the long term it exposed many more distinct visions, rot, and drifts. Not to forget the two initial Darkthrone albums: the technically doomy mammoths *Soulside Journey* and *Goatlord* (the latter not really an album at all, but a rehearsal tape with more than enough charisma to justify its place in the pantheon); both are superficially far from the subsequent material, but in actuality not so distant at all. Rather, they are the first two layers of the anti-celestial sphere of this godly band. The most recent facet is *Ravishing Grimness*, something that I thought had a bit of humor value in the title, and which held the same type of disappointment as *Total Death* had initially. Within a few listens, I managed to pull mine head firmly out of mine ass and ravish in the grim void of *True Black Metal*, a rare thing these days. Even rarer when there is no nostalgia, whether in the music, lyrics or approach. Darkthrone is probably the only band left from that NWOBM still playing with the old authentic feeling.

As the trees began to burn last autumn, I spoke with Old Grumpy Uncle aka Professor KoldVoid aka Fenriz of Darkthrone.

- Someone I was talking to about *Ravishing Grimness* used the word minimal.

- A lot of people seem to be afraid of making primitive riffs. They have little belief in minimal riffs and using a riff, for example, eight times or more. But I find that to be intriguing, at least, like some passages of Burzum that work really well. It works with Bathory too, but we are just doing another old school album, basically. We are really, like, down to earth here. [laughing]

- Yeah, I can totally appreciate minimalism and massive repetition of riffs. It is interesting about the Burzum thing, I heard some Burzum in the second track *The Beast* [I had actually meant to say the first track, *Lifeless*].

documents as Fenris?

- Yes, there you see (showing his driving licence). That is of course also in my passport. I did not just want to use it. I was serious about it.

- For me *A Blaze In The Northern Sky* and *Under A Funeral Moon* are milestones in the new era of blackmetal. Do you agree with that?

- Well, I think that other albums are also important, e.g. first *Burzum* and of course old *Mayhem* stuff, *Bathory*, *Celtic Frost*... Anyway, most people think that *A Blaze In The Northern Sky* and *Under A Funeral Moon* are very important albums, so I guess I agree with you. These are definitely the albums that sell most from *Darkthrone*.

- Do you like the old *Soulside Journey* album?

- Well, at the beginning I did not like *Soulside Journey* but now I think it is ok because I have a distance to this album and it is ok to listen to it.

- I read an interview in 1992, where you really wanted to ignore the *Soulside Journey* album and said that *A Blaze In The Northern Sky* is your first album.

- It was very important to me to think like that at that time. We wanted to ignore this album. It was important for us to do it, but not so important anymore. It was just to get the point through to everyone that we are now in different direction.

- Those early recordings had a very raw sound. But it seems to me that you changed a bit with *Panzerfaust* and *Total Death*.

- *Panzerfaust* was also recorded in *Necroland Studio* so it also has a very ugly sound. We tried to do our best in the studio but people think nowadays that it sounds like shit, because people record albums with very nice sounds and that is not for me.

- You think that this is the blackmetal sound and you do not want a better sound for your cds.

- Yes. We always want an ugly sound like *Bathory* - that is very natural to me. That gives me the blackmetal feeling. I do not get blackmetal feeling when the album has a very nice deathmetal sound. That is nothing for me. That is why I almost do not listen to new things. I like the old *Bathory* sound.

- Do you think that *Nocturno Culto* voice has changed from the beginning?

- I do not think so. He is not planning to change his voice on the albums. He just sings and if it sounds different it is nothing planned. I think that on *A Blaze In The Northern Sky* and *Total Death* the vocals are not so different.

- Can you tell me how you compose a song?

- When we started working as a three-piece band then we had a sort of individualistic dictatorship. If *Zephyrous* wrote a song we had to play and record it. We trusted each other. So we knew that everyone was so much into it that if one wrote a song we knew it would be great. That is how it worked.

- You got an idea of a rhythm in your head and you make it to a song by yourself and show it in the rehearsal?

- Yeah, but I do not know how the others make their songs. Some time *Zephyrous* said that he just picked the guitar and the first thing he played he started to build a song from. But it was the same with me. I used to play the guitar and made many riffs. So when we played the guitar I knew where I was going to play my part. We never cooperate in our song writing. I never use any of my riffs in *Nocturno Culto* songs, and *Nocturno Culto* does not use mine. All of us

worked individually and when the song was finished we just took it to the rehearsal room and rehearsed it. We were not allowed to say e.g. *I do not like this riff Nocturno*, *change this riff Zephyrous* - not allowed. We had this individual dictatorship.

- What does *Arisk*, to be an Aryan, mean to you?

- It does not mean much anymore, but it used to mean. I change my opinions all the time as I am going through different stages in life. So later I can sit back and learn about the things to be in different states of mind. I used to be an antiracist, and I was put into prison for antiracist demonstration. Then I went into a more typical racist kind of thinking and now I am just looking back on them trying to learn something from these two states of mind. Now I do not care about it.

- Are you still a satanist or do you claim to be a satanist?

- Well, I have been on radio many times because I have said that I am a satanist and people called me up and wanted to do interviews with me. I do not have so much trouble walking through life as a satanist. But there are many forms of satanism you know, as there are with christian thinking. But I tend to take individualistic stands in all process but I still call my way of thinking satanic. It is easy to call myself a satanist because the lyrics of *Darkthrone* are satanic. But when it comes to be possessed by satan it is not something you can really choose. You can be possessed in a short term or it can last for many years. I do not know, maybe I am not possessed anymore but I still have the spark within me, the fire which is burning the flame.

- Ok, let us get back to your 'new' (*Goatlord*) album, which was recorded during 1991-1992.

- Yes, it is a rehearsal of an album material that we finished. We were just going to record it in a better studio but we never did it because we were so tired of playing this music, it did not mean much to us anymore. We were just into blackmetal at that time so we decided to kick the bass player out and leave the songs alone. But later we thought that those are pretty good death metal

songs so I did some vocals on it in 1994, and then it was released. But it is not a real album. If it were a real album it would be out on vinyl too, but it is only on cd. It should have been our second album.

- So, it is a deathmetal and not a blackmetal album?

- Well, I just call it darkmetal, because it is not typical deathmetal either. It has this rehearsal, strange sound and also the singing is not typical deathmetal. I think it is closer to deathmetal than blackmetal but it is not pure deathmetal. I think the vocal is very atmospheric on *Goatlord*.

- I heard rumours that you are going to split up?

- No, we never even thought about splitting up but we are just a two-piece as *Immortal* used to be. We will continue like this because we cannot have new members in *Darkthrone* I think. Me and *Nocturno Culto* have been together for almost ten years and it is difficult to a new person who would fit in and we have never ever thought about it. We can manage to make albums by being just two of course, no problem.

- Now I would like to ask you about your (ex.) projects. What is the latest about *Neptune Towers*?

- I did the third album but I am not too satisfied with it. A lot of people want me to release it. But I do not want it, it would be boring to mix it and go through the whole material in the studio again. It is three years ago that I made the third album and it is lying on the table on a tape but I do not want to release it. It is enough with the two *Neptune Towers* albums.

- What about *Dødheimgard* - don't you think it was quite similar to the *Darkthrone* style?

- Well, I played bass there and I had never played bass before. It was great for me to play the bass there, I made a lot of bass lines. I think it was rather interesting but later I did not have time because I had so many other things. I never thought that *Dødheimgard* sounded similar to *Darkthrone*, I have never made a single riff there. People just think that because I played there. If it had been another bass

player people would not have compared it. I played there so people think of *Darkthrone* automatically.

- Can you tell me what is up with *Isengard*?

- Nothing is up. I am thinking of doing different stuffs and I would also like to keep *Isengard* as sounding like *Isengard* but I have no more materials, no more ideas of this folk inspired stuff. But I do not want to do blackmetal on my own because I am saving those for *Darkthrone*. So I am not thinking of doing more *Isengard* either and when it comes to *Storm* it seems that we are not going to do another album after all. We will see, I am going on another mountain trip with *Satyr* next month and we will talk about it then. But he has moved away and it is difficult to rehearse and stuff like that. You can always work in a studio but I really find drumming boring.

- So was the first *Storm* album inspired by a mountain trip?

- No, no. It was inspired by folk music basically because *Satyr* and me were hanging out together listening to folk music and we wanted to do it ourselves, and there it was. It was natural to us not to use violins like some metal people in folkrock, we did not want that, we used only instruments we were familiar with. If people like it - fine, if not - they can listen to something else.

- *Isengard* albums seem hymnical to me, like going in battle with christianity. What was in your mind when you composed these songs, e.g. *I Kamp Med Hvide Krist*?

- Well, it would be better if one asks me this question right after I did it because then I had very strong feelings about it. I have not even heard this album for a couple of years, so I do not really remember. But this particular song was made as a tribute to the first Norwegian blackmetal festival in 1994. I made it for the festival - that was my idea with it. I had a studio in my living room so it was easy to make a lot of material.

- What is your opinion about the invasion of blackmetal bands?

- I think it is both great and also not so great. Because once we wanted to be a really small, obscure scene but now it is a big scene. A lot of people are playing in bands, a lot of kids are buying the albums. A lot of satanic art has been made and that is good. There have been lots of christian art before and now lots of satanic art. When it came this far I just want to continue. But I do not have to listen to it, I am making it myself. I do not really have to listen to new bands and I do not really want to either. I would rather listen to *Bathory* albums that is where I came from.

- Do you support any band?

- *Infernö* and *Aura Noir* with this black/thrash thing. But I do not really support new bands with fancy sound, that is not for me.

- You said you never want to play live with *Darkthrone* because it is not a live act.

- No it is not.

- But you have played live.

- We cannot say we are not a live band if we never experience it. I do not like the troubles around it. I do not like travelling. You have to make a good sound. Stay sober to make a good performance. I also do not like watching people playing live. I listen to a lot of techno but I almost never go to place where they play that music. I play it at home.

- Can we say that *Darkthrone* is alive and going to continue?

- I think we try to make more albums. We have never discussed to quit. We can take our time, we have other things in our minds.



We have jobs, you know. When you have a regular money income you can do whatever you want in your spare time. But I see a lot of bands that do not have jobs. They have to go on tours, make money. They also try to make good music. But if the trend dies, if it dies and they no longer sell, maybe they cannot get a job then. I am playing safe.

- **So you work like every average person?**
- Yes, but then again I know a lot about average people and a lot of black metallers do not know anything about average people. I have been working since 10th October 1988.

- **And what is your job?**
- I have always been working with the mail. But I can listen to music all the time. I do not have to serve anyone. I do not want a job where you have to be nice with people like in a store.

- **Do you keep the distance with people?**
- I used to keep the distance, and I like conversation and here in *Elm Street* there are always a lot of black metallers and other interesting people to talk to. But I love the art of conversation. I used to write a lot of mail with the underground scene but I wrote so many letters in a five year period that I got so bored that now I am talking to people in the last five years. I am not a loner. I would not want to sit at home and listen to music, but rather drink beer, smoke. I would go crazy sitting at home.

So we are back in 2000, and realize that Fenriz is still the same... unpredictable. Stephen continues:

- **I heard that you guys recorded the Ravishing Grimness album in three or four days.**

- Yeah it was in four days. 28 hours. Fast and furious. We know what we want, and we do not want much. I always say that you do not have to be a rocket scientist to do this. [laughing]

- **Did you write or arrange a lot of the material in the studio?**

- No, we did not do that, that would be too extreme. All the songs were ready, it is not that fucked up. It is more serious than just going into the studio and cranking them in just four days. We tried to do the songs in one take.

- **What studio was that?**

- It was the studio where *Wolf's Lair Abyss* was recorded. Once again we were unable to go our own path so we followed *Mayhem*.

- **Have you done anything in your own studio recently?**

- It is not really my studio; I was borrowing it for two or three years, that *Necrohell Studio*. We might put it up again in *Satyricon's* rehearsal space to record another *Darkthrone* song for a compilation. But we will see. It is a lot of recordings on my behalf in the next one-and-a-half months, so everything is a bit chaotic right now. I just hope there will be time for skiing in the winter.

- **What other recordings are you doing?**

- I am doing the *Elbon* project, but we are probably just going to do one song first and check what is happening. It is a difficult project to put together because everyone is fucking busy and there is a distance issue too. And then I am doing the *Valhall* album. I am always playing with that band and we have been rehearsing the new album for two-and-a-half years now. It is a fucking drag, but now we are going to finally record that. But that is like low budget, and no one has interest in that band anyway.

- **Well, I am into Black Sabbath. That is probably an accurate, safe reference.**

- It cannot be any worse. [Valhall has]

become much funkier now.

- **Like what, Funkadelic? Parliament?**

- More like *Jimi Hendrix*. I am actually a pretty good funk drummer.

- **Good, you got that backbeat down?**

- Yeah, I really do man, it is very enjoyable, much better to bang your head to.

- **It is much easier to bang your head when you shake your booty at the same time, right?**

- Well, I cannot shake my booty when I am sitting though.

- **I was wondering how you got involved with the Elbon thing?**

- It was basically *Maniac* and *Killjoy's* thing. Those two decided it but they just needed people so they asked *Phil [Anselmo]* and me.

- **What do you expect from that?**

- I expect it to be pretty primitive. We have discussed what style [it is going to take] and most people seem to be going for that *Hellhammer/old Bathory* style, which is perfectly fine with me. It is the only thing we do these days.

- **Are you going to be writing some of the music?**

- I am really slow with that shit. I have written two super riffs, and two not-so-super riffs. Someone will give me a guitar and I will make a riff, because I know where to put my fingers.

- **I want to talk about your lyrics, not specifically, but just the way people treat them. It seems like you have been put on a pedestal by a lot of people for a number of reasons, and one of those being your lyrics. Do you still consider yourself Satan's poet? Is he still speaking through your mouth?**

- They have not started treating the new ones yet. The lyrics are much more personal this time. What I did in the past was totally satanic, but this time it was more pain, more real for me. I am a fucking wuss that cries my heart out in the new lyrics.

- **That is rock and roll.**

- These lyrics hurt much more to write than anything else I have written. It was great but sometimes I am my own worst critic. But when I put it right, I put it pretty well. I also have to take into consideration that *Nocturno Culto* is going to sing this shit, this time I wanted to make it a little more singable. Not just wandering off on my own and just handing him lyrics. I do not know if it really helped and I do not know if I really care. The last four years I have written almost no lyrics, so I had to get working again. It was pretty good that I got depressed and shit. *Nocturno Culto* just called up in December, *Hey, let's record an album* and I could barely hold the phone up. It will probably be the same next time around, I hope we will do an album in two years again. I think *Nocturno Culto* wants to do it sooner too, but we are busy.

- **That is another thing - it seems like since Panzerfaust came out, there has been this rumour around Darkthrone that the band has broken up.**

- Yeah, we were not really active, but we were not really active since 1992 either. It is just recording shit - we do not like to play, really. [laughing] We do not like to play live either, we like to create. When I started making songs as a kid, I never thought about standing on stage.

- **Entertaining?**

- No, no. I just wanted to create and release it as a piece of musical work. Think about what the breaks will be, what rhythms will fit best, that is what I am basically still doing. And I am pretty happy doing it.

- **Are you writing any of the Valhall stuff?**

- No, I do not bother, man. Maybe I do not

trust them to play my riffs right. I usually do a lot of finger pulling on the strings and stuff and I really want that played right. *Nocturno Culto* can do this at least 95% right, so that is good enough. I do not know if the *Valhall* dudes can understand some of the riffs I am doing. I am into a little more improvising too. If I were to play that funky shit, I would want to play the guitar myself. If I make the music then I have to teach it to the others and I am a really bad teacher, I get really fucking irritated. It is not a good idea for me to teach stuff, and those guys have always been bugging, we always get into arguments when I am trying to teach them something. No, I do not think I will do that. If I want to do something like that I will just make it myself.

- **For a while there you were doing a lot of stuff by yourself. Isengard, Neptune Towers...**

- Yeah. That proves that you should not lock a musician in a studio. A lot of musicians maybe should not have their own studio, but at least it was a four track, so I did not have that fucking "life" sound, which a lot have. I guess I got burned out and was not really pleased with it, so I just ended and just gave the studio back. I was like *Damn it, I have been creating too much and it is time to let the ears take over*. I have been basically building up my record collection since that time. I have really hungry ears.

- **What kind of stuff are they hungry for?**

- Well, every kind of possible thing that is weird for me. Mostly old stuff now, but whatever is easy listening is easy listening. Hipster, the hipster sound, jazz...

- **What kind of jazz are you into?**

- Well...eh...a lot really...

- **Are you into that Miles Davis stuff from the early '70s?**

- *Miles Davis* stuff from the early '70s?

- **Like *Get Up With It, On The Corner, Miles In The Sky, Bitches Brew*...**

- I have been handed *Miles Davis* stuff from this and that year and, as long as it is not from the 80s, that shit was horrible. But it is better when it is old, but I have heard some of his records from the 80s, that is just whack shit, man. But then again I like *Herbie Hancock's* disco period, with vocoder. Whoo-hoo!

- **Yeah, Thrust.**

- I even like early *Commodores* [laughing]. Really early. You know, I am getting more and more into the bossanova thing, Cuban shit. Some of these guys are really playing excellent music. Well, three years ago I would have liked to kill those motherfuckers. [laughing] Now, I am like *Alright!*

- **Yeah, it is interesting how tastes change.**

- I got the whole spectrum down with the electronic genres, of course. That is a lot for me, you have, like, 100 different styles within that. Then you have all the hip hop shit. *Phil [Anselmo]* really hates hip hop. I know all you Americans hate hip hop.

- **Really? I do not hate hip hop.**

- Yeah, yeah, but it is different here because - you have been having that whole hassle with it. We were always like *Hmm, trip hop, alright, cool. It is innovative. Innovation.*

- **It does not have all the cultural bullshit tagged on.**

- It is not like I am sitting here listening to *Puff Daddy*. I am talking about the more underground shit. Not this gang shit, although I do like some of that. Some old *Old Dirty Bastard* is cool. Here in Europe we have a lot of English people doing more abstract hip hop, with not so many vocals. A lot of interesting music going on here.

- **Back to Darkthrone, I heard you were thinking of doing a video. What is that all about?**

- No, I am not thinking of doing a video. *Nocturno Culto* is thinking of doing a video. He says he is going to put together some weird black and white stuff, and I am saying *Oh, Satyr is not going to be too happy about that and Who the hell is going to show it anyway?* I never thought the idea of music video was so super anyway.

- **Well, it brings everything to the surface, to a visual level that can destroy the abstract mystique if it is not done right.**

- I like to just listen to music. I am old grumpy uncle now, man.

- **Grumpy uncle? There you go, that is your hip hop stage name.**

- [laughing]

- **So that video would be for a track, it would not be a live thing?**

- No, I do not want to be in a video. I do not know what *Nocturno Culto* is thinking here; I am really giving him free hands. If he really burns for that he can do it. It is not like we are sitting down, *Let's have a talk for an hour*. We never even talk about all that stuff anyway.

- **I wanted to ask about some rumors I heard about. Someone told me that there was going to be some US shows set up sometime, in San Francisco, for one. That is not happening, correct?**

- Who? Where? Well, we have been saying we want *Larry Hagman, 'J.R.'* from *Dallas*, with mid-parted hair and shit. We want him on bass and backing vocals. We want him on tour. If we get that then we will tour Indonesia and shit, not San Francisco. Fuck that. I do not think we would even play the Bay Area at the end of the earth.

- [laughing] Fuck off! You guys would be a hit in San Francisco. Those leather pants, man. Those guys love that shit.

- **Seriously, I hope [Nocturno Culto] does not talk me into playing live again, because I utterly hate it. I fucking despise playing live.**

- **It seems like a lot of black metal bands have gotten commercially successful and go on these tours that last 50 dates. It seems contradictory to many of the classic black metal lyrical standpoints.**

- Yeah, well, I guess the polarization has melted. The ozone layer has been melting the polarization. I guess every artist comes from the extreme standpoint but then they blend in after a while. I think a lot of these people never forgot where they came from. You tend to go through that grim period of total black metal shit for two or three years and then you mellow out a little bit.

- **Get happy?**

- I am not talking for myself right now. I can mellow out and throw jokes around and shit, but I definitely never got any happier doing this.

DARKTHRONE SELECT DISCOGRAPHY

Soulside Journey - 1990, Peaceville • A Blaze In The Northern Sky - 1992, Peaceville
Under A Funeral Moon - 1993, Peaceville • Transilvanian Hunger - 1994, Peaceville
Panzerfaust - 1995, Moonfog • Total Death - 1996, Moonfog
Goatlord - 1997, Moonfog • Ravishing Grimness - 1999, Moonfog

BLOODSHED

Swedish blackdeath heritage revived!

- If it is your first musical project, then I must admit you have got a tight band together in a short time. But then my question is - if it is really your first metal experience, as musicians?

- Well, let me answer the question with this: in early 1995 *Glenn, Mikael, Tommy* and I (*Robin* - ed.) started our first band (changing names several times, but the one that lasted longest was *Obizurt*). After a little while *Mikael* got a bit bored of singing and joined another band, this time as their drummer. In 1996 *Mikael* met *Joel*, started *Bloodshed* and quit the other band. *Glenn* joined the band shortly after. From the beginning *Glenn* and *Mikael* were supposed to share the vocal and drum duties (but things turned out differently). When they started looking for more people they asked *Tommy*, since they already knew him. They also found a bassplayer, *Stange*. *Glenn* and *Tommy* started putting most of their effort into *Bloodshed*, so *Obizurt* faded away and was laid to rest. In December 1997 they recorded the debut demo *When the night betrays the light* (by the way, the band was called *Scythe* at the time). Shortly after the recording *Stange* stopped coming to rehearsals so they asked me to replace him, which I did. So, one could say that *Bloodshed* is *Glenn's, Tommy's* and my second band, *Mikael's* third and *Joel's* first.

- Agree that the scene is so much overcrowded with bands that it gets difficult to breathe for truly talented performers. But then what still makes you drown into the scene, fight within and deliver your piece of brutality? Isn't it at some point hopeless fight?

- Nae. Most times the good bands will be the ones that are standing up when the rest has fallen. But it is confusing that a band like *Cradle Of Filth* has become big. I like that there are a lot of people that are involved in the metal scene and play in bands. The irritating part is that there are so many albums released, and far too many that should not even be demos. Bands do not get the time/let themselves evolve and mature before they have released three or four albums. We took a dive into the whole mess because we love metal and we like what we are doing. It has not at all felt like a hopeless fight so far. It seems like the fact that we put effort into the music and make it in a honest way has shined through, because we have so far only gotten negative response from one person (two if you count *Tommy's* father, who had opinions about the arrangement of one of the songs).

- You described me a vision of *Bloodshed* as more or less musical, not having any appropriate lyrical message, at least you mentioned that it is not so important for the band. At least I got the point like that. You think music should stand behind this brutal idea as the root of it all?

- Well, it is true that it is the music that we prioritize. But the lyrics are not unimportant to us and they are not just a bunch of words put together meaning nothing. We do put effort into our lyrics. The songs on *Laughter*

It has bumped into me all of a sudden. I was so slow to answer one more usual e-mail to the band that wished to be reviewed in *Ledo Takas*. I was not sure which country they are coming from! Finally the goddamn tape arrived, and I have freaked out!! Totally mind-blowing explosive cake of Swedish black death at its best!!! You know the story: *Dissection, Dawn, and Bloodshed!!!*

Isn't it genius that all good things happen when you suspect them the less? Yeah, that is why I totally worshipped *Bloodshed's* demo *Laughter of Destruction*, conducted this interview, and offered them a 7" ep deal afterwards. Guys were nice enough to answer. It was done by both *Robin* and *Joel*.

of destruction are all about death, each one in its own way. But I think music should come in first place, at least if you are going to call yourself a metal band. I am not at all fond of bands that totally rely on image and a lyrical concept.

- *Laughter of destruction* - that say quite much about your goals with *Bloodshed*, really. So then tell me where it is based on, this laughter of destroying?

- That was taken from the song *Scythe - Blade of destruction*. In that song it means the reaching of a goal (through a symbol of

violence), the death of an era and the (re)birth of a new. We took that line because, first of all, we thought it sounded like a pretty good demo title. As demo title it signifies our music (in a similar sense as in the song but in a musical and creative way) and the general topic of the lyrics: death.

- Death metal bands have a very wide range of lyrical topics these days, starting from gore themes to satanism, from social issues to occult. Do you like it being so diverse, or rather stick to older bands exploring the death topic, without anything else (I mean

Celtic Frost, Possessed, old Death?)

- Other bands can sing about whatever they want. But, some things could of course turn out very bad and inappropriate. However, I think, made in the right way, just about anything can turn out suitable lyric-wise. But maybe you should think twice about calling your music Death Metal if the lyrics are praising *Jehova* and about eating your vegetables. Our lyrics on the other hand have so far dealt with death, in various ways. I feel one can be rather diverse within this subject. But that does not mean that we absolutely will not make a song about something else.

- There was a debut demo before this recent tape released. Was it intentionally supposed to be spread in limited edition, or you had weak means to properly advertise/push it?

- The band was not 100% satisfied with it. So it was sent to only a few and it was sold to people in the Stockholm area. Only 100 copies were printed and no more will be. The band thought that was enough. So it was not intended to be limited, but they could have pushed it more if they wanted, which they chose not to, instead we started working on new material. So to answer the question - no.

- I hear a major *Dissection* influence in your music, guys. Not a bad thing really, especially when it is performed in a perfect way. But can you admit it yourselves? Is it natural progression, or a sort of tribute to the legendary band?

- You are actually the first to say this. But we will surely admit that we all love *Dissection*, which probably manifests itself in the music in one way or another. We do not think that we sound like them though. Other people has compared us with *Marduk, Merciless, Mayhem* and *Lord Belial* among other (and again we do not think we sound exactly like any of them), and if we have to be compared to others I think that *Dissection* can be added to that list. But we are of course striving to get a sound of our own.

- Following the same interrogation line, do you think it is possible to escape other artists influences, just ignoring the whole scene, and claiming you do not listen to other bands? At the end of the day it happens that such bands sound the most typical...

- If a band says that they are not influenced by anything they are most certainly lying like a priest in church. Such a basic thing as using drums, guitars and bass is an old idea, used by all metal bands. An idea they did not come up with themselves, and therefore an outside party had to affect them. And yes, some bands that state that they are totally original often prove to be the very opposite. A band that I find kind of original is *Darkthrone*, and they always say that they are very much influenced by *Bathory* and *Celtic Frost*. It is one thing to be influenced and another to steal.

- Tell me what is going on with Swedish scene as I hear all these new, and even bands which hang around for several years, turning pretty average typical metal, get unformed and play sort of rocking



heavy/death, which is totally the same in most cases? For example, new Amon Amarth? People down there are excited about them all, or it is sort of move to please the foreign demands?

- I have only heard one song from the new Amon Amarth (which I like), so I cannot really say much about that one. But I am assuming that you are talking about the rock influences we have seen bands as Entombed and Desultory have gained. I myself prefer the old Stockholm Death Metal (even though I think some of the rock/death is ok), and it seems like most underground people also prefer the older stuff. But I think (or at least hope) that the bands play this because they like it and not to please foreign demands, etc.

- In general, I am sure you are sick of labels that are stick on band's music, and do not care if someone names you black, and other - death metal? What about purity of styles that some people try to fight for in the metal scene? It bothers you a bit?

- Nae, it does not really bother me. People can call us Black Metal, Death Metal, Thrash Metal or whatever they want. We usually call our music intense Death/Black Metal (or Black/Death which is mostly the same). But of course labels that are just signing a band because they were looking for an "evil" Black Metal band cannot do it because of the music but the money they can make on it. About the fight for purity - if people make honest music what will come out will come out, and will hopefully be good too. Then if it is pure Black Metal, pure Death or Black mixed with electro and some jazz influences is not really any

interest to me, as long as it is good music.

- Recording in *Sunlight* you automatically grow into a damn serious and far thinking outfit. What are your goals with *Bloodshed*? And if that effort you spent there with *Jocke* (ex. Dawn) is worth it? Satisfied with the outcome? You will return to famous studio once again?

- Our goal is to make good music, music that we like. And when we got the chance to record the demo in a good (and legendary) studio we did not hesitate to do it. But I think we would not be less, nor more, serious if we had recorded it in another studio. Even though I can see your point. In a time when bands get a record deal immediately, we actually spent a little time on our demo and put some effort into it. Doing it, what I would call, "the right way". We are satisfied with the result (there are of course things to improve, but I think one will not ever be totally satisfied), and *Jocke* was very nice to work with. He was very helpful and came with a couple of good ideas, and the fact that he showed up, after having slept only for two hours before *Skogsberg* called him and said that we were going to record that weekend, is appreciated from our side.

- The getting process into music business catches you curious, ambitious or scared? There are so many bands, labels and just people around, and half of them even probably do not realize how they have ended being there... As a band, you ever think about the risk to lose the right track due to incompetent people around?

- I like being in contact with people in the metal scene. But of course some seem a bit lost and some are maybe not thinking of the

general best for the scene. One just has to take care of oneself, and not put all your trust in others. We think it is important that we get to do things our way and do what we think is the right thing.

- *Robin*, you are in the scene with your own zine too, with other band members contributing either. Was it your first experience with music, and how do you look upon it these days? As something to vanish with time, when the band and/or other goals will swallow all your time? Go ahead telling a few words about *Scythe* and any other activities you want to share about.

- I started *Scythe* zine in late 1996 (if I remember correctly). I remember how surprised I was 'cause it was so easy to get in touch with bands and most of them were very helpful and willing to do interviews. Anyway, so far I have released one issue. So the ones who read this that speaks Swedish (or wants to learn) can order a copy from me. Right now we are four people (plus some extra that helps out with some reviews) that are working with the zine, and we are working on the second issue that will include interviews with *Immortal*, *Mayhem*, *Dawn*, *Cranium*, *Centinex*, *Dødheimsgard*, *Infernal*, *War*, *Funeral Mist*, *Katatonia*, *Sunlight Studio*, *Wyvern*, *Insision*, *Raise Hell* and *Insania*. It will be pro-printed on semi-glossy paper (A4). Check out the website at <http://welcome.to/scythe> or e-mail me for more info. I still feel that it is damn fun to do the zine, but the negative aspect is the deadlines (which I always manage to miss). After #2 we will probably put more weight on the website (but we will still release the

printed version). And I hope we will continue working with *Scythe* for a rather long time. Maybe someone will get tired of it, maybe I will get a bit tired (but then the others could just do most of the work) but I believe we will continue.

- You started to receive interest from record labels. What about signing a full-length deal? Do you feel ready for that or not yet? I think *Baphomet Records* is not the worst place to get things started to roll? Or you would prefer to wait until bigger shark approached you?

- We would like to do something before moving on to a full-length album. That is why we have planned to record an ep. After that I think we might be ready and able to produce something of good quality, good enough for a full-length album. And I agree with you that *Baphomet Records* being a rather suitable place to start at. (Maybe I should mention that it is with *Baphomet* we are discussing the ep etc.) *Killjoy* (who owns the label) seems to be a man of the underground, and at the same time *Baphomet* is backed up by *Necropolis* and *Hammerheart Records* (who could be referred to as bigger sharks, or at least maybe a tigershark).

Not to forget and actually to explain, that upcoming Bloodshed release - an ep, should be out on vinyl by Leda Takas Records, and on compact disk - by Baphomet Records. Just wait a bit to realize their forceful attacks, and by no means - order the Laughter of Destruction demo!! Bloodshed, Robin Augustsson, Oxelv. 5. 138 31 Älta, Sweden, robin_scythe@mail.com

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- Following Avulsed stages with every new release, one must be blind not to see and deaf not to hear that vast improvement the band makes every time. Do you consider *Eminence In Putrescence* the album which made people pay decent respect to the band, or rather new cd is that final breakthrough disc, which will open the doors you have been dreaming about ever since for you?

- Yes, I think our first album *Eminence In Putrescence* was kind of our presentation card. Even though prior to that release we already spread our name in the underground with various releases, the first album was our very first important release, something where people could notice that *Avulsed* was a band to keep an eye open for. However, if we compare that album to the new one, I must say that one was pretty average. Not that we are not proud of it, but the differences are consistent!! The new album *Stabwound Orgasm* is the biggest step for us, with this work people are really considering *Avulsed* as a band to be respected. I do not know if we will ever have that "breakthrough", but that is something we are not obsessed by!! Our aim is to play Death Metal, the music we love, no matter what is the trend, and then, if a bigger label comes to us and offers us conditions that are suitable for us, then we will see...

- Can you explain how the improvement comes to your band? Is it about every single riff, vocal chord and drum pattern that you feel gets better with every new rehearsal, or the whole feeling must be tighter these days, uniting forces of five musicians into each single track?

- The improvement comes with the persistence. When we started back in early 1992, we did not have any experience, but as years went by, we were changing some members due to different reasons (personal & instrumental) and always tried to get a new member that is able to play better than the previous one. Then, when you are able to play whatever you like, then you can write songs the way you always wanted. With a bad drummer or a bad guitarist you cannot always play something you would like. Anyway, the new album has been more thought in every aspect, we tried to make every riff, every drum beat, every chorus, every vocal part and the whole song structure more mature, more varied, more catchy, more aggressive... In our previous album, songs were written in a more superfluous way, but now we take as long as needed until a song convinces us 100%!!

- I have taken it as a surprise to hear your voice much more in-depth, not that gargling as earlier. Have you paid any attention to *Slumber of Sullen Eyes*, for that matter? Moreover, instead of clear singing (that was experimented on *Eminence In Putrescence*), now you have added some hellish scream of the pit. You have gone for it according to music, or by the will to make it yet thicker, more extreme, roaring like hell?

- Well, I must admit that *Demigod* is one of my favourite bands ever, but I must tell you that *Esa's* vocals have never been any of my influences, as neither was *Chris Barnes* as many people think. Instead, some of my influences come from bands like *Funebre*, *God Macabre*, *Crematory* (Sweden), *Necrophobic* (the demo & EP era), *Grave*, *Pyrexia*... In our *Eminence In Putrescence* album I do not remember any clean vocals!! That was in our *Promo '95*. (Sorry, it was my mistake - ed.) Anyway, the "hellish scream of the pit" as you call it is simply a more 'aggressive' way of singing that I normally

Blessed By Gore



They are dealing with splatter and gore since the birth of ages. Stabwound Orgasm is definitely their best effort to date, firmly proving Spanish death metal masters to establish their name worldwide, finally. Not that previous album *Eminence In Putrescence* was bad, yet it is about its follower that made Ledo Takas dig deeper about Dave and co. Check it out, and do not forget that *Armed Forces* compilation also has one song from the new *Avulsed* album featured - *Nice Rotting Eyes*... His majesty Dave Rotten speaks...

do live. On live situation I become like possessed and then I add many 'aggressive' kinds of singing, different than the album, so I decided to apply that on this new work. However, the difference is not that big, since I do not want to do that kind of growling/screaming variation of voice like every band does. I just do it the way I feel to make it more varied, and perhaps on the next album I will keep on experimenting other forms of grunting!!

- *Cybergore* has received quite a controversial response, but I have made a conclusion media has got its message, yet did not like it that much. You still think it was worth a try, and keep enjoying that weird shit it is displayed there? In general, I thought earlier that your attitude towards music was very conservative... until I saw positive reviews of black and doom records in your catalog. ... Is it changing with time? You think you need to follow what is up hot/popular there, not sticking just to your beloved music?



- Conservative?? Mmm... well, although my favourite kind of music is Death Metal, I like many other styles!! The fact that I hate certain childish attitudes in the scene does not mean I do not like certain Black, Doom, Industrial, Thrash or whatever kind of music!! The only thing I cannot really stand is that 'folk' shit of bands like *Vintersorg* or *Otyg* and these poor wannabes that want to imitate the ancient 80's Thrash music & feeling. These are just pathetic!! As for the rest, I like some bands more than others, that is it!!

As for *Cybergore*, we are still very proud of that cd!! I know some people did not like it and even hated it, but many others loved it and at least we showed that we have guts to do whatever we want without giving a shit about others' possible opinions. I think that is a really extreme cd!! And yes, everybody changes with the time. I am 30 years old now and I am not the same as with 15 years, although the passion is still the same!!

- I wonder if you still name *Avulsed* as the brutal death metal band, having in mind all these melodies and keyboard lines here and there? What is brutal death for you? It is a difference between *Suffocation*, *Internal Bleeding* and *Avulsed*, anyway?

- Ha, ha!! That is a funny question!! When we started, there was not 'brutal Death Metal' term, because Death Metal is considered brutal, but when American bands started to arise, that term arose and some people said we were not brutal enough... that is bullshit!! So then I decided to call our music just Death Metal, because in fact that is what it is!! And to anyone who do not consider *Avulsed* as a brutal band, then I dare you to come to one of our gigs and after it, tell me if it was not brutal!! We have played with bands like the ones you mentioned, and we have proved to be more brutal than them on stage!! Brutality is not about only 'ta-ta-ta-ta...' blast beats all the way, but also because of the pounding rhythms, the combination of all, and the whole attitude of the band on stage.

- This melodic wave comes from the earlier stages of death metal? I mean, you have an inspiration in *Demigod*, old *Sentenced*, old *Belial* records, or it is totally coincidental?

- The *Demigod* influences are not coincidental, we love that band, and specially the drummer, who writes most of the songs, was really inspired by them years ago, but as for the others, no, we do not feel influenced by them. The melodic edge in our songs come from old Swedish Death Metal bands.

- You are loyal to gore tradition of death metal lyrics, through the entire set of your tunes. Can you say that these topics possess you, or it is just homage to the death metal manner, sort of the path chosen that you cannot betray? What about an idea that death metal should be about spiritual and philosophical death, with really dark message that *Celtic Frost* or *Possessed* (for example) were following at their start?

- You described it perfectly!! We chose this kind of lyrics from the start and that is something we do not want to change. Me, as a fan of death metal, hate these kind of bands like *Death*, *Gorefest* or *Carcass* that started out with brutal lyrics and then ended up talking about today's social problems and shit like that. This not the *NBC*!! Brutal music is about brutal lyrics!! This music inspires brutal feelings to me and I cannot sing about flowers and lambs!! The *Celtic Frost* or *Possessed* lyrics are ok, but that is like another option they chose. For example in my other band *Christ Denied* I sing about antichristian topics.



- In general there is a way of thinking that death metal performers are somewhere lower with this brutal thinking and messages, and guys performing that aggressive music just act on the stage like that, having totally different way of life, as soon as they leave the rehearsal rooms or concert venues... Is there a death metal philosophy as such?

- I do not know if there is a real philosophy, but well, I see live performing as a way to unleash my inner rage & aggressivity. I do not do it intentionally, it just flows from me. Sometimes I have tried not to move that much on stage because of some problems with my neck, but for some reason I cannot stand on stage like a stupid statue... as for my way of life... well, I have two other bands, a record label, a record store... everything is Death Metal!! I cannot say if others act in a different way, but as for *Avulsed*, we all fell this music, otherwise we would not be playing this, because this is not definitely giving us money to live with...

Beside the band, Dave also runs Repulse Records, a label that means death metal. It is like a fortress of the genre, proudly standing among countless black or melodic metal oriented labels these days, just making the music speak for itself. I am sure it has its fans and it has a perspective.

- Label was your dream from the early childhood, right? Like with *Avulsed*, you have passed a troubled stage when it was still *Drowned*, and you had to re-start the whole thing once again... Can you reveal some in-depth details how things were run back then, in early 90-ies?

- Yeah, the band & the label are two of my dreams that became true!! I also had a magazine, but due to lack of time I had to leave it and since then I only did collaborations in some mags. Back in early 90's it was really different!! Death Metal was like starting and everything was new. Every band was releasing demos and the first target was to do a 7" ep. Now every band does a cd-r and goes directly for a mini cd or a full-length cd without waiting. That underground spirit is somehow lost. Now people only want 100% pro-printed zines with full

colour cover & free cd, if it is not like that, then they do not want it...

- I think (tell me if I am wrong) it were you who started producing some bootleg tapes of Morbid Angel *Abominations of Desolation*, which were marketed as *Headache Records* release... Do you feel ok now, recollecting these small details about cheating people back then? Or you rather look upon it as a sort of start of your label?

- It was not cheating people. That recording was just an underground jewel unavailable anywhere, only for tape traders. I just wanted to do a limited edition to spread around maniacs for a ridiculous price. There are actually many bootlegs that are of more value than the originals!! I also wanted to do *Asphyx's Embrace The Dead* on tape, but well, that was something I did ten years ago and there are just funny remembrances to me.

- You said you have tried to publish a fanzine yourself? Do you still read underground press these days?

- Yes, I did a zine called *Spain Is Different* in 1990 together with two friends, but as they did not work seriously enough, I decided to continue by my own, and the 2nd issue was called *Drowned Mag.* in early 1991. Unfortunately that was my last issue. I actually read a few publications, but mostly interviews & reviews here and there, because being on a label, I receive tons of magazines everywhere and I do not have time enough to read them all...

- Your press releases mention some financial troubles that touched *Repulse* last year. It sounds like a slight surprise though. Where were the reasons of that? Do you really think it was due to your experiments with other than death metal type of bands? That means you have higher sales with brutal bands?

- Yeah, 1998 & 1999 were bad years for us, due to a bad financial strategy during the past. Like every business, they all have ups and downs. Every label has that, but we feel honest enough to let everybody know what is going on here. We do not have anything to hide. Yes, these experiments with bands like *The Mist*, *Jesus Martyr*, *Gothic Sex*... we felt we did not have to be afraid of releasing whatever we liked. You know, everybody was expecting from *Repulse* to release only brutal Death, but we also like other kinds of

extreme music. They did not sell good and on the other side, unknown bands like *Sepsism* & *Deeds Of Flesh* got popular immediately and sold thousands of copies, so we thought that we had to go back and release only Death Metal, because this is the music we can sell & promote better.

- Still on label side, I wonder about that *Demigod* story that happened earlier in 1999... They were so close to return with a new album, and then it turned into total resignation afterwards... Tell me if the music was the only thing that made parts split, or there were some extra (financial?) issues that you have not made an agreement with them?

- The new *Demigod* album was being recorded in early 1999, but suddenly the singer (*Esä*) was kicked out of the band because he was not singing the way the rest of the band wanted. Then the bass player moved to England and the drummer moved to Helsinki. This happened right in the middle of the recordings and they still have to send me 1.000 US\$ back from that, so not only they went back to the grave, but also helped us to get a little bit deeper into shit...

- It was really strange to learn that *Adramelech* were kicked off the label either, with official statement their music has changed. One of ex. *Demigod* musicians was performing with them. As far as I have heard they still perform brutal death metal these days... Tell me *Dave*, what the hell happened with these Finns...

- The real thing is that in July 1999 I got the cd master of *Pure Blood Doom* and it was a real shit!! I could not believe they were the same band!! The music was a lot more thrashy, the vocals were awful and the production was like a crappy demo... then I reconsidered their position on the label and seeing that their previous album sold like 1700 copies, I decided to skip them from the roosters. They noticed that all my reasons were not that drastic and decided to re-record the whole album by themselves and they have released it by themselves. Now that album sounds like real *Adramelech*!! I wish they would have send me that since the beginning, but well, perhaps that would not have helped them too much, as I am really tired of that kind of "phantom-bands" that only record albums

and never reply interviews and support themselves. We are still good friends with *Adramelech* though!!

- As a band, *Avulsed* has done many gigs and tours around the globe, and it seems to me, you do everything yourselves, without any managing company or person. The label you run helps you in that? Sort of to keep a track about the latest tours and offer your suggestions to right people at right time? Getting on good tours, *Avulsed* is lucky enough? Or you see the limits far from nowadays situation?

- Yes, of course all the contacts I have with my label are used for touring, but these contacts are also available for every other band in our label!! The fact is that there are bands that are more active than others!! *Avulsed* is a very active band and we love to play live!! We have had good & bad luck. We already toured Europe twice, one with *Sinister* & other with *Incantation*, but we do not feel we need to tour Europe again if it is not with a bigger act. It is too hard to play a 3 weeks tour in front of 100 people each night... We want to tour again, but this time with a bigger audience. Anyway, now we are working on an American tour of 4 weeks in May. We will start in California and then go through Mexico, the whole Central America and finish in Colombia & Venezuela. I do not know where the limits of *Avulsed* are, but I feel we are just starting...

- So how was your recent tour in support of the new album? It seems to me that you stick more on southern Europe route though... Is it just the shorter way from home to travel, or you can make a conclusion that let us say - Scandinavians are rather less excited about this sort of death metal you write?

- At the moment we have only played 2 gigs in Venezuela and 17 in Spain in support of the new album. To be honest, going to Germany and playing in front of 50 or 100 static assholes is not that exciting... I rather play wherever in Spain in front of 300 maniacs that are really into this music!! Or in Central America!! You might think that there is no scene in Honduras, Salvador or Guatemala, but well, judging by our two gigs in Venezuela, I think our next tour over there will be crazy!!

- I am sure these countries are full of metal maniacs who are eager to see good bands perform good shows. So it is kind of useful to and exciting to go there... Cover art reflects any of your wet dreams, huh?

- Ha, ha!! Not at all, ha, ha!! It is just one of the hundreds of pervert thoughts that flows from my mind!! I like it because it is provocative, and even in places like on the *Nuclear Blast* catalogue they do not want to put the cover because they find it too extreme. Ha, ha!! That is precisely what I wanted to achieve!!

Stabwound Orgasm's lp version, released by German Deadly Art Productions, looks extremely cool. I mean, both exploded strawberry cake coloured vinyl, and great cover art are impressive. Beside that, it comes with extra 7" ep, as the whole album did not fit in a single lp. Get it people, either cd or vinyl! - it is indeed death metal at its best.

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Spacemen

THE KOVENANT

- The reason for us changing the name is that we got into trouble with the Swedish band **Covenant**, and they were going to sue us and stuff like that. We tried to call us **The Covenant**, but that was not good enough. We promised the Swedish bastards some real beating if we ever met them, but in a way they have done us a favor since it looks a lot better to write **Covenant** with a 'K'. The new logo is also a lot better than the old one, so we are satisfied with the name change.

We have also become a trio since some of the other members were fired. **Astennu** did not even bother to call us and let us know that he went on tour with **Dimmu Borgir** instead of showing up in the studio with us. There were a lot of internal problems for a while, so we became a trio and this is so far working out great. We have found a second guitarist now. His name is **Audun** and is a traditional heavy metal guitarist. The bass and keyboards are now handled by **BASS**, who stands for the artificial intelligence in the band and he takes as much space as my drum kit. We are looking for a new bass and keyboard player, but this is working out fine too.

- Tell about the new album.

- **Animatronic** was recorded at the **Woodhouse Studio** with **Siggy** as producer as usual, and again, the songs were not finished when we started recording. The guys sat and worked their asses off during the night in their hotel rooms to get the songs done. Everything was recorded with 'click', so it has this 'machine' feel to it. All in all, we are quite happy with the result. The musical changes this time came quite natural, and we will continue with this development. We felt that we wanted to get rid of some of the symphonic black metal elements we used to have. We wanted a more powerful and maybe a fresher sound on this album. I think the style we got on **Animatronic** puts **The Kovenant** in a bit of a special spot, since we had the guts to go this way. We have been criticized for this, and especially for copying **Marilyn Manson** and **Rammstein**. I can agree with the comparison with **Rammstein**, but we would not be linked up to **Marilyn Manson** if it had not been for the photos of **Lex Icon**. We did in no way try to copy **Rammstein** or anything, but I like the comparison since we like them a lot. I think we still sound like **Covenant**, even though we gone in a different direction by using loops, samplings and a more electronic sound. We have also done a cover song this time of **Babylon Zoo's Spaceman**, and that one is one of my favorites on **Animatronic**. We chose that one because the lyrics fitted in the concept in a very good way, and I think we have managed to do a much more bizarre and raw version of it. I am very satisfied with that song.

There is always someone who is griping and talking shit, but so far, the response have been really good. In USA for example, the interest for this album is really huge. We are going on a couple of tours over there, so I think we will sell quite well in the States. It will be a lot of touring with **The Kovenant** and the other bands I play in now. I think this album has the potential to sell a lot more than it has done up till now, cause we have had some problems with the promotion up till now. That is very irritating. We were supposed to get interviews in the big national newspaper here in Norway like **Satyricon** got, but that did not happen. Also, it has been almost no promotion and reviews of the album in big rock magazines, and that is too bad since I believe **Animatronic** will appeal to a lot bigger audience than what

There has been a lot of changes within last and this year's winner of the Norwegian Grammy in metal. They have changed their name from **Covenant** to **The Kovenant**, they have been reduced to a trio and last but not least, they have changed their style quite a lot, both musically and visually. The band's third album, **Animatronic**, has a much more industrial and electronic sound, and many have been surprised by this change. They have also been asked to be on the **Thomas Giertsen** show on Norwegian TV, but of course, they got cancelled in the last second. **Von Blomberg** (a.k.a. **Hellhammer**) called one cold winter morning to talk about all the changes, and started with the change of name.

our earlier releases have done. I think there is a lot of people who has not heard about the album that would have liked it, if only they could get to read about it.

- The visual style is also somewhat different now. How did you come up with this idea?

- Well, we wanted to do something visual that was more in style with our music, and at the same time we wanted to go a step further from what we did on **Nexus Polaris**. We just followed the music visually, and I think it worked out fine. It is supposed to be a bit bombastic and maybe a bit provocative, and at the same time we feel we are following the tread from the music with its futuristic visions, space stuff and all the crap we are writing about. If we had looked like a bunch of black metal guys, then it would not be in harmony with the music. It is all about putting on a mask, which we have literally done.

- You were supposed to guest the **Thomas**

Giertsen Show on Norwegian television. What were you supposed to do there, and why didn't it happen?

- We were only going to play at the end of the show. Those who are on the show are bound to be made fun of, so I think it would have ended in some bloody lips if we had been in the actual show. When we thought the deal was closed, we got ready to do the show. We bought the stuff we needed and told everyone to watch. Then, suddenly, a few days before the show was going to go on air, we got a message that said we were not allowed to play. The management of the tv-company had said no, and that was really nice of them. Bloody bastards.

- You won the Norwegian Grammy for metal last year for **Nexus Polaris**, and you are nominated again for **Animatronic**. Do you think you will win again?

- No, I do not know. We do not really care

too much about the Grammy awards. They do not mean that much for a metal band. We are nominated together with **Dimmu Borgir** and this joke stoner rock band called **Black Debbath**, so there is always a possibility to win. I know it is quite disgusting to say this, but if you do not win there is really no point in getting nominated either. It is fun to be at the party after the show, but the whole thing is just a circus. A lot of people got a bit jealous when we won last time and said we did not deserve it, and because of that it would be fun to win again. I do not think it will happen, but...

- Well, what happened was that the guys won again, so big congratulations to them. I guess the **Dimmu Borgir** guys aren't too happy with that. And now there will be touring to do for **The Kovenant**.

- This spring will go on a European tour and maybe we will do a tour through the biggest towns in Norway. We have to get to the other towns in Norway now, cause it is not fair for the fans to travel all the way to Oslo for just one gig. In the summer time there will be the usual festivals in Europe, and then we will take the States by storm. It should be fun. We are also doing some singles as soon as we get time to think the concept through, plus we are planning to do a video sometime in the near future. You know, things take time with us, but that is the plan.

*Well, the new **Mayhem** album should come out shortly if **Season Of Mist** ever decides the release date for it. It should be a new masterpiece, that is for sure!! The thing is that the management for **Mayhem** and **The Kovenant** has double booked some tours, so **Hellhammer** might get some problems choosing which band to play with (and I know he do not want to choose between his bands). Hopefully these problems will get sorted out, so you all can see both bands playing through Europe this spring.*

*(This interview also appeared in the Norwegian music paper **Backstage** nr. 1/2000.)*



Described new record is actually a great piece of art, denying that romantic music is usually crap. At least putting Emyrium in your player please forget all 'romantic' metal bands that soil this earth. Schwadorf goes in details about his spiritual experience...

- Listening to the latest record I cannot escape comparison with Ulver and their *Kveldssanger*...

I guess you are aware of this emotion when someone accuse you with plagiarism disease. I do not want to be so crucial about it, but well - there is something about that musical study, eh?

- Of course there is, but I think we are miles away from plagiarism or anything of the like. It is simply that both, us and Ulver decided on the records concerned to clad the music in a very archaic, isolated garment, to uphold the feeling of folklore and nature mysticism. But accusing us of plagiarism is in my eyes as ridiculous as saying that Grieg plagiarized Sibelius or vice versa. They both belong to the same school of composers, but obviously both have the distinctive feeling of the homecountries in their music, which I think we have too (and which a lot of people even told me).

- On the other hand, it is natural that gliding around the same musical pathway you cannot escape some similarities. I have a sort of theory, that music has some basic fundament which at some point you are destined to follow, and any forced creativity to escape it would fling aside otherwise excellent ideas you have in minds... Any comment?

- There is a lot of truth in this!

- Where do you base these nostalgic (am I allowed to name them *folkish*?) melodies at? I am sure you do not follow any thought-out formulas or masterplans made by some dudes or found in the books. But when it comes to spontaneity of mind, you should still have any shaped layers where to pull these precise melodies out?

- Most definitely, yes. I try to get a distinctive atmosphere in each of my compositions. Often I fantasize into special areas and landscapes which made a grand impression on me thus the harmonies and melodies carry that certain aura of nature mystique. Paintings by the likes of *Kittelsen*, *Sinding* or *Werenskjold*, or traditional fairytales and sagas, specially from the impressive region I have been raised, help also a lot to convey the distinctive mood faithfully.

- Both you and Thomas sling on the latest record, weaving harmonious vocal patterns, as if supplementing each other. Do you experiment whilst composing music, and seek for the best results how and for whom to sing here and there? In other words, how the order is decided, or it always comes itself with more practice?

- Of course there is both, instinctive experimentation as well as perfectly worked out vocal patterns, whereas the first mentioned definitely has been used more frequently on *Where at night*... We just met for three days in my recording studio, locked the door behind us and started to try out things - from this point it moved onward and onward. But usually it is naturally that I take care for the bass and bariton whereas Thomas uses his classically trained tenor vocals.

- You have recently participated on *Chthonic Streams* compilation album *On The Brink of Infinity*, with your new exclusive track *Die Schwäne im Schilf*. It was composed exclusively for the compilation, after *Where at night*... session? It sounds a bit closer to these ambient and industrial bands there.

When shadows grow longer



It was not until the recent Emyrium cd *Where at night* the wood grouse plays that the band has refused their metal way performed on two initial records, and turned to purely acoustic path, thus making some stir in the acknowledged circles. Moreover that the statement followed - they will never return to heavy metal distortion...

*We still, O wand'ring
Wast thou not hear the sad song of night?
How the wind does beckon thee to rest for a while
and to lend him thine ear?*

*What woe'ful tale does it tell tonight?
What tragedy of old?*

(The sad song of the wind)

Don't you think so? In general, your participation was pretty much exclusive, comparing to the other performers. Do you think Emyrium has found a good spot among that musical milieu?

- I do not agree with you. I really do not think that it sounds in any way close to any of the bands featured. That is what most of the reviews said as well. Without wanting to sound too arrogant - I think the song is quite outstanding in its context.

I of course enjoyed it a lot to participate on a compilation that features also artists from genres outside of the tiring metal milieu.

Thanks to Derek once again. *Die Schwäne im Schilf* has been composed and recorded after the *Where at night*... session, yes. I am planning to let it have a spot in a different version on our next album though.

- When it comes to promotion and pushing of Emyrium, do you pay attention to dark ambient scene? It has another circle of listeners, with really different thinking and ideas. It would be interesting to learn how their reaction correlates and differs from that usual 'metal freak'.

- Quite honestly, I do not care much for the promotion of Emyrium's music anymore. I

used to do in the past, though nowadays I wish to concentrate on the music, the poetry and the visual artwork and let the promotion be done by *Prophecy*. I even think about stopping to give interviews, since I am pretty tired of answering the usual questionnaires these days. Maybe it will change in the future again, but these days I really do not care, as long as we are not promoted as gothic metal or whatever. I truly hope, though, we will find some listeners outside the metal public, but that will be *Prophecy's* job to do.

- I am very curious to ask about the term 'romantic' that you use to call your music. I think this word turned really abused in the scene whilst being stuck anywhere possible and impossible. When it comes to Emyrium, I still feel its true meaning, without any gimmicks. Do you create being in romantic mood, do you play the music obsessed by romantic feels?

- You are precisely right - the concept of romanticism is most misused today - and that not only in the metal scene. Romanticism means for me to respect one's life and feelings to full extent, the darker as well as the lighter side and is obviously a synonym for passionate, emotional and moody art.

- It has something to do with love (in general), or not necessarily? For many people 'romantic' quickly corresponds with love and things that typical metal dude usually names as opposition to his or her rebellious spirit. How do you paint the world - I guess not just with romanticism?

- Romanticism has not necessarily to do with love. I think 'strong feeling' or indeed passion are adjectives I would put in the place here. As said, it is very dumb to associate romanticism only with some kitschy TV love stories or whatever, which is what most people connect with the term. In my book, even *Darkthrone* at their best (*Under A Funeral Moon*, *Transylvanian Hunger*, and parts of *Panzerfaust*) have been romantic artists. And a romantic author like *Lord Byron* would rotate in his grave if he knew with what kind of garbage he is brought in connection with today. Romanticism equals even a rebellious spirit, since the movement has been born out of rebellion - so get your history books and read about it before you tie a wrong connection.

- Did this worn out concept of metal being melodious and almost pop-like have finally made you draw the line between melodic metal music and calm acoustic serenity, and turn your backs to fuzzed kind of expression? Or you were just fed up with your heavy metal years to finally abandon it? Is it your way to mature?

- It is simply that my musical preferences and thus the concept of Emyrium evolved into a direction in which it has to be kept pure from anything that could hurt its serene and specific atmosphere. I am not much into stuff that mixes too many different moods and styles, so if I want some raw and bestial music I listen to *Darkthrone* and when I want something calm, and moody I put *Landberk's* serene pieces, classical music or *Kveldssanger* on the player - and so it is with Emyrium. It would make no sense destroying a carefully build up mood, that truly conveys the secret mystique of nature, by bringing noisy electrical guitars into the picture. I still like some Metal (preferably the early Norwegian school), but in Emyrium any Metal influences have been put ad acta.

- Getting closer to Emyrium lyrical side I notice quite a few allusions to the past mysteries and wisdom. It makes me think about

that folkish aspect again, but rather in a wider term, with no confrontation on German matters only. You are universal performers?

- Yes, that is surely right. It was meant to be kept open. Even though, I think we have the special mood of German romanticism in the music and also I obviously connect the atmosphere to landscapes and happenings close to me and thus being located in Germany, I think it is also enjoyable for a British or Spanish listener for example.

- Then where do you take the stories for the lyrics from? Is it also just your world of dreams that comes down on paper?

- They spring from both, my rich fantasy and the fantastic realm of the olden folk lore.

- Does the use of ancient English have any special meaning to the band, or it is just an effect to make it more solid, to have more wisdom, or I do not know – stoicism in there?

- I prefer old English to its modern counterpart any day. The language is richer in expression and brings the romantic mood of our music better to the fore.

- I think you had several songs sung in native tongue in the past, but not on *Where at night...* album. Why? And what about

recent compilation tune?

- You got something wrong there. *Die Schwäne im Schilf* was the first track ever by *Empyrium* that had German lyrics to it. We used to have a German title for our demo, though. In the future, however, I realised it would benefit *Empyrium's* concept to have the lyrics exclusively in German. We maybe should have done that already on *Where at night...*

- On the other hand lyrics carry that gloomy, or I would even name - fatal character, which has really nothing to do with joy and satisfaction of life. Is it a phase your world is at meanwhile, and not just broad imagination?

- I am drawn since childhood to the dark and unexplored side of things and have a huge fascination for tragedies and romantic drama - it simply touches me deeply. I am not your gothic depressed dude, meaning that I can and want to enjoy life to its full - but that includes its less light and sorrowfilled moments as well. For there is inspiration and beauty even in the most shadowy hour.

- This music is not meant to be performed live? Why or why not?

- That's why!

- As I understand you have another project named *Sun Of The Sleepless*? Can you tell me more about it?

- "For quite some time there has been some grimness slumbering inside myself which needed to be expressed. Since I am a big admirer of the old Norse school of black metal, and especially *Dark Throne's* masterpiece *Transilvanian Hunger* I thought it to be a real relief for myself expressing those grim, negative emotions via music the Norwegian school, thus *Poems to the wretches hearts* was composed and hammered unto the reels (or more appropriate hard disks) in December 1998. Still, *Sun Of The Sleepless* is a chameleon in many ways, the next release might be something totally different again. I just need this kind of outlet for the most spontaneous emotions and musical desires of mine, since *Empyrium* is bound to a specific concept."

That is what I answered in *Oskorei Magazine*

- I think it captures its essence perfectly.

- So *Markus* (or should I name you *Schwadorf*?), you also work at *Prophecy* hq's, if I am right? How is it going with promoting your band? I could not imagine a job more satisfactory than this, hehe... How

many people work now for *Prophecy*?

- No, I am not working at the *Prophecy* hq. I just live and work in the same house in which my recording studio is located which I run together with *Mr. Koller*.

- Sorry for my questioning mistakes. Speaking about the label orientation, I think it is rather unique with all these bands into gloomy music, and now every new release sort of lets you expect something in the same vein... How do you feel about other bands on the roster (*Tenhi*, *Gods Tower*, *Drawn*, and recent addition *In The Woods...*)?

- I think *Prophecy* managed to establish a profile based upon genuine quality and a certain mood to its bands as well. My favourites among the lot are definitely *Tenhi*. But the other bands are great too!

- What music do you listen at your spare time?

- Anything dark and passionate. Classical music, progressive rock, some electronic music and trip hop stuff, dark and traditional folk and still some metal.

Empyrium & Sun Of The Sleepless on the net at: <http://empyrium.black.art.pl>, <http://sots.black.art.pl>



BABYLON WHORES

- To start with, *King Fear* is definitely your best effort to date - it goes without saying, or rather the first listen makes it clear even for these unacquainted about the music style you perform. Is it a result of your search for a better interpretation of deathrock, or rather matured feel for the music in general?

- Thank you. Yeah, ever since the beginning I have thought that we have a magnificent vision of what we want to accomplish, but it is not until about now that the actual technical means in between have developed sufficiently in order for the vision to actually have some sort of connection to the finished product, ya know...

- It seems that the band is slightly but firmly ridding off the last clichés that might still be found on your previous releases. This new effort sounds to me as a perfect medium between what could be called deathrock, heavy metal, or even heavy music in general. Sort of just Babylon Whores, and no additional comment. Say me the name, and I know what kind of thing it is ... Am I right?

- Thanks, I would like to see it sort of like that, too. I think every individual band that does not cater for a fixed genre has to earn that right to be just themselves in the eyes of public - kind of sad, but that is how it is. It does not actually encourage people to go on and pursue their individual vision, does it?

- Well, musically *Skeleton Farm* is truly great, groovy and heavy I would say! Any allusion to Cathedral and Sabbath for that matter, heh? In general, *King Fear* sounds much heavier and less melodic, comparing with previous stuff, especially with *Deggael*. Is it anyhow predicted or influenced by the process of writing songs for the album?

- With *Babylon Whores*, nothing, I mean absolutely nothing is premeditated. *King Fear* just formed itself out of our collective chaos as an amicable (?) homunculus. There is definitely grounds for talking about Cathedral with *Skeleton Farm*, yeah, a great band they are, too...though if you picked that song as a single example out of *King Fear*, it might just give a bit of a distorted view of the musical whole, you know, although I think it fits there in its place nicely. (Well, I simply enjoyed *Skeleton Farm* so much - ed.) All in all, I personally think that *King Fear* is both more melodic and heavier; I think it is more wholesome in all aspects. I do hate forced crossover bands; bands in a sense like, *let's have this rap song and this crap song and this sab song...* I basically see it as putting the means before the content, you know; the main thing is the content which these crossover usually lack - I mean, you can get as 'heavy' as can be with just piano and vocals, too...and on the other hand, your regular run-of-the-mill death metal churn ain't necessarily brutal at all, not to speak of 'satanic'...

- I hear gloomy flute melodies on your album, sort of adding one more colour to that neat carpet, but otherwise making it all so different from what Babylon Whores were about to construct earlier. Taking flute as an instrument, how could you describe its role in the creation of moods? Not only with your own music, but in a wider sense of it all?

- I think all of the traditional acoustic instruments are much more natural in the sense that their vibrations are more harmonious to the ear...along with strings, they are a weird synthesis of human and natural/animal sound, a sort of a magical bridge between man and nature...and even if you do not agree with *Jungian* psychology, I think those sounds might sometimes take us back a few generations. The inclusion of the flute was a

When I have heard *Cold Heaven*, *Babylon Whores* debut, for the first time, I thought - where is their power, where is their strength on that record? Then after some spins loud rock'n'roll has made its impact, and it was pretty good even at a daytime... Then *Deggael* arrived, a short six-tracker with a weird amusing video. It was ok, but a bit too mellow for me. Though *Death Comes* festival with guys headlining it all was asumingly interesting event, with more neurons filled with drunk bloody soundscapes. And now we have *King Fear* - their best effort to date, which has blown me away, unlike any previous *Babylon Whores* release...

Ladies and gentlemen, embodiment of sarcasm itself, *Ike Vil*. But he is as never serious down here, and I am proud of my cool questions, hehe.

matter of coincidence, we definitely saw that there was something that is still missing (in other words, there were a few tracks left on the mixing table) and *Antti* bumped into *Nik Turner* in Kallio, Helsinki. He delivered it exactly as it was supposed to be...

- Unfortunately my copy of the promo cd has no lyrics enclosed (I think other journalists faced the same trouble either, hehe), just a short note about the special concept this album deals with. Useless to say, I am truly

interested in that 16th century prophecy unleashed... Some more info on the whole thing? Does it have anything to do with your *Vil* (I mean, 'will') to flounder in mysterious occult things again?

- Probably...We were faced with the prophecy of *Nostradamus* telling about *The great king of terror descending from the sky in the seventh month of 1999* and as the mixing coincided with that, we had a heavy indicator of what to make of some of the other themes

that had crept in and laid themselves around the album in the form of different symbols of the (black) sun...as a void of creation. That *Grand Roi Deffraieur* of course instantly made the connection with the supposed *King Fear/ King of the World* (see e.g. in *Radio Werewolf*, one of the secret chiefs holding court over the arcane happenings of this world in *Agharta*, presumably in Tibet. On the other hand, among other possible explanations, the chain of events told on the album where opposites gradually conjoin through *Sol Niger* can in its entirety be seen as the cycle of life (or death), the fear of which is often royal. The formation of the whole thingie was ideal, we were just mediators, and maybe just because of that there is an advanced sense of coherence even outside the perimeters of our own intellectualized translations...at least in my eyes.

- It usually comes as a sweet paradox, to meet these ill-natured textures together with kick-ass energetic music. Like two opposites that actually unite under one roof, making it bizarre and twice as interesting. Aye? On the other hand, on this *King Fear* I feel that music is turned more into this negative shaded side of the balance either. Not through entire set, but like here and there, riffs catch me thinking it sounds minor.

- A nice point, that is just what it is all about - see above; the whole story of *King Fear* is opposites uniting in one single death, one added one becoming one for there has not been anything else than "one" to begin with...to pursue it, the dichotomies must be joined instead of having them grow as contradictions. It is the basic principle of hermetic philosophy.

- Apocalypse is something you strongly believe into? Do you relate it anyhow with christian dogmatic shape that is slightly childish, I would admit? What is your interpretation of the armageddon? Do you see it coming (in your dreams or visions)? Do you care about it after all?

- Would be the best thing that 'progress' and 'evolution' could achieve. In many ways, those two things, along with something called 'rationalism' have substituted the maxims of a religion that died but still keeps on haunting. I would say the mainline apocalyptic corpus is solely the property of christian culture (we will just forget about its roots & variations in other cultures for now.) Its scenery and idiom are very usable, though not very actual - I mean, it is just the stuff of dreams, very poetic, very austere, very dark. Very black metal. If you would want to dig up a physically relevant prophecy concerning the end of the world, you should look for the *Tolltec* calendar, which ends in December 2012 - presumably in the shifting of the magnetic poles of the planet, resulting in the whole face of the planet being transformed.

- Changing the topic, do you regret the demise of *Misanthropy Records*, together with all *Heroine* and stuff? I have heard you do not give a shit when it comes to commercial side of things out of *Babylon Whores* music. Then there should be no difference where to put your albums, and *Necropolis* is just another medium to keep them done? Anyway, I believe you were in closer friendly touch with your previous label, as well as current? Why exactly *Necropolis*, which had no similar music before?

- Of course you could see it kind of sad, but that is what *Tiz* decided to do and my complete respect for that. Life goes on. If we have had been dependent on one label putting out releases, we basically would not have had the justification to exist at all, you know what I mean...of the offers we



Babylon Whores live in *Death Comes* Festival, Lithuania 1998

received after the 3 song rough mixes of *King Fear*, *Necro* were the most enthusiastic, if not the biggest of the labels, and so far they have been more than up to their word - I think I have even better relationship with *Paul*, not to speak of the fact that they really do their best in pushing us...really.

- Ha, in fact they are more known as a blackmetal label, with truly antichristian & satanic ideology. You seem not to care too much about blackmetal, at least making jokes on all these kids around 'facing the evil'. Or some respect for veterans of the genre still runs through your veins?

- I do respect good black metal & 'satanists' that actually make some sense (at least) to themselves, but most of the black metal today is...not even gray.

- Any new video in sight? What kind of reaction you received for *In Arcadia Ego*? Actually it has that damned feel that is circling around the band, when you listen to the music or going through lyrics. Or would you like to make some changes if re-assembling it anew?

- Probably lots of. A good experiment it was. We recently did a 8mm-shot video of *Errata Stigmata* and will proceed with a bigger budget pro video for *Sol Niger* in February.

- I have read in *Ancient Ceremonies* magazine that you were pretty pleased with a *Death Comes* festival experience in Vilnius back in late 1998. Is it not very usual that you appear in bigger festivals around? Is it fine to perform in front of huge crowd then? What about tours, do *Necropolis* people organize something at the moment?

- Yeah, of course it is nice to play to bigger crowds. For the last few years, we have consciously tried to narrow the performances to some bigger gigs. Mainly due to laziness. Yes, *Necro* takes care of the tour front too, currently a European tour will take place (90% sure) in March/April, with possible dates later in the year in the US.

- I was thinking over questioning about an interview with you guys back then in Vilnius, but well, I thought maybe you were not in the best shape for a thing, especially after the show... You were so tired due to too hospitable organizers, or it was kind of fun to make a party yourselves? If you remember that particular event that is...

- Err...I think we were tired but extremely happy...Cheers to *Säkla & Ugnius!*

- Is it your first interview for Lithuanian magazine? (I hope so, hehe.) Usually after any more famous band makes a show here, they quickly are recognised, at least for a while, when something new pops in through radio or such, but it was not the case with *Babylon*

Whores. I think your band still remained fascinated only by true fans of the group, after *Death Comes* I mean. Can you imagine why? It should have something to do with rather specific music that you perform...

- I think we have done one before...*Antti* is currently answering *Edge of Time* that I think was from Lithuania also? (*Damn, you are right* - ed.) No, I cannot imagine why we are not stinking filthy rich and loved by everybody yet. Any hints for more success? Better deodorant maybe.

- Maybe. But I believe that in native *Suomi* you have been recognised from the very start. It seems to me that Finnish people should understand and enjoy it better than

Lithuanians. Do not ask me why, but well, I think so. Do you feel the support flowing from your admirers down there, and when has it started approximately?

- Our fanbase here is not that huge either, some thousands of copies sold...though I guess there is quite a lot of die-hard fans among them I would say.

Thanks a lot for your interest, *Tadas!* Good luck with your zine and take care, *Ike*.

- Thank you too, was nice to talk a bit.

Lately *Babylon Whores* were shaken by the line-up change, since *Jake Babylon*, the band's bassist of five years had to go. His tentative project is named *Death Fix*, rumoredly

more in an industrial vein. With just one week before the release show of *King Fear*, a replacement was chosen in *Taneli Nyholm* (of *Pandemonium Outcasts*, formerly known as *Candlelight death'n rollers Absurdus*). Press release also states that a fellow sufferer, *Antti Lindell*, who stepped in earlier to share guitar duties with that another *Antti* is still hanging in there, too, seemingly in full mental and physical health. So they are five-piece now, continuing to shock the ethics of the world once again.

Babylon Whores live in *Death Comes* Festival, Lithuania 1998

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Galgenberg

Polish blackmetal underground has always been to the extreme, denying any correlation with the commercial point of the scene, and fighting for the ideals they have always been performing the music for. Galgenberg has kicked my butt with excellent brand of raw blackmetal, first of all with their demo tape, and recently - with a new mini album. I have not resisted against talking to the band. See what happened out of that...

The band was founded in the late months of 1994 by Grauth (guitar, vocals, keyboards) and Blut (bass) with intention to play Black Metal and represent ideology that had started to fade away at that time. Later Kamela was involved as a session drummer. Then band hid themselves in dungeons where they forged their compositions and awaited the proper time for assault. This time came at the end of January 1997 when Galgenberg recorded their debut demo *Blutgrund*. Release time of this material has been delayed by finding the suitable sound problems and band's lack of any special interest to present it to larger amount of people. At that time Dark Blaze Stronghold discovered a large musical and ideological potential, and therefore, in January 1998, produced the demo on professional basis. Within a year 500 copies have been sold out and the band has gained many supporters and even more foes. Galgenberg present proper Black Metal ideology, that is the hatred to judeo-christianity, weakness, goodness, altruism and so on. Galgenberg perceives Black Metal as the notion for spreading hatred and prejudices.

In January 1999 they appeared on a *Dungeons Of Darkness* compilation cd entitled *The Night And The Fog*. Their track *Segeth...* has been placed along with many noble underground artists like Absurd, Thor's Hammer, Kristalnacht, Graveland. In May they recorded new material for the debut self-titled mcd. The material has been released within two months, once again strictly limited to 500 copies and once again via Dark Blaze Stronghold. Attacks of law officials eventually caused loss of 100 copies of these mcds (copies were confiscated by the German police of German distributor). In January 2000 Galgenberg joined forces with Mort (guitars, keyboards) of Winterschlacht and hopefully this alliance will bring even more striking attacks.

- Band's releases are the line that makes interested parties follow its existence. Music and actions are probably the only things one can learn something about musicians. And when I think upon Galgenberg, this thinking comes to my mind as never clearly, since you keep the minimal amount of info in every aspect. Can you relate Galgenberg to this thought?

- People with low self-esteem wanting to be famous introduce themselves through the biographies, leaflets, photos, newsletters etc. We do not give a fuck about being well known, we will not make press-tours, as you said only effects of our actions count, the rest is hidden in the shadows...

- You refuse to print and let others know your contact address. Is there a serious reason for that? May I ask if it has something to do with your personalities that people relate in non-musical life? Or you are aware of state's officials to react against your art, even in violent form?

- We do not want others to contact us, we are not interested in mere correspondence, if there is any reason to get in contact with somebody, we will do it ourselves.

- Recently I was travelling through Polska, and visited Krakow, and I saw disgustingly lot of judeo-christian attributes all around

the town. Do you feel the presence of their shit? Are you indifferent to it, or rather make some contra-actions?

- We are interested in our area - in Silesia. There was some arson of chapels, some crosses fell down... The people in Krakow should take care of their shit; we will not do it for them, too much is to be done here...

- In the last couple of years opinions in the blackmetal milieu concerning violent actions has seemingly divided into two literally diverse groups: half is for violence, desecrations, and arsons, others claim to fight intellectually, and say it is stupid to fight with force. I wonder what is your position though, and how do you look upon it in the years to come?

- Of course, violence. All these preachers who propose intellectual fight are just too afraid to act. All what leads to victory is good, but I do not believe that preaching will make its

effect. For the final victory we still need WAR!

- Your ideological views should be clear I think, as far as you belong to *Dark Blaze Stronghold*. You have something to say about it? Track titles are enough to show and manifest it? Can you name it a war-like attitude?

- Well, war is the keyword in the whole Galgenberg idea. We think that war is the essence of Black Metal and in this respect there is the perfect agreement between *Dark Blaze* and us. We are fighting the same war, we strive for the same victory.

- In Poland it seems blackmetal is all about two separate hordes, one deriving from Graveland and their supporters, and another - in the shape of Behemoth, and people who are ok to a slightly commercial side of things. Am I right supposing it is still about that war going between?

- How come to compare Behemoth with

Black Metal? Well, most of Polish scene is negative towards commercialism and the bands who are not gets no support from the underground and some action against them are undertaken. It is a pity that not many scenes follow our way of dealing with things. - Anyway, Polish scene was always in a special state, first of all around the sound that in my opinion is coming from that raw 90-ies blackmetal wave (Norway and stuff), but music captures pretty specific feelings. Would you name it as Slavonic character?

- I would name it that this is what Black Metal should be.

- *Blutgrund* demo was your first official release. For how long have you been practising with the band, and were there any other bands before? In the beginning, you had certain goals with the band? Was it somehow influenced by other hordes of the (Polish) scene?

- Well, the band was founded in 1994 and we have played earlier in one or two bands. The goal was simple: to play Black Metal as it should sound and to cultivate the extreme ideology of early bm. We do not listen to music that much, actually, so I doubt whether there were any real influences.

- Both your releases are out on *Dark Blaze Stronghold*. Do you trust enough *Syrragh* and his label? Do you care about its underground way of handling things? You would leave the label if it took more business-related position all of a sudden? However, material released on cd means more business, whatsoever. How do you look at it?

- Why shouldn't we trust him. All of us work for the idea not money, so I see no reason why should we worry. With people who would be business prone we would not waste a minute to talk. We live in the age of computers and cellular phones so why should we stay with tapes only; anyway, cd released in quantity of 500 copies is not really linked with business attitude.

- What about vinyl? I wonder that you go for cd instead, whilst many true blackmetal and simply metal sons, reviving the past years spirit, go for vinyl first of all? I have heard vinyl in Poland is not on sale at all...

- What sales have to do with it? We are not sentimental and we do not give the fuck whether it is released on vinyl or cd. Our music sounds great no matter from what source.

- Returning to self-titled mcd, the progress of music is awesome. Do you care about growing as the musicians, and have more techniques in performing your music? Have you chosen another studio for mcd than for the demo? Or it is just about better production this time?

- We care about what should characterise every Aryan; that is constant development. Yes, definitely we have chosen another studio, as our debut demo was recorded in our rehearsal room.

- I was slightly surprised to hear these grim and dark melodies that four tunes of mcd breathe with. You care a lot about this aspect in blackmetal these days? How can you comment this melodious mysticism for people who must know that it is way different from the typical 'melodious blackmetal' bands, or at least from those who pretend to be as such?

- Of course, dark and evil feeling conveyed in music is one of the crucial features for us, the goal is not to compose interesting or well-developed music, the goal is to create expression of the dark side of human nature.

- In my opinion, *Blasphemer*, the cover of Sodom, is out of place on mcd. It is way different from the rest, it has another approach to things. How do you look upon it yourselves? Have you heard the Luciferion, hellish

death metal band from Sweden, version?

- We have decided to put this track because it expresses the idea of Black Metal pretty well. We think that our version is the best, and parody of Luciferion does not interest us. (Ha, if you ask me, it is really too arrogant to say that - ed.)

- Kamela was your session member in demo times. Now he is listed among band members. He has finally convinced you to be a literally great drummer for Galgenberg? Or this 'session' cliché was put for other reasons?

- What is the difference whether he is session or regular member, as he is actually the best. By this what he have done he have proved himself worthy to be a full member of Galgenberg.

- You know, some moments of your music remind me Satyricon and some other Norwegian bands. Any comment? In general, what can you say about the originality of music, and if you try to escape plagiarism as such? Is it partly possible executing the speedy majestic black music you are dealing with?

- In general I will not answer the questions in which I am compared to Satyricon. (I see no reason why, though - ed.)

- Next. What you consider as black metal? The old bands, the starters, raw stuff put in 1983-1986? Or the nineties invasion with Burzum and Darkthrone? You yourself, in which period of time can claim to start touching the kult?

- Black Metal is nor old neither newer bands; it is the burning churches. Only war is important, not musical genres. (For me it is Galgenberg music, that got me interested, first of all - ed.)

- Will you continue anonymous behaviour like no lyrics, no photos, and no contact address in the future? By the way, is the

switch to purely German lyrics meant for next recordings either? What can you say about Polish hordes singing in native language?

- Well, there are actually photos in the booklet of our mcd. As we said earlier we do not give a fuck about contacts, so there will probably not be any contact address, as for the lyrics... we will see. The same with German lyrics, we think about lyric in English and in Polish.

- As every self-respecting Pole you must be not that friendly towards Lithuania, especially concerning history and the past. For how long can this dissension last, if we consider that formally people are not so fanatic about their countries anymore? It can evoke some negative thought or way of handling things towards me and my magazine?

- We do not really worry about Lithuania. I do not see anything problematic in history of our countries. Maybe there is something problematic for you but not for us. Forthcoming European Reich should take model from Polish/Lithuanian Union. We see enemy in Zionist Occupational Government, not in a small Baltic country.

- What makes you continuing to play black metal? Would you keep it going even all the rest of the world stop playing and listening to it one day?

- We play for ourselves, if the rest of the world will stop playing bm one day, we will be very happy because we will play bm exclusively and just for us.

- Any further actions of Galgenberg in sight?

- More violence, more fight, worse sound, more victims...

Contact: *Dark Blaze Stronghold*, P. O. Box 67, 41-900 Bytom, Poland

Measuring the depths of hell



Netherlands have lost Pestilence, they have also lost Gorefest - long time ago. But there are still Asphyx, Pentacle, Soulburn, and obviously - Sinister!!! Once again: long-time favourites, and I thank Nuclear Liz for a great opportunity to chat a bit with the legendary death metal combo...

- This is Alex, The bass player from Sinister. Bart asked me to do this interview.

- **Aggressive Measures have been composed during all these long months after Hate was released, or it was a job of the recent half a year or something?? I believe these shake-ups in your line-up have influenced the creative side of the band either?**

- Well, after *Hate* we recorded a mini cd called *Bastard Saints*. A couple of songs for *Aggressive Measures* were written right after *Bastard Saints*. But mostly were written with the new line up since July 1997. I do not think that the line up change influenced the writing of the new material. Sinister has always been a guarantee for brutal music, and it still is.

- **There is some tendency in the underground, that playing such fast and brutal music (be it thrash, death or black) you are enough with 30 minutes long album, as then it makes one harsh punch, as if keeping the listener to beg for more. How do you think, *Aggressive Measures* would be so ass-kicking if it were 4-5 extra songs, and more than 45 minutes all in all? Otherwise, when preparing the album, do you have in mind sort of there should be 10 songs, or no more than 15 songs thinking?**

- I think that the quality does not lie in the duration of an album. We realised that the album was not longer than 33 minutes, but it never was an issue for us. We consider the album complete with 8 songs and an intro. Personally, I like albums that do not take longer than 40 minutes of your time.

- **Now let me ask about the story with a scheduled show in Klaipėda, Lithuania in November'97, which has failed to happen. Organisers told me that it was time about the split with Mike, ex.singer of the band. Maybe this show was the final reason to part ways with him? You**

were ready to come and play in Lithuania?

- Well, Mike was still a member of Sinister in that time. The reason why we did not appear on that gig was the fact that the distance between our home and Klaipėda was too big for just one gig. The plan was to do a whole tour in the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Russia but somehow it did not went on. We regret that it happened and hope to come in the future.

- **As far as music is concerned, should this new album be considered as the return to previous aggressive way of Sinister, after the quite controversial mcd *Bastard Saints*, that everyone named as pretty weak in its contents? Or you tried to experiment a bit with those re-recorded songs there?**

- Well, I do not share your opinion that *Bastard Saints* was a weak album. In fact, I consider *Bastard Saints* as one of the best songs of

Sinister. We take the songs as they come, and usually this means that it will be fast and brutal as we have proven in the past and what we will continue to do in the future.

- **I want to ask your point of view about the progress matter. In death metal music, what you consider as the progress? To remain true to your beloved styling is a kind of progress or not? Maybe to keep improving as the musicians and to keep the sales growing is the matter of progress, whilst you stick to the same kind of music you were doing ages ago? You have any respect to the musicians who move from one style to another on every new disk?**

- I think that you can make progress within your music style. We are better musicians than we were ten years ago, but our music is still as brutal as then. What other bands do is their problem. We will be playing death metal for years!!!

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from 1988, I believe there are some reasons not to be bored with death metal? Can you name any or all of them? I believe that it is not the only music you listen to and respect for that matter... Yet how often death metal spins on your stereo at home, and how come *Sinister* is still really *sinister*, not moving anywhere?

- The reason why we are not bored of death metal is that we all love it in the deepest of our hearts. We also love other stuff but our devotion lies within the most brutal kind - Death Metal!

- I believe quite a few black metal fans would agree with me, that the feel created by your music is very dark, and let us say - the recent wave of sympho black metal bands lose a game whilst creating that feel totally! You consciously make your music dark? Can you say that it is a special parameter, which differ *Sinister* from other death metal bands?

- I know what you mean. I think that *Hate* was one of the darkest albums we have ever made. I think *Aggressive Measures* is a little bit lighter but more brutal than *Hate* (absolutely - ed.). I think that we do sound different than other death metal bands. We have our own style that makes *Sinister* for what we are.

- I am not sure if I receive an answer, but you had more occult based lyrical approach with *Hate*, that has strengthened your way of dark feel with music even more. It was *Mike's* approach to act more mythic and occult? I believe that new album is not continuing that theme anymore? It has anything to do with a new

singer? His manner of writing lyrics is still dark, isn't it?

-Yes, the lyrics are a little bit different, because *Alex* and *Eric* wrote the lyrics for the last album, and they are not so into the occult.

- On the other hand, I know that *Sinister* has always been more than just a usual death metal band with no concept/ideology, or at least your track names suggest me so. There is some things you want to share with me? It makes you put some idea from what you learn and read into the music you perform?

-Well, like I said, the concept of the occult lyrics were based on *Mike's* idea. Our main goal is to make some good songs and not to bring a message to people in the form of a lyric.

- When you name an album like *Aggressive Measures*, or *Diabolical Summoning*, or *Hate* finally, do you mean with them mysterious, unpredictable side of these powers, rather than actual human kind of it? Is there any place for social things, or just matters we meet in our miserable lives, in your lyrics? How far can it be fictional?

-We do not want to be preachers and bring evil gospels to the listener, we do not want to discuss social matters of whatsoever. The lyrics (at least on *Aggressive Measures*) are fictional. They are tools to confirm the brutality of the music and have no meaning of whatsoever.

- Speaking on *Eric's* voice, he do resembles *Mike*. I mean, it is not so strange, as the band does try to keep

music in the vein of earlier records, and then it is about a kind of voice you prefer. Many examples prove it: *Morbid Angel*, *Cannibal Corpse*, *Pestilence*, finally *Judas Priest*, *Iron Maiden*... Can you explain though, why you have picked up the vocalist with voice similar to its predecessor? What about drastic changes in that department? Do you consider *Eric's* job better than *Mike's*?

-We like singers with a deep growl. We think that that is the best combination with the music that we make. I do not consider *Eric's* voice better than *Mike*. *Mike* also did a great job on the previous albums.

- I know about *Houwitser*, consisting of quite some lads... Never heard the music, but rumours spread that it is rather similar to *Sinister*?! Then do you get along well with *Mike* after all?

-First of all, *Houwitser* is a project of *Aad* and *Michel* (former bass player), *Mike* joined the band two years later. They just recorded their first album and yes it is also very fast and brutal. Our relationship with *Mike* is still very good. We do not see him a lot but we do not hate each other. It is just that the cooperation in the band was not as it should be in a band, so we decided to go our own ways.

- You definitely feel that death metal hype has gone, now just true fans are left, yet market still exists. Can you tell me what is going on with different marketing and festival/tour organising? Do you feel being a bit aside with current trends taking it over? On the other hand, I believe for bands as yours there are still many

offers to play summer festivals, and you are well promoted by your management/label?

- Well, I think that death metal is getting bigger again. There are some great new bands and the black metal hype is over. We will be playing on 3 summer festivals (1999 - ed.) which are *Milwaukee* festival (USA), *Wacken Open Air* (Germany) and *Dynamo* festival (Czech-Republic).

- Death metal should be about death? Or not necessarily? And what can you say on melodic death ruling the trend these days? It can be named as death metal? Lyrically I believe it is too far away from death and destruction...

-No, No, No.... Death metal is not dead. Like I said, it is coming back. There are always people that love brutal and fast music. It has been in the past and it will be in the future. Believe me!

- Yes, I am sure about that, but you have misunderstood my question. Do you look upon *Sinister* as an art form? If it were not music, what would be that artsy substitution to you, if any? You have that passion to create? How do you think - where does it come from?

-Well, I am a huge horror movie fan. So if I would not play in a band, maybe I would direct my own horror movie. I do not know where it comes from.

- I am interested to know your point of view on Dutch metal scene, death in particular. You love *Pestilence*, *Pentacle*, old *Gorefest*, *God Dethroned*, *Asphyx* records? Would you say it was (is) a kind of school of it? Or the roots are more based in European death metal?

-The Dutch scene is very good. It is too bad that *Pestilence* are not making any music anymore, because they were truly awesome. I think that the Dutch scene is different than the rest of Europe. Each band has its own particular sound that makes them unique.

- *Sinister* have any chance to drastically change in one (three, five, ten...) years? Musically, I mean... So what kind of new summoning world should expect from you guys? And how do you feel as a band comparing to ten or five years ago?

- We will be playing brutal music for a very long time from now. Do not expect a slow album in the future. *Sinister* will be raging until we think it is time to quit.

Actually this interview was conducted last year, and ever since they have lost their singer once again. Before that I saw them live in *Wacken* - hell, it was a Performance! Hot summer daytime show has turned into hellish moshpit all around the place. Such moments are enough to realize that death metal is something that cannot cease, with a help of so darkly wonderful outfits as *Sinister* are.

Discography:
1992 *Cross The Styx*
1993 *Diabolic Summoning*
1995 *Hate*
1996 *Bastard Saints*
1998 *Aggressive Measures*

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Sinister in action at Wacken '99

WACKEN OPEN AIR 1999

It is not a pink daydream anymore, even for a metaloman from Eastern European country. You do not need a special visa to enter German domains, so half of the troubles are in the past. No wonder that I have ended up last summer in *Wacken Open Air*, one of the (if not the) biggest European metal festivals, feasting the jubilee tenth event together with another 20000 or so maniacs. It is a 100% countryside place there, that is a great area for such a big festival that *WOA* definitely is. Fresh air, friendly inhabitants (they are so used to festival that already happen to open their windows wide and put *Sepultura* at full volume during the fest days). Metal makes the world go round... Indeed I would love to live there, heh.

Ok, at first hand I had an explosion of impressions – it is a bit too much, when you have never experienced anything similar before. It is sick, sick, SICK to see so many metalheads at one place! Unimaginable quantities, and what is the most significant, different from my country – people are of absolutely various age, not just your usual kids and youth audience. I was quite amused to see 40+ years old ladies with *Dimmu Borgir* shirts and even tattoos here and there. Just something that you would never see or even imagine here. Of course it has been both irritating, especially with too many kids wearing *Darkthrone* shirts, but it is also a part of the trend. Festival atmosphere was great, and you could barely see a gloomy face among that crowd (except some 'true' kids of course) – it was clear that people occurred there to see their idols, to bang their heads and to have one big party. The only minor point, which seems to be unavoidable at any event of such scale – piles of rubbish in the whole



Abbath is quite concentrated

area of the festival. It was weird indeed to see German people so careless about cleanness, the nation that is said to be the tidiest in the whole world.

Nah, who cares... Let us recollect some metal instead. And there IS what to recollect! Maybe it is good for organizers to invite over 80 bands, which have been performing two long days on five stages, but the listener, fan, maniac is unable to catch all of the bands he wants; well at least such who likes not one but a few kinds of metal! That was my biggest trouble and disappointment with *Wacken'99*. I could not check all the bands I wanted! Let us believe that this year they will bring fewer artists, or not so much of them will be of my liking. That is why I missed quite a dozen of bands in any other case I would gladly see... for example *Rage*, *Witchery*, *Crematory*, *Napalm Death*, *Bewitched*, *Solitude Aeternus*, *Amon Amarth*, *Agent Steel*, *Nevermore*... the list goes on...

And now, so to say – the gem of the report. The list of bands and descriptions of their peculiar shows – all of them were really shining, and have made an indelible impression for the rest of my life. First day, that was Friday August 6th, I was amazed by *Sinister* first of all. They have appeared at *History* stage at 17:30, time when the weather is still too hot to relax, and the night is far from darkening the sky. Mind you – I have appeared straight in hell – enormous moshpit that these Dutch masters happened to evoke! It was hardly bearable to survive, whether you have been standing in the first or last lines of the crowd. And guys were excellent – they have blown with their death metal aggression, performing many new and even old tracks. Then it was time for uncle *Udo Dirkschneider* to show that metal master cannot get older, he can just get wiser and supreme! It was a hell of a show, simply 100% professionally prepared miracle that could not leave

anyone ignorant, who ever worshipper *Accept*. *U.D.O.* were playing almost only old time classics, that reminded a sort of best of album, yet performed live, in front of you! And the third monsters that damned Friday were nothing else but *Mercyful Fate* – the legend that every true metallor MUST experience, and never forget it! That is the case with me, I still clearly remember all the classic moments of their performance, where *King* has taken the role of the conductor over the whole headbanging, or just awestruck staring area. Indeed it must be experienced, especially whilst the band performed almost all the classics from both first albums... Such festivals are especially good chance to listen to the most legendary tunes by metal monsters. Must admit that Friday was the day when *Hammerfall*, *Destruction* (first show after being reformed), *Mayhem* and *Immortal* performed as well, but they were not as monstrous as I have expected them to be. Well, *Maniac* has been making different kind of posing, yet I think *Mayhem* is not that kind of band which leaves such a huge impression performing in front of a big crowd. Anyway, it was good show, with all the bands mentioned.

And then came Saturday, with its rain and worse mood everywhere you could see. Ha, musicians were the only guys who could and had to make the audience enthused again. And they have done it. *Cannibal Corpse*, *Atrocity*, *Dimmu Borgir*, *Therion* – these bands have been turning the whole shit upside down. If not literally, then mentally indeed. *Corpsegrinder* and co. made the death-bangers forget the irksome rain, and concentrate on slamming and growling together with the American five-piece.

They had a great response, as well as local heroes *Atrocity*. Guys have prepared a special show with strippers, *Liv-Kristine* and other extravaganza, and what surprised me the most – they have not limited themselves to poppy cover songs, but added a few old time death metal classics, as well as *Procreation of the Wicked* cover, making the whole show much more alive and extreme! Good, damn good! Ok ok, I know that many of you will simply suggest me to fuck off if I say that *Dimmu Borgir* has got the best performance from all black ('black?') metal pack of *Wacken*, but it was true. I personally have been waiting for their set with a usual suspicion, but it was dispersed so quickly that I was not sure whether I started to headbang from the middle of opener *Reptile*, or from the following song. Nonetheless, their sound was perfect, performance – excellent, and impact that they have done to the audience – professionally finished and rational. *Simon*, who replaced *Nagash* on bass, has definitely added his charm with a firm vocal performance, too. Nobody could blame them for deceiving blackmetal ideas or something that night. *Therion* has ended up not only the night, but the whole festival. One thing, which was disappointing, was a short set, but it was darn worth it! In the dead of the night you stand there and observe the metal symphony, accompanied with real orchestra and choir! Charming, passionate, exclusive. It was definitely the best band to end it up, with final accords chosen as hymnic and eclectic music. Aye, *Wacken'99* has ended then, but the festival organizers rushed to invite every and all of attendants to next year's headbangers paradise, and I bet many of them will surely move there this summer again. Including me?



Too huge crowd for Maniac?



No he plagues!

Ancient, but not old!

PENTACLE

Sometimes it is destined: things that you wanted to achieve so much do not roll as planned and predicted, and the more force you put in it, the worse the result gets. I definitely do not aim at Pentacle music with that, but rather at my own effort to get the band featured in Ledo Takas. Imagine - two times I have been sending my questions, and three times guys have been answering them... but these letters have been simply disappearing, simply vanishing somewhere on the way! It is slightly similar to Pentacle biography, with their followers expecting new and new releases, and the band being quite relaxed about it. This following interview has much talk about the matter, but let us not forget an exceptional music that Pentacle make, which I have been following for almost 4 years now, and it yet makes less than half of their existence. Anyway, it does not matter anything - if I like them, I like them. Wannas (bass/vocals) and Marc (drums) were talkative enough... as always.

- It was an unbelievable struggle for you guys - to come up with your debut album after so many years in the scene! Congratulations, by the way. Whilst you look back at your entire period with Pentacle, it was worth sacrificing these years?

Marc: - Well, thanks for your congratulations. It indeed took many years to release our first full-length album, but we never sacrificed anything to achieve this! On the contrary, during the past decade we were able to play with a lot of bands, release a great variety of things, from rehearsal stuff to a mini-lp/cd, and have the great experience of touring. I would not call that a sacrifice at all. It probably looks like this, because most of the stuff that we have previously recorded and released is underground material. We had also advantage of having great support from a lot of people. People who believed in what we were doing. As a matter of fact, in the past there have been opportunities for Pentacle to accomplish a faster growth, like offers from bigger labels, but we never yielded to it. And we are not complaining about anything. I guess this is just the Pentacle way. Bigger labels are not always greater too, you know.

Wannas: - Thanks for the cool words. Yeah, it was a long time. Pentacle exists for ten years now. It was and definitely is a cool time. I think we managed to do it just the way we wanted it do, right from the start. We are not an ambitious band. With that I mean we do not want to become world's most famous band, but we wanted to be respected by people who know what we are creating with our music and outfit. After all those years I can say we got a lot of recognition from the scene for what we are doing. That feels good, you know. We are not into it for the money, but some kind of 'reward' is always cool to get. Well, we still get kind words about the band from all over the world: from zines, bands and fans, so I am pretty satisfied with what we achieved. We do our own thing and that is the way it must go. We had some rough times, but afterwards I am glad we managed to pull it through, even though the road was rocky as they use to say. We released some cool products, did many cool gigs and met a lot of interesting people through Pentacle.

- I believe things have started to move on with a new album, or it is still that frustrating as in the past? I mean does label get you more promotion, do you have any shows/tours on the corner?

Marc: - Again, I do not think that we lacked anything in the past! Maybe just that nowadays people know more about Pentacle, but to be honest and with all respect, I do not care. Not that I do not like people to like us, but if they do or if they do not, it will not change my behaviour in any way. The only thing maybe that has changed is our criticism in choosing places to perform. When nobody knows anything about you, you get to play at places for maybe some 20 people. When it comes to promotion you should know that *Damnation* have also done their best for our previous release *The Fifth Moon*, just as they are doing now. Of course a bigger label can get you more promotion, but they often do not care anymore about what you are producing, only how much of it. The guys from *Damnation* are buddy metal freaks and that results in better performances of both parties. And again, we never tried to reach a certain level on which thousands of people buy your t-shirts, but do not know that *Hellhammer* is not the latest *Yamaha* bike.

- I have a feel that Pentacle were quite underrated till ... *Rides the Moonstorm* was out? Or how do you see upon it? Have you had enough of attention concerning previous stuff from bigger magazines and media around the metal market?

Marc: - I do not know how you got all of this information, but the source that told you this certainly is not reliable at all. We never felt underrated in any way. If we wanted to have more response from larger crowds or bigger magazines, then we would have changed our style into something trendy. On the other hand, a lot of fanzines do show interest in us. And they have been doing already from the beginning. After releasing *The Fifth Moon*

things surely went faster, but actually - and without being arrogant in any way - we were used to doing interviews and stuff. If you see that most of our vinyl releases were sold out in a few weeks, it can only be because people know about us. Then again, what is the use of a lot of attention?

- If I am right, you were not that much satisfied with how things went with *Displeased*? What is the old story about? Do you think *Ron and co.* are dedicated enough about their bands?

Wannas: - They did their job in releasing the mcd, doing some merchandise, did some promotion and gave us cash for the tour we did with *Ancient Rites*. I mean, I am thankful for them for what they did because they gave us the opportunity to do our thing on a bit bigger scale. After a while we felt forgotten by them. They did not contact us when something needed to be done or our opinion was needed. I think they thought we would sell more copies of *The Fifth Moon* mcd. They were really enthusiastic in the beginning, telling us how much we would sell in Germany, but after a while they noticed the sales were not that big, so I guess they were disappointed and were not that interested in us anymore. Maybe they thought we would be the right band to fill up a part of the retro thing gap. Well, we did not, and I am glad about that. We never gave any shit about trends. Of course it is cool when your cd sells good, but it never was an important issue for us. I guess *Displeased* were disappointed about this all and put us on the side track. We never heard anything from them anymore and even when we had some cool ideas they just ignored them. As told before, the communication was not very good and I do not like it when we do not know what is happening with our own band. About other bands, I know only *Eternal Solstice* personally, and they seem to be content with what is happening. As their band is a low profile thing, I can imagine *Displeased* is not willing to put too much effort in *Eternal Solstice*.

- You know, my first acquaintance with Pentacle was your track on *DSFA* compilation *Paradise of the Underground*, and I still think that was a pretty lame tune, sincerely... How do you look upon it these days? It carried the same amount of strength and ideas back then?

Marc: - We are very satisfied with our past. It shows a constant growth without forgetting our roots and what we come from. I would not say that when we could do it all over again, we should also release the same stuff, but we are glad with the way things worked out. When I listen to our first releases (until *The Fifth Moon*), it sometimes irritates me that we did not get more out of it. We have known a growth as musicians too of course. I guess that people can notice this too when they go from *Caresse* by *Both Sides* to ... *Rides the Moonstorm*. Therefore, I am proud of the fact that we never gave in to playing more technical stuff. We just kept on doing what we have been doing for the last ten years. The only thing may consist in getting more out of every song. Again, just like we always did, but becoming a better musician means putting your personal goals onto a higher state. I am not that easily satisfied with myself, you know. I always have the feeling that I could do better. That is why it takes quite a while before we really release a new song. For us, it has to be perfect. And after some years, you think that what you have recorded is cool, but could have been done better... so things recommence.....

- *The Fifth Moon* was like a real challenge for you, guys - it was damn great step in my opinion! It finally showed what you are capable of, and truly shaped the style you perform - violent old school death metal. When that feel of getting real strong and cemented came to your songs? It must have something to do with improvement over the years, maturity, which reaches you at the age of 25 or something, not 18 let us say... Do you look upon Pentacle as professional musical project these days?

Marc: - I think you could divide it into two different parts. From one point of view, you could say that it has something to do with our age. Not our biological age, but our age as musician. As I told you before, as musician you

experience some kind of growth. This of course reflects in our songs. On the other hand, we still have the same ideals when it comes to metal as - let us say - ten years ago. Maybe it is this combination that you can hear on *The Fifth Moon*. It still possesses the same spirit as the songs from our rehearsal or demo, but they are just a bit more technical and better structured. At least, this is how I see it. And I guess that tells you enough about **Pentacle's** future releases. Probably as brutal as the rest, just a little better figured out than the previous one. All you need is a little patience.

Wannes: - In a way I agree with you. It is pretty obvious lots of people do not see a release like a demo or a 7" as a full product. More something like a gap-filler. Especially in our earlier years when we only released such products it was only the die-hard underground freaks who picked up our releases. With the release of *The Fifth Moon*, which is our first 'major' release, I noticed a change in acting from a lot of people. We had a cd out, and that made us to a respected band, only because we had a disc out!

- **You sound exactly like Gunther of Ancient Rites, at a time when their recognition has come!**

- Except for our first rehearsal, we always put a lot of money and effort in our own stuff. For me in a way it does not matter if I am doing a demo or an lp. I put as much time and sweat in a so-called small release as in the recording of a full-length cd. Except for my own band I respect smaller releases from other bands as much as cds. You can see when a band is doing their best, whatever their status may be.

When ...*Rides the Moonstorm* was released the exposure from the bigger magazines was not that different from when we did the other stuff. Only an interview in *Rock Hard* was the most memorable what happened when talking about the bigger press. We got good reviews and I am happy with that, but I do not believe we got more attention than before. *Damnation* reaches a lot of cool people who for a part were not familiar with our sound yet. We did not get interviews with *Kerrang!*, *Metal Hammer*, *Aardschok* or whatever. Just the good ol' underground thing.

- **What are your lyrical themes and inspirations about? Noticing such titles as *A Serpent in Blood Red* and *Veil of Sulphur* I guess your lyrics are not that typical bang-your-head-drink-til-death-rape-that-bitch type, as many revamped thrashers like nowadays... Band name suggests me you have your occult contribution in both **Pentacle's** ideology and lyrics. Why there were no lyrics on *The Fifth Moon*, by the way?**

Wannes: - The topics I write about are personal feelings, experiences, thoughts and 'visions'. In the old days I used books to get inspiration, but I dropped that years ago, as I did not find it satisfactory to use someone's ideas or stories for personal use. From then I used my own way of 'thinking'. No, I do not use the typical 'bang your head' lyrics, although in some cases I find them amusing like *Desaster's Metalized Blood*. This subject will not fit **Pentacle's** lyrical concept. However, the lyrics for *Soul's Blood*, the song which will be featured on the split with *Desaster*, have a bit of this typical metal feeling, yet written in a very personal way. A totally different approach from what I have done before, thus interesting. The reason why there were no lyrics included on *The Fifth Moon* was I did not feel too comfortable with the idea people could read my lyrics where as I thought they were not good enough for publishing. That is the sole reason. As a compromise we used parts of the lyrics in the cd booklet. Every member could pick his favourite sentences from a particular song which were put right nearby his photo.

- **How come your newest addition, guitarist Edwin has abruptly put it off, and the ways parted? On mcd it sounds pretty cool, this pair of guitarists. It was due to his personal problems, or you rather think three-piece is the optimal choice for the band like yours?**

Wannes: - Newest addition... *Edwin* left the band three years ago. You can hardly say it is news anymore. *Edwin* left the band because it took too much effort and time for him to play in **Pentacle**. He had to travel for four hours to rehearse and getting back in one evening. That is a lot of time. We also did loads of gigs that time, so all in all it was too much for him. When he joined us he thought we were an underground band with sometimes a gig and not too much rehearsing. Unfortunately he was wrong. I am sorry it did not work out, because he is a very cool guy, a true metalhead and a great songwriter. He just could not put any heart into the band anymore. He has now a new band called *Putrefied*. It is more in the American brutal death metal. I wish him good luck!

Mind you, we have always used two guitars on every release, except for the rehearsal. So it was not the first time we had two guitars when we recorded the mcd. Personally I find the difference in using the second guitar on the mcd and previous releases not existing. We always made sure to put some extra ideas concerning the second guitar while recording, but not too much as we were a three-piece most of the time. Live we must have to reproduce the sound we have on disc, so you cannot do too different parts in the studio.

Of course fits the concept of a trio very well to our music and image, but I definitely would not mind of having a second guitarist in the band though he must have the right mentality and background to play in our band.

- **Having in mind that you exist for more than 10 years now, I guess nobody can name **Pentacle** as a productive band. What are the reasons for that?**

Wannes: - This has different reasons. First, we are not fast songwriters. We take our time and are critical towards the material we are writing. We have to be satisfied with our songs and this takes often quite some time. New songs change numerous times before the last version is ready. We put a lot of effort in the songwriting process, but again, this takes time. Second, we rehearse only once a week. Because of the busy schedules our members have it is pretty difficult to rehearse more than that. I would

like to see it different, but till now it is not possible. Third, we have our periods of no inspiration. This is a major frustration, but there is little one can do about it. Stressing about this problem does not make it easier. Fourth, we have always embraced the philosophy of releasing not too many products a year. Some bands may have another view upon this, but we feel more comfortable releasing once a year a good product than putting out release after release with a double table quality. Again we take our time and prepare us as good as possible.

- **When anything new should be unleashed from the chain?**

Wannes: - We recorded three songs at *Harrow Productions*. Two of those songs are meant for a split 10"/picture disc with our friends *Desaster*. We recorded a new track called *Soul's Blood* and a *Desaster* cover. *Iron Pegasus* (*Costa of Tales of the Macabre* zine) will do this one. Furthermore we did a *Possessed* cover for the upcoming tribute called *Seven Gates of Horror*. It is the song *The Beasts of the Apocalypse*, off the second *Possessed* album. I am very satisfied with both covers, as they sound more like **Pentacle** than original bands. We put a lot of work in these songs because we respect both bands very much. *Desaster*, because they are very cool guys and make great music, and *Possessed*, because they are GODS! We felt we had to honour both bands in the right way, so we put a lot of effort in their songs. Our new track is totally to the bone and aggressive. A bit more primitive than the material on ...*Rides the Moonstorm*, but with the same ancient vibe as usual when dealing with **Pentacle** material. It contains the fastest parts **Pentacle** has ever used in our whole career. It shreds!

Immortal Records from Poland will do the release of *Seven Gates of Horror*. Other bands who contributed songs are *God Dethroned*, *Vader*, *Absu*, *Sinister*, *Sadistic Intent*, *Damnation*, *Houwitser*, *Cannibal Corpse*, *Vital Remains*, *Pessimist*, *Angel Corpse*, and lately I heard *Swedish Hypnosia* will be featured as well. Last time I spoke with *John of Incantation*, he told me it was not for sure yet if they will do a contribution as well. There were some other bands involved, but I do not know if they were confirmed. About the release date, I heard a long time ago something about February this year, but I wonder if it happens. I hope so because I am really curious how the other bands performed their versions. Except for *Angel Corpse's Burning in Hell* and *Vader's Death Metal* I have not heard any of the bands' covers.

- **Together with ancient heroes of metal I bet we should include Asphyx as your huge inspiration? For example, Wannes voice is like Mr. van Drunen at his early stage... It was often that Pestilence, Asphyx, Sinister have been slamming Dutch stages back in the past? I assume you were missing these shows quite rarely, eh?**

Wannes: - That is right. Old *Asphyx* has definitely had its part on our sound. It was my favourite Dutch band and I know drummer *Bob* from 1988 when I ordered their first demo. Albums like *Embrace The Death* or *Last One on Earth* are classics. I enjoy everything they did, like the *Asphyx* or *God Cries* albums. You are right about the similarities between my and *Martin's* voice. I guess we both have the same influences that make them sound alike. *Martin's* vocals on *Pestilence's Consuming Impulse* and *Asphyx's The Rack* are really great! Well, to my recollection *Sinister*, *Asphyx* and *Pestilence* never did a gig together or with the two of them, but I do not know for sure. Most times it were *Acrostichon*, *Dead Head*, *Gorefest* (yep, how come have I forgotten *Gorefest?! - ed.*) and *Sinister* together in a certain combination. Those were really good times, I can tell you that! The Dutch scene had some killer bands (there are still good bands from Holland like *Centurian*, *Mangled*, *God Dethroned*, *Cremation* and more) and the people were really enthusiastic about the whole thing.

- **And now Celtic Frost. I am sure there should be no point in questioning about them due to that intro you did on ...*Rides the Moonstorm*, as it really says it all. By the way, you inquired any permission to use it, or what? So, do you acknowledge that enormous influence they do for you and many other bands? How do you look upon these new bands writing up mediocre music a la CF just for the sake of trend? Which is your favourite of their collection? Do you tend to like *Into The Pandemonium* or *Vanity/Nemesis* and *Parched With Thirst*? Maybe you have checked out *Appolyn's Sun* already?**

Wannes: - No, we did not ask any permission to use the intro, as it is from live tape and does not deal with any official *Frost* intro/outro or music. That is why it surprised me *Mr. Fischer* himself makes such a big deal of it. I guess you have not read it, but in a recent interview with the German mag *Deftone* he was very upset because of that intro and he said he could sue us for this. He felt we stole something of *Frost*, which definitely is not the question. You know the intro. It contains three times "Uh!" by *Torn* himself, three times "Uh!" by the public and the sentence "Fuckin' crazy!" and that is it! I find it very narrow-minded of him to do such accusations towards **Pentacle**, and I truly wonder if he actually ever heard the intro himself. Of course the *Frost* influence is undeniable and we are still proud of that, but such stupid talking definitely does not strengthen his intellect. I would rather talk to himself about this matter, but as the chances of meeting him are pretty small, I want to voice my opinion right here. In a way he is a hero of mine, but I am not afraid to tell him the truth. The fact that he delivered some classic records does not keep him free of any critical views upon his actions or words. The last regular classic release he did was in 1987 with *Into The Pandemonium*. That is thirteen years ago! Although I like *Vanity/Nemesis* and *Parched...*, they do not have the same standard as *Into The Pandemonium*. This is all history. Let the (recent) music does talking! I cannot judge upon *Appolyn Sun* as this is not my taste of music. It would be too easy to say it sucks, just because it is not extreme metal. Maybe the *Frost* reunion will bring something interesting. Time will and shall tell! It is just a pity it must be this way.

My favourite Celtic Frost album is *Morbid Tales*, but I enjoy all their early material, including *Into The Pandemonium* very much. This is truly classic material and Tom's current attitude will not change this. I do not like when bands are using Frost influences just because it is cool. I despise this, just as any other motivations to be 'in' or 'cool'.

- Are you aware that Spanish Avulsed have covered Pentagram either? It makes you feel a bit insecure, or that was your choice in spite of anything? Your version of *Spell of the Pentagram* is a bit different from your own material, yes? I think it makes the whole album quite more diverse!

Wannes: - Yes, I knew they did the Pentagram cover, but it did not stop us of doing one as well. So far as I know the song we did has never been covered, so it does not matter. It would be more nice if Avulsed would not have done the Pentagram cover at all, but as they were earlier there is nothing to do about it. A nice story is that Abominator's Damon was really upset when he heard our version of *Spell of the Pentagram*, as they wanted to do it themselves. I am glad we were first! The song fits our material well. Indeed it is a bit different from our own songs, yet the spirit is the same. And yes, it makes ... *Rides the Moonstorm* more diverse.

- What about metal in general? Do you respect and listen to current top bands from black metal or melodic/gothic circles? Or you would better stick to older thrash/death instead? And whilst performing live, do you care what other bands play, where their influences derive from?

Wannes: - I do not listen to gothic. Only to death, black, thrash, doom and some speed metal, but not much. Furthermore - good old Iron Maiden and King Diamond, Mercyful Fate, and that is it. I am not into other styles of music. Just call me narrow-minded, but that is the way it works with me. I am fully into extreme metal and I listen to it days after days, and I have no problem with it. I enjoy the old styled bands most. Some examples are Venom, Possessed, Bathory, Carpathian Forest, Necrophagia, Blasphemy, Sarcofago, Hellhammer, old Beherit, old Master's Hammer, Törr, Emperor, Destroyer 666, Desaster, Nun Slaughter, Repugnant, Sabbat, Bestial Warlust, Protector, Hate Eternal, Mefisto, old Exodus, Mantas/Death, Obscurity, Poison, old Mayhem, Morbid Angel, Agressor, Slaughter Lord, Treblinka, Necrovore, Dr. Shrinker, Mortem, Grotisque, and many many more.

I respect almost every band. Maybe I must say it a little bit different. I believe everyone has his/her own choice of what they want to do. I try to respect that and with a couple of exceptions it works. Whether it is gothic, doom, electro or whatever, it is their choice, right? If I appreciate it is another story.

- Damnation should be the perfect label for you guys? I mean Daan is so much into this kind of music you live with, and I bet guy is real dedicated to solve all things concerning promotion and support necessary from a talented label? But does the limitations Damnation undoubtedly live with, as it is purely underground, make

you dream about better opportunities signing with bigger label?

Wannes: - Daan and Jeroen really do their best for us and even when Damnation is not that big we are very satisfied with their work. If problems occur the reason is often third parties who are not able to do their work the way they should do. Both label and band are victims of these morons and this can be very frustrating for both of us. Just imagine this story about the double lp version of ... *Rides the Moonstorm*. The vinyl itself had to be done twice, the cover three times and the inner sleeves twice!!! Just because some idiots are not capable of doing their work in a proper way. So many things can go wrong and do go wrong, it is unbelievable.

Damnation is indeed limited in their actions, but for a band with the philosophy as ours it is a very good label. The communication is good, which you could already read in a previous answer; it is very important for us as we want to be involved in as much matters concerning the band as possible. Both parties do their best to get the ultimate result.

- Want to ask if Pentacle is enough for you to live from these days? Or you still have to work your ass out in full-time jobs to keep on with music?

Wannes: - No, we cannot make a living through the band. We do not earn enough to pay our bills or to get some food on the table! The band keeps itself alive, but the members have to work to get some money. Death metal does not pay enough and except for bands like Morbid Angel and some more there are not many who can make their living out of this music. It would be cool though because one would not have to work and could spend his time on the band.

- Finally, tell me briefly what is the situation with new material? And how could you manage to make new stuff still better, catchier, distinguishing from other records around? It is a headache thus far, or you know the formula that it would turn out great?

Wannes: - We are working on our special ten years anniversary release, which will be a double 7"/mcd on Damnation Records. It will contain three new tracks and two Death covers (*Legion of Doom* and *Witch of Hell*). We have lots of ideas for the new material. It is very typical Pentacle, yet a progression from the older songs. But do not be afraid! The new stuff is aggressive as hell and kick ass! Some is slow or fast, but it is still Pentacle for 100%. And yes, it can be very difficult to come up with some new stuff. We had our periods when nothing cool was composed just because the inspiration was on a very low point. That can happen, although it is very frustrating when such a period takes too much time. Ok, it is always too long, but when after a couple of months still no new music has been written, one sometimes can ask himself what to do to get it all right. Lucky we got out of these musical depressions, otherwise we could not have written this new material!

Don't forget the ancient feeling... It still rules!!!

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Lycanthropy

by Vytautas Stankus

"How come there could be so much water in one place? And the verdure so luxuriant, the fury of elements so stormy? How come so disorderly, so many-coloured world could exist at all? And this abundance of water – a real sacrilege: water was running in a stream at the foot of a mountain, pools of water were laying around everywhere. Water was not only on the land – air was also full of water drops.

The creature stopped, pressed itself to the soil, staring into tiny spots of light far in front, glimmering mildly in the dark.

This world was too hot and humid, and the twilight – too dense. The verdure was too much tall and luxuriant. The atmosphere was trembling, and the plants were lamenting in agony. Gloomily flashing lights were not scattering the dark any bit in the distance. Mournfully, as if complaining, something was howling not far off. There was a life existing – far more plentiful than it could ever be in the planet. Yet it were the lowest forms of life, incapable to think, as usual – just a biologic jumble of tiny lumps of matter, able just to react lazily to irritants.

"Maybe, the creature thought, it was worth to strive so much burst into freedom. Maybe it was required to stay in that nameless place, where was no being, even no sensation or reminiscence of being, only the knowledge that there is such a state – being, that has come from somewhere only that knowledge and accidental fragments of thoughts, separate fragments of information, evoking the wish to fight, break away, become independent, perceive what you are and why, and how you have ended here..."

C.D. Simak,
"The Werewolf Principle"

Werewolf – who is this strange creature, hero of many horror flicks, covered by the mould of time, as if disappeared in this technological age? Is it the fruit of fantastic imagination's consequence of the middle ages' society? Or a part of reality, incomprehensible and unrecognized (and that is why not made public) for dogmatics of modern science? It is too crazy phenomenon or fact to be discussed about at all. Some were afraid to talk about it due to the superstitious

fear, some were afraid to be ridiculed. However, science always was and still is built, thanks to brave minds only. Great minds, which do not bow the heads against slavishly inertious dogma. Yet who would say where is the boundary between courage and stupidity, wonder and fraud, reality and dream, intellect and madness?

We will try to uncover the cloak of this mystery a bit from several "untraditional" sides, leaving the reader himself to make the final opinion and conclusions. The author by no means has pretensions to show himself as preacher of the truth or the know-all.

Werewolf – a person, turned himself or turned by a magician, into some creature, most usually wolf. This is the explanation of the term by an ordinary explanatory dictionary. Werewolf looks like a wolf, only usually with man's tooth, with a white spot under neck (somehow it is claimed that a white wrap has been tied there, when he was a man), a short tail is often mentioned either. Their mind is still like human's mind, but they have lost the tongue ability. It is possible to convert into werewolf both temporarily, and forever. They do not blend with true wolfs. Often appear nearby settlement places. Werewolves are forced to feed on the same food as normal people. In quite a few tales the spellbound werewolves are described as peaceful and harmless creatures. Magicians and witches, turned into werewolves by their own will, are much more dangerous: they straightforwardly attack people. Thus our hero is pictured in mythological sources.

Volkulak, Volkodlak, Vovkun, Vrikodlak, Vlekodlak, Vurkolak in Slav, Wilkolek – in Polish, Vikodlak – in Czech, Ulfbjorn – in Icelandic, Verwolf – in German, Werewolf – in English, Loup-Garou – in French (Loup – 'wolf'), Lycanthropy – in Latin ('wolfman'), Vilkolakis – in Lithuanian, etc. Isn't it strange, that almost all nations' languages have a word 'wolf', or at least its root, in this term? Whether a man, if he can yet turn into a wolf, cannot turn into any other beast? It turns out that he can, but it depends on geographical latitude. For example, Africans have the stories about conversion into the lion or hyena, Indians – into leopard, Chinese – into tiger, cat or even crocodile that are widespread there. But in Northern regions conversions into the wolf are dominating. Why? Let every reader answers this question himself, analyzing his feelings for this admiration-worthy creature beforehand. I guess there is no doubt that wolves were the mostly widespread dangerous predators in the middle ages of Europe.

Let us leave the myths for mythology

and ethnography yet. Let us look at what is the idea of esoteric science spokesmen about the subject. A famous occultist of nineteenth century *Elifas Levi* maintains that:

- 1) nobody was ever murdered by a werewolf, and if anybody died yet, - died due to suffocation, without bloodshed and without wounds;
- 2) a werewolf was never killed at any certain place, neither with firearm, nor with blank weapon;
- 3) if a suspected person was visited after the hunt of werewolf, he usually was found more or less wounded, sometimes even dying, but always - in human shape.

Why?

Conversion – what is the meaning of this term in this particular case? If it directly points a person's body turn into a body of the wolf? Maybe yes, but speaking about the body in occult terms you must be careful. You know, in occultism, as well as in many other spiritual teachings, you cannot limit to one physical shape to explain the structures of human and other creatures of this world. By the way, however hard some materialists would like to make that, the science cannot explain even the brain activities in any way, until these days. It cannot be isolated of spirit term only as well. Cannot be isolated not only in theory, but also in practice. Many techniques of magic are dedicated exactly to perfection of other bodies and their use to corresponding aims. What and which are these bodies? The final answer to this question would be equal to the answer what is the man. Scarcely it is possible at all, it would hardly be the purpose of this short article.

It is explained in esoteric tradition, that the man consists of many bodies, and their number usually hold sway from three to nine, depending on various schools. The first of this division is known for everyone and invisible only for the blind – physical shape. The last mentioned is usually named the spirit. There is not much talked about intermediate bodies. Such are the circumstances in modern (and not only) society, that only two institutions have the right of acknowledgement. Different from each other in their methods and philosophy as night and day, they have been struggling, are struggling, and hell knows for how long they will struggle in between. It is the science and religion (*I would correct: the church – ed.*). First of them sees only material plexus of muscular, bone and nerve tissues, the other – a symbolic, metaphoric soul as well. The abyss between them – the occultism, which is not acknowledged by none.

The most coarse, but often used division in occult sciences is dividing into three bodies. Where the intermediate is named the body of stars – astral (astrosom), and others – physical and spiritual. The most acceptable is probably dividing into five bodies, that is:

1. physical
2. ethereal
3. astral
4. mental
5. spiritual

In spite of that, as mentioned above, separate schools divide it differently, they do not contradict to each other so much. Simply, supporters of a rougher division do not recognise the bodies of

finer division as separate shapes, and think that it is just separate aspects or parts of rougher bodies.

We will briefly describe every one of them, omitting the first. *Ethereal* – a plainly energetic – ethereal (more subtle, invisible by a simple eye form of matter) copy of physical body, which keeps the life and functioning of physical body; it is considered that death manifests itself by the break of physical and ethereal bodies connection, first of all. The representative of ethereal body is instinct. Extrasenses-doctors usually work with this body. *Astral* – often yet named as the body of feelings, is nothing else than the source and instrument of our emotional inspirations and experiences. It consists of so called star (astral) matter (that is why influences predicted by astrologists can be formed just for one particular person) and exist in the astral world of changeable forms, and he can take various shapes himself. The representative of astral body is feeling. *Mental* – accordingly the bearer of our mental – intellectual work. The representative of mental body is thought. It consists of even more subtle matter than astral, and having indistinct oval shape it exists in the world of concrete and abstract ideas, which is named like that – mental world. *Spiritual* – immaterial, formless, unenergetic and so on. The representative of spiritual body is intuition or direct knowing. All these bodies exist objectively, independently from belief into them. As a physical body, every of them have their sensual organs. But like physical bodies, they can be developed infinitely differently, with every separate person. The main reason of existing of these intermediate between physical and spiritual bodies is considered that soul, being totally unmaterial, cannot have an effect on physical body and possess it directly.

It would not be true to claim that all these bodies exist separately and do not interact among. It is not the case, probably the most accurate comparison would be to imagine a man as a Russian doll – 'matryoshka', which is made of many separate dolls of various size, fitting one in another. By the way, this comparison I think is not accidental – our ancestors had a great knowledge. They also knew how to preserve and convey this knowledge in subconscious, and not in conscious level. Think of cards (a simplified version of Taro card-pack) or chess game.

All these bodies interact among in the man, and any break of connection among them can summon such consequences as catalepsy, weak-mindedness or death.

Another postulate of occultism claims that these bodies can separate, and it is even necessary to separate them for a short time. But do not confuse the separation and the break. In case of separation the energetic or so-called silver thread, which unites the bodies, does not break away, and can stretch to infinity not only in space, but also in time respect. As the sleep for example, natural unconscious separation of astral and ethereal bodies. Unconscious, that is. But magicians often practice and mention a conscious separation of astral body, named the astral projection, lucid

dreams, or out of body experience (OOBE). During the astral projection the magus consciously leaves his physical body and travels through astral and even physical worlds in current and other times. Possibilities, advantage and experience of such travels almost 100% depend on trained qualities of magician. The author has undergone such travels himself and is sure by their reality no less than the reality of this world, and recommends it for everyone.

Yes, it is nothing else than the soul's going out of body not only to this, but also to other worlds. It is usually believed that to go out to physical world is much more difficult, and it is not without a ground. You see, the astral body does not have any contact with physical world, and its sensual organs do not fix this world. Yet magician, who wants to act in physical world, can form the so-called ethereal duplicate, i.e. the second energetical body, as like we stated above, ethereal body can separate from physical only in case of death, and with the help of it to fix (see, hear and feel) localities and people, necessary to him in this world. Actually he does not fix real material things or occurrences in practice, and deals with their energetical copies. Natural unconscious formation of the ethereal duplicate occurs sometimes whilst the man dreams, that his limbs drag itself as if along the quag, when it is hard to move.

Occultists maintain that the werewolf phenomenon is namely the human astral, which has got the wolf shape during the astral projection and has materialized up to visibility.

Let us not forget that astral world is a world of changeable forms. And to take the shape of any kind, consciously or unconsciously, for astral body is not a hard thing to accomplish. Of course, many cases of lycanthropy in the middle age villages were unconscious conversions, since as mentioned - not everybody was able to have a chance to master this art. You may ask, what is the difference between conscious and unconscious lycanthropy? Very simple - unconscious conversion is usually dependent upon satisfaction of suppressed need for freedom, aggression and sexuality. At that time the object does not control anything, and cannot recollect anything after all. This experience is totally opposite to conscious lycanthropy. Where the magician controls the situation more or less, also controlling his own state and consciously knows what, why and how he does at the same time. And fully recollects everything after the return. He controls the state of consciousness and it changes exactly. A conscious astral projection is possible only whilst changing consciously the state of consciousness and controlling that state consciously. What is not that easy.

But why the wolf? The famous researcher of Northern American Indian shamanism C. Castaneda claims, that according to shamans, conversion into the beast is one of the most primitive techniques of magic. So to say, to form the bestial astral-etheral body is not difficult because these forms are more primitive constitutions than human, and require a more primitive energetic-emotional (etheral-astral) combination. The

form of such a combination usually corresponds with one existing in nature, and most familiar for subject (that is why in different regions lycanthropy have been getting the forms of diverse beasts). And so the persons with such combinations in cases of unconscious lycanthropy were not necessary to strive converting into wolves or other beasts. They have been doing that automatically, yet usually - unconsciously.

Shamans and magicians can consciously take such an ethereal-astral combination, and then the shape as well. So why not the human shape? The man is manifold creature and energetic distribution in his bodies is different from the beasts; the energy expands into many layers or bodies, described above. The man can leave for the ethereal-astral worlds in the shape of human body, yet to hold out for a longer period there is quite complicated and requires a corresponding preparation. Due to the same primitivism ethereal bodies of the beasts are rougher, more material and more stable in a projection, than human. That is why in such a form to hold out of physical body is more comfortable and requires less energy.

On the other hand, the fact of conversion itself is not that much necessary. Some people can already have the astrosomic form of any beast, which fits their instincts and wishes the best way. Famous mystic of eighteenth century - clairvoyant *Svedenborg* has often been seeing his friends in shapes of various beasts. He has been seeing the astral shapes of these people, that is. So for such fellows it is enough just to leave the body (exteriorization).

But a werewolf is not necessary destined to be the astrosomic of that same person. In the practices of magicians you can find mentioned that for a magician with great powers it is not necessary to go out of body himself. He can create an astral duplicate and send it to fulfil any task (for example, to get some information). If you want, you can move your consciousness into that duplicate and travel with it anywhere you want. However, *M. Denings* warns: never give an astral duplicate shape of the beast, if you let him go separately - you may never control it anymore. It is described by one of the most famous occultists of twentieth century *Dion Fortune*, when after a successful trying to create the astral duplicate she was possessed by emotion of vengeance to one person. Duplicate has suddenly got the shape of wolf and disappeared. And summoned back it has been returning stronger and more powerful every time, when after all has attacked its mistress...

Are werewolves material then? We have mentioned about the materialization up to visibility. Thus they can materialize to a certain level, but they are not material in a true sense of the word. They cannot make physical wounds, but they can suck the ethereal energy out (suffocation, what by the way also goes down in vampyrism category). The most interesting, that level of materialization usually depends not of the werewolf himself, but of the person who gets into interaction with him. The more sensitive and more scared person, the more materialized werewolf. The more materialized, the more dangerous it is. Yet

more hurtable as well. Metals, especially silver, disjoint and melt ethereal-astral derivatives. The wound, done to the ethereal body by the subject, appear on the physical body according to the law of reflection. The seriousness of such a wound is actually dependent on the level of materialization, sort of metal and of course level of the werewolf hit. These are the answers to above-mentioned propositions by *E. Levi*.

No doubt that not all werewolf cases had a nature described by *E. Levi*. *C. Wilson* tells about maniac murderers, who have been killing children and young girls, who thought they were werewolves, yet whilst being caught in the place of crime they had a human shape. But it is another matter.

Another times are right now, either. The reason of legends about werewolves disappearance is maybe not required to look for in middle ages' people stupidity and not in modern achievements of science and materialism, which have as though disclosed the deceptions, superstitions and psychical diseases, but in the alteration of human existential form. The term 'gun' has not disappeared yet, when an atomic bomb has taken form instead of a dagger. The possibility of dagger's utilization has not disappeared as well. The ability to utilize the principle of werewolf has not disappeared either, not speaking about astral projections as disappearance of magical techniques, at all. However far the science were advanced, the entire chasm of unanswered questions lies in wait the travellers, named as humans, to the future. Maybe the time will come, when that what seemed fantastic will be natural, and what seemed absurd - will be wise.

However hard people have learned to keep the beast inside, in other, even more cruel forms it crawls out from the cave and then uncontrollably tears everything on the way apart. Isn't it about time not to deny, not to forbid, not to laugh, but to understand and try to tame it? And after that to experience the inexpressible feel-

ing of freedom and power. Only him, your dark angel-beast, can lead you into unspeakable areas of the unknown kingdom. Only through him you can understand the darkest corners of your personality and to reach the start of your personality. Do not forget what perhaps the most famous magician of the twentieth century *Aleister Crowley* said: *every man and every woman is a star*.

Meanwhile especially lots of occult groups are working at the improvement of techniques of old and new astral projections. Such elements as techniques of Tibetan yoga, shaman practices and elements of ritual magic are combined. As well as training techniques of hypnosis, autohypnosis and autogenic relaxation. Psychotropic plants and preparations are being used. Even electronic/computer equipment and apparatus come to the aid, that *The Lucidity Institute* founded by *S. LaBerge* use. Earlier techniques of astral projections have strictly been hidden from the general public, yet lately, even quite difficult, it is possible to find some information about that. The literature following below will help these, who have got interested by this matter.

FIND THE WOLF AND MAKE FRIENDS WITH HIM!!!

See you in the darkened woods of the unknown.

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Keywords: astral, astral projection, projection, lucid dreams, OOBE (Out Of Body Experience), NDE (Near Death Experience)

- Blood Axis different recordings were featured on various compilations in the past. Was it done on purpose, because you enjoy to be featured among others with just a piece of your art, or it was simply that you had no offer / possibility to put out a full-length release? A bit similar to these mainstream bands for me, which put various singles before recording an album, how do you think?

- For the most part we have only appeared on what I consider 'special' compilations - they were either issued by friends close to our heart (for example *Cthulhu*, *Athamor*, or *Ultra*) or else they had a theme which was very close to our heart, such as the tribute to *Julius Evola*. So the common factor is of friendships or visions which we honor.

- By the way, could you tell me your point of view to music selling business. If these things could ever be related to Blood Axis, and how do you look at these artists who understand music as a moneymaking machine?

- My opinion of the music industry is very low. It is not much different than any other business. **Blood Axis** has practically no connection to all of this, and I can honestly state that I have no great urge to make money. If I were concerned about making money, I would do things quite differently. But I prefer to follow my own imperative, and it is one that does not hold financial rewards as any ultimate goal. Other bands might treat music more like a job, and as a means to earn a living. If that is their choice, fine, but I do not find it a very inspiring motivation myself.

- Through the years **Blood Axis** was gaining more and more respect, and I bet it was a relatively short time to reach a cult status. How could you explain this phenomenon? Do you feel it, does it put pressure on you, sort of not to lose the right track, mood or whatever? Or it is rather separate directions: you with stunning ideas/your music, and that response which goes as a side effect to all that music you create?

- I have no explanation for whatever status we have, but I am glad if some people find inspiration in our recordings. Certainly if you asked a number of people who have appreciated our music what aspect of it they found most compelling, each one might give a different answer. This is good, and I think it results from the fact that we do not fit into any easy category or genre. I consider **Blood Axis** to be an expression of my and our personalities, and thus something which is subtly changing and evolving all the time, but it will always reflect the same core. A positive response is nice, but we do not do things with the response in mind. We follow our will, and - speaking for myself - the only 'pressure' comes from within.

- What kind of background you have as a musician? There were some particular bands or people, who influenced your decision to make with music what you are doing these days?

- I have no proper musical background at all, except that when I was 13-15 years old (in 1982-1984) I first started experimenting with electronic instruments, creating noises and then manipulating this into 'music'. I suppose I was



Finally. Done. I have been waiting for Michael Moynihan to answer my questions for a good year now, planning to feature the infamous **Blood Axis** in issue #7, but there is no good feature without a struggle. This is no exception. Great views and some answers to get wiser. I am sure you are aware of the decadent industrial/ambient project, **Storm Records**, **Lords of Chaos** anthology, and the actions related...

inspired by the music I listened to then, which was the first wave of industrial (**Throbbing Gristle**, **Monte Cazazza**, **SPK**, **Whitehouse**, etc). Shortly later I was a member of the band **Sleep Chamber**, and then in 1989 I was asked by **Boyd Rice** to help perform some **NON** concerts in Japan, and we collaborated on some other projects. I also created the idea for **Blood Axis** around this time, although I do not know if there are any music groups who provided an influence for this (as far as the sound). The first **Blood Axis** recordings really do not seem similar to any other groups I can think of, and we have absolutely never tried to imitate anyone else.

- All these artists you mention are known for their much harsher approach to music, whilst **Blood Axis** represent it in a merely ethereal way, sort of distancing from the wall of sound of early industrial. Have you made your own picture of how it should be done sound-wise, for **Blood Axis**? And if your first attempts to build that sound were of this symphonic/ambient kind as well?

- The artists I referred to are simply those whom I was listening to back when I was first recording music, which was more than 15 years ago. There are many other forms of music which I find equally powerful, if not more so: Classical, European traditional and ancient folk music, etc. In a certain way, I think **Blood Axis** manages to combine some of these elements, and we will continue to do this, pulling influences from even further back into the past and incorporating them into our composi-

tions, to create a bridge between the past, present and future.

- That event - CMI anniversary party in Linköping, was a special thing for you? In general, you like to take part in such parties (not as musician)? What about the performance there - people seemed to think it was pretty special? Or was it a usual **Blood Axis** performance? Then how it has appeared as an album?

- The **Cold Meat** 10th Anniversary feast was a special event organized by **Roger Karmanik**, and it more had the feeling of a banquet of close friends than a 'concert' or a 'party'. We were honored to fly over to Sweden just to play this one show, and I think most people there enjoyed it. **Blood Axis** had never really played live at that point, so you could hardly call it a 'usual' performance! For the album we took the digital multi-tracks, cleaned them up a lot in the studio and re-mixed them, in order to create a level of sound quality we were happy with. We also spent a lot of time to design a package for it that related to themes of ancient Sweden on both a historical and metaphysical level.

- Consequently, a bunch of performances followed in late 1998. Could you share with me your reminiscences about that time? Would you name it a tour or just a set of separate performances happened to stick in a row?

- The way I arranged our tour is a good example of how we do not follow the typical 'rules' of the music industry. Normally if you play a tour you are supposed to perform as many nights as possible, so that you will make as much

money as you can in the shortest time, with very few 'days off'. Thus you might travel through lots of different countries, but you will barely see anything except the highways, restaurants, and venues. I arranged everything quite the opposite: it was an extended journey through all of Europe first, and a tour second. We only played a few concerts each week, and we had a lot of time in most countries so that we could visit special places, spend time with friends, and absorb some of the local atmosphere and culture. Because I arranged it this way we did not make money (although we did not really lose any either - everything came out about evenly), but we gained a lot of amazing experiences which we would never have had otherwise!

- Tell me what kind of audience you meet during your charming performances. I mean many different people seem to get interested in dark/ambient music nowadays, starting with metal/rock and ending with classical music lovers... So how is it live?

- We saw all sorts of people at our concerts, and I do not think there was any one specific type of person in the audience. This is how it should be!

- You have any special live show? How do you fill up the space on stage being a three-piece? Is it merit or shortage?

- For the tour in Europe we actually had four people: I sang and also played accordion and percussion; **Annabel** played electric violin; **Aaron** played electric bass and special effects; and **Markus** played drums. Everyone was of merit, of course!

- Surprisingly (at least for me) you come from States. Not often one sees and hears so imposing project from there. You are native Americans? Tell me if you were close to art and creation from the childhood? What about American crap culture and its influence?

- Myself and **Annabel** and **Aaron** were all born here in the USA, although our ancestors originally came from Europe [from the British Isles and German mostly], so that is where we find our roots. **Markus** is German, and was born there but moved to America as a young teenager. We have all had an attraction to artistic work [whether drawing, graphic design, publishing, painting, etc.] and music from a young age, and I am sure we will until the days we die. I can only speak for myself, but I avoid American culture as much as possible. I never read newspapers and hardly ever look at a magazine. I never watch television and I do not even care much about films. So 'crap culture' has little effect on me. To a large degree I am sure this is true of everyone else in the band too, although **Robert Ferbrache** [who often collaborates as a member of **Blood Axis** and helps on recording the studio material] might be an exception: he is an expert on many of the more bizarre and perverse aspects of pop culture.

- The use of **Romeo and Juliet** (main theme in **Reign I Forever**) was not the only classical thing in your music? You see, I might not notice the others, as I am not the best expert of classical (even I would like to be!). But anyway, **Prokofiev** masterpiece is most noted. There were any reasons to include it in **Blood Axis** own music? You utter about **Thor** there -

is it just your lyric, or is it related to Romeo and Juliet theme either?

- The lyrics are about *Thor*, and I thought the basic rhythm and melody of that line of *Prokofiev's* march perfectly captured the feeling of this god's movement so this is why I utilized it. We have also made arrangements of some *Bach* pieces and also a *Haydn Oratorio*.

- Could you tell the concept of *The Hangman and The Papist* composition? I feel it is extremely haunting track both with soundscapes and lyrics - a sort of total unity of both.

- Thank you for the kind words. The song was originally written in the 1970s, by a musician named *David Cousins* who had a group called *The Strawbs*. It is a brilliant tune and the lyrics are more like poetry - with a serious message about the fratricidal consequences of organized religion. *Robert Ferbrache* first played it for me, as it was one of his favorite songs. The original song is also very haunting and evocative, and I always thought it would be a great challenge to attempt a *Blood Axis* version of it, which could achieve a similar power. Hopefully we have been successful in this endeavor!

- Just noticed your interview for *Descent* magazine #5, which had several interesting issues... I personally realise that American people can be so fanatic to ban you, but I really cannot imagine that in reality! It should be really crazy, nothing else! You end up being influenced by these protests or still go on totally ignoring that stupidity?

- I was also surprised that people in America would actively try to ban concerts by a band they had never even heard before. But in the end the protests only made us much more famous and powerful, and brought us many new listeners. So maybe I should thank the protesters?

- Europeans must be different type of people then, or you have not noticed anything different whilst being on the Old Continent? What about these live shows which gather just crowds you want to experience your project - is it much different from country to country? I believe your travelling has something to do with exploring that as well?

- Europeans often seem more intelligent than Americans, and they generally have a deeper appreciation for art. Our tour was specifically arranged so that we could usually spend time in each different country where we played and experience some of the local cultures and traditions, visit with our friends, etc. All across Europe we met great people at all our shows, and they often understood well what we are trying to do with our music. If people are interested in reading a more detailed account I wrote of the tour, it should be in the new issue of the excellent German magazine *Moondance* [for more information write to: Timo Kölling, An der Friedenseiche 7, D-32457 Porta Westfalica, Germany].

- Are you serious to re-name *Blood Axis* then?

- Until they decree the name *Blood Axis* illegal, I have no plans to change it.

- *Michael*, your person is surrounded by a mystic aura, due to your multi-layered pile of works. What inspires you to create music, to write, to discuss philosophical things? How do you feel about making so various

deeds, though dedicated to open mind and creativity?

- This is a difficult question to answer. I have always felt an internal drive to do things, and I have never wanted to limit myself to just one area of creativity. Some people feel the urge to do things for ideological or political reasons, but this is not the same for me. I work on all these projects simply because my spirit compels me to.

- Tell me if it was difficult to write the huge encyclopedia that *Lords of Chaos* is? I guess it was 2-3 years work, if not more?

- It took a few years to write the book, although I did not work on it full-time [I was also doing many other things during this period].

- What kind of purpose you had with it? You stated some personal position towards the scene, or tried to generate the huge violent movement into explainable write-up for consumers?

- My purpose was simply to present an account of the 'infamous' activities which were connected to the Black Metal scene in Norway and elsewhere. We did not want to just present it from our own point of view, but rather from a number of viewpoints and allow the readers to come to their own conclusions. Since I was already familiar with underground and extreme music, as well as philosophies like Satanism and heathen beliefs, I felt I was in a good position to write a book like this. Hopefully we did a better job than most 'journalists' would have...

- How come have you got acquainted with black metal movement? You constantly listen to this musical direction? What about other types of metal?

- I first heard about Black Metal in the wake of the violence and church burnings, but I was already quite familiar with the musical precursors in the genre like *Venom* and *Bathory*, etc. I was also aware of the whole Death Metal phenomenon and I knew many of the bands, since I had interviewed them for music magazines. I appreciate certain aspects of these types of music, but generally it is not something I listen to all the time.

- After *Lords of Chaos* was out, and gained immense response, both

praising and controversial, there was an outburst of other writers and researches to make things similar. I know about one guy from Sweden writing about local black metal movement, and some people in US writing their university degree thesis based fully on underground movements... In your opinion - it is more good than bad thing or vice versa?

- I would have to read the texts in question first before I could comment on whether I thought they were good or bad. Actually, as far as *Lords of Chaos* is concerned, the controversy was pretty minimal. The book has been reviewed more than 100 times, and most of these were overwhelmingly positive. Only two or three reviews I have seen try to raise a "controversy," and this usually has very little to do with what is in the book itself, but rather stems from the writer having a problem with me personally (often for rather stupid or confused reasons).

- Actually I am absolutely not aware of your other writings. Could you slightly draw a curtain on this matter? You think over another thick book, or rather prefer publicist features here and there?

- I write articles for different magazines, usually about music and cultural topics. For example, I am a regular contributor to the American music magazine *Seconds*; in the last issue I published a huge interview with *Bobby Beausoleil*. He was a former associate of *Charles Manson* and also *Kenneth Anger*, and he composed and recorded the music soundtrack to *Anger's* film *Lucifer Rising*, among many other interesting achievements. I have also written for *The Black Flame*, the art journal *Panik*, *Eye* magazine, and many others. I have contributed a number of essays and translations to the forthcoming *Feral House* book *Apocalypse Culture II*, which will be published in the Spring of 2000.

- With your music, do you feel you make a negative or positive contribution to the world? Or neither of them?

- I think we try to present express ourselves in a true and honest way, and that is positive.

- Could you say that Paganism is your life? You live for pagan ideas, or it is

better to say - they live for you? Without this subject, do you imagine *Blood Axis* as such? Could it ever happen to be built?

- I have never considered myself a christian, and my beliefs fit much more closely into a heathen framework - it is as simple as that! Of course my beliefs also are reflected in *Blood Axis* - they are all inter-related. It could not be any other way.

- You were signed with *Cthulhu* label earlier? How was that relationship, and what was wrong with them? By the way, when original version of debut album was out? Why was the *Gospel of Inhumanity* album had to be re-released by different label?

- There was nothing wrong with *Cthulhu*, to the contrary - they were a fantastic and unique label, but more importantly than that, they are some of our best friends. The only reason the album had to be re-released on *Misanthropy* is because *Cthulhu* had some unresolvable problems and were unable to get the pressing plant to manufacture any more *Blood Axis* cds [basically the plant was trying to censor the album]. *Misanthropy*, however, had the capabilities to get it repressed, so it was a joint decision to let them do this. The album originally came out in January 1996, if my memory is correct.

- It was stated that next album of *Blood Axis* will be out on *Efenblut* again. When can we expect it? You have any, appropriate schedule of writing/recording/releasing it, or rather not?

- We will release the next album [*Ultimacy*] when we have finished it and feel the time is right. This may be later this year. It will not come out on *Efenblut*, as that label has recently stopped issuing cds. At the moment we are not certain which label *Ultimacy* will appear on, but there are many people interested in releasing it. (*Sorry, my question has got oou of time by now - ed.*)

- *Storm* is a label producing any albums, or vinyl records? Or you rather prefer to take over mailorder/distribution more? Is it more like your small pet than serious business thing?

- *Storm* is a small label which sporadically releases both vinyl and CDs, and books. It is also a mailorder distributor. Since I am so busy with various projects, I really do not have the proper time to try to develop it into a more active business, and I am also not very inspired toward getting rich through capitalist schemes, so the company stays very small!

- Behind all this tremendous musical and writing thing you have any regular job or not? Then how do you make your living?

- I am able to make money as a writer, and *Blood Axis* also sometimes brings in money from record sales, but mostly this is all put back into the projects of the band. In general I try not to worry about making money, since usually the more people are concerned with it, the more it controls their life and invades their consciousness. And when that happens, you might as well be dead!

For more information about *Blood Axis*, send an IRC to: *Storm*, P.O. Box 3527, Portland, OR 97208-3527, USA, blood@teleport.com



Blood Axis live at Sintra, Portugal. Photo by Karen Taylor

Cruel Sleepless Souls



- What are these dots above letter 'A' in your monicker all about? What the band name represents, and what is the story behind it?

- *Mactätus* is Latin for *slaughter* and *sacrifice*. Our meaning behind it is the sacrifices we make to 'slaughter' the christianity, our fight against the light. We are strongly against christianity and fight to rid our old pagan kingdom from such a plague. The band name reflects the main elements in the band regarding lyrics, music, individual aims and points of view.

- There is a certain difference between both of your albums. Is it the new approach that you adapted to your musical strength, or rather a new way of composing that stroke you after *Blot* was recorded and released?

- It just shows that we have matured and developed both as individuals and a band in this time. We have a greater support in *Napalm Records*, and that gives us great possibilities in the recording of the album. The choice of studio also has a lot to say and gives us a distinctive stamp. I think *Provenance of Cruelty* is a much stronger album than *Blot*, in every way, but they are hard to compare since they are so different and have the basic elements are as of two worlds.

- I would name debut as sort of underground album, both concerning the production, realisation and even music, if you know what I mean. Do you agree with that?

- Our *Blot* album is as you say a more underground album in every way. I think this sound is in good connection with the material and the era *Mactätus* was in at that time. Another reason for this was the studio budget for this album. I am very pleased that you notice the totality in the album, because it is an underground album all through.

- Working with ever since vanished *Embassy Productions* was fruitful

Mactätus might appear as one more Norwegian black metal band for the first sight, but favourably creative people hide behind these masks that cannot conceal the potential of their music, and stunning atmosphere presented in their albums... I am sure that this feature will attire new *Mactätus* fans, because *The Complex Bewitchment*, their new album is coming really soon! Prior to that they have been carving the dark and gruesome path through *Blot* and *Provenance of Cruelty* albums, which were fairly interesting to ask them a few questions... *Gaut* shares his views on the nuances of their history and the issues of blackmetal business as well!

enough for the band? I think you are still proud to start your way on rather drastic in its views and actions organisation that *Embassy* were famous for? But whether *Mactätus* reached the goals and channelled its dark spells via *Blot* that you were presuming?

- I have little or no respect for the work of *Embassy Productions*, they did not care for their bands at all. And our time with them gave us nothing, except for the distribution of a few hundred copied of *Blot* (lucky me to have one of them! - ed.). We paid for the studio ourselves and owe nothing to this label. *Embassy*

Productions were nothing else but a rip off label, and they deserve the time in jail that they have been sentenced to, for fraud etc. We could have released *Blot* in a better way ourselves if we just had taken the chance.

Blot is now going to be re-released through *Moribund Cult* of the US with a new cover and a remastered version of the album. We are currently working on this so I hope it will be out sometime before the summer.

- Musically the debut invokes rather nostalgic feel, due to its unhurried manner and sort of landscape painting feel (at least I imagine it like this). Do these things correspond to your souls?

- As I see you have caught the essence of the album. It is a true nationalistic album, a hymn to the Kingdom of Norway. Main elements here are Norse mythology, Mother Nature, black magic and spirits of the damned. The feeling on the album is meant to be this way, and it is great to see that it is received as this.

- In fact the synth/vocal break in *Vandring* reminds me so much *Darkthrone* in their *Panzerfaust* era. Do you consider the godfathers' albums as quite influential for your band? It was intentional, that same kind of voice, or is it Norwegian language which might made both sound similar?

- I cannot see the similarity myself, but it is hard for me to be the judge of that. We are not influenced musically by *Darkthrone*, but I must say that I look upon them as one of the founders of the Norwegian black metal scene. It might be as you say, that the language makes it this way together with the underground sound. Musically *Darkthrone* and *Mactätus* are very different, you might say that *Blot* was underproduced in its contents. *Darkthrone* are an "old school" band, and that is not quite the

the money to support them.

- Between two record sessions I see a new bass and keyboards players in the line-up. You were not satisfied with how things went with *Hr. Bukkefot*, or it was his decision to leave the band? Another story being fed up with music in general?

- We were satisfied with him, but he left for personal reasons, that I will not comment any further. Since this we have

ground of Mactätus. But as I see Darkthrone as a true mark of quality I must thank you for the comparison.

- No no, I have questioned just that single song and special vocal break, that is... However, *Draped In Shadows Of Satan's Pride* lyrics were written by *Nocturno Culto*. I think it also means some sort of connection that bonds you with Darkthrone. Just a sign of friendship, or something deeper? I have read he is not very amused writing lyrics, that is...

- He is a personal friend of *Forn*, and we were one lyric short on the album when we entered the studio. So we contacted *Nocturno Culto* and asked if he had some lyrics ready. He did not have that so he wrote one instead.

I have no idea of what *Nocturno Culto* thinks about writing lyrics, but I must say that he has a great way of doing it and his lyrics are of great quality. I am personally very satisfied with *Draped In Shadows of Satan's Pride* and think it is a great track both musically and lyrically.

- Your story seems pretty much similar to Dimmu Borgir for me, though maybe not in that huge scale of curse. After underground debut you jumped on a bigger label, and that was quickly reflected with tighter approach to music, much better production and definitely - improved way of handling things with the whole beast that Mactätus doubtlessly is. Don't you find parallels? You have something to say concerning Dimmu Borgir?

- The bigger labels have more money and are interested in taking on their bands. One thing we have in common with Dimmu is that none of us are "old school" bands. The thing is that we had low budgets on our first albums, and this gave you the same feeling. Every musician is depended on growing with time, musically I mean. This has been the fact with both Dimmu and Mactätus, and sometimes we have the ideas but not

changed the bass once more for the upcoming album, *The Complex Bewitchment*. Our former bassist, *Istar*, did not fit with Mactätus so he was changed out with Mefistofeles.

- Did this change influence the composing of *Provenance of Cruelty*?

- No, none of the involved bassist made any music in Mactätus, and had therefore little influence on this. They made their own bass lines, but nothing else.

- In general, agree that music turned much more energetic and keeping sort of modern attitude to blackmetal. It was your intention? Don't you feel any danger, that album sounds a bit more acceptable to average listener (massive consumer)?

- The *Provenance of Cruelty* Mactätus is more the real us. *Blot* was an early stage in our development and we had little experience with studio recordings. Although it was a great step on the way for us, it gave us much both during the recording and after. I will not say that we have sold out, become commercial, because of the sound. The material is still Mactätus, and that is something that we are proud of. We do not try to make an album that sells or is for a wider audience. Mactätus makes music that we like and that we can stand for. We have no intentions of going the way many others have gone...

- New album shows more reference to satanic/dark kind of image of the band. Or you have found better means to express your real message already reverberated on *Blot*? Now it seems more straightforward to me. Well, I can judge just by your track titles and band pictures...

- As mentioned earlier the two albums are totally different, and this goes for everything. I cannot call it concept albums, but we make a totality in every album, and this includes sound, lyrics and material. Cover art as well, every element on each album is accounted for and is a significant part of the finished product.

- Who is Vidar Heimdal whom you address a 'fuck off' inside the booklet of *Blot*?

- He is the former head of the cultural service in our hometown. He has under several occasions made problems for Mactätus. He has thrown us out of rehearsal premises and given us problems with the police etc. The fuck off addressed to him is well deserved and I hope he will rot in heaven.

- How are you treated by Napalm? This label has quite a huge roster, so is there any troubles to receive enough of promotion and stuff? I have heard they are not very active whilst offering tours for their bands?

- Napalm is a very serious label, and they are treating us great. They have confidence in their bands and know that they have to support us with what we need. They have a great reputation, which they surely deserve, and their contact surroundings are huge. The Napalm stable are varied and filled with quality, and this shows good business and talented people. I think that Napalm is the ideal label to be signed with, because they are big and have a great network, but they are also interested in taking care of their bands. Many labels lack this ability and mistreat and forget their bands.

- Can you tell me your overview on blackmetal scene in Norway these days. It seems like it has totally changed since 1993, with new and established bands mainly striving for success, fame, money, recognition? At what extent is it common to

Mactätus, and is there a feeling of some kind of mysticism yet left?

- I see what you mean about changing, but I do not see it the same way as you. The thing is that there are more money in the genre now, and we are not tied down by financial boundaries like earlier. Few of the early Norwegian bands are aiming for fame and money, we are just doing the things we like and spreading our messages. There are not many bands in this genre striving for success, but there has happened a big change in this scene. Lately it has popped up lots of bands that are trying to ride the wave from the early nineties. Mostly influenced clearly by greater bands, they make music that ties the different aspects of black metal up in one knot. So the bands that have been around no longer will be individual or one of a kind, this forces some of us to conquer other aspects of music and to take the scene further. This is somewhat that work of bands like Dimmu Borgir, Dødheimgard, The Kovenant, Arcturus etc. I think this is in some way great because it widens the horizon and gives fans more possibilities and experiences.

Our new album, *The Complex Bewitchment*, will be released sometime before the summer. I would just like to thank all our fans for whatever support you may give us...

Dark satanic regards from *Gaut* on behalf of Mactätus...

Black Metal is not just music, but a way of life...

<http://members.tripod.com/~Mactatus/Mactatus.html>

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Progressive machinery from the forest

MYRKSOG

- Myrkskog stands for *dark forest*, if I am correct. Is it really one of Norwegian dialects, and not Swedish equivalent? Has band name something to do with extermination, death and horror themes that your debut album is stuffed with?

- You are correct with the translation of the name, but it has nothing to do with extermination, death or horror. It was just a cool name when we started out, and it really stood out from the other band names. But it has nothing to do with the current situation Myrkskog is of today. We would for sure picked another name today... Myrkskog is just a Norwegian translation from the famous J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.

- Ah, daddy is again here. Marvellous stories, indeed... Your nom de plume, *Master V*, is related to Tolkien's dreams as well, or it has any other meaning?

- *Master V* has nothing to do with Tolkien. *Master V* is just a name of fiction, but has a greater meaning. 'Master' - I guess everyone knows that one, and 'V' - has the same meaning as eternity, the ultimate and can be considered having the same symbolic effect as a circle. No beginning, no end. Just a perfect totality which makes a superior symbol for the strong and complete...

- You seem to avoid any usual terms to define music of *DeathMachine*. Anyway, as a true journalist who cannot live without clichés I place you on the edge of death and black metal. How do you feel there? Ok, I add some specific determination - sort of Scandinavian, but hard to say whether it tends more to Norwegian, or Swedish substandard.

- Yeah, I can very much relate to the description you mention. We have elements from both bm and dm in our music, but also some industrial happenings. I do not think we are a typical Norwegian band or have a typical Swedish feeling in the music, but in my opinion, I think we have managed to get a hybrid out of Myrkskog. A hybrid that I think can stand out from the rest and hopefully some out there sees it too. We have come to stay!

- The name *Satyricon* says something for you? I mean their rage is probably the only thing I can relate as Myrkskog's resemblance to any other artist. Do you respect them, are you fans of *Satyricon* music, or simply do not bother what they are up to?

- I have great respect for *Satyricon* and their work(s). I have been listening to *Satyricon* for years and I have always found the music interesting and enjoyable. But I still have not heard the new album in its entire context. I guess that is the album with most aggression and furious anger, because I can not see any resemblance in *Satyricon*'s earlier albums and our *DeathMachine*.

- Well, ideologically you are about death, I presume. But biography does not reflect yet the aspects of it. Unfortunately lyrics are thing that I do not possess at the time, so the only way left is to interrogate for a better explanation... Sounds like you strive for ultimate vanish, with total nothing ruling supreme afterwards? You enjoy painting the world in black and horror colours?

This phenomenon must not be that known for you, I presume. Me was not aware of a killer band from Norway for some time as well. But they did not have any praiseworthy release, if you wonder. Until *DeathMachine* has been unleashed... truly masterful hateful metal album, incorporating everything you have ever imagined about destruction and plague. Just brilliant. Great to see them joining prestigious *Candlelight Records* rooster! *Master V* thus speaks...

- What can I say? I must say that I could really like to see most of the human race suffer. To bring down humanity on its knees and shoot him/her in the head. I do not paint the world in black; the world does it by itself. Or should I say humanity...? This is a very wide aspect to go into, and therefore, as you said, I will not say, play and depict the rest...

- Any relations (of yourself or other band members) to satanic, occult or secret organizations that lets you explore learned topics around the concept of Myrkskog?

- Myrkskog stands beyond any religion, organization and the hypocrisy that evolves in such matters. In my opinion, the closest I get to any religion or occult matter, must be *Church of Satan*. Not the



rituals and the "spiritual" aspects, but the way of thinking and way of living. Thus I am not a member or preacher of this satanic art...

- I resume that Myrkskog stands for rather variable way of, or to say better - band philosophy. And concerning you are not going to keep spinning in the same vicious circle neither musically nor lyrically, should one interpret it as sort of changing/growing art with every new album? You are not the ones to look back?

- I think you have described us quite well in your assumption. Myrkskog will never be a band that does the same thing twice. We can be rooted in the same genre as before, but we dare to do more liberal and daring ways to make the music and the band a greater unit than many of the bm bands today. We think it too limited and narrow-minded to spin around the same block every time. We need to express ourselves a non-typical way and therefore you will find Myrkskog in very varied state of mind as time passes. When something has been done, be it right or wrong, it is history. No need for dwelling or asking why...

- Music is mostly fast paced, and pretty much suits the concept of death. It always creates such mass-killing-associations, at least in my bizarre way of thinking... Do you feel that whilst rehearsing, or performing it on stage?

- I do not think I get a mass-killing association when on rehearsal or a gig, but I get really pissed on stage. I get angry, frustrated, pissed off and I sometimes want to kick a person in the face. To blow off some steam... But also get the feeling of play "rock'n roll". Having a good time, show the audience a good time and to show off for the public. I have this diversity from time to time when I play... I will not ask you for understanding it, but on the other hand, I do not care either...

- I see your point. For the first time realizing the existence of *Pilar Deconstruction* I questioned why the hell it is attached to otherwise great album? I even thought about not conducting this interview at all! But it was a spontaneous reaction, which slowly but firmly grew into almost a worship-like of emotion. Tell me *Pilar Deconstruction*'s story - how has it ended up on your cd? I suppose it was spontaneous either?

- The idea of *Pilar Deconstruction* was very spontaneous. The reason was that we thought the album would be a bit short and we needed an idea for making it a bit longer. Since I have known the man behind the *Hagalaz'* *Runedance* remixes, I asked this guy and the sound-engineer from the studio if they would do a remix of *Syndrome 9*. And I must say I really enjoy it! It has groovy beats, slow ambient parts, techno parts and all the elements that I enjoy within such music. It has a lot of emotion and has a relaxed feeling. Maybe one can need it after all the blastbeating of *Secthdamon*.....?

- This tune makes me suspicious that you are not against modern means to make music, and maybe even have some small underground projects going around the home-made studios with PCs loaded with powerful soft-



ware... Do I have reason to think so? In general, is Myrkskog purely modern metal band, or not?

- No, not any of us are against modern music. We are all very liberal and have varied tastes within music. Myrkskog will definitely be a modern band in the future. We will never go underground, never be like Darkthrone/Gorgoroth (no offense) and will always look for newer ways to express ourselves. No limit, no restriction and always do what we feel. Me and Savant M are also doing a musical PC project called Phase 9. I guess you will find every kind of musical expression in this act. From dm, bm, hardcore, rap, techno, circus-themes and other weird elements. Just await and see... It is not for the narrow-minded, but an expression based on liberal ways of thinking...

- What about Ode til Norge demo then? I mean name suggests a tribute to the past, seems like music was way different back then? Have you used the drum computer due to lack of decent drummer, or rather wanted to make it that way with no troubles which you kept bouncing at whilst rehearsing with earlier drummers? There is no info about distribution, sales and reaction towards demo. Can you share these things right here?

- The Ode til Norge demo has never been in any magazine, never sent to any labels, but a few of the closest friends etc. have a X of this demo. The reason for having a drum-machine, was my imprisonment and we started the recording a week before I was imprisoned. And the idea of making a demo came out of my sentence in mind. So we had no time to hire a drummer. But we were also back then into speed and aggression, and I cannot think of any drummer at that time, which was able to play drums so fast. At least not within the area... It was definitely a tribute to our past and I am not ashamed of it, but it could have been done a thousand times better.

- You have 'pro' or 'anti church-burn-ing attitude?

- Church-burning as an effect has absolute no credibility and the shock-substance it once had. Not that I long for that period, but when it was going on in its worst, these fires shocked the Nation and to some degree the World. But as I said in an earlier interview, "the only thing that came out of these actions, was a stronger community of bastard christians". So the ironic part must be: for being 'evil' at that time, for shocking people, for being extreme in every way, we actually helped

to gather even more christians. Wasn't the purpose doing the opposite...? I am definitely pro-destruction.....

- So Secthdamon is your current drummer? He also performs with Odium. You are fine with this situation? It is clear without saying that his contribution in Myrkskog is much intense and tight. It is milestone alike comparing these two albums... Do you yourself enjoy Sad Realm Of The Stars?

- I am very satisfied with Secthdamon's playing on the album. He has contributed a lot with his expression on drums and I cannot think of another drummer within the bm-scene who could do the same. He makes the music a bit more distant from the bm music, which I prefer. I do not know how the situation is in one or two years ahead, but I guess he can do a good job with both bands. Thus I want he used more time on Myrkskog instead of Odium... These two albums cannot be compared at all. There are 3-4 years between the albums and the situation was different in '95/96 than in '99. The musical development has grown in every band, every scene and you always develop as a

musician. But I must say I do not enjoy Sad Realm of the Stars that much. It is too plain for me.

- Cover picture seemingly corresponds with the album title. But don't you think it is a bit cliché and leaves no background thinking for consumer? Sort of you say, play and depict what you really think and mean?

- Whether the consumer wants a cover to think about or have a plain cover, does not bother me at all. The cover fits the album/title and that was the intention. I do what I like, and if someone does not like... who cares? But I know what you mean. What you see/listen, is what you get from Myrkskog.

- Candlelight must support you with live shows. If you only play them at all, that is... But I am sure that your band is looking for the road experience already... Can you tell me yet when it happens, and what are your goals on tour? Please lay your position towards performing at big festivals, and attiring big masses. I mean there is a certain bunch of blackmetal bands that refuse to spread their sound live, especially in mass events...

- The goal this year, after releasing the album, is to attain at festivals, playing lots of gigs, touring and get the chance to play with bigger bands. I do not know when it happens, because we have not released the album yet, but I hope to get on tour during spring. We will play for many as possible, as much as possible and just having a good time around the world. We love to play live and I think we are a very good live-act. The goals on tour... Have fun, play like Hell, get experience, meet people and as the legendary saying says: Sex, drugs and rock'n roll...

- It was mentioned that multiple labels fought to score the contract with Myrkskog. Can you tell more

and name several of them? What counted when you made your final and ultimate choice?

- We had offers from Nocturnal Art, Hammerheart, Repulse, Invasion Records and others... Nothing much to say really. We decided to go with Candlelight because we thought they had the needed backup and financial support for Myrkskog. We also knew that Plastic Head had bought Candlelight, which means that they had a good distribution. Which of course is very good for the band.

- Can you explain how the improvement comes to your band? It is about every single riff, vocal chord and drum pattern that you feel gets better with every new rehearsal, or the whole feeling must be tighter these days, uniting forces of five musicians into each single track?

- Improvement comes from the heart. With impulses from other musical genres, rehearsing and of course that the band stand strong together and believe what they do. We always make new things on rehearsals. It might be drumpatterns, guitar chords, vocal diversity... Impulses to improve is the ultimate way, not be limited by a genre or way of thinking.

- What music do you listen at your spare?

- I think that Testament's The Gathering is absolute killer! But I listen to everything. Dm, bm, hardcore, techno, ambient, pop, rap, classical... The Cranberries are good, so are Massive Attack, Marilyn Manson is cool... Everything with a feeling....

So yow yow... don't be afraid of the techno remix at the end of DeathMachine, it is still very cool, like the entire album of mighty Myrkskog! Contact them at: myrkskog@online.no.



- Listening to your album one can definitely draw straight relations to the grands of death metal scene, like Morbid Angel, Krisiun, Deicide. I presume you are not denying that? Can you say it is about passion for brutal kind of music that it simply requires these qualities that above-mentioned bands have? Sort of there would be no real death metal sound without basics that are set by senior performers?

- We appreciate Death Metal music and we are fans of bands like the ones you mentioned before, they are the best Death Metal bands for sure and of course we are influenced by them. I cannot admit someone in the Death Metal scene that does not respect Morbid Angel, Deicide or Krisiun, it does not make sense for me. They created their own style in this particular kind of Metal and will be reference for the coming bands for several years.

- I still wonder about your masterful and fucking tight performance, something hardly imaginable from a band with just a debut album, and agree - from a country, where metal bands usually produce not so skilled albums, excepting of course recognised worldwide bands. I assume Rebaellium band members are experienced hardened musicians for that matter?

- Yeah, we have been playing our instruments since 1991, except Marcello (bass/vocals) who before was just vocalist in another band, he started to play bass when he joined Rebaellium, in 1998. From 1992 to 1996 I played in a Death Metal band with Ronaldo (guitars), and Sandro (drums) also played in this band from 1995 to 1996, when he started to play Death Metal, cause before he was playing hardcore. So we have a good experience with this kind of music regarding techniques and skills.

- Am I first to say that *Flagellation of Christ* sounds probably like the part II of *Hatework*, just without vocals (I guess you know what I exactly mean)? Were you looking for some orchestral intermezzo in between of other crucial songs, when composing it, or creation of the track happened long before you entered the studio?

- We are big fans of Morbid Angel, and since *Blessed Are The Sick*, when Trey started to use the machines to create different tracks, we were influenced by that, it is something plus for the fans, and it helps to improve the feeling of the masterpiece you are creating. We are sure *Flagellation Of Christ* sounds different from the other tracks but this number is not something 'strange' in the album, the felling is the same, War and Blasphemy!! When we started to work on the songs for the recordings we ever thought about an instrumental track like *Flagellation Of Christ*, we composed some riffs at home and the rest was done in the studio. The song represents the march of the Nazarene holding the fucking cross, it grows with his suffering and at the end all the noise symbolizes the pathetic death of Jesus Christ, dominated by his enemies without any reaction.

- The rest of album is fast paced death metal all the time, simply cleaning the music from any collateral influences, that is. Is your ultimate goal to make this kind of sound as crushing as possible? It must symbolize the destruction of conservative

Meet new death metal gods... bald!



I have been hearing rumours about how impressive these Brazilians are on stage, and that their brand of death metal is something everyone must experience at once, but it was not until their debut cd *Burn The promised Land* has popped into my mailbox, when I felt an instant urge to get more about them!. Damn, I have been longing for so high quality of brutal death metal! Top-notch songs and fairly vast imagination through the set of tunes! Fabiano Penna Correia (guitars) answers some questions of Ledo Takas.

morals, religious dogmas, or discipline?

- We are not trying to create something new in the Death Metal scene, this is not the way... We are just playing this kind of music the most extreme we can, we are living in a chaotic age and everything around us is one more influence to play fast, aggressive and brutal. We hate the way people see life and the way people have to live, we are going against all of this, playing Death Metal and living in the Underground, this is the life of the warriors. We are not 4 guys who work during the week and then on Saturday and Sunday we play Death Metal, we live for this every day and it is clear in our music that Rebaellium is not one more band playing Metal, we do that in the most intense and extreme way we can...

- Press sheet names Rebaellium as a war machine, I guess you are not against that description... Do you look upon this kind of death metal as machinery, where feelings other than hate and despair have nothing to do with the way of expression? Vocalstyle also carries just pure agony of unhuman kind, as if clutching rare stings of the sun...

- Death Metal means war, this is the most extreme kind of music ever made and there is no another way. No melodies, no female vocals, no depression or another shit like that, Death Metal is the soundtrack for the real warriors! We enjoy Classical Music and masters like Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Niccollo Paganini and others, but when we compose Rebaellium tracks we are just influenced by the chaotic atmosphere that surround us in our life, this is the strongest feeling for us. The most we

play live and the band grows more strength we get from our own music, the feeling that make us stronger every day to keep this work going on.

- Next thing I totally wonder about is that great sound you have achieved in one of Brazilian studios. It was anyhow famous studio & producer there, or you had luck with this recording done there?

- We first recorded *Promo-Tape 98* (re-released by Hammerheart Records - *At War* cd single) in that studio, the result was ok, and so we decided to record the full-length album in the same studio with the same engineer. Recordings of *Burn The Promised Land* were not 100% good, we had some problems to find a good sound for drums, etc, but the feeling of our music is completely clear and the album sounds powerful and heavy, this is very important. This studio is owned by a Brazilian Folk Music record label, they are used to record pop music and other commercial shits, we were the first extreme Metal band to record there. Since we always have clear in our mind the sound we need for Rebaellium, we had the whole direction of the recordings all the time.

- Your current label was the only choice for the band? I guess other labels have not got a chance to check you out before, when Hammerheart just noticed & signed you? It was a quick period between they heard your music and offered a deal? I suppose there is nothing to regret about them so far?

- We sent our promo-tape to several known record labels, we received 3 official offers and Hammerheart did the best offer for sure, since they were the

only label interested to bring the band to tour Europe. Things happened very quickly, but we are very satisfied with their work, *Burn The Promised Land* has a good promotion in Europe, they worked for the first European Tour and are already working for the second one in next June, we are negotiating the Brazilian version of the album for next March, I mean, they know the potential of our music and they are doing their best to let Rebaellium known in the Underground scene.

- Hammerheart truly supports you with live shows. Tell me about the recent tour you did with Limbonic Art, and concerts with Ancient in February. What was the reaction there? People were treating you as a new band (sensation?), or they rather knew Rebaellium already?

- Tour with Limbonic Art was very bad. We came to Europe two days before the beginning of the tour and we did not know anything about the dates, countries where we had to play, etc. It was a low-budget tour, with bad promotion and with the wrong bands for us. Anyway we got a very good response, especially in the gigs in Holland where Rebaellium is already very known. In Germany we could see that people did not know so much about our music, but they were all shocked with the aggressive and extreme show we have. Unfortunately we also were not able to play 2 gigs in Poland cause we had not a visa to cross the border, and we have heard that a lot of people went to those gigs especially for Rebaellium, cause in Poland Death Metal dominates the extreme scene, instead of Black Metal.

About the gigs we played with Ancient, 3 gigs in Holland were cool and the one in Belgium was killer, we played in the same place where we did our first gig in Europe more than one year ago, a pub called *Frontline*, and it was something really great, 150 people screaming *At War* some minutes before we start to play, wild fans screaming the titles and the refrains all the time, it was really impressing.

- Before the tour it was mentioned you are going on tour with Satyricon and some others. Then it was cancelled. What happened? Does the main band of the tour, or tour agency have anything to do with that? Maybe they did not want to put together death and black metal bands?

- I do not know so much about that, I have just heard that it would be very expensive for Hammerheart to go on tour with Satyricon, then they cancelled this one and we were included on the tour with Limbonic Art as an emergency cause we had to come to Europe to promote the album. Anyway Rebaellium is gonna return to Europe very soon, we must tour the whole continent during June beside Vader, Vital Remains, Fleshcrawl and Pandemia, the agency is already booking the dates and we are sure it will be a killer tour.

- You are staying in Europe until March. Let me ask if this is sponsored by Hammerheart as well, and for example what do you do when there is no shows for a week or more? Or is it just a good time to spend in the Old Continent? I suppose you work on some promotion for the band either.

- The problem is that we were supposed to play 18 dates with Limbonic Art, and

we played only 8 dates... we had some plans regarding the promotion of the band over here but everything changed, as you must know life is more expensive here than in Brazil. So *Hammerheart* is supporting us with money and food the rest of the time we have to stay here cause we had already booked some dates for March, and it would be impossible to return sooner to save some money. Now we have gigs only in the weekends, during the week we keep the work with interviews, e-mails, negotiating more gigs for June/July. Sometimes we can rehearse, we also have to practice our instruments every day, and when we have some free time we can play soccer with some Belgian friends or take some pictures in different places.

- Seems like Europe has opened the doors for the band? Were you just shy newcomers one year ago, with a future not certain at all? Then how have you managed to get over from Brazil and play some shows? It happened with some concert agencies support, or you did everything on your own?

- First time we came to Europe we had other plans. We lost our jobs, we sold everything we had like equipment, clothes, furniture, and we came to Belgium to live here, we would get some jobs to make money and later we would start to work for the band. But in the second weekend we got our first gig in the *Frontline* (Gent/Belgium), we started to receive other offers to play live, some people from other countries also started to hear about the band and things turned in another way. Our future is still not so clear, we do not know what can happen on the next day, but we are always doing our best to keep the band, this is the most important for us. On the first time we got 19 gigs by ourselves, only with the support from some friends, and I can tell you that right now we still keep this hard work to get underground gigs cause in our country we never can play live, so if we are here we try to play the most of the gigs we can.

- It sort of reminds me Sepultura, which flew over to US with just a tape in the bag, and no certainty about anything. When it comes to Brazilian or let us say - the whole Southern American scene, it seems like there is no other way indeed... But Rebaelliun has been existing before, for five years as bio states... You were just a local death metal band?

- Yeah, we played Death Metal in the another band for 4 years, we recorded 2 demos and 1 split-cd and some gigs were played as well. In Brazil we were very known and respected, but it was completely different from the situation we are right now. Brazilian bands have no other choice, we have to start the career in Europe or USA, it is the only way.

- Tell me more about the past - how have you got together and what kind of tapes/releases you have produced? Was it distributed by small underground dealers around the world? Can you mention your current line-up either?

- The current and the intact Rebaelliun line-up: *Marcello Marzari* (bass/vocals), *F. Penna Correa* (guitars), *Ronaldo Lima* (guitars) and *Sandro M.* (drums). Our first band, from 92 to 96 had me and *Ronaldo* on the guitars and *Sandro* on

the drums the last year, we are all friends since we were children, we also played before in some other bands, when we were just learning how to play the instruments... *Marcello* was the vocalist of another Death Metal band with some friends, we played some gigs together in 1993-1994, and when we started Rebaelliun he was the first one we remembered to be the frontman of the band. So he learnt how to play bass in a few months and he quickly understood the meaning of this band.

About the other releases we did in the past, our first band, called *Blessed*, released 2 demo-tapes - the last one with *Sandro* on drums, very good stuff - and a split-cd with two more Brazilian Death Metal bands, released by Brazilian label called *Heavy Metal Rock*. All of this stuff is no more available, neither we are interested in letting people know this stuff, it was done in the past neither it contains the same felling of our current music.

- Now tell me when, why and what for you have left your precious hair? Metal and long hair are inseparable, well at least it was an image back in the nineties and before... Now more and more musicians just cut it off for the devil's sake, and you did that either. Or it is Angelcorpse syndrome setting the spells on you?

- We do not care about long hair or bald head, this is bullshit. *Angel Corpse* proves that you do not need long hair to play Metal, it is just a choice.

- I do not have your lyrics at hand, but titles only makes me think over very dark and definitely antichristian side of concept, standing behind the album. Can you say something about it, like what makes you express this message? Is it just a reaction towards that brainwashing, or your deeper studies of the dark side? In

some way I believe you have dealt with the occult as well?

- Rebaelliun is not a satanist band, there are some conceptions in the satanism that I agree with and I can use in my life, the same for the other members of the band. However, antichristian thoughts are very clear in our lyrics, christianity is a kind of philosophy which goes against your freedom and your will to survive in this world, it is something for the weak ones... I have read a lot about occultism in the past, *Eliphaz Levi*, *Aleister Crowley*, some researches about Ancient Magic, etc. Nowadays I am not so interested in that, neither I have time to look for new titles and to read them... under this point of view I can say Rebaelliun's music is more spontaneous than something connected with studies or established thoughts...

- Any relation to satanic way of life, or you better stay yourselves, and do not bother about any organised movements? Anyways, I think the band name make you lead really rebellious way of existence, so there should be something unique about that?

- It is pathetic for me, any kind of religious organization, it can be christianity or satanism. People are different one from another, it is impossible to have rules, dogmas or any kind of discipline which will work for everybody. I believe in myself and this thought gives me the strength to keep going on, this is my philosophy. As I told you before, there are some conceptions in the satanist philosophy which are really interesting, but it does not mean I am a satanist, I am not interested in rites or deals with the occult, I prefer to think about the real battles in the real world. The dark side is inside each one of us, we do not need to make part of some organized movement to feel this energy, Rebaelliun music

shows that we can control this and make use of it for our personal will.

- Again returning to Sepultura (I wonder that I mention them the second time already!), is there any chance that with years Rebaelliun may turn completely other musical and ideological way, like that famous (or 'famous?') band did? Do you respect their current music?

- No way man, Rebaelliun will play extreme Death Metal until the last day. When we are not enjoying this kind of music, band will end, but I am sure we have a long way to run in coming years, playing fast and extreme. About *Sepultura*, I do not like any stuff from them since *Arise* (neither *do I* - ed.), but this is a choice they did, it is not my problem.

- I guess your label has not left your album without vinyl edition. You are vinyl freak, or it is just the same for you whether it is pressed on vinyl or cd or tape? I feel that Brazilian freaks should be also vinyl addicts, since all these older Brazilian bands used to put longplays in their homeland... Comment me the lp version of *Burn The Promised Land*.

Burn The Promised Land lp version sucks! Also *Hammerheart* think the same... we had problems with the layout for the vinyl, so for me it looks horrible. I am not used to listen to lps anymore, but of course it is something 'cult' to have your music in a vinyl album, so for the next one we will look for a better production for both cd and lp versions.

Anyways, music remains the most important thing, and Rebaelliun are masters of the style they perform. Just check them out around during their tour next time, and buy this marvellous debut album from any closest store!

Rebaelliun@yahoo.com



AMBER ASYLUM

Avenging and Bright/I have a Bonnet 7" ep Eislaus

Small cute 7" in grass (or emerald as they name it) green colour with several compositions dwelling of nature. That is *Amber Asylum*, reknown project which had in line-up *Annabel Lee*, courtesy of *Blood Axis*. Since she left them to concentrate on infamous preachers of the natural law, whilst this ep still features her. It is a pity that two tracks are my first acquaintance with the band, since I hear great mournful tunes of countryside, and I am sure more music by them would highly please me... Or in other words – two songs are definitely not enough for my demands.

What I hear is dominant violin melody, yes, *Annabel* is surely identified, her style of performing is sort of similar to *Blood Axis*. And also drum accompaniment (courtesy of *Stevé von Till* from *Neurosis* – only in this recording!), as well as cello (if I am right), so I can make a guess this band is about identifying itself with the past, what creates that ancient image of village musicians sitting and playing their plaintive tunes for the rest of the crew. It makes me feel also to realise that ancient heritage is probably similar in America, Lithuania, or any other European country. Yeah, these tunes are of Irish tradition, and traditional way of playing it is felt, not a pathetic 'music' done for the sake of fashion. At times drum beat is forcefully untight, like our ancestors used to play. They did not care about it, they felt where to play tight, and where to let singer or lead instrumentalist take the initiative. And so are these songs – *Avenging and Bright*, and *I have a Bonnet*, sincere, unlimited and bringing a very individual message, for the generations which are completely away from bequest of the past... Ask about it from *Storm Records*, 6\$ for the United States residents, 8\$ for the rest of the world.

CHANGES

Fire of Life / Icarus 7" ep Storm/Cthulhu

Apocalyptic folk of the 60-ies – can you imagine it reviewed in *Ledo Takas*? Well, I can. For these unfamiliar: *Changes* were a pioneering band of mentioned style twenty plus years ago, recently re-discovered by *Michael Moynihan*'s own *Storm Records* and German label *Cthulhu*. They co-released their old recordings as *Fire of Life* album. Its title track appears on this golden vinyl edition, which is limited to 1000 copies, together with another – never released before song of the band. Moreover, *Icarus* is recorded these days – in 1995! My surprise comes due to its authentic feel, and so similar way they manage to memorise that music! Incredible. Well, I tried to get into the whole album, but it left an average impression on me, as far as I remember. Otherwise this small vinyl thingie finds more respect in my heart, even if they were strongly associated with some apocalyptic sect back when writing this music. Nonetheless, a feel of despair and vanity of the world flows from these tunes, inviting to meet things mysterious and unexplored, with hands and hearts opened. Indeed I can just guess at what extent it was new and unusual when my parents were young, but I presume *Changes* were real strangers in both musical and philosophical level. So, any resemblance to hippie culture is just an illusion, nothing more. In other words, their art expressed just with acoustic guitar and voices, deserves to be experienced.

A haunting front cover painting is done by lyricist R.N. Taylor, and the whole theme is leaning towards sun and world burning visions. 5\$ (USA)/7\$ is a real bargain here, but be quick.

DAVID E. WILLIAMS

Triumph of the Williams 7" ep Storm

Really strange muzak, at the first listen sounds as if it were nice and sweet, if not an odd singing manner (reminds me a blend of goth and punk singer) and sometimes trippy feel of its instrumentation (especially in *Pumpernickel Crust*). That is a man behind its monicker – *David E. Williams* himself, preparing this explosive cocktail the reaction of which you feel only after a while. Label names him a demented pop genius with unrivaled black humour, but I would not dare say that it is so sweet after all. Sounds like a soft music experience far

from being usual or boring. It vigorously leads a weird synthetic path, amusing the alternative ear. See yourselves – lyrics are filled with sick imagination and visions that are not so standard for a mere mortal. Then observe a blood red vinyl, the same red tones of cover art and inside lyric sheet, and notice that sign down there: *limited edition of 666 copies*. Yeah, official journal of *Church of Satan – The Black Flame*, states that it consist of catchy pop tunes that flay the soul of the human animal... It is definitely an item for just these individual souls, so never trust any review. Maybe a reference point can be *David's* full-length album *I Have Forgotten How To Love You* released on *Cthulhu Records*. By the way, these four tunes appear there in different versions. Pay 6\$ (USA/Canada) / 8\$, ordering 7" from the label. *David E. Williams*, P.O. Box 2422, Philadelphia, PA 19147, USA

FORGOTTEN SILENCE / NOTRE DAME

Hathor's Place / Abattoir: Abattoir du Noir 7" ep (adv.)

What could be common between both *avant-gardish projects*? I thought before putting this new split into my stereo. *Forgotten Silence* are too much sophisticated to fit in odd improvisations of *Snowy*, and blackmetal tinge that *Notre Dame* posses is not a cup of tea in Czech musicians' minds as all time favourites. Well, *Hathor's Place* actually corresponds with *Abattoir: Abattoir du Noir*, to my sincere surprise. And both projects are to blame for that. Maybe they have agreed upon that before recording both tunes for the split? Ha, not that it was truthful, but impression is like that! *Forgotten Silence* are more packed than their previous records expose them, having a heavier guitar sound and production in general, darker growl and thicker groove behind it. *Hanka's* smart voice sounds as never charming, and fits the heavy concept as a glove. Indeed it is one of their best tunes ever written! When it comes to *Notre Dame*, this freaky tune is less extreme than their debut mod material, and sort of even more improvised around guitar abilities, not forgetting *Vampirella's* innocent yet seductive chants, confusing even the most liberal critics around. Indeed a trouble to name this experience – heavy metal with a horror brought to a playground with freaked out children down there... Well, of curse their images are not infantile but that charge they amuse themselves with is worth the most nasty kid you have ever seen. Maybe they play with fire that is, yet I am pleased to see that vaudeville around the project. In that context *Forgotten Silence* sound and look like a calmer and more mysterious side of human emotion.

By no means – a very amusing cake of vinyl, with surprisingly refreshing new compositions from both participants. Limited to 555 copies exclusively! Get one from *Ledo Takas* for 6\$. *Forgotten Silence*, Alexandr Nováček, Machova 487, 665 01 Rosice u Brna, Czech Republic
Notre Dame, Snowy Shaw, 417 05 Gothieburg, Sweden, notre_dame68@hotmail.com

HIN ONDE

Fiery September Fire 7" ep Aftermath Music

However the opener *24th of September 1155* is great, yet then *Hin Onde* music gets worse, and cannot re-echo that jolly amusing atmosphere of the very start of this record. Instead of patriotic sound lines they shift the whole idea into shallow wandering inside *Tolkien* shaped woods, and then even transcend into epic folkloristic bard hymns. Thankfully, to end it up, guys turn again to the more energetic and raging side of the pagan metal, but the entire piece of vinyl still seems to me like an adventure in hope to find an own niche. Yep, all four tunes of the 7" ep are different, making listeners wonder and discover themselves what *Fiery September Fire* is all about. I am not sure, maybe others enjoy the opposite evocations that *Hin Onde* cast a spell upon, but I am actually amazed by that light hand that their expressive opener swirls and involves me into. It is about characteristic folk touch, immortalized with a typical 'no fancy sound' keyboard, simple heavy metal riffs and share of clear and grim singing, what truly makes it sound majestic and something that you can bravely stick the 'pagan' term, unlike many other followers of the trend. At the same time you may name *Fiery September Fire* a slightly too early effort, as I am sure *Hin Onde* will write even catchier tunes ahead. By the way, this four-piece project has members of fiery black metallers *Azagal*; that is a kind of surprise, if you consider another approach to metal as a surprise. What the heck – bombard *Aftermath* contact datas, and ask if this limited to 500 copies thing is still on sale. I had it at the typing time (6\$), but no idea if it still remains in stock until the print date... Otherwise you should wait for something new from the band...

Hin Onde, c/o T. Kalliola, Kaskentie 3 as. 1, 05840 Hyvinkää, Finland

NEPHENZY

In Anguish and Furious Pain 7" ep '99 Underground Loudness

I am amused by their war against romanticism – back cover sticker with crossed guy looking gloomy says it all. Let's believe that *Nephenzy* are against stupid trendy cliché, and not against the values that for example *Empyrium* guys represent. No wonder that they play furious death/black themselves, as a thick answer to romantic music. Both tunes of this ep are traditionally Swedish, but not boring at all, rather energetic and bludgeoning. Four-piece is about fast pace, and melody infiltrated into their way of violent music. *Dissection/Dawn* school, in other words. In fact *Nephenzy* still yield to these masters of pure sound, but sound indeed promising whatsoever. What drives the listener most of all is this rage and search for something dramatic. I truly think that guys will find it with their upcoming releases, moreover that this is just a two track excerpt of their musical data. Seven inch comes in a cool gatefold package –

something very special for so small vinyl layout, but nonetheless – I would love more eps to be packed like this! It surely requires more funds and patience for the record label, but no doubt that real collector appreciates such fancies. Finally their lyrics are based on very negative themes, balancing on the edge between death and insanity. That might be another point to be the opposite of romantic wave and all crappy newborn Swedish performers. Get this great ep from *Ledo Takas* for only 6\$! *Nephenzy*, c/o Martin Hallin, Prästbolsgr. 21/4tr, 587 33 Linköping, Sweden, nephenzy@hotmail.com

PROFANITY / LIVIDITY

Drowned in Dusk / The Urge To Splurge 7" ep Cudgel Agency

This one belongs to the brutal grinding death tradition, where both participants fit each other very well, and I guess know each other pretty well – not to make a confusion out of common project. Both bands just taking a break between their albums, or maybe it is more correct to say – have initial sketches of what to expect on their new full-length releases. Another joint point is cover versions that *Profanity* and *Lividity* have done. I vote for the original one. *The Exorcist* of *Profanity* is too messy and not that tight (or should it be named not groovy enough?), certainly not the best version among numerous try-outs that *Possessed* trademark tune is being rehashed of. It sounds slightly too brutal, if you know what I mean. And the original song is meant just to evoke that raw deathrash spirit, nothing else. Here we go with a scissors effect, that is. When it comes to their own material, it is quite common typical brutality from A to Z, not the worst, not the very best, a few inches above the average. Gurgling death metal, where chopping rhythms, rifting massacre and guttural growls prevail, with several insane scream-like backing vocals by *Lividity*. No idea what they mean with a title, but it sounds amusing. As far as I know this band has close to cult status in States, then this hand-numbered and 1000 copies limited vinyl should be a sought-after release in a while. Order a copy from *Ledo Takas* now, for 6\$.

Profanity, c/o Thomas Sartor, Jahnstr. 5, 86399 Bobingen, Germany, tel. (49) 8234903269, profanitytom@a-city.de
Lividity, P.O. Box 3325, Peoria, IL 61612, USA

RAZOR OF OCCAM

Diablogue 7" ep Damnation

Oh my devil, how much I enjoy these cute plastic things, whether they are pictured, coloured, or just black! Aussie horde comes up with black vinyl, something that truly shapes their horry muzak in there! And bet you – they are pure metal the down under way! Not that much blackmetal, but nevertheless bludgeoning it all with blazing guitar riffs and sick insane screams. Sounds quite old way, but not at all retro or something shite smelling. *Tyranny of The Gods* is more traditional straightforward deathrash tune, with a few breaks and rhythm changes, smelling of *Order From Chaos* as well. I think 80-ies sound worshippers should cry out the pile of tears, feeling the glory of the past that this sound evokes. The flip side has *Ascent Of Man* – a composition which starts in the same highly energetic vein, but later on has more mid-tempoed rhythm and more imagination, if you know what I mean.

That is *Razor Of Occam's* first release to reach these shores, and I believe it deserves to be checked out. 7" is definitely more than a simple demo, so good choice and cool label to start things rolling. However, cover inlay could be better. First I do not like thin paper layout that much, which is not glued into a card, and next – I like more neat designed fancies inside. But I believe that was an idea – to keep it simple and pure. As the music itself. I also wonder about the symbolism of space images as cover artwork. Limited to 500 copies, so search it very hard!

Celtic Tradition

RELIGION

The Celts were a superstitious people. The supernatural pervaded every aspect of life - the spirits were everywhere: in ancient trees, weird rocks, and in the rivers and bogs. No part of the daily routine could be carried out without some reminder of the gods. They were responsible for the seasons and they controlled the natural world of which man was a part: they therefore had to be placated through intermediaries - the druids, who knew the ancient wisdom and could ensure that the correct procedures were at all times followed.

Celts believed that if a human life was at risk through serious disease or because the gods were wrathful. The only way to placate their antagonisms, and to save the endangered life, was therefore to offer another life in its place. Criminals were preferred as sacrifices, but if the supply of criminals was insufficient, numbers could be made up by substituting innocent men. The method of sacrifice varied, but the most dramatic of the practices described by the ancient writers come once more from the pen of Caesar. *Some tribes, he says, have colossal images made of wickerwork, the limbs of which they fill with living men: they are then set on fire, and then the victims are burned to death.*

Caesar may well have overemphasized human sacrifice, at which he professes horror, in order to justify in the minds of his readers his brutal campaigns against the Celts in Gaul. But that it formed a part of Celtic ritual there can be no doubt.

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

(source: Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance - a non-religious, non-sectarian organisation)

Beliefs and practices of the ancient Celts are being pieced together by modern Druids. Because so much information has been lost, this is not an easy task. Some findings are:

GODDESSES AND GODS - The Celts did not form a single religious or political unity. They were organised into tribes spread across what are now several countries. As a result, of the 374 Celtic deities who have been found, over 300 occur only once in the archaeological record; they are believed to be local deities. There is some evidence that their main pantheon of Gods and Goddesses might have totalled about 3 dozen - perhaps precisely 33 (a frequently occurring magical number in Celtic literature). Some of the more famous are: *Arawn, Brigid, Cernunnos, Ceridwen, Danu, Herne, Lugh, Rhiannon and Taranis*. Many Celtic deities were worshipped

in triune (triple aspect) form. Triple Goddesses were often sisters.

Recurring theme in Celtic iconography is the horned god of which two main types may be distinguished: the antler horned god, *Cernunnos*, and the bull or ram horned god, who is unnamed. *Cernunnos*, wearing his antler headgear, with two gold torques, one around his neck and the other in his right hand, is shown sitting among his beasts on the *Gundestrup* cauldron. In this guise he is seen at his most typical, accompanied by a stag and a horned serpent. Clearly a deity of some antiquity, *Cernunnos* may well reflect a hunting god of the pre-farming period. Pierced antler frontlets have been found at the camps of Mesolithic hunters, and the wearing of antlers by shamans is well attested among the later pastoral communities of Russia and the circum-polar zone. The torque was widely regarded in the Celtic period as having magical properties in warding off evil, while a serpent is a frequent attribute of the Celtic version of the war god. The other, unnamed, horned god must also be associated with warfare, since he is often depicted naked but armed. The serpent may be a reminder of the god's other attribute as a healer. There is nothing inconsistent in this suggestion - the Celtic tribal god was, after all, skilled at all things. There is an interesting example of just such a combination of skills in the Irish literature. In the *Tuatha Dé Danann*, one of the gods, renowned as a warrior, heals the wounded hero *Cú Chulainn* with magical chants and sacred herbs.

AFTERLIFE - The dead were transported to the Otherworld by the God *Bile* (aka *Bel, Belenus*). Life continued in this location much as it had before death. The Druids believed that the soul was immortal. After the person died in the Otherworld, their soul lives again in another human body. At every birth, the Celts mourned the death of a person in the Otherworld, which made the new birth possible.

CREATION MYTH - No Druidic creation story appears to have survived, although there are numerous accounts of the supernatural creation of islands, mountains, etc.

BAPTISM - There is some evidence

that the Celts had a baptism initiation ceremony similar to those found in buddhist, christian, essene, hindu, islamic, and jainist sacred texts. Other researchers dismiss baptism as a forgery by christian scribes as they transferred Celtic material to written form.

DIVINATION - Druids used many techniques to foretell the future: meditation, study of the flight of birds, interpreting dreams, and interpreting the pattern of sticks thrown to the ground.

AWAEN SYMBOL - This is a symbol drawn in the form of three pillars, in which the outer two are sloped towards the centre pillar, as in *IV*. The symbol has been in use since the 17th century; it recalls the druidic fascination with the number three.

TRISKELE SYMBOL - This is an ancient druidic symbol consisting of three curved branches, bent legs or arms radiating from the centre of the symbol. The flag of the Isle of Man contains a triskele.

SEASONAL DAYS OF CELEBRATION - Druids, past and present, celebrate a series of fire-festivals, on the first of each of four months. Each would start at sunset and last for three days. Great bonfires would be built on the hilltops. Cattle would be driven between two bonfires to assure their fertility; couples would jump over a bonfire or run between two bonfires as well.

MODERN DRUIDIC MOVEMENTS: *Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids (OBOD)*

There are two beliefs concerning the development of this group. One traces their origin to the *Ancient Order of Druids (AOD)* by *Henry Hurle* in England in 1781. This group repeatedly split due to internal disension into many separate organisations. By 1918, there were five groups attempting to perform solstice ceremonies at *Stonehenge*; all were breakaway groups from the original *Ancient Order of Druids*. By 1955, all had disappeared except for the *British Circle of*

Universal Bond, which subsequently split in 1963 to form the *OBOD*. The other lineage is claimed by the *OBOD* who trace their ancestry back through the *AOD* to a group founded in England in 1717 by *John Toland*. He is said to have combined local groups of Druids (called groves) from 10 locations into the *Mother Grove*. The *OBOD's* current address is: PO Box 1333, Lewes, East Sussex, England, BN7 3ZG, oaktreepress@e-world.com.

Arn Draiocht Fein

This can be loosely translated as 'our own Druidism'. Their name is pronounced *arn ree-ocht fane*. It was founded by *Isaac Bonewits* who is currently the *Archdruid Emeritus*. The *ADF* emphasises scholarly research, and 'a blend of ancient practices and modern realities'. His motto is 'paganize mainstream religion by mainstreaming paganism'. Their goal is to recreate Pan-European Druidism, involving elements from Baltic, Celtic, Germanic, Slavic and even pre-classical Greek and Roman beliefs. The *ADF* publishes a quarterly *ADF journal*, bimonthly *News from the Mother Grove*, and a semi-yearly *Druid's Progress*. Their address is: PO box 516, East Syracuse, NY 13057-0516, kithoward@delphi.com.

THE CELTIC CALENDAR YEAR

JANUARY - *am Faolleach*. Traditionally, 'The Wolf Month', two weeks before the festival of an *theille Bride* (known as 'faoilteach gearmhradh' - winter wolftime) and two weeks after it (known as 'faoilteach earraich' - spring wolftime). Also known as the 'storm days'.

FEBRUARY - *an Gearran*, the gelding or horse. (Middle Irish - a workhorse; Gaulish coligny - Equos). The horse was used to draw the plough. *Gearr* also means 'to cut' and *gearran* is one of the many names used to describe the spring winds. Hence, *gearran* is the cutting wind; *feadag* is the whistling wind (the plover); *gobag* is the biting wind (dogfish).

MARCH - *am Mart*, the seedtime. There is much folklore concerned with the charm known as 'na tri Mairt' (the three Marches) which was said to protect the harvest from fairy enchantment.

APRIL - *an Giblean*. The end of April is known as *seachdain an t-sionnach*, the week of the fox (end of the winds).



MAY - an *Ceitean*. The first weather of summer. (Old Irish *ceitsoman*, *Cet* - first). The two weeks before *Bealtaine* (*ceitean earrach* - spring maytime); the two weeks after *Bealtaine* (*ceitean samhradh* - summer maytime).

JUNE - an *t-Ogmios*. The young month. (Perhaps from the idea of the young summer, the young sun god).

JULY - an *t-Iuchar*. The border time, traditionally the last two weeks of July and the first two weeks of August. Also known as the 'dog days'. (Sirius, the dog star, can be seen in the sky).

AUGUST - an *Lunasdal*. From early Irish *Lughnassad*, the festival of *Lugh*.

SEPTEMBER - an *t-Sultainn*. The fat time. (*Sultar* - plump, fat, in good condition. Early Irish - *sult*; Gaulish *Rivros* - fat; Gaelic - *Reamhar*). All these names refer to the ripening harvest. The September moon is *gealach* an *abachaidh*, moon of ripening.

OCTOBER - an *Damhair*, the stag rut. Gaelic - *damh* - a stag. Old Celtic - *damo*.

Gealach a *bhruic* - moon of the badger.

NOVEMBER - an *t-Samhainn*, summer's end. The month of the festival of *Samhain*. (Old Celtic - *samon*,

possibly *sam* + *fuin* - end of summer).

DECEMBER - an *Dubhlachd*. The dark season. Old Celtic - *dubo* - dark.

SEASONS:

SPRING - *earrach* (also *errach* and *ersako*) - scarcity of food and fodder.

SUMMER - *samhradh*.

AUTUMN - *foghar* - the Harvest.

WINTER - *geamhradh* (also *gaimred* and *gaimo*) - Stormy.

SEASONAL DAYS OF CELEBRATION

The Celts measured the Solar year on a wheel, circle or spiral, all of which symbolise creation and the constant movement of the universe - growth and development. The Celtic Nations consisted of Alba (Scotland), Breizh (Brittany), Cymru (Wales), Eiru (Ireland), Kernow (Cornwall), and Mannin (Isle of Man).

To the ancients, the Heavens appeared to wheel overhead, turning on an axis, which points to the north polar stars. At the crown of the axis, a circle of stars revolved about a fixed point, the Celestial Pole, which was believed to be the location of Heaven. At the base of the axis was the *Omphalos*, the circular altar of the Goddess' temple. The universe of stars turning on this axis formed a spiral path, or stairway, on which souls ascended to Heaven.

This Sun-wise, clockwise, or *deiseal* (Gaelic), motion of the spirals represented the Summer Sun. The continuous spirals with seemingly no

beginning or end signified that as one cycle ended, another began - eternal life. The spiral's never-ending, always expanding, motion also symbolised the ever-increasing nature of information and knowledge. Many of these symbols also often appeared in triplicate, a sign of the divine.

In addition, the seasons of the year were thought to be part of this cycle. In Gaelic, the names of the four seasons date back to pre-Christian times:

- 1) *Earrach* for 'Spring',
- 2) *Samhradh* for 'Summer',
- 3) *Foghar* for 'Harvest' which refers to Autumn, and
- 4) *Geamhradh* for 'Winter'.

The Celtic Wheel has two main fire festivals for purification and good fortune: *Samhain* and *Beltane* - the beginning of Winter and the beginning of Summer. To the Celts, and most pastoral cultures, the year actually had two seasons instead of four. Subtler divisions of the year concerned crop-raisers rather than cattle-raisers. The druidic tradition also celebrates two other fire festivals: *Imbolc*, and *Lammas*. Five additional sabbats have taken their place amongst the ceremonies over the years (listed here by their Druidic names where possible): *Alban Arthuan* (Winter Solstice), *Alban Eiler* (Vernal Equinox), *Ostara*, *Alban Heruin* (Summer Solstice), and *Alban Elued* (Autumnal Equinox).

SAMHAIN (pronounced 'Souw-wee', or in Scots-Gaelic, 'Sha-vin')

After the last apples are picked the year begins again with its dark winter half, when the Earth rests and fertility is renewed. Also called *Samhunn* or *Hallowe'en*, this festival is sometimes called *Trinoux Samonia* or 'Three Nights of the End of summer'. Originally a druidic festival, it is celebrated on the eve of November 1st (October 31st). Technically, either date is appropriate as the Celts measured the day from sunset to sunset. In the Celtic tale *The Wasting Sickness of Cuchulainn*, it is celebrated for a total of seven days - three days before, the day of, and three days after.

Samhain is a time when spirits can mix freely with humans, when the veil of the Otherworld, or the *Sídh*, is thin. The *Sídh*, also called *Faerie Hills*, are the special dwelling places of the Otherworld spirits.

such as the mound at *Brugh na Bóinne* in Newgrange, Ireland. This suspension of Time extends to the laws of society, so that all kinds of boisterous behaviour can be indulged in. At the end of the festival, several beasts are sacrificed whose life-energy goes to replenish the dormant soil. In origin, *Samhain* was a pastoral festival, held to assist the tribe's fertility, to placate the dead and evil forces, to please the gods and as a clear distinction between the joys of Harvest and the hardships of the approaching winter.

The assemblies of the five Irish provinces at Tara Hill, the seat of the Irish King, took place at *Samhain*, marked by horse races, fairs, markets, pastoral assembly rites, political discussions and ritual mourning for the passage of summer. In the Christian tradition, these two dates are celebrated as *All Souls' Day* and *All Saints Day*.

In the Scottish Highlands, many crofts had their own bonfire, or *samhnag*, but one house was usually a popular gathering place. In early Celtic tradition, *Samhain* was closely associated with burial mounds, or *cairns*, which were believed to be entrances to the Otherworld.

In an example in Fortingall (in Perthshire), a *samhnag* was built on a mound known as *Carn nam Marbh*, 'The Mound of the Dead'. Local lore has it that the mound contained the bodies of plague victims and is, in fact, a Bronze Age tumulus. A stone, known as the *Clach a' Phaigh*, 'the Plague Stone', crowned the mound. Once the bonfire was lit, the participants would join hands and dance around it, both Sun-wise and anti-Sun-wise. As the blaze waned, the younger attendants would take part in leaping games over the flame. No quisers appeared in this particular tradition; the bonfire was the sole center of attention. In the Highlands, after Sunset many of the youth carried a blazing torch and circled the boundaries of their farms in order to protect the family from the Faeries and malevolent forces. New fire, kindled from the sacred communal blaze, was then brought into each house. Like the *Beltain* fire, the *Samhain* bonfire was most likely made from *tein-eigin*, fire made from the friction of two pieces of wood.

The **WINTER SOLSTICE** or *Alban Arthuan* ("The Light of Arthur"), also is referred to as *Yule*, *Jul*, *Saturnalia*, or even *christmas*.

This feast takes place on or about December 21 and marks the longest, darkest night of the year.

This is a festival of peace and a celebration of waxing solar light. Many honour the new Sun child by burning an oaken *Yule log*, and honour the Goddess in her many Mother aspects. The *Father God* also can be honoured as *Santa Claus* in his *Old Sky God*, *Father Time*, and *Holly King* forms. Winter symbolises the time in the womb - a deep rejuvenative sleep, rather than nature's death. It also points to how the ancients looked upon human death as a necessary pathway to rebirth.

IMBOLC

Celebrated on or around February 1, *Imbolc* is also known as *Dimelc*, *Brigid*, *Candlemas*, or even in America as *Groundhog Day*. This mid-Winter feast day symbolises the first stirring of the Earth from its icy sleep and was the time for caring of the sheep in ancient Britain. In the Mother-Goddess tradition, this day is the festival of the goddess *Brigid* or *Brigantia*, patroness of poetry, healing and metalsmithing, rekindles the fire in the Earth, preparing it for new life. During this time *Brigid* personifies the bride, virgin or maiden. *Brigid* also is the protectress of women in childbirth.

This stirring of new life is manifested by the first milk of the ewes, a few weeks before the lambing season. As the foundation for the American *Groundhog Day*, *Brigid's* snake comes of its mound in which it hibernates and its behaviour is said to determine the length of the remaining winter. The Brythonic Celts came to associate *Brigantia* with the *virgin Mary*, leading to such names for the feast as *Gwyl Mair Dechrau'r*, 'The Feast of Mary of the Beginning of Spring'.

An ancient Irish story tells of how on the eve of this day, the *Cailleach*, or *White Lady*, drinks from the ancient Well of Youth at dawn. In that instant, she is transformed into her Maiden aspect, the young goddess called *Brigid*. Wells were considered to be sacred because they arose from *oim-belc* (literally 'in the belly') or womb of Mother Earth.

VERNAL EQUINOX

Also called *Alban Eiler*, which means 'Light of the Earth'. The *Vernal*, or spring, Equinox takes place on or about March 21. An 'equinox' refers to the time of the year when the sun crosses the plane of the Earth's equator, making night and day equal length all over the planet. Crops were typically sown at this time, a time of transition. This rare balance in nature represented a powerful time of magic to the ancients.

OSTARA

Also known as *Lady Day* or *Eostre*, *Ostara* takes place on the first full moon after the Vernal Equinox and marks the fullness of the Earth and the triumph of the Sun over winter. In the Celtic tradition, it signified the period when the Sun and the Earth mate to produce crops.

It is thought that the church's feast of *Easter* is named after this feast. Prior to *Easter*, the church pre-



compares with the *Lenten* season, a time of meditation and sacrifice.

BELTANE

(pronounced Bee-YAWL-tinnuh)

Beltane, one of two Celtic fire festivals, is a celebration of the return of life and fertility to the world, which takes place on April 30th. It is sometimes referred to as *Cetsamhain*, which means 'opposite Samhain'. In the Celtic countries the festival was known by other names, such as *Beltaine* in Ireland (which means in Irish Gaelic 'May'), *Bealtunn* (which means in Scots-Gaelic 'May Day') in Scotland, *Shenn do Boaldyn* on the Isle of Man and *Galan Mae* in Wales. The Saxons called this day *Walpurgisnacht*, the night of *Walpurga*, goddess of May. Like *Brigid*, the church changed this goddess into *St. Walpurga* and attached a similar legend to her origin. Also known as May Eve (likewise May 1st is referred to as *May Day*), this festival marks the beginning of summer - the growing season.

The word 'Beltaine' literally means 'bright' or 'brilliant fire', and refers to the bonfire lit by a presiding Druid in honour of the proto-Celtic god variously known as *Bel*, *Beli*, *Balar*, *Balor* or *Belenus*. *Bel*, the god of light, fire and healing, had Sun-like qualities, but was not purely a Sun god as the Celts were not specifically Sun worshippers.

It has been suggested that *Bel* is the Brythonic Celt equivalent to the Goidelic Celt god *Cernunnos*. Both *Bel* and *Cernunnos* represent the belief that the *Great Father* impregnates the *Great Mother*. Some also believe that the mythological king in the story of *Lludd* and *Llefelys* in *The Mabinogion*, *Beli Mawr* is a folk memory of this god.

At *Beltane*, the Horned One, the God, dies or is taken by the Goddess, only to be reborn as her son. He then reclaims his role as consort and impregnates the Goddess, sparking his own rebirth. It is important to remember the mindset of the ancients: nothing can live without death; the ancients understood and accepted the taking powers in life in order to obtain the benefit of the giving powers. Through this rite, the Goddess is also transformed from the taking *Crone* to the virginal Maiden or Sister, and again to Mother, a giving goddess.

Other beliefs tell of the Summer God being released from captivity, or the Summer Maiden wooed away from her Earth-giant father. The Hawthorne tree represents the giant and sometimes this wood is used for the Maypole (see below).

In Irish mythology, the great undertakings of the *Tuatha Dé Danann* and the Milesians - the original supernatural inhabitants of Eiru and their human conquerors, respectively - began at *Beltane*. The Milesians were led by *Amaigen*, son of *Mil*, in folklore reputed to be the first Druid.

Rituals: two bonfires were kindled by a presiding Druid most likely from *tein-eigin*, fire made from the friction of two pieces of sacred wood,

most likely an *Dak-plank*. This fire originally symbolised the sacrifice of the Oak-god. Oak is the tree of the God of the Waxing Year and Hawthorne is the tree of the White Goddess. In ancient Ireland, no one could light a *Bel-fire* until the *Ard Ri*, High King, had lit the first on Tara Hill. In 433 AD, St. Patrick showed his deep understanding of this festival's symbolism when he lit a fire on Slane Hill, ten miles from Tara, before the High King *Laoghaire* lit his. He could not have made a stronger usurpation of the people's faith. *St. David* made a similar gesture in Wales in the following century. The Druids, the powerful Pagan Celtic priests, would drive the cattle between these two fires to protect them from disease ensuring a high milk yield, and the powers of darkness.

Sometimes, a procession was made around the fields with a burning torch of wood in order to obtain a blessing on the corn. On this day, all hearth-fires were extinguished to be rekindled from this sacred fire.

A May Pole fertility dance also took place. A pole, a phallic symbol for the God, was made usually from a *Yule* tree, its branches stripped and then planted into the Earth. Red and white ribbons were attached to its top. In the Goddess tradition, the white ribbons stood for the Goddess, red for the God. Men and women danced around the pole, holding onto the ribbons and interweaving them as they went round. The King and Queen of May were also elected - stand-ins for the God and Goddess - and led the festival. One telling explains that the Queen would ride in on a white horse and the King on a black one. The Goddess on a white horse has a powerful association in Celtic mythology. When *Niamh* of the Golden Hair came to take *Oisinn* away to the Land of Promise, it is upon a white steed that she rode. *Rhian Gabhra*, or *Rhiannon* of the Gaels, rides a white mare in the otherworldly realms. In both Welsh and Irish traditions the white mare is representative of the Goddess in the Otherworld. The ancients would also then go and make love on the ground - considered a form of

magic, prompting the crops to be fertile. Another, similar rite that took place at *Beltane* is called the 'bringing in the May'. The youth would go out into the fields and collect flowers. They would often spend the night in the wood, which resulted in many 'greenwood marriages', or 'handfastings'. In the village, they would stop at each home and exchange the flowers for food and

drink. Thus, they became the harbingers of the renewal of the Earth. This rite also represented the need of the tribe to share their belongings, sustaining the entire population as a result.

On May Eve people would tear branches from a

Hawthorn tree and decorate the outside of their homes. The Hawthorn, or Whitethorn, is the tree of hope, pleasure and protection.

The strong taboo on breaking Hawthorne branches or bringing them into the home was traditionally lifted on May Eve.

Another custom would be to jump over the fire. Young people jumped the fire for luck in finding a spouse, sojourners jumped the fire to ensure a safe journey, and pregnant women jumped the fire to assure an easy delivery.

On May 1st, the entire tribe, village or clan would lead the cattle to the summer *bualte* (pronounced 'booa-tuh') or pastures until *Samhain*.

SUMMER SOLSTICE

Alban Heruin, or 'The Light of the Shore', also is referred to as Midsummer's Day. This feast takes place on June 21st and marks the shortest, brightest night of the year. The Summer Solstice marks the Earth's full flowering. Midsummer's Day was traditionally celebrated out in the forest and involved masquerades, picnics, games, and, at night, a bonfire to cut the chill.

LAMMAS

Traditionally called *Lammas* from the Saxon word *Hlaf-mass*, the Feast of Bread, this festival is also known as *Lughnasadh*, *Lughnasa* (pronounced 'Loo-nahs-ah'), or First Fruits, and is the feast of the god *Lugh*. Celebrated on August 1st, it coincides with the beginning of the harvest and signifies the death of *Bel*, or the Corn King. The Corn King dies, to be later reborn, so that the tribe may go into the winter months with sustenance plenty. Another myth tells of the greedy *Fomorians* Earth-spirits that must be persuaded to relinquish the fruits of the soil to humans.

In the Scottish Highlands, this feast was sometimes referred to as the *nasad*, or games, of *Lugh*, son of *Ethle*. An early Irish tradition has it that *Lugh* established the festival in honour of his foster-mother *Tailtiu*, a close relationship in the Celtic custom. In Ireland, *Lugh* also is referred to as *Lugh* of the Long Hand, son of the Sun.

Rituals:

Farmers cut down the first stalks of corn with sickles and called these stalks *John Barleycorn*. This first grain is used to produce the first beer of the season, for consumption at the Autumnal Equinox six weeks later.

In the British Isles, the Horned One was thought to be the consort of the Earth Goddess (see *Beltane* explanation). Harvest festivals usually included a *Stag Dance* in which men wore antlers on their heads.

AUTUMNAL EQUINOX

Alban Elued, 'The Light of the Water', also is called *Harvesthome*. This feast takes place on September 21 and marks the last harvest before winter claims the Earth. As with the Vernal Equinox, day and night are of equal length across the planet. This balance in nature presents a powerful time for magic.

To the ancients, this was a sacred time. The Irish saw this time of year as the Waning of the Goddess. From the summer to the Winter Solstice they would hold festivals for the God - who was seen as a dark, threatening being. To the Goidelic Celts, the spring was the time of joy in the rebirth of the Goddess. To Brythonic Celts, however, this was the time of the death of the God (the Sun or the Grain God).



Led By Satanism

Thyrane

Like the winds of nowhere shakes the pale remains of nature, inevitably dying in late Fall, thus are the subtle thunderous attacks of Thyrane upon thy marble heart, which streams towards the eliminating inferno... Avather shares my feelings invoked by plain Black Harmony worship...

cial, in your opinion? *Ahti* is a metal guy, or he is rather used to this music, after so many years dealing with heavy bands?

- Naturally *Ahti-silli* is first who is going to hear the new material, as it will be recorded at his workshop. Yes, the choice is very clear this time also, maybe next time we will try something else, but just maybe. Here are a few other studios which are good too but all of them are located in the south of Finland, 800-900 kilometers away, so it is not very tempting idea. From my home to *Tico* I have to walk 100 meters, so that counts quite much. What makes *Tico* so professional is *Ahti* himself, simply. Over ten years of

experience speaks for itself. Of course the equipment is good too, but there is not anything ultra sci-fi hi-fi stuff either. When it comes to *Ahti's* musical taste, I remember he named *Susanne Vega* and *Slayer*, think about that!

- I am trying... his head must be really aching, hehe... From your biography I guess that to shape Thyrane was not the easiest task? It was drummer *Blastmor* - the originator and former of the horde?

- Building up this band to the state where it is now was not that hard, I might say. There has not been that many changes in line-up, only finding right persons took some time.

- *Black Harmony* first of all was released as a demo tape, yet further on you got the cd offer, and re-released it. Wouldn't you mind to skip that 'underground' part of the band's development? Many bands go this cd-first-learning-to-play-next way nowadays, but I suppose that not always it makes them good. Anyway, cd should have done a much wider promotion for the band?

- Yes, we got the record deal with that *Black Harmony* tape, but releasing it on cd was not even mentioned in the deal, it was released to promote the band and it did its job very well. We had a deal for only one full-length cd, which is now released (*Symphonies of infernality album* - ed.). I would say that we are still quite underground band despite those cd releases and other things. That underground spirit is something that will never vanish from our souls.

- When it comes to so called underground, you keep following what goes on there, answering interviews and reading latest magazines that come out? At what point is it important for Thyrane? I think it should be different from when you started, and now?

- As I think our UG activity, I could say that I am the one who writes all letters mostly, and *Blastmor* is handling most of the interviews. Sometimes, maybe once in a month, I order some shit by mail, but not very much though, zines are very relaxing way to spend time and from there I can see what the hell is going on in the scene. I think that one of the biggest differences between the past and the present is that nowadays there seems to be two camps in the bm field, meaning that there are bands who are playing bm in their cellars, in the "old school way", sounding quite the same as years ago and some of them even avoiding to progress; and then are those who are innovative in many ways and feel hunger to progress. But as always, there are good and shit bands in both camps.

- When you have a new album recording session then? How much stuff do you have and plan to use on the album?

- Next studio torture session is in August 2000. Right now (March) we have very little material on our strings but as *Symphonies of infernality* is playable in 51 minutes and contains eight songs, I think this time we will make it little shorter. Variation between songs is to be quite drastic, at least one song will be very slow tempo (at least for Thyrane...), we will see how haunting and oppressive we can get it.

Here I must interfere and admit about the labels' mess, that Thyrane are bound with - it has confused me quite a bit. So, guys were to release one full-length on *Woodcut Records* (and they have done it recently), and then they got signed to *Spikfarm Records*, with yet a new disk scheduled for later in the year. So, ignore my fuck-ups in the questionnaire further on, and keep reading!

- Is it *Ahti* at *Tico-Tico* who will hear the new stuff first? In general, do you consider where to go recording or the choice of *Tico-Tico* is obvious as hell even beyond any thinking? What makes this legendary studio so spe-

- How has been for a drummer to form the band? Does he participates in music writing, I mean - putting up riffs and so on? He should be acknowledged with guitar playing then, or to have appropriate musical education.

- In this case it is easy for drummer to form a band as he can play guitar and make all songs quite by himself.

- Every time I hear the drummer handling on the vocals, it invokes my respect and applause for being brave enough to break the typical rule that your frontman has to be in front. But it was not the easiest way to keep both things smooth (drumming and vocalising), especially when singing does not follow the rhythm, wasn't it?

- In the beginning when band played their first couple of gigs it became clear that it is quite impossible to play this kind of music with drums and sing at the same time properly. So after few years when gig-fever had ripped to intolerable, we had two choices: to find session vocalist, which would have been worse alternative of the two, cause band's sound would not be the same. So we got session drummer to gigs, where *Blastmor* is playing lead guitar and sings and this works very well.

- So what about early stage of Thyrane? You have finally put first tunes only after almost 4 years since formation. It was not easy to write good songs, or you actually were too slow to compose any of them until 1997, until the full band was in action? Your aim was to perform furious blackmetal from the beginning?

- We could have easily done demo or two in the first years, but how would have been the quality on those products? Remarkably worse than in 1997, when time had done its task and real band with right members was in action and we had enough money to good studio. *Satanic Ages Overture* is by the way from '95-'96, but it is now quite different than in the beginning. But aggression has always prevailed, right from the start, and always will!

- Ideologically, your position is clear I think... You have something to say about it? Or lyrics and titles should do it instead? I must admit that your lyrics are quite poetic and carry a huge amount of pride that lurks behind these words... It should be exclusive moments that catch you inspired to write these anthems...

- Satanism is clearly the prime mover in Thyrane's lyrics which are written by *Blastmor* from his own point of view, therefore I cannot comment very deeply those verses here. But you do not have to clairvoyant to get a hold of the scarlet thread there, don't you? Pride is one thing which has experienced a great loss among those people who are surrounding you everyday. You see, it is so fucking boring to see people wallow in their self-pity. They should fucking kill themselves or do something to their life (if they are able to do that in the first place...).

- It is a real huge variation of lyrical concepts in today's metal. You have something against musically bm but lyrically not satanic bands? Any warlike attitude towards another type of bands is characteristic to Thyrane?

- Variation between metal bands' lyrics of course is ok thing, but when it comes



to bands who proclaim themselves to be blackmetal band but lyrically almost preach the gospel, it definitely makes me puke and then laugh. And I might say that there is a little misspelling in your question, cause I would say that if band is not lyrically satanic, then it is not blackmetal in any way, period! No, I would not say that there is any war-like attitude and definitely not towards OTHER type of bands, we rather let them do whatever they want and besides, every now and then they even give us opportunity to laugh ourselves to death, cute.

- Initially *Woodcut* were supposed to release your full-length as well, but then something happened? Can you comment the move into *Spikefarm* field, and does it reflect anyhow in the contract subject about amounts of \$\$\$? Is it true that *Woodcut* has stopped its activities now? You are satisfied with the job they did for the band?

- Yes, *Woodcut* was supposed to release our full-length too and now it is done, so something happened indeed! Seems like you have wrong information there dude! (excuse for desinformation - ed.) Oh yes, as we are now on *Spikefarm*, our worries about money are now wiped away forever! Yeah right... Bullshit! Of course there is more money moving in *Spikes* house but it affects only such things as records are released on time (*Symphonies...* was delayed one year) and promotion is more prominent. But now *Woodcut* is stronger than ever due to some uniting between them and their biggest distributors in Finland and there has been also few new signings done, so they definitely had not stop their activities. All in all we are satisfied to what *Woodcut* have done for us, only thing what pisses us off is that huge delay of our debut album.

- Do you think *Spikefarm* is fairly big label for *Thyrene*? Or your wish is to move up and up as soon as new offers come? Would you follow the path of *Enochian Crescent*, or let us say - *Children of Bodom*, joining a more commercial label? Things like popularity invoke a discussion inside your ego?

- *Spike* is probably the best label for us at this point and I hope they suit us in the future too because of the reasons I mentioned earlier, and also that *Spikefarm* is Finnish label means a lot. Communication is much easier with Finnish label and we also know the label manager personally very well. There was some kind of interest from *Avantgarde* towards us before *Spikefarm* was alive but after all nothing happened. *Avantgarde* is probably very good label too, but we are on *Spike* now and that is it. Popularity is natural consequence of hard and dedicated work from both sides, label & band and it is not its own *raison d'être*.

- So, will the same prolonged style of composing remain, bringing 7-10 minutes killers? You feel in the best shape doing so long tunes? How do you think is possible to keep that interest with a longer song? With other bands it is easy to get bored with 2-3 minutes, that is...

- Songs are now little shorter but still not any kind of punk cuts, hah! There are 5-8 minute killers this time. Songs just grow to be that long, it is just so natural and interest is very easy to keep up by



including good riffs and skip the rest! When there is enough good material in the song, it does not matter if it is 3 or 8 minutes long.

- You know, keyboard part in *Satanic Ages Overture* heavily reminds me *Enslaved*. Any comment? In general, what can you say about the originality of music, and if you try to escape plagiarism as such? Is it partly possible executing the speedy majestic black music you are dealing with? I think basic origins cannot be escaped, it is about how you fill them with the rest, or whether you compose that basic stuff in the best way, or not.

- Well does it sound *Enslaved*?

- Yes, it does.

- I do not know, maybe cause I do not listen *Enslaved* very much, I think that this would be *Blastmor's* job to comment. Originality is of course important in music cause it makes band stand out from the mass, BUT it does not necessarily mean that music is good. Music can definitely be good without being original, this is a fact which seems to be vanished lately. Too often I got to hear band trying to make their music so fucking different and original, but the result turns out just pure shit. When composing we aspire to enjoyable, aggressive and listenable music primarily.

- What the hell goes there in Finland, that almost all so called black metal bands of the recent years do just week melodious music?! I seriously think that just a couple of bands are able to compete with Swedish and obviously - Norwegian scenes. Of course, before the mighty *Thyrene* has approached, hehe! Do you have something positive to say about *Suomi* scene?!

- Finland has been overshadowed by Swedes and Norwegians for many years, but do you claim that any Norwegian band has not turned to softer path? *Ulver*, *Dødheimsgard*, *Arcturus*, *Covenant*... any comment?

- Umm, in fact your mentioned bands turned the other way than I asked the question about... I have heard quite a few Finnish bands which do just lame melodic shit, with no pretension to grow at least as big as *Dødheimsgard* did. but it was one-two years ago, and this question was ask at that time. Recently I have discovered some more great Finnish newcomers... continue please...

- In Finland here is rarely two bands who sound exactly the same, think about



Norwegians few years ago, they all sounded the same, the "Norwegian sound" you know. Many new very good bands are coming, you will see...

- What is your opinion about *Impaled Nazarene*, the past and present of this band? On the same line, do you know *Belial's* early material (demo and *Wisdom of Darkness* mcd)? In my opinion, it was something really great, on the edge of death and black metal... And also *Demigod* only cd... Just wonder if you know that stuff and like it? It is something I really appreciate from Finland...

- *Impaled* is quite ok band for me, though not to be taken very seriously these days (if even earlier either). Of course I know *Belial* and *Demigod* and have heard their stuff. How about *Beherit* then, now here we are talking about a king band.

- Surely. But they never were my main guide in blackmetal education. Next. What you consider as black metal? The old bands, the starters, raw stuff put in 1990-1993, or current melodic subgenre, so spread in any place you can imagine, with kids listening to such 'bands', and not having a clue where it all has started? Can it be so varied with almost no limitations, that media tries to present it as?

- Blackmetal is metal music with satanic lyrics. Done by authoritative persons of course. It does not change the term if music is spread everywhere and it is irrelevant who is listening to it. Those things you mentioned do not have any affect to what *bm* is. The first two lines tells it all and those who know it will not

let media misrepresent the term.

- Corpse-paint is an inseparable part of black metal? Have you ever thought about ridding it off? Do you believe in that magical strength it gives to a person who wears the paint of the dead? Or otherwise - what is your idea behind the use of it?

- For us it is inseparable part of blackmetal and we have not thought to get rid off it just because others are doing so. It gives us some kind of black aura and demonic completeness while spreading the cruelty and fear at the stages of hell.

- What keeps you continuing to play black metal? Would you keep it going even all the rest of the world stop playing and listening to it one day?

- I can only say that it is just...something that keeps up the drive. I simply love black metal music and only listening to it is not just enough. Sometimes there are quiet periods in the playing field, but after that I am bursting with enthusiasm. So it really does not have very much meaning who else is listening or playing it. But in the case when the whole world would stop playing it, that would mean that my band mates would do it also and that would be...the end...of this interview.

No idea what *Athanor* had in mind with these last words. I think he was simply tired at the end of the day, so take it easy and dare not suppose that *Thyrene* is a weak lame shit. This band rules supreme, making all the blackmetal world respect their demonic hymns. Hail!



ABBATOIR OF LOVE ...And Even The World Is My Booty demo '99 Wheezed Blood

I have *David's* previous tape in collection, and it makes me more satisfied than this – his second work as *Abbatior Of Love*. That is basically due to new colours in that gloomy industrial ocean. If *Rokkr* was more ambient, sort of driven by dark emotional cascades, then new demo is more harsh, with addition of brutal electronics. Name it ritualistic, organic or whatever, it still lacks the soul, the essence to move around. As if *Abbatior Of Love* has lost that soul after *Rokkr* (which was not an easy listen of ambient as well), used to move towards grabbing some new lives away. It is like a monster indeed – warlike triumphant samples still make it sound at least a bit lively, and are my favourite in *David's* project. It could be more repetitive. It has more to do with that dark gloomy music from the first demo (be sure to hear here several tracks like that as well). Neither artist tries to put on any vocals with harsher experiments. I suppose it could work, though it is very difficult to predict. But when we recollect *Benevolence* by *Deutch Nepal*, it proves to be worthy to try. So, this 28 minutes tape is for die hard industrial ambient freaks mostly, and would most probably disappoint those who expect emotions within electronic music. Do not be sure that you enjoy ... *And Even The World...* If you took attention to *Abbatior Of Love's* previous tape, that is. It comes with monstrous cover artwork and invokes some attention anyway. Forward 5\$ to *LTR* address, or ask about *Rokkr* demo, which is on sale too. *Abbatior Of Love*, c/o David Jolly, Vosdellestraat 37, 1560 Hoeilaart, Belgium

ANARAZEL Rise of the Tempest demo-mcd '99

This demo is claimed to have a more superior production, comparing to their older recording done earlier, after the inception in 1996. Ok, it is not a bad result for demo, but not more. Drum sound is definitely a bit too loud in the mix (yeah, drummer uses many blast parts and in general works quite intensively), and vocalist with the rest of the crew is got lost somewhere in the middle of the sound patterns. So to say – *Anarazel* are still in the process of carving the path to find a stable and firm foundation where to build their rage machine. By the way, their monicker sounds so pathetic to my Lithuanian ear (it is a name of one evil demon though, so be careful). No memories of the *Slayer* cover band they once were are left on this four-tracker though – they have moved towards darker, sinister side of intensity, referring to it as unholy Australian metal. Let us drop the middle word, and the description is clearer, I presume? Or let us drop the first word? Who is able to describe me how Australian metal sounds like? Or how New Zealandian metal sounds as? Hmm, I just name them melodious black/death with some energy and fury nonetheless, but so to say – nothing really exceptional. Typical vocal grunt and scream, supported with common riffs but not having the charm of innovative or at least catchy band. Less Swedish influences, and more raw aggression like the forefathers of Australian metal have been cultivating – that is my recipe if anyone bothers to take it as a clever enough advice. By the way, this demo was sent to me from the main Aussie evil metal label – *Modern Invasion*, so hopefully the band will eventually have some use out of this, and produce a pile of more memorable music on their first full-length which is coming soon. *Anarazel*, P.O. Box 26, South Oakleigh, Victoria, 3167, Australia, anarazel@iname.com, www.alphalink.com.au/~gelmam

ANTHROPOLATRI V Svete Kostrov tape '2000 Beverina

I wonder about *Juris* taste. Everything he releases me either likes a lot, or almost hates. Sort of no compromises, or maybe it is stupid me judging music like that? Anyway, like the follower *Anafel* tape, this 'music' is terrible. Amateurish, infantile, insipid, cliché, boring, trendy, crap. Reasons for such thinking follow... Their image, concept and ideas suit me rather fine: pagan past, true feelings for your country, conceptual lyrical story, patriotic message... Ok, no complaints: if you understand Russian, you will have a good time researching the easy-readable but not so easy forgettable story. The question number one though: why these dudes (namely, *Lazar* and *Vognestav*) live in Germany these days, if their message is to unite all Slav tribes into one huge brotherhood? Is it really patriotic act? I cannot get it at all! Then they claim: *this album is dedicated to the proud of Serbian Folk*. Ha ha, with salute from Germany. Notice at *Lazar's* address, that he even

transcribed his name with Deutch 'w' letters... I am not kidding, just cite what is placed in the inlay card. But enough about tiny politic aspects, moreover that music has nothing to do with that, and music should remain what counts. Damn, I would break their drum computer disks immediately. If you do program drums, please make it with sense and with a decent sound! This sounds like shit!!! This gets nowhere together with guitar sound, and especially second-rate vocals. Every instrument you hear on the album sounds for itself, never making it a one whole. Usual keyboard niceties, melodies that mellow down to a dull musicianship, and of course – intermix between pathetic singing and 'blackmetal' scream. It gets nowhere, unless the thrashcan!! Ignore, please. *Anthropolatri*, Witali "Lazar" Seikowski, Hoptenbergstr. 15, 04159 Leipzig, Germany, 1145-951@onlinehome.de

ARAFEL Skazki Starogo Lesa demo '2000 Beverina

I cannot take it seriously, by any means. Fuck, it is funnier than the worst American joke (not that it were smart, but just that the idea is usually absolutely dull). Imagine Israel based 'band' with four Slavs performing trendy 'melodious black or pagan metal (whatever)' with an amazing title for a demo tape – *Tales of an Old Forest*. Whether they have been reading infant books for a too long time, or they are really fanatic about their childhood – hell knows. One thing is certain – this pseudo blackmetal is leading to nowhere. His majesty trend gives birth to a bunch of mutated stupid followers who have absolutely no idea about the real thing, and hide behind nature pictures, as well as the 'pagan fellowship' stamp. Guys do bother to give credits and 'thank' Limp Bizkit, Deftones and a bunch of other fuckers. What for?! For inspiration? So where the hell are tales from Russia then? Finally they hail *guys who listen more than blackmetal*. Amazing! Hey, I am one of these guys, but I spit on you, trends. You want just fame and money. And big sales. Fuck, let us face it – *Arafel* (mmm, doesn't it sound Jewish?) is pure poser trends. Yeah, of course synth based melodious music, and of course the screamer with his guts overtrained, and of course guitar sound thin as November ice – it makes me sick, sick, sick!!! It is worse than your *WVA* midday set of rap songs. Their compositions are straightforward one-sided boring clichés wrapped in lousy production with several funny details (for example, track number two *Sorceners of Russian Wood* has vocalist barking like a mad dog in the beginning). Please just rot in your Jewish land, and do not pretend to long for mother Russia and its tales. Fuck off, beforehand. Forward hate mail and death threats to: *Arafel*, Halper 36/11, Bat-Yam, 59314, Israel, leshii_666@hotmail.com

ARCHAOS The Land / Love Obsession tape '99 Bestial

Finally the best piece of ambient by these Romanians, recorded in their career. Their previous release was a slight disappointment, whilst idea of two separate sessions, that new release was recorded like, has worked darn well. There is an obvious bridge between both sides, one of which is made in 1998, and another in 1999, but they also carry quite separate character, each one. Even every single composition is special on this tape. But it does not create that effect of chaos, like *Vastes Terrae* was basically all about. Guys have definitely grown to compose spiritually enhanced music, which now flows free through the hidden shelves of their subconscious. Easy to feel these opened horizons that suddenly have appeared in front of them, listening to this tape. No, it is not an easy listen, and it is not a tape everyone can put for his parents. Couple of first tryings might end up like it happened to my taste – it sounds too weird until you catch the swiny mood there. I enjoy it even more on side B, where a jazz lick is touched somewhere in the middle... I think they could achieve pretty great results collaborating with some well-known trippy ambient gurus, or with *Ulver* for example. To stick any label to this music would be nonsense, since *Archaos* manage to combine many diverse soundscapes. To those who know their earlier stuff I should stress that dark synth ambient is almost gone, and it is changed by open to experiments rhythm variation, use of dozen of exotic instruments, which gives the project a slightly oriental touch here and there, as well as wide range of lyrics interpretations by never-the-same-sounding voices (I mean different languages used too...). Check it out for a definite change, and a pleasant surprise. Comes with burning red and black coloured cover, as if limiting it to just life and death... or I got a

wrong impression?! 6\$ from *Ledo Takas Records!* *Archaos*, Dan Serbanescu, Str. Aleea Aninii Dornei nr. 16, Bloc 14, sc. D, apt. 49, sector 6, Cod 77533, Bucuresti, Romania, raduarch@hades.ro, danarchaos@yahoo.com

ARKILAE WHYM AESLAELITH Songes d'une putain demo '99

This band is better than *Love Lies Bleeding*, and I say that because *Lord Adrastis* performs in both bands. Here he is joined by another four blood-thirsty individuals, aiming to be as black and poetic as possible. They are too expressive musically though, what means overtopped stream of emotions. Sort of thing I cannot relate to black metal. Ok, real masters of the style upcome with majestic symphonic arrangements, yet still keeping brutality and class. These small amateurish bands just mix metal and off key classic accompaniment, thus destroying otherwise acceptable music. French horde is not an exception, helplessly trying to become next *Emperor* or *Dimmu Borgir*. No, I truly doubt *AWA* (I am in trouble to type over the whole monicker once again) would appeal to me without their often drawings into orchestral stuff, but with soundscapes like these they receive even less sympathies from me. Simply and clearly – it has nothing to do with black metal, and please do not mix it together next time. Pick up tape inlay, and you will see grim faced band members, with a neat bm images etc. Satisfied? I am not. In spite that lyrics of theirs breathe of eclectic Faustian spirit. Poetically they are (as a band) perfect, but not musically. Otherwise I would feel slightly bothered about the cover art if not the poetry. Music makes me imagine much different things than these. Their brand of bm suffers from being too weak. Me thinks – when their ideas make music and the rest bonded together, the final outcome should more resemble one fist, than performed on this tape. Though if you want another chaotic mix of music turned into trend, check this out. Comes with a pro-printed cover and tape. *Arkilae Whym Aeslaelith*, Lord Adrastis Korgan, 16 avenue Beausejour, 94230 Cachan, France, adrastis@big-foot.com

ASHMADAI Symphonies For The Kings demo '98 Hades / Satanachia

If you are a king in your bedroom, then it is music for you. I am sure *Laldaboath* is definitely a king, rulling his toilet and his bathroom, and playing this music loud to his pets living there or somewhere nearby. Obviously – *Symphonies for The Kings*. Cool, I also used to be fascinated by fairytales when I was a small boy. But one day I said to myself: enough of believing this fantasy, and enough of believing in all the *Mortis* clowns, who keep putting yet another 'kingdoms' on the map of the louisest synth music. Know Lithuanian *Wejdas*? Know well all three of their demo tapes? Then pick up the worst synth parts out of them and put them together, add no additional instrument, no voice, and almost no effect in addition. You have got it – the most boring synth music imaginable! Let us believe that the great plague, devastating medieval kingdoms and 'kingdoms' will devour this lousy king together with his 'music' much sooner than he starts desperately screaming for help... I am truly amazed...

ATYS In Darkness – In Light tape '99 Bestial

I wonder what inspires guys to create their hateful music on synth????s it just a matter of not having appropriate means to rehearse with a live drummer and synth player, or is it based on economical issue, since working with such synthetic place of muzak is a way easier, and you can save quite a few bucks in the outcome. But c'mon then!!! Isn't it music itself which should be centered with attributes around? Listening to *Atys*, I cannot claim they share my point of view. Cover inlay, and cheap sound quality are still the leading matters for Romanian guys at this moment. And music suffers a major deal. As mentioned, synthetic aura is what makes me really sick, as it unites all these attempts around into one commonplace, including *The Second Moon*, *Nomicron* and tons of other bands. How come it could be individual if tracks are recorded with the same computerised base? Even music may differ here and there, but then again it ends up having quite a few similar features. *Atys* rather often enjoy leaving metal spheres too, and jump into ear-friendly ambient, which is once again nothing special nor effective, if you ask me. When it turns into another synth/black track, it makes me truly bored with this tape... Especially on *Table of Covenant*.

To say the truth, I find myself helpless following their 13 track combination, as a bunch of songs do not have a decent beginning nor end, rounding it up with one messy bunch. Something I am not too fond these days, really. If you still feel like want to order this, contact *Adrian* at *Bestial* – some 6\$ should please him. *Alys*, Aleea Muncii bl E 21, sc 5 apt 98, 2900 Deva, Romania

BACHUS Domine Spiritus tape '99 Sombre

I was on alien organised trip, or something? Yep, they have definitely forced me to go with them, and erased a couple of months off my memory... I will complain to V2 organisation! Time has really gone so fast that I have not noticed *Bachus* again are with a new tape. Only their deal with UFOs was not very gorgeous. At least green humanoids make much worse ambient music than Earth inhabitants. Comparing with the debut tape, this one is no development at all. It is basically the hotchpotch between extremity and relax, the mix which leads nowhere. In general, guys have not made it to sound at least a bit lively. It is very synthetic to get your ears on; like when you buy your favourite beer you expect it to be fresh and tasty. Imagine an opened bottle, and the smell of burning plastic instead of ale. I bet it is not too attractive. I do not like at all fast drum computer based attacks, it sounds like a cheap pre-production experiment of third rate bm band. Vocalist, whoever he is, is boring because he whispers all the time, thus rushing me think he is not able to use his normal voice loudly. Everyone can 'sing' like his bm hero in a dream or mind, or to whisper as the biggest achievement. I guess you still remember that from the teen years? So, *Bachus* singer makes you return to the whispering past. To draw back the poor side of *Domine Spiritus*, here you are with a couple memorable tunes too, these being more ambient and symphonic, and not rhythm noise based. Actually this kind of music was more noticeable on *Oryg* too, so let that be a short reminding point to get into minds of *Bachus*' guys about. Still waiting for the fresh and lively music to come from Belarus...

BLOODSHED Laughter of Destruction demo '99

Supreme Swedish black/death! The new kings are coming to crush the weak, so better beware their blasphemous strike! It was a long time the term, black/death, was misused to label the music of the scene's losers, who can not make a homage to neither of respected styles; whilst jewelry albums that made media to invent the term were shamefully forgotten. I am referring to *Dissection* first of all, but also to first *Marduk* and *Dark Funeral* material, which did had a dose of brutal death metal, in spite of composers themselves rejecting that. When it comes to sound that *Bloodshed* have chosen – it is so traditional, that *Dissection* guys should go to the lawyers for consultation. Ah, these drum arrangements make my spine shiver... though musically it is about great skill to keep it fresh and not repetitive, so forget any forceful clowning at all. Newcomers just have that necessary charge to keep the real black/death alive, which is more than enough. No wonder, as demo is recorded in *Sunlight*, which is a huge impression for a further career. I mean, guys seem damn serious with their task, and I am sure the day of a greater deal is sooner than expected. If my supposition is right, *Bloodshed* should be signed when you read this. Unless they do not want it themselves, that is. Having in mind their young age, great catchy songs come as a nice surprise. Fiery windblowing attacks are sometimes intertwined with mid tempo mood of melancholia, still holding a very cold and grim effect to it. Once again I can praise *Mikael's* drumming, yet check out that he is also the vocalist! Well, to tell the truth, this point is the only to be worked out better in my opinion. It is harsh edge-balancing screaming, which is good and would be very good with other band, but since *Bloodshed* has really gained my deep respect, I expect the same kind of input from their vocal performance. *Mikael* needs just a little bit harder try, yes... Overall, order the tape by no means. It is just merely 4\$ with an ok layout and manufactured tape. Do not miss their interview elsewhere!!! *Bloodshed*, c/o Augustsson, Oxebl, 5, 138 31 Alta, Sweden, bloodshed@post.com, http://listen.to/bloodshed

CANTUS BESTIAE Pactum Tacitum Con Daemona demo '99

I definitely adore raw evil blackmetal with primitive sound quality and even primitive songwriting, but only when it is bestial enough to provoke the ego to react

properly, it is about the kick ass songs that must be very good and support raw production. But at times, especially when French black legion is concerned, rawness overcomes the music itself literally turning tunes into antimusic. Yes, you cannot frighten me with the over the edge sound, but there is a distinct limit that I feel ruins the original idea. It is not about being weak to accept it. If there is a noisy feel within, you cannot ignore it. Guitar line and drum pace is hard to distinguish. I do not think *Cantus Bestiae* want to hide performance mistakes in such a way, but when you cannot properly hear the music, similar ideas pop into mind. What is checked anyway - mid tempo black metal with not so convincing riffs (one guitar only is recorded, rather than impression) and some blast grinding parts. No fake additional influences, black till death. But that is not their best attempt, be sure. Five tracks with intro and outro recording features S.V.E.S.T. member. Vocalist is below average quality, and is too loud singing in the mix. *Cantus Bestiae*, c/o Anthony Cormier, 74 rue Ambroise Pare, 72000 Le Mans, France

CRAFT **Total Eclipse demo '99** **Carnal**

Finally - something blackish Swedish, but not typical! Their sound reminds me more the oldest *Sigh* record, and vocals (unfortunately, just session - I cannot get a point why this great screamer *Björn* is yet not a band member) - *Forgotten Woods* in their best times. That band was something special for the whole Norse scene, because their misanthropic vibe was and is hard to plagiarise, and moreover - successfully copy, if your soul is not dedicated enough. I believe that *Craft* musicians have the thirst inside for originality, what should be the engine of every new band. Formula is simple: to find that thread, evolve it, until you feel that it may blow, and then to leave all of your creativeness and energy under the reels of a studio. This example proves that you can do it at the first attempt. If you want to understand better the *Craft* musical identity, I simply advise to remember both bands I have mentioned already in this review, and expect a very desperate lifeless approach to black metal in addition. Musicians have reached that level when it is not a big difference whether it is fulltime mid-tempo melancholy or it has a few speed-ups. *Craft* explore both, but they use blast beat just occasionally, to reinforce the sick impression. By the way, tape is divided into chapters, accordingly recorded in early 1998 and summer 1999. The older session sounds for me just like a bonus. It is shorter, and it does not have a vocalist at all. I sing my diatribes exclusively for the new material, that is. Tape inlay has information that all this material was conceived during five last years, so I tend to suspect them being rather skilled musicians, which should not be lost in the stream - listen to my prediction! And order the tape for 5\$ from *LTR* catalogue. *Craft*, Joakim Karlsson, craft@antisocial.com, http://hem1.passagen.se/nocta/craft

CUMDEO **The Threads of Imagination tape '99** **Rest in Peace**

Wow! It starts promising, much rougher and to the point than their anyway cool demo tape few years back. Vocalist *Alexander* growls like early *Phlebotomized*, or Lithuanian *Dissonance* singer, at their better days. Yet later on he goes through entire singing lecture, with some better and some worse, generally rather ok and quite various ideas. Anyway, that dark growl pleases my heavy heart the most. So, guys from depths of mother Russia have definitely matured into much decent and thick metal unit, almost abandoning their symphonic past, the matter I found quite surprising. Cool that their new approach is nonetheless good, or maybe even better if you ask my opinion. *Cumdeo* lets one to realise that doom/death horizons are much wider than some mediocre performers almost persuaded us with their lousy releases. It also sort of lays the listener back to early nineties when this music was on the wave. Yeah, *Cumdeo* are not fascinated by mellow pseudo symphonic or even worse - romantic soundscapes, and dig their still melancholic music with heavy mournful tones. Even though keyboard mister (or master?) *Konstantin* keeps pushing his buttons (synth is more a tasty background spice here). I believe it is welcome on all the plates of really qualified doom/death metal admirers. This tape is way longer, clocking into 47 minutes - I am glad they keep listener interested through the entire set. Eight compositions tend to support each other, painting marvellous soundscapes, close to inlay nature pictures and fractures. Sadness and solitude are the elements absorbed within, lyrics carry the same kind of feeling. Just some style correction and a bit of precision with vocal variation would do! Otherwise tape is really strong. Obtain for 5\$ from your beloved *LTR* address! *Cumdeo*, c/o Alexander Ivanov, Komsomolskaya str. 11, 214033 Smolensk, Russia

DAMAQ **Whisper Of The Night Winds demo '98** **North Poem**

Nothing special from this Malaysian outfit. Well, at least it sounds bearable unlike other metal teams from there.

Damaq perform traditional heavy thrash with a black edge or how do they usually name it? Anyway, it is far from blackmetal, at least in that way that I imagine it. Though this band has some things common with Eastern branch of the style, especially Japanese *Sabbat*, and other veteran bands from their region (Singapore, Malaysia). Though not that rarely these riffs are more than familiar, and make *Damaq* lose any sort of inspiration. It seems that half of the music composed on this 5 songs tape is an obligation for them, whilst another handful of composed riffs dwells of creation, especially when faster uptempoed. *The Last Wrath* is concerned. I do not know - maybe it is me who enjoys their faster side of metal more, but indeed the slower or mid-tempo moments do not convince. As well as vocalist with his guttural (or better said - roaring) voice damaging the instrumental effort. Cannot understand some of their 'melodies', which sound so untuned and thus - unprofessional.

I still must greet the band for sticking to the roots of metal, and it seems to me that they do it wholeheartedly, never counting on trends or possible band wagon jumping. But the impact should be stronger to really attire someone outside local metal milieu. Otherwise *Damaq* will remain just another amateurish outfit to sink below this huge ocean, striving for recognition... For 4\$ you can get this tape with photocopied coloured cover from the label address. *Damaq*, Shidi, 23F Kg, Batu Putih, 09700 Karangan, Kedah Darul Amah, West Malaysia, damaqq@hotmail.com

DER GERWELT **Revelation tape '98** **Rest in Peace**

Quite a splendid force from Volgograd, Russia, consisting of *Tales Of Darknord's Alex*, and *Aartrack*, who is not anyhow familiar for me. Having in mind *Alex* main band's conservatively brutal style, this project kind of grows bigger than my expectations, that is - music sounds fairly good and what is more important - impressive for the debut. Cannot claim that I have never heard their brand of deathened blackmetal before. It is surely backed by the releases from the past, earlier in this decade. Would be wrong to say they sound Swedish, but it is the closest description I could imagine of. However, forget melodic death crap, I really mean harsh and furious blackmetal in this particular case. Voice of *Alex* reminds me *Dawn*, whilst music tends to be composed in a less complex way, still carrying a decent pack of wise decisions within the style. Their songs are pretty long, but do not turn boring or repulsive. *Der Gerwelt* sounds like a band, which needs just a bit more effort to strike really massively, and I would predict this to happen with one of their next recordings. I am sure of that. In spite of a negative view in general, their drum programming is clever and worth checking out too. Just one major shot in the dark is awful English, which should be forbidden not only to print in the booklet, but also to start rehearsing with. It is necessary to bring them first of all for the proof read, *guy!* Or perform in native Russian, otherwise. Nonetheless check the pre-printed and manufactured tape for 5\$, from *Ledo Takas* address.

DER GERWELT **Nordlich Sturm tape '99** **Beverina**

In spite of my doubts, this older demo tape of Russian satanists is no worse than *Revelation*, like *Juris of Beverina* has proclaimed in his press release. What a heck, I think it is even slightly better than *Revelation*. Just one thing, which slightly pushes it aside, is repetitiveness that is especially felt within six long tracks. This demo is longer, and there are still about the same amount of ideas as on *Revelation*. So, their main trouble for the future is to improve the songwriting to have it in a more diversified and supreme approach. Anyway, *Alexander's* guttural screams impress, much better than depressive blackmetal wannabees around. It gives *Der Gerwelt* a necessary pack of power to convince that their warlike messages in the lyrics are no jokes. The same can be said about the whole production, with harsh guitar sound and rather ok drum computer soundscapes. The opener *Godless Truth* imposes me the most, maybe due to a culminating chorus proclaiming: *I am a godless truth without compassion. Without, without!* Yeah, that blows. What I do not like on this tape are these more traditionally melodic (Swedish) death metal breaks, dividing the otherwise very strong impact, creating rage and intense grinding. Their music would do better without mellowing down in these moments (that also pushes me to claim *Der Gerwelt* a Swedish school oriented one again). Unlike for example Ukrainian *Hate Forest* - hate must be intense and exclude any compromises! Well, on the other hand they must be damn angry on Jesus followers, since they repeat this name on every corner around, what eventually gets too repetitive like the same musical clichés that I mentioned above. I wonder then, that demo is named in German, whilst all the lyrics are of English origin. Anyway, something to brag about for Russian scene, realise it ordering the tape for 5\$ from *Ledo Takas*. *Der Gerwelt*, c/o Alex Kartierimov, P.O. Box 13, 123480 Moscow, Russia, more_hate@mail.ru

DESTRUKTOR **The Holy Trinity.... Denied demo '97**

Even though these guys are rather thrashy, I feel brutal noisy Aussie school in their playing, inclined to *Bestial Warlust* and *Destruction 666*, as well as to old *Behert* and *Blasphemy*. Classic comparison? You bet! Drummer recently joined *Destruction 666* (don't you see something similar in their names?!). To cut it short - satanic mass murder holocaust, performed in a simple but fast thrashy vein. In spite of just three tracks and 10 minutes it is rather easy to get a picture of the band, and their violent approach is to blame for that. They are much more metal than your next sympho/atmospheric shit, by the way, so do not hesitate to try (un)tasty metal course, if you are sick of current trends. What I do not enjoy at all is *Glenn's* vocalstyle. He screams in a desperate way, thus ruining thrash concept, and confusing the listener. I see the point to be as much blackmetal as possible though, but then again - it should go with music together... According to *Glenn*, new 7" ep '99 should be much more to the point, and I understand that as more blackmetal oriented? It will be released by *Black Militia Productions*, by the way. Frontman says they have heavily improved since this old demo, but anyway - this one is far from being a bad demo. Contains smelly named tunes: *Kingdom Of Everlasting Hate*, title track, and *Battle Of Armageddon*. It gets an 'ok' mark from me, if you wonder. Vocalstyle has to be changed though. *Destructor*, c/o Glenn Lynch, P.O. Box 24, Kangaroo Flat, Vic. 3555, Australia

DIELAND **...Is Out Of Real... demo '99** **Sombre**

These guys are musically gifted, but thus far they have troubles choosing the form of expression. Either they think it is possible to unite diametrically different genres, and consciously practise that, or their writing process is spontaneous, but very open-minded and flat. Somehow I feel a necessity to explain their folkly rock and (death) metal combination, which sounds a bit weird, if not amateurish. (Notice, that *Dieland* is a promising young band, and that is the main point in this review, in spite of some critics.) Tape consists of five equally psychedelic compositions, where loud bass guitar tricks you around, and a very imposing flute dominates over the rest. Seems like this instrument yet completes the picture, working in background more or less, but whilst *Pavlik* plays it so often, it drops out of background ingredient role, and pops in the main circle of players. But actually flute is not ready yet to go together with a guitar and rhythm section. At times it starts to bore you, and if not several swingy melodies it would ruin the music. I would suggest them to kick the metal off once and forever, since death growl sounds here simply out of tune. And that is probably the only thing a bit metal with *Dieland*. Guitar and rhythm parts are groovy folkrock oriented, with a pretty unusual outcome, which must be developed. I would better not guess if it is Russian, Belarussian or Ukrainian folk motives, but it makes a listener to get closer to Slavic culture, naturally - to the impressive side of it. That is why it is fine with me to hear it within standard rock context, as far as it remains amusingly unique. Supposedly, young guys will transform into a much more mature act with time, and this tape will remain as a nice start for them. Nonetheless, experience it to catch the flavour of Slavonic rock music. Some 4\$ should cover the costs of this tape. *Dieland*, c/o Andrei Voroninskogo str. 11-1-301, 220039 Minsk, Belarus

DIVINA ENEMA **(Do Wight Shalt Never) Shine demo '99** **Idaemon Inside**

Performing *W. Blake art* exclusively. How can you be so sure about the description like that, and having the last *Ulver* cd in your player? How can the listener be so dumb NOT to notice that?! Coincidence? Nope man. Everything sounds quite suspiciously here. Why the hell inlay card screams about drums recorded by someone, when it is deadly computer beat, and not a single live effort? Check out that this tape album lasts for over 75 minutes; and one more referring to *Garm & co.* - *Blake's* lyrics, spit over the entire tape. So far so good, without getting on music yet. Execution is much worse than overall info might suggest. The only notable thing is *Yaroslav's* pretention to sing like *Garm*, with his flat singing voice. But that is about 30 % of the whole vocal pack on this tape, the rest being all the palette of male and female voices. The latter are extremely bad, childish and out of tune with the rest. It is probably the most important key to ruin this long album. Nonetheless, male voices are just slightly better. Anyway, the music has nothing to do with avantgardish capacity *Ulver/Arcturus* fans might expect. *Divina Enema* has nothing more than another romantic version of deathrash with various hardly combinable variations. In 75 minutes they cover so many different soundscapes that it is too hard to follow them. I do not know, maybe guys wanted to be so vast or unlimited, but it ends up being deathrash. Stupid romanticism is far from being profound, majestic or impressing for that matter. If they want to be energetic, their means used

are not the best - at times choppy song structures sound as poor as another brutal American death band (without the growl thing). Do not consider to spend another 5 bucks for this crap. *Divina Enema*, c/o Yaroslav A. Burakoff, P.O. Box 234, 220075 Minsk, Belarus, vzlotov@home.by

DONIS **Delnainal tape '99**

Donis consist of two persons - *Donatas* who is an originator of the project, known from different collaborations in the past (including *Ettime*), and *Daina* (her name means 'song' in Lithuanian). Both of them are deeply dedicated to the folk art, so this duo sounds pretty much knot together. It is always great when two performers combine not only their skills, but also find the musical expression so close to both of them. Actually I thought it were *Donatas's* own project, until I got this precisely released tape with huge fold-out inlay designed in pressingly Lithuanian folkish way. It sort of reminds different folk items you are acquainted with in museums and traditional fests. Yet music is not destined to plainly celebrate so much. It truly captures the mystique of ancient experience, transmitted into folk songs and improvised synthesizer's wanderings. In fact, I find this combination slightly unusual - not that it would sound bad, but of a result which is never heard, at least by myself. On one hand, traditional singing sounds weird after a dreamlike emotion (let's say, *Ryto Rasa*), and vice-versa. One must experience it to realise. I would prefer *Donis* further explore untraditional approach to tradition, *Sokis* sounds exotic for Lithuanian folk experience, with its recipe as the symbol of the past, and weird oriental motives, as the challenge for the future. Knowing that guy is keen on experimenting, I would urge him to showcase his it with this project as well. For me, who is perfectly familiar with folk bequest, this tape might sound a bit standard and experienced. However, I am sure it will be a great listen for anyone who is eager to learn some things about Lithuanian folklore, which is yet lifted up to a modern level, at some extent. Not to forget *Donis* live performances, which sometimes are even stronger than studio recordings. Check them out - it is definitely the best Lithuanian ambient/folk crew has ever come up with! I guess some 5\$ should make it. *Donis*, c/o Donatas Bieklauskas, P.O. Box 444, 5802 Klaipeda, Lithuania, istic@yaho.com

DRAKOR **The Black Souls tape '98**

Surprisingly wise cassette-album from Colombian one-man band, run by *Isthat*, or *Edwin Cardona* (in case someone knows the guy). Dark soul delivers a lengthy slab of hateful blackmetal, perfectly using limited studio abilities. In fact he manages to get even more out of that - this raw ancient sound gives music the same kind of double effect, as if it was meant to be registered in these extreme conditions. I think it clearly proves the guy to be more than another bandwagon jumper, or any moron hoping to cash on the mystique of blackmetal. I could easily point things which work average on this tape, but somehow that spirit prevailing on *The Black Souls* stops and makes me realise that emotionally good blackmetal means more than technically. Especially when old school type of bands struggle for survival (in the review massacre of *Ledo Takas*, hehe). Thus I raise the bloody thumbs up for *Drakor*! In general he leaves me thinking that his project stands among the biggest hopefuls of Southern American bm scene. Do not believe though that it is one-sided blasting bm, as it is much more diverse. It has even some synth, normal singing and acoustic intermezzos, impressively refreshing a 43 minutes recording. But the essence is doubtlessly black, raw and obscure. It is great to feel that even in these symphonic moments. I would call it a neat composing and smart feeling for the music that turn into one whole, instead of chaotic beats and pieces. So, like with many promising bands, I wish *Isthat* not to lose that feeling and lead his ship into pure darkness, transcending back with even more majestic occult muzak next time. Please, try to find this recording - it is worth indeed, but I do not have his personal address... Try to get info from: *Abyss Ritual magazine*, Giovanni "Putrid", A.A. 3610, Cali, Colombia

ENSIS ET CARNIS / AB IMO PECTORE **Praeposterus / Dragnyn demo '99** **Wheezed Blood**

Two sides, two ambient synth projects, one German, another - Belgian, one is bad, the next is promising. Both creators are not very profound in keyboard music, so their progress is a question of time and will. *Ensis Et Carnis* actually disappoint with pointless rhythmic and ambientish growls along with rather minor medieval soundscapes. Without vocalist and drum program (drummer?) it should be an ok music, if you do not take plagiarising factor very seriously. But synth as an instrument is used just minimally, like most of today's "projects" do. Much deeper feel of loss and loneliness is provided by Belgian *Ab Imo Pectore* (side project of *Abbot of Love*), since there is no room for vocals, or other arrangements beside the keyboard. Even music keeps on being another follower of *Mortis* cbs, it definitely has an own face, not to be missed for clown of the scene.

David contributes to medieval art, and he brings the listener back in time. It sounds at times like *Ataraxia* gone synth, so there is a point to check this side! *I Wish A Inno Pectore* did off minor *Mortis* shade, and then we will have a great project, worth more than a dubbed demo tape. Compositions of *David* are various and make a range, but that old emotion behind them has a unifying feel, conducting the whole orchestra. Even though this tape is dubbed, and has a photocoped cover, music on side two is worth checking out. *LTR* is selling it for just 5\$, yet be fast here. Funeral freaks – you should better put this one on the nightwalk to the graveyard.

FORGIVE-ME-NOT Spaceapple tape '99 Metal Agen

It comes delivered on a plate – simply as that. Might be a bit too boring as it needs no chewing, no sauce, no peppers, no cream, nothing. It is done by musicians already. Depends whether you like it or not – sweet pudding with cherries on the top, err... melodic heavy rock, or should I name it metal for devil's sake? Hardly... Nonetheless, Russian five-piece have established a name with a previous *Tearfall* tape as being professional enough, and if their music is purposely tuned commercial, then it is done with patience and care. Sing-along choruses sound especially tight, breaking Russian radio charts I believe. Or they are not used to dance by hard rock music down there in Russia? No matter, if you are sick with *Lake of Tears* or other crappy *Paradise Lost* wannabees, check *Forgive Me Not* once again. You can easily play this tape for your mainstream girlfriend/friend, and if you turn the stereo really loud, you might scare even nearby a dozen dead neighbours.

Just imagine that our heroes had a hell more aggressive and in general better vocalist. I am not talking of *Irina*, who has sung some lines again (could be more of her actually). I feel a bit uncomfortable with male voice, that is – *Vic's* drying yellings. His effort to sound like others is actually a shot in the dark, as all these babies of melodic metal scene are voiceless anyway. *Udd's*, *Udo Dirkschneider* should fit there quite well, at least kicking some ass of *Spaceapple* metal heritage. I mean guys turned a bit more straight-ahead rock'n'roll at times, comparing to the previous tape, which cries for a harder singer. Though that ballad-type *Then Comes the Light* is pretty waffled. But that is the deal with being commercial. Love, peace and *Elvis* spirit. Rock around the globe, err... clock. *Forgive Me Not*, c/o Andrey Sukhanny, P.O. Box 2507, 300000 Tula, Russia.

FORGOTTEN Retreat demo '99

Mournful, melodic and atmospheric, but slow death metal. Performed in a heavy vein, especially when vocalist is concerned, but also full of synthesiser charm and acoustic intermezzos. Briefly, this would be it – it one needs to get a point what kind of music this Turkish four-piece performs, but as usual for *Leod Takas* I will try to dig deeper and find out some more comments on a four-tracker.

To say they are very good or at least good enough would be an obvious exaggeration. This band is not amateurish though, and I feel they are practising for quite a long time (a shame that no biography arrived with the tape). What they still can not properly deliver musically – the highlights of these compositions. Entire set flows like a short chronicle of doom/death metal history, which will be really forgotten in a run of time. In this genre you need to get listener surprised, to jump over the ground (unless you are *Skepticism* or *Esoteric*, hehe), and not just change one gloomy riff with another all the time. Turks actually combine it with faster rhythms here and there, yet I would point these episodes as their weakest corners, unfortunately. Slow motion suddenly turns into not that melancholic character, which deserves to be better arranged. Sounds slightly out of tune. They especially enjoyed these speed-ups at the end of the songs. Too much lined-up and predictable.

Again me wishes to encourage *Forgotten* to be remembered and continue finding their own highlights in doomy metal. You are on a right path, stay that heavy and do not turn your backs to growling and brutal attitude. We are fed up with melodic wimps around. Copied tape with a printed cover should be available at: *Forgotten*, Tolga Otabatmaz, 137. sok. No: 15, Ozgur Yapi Koop., 06370 Batkent, Ankara, Turkey, tel. (90) 3122501645

GIRNU GIESMES Juodi Vasaros Trimital mc'98 Dangus

Lukas was always complaining about the outcome of his releases, since the production was a thing he was pointing at as non-existent, or very bad. Here we go with drastic progress in this division, as new album of ambient guru turned out much different from its predecessors, and production acts as one of the main factors of this.

He has definitely grown as an artist, giving much more efforts to experimental audio schizophrenia, leaving his earlier radicalism aside. Mastermind explores the psychodelia of 70-ies jazz records, successfully mixing them up with dark mesmerising ambient loops, and shivering poetic vocals withdrawn from radio programs. The latter is a continuation of *B Nerimo Veidrodzial* - *Lukas* seems to feel that these weird poetic voices fit in

his music a great deal. I would pleasantly consume more spoken word like this, especially when it is arranged in a dark eerie way. Last but not least – *Girnu Giesmes'98* have got a punch when music turned more opened for space and atmosphere in its contents. Like for me it has broadened two or three times, which is a good thing, isn't it? I mean, but previous tapes were something special either, not accidentally they were praised in *Leod Takas*, but this new album blows them both away in one single listen. Hail *Girnu Giesmes* for progressing & turning into a decent dark ambient project! Where are ears of the genre's labels, respectfully? Go and check it for 6\$ from my address. *Girnu Giesmes*, c/o Laurynas Jukonis, Skroblu 27-55, 2015 Vilnius, Lithuania, girnu@takas.lt

GIRNU GIESMES / SALIKAPALIKAU Breksta / Trilogija Agnozija split tape '2000 Dangus

Another – new split tape of Lithuanian ambient masters, together with the new face of the genre – *Salikapalikai*, featuring ex-member of *Wejdas* (one album out on *Red Stream*). They split the tape into two sides, exploring the inner spheres of the sound for 30 minutes each. Not an original idea but I am sure the split within industrial is a great idea after all. Musicians into it use to experiment, collaborate, even blend their art at the same time, so it is a gain when you can hear two different, and also similar projects, comparing and discussing about their ideas immortalized.

GG are absolute leaders of the duo; it is unquestionable, clear as 2x2. Again *Lukas* and co. dive deeper, below the line of conscious understanding, only this time isolating the sound carpet from anything human. Everything you achieve whilst listening, is just a pulse created of fragmented chaos, primeval being and infiltrated shapes of something big, undecipherable. Menacing loops, strangely combined with the raw industrial drones, still leaves the ears not overworked with intensity, so I would name this music quite relaxing, fresh, explorative. Oh yeah, it was *Lukas*' vision before his Nepal trip... I can just warn you about the next session that it is inexorably approaching...

Salikapalikai sounds quite similar to the masters, but still not as vast and profound. I would name this experiment as their first try which is not bad at all. Yet images usually tend to repeat too often, and their ideas could be more memorable. The only thing that can easily re-shape your brain tissues is the closing part of trilogy, mostly due to sick and mercurial sample, which is in Russian. Some really sick persons are interrogated, and their answers with incoherent speech sound so ill-natured... To clearly hear what they speak there is not that easy, at least you have to know the language. Well, I would obtain this split for **GG** sake, anyway. You can try for 5\$ from *LTR* either. *Salikapalikai*, Darius Gerulaitis, Vilniaus 33-55, 5412 Siauliai, Lithuania

600 Sublime tape '99 Bestial

It is funny to the core. I could not believe the christian attitude was their joke, but like *Adrian* from *Bestial* said it really is but a decoration. Like *Dimmu Borgir*, just the opposite. You think God is not attiring attention in this way? They do! I imagine how much fun is to see all the crap streaming on their heads for this xtian attitude; and make a good laugh at all these 'serious guys with death treats' down there. Ok, so say my point, I still do not support this fake christian acting, but as far as it is a good joke, I can ignore it equally fine as enjoying all the 'thanks to god' on front of naked girls' pictures. Moreover, guys have a spicy eroticism inside the lyrical context, which makes some xtians take some attention to the band too. Hehe, it is so unorthodox!

Anyway, enough about image (you see how provoking these guys are, that every zine editor like me spends half of the review describing their ideas), let us go to their dreamy doomy music. You know, it has impressed me less than debut album, and I do not know why. Maybe there is a thicker tum into more melodic rock audience, and less darker metal, which makes me long for their previous tape. Maybe it is vocalist *Constantin* in particular, who is definitely better without his preaching manner of singing. Maybe their progress between two releases was a bit too slow, and this time *God* has not produced that much of innovative material than earlier. Anyway, do not get me wrong. If Romanian metal scene has something outstanding, then one of the best three or four bands remains *God*, and at times their riffs and combinations of various instruments sound really well. Just to prove that, at times I feel like listening to bits of *Christopher Johnson's* compositions, even though *God* does not have a single as great tune as *Therion*. Whatever – ignore the attributes, listen to the music. *God*, Aleea Pacurari nr. 6, Bl. G5, Sc. A, Et. I, Ap. 7, 6600 Iasi, Romania, tel. (40) 32154286

GOLD FÜR EISEN Kein Morgen tape '2000 Beverina

Damn, I have tried to deny this postmodern (black) metal effort, because it has something contradicting inside, but sarcastically pleasurable sadistic feel has stopped me from being disguised. I feel the clockwork orange smell

there. No idea why and where exactly, but the whole effort makes me feel like that. Ok, maybe it is cynical smiles in the faces of these guys? In general, photo session totally corresponds with the music – they are dressed in suits and ties, still staring viciously at you.

No doubt that German band has a quite individual approach, avoiding boring and typical metal music clichés. Reasons? They blend fury of blackmetal riffing and raw groovy *Atrocity* influences, they smash death metal with a silvery voice of *Tina* (she is no more than 12 I presume) in there, and enrich their avantgardistic variations with children choirs to top it off. Yes, at first hand you feel confused and looking for a typical standardized demo, but it is more than that. Another name that comes to mind is *Apokalypischen Reiter*. I mean *Gold für Eisen* grows are hard to use to, like *Atrocity* as well, and simple rocking riff after a fast snaring sounds unconvincing at all, but once again – the whole character of this demo attires even a skeptic ear. Since I am always feeling fine with truly harmonious passages, my recommendation would go to last tune with children choir, which sounds so naive and pure, unlike these smiles on the cover. Yeah, they have a good psychological point to withstand any critics. By the way, all lyrics are in German, if you have not got a point yet. Just run to your devoted distributor, if you feel urge for something weird but addictive. You will find it pleasurable. *Gold für Eisen*, Jub. Postfach 101143, 17090 Neubrandenburg, Germany

HATE FOREST Scythia tape '2000 Beverina

Damn! This tape kicks a huge blackmetal arse! Totally mindblowing aggression and exterminating power around seven equally strong compositions. A pity that only four of them are real metal tracks, whilst the rest – above average and totally effective intros and breaks. Hear the Carpathian wolves howling and clash of swords under the banner of darkness! Total devastation is within their massive fat guitar riffing arising from the bottom line of the mixing table. This is the main element attracting me – that flattered sound, almost killing a few drum tricks in the mix. What a fuck! If it makes music stronger, it is worth the sacrifice. With the intensive multilayered riffing that *Hate Forest* meets the listener with, it is more than welcome. It actually is the blackmetal feel, which is missed in countless bands of the recent years. If you need and cannot live without comparisons – I can throw a few – *Niden Div. 167*, *War*. Yet, musically this Ukrainian band has more to do with mass-crushing black/death disharmony, especially (un)sympathetically sticking one riff into another, and immensely using the abilities that two guitars can create in black metal. Their lines separate and then join again, thus invoking the landscapes that a true blackmetal soul must be provoked to enjoy, or reject of course. I highly appreciate these tuneful strikes; forth and again.

First side of the demo has especially knocked me down! Hell, distorted low-tuned vocal with bunch of effects works perfectly a bit reminiscent of *Wallocha*, but it fits *Hate Forest* music with slightly more powerful kick than Norwegians stick to their mournful chants. If you hesitate, harken, that their front cover depicts just a massive inverted cross, and that says it all. Lazonic song titles, and contact address – I am urged to learn more about the band! One good thing for a moment – you can obtain a copy of this demo straight from me – costs 5\$, Believe – money is nothing comparing to *Scythia's* might!

Hate Forest, Roman Saenko, P.O. Box 8734, 310002 Kharkiv, Ukraine

HEAVEN GREY Northwind Soundless

A major disappointment with Latvian six-piece, since they have moved from initial emotional doom/death to faceless trendy melodic metal, not only losing their identity and joining crappy club of *Ruination* and friends, but also plainly regressing with their compositions. This time cellist *Ernest* has so tiny space in the musical spectre that it makes me wonder how come he is still a full-time band member? One track (*Visions*) truly shows his importance and change monotonous sissy muzak into something more monumental at once. But it is now an exception than tradition, and it is a real pity since this guy has great ideas on their previous tape, so highly praised in different corners around.

Sometimes I wonder how far one can go to please the gray demanding public, and refuse their own thinking and exceptional approach, yet Latvian dudes truly point out there is no limits in selling out. The worst part is vocalist *Ansis* and his uglier than average grunt. When it is supported by the rest of crappy instrumentation, there is no other way but go straight to girlclub and play it all the night long. What a romantic night, really, that would be... Yet I believe that all these girls which adore such music one day, will turn their backs on it the next morning... What I want to state is that *Heaven Grey* have turned into a bunch of musicians with one day/week/month music, which comes and goes...

Like on previous tape, *Heaven Grey* included several tracks performed on their own language. Ok about that, even if with stupid boring music it sounds much more provincial than before. Nonono, I would never recom-

mend this, in spite of visually ok design and wrap in. Ask for 5\$ from *Soundless*: Heaven Grey, Vladislav Kalinin, Miera Iela 89-3, Riga, LV-1013, Latvia, tel. (371) 9272999, heavengrey@usa.net, www.geocities.com/Broadway/9771

ICON OF SIN / ANGIUSH Not My God / Towards Abysses demo '99 Bestial

Zzzzzzz... Slower Romanian metal, usually named as doom/death. Both bands have some common characteristics, that unless them under the belt of this tape, but they also differ here and there. Drawing a restricted conclusion, music is ok to listen, but not brilliant at all. Demo tape name suits it fine. I would be much more pre-tentious if it would be named a split album or *esalike*. It seems that *Icon Of Sin*, who start on side A, are drifting between two poles – one is grunt led doom/death with old *Paradise Lost* guitar sound, whilst another faces *Hartman* taking much higher note using already his clear voice, whilst instrumental part of the music tends to be more traditional (doom) metal, without any heavier allusion. In fact there should be more coordination among their tracks, by no means. This jumping from one level to another does not help *Icon Of Sin* to shape the fundament of their metal style. I am sure listener would hardly separate them from the crowd of doom/death bands. My suggestion would be to turn the epic way, and forget the grunt singing. But vocalist must sing much louder and stronger, that is for sure.

Anguish incline to slow death metal, which I cannot label as doom, or emotional metal. Plot is really with them, but result deserves to be better. Slow death metal by me is a bit deprecated term, with an aim to hear something more exciting. So I truly think their compositions lack a harder input, first of all in structuring department, and also when melodies are concerned. Either they are typical and thousand times heard, or busy joined with 'bridge' parts, going nowhere. The feel that it is a waste of tape does not leave me. No one knows where they find their point of inspiration... if they ever do at all... *Icon Of Sin*, Str. Avania no 28 bl P1, sc 1 ap 94 sect 2, Bucuresti, Romania *Anguish*, by Independent bl 9 sc A ap 13, 0200 Tirgoviste, Romania

IMMEMOREAL Towards 1347 demo '99

If this were their first recording, it could gain quite a response for merely ok start, but unfortunately *Towards 1347* is already third demo by the band, started seven years ago. Since they failed to gain a deal before, I doubt if both first tapes were much worthier than this one. Meaning that latest tape is not worse or bad in general. But let me ask what is a point to name the demo by historical date (referring to the pagan past?), and to have no other allusion to that? In spite of no lyrics printed, I was trying hard to get an idea what kind of date that was, what it symbolises in general, and for the band in particular. Neither cover inlay information, nor biography gives further notes about that. Both previous demos were named in completely another way, either. Hopefully something will be cleared up when their next recording is unleashed...

Musically *Immemoreal* are as fine as Swedish death/black is concerned. I feel the lack of darker and more ultimate riffs in here, typical trouble for the average band, digging the rough death/black path. It is about Swedish bands especially that cannot find a right niche among numerous rivals surrounding them. So forget about individuality of music. Recollect the average Swedish band, which always hesitates which direction (melodic death or black) to choose, and you can leave this tape aside. Unless the style is your favourite, I would truly support them without too melodic guitar parts, and definitely much more personal vocalist. Seems like so far *Immemoreal* just push their back qualities into advertising campaign (intro by *Limbic Art's Mortuus*; vocalist used to sing with *Abtaze My Sorrow*; studio used by *Old Mans Child*...). Common, give your music a real push, and then add the rest of the pack for press release... Three track pro-tape costs 6\$. *Immemoreal*, c/o Blash, PL 5280, 44193 Alingsås, Sweden, blash@algonet.se, www.darfmatal.com/immemoreal

INCRIMINATED Ride of the Grotosque demo '99 Hostile Regression

A definite turn to the past of this Finnish band, with a target well known and highly valued, mentioned many times in highly respected as well *Leod Takas*, Celtic Frost. The legend so many times cited, and especially held as a plain inspiration in so many cases of metal history. At this point *Incriminated* are not anyhow provocative, or innovative. Though I cannot say their split cd tunes of 1998 (see album review section) were anyhow bad death metal. Just this new direction is so much different it always makes reviewer wonder – how come? Ok, even if their feelings towards the past of death metal are true, music deserves to be more convincing than these three tunes. First one *Evil Aggressor* is incredibly short, clocking in one minute and having probably just a single riff, which needs a continuance at any means! Then couple of other songs are more finished, yet I lack their feel as a band yet. It should come with more experience whatsoever, *Incriminated* need much

more tunes to be done for that actually. Of course if they don't jump onto another field of music, then the whole process will most probably roll from the beginning. I find growling vocal style slightly confusing on this tape, it has nothing to do with that groove deathrash riffing, as was eventually proved by the masters of the thing, once. So, my ultimate advice for them would be to cut off that downtuned growl. Then the rest should go smoother, I assume. And next time it is obligatory to appear with much more than just 9 minutes of music, to really demonstrate what you are all about. Incominart, P.O. Box 37, 55801 Imla, Finland, audioterror@vobox.fi

INFERNO

Pekko na zemi demo '96 + Temna poselstvi davných predku demo '97 + Chram Nenavisti split '98 + Ve znameni ohne 7" ep '99 (adv.)

Czech band was enthused to mail a tape with entire collection of their recordings, after the start in 1996. Unfortunately their promotional man has mailed a very brief info on these recordings, so I not only do not have song titles (except second demo), but also do not know the band which participated on the split cd '98 with them. That is why I decided to review everything together, as music really matters here, nothing else.

Another criteria to put everything together is pretty simple music on the whole 90 minutes tape. What was started in 1996, is still being continued these days, of course the newest ep being the most promising piece of their melodic black metal. I cannot stop wondering why dozen of Czech bands are so unimpressive, even primitive and similar. Yes, several of them has done at least half of reasonable stuff that Master's Hammer has laid fundament to, but anyway... Old Maniac Butcher, Dark Storm were crap. Inferno is better than these bands, but actually not as well listening as, let us say, Unclean, or new Maniac Butcher. You guess right thinking these guys have bits of all those mentioned bands. Yet they lack identity, at least some own hooks. Everything is way trendy and same. An ok lister, but is it enough for you? Search for something else to find the real jewel. Awful Burzum cover on second demo, by the way. Much better Master's Hammer one on newest 7".

I cannot be polite with their band photo, and again it is oh so many times seen quasimodo painted faces on Czech tapes, which look so unprofessional and amateurish. By the way, wasn't it Carl-Michael and crew first with their own Inferno, or it is about 6 character that matters? However, if you need an ok but nothing special Czech bm band, contact it and ask for more details on all their releases, and prices of them: Inferno, c/o Tomas Trombik, Nedbalova 1713, 735 06 Karvina-Nové Město, Czech Republic, tel. (351) 696316022

JÄÄPORTIT

Kaun Koskematon tape '99 (adv.) Noitavasara

You know, I am an expert of this young Finnish synth (or, according to its majesty *Metalion*, one man and a synth in the forest) band! Once upon a time I have traded their demo-cd with *Normendahl*, and now he puts a new tape album into my postbox. He even released it himself! Not a guy behind the keyboard, but *Norm Noitavasara*. So, I believe he tries to push it hard. Well, I have not received any penny from *Norm* anyway! I wonder though why he has just photocopied elsewhere great coloured cover. So, expect my opinion.

First recording was between ok and amateurish, with the latter to take more time actually. But some moments were really bright and listenable. Yep, pretty bright as I hear no dark soundscapes in *Jääportit* music. Sad, melancholic, eerie – yes, dark – no. *Kaun Koskematon* is actually between an ok and good. Not that really good, but good tape. At least one man has not lost his synth in the forest, and he is not so hopelessly lost too! *Uuunvarjo*, aka *Tuomas Mäkelä*, to name him correctly, uppones with a couple of brilliantly arranged compositions, which could easily beat some worse trip on latest *Burzum* album. Very rare background voice adds a sort of mystique to it, and still does not resemble *Mordis*! I wish him tell us something more during the keyboard music counsel. By the way, one track *Hänen Jäälävä kaksensa* is taken from the first demo-cd, yet it holds up the standard of this new album.

What I still want to hear more in music like this is darkness. Just take some *CM* bands and realise they know how to make it sound frightening, and at the same time innocent. Innocence without knife is too familiar thing... Thus I would not advise *Jääportit* for *Metalion* and likeminded guys (i.e. no synth without metal attitude), but for synth music trend followers here is a project to take a listen at. No fake children here. Tape available for 5\$ from my address, *Jääportit*, tuomasma@treenet.nut.fi, http://jaaportit.cjb.net

JOTUNHEIM

Haght Blasir Heimdalir demo '99

F. Marcks and *S. Ekberg* are two metal dudes, who love metal, and even perform it themselves, knocking the hell for the second time. Duo has done a neat tape, inlay, printing a Swedish flag, tons of runescrypt, different type of nice mythological images, and placed themselves on a very ancient looking picture with swords and helmets of course. But what I hear on actual tape does not convince me at all! Structurally music

is not that bad, but it has just a little bit to do with viking/mythological feel to it. When guys try to be majestic (a la *Aeternus*), their music is slow death metal; when they speed up to be black metal, it turns into usual Swedish bm. To make *Haght Blasir Heimdalir* justice, demo does not sound like any other pseudofolkish release these days, as guys approach it with a darker mood. Voice of *F. Marcks* is either dark growl, or a narrative singing, somewhere close to *Aeternus* or *Wallachia* (yet both mentioned are way better indeed). A visit to a good studio would doubtlessly suit their challenge fine, and would probably help to find that balance of metal yet – majestic, dark and monstrous. Now *Jotunheim* are forced to keep it refreshing with several synth intermezzos, which, as well as vocals, were registered after other instruments were mastered already. If you give a fuck of these drawbacks and think it is possible to feel viking atmospheres in there, give it a try (they charge 5\$ for it). At least check out that harpsichord melody in fifth tune or something! It is convincing (maybe more medieval than viking though). Ok, that is not the end of *Jotunheim*, is it? *Jotunheim*, F. Marcks, Benvägen 56, 723 52 Västerås, Svea Rike, jotunheim_@hotmail.com, http://listen.to/jotunheim

KAAMOS

promo '99

I am happy about *A Mind Confused* has ceased to exist. I mean, following their steps it was evident that demo phase had much more to do with enthusiasm and ambitious music, but when it came to debut album, many good ideas have vanished, thus shutting all big mouths about *AMC* exceptionality. Step by step they turned into a mediocre NWOSDM band, with almost no turning point for any new release.

Ok, enough of speculations. It is easy to do that after I have got acquainted with *Kaamos*. Slight surprise to hear them so well organised, dark and brutal! No more weeps, plain death metal! Old school – no doubt about it. Swedish down tuned (*Necrophobic*, *God Macabre*, *Vomitory*) stuff mixed with *Fleshcrawl* and *Sadistic Intent* or old *Absu* here and there. For a debuting recording it is good enough. With these three tunes they have spent only few months, before letting them go on tape. I feel a link between this almost spontaneous rush and *Konstantin*'s lyrical approach, the latter dwelling into depths of ancient ceremonies. Words are simple, but they tell a lot. It actually makes *Kaamos* a bit more than another rehashed dm band. With these fundamental lines music gains a bit deeper picture, plus roaring voice acts frightening on thy ears.

To sum up my chaotic remarks, Swedes has started this, err... KAOS! That is a point about their technical (!) music, and since it has much to do with how true death should be like, I raise my sword and chalice full of human blood to say hail for a rather uplifting effort. Me thinks 13 minutes tape is not for sale, but two of its three tunes, namely *Desecration* and *Blood of Oaths* are available as a 7" record via highly respectful *Dauthis* label. 6\$. *Kaamos*, Box 605, 13626 Haninge, Sweden, kaamos@kurfir.net, http://members.xoom.com/kaamos

KALTES

Starchariot demo '99

Hungarian blackmetal, and in my subjective opinion, much better than other tryouts from that land for example, *Ahriman*. In fact I am pleasantly surprised by these two songs, even if they are not making this demo the most prominent debut of 1999. The start is done and just time and will should answer the question whether *Kaltes* grows as a band further on, or not. I really hope they will do.

What is exposed on title track and *Path of Forces*, is mid tempoed black metal with a few speed ups, merely instant melodious riffing, as well as traditional keyboard background, throwing them a bit back in the league of mainstream bands. Anyway, do not expect a weak synth based blackmetal, it is much better and grimmer than that. They remind me early demo period *Gehenna*, even though *Kaltes* have got a better sound here on. Anyway, guitars are below the rest in the mix, and keyboards create that rounded up sphere, like in *Black Seared Heart*. Voice of *Tauer* is sort of similar as well. But Hungarians take a flatter grip to national folk experience, both with singing and a bit – with riffs, altering blackmetal parts with traditional (pagan?) metal cleaning the distorted passage off. No wonder that *Kaltes* means 'mother earth', and lyrically they have mythological inspiration. Guys claim to incorporate even more folk elements in their new recording, which should be accomplished by the summer this year. My advice is to keep a track on that, and definitely obtain this piece of a tape, even though it has just about 13 minutes of music. The price is ridiculous – 2\$! Comes with a laser printed coloured inlay, depicting a few natural paysage. One of a few harmonic blackmetal tapes, worth of checking out. *Kaltes*, Peter Ken, Vacagres str. 15. III/15., H-1151 Budapest, Hungary, kaltes@treamail.hu

KARNNOS

A Burial In Flames tape '99

Reaping Horde

Something unique this way comes... Pagan spirit sunk into the souls of several outrageous europeans who maintained to accomplish this ritual of naked beauty, what is hidden beneath a visible layer of consciousness.

As if a natural element speaks within their music. As if performers are just tools of darker forces of the glorious past. If you walk the loud streets (of Philadelphia), you can hardly imagine these evocations are still possible to summon through such simple means for the ear. Like acoustic guitar, human voice, and synth for the more ambient loops of imagination. Yet it is here – in front of my computer, and I am pretty much excited about the outcome of this great piece of folk ambient.

Karnnos (coming from the Celtic forests god *Carannos*, or as they spell *Karnunnos*) is about very strong emotions, but put in a dramatically running way, thus the set of moods somehow remains above your receptors that otherwise catch it all precisely. I am sure such palette is experienced when listening to *Ordo Equilibrum*, and *Blood Axis*, by no means. Musically my new discovery have links to these bands either, but not as evident to blame them plagiarising anyone. One can easily feel it noticing the interchanging moods throughout the tape: once totally serene and traditional, it might grow into shamanic ritual, or misty rustle.

Not to forget the unique packaging, coming with a sweat-flag leave (or any similar Portuguese plant) wrapped around the tape, and put into tarpaulin bag, which is firmly sealed with a dark force by the hands of that person who did that... I guess it was *Johan* himself. To really admit its exceptionality, this tape is duplicated in exclusive 67 copies, so to get it is a thing not easy to accomplish. Anyway, if you have thirst for the art described, do not hesitate a second. I am already waiting for the next mini-lp to be edited soon. Do not miss them!!! Contact through *Reaping Horde*.

KHARADRAI

Hexapteron demo '99

Meat Hook

You beloved and hated ambient music, performed with a help of synthesiser and friends. Love it or hate it type of music, yet if you have several cds of that sort of darkness in your collection, *Hexapteron* is a worthy addition to the pack. Only for a little while it might be superfluously enigmatic and familiar, but music quickly perverts the brain cells, giving them musical cyanide. It is symphonic, but sick and truly dark to flow from one ear to another without any end result.

Like most of people who's IQ is lower than high, I wondered what the fuck is that band name about, since linguistically it goes really bad with the image and musical story. Anyway, *Kharadrai* is 'silence' in ancient Greek, and that says it all. *Kharadrai* (the mastermind of this project) is not the first asking the way to reach silence, or to translate it in an own way, and he is probably not the best making this transformation, but why not to hail the guy for a nice try? If you check the highlight *Akhmalon III* (this is the last chapter of a trilogy on this tape), you will definitely get a point. Remember *Anathema's Dreaming: The Romance?* That closing chapter of *Serenades?* The story continues with *Hexapteron*, and it is the last tune here as well. Not exactly musically (here we go with much shorter and more dramatic tune), but emotionally. Like I am caught measuring time paradox. Great!

I mean it – if sir *Kharadrai* will get music like this, I will bow against his next release. Other tracks are fine with me, even if they sound average at times, or a bit forced to be mournful and occult. Anyway, this demo is a worth purchase, and please do not greed your 5\$, now. I can just suggest checking his previous two demos, and surely wait for the next nuclear timewarp. *Kharadrai*, Junalliankuja 1 E 88, 00520 Helsinki, Finland, kharadrai@xoommail.com

KILLING MODE

Vale Tudo! demo '99

Hybrid Music

Some Sepultura fans have made macho metal/core in UK, but indeed it is just one more fan-based band, which fails to be good simply because guys repeat the worst stuff that Brazilian monsters could ever invent. Actually it is more modern metal than hardcore, unlike their biography tells you. But I hate that modernism as it has nothing to do with cool music you can enjoy. Shitty pissed off vocal style, guitar grooves which lead to nowhere, and moshy rhythm section. Something for thirteen year old trendies to jump with at their shows, but something disastrous for *Ledo Takas* editor and I am sure – readers as well.

No wonder, *Killing Mode* is based just in November '97, grown on the music of the later trends. First demo is recorded in July 1998, and presented (in an intelligent way) a bit later. Five songs, 23 minutes. Their next demo is scheduled yet, with drummer/vocalist *Helbs* switching onto frontman position only. Another drummer has joined. Only I am afraid the style they will continue with will not interest me... *Killing Mode/Hybrid Music*, Suite 15, 40 Sussex Square, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 5AD, tel. (44) 1273682696

KORRUPTION

Slaves of Darkness tape '99

Bestial

Totally straight-forward thrash/death, simply a metal kick, but it does not convince me that much. Their compositions are quite short, no waste of time for various tricks, or too repetitive song structuring, yet it is basi-

cally generic piece of tape, to say the truth. I would prefer more riffs per song actually, or in other words – they are too primitive for me. Also their groove riffs are not impressive enough to keep that mid tempo all along the recording. Reminds the early 90-ies, with the thrash going down, and death metal coming by storm. Or how can I explain their wish to sound as possibly brutal? Especially vocalist is active to growl the hell out of his lungs. The tuning is also put down a bit more than general thrash outfit uses to handle it.

Even a beginner is able catch *Korruption*'s lean to *Six Feet Under*, what could be a positive thing if their compositions were interesting enough. But to become so professional and hyper groove, guys need to work a shit-load more actively, and check out that their new songs would sound much more convincing. There is no point to release next material with the same bunch of mediocre material. Even the tape inlay looks fine, I cannot say anything about lyrical side (I just can take a wild guess and suggest the typical thrash topics in there), and their band photo suggests they do not care about the image at all... I would not name this a tape album, since eight songs end it all in 26 minutes. Just a try out in the stream of new bands... Inquire from *Bestial* for 5\$.

KRATOS

Looking Behind The Mirror... tape '99

Bestial

One more pleasant surprise from sunny Romania, again coming in shape of mournful dark monumental metal that people love to name as doom/death. This cliché is too narrow at times, especially when ideas behind the actual music overgrow it. *Kratos* turn to become one of these bands, which I am sure, will even break new grounds in the near future, but current tape is fairly awesome already. I wonder to find so many layers in that atmospheric field – many bands happen to limit themselves to a very dumb and narrow area. *Kratos* love to explore it to vast measures, contrary to the trend. They actually use the whole line up for that matter, what is so important in my eyes. When you discover any great melody, keyboard charm pops in and then after – serene voice of *Monica* or *Dan*'s choir. To speak further, he is my main complaint about this recording as well. You see, some clean singing is not bad, choir is great (*Piece of Us*), but his roaring leaves quite a few question marks, and even narrating this guy is not that much convincing. To improve things up I guess they would better check anyone else, and leave *Dan* concentrating on his guitar, and probably some choirs.

At times guys might remind German *Cromatory*, yet it is clear as electric bulb that *Kratos* have much wider horizons when it comes to making their music interesting and full of smart ideas. No idea if this tape will be supported by next recording even better, but I am curious about that! Nothing to be harsh about their personal lyrics, which so perfectly fit the music itself. I sincerely warn you – 6\$ is a bargain for this cute tape that *LTR* asks for. *Kratos*, Dan Dron, Str. Lamotesti 3-5, Bl. 62, Sc. A, Ap. 31, Sector 4, Bucuresti, Romania, danydr@hotmai.com

LOVE-LIES-BLEEDING

The Lady Who Didn't Want To Be demo '98

Demonion

Of course it is better than his previous demo, which was also black, melodic, misanthropic and hateful. But I still cannot fully enjoy *Lord Adrastis Korgan's* music as it seems to me rather average both in composing and performance. He sort of combines the ugly face of black metal and symphonic sources, which are more than obvious throughout the tape, yet for my ear the bm spirit loses its meaning in such a way. Yeah, some raw playing still takes part, which I enjoy the most. When it comes to try-outs to be majestic, pictures get more obscure... I mean effort is definitely much to be desired, I mentioned darkness, and that is right – this attribute both supports their music, and requires better recording and skills next time.

Some power is a thing which would suit *Love-Lies-Bleeding* very well. Or band name suggest any alternative thought? No, as far as you have a single black metal riff, you are supposed to be more evil, more drastic, more to the point instead of crying around about your misanthropic state... Well, I admit that lyrical concept is impressive. In spite of some handy help of good old *Charles Baudelaire*. But seems like it requires much deeper tunes indeed. You know, the furthest from blackmetal music moments remind me *Karl Rueslättern's* manner of singing, and dramatism of *Band Symphonies* (in absolutely other tune). At some point these two bits have stuck in the head, what could be a point to *Lord Adrastis Korgan* take a direction. Yes, if he so desperately needs to have something diverse from the usual standard.

This tape is released under Greek label, meaning it has a pro-printed cover with lyrics, etc. I should tell you that it is available at my address, and to real dark black freaks this tape should be a must, as well as *Love-Lies-Bleeding* self-titled demo '97. You know, people enjoy symphonic black, these days... Each tape is 5\$ worth. *Love-Lies-Bleeding*, Lord Adrastis Korgan, 16 avenue Beausjour, 94230 Cachan, France, adrastis@bigfoot.com

MATERIA GRAVE

Dammi una Vita demo '98

My oh my... I instantly thought my English was at least ok for communicating, and especially writing. But after an attempt to read (it made me sweat insanely) MG press sheet I realised that I am hopeless anyway. Or how to react on that 'highly sophisticated' presentation none of English speaking guy would ever understand. I see their high potential, dammit... Then it is ok that they use native lyrics, as who would dare to write something critic on the band if their poems were of Lord Byron's native tongue?

Nah, to sum it up guys - please wake up and write an essay, sort of *How to achieve the most important goal in my life for this very moment - to be more critical to myself and my creations*. It might help to avoid recording and producing such amateurish crap that *Materia Grave* demo stands for. What about *technical brutality, melodious passion mixed with suffering and sadness?* That is what the flyer lies about. Ok, I can admit it is something they want to achieve with metal music, but the first attempt is simply ridiculous. Imagine your 1989 raw thrash band, rehashing the same mid-tempo tunes, and topping it with growl (this way amateurs used to show their fascination with a new - death metal wave back then). Surprisingly, such demos can turn into an inexhaustible source of inspiration to write about music you deal with. So, yeah I could go on slugging *Materia Grave* down, mentioning their female singer, incredible leads, bla bla bla... but let us better leave it for media brotherhood as I try to save this iron-curved magazine space for something more admirable. Save 5\$ and ignore this pro-printed tape, *Materia Grave*, Erik Ballotta, Via Pontelongo no 5, 35020 Candiana (PD), Italy, fax (39) 0499703458

THE MEADS OF ASPHODEL

The Watchers of Catal Huyuk demo '99

It is thousand of times better to review a controversial demo than average album, which turns to be just a repeated cliché all and every time around. British duo can easily be determined as outstanding and completely unordinary band from the rest of (black) metal movement.

Their originality is both through musical means, and ways how to achieve sophisticated combination of seems to be heard formulas. Some features that I found on 4 track 18 minutes tape (their third since the inception in mid '98): mid-tempo black metal, oriental aura a la Therion, British (Irish?) folk touch, weird vocalstyle, drum computer, punk rock band cover... Not too less, eh? Me thinks that last episode should make many bm heads turn their backs on Brits, but please be patient and do not judge it just by track titles. Take a listen instead!

I personally have mixed feelings about this demo (like it is always with me when music is so varied). Mentioning drawbacks: it has mechanic feel to music, too sudden jumps from one soundscape to another, and so bad roar in *Pale Dread Hunger*. But let me tell you next - that same tune has the absolutely best riff (or should it be named folk melody?) at the end, when ????? takes over the rest, pushing the whole music into trance-like dimension. That only line (making my spine shiver) point at TMOA as a duo to be looked at, at least further on! If you ask me, I can accept that G.B.H. cover either - it sounds pretty Motörhead-ish with raw loud bass. Their lyrics have nothing to do with stupid punk, no allusion to that shite at all.

Want to be provoked? Order *The Watchers...* straight ahead! The Meads Of Asphodel, 33 Lilac Road, Hoddesdon, Herts, EN11 0PG, England

MENTAL ECLIPSE

Graveside Flowers' Remembrance demo '99

Death's Return

Want some savage brutality? And still cannot find the edge of insanity? Try Belarusian four-piece, delivering six songs of nasty old school thrash. No wonder about their style - many postsoviet musicians still like to stick to music they have experienced some years ago. So, this one is pure thrash, ugly, primitive and raw. Well, I am sure they would tell you they play death metal, as their vocalist uses growling voice, but it is not enough to be dm. There are just thrashy clichés and structurally it is no further than Exodus and Destruction. Cannot really tell I

share that enthusiasm *Mental Eclipse* bring with their songs, but at some point it is fine with me. I like their blasting energy, their never-ending metal madness, and *Vitaly's* leads in particular. Drummer *Serge* is awesome too. Just his playing should be a bit more coordinated. What irritates me on this demo is a bad production, as sound is very messy. Vocals are buried somewhere in the mix, neither rhythm section looks better. It really swallows a half of their effort. I just can imagine how the band would sound with crystal clear recording, or with megabrutal guitar sound. Guys did tried to get as brutal sound as possible, but seems like with these conditions they have experienced, it was impossible. On the first listen it sounded so messy... It definitely needs a patient guy to get into the songs. So be prepared for that. Or have thrashers ever needed anything else than raw music? So that might be the answer who should obtain *Graveside...* Tape is supported by an ok pro-printed cover, as any other *Death's Return* or *Sombre* release, so it might be a good choice anyway. Make a try. \$5. *Mental Eclipse*, c/o Serge Lobko-Lobanovsky, P.O. Box 58, 220124 Minsk, Belarus

MENTZOBERRANZAN

Irreparable tape-single '99

Kali Yuqa

I can understand this 'single' thing, as it comes from Russia, but anyway - tape single sounds quite weird for me. It is a minor detail, just a note for anyone who thinks it is full-length tape, or demo. Be ready for just 12 minutes of symphonic decadent metal, or maybe just heavy poetic music with no further restriction. Yeah, sound quality is good, compositions are interesting, there is a creative potential in *Alex's* head. Though it also sounds strange to me, because he (keyboard player) is the only (!) true musician of the project, whilst music is not synth/ambient at all. Session drummer, guitarist, and vocalist make it a metal band. But where is a reason to name them all session guys? It is another Russian mystery indeed. To cut it short - I can relate to *Menzoberranzan* as a full line-up band, the end of the story.

Now, to dig deeper into that multi-layered carpet of theirs, I hear synth based variations, which are arranged damn successfully with leading and rhythm guitar riffs. There is a cool job done to make a neat sounding whole out of these small pieces, it shows a splendid potential. Vocalist sounds pretty much forced with his operatic voice, but other than that he fits the atmospheres. Not another *Garm* yet, hehe... Nostalgia might be a right word to describe the general feel that I get from these songs (*Irreparable* and *Initiation*, respectively). Just wonder if that gets somewhere further on, and if they find that niche which is wandering somewhere within their harmonies. I guess *Arcturus* will stay their big influence for a while, but it is about time to stand on your own guys, you have potentially individual tone to the symphonic music. I do not have any background information about previous *Menzoberranzan* releases, but you can always order this tape for 6\$ from *Black Tears Distribution*, 6 Elderfield Road, Store Poges, Slough, Berks SL2 4DE, England, BTears@aol.com. *Menzoberranzan*, c/o Sergey Stvorov, P.O. Box 390, 198207 Sankt-Peterburg, Russia, menzo@kingdiamond.zzn.com

MISANTHROPIC POETRY

Inhaling the wind of the burning grim dreams tape '99

Beverina

1. They have been adoring *Blizzard Beasts* for a way too long. 2. They have been practising brutal death metal for too long to turn into grim nebular raven's blackmetal so quickly. 3. They are pure clowns of *Angelcorpse*. These are my three propositions, as a reaction to that crap which is presented as *Beverina's* most violent release to date. However, neatly printed cover is the only thing accessible within this tape case. Since music totally sucks, and it is as bad that I had troubles to take a listen. Anyway, this review is done by five spin experience, no fakes! So it never gets better, this Russian excuse named as a band.

Back to above mentioned ideas, the first one fits them best, as *Misanthropic Poetry* blindly follow the most extreme album of *Immortal*, thus showing huge dilletan-

tism as their music is nothing but a bad copy of American death metal. And 'grim' voice of vocalist cannot help to change things to a blacker side of metal. I doubtlessly agree that bm can be technical aggressive and killing at the same time, but not in such a clownlike way! *Misanthropic Poetry* lose the track in their aggressivity, and even ravenwinter type of lyrics (and obviously - *Immortal* rip-off track titles) cannot help any bit for them. So, *Angelcorpse* is out of question actually, this resemblance has happened accidentally. But be sure Russian band is not at least a bit as powerful as exterminators themselves. This goes nowhere. Even not to thrashbin. It is too bad for it. By the way, it is not their official release, as they name it, but demo re-printed by a Latvian label.

MYSTICAL FATE

Evernal Storm Nocturn demo '99

Impio

Despite a limited budget production and worn out band name (remember another *M. Fate?*), this demo is truly remarkable, carrying together a dangerous explosive misanthropy. I see why *Impio* decided to rerelease this demo in limited 250 copies edition. Once again - sound is average, luckily music does not require to shine it as a blade. It is pretty straight forward and in your face, but not that aggressive that one could think about, after I told this. They fall into the realms of death and black metal and even compositions themselves are not total ultimate blackmetal, they have much darker approach than many losers of the scene try to achieve.

These misanthropies of infernal depths make a name for *Mystical Fate*, as it gives the band exceptionality of its own, that is damn important if you try to achieve dark results, performing simply arranged music. Negativity starts on first ambient drops of intro, and ends in instrumental organ dominated composition *Kingdom of Shade*. And the rest is filled up with the same kind of a feel...

I see no reason why *Mystical Fate* would not develop into another Portuguese sensation, at least with this tape in hands. Of course, if they continue raising high this small black dimension. Not musically, but more spiritually this reminds me *Burzum* (difficult to explain why), and this must be the greatest compliment for them, I believe. Luckily for you, obtain one of 250 copies straight from my address for lousy 5\$. Professionally manufactured, of course! *Mystical Fate*, Urbanizacão Monte Belo, Lote 38-5° dtm, 2910 Setubal, Portugal

NARGOTHROD

promo tape '98

Hades / Satanachia

Try to be careful with Portuguese band - its music grows constantly with every new listen. Basically, what might piss a listener off, is lousy production and awful voice that *Glauring Dragonvornit* screams with. Musically these *Tolkien* worshippers are rather ok, mixing evil violent black metal with a dark feeling, but sometimes slowing down up to obscure compositions. Sound quality yet completely weakens their effort, since such music should be registered with much more heaviness and pride.

Nothing special for black metal purus, as *Nargothrod* discover no new lands here, but technically it is an ok demo or promo tape. I have not much of a complaint about their drum computer either. I still see no point in using fantasy concept, and having not a single tinge of that in music. Nonetheless, their tape inlay makes me suppose that guys are not that much serious about their concept, at least they do not know what they want to do with it at all. They state in there: *this lousy tape was recorded (...)* and all that shit... Fuck. Please wait a couple of years, record it in a reasonable studio, and stop acting like morons!! It is not funny at all.

Trendies? Let me stay with my own opinion, and let us wait until/it next recording still shows *Nargothrod* as black and evil as they pretend to be on this eight songs tape. Features *Firstborn Evil* members. *Nargothrod*, P.O. Box 608, Paivas 2840 Amora, Portugal

NARGOTHROD

Moria tape '99

Orotame Music

J.R.R. Tolkien based muzak begins pretty promising: synth intro and techno charged start of *Ungoliant*, developing into rather schizophrenic tune, which avoids

appropriate forms especially when *Glauring's* vocalstyle is considered. But then stupidity starts, and unfortunately - in musical terms. Since I cannot name it as experiments. It is a crime against my stereo! I see why the tape was spewed out for several times now...

Two *Firstborn Evil* members and a bass player do not bring this music to 'fuck off everybody' attitude, they simply play anything they can spontaneously think of at the moment. So it turns into one of the shittiest tapes I have recently witnessed. What those grinding/brashing riffs have to do with *Tolkien*? Even dreamers like *Summoning* & stuff are only average when it comes to musical strength, they obviously express more of that dreamworld than such crap like Portuguese project is. Once again I just can wonder - where is a point to hold on that concept when you play something totally out of tune? *Nargothrod* may answer - *that is a concept of fucking everybody off*. But then please sing about your *fucks* and find satisfaction for my grim soul, and to say the truth, *Forlorn In Silence* appeals more to me. To those unacquainted, the latter band was *Adhramalech's* (vocals) and *Morifahnus's* previous band, and back then they were doing more atmospheric or melodic screamy metal. In fact, tune on *Asgårdreien* compilation was my only experience of FS, yet that is what I have to compare this new project with.

NEBULAR MYSTIC

Taakeriket demo-cd '99

Nebular

This project is more straight-forward Norge bm, music has more aggression, and production is better, but I cannot find satisfaction for my grim soul, and to say the truth, *Forlorn In Silence* appeals more to me. To those unacquainted, the latter band was *Adhramalech's* (vocals) and *Morifahnus's* previous band, and back then they were doing more atmospheric or melodic screamy metal. In fact, tune on *Asgårdreien* compilation was my only experience of FS, yet that is what I have to compare this new project with.

No no, *Nebular Mystic* is harmonious enough too, especially when riffing is concerned. Actually they fit that 50/50 situation, where black metal is extreme but melodious and easily acceptable. But no wonder that debuting with this demo-cd they fail to write memorable enough tunes. It is not sufficiently extreme for the sake of extremity, and it is not sufficiently harmonious (or to put it in other words - tunes are not made on guitar melodies only) for melody sake. Seems like a lockout? I do not claim that. There is a definite wish to be exceptional within the scene, to bring raw blackmetal, but duo needs some time to kick the middle-class riffs off, and show thicker character of their material. I know that they are capable of that. I cannot even think on putting them down to a level of any crappy German or Italian newcomers, as *Nebular Mystic* are way more better. But please try to avoid an excuse of a solo like in *Sorgens Kier* (which is a very bad copy of *Ch. Schuldiner's* riff on *Crystal Mountain* next time). Give more personality to the main screaming voice as well. Cannot pass to another band without noticing a typical monicker of the band... FS was a way smarter decision. Nevermind. If you need Norge blackmetal plain and pure, without any modern crap effects, you have found a band to dig into. Only 8\$ for a three track cd with *Kris Verwimp* painting and dark arty inlay. *Nebular Mystic*, Ringen, Molleveien 37, 2010 Strommen, Norway, fax (47) 98649591

NOKTURNAL MORTUM

Nechrst tape '99

Oriana

Neither *The End* nor *Nuclear Blast*, their worldwide labels are so dedicated and devoted to the band to release its new albums shortly after they are registered and ready. But Ukrainian heroes also do it their own way, upcoming always first on their *Oriana Productions*, with a tape version. So, if you wish to check them out in an operative way, always write directly to the band, and learn about the new recordings.

I guess this review appears earlier than anywhere else, and I must encourage everyone to check the album out!

NORHAUNT

The Omínous Silence demo-cd '99

Two long-haired (ex?) metallers run to compose some dark ambient music, doubtlessly influenced by *CM* crew like *Penitent*, in *Slaughter Natives* or *Aghast*, and even synth side of *Burzum's* debut (remember the closing track?). It is cool that they have dropped extreme metal stuff (which was present on earlier recording), I have not heard it anyway, but none project mixing extremity of metal, and mystic sounds in separate bits were successful until now. Neither *Norhaunt* would be, let me guess.

Harlell and *Ketil* hypnotise with a rather rhythmless invocations of the underworld, being both rude scary and quite nostalgic, thus creating a duelling opposition. I really enjoy *Norhaunt* when minimalist noises transform into acoustic guitar melody, or melancholic piano lick. In such a way, guys are looking for personal niche within dark music world, and even me is not a guy who has heard the bigger part of recent years' dark ambient records, I can sincerely say that they are close to be totally original! At least creating the special night-covered mood within the heart. Recommended during long winter nights, not necessarily at high volume. Cannot wait to get hold of further stuff, as *Harlell* promised to experiment more with voices as an instrument. It is something still to be developed in their conceptual orchestra.

It could have easily turned into a self-released cd, instead of demo (cd costs just 6\$, coming with pro-printed covers with haunting pictures; + layout). But I get a point of them not to rush things, and still act as a demo band. However, they are ready to take the shivering world by storm now, I am sure that with demo like this any label will hardly resist against taking over their musical strength. Good Norwegian job! *Norhaunt*, c/o *Harlell Langås*, Alme v.6b, 7058 Jakobsli, Norway, harlell@hotmail.com



Simply the best that Nokturnal Mortum have come up with so far. New album marks their highly developed techniques and much varied music. It is truly harsh blackmetal, yet always sounds immensely neat and advanced. Recent Emperor albums come to mind once again, but not as a lame rip-off example. I think I have not heard a band yet, which could follow in the steps of the latest Emperor disks with such a respectfully decent level of composing and performance. Another great addition to their majestic music is traditional folk influences, with a wide range of authentic instrumentarium used! Cannot ignore a marvellous choir on *V agne Drevlannych cervkvi* too – it truly makes this long but not boring album unique.

I just wonder about guys turning completely Aryan and nationalist in their ideology, whilst earlier they were caring just about pagan roots, antichristianly in general way. Should one believe their sincerity, as Nokturnal Mortum sing not in national Ukrainian, but rather international Russian? It sounds very strange. Imagine Czech bands singing in Slovakian, or Finnish guys – in Estonian? Anyway, the message is got by no means, with music forcing you to believe these are pure feelings... The price of 6\$ for this piece of antichristian black art is damn worth it! Killer.

NORTHCROWN **Presage of War demo 2000** **Swordstain**

Epic war metal – every once in a while the band deserves this abused name, and Northcrown refer mostly to Aeternus (which is a great band, by the way). In my long and painful reviewing career there rarely were cases when someone would successfully follow that truly dark path, and thus you cannot name Finnish youngsters trendy (at least until I hear another band sounding similarly). It is not the main thing that they follow someone, thus far, as it is their first tape, but they must evolve further on, by no means.

What makes them that similar? Simply a marching character of all four compositions, bunch of proud sounding guitar riffs and dark sinisterous voice. The latter is less accurate and underdeveloped in my humble opinion, as the guy behind a mic simply gets out of the track here and there, whilst listening and recollecting Aeternus, you cannot miss that lack. But like the rest of this crew, he does have all abilities to improve and mature. Just listen to the track number 3 (*Swordstain* have not supplied me with titles) – he uses an inhuman scream that sounds great! Such musicians always impose – they do not strive for what they cannot achieve (I mean all crappy Finnish 'melodic blackmetal' bands that turn into comic parodies in most of cases). They would better take one intelligent music line, and weave it with subtle additions, thus keeping an own spirit of the music, and not jumping from one extremity to another. Of course those who think that Aeternus is boring will not find anything diverse on this tape. It is not meant for shocking the audience though. More energy put into the mixing next time, more own achievements, and we will hear more widely about Northcrown. Inquire for 5\$ (Europe) / 6\$ from the label.

OLD WAINDS **Cherez Chaos K Vechnoi Zime promo #3'99**

Hum. So impressive previous demo tape cannot force me to praise blindly a new material from northern Murmansk. Old Wainds have not stagnated and made it any worse, but they have not moved forward as well. I cannot hear these brilliant raving riffs, which have been bleeding all over their black metal. I cannot feel that penetrating scream line that has been making my spine shiver. I cannot catch that darkened groove, that almost all the compositions from the past have been torturing the brain system! What the hell then? Is it really just a rougher production to blame? Right, that must be one of the main factors about Old Wainds losing that charm of cold black metal horde. Now their sound makes me think just on raw blackmetal stereotype, which in this case means slightly more traditional approach, taking the stylish mark from the band. But their special kold sceptre has definitely vanished. Maybe their aim was to alter the production until the very edge, or maybe it has happened due to limited abilities and funds after all? But most probably – both assumptions are true...

Once again – if you enjoyed the massive soundscapes of Old Wainds' previous demo, be ready to check this one out as well. But expect another interpretation of northern wintry landscapes... Anyway, their music must appeal to everyone who claim to fight for black metal purity – no doubts about that! Sharp, bleeding, devastating. Though do not rush to order this tape, as four tracks with photocopied cover are meant just for promotion. Quickly after this was accomplished, five new songs have been recorded, so let us better wait for a better mix, and more ideas, that would end up in a new release by the band. I truly want them to write as good blackmetal as on older demo! Old Wainds, A.V. Ivanov, ul. Gagarina 47/2-82, 183018 Murmansk, Russia, factory@com.mels.ru

PARCELS **Encyclopaedia Of Metal tape '99** **Death's Return**

I am not very keen on listening to the worst tapes in the world, especially when they are almost 90 minutes long. It has happened though after I have put on Russian deathrash metal band, which somehow decided to include even 4 demo tapes of the past, to make this totally pathetic "encyclopaedia". Two demos are of '97, and two - of '98. I would be less critical if it were just plain deathrash that they are used to compose throughout years. Basically it is like that, so primitive, boring and outdated. But there is one more demo beside three other, where guys act like imbeciles playing silly songs, or pseudo grindcore tunes. Common lads, are you kids or what? Leave this stupidity for beginners, and never ever include it on official tape! It makes me think on school years long long time ago...

Nevertheless, their 'serious' music has nothing promising to offer, for me this band is dead even before they are with this tape out. I mean, how could they make people interested if they have 0% of musical strength. Death metal should be the music which burns you from inside (and not freezes like immortal, hehe). *Parcels* are neither far nor close to blackmetal spirit, not even speaking about brutal fury in general. At times they toss around moving to doomy stylistics, so basically the case is closed with *Parcels* having nothing to offer but miserably trying to be metal. This music goes nowhere. *Parcels*, Alexey Razumov, Volchaevskaya 82-133, 680020 Khabarovsk, Russia

RESURRECTURIS **Nocturnal / Corpses (Forever) double tape '99** **Backwoods**

I have been old time friends with guitarist Carlo, so those who are devoted to *Ledo Takas* from a long time now should remember me reviewing every single tape that Resurrecturis has released in the past, and their debut album *Nocturnal* has not been missed either. Thus it is no worth to repeat myself here, since this double tape re-release includes exactly their entire career up until this moment. Not a bad idea really, and original. Instead of typically putting it on cd, guys thought that small underground tape company should spread the message better. And they are partially right – in this case many underground people, who cannot afford cds, will obtain these tapes.

Together with perfectly layouted covers, confirmed sharp death metal sound that this band always approach, you will get a few surprises, in form of extra tracks. All in all there are four of them, and two happened to become cover versions – *Ratusas Resist* and *Heartwork*. No need to utter the authors of both. Ummm, I think covers could be really better, especially with the latter. Simply the mix is much different, and you cannot hear melodic guitar lines that are present in actual song. Another minor note is that many songs from demo tapes were later re-recorded for the album, and this double attack is quite irritating at times. So to say – only for die-hard freaks. Good point is that *Backwoods* sell it both separately, and as a double pack. Both tapes will cost you just 11\$ (Europe) / 13\$, whilst separately they are 7\$ (Europe) / 8\$, so think about it! Ok, for the end – this is raw underground yet melodic mid-paced death metal. Resurrecturis, c/o Carlo Strappa, Via Medaglia D'Oro 73, 63023 Fermo (AP), Italy, tel. (39) 0734623016, resurnoi@tin.it

ROSSOMAHAAR **Grotesque tape '98** **Rest In Peace**

At first I have experienced this tape dubbed in a low amateurish way. The reaction was – totally lame try-out to be synthetic blackmetal. Then I got a much better, most probably professionally re-recorded version with the same material, and opinion started to change for the better. But not enough to make a major alteration in my taste system. It is not anyhow exceptional from the current computer-made symphonic/black metal, since the majority of these tapes and cds sound so similar. Not only due to the same cliché artificial melodic, but also seemingly not so far reaching 'symphonic' ideas. Damn, show me that *Lazar*, and I will make him bleed learning what to do with his soundblaster...

What the hell... this guy (here we go again – one more single-dude-makes-it-all band...) have simply tried to make dark orchestral music, that is my understanding of this effort. Otherwise how could you explain that mess when guitars and bass pretend to keep the rhythms with oddly programmed drums, but he simply cannot be as fast and skilled to grind the shit out of his guitar! Concerning the drumming, it would not be a big deal to play that stuff for a live drummer, if not these weird moments when *Lazar* seems to put any and all available software he found in his PC.

Concept is 'well-known' Tolkien's world, pity that booklet had not enough of space to print some lyrics. I bet to have a great read there either. Nah, just better go and read over *The Hobbit* once again... I think you will have more pleasure to feel yourself a child. Rossomahaar music might act entirely opposite, so I would not suggest to take a risk... though who knows – if these synth musicals are your cup of tea, why not? 5\$ from the label. Rossomahaar / C.D.M. Promotion, P.O. Box 223, 121019 Moscow, Russia

SAGENHAFT **The legend of the forgotten reign demo '99** **Ordo Obscuri Domini**

You can make a pompous cover inlay, to limit the edition (which is not the case with this tape) and sell it for 7\$ per unit, to distance the artist from the rest of the crew, to name them legendary, the only real or whatever; but you cannot change the actual music recorded on the tape itself. If it is boring rehashed crap, it will remain but none better than that. Whether it is medieval, atmospheric, dreamy, emotional, or misanthropic sounds... Unfortunately, *Sagenhaft* do not fit my criteria of good ambient synth project, and I do not give a shit that this was recorded back in 1995! It does not justify all the clichés used on these five compositions, neither make music more special, unique, I had much higher expectations both artistically and composition-wise. And *Sagenhaft* quite easily proved me wrong. A feeling that I am listening to another metal disc's intro did not leave me up until the last chapter, and real music has not started after all. Yes, you can use several ideas to begin a record like this, but that is all about it! Get more skills and ideas, guys. Realise that *Penitent* and *Mortis* is not the whole ambient synth scene, and even them have moved forward from the original style they performed back in 1994. I am really sick of grey, untalented synth music, polluting this crappy world. Neither *Bar's* crispy voice saves it. Tape is really not worth even half price of what they ask for it (7\$).

Sagenhaft, Gianluca Martucci, Corso Umberto I 38, 80046 San Giorgio a Cremano (NA), Italy

SARDOTICAL SCOUNDREL **Extinction By The Birth Control demo '99** **North Poem**

Bluargh! Something grinding this way comes. Typical representation of the style, this demo with seven tunes matches 12 minutes of timing, with no extravagant gimmicks or pseudo evil samples from the cinematic gore encyclopaedia. Malaysian crew deliver it as metal as possible, what imposes at some extent. In any case this necromass is devoted to die-hard freaks only, so meet thy doom or be doomed, there is not third solution. Their label still might confuse you, since there is no promised 'pure Delicade', just a few *Cannibal Corpse* hints, but if any devoted CC fan takes a listen to *Sardotical Scoundrel*, he or she (addicted to vaginal skin, yeah) must confess a fair outrage about their resemblance. It is simply two different leagues, which never cross, never in the whole universe. Moreover that my current headache healers are much more primitive and straightforward, and their growler is simply unbearable. Just a guy from the street, with a fake job at the microphone. I am sure they had troubles in the studio mixing his angelic voice to be heard well enough. Ok, at least they have some deathmetal hooks here and there, otherwise this would be a complete waste.

Comes with a pro-printed coloured inlay (argh, sick artwork) and costs 5\$ from *North Poem Records*.

Sardotical Scoundrel, scoundrelsm@hotmail.com

SCATOFAGO **demo '99**

Grow up, stupid kid! I could give this band a bad but encouraging review if they were really serious about their music. But they are not, and they have time to include a childish joke at the end, together with black-metal wanna-be tracks. It is really more than enough, moreover that their 'main' (is it really?) music is nothing but immature, chaotic and underworked crap. Just another demo band with fewer ideas one could expect. *Donald Duck* must be their favourite yet, so I cannot understand how come have they left their kindergartens and stolen that drum programming equipment? *Humour is one of the best weapons against stupidity*, says *Thomas* or *Lord Azmoth* in his press sheet. Ok then, please go to the zoo and make people laugh of yourself, but do not even dare to make a fool of black-metal anymore! It is more than stupid, man. It is not about being your own god, really.

I think it is about time when all pretenders and imitators with no understanding should be banned, not naturally of course, but more mentally. Stop supporting crap like this, be careful before ordering anything that claims to be raw blackmetal, or even 'coprophilic blackmetal'. Ha, I really take it straight-forward, and would better put 'shitty blackmetal' label. Musically they are chaotic aggressive beginners, yet incorporating keyboard, but going nowhere with it. Too much unrelated bits and pieces, but not actual tunes. Avoid by any means!

Scatofago, c/o Thomas Bernolin, En Bout, 71700 Tournous, France, lordazmoth@voila.fr

SERPENT LORE **Brandishing Damnation Sword demo '98** **Hades / Satanachia**

Finally I am enthused listening to a demo tape! It is not that easy as one might think, since the stereo is over-crammed with mediocre music all the time. Ok ok, *Serpent Lore* are not the new messiahs yet their brand of black metal is both cool to listen, and to review either. Just ok structured dark music, with real tinge to remain much blackier than many pretenders pose to play. I guess to like it due to a metal instead of pop thol-

ce done by guys. Finally here is no cheesy melodies (even music is pretty harmonious for that matter), no hyped yelling, no pretentious tricking on you.

If anyone out there supposes this Portuguese horde just repeats what was done by early bm revival waves in early 90's, here you are – it has a clue. But I vote for them, since structurally guys have put a soul into these tunes, three of their own + a cover of *Freezing Moon*. Mmmmm, is it original choice, the latter one, eh?? Nope... but executed in a pretty convincing manner. Ok, music of *Serpent Lore* has definitely a soul, a sort of spirit, which presents in every rehearsal of them. Easy to feel that, really. If you do not believe me, get it yourselves (5\$ from my address) and realise! And it is no way Norwegian sounding at all. Cool. Dam cool. I hope they will not wimp out as let us say, Portuguese ex. hope *Firsborn Evil* did.

Strange, but I will not suggest them to be more original. They are good in that straight-edged mid-tempoed black metal, and that is it. I am even feeling fine with a so-so sound quality – it has at least the primordiality, so close to their music. Might be something special, their new offering. *Serpent Lore*, P.O. Box 3539, 4201 Porto Codax, Portugal, SerpentLore@yahoo.com

SIAURYS **Pinatis Naktimis Miske promo '99**

Vienunioje su Tamsa, reviewed in issue #7, was not for sale. Now *Siaurys* is back with their next recording. As I have predicted, it is more mature and intense in its approach. In spite of rumours, they have not taken more folksy way, and keep building raw aggressive blackmetal pathway. Yes, folksy singing pops up here and there, but in a rather weird ethereal way, and it is not that pathetic melancholy that dwells from most of other Lithuanian bands. First impression is like these songs are way influenced by *Emperor Wrath* of *The Tyrant* times, but that is about the raw sound and similar hardly recognisable vocals in the mix, than music. Guys do take an easier approach, making it all ride on and on. Rhythmically it has something to do with *Pocculus* album tunes, as drum computer has just several rhythms, which never turn slow, and keep fast or at least mid-tempo oompha-oompha drive. No comparison with *Pocculus* music whatsoever. My suggestion would be to get a real drummer though, as soon as possible. With own ideas and more imagination. That he could influence a bit the whole concept and make *Angis* re-consider his stamped way of songwriting.

My predictions with *Siaurys* are coming true, slowly but firmly. I mean, this recording is not perfect, even for a promo tape, yet they are heading forward to complete their own way of this darkened root. For example, take keyboard line. On *Vienunioje su Tamsa* it was performed in a crappy way, whilst now I hear some heavy monstrous rolling synth cut-offs which fall into my heart, adding that extra dimension keyboard is able to add to blackmetal. Guitar riffing is mostly straight-forward, but never below the average artistic sense. *Angis* has enough of strength to charge his riffs with energy, what is also a feature so welcome in this genre of music. When I review this advanced tape, *Angis* is still quite depressed with the average outcome (in his own eyes) of the record session, but please better listen to me – check this band out, whenever this promo (just six tunes out of 10 or 11 are supposed to put on) is out. You might be aware of raw sound quality, yet will experience blackmetal with a damn destroying feel to it, and sure satisfaction for energetic musical thirst. *Siaurys Angis*, Bililuno 16, 4230 Kaisiadorys, Lithuania

SICKNESS **Enthroned demo '98** **Sinister**

Luckily, this demo is sick in a positive way. I really expected it to be in league with the worst death metal dilettantes, as with such a band name it is impossible to perform listenable music. Well, neither this nor poor photocopied cover inlay make *Sickness* worse band than it is. Music remains the thing one must stick to, and sickness is a keyword to their brutal approach. It is *Chris* (guitars/vocals) who lines the whole band up, due to his powerful growl, which is something close to old *Obituary* and especially *Asphyx*. Other musicians are not so impressive, yet this growl means a lot, as it is heavy brutal and ass kicking. Actually it makes their death metal sound like these old records, what is a positive thing. *Sickness* grind pretty fast, but never fall into grindcore or messy realms. Music remains death metal. Of course it must be more personal, memorable and various, even in the frames of style they love. I do not remember though that Greek musicians could do something unique in brutal death department. So, maybe *Sickness* will be these groundbreakers? Anyway, if they do not change their monicker nobody will bother to check them out, that is sure. Or sick death fans still check new bands with poor reputation? Raw sound of *Sickness* is rounded up with three individuals, but besides improving their perspective enough music they should also take care on its presentation. Or at least kick some shit out of the guy's, who releases their tapes, ass. Please order these 26 minutes of brutal death the old way from my mailorder for 5\$. You will not be disappointed. *Sickness*, c/o Nick Sarnakouris, 44 Rizariou str, 14451 Athens, Greece



SIRIUS
...The Eclipse (the Summons of the Warriors of Armageddon) demo '98
Andromeda Creations

And they deserve all praises! One of the greatest discoveries of Mr. *Samoth*, or should we blame Ms. *Constance of Andromeda Creations* for that? No matter, it is music that counts, and *Sirius* is a big talk really, as far as this debut tape goes. It is so much different from the rest of Southern European bands that makes me state about another way of composing – much developed and analytical. Demo proves *Sirius* guys to be ahead their colleagues, thus shooting straight to the charts of unsigned blackmetal bands. Well, it has not lasted long, as you all definitely know, and can learn from *Alburrrgh* section. *Sirius* do have their own heroes, or to be precise – their beloved record, and that must be *In The Nightside Eclipse*, as the music draws basic parallels with Norwegians. Sound is closer to *Emperor* demo or *mlp*, and *Lord Carnoth* (who is the summoner of the astral forces) gets especially close to *Ihsahn*'s scream the old way. These comparisons yet make *Sirius* stronger, since all four tunes are built in a surprisingly tight and emotionally neat way. You would never expect it from demo band, that is. To top it off, *Sirius* is highly symphonic, and probably the next big thing of symphonic blackmetal – the style so trendy nowadays, but lacking really great performers. Aye, *Limbic Art* comes to mind, but I tell you – *Sirius* synth is a head more various and impressive.

I thought their idea to repeat the whole 20 minutes program without vocals on side B is a bit lame, but hell no. Just listen to it – makes me discover new things in their multi-layered music, especially when riffs are concerned. In one word, you will be lucky if you rush to order this tape from *LTR* on time (just 6\$). Otherwise blame yourselves and get their debut album on *Nocturnal Art*. Top notch music! *Sirius*, Carl Draconis, Quinta das Flores, Lt 12, 6C, 2670 Sto., Antonio Cavaleiros, Portugal, draconis@geocities.com

SLAVIA
Gloria In Excelsis Sathan demo '2000 (adv.)

Yahoo!!! One more Norwegian band, but it is not anyhow bad or trendy. I mean as far as black/thrash subgenre goes. One could blame them for being slightly retro-oriented, but a closer listen to this five-song thing will prove that sceptic wrong. *Slavia* have slightly more individual approach to music, which includes incredibly weird moments, both musical and ideological, if you can name it like that. Rooted in satanic pathway and terminology, they do not mind to point out their vast interest in Eastern European culture (just read their monicker once again), which must be reflected in music displayed as well. Well, it is done in quite a controversial way, as *Blasphemic Art* has a unique finale; a segment of Soviet Union anthem, which makes me (a relative child of that empire) burst out in laugh. Simply because it is funny. Guys think it is a masterpiece in strictly musical sense, that is why it is included. They try to dissociate from any political issues whatsoever, but I guess it will push their demo (the title track has *Hitler's* speech) being discussed over anyways. Actually, that anthem could be better drew into the track itself, now it sounds just a nice glued thing there.

Ok, I seem to forget the music itself. So, being thrashy black it still has surprisingly calm acoustics here and there, and *Eon Christi* has worked a brilliant singing passage in *Monturi Te Salutant* (by the way, you can check this song on the enclosed *Ledo Takas* compilation). I truly believe that starting off in this individual way guys just continue to improve, and discover new ways in the dark extrema music. So far imagine a mix of *Kivkissavutene* and *Hellsborn*, spiced with much more melody and these odd moments. Demo is recorded live, and has sound quality good enough. About the price and cover specialities ask yourselves! For open-minded people only! *Slavia*, c/o Jonas Christiansen, Hostvedt, N-3618 Skollenberg, Norway, slavia@innocent.com

SLEEPING FLOWERS
Infinity tape '99
Sombre

I imagined them to develop in another direction, and as a band either, so I am quite disappointed with the outcome of this new tape. Not to mention even worse recording quality and effort of a producer (if there were

such?). Surely it is still *Sleeping Flowers*, so for these who adored *Sunland* this might be a pleasant return to that land, but yet be prepared for some unavoidable trips to related spheres.

Guys have lost that natural identity, which was so obvious on the previous record session. And seems that they have lost it somewhere on the way to find a better identity for themselves. That move towards sissy (goth?) folkrock seems as a lousy idea, especially when irritating lead guitar disturbs to otherwise sleepy atmosphere. I have heard a link to *Led Zepellin* actually, but it is definitely out of place, or composed in an awful way. You can not be good playing melodic rock, and then boom – all these noisy LZ leads. It was much better without too many tricks or out of tune bits, it was much better with nature friendly music. Vocalist could have done much better either, at times he is singing out of tune. So, it does not grab me that hard as previous tape did, but I do not regret to make an interview with them in the past anyway. If they do not manage to find their new way (I hope they will finally clean it to sound perfect one day), I will always listen to *Sunland* with pleasure. This one is for die hards only.

SPELLBOUND
Breath mc '99
Dangus/Kabilo Muzika

Man, I am not playing nationalistic games, I never tell lies how incredible Lihuanian bands are, but these guys fuckin' rule! Progressive heavy metal masterpiece! And never say to me that good musicians exist only in States or whenever they are noticed. *Spellbound* were not really worth of a decent record deal some years ago, when their debut demo was released, but now they totally improved to reach the skies, or depths of hell! That is what vocalist *Sigis* tells us about in his sometimes weird, other times rather naïve lyrics, what, however, leaves you thinking over. And at this point I believe *Spellbound* differ from the rest of progressive metal millieus.

Ok, I have drifted away from music, which yet remains the most brilliant part of the five-piece. You know, these are their compositions from a few years back, recorded yet in 1997, not long time before guitarist *Rokas* (*Sigis*' brother) has tragically passed away. Two years were spent in vain, but the band is live and well again, and their music sounds as never fresh. Nothing to complain about it being two years old!

Forget about other prog bands, not knowing what they are all about – *Spellbound* are for real, remaining heavy as hell, even thrashy at times, and so ethereal all the time throughout their set of 10 emotional tunes. Bass player *Arimas*, the best in his position over here, keeps the rhythm as never tight, not forgetting about his firm bass solos; and *Sigis* is a musician who has made a huge progress comparing to his earlier singing. Together with aggression, never met before in *Spellbound* rehearsals, they make this nuclear of a great record, which is still released as a tape only... A shame on prog labels – just get in touch with the band to win them! Hail the new dreamers of heavy metal! Tape is yours for 6\$ from my address, *Spellbound*, Sigilas Velyvis, a/d 471, 2007 Vilnius, Lithuania

SPIRITUAL IMPURITY
Hellwars demo '99

This one is more like a promotional tape, at least it looks like that: dubbed on a common TDK tape, with an elementary inlay cover which has only track titles, and even no cover picture at all. I would name this tape as a plain promotion, since the music is left – that should count. Ok, closer to the essence. It is built by a single Finnish guy named *Markus*, handling over vocals, guitar, bass and synth, as well as programming his *Kawai R-50* machine. Well, result is raw, primitive, amateurish and not convincing at all. Ok, music is something his project should develop with time. Right now it is simple and basic blackmetal with easily distinctive guitar line and fast uptempoed pace. But my imagination cannot agree this is music that *Markus* is really pleased with. Being him, I would immediately look for another guy to share with, and get more ideas. It is obvious that such beginner band needs more visual dreams to get the character to its music. To get a tight duo with drum machine is not the ultimate goal – that is for sure. I see, maybe *Spiritual Impurity* just seeks to add the spirit of *Behelit* (cover of *Black Arts* is done on this debut recording), so it is already an orientation. Yet so far there is no deal to tell that *Markus* is the musical genius close to *Holocausto*.

Ok, four track recorded cannot produce an overwhelming sound, yet I would think three before obtaining demo with that quality. It sounds very dry, synthetic, and drum machine blasts with simply a cheesy sound, even funny patterns at times. My suggestion is to mature until a thicker and more professional record session, and better bury this tape. *Markus* asks 3\$ (Europe) / 4\$ for it though. *Spiritual Impurity*, c/o Markus Walli, Linnankatu 5B 23, 20100 Turku, Finland, mwalli@abo.fi

SUFFOCATE
Exit 64 tape '98
Erebus

Their previous demo *Unborn Suffer* was recorded in late 1995, and released in early 1996, gaining the band quite remarkable reviews and a big following for excel-

lent technical straight-forward early *Massacre* alike deathmetal. Not by chance it is distributed by *Ledo Takas* either. This new material is continuing Slovakian tradition I would say, meaning refreshing growly deathmetal that usually flows from their country. *Suffocate* managed to make a nine track recording this time, which goes beyond demo tape frames now: it sounds like a finished album released on tape though.

The only thing that has changed to worse is vocal range, since on this recording *Gellért* uses not only his dreadfully brutal growl, but also some shouting tone which simply does not fit that outrageous death metal idea, in my opinion, I would like to hear him just growling the death metal way. Experiments are done on just three or four tunes, so let us hope it will not change the whole sound of the band in the future. Especially good is song number six, mysteriously named *D.D.D.* Concerning the instrumental side of things, *Suffocate* are no less groovy than on previous demo, simply a headbanging pleasure... Actually that Floridian influence is not as big as earlier, maybe disappointing the fans of *Massacre*, but definitely making *Suffocate* a more personal band. This time they plainly represent their land's death metal, and it really says it all. No doubt that guys are truly good in technicals, and energy is always with them. It is really about the time to get them signed, I see no reason why others release full-length albums, and *Suffocate* – not yet. Anyway, purchase their tape for 5\$ from the label, and check out their song on this issue's compilation. *Suffocate*, Zsolt Höggye, Boriny 1367/12, 929 01 Dunajska Streda, Slovakia, suffocate@usa.net

TAINÉ
Cealalta parte tape '99
Promusic

Romanian answer to technical deathtrash. This style of metal requires precise communication within the band, long months of practising the songs, having a great sound in the studio. In some way *Taine* are ok with these points (I really wonder about their sound quality as other Romanian metal bands usually suffer from that). But when it comes to genuinity, this four-piece have nothing mentionable, if we recollect such names as *Cynic*, *Atheist*, *Death*... or even *Neglected Fields*, if you want my opinion. I do not say that *Taine* compose weak stuff, but it actually does not hit you internationally. I could mention some things which seem to me below the average, but in fact such complex music is better to be judged as a whole. It is not that case when one guy falls out of the musical picture, they truly know their functions in the band. Yet *Andi's* effort to sing as close to *Chuck Schuldiner* as possible ends up in total vanity at times... Be yourself, man – do not force things when they should be different, leave them as they are!

Taine is slower in tempos when it comes to deathrash, and stick on complexity of their arrangements more. Me thinks that that is another subject to be developed. Metal is a keyword, yes, but but heaviness could be more dominant. I think of *Atheist*, who have always been heavy enough, even with their *Samba Briza* like tracks... Other than that, for progressive techno thrash admirers this band might be another revelation. Contact their label for further details about the band. Professionally released tape with coloured cover is available at my address for 6\$.

TEMPLE OF TIPHARETH
Strange New Order demo '99

The first and wrong impression was that here I deal with another German blackmetal wannabe amateurs that *Last Episode Productions* has released or like to, but it is mostly dry production and weak generic screams of *Nemesis* (he plays guitar, does bass just on this demo, and appears as the ultimate engine behind all musical and lyrical ideas) that made me suspect such hopeless imitation. Indeed *Temple of Tiphareth* are much better and definitely have their own goals by hanging around. This demo is still just the start, so labels – please leave them to improve and do not offer any cheap deals yet! In fact, guys prepare their next demo *Elerion 541 Mabakiel* soon, so they look like clever lads not to sign any contract too early.

Yes, *Daniel* must improve his uptempoed drumming as soon as possible. This recording suffers from chaotic rhythm section in faster labyrinthine of music, which fails to be tight. Though composing of the band is pretty interesting, combining trippy keyboard wanderings and menacing guitar riffs. I am glad not to find any single note about this music being blackmetal, in band's biography. They rather speak about many different styles of art, what suits it finer. One could easily clown about *bm* roots, but *Temple of Tiphareth* are indeed still looking for their sound, and thus they cannot do without one or another influence from other musicians. Yet some musical lines make them sound quite special. I suppose their keyword lies somewhere in scary mysterious atmospheres but not in faster moments of the tape. Good, the rest is left for listeners – check it out, for some unusual German modern dark metal, yet with mediocre and typical screamer. *Temple of Tiphareth*, Christopher Braucks, Unnaer Str. 32, 59174 Kamen, Germany, tel. (49) 230775407, salem666x@aol.com

THARAPHITA
Raev tape '2000
Dangus

Get this excellent tape with six pagan heavy metal songs!! It is absolutely brilliant, and definitely blows away a few bunches of crappy *Century Media* or *Napalm* albums, which usually are weak reflections of the pagan trend. This one is real, drawing influences from traditional metal (ha, *Allpool Lund ja Jääd* starts like a *Megadeth* track back in 1990) and ancient musical heritage, which almost excludes the use of traditional instruments (they play a very minor role indeed, and only in title track!) Estonian masters manage to create a majestic historical perspective with usual metal tones, great vocal choruses, and sublime keyboard background, which is neither irritating nor overused. I am excited, indeed. Something assumingly cool was performed by *Tharaphita* on the debut demo too, but guys have definitely stepped towards purely developed music with time, which is about identity and might now. It slowly but firmly puts a spell with hypnotising rhythms (but it is not a weak stoner avantgarde, nor gothic/atmospheric excuses - no way) and voice of *Ank*, periodically turning insane. That is the only feature they can be mentioned close to blackmetal, though the guitar sound has something of that type too. Anyway, it is not about labeling, but more important things, for example - great production, or spiritual satisfaction that *Raev* (means 'rage') brings. What about production, I truly advice to any band to try Tallinn *Townhall Studio* – there is nothing to regret about the result! I just wonder that this album was not released since 1998 when it was recorded, and that these songs are written even few more years back... Anyway, it must be out on cd and lp, it cannot be missed without broader acknowledgement! So far order the cassette version from me for 6\$. *Tharaphita*, c/o Ank (Ants Lill), Piira 23-1, Rakvere 44301, Estonia

TOMB OF TIME
This is What I See tape '99
Beverina

I had troubles getting into this tape, since it contains only 16 minutes of dark ambient, industrial and acoustic music. For me it is not enough to get into (to say the truth – his) essence, moreover that every composition is different from the other two. It attires interest to some extent, but ears and mind need more soundscapes to really consume the music. It reminds not a demo, but a single release, when big bands make listener pre-tasting the coming record.

New performs his rituals in shamanic way, in times leaning towards dark rhythmic impulses; using his clear or harsh/screaming voice, at other moments sounding monumental and sticking to symphonic meditations. Last tune on this tape is performed with acoustic guitar, and eery whispering voice. I think that makes it all for this tape – sounds really dark, and points out to continue in this direction! Second half of the track is just backwards played instrumental, and the same whispering voice in normal way. I am sure other people will enjoy *Process Of Absolute Immortality* the most too. But other two compositions are no bad either. So far check out a tape for 5\$ from my address. Though I expect more music from *Tomb Of Time* to really discover the Bulgarian project. *Tomb Of Time*, Boris Izvorski, Macedonia Str. 12, BL 51 En. E Ap. 100, 2500 Kjustendil, Bulgaria

UGNELAKIS
Ugnelakis tape '2000
Dangus

It is all about getting under the obscure production and realising the true directions of this emotional pagan metal formation. At first debut tape sounds pretty much weaker than it really is, and the melodic metal trend cannot let you experience hidden passages beyond what is concealed from the speakers. If you have ever experienced them live, the initial reaction to this tape would be the same, due to sloppy sound, unlike the live shows when *Ugnelakis* usually rage ahead. As well I am not that much convinced about the distorted vocal overdrubs (which is but a copied version of current trends of pop/black, who cannot properly sing). For me *Ugnelakis* music does not absolutely need that growling distortion, moreover that *Povilas* can scream and sing assumingly well.

Now, when it comes to music, maybe pagan term suits them right, in spite of turning cliché, yet compositions have a feel of highly accumulated ideas, first of all by a guitarist *Robertas*, who also opens with several impressive lead parts, sort of delimitating the band from any mass consuming newcomers. Good, really good. Their paganism comes from the lyrical side, first of all, and here we read a philosophically approached poetic metaphors, not that common for starters. *Dangus* has mastered a nice inlay card, which wraps up this ideologically pure product. Well, for me their fresh approach to melody is still the main thing, damn – I am not that much into that harmony anymore, so here you go with own conclusions. Just imagine what the impact would be if the studio had a proper equipment and mixing table. Doubtlessly *Ugnelakis* need a great budget for their next recording, and by then I am sure my country will get one more inter-

esting metal release. Buy safely from **Ledo Takas** for 6\$. **Ugnelis**, c/o Manius Kaculis, Skroblu 6-35, 2015 Vilnius, Lithuania, ugnelis@centra.lpc.lt

URMA Templum Sub Terra demo '99 Ordo Obscuri Domini

Even limited to 100 hand-numbered copies, this tape does not stand so high to be obtained for 7\$. Music cannot get better if it is wrapped in a nice cover and is labeled as limited, rare, unique... I would never jump on that hook, nor it might have any influence on my review criteria. Especially these days.

Eventually not bad, these sonic experiments could have rounded up as a better conceived and united tape. At some point it reminds the first demo of **Anubi**. Everybody knows that I am not a fan of that tape, since it was not co-ordinated properly, and was put together just accidentally. Sounds and noises go on and run, leaving nothing much exceptional in listener's mind, except several acts of annoying noise, which have nothing to do with hard-hitting organ symphonies of majesty, also used. **Urma** have sampled *Bach* and some other classic composers', thus briefly touching monumental art. It is like an opposite answer to that minimal noisescape, instantly popping here and there. But when it comes to their own invocations, my heart is left untouched. Neither deep within, nor by accident. I am sure this project must grow better, to get all the necessary contents of dark ambient to fill in their music, so to say. Otherwise this empty feel will not leave both their listeners, and musicians themselves. Counts 39 minutes of this living hell. Contact the band through **Ordo Obscuri Dimini** address.

WA Hole In The Sky vol. 5 tape '99

Another volume of purely underground compilation, clocking into academic couple of hours poisoned with a bunch of real metal. Thrash, death, doom, black, heavy - it all ends up metal. Surprisingly or not, but this volume pays a tribute to local French scene, and thus it turned to have nine French bands out of 17. Not all of them keep a very high creative note, but that is a rule of such compilation tapes, and it is definitely not only the French bands to blame. For example, exotic Philippines guy named **Brian Zamora** is represented with two projects - **Kratomas** and **Zamora** (what a coincidence?), and none of them sounds better than a yelling pig, which is caught up in a compact area, smashing itself against thrash cans that are put up everywhere inside. I understand the aim of appearing of these bands as well as **Indonesian Exclusion** in the tape, but where is the quality then?

Ok, in fact volume 5 still has its highlights, and in general sounds better than previous volume. Signed and established bands have much to do with that (**Damnation**, **Yrkoon** - even though I was quite disappointed with their close to mediocre *Wind of decline*), **Witches** - pretty weird macabre intro). To find absolutely unfamiliar promising bands is much more exciting though. I can point out French death metal purveyors **Dementia**, Greek tradition fighters **Uranus**, rather ok black metal of **Wollen** (see separate review), German doom/death charismatics **Gone Sadness**. These performers do a good patient job that might pay off in a long run. At this point it is really worth to check out such compilations indeed. Comes with an A4 sheet with band pictures and all contacts. Address 5\$ to: Laurent chez Boye Patricia, 32 Bis Avenue Bouloc Torcat, Bat C n° 39, 81400 Carmaux, France

VALHALLA On The Way To Gods tape '99 Beverina

I have expected this to be much thicker and more personal. It has just a little bit to do with black metal and with *Hammerheart* era of **Bathory**. That is my biggest disappointment with Ukrainian two-piece.

Lots of post-soviet bands play something in between slow metal (should it be named doom?) - a big doubt) and folk music, with results so similar to each other. Not only bands are average and uninspired, but they also

sound like two drops of whiskey. So, after a dozen of spins I still cannot pick one special tune to describe or name as a favourite. I cannot stand synth monotony, which does not stop at least for a second, making music dependent on keyboard melodies. Its point was to add that folk touch to metal music, yet it might have sounded better just in plain metal line-up, without any additional candles. These bands should take care on composing, and how to avoid the same rhythmic clichés better. Guys are so proud to have Scandinavian mythology as their concept and lyrics which are 'so close to **Bathory**'. Well, if crap like *Among the heathen I saw my mother; to the left of me there's my brother without his head* type of poems are **Bathory** sort of, then my grandmother was a Pope one. It suits any gore/grind band better, huh?! Another story is *Stonecold's* (Hammerfall influence?) pronunciation, which should be heard to be believed. I thought he sings in his native language until I have checked the lyrics. Ok, if you want to have a good laugh, you will check it & realise yourselves.

Music is not the most pathetic in the world, but boring and one dimensional for sure. Get it unless you want to realise my words are true, or if you want to check some Ukrainian corpsepaint beside totally un-black music, 5\$ to **Beverina**. **Valhalla**, c/o Yuri Gadzevich, P.O. Box 59, 262024 Zhitomir-24, Ukraine, aval@net.z.ua

VALHALLA Winterbastard tape '99

One more time? Gee, I start to get lost. It is pointless to repeat that choosing so archetypal band name like this, you must be either an idiot, or an idealist. Or to be sure to offer top-notch music with scoring a definite contract with fair label for a multialbum deal. Russian **Valhalla** seem to me like idealists, but anyway - their band name is just another mistake young bands are at fault. So, who still cares which **Valhalla** that is - Finnish, Ukrainian, Swedish or Russian? I personally would not care that much, if I were unacquainted.

Ok, their demo sounds better than above reviewed, but I am surprised to hear almost gothic metal like intro, which turns later (track number two) into blastbeat, and that should mean - black metal? Well, patience my friends. I am sure guys do not want to be named like this (especially that they have such monicker), but neither they prove to have blackmetal standpoints. Vocalist screams (anonymous effort anyway), and that is all about it. But who does not scream these days? So to say, **Valhalla** are not anyhow predictable, but more or less they play extreme melodic metal. At times it turns pretty heroic and even epic, yet these cheesy melodies totally destroy that proud feel about the whole recording. Surprise was to hear one identical to **Poccollos** riff on the same track number two. Their lyrics seem to be sung in mother tongue, which might prove my hypothesis about the heroism fragmented on tape. Though tape is titled in a not so patriotic way. So, **Valhalla** have pleased me with sending just a tape with no cover or additional info (tape is put out as just a promo offer for the time being). **Anthony** though assured that they are not interested in money making, but rather aim for purity and honesty of their creations. Well, these into melodic modern metal should write him... Latest news: Finnish **Northern Sound Records** just signed them for a full-length to be out later this spring... I would not risk that much, though. **Valhalla**, c/o Anthony Sharafostov, Frunze 102-41, 620144 Ekaterinburg, Russia, valhalla@newmail.ru

VLAD Domine demo '99

Hey Italians, is it fun if I had a band **Carlo** or let us say - **Giuseppe**? For me it is, as well as **Viad**, since this name is rather used in my country (actually as *Viadas*, yet it makes no difference), and to name a band like that is a lot of fun indeed. A really cool thing for all metal or dark music enemies to laugh at. Ok, boys meant *Dracula* with such a monicker, I am sure, but anyway... Musically their second demo is not the worst, but not the best either. Imagine energetic deathrash, and gothic atmospheres going on. Unfortunately, not together... I cannot swallow so drastic moves from one style into another, and this is **Viad's** main lack. Their next rehearsals and next tunes must be much better tied up together,

to avoid these jumps from one style to another. Music turns quite messy, pulled out, thus unity is hardly noticeable. I mean, integrate both parts somehow, make deathrash tinge sound gothic, and make atmospheres rather aggressive. Another point to be criticised is singing vocal part of **Alessandra**. Guy sweats out to be as close to a man named **Fernando**, that you start to think he is manically obsessed with, or being sick of all his **Moonspell** records. Please act a bit on your own, do not follow the idol behind the microphone...

Nonetheless, **Viad** might grow into something considerably interesting, I say that. Just some extra years, much more experience and dedication - the formula is simple, isn't it? 2nd demo comes with a decent inlay card, including Italian lyrics. Costs 5\$ (Europe)/7\$. **Viad**, Christian Florido, Via Giotto 19, 00010 TorLupara, Mentana - Roma, Italy, cflorido@hotmail.com, http://viad.freeweb.org

WITHOUT FAITH False Prophet mc '99 Adeon / Metal Fear

Another tape album, which cannot be counted as an album, and how deceived a person should be ordering it and realising it is not worth an ordinary demo tape price... If guys were a bit more self-critical, they would better spend another ten years in a rehearsal place, before entering any studio. Or put these seven songs as a standard demo, apologising for a bad sound, etc. Production is so poor that it would fit any 1987 thrash band much better. It makes one, who wants to get into what is recorded there, cry. There should not be so many followers of poor metal music whatsoever. One song to take is enough to understand what they try to play.

In spite of sonorous press release, lying about ultimate bestial menacing black metal with older metal influences, I hear nothing else but third rate copy of extreme thrash bands of the 90-ies. It is bad, because of cliché structuring, no improvisation within given genre, no attempt to sound as a band and not as four separate noise-makers, plus totally unbearable voice of **Frisatanic**. I would better keep my mouth shut, or better - my sharp pen away from the paper, or the best - my fingers away from the computer keyboard, and his lyrics, eh. Simply amateurish, primitive and shaggy. I see his problem to express promptly in English, but it is too messy indeed.

Cannot say the same about music, which is too straight-forward, without any tricks, and recorded with an awful production. Good luck achieving at least half of inlay cover quality with music. **Without Faith**, John Ioannidis, 37 Soumela Str, 551 32 Kalamaria, Thessaloniki, Greece

WOLFEN The Seven Geases demo '99

Even though typically modern but more or less acceptable melodious one man band black metal demo from the depths of France. Performed, composed and executed by any **Lord Dagoth**. Flyer states that it is his new personal project, so I assume this guy has been performing with any other (black) metal band before or even meanwhile, when you read this. Surprisingly, sounds like drums are not composed with computer, and that is cool. Or maybe it is rather good and authentic live sound achieved, I am not really sure.

Demo has a subtitle *Act III*, but do not ask me why, and where you can get both first two acts. Anyway, demo consists of four compositions, one of them is purely synth (and pretty good). Well, just occasionally **Wolfen** turns way too melodious, with breeding into further shores than blackmetal actually lets him. And then the whole thing sounds too cheesy, but that happens just here and there - not the basic lack that is. Though there is also doubt about power of **Lord Dagoth's** vocals. They are so generic and have nothing personal at all. Reminds me one Mexican band (**Avzhia**), which as an embodiment of typical mediocre blackmetal. Fortunately **Wolfen's** riffs and synth lines manage to create much more personal feel.

I fail to name the project anyhow else than synth black-metal (flyer reference to 'wolf metal symphonic' is ridiculous), and this one cliché puts him already into the pan of standard bands. No certainty that **Wolfen** will rise

to the spheres of more respected bands, but everything is up to guy who makes it. It is easy to stay just mediocre and please the standard trendy listener, but it is much more difficult to walk an own path... Let the latter happen, anyway. Nice cover artwork, and unusual brown/red tones of the booklet. Looks cool, even weird a bit. 7\$ for the whole thing is yet too much. **Wolfen**, c/o Lord Dagoth, 4 rue Pierre Mendes France, 28300 Mainvilliers, France

WOLFSKIN Campos de Matanca tape '99 Reaping Horde

Truly unique experience, pretending to the notorious personification of pagan spirit; through dark ambient music. It does take a while to get into the vast shapeshifting measurements of **Wolfskin**, so you cannot say this project has just that usual ferocity referring to nature. It is beyond the visible and usually flows behind unnoticed... unless the audible systems of some freaks are able to catch the essence of such ambient sound loops.

Mastermind **Johan** describes **Wolfskin** as a channel to transmit his pagan roots, and step above the hassle industrial might evoke in nowadays commercially tinged underground music. I am sure he is inspired by strange visions, as if this music lurks deep within the heart in wait to be unleashed. Once again? Yes, since it is a cycle of repetition, the gates which re-opens at a certain time and place. Like nature changes four times a year, reminding about itself on and on, **Wolfskin** invokes the cycles in aural kind of way. It is sort of repetition that once was performed by the Gods themselves, as that mysterious loud nature of sound has echoed through the aeons, keeping the transformation a bit, but still remaining primal in its essence.

Ambiental drones has a blur over it all, music whirls somewhere in the depths of the tape, yet it is damn inspiring, and definitely individual by its own originality. No pathetic synth melody, neither any other instrument to bring it closer to any trend. If you dig the darker side of ambient, here is the solution, even for a fan who cannot listen to anything else than **CMV** or **Project** back catalogues... Comes in limited to 67 copies edition with tape wrapped in unique book-like cover produced from natural means. Might be re-released on cd-r soon, ask more info from the mastermind also responsible for **Reaping Horde**.

ZUBIRUN Hellfire Generation promo '99 North Poem

First of all, let me bark a bit about the idea of such a tape - I think it is out of place to be spread in the underground. Who the fuck needs a promo tape, which is yet on sale for 4\$ and offer you just one four minute song, dubbed on a simple tape with a photocopied cover? Even if it were a world leading metal band, or any top promising newcomer, its or its label's wish to earn money for just one track would be too drastic and embarrassing action. And here we go with one of Malaysian newcomer, that is going to release something more appropriate in the months to come, by the same **North Poem**. I would (hardly) understand them if tape were given away for labels and magazines, and not sold at all.

Ok, enough about that. Here comes **Hellfire Generation** - that song, which echoed so immensely in my reasonable comment. Well, nothing special indeed, even if its catchy deathrash taster with a screaming vocalist and rather melodious line. Their riffing is sort of straightforward and conservative, yet rhythmic leave a standard headbanger satisfied. No idea why they name this music aggressive grind eastern metal. Neither grind, nor eastern melodies are playing any role, I just truly select their manner to sound old way, what imposes to me, more or less. Anyway, one tune is not enough to make one's opinion, so I would better wait for that 'official' release of **Zubirun**. Once again - one track tape is never worth any money. **Zubirun**, Syahrul Hazri, 113 Jin Tim Long Jaafar, Fasa 3, Kg Boyan, 34000 Taiping, Perak, West Malaysia, zubirun@hulmail.com, www.zubirun.com

Adeon Productions, P.O. Box 20017, Kalamaria 55110, Thessaloniki, Greece, adeon@otenet.gr, http://adeon.cjb.net • **Andromeda Creations**, Konstance B., P.O. Box 366, 2775 Carcavelos, Portugal, anti-matter@netc.pt • **Backwoods Productions**, c/o Laszlo Kaposvan, Corvin u. 17. II/2., H-3530 Miskolc, Hungary, tel. (36) 8246343588 • **Bestial Records**, Adrian Mihailov, Str. Caras Nr. 8, 1900 Timisoara, tel/fax: (40) 56163024, bestial@banat.ro, http://members.xoom.com/BestialR • **Beverina Productions**, Juris Šindars, Lielvarde 139-74, LV-1082 Riga, Latvia, valkyria@latnet.lv • **Carnal Records**, Björn Pettersson, Fridhemplan 2d, 792 30 Mora, Sweden, tel/fax (46) 25013843, carnal@wulf-web.com • **Dangus Productions**, c/o Ugnis Liogis, P.O. Box 3058, 2026 Vilnius, Lithuania, fax (370) 2613176, ugnis@takas.lt, www.omnitel.net/dangus • **Dauthus**, Timo Kelola, Lajonets Gata 379 III, 13680 Håringe, Sweden, davthvs@algonet.se • **Demoniac Productions**, c/o Alex Antoniou, Agiou Ioannou 6, 85104 Krumasli, Rhodes, Greece, triplea@olenei.gr • **Hades Productions**, Carlos Fernandes, P.O. Box 70011, Damaia 2720 Amadora, Portugal • **Implo Productions**, Sílio do Cabecinho, 6250 Caria, Portugal, implo_prod@hotmail.com • **Kabla Muzika**, c/o Kestas Kiriakovicus, P.O. Box 3041, 2026 Vilnius, Lithuania, tel. (370) 2344163, kablys@takas.lt • **Meat Hook Productions**, Ville Sorvali, Porvoonkatu 37 B 6, 00520 Helsinki, Finland, wllie@pp.hv.fi • **Metal Ager Records**, P.O. Box 179, Glavpochlampi, Sr-o/d, 101000 Moscow, Russia, tel/fax 952677780 • **Metal Fear Productions**, P.O. Box 20088, Kalamaria 55110, Thessaloniki, Greece • **Noltvasara Productions**, c/o Normendin Gmnoire, Väinämöisenie 35, 96300 Rovaniemi, Finland, noitay@hotmail.com • **North Poem Records**, Syaiful Khairi Mahadzir, 372 Jln. 1, Taman Permai 08000 SG. Petani, Kedah, Malaysia, hiddenpoem@hotmail.com • **Ordo Obscuri Domini Production**, Sergio Mazza, Via del Corallo, 14, 80059 Torre del Greco, Napoli, Italy, maza@octava.it, http://uteni.tripod.it/ood • **Oriana Productions**, P.O. Box 8622, 310144 Kharkiv, Ukraine • **Orofärne Music**, Rua Firmino Rebelo, 15, 1/çh cto, 2780 Porto Salvo, Portugal, odiosous_larvae@hotmail.com • **Promusic Records**, Ioan Brindusan, P.O. Box 1-121, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, promusic-rec@hotmail.com • **Reaping Horde**, Apartado 101, 5400 Chaves, Portugal, horde@mail.pt • **Rest In Peace Production**, Vladimir A. Korolenko, P.O. Box 72, 214004 Smolensk 04, Russia • **Satanachia Productions**, Paulo Mira, P.O. Box 70235, Damaia 2720 Amadora, Portugal, pauloxmira@mail.telepac.pt • **Sinister Productions**, c/o Manos Valsamis, Gallias str. 2, 85200 Rhodes, Greece • **Sombra / Death's Return Productions**, Dzianis Puhach, P.O. BOX 74, 220124 Minsk, Belarus, sombrepredproduction@hotmail.com • **Soundless Productions**, Andrius Orlovas, P.O. Box 3, 4580 Alytus, Lithuania, tel. (370) 3575080/(370) 8718409, soundless@omnitel.net, www.omnitel.net/soundless • **Swordslain Productions**, Kimmo Liukkala, PL 52, 32701 Huttinen, Finland, ikulinentalvi@hotmail.com, http://crome.to/swordslain

- A good way to start it all is to compare your both albums released so far. I remember listening to the debut and finding *Dominium* quite amateurish, standard and inspireless. Do you like it today, and especially whilst realizing this grown level of creativity that you accomplished ever since?

- Hum, that is more than pleasurable to know that we are turning more people unto our current musical approach than we were to match in the past. So to start I would also like to extend you our sincere gratitude for all your interesting words about the growth of creativity of the band from our debut album to the current one. I guess that the recording sessions for *Martyrialized* were way more relaxing and even faster in all levels than the recording of the debut full-length album, titled *Dominium*. In the end of the day, in my own sincere opinion this helped a lot as a result of all the musical levels of the new album, to say the least. We were also very unskilled at that time in terms of studios and pre-production procedures, so I guess the *Dominium* recording sessions were more than necessary, even if the band was more at that amateurish stage than nowadays. All our previous experience granted us the necessary elements to keep this new recording faster & even more profitable, in the end of the day. In conclusion there is not a point of comparison between both of them in my own point of view. The technical development of the band is increasing from day to day & everybody feels an urge to present something new to the masses in order to keep the interest flowing on towards their own niche. There are too many bands nowadays overflowing up the actual scene, so those who want to keep on making music as a full time job have to learn how to compete with all their enemies. This also means that we are using a lot of different melodies, emotions & even some dark atmospheres in our new full length effort *Martyrialized*, in order to strike, to keep our musical creation a step further in musical evolution, as well as keeping the whole idea with a certain interesting vibe. We are against using only one single element in our audio creation structures, as this would not give us the real chance to make some killer multiple orgasm rhythms, full of aggression, surrounded by some slower assassinating parts as well. We are constantly striking for diversity in our songs, but we do also keep loyal to our metal roots without losing our aggressive melodic identity. I believe that by using all those elements there is still a lot more of metal fields to explore into our diabolical sound & philosophies. So why shouldn't we do it over this very interesting way instead of being locked upon a standard and inspireless state of musical madness? In fact by making the hybrid perfection of all those presented characteristics we are reaching the perfect musical madness & intense bestial pleasure, that keeps us moving with a killer production settled by ourselves. I guess with *Martyrialized* we are just reaching one of the highest skilled climax of our own career even if there is still a whole new world full of elements to keep on discovering in the future, to develop our musical progression in even more intense & astonishing level. Actually we do not like too much the material of our debut album and we have just made new versions of four old tracks to present at our live

The Phenomenal Progression

Malevolence

If somebody have said few years back that I will ever feature Portuguese outfit on the pages of Ledo Takas, I would definitely ignore and despise that person with all my fighting spirit. And indeed *Dominium*, Malevolence's debut album was poor in its presentation and performance. Then few years later they have still returned, and returned with a milestone in metal music history - *Martyrialized*. Karlos Kariano admits that debut was just a start and nothing else...

shows. There have been some people asking us if we would like to release that album again upon the new label but we would for sure prefer to make a new album than to present it the way it was to the metal community in general, if you ask me. We are definitely more than what is exposed in that weaker debut album, but we cannot deny our past either and upon this path of course I have to admit that all the mistakes from the past are necessary to accomplish at the greater state of madness on this scorching earth where we inhabit. If you liked all the progression from the debut to the new one, then I am more than able to state that you will shit upon your pants when you also have the chance to listen to the new material that we are gathering for the third full-length album.

- I hope that I dare not to shit that way, at least I never done it so miserably yet, hehe... I believe that progress had to do with line-up changes, whatsoever? Is it true that you were left alone after the debut? What happened with other members? They did not believe in the future of the band, were not intrigued enough to continue, or simply were not good as musicians? It was a natural split, or more like a forced one?

- Of course the line-up modifications have helped to create a more positive chemistry beyond all the levels of composition and execution of the band, in all levels if you ask me. The relationship with the new members is more than comfortable & extremely positive since the beginning of our co-operation back in January 1998. We are just amusing ourselves very much & implanting a strong musical enthusiasm among each other lately. For the very first time & since the new member's entrance I am now able to state that Malevolence's short musical career breeds an outburst of phenomenal enthusiasm. The blackened old days are just vanishing away as time passes by, and besides that the new guys are more pleasant & twice cooperative in all levels than the previous ones. They are also playing a major role in my own life by supporting & pushing me to make the refusal of that nervous breakdown that I had to face almost alone when the band had that formation rupture. We are no longer puzzled at our musical progression or feel perplexed about our intersecting point. It is just a case to say that we

are all feeling very near the untouchable level, if you dare to read what I meant between the lines. I think this time the primitive rebellion is all among us in the same level charge & I am now more convicted that the authentic emotion of hate towards all the cretinism of civilisation is higher than ever in all levels over here, to say the least. We are feeling all very bloodthirsty in a very energetic & positive dark way. First I do not think that a split-up from some members of the band does necessary mean that the ones which depart or the ones which stay have serious social problems or some sort of brain damage. As you know people are very different among themselves & we are living in a place of opportunity where we can work to match our own dreams or even decide to get weaker to just watch life passing by throughout all of us. So as you know I have always been upon the red frontline of this band, striking to accomplish my desires & perversions while others were only there at the same time to throw myself into a circle of betrayal & nonsense. I mean situations like this one often take place over the band & there is always a balancing pendulum waiting for you to fall for one of the sides to catch you like a scrutinised victim. This does not equally mean that I think they were the ones on the wrong path, as well as this does not mean that I am the single saviour on Earth possessing the universal wisdom or the major reason all over. In any case I do not give a fuck for people which lack on attitude or do not have enough individual inner strength to surpass the most difficult moments. This is their own problem & what positively counts are that I still believe in what I am doing seriously. As a consequence from that Malevolence is still alive, I am still here & the reunion of the new line-up just gave us all the chance to make the best work of our entire career as individual musicians and that is really what counts nowadays for us.

- Between the recordings of both albums, you have learned to combine the whole thing better, or simply have grown as composers? I know that everybody claims to grow naturally, but me yet think it is more than that? If you mentally do not force yourself to progress, the new better tomorrow will not be reached.

- I guess you are right and I can agree almost with all your strong points of view

in this statement. The progression from a musician, a painter or any other artist comes naturally in all the levels but you have for sure to mentally force yourself to surpass some barriers in your life to keep on getting to your individual targets as a mortal human being. Following that idea I have to let you know that in my point of view there is still many people on earth that just belong to the spiritual circle, where everything is limited to the appearance. Their conception of the metal musical approach is so narrow-minded that nothing courageous is able to move them, so Malevolence definitely goes right in order to fight against all those ideals to achieve also something more than the apparent, even if we have sometimes to collide a lot of ancient codes & models infiltrated upon society and some individuals in particular. If men are always on the perfect research for new kingdoms of knowledge, why should we sometimes act so narrow-minded over our own niche without trying to achieve the unachieved? If normal people that have already played in this band just believe in the acquired, in the concrete, without even trying to understand that their own certainty is just based upon a phenomenon that also looked strange in the moment of his discovery, then I cannot conform also with all those narrow-minded visions when those individuals approach the band with. The desire is to make the decline of the ones, which still believe in something more than just to steal all the integrity and attitude already achieved during the 5 years of the band. I mean people often exasperate with the ones that insinuate that their reality is pure illusion & that their present truth does not exist, in fact, only for a meaneat fraction of seconds. So if our quotidian is so vertiginous to this point, possessing certain unknown dimensions, unexplored realities, and disdainful domains & refused examinations, I have to be just on the insubordinate side striking for individual rebellion at a certain point of my life. I guess this perfectly makes me like an extreme haunting phenomenon, that is also able to perturb the mankind's deepest fears, so in the end as we really need some extreme views, some sort of progression to keep on surviving to some people ideals of stagnation towards life and the future in general, then of course I can use my own strength to achieve some sort of progression into my life. So to make a conclusion, Malevolence is stronger than ever and with the actual phenomenal chemistry that we have in the band, we are for sure on the right path for more 5 to 6 years, or even more of work & existence of this band. The new guys do have a different vision from what cooperation means in a band, and they are also pushing my musical skills way beyond my own beliefs while in the past I was the only person working towards the ideals and inner musical structures for this band. I just made this necessary comparison between the old members and the new ones all over the answer, cause I definitely think this is a very good example to show to people that we can never let our hands down, and of course we need to keep on surviving, incrementing new ideas, using our insanity to reach the new better tomorrow, like you state. Without any sort of goals or targets in your life, your existence becomes meaningless. We in Malevolence just love natural progression, all sorts of inspiration, to keep on fighting, discovering, & conquering new terrestrial domains

to inhabit with.

- So to say, one who wants to stick any label to *Martyrialized*, can easily get in trouble since it is not the album you can easily stick the cliché to. Yet me personally still find it based around death metal, to speak in a straightforward way. I would add melodic, but not in a way that nowadays trendy Swedish bands make it, yet more like melody which is put in much darker regions. That is what brings a later Samael influence here and there, as well as classic heavy/thrash riffing, as a base. How do you feel within this grandiloquent description?

- I have to feel more than pleasurable since I guess you have found almost all the elements in our musical approach that we are trying to push forward. Thank for all the grandiloquent description as well as for the phenomenal words about our musical direction. Malevolence does not possess actually a singular influence or even a determined source of inspiration if you ask me, and that is the major reason why none have yet been able to categorise our sound and musical bastard creation. I really believe that from day to day we are losing a lot that idea of listening an album just for the sake of catching some particular influence. I mean we cannot deny either that we did not want to have any exterior influence in our past or even affirm that we do not have any nowadays, cause in fact that would definitely be the lie. I guess we are just in the opposite procedure of many other metal bands of nowadays at a certain inspirational extent, as we often compose our own music by making the reunion of our bestial & natural skills like an elite, before anything else. This is just the major base to start on developing everything upon our current form of art. I can also assure you that we also make the gathering of some ideas & extreme philosophies that we are able to absorb during all the period that separates the release of each new audio bastardisation that we create. That is just a matter of collecting the most significant facts of our past to subject them to some futuristic analysis, in order to use all those reflections both on the musical & thematic level. By this procedure we just make the fine extraction of the elements or incidents from reality that we also think are the most adequate to incorporate in our musical gathering madness. The blackening Earth & all the enslaved people living over it are just some of the most inspirational elements that we can use as a major source of creation for a band like Malevolence. If you also ask me if we do think that we already have a very personal style by now, then I have to admit that people have been just praying that we are one of the most original & refreshing metal acts of nowadays. Therefore the extreme & diverse multidimensional element of our musical approach, plus all the diabolical passages that we are using in perfect gathering with our machiavellian literature to break all the rules of thy intoxicating morality, have been granting us until now with more than 1400 phenomenal reviews all over the entire globe. People upon the mass media just state that Malevolence do have in fact a very personal sonic element in their sound & are just giving us amazing marks running from 8/10 to 10/10 in general. So to be honest I just have to reply you with a posi-

tive answer as in fact we also feel that we do have a very individual & original effect in many levels over the masses. We are just playing a style of metal that we are always enraptured to define as the latest soundtrack of sonic metal destruction & we often call this as our own musical approach because it is always impossible to compare us with other bands as we can never be defined with only one specific musical style or two.

- Do you ever wonder where your riffs come from? I mean that many musicians claim their inspirations are precisely selected in their own heads, without any outside influences. Do you also believe that it is possible to make a totally own thing, even if you listen to other bands?

- Nowadays I also feel a natural urge to not write the same musical approach that other bands have made in our past. Anyway as you know there is still millions of bands all over the world and sometimes if you do not have your own dark moments to get inspiration from, of course you will start upon the more easiest way, that is - to copy what other bands have been doing lately. I cannot conform to those situations and I just love the bands that go for the opposite way of thinking. So I am not denying that we do not have any sort on influence. What I want to express is that I do not feel direct influence from any other musician to the musical state of creation that we have reaching nowadays. Of course I like to analyse and listen a wide range of bands running from the most brutal to the most progressive ones. Besides I can never be in perfect accordance with musicians that feel the way you are describing to me, as no one over this scorched earth is the perfection made flesh. I am of those few ones that are also leading a life without thinking in limitations of any order as I am also twice audacious upon the world than many of the guys of my age. This also does not mean that I am a person always breaking the lines of freedom from my fellow creatures. I am not so radical for sure in all those levels of existence & to be honest, my own freedom stops where the freedom of others begins. I do have a great respect for the individual minds of our century as well as for some of our ancestral past, but if someone comes to me with a gun & tells me to kill myself, I am not so stupid to be enslaved by that procedure, if you really get what I mean between the lines. If our century does not retreat towards the audacious conceptions & risky hypothesis while there is still a certain number of people that in fact take their retrograde persistence-like forms of prudence & inner pusillanimity for a superior form of life equilibrium. Of course over this very restrictive & limited way of thinking I have to go for the theory of musical progression than to defend just the ideals of other musicians. We must not believe in dogmas of any kind or even in what comes directly into our perceptions, as sometimes it is not the most reasonable element of all. I also do not follow those ideas of objective truth, as for me there is always a lot more elements to discover on the dark side of men that we will never be able to explain like perfectionists do. In this same extent a philosopher or a musician is also failing towards my own systematic ideals of life that I have been lately persevering, when he

says he knows all the most relevant aspects of life in general. On the other hand we are always in a learning process until we die, so to defend such extreme views it is a simply narrow-minded procedure. I can say that I am in perfect accordance with many musicians of our time, as we have to keep on visualising some new targets as well as to being able to achieve some new goals with the constant research over all the barriers of life. I am also of those few which are always striking for a better way to accomplish another forms of knowledge & that implicates almost all of the time to use extreme forms of mental conquering towards all the enemies of such research. With the analysis that I make from many musicians, philosophers, artists or writers in general I am just gathering some elements & aspects that I see like the normal procedure to elevate my individual mind to places never seen before and does not necessary mean that I do support all their ideals and philosophies, since I am not so stupid at that point in my life to make something more original than others can do. It is just a matter of feeling the world and the atmosphere we live in with a different perspective than the self-proclaimed ones.

- I believe that after the sophomore album was released, the process with growing as the band has firmly moved forward? With so much dedication and investment (including recording session in Fredman) it was destined to be such, or the actual music is still the main factor?

- Music has always been the main factor for a band like Malevolence. Studios and producers are just there as a fine complement to give some extra support to the musicians in general, to make them accomplish the final madness that they are always pursuing as professional skilled weapons of musical annihilation. There might be some opposite point of view from mine but I guess in fact we do have good studios in Portugal, but we do have a great lack of people that know well how to handle the mixing buttons to obtain a very high quality & professional level of sound. We decided to record at Fredman Studios as well as to use the final mixing ability of Fredrik Nordström not just because he had already worked with bands like At The Gates, Arch Enemy, In Flames, Dark Tranquillity or even Hammerfall. I mean, we wanted even more than what he had already done for all these bands in terms of final mixing. We pre-produced all the album & we also made all the production of the final work by ourselves, so Fredman Studios is just the complement to overcome to Portugal with the perfect powerful sound that we had in mind to accomplish for *Martyrialized* - new full-length effort. We have always loved that typical Swedish raw guitar distortion & the powerful sound from albums like *Slaughter of the Soul* from now defunct At The Gates. We concluded that we were also more than able to travel there, to try even to surpass the work from those metal bastards and that is pretty what we decided to make in the end of the day, to be honest. That *Slaughter Of The Soul* thing is so fucking aggressive that he managed to catch such a great impact upon the entire band. We had at least to have the chance for one single time to share the very same

studio to capture all that aggressive smell that tastes so good all over the most typical metal caterpillar albums assassinating men in general. For this album we just needed a professional metal guru that would know exactly how to move the buttons to obtain all the ideas & musical visions that we had over our mind. We needed that crystalline quality & powerful sound from the Fredman Studios to our audio bastardisation in such a level that we ended in choosing that one as the perfect room to record all our annihilating production. We were not only looking for a satisfying result this time as in *Dominium* we also thought like that in the past, & now there is many elements that we would like to have been changed in the initial recording. This time we were just looking for the highest & final perfect result in order to live with the album upon the future without wanting to change anything. After one full year since the album is released we still feel the same equal level of passion for all the songs gathered there, so we definitely made the right choice this time & we are very proud of this recording in all levels. There are not too many words to describe that twisted accomplishment between Malevolence & Fredrik Nordström. Of course it was a phenomenal experience to record in such a great place like Fredman Studios under the support of this metal guru, but I cannot say that we really absorbed some new experience over there. I mean we had initially 15 days booked in the Fredman Studios to record this new album and I can assure you that we had all the ideas pumping all over our extreme imagination just waiting to be unleashed. We now know also how to deal with some production aspects and by that we made all the pre-production & production of the new material without Fredrik Nordström's influence need of guiding. On the seventh day that we were staying there we had almost everything completed towards the final product. The recording, the mixing & the final mastering have worked perfectly well because all the pre-production of all the individual tracks were already done by ourselves before leaving Portugal. We already knew in advance the ideas that we wanted to put in practise as well as almost all the result to achieve within *Martyrialized*. Besides all that both Fredrik Nordström & Anders Friden were just extremely attentive & helpful to Malevolence with the intention to reach this great result. The differences are evident & in our opinion - *Martyrialized* speaks for itself without need to resort to any external influences & experiences above all.

- I wonder though that *Martyrialized* is so short as an album, especially comparing it to the debut. You used to write short in your face songs instead? But it seems to me that atmospheric enough death metal album, that you perform, could be slightly longer, as the opposite to these brutal or aggressive death metal albums, which leave you satisfied with short set of 28 or so minutes.

- Hum...sounds twice great to know that you need more music from our side after listening the new effort since this was also one of the main purposes that we had in mind to accomplish with the new full-length effort. Since we started the promotion to this brand new devastating



full-length album, people have been systematically approaching us with similar questions like this one. So at this point I guess I have to take that observation from yours like another fine compliment towards our musical art instead of a narrow close-minded criticism. If you ask me, it is more than great to know that in fact we have been able to piss so many people off this time as we also had that pursuit feeling in our ideas when we started to develop all the musical themes & structures for this new album. That is one of the major rules that makes us move actually as well as to choke people just for the individual pleasure. I guess if the album has only 30 minutes that is also twice as good in our own opinion. We have in fact recorded two more songs in the studio that could be in the album but the whole idea was just to make it shorter in order to create that dependency over pissed off people that would find the album shorter than many of the others around. We have been without releasing a new album for almost three years so we positively had to come twice as aggressive as possible to us. If you ask me if this was done on purpose for this new full-length effort, then I have to reply to you with a positive answer, as with *Martyrialized* we just wanted to be able to achieve a very short but mighty album in all levels. We just were able to make many people really react like you and say that the album could be longer to some extent. Anyway we do think that those 30 minutes of sonic mayhem are more than enough to make the conceptual idea that we first had in mind. You are haunted by a caterpillar rhythm section full of original & intense ideas during

those 30 minutes, and when you get to the end of the album you will feel an urgent necessity to press the play button once again as you are so marvelled with all that is going on that you do not want to stop the sonic mayhem addiction that the album possess in all levels. Some of the best metal albums out there like for example Slayer *Reign In Blood*, Deicide *Legion*, At The Gates *Slaughter Of The Soul*, Vader *Black To The Blind* or even the new one from Hate *Eternal Conquering The Throne* also had that impact on us & are actually some of the jewels of the extreme metal scene, so why try to expand the albums sometimes a bit more longer when with 30 to 35 minutes you have already accomplished all the ideas that you had in mind with strong effects in general all over the masses. It is always better to have 30 phenomenal minutes of pleasure than 45 or even more of boredom & disgusting musical approach, in my sincere opinion. Besides that, we have managed to accomplish a very diversified album & we just want to make our potential listeners be able to listen to the album more than only a few times, as they also have the necessity to understand the album with a couple more listens than the first normal ones. This is an album full on annihilating new elements, so this means that after all the attentive listening that you take to the album you will see that we do have a very growing album, so this also keeps it twice as interesting than many of the long running albums that nowadays are only able to piss us off in almost of the cases, as there are always 2 or 3 tracks in them that are not so good & are there only to

make some more audio time available. Of course we will also keep on including some slower songs all over the new material in the future as this is also one hell of a characteristic that we want to preserve in our multidimensional sound. **- What kind of concept does the album include? I believe it has something to do with your land's historical past and religion in particular. So, can you briefly tell what inspires you to memorize such conceptual ideas, and at what point it corresponds with musical expression of the whole thing?**
 - The grandeur of the themes that I do explore all over the album do have for sure all the characteristics you have been stating under your question but we do have some more darker conceptual ideas in the album than that. All the thematic lyrical approach from the album is close to my heart to be deeply honest with you, brother *Tadas Kazlauskas*. All of them come from my mind all over, and just make the exposition of the central idea from the album. I am just gathering nine simple quotations in *Martyrialized* to get people understand the full purpose of each single lyric plus each single song like a movie soundtrack, where they can visualise all the ideas we are expressing with the album. My lyrical themes are just spinning in this useless hole in time & we are often trying to expand ideas of igniting something to perfectly achieve with them, something different, something that is better than the present state of decline. We can never agree on the idea that people are just supreme or flawless than others cause in fact there is not a global truth upon mankind. Therefore in *Martyrialized* you will be

able to sense our own inevitable collision course with all those christian persevering performances that people often take as true reality in their life. We are just expressing that we are the opposition to that carnival of christian madness. So instead of being abandoned in bleeding faith & afflictive penitence when the speech of the saviour (=christ) always sounds the same, we just prefer to be considered as the new researchers of progressive & supreme apocalyptic art. With the thematic side of *Malevolence* we have always been trying to show to people that we all must unite our own efforts to get rid off that moralistic raping madness by taking the shinning onslaught as our new name. That is the same to say that we need to be in constant battle with all the tyrannical ideals upon the carnival of morals & politics that we have to face since the ancestral times not only in Portugal, but also all many other countries as well. At this point we have expanded a conceptual view about the present state of decline of humanity in *Martyrialized*. The album becomes for us the perfect vehicle to amplify & bring about that twisted visionary accomplishment, because we made it on the supreme reunion of all the biggest aspects that we consider as the highest martyrdom of our own existence on earth. We are just materialising all the entities, who have been previously marked & restricted by the laws of injustice, stealth customs & other several punishments of society, extremely dangerous & cruel for their own kind fellow creatures, in the album. *Martyrialized* shows also to people in general that all those entities that have suffered these treatments will make an inevitable collision course with all the aspects of the martyrdom. Throughout the use of their own individual reflection they will start to renounce over & over the same codes & models settled by the entire segregating community in general. So in conclusion you have also a fine phrase upon the album that sums the entire concept when I say ironically that men teaches men to kill their brother men. Just watch & listen the statement I make: *I send my brothers to teach the brother men, I teach my brothers to kill the brother men...* in the song *A Shinning Onslaught Of Tyranny*.
- You are released now on a starter label *Maquiavel Music*, which has just this cd release for the moment. Was there any risk you can think of to sign to them? I believe they pay all dues to the band anyway, since so far all their promotion was related to *Malevolence*. Is there anything extra you would need from a label in general, and from *Maquiavel Music* in particular?
 - We have never been afraid to sign this new promising deal for our next three full-length efforts since we believed since the beginning in the entire professional attitude and metal compromise from the label. The reaction to our new full-length effort so far has been more than phenomenal both in terms of promotion & distribution and all of that is also due to the fact that *Maquiavel Music Entertainment Lda* has been doing a killer job for us all around the world. To be honest with you we were positively the first ones to be caught by surprise this time. I mean we knew since the very beginning that we really

had a very good & twisted accomplishment in our hands when we got of the studio, but the idea that we had from the very first reactions have really nothing to do with all the major & amazing feedback that we have been receiving so far. In Portugal we were able to sell 1000 copies only in the very first months of sales & until now we are soon reaching the 8000 copies sold worldwide, including three different licensing deals to countries like Poland, Norway & Malaysia. If we do have also in mind that only one year has passed since the release of the album until now, then I guess we are more than on the right path to duplicate the number of sales 'cause there is definitively a lot of promotion to be done to the album in the future as well. In terms of interviews we are also reaching more than 750 interviews answered very soon for the promotion of the record & believe me that these are not fake numbers, as in fact I have been dying to come up with the answers for them all since we also started the promotion. We are mainly doing exclusive interviews for many radio shows around the world including par example so many diversified places like Canada, Australia, France, England, Romania, Mexico, Chile, Spain, Holland, Belgium and a lot more others. What really surprises me, is the fact that we have also been able this time to be included with interesting & deep interviews in some of the biggest & professional magazines from the world including for instance names like *Terrorizer*, *Hard'N'Heavy*, *Legacy*, *Nordic Vision*, *Grinder*, *Torment*, *Riff*, *The Grimoire Of Exalted Deeds*, *Ancient Ceremonies*, *Oskorei*, *Thrash'Em All*, *Necromance*, *Black Light*, *Masterful* plus many others all the way around the globe. At the time I am also answering this one you can be sure that I have also some left to answer for magazines like *Punishment* from Sweden or even for *Imhotep* from Norway. They keep on coming every day. This are just the most important ones with schedules, cause in fact we do have also still more over here to be aligned also for publications upon the next months until the summer. All of this sounds very amazing & I am the one still not believing in all this recent happenings for sure. I am more than surprised also with the name that we are spreading at the same time for the label, as actually we already have exclusive distribution over Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, Poland, England, Holland, Slovakia, Greece, Czech Republic, Canada, Italy, Greece, Malaysia, Singapore, Scandinavia, Brazil as well as Chile. Besides that I know that the label is actually working towards opening also a couple more exclusive distribution deals upon some other countries like Australia & Japan to mention just a few more. It is just unbelievable what we have been able to accomplish with such a new label as well as with our second full-length album so far, brother *Tadas*. As the entire rejoinder in general has been so great we are already thinking in doing a support slot to some bigger bands upon 2000 over our possible first ever European tour. We already had some offers to make some interesting ones with bands like Behemoth or even Immolation, but we just want to make

some more promotion in the meanwhile to see if in fact we can obtain even a bigger tour pack in the end of the day. If all that was not yet enough, I can also advance you that we are receiving also some number one position over some radio play lists lately, so what the hell can we complain about this time when everything goes so marvellous for the band in all levels, even if sometimes I am dying to fulfil all the curiosity from all the world from people to this new release? I cannot complain either in any direction cause I also love to be always busy with the band and myself. That is for sure what keeps me also alive in this disgusting world.

- Concerning live performances, Malevolence aims to play as much as possible, right? Then would you ever limit yourselves with performing one show with bands of rather different musical background? Sort of festival thing where you can see many different bands, and people there... You are not against showing up for a tentatively wrong crowd, which would not understand your music?

- We can play almost with all the bands out there since we are very open-minded to those live stage fields. We just have to make our own live presentation and to be sure that we act the most professional we can in all the possible levels, we also have under all those single shows or festivals. Playing live is great. That is when you have that special chance to meet a great amount of your fans besides many other people related with metal. You can always see the rage flowing from their eyes from a different point of view, that you do not have while you are recording the material of the album. Believe me *Tadas*, this is just one of the best sensations you could ever get towards the musical approach you make in rehearsals and later in studios. It is a sacred place where you can share all your emotions no matter if they are more aggressive or even more intense. When Malevolence plays live we can express our musical views even better & get an even greater dose to the mind of the attentive listener directly with no subterfuges. We do not use any effects in general in our own shows & we are those few who still believe in the integrity & rawness of music to make people move with a certain vibe of energy. No one can stand deeply concentrated on our music without feeling a strong vibe for moving on & rolling off. Our shows are pretty intense & aggressive to keep just standing there. At least this happens in Portugal, so I hope that we will have some kind of opportunity in the future to watch the same rejoinder on foreign lands like Lithuania. Be sure that we will give you a great dose of intense & mesmerising moments live.

- What about classical motto of rock music: drugs, sex and rock'n'roll? Do you go that way during your shows? Is it a party-time, or more like sort of a job to accomplish?

- We take the live shows to a very professional procedure in our lives. Of course you cannot get the full representation from the album on stage since this is also not our idea. We do have slight different elements to throw in the studio and on a live stage. Anyway, we do party a lot after each single show and you can also be

sure that we over Portugal do have some of the best entertaining procedures to keep us busy after each single show. We have wonderful women, bestial food, and phenomenal and strong beer, so we keep the rest of the night doing some extra metal parties with the other bands when we do have also a place to rest from one day to the other. Sometimes we also have to come back after the show to our houses and over those situations we positively regret the chance of not doing those parties, but sometimes we also have to drive for hours and we have to be at least 50% working to get to our house without getting crashed with the cars over the road or something like that. Anyway there is still plenty of time in life to party, to act as a professional and also to keep on doing all the other extra necessary things that you have mentioned in your question. Sex, Drugs and Dark Rock'N'Roll do not endanger your life and do motivate you to keep on going forward in some more depressive moments, when all the madness of the outside world does infiltrate to a very negative aspect for your life, if you ask me. Let them party, let them drink the wine, let them fornicate & sodomite archangel.

- Why your name is spelled with 'k' now (Karlus Kariano), whilst earlier you were Carlos Cariano?

- I am still *Carlos Cariano* as a normal human being, but for the artistic side I have now felt the urge to do something different, and thus comes *Karlus Kariano*. Since I have the methods to make the holocaust, I create the dependency and of course all the legions that are able to enrapture humanity into the tentacles of Khaos. It is something unique to get that modification upon your name as an artist, and it suits also better the image, the dark conception of everything related with the mechanisms of destructive behaviour that I always use as the Sermon of Khaos to all the hypocrites and parasites stressing upon our darkening sphere. Nothing more nothing less...

- Looking forward, you will rely on what you have done already, or will try to follow the path which leads to completion, with a possible abandonment of the music style that you have been following for the dozen of years?

- We will for sure try to make a more complete and defined musical approach with the new album in all levels. We do have many innovating ambitions that we are trying to develop & incorporate upon our devastating extreme metal approach. If we are trying to be original & unique among all the competition is just because nowadays the technical development of bands is increasing from day to day & everybody, including us, feels an urge to present something new to the masses to keep them full entertained by catalysing all their flowing deep towards the current metal scene. So with this spirit in mind I can advance you that Malevolence is still of those few that are still loyal to their own metal roots. This also means that we can make a great evolution and bring some new original twists upon our musical approach without even loosing our own integrity in order to become more commercial or something like that. I believe there is still a lot of aggressive & brutal metal fields to our diabolical sound & philosophies that we have not explored yet, so if

we do have the weapons and the machinery skills to break all the boundaries of metal, why shouldn't we use them? For example, people might think or even get confused by the fact that we also use keyboards in the same way that so many others do. But when they listen to the album they are confronted with some new & refreshing ideas that no one has ever used before. At this extent we are not trying to make people confused. That is just the opposite path that we take over our musical structures as we are just showing to people that we are able to create a huge ceremony of diversity/intensity into all the songs as well as keeping them very raw & brutal. In conclusion there is no way for confusion over them and I would like to take this brief chance to extend you my deepest kind of gratitude for the very interesting interview that you have managed to accomplish to support the band over Lithuania. It was a very different one in all levels that sometimes made me think twice before getting you the final answers. Besides that I would like to tell to the Lithuanian fans that we are also dying to play over there. Just check our new album if you positively dare to listen to something very innovative, original & twice aggressive than what you have been always used to. The album is not yet available down there, so just try to get it from other mail orders outside of Lithuania or request to your motherfucking national distributor to carry the devastating album also for the Lithuanian crowds. 1999 was undoubtedly a year almost fully spent on the intense promotion of *Martyrialized* to take our multidimensional metal approach to the entire world. While on the other hand the new year will be the stage to force the conviction that we are also back with another bullet of metal vengeance in our own hands. We will also take this upcoming year to unleash our greatest machiavellian lions upon the arena to fight, conquer & discover all the forbidden pleasures we have all been dreaming about for so long since our creation. Watch out for the Machiavellian intrusion upon 2000.

If you think that Karlus is slightly crazy with so huge amount of faith in his answers, then consider the profound comments again. Isn't it the way that True artist must explain and defend his believes like? Yes, it is. It is about the real passion for the art that you try to develop, and it is about standing on your own. Great that Malevolence keeps growing, in spite of Martyrialized phenomenal music and success. What should it mean further? Just a real challenge with their third album, and great impact on minds of all self-respecting metal lovers.

REVIEWS

Ancient Ceremonies #3 (80A4) magazine

I have missed #2 of leading Portuguese rag, and it must have been a missing connection between the enthusiasm of debuting issue, and maturity of this great incarnation that *Ancient Ceremonies* has turned into. My main complaint in the past was their quite so-so English, and consequently - unexpressive reviews, and weak questionnaires. So it is the past, I tell you. Perfection is still ahead, naturally, like with any other above average magazine, but whilst reading numerous reviews you never get bored. That is also due to a plethora of contributors, who make *Nuno* and *Vanda's* job much easier.

Anyways, I guess it is about interviewed bands which make *Ancient Ceremonies* so cool read, since most of them (except Peccatum who acted like stupid rock-stars) have shared tons of philosophical views on existence, and many neat details concerning their musical experience. Here we go with *Primordial*, *Manowar*, *Deathwitch*, *Sentenced*, *Grief Of Emerald*, *Nile*, *Enslaved*, *Babylon Whores*, *Vatathron*, *Pentacle*, *The Crown*, *Trauma*, *Witchery*, *Diabolical Masquerade*, *The Elysian Fields*, *Ritual Carnage*, *Angra*, *Necrophagia*, *Krabathor*, *Impious*, *Silent Stream Of Godless Elegy*, *Ataraxia*, *Medieval Demon*... Indeed at least half of them suit my taste so fine, that I would not mind to get them featured (or have/had them already) in *Ledo Takas*. Also featured in #3 are a bunch of recent metal gigs, mostly with big acclaimed bands, but that is fine and healthy to read about either.

Ancient Ceremonies, even not anyhow exceptional, has all the qualities decent metal magazine must have (well, except compilation cd, what turns into a must for any important magazine these days; but #4 will have it too), and since it is done with heart and conviction I am sure there is just one way for them - to rule! My recommendation - 5\$: Cannot wait for #4. *Ancient Ceremonies magazine*, Apartado 60334, 2700 Amadora, Portugal, fax (351) 2114951204, ancient.ocr@mail.telepac.pt, http://come.to/ac_zine

Bast #9 (52B4) magazine

American zine which tries to be different but still keeps that mentality inside its pages. Of course, the effort is worth of encouragement and applause, but I would pick any solid European magazine instead anyway. I think that it is clear when I mention *Descant's* progress and *Bast's* try-out to be different. The leap is huge, if not immense. Starting with layout which here is standard black text on white paper, plus a picture or logo here and there, and ending up with articles/fractures that I doubt is that important for a metal magazine. Well, they have another understanding of what is related to metal music, but for me it is not apartment rental troubles, or fave pets contest. Just an opinion.

The most important anyway are fairly amusing interviews with *Gwar*, *Nile*, *Steel Prophet*, *Vader*, *God Dethroned*, *The Crown*... errr, not too much? Think so, and they are not digging that deep to get out a kind of message about these bands' character. But also some show and festival reports in addition, and very individual travel reports made by the editor. She loves Europe so much, and that is deserved indeed. Though for anyone living there I think these traveller descriptions might sound weird. There is no fun to read sort of *I saw Ferris, my friend Pope John Paul II* at every corner... I mean, ok it is good if you are excited about meeting these guys, but what is the difference for reader who you met there and whom you ate dinner that evening? Let us make it an independent gathering of professional journalism, let us see the basics of it all! So to say, not very polite review of a magazine which editor has actually praised your own thing but I cannot lie then... *Bast* is rather good for American market. And costs just 3\$ (USA)/4\$. *Bast magazine*, 334 Hyde St. #2, San Francisco, CA 94109, USA, bastzine@pacbell.net, www.bastmagazine.com

Clewone #4 (44A4) magazine

Quite outdated and poor publication from Malaysia. Editor clearly states that it is just another zine, and thus it is the last issue he has ever done. In fact *Syaiful* has been busy with his label *North Poem* ever since, and I see a point in concentrating on what you really like the most. Journalistic experience is done, and maybe some people will yet find *Clewone* appealing. Me is not that enthused though. I cannot easily go through very bad English, and all of these mistakes that are plenty in every single page. It is almost unbearable. And professionalism of the writer is far from being perfect. If you know a bit about the scene, you will easily notice some profane incompetent journalism here and there. It is a bad sign, especially when these respected bands are concerned: *Morbid Angel*,

Twisted Tower Dire, *Cold Mourning*, *Desert Rain*, *Sofia Run*, *Necrophobic*, *Bal-Sagoth*, *Moonspell*, *Typhon*, *Hades*. Weird to notice almost all foreign bands first of all, and all local representatives - after that. Namely, *Zubirun*, *Tandus*, *Infernal Void*, *Kekal*, *Kremation*, *Dooms Heat*... When it comes to layout, it is but chaotic and misleading. So, nothing good about this rag? Well, passion and dedication always remain, as far as you do your job with care. But is it really enough for a metal freak in 2000? *Clewone magazine*, Syaiful Khairy Mahadzir, 372 Jalan 1, Taman Permai, 08000 Sg. Petani, Kedah, Malaysia, hiddenpoem@hotmail.com

Dark Blaze '99 Is The War Lost? (44A4) magazine

Hah, with that strength and faithfulness *Syrragh* should not pose that question at all! After completing the read of newest *Dark Blaze* volume anyone sane enough must realise that the war is not lost! And will never be! In any related form of war, that one can imagine. If you get the point with this magazine, you must agree with that. So this title turns more like an invitation to act, and not the rhetoric point to discuss. It is the fist in the face of humanism, weakness and hypocrisy. Even if you do not always associate yourselves with their ideas. I have no fear to admit that bunch of opinions seem to me too controversial and sometimes simply opposing my thinking; whilst others surely find my deep support. And this is the essence of the fight - to be active and not to generalise. To invoke discussion, swirling from one point to another. *Dark Blaze* does that, in spite of several articles proving one side of the coin, whilst others - its opposite meaning. What the heck, their writers are open to continue the discussions, as far as they are fitting the general free man's will, and that leads to a more perfect state of mind. Anything from satanism, national socialism, paganism and more are discussed, with bunch of features and a few interviews, not all of them being musical, so to say. I only cannot get a point when ideology stands above the actual music. *Syrragh* published a few tiny informations about 'true' bands, which he does not like at all. At least not these big interviews, they have much more to offer. *Absurd*, *Lord Slayer*, *Venomous*, *Blackdeath*, *Ofermod*, *Nokturnal Mortum*, *Negara Bungeet*, *Grand Bellal's Key*, *Osculum Infame*, *Limbic Art*, *Obtained Enslavement*, *Southern Productions*... Review section comes in a separate booklet, but I have not a chance yet to check it until this moment. The package costs 6\$: from: *Dark Blaze Stronghold*, P.O. Box 67, 41-900 Bytom, Poland, tel. (48) 322800589, fax (48) 322814955, www.paganfront.cjb.net

Dark Hole #2 (28A5) zine

I admit *Dainius'* enthusiasm, but with this quality he is not capable to attire the masses. Not even die-hard metal freaks. Yes, he can blame printing house, he can blame hard conditions for all the delays, and he is right + I damn understand him, myself being in similar stress situations in the past. Zine publishing is not an easy task at all, if someone still wonders about that. But *Dark Hole* must progress, must go further from this dead point - that is the only way round. What I found here is just amateurish enthusiasm, and an obvious effort to design things in a merely expressive way (whether it looks fine in A5 size is another matter). But writings deserve to be better. Well, *Dainius'* must take several English language lessons, that is... It should be his ultimate task until issue #3 boils around. It is terrible to read that anti-manner of writing. I can understand his Lithuanian thinking, him putting words into sentences, but will the foreigner dig it, eh? Thousands of doubts.

Concerning the contents, here you are with *Nahash*, *Invasion*, *Inhumate*, *Blood Suckers*, *Alex Kurtaglie*, *Aurora Borealis*, *Cumdeo*, *S.C.A.L.P.*, *Grenouer*, as well as few dozens of usual reviews. I wonder though that he still lives on with supporting everyone he can politics and interview bands which he admits not to like at all, and gives bad comments for their music in reviews. Well, it happens at the start, but it is really about time to get more serious with *Dark Hole*, if his idea is to make it interesting. 3\$ for #2 is not much though. And you get a free A3 size *Dissimulation* poster (yeah). *Dark Hole zine*, Dainius Burauskas, Draugystės 3-38, Lt-5100 Joniškis, Lithuania

Frozen Hell #2 (100A4) magazine

Do not expect 100 pages of exceptional write-ups, as this heavy-weighted piece of pages is DIY type of thing. Stapled, photocopied and pretty awfully rounded up. Overall presentation is weak, since layout

reminds a bunch of press release sheets put together (even it is not just reprinted biographies sort of thing). Fuck, I would manage to keep all that stuff in 40 or even less pages. So much space and paper is wasted out... so much of white spots, that it makes an old neat-layout freak go screaming about lousy economics. More that it makes it look like third rate thing, or too much underground rag (for my taste). Written stuff is not bad for a so-so presentation, though it still remains an average attempt both interview and review-wise. The latter are probably even better, with some exceptions when editor meets music unknown to him. Then some misleading descriptions start to happen... Interviews are average, but not cliché, though some questions could be a bit more varied, and less 'which Greek bands do you know' oriented. Find there *Falkenbach*, *Wallachia*, *Ragnarok*, *Krabathor*, *Withering Surface*, *Near Dark Productions*, *Nightfall*, *Sorhin*, *Evermaster*, *Unlord*, *Algaion*, *Aurora Borealis*, *Mortuary Drape*, *Esoteric*, *Immolation*, *Exhumation*, *Less Than Human*, *Anata*, *Sad Enthus*, *Maniac Butcher*, *Sear Bliss*, *Wolferian distribution*, *Deviser*, *Sofia Run*, *Sickness*, *Non Serviam*, *Garden Of Shadows*, *Scholomance*, *Kawir*, *Thrashing Rage magazine*, *Denial Of God*, *Atar*, *Impact Winter*, *Besieged*, *Twilight*, *Dunkelheit*, *Enthroned*, *Halfmoon* and *Canadian scene report*. Lots of names, but interviews are too short most of time. Well, I wish *Michael* more concentration on things he wants to present the most, and much better layout. This bunch of leaves costs 4\$ (Europe) / 5\$ from: *Frozen Hell magazine*, c/o Xidas Michael, P.O. Box 20017, Kalamaria 55110, Thessaloniki, Greece

Gaze Into A Gloom #7 (52A5) zine

Another step by growing industrial music fanzine from Latvia, this time marking its new era since this issue is absolutely free, pressed in 1100 copies. To get it you need just to pay for the postage, which should be not more than one or several bucks. So, it is rather a worth purchase, if you are into *Whitehouse*, *ITN*, *Fading Colours*, *Sigillum dei Draconis*, *Trylok*, *Spahn Ranch*, *Pripadok*, *U238*, *Sweet William*, *Held*. Not actually all features are plainly *V. Edgar's*, he uses tons of promotional information to shape up his investigations, as well as cites other interviewees to make the picture on one or other artist at its full extent. I am not against such journalism, especially when readers do not have chance to reach these other magazines. But I would still prefer to make everything on my own instead. *Whitehouse* are not featured though, it is just a talk with their fan to the bones *Gary Simmons*. A pity that *V. Edgar* does not explain why exactly this person was chosen, I believe *Whitehouse* have more fans like him with close to twenty years of listening experience (not to offend *Mr. Simmons*). But when it comes to the range of industrial music, *GIAG* covers it perfectly, speaking about everything from harsh death industrial to ambient minimalism. Only his reviews could be a bit more critical and to the point, since here editor again just cites biographies and thoughts of others, and says quite little himself...

By the way, *Gaze Into A Gloom* has gone even smaller in size recently, turning into a bimonthly newsletter with reviews and features. Well, A5 is not my type of press but I respect it for its own originality. Write to the editor and ask about it! *Gaze Into A Gloom magazine*, c/o V. Edgar, P.O. Box 15, Riga, LV-1011, Latvia, novanal@junik.lv

Imhotep #5 (48A4) magazine

After a while *Roy-boy* has returned with his new output, much in the vein of the previous issue, with less pages and worse printing quality though. Those who know the *Mimes Brunn* story, should wonder that editor has taken it as an attempt to confirm his style and way of writing, and this new issue is just about that. No doubt that *Roy* tries to prove it too hard at times, but why should he ignore that story, otherwise? I would not be as harsh in some places, though. Yet the idea to interview *Odinn* was a cool thing to answer with, that is for sure (do not think I am so much interested in their war, though). So to say, brothers Norwegians have a nice battle there, for these interested.

Imhotep as always delivers several brilliant chats and features, like those on *Immortal*, *Ancient Rites*, *Dark Funeral*, *Dimmu Borgir*, and *Mimes Brunn magazine*. Others are a bit less interesting, though readable either - *Thyrfing*, *Enochian Crescent*, *Björk*, *Trail Of Tears*, *Mortem*, *Paradigma*, *Moondance magazine* (this one was too long and out off things which could interest me as the interview with zine editor)... I just wonder how can *Roy* and his contributors say so many bad words on *Dimmu Borgir*, and then give them the

best reviews and even interview them? I mean, if you hated the band, and if its' new cd makes you enjoy them again, please be so careful to delete all the crap you had said about them in the not so distant past... That is the way I would handle things. I also think people speak way too much about *DB* in general, and that makes the band worn-out in others' eyes... In general I wish *Roy* to say bye to his contributing reviewers as their comments are a bit out of tune at times, and their opinions vary differ. It makes review section slightly messy. Though it should not stop someone from obtaining this issue for the same 6\$ price - worth of checking out. *Imhotep magazine*, Roy Kristensen, Bergjveien 9, 1262 Oslo, fax (47) 22618330

Inner Essence #1 (60A4) magazine

I feel the word of experienced writer here, but his personal views and opinions are not always like mine, thus making this zine both provoking and interesting to consume. Naturally some things I would never do this or that way, some things I included I despise... Too much of romantic thinking for my ego! You see, this review tends to shape a reaction (or is it me shaping that reaction actually?) instead of turning into another... features bla bla bla, review are awfully bla bla bla, costs you bla bla... sort of thing. Ain't it a reason to check it out? *Raul Jimenez* has been there with his *Extincto Sensus* for a while, and the moment came for a change. Not just the magazine title, but the approach behind it. The soul? One could point at a soul of a new issue, even though it is not a material thing to observe or discover. It is beyond that, beyond the l... errr - between the lines, that is. Nah, I believe it is enough to get you interested. Let us go to other debatable matters.

What surprises me here, are editor's attitude towards people who by one or another reason have not answered his questions, thus naturally should have never ever appeared on these pages. That makes me feel they had reasons not to answer, and I would take but a piss about their attitude. Usually I forget such 'interviewees' as soon as my new issue is done. *Raul* takes it as an insult and publishes his original questions, which are complemented with editor's not so friendly comments. That is not a fair journalism. Other than that is pretty much of a try, in spite of being review-less; the style being obviously better than layout (too simple) used, so why the hell you should ignore these things indeed. In *The Woods...*, *Antichrisis*, *Empyrium*, *Devil Doll*, *The Gallery*, *Wish*, *Mimes Brunn*, *Descent*, *Istan* (the entire editorial brotherhood, hehe), *Naervaer*, *Unholy*, *Penitent/Arcane Art*, *Prophecy Productions*, *Oberon*, *Crown Of Autumn*, *Ebon Records*, *Solstice*, *Paragon of Beauty*, *Sup*, *Tenhi*, *Delnyonychus*, *Stille Volk*, 6\$/10DM/3€ from: *Inner Essence magazine*, Raul Jimenez, Apartado 1043, 28915 Leganes (Madrid), Spain, soporte@atelnico.es

Mimes Brunn #Storm Frá Vest (68A4) magazine



It is massive. It is legendary. It is done by demigod. I doubt if I could bare his glance if ever met in the street. It is from west... Just stop wondering and taking that serious! *Mimes Brunn* is done by a mere mortal like me and you! He is not the god to bow! He is just magazine editor with a real attitude and sober mind what to do with it, instead of following the masses. But nothing more.

What I want to say is: after you read about it elsewhere and until you take and read it yourself it seems *MB* is something surreal, like UFO or something. After the (inter)course you realise that it is earthly, and even more close to your inner world than you thought. It might be an object to show at young editors conference, but let us leave the crap analysis for scientists, and get closer to the phenomena. *Odinn* knows the formula to be the phenomena, which is reader-friendly and reader-killing at the same time. Depends what kind of reader you are. Do not try to take *Mimes Brunn* as next musical magazine, as it is not. Bands and people featured (*Aeon*

magazine, Behemoth, Circle Of Jeronimgand, Abigor, Bishop Of Hexen (this one is something), Götterdämmerung, Aeternus, Isten magazine, Russ Smith, Paradigma, Demonic, Tom G. Warrior, Samain, Primordial, Thy Serpent) are just statistics, manequins in editor's hands, if you want. Too cruel? Nope... Editor does not make laughs when it is nothing to laugh about. At times he is damn serious and seems to really admire his interviewees. So it ranges... Intelligence is the keyword. Everyone answering *Odin's* questions, reading his magazine and even hating him for anything he does must admit that Mr. MB is the king within the pages of his zine, so to tell him what to do or how to act is pointless. After I read *Mimes Brunn*, and then some negative opinions *Odin* printed in his flyers about this issue, I really laughed at that negativity and short way of thinking these people have. Actually it made me be indifferent against stupid critics I receive about my deeds. It teaches you. It might teach you to bare critics written in *Ledo Takas*, too. Try MB to learn. Just do not think I love this issue 100%. There are so many things I hate here. At times *Odin* has no sense with his silly comments, or slightly out of tune comparisons. I do not like at all his graphic work, frame-like illustrations, the layout in general, I hate his hatred towards *Grishnackh/Euronymous* trend – it is way too much of it here. Some things he discuss just makes me pissed to continue reading. But I cannot say it makes me hate *Mimes Brunn* in general. There is too much of interesting stuff to hate it. Just look at the cartoons and reverted images of a guy throwing fascist swastikas into dustbins. Ain't it amusing? Ain't it a decadent circus? It is what makes the world go round... *Mimes Brunn* magazine, c/o Odin, Box 1102, Majorstuveien 17, N-0367 Oslo, Norway.

Morbid Noizz #5/98 (100A4) magazine

Regular Polish national metal magazine, naturally written in local language. I am lucky to know Polish more or less, as this rag is truly interesting and professional. Even if you do not care about colourful cover, fold-out poster, excellent layout and graphic design, you should respect well thought-out interviews; and reasonable, not so rarely quite innovative, reviews. It is possible to speak about a definite style of *Morbid Noizz*. It has something within, that unites different journalists into one cool team. Well, for someone there might be too much of traditional metal bands, others might hate bunch of death or gothic metal features. But that is about it with these 'big' magazines.

I am slightly confused though when journalist makes an indie and finally he admits that new album of the band he talks to is not the best, or he is disappointed with. Well, what is the case then? Are such Indies really necessary? It might be editor's ideas, but well – I would never ask my colleague who does not like the album to talk to the band. I would better sacrifice my precious time and make it myself to show that I like them and I want the band to be in my magazine!! *MN* editor does not share this idea, I believe.

So, you lose nothing but 100 pages of small printed reading, with such big names as Bolt Thrower, Sentenced, Bruce Dickinson, Slayer, Doro, The Haunted, Katatonia, U.D.O., Mithotyn, Emperor, Diabolical Masquerade, Swordmaster, Fear Factory, Cryptic Carnage, Dan Swano, Solitude Aeternus, Paragon, Mercenary, Deviser, Centaur, Brainstorm, Siebenbürgen, Cynhavoc, Solwork, Infernal Majesty, Elend, Aion, Destiny, The Gallery, Glast Causeway, Labyrinth, Crimson Midwinter, Impious, Morta Skuld, and yet tons more... *Morbid Noizz* had some troubles and delay times this issue, but then in spring everything started again smoothly, so if you know Polish, this is a save buy with tons of information. *Morbid Noizz* magazine, ul. Malwowa 20, 60-175 Poznan, Poland, tel./fax (48) 618677327

Mortal #3 (52A4) zine

Euro embodies a typical underground zine-maker, with all its qualities and shortcomings. He simply wants to make it for his interest and the devil's sake, and if others enjoy it – it is twice as good. He definitely features his favourite bands and people involved, and rejects anything what is not of his liking. He is brave enough to admit that zine is subjective and at times brings quite narrow-minded attitude, so it is no fear for reader to be ripped off... Just fiddle it before purchasing, or read carefully his flyers, and you will see if it is your thing, or not. So, for the third time *Mortal* plainly stands for death metal. Do not expect anything else, and if review material is of another kind, it usually receives just bad comment, or is simply not understood by editor. That is about it really. Interviews are worked out with Deranged, Ulvidy, Krabathor, Vomitory, Anasarcia, *Headfucker* magazine, Nomicom, Abramelin, *Brutalized* zine, Aurora Borealis, Diabolic, Cenotaph, and Gorge. Though I have not found anything spectacular in there. Basically the same questions about music and stuff, with almost identical answers. After reading *Mortal* up, I questioned myself – maybe death metal dudes have really nothing interesting to tell at all? At least half of these interviewees seem to me really boring... Even the music that they play is just a way to waste that extra energy, but nothing more. But well, that is also a part of the deal when you ask cliché questions. In fact

Euro's friend *Juha* who contributes in this issue either is much weaker with his guests. I would really wish *Mortal* go into deeper clutching journalism, or fanzineism, but if you feel ok with this photocopied in mediocre way read, order it for 4\$. Latest news are that *Euro* will finish up #4 in spring 2000, and then move to make another, more professional publication. *Mortal* zine, c/o Euro Pihala, Poste Restante, 32700 Huittinen, Finland, tel. (358) 505248268, euro.pihala@hotmail.com, www.angelfire.com/ak2/mortalprod

Nightwalk #2 (36A4) magazine



After a promising but thin issue #1 there is a necessity to upcome with a thicker volume. That is the rule of zine world. *Attila* has tried it hard this time, but the final outcome could have turned slightly better! I mean that *Nightwalk* is a fine read, but not more. A tremendous advantage of a debut was an entire set of live Indies made with famous Norwegian bands. This issue is not like that, even editor has made a couple of phone chats (in *The Woods...*, *Gorgoroth*) beside Indies done the usual way (Bloodthorn, Mystic Circle, ...and Oceans, Lord Bellai, Arathorn, Amortis, Enslaved, Ahriman, Malignant Eternal). Simply calibre of bands back then was too thick to stand it up with number two. Ok, here we have some very significant names either, but not so legendary anyway. *Attila* still manages to make rather interesting interviews, unless his interviewees are morons. Yeah, couple of them are that poor failing to describe their intentions or beliefs.

Layout-wise #2 is just a little bit better than #1. The department which should be improved more next time! Also I do not enjoy big font of letters – I could put the entire mag as this in 10 pages easily. New thing is music reviews, and these pages seem to me pretty normal. At times it is a bit difficult to express himself in English, but that is a minor shortcut. This new section makes *Nightwalk* a standard zine, but it cannot compensate the lack of a cult which prevailed in a debut. You know, he promised to visit Norway once again in summer, and to return with his third volume full of excellent material again... The wait should not last long... Some 4\$ should do. *Nightwalk* magazine, c/o Attila Máté, Tessedik S. 140, H- 4032 Debrecen, Hungary, amate@tigris.klte.hu

Odiosus Larvae #4 (40A5) zine

Fernando continues his reverending attack with underground releases, this one being one of the last in A5 format, so – hopefully the move to more solid shape will give *Odiosus Larvae* new touches to grow. Thus far the DIY standard prevails, and even most of you will consider #4 as normal underground publication, deep in heart you wish for a better rag than this. Yeah, easy to compose and photocopy, but I cannot find the soul of fanzine. *Fernando* appeals to information sake. Ok for someone who is still not satisfied with info he gets from Internet and elsewhere, but I am fed up with info streams, so I need something more eclectic and with brains inside tons of addresses and biographies. Especially when I know that 70% of these bands will fail to achieve something worth mentioning in their whole 'career'. Carnage, Desaster, Sculpture, Tortura, Celtic Dance, Nomicom. One cool band out of six. In addition – a stupid and boring newspaper cut article on *The Satanic Ritual Abuse*, and almost excellent research on *Vlad Tepes*, well at least a great description of real *Dracula*. This one at least is worth to check the zine out. Other than that, I expect major changes! Some 3\$ should cover it.

Odiosus Larvae #9 (20A4) magazine

Yes, this issue is born five months later, and has a vast improvement, including already professional printing and intelligent layout for the rag. Yet it still reminds me more a newsletter than a real magazine. In any case – I prefer thick issue once a year, than twelve issues coming every month. Next, I cannot get a point where is that interest to interview new bands and ask them all the same questions? Are they really so similar to each other that editor cannot find individual features to be questioned about? Or his and his contributors' imagination is too narrow to invent much more interesting features?? Anyway, this issue chats with Sweet Flame, Amstvarner, D.C.M., Cicatrix, Nightfall, Hellcome, Immolation, Enshoph. Usual review sections, where I find demo released in 1997 as the 'demo of the month'. I am sorry, isn't this magazine released in 1999? So what kind of a month it talks about? To continue crushing (as always – just by my honest and sincere opinion that counts!) *Odiosus Larvae*, one of most active contributors *Sergio* should worry about his English, as it is much to be desired, and what is familiar – when you read reviews where editor and his crew usually change each other over and over again, you cannot just leave it that way, when one review has a good English, another – so terrible. Let

they level it somehow...

Good point is that Portuguese thrashers give it away in decent extents, and in general take care on paper to be properly spread. I would hardly spread 500 copies each month... *Odiosus Larvae* zine, c/o Fernando Reis, Rua Firmino Rebelo, no 15, r/ch dto, 2780 Porto Salvo, Portugal devermils@hotmail.com

Oskorei #2 (48A4) magazine

Second coming of oskoreish journalism, however it is probably the less impressive release of the whole *Oskorei* family so far, and editor *Lars* has own reasons for that – his data was erased from computer, thus mister had to re-write reviews and stuff. It is not the most exciting thing to do after all, believe me. Once I had a similar situation, but it was obviously not 400 reviews whatsoever... He was thinking upon never getting this issue done at all, but here it is, by the way – sold out already. Debuting with *Oskorei* #1, *Lars* has put a success formula for his next endeavours. Returning to my point of view, this one is a head worse, first of all due to uninspiring at all review section, which simply lists the styles bands play, or reflects *Lars'* reaction towards one or other musical expression. Me who had listened to many of these albums, is quite disappointed to select just that poor information in that section. Not to forget that *Lars* is not a fan of thorough in-depth reviews.

Other than that is fairly ok. Interviewed are Dark Funeral, Primordial, Lunar Aurora, Hellstorm, Aurora Borealis, Warhammer, Skyforger, Behind The Scenery, Witchey, Seth, Mithotyn, *Necropolis Records*, Krabathor, Urgehal, Hidden in the Fog – I would personally ask more questions each of them, but that is about style. *Lars* like it short, quick and to the point. Dutch scene report features mainly young debuting bands, which has maybe more value to read than about these guys with record deals. Layout is truly good, but not as good as *Ledo Takas* #7 (and #8 also I believe). Compilation cd coming together is much better than volume 1, great to hear *Necropolis*, *No Colours* and other decent labels' artists. Good job with compiling & getting the bands. So if you rush you might still get this issue for 6\$ from some distributors worldwide (and *LTR* for that matter), if not – check out issue #4 which is out when you read this. *Oskorei* magazine, Lars Jamne, PB 241, Indre Arna, N-5888 Bergen, Norway, mail@oskorei.com

Pernicious #2 (48B4) zine

I have got a picture that *Eamon* has been walking brutal metal shoes for a good decade of years now, but unfortunately this has not made a base to make a good fanzine. What is written there is just a mess of death/grind underground, and at times editor has a unique ability to fuck up the entire layout and typing unto unbearable level. Personally I cannot stand such a careless attitude towards your own work. Ok, at times I also do not have time and/or wish to make additional proofread, but certainly not in these enormous extents that one more 'editor' does. I have no idea who can enjoy such kind of bad press as *Pernicious* is. Chaos prevails in his interviews, and reviews either. *Phaos* is asked 4-5 completely different questions in one question, so it is no way out but to be confused, and answer in a straight-ahead way. Anyway, *Eamon* usually takes interest in pretty dull things, which have nothing to do in context. Aborted, Appalling Spawn, Basterd Saints, Conspiregrind, Depraved, Carnal Experiences, Mental Horror, Perversity, Plague Rages, Serial Butcher, Yattering have made themselves participate anyway, but what for? *Pernicious* zine, c/o Eamon O'Connor, 1101 Midland St., Uniondale, NY 11553, USA, tel. (1) 5165649315-

Pläkk #2 (32A4) magazine

The first ever professional metal publication from Estonia, and it shapes the picture how it is developed there, in this northern Baltic Republic. According to *Badgod*, editor – pretty poorly, so *Pläkk* actually tries to turn into that engine which must rise the heavy flag high in the sky there! Best of luck, brother! And his result is awesomely intriguing. Guy is experienced in various kind of journalism, so his own rag is sort of typically tight and well composed, nothing comparable to many amateurish zines. It has professional layout and amicable features, keeping the 'ol' good support underground attitude, especially when it comes to local bands. Now I really think that Estonian scene is still underdeveloped, if these activists speak about the movement with so many dark colours. I am sure *Badgod* and his crew is about to make something, finally.

Ok, not to forget, *Pläkk* was originally born as Estonian written magazine, and this next issue was like an experiment, which also has a Russian written 8 page extra, with several features translated. So, the idea worth of attention really. Now they have third issue in Estonian again, with better result I presume. In my humble opinion, *Pläkk* could still be with more reviews and information in general, since I have gone through its 32 pages in several hours, but that is about the progress and more input which should come itself, if they remain as dedicated as until now. The base and ideas are really worth it, but experience is something

they still need to gain. Ok, not to forget the contents: Bloodthorn, Insatiny, *Ocean Morpheus* zine, Diversia, Buried Dreams, Danse Macabre, Ancient Ceremony, Postmortem, Sear Bliss, Cat Rapes Dog, Ignorabimus, *Necropolis Records*, Neglected Fields, and a funny (be aware: Estonian mentality!) jokes at the end. Ask the price!

Ehhh, I have heard rumours that *Badgod* intensively projects something big soon... *Pläkk* magazine, Lannart "Badgod" Madisson, PK 7, 71001 Viljandi, Estonia, pennu@metal.ee

Psychomantium #1 (36A5) zine

Cool zine strike from Barcelona! When you get a first issue of new zine published in half size (A5), there is always some suspicion it is not good. Well, in most cases it happens to be truth, unfortunately, but not with *Psychomantium*. Yeah, it is simply write-ups put together, purely dealing with heavy music, but intelligence and wisdom already flows from them. What could you expect – it is prepared by four devoted and experienced in metal persons, including two ladies, namely Carol and Aleydis, as well! So my interest is doubled concerning their professional ways to say things, and yeah – dozen of years spent in there! It is always a pleasure to notice Demigod, Ancient Rites, Pestilence, Nocturnus, even Darkfied and Carcass (old of course) in their own playlists! In general, this team is dealing with the feel in metal, and shit on current trends. I am glad to realise that thing in rather short read, which is anyway pleasurable & convincing. Well, my heart is touched by vinyl review section (reads more like an info about all these great editions), as well as with more or less good Indies done with Bethlehem, Damnation, Summoning, Nun Slaughter, Gothic Sex... Editors do not leave abandoned by time and dust topic – ladies in metal, and speak about these groups which have or had growing females, or playing bass/guitar/drums there... Not much talked yet, but nothing new actually. Well, since I am not a fan of A5 things, I wish *Psychomantium* grow into a larger writing asap, and next issue to be done asap too! It is on the way, yes. Their feel for journalism is here, with issue number one already. Check it out for sure, moreover that it is free (with sufficient postage enclosed!).

Psychomantium zine, c/San Pol, #26, 1° 4°, 08820 El Prat de Llobregat, Barcelona, Spain, psychomantium@excite.com

Raven #999 (52A4) magazine

Damn, this one is again specific, though typically Russian due to the way of laying thoughts down. It actually reminds me a bit the Russian literature, though I am acquainted with just a part of its vast heritage. As a fanzine, *Raven* is quite weird, and especially this issue has a sort of alternative approach to laying down of its contents. *Tim* has made one long long diary out of it, similar to these art magazines, that are released rarely, but they always have something special to say; or it also reminds me the librarian archives that are rarely checked by occasional visitors, and remain a plain possession of these old faithful curators, who pretend to know every single magazine or book by heart. Even the layout reminds that, not only text. Magazine has the same background painting throughout all of its 50 pages, a few pictures and logos, and in general does not include so many fancies around it all. You may name it a style, but *Tim* admits that he has done it all in quite a short time, caught by sudden inspiration. Hah, never experienced such kind of underground magazine? Then try *Raven*. I am sure you will find bits and pieces of wisdom there. I find *Tim's* interviews quite profound and truly inspiring, as far as the reader is ready to accept art at its most unexpected shapes.

Abigor, *Bak De Syv Fjell*, *Summoning/Die Verbannten Kinder Evas*, *Geasa*, *Sotsirch Susi* magazine, *Crown of Autumn*, *Manzoberranzan*, *Angizia*, *Mortifer*, *Ens Cogitans*, *Empyrium*, *Terror Zone* tv-program. That is just a part of its contents, the rest is filled up with various thoughts and review-like monologues. Of course, it has its own specifics, and at times *Tim* is quite subjective, especially towards ex. Soviet musicians (or 'musicians'), but in fact these who do not understand Russian, have no chance to get into these characteristic nuances at all. I believe it is destined to be understood just for ex. Soviet people, though at times I also start to feel quite far from their reality... Anyway, it is time to start English written publication, *Tim*. Some people have that wish. *Raven* magazine, Timothy Dovgy, P.O. Box 29, 214025 Smolensk-25, Russia

Revenant #2 (60A4) magazine

Announced as one of the better Italian magazines around, this issue of *Revenant* has been a way delayed, with flyers floating around for quite some months before the actual issue has been printed. But yeah, it has some reason to be checked out, though I find truly original ideas just from time to time there. It is a bit weird to read a few interviews with really interesting vibe, good grammar, and interesting way of questioning (*Salyricom*, *Carpathian Forest*, *Enid*, *Ataraxia*, *Mortuary Drape*, *Emperor*), and then suddenly those mediocre standard features, which pop up here and there, where interviewees have really nothing to say, at all (Descending

Dusk, Thy Serpent, Ebilis). It is both sides to blame, but the editor, or one who conducts the interview, must take care that his publication had a deeper interest in itself! When it comes to reviews, they are really much to be desired, in spite of quite individual approach to the techniques of reviewing. To be honest, I had some things to learn also. But editor must also improve his way of laying thoughts, to be less chaotic, and more concrete. Also featured are Mayhem, Enochian Crescent, Black Sun Records, Night Conquers Day, Aeternus, ... And Oceans, Diabolical Masquerade, Raventhron, Maldoror, Franco Battiato. ... I am sure that Francesco is constantly growing with his life, as well as with his journalistic issues, so let us just wait a bit and see if it turns into an excellent *Revenant* #3, or not yet.

Revenant magazine, c/o Parmigiano Francesco, Piazza Libertà 52, 20010 Cornaredo (Milano), Italy
fraevil@tiscalinet.it

Slayer #11 (100A4) magazine



Sort of thing to be checked at least once in a lifetime for every true metallor. I can blame myself not to get hold of previous ten volumes, but *Slayer* #11 fucking rules the lands! In spite of some rumours that it is not that good as used to be. I have fully enjoyed what I have got there, and that makes it all worth it. When you pick it and leaf you already feel the aura of metal scene. *Slayer* is a unique piece of underground due to its rare never published before pictures, simple old fashioned layout, funny weird *Arne* & co. pictures, and definitely - texts. *Metalion* possesses lots of knowledge - something that colleagues editors may envy, and surely learn from him. He is accurate whilst putting things on inside the *Slayer* pages. Any fact worth mentioning does not slip through his sharp pen. He easily manoeuvres interviewing musicians, many of which are his friends, still keeping it strictly interesting and not turning into a chat at a neighbour's bar. This issue has just one shameful band in (Marilyn Manson), but I see why editor has them in - it was prepared in 1997, when MM seemed a bit more worth than it now is. Other than that is essential: Ulver, Blood Axis, Gehenna, Marduk, Immortal, Satyricon, Hammerfall, Morbid, *Bård Faust*, Gorgoroth, Old Funeral, Destroyer 666, Merciful Fate, Sodom, Lord Belial, Nifelheim, Aeternus, Sacramentum, Cybele, Swordmaster, Grave Digger, Sadistik Exekution, Netherworld, Nocturnal Rites, Nocturnal Breed, Aura Noir, *Snowy Shaw*, Emperor, Exciter, Adorior, The Darksend, Warhammer, Desekrator, Running Wild, Dimmu Borgir, Limbonic Art, Hemlock, Motörhead, Borknagar, Bestial Warlust, Agathodaimon, Hades, Mundanus Imperium. Not too little, huh? I especially enjoy his tribute to old bands, as articles include some facts I have never been aware of earlier. *Metalion's* passion for metal is essential, and if someone still doubts about it - make a meeting with *Slayer*!

Some things I would make different still exist, but it is natural, as no one is god, and it would be suspicious if some editor preferred a carbon copy of *Slayer* for his magazine. Short reviews and layout details are the main complaints of mine. Ok, ignore it, and fucking buy whilst it is still available (9\$ from my address).
Slayer magazine, P.O. Box 447, 1701 Sarpsborg, Norway

While Astral Light Tantalize Zenith #1 (22A5) zine

Yeah, for *Dangus Productions*, Temperance, Oppressor and Scabbard it is more the anti-support than a real featuring, at least I would not be that much fascinating to appear in a crappy notebook of primary school attendant, like this... Just the play for kids - nothing else. I am too old to read every thrashcan worth waste of paper, including silly tales with no point at all, and naturally - bursting out with unbearable English inside. With a poetic metaphoric name like that *Leonardas* could at least try to write something.
W.A.L.T.Z. zine, Vytauto 25-3, 5720 Palanga, Lithuania

Ancestors Lore

Karnnos

I have got in touch with Johan Aernus not that long time ago. He has mailed me a simple statement about his Reaping Horde. Step by step we got in closer contact, and I have quickly realised that this man has something to offer for stagnating trendy pseudo ambient/folk/industrial scene. Where is the true art of these pretenders to be avantgarde and bizarre; to be nationalistic and pagan but having no fucking clue about what it really is; asks Johan. I see his deeds as pure artsy actions, which have no relation to the business side of things that many recent 'artists' unfortunately fail into these days.

Reaping Horde exists since August 1998, so far releasing several interesting tapes with diverse industrial music, taking care about its quality, purity and presentation as well. No need to say that it is always limited to just a few tenfold copies, and that it has an exclusive approach, always... But better check out what the person behind it all says: "The name Reaping Horde is born in such a way - in a determined period of my life, quite before I formed the label, I had this image of the Wild Hunt, Odin and all His Horde running through the skies at twilight. It was just a glimpse, but a very intense one. So, when the time came to create my own label, I called it Reaping Horde, as if we are a Horde of Reapers, harvesting and gathering the last gleam of light and shadows before total darkness..."

Johan is also an active musician in a few projects, namely *Wolfskin* and *Karnnos*, and the latter one has drawn my full attention, finally. But I still see upon his activities as one whole, so let this feature be just a reflection of that creative sphere that is settled there in Portugal... "It has been some years now that I felt an urge to create music; I was no longer satisfied with just being a listener. It was then that I created *Wolfskin*, as appropriated to my nature and to what I wanted to express. It refers to the Bersekker's army, but also to the untamed and uncorrupted Spirit of Nature and Strength - if you do not find it in this decaying world that does not mean that it is lost... I discovered things that I always felt as right and Truth in what is called Paganism. I started to read and feel what *Evola* calls the Tradition, diving further into myself, the roots of my blood, and into the Traditional world of Paganism, mainly of my own, the Aryan or Indo-Europeans.

Wolfskin is my solo project and I like to make rather sounds than music, creating soundscapes that take you to another place - I like to call it "trance-music" and it is better enjoyable in the dark, a little drunk and stoned. Well, *Karnnos* is our pop group! I sing, write the lyrics and play whatever appears

to me, but other persons' ideas come across. It is very much related with the Celtic imagery and myths, but also has some personal reflections about fear, war... From references to *Necronomicon* to the God of the forests *Kernunnos* (that gives name to the project), the mysterious *Hyperborea*, melodies that appeared on dreams or just the pain of loss; *Karnnos* is just a collection of decadent songs... I hardly except the kind of words we being earning! We have been invited to release a mini-lp and will start the recordings in January.

There are persons that simply adore *Wolfskin* and say *Karnnos*... Well, too folky, too musical, etc and I just get annoyed; what the hell, if you are musical you are not interesting anymore?! But mainly it is a question of get used to the kind of stuff that I do in *Wolfskin*; I mean, I almost do not use musical sounds so it sounds a little strange... But if you listen to projects like *Nurse With Wound* or *Zoviet France* you will see that *Wolfskin* is very "traditional" after all...

The core of my work is what fascinates me at the time I am recording something. It can be a book, like *Celtic Twilight* of *Yeats*, a place, like a mountain or the woods, a ritual, be it real or dreamed... If I say that my influence is the Celtic and Teutonic traditions I would be inaccurate; my art is just a reflection, a personal consideration of what I read, feel and experience. Each track has a purpose, a special symbolism and imagery to me. It is art not to the others, but for me."

- How old are you, and when you have started to be more or less acquainted with sounds?

- I am 25 years old. I started hearing music very young and things just grew up in me to the point that I just wanted to make something and not just hearing it. *Wolfskin* was born 5 years ago, after 2 or 3 years playing with some persons around.

- You mention *Wolfskin* as your main project, and the first to strike your mind about starting everything up. What was that start like? Did you

just observe what other people do in the scene, or pretty much did not care about them, and simply went to discover your own soundscapes to be relieved from within?

- *Wolfskin* was born on winter solstice as a result of an image that I had in my head for the name; I wanted something that symbolized the forces of Nature, the savage side of man. And *Wolfskin* was a perfect name for that. At that time I was not paying much attention to other groups. When I record music (especially *Wolfskin*) I do not like to hear music, I prefer to concentrate on my own. But of course that I am influenced by other musicians on an external level. I always liked hypnotic and ritual music so when I started it was in that direction that I went.

- Own label was a quick follow-up then? I am not turning this interview into questions how you run it and such, just an obvious interest how it has been initially decided about and started. I mean you never just wake up one day and think: *ok, today I should start this and that, the day X has come*... Maybe it is a feature that you individually feel really strong to go your own way, with no one else telling you what to do or even suggestions how to do?

- No, things were not that fast... I just had some themes (mainly improvisations in a 'Current 93 from the beginning' fashion) recorded and showed them to a person of a label, that I do not want to mention as they do not talk of me on their interviews, that decided to release a tape of *Wolfskin*. The following years I worked with them on several projects. Then I just quitted because things were going on a direction that did not interest me. Then I just thought for some months; I could just release my music through other label but I decided to create a label so I can edit some good projects that come around...

- Back to your music, I think these who are acquainted with it agree that it flows from deep within, and one needs damn careful approach to feel it, not just hear the sounds. Concerning your projects, *Wolfskin* and *Karnnos*.

- Thanks for that words... Our music comes from deep within so it is there where it must be felt. I always liked music with a sense that has something behind it... And it is that way I try to make it.

- **Why do you name Karnnos as just your pop project? Is it a joke, like comparing both projects, it is really easier to get into Karnnos? Somehow I do not believe that you compose and release these songs as just a fun? Well, show me that listener who would name it a pop band, and I will smash him into pieces, hehe.**

- That is a nice gesture, to smash someone for us... What would you use?! (*I am not sure yet, maybe a very loud speaker, hah - ed.*) Yes, it is a (perverse) joke to say that... **Karnnos** has a more musical approach so more people appreciate it, but by no means it is just fun... It is born from a mutual will to make more spontaneous, melodic themes than **Wolfskin**... I just do not seek the same with the two projects... **Wolfskin**'s sounds are the mere reflection of forces and images that I do not control, they flow through my head and I try to capture them in music... I try to make music beyond consciousness, to expand awareness towards infinity and nothingness. Or towards spiritual light and the darkness of matter & instincts... I try to capture the spiritual & instinctive force of an archetype & image... I am talking of such ancient images as the cart of fire that takes the heroes to the Sun's flames (the Nordic *Walkyren*)... Of course that not all my/our work is inspired by such old images; I also try to paint the images I got in my head as the ruins of our world burning in the fog, our ashes fertilizing the soil for the new world that will arise when the bull lifts the last leg...

A. Guerra (further on - AG) - Naturally, a work that is done plurally, as it is the case with **Karnnos**, as opposed to **Wolfskin**, which is a more personal project, can reveal a variety of characteristics that are latent and inherent to the people involved. This means that a different feel can appear in two separate manners: the naturally different working process in which there is an evident interaction as you consciously work along with the other; and one more unconscious level, in which your work flows in addition to what the other is building; a bit like a staircase, where each step is built alternately by two workers. I think this idea can be applied to both the intention and the musical ambience in **Karnnos**. Dissimilar methodologies, same intensity and commitment as **Wolfskin**. Accessibility, in what concerns to **Karnnos**, is not means to an end, it is an intimate demand. The words give birth to the sound.

- Could say it better, in **Karnnos**, usually, we just have a lyric (mine or some traditional writing like *Voluspa* or the song of *Amergin*) and make something around it, according to our feelings... Less "occult" images and more "mystical" feelings...

- **Whilst writing stuff for A Burial In Flames** tape all three members have been working separately, bringing up their own experiences, or it was more like a common process? With music like this, which way is the best, in your opinion?

- In **Wolfskin** I make all things alone but in **Karnnos** all sessions are collective...

We were only two at that time (with two occasional collaborators) and always played together. Now we are 3 persons and some collaborators and, again, everything is done together. That is the interest in playing with other persons, joining perspectives and feelings on a track.

- **Even you mention your Celtic roots there, I think music digs deeper than all these projects which has a usual folksy melody or couple of them, and that is all. Karnnos as it makes the listener ask in wonder - so these Celts with their music were more than I have already experienced?! Or is it more like your interpretation of how it should be reflected in Karnnos?**

- Our Celtic roots are very important to us as we are surrounded by their heritage and like to know more about it. The word Celtic is overused for persons that sometimes do not know very much of what they are talking about. I just read what I find about that great civilization, see their remainings on my land and in the persons... And I prefer to discover those roots in my spirit, in the silent woods, watching the stars... To feel Nature, the moisture of fog, the colours of dusk, the roughness of stone, as symbols of those forces that lay on the *Sidh*... I am not interested in pure knowledge, I am interested in feeling as the ancient. And to bring that feeling to music. In that way many things that I say can make no sense in these times ruled by the tyranny of reason and when science is a supreme god...

AG - Of course, we can detect a higher or lower level of truth in the Celtic-affiliated music we hear nowadays. When we hear the formula 'Celtic music', we can almost predict what we are about to listen, which, in most cases, is an onanist, gratuitous, narcissist virtuoso exhibition. Now to **Karnnos**: of course, most of the times, only the author is completely aware and conscious of the whole meaning of the work, but in this case, and to confirm what you have said, I think it is notorious that the Celtic element is present at various levels, from our name itself, to the lyrics, and some moments in the music.

- **How is it going with new recordings? What label has asked you to put a mini-lp? I believe they were similarly blown away like myself... I also believe that their goals with making music are similar as yours - anti-commercial, and dedicated to these persons, already familiar with its charm.**

- Well, after some preparations next week (February 2000) we will start the recordings of the **Karnnos** mini-lp... You

have not heard our themes on *The Nemeth* compilation, but I can tell you that they show a bit of our future way. It will be more homogeneous than the tape, with less linear tracks; homogeneous yet diversified, get it? We have not started the recordings but we want to create a very enchantatory piece, haunted melodies and floating sounds... It is a label from Belgium called *Kapellmeister* that liked our music.

Again extract from Johan's letter: "To me music is just a way, a path, not an end. I could be a painter or sculptor, anything. The most important to me is my belief, my emotions and the images that I associate with myths, tales or places or the dreams I have. Each track is usually related with those aspects; it is a reference to an image, a dream, an ancient ritual, my life, my ideas... Sometimes everything at once!"

- **Since you say that music is just a way, a path, I should obviously ask if you might lose interest in it? If let's say you all of a sudden are fascinated by other things (as mentioned - sculpture, painting...), might it end up you quitting with what you started so impressively? It smells for me as free artistic freedom, but anyway, all your deeds leave a track and expectations for the future... Just take *Misanthropy Records* and their demarche... It caused a real wall of reaction...**

- It is a path for self-knowledge, a way to self-balance. In that sense I can eventually stop making music some day. But I doubt it; I just love to be on mags like *Ledo Takas*, so lavishly produced... I said that because this year I will dedicate all my time to music but next one it will be dedicated to writing (I got three books to finish!). I also like to make other things; I am really interested in trying the sculpture. But honestly, there is an enchantment on making music that I cannot find anywhere else. I do not see myself stopping; maybe changing but never stopping. As *Albin Julius (Der Blutharsch)* says, *we will never give up...* Life is a labyrinth as nothing makes sense; so why stop? No, always ahead until *RagnaRokkr!* I just follow my *Wyrd* to the end; whatever it is. Doubts and questions are necessary to make things right but you must be able to fulfil your Will. An Iron one, of course (lots of smiles from this side).

- **It seems to me that the number of people devoted to their past, ancestors and all consequences flowing out of that is firmly growing. Whether it is good or bad we can always dis-**

cuss, having in mind a fashion thing and true dedication... How do you look upon this? You are aware of other individuals thinking and acting close to the same horizons as yours?

- There are persons with a true dedication to their roots. I try to get in touch with some of them. As for fashions I would use the same tactic that you spoke about earlier - crush and smash. Nowadays christianity is so buried and decomposing that persons seem to look for some spiritual comfort. And the past, in this case Paganism, is an easy target. But what do you see? Persons come to these Traditions with a material vision; *oh I want a spell to become rich*. Traditional world has different laws. And many persons do not understand that. They are not devoted to their roots, they are just being fools. I do not care about them, they are rats as christians are. Persons are just used to get all without effort or sweat. But the true gold of Traditions is an inner one; spiritual awakening is a hard and difficult way, and not all are prepared to make it. I am not being pretentious on this one, I am very far from great deeds. But as I see myself under many people, wiser than me, I also see myself above the "vain herds".

- **I feel that all this pagan/traditional way of life movement has a strong national character, when you take a glimpse in every country or even region. And actually that is what makes me the most suspicious and sort of critical to most of them. It is funny to see metal band from Germany hailing the teutonic pride, and Lithuanian 'warriors' cursing Teutons for their bad deeds. Then after all I see the same Lithuanian band signed to German label, with the same album re-released... What I want to say - your way of thinking imposes to me, sort of finds a reflection on what I use to see in this movement: you never should be too much proud of what you are, and get wisdom from the whole pagan (if you want it to be pagan that is) world. Wherever it comes from, as far as it is true and really inspiring. Ehh???**

- Well, I think that balance is the right choice. You should know your roots but understand that they are part of a vast world. I find that things that you describe as child plays. The real opposition is between modern thinking and Traditional thinking. Of course that you find differences between, let's say Egypt, Tibet and Scandinavia traditions. But the core is always the same. We are very used to see all with 'material' eyes. But if you look to a Tradition as a whole, some common lines appear - the reflection of unseen, invisible, otherworldly forces (represented on symbols and the archetypes of Nature), the importance of principles as opposed to simple morality, the cyclical understanding of time (everything that happens has already happened before, on another day of *Brahma*) as opposed to the notion of progress... These ideals were just affected by images, tales, etc. and changed according to the natural character of different races/cultures/times. A Nordic Berserker with a sword and a Tibetan monk can reach the same purity with opposite methods... About national proud - I am quite proud of my land



(mainly the North of Portugal and Spain) and it is history but quite frankly, why should I think that mine is better than yours? Is a joke, like that of the purity of the race, what race is still pure? Inspiration comes from the spirit and it has the remainings of our ancestors; if you deny them you deny inspiration...

- I will continue. These narrow-minded people are too uneducated or ignorant to realise that things like festivals, rituals, celebrations and ceremonies are conducted basically in the same way everywhere, they are that same universal language, of course varying from place to place, from south to north. But taking it all as one huge path of experiences, one should find the same attributes even in his imagined 'enemies' camp. Are you familiar with thoughts like mine?

- Exactly what I was saying. Rituals, ceremonies, festivals are symbols; it is up to you to understand it or to be inspired by them. And as they are the same you will have a part of your work that is similar to others' but as you are different from them, that work will also be unique... Just want to add that the older and most sacred symbols, like the spiral, circle, swastika are present in almost all Traditions what proves their unity.

Johan describes his tapes released: "All our editions are related with some pagan thematic and are edited in special days, according to the Celtic calendar. Also they have handmade packages that include natural materials in order to create a really unique piece..."

- What natural filament does Wolfskin cover wrap-up is made from? It looks and smells so nature-like, it is unbelievable... You must have been influenced by other labels, fascinated with these exclusive cover packages? Is it kind of excitement, attraction to work with these things for you? What do you feel it basically has to do with your (musical) creation?

- It is a paper called 'coconut paper'. I learned to make packages on my former label (although theirs' were less rough). It is a way of completion of the music really; when I am recording I like to imagine a perfect way of wrapping that music. And also I like to work with my hands, it is great, very similar to rural work, it frees the mind from unimportant thoughts, those repetitive tasks.

- What is the meaning of 67 copies that your tapes are limited to? This number seems slightly weird for me, at least... Maybe it has something to do with your personal experience? Have you succeeded to re-release



Wolfskin tape on cd-r? It has any special layout again?

- These are two numbers that I like; the Celts worshipped the number 3 and its multiples and 7 is the number of steps on several Traditions to reach perfection. It is just the combination of the two. Or you can say it is the combination of God and the Beast...

(laughs). I am now recording the Wolfskin cd-r (that will have 3 themes from the tape you know and 5 new ones). Yes, it will have a special handmade package, I am thinking on it...

- You mentioned that Reaping Horde might be interested in other musical forms further on, including blackmetal. Is that mean you want to expand (more like in variety of delivered sounds), or just a curious wish to experience new forms? You are aware of metal movement in general?

- What I meant is that I am interested in all (good and dark) music that is within Reaping Horde spirit. I just used Black metal as an example; we already have ritual/obscure, darkfolk, darkwave and martial/industrial editions so what is

missing of the good music in this world...? Blackmetal. Yes, I like some blackmetal projects. Fave track: A fine day to die in the Emperor's version! I appreciate the energy and dark atmospheres created. I do not like when the paintings hide just hollow persons... I think that ideas behind Black are just too wasted; I mean, I just do not care about Satan and Crowley and all that. Satan is just the fear of christianity. Why should any wants to play with the fear of such rats? I prefer to look further, to what is really important... It is great to see Black projects interested in mythology. The perfect project for us: mixing black metal and folk influences, dark and uncompromising. And with some torches in their hands...

Concerning future releases of the Reaping Horde, Johan adds: "Next editions are a cd-r of Once A Barge (dark-folk/wave), another with French label La Nouvelle Alliance (and their projects, ICK, Dernière Volonté and Blasterkorps), martial/industrial (an)themes. Then another collaboration with Shadowlight Communications (New-Zealand) with Wolfskin and Ereshkigal (from our side) and Gydja (from theirs) dedicated to the Goddesses of twilight and death..."

Reaping Horde, Johan Aernus, Apartado 101, 5400 Chaves, Portugal, horde@mail.pt



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ADVERSAM Animadverte Scarlet

Hail Italian black metal! If you think I am crazy or totally deliriant with this salutation, think again. It is better to check the selected album twice before praising it, but reality is the first not surprising anyway — Italy has finally witnessed the first international high speed and high quality blackmetal outfit. Hateful, harsh, bludgeoning and still mystic enough. If drawing comparisons, they would match Nordic stylistics, something between Norwegian and Swedish schools, with the very best meaning of this description. Like they take what is best in there from different bands, adapt it through their imagination, and naturally add some grim touches of their own. No crappy copying or wanna be attitude, at all! Purely developed black music, which should surely make jaws dropped of the whole Italian and part of Scandinavian bm scene.

Adversam must doubtlessly receive eternal hail for properly using keyboard, too! So rare thing with new bands of the 90s, most of them make metal sound laughable, simply losing black flame. Thus Italian extremos perform plain sick and majestic music, using great evil atmospheres in the background, in one league with **Satyricon**, **Emperor** or **Gehenna**. Just take a listen to early *Awaiting*, or the follow-up *The Path*. One feature which could top the whole album of is the vocals, still sounding a bit standard and too silent in the mix. Power of bm scream would fit this music, I am sure. However, production shines here in, and Italy should not be that land the recording was made in. Or something has really happened in Apennines, and follow-up masters of harsh bm will crawl from deep catacombs? *Animadverte* is an album not to be missed in the ocean of crappy releases. Remember that name, and four Turin inhabitants re-creating the majesty in Southern Europe! My applause.

AEBA Flammenmanifest Last Episode

Fast, melodic and versatile black metal from one of the most talented bands of the genre, says press release. Another dustbin-ready crappy piece of dilettante musicianship, states my mind. Not a single point improved since debut Im Schattenreich; at least not enough to avoid one more shirky quality cd after one year. What you get here are 90% boring riffs, 90% trendy screams, 90% miserable drumming, 90% stolen arrangements. At the very exceptional moments keyboard sounds slightly better, yet usually it is Dimmu Borgir formula, performed five times as worse, and miserably arranged with the rest of music.

*Incredibly stupid is to play exactly the same notes for both guitarists. Are they so primitively thinking fools to follow each other? Well, keyboards do go after the music either, with no room for any individual line or arrangement at all... In that case — why **Aeba** are five-piece? Guitarist could easily record everything alone, as two guys absolutely uselessly repeat the same. Maybe they try to make a sound thicker? Eh eh eh... Dear German journalists, and these people involved somehow with music business. Let us agree that **Aeba** has nothing to do with talent whatsoever, and just a miracle (that might be some new members) can save them from being totally hopeless and mindless. Very poor effort.*

AGALLOCH Pale Folklore The End

Truly enchanting experience — this debut album by a dark minded musicians, who has a clear vision to make uncertain collages of soundscapes. Dark yet it is basically metal music, drawing influences from gothic and death scenes, still keeping that slow and dark pace everytime. Actually I have some remarks what could be better on this cd, but let me say first that basically it is an ok effort, with much of strength and potential to grow. Yeah, biography confirms that guys have started with death/doom music, so it is evolving now into something more unique. These acoustic and symphonic breaks between guitar and drums based songs are evident, yet *Pale Folklore* still makes you judge upon **Agalloch** as a metal band. Probably that part of them is more expressive so far. Yet who knows — maybe they will progress into something yet unheard.

As far as such masterpieces as *Dead Winter Days* are written I bet to praise this project on and on. Yes, now let us face things which could be better though. Do not know why but at times a *Paradise Lost* riff or typical crying guitar pops up, or useless melodic death metal tinge sparks out which is out of place in that dramatic melancholia **Agalloch** upcomes behind. Another clear influence is **Ulver**, and that is damn positive in my eyes. Remember *Bergtatt*? Ah, these slower moments with masterful acoustics is cited on described record. I see why vocalist then tries some choruses... At times they manage to make it very well, at times it fails through. No black metal here whatsoever, just musical link or remark to these uninitiated. I am fascinated with a great cd inlay, and I bet it is a cool answer to all these people slugging down nature pictures on metal cds. It is beautiful, guy taking photos has made a colossal job. It is pure winter feel within the booklet. Haunting misanthropy in lyrics of *Haugrim* complement the picture perfectly. In spite of some things to get repaired, check **Agalloch** out now!

P.S. After a while I have got their demo '97 *From Which of This Oak* (available at **LTR** for 6\$!!!), and it explains these melodic death parts, which are much more often on demo... neat progression though!

AGENT STEEL Omega Conspiracy Candlelight

I am getting bolder and bolder with every day people, but my metal experience and knowledge do not fall down together with old hair. Everybody can trust me to get some important information from the past — I am open for stories like that... But sometimes even me, old mohican, is helpless to recollect some old bands which still manage to come back. 1985 was the year I have still been playing with my toys I believe, nor I had spikes on my shoulders in 1987. These two dates point the start and fall of **Agent Steel** — speed metal pioneers, once sharing the stage and sale charts with **Megadeth**, **Slayer** and **Anthrax**.

Do not be that suspicious about their comeback. Just check *Omega Conspiracy* — it justifies any reason for this comeback. I take no shit if they do it for the sake of trend, money or whatever — their album is fucking killer! In fact, it requires some spins before totally getting into, but then it finally explodes, in your speed metal dreams! Truly unbelievable, this powerful slab among many fake old school revivalists: I hail **Agent Steel** for their right attitude towards this heavy trash/speed, forgetting all sissy pseudo power/epic hymns, that usually come in these new discs of old bands. Guys do have several calmer songs, but they finally turn into raging numbers at the peak or the culminating note of compositions. Line-up features entire pack from the previous decade, with only one addition — a new vocalist **Bruce Hall**. He takes a high note quite often, but makes it really convincing. In a way both musical strength and dynamics make me think on newest **Judas Priest** album, and **Nevermore**, not forgetting classic albums of **Annihilator** and **Sanctuary**. In other words — no way to miss it, if you love old true metal! Welcome back, dudes!

AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED / CONVERGE The Poacher Diaries Relapse

Honky Reduction was more convincing, indeed. I sort of expected total smash from this, their next release, but nine tunes of it have not lived my full expectations. Maybe it is total timing to blame (just a bit more than 10 minutes of grinding shock, what is obviously too less even for grind band), but I feel that guys can come with something more convincing next time. Yeah, their first full-length is coming pretty soon. This time **Anb** do not pour that monotheistic wall of guitar sound, it is a bit deadened in the mix, giving much more space to Jay's agonizing shouting. Sounds to me that recording has suffered a bit — even so clearly heard drum computer on *Honky*... Lost some power now, and even made me think about real drummer taking the action! Well, it is not true anyways, proving one more time that **Scott** knows some shit about programming indeed. I am sure some amateurs of blackmetal scene would have a decent lesson in drum programming, if they ever dared to get a listen to **Agoraphobic Nosebleed**...

Umm, this is actually a split cd, and next in line are also US born **Converge**, continuing pissed off but rather in an own way muzak. In fact their first tunes keep on that crazy grinding attitude, with a decent deathmetal and core way of support, yet it sounds quite typical and American. I would add — without any special hint or idea to distinct them from the rest of the scene. Well, they are much more extreme, but that barely counts, in my humble opinion. Then with *They Strut on R Miles* guys suddenly slow down and dwell into American sludge/doom territories, simply fucking up the whole idea of this split. Well, maybe that is fine for both participants, and/or label, but me as the listener cannot figure out the aim of these variations, and I really do not feel like fucked in the head by that music. It ends up boring. I would prefer plain **Agoraphobic** stuff, without any extra ingredients. But it is yours for just 6\$ (USA) or some 11\$ for European market. **Converge**, 432 Morris Ave., Providence, RI 02906, USA. **Converge13@aol.com**, www.hydrahead.com/converge

ALTAR In the name of the Father Pavement

Uhh... This sounds the most convincing that **Altar** has ever come with! A kind of surprise, if you like. I have not heard *Provoke*, their previous album, just a few pre-production tunes, but it is said to be less aggressive, and catching the band up compromising in the name of groove here and there. I want to believe that these were the reasons which finally let them go from **Displeased** label, and actually return to a confirmed infamous **Altar** style, where brutality is legit! Anyone expects something else from this Dutch legend? Don't be silly — under the **Altar** music there is no air to breathe for feeble-minded!

It was a quick deal to get used to their both initial albums, and at some 20-25 minute they tended to get monotonous. There is completely another bargain here, which should be heard, and not described. Just think about death metal album where feel is greater than technical abilities of musicians or their aims to sound the most brutal, the fastest, etc. What comes to mind? **Delicde**, **Morbid Angel**?

Yes, **Altar** also has individual feeling to wrap up their rigorous bludgeoning metal, name it brutal death or deathrash. They have not moved far from their incipient antichristian mockery, and album title is not the only thing that can suggest that. Check out a barbarous intro, or the classic *christian motherfucker* term used as on *Youth Against Christ* album. I vote for these small fillings.

Yep, this album was actually self-released by the band earlier last year, and soonish after *Pavement* has grabbed them, like kid the candy. Worth it, worth... Re-issue features *The Trooper* cover (umm... not bad, typical altarish vocals sound strange though), and press sheet promises one extra new song, but I cannot find it on promotional copy. See yourselves.

AMON AMARTH The Avenger Metal Blade

Is it my taste which obviously develops, or their music that undeniably changes with every new release? Both, as a matter of fact. But **Amon Amarth** is turning into one of many Swedish death metal bands, losing its identity much quicker than I expected. Seems like earlier they really had more sorrow to march through the nine worlds, but then someone has sent them from the golden hall of death metal, and guys are not that thick and dedicated as before.

Excuse me, but I cannot justify their step to sound more groovy (i.e. trendy), using fast brutal parts in minimal amounts, and adding stupid everyone-use that melodic heavy metal parts over the top. Easy listened - easy forgotten crap.

Commercially they will surely sell more *The Avenger's* than any of their previous releases together (especially in Japan I suppose), but who the fuck can be proud of saying - you see, we made it more acceptable to trendy NWOSDM listener, so we have sold more albums this time... I still believe it is not the attitude dedicated musicians have these days. Structurally, **Amon Amarth** still remind new **Hypocrisy** with their calmer songs, but who can actually put these chains of excellent riffs as perfect as *Tätiggrön's* company? No one! **AA** just fail to be the new **Hypocrisy**, moreover that the band lacks energy and power within this new cd. It has a decent *Abyss* production, with remarkable down-tuned guitar sound, though. Music is not strong enough, that is their problem. Neither heathen ideology convince me any more. Listening to these moderate songs, I cannot imagine what kind of relation they might have with such lyrical subjects as paganism, at all. Two matters that are so much different. On the other hand, let me take a wild guess. **Amon Amarth** goes on with such lyrics just for the sake of trend. I hope I am not wrong. Music suggests so.

ANAO Les Rites de Cromlech Drakkar

With a decent studio production French band has lost its identical raw sound which was characteristic on the previous demo, and their charm has gone. Music has probably got weaker and more standard, so there are several reasons that I am not pretty much fascinated with this five-track mcd. Could it be named black metal? Well, not exactly, even *Gwalamm's* voice is still harsh and scream-like. Though instrumentally **Anao** have stepped away from extreme fast riffing and blasting rhythmic. Now it is about harmonious deathrash melodies going hand in hand with mid tempos, what is rather ok for the devil's sake. But this release lacks not only identity, but also aggression and anger. Sounds pretty usual, fearless in other words. It is not melodic death/black no, but this other stage of the same melodic side is not shining through **Anao's** music.

They try some innovations (at least it seems like that for the band) that I am so sick with. You know, that type of "horror synth", made with keyboard only. Enough to recollect **Nomicon** and **The Second Moon**, and I want to puke. Yes, you cannot write anything decent with that machine — it sounds exactly the same as above-mentioned projects. And it (the *Obscure Symphonie* composition) has nothing to do with metal at all, so — with the rest of **Anao** material either. If you find anything really dark there, let me know where exactly. It is not dark at all. Outro has a much darker feel to it, by the way.

Anao, please stop playing stupid games with your computers and kick some major ass with your metal hearts next time. Otherwise you will fail to write decent music once again. Pass this mcd for anyone else. **Anao**, 4 Chemin de la Cascade, BT K17, 29000 Quimper, France

ANATOMY The Witches of Dathomir Bleed

Aussie band with a not so black metal corresponding name has returned after two years break, with their sophomore record, this time on singer's own **Bleed Records**. Luckily, I have their debut at hand as well, so there is no doubt about their past, which never correlated with the typical Australian bm sound. **Anatomy** has been performing Scandinavian kind of the genre, at least quite close to it, if guys are not enthused about my straightforward comparison.

And this album is more than your average Swedish newcomers can offer indeed. Still closer to black/death origin, guys have enough of guts to turn it into menacing ominous music, which nonetheless has monumental feel and attacking evil power. Not that *one size fits all* attitude of structur-

ing. Just *One More Nail* actually has that kaos essence, that is rarely heard in other than Australian blackmetal records. As another plate of the balance, discover the blast beat led melodious infinity akin to **Satyricon** or **Demoniac** class.

Maybe listener who is bored with uterpedd black/death metal will find this too typical or less inspiring, and that may be true, since *The Witches of Dathomir* sounds really chrestomatic, but good enough not to miss it for these, who worship the style. I must notice much developed lyrical base, which remained dark and thick, yet much advanced & sophisticated, comparing to plain antichristian mockery in *Where Angels Die*. Yeah, *The Exorcist* is not the worst thing to end it up and go, really. If you have **Cannibal Corpse** version, or original *Seven Churches* lp, draw your own comparisons. In my ears, sounds good. As well as the whole record.

ANCESTRAL MALEDICTION / OPHIOLATRY Ancient Contradictions / Opposite Monarchy Millennium

Never expected something refreshing from two painfully unknown Brazilian bands, especially that I find this idea to release a split mcd with running time of merely 15 minutes rather useless. I would put a 7" record instead, or ask participants to prepare some extra songs to make it a full-length split... However, me guess this one is a premiere cd release for both bands, attiring the masses to their brand of death metal. Try them bravely, my dear maniacs!

Chaos... this word should invoke impressions about upright playing, messy song structures and boring result afterwards. *Formulas Fatal to the Flesh*... this means order and structure within chaos; anybody wants to contradict? Well, just leave your arguments for own ego training then... Surprise or not, but **Ancestral Malediction** push the reviewer to think about **Morbid Angel**, and it is but a compliment I am sure! I mean the latter record of death metal gods, due to raw smashing voices of **Eduardo** and **Ronaldo**. Just an extra inch in technics, more imagination with finding their own highlights, and that may turn into another **Krisiun**, or **Rebaellion**. Yes, Southern America is not just about gore and grind. **Ophiolatry** do not step aside from Floridian formula of brutality, yet sticking more to **Delicde** way of putting riffs. They try not to lose the speeds throughout both tunes, thus leaving listener following them on, but the band also sort of runs of ideas when the style is concerned. I guess they would not be as sticking to memory if their set consisted of 7-9 tracks. But the potential is here as hell, find the way towards truly aggressive deathmetal here! Short but thick message of brutal kids, I am sure will please the rising hordes of vulturous freaks around. Get it for 10\$ from **Leão Takas**. **Ancestral Malediction**, c/o Eduardo Claro, Av. Audra, 2373 B, dos Guadés, Tremembe — SP, cep. 12120-000, Brazil. **Ophiolatry**, c/o Fabio Sperandio, Av. Fortunato Moreira, 314, Pindamonhangaba — SP, cep. 12400-000, Brazil

ANCIENT Det Glemte Riket Hammerheart

I do not know how **Damnation Records** feels about this re-release, but me personally am proud to have their original copy of *Trolltaar* mcd. That was a classic, even not as profound and eerily as **Ancient's** early stuff, including the mighty *Svartalfheim*. This re-release includes quite a few songs from the debut album, of course — in their premature form. Cool, really cool to hear demo versions on cd, that must have been done years ago. Since **Ancient** demo tape *Early Howling Winds* was, is and will be a classic in Norwegian black metal, however simply it is composed, recorded and performed. Hm, I am not sure I would give much of praise to bm band recording such quality demo in 1999, but anyway — these straight forward melodies and gearing evil burning around black metal hymns inflames some fire in thy heart! It is from 1992, by the way. Raw, haunting, pernicious. Simply as that! I wonder why there is no versions from their rare but cult 7" ep, which followed after the demo? Anyway, you will find the entire *Trolltaar* mcd, as mentioned, some synth unreleased tune, and one cover, which is obviously recorded much later, maybe even recently, and I bet it is a cover of any old band. By the way, it is the worst thing on 54 minutes full-length, and it clearly makes the difference between old and new **Ancient**. The track is called *Sweet Leaf*, so now you can laugh at me, that I do not know which band is covered. Maybe it is **Black Sabbath** or what?! I mean, **Hammerheart** could print some more info on their press release, as other guy might not know where the hell all these songs are from. Buddy, it is not the new **Ancient** album, it is something 100 times better!!! Classic black mark doomed cd!

ANCIENT The Halls of Eternity Metal Blade

Very diverse feelings about this. **Ancient** has not come anywhere close to earlier recordings, but some songs out of 11 tight packed numbers are much closer to *Svartalfheim* than both previous albums together. I suppose **Mic Aphazel** got slightly upset with his band's manic move towards average symphonic black metal, and finally decided to turn back a little bit. Though it is not the return to the ancient **Ancient**, my ear catches the move anyway. I wish it would be total return to the roots. And that would mean no female vocals, no over-bombastic way of composing (what is a COF sound copy

anyway), just pure blackmetal. If you ask me, their new "female vocalist" is nothing but whore. Just another bloody whore that frontman has picked. Her voice is terrible, she cannot properly sing at all, thus she uses just narrative voice. Whilst her pictures make a better impression... To be honest, even at their early stage Ancient was not the most violent band on earth, but somehow their Norwegian riffing has got that punch to sound soooo evil. Now they got down even more, and I mean the previous cd has only suffered due to this, whilst *The Hells Of Eternity* looks much better, if not good. Nonetheless, Aptazol has written several contradicting tracks either sort of love them or hate. Indeed *I Madras* sounds very weird, kind of oriental or arabic black metal? Even more I cannot share my enthusiasm with old metal sound and attitude, what is not actually that retro trash or whatever, but more this heavy metal thing, does nothing for real heavy metal. It is good when it is worked out, but not when simply attributed to blackmetal. You would better turn the head to acoustic classics that are pure reincarnation of grim feelings, something what Ancient had no right to abandon ever... As a whole 62 cd minutes are not boring, and leave you charged with negativity inside the exploding mind and soul...

ANCIENT WISDOM

...And The Physical Shape Of Light Bleed Avantgarde Music

Monumental spirit remains the keyword with *Marcus* solo project, whether looking back at 1995's debut or later follow up, so here is still the same music that he has been doing with Ancient Wisdom ever since. If that sort of composing is so much different from his Bewitched experience, so within the three-piece anthology of Ancient Wisdom everything sounds quite familiar. Not because I do not like it, though, yet to be sincere, his previous works (especially the debut) have lost a bit of that power it once contained, in the course of time. So to say - music from that time would be more approved in 2000, but thanks to the dark forces, Marcus moves on with his way of manifesting the evil. Enough of experience he possesses, and can build up yet greater hymns than before.

Cause music is of hymnical nature, if you are not aware yet. One could blame the satanic bard to be too symphonic, poetic, melancholic or harmonious, but spiritually it is of very dark nature, whilst true shapes of satanism can get unpredictable forms, right? Sort of satanic pride speaks through the channels of Ancient Wisdom, and even music can be poetically mellow, the speakers are overwhelmed with darkest messages. The ultimate symphony in honour of the devil. There is also bonus *The Spell* cover tune of *Demon*. In the same line, yet more rocking - like the original. Not the best, not the worst too.

If you feel the black blood running through your body, then *And The Physical Shape Of Light Bleed* will be a great lullaby for thy infernal dreams and darkest nocturnal visions... To me it sounds much better than a handful of 'extreme aggressive yet melodic' blackers try to perceive. Sleep, babies, sleep under command of grim Swedish genius.

ANDRAS Sword Of Revenge Last Episode

Black metal from Eastern Germany... You know what it means? I bet you do: mediocre standard riffing and genuinely repeated screams. Whatever, it has playing interested music. It can be even from South Africa (yet who believes one would pop in performing 'extreme black metal art?'), but actually teutonic lands make me feel deceived most of times I get an 'evil crushing violent schwarz metal masterpiece' from there. It has something to do with mentality, no less. I mean you can write amazing melodious lines and conquer million hearts like *Accept* or *Helloween* or *Blind Guardian* did, but to use that one lined guitarish in nowadays black metal, when it is too primitive, and absolutely not supported by other instruments - it leads to one more waste of a record. I know that trash and death influences must make a bm record simply structured, kind of a bit more to the core, however German purists have bad times achieving this goal in their second record.

To clear my point: Andras are one of the simplest bm artists featured here, but that simplicity of their structures is damn naked, and most of the tracks are shaped in the same or nearby dresses. Too bad for them, and too unsave to get in use this one hour long cd. Argh, I should point out that Andras is not the worst around, especially comparing to their dozen of labelmates, and I even can name several tracks - *Reaching For The Throne*, *Fleisch Und Blut*, which are the direction they should follow. But definitely with much heavier approach, sixsix times as better production, and absolutely improved songwriting. And if they want to be black metal, then please no gothic rock as performed on pathetic *Chalice On Dragons Blood*.

APOLLYON Diaboli Gratia Full Moon

Cannot say it is mindblowing, overwhelming or at least very good. Simply these 19 minutes are not enough to fully experience their ideas, as there are quite a few of them, with continuing consequence to follow. I believe. But it does not mean everything they do is brilliant. Just a promising start, not pretending to the elite thus far. Having in mind that Apollyon's debut was promised quite a long time ago, one could expect a bit stronger set of songs than displayed on *Diaboli Gratia*. Guys do not strive to be the fastest, even some blasting riffs take place. More often a mystery and imagination prevails, creating a truly dark ambience around the extremity. Biography claims Danes playing more atmospheric and grim stuff up until this mcd, by the way. So, I believe this to be a conscious development. Ok, I start to doubt - maybe I am wrong about their usual approach? Maybe they would be boring at all with just faster parts, or with

purely melancholic bm? Here we go at least with female voice and epic piano parts, which do not go too far to be mellow and gothic, but remain odd, cold and frightening. It is always not easy to predict how music of such projects will develop, so the best way is to wait and see, where guys will stay further. I am sure it can be simply everything: from old school bm notoriety to the most experimenting dark metal. The only demand from Apollyon is to keep their own track and not stop making black music profound and exclusive. Try this 19 minutes 5 song mini for 10\$ (USA)/12\$ from their label. You might enjoy it. Apollyon, c/o M. Bisgaard, Elevang 13, 7100 Vejle, Denmark.

ART INFERNO

Abyssus Abyssum Invocat Scarlet

Journey Through The Dark, hrm... I have heard good reactions about them, yet never experienced the band myself, neither... Among Secrets mid few years ago, nor older demo tape. Briefly, *Art Inferno* (which is the continuation of JTDD) has left me slightly indifferent to their so-called 'Wagnerian black metal'. First of all, this term is so misused these days that every second new kid on the block thinks he is so genius to compare his mediocre music with immortal composer. That bullshit is a part of the deal with *Art Inferno*, too. To cut it short, I am sick of second hand symphonic black metal. It is getting mad to hear it performed by so many newcomers, which play it definitely just for the sake of trend, or cannot do anything memorable, just cloning sounds and riffs of others. Here is a list of bands, which I find in *Art Inferno* music, and none of influences is at least of the same league as originals: *Cradle Of Filth*, *Limbic Art*, *Solefald*, *Nominon*... The list goes on, unfortunately...

Next thing to disappoint is a weak synthetic (aka 'plastic') sound, naturally built upon keyboards, and forgotten metal lays waste. Common guys, you are not as close to infernal harmonies as Arcturus were on *Aspera*... so this symphonic sound gives you a lousy immature feel to it, putting *Art Inferno* to an 'average' category. NWOSDM, hehe... Got it? New Wave Of Wagnerian Black Metal. Sounds stupid, but now I have a sticker to put on every fresh 'symphonic' bm wannabees. So young bands should better avoid my review massacre... Not worth to be checked. Released just for trendy kids for vampire games.

AS DIVINE GRACE

Suprematur Avantgarde Music

This mysterious crew is back with the next emotional track, second in their career. It was about long time since *Lumo* came out (early 1997), delivering unusually melodic pack of songs back then, so diverse in this heavy milieu they have been swirling in their early years. Now, when musical horizons, not excluding metal labels and the scene, are pretty much blurred, it is no wonder to hear that sound, and new stage of *As Divine Grace* does not sound odd as well. So, just take them as they are. According to bio: band's aim is to write timeless music that is not molded by past or future trends. Perfect. Music really stands for that. At times it might sound based on typical musical squares - one after another, but they keep offering songs far from usual and cliché things either. Especially in the middle of this longplay, *Tango*, *Shelter* and *Be Used* sound like the adjusted versions of *The 3rd* and *The Mortal*'s later years avantgarism, where feeling is quite 'deceptive'. It makes you doubt about the real message of these tracks...

As Divine Grace parted ways with *Jari* ever since. He used not only to play guitar, but also share vocal duties with *Hanna*. This move definitely strikes the ear, as female vocal chords dominate over the male instrumental - that is always something special, so much different from the case when both just split vocal parts. I believe that *Hanna*'s operetic tone which can go very deep to a second or two, is not something that masses adore. It is about individual approach to that kind of singing, so it must be a refined album after all. That shapes their sound these days, if not more. But however - if you know and enjoy *Lumo*, this new release should not be a problem to get into after all. I would suggest not to listen, but to explore *Suprematura*, exactly what their mostly one word song titles suggest me: there is always extra behind these short names. *As Divine Grace*, PL 2, 21570 Sauvo, Finland, asdivinegrace@destool.com

ASTRAY

Until I'm Cold Enough

After years spent with distribution service, and jamming in rehearsals with various death metal projects, *Markku Pääkkönen* has formed another band, this time much more melodic and artistic, with links to black and gothic. Like many of '99 Finnish bands do it. So, I am surprised as *Markku* is not only a skilful composer, drummer, but a guitar player either. He has recorded both instruments, still preferring to play drums in live shows. His mates are so young I would refuse to put a picture on the cd sleeve, but anyway - no jokes about their performance, as it is rather ok and even impressive I suppose. Ask yourself if *Astray* is better than recent starlets of Finnish sympho death/black explosion, but at least I can assure they are not worse. I would compare them with *And Oceans*... having in mind their technicals and young age first of all, and music as the next resemblance. Ok, it is still debatable self-released mcd, with just four compositions, but be sure - the fundament is hellish and strong. Especially when such majestic melodies rule the songs as in *Universal Truth Divine* or *The Beast Is Awake*.

Vocal style of *Vasa* is a point stopping the put of exclamation mark. Indeed he could be an inch different from the rest of the screamy trend, as whenever music is good or bad you unconsciously prefer something more original than these standard shrieks. So warning!!! This cd is not about poor vocals only - listen to it carefully! And yeah, it is characteristic with Finnish bands. Quite a serious lack but well - it is up to them to improve it until next recording, and everything

will be ok. Forget all these home-made demo-cds, this is a great slim-bp package, nothing to complain about. Including a clean and healthy *BRR Studio* sound. Poor \$5 (Europe) / 10\$. *Astray*, Markku Pääkkönen, Puukivatie 32, 88900 Kuhmo, Finland

AURORA BOREALIS

Praise the Archal Lights Embrace

Yes, it is quite a revelation-like album for American death metal circles, but to be a real jewel it lacks a bit more power, especially when it comes to production and *Ron*'s style of shrieking. No idea if traditional death metal grow would help him but this kind of deadened scream is truly weak for that energetic music that flows from three-piece's debut album. And it is no big black metal influence unlike some media dilettantes have proclaimed. Maybe they were misled by *Ron*'s voice.

Aurora Borealis has started with a mini cd a year or so back, and still producing the records themselves they are pretty professional with that. I hope this megahard work with the band will finally give them some more effect than countless young bands receive after signing their bad deals with miserable companies after two months of existing. But not about business this review should be. Ok, a certain touch of traditionally brutal death metal, though *Ron* and company use quite a few straight-forward melodies to release all these powers of evil through their music. No pathetic NWOSDM copycat though, I even cannot find a single European dm resemblance on this cd. It tends to be brutal all the time, and these melodious lines as if add some exotic touch to them. Just one thought popped to mind - if *Ron* tried to reach a powerful shrieky voice a la new *Hypocrisy* the result would be oh so better. Why not to try some more echo and simply scream all the lungs you have? With brutal edgy music, it could have a healthy outcome. Musically their hit so far is the closing *The Storm*. Expect a naturally progressed next album, though order of cd straight from guys: *Aurora Borealis*, P.O. Box 1327, Clinton, MD 20735-5327, USA, a u r o r a b o r e a l i s @ a o l . c o m , www.concentric.net/~Neophili/AuroraBorealis

AUTUMNBLAZE

DämmerEibenTragödie Prophecy

NWOSDM has produced many great bands, but its potential was too narrow for most of new bands, thus it has faded away, after living up a trend. Every band, which still thinks to get big in *Iron Flames* wagon, quickly realise that it is just an illusion. Check out how many melodious deathers turn their backs on their second albums. And the number of vanished bands is constantly growing. On the other side of the bridge stands melodic romantic (gothic?) metal, full of pseudo emotional music, combined with distorted guitars and rhythms stolen from heavy metal. Seems like their roots are decent, but they cannot upcome with catchy material. You are right if you think *Germán Autumnblaze* have both in their music. You are wrong, if you suppose guys have managed to get a unique blend of both subgenres. Wrong! Ten tracker has nothing attractive at all. I am sick of their pathetic vocalist, both when he tries to sing, and when he screams. It reminds a school party with boys making a musical present to girls... Then what the hell press release screams *Autumnblaze* being epic dark metal? Let us name things as they are: pseudoromantic sweet metal/rock. Well, do not forget rougher involvements within this cd, yet it happened to be much less than death metal freak could expect. I ask then - why it is included at all? Most probably guys have been doing that faster stuff at earlier stage, now constantly moving from it. Well, good luck with sissy music in such a case. You guys absolutely do not need these speeds...

Even *Lake Of Tears* have one extra percent of flame in their music. Even *Niklas Sundin* pointing on the frontcover (pretty mediocre) cannot help *Autumnblaze* with this debut album...

AVULSED Stabwound Orgasm Repulse

Who still remember the old *Carnivoracity* ep, so effectively slammed down in second or third *Brainstorm* issue, which is hardly believed as *Avulsed*'s release. If you check *Stabwound Orgasm*. Admittedly Spanish deathmetal revivalists have improved a great deal since then, and they are through a best-progressed-deathmetal-band-through-entrepreneur award, or something of that sort. Evolution has marked every new *Avulsed* release with something modern and probably dark sullen melody is the most noticeable thing that was developed with years, that added the heavy brilliance to this brutal band. It is a perfect equilibrium between tradition and progress. They are as progressive as their style lets them be, in other words.

Does anyone name *Demigod* mighty album as progressive deathmetal? No. Neither is *Avulsed*. From first till last, second they show the roots of death, bowing actually to that wave of 90-ies bands, who take care on melody as well. Truly dark, extreme, aggressive riffing, and on pseudo-melodic life metal. I tell you - *Stabwound Orgasm* is a tribute to that 90-ies direction, that not many bands were heading back then! Once again I must mention the mighty *Demigod*, as their main inspiration. But to tell the truth - I have never heard any single album with *Stabwound Orgasm*'s spirit so much alive, and I eternally hail *Avulsed* for capturing that spirit back, on their own record! It was not that impressive on *Embrace In Putrescence*, doubtlessly.

Dave, damn, he has tuned down his voice to sound like *Esa*, hah, I cannot believe that. It is so much better than his old gargling standard growl, it is unbelievable. Surprisingly, I also find some resemblances with the *Ballad mod Wisdom* of *Darkness* here, in faster/blaster rhythm attacks, and when *Dave* uses that hellish dark scream here and there. Though who really cares about old *Beulah* these days... Nah, you must experience how deathmetal history is revived,

and how it must have been performed. Top-notch purchase! Satisfaction guaranteed! Check out say ladies doing perverse tricks on the cover... Highlights: *Nice Rotting Eyes*, *Anthro-Pet-Phagus*, and title track, of course. *Avulsed*, c/o Dave Rotten, P.O. Box 50662, 28080 Madrid, Spain, tel. (34) 915225636, fax. (34) 915311122, dave.rotten@repulserecords.com

BABYLON WHORES

King Fear Necropolis

The new record sees *Whores* moved further, and I tell you - into a damn attractive side of heavy things! *Daggaal* was ok, but not groundbreaking, whilst turn-of-the-millennium equinox crap sees them fitting the epoch so tight! Even though I review it in the dawn of a new age already, album remains one hell of an apocalyptic and at the same time amazingly refreshing pack. I mean, with bumping laboback groove that previous mcd was filled in, *King Fear* is yet different and loaded with rock'n'roll power, yet it brings the listener deeper into heavy horizons, if we take *Cold Heaven* as a guideline. Sort of closer to metal music, if it can be considered as such like. Yes, please check out *Skeleton Farm*, which sounds like a borrowed groove of *Cathedral*, with paid as a tribute riffs to *Sabbath*, still channeling so much heaviness around. Then *Fay* keeps them rushing towards atmospheric/gothic soundscapes (older *Paradise Lost?*), whilst the closing and title track at the same time, behind an apocalyptic intense drives, is crossed with eerie signs of flute... So to say, *Babylon Whores* are real masters of exploring that depth of music they have firmly stuck in, that you always wonder discovering something new in their repertoire.

Returning to previous (heard for me) their recordings, it is impossible to miss this band for any other. I think this tuning and groove (with *Ike*'s refined shouting) is unique, sort of specimen for the next generations to get inspiration from. Though it would turn into a trend, which I believe *Babylon Whores* would not be as pleased with *Deathrock* - it says it all, however transformed this message from the dark is. Believe me, you will not get a better satisfaction than 10 rocking tunes, uniling a story, or to name it right, 16th century prophecy, into sounds. Ah, pity that promo cd does not have a lyric sheet... I can guarantee a great experience getting through the lyrics, well, let's intellect should have not dropped down at least, heh.

BEAST PETFIFY Dimensional Oranged Dilemma Sonic Wave

Rather strange music creates this Singaporean duo. You cannot name it any other way but energetic thrash/heavy metal, but their approach is indeed improvised enough to spend quite a few lists before it gets under your skin. Writing this I am still not sure it truly applies to me, since from time to time I catch myself not still totally in what they want to say playing one or another passage. The same can be said about lyrics (probably the most mysterious subject in *Beast Petfify*, or their means to express the thoughts are slightly different than mine, or Europeans, in general?), and vocal performance as well. No single doubt that *Al Fahmi* (all guitars and lead vocals) and *Scyrlu* (bass, drums, backing vocals) are great performers, and none the less - this album is partly sponsored by *Washburn* guitars worldwide, so yeah - maybe their unmeasured skills are simply too far away for me? You would better check it out yourselves, but several jumps from one riff to another sound merely weird to me. I prefer *Beast Petfify* when they turn more traditional heavy metal way, then it is clear and great solos just double the impression. A grand high-pitched scream in *Massive Irrefragable Burden* truly kicks ass, and actually reminds Lithuanian legend *Katedra* with original vocalist. But their eastern beasts add any chaotic thrashy rhythm, and mess up the entire track. Yes, such high screams are truly missed in a larger quantity. Most of their songs last for 8-9 minutes, so to catch their main idea is a job of a truly musical enigma. I still wonder about *Scyrlu*'s ability to perform both constituents of rhythm section, and please not even dare think that he just programs drums! No, it is really tightly played set, with pounding bass guitar topping it off! Impressive, eh? Ok, for the maniacs of untraditional approach to heavy music here is the solution. Just 14\$ from *Leado Talvas*: *Beast Petfify*, BLK 345, Yishun Ave. 11, #06-173, Singapore 760345, Singapore

BEHIND THE CURTAIN Til Birth Do Us Part Laser's Edge

Danish *Intramental Management* start to receive the response for their hard work: their promoted band has been signed to respective American progressive label, which should give these guys a necessary field to grow and reach the right listener.

Music by six Danes is slightly more metal than other *Laser's Edge* bands, which have more to do with progrock. Here we go with some really heavy chunks of metal, at some point getting close to *Atheist* circa 1993. Though I will believe biography and retell you that *Psychotic Waltz* is the closest band musically. As well some *Candlemass*, or should I say, traditional heavy doom, influences shining with a nice trip back to traditional hard rock a la *Deep Purple* or *King Crimson*. To consume all these names is not a thing for getting a point about *Behind The Curtain*. The only true way is simply to check their almost one hour long debut album out, making experts reconsider once again the mastery of progressive metal musicians which is doubtlessly higher than many other bands reviewed on these pages. It is just about music, which is too complex for many standard ears. I think *Til Birth Do Us Part* is a decent reward for their whole five years struggle to upcome with something memorable, which should establish *Behind The Curtain* name among progressive metal camps of the world, if you feel a bit disappointed with too mellow bands of *Laser's Edge*, this one must be the solution.

Behind The Curtain *mgrnt.*, Claus Jensen, P.O. Box 1268, 2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark, tel/fax (45) 32676295, behind@intrumental.com, www.intrumental.com/behind

BELTANE Dionysian Blood Definitive

Surprisingly mysterious but refreshing music from Australia. I would not be so limiting to name them electronic, as they offer much more than simple boring edm, or ambient/goth-ic/whatever, based on synthetic sounds. Literally they are the main songwriter and soul of the duo – Paul Handley, and female singer Karina Eames with a weird, haunting and cold voice. Several additional musicians (guitarist and one more singing beauty) participated recording this debut five song single release, but still the main idea is these two musicians, truly charming me with their unique artistic approach to alternative electro music.

Every tune is quite special, carrying an individual character, like the opener and the song is pretty driving with oriental licks and latinic rhythm, which as it predicts we will have a very dark piece of music for another half an hour, but further on it gets much more opened to the ears, even danceable at some point. Anyway, it is not any stupid body music for your radio, it has contemplative atmosphere though. I am sure true admirers of deep cutting musical landscapes will easily make a difference between the two, and yeah – Beltane sound pretty deep digging into thy soul, and relentless thirst of the artist which lurks within. Poetic, lively, plastic, changing, sometimes hiding behind the shades, sometimes suddenly appearing in its wholeness. It is achieved within a very closely related musical tandem, between musician (Paul) and singer (Karina), like between painter and its poseur, between photographer and its model.

I am sure Beltane will cleverly grow into something huge (both musically and expressively) – they will soon be out with full-length disc, but check this out either by no means, moreover that it has a multimedia video for the *Dionysian Blood* – an anthem for plastic arts... Exceptional approach, fresh ideas and rather ok realization – wish you anything extra?

BEWITCHED Dragonflight Conquistador

Now I see why Chilean masters have nearly inked a deal with *Holy Records* few years ago! I imagined them as one of these exotic South American bands, rehashing hopeless deathriff riffs. Oh boy – what a wrong supposition! Another discovery – did *Mercyful Fate* have anything to do with doom metal in their early stage? Yes, they did! As far as *Bewitched* music is concerned! In other words – it is a step from *Mercyful Fate* to doom. But unlike many traditional and even more death/doom bands, *Bewitched* are rather unique in what they play. Label names it satanic black/doom, I would keep silent mentioning black though, and better say – dark. Music is as dark as traditional to metal roots. Some comparisons spin in my head, but I cannot (I simply fail) name it. *Tristitia*? Well, some sombre moments... *Ophthalmia*? At some point... *Pentagram*? Not that energetic... *Mercyful Fate*? Whilst being at their harshest...

No matter which bands can be associated with Chilean doomsters, it is obvious that their music deserves quite a few applauses. Superbly structured, with many unexpected turns, and great performers. Only vocalist screams a bit too out of tune here and there. Yet his singing voice is perfect, reminding me of *Serpent*. I cannot get a point just in *Rainfall*, where girl sings a song in Norwegian? Trend syndrome?? Hopefully not... If you wonder, cd includes a *Black Funeral* cover, and counts over 70 minutes all in all. Having in mind how surprisingly cool this album is, I offer you to buy it immediately, and suggest *Conquistador* to re-release their debut album (available as a limited edition on Chilean company) further on. Definitely not to miss!

Bewitched, c/o Cecilia M., San Buenaventura 3206, Villa Fray Camilo Enriquez, Santiago 24, Chile, fax (56) 26724297, steer@ndc.cl

BIFROST Mythistory Hammerheart

The third cd by *Hammerheart Records* owner *Guido*'s paganism inspired band, but no resemblance to the rest of label's pack. It is pure thrash, like their first two albums were. Switching from hardly functioning *Nazgul's Eyrle* to nowadays blooming in black *Hammerheart Bifrost* has done it finally – received at least a bit of attention with music they have been making for a long while now.

I still miss their oh so bravely defended ideas within musical realm, as that thrash they execute has less to do with paganism than pope with Satanic Bible. No, *Bifrost* should not turn into next *Skydud*, but I would love them to try more epic sound, incorporating it into their Bay Area thrash model. However, Dutch folklore might be a bit too distant from being sampled... They have short sampled intros, yet not create that feel you could identify as pagan. *Vio-Lance* or *Exodus* are rather closer to *Bifrost* instead. Mind you – *Guido* makes me think so, first of all, as his scream is rather high. Faster guitar parts have American stamp over it too. But do not miss slower episodes and vocalist's diversified narrations, since it might be that key to achieve something unique for *Bifrost*.

So far I would name their music as seeking after more accurate milieu, and in spite of it is their third cd, it still shows *Bifrost* as musicians which need their music very much. To find out the real way. Do not understand this as their underestimation. If you buy *Mythistory* you will find it pretty good, especially when it comes to structuring and metal feel. But to have such in-depth written lyrics, so much blood in veins, and rather cool design within the pages of thick cd booklet, the band must turn the wheel of thrash into traditional notes, at least a bit!! *Bifrost*, Smaragdstraat 15, 6412 SV Heerlen, The Netherlands

BLACK FUNERAL Woon of Characith Full Moon

It is a regret when a strong band moves from one style to another, even when that new approach happens to be no worse. But it is no regret when a shitty band finally realise they can not do something reasonable with music they practise for years, however hard they have been trying. That is what happened with one of the black metal starters in USA *Black Funeral*. They had truly poor imagination with both their metal albums, none of them finding a niche in noticeable record shelf. So, *Baron von Abaddon* has cut his hair, washed his corpse paint out, recalled that once he was named *Michael Ford* (he has finally found his long lost passport?!), asked his contributor from *Valefor*, *Shanna Lejeune* to join in *Black Funeral*, and here it is... so trendy these days dark ambient/industrial. Not the best, not the worst, just next in a row. Ok ok, *Baron*, ehrrr I mean *Michael* has been practising synth horror music since a long time now (remember *Darkness Enshrouded?*), so he is not a bandwagon jumper. But why the hell to cope with that old black metal monicker, I cannot understand.

It is a night side based recording which captures works through a private Characith Lunar Lodge..., bla bla bla. Let us leave it for starters, if music has a limited amount of darkness, then no press release helps to make album darker or more mysterious. Mediocre effort, and that is about it. For the masterful examples of such music listen to *Ordo Equilibrus*, or *Lastword* at least. Neither ritual feel, nor charm of voices are as profound as exposed on the classics of obscure vague music style. Both musicians are not the newcomers, thus – it could have been a way better. With another monicker I expect it to happen further on. *Black Funeral*, 3058 Dunster St., Indianapolis, IN 46227, USA, nachtteler@hotmail.com

BLOT MINE Porphyrogenesis Near Dark

They suffer a light form of HES (*Hecate Enthroned* Syndrome), but make a positive gain out of that instead of drawing in shit, like Englishmen blacksters happened to do throughout their career. *Blot Mine* is much talked about basis of three ex. *Setherial* members, with addition of another guitarist and vocalist, who have been around since 1995, and I suppose this debut was destined to be pushed to shops one year or so earlier. But what classic was, classic will remain forever. Of course, HES infected you cannot be the most innovative outfit around, neither *Blot Mine* are. If you are familiar with any *Setherial* or *Dark Funeral* freakshow, *Porphyrogenesis* music circles around that type of sound. I want to state though that *Setherial* is not a copy of *DF*, as well as *Blot Mine* is not a copy of *Setherial*. What get as a final blackmetal holocaust is a debut record of Swedish extremity, spinned by *Blot Mine*'s hand, though keeping a track of its own. As the most important note there runs plenty of *Dissection* alike riffs and atmospheres, not mentioning *Los Angered* production, so close to *Storm of The Light's Bane*, the least, I definitely fits *Blot Mine*'s music. To cut it short though, the cold feeling of *Dissection* is not as easy to catch and express, that is about sixth feel indeed... I miss your mastery, *Dissection*! Another drawback is next *Jon Nachweid* sort of vocalist, who could actually by his own note, and thus make it all sound more personal. On *Porphyrogenesis* it only makes *Blot Mine* sound sicker of HES than they actually are. Yet I am sure many freaks out there suffer from this syndrome either, so they have no troubles accepting this fact as a shark record. Neither do I. Hail Swedish masters of hellish blasphemies! By the way, it is also released as a set of 4 7" eps with 2 tracks each and ¼ of the cover artwork, which all together make a great picture on the wall. Act fast, as this weird shit on vinyl is limited to 300 hand numbered copies. *Blot Mine*, blot@hem.passagen.se

BLO.TORCH Blo.torch Wicked World

It starts with a purely *At The Gates*-ish/*NWOSDM*-ish rage of *Spanish Sun*, but ends with some more thoughts than just another melodic death band suggests in its debut cd. *Blo.Torch* hail from Netherlands, making this big with modern deathrash metal genre in the land of tulips for the first time. So, unexpected variation starts with *King of Karma*, calmer track, when with usual growls and screams are substituted with lead singing along with mellow guitar line and trippy feel to it. At first it makes one pissed to hear dm band being so far from heaviness and darkness, but after some extra spins I have realised it was worth trying. It makes *Blo.Torch* at least different from the rest of melodic heroes in some way. Let it be weird, unpopular, pretentious, but how often you get an excellent melodic death cd which could live on the same traditional ideas?

Dutch five-piece is just ok when it comes to that Scandinavian heavy metal influenced brutal music, though they know how to build it up pretty tight. The fact that there are so many releases like theirs does not make any support for *Blo.Torch*. But if I were a die hard fan of the style, I would prefer them to many average bands around. They are signed to *Wicked World* not by accident. On the other hand, I doubt *Blo.Torch* will sell tons of records as metal world is fed up with the newcomers of this style. Second reason will be that Dutchmen are pretty alternative to typical *NWOSDM*. Anyway, if you understood what I tried to talk here – check it out in your local shop, I believe music (or even separate tunes) should work on each person individually. Though there were one and only *At The Gates*, and however close some musicians might identify themselves, there will never appear someone as unique as Swedish progsters were during 1991 through 1994...

BRANDANCE Redemption (adv. preproduction tape) Double Edge

Neither electronic ambient freaks that I supposed first, nor industrial moshcore wannabes that I presumed then after these guys are. And both times my expectations were wrong, as their music turns to be awesome instead of lousy. Ok, all suppositions away, meet thy fate storyteller with eerie and evocative muzak here! Though I believe it is time to straight things up a bit: *Brandance* are next to *Type O Negative* success, and if they were pioneers with this ethereal music... Then you know what would happened. Not a blind copy though, but links are definitely with them.

I will not go on complaining, as I simply do not give a shit, as far as what I hear on this strange (every tune is half cut, and makes a total tragedy of a listening pleasure) pre-production tape do satisfies my inner ego. It apparently does, and I can even partly agree with a few reviewers who hail this band as innovators of a new genre. They name it progressive dark-wave. Huh, basically it is cold and dark *TON* (gothic) rock (meta?) with loud bass, thus measuring rhythmic, and plenty of programming jems (including wall of sound creating synth). No industrial bulps, no modern shit. They definitely have more to do with prog rock – soundwise slowly fading into the dark realms. Whistler vocalist *Sebastian* leads the ghost ride with his seductive gloomy voice, rising the whole effort two points up.

I can just imagine how their full length album (third already) sounds, when it is completely arranged, better organised and sticked together. Must be a head better than these separate cuts. That is why you should inquire about it from their label, and do not forget to check *Shadows* tape (10\$) as well as *Fear Itself* cd (15\$) Pretends to be unique.

CANGRENA Demoniak Transition American Line

Concerning geography, *American Line* has something unique to offer, presenting for one more time a band from far away country – Costa Rica. Musically they perform traditionally brutal grinding deathrash, yet recording suffers from being too thin and underproduced, whilst music brings a pretty chaotic feel, but it is not the worked out chaos of Brazilian legends *Sarcotago* or old *Sepultura*, or old *Behelit*, it is a mess of a chaos instead. Seems like *Cangrena* is one of these bands which dream about getting really brutal, but are far from that, because they have just a growling evil vocalist, whilst instrumental arsenal is far weaker and suits already mentioned deathrash styling.

Not much to add really, imagine demoband of the late 80ies which has no clue how death metal should be handled, and brutalize their thrash riffs for the hell's sake – *Cangrena* do something similar. But they could have wait a bit with the record deal, as this debut cd is not worth to compete with highly skillful bands popping up from States and especially Europe. However, *Cangrena* cd costs just 12\$, and comes with blasphemous set of lyrics (and with tons of grammar mistakes there), but this price is from their label only. *Rootoo!* *Cangrena*, P.O. Box: Lista de correos 20-50, San Pedro de Montes de Oca, Costa Rica, cangrena@hotmail.com, www.cangrena.com

CARPE TENEBRUM Mirrored Hate Painting Hammerheart

Let us face it – *Carpe Tenebrum* is solely *Astennu*'s project, where *Nagash* (or should I name him *Lax Icon* already?) does guest vocals, so it should remain and be reviewed like his project, and not a duo. Please notice how much *Astennu* has done after his move to Norway. A lucky and hard-working guy indeed. I guess all these backstabbers who were naming him as a traitor or not loyal to something, should better shut up now, and think why they needed such a shit to be talked. The new album is much less commercial and much more to the core of black metal. Anyway, it is oh so hard to avoid these *Dimmu* influences... Comparing this second output with a debut, which *Astennu* has written back in 1995, a strong movement towards intensity and extremity is observed, and there is no more such vocal compositions, and these *Ved Buens Ende* wud of vocals as in *Blood Dance*, but what concerns violent side of this Norwegian/Australian project, CT have improved quite a bit. Well, it is not a milestone in black metal, not even a bit evolutionary (unlike *Majestic Nothingness* was), pretty much in the same vein as many other bands, but if you like Nordic sound just a bit, you will shit pants of *Mirrored Hate Painting*. A bit weird is to hear reverberating imitation of blast beat, I mean such a noise like grasshoppers on. On the other hand, you can hear it on the most fastest black metal cds too, haha... So, *Carpe* have not refused drum computer (a lame decision!), and added that extra "grasshopper" sound. I am not that much enthusiastic about their use of distorted with effects narrations to fill up space between the tunes. It sort of irritates. But it is just some tiny complaints to show that my job is to criticize. A worthy buy in any case!

CATAMENIA Morning Crimson Massacre

After rather disappointing debut *Finns* have not abandoned symphonic black/death way, and still continue in the same tradition, of course standing on a bit higher level. Well, songs are yet too short with a riff or two, but no end or whatever, I cannot accept it as a sanguineous composing, it lacks blood running through thy veins! Or how can you name a song which starts promising, but after a riff or two, and any bridge it suddenly ends??? No, no, their songs do not consist of only exceptionally catchy riffs, but at least half of them are worth of the try. Like that leading melodious theme in *Passing Moment Of Twilight Time*, which sounds majestically brilliant, yet the track itself is still too short and cut too early.

Other than that, *Catamenia* sound a bit more black metal, especially vocalist *MiKa*, though with a melodic angle like theirs it is difficult to name guys as a true bm band. As well as these commercial tinges makes me smile once again. The last track (being probably the worst musically) is sung in German with *Atrocity*'s frontman doing some scream and writing the lyric. Is it the best way to sell records in Germany? Do not think so. Next to mention is a cheesy frontcover artwork, with ideas simply stolen from *Moonspell* and others. Wolves, naked girl, and wintry forest. Cannot imagine something more trendy. Ok for them to put albums one after another, but to reach a notable mastery there is still much to do for *Catamenia*. With composing especially, as this is their main trouble. I do not know – maybe a new face in composition department would do, or guys should take lessons from their unaccountable colleagues. Good luck.

CENTURION Choronzonic Chaos Gods Full Moon

Fat and massive supper with several beers (yes, today these nice guys in supermarket reduced the prices for a week or so ahead, so there is a unique chance to get drunk paying close to nothing), and I am ready for another onslaught, er... review. No, I cannot put another crappy record again – I am fed up with slugging them all down, let us better make a pleasure of a review, playing some real metal. For tonight! Hail *Centurion*! The newborn European answer to *Deicide*! It is but a compliment. How many times you have read line like this, that the band performs pure in *Deicide* vein, but it have finally been turning into just a poor copy? *Centurion* make you re-consider this suspicious thought, as we at last have the band able to compete with *Florida* satanic monster. It is as close to the original as one might get, but nevertheless – *Choronzonic Chaos Gods* is a hell of an album, finally proving *Full Moon* pushing a decent band indeed! Their demo/mod was one of the average death metal releases, heading to the "massacre pile" of dm discs, and the idea to put it on cd was probably their large mistake. It would have worked better as a demo or 7" vinyl as the most, back then.

Guns are way better in composing and sticking beats and pieces together on this debut album. Not mentioning their improved skills and feeling of a unity. Add a decent production (what is a must if you wish to push a heavy death metal record forward) – and the formula of improvement is behind you. *Centurion* are not that band to seek for innovations, they are about to slash and burn, invert and destroy, make total chaos of pathetic christian world. So meet them bravely, and spit on *Deicide* influences – *Centurion* are worth them! Check out cover artwork, made from a pool of band members' blood. Favourites: *Hail Galgula* and *Let Jesus Bleed*. Awesome! *Centurion*, c/o Wim van der Valk, Wallenbergstraat 27, 3882 HA Putten, Netherlands, tel/fax (31) 341358002

CEPHALIC CARNAGE Conforming to Abnormality Hammerheart

Marijuana and grind have something in common, at least the pot has inspired many guys to create the most crushing music they ever imagined. After so intense propaganda of green stuff in OC bio I start to believe the foursome never leave the hallucinogenic dreams, neither when you read this, nor when you listen to their cd, nor when they were recording it in studio. One could argue it is possible to make it precisely tight and catchy while stoned, but hey – why not? If it is really a kind of state guys feel emotionally up, that is fine with me. I appreciate their ability to use the aforementioned conditions. Instead of measy grindcore or deathgrind try to imagine a violent insane yet clock-light performance spread within the limited enough genre. If my mind is correct, *Cephalic Carnage* have something to do with the best *Brutal Truth* tunes, as well as South African hopefuls *Groinchum*. Music which you can firmly name as high-tech grind, where American brutal death metal wannabes should feel like immature kids. Heaviness of death metal is a right word to describe this either. Yet that is not all. Show me an interesting grind band these days, which would start and end up with blast beat and madness. CC use a whole bunch of weird slow downs, guitar and drum tricks and different samples between the tunes too. In spite that usually it does not make albums more interesting, their weird shit does not disturb that much. Slow grooves make you take a breath and expect the next grind beat with a double anomaly. Add the whole army of shinky and growly vocals during the session, and you have the whole cannabysic picture. I repeat – this one is not bad at all! A bit short for a full length – just 8 tunes and 30 minutes, yet that is good thing about not boring you too much. Try it. *Cephalic Carnage*, P.O. Box 140689, Edgewater, CO 80214, USA, tel. (1) 3033921291, cepham@juno.com

CHRISTIAN DEATH The Bible Candlelight

Well, to be honest I have never heard any of their album from the back catalogue at its fullest, but separate tunes have never evoked my real interest in *Christian Death*. Probably music is way specific to adore for my stereotypical taste. Thus nothing extraordinary I suspected with this new cd of the duo, but surprisingly it is rather spicy and positively ill-natured. Hah, reaction sounds weird, yet such is the music. Both guys go back to the bone! Guitar sound creates an atmospheric feel to music, not speaking about condoleance-free voices of *Vektor* and *Maitri* (she actually fits in the breaks among his haunting prayers, but sounds not only severe but also effective). Forget all the trendy goth ("goth") crap that the scene is soiled at the moment, forget even standard stuff from the past heroes – *Christian Death* is much purer, and absolutely not spoiled by commercial side of things. Yeah, it is not that easy to get into their specific way of sound, but after a while it looks like you have been friends with the black colour for ages, with *Christian Death* always stretching you a friendly(?) hand on the way. Yeah, this new cd consists of four live tracks, which I am

almost sure are not new, as well as eight studio compositions, yet the main concept twines round the basic theme – *The Bible*. Or better interpreted – round its inverted version, that pleases my antichristian way of thinking so well. Their lyrics, after so many years dealing with the same concept, are really source of wisdom, and even at times sound rather spontaneous they still have much thought there, and actually fress individualism not that much considered about his actions or believes. Controversial may it sound, yet I find there some things that may have helped me in my teenage years. Paradox, or self-cognition? Cool that promo cd has come with a front cover + lyrics, that is... Yes, yes this bible turns into a discovery for you either, meet the other side of gothic music! Christian Death mgmt., Tim Fraser, fax (44) 1473425701, tim.fraser@telinco.co.uk, www.christian-death.com

CLANDESTINE BLAZE Fire Burns In Our Hearts blackmetal.com

Only pure bloodlust and massive portion of hatred – that is the contents of *Northern Heritage* mastermind's own musical project, and black they are destined to remain. Not a single compromise – here we go with 100% dedication to the blackmetal spirit that was so strong in the early 90-ies. CD admit their project is a tribute to the scene's purity. So please do not miss them for another pretenders to commercial success (that this magazine is full with anyway). Yes, I totally agree with them that it is much closer to what I imagine as evil music, confronting the latest trends.

Do not expect the worst sound quality in the world, but be ready and satisfied with raw production, taking no care at fancy/shmancies. However, after a massive *Intro* I am not convinced with the following self-titled tune. It sort of reminds me these evil-bm starters with their demos. Too standard, sort of once-heard-and-forgotten tune. And vocalist is awfully mediocre. But then something turns upside down within this record, and they start to present fairly interesting material, with a hellish primordial strive for melody, that is absent on the opening cut. Just a reminder – *Dardrone*, *Burzum* (on occasional slower moments) of the early years. That says it all. No stupid clowning, but music in the vein of the past. I am sure that some spirits are still worshipping this sort of black massmurder... Or how should I comment the satanic plague that *Clandestine Blaze* put along with their evil message?

This was initially out on vinyl by *Northern Heritage*. In 200 copies, and surely sold out quickly. Then thanks to American label some more souls will hear the barbaric message from Finland, and you will read about them right here either... I hope though that this cd edition will not make them less underground than they want to be. But please ask the band before sending any interview questions, since it might be rejected at once. *Northern Heritage/Clandestine Blaze*, PL 21, 15141 Lahli, Finland, clandestineblaze@hotmail.com

CLOCKWORK Surface Tension Sensory

Not easy to disagree with a press release when 20-22 years old guys perform emotionally advanced music, still not afraid to experiment and breath the air they think is right: *original blend of symphonic rock and technical metal, melodic and highly memorable*. Well, I am not so sure about the latter, as I always find progressive heavy stuff a bit complex to sing along, yet if it is listened to 2-3 times a day, then why not. To tell the truth, I have no time for so intense audio lessons with every new cd I get, but it does not mean *Clockwork* is a bad band. *Clockwork* do not invent any new bike or motorcycle here, they rather keep the long time established rules (classical training at *Berklee College* means something, isn't it?) – fans of *Rush*, *Dream Theater*, *Fates Warning*, even *Queen* and alike should easily agree with that. At some point their compositions might seem slightly too much radio friendly, or too lightly arranged, but that is only one side of the coin, since the other one has that firm progressive feel to it: pretty groovy, melodious and pulsating for the most part. I am not that positive about *Douglas Gillin*'s voice, or to say more precisely – with his high-pitch, which (in my humble opinion) at times destroys that ticking order of *Clockwork*. Thus I enjoy much more their instrumentals *East of Knowing*, or even better *The Convolution Box*. To cut it short – if you feel a lack for a cool progressive music, here is the answer. Forget all daddies rehashing the same riffs again and again, and take a look at the younger generation, with fresh heads and healthy musical delivery. *Clockwork*, 219 Canford Dr., Broomall, PA 19008, USA, clockwork_music@yahoo.com, www.netti.nl/~japi

COALESCE 0:12 Revolution In Just Listening Relapse

Since hardcore is not listed in my favourite styles of music, I can occasionally get acquainted with the recent albums in that genre. *Coalesce* is yet slightly familiar, I had their 1995's ep *002* reviewed in one of previous issues. But the band has been incredibly productive ever since, so the dozen of records later they are back on *Leda Takas*, still recognisable for their ultra heavy message and ultimate psychotic song-writing. Sort of metal/core which hardly fits these pages. Their bent to recant (and the last) era of *Brutal Truth* is painfully evident, you know all these psychedelic tunes *Liker* and co. have been practising to fuck up their otherwise great grind lessons. So, imagine a band digging even deeper into weird shit with disarmonic distorted riffs, and close to madman's visions musical lines to round up the sick session. I am sure these soundscapes are possible to reach just for freaks, not for typical guys like you and me. Or then, if such psyched out projects are so popular in the States, maybe that country is really gone crazy.

No no, I am fine with this shit, I do not act & preach like boy do not dare listen to this, this is dangerous for your brain tissue. But there should be a reason to explain their mutated

wish to write completely fucked up riffs, which turn into anti-music, in the frames of heavy as stamroller metal/core. Imagine what kind of hell their shows should be... like teenies fighting and raging all the set through, and then going to the streets murdering and raping around... I do not know, their music makes me think that way. Must hail *Relapse* though for using great modern technologies to make an inlay booklet look exceptional. And wonder if this nine-tracker is a full-length, or just maxi cd? Less than 24 minutes of nated. *Coalesce*, P.O. Box 11543, Kansas City, MO 64138, USA, daskew@gnl.com, shigram@aol.com

CON ANIMA The Book Of Riddles Scarlet

Young but growing Italian label puts the new aces on the track of music business. One of them is definitely *Con Anima*, cold and vicious gothic metal musicians with *S. Danza Culto* (aka *Culto Culto* – ex. singer & bass player of *Mayhem* from 1991, and leader of *Shadow Dancers*) in the forefront, who takes care on male lead vocals on an entire album. I do not want to push it as his band, side-project or whatever though, as it is not. Just the fact itself is worth interest, in my humble opinion.

However, trio is based upon *Amor*, who performs all instruments and sings either, beside composing the music; and mean *Embla*, who adds some solid female voices here and there. I have a positive view towards their songs, and six *Interludio*'s performed on *The Book of Riddles*, with exception in *The Angel of Melancholy*, since it seems to me pretty much emotional and out of context. This charge of feelings put into gothic music makes me confused. But the rest of stuff is really different – gloomy, melancholic and very suicidal at times. Like bio bravely notices, there is some kind of gothic heavy metal going on here, and it really is about it – goth not appealing to doom or death, but heavy metal. Maybe that is a hook to keep the whole thing a bit away from the blackest streams of gothic.

Yet white make-up painted and life denying colleague will surely spend some freaky hours with debut cd of Norwegian project – moods turns especially negative towards the end of this cd. I would prefer it to be as misanthropic as *The Riddle* tune is. Intermixes help to keep up that atmosphere as well. To sum it up, *The Book of Riddles* is not that next groundbreaking cd, but surely one to take a listen to and keep in mind for future checkings. Label guys are once again right that it is far from the later mainstream trend and commercial angle. *Con Anima* will not sell tons of cds, but they will definitely find true fans since music they perform is just for lonely souls, not for the masses. *Skol*

CORPORATION 187 Subliminal Fear Wicked World

What a heck is going on?! I think it is *The Haunted* to blame for this new thrash wave, with completely fucked up vocalist. Damn, it is so annoying to hear poltantly great band, which brings but excellent instrumental layer, and totally ruins that solid metal picture with some fucking poor hardcore guy at the mic! Yeah, my expectations were nothing else but to hear hardcore riff on the first track's 10th or so second, yet the thrash wave kept rolling on and on... Reminding a bit the last *At The Gates* album... but vocally having a so bad excuse. I cannot stand these lame screamers who would better suit some who roars louder having a good time in *WIC* competition, yet have nothing to do with thrash metal at all! No no and once again – no, I would never count it as the style we all loved in eighties. It is so much different from that. Right, it is modern metal music, but that does not say it all. Modern is sort of amorphous description, yet with *Corporation 187* it gets purely negative meaning, at least in my scale of rating. Gas, I would really love to shut this pissed Swedish guy up, and listen to musical refreshment alone. Or imagine how they would sound if *Chuck Billy* or *Tom Araya* (in his early metal years) would add their steel of a voice... Aye, *Corporation 187* is said to be the *Slayer* cover band in the past, and they still adore these metal gods. Neat riff variation, looking as a Swiss coked drummer, and massive leads prove them to be fairly skilled musicians. They could add some more effort to build an own character of songs, but otherwise it is not difficult to hear that basic foundation is already present in this debut record. Ok, at least it is not for some veterans, so kids – run and buy your next-to-favourite metal cd, I think *Wicked World* is a fair label to make the band grow in a few months or so.

CREST OF DARKNESS The Ogress Listenbia

Ingar Arntsen and his murderous crew have come to another point at creating horror dark metal, naturally progressing since their debut *HNF* album few years back. I would wonder if it were the same type of death/black really, instead of that *Crest of Darkness* have taken another option, and have almost succeeded in adding another dimension to their brand of heavy music. Listening to the opener *Eucharist* or very *Reference* one massive innovation is heard – a very sick and dark double blast attack, and an almost industrial (with *trash*, as press sheet named *Ingar's* vocals?) atmosphere respectively. Thus, no labeling on *CoD* music, like this is death, and this one is black, a feature that frontman wants to avoid I believe. In his own words yet, *I do feel that Crest of Darkness is a part of the Norwegian black metal scene in many ways* – you cannot but agree, as it partly requires your darkest feelings to be absorbed with fast punchy music. On the other hand, try to recollect a previous record, which was full of other influences, more or less metal-tinged. So this one is not far from that, with most noticeable aggressive industrial/thrash point, as memorised on the second album by Canadian *Inner Thought*. *Ingar* adds: *I would like to think that we incorporate new sounds that give us somekind of personality*. In my humble opinion, *The Ogress* is not a step ahead of time, like

I said – not yet another dimension, but who is that genius to add one more dimension with every new record? Every second disc is pretty genius too, so *Crest of Darkness* might be that groundbreaking in their continuous adventures within horror based soundlines. Keep an ear opened, and your batch of \$\$ ready to grab this compact disc. Dedicated to female mass murderer *Belle Gunnes* (read about her in *Inhotep Presents*). *Crest of Darkness*, c/o Ingar Arntsen, Ludvig Skattumstg. 28C, N-2800 Gjøvik, Norway, tel. (47) 61175845, fax (47) 61188222, http://home.c2i.net/gdwar/cod

THE CROWN Deathrace King Metal Blade

It would be an album of hit killer songs without any fillers, if it consisted of such cool intense fucks as first four numbers of this cd. Yes, then I would totally praise the new *The Crown* record, just like their press sheet offers to do. But what the hell is that *Vengeance* about? Just good old rock'n'roll, which is not bad whatsoever, but puts the whole record to another category. It is not that fury of bludgeoning *Deathexplosion* or intense thrashy fucker *Executioner*. I do think rock'n'roll, as hard and flat as it is accomplished due to death metal production, still makes the track a filler, between these blasting attacks. Blast blast and fucking blast – that makes *The Crown* cool, and not groovy riffs in between.

It would really do better without several tunes, even though then total timing would count just 40 minutes. Ok, let us not forget that *Hell Is Here* was even more diverse and headbanger-friendly, most of the disc offering just groovy attacks. So to say, they have stepped forward in the regions of brutality, abandoning any allusion to new wave sound, and hell yeah – sköl to them for that! Do not expect here next *Entombed* either – so-called rock'n'roll has a more figurative meaning here. If you hate anything out of death metal, be sure to obtain this record by no means – it breathes of death metal. Comparing once again to their previous album, I hear more details keen on last *At The Gates* album; or it is *Tampa* himself who contributes with several guest screams on this cd, that forces me to notice that? Anyway, good *ATG* influence is always an honour to notice, so take my word into the brains here! Ah, my spine shivers every time I recognize his ultimate scream... Oh yeah, and I wish you better luck discovering where sir *Mika Luthren* yells on this cd – I failed to catch it.

I can again be annoying and tell that their lyrics sound slightly weird to me (how can Satan be revolution? Revolute – yes, but not revolution...), but it is minor points of personal taste. To cut it short, the best I have ever heard from this Swedish hardcore, and headbanging death metal paradise indeed! Highway to hell.

CRYOGENIC Celephais Solistidium

Let us believe the bio and cite that *Cryogenic* is one of the pioneering german bm bands, laying the roots in early 1993. Hum, I would never believe that group with such a monicker could play anything else than brutal death, yet their debut cd proves me wrong. It is neither brutal nor that intense nor depressing. On the contrary, six guys compose in a complex but rather atmospheric way, making me shuttle them into modern black metal category. Concerning the listenability and skills of this album – well, it has better and worse sides, but all in all ends up to be pretty ok. I know, definitely know that such description usually means that reviewer forgets about the album as soon as he is done with a review, and even let me say this: I am not so sure I will listen to *Celephais* after that. There are too much of new releases to pay attention to every single average or ok sounding cd. On the other hand, *Cryogenic* write not a shitty music, they are not comedians and that might be the reason to check this out.

I choose *Wanders* and *Die Rueckkehr* – one of the first album tunes, but I suppose they are written lately, as potential there is much bigger than on the next part of the cd. As I know the band included some older demo tunes, which are not so spectacular. Again it is the part of today's business – to have a full-length instead of a new demo or mini album. In my opinion, it would have worked better that way. To cut it short – I do believe *Cryogenic* will fix some minds, and will not remain just promising. They need to discover yet more memorable melodies, to change the crappy logo and get more angry or cruel at times (especially vocalist *Svert*). Female voice has nothing to do with making me puke though. Is it the production to blame? *Cryogenic*, Leo Rasche, Witzlebenstrasse 12a, 14067 Berlin, Germany, tel. (49) 3032606302, fax (49) 303232603

CRYPTIC REVELATION The Truth Is Out There Deathiron

A title of this release is not conducting you? It should point the direction towards the unknown, towards supernatural, towards the *X-Files*... Indeed the concept of Japanese four-piece is unusual for the metal scene. In their own words, they want to find answers to paranormal phenomena, even the truth sometimes might be non-existent. Well, *Hyponosis* also comes to mind, yet *Cryptic Revelation* are less fantasy-oriented, and base their lyrics on true, confirmed stories. That is about the concept, yet the music of five tracker comes as the biggest surprise – excellent brutal death metal with purey American twist and sort of composing. They definitely are worshippers of *Horndon* school, it goes without any mention about it in biography. It claims though that *Deathiron* (that was their name until recently) have been around since 1991 (I), and always paying respect to Florida. On their 1995 demo *Cryptomnesia* guys were experimenting with more technical side of death metal, yet then they turned much thicker and tougher. I still hear *Brutality* link here and there, what sounds cool in any case! But the main idea is your cruel brutal crushing way throughout the set, with low guttural torture of vocalist *Yoshinari* (he desperat-

ly screams from time to another as well), and typically *American slow downs*, which could be slightly shorter.

I am surprised by their highly skilled performances, by that great sound they got in local *Osakan* studio, and by excellent professional job they have accomplished with cd layout. Typically Japanese – with precision and quality. I hesitate to name it a self-released mod, it looks too good for that matter. The second great Japanese death metal band after *Intense Basium* – sign them, check them, listen to them on the *Armed Forces* compilation cd, finally! *Cryptic Revelation mgmt.*, Dai Katayama, 14 Nishiyada, Kuwana, Mie 511-0056, Japan, tel./fax (81) 594215607, sommrag@aol.com

CYBELE Songs Of Soli Head Not Found

After hitting the infamous *Wave Gothic Treffen* festival last year, ambitious females have done it once again. Their return mod marks six new songs, the opener *They Named It Her Curse* being just a short introductory like arrangement. The next five tunes show *Cybele* as rather improved and balanced goth rock band with melancholic nuance. My problem with their 1997's *Brightly Blackhearted* debut was vocal manners, and I found girl to be slightly out of tune. That drone is gone together with a singer, since *Hilke Wahl* is responsible for this department now, and her sense with music is much better, as far as I am concerned. Yep, she does not have a very extravagant voice, unlike her predecessor, but simply she invokes the same amount of movements in the brain. I mean *Hilke* fits musical image with her performance. I recommend this mod for gothic lovers, for people sick of brutal metal, or for these who are bored with mainstream and want some much more emotional musical experience for their ears. It is not as weird as quite a few nowadays highly rated goth bands, so it should be a great introduction to music, which is named as rock yet with a difference, making it alternative to alternative either. Funny, but one guitar riff in *My Precious Distraction* reminds me black metal and latest *Ulver*. Ok, hopefully *Metalion* will squeeze the shit out of the quintet, taking them under pressure to write and produce even better second album. At least this pre-tracker makes me suppose he will. Keep it up, girls. *Cybele*, c/o Vidar Rås Jensen, Redstuvn, 17, 0572 Oslo, Norway, tel. (47) 22384306, (47) 23174880, vidar@artlight.no

DAKRA Inner Wastelands Scarlet

Short *Dakra* biography in a press sheet lists eight glorious bands, starting with *Black Sabbath* and ending with *My Dying Bride*, as their influences, which is but a joke, as far as I am concerned. They do not have a single reason to be compared to these grands of metal. It is an insult to the scene actually! Moreover that biography has basically no other purpose than to place *Dakra* among the scenes finest. I wonder if their cds come with these crappy stickers in the vein of... on there? One particular moment of music is worth mentioning – *Armor Vitz* *Mors* chorus, where *Eva* finally makes her operatic voice fill to guitar riffs, and *William's* growl suddenly fits it all either. It is enjoyable and tends to stay in memory for a while, unlike the rest of *Inner Wastelands*. The whole effort is weak, thrash-rate gothic metal, with the most typical riffs, thousand of times heard structures, and keyboards making me puke, heavily! On the top of it all we have so loud screams of *Eva*, as if she was live on stage. C'mon, you are perfectly heard (I have to turn down my volume, hehe) without these extra decibels. This Italian temperament does not work though, as vocal melodies are out of place quite often and does not sound like "the opposition to the standard gothic acts". I really think it is about "nothing special" term which should be used for *Dakra*. But not for press sheet, hehe. Meant probably for kids who have grown up with commercialized gothic metal, which in fact has nothing to do with real goth music. More heaviness and growls next time, Italian newcomers.

DARK FUNERAL Teach Children To Worship Satan No Fashion

Long long wait has given its fruits, eventually. They have been promising to teach their children for a while now, and what kids do when they are promised something? They certainly cannot wait to get that promised thing! Thus it should be heaven (hell, that is) for the *Dark Funeral* fans. Moreover that five-song mod features one extra video track of the only tune, written by the band for this release – *An Apprentice of Satan*. Why shouldn't we start with it, eh? Press sheet has some reason to name it as one of the better *Dark Funeral* tunes ever. Purely confirming their trademark style, known from the past, yet hellish and awe-inspiring. Video itself is a standard live shootage: metal, fire-breathing, devil's presence and pig heads, though looks fine due to its simplicity and traditional approach.

And then amusement passes onto cover tunes, that Swedes are teaching their children with. The band states in the bio that their intention was just to show their old time favourites and influences, not pretending to recreate the originals as they were. It is not easy to predict that listening to their own versions. In my humble opinion, *Sodom* tune is chosen from their worst album, yet *Remember the Fallen* is probably the best song on that album. Anyway, it was not impressed me, as well as *Emperor Magus Caligula's* voice on *Dead Skin Mask*. In spite of this, *Slayer* charm is certainly touched musically, rhythmically and soundwise. Good job. *The Trail* was a tune that caught me getting into for the longest time, due to its difference from the original. But in a while I started to enjoy it pretty much, appreciating that own feel I got with *Dark Funeral*. And the closing cover is *Pagan Fears*, my all time *Mayhem* favourite, and definitely the brilliant of this mod. Unlike with *Slayer*, here *Caligula* makes his best effort, getting quite close to *Attilia's* voice – intriguing surprise! Technically they are gorgeous with it too. So yeah, *Dark Funeral* are sort of exposing the metal to kids, thus being not that much themselves, but surely proving their mastery.

In spite of some variation, Dark Funeral, P.O. Box 4268, S-102 66 Stockholm, Sweden, dark-f@algonet.se

DARKTHRONE Ravishing Grimness Moonfog

If you give a shit on this album, you are more than welcome to return this *Ledo Takas* copy at my address, and your effort will be completely refunded. Then you are my enemies either. You are not allowed to believe in blackmetal II *Ravishing Grimness* is just another record for you.

It is a milestone of blackmetal genre, the most wanted and most wanted release in last couple of years, which does not disappoint at any stage. Moreover - it is THE blackmetal album of 1999, simply putting things into places, notifying and confirming the essence of unholy musical expression. It makes reconsider the term and probably speak about current modern artists as non-blackmetal, paying all due to forefathers of the genre in its most primitive, unique and captivating sense. Because *Ravishing Grimness* is all about it - pure fucking amagadon, or as they name it themselves - true blackmetal unlimited! Hehe, sounds like a bit of a joke really, as it is not 1993 anymore, yet the spirit of black blood runs rapidly through the veins of *Fenriz* and *Nocturno Culto*, that is out of a doubt Grim evil enchanting furious deathly darkened lifeless, and to the fucking core of metal! Six tunes which easily tops the band above the rest of the scene in a single spin. Experience that is impossible to forget.

A shame would be to discuss every tune of this masterpiece of an album, but let me tell that the letter part of *Lifeless*, the first riff (well, actually it seems like the only one either, hehe) of *The Beast* and the ending fade of *Across The Vacuum* are some unerasable moments for the genre's classics collection. *Darkthrone* hail the tradition and still deliver some gems never experienced by any other blackmetal band. Their feel for harmony and melodiousness is blasphemous, as you cannot stop naming them ugly! And this is but a compliment. Must admit that *Ravishing Grimness* is probably the easiest acceptable *Darkthrone* disc, what comes as a slight surprise. Though it shows the experience and maturity of artists. *Nocturno Culto* and *Fenriz* are here to show how cult blackmetal must be played after experiencing different stages for more than 10 years now. If most of *Darkthrone*'s albums were so unexpected by their everchanging moods, production levels and totally insane surroundings, so now it is purely music that counts most. Hell *Darkthrone*! I wait for a followup next year.

DAWN OF RELIC One Night In Carcosa Wicked World

Suomi musicians definitely have problems with attiring their listeners interested, since the music executed on this debut album is way too generic for the subgenre they perform. Named as dark metal, it has actually nothing to do with masters of mentioned style like *Deinonychus* or *Bethlehem*. Press sheet could easily put a 'melodic death/heavy/black' trademark on *Dawn of Relic*, yet is it a good selling point, heh? No, it is not, as far as I am concerned, since this metal subculture has come to an end much records ago, and in my clumsiest opinion there is no point to rehash the same riffs again and again.

Unfortunately Finns do, and make it technically ok. However, it cannot help them to be original in the streams of metal grooves. My biggest problem is vocal performance - I start to hate all these screams from the very moment they appear. More like it is DoR trouble, as they still do not have a permanent vocalist, so all screams are recorded by couple of session guys. Let me fly with my imagination - this record could be a way better with some death metal growl, probably some singing touches... Why to limit oneself to boring (Finnish) scream cliché? Thankfully, several tunes are left without vocals at all, that is - instrumental. Then you can easily notice all their guitar structures, so similar to other performers around. Yep, it is not just about vocals used, it is about the whole album, which remains too mediocre in my ears. After spinning it for 5 times I still cannot remember any memorable tune or melody - everything is so similar, or were used by other bands in the past... *Lovecraft* influenced concept is rather ok, but it obviously loses half the charm when music is far from going hand in hand with concept. Where is their darkness of sound? 13 points down in my WWR.

DEAD SILENT SLUMBER Entombed In The Midnight Hour Hammerhead

One more drum computer based one man project, and the question is if media and listeners can still accept it as being such, since in a stream of time reputation of such projects has incredibly decreased. Label press sheet still beats the fists with no mercy claiming that it is one of the best one man newcomer bands, destined to be developed in the years to come, and not to stay one time shot at all. Listening to this debut I must agree that they have a reason to speak in a so anthused way. About the future.

Ok, time to reveal all cards here - *Jens Ryden*, man responsible for Swedish *Nagitar* vocals, is in charge of *Dead Silent Slumber*, his favourite pet, as he likes to name it. He has been playing with that small creature for a couple of years, and then it grew more seriously, as a 4 track promo tape *Jens* has put, immediately got label attention. Here we go with the result - modern death metal with Swedish spirit in it, and fairly dark soundscapes around. His voice is probably the weaker point, since the frontman fits typical death screamer/growler, yet has nothing personal. Compositions are rather groovy, usually mid-tempoed and spiced with synth mysticism. I feel *Samael* touch here and there too. Yet surprised about numerous guitar leads, not just because they fit this music, but also that *Jens* is so good at it. Musically he is responsible for bass and synth as well. Drum sound is carefully pooled to smell of live drummer taking the action. Visually the gifted artist has done the whole design and textures of the album, topped with self-drawn logo and

front cover! Believe me, if my words do not convince, then album layout must after you take a look at it! However, music remains the most important, and I think *Jens* shall work a bit more to make it really exceptional, not just good, as it happens with *Entombed In The Midnight Hour*. *Dead Silent Slumber*, c/o Jens Ryden, Svanvarg, 3 (2tr), 913 35 Holsund, Sweden, fax (46) 90192264, deads@hotmail.com

DEATHKIDS Bleeding & Praying Sonic Wave

The shocking value of the cd visuals is cooled down by typical music, in a major way. However, this three-piece is an exceptional case in the whole death metal industry - personally me has never experienced a band which consists of two kids and their father, bursting out with satanic and blood-thirsty messages throughout the nine-tracker, *Ken Wootton Sr* must be totally insane to keep this project going, as he is so politically wrong father to the sick ill-natured American society. What you usually hear from your parents? That music you listen is noisy, stupid, crappy. Then you would love to have such father as *Deathkids*' bass player! Their mother/wife should be proud of the 'family business' either. Some inlay pictures yet seem a bit too theatrical to me, with just a symbolic meaning and quite average execution. Though lyrics and music itself pretend to be of a very rude towards humanity kind, definitely influenced by American death metal standard. By the way, one lyrical contribution comes also from well-known satanic philosopher and prisoner *Lord Slayer*.

Thus you may say their riffs and structures are a disappointment for me, especially having in mind that guys have got a decent producer skills of *Alex Parris* (*Testament*) to register this album. It is plain and simple death metal, with many slow down, and not that much intensity indeed. Forget *Morbid Angel* middle tempo gems, this one is much worse here. If not a low tuned production, I guess *Bleeding & Praying* would sound quite weak. Yet *Harley* has a decent growl in his guts, sometimes doubled with an utter scream (nonetheless it reminds *Deicide* due to that). I still cannot get a point if my cd-r copies and laser-printed inlays are just a promotional trick, or *Sonic Wave* has decided to release it this way. Write them and ask for sure, since to pay 12\$ for cd-r sounds too overpaid... *Deathkids*, P.O. Box 139, Lindenhurst, NY 11757, USA. tel. (1) 5169578179, deathkids66@hotmail.com

DEATH OF MILLIONS Frozen Dies Irae

American fellas trying to be sick. Well, at least their vocalist has something to say concerning killing, raping and other niceities. Still he thinks and greets his girlfriend, so there is a ray of hope after all... I mean, he is not that serial killer *Death Of Millions* lyrics may suggest. As far as sick mind is concerned, *Chuck* has enough guts to compete with *Chris Barnes* at his *Carnibal Corpse* era. It gets slightly repetitive in 9th or 10th chapter, but who cares! Just brutal and thick truth avoiding any other type of lyrics. Death metal! Actually, *Majestic Black* is of a great difference from the rest lyrically, with much more personal feel to it, making a vast contrast with the rest. Pretty weird, I would say.

Ok, music. American death metal. Brutal, choppy, a bit underproduced and that is why - raw and violent. Though I would love to hear guitars in a louder way, to feel that oppression, to really feel standing in front of it. To say the truth, their riffs are slightly too much straightforward for me, but *Death Of Millions* doubtlessly have very good moments either. To name it right - they are still growing to work out a neat monolithic sound and heavy-weighted attack. Or imagine a cross between *Carnibal Corpse* and *Morbid Skull* with weaker impact, unfortunately. I still enjoy vocalists *Chuck*'s variation with his high scream and deep growl, enriched with some narrative (oh so sick) monologues. 51 minutes cd comes in digipack edition (*Dies Irae* are masters to make it look brilliant!), and includes *Twisted Sister* cover as well. Besides, it has a great inside pictures with ruined castle walls, which makes it different from the rest of US death metal albums' visuals. You can order the cd from *Ledo Takas* for 16\$. *Death Of Millions*, P.O. Box 33367, Austin, TX 78764-3367, USA

DECAYED The Book Of Darkness Drakkar

Experienced musicians, almost veterans of the Portuguese blackmetal scene have approached with a new cd that contains over 70 minutes of their and not only their music. Strangely, the 'main' album recordings date back to 1997, and I have no idea why it was not released until now. Moreover that *Decayed* has always been active with several 'smaller' releases (7" ep, split cd). Beside it, there are plenty of cover tunes, which are recently registered. Ok, not to leave them so quickly, I must admit that just a few covers sound really good, others are pretty lousy - especially awfully unlight version of *A Call From The Grave*. I am sure *Quorthon* would immediately sue them if he had heard that... I think that before covering any tune in the world you must make sure that every part is repeated correctly... *AC/DC* together with *Death* or *Celtic Frost* covers sounds at least weird.

Now the main album, which actually is a concept story of antichristian kind about the dark side, where even music is related within. Probably the best thing here is their old way of black thrashing metal. Even quite primitive and not that much impressing, but really ok when it comes to the genre's standard. Cool that three-piece do not avoid blast beat, unlike their music of previous 7" ep might suggest, so it quickly gets more varied and alive on that long run. Traditionally raw and unpolished sound, dirty atmosphere - you know it all perfectly. *Decayed* must be proud of their old school influences. Check out the photo session a la 80-ies and it will once again prove that the band is about the true

metal spirit. Believe me, they have something to blaspheme about the church either, even though there is nothing amazing in their bursting dark poems. See yourselves if it is a pleasurable digestion. *Decayed*, 5a S. Jose, R. L. Camoes, At. Arcos, Penado, 2775-235 Parede, Portugal, sig-nofevil@rocketmail.com

DEEDS OF FLESH Path of the Weakening (adv.) Unique Leader

I have never liked the idea to review just a sample cd, whilst the actual album has three as much music than that. Yet the new *Deeds Of Flesh* label staff thinks different, and gives me a three track pre-taster of what has turned to be the real development of naturally brutal death metal. If you would read my review of *Trading Pieces*, it ironically mentions that *Deeds Of Flesh* is a band with one-dimensional songs structure. Ha, so now I am really careful, especially that I do not possess the entire recording. Ok, when it comes to these three tunes, namely *Summarily Killed*, *Sense of The Diabolic*, and *A Violent God*, they are fairly good. Nothing surprisingly new, if you might have expected at least any changes within American deathmetal frame. It is basically heard thousands of times already. That *Morbid Angel* feel circa 1991 was a new thing for me, especially in the closing tune, invoking a decadent sick feel to that slow menacing yet brutal music. But *Deeds Of Flesh* have passed over a new level of uniting their extreme visions, so this new release truly shows them as better musicians, tighter packed band, and it ends up in consumer paying with no regret for the final product. Expecting a high-class deathmetal you never get disappointed with this quality. I do not care if it is standard as far as music convinces me.

By the way, this time guys have finally got some fucking neat artist to cover their front - it convinces them to be precise not only musically, at last. Argh, take a wild guess if the rest of this is as convincing as three tracks. I hope so. Available for 16\$ (USA) / 17\$ from their label. Ask for back catalogue, and three types of shirts too. *Deeds Of Flesh*, www.deedsofflesh.com

DEEPSKIN Judas (adv.)

Phewwww... It is anything but not the music I expected from the founder of *Moonspell*. Especially when he left the Portuguese heroes, being unsatisfied with the new direction of these modern metallers... As if he has been longing for more folksy/majestic music back then. Well, a few years have passed ever since, and so much talked about new project of *Ares* has got completely different shape, in fact stepping much further into mainstream spheres, than *Moonspell* themselves. That is the basic disappointment or the loss of hope in his choice, if you want. It all ends up being plainly plastic-go-happy sort of music, wrapped in dark artistic visuals. But that is of second importance, and me basically do not give a fuck since the music is uninspired. *Ares* even abandoned his bass guitar, now turning into a vocalist of questionable skill. As well he takes care over the samples, which prevail on *Judas*. Yep, another electronics stuffed heavy record, but to name it metal would be an exaggeration. It is even far from the darkened feel that other innovators of modern means (*Samael*, *Septic Flesh*, *Tiamat*) keep searching for. The debut record clocks in 32 minutes, what is not enough for this sort of music, if anybody takes my opinion into consideration. *Deepskin* message simply needs a reparation and thicker impulse, to avoid being thrown into the deepest corner of mainstream rock music. I just wonder if mass media will be able to push them on successfully, and make kids adoring the new-born gothic (?) industrial/metal (?) star. But it is really a bad dad idea that make the masses stuck to one or another candy? I highly doubt that. Just make your own mind before being influenced by big names. *Torre mgmt.*, Joao Paulo Pina, Rua do Jasmin, 44, 2645-530 Alcabadeira, Portugal, tel. (351) 214649110, fax (351) 214649111, torre.mgmt@mail.telapac.pt

DEMENTOR The Art Of Blasphemy Qabalah

Although Slovak death metal is brain-blowing and gut-expanding, I cannot enjoy it as much as *Krabathor* or *Vader*. Memorability of tunes is missing, so that is why album sounds like one long cannoda. The style which is more widespread in the States, refusing any melodies or tears. No timeout, no improvisation. In fact one composition is much different, and that is keyboard intermezzo *Requiem To The Cursed Lust*, as if dividing two imaginable sides of the record. For me it sounds too diverse from the rest of the album, a bit too weird to include with these shockingly ultrasongs. You will not find an American band playing a song like this on otherwise brutal cd. So, it must admit *Dementor* are Slovak four-piece? I should dignify their common effort achieved, since guys are damn tight in performance, and get a highest grade for that. Anyway, I wish them as memorable composing as *Krabathor* manage to achieve. On the other hand, *Dementor* might want that blasting American style, and consciously avoid any similarities to harmony or tunelessness. Keyboard pause in the middle seems more than enough for them. Since vocals of the stageman/guitarist *Rene* are slightly monotonous, I can but to draw a line with their lyrical thematics. Basically it develops old poor story of Jesus: how to destroy him... I am not against it, but after all it does not bring any memorable message as well... And final sign of their straight-forward attitude is front cover picture, with a pope eating the guts of christ. Looks too funny and uninteresting. Well, it has a figurative meaning too, but looks too realistic.

Ten tunes fit in 32 minutes easily, and that indicates once again how fast they can do it. Are you so fast deciding to buy this cd or not? *Dementor*, c/o Rene Blahusik, Vajanského 154, 02001 Puchov, Slovakia, fax (421) 825612710

DENIAL OF GOD Klabautermann Hammerhead

Named as absolutely cult, I still remember their mod'95 to be more typical than outstanding piece of black metal, which carried pretty lousy production back then. This new (still mini) album, which has been in works for good several years, if not more - due to unstopable caravan of problems within the line-up and such, is finally out in the market, delivering an acoustic instrumental *Stormslet*, two new songs, and one re-recorded track. Not that much after four years of silence, if you ask me, but it is fairly representative, and brings serious hopes that they will grow into a deadly venomous dose, finally. Yes, first full-length *Horror Metal* is promised in a not so distant future. I just wonder which song of the two is more fitting their recent style - faster blastbeat ridden yet melodious title track, or old school thrashy piece like *Black Horror Metal*? Anyway, they manage to combine both streams rather technically and create a common sound of *Denial Of God*, what is but a compliment. Long in work, four tracker acts now as a taster of what is yet to come, or maybe a reminder that Danish blackers are still alive, and are as evil as ever before. Finally, this new recording brings the band much better produced, that combines both aggressivity of raw blackmetal and ability to hear everything what goes on in the recording. No doubt that they have grown as musicians as well. So, I would still prefer to be careful, and start praising *Denial Of God* if they deliver no less armageddonish new album. So far they have something to offer. If 19 minutes mod is enough for you. Comes as digipack cd, as well as a limited edition picture 10" lp. Do not miss it then! *Denial Of God*, c/o Azter, Jørgensgard 49B, 1-4, DK 6400 Sønderborg, Denmark, tel. (45) 74436180, vampyr@ge2net.dk

DEPRESSION Chronische Depression Deadly Art

Chronical pathology for death/grind - that is the craving of two-piece German band, which has been diagnosing for blood and guts for more than ten years now. Those familiar with German death/grind school will quickly get a point if I mention *Blood, Gut, Dead* and bands like these, amusing the scene some 5-8 years ago. *Depression* was one of them too, but their creative abilities were still under development back then. In spite of that, bunch of demo and a vinyl releases they have been putting ever since though. Well, *Chronische Depression* is sort of their debut album, if split cd with *Agathocles* and split 10" lp with *Rot* are considered as just pre-tasters. And if you agree that full-length album can consist of half new material, and half-old stuff. No matter. It is totally insane brutal metal music, tearing bits and pieces of human body away. I cannot pass comparing this record to other grinding death bands that I have heard, and guess what - *Depression* truly rule over the heroes of the past! Maybe their down-tuned yet clear and heavy sound makes me banging that head in surprise? There is definitely more about brutality than average 90-ies grinding metal crew could offer. This issue links them to *Morician* for that matter, no surprise that they cover *Bloodcraving* with a live drummer, by the way! Grinding music in general has a lack of power; that item is basically pissing me off in other cases. So now I have a record where brutality and aggression are the keywords. Gut, meine liebe. Aye, so this record has ten bonus tracks taken from all ten previous releases by the band, simply retrospectively their entire career. Old songs surely do not bare that same class or a decent sound, and thus it gets a bit repetitive and not so good for the end, but in general this music is quite classic for the style's admirers. Cd costs 20DM or 13\$ from the label. Lp version coming later in spring. *Depression*, Kai Sattaraku, Nervenstrasse 9, 44263 Dortmund, Germany, fax (49) 2312863754

DEPRESY Shindy

Sometimes a band name can play a bad trick. Never trust any suggestive moniker before sharing some spins with a player. These are the rules for reviewer, and they are damn useful. I had seen quite a few flyers of *Depresy*, I had read they play death metal, but a feeling that this band is not worth my attention has been following me, and monicker is to blame! It is not bad, but it suggests me another type of metal than is represented by Slovakian five-piece. Aggressive mystic death metal - that would be my description, which needs further reference, so - swallow it either, Eastern European death (with *Krabathor*, *Dementor* as the guideline) with strong *Septic Flesh* influence, felt mostly in *Dragon's* voice and guitar riffing. Actually it is *Mystic Places of Dawn* that pops into my mind, all the time. To justify *Depresy*, they perform this brutal yet dramatic death in a creative way, not falling into wanna-bees category. And do not even think to find more than these brutal similarities with Greek masters. Impressive death metal is supported by self-searching lyrics, and a massive booklet, wrapped in additional paper cover. *Shindy* have done a neat job with this new release, and I do not see a single reason why it should not be promoted otherwise. Band is worth it! Ah, just not to forget - includes a cd-rm data clip with band image gallery and biography, besides a so-so video clip, which is good in itself, scenes and filming, yet lacks a bit more related scenario. *The Antichrist's Philosophy*, their close to best tune, is chosen for this video. A brilliant addition to your collection. Death metal lives on, believe me! So feel the growing power of *Depresy*, that is cast upon you! What *Spirits*, *Sotiris* and *Chris* think about this, though? *Depresy*, http://members.tripod.com/depresy

DERANGED III Listenable

Ehhh, easier, easier... It is a damn heavy slab, not literally but when ear-damaging effect is concerned. That is what death metal is supposed to be about, really. And *Deranged* show it clearly with this album. Me have missed their sophomore

High on Blood cd of last year, after (unwillingly?) following almost every of their prior releases, and not sticking that much to them actually. *Deranged* were simply in lack of powerful growler, that have been weakening their aggressive image over the years. Now it is done – new guy has quite (un)healthy lungs to compete with *Broken Hope* or even *Cannibal Corpse*. It happened to change massively the whole sound. I remember their *Rated-X* to be pretty raw and instrumentally ok, so there must have been just cosmetic changes, but nah – *Deranged* had been keeping to yep tighter music all the time, and it is so obvious within *III* (Rhythm section, guitar riffing, solos – it all sounds yet more ultimate, distorted, pissed. Just one melting pot of hot metal liquid.

Other than that I do not hear so many features which could make them exceptional in this genre, yet the music says it all – pure pounding death metal where sweat drops bounce much faster than you count the snare beats... Fans should be satisfied indeed, especially enjoying American style of the genre. Add one or two samples and lethal atmosphere throughout the eleven tunes, and you are here with nervous audio system at home. Mind you – Swedish freaks have made it just to blow it up, hah... Intensifying charged, guys mean it – never to stop the way to their death. Check this out, suggests *Leio Takas: Deranged*, c/o Rikard Wermén, tel/fax (46) 40464573, brutalmotherfuck@gamma.telenor-dia.se, http://members.tripod.de/deranged, http://start.at.your.death

DETHRONEMENT Survival of the Sickest Laud N'Proud

Intro and the initial riff of *Day of Judgement* prepares for something outstanding within Swedish death metal map, but the rest of *Detronement* debut album puts them a bit lower than several highlighting death metal combos, in the charts. Imagine thrashing death metal in a purely Swedish way, without any distinctive surprises, and even any suspicious tempo changes. To put it otherwise – the order of riffs is easily predictable, thus – on the 13th minute of cd it is enough to realize that nothing extra will be performed for the rest of this album. And it happens to run until the end, according to this prediction. The only hassle occurs when the after mentioned first riff (brutal blast beat with painful guitar rawness, reminding *Dark Funeral*, by the way) is changed with mid tempo melodic Swedish death, which is basically a disappointment. Brutal album that you think about at the beginning, happens to be not so brutal after all. Aggressive side of *Detronement* sounds slightly better than melodic metal they so enthusiastically blend here together. Lyrics bring that raw attitude towards humanity, provoking to expect more rage and no compromises from their riffs and vocal patterns either.

Though this is not bad, straightforward, old school, and extreme enough to kick the balls. They cover *Massacre* at the very end – *Dawn of Eternity* sounds rather fine (if not good) and evidently shows how this go-ahead-death-metal thing should be done. Me thinks that *Detronement* have good album to improve their skills at, since *From Beyond* probably remains one of the highlights of straight-ahead death. Less melodies (or more high-class riffs there?) and more guts to your riffs and vocals, and everything will go excellent. At least for old Swedish death metal supporter, but who really cares about that style's subtleties these days?

DEVILYN Reborn in Pain Lionable

Hard-working Poles did it again. Curse me if they are not as good as to kick a major ass in death metal world. *Reborn in Pain* sounds like a plü of *Anger*, but it is not all, as soon as you dig these twelve monstrous tunes. First, guys have definitely got more pecked, solid feel to their brand of death orgy (I know that it sounds suspicious when you have debut cd spinning, but check this new slab yourselves then!). It is more than obvious after some spins. Next, *Devilyn* have successfully crashed down and thrown away their *Morbid Angel* shadow, which was quite annoying at that time, looking from the point of where they are now. One month trek with *Cannibal Corpse* has made them sound less Floridian and more New Yorkish?! I think to have some clue... Do not expect European death metal, that is sure as two times two. So, basically it is the same story as with label mates *Solwork* music is re-worked from the debut, offering as thick and tight impact, yet it makes one enjoy seemingly the same kind of deathmetal again and again... It never gets old, boring or outdated due to bands like *Devilyn*. I give no shit about everyone taking separate path when it comes to ass kicking brutality. If it is meant for heads to bang let it be so. Let necks break and brain tissue pour out. Damn *Devilyn* live performance would be a thing to experience. Rumors spread that they are as tight there as on their records. Otherwise they could not be named as the next brightest Polish extremes. I mean *Vader* is a team to be compared to, and you should know how they perform songs live... Seems like I am totally hopeless to point out the greatest things on this album: besides deathmetal attitude, receive a monstrous inlay frontcover art, and music matching excellent design inside... It is really like those waves in dirty soil, or whatever one imagine it to be. A death metal class!! *Devilyn*, c/o Navi, ul. Lasna 16A/88, 33-100 Tarnow, Poland, http://devilyn.black-art.pl

DIABOLIC City of the Dead Foeless

I see enthusiasm of death metal freaks worshipping this band. It belongs to the better league of the genre in the States. After four *Diabolic* guys have finished work over debut album *Supreme Evil*, Dutch label has scored to sign them for a demo re-release with additional bonus tracks. Here we are – deadly death metal in its purest kind. It is not easy to reject all sceptical points of view, since material is influenced by *Morbid Angel* and *Cannibal Corpse* a big deal.

Another band which comes to mind is *Fleshcrawl* with slow parts from their debut album. Especially *Diabolic* vocalist reminds me German colleague from *Decant Intro...* times. In spite of that, *City of the Dead* leaves you grasping for air. I imagine how powerful it might have sounded, being just debut demo of the band few years ago. The only drawback I would name is typical for a bunch of USA brutal death bands: songs structure. Well, one could contradict it is a part of the style, but I would argue. To become real outstanding (or elite if you want), you must surprise listener with something extra, any hard kicking musical mean: Like *Nie* are doing, for example. I do not know, maybe *Diabolic* have done it already on their full-length. Moreover that demo tunes were recorded back in 1997. So if their start was so impressive, guys have hopefully moved even further in death metal sublayers. Check out both releases if you notice them on the recordshop shelves. Full-length cd is released by *Conquest Music: Diabolic*, P.O. Box 9689, Tampa, FL 33674-9689, USA, blastmasters@hotmail.com

THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN Calculating Intimacy Relapse

Ah these Americans, they always invent something unlistenable at all... Call me narrow-minded, conservative dumb ass, but I never feel like choosing this record for my birthday party. Neither does my mom, nor my girlfriend, or neighbour upstairs. They all would hate it from the first attempt to get into track number one. Hah, you think I belong to the crew mentioned above? Think again. I am just not that much into psycho core and grind chaos stuff these days, which is delivered in such a humming way. Once again (see *Coalesce* review) I refer to *Brutal Truth*, but it is seemingly my lack of knowledge forcing to compare these new aggressive bands with them. Anyway, if you dug the most weird tunes of couple last BT cds, there is no way to hate *The Dillinger Escape Plan*. It is just weirder, sicker, much more pissed off, and fucked up. You know, my mind throws out the picture like this: DEP crew is a rock/metal/you-smell answer to power electronics. Since it is impossible to follow any reasonable line in their music, any appropriate riff or beat that you can catch and swing for at least five seconds. Everything changes so unpredictably and fast that it is impossible to feel at least a bit comfortable with them. At times the strain is so huge that it makes act, not listen. I must admit that it must have been one hell of a job to create that harsh feel using (almost) no electronics at all. Well, at least comparing with all these industrial masters we have in the scene. Their booklet is about displaying industrial equipment, that is, but do not be fooled around – do not judge the book from its cover! However, *Calculating Intimacy* music (?) must be the score for kids addicted to chaos and confusion. Yeah, yeah, power electronics is not my fave style either, so now you get a point about this (useless) comment I was trying to create about the disc I would better present to my worst enemy. *The Dillinger Escape Plan*, 7 Parker Dr., Morris Plains, NJ 07950, USA, info@dillingerescapeplan.com, www.dillingerescapeplan.com

DIM MAK Enter the Dragon Dies Irae

Erik Rutan has left the crew so long time ago that it could hardly be the reason they moved to hc side of things. Moreover – who remembers today *Ripping Corpse* and their violent speed/death metal close to ten years ago plugging the minds of thrash fans? They have sold 15000 units of the only album, and it was done with a bad promotion and handling of things. I am sure *Dim Mak*, newborn child of three ex-members will hardly sell at least one third of that amount... No, I was not a *Ripping Corpse* fan back then, but it has been better than this metalcore, those guys are teaching kids with at the threshold of new millennium. The biggest disappointment and most modern thing as well is *Scott's* voice, which is annoying shitty hardcore yelling. Guy wants to express his angriest feelings towards society and bad things in life, and that sounds damn pleasing. No conviction at all. Ah, if they had any decent growler, they could win my sympathy, at least on several particular songs. Mind you, guys are riffing really fast here and there, keeping up brilliant technics and almost jazzy variation, to create a complex metal sound. In some way I hear reminiscences of such American thrash innovators of the 80's as *Angkor-Wat* and *Heox*. Me guess nobody takes a shit what I am talking about... But that is not easy to listen: uptempo music which you enjoy, mixed with shiltcore. Add that vocal manner... nah, it is not an album I could recommend, even in the corner of my heart. Simply the way I would never expect from an ex-speed/death band. Conceptually they are fascinated by martial arts and Eastern philosophy, absorbing it with hc type of lyrics... Label origin may suggest their philosophical interests though... *Dim Mak*, c/o Scott Ruth, 94 D. Throckmorton Ave., Red Bank, NJ 07701, USA

DIMMU BORGIR / OLD MAN'S CHILD Devil's Path / In the Shades of Life Hammerheart

Damn *Hammerheart* guys have small for great deals both musically and commercially! I believe them to grow into one of the leading black metal labels, like *Ormus* once were! What can you say having one of the most sought-after releases of the decade? Both mcds were released by *Shagrath's* own *Hot Records* in 1996, but as their distribution was not the greatest, fans of both bands can hardly obtain the cult classics these days... *Hammerheart* has put both recordings onto one split cd, and released vinyl versions separately. In spite of many musical changes of both bands, good or bad – for you to judge, I vote for the old recordings, as well as first two *Dimmu Borgir* cds, and first *Old Man's Child* full-length. They have more cult feeling, unity with the blackest source of metal. Since I enjoyed *OMC* more, I begin with their 5 masterpieces, which go on the other side. Well, they do not

have the phenomenon of *Born of the Flickering*, but anyway – tracks simply breathe of majestic Norwegian brr, melodic and gloomy, still exposing enough of roughness and violence. I hail that dirt in their sound, I adore angst-ridden riffing, and sick throaty voice. Will they ever return to this hypnotizing feel of black metal?.. Nothing to lose with four *Dimmu* songs either. Title track is absolutely nowhere else ever featured, *Master of Disharmony* carries much rougher and harder feel than recorded on pop/black classic cd, and for the end – one surprise in two parts: *Nocturnal Fear* covered twice! One version is modern black metal wrapped, another has a very choice style to the original. Isn't it *Tom G. Warrior* behind the mic, eh? They have got pretty low-tuned and hollow production, thus forcing all hearts of CF fans shiver! I swear all nine songs here is a must.

DIMMU BORGIR Spiritual Black Dimensions Nuclear Blast

To my huge surprise, this one is much less commercial than *EDT*, and actually much better than pre-taster *Goddess Savage Garden*. Fun or not, but *Dimmu* guys have totally answered to all critical shots towards the pop/black phenomenon settled by them. Ok, I am not that ass licking guy to say music like this enables them to speak different shit in papers, but let us have a look to the newest masterful album of *Burgers*, leaving others talk about their image and acts. The main difference from previous full-length is the black metal itself, which has got a part of fury and speed met in early albums. More morbid riffs and less romanticism, or however you call these predictable synth soundholes. Well, they still prevail in several tunes, but are less poppy, and more symphony oriented, a kind of *Emperor* rip-off a bit? At some point keyboards make songs like *Behind The Curtains of Night Phantasmagoria* or *United in Unhallowed Grace* sound darker and actually support the fury instead of calming the dramatism down. But yet I wish the band to make such atmospers out of every song, instead of making them with pop/black. So far, albums like this or previous haven't occur in the first rows of cds you are sick with in a few weeks. *Simen Hestrnas* appears on here as well... Hm hm, I would never use him, just listen to new *Borknagar* and sort it out yourselves... Well, these clean voices might make the disc more gracious, but what the heck – it is *DB*, not any other band. Or *Mr. Shagrath* decided that it is a bit too much for him to handle the entire palette of vocals from now on? Anyway, listen people – if you laugh at *Dimmu* even without hearing their new material, I bet this can easily come to you as a surprise, as it has made such trick with my taste either. And the eurocharts are clarified by satanic muzak... And all chicks faint behind the feet of the *Burgers*...

DISARRAY A Lesson in Respect Eclipse

Wrong choice! Since *Leio Takas* has never kept relations to agro metal, or anything compromising towards hardcore side of things. This music is not meant to be promoted through the pages of this magazine, and that is about it. I wonder how people like *Disarray* choose the goals to promote their music, if they send it to media representatives that have nothing to do with that crappy modern metal style. If me were them, I would better check out some information what are these magazines all about, before shipping promo packs out. Thirteen tunes of boring macho music where I cannot notice a single song different from the rest, neither composition-wise, nor performance-wise. All right, the last in row is *Free Bird*, a cover tune of *Lynyrd Skynyrd*, which is claimed to be the classic metal tune covered in a most brutal way around. I am too incompetent to argue, though. That is *Disarray's* third full-length, first time released by a decent label, which has a fairly wide USA distribution, after two self-produced albums. Thus I think that the name should say something for these underground way of life living interested parties. I must admit their effort is quite metal indeed, no shitty hardcore here, but this moshing atmosphere still makes me sick, and turn my back to it pretty fast. One of countless *Disarray* press statements claim them to blow *Crowbar* away, but believe me – that is out of question. *Crowbar*, even has that modern metal syndrome too, at least are sooo heavy and put one or two heartbreaking melodies once in a while, that makes them a bit special among these brainless moke kids. Whilst *Disarray* have no firm axes to throw within the music. Smells crappy and typically American. *Disarray*, Chuck Bonnett, P.O. Box 975, Dickson, TN 37056-0975, USA, tel/fax (1) 6154641998, scarred66@aol.com

DISGUST In Aeternum... Shock Wave

They write typical, thousand times heard, angry death metal, which at times sounds so conservative and hard to find refreshing minutes in. They are loyal to their musical faith, and perfectly depict it with this debut twelve tracker album. Both descriptions suit *Disgust* perfectly, and as usual – it all depends on what is the connection between the listener's attitude towards death metal, and this band's attitude. I guess that both attitudes must correlate, or must be diplomatic to each other, otherwise the result would be a disappointment, or the understanding would miss a few necessary qualities. Ok, so the main idea with this review is to prescribe *Disgust's* kind of death metal, after all. They remind me a great deal the Dutch scene. The feel that I have put *Youth Against Christ* once again cannot leave me, as the whole album is kept in that vein, simply coping with that kind of sound further on. As a wider interpretation, *In Aeternum...* can be named as death metal from the early 90-ies, and this is absolutely no complaint, sort of *this music sounds old*, it is boring and stuff. Fuck trends, and let everyone play what is the most close to their hearts. Let everyone listen what is close to their taste either! Thus all brutal death

(with thrash tinge, just think about early *Altar* freaks must bookmark this name with French origin, and try to get into the perfectly combined blend of aggression and techniques. *Disgust* are not the fastest band, they are not with this music to show off, just to lead their soul's labyrinths. No wonder that they have been moving towards this first full-length for ten years (like interviewed elsewhere *Pentacle*), now finally accomplishing it. It is not about being there for money and fame, it is about the music and only music that your heart seeks to follow. I cannot describe it better. If you ask me – *Disgust* cd will not take place among death metal classics of my collection, yet it will surely take a notorious place among many other death metal releases that I value and take care of. *Disgust*, Laurent Dequid, 7, rue Guesde, 62420 Billy Montigny, France

DIVIDED MULTITUDE Inner Self Sensory

This magazine is destined to feature Norwegian bands... Even from an American progressive metal label I have managed to get an album marked with Norwegian names and thanks list. A slight surprise, though not since *Divided Multitude* play progressive music down there, but since they have managed to be signed by *Sensory*. Actually their music is what American standard stands upon: progressive, melodious and commercial. Unfortunately for me, I have not found many jewels on this long cd (72 minutes). Instead of that it has quite a few clichés smelling of naphthalene, or however pop culture products are named in your land, which make me puke whilst every sing-a-long chorus pops out! You may guess right that it is impossible to have 70 minutes of boring choruses, and slightly better verses. So yes, *DM* play a whole bunch of more wandering guitar passages, including piano and cello to capture that progressive feel to it. Something that I can be attracted to either. No lame result is achieved with harder heavy metal riffing at some moments. Thus, if *Inner Self* featured some 30-40 minutes of adventurous heavy/progressive, it would be an Album. Well, maybe with a more hm oriented singer. However, it is not the case, so I would foot myself recommending this. Pretty much commercial and losing metal grip in a long while.

DIVISION ALPHA Fazlum One (adv. cd) Noly

Weird shit, sort of electronic/industrial metal, where every tune is different from its follower. *Aye, Philippe* has recorded me just four tunes out of the upcoming full-length, as a sampler, so the view is slightly subjective, but anyway – I am surprised to hear that *Holy Records* sign such performances these days. Even if it were my cup of bloodooed style-wise, I would never vote for modern technology praising or hating (I do not care!) lyrics, like in *Erase My Software...* blargh!!!, it has no appropriate message, even if you are computerised modern man, enjoying everything cyber/digital or whatever... What metal has to do with it anyway? Returning to music, they charge their cannons from typically technological groove like *Screw*, to annoying nervous sludge boredom, to almost Tamat-ish dramatism in their most experimental *A Deeper Kind...* days (on *Disparate World*), and return to slow brooding electronic heaviness later on. Programmed drums, cybermetically distorted vocals, guitar riffs just to keep that modern heavy line and mechanic feel to it – I am not convinced at all by this technological *Division Alpha*... Let me be so conservative offering to ignore any modern crap that ruins what once was pointed as heavy metal. Some limits must be hold, whatsoever. Records like this confuse true metal heart, which was meant to be never torn apart! Hehe. Common people, tell that I am old fucking grandpa, knowing nothing about modern music: it was better in our youth days, really... *Division Alpha*, Philippe Reinhalter, 2/26 rue Gabriel Peri, F-93300 Aubry, France, tel/fax (33) 327308263

DRAINED Suspension Of Disbelief Martyr Music

Should any reviewer be positive whilst guitarist/vocalist *Neil* thanks Jesus Christ in the first place? Not that their message were truly xian, but it is still enough to slag such a rubbish down. No, I mean, come on – how can you be so "correct" and believe in a miserable god when your music and even lyrics are rather pissed? Something to think about, and there is no big deal to name *Drained* as any mysterious prophets of church, with a youth-friendly attitude. Simply they are not able to preach, they are made by society context, thus failing to be attractive to a sophisticated listener. I could easily ignore that "thanks", but why? Thrash, core, thrash. Thankfully, not that much of hardcore, a vast metal riff takes over in many songs, but still, it is just American thrashcore... Want some names to compare *Drain* with? No, I will not use this precious space – it is too expensive. Fans know them pretty well. Same moaning vocalist, same moshing macho riffs and stops. Hardcore kids will find this too extreme, but for metal it is too groovy and doubtlessly – trendy. Ignore! Three bonus live tunes are added as a hidden track, yet the sound is awful with them, nor it changes anything with this debut cd. *Drained*, 4 Camardo Dr., Wauhan, MA 02571, USA, http://members.aol.com/drainedcd/index.html

DRASTIC Thieves of Kisses Beyond...

Smart boy *Chris* has been experimenting with different cosmohoric ideas for a while now, naming it all *Drastic*. Then my eyes have crossed with his riff announcing the debut album. That picture (also displayed on album front cover) is something that keeps your eyes researching it for a few sec-

onds, I mean it is about how a cover art should look like – enchanting, mysterious and provoking. Curiously, I supposed it to be a sort of South American deathband, yet before taking a look at the address. Maybe a monicker? No, better do not ask me why.

Italian/Polish project (I still cannot figure how one man band can be half-Italian, half-Polish though, since you are either of Polish origin, or Italian for that matter) is quite different from metal standard. But it is difficult to name it avantgarde, as these untraditional decisions are taken at the very special moments. Well, for the metal milieu it is pretty innovative; with several rhythmic changes you never expect to be; or the balance between atmosphere, that is a huge part of **Drastic** music, and quite intense guitar massiveness. The highlight of *Chris* are keyboard mystique, at times prevailing over the rest of the stuff. Twice as pity that female singer destroys the effect, totally. She is definitely not fitting the dark or dreamy concept. Her voice is far from being in line, and thus she fails to keep up the same kind of shade over the record. It would have sounded much darker and majestic without that cliché. As a paradox *Springial* (10+ minutes long) happens to be the best and the worst song on here, having the best synth arrangement and worst vocal performance.

Besides I want to mention *Voyage Dans La Lune*, put as if a poor bonus song after few minutes break at the end, but for me personally it is something amusingly cool. And dark. A techno jam with some guitar – check it out! Overall, good moments over here should not rush you ignore digipak cd – 208 from their label. **Drastic**, c/o Chris Buchman, Via Morosini 23, 30019 Sottomarina (VE), Italy, tel./fax (39) 0415541837, drastic@unive.it

DRAWN A new world? Prophecy

Not a new band, but music of them sounds anew. Even having previous recording in collection, I still feel like I am experiencing **Drawn** for the first time. Not that they dropped something very important from musical picture, but because they have added a set of new untraditional decisions, confusing a trendy listener more and more. To be into **Drawn** for entire 65 minutes one must make his mind absolutely free from background thoughts or deeds, and try to dig deep into sounds between the lines (notes, that is). Even new in *The Woods*... is easier acceptable.

At times **Drawn** resemble *ITW* daughter band, roughly joining raw side of *Heart Of The Ages* with recent atmospherics of Norwegian gangs, together. It seems then that good old days of *Svithild* and co. are back. But then I catch myself thinking **Drawn** are not *ITW* copycats in spite of *Christer* composing stuff for both projects, and *Jan-Kenneth* contributing to *A New World?* here and there. Their moves from raw intense metal to crying doom or atmospheric music usually are dramatic and unexpected. Or another characteristic – a weird trippy arrangement after an intense part. One drawback is a gargling voice which appears from time to time, it was used also on the first mod. Possible to use it, if there were none other types of singing, which are far better, including female led melodies.

Obvious that **Drawn** want to express their inner self through music. Otherwise they would cut off dirty (as they name it) outtakes, and leave just tight atmospheric metal to hit the charts (or to be doomed to stay in *The Woods*... clowns?). Afraid you not of these experiments, unless progressive atmosphere is something you cannot stand. Recommended in late autumn night hours...

DREAM INTO DUST The World We Have Lost (adv.) Eliashut

Derek Rush is unpredictable. At least with this project (besides, he participates in other six). It is natural to experience new values in building of sounds for him, so older manner to explore the unexplored is gone, at least for the time being. Although it is *Derek's* first full-length release, so probably the past is less important now. I had hard times understanding a track from *Presumed Guilty* compilation, mini cd was easier acceptable.

So, with time **Dream Into Dust** gets more spirit of acoustic inspired music, having less space for dark ambient minimalism. To tell the truth, it is up to *Derek's* contributors, who come and go all the time, but it also depends on the main man, whom to choose. Unlike earlier sessions, violinist now participated, adding completely another touch to this weird music. So, no - you will not get an album polished, hot and spicy, delivered with tasty meal and red wine. It is more related to lonely lawn with a few inhabitants, conceiving their joys and misanthropies. Music is kind of individual stories, even though lyrics do not deal with so strictly diverse topics. Expect deep esoteric thoughts about transcendence and its opposition (?). Am I that good interpreter of somebody's mind-bombing artistry? I guess opinions would split apart. That is the case with **Dream Into Dust**. Love it or hate it, but you never know how it works on you before checking it yourselves. Orchestral music freaks should go nuts though, as it is far from its original form, and even far from *Arcturus/Dimmu Borgir*. Search hard, as this one is put on a closed down label. **Dream Into Dust**, *Chthonic Streams*, c/o Derek Rush, P.O. Box 7003, New York, NY 10116-7003, USA

DUNKELGRAFEN Baphomet's Aeon Last Episodes

Even though better than their previous album, and even better than the rest of the crew, it is yet teutonic black metal, and it means music like this can not be higher than the average. I name teutonic black all German bands which sound similar to each other, and actually has nothing interesting to offer for the scene (if there is a thing as such). I still wonder when it all started and which one was the originator, but please realise yourselves that a huge pack of them is worthless.

To backup my thinking: entire collection of riffs is taken from their previous album, just slightly improved. Vocalist shrieks so bad that I would do the same kind of scream taking a piss, and even not in a toilet room. Overall music avoids that melodic cliché but at times remains pretty tuneful and rather far from true black metal standard. In this case it is a minus for them. Production is cleaner this time, without awful rough details that *Scatter...* was so terrible at. But then it turned into a soft and thin material soundwise, with absolutely no highlighting standpoint to deliver something memorable. After a listen you forget about the album as soon as your grandma buys you an ice-cream. I would claim *Dunkelgrafen* do not have an enough of ideas, or even talent for that matter. Two albums are enough to realise that. There is no point in expecting something special from their next material. So teutonic, grey, boring... There are no escape really, but not due to black spells of German scene, but due to their bad reputation. There is no need to act for them like bad guys – they are bad, and do not even dare to think that this means their music might be good. It is not at all, whether it is *Baphomet's Aeon*, or *Satan's Candle*...

EARTHCORPSE The Taste Of Sin Sliver

I had problems enjoying their debut, and neither I am satisfied again this time. Label presents **Earthcorpse's** new album as the continuation of old *Paradise Lost* and old *My Dying Bride*, and in general – UK doom scene. Well!!!!!!... Let me totally disagree and correct you *Mr. Hans de Wynaert*: it is nothing more than slow/mid tempoed death, and the right thing is only that it is slightly melodious. I do not know if it is possible to write appreciable music like this, which would be plainly disharmonic.

The biggest headache is their vocalist *Mark* (actually the only remaining original member), as this guy cannot properly growl nor scream, so his voice sounds like chopped in between, and in addition is too weak to stand the music standard that others perform. His voice actually turns **Earthcorpse** album from technically ok to a weak one. So, the other guys do a slow metal performance, and even at times it sounds easily predictable (isn't it that UK sound that biography so often brings about?), at the final ranking melodies make it not to damage the ears. Just wonder how it would sound without *Mark*... Or is it really difficult to kick out the only original member? Common, guys! Nonetheless, the last tune, a techno remix of number two *Winter* sounds very un-UK, and so poor you cannot imagine. Fuck poor techno. Hal quality techno.

The only thing I truly enjoyed with this cd, is a booklet. It is full of luxurious artwork illustrating every track somehow, and actually some 7 out 11 works could easily were the front covers. So, mainly they consist of photo collages with some colour improvisations, and background shades/extra visual effects. Paradoxically, their own front cover art looks pretty average... What to do – maybe you can enjoy these inner sleeve pictures at your record shop, as to buy **Earthcorpse** music together means the loss of money. **Earthcorpse**, 1 Ship Inn, Hougou Du Valle, Vale, Guernsey, C. I., United Kingdom

EINHERJER Norwegian Native Art Native North

Being not widely acknowledged with a few recent records of **Einherjer**, I feel a bit in a wrong place, especially recollecting their old time favourite – *Aurora Borealis* demo. One thing is sure – they are completely another kind of band now, with dark/black links forever deleted. However, the pride of the north is still with them, promoted as never massively – even in the new album title, and also (guitarist *Frode's* own) label name. Biography clearly states that music, which is performed by the four piece should be named as viking metal. But if you ask me – it is totally different from *Enslaved*, *Heimheim* and *Kamptar*. There is absolutely no harsh metal on this record, so I would musically state it is majestic and pompous heavy metal with a raspy vocalist and marching feel to it. Through the set of eight songs the musical concept is barely the same, with a rare double bass drumming and thicker vocals here and there. I am not so much convinced about few riffs which are sort of too modern Norwegian metal oriented, and especially when they are supported by a plain synth - the message gets rather typical and hardly kicking the real butt. Note that the band lacks energy or power, but their metal is quite sloppy at times. A bit controversial thing is to compare this music to a dirty **Einherjer** faces on the promo pictures. I wish the sounds were as filthy either. But lyrical synth (*Draconian Empira*) is not the instrument to support that feel. Though music like this also means more units sold, so... Probably they should have concentrated on the images brought on previous records, as viking themes suit this music much better than grimace twisted faces? If anybody feels liking the records that you can get into from the first time, here is something to grab. But I am looking for a kick ass and intense Norwegian metal, first of all!!!
Einherjer, www.einherjer.com

EMPHYRIUM Where at night the wood grows plays Prophecy

If there were no *Kveldssanger*, I would proclaim new musical gods right now. At this point of time, when the natural mystique of **Ulver** is gone together with their unbelievable masterpiece, achieved back in 1996, **Emphyrium** have managed to step very close to it. Ok, I sincerely do not care for similarities and possible plagiarism, as far as it is perfect and haunting. If **Ulver** can be easily named unearthly, then **Emphyrium** are at least geniuses, walking the same paths as you and me. I mean, there is no big deal to make a copy, when you have a brilliant example, but to make it passionate, wandering and convincing – you must have a high spirit inside. Folky attitude still reminds more these Nordic landscapes than German dominions, but why the fuck **Emphyrium** or any

other band should stick to the music they were born with? As far as it can be considered brilliant, without any stupid show off things, then – why not? Moreover that guys do not mention any relation to a particular country or formula. Just music from the heart, if you want. I see a point even in using *The Kittlesen* picture, which was misused too often in the past. The feeling over this whole opus is very important. The only thing worse than *Kveldssanger* is the wood singer itself. Well, nobody can follow *Garm's* diurnal chords, and that is clear listening to... *grouse plays*. Chorus-like voice is cool, but normal singing is less majestic, and is actually different from Norwegian one. *Deutsch* minstrels do without vocals at times too, dividing the exposed nine compositions between instrumental and vocal music. Experience it yourselves, people. Grim and proud acoustic masterpiece. Next to **Ulver's** *Kveldssanger*...

EM SINFONIA In Mourning's Symphony Martyr Music

Performed by eight individuals, music could have turned slightly more spectacular, or in other words – it sounds a bit dry for the genre. It is an attempt to write a piece of atmospheric (doomy death) metal, and the mainman behind it is not other but *Brian Griffin* of *Broken Hope* fame. He does not bring influences from his main band, unlike couple of **November's Doom** musicians, performing together, who have brought some similar soundscapes, thus making **Em Sinfonia** more growly than *Brian* might have imagined. So this four tracker is not an orchestra worth piece of music, nor it was in the process of writing. Mainly composed by one guy, with arrangements and adaptations of others, basically contributing to the project. I am sure if they change it to work together in the initial state of songwriting, there might be obvious turn into much more complex and maybe even symphonic music milieu. Thus far *In Mourning's Symphony* is quite an ok debut, forcing me to mark an **Em Sinfonia's** spot in a metal map. I was slightly confused when I failed to chew them with first attempts. Music is not that much complex, but you must take a while to get it. That is probably about that dry feel too. The closest comparison is doubtlessly **MOB** debut album, both with its slow motion, growling approach and violin interruptions. Definitely **Em Sinfonia** do not copy them blindly, and that is respectable. With a minimal use of synth (very background and occasional) they remain pure metal, leading their own way. Take a look at gloom lyric accompanied by a historically classic and intelligent booklet. Well, it is worth the money (12\$ - USA, 15\$ after all, even just 31 minutes sums it up). I will be curious to hear where they move afterwards, and if respectful line-up will cease to live together, or not.
Em Sinfonia, c/o Brian Griffin, 12564 W. Dorothy St., Beach Park, IL 60087, USA, EmSinfonia@aol.com, <http://members.aol.com/synfonia1/emSinfonia.html>

ENDURA Elder Signs Red Stream

I could not believe someone telling me that **Endura** do great music, nor *Red Stream* dittyrms have been influencing myself. Everything I heard of them was *Liber Leviathan*, or it was *Great God Part?* No... however, it was not my cup of tea, and what could I think their old stuff will be about? Of course, nothing better than what I have experienced yet. Oh, how wrong I was! This monstrous compilation is just brilliant ode to trippy ambient music! Truly unique and diverse. Something you never get bored, even if it takes you more than two and a half hours of very careful attention. Presumably, their diversity is a main factor of so rich in atmospheres experience. It is well branded and blended to make a horrid travel through psychedelic musical spheres. Sounds quite lightening at times, capturing the true essence of mystique, it is about the spontaneous creation that is uniquely flowing into the depths of your psyche. Maybe **Endura** were at their most creative stage back in 1994-1995, who knows... It must be experienced to reach dark gothic acoustic musicals, suddenly mixed with exotic oriental singing and ritualistic tantrics, or going back to eerie keyboard based lullabies. All synth project wannabees must experience this to realise their childish dreams about ambient. It is not about pushing two keyboard buttons per minute, at all! Double cd features *Dreams Of Dark Waters* album, previously released just in 500 copies with an **Abraxas** monicker. *The Dark is Light Enough* album, and exclusive, never published before bunch of extras. And is a quick grab from the shop for sure. Pay just 16\$ (USA) / 19\$ from **Red Stream**, which is pretty cheap for a double cd with marvellous booklet design. Top-notch release! **Endura**, 4 Verdun Terrace, West Conforth, County Durham DL17 9LN, England, tel. (44) 7788572118, fax (44) 1740654356, stephen@freemove.co.uk, www.encominfreeserve.co.uk

ENOCHIAN CRESCENT Omega Telocvium Avantgarde Music

Not an expert of their previous material, and not a devoted fan of what I have experienced, I must admit that the newest album of eccentric Finns has own character and individual approach to musical extremities. It needs not any accurate cliché sticking, unlike their previous black metal stuff, yet to name them whirped out guys would be too drastic. *Omega Telocvium* is really about maturing and progress, so there is no wonder to hear extreme **Impaled Nazarene** worth fast rhythms (*Transitory, De Sistris, Od Teloch*) followed by close to epic: Nordic notes or even gothic induced singing extravaganzas. If you consider **Hypocrisy's** gloomy ballads as deathmetal, well, then **Enochian Crescent** do not leave blackmetal guidelines either. But in my opinion, it is much more than that, if not to say – the entire palette of heavy music is concerned within these forty minutes. There is a distinct feature that differs them from other usually mediocre Finnish melodic bands – thought out diversity,

and it keeps the listener closer to the stereo with ears wide open: what is next? Listening to the album for the first time, everyone must experience this uncertainty about recorded music, until it crawls under the skin and shapes the whole picture. On the other hand, listening to these tunes I cannot imagine that fury they speak to evoke during their scandalous live shows. Of course live show should be re-arranged now, with any new elements adjusted for newly sounding stuff. But it seems that this sophomore full-length finally stands up as **Enochian Crescent** credit card 99, instead of being just an addition to their shocking image. *Aye*, front cover is finally not that crappy as earlier, even it remained weird enough to stay solving riddles what it actually represents. Be sure – it has something to do with master Satan... All in all – something evil (good?) this way comes.

ENS COGITANS Re-Vision Seven Art

I am surprised not once, but twice. Before explaining it, let me regret that I do not possess their earlier recordings, so I cannot say anything good or bad about comparing them to the new album. I have heard mainly just positive response about **Ens Cogitans**, and saw them featured in a few magazines around too. My first surprise – they have moved from technothrash material so much talked about in the past, so their brand new melodic metal sounds really odd. I guess their old fans should be totally blown away by this decision to turn softer and radio friendly, it is easier to make an opinion never experiencing the band before, that is for sure. My next and the main surprise – their music is damn professional, both in composition and performance. Being rather sceptic about the style, I feel their potential, and I definitely hear their ability to take the audience by storm! What do you think – they have been practising complex metal structures over the years, so switching onto something less intricate they managed to upbring all the necessary qualities to fill up any ozone hole in the overall sound. I was trying to think over any band which **Ens Cogitans** remind me, but I failed to really recollect any. Everything seems to be heard so many times, but anyway – Russian boys still seem to deliver it in a highly refreshing style and quality. Another Russian band, which dared to be so soft, and hardly could be named true metal either – **Forgive Me Not**, is maybe the only band that I can relate to. But **Ens Cogitans** are simply better, and probably more metal. Modern melodious groovy metal – that should be the most appropriate cliché stuck to their music. Melodies are truly heart shocking, and musicians are so tight as a team. They do not afraid to use quite a few electronic samples creating the modern image, like **Moonspell** do. The only thing I would like to be stronger, is voice of *Oleg* - it tends to sound too hit oriented.

However, it is a truly remarkable melodic metal album, especially recommended for laid back eyes, or relaxed party hours. Ask about cd from the band either, price is just around 12\$, or mere 8\$ if you live in Russia! **Ens Cogitans**, Oleg V. Alimov, Tolmachev St. 11-82, Ivanteevka, 141250 Moscow region, Russia, ens_cogitans@mtu-net.ru, www.rusmetal.ru/enscogitans

ENTRALS Serpent Seed Leviathan

Finally an excellent band from Czech Republic! No wonder – it features **Root** guitarist, *Mr. Blackie!* But unlike recent **Root** manner to turn more into dark rock, **Entrals** is but pure (dark) death/black metal band, the way it was meant to be played. I realised that they are not another lush newcomers group hesitating whether to be evil, or brutal, on the primal listen. At first a side project of *Blackie*, it has turned into a great band with full line-up and dedication. *Blackie* composes all the music himself, but I must admit that it is pretty various and strategically logic, as if it were composed by a 'normal' band. By the way, bass player and drummer are awesome in performance, thus making the trio worth of each other (musically, of course).

Then back to the soundworks. You know, it ranges from something close to **Marduk** and **Dissection**, and for instance – classic death metal on the other corner. It is hard to categorise them, **Entrals** do not stick to neither 'scene'. That is what I appreciate the most, and when tunes are so aggressive and energetic, why not to say it is a killer album! You might have heard several riffs, but *Blackie's* way to combine bits and pieces together is phenomenal. He succeeds to write catchy dark music out of... nothing! Not exactly nothing, but of technically no extraordinary riffs, which would sound average with bad composing of them. To cut it short: you need to have a talent to put everything in places! I can assure **Entrals** have it. By the way, the only thing to disappoint me is their band name.

At the end of the game they go with three cover tunes, one of which only is heard for me though... **Exorcist Black Mass**, *Cruz Nightdemons*, and *Root The Way of Destruction*. An answer to *Silent Stream of Godless Elegy* cd? However, buy or die! **Entrals**, c/o Igor Hubik, Ant. Slavka 9, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic, entrals@post.cz

ENTWINE The Treasures within Hearts Spikofarm

Certain amount of people, even if they are grim and evil black metallers, do not support violence against children, and they have some decent arguments fighting for what they believe in. But this time I am the executioner, so beware, dear kids! People also speak that gypsies beat their children even before these make something wicked, as if then they were good and clever boys and girls. **Entwine** are actually too late to be punished beforehand, since their full-length is being splitted (and I assume thrown down into a trashcan here and there) in the players of brother-revellers. It is a damn mistake, to produce underworked music. If you ask me. Debut album on the shelves may make them proud of themselves, but music down

there is but a plain crap, immature sissy metal, or commercial oriented pussy music. Typically Finnish, I would add. Drinking so much they have lost their balls, that is for sure...

Otherwise, if *Entwine* have waited for some years when their musical maturity comes, and when *P. Willmann's* voice will turn into male one (instead of sheep's), maybe they would have produced some more listenable emotional metal, as the opener *The Guiding Light* suggests. But that is a place where the joy ends, and the rest of 37 minutes long cd is a neatly produced puke, including a nightmare of a cover - *Enjoy The Silence*... A bit arrogant way to do it in a so bad manner, indeed... Returning to that same opening cut, I think female vocalist adds that missing point to be not so hopeless. Try it in a wider scale next time, boys'n'girls. Oh my oh, what all these labels look at these days?! It is really not enough to have a great production, damn catchy designed cover, and worldwide distribution. It is about punishing your kids before they sign any contract. Parents of *Entwine*, please to my editorial room, tomorrow!! And do not forget to bring your children together. By the way, ain't it that gothic makers from UK/*Enache* rocer named *Entwined*? Just to let everybody know... Let there be even 10 bands with these entwined messages... *Entwine*, A. Harttu, Aleksanterinkatu 29B, 15140 Lahti, Finland

ESOTERIC Metamorphogenesis Eibon

It is logical to expect familiar music from such exceptional project that *Esoteric* is. It truly fits even the most suspicious predictions. Yes, for the third time *Esoteric* tortures the world with the most sickening, horrific heavy doom, since laser disk was invented, as if washing the dirty souls with their one and only preaching, which they know so well. And Englishmen do it in an amazingly convincing way! Like mentioned in *Leado Takas #6*, the huge step for them was *Pernicious Enigma*, simply marking the new heights in that psychedelic transformation. This one is just a continuation of that - not far removed, anyhow more superior, but definitely no worse! Once again the integrity of their material should be mentioned, balancing from really slow and empty emotion-wise, to very intense, almost noisy (with a help of effects and guitar distortion) pounds, whilst musical structure remains crawling and way depressive. *Greg's* voice leads the decadent orchestra, no doubts! If you recollect any earlier *Esoteric* record, you have got the same voice here, too. As an event, or change for this cd, none other than *Tom Kivälöv* appears on background vocals, altering *Greg's* monotonous voice pretty successfully in *The Secret Of The Secret* (excellent title for esoteric music!). *Paradigma's* boss did the mastering of this album as well, adding his skills to overall neat album. By the way, I was checking it for a couple of times, but these songs round up *Esoteric* album this time. They could have shaped it as an mod, knowing the lengths of the previous 4-cds... This runs just for 44 minutes. Anyway, it is enough to be caught by massochistic drones. Comes with a great cover art, like usual for *Eibon*. Ask the availability and the price through: *Esoteric*, 19 Fairmead Rise, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B38 8BS, England, esoteric@beraff.demon.co.uk, www.beraff.demon.co.uk

EVERGREY Solitude * Dominance * Tragedy Hall of Sermon

Ok, I will add my name to those who wonder about *The Saviour* to sign progressive power metal crew, but indeed they prove to be a damn professional team, and leave critics with their jaws dropped down. Whether reviewers like the music, or not. When it is performed with the highest class, there should always be a tiny small respect towards the band itself at least, even it does not appeal to you. *Evergrey* are not the newcomers in the scene, and was marked their name yet with a debut record, which was out on local Swedish label. I think their chance to grow bigger is now, with *Hall Of Sermon* either, and seems like initial response outrun all expectations. If you ask me, I would prefer some other power metal bands, as my faves; maybe it has to do with my love for thicker approach to the style, but that does not mean *Evergrey* are weak or slow. Swedes do have a few balladesque tunes, which I wish me a bit down from loving *Solitude * Dominance * Tragedy* at its fullest. Sort of wish to skip these emotional songs to reach their heart ripping double bass drum ridden thunderstrucks (*Damnation*) appearing on this record as well. But that is a part of the deal with the style they carve their path within, so it is about individual approach to power progressive metal that they go. You will find complex musical layers in there, with additional effects enriching their guitars-drums-vocals formula. Sublime keyboard, violin and piano arrangements, or even harp in *Words Mean Nothing*, forwarding the feelings towards monumentalism and majesty, and burning listener from within at the same time. I just wish the screamer *Tom S. Englund* to have much more powerful and rough input into this cocktail. If you know what I mean, that it would knock down everyone on the way. Otherwise - nothing to complain about *Evergrey* class.

EVIL INCARNATE Blood of the Saints Deathgasm

Totally underground release with two demo tapes put on compact disk. But I cannot find the layout effort too great, even some intention might have been to keep it as simple as possible. However it makes me think upon total amateurism of these people who layed it out, and totally careless attitude of the band. What to do - America... Well well well, the same kind of atmosphere is prevailing with music, though it is not as bad as the cover might suggest. Yup, ten songs are purely straight-forward and performed in a simple metal way. But in fact *Evil Incarnate* have that dark occult feel within their deathrash compositions. Mostly thanks to vocalist *Michael* they have much to do with American legend *Order From Chaos*. To say the truth, I have

never been their fan, but when it comes to their younger brothers from Illinois, sympathy is a right word to describe my reaction towards *Blood of the Saints*. No no, it is not the doomy H-bomb of deathrash. It is quite smaller destruction upon mankind, but I feel that guys can achieve something more memorable with their next release. All in all, it is just two demos recorded in the studios with limited possibilities. *Evil Incarnate* do not need crystal clear sound whatsoever, this dark raw spirit ads that occult feel to them. I believe *OFC* were too bizarre and had many unexpected experiments for my taste, so this more straight-forward approach with even slow doomy riffing have found that room in the heart. Actually four tracks of demo number two (of 1997) sound better, and that is a reason I wish guys yet to improve the songwriting and upcome with some totally heavy killing and still dark piece of metal. But hey, do not be so childish with your frontcover pictures and with oh so unimagineable lyrics. Just 10\$ (USA)/12\$ for 32 and half minutes. *Evil Incarnate*, c/o Michael Eisenhauer, 2703 Gallilee Apt. E, Zion, IL 60099, USA

FAERGHAIL Horizon's Fall Shiver

More than couple of trials to get into this cd has gained *Faerghail* more of mine sympathies (resulting in at least not to be crushed like poor faggots). Indeed their music sounds very average at the first sight, but it is not so bad in a long run. Among many useless riffs you can find one or two rather brilliant ones, and after it is not based on 'good vs. bad' musical characters, the whole album sounds conditionally ok. Well, again it does not mean I like Finnish brand of metal here enough. Their biggest drawback is the try-out to blend black metal with miserable melodious metal. These two aspects do not stand together, you should but avoid one part of the pair if you want to develop the other properly. I do not defend any of them (even pure melodism in metal makes me sick, and I can say just the opposite about blackmetal); please deliver your music with guts, and you will get the praise, not mentioning satisfactory sales. Whilst it is hesitation-like, listener does not believe in their ideas. Seems like guys have big doubts all the time: to follow raw side, or to stick to easy-composed easy-forgotten melodic fill-ups. Anyway, *Hämärän Kutsu* and *As I Withers Away* firmly outstand of the pack, where even otherwise boring keyboard and *Jussi's* voice sound promising. Beside riffs which are caught as hardly illustrious, this guy is destined to improve a lot further on. Oh, bonus tracks being the entire demo '97 remains a huge mistake, as it gets too much to bare them for another 15 minutes. I cannot get a point of record labels adding such bonuses, as usually they are crap, which can just to diminish cd sales. Exceptions occur, but *Faerghail* is not that band... 15\$, as any other *Shiver* release. *Faerghail*, c/o Tom Kangassalo, Eronitie 3, 32700 Huttinen, Finland, faerghail@hotmail.com

FATAL BLAST WHIP Seduction Blacklight

First acquaintance with one of the most promising American ambient industrial goth project happened to catch me experiencing their single release with a bunch of remixes. Material, which could make you think about similar or monotonous remixes of their own *Seduction* composition, happened to turn into an interesting journey through industrial music labyrinths. Yep, pure electronics, even vocals have many effects to sound ethereal or simply harsh. But I have had a good time listening to this sometimes dancefloor worthy muzak. In spite of label's politics to leave dark electronics for other labels, *FBW* have that sinistrous feel in the air, frightening many little girls around. In general, atmosphere is constantly changing, from dark and uncertain, to clear and lined-up. So, *Seduction* has even four cover versions, remixed by *Battery*, *Pivot Cow*, *Scar Tissue*, and *Joshua Bourke*, artists well known in electronic music world. They have brought some new colours in *Fatal Blast Whip* sound, I feel it. Yet old fans might consider it as a step into forbidden territory. However, I enjoyed most not the remixes of *Seduction*, but a follower *Slave Device*. Man, it is in the vein of G.G.F.H. It sounds scary and mysterious enough. That piece of cd is really dark - I would love *Fatal Blast Whip* if they always use these ominous soundscapes, both vocally and programming wise. In general, both closing tunes have much more to offer for a tired ambient freak. It points out that *Derek Jones* changes his ideas, which should shine bright on the full-length later in the year. All in all - a very interesting project and music of course.

FIG LEAF Fearless Moonchild

Week 65 minutes for a change to my bear induced head, which has no clue about progressive rock! And this time there is no metal at all, no pretension to be heavy, no solution to global problems, just a pile of trippy laid back tunes with a more than noticeable direction towards 70-ies and hippy era. Not that I am a fan of that generation, but musically they can be ok to some extent. You cannot really stick a definite label on their forehead - it would not be fair to that weird atmosphere that these guys upcome with. And it is a band with wider sight to music, so it might range from jazzy or swingy to a pretty heavy kind (still not pretending to be metal), smartly supported by always disturbing sax, or relaxing keyboard. Yes, *Fig Leaf* choose analogue synthesizer to create that feel, and it works. Sound *Deep Purple*-ish at times. I must except an epic title track, or better said - a set of tracks united by one name and concept, clocking in a mere half an hour. It basically shapes this whole album, both musically and lyrically. Again, I am not a fan of their attitudes, and all that ends up in a closing *Sania Cruz*, where *Fig Leaf* guys together with their friends (mind you, it is *The 3rd And The*

Mortal and *Atrax* crews) sing a stupid hippie song about travelling and booze. Ahem, it is actually too much for me, moreover that it sounds so stupid, like a charity song for Namibian kids, or something. Ignore that crap, and go with the rest of the album, which is smart enough. *Fig Leaf mgmt.*, Martin Kvam, Nordre Skogvei 51, 5057 Bergen, Norway, m-kvam@hotmail.com

FINTROLL Mindnattens Vidunder Spilketarm

What seemed at first a very big joke, happened actually to be just a big joke with music hinted in *Kovenant* styled vests... No, seriously it is funny to hear six Suomi bastards performing their humpa polka style mixed with metal and trollish imagery, singing in Swedish (!), and mentioning *Astrida Lindgren* in their thanks list. Biography mentions that *Fintroll* was formed in not so sober state of mind, yet at least nowadays they are pretty much more aware of what kind of amusement they achieved with this. Album lasts for only half an hour, but it is enough to drive you crazy with its stupid melodies, which at times remind me old old Russian comedies on TV. *Blackmetal* is not a term *Fintroll* should be close to, as it is completely out of question with this album, except some harsh vocal tone performed by *Katja*. They might have one or two major *Kovenant* influences, but that is about it. To say the truth, I have got a point - it is a real musical reflection of troll tales, instead of superficial blackmetal kids that try to show all that in too negative colours. C'mon boys and girls, take again your favourite goblin tale book and realise that these grim and evil creatures in their original appearance were very funny, first of all. My fave tale on this album is about two guys who take a bath in sauna, and all of a sudden trolls blow it up in a second! Haha, really curious story. Ok, I think I must tell some extra about the music, which at times is pretty majestic, topped over with poppy keyboards, and time from time - epic vocals a la *Nattvindens Gråt*. By the way, their line-up counts *Barathrum*, *Moonsorrow*, *Rapture*, ex *Thy Serpent* musicians, so you cannot say it is about new kids on the block. Whether they are understood right, or not - that is another question. Nice looking booklet, by the way, fintroll@hotmail.com

FLESHCRAWL As Blood Rains From The Sky... We Walk The Path of Endless Fire Metal Blade

Seems like everything is said about German death metal band number one. As far as they keep writing ultimately brutal music for a close to dozen of years. This dedication sort of reminds me label mates *Canibal Corpse*, as musicians prove that they live with this music, and not just pretend taking a look at death metal inside, and then going somewhere else. I am proud of *Fleshcrawl*, since they never turn their backs neither to ugly riffs, nor to hateful ripping lyrics. This new lp sounds like it was their first album with so much youth energy. Just the composing is much heavier and alive. If you are not aware, first record was much slower, sort of American type where fast grinding part was followed by slow riff, and this way through the entire record. From *Impunity* (1994) *Fleshcrawl* dedicated themselves to totally raging death metal, with remarkable tuning down to hell, competing with *Entombed* or *Grave* guitar sound back in 1991. Yes, new record makes me think on early stage of death metal. *Fleshcrawl* are not so far away from the structures of their two previous records, but something is more ancient with this painfully long named new cd. It might scare some melodious yet brutal death fans out, but I think that is the aim of the band: to revive the glory of Swedish school spiced with German pepper. For a *Fredman* Studio this is so heavy record, I am sure *Fleshcrawl* has scored half of Gothenburg kids out these weeks they were staying there... this might be the reason why they sound slightly different now. Too recording has more raw uncontrolled power inside, a bigger slamming effect. I would not discuss which studio (*Fredman* or *Abyss*) suits them better, though.

They are so heavily obsessed with blood, I tell you... Just notice: third record title in a row has something to do with blood. Well, if you are surprised, just read through the sick death invoking lyrics. Traditionally, guys have done a cover from the past, this time choosing *Exhibit 84* (refreshing tune), and if you are lucky enough to grab limited edition of this album, you must find a *Carnage* cover as well. Deathmetal über alles! *Fleshcrawl*, c/o Mike or Stefan Hanus, Finkenweg 17, D-89257 Illertissen, Germany, fax (49) 73037359, kil@fleshcrawl.de, www.fleshcrawl.de

FLEURETY Last Minutes Lies Supernat Music

A pleasant return! With one tune recorded in 1996 (less good and more experimental), and two tracks registered one year later - really cool. Both sessions show *Svein Epli* and *Alexander* more as instrumentalists, refusing to put their voices too often (except small bits of narration), and having several female vocalists instead. Their voices and *Fleurety's* laid-back music makes this new record a cross between new *Katonia*, new *Uver* and *The 3rd and The Mortal*. In both parts making my thumbs up of enjoyment and satisfaction. I am not sure though what is that successive decision about this avantgardic project, mostly because it has moved so far from its earlier musical shape. Do not believe when you hear that it is jazz music with hints, as it is not! Actually it is pretty bizarre, but still guitars and rhythmic oriented stuff dominate, where you can easily catch their old manner to lay different pieces of musical progression. Just remember *Min Tid*... weirdest moments and put them all together, with eerie voices, and saxophone drones. Unlike jazz music, *Fleurety* are still catching you with some memorable phrases, and even verses, which must be experienced and played several times before really getting into them. But once properly experienced it makes you returning to short (20 minutes) mcd (available for 11\$ from my address) on and on.

I believe that on their next full-length *Fleurety* will manage to do without too much experimentation, and build music more with these catchy addictive grooves + memorable voices. There is no big deal to be the most avantgardic, better try to combine your ideas with vibe and feel. *Fleurety* are able to do that.

FORBIDDEN SITE Sturm und Drang Solistium / Bestial

No, I do not think this rather old disk just that it is available at my address - it is pretty interesting and unusual etherial metal, full of French sophistication and hardly measurable pathos. After *Misanthrope* demarche, it sprouted on - to use French language at its decadent, poetic sense, combining it with heavy music. *Forbidden Site* mix it with English lyrics, and indeed are more than dark death/black metal with clear singing. In fact they stick every bit of a muzak with precious care and thus the result is making one wonder, at least I cannot state that it is the top-notch album, that production is flawless, as with the next effort guys must have done something more catchy; but at times, you know how it is - when it is full of atmosphere, classic vibe and raw metal parts - the whole makes more contrasts, and more thoughts in listeners mind. Take notice - *Forbidden Site* are exactly opposite to all that crap of 'musicians' who make a stupid salad of different soundscapes. Even if extreme metal side jumps over the barriers their piano ideas might have, it is still fully controlled steam, which is truly appreciated by your review-god. I believe guys will not take this as an insult: most of all I admit the effect that girl choir does on the platter. It is something really beautifully decadent, sad and melancholic. Unlike so many fuckers around who have no clue about making music: arcane. *Ars Vampirica* is the highlight, to cut it short. Another positive moment - album tends to keep you attentive for the entire set of 70 minutes, which is but an achievement. So far so good - if you do not believe me, check out other sources hailing French four-piece *Mearwhile*, *Sturm und Drang* tape is for sale for a funny 6\$ price. Act fast until the stock ends. *Forbidden Site*, 28 av. Rhin at Danube, 38100 Grenoble, France, tel./fax (33) 476854344

FOREST OF IMPALED Demonvoid Red Stream

This one is ok but no more than that. American sort of black/death, which can be both extreme and sickening in one track, but harmonious in another. No, no, *Forest of Impaled* would better chop their heads off but not turn into another pop/black starlet, that is for sure. I definitely hear their strength in these nine songs, but it does not make them anyhow exceptional in a vast stream of newcomers. I wonder though how tight they can move from one influence to another: *Order From Chaos* (billig, even major role), *Satyricon*, *Acheron*, *Immortal*, *Morbid Angel*... They manage to write better songs than *Angelcorpse*, maybe even than *December Wolves*, but that does not lift them higher than these two mentioned bands. I assume it is about this extreme way American performers try to achieve the golden balance between brutality and hatred these days, or black and death if you see what I mean, but this debut album has a limited ability to strike in a major sense of a word. Do not ask me why though... Like *December Wolves*, these guys have passed several stages in the past, like melodic European metal, then black metal, and now they turned into more chaotic side of both styles. That is fine with me, as far as they are searching for their own sound. Yet I wonder if their old demo material was that much worse than this. Knowing *Red Stream* picky masterminds, I guess *FOI* were not that bad... Anyway, just hell of a practise writing new material might rise them up to receive that major recognition. Who knows, maybe sticking to any particular idea for the whole album would make them some fair improvement either?? I say that from my experience, since these musicians combining a few into one usually are slow to realise there is another approach to extremity as well. You should catch that path, with precision and patience. Anyway, if that bubble mentioned above appeals to you, by *Forest Of Impaled* (but take a listen before buying the cd!) - 14\$ (USA) / 16\$ from the label. *Forest Of Impaled*, P.O. Box 346162, Chicago, IL 60634-6162, USA, foi666@hotmail.com, <http://welcome.to/foi>

GALGENBERG Galgenberg Dark Blaze

Excellent follower after Polish duo's debut demo two years ago! Supreme and majestic black metal. This is something for all pathetic kids to figure out - you cannot make it just for showcasing romanticism and beauty. Black metal is about raw musical art, which *might* be shaped in darkening glare of melody. Difficult to express in words, but that blend of basic components has an alchemic touch to it, and at least my heart always points what is great and what is average. *Galgenberg* music is great, however obviously Norwegian tm influence takes presence on this debuting mod. And if you, reader, agree with me after listening to them, you can say the taste of yours is similar to mine. That is fine with me if anybody takes no deeper attention to the band either - this is their (different) comprehension, so why to bother? If you do not have *Leado Takas #6*, I remind to compare *Galgenberg* demo with a mix of *Graveland*, *Darkthrone* and *Satyricon*. So, keep in mind just the latter this time, since guys have turned into much more technical and careful project soundwise, as well as atmospheric. Their unbridled blackmetal reminds this time a couple of extra *Norge* hordes - *Kvst* and *Keep of Kalessin*. I mean, all these bands writes their stuff referring to mighty *Satyricon*, but probably all of them at least partially succeed to achieve that grim ambience, whilst many diatantias fail. *Galgenberg* are not one of the latter - they rule pretty supreme! You can nearly feel *Satyr* composing their guitar parts, though vocally it is more personal. And I cannot stop being fascinated by subtle synth addition, which is as intelligent

and supportive to music as it is bearable to feel black metal majesty. The only failure is *Sodom's Blasphemer* cover, since it is a bit different from the conceptual tunes, music does not go together. Besides, Swedish *Luciferian* has done it much better four years ago. Other than that, this is a must, counting on *Galenberg* progress. If they continue like that, next album must be huge. Hell darkness.

GOODS TOWER

Ebony Birds
Sturmeslögel
Belarusian folkies finally go to take Europe! It must have happened few years ago, they were absolutely worth it, but well – living in a commy state you cannot use all the opportunities at once. Even though *The Erie* and *The Turns* tapes were re-released on cds in Russia, it has not brought them enough of feedback outside of post-soviet world. Concerning Lithuania, fans are rather familiar with the band here, for five years now. Thus it is a bit typical to hear the same re-recorded material for third time already. Ok, for European market it might be a new candy, but anyway – being in a band I would better prepare a totally new album, and try to shoot into the centre then. Not that this compilation is weak or boring. Music here is actually very good, due to it is not only historically original, but also finally recorded in a proper way. Guys must have visited any German studio, I am sure. Sound engineer has done everything to gain *Goods Tower* an excellent feel behind their atmospheric music. Many tunes have got another bonus, sounding now much darker and more powerful. Especially *Eye for an Eye* and *Beyond Praying*. At times I even forget that *Lesley's* voice is so off tune, when he screams. Music makes it sound bearable to some point. Anyway, *Goods Tower* would be just perfect with another type of vocalising (like these goth moments in *Eye for an Eye* suggest). Their atmospheric pagan metal requires something extra instead of weak guttural scream. Though *Lesley's* variation is but a thing to contrast the whole sound image. Well, I am sure new *Prophecy* sublabel will take care on their new material, that must be something tremendous. Or at least pretty great in eerie folk metal music.

GORBALROG

Untergang
Solstitium
Novgorod, Vladimir, Gorbachov... The Russian monickers says lives on! Let us expect *Zhirinovsk* and *Lenin* in a nearest future! Hopefully these new 'hordes' will be as comic to take a listen to as possible. What? It is not *Gorbachov* after all??? What a pity... Music is more or less listenable either, and it is really time to switch on it.

Unlike raw and brutal bm past, the new material is based upon hymnic structures but there is no loss of strength and brutality. Bio claims nonsense. It is but a loss of energy. And hymn-like parts are rather rare on the cd. What I experience is mostly mid tempoed sullen music, with links to black, death and atmospheric metal. If it must have been bm, I feel pity for the guys... It is really not. Or how do you feel hearing a *Dan Svano's Nightingale* worth goth muzak after a blast part? Ok, it might fit here and there, but usually it does not. It is not the case whilst new musical points happen to transcend. It reminds a bad joke or worthless try to mix the unmixable. It is a split in the face to true black metal bands, finally. I hate danceable grooves a la *Lake of Tears* and *Cemetery*.

Well, the whole album is not a plain mishmash, some better tunes and separate moments prevail. Clear singing (even *Harris Johns*, the old *Kreator* and *Sodom* producer, shared his voice) and melancholic mood make the closing *Aeon* *Verwesender Annut* the best tune, but then again – if the whole cd was like that: mellow, mystic and gloomy, my review would have been much different. I just want to give a clue what to expect at bolder borders: taking *Untergang* as a whole, it unfortunately falls into German extreme metal league, and you know that it generally means my thumbs down... The world has witnessed tons of better (debut) albums. *Gorbalog*, Marc Horstmeier, Hilttenstrasse 58, 44289 Dortmund, Germany, tel. (49) 2314460198

GREYWINTER

Surbed By Night
Meathook
It is basically refreshing to hear Suomi band a bit deeper into the blackmetal essence, than typical 90-ies melodic shifty romanticism invading the scene down here. Proliferity of *Greywinter* artists as violent music as *Behelit*, *Rotting Christ* and *Darkthrone* used to perform. But it was few years ago, when *Lord Euren* and *Baron Tjornen* were just another demo band. With this new, their third effort, *Greywinter* have moved elsewhere from their raw past but in spite of biography claiming it to be not so black, I would still label it as a blackmetal band, which is closer to the roots, not forgetting cold and infernal melodies in riffs. Anyway – no melancholic crap, or romantic dark music is registered on three track cd, just fast aggressive metal. It should be ideology and lyrical content which makes them state things like that, and name it cold and heavy murder metal. So, it has much to do with bm styling. Like the opener *In The Wake of Winter's Wolves* is slightly more melodic *Transylvanian Hunter*, carrying a cleaner production whatsoever. A first riff of the title track is sort of disappointment, since it is different from the rest, falling into mellow metal category, failing to keep up fast and aggressive pace. Hopefully this is not *Greywinter's* resignation, like the rest of that tune actually suggests me. In spite of its more friendly to listener character, music is neatly composed and has something to do with *Ophthalmia*. Briefly, *Greywinter* is a cool band, and definitely better in Finnish blackmetal milieu, willing to preach a devastating word towards local dark minds. I believe they will write even more ripping tunes with *Darkthrone* spirit and necrotic mood around it, but nonetheless check out this mod, as it is worth 11\$ *LTR* asks for it from you! Northern holocaust is coming! *Greywinter*, Tarvonen, Karajatuuvankuja 2 / 35, 00690

Helsinki, Finland, seareach@saisaunahiti.fi

GREYWORM

As The Angels Reach The Beauty
Serenades
I thought I had missed them in *Wacken* and it was a huge loss, but thanks to *Pulse Promotion* I finally heard what *Greyworm* is truly about, and my awe has turned into a simple satisfaction of a rationalist intuition that this so praised band is not that good in reality. Ok, I have not seen them live, but studio time they have spent with *As The Angels...* is not worth to be placed on cd. Imagine third-rate gothic/dark/black (or how they name it these days?), which you forget as soon as the force of honest opinion makes you throw it off the player?.. COF are to blame for starting the trend, but then again – *Greyworm* are so many layers below them, there is no point to draw comparisons. Anyway – screaming vocal, boring riffs hidden under the shell of synthesizer, and the 'same size fits all' type of song construction makes me but puke, exclusively! I am not talking about average music, I am here to name this cd as a pure misery, mistake, misunderstanding, miswateveryouwant!

It is so sick to realise that mediocre bands take over much more gifted outfits, and simply take their place in various important festivals, record shop shelves and distribution lists... Everything is scored by business people, whilst true jewels shine just for lonely souls. At some point it is good, but it would be better not to see such crap like *Greyworm* promoted so heavily. Someone might consider my reviews and style in general as stalling new bands and new generation in general, but the way I write simply reflects the way I am growing with music. If it is so grey and sales-oriented, I try to open the eyes of potential buyers. Believe me, you are about to do tons of better music, and not necessary from the old records. Next rabbit, please!

GRIEVANCE

The Phantom Novels
Head Not Found
They do not name it black metal, they call it dark progressive metal. What the heck... Is *Dimmu Borgir* black metal then? Anyway, both bands have much in common, and thus – name them how you prefer or like, but result is the same. They prefer it dark, bombastic, majestic, but nonetheless – easy going and listenable. This resemblance is the main lack of *Grievance* – the first Norwegian band recorded in *Fredman Studios*. Except *Angels Scumb*, carrying on a great goth vibe in the form of *Robert's* singing, everything else on this platter is plain death/black with *Dimmu* keyboards.

A bit trendy are *Anders Friden's (In Flames)* vocal contributions on half of this album, and I see no point in using him. Ok, he is sharper and more aggressive than with his main band, yet *Kenneth* has a great pitch (to be so close to *Shagrath*, ha), and actually is better than *Anders*, but hell knows why guys decided to use Swede in three tunes... I cannot believe that it is done just to make a stir with 'guest musicians' thing... It is a loss of identity after all. Well, *Robert* and *Kenneth* composed everything as a duo, so they might have needed some outside help. Anyway, both guys have several cool ideas in minds, and have a reason to sign a multialbum deal. Not that six-tracker is bad or mediocre, but when so many bands cope with the same style, it might be difficult to breakthrough. I see already better ones: *Grief of Emerald*, Swedes by the way. And that is probably... all, so yes, after all *Grievance* is not that bad, as review might paint them. But please less poppy structures next time, and more metal, more darkness, more progress. To prove you are dark progressive crew, (My inner self has something to add: Do not believe him, he listens to this cd more often than his old beloved albums, ha...)

HADES ALMIGHTY

Millenium Nocturne
Hammerheart
Oh poor me... poor taste of myself... It is very difficult to endure the fall of one of the most cult Norwegian bands... How come, I ask – how come they could write so uncompromisingly worse material... Aaaaaaargh, it has nothing to do with famous... *Again Shall Be...* or *The Dawn of the Dying Sun*, even nothing to do with the majesty of early demo tape. Have they had less time to work harder on this? Is it *Nuclear Blast* which pushed guys to make changes?? Anyway, most probably it is up to the band to try new waters, but this experiment ended up a catastrophic outcome. I see why *NB* has sold the licence to another label then... Ok, shitty production must be pointed out as the biggest disappointment. There is an evident turn to sound clearer, but then *Hades* feel is lost forever!!! Dirt it was and dirt it should stay, to keep their unique black metal. What concerns *Janto's* voice, it is unbelievably deranged and weakened by sound engineer. It is soft, as if guy is screaming through the phone receiver. I am in lack of words to describe this shitty feel behind the compositions. It is the main reason of failed effort. But well, *Hades* music has lived out worse period between 1996 and 1998. Together with some flashes of undying riffs of majesty, not so rarely guys start to use some weird stamping with guitars, as if they do not know what to do with the riff. Sounds very bad, having in mind their potential. It reminds me a weak football or basketball team, which is afraid to attack the rival, which is dead as a team! I do not want *Hades* to be dead, after numerous songs and years of pagan glory! Well well, let us better forget this effort asap, and I personally wish guys tons of genuine ideas writing their next album. Your path is one and only – try to recollect *An Oath Sworn in Bjorgvin* or *Awakening of kings* times...

HELLSTORM

Fucking Blood
Head Not Found / Apocalyptic Empire
Besides countless jokes and pun out of hellish rock'n'roll Norwegian brothers have improved a milestone since their

debut 7" ep on *Oslovel* of last year. Having in mind, how much I disliked it, a huge surprise indeed to hear their compositions three times more packed, twice as heavy and once more thought-out. No no no, it is not the case due to guys turned more black metal oriented, and I loved them better. Dumb ass – no style can bribe me! I simply hear the band to sound hell better, actually fitting their name finally. So here is no corruption indeed, as some journalists tried to perceive: as if *Metalion* was so fascinated to hear the band having a tune titled *Stayer* that he immediately signed them. This song from earlier vinyl is included on here either, and I must admit it is one of their worst tracks. Otherwise, if you do not enjoy old trash/death/black with a rock'n'roll tinge comeback, this is a waste of time anyway.

Excavating *Hellstorm* music piece by piece is no big deal nor it is interesting at all. You know it all – the same raw sound and clichés exposed. But unlike their earlier stuff these songs have got a whole lot of a cool dirty sound being yet technically controlled and displaying guys as much better musicians. Ha, ex bass player *Erik Elden* let to join *Einherjer*. Good luck – your place is not vacant, brother: *Karna* has more blood in its veins! As I told ye, some links towards black metal are mostly evident, and it makes them a stronger kick in the arse indeed. Please stop thinking about me worshipping *Metalion*, as *Hellstorm* boys have something blasphemous to offer: 1000 copies limited lp version is released by *Apocalyptic Empire*, a label run by *Hellstorm* themselves. Each lp copy costs you 15\$. It has an exclusive fucked-up cover art and is worth of adding to your collection. *Hellstorm*, Box 97, 7550 Hommelvik, Norway, tel. (47) 73971720, fax (47) 73971721

HORA SUPREMA

Hora Suprema
With a help of German branch of *Metal Blade* promo dept, this melodic/atmospheric metal band tries to promote their self-titled and self-released debut record, which has been out for a good 18 months time already. However, their name is new for lots of you, I believe. Nothing really spectacular, just an ok release, like people use to name such things. I do not know whether *Hora Suprema* will turn the next big hype like *Darkseed* or their likes did few years back, but actually I do not care as well. By any means, this watered down metal is not convincing. If it is about emotion, then their sort of sound should be much deeper, and should search for higher forms of expression, much different from these cliché rhythms, riffs, synth lines and vocal patterns. It is not enough to adjust the whole musical machine 'like others', because our ears are tired of identically sounding bands. Especially when they are not powerful enough.

It says *Hora Suprema* have been performing doom in their early days. Well, maybe it would still suit them best. Surely, then media, as well as trendy fans, would get them less attention but now it really looks like these guys just walk grey paths strolled all over by other musicians. I cannot feel enough of inspiration to somehow except their music from the mass. One thing maybe worth attention is their effort to combine English and German verses into the same lyric, either giving it an English, or German title. Looks amusing to read, really. But otherwise I am not convinced by such lyrics like *I'm so sure that we can walk on water – just like Jesus did...* I mean – what a fuck! For how long this damned name should dominate in lyrics of thousands and thousands bands. Let us get rid off it once and forever! I do not give a damn whether he walked on that fucking water, or he took a shit on the coast!!!

Goes for just 10\$ from: *Hora Suprema*, c/o Michael Hagemann, Burdastr. 4, D-77656 Offenburg, Germany, tel. (49) 7819903428, horasuprema@heavy.de, www.heavy.de/horasuprema

HYPERION

Where Stone Is Unscarred
Massacre
In spite that this formation is debuting with full-length cd, music is rapidly growing on your skepticism with undoubtedly soon-to-become-hits tunes. At least half of their compositions have surprisingly strong, catchy and memorable refrains, which you start to sing-along and cannot stop! Like it once was with *Helloween* and recently – with *Hammerfall*. Thus I would not wonder to see *Where Stone Is Unscarred* among the best sellers in power/heavy metal market this year. The effort is worth it. One criteria which can stop it a bit is *Matt McManis's* voice, which is not yet as powerful and loud as his contemporaries. Not bad, both with high-pitch and traditional heavy metal scream, but something could be done to make it more consonant with the rest. Another thing that makes heads bang is their unexpected combination of hm roots, with every now and then so simple and sincere melody or chorus, that it even makes think about cheesy 80-ies metal. Yet themes like that usually do not last long, when *Hyperion* take another – much more modern way, characterised by low tuned guitars, innovative synth and double bass drumming. Ha, in such a break Italians remind nothing else but recent *Amorphis*, which is damn positive to hear with heavy metal band.

I am slightly disappointed only with a semi-ballad *Beyond The Sky*, which simply does not convince me and is the only tune not heavy enough! Eventually it means 6 extra minutes and too long album. Otherwise here is not much of a complaint – you hardly find such an entertaining heavy metal cd these days! *Hyperion*, Elcrys mgmt., via Gramsci 32, 23891 Barzano (LC), Italy, tel. (39) 0399211802, fax (39) 0399287606, elcrys@tin.it

IGNORABIMUS

Dah Da Zorp
Guaño
First of all an event in Baltic metal music market – a new and finally really serious label going worldwide! This is not a joke and absolutely unquestionable – *Guaño Records* has come to stay in the market for a long long time. Believe it or not, but you will hear about them and their bands in a not so distant

future. Ha, one of them comes already – Estonian melodic death metallers with a long and mystic monicker. Yet their debut album is titled even more mysteriously, with a meaning known only to themselves, or maybe Estonian people as well? Anyways, a major warning goes for all these kids into sweet romantic shit – this is not the case, since *Ignorabimus* perform old school inspired grunting death metal, just turned more melodious way, and nonetheless – with guitarist *Aksee's* melodic singing here and there. If not these jumps off death metal riffs, I would name *Ignorabimus* a classical mid-tempoed dm band, performing even not groundbreaking but an ok music, reminding me Swedish veterans *Expulsion*. Yet I feel a lack of energy and that death metal monstrosity, with both bands by the way. I imagine that they should be a good experience for a headbanger in a live situation, but to feel the power of heavy sound at home you need either play their album loud as hell, or find another cd with more energy. Though why to judge them this way – I imagine they do not want to play that more moderate in tempo and heaviness music, so that is about the taste. Yet I would choose something more ass-kicking. One weird moment is *Code To The Joy*, a tune which has a real interpretation of Beethoven's masterpiece performed by real choir! And their lyrics are quite odd for the read. Aye, returning back to production and layout of cd, you must be shocked to say it is not top-notch! Perfect artwork, tasteful graphics are a true pleasure to take in hands!

IMMOLATION

Failures For Gods
Metal Blade
Anyone who wish to trade a previous *Immolation cd* here in *After* into 4 copies of this magazine, please get in touch with me asap! Shame to admit, but I still have not heard it... After 1990's debut this new smasher is my second meeting with crazy antichristians (except their demos/promos album for *Repulse*). Well, so long hiatus has made some changes whatsoever, so with first or second listen I felt like *what is wrong with this cd?* But with every next listen I purely grows on you, positively of course.

Now I know what is 'wrong' with this cd – completely different production. Forget their raw sound of old stuff, it is something else than that. I loved that menacing brutality of old death metal records, and truly these new polished songs at times seem a bit 'too produced' for so extreme music that guys perform. I see the point to keep it downlaid and dark enough though. So ok, I will not write eventually you use to it, let us leave it as it is.

Now the music. Do not expect another fastest band in the world, as it is not. Rather than that, *Immolation* experiment much more with slower and even doomier structures, using so many hints met in slower tracks of *Morbid Angel*. At times you start to doubt isn't it *Bessed Are The Sick* or *Domination* indeed, but nah – no way to miss bands one for another. *Immolation* excites their brand of death metal in lowest notes possible, actually like ten years ago, and their technics have really changed, adding those unexpected tricks. But on the other hand, you can find quite melodious riffing here and there, close to legendary *Demigod* album, or even recent black/death wave. Sounds good and firm, be sure. Other than that, just usual *Immolation* trademark – a safe buy 10 times of 10. *Immolation*, P.O. Box 566, Yonkers, NY 10710, USA

IMPENDING DOOM

Signum of hate
Ketzer / Reverina
You have missed the limited edition vinyl release of German band? Or cannot find the compact disc version as well? Here comes the solution – tape released by two underground companies with solid black/white cover and even both bonus tracks featured only on lp version. I am sure this tape with old school deathrash will find many freaks interested, and not only in countries where cd is too expensive to purchase. Second album of *Impending Doom* faces the band worshipping the old metal tradition, but still incorporating pretty drastic ideas and technological decisions. I guess *Metal To The Metals* says it all about their attitude, no wonder that they are named as next teutonic purveyors of the metal class, after *Desaster*. Indeed, metal to the bone is the right reasoning about it. But then again I am slightly confused by several melodious tracks with a clean singing. Not because they were bad, but I cannot relate them to crushing meltdown tunes like *Sumerian Awakening* or the mighty opener *The Age Of Antichrist*, which sounds as if recorded in completely another league. I wish the band to stick to much rougher metal one for all it is not about the variety when sullen power breeds around your heavy heads! In fact, *Demigod* on split 7" with Danish *Emortism* sounded better than couple of covers featured on this tape. *Demigod Emperor* is too heavily dominated by dark goth, and has no thrill of CF chemistry, and *Chapel of Ghouls* lack a decent production as well as more passion to add like death metal gods. Both tunes sound like it is just another good time spent in front of yawning audience, and has no genuinity that performers can always be proud touching the metal classics. In any case, *Impending Doom* remains that haunting experience, which could not be missed, especially just for 5\$. On sale from *Lada Takas* mallorder as well. *Impending Doom*, Andreas Kaufmann, Dürfelstrasse 1, 07570 Weida, Germany, tel. (49) 3650363484

IMPIETY

Skullucking Armageddon
Dies Irae
Time to praise Lord Satan and his true worshippers from the east! *Impiety* is supposedly the next longest existing eastern black metal horde after Japanese *Sabat*, so devotedly continuing pure black holocaust in the name of the Horned One. Their music is simply like a mirror of the lines written above, which I have laid after going through their blood-shedding fire-spitting blasphemies, that people usually name as lyrics. There is that satanic impulse strongly related to the god-

killing music and massacre worth concept. It is a pity that Singapore veterans cannot afford a proper production, even these days. I admit that raw sound is a keyword of extreme blackmetal, but the sound is rather deadened here, even listening to it at a high volume. I also cannot enjoy at its fullest *Shyalthan's* scream, but it has something to do with his manner of vomiting words into a mic. It could be slightly more personal. Voice is a bit put down in a mix, though. But these are just minor drawbacks, since musical madness of this sophomore cd (first album *Asateurul Awaleen* was out on Dutch *Shivadarshana*) purely rages for 45 minutes, thus skullfucking blasphemy should stay a must for true metal admirer anyway. There is no rest for pussies, not a single hesitation about *Implety's* way of presenting the black mass, just total fucking massmurder. Not the least – three-piece team of nightcrawlers should be excellent live, mixing party Scandinavian party Australian ways of bni, with double blast extremities and hints of old school. That is what makes them so unrelentless. Not to forget a solid digipak edition with blowing layout and blacker than black embossed logo inside! Looks truly great and especially dark. Much more impressive than bunch of pretenders who fail to achieve that. So is their music. Get eastern monsters' cd right away just for 16\$, from *L7R Implety*, P.O. Box 544, Bedok Central, 914605 Singapore, Singapore, implety@cyberway.sg, www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Stage/1063

INCRIMINATED / FULCRUM CREAK
spill
Hostile Regression

This split looks like a promotional thing, sort of demonstrating the abilities of both bands. At least I cannot see why it should be presented as their album, both due to its poor presentation, and standard music. Nah, it is not actually bad, neither it lacks any elementary layout details, but the label (owned by *Incriminated's* bass player & vocalist in the same person) do not push it as a real thing. Anyway, it should have acted as a decent promotional release, as far as I am concerned. The question is if many potential listeners had a chance to learn it.

Incriminated opens it up, delivering four rather tight mid-tempo thrash cannons, with deeply growling vocalist. Nothing new at all, even if a bit early nineties stuck music, which is nevertheless loyal to the metal banner, sort of *headbang for your own pleasure* thing. For a more sophisticated listen please choose something else, but if you feel like thirsty for straight-ahead thrashing blast, here we go with *Incriminated*. Definitely a rare exception in today's scene. Next is *Fulcrum Creak*, plunging into purely modern aggressive thrash with totally crappy shouting vocalist who leaves me emotionless. Well, at time he, as well as the rest of his team, beats it up and tunes totally lyrical and burning down all the distortion, but clean moments seem too mellow to

me, once again remaining just a reminiscence of modern crap. Technically this crew is really fine, I am sure they would stir up some mess if promoted in a right way. You can always check both bands in, just for 16\$ getting this split from the label. *Fulcrum Creak*, Peltolanenkatu 5b 9, 80220 Joensuu, Finland, tel. (358) 405159580, fax (358) 503506336, fulcrumcreak@hotmail.com

INHUMAN
Foreshadow
Uniao Lisboa UL IV

Recorded and mastered in England, produced by *Simon Elermy*, this sophomore record (after a decent debut few years back) by Portuguese goth metallers is a major disappointment, as far as my humble opinion goes. I am mostly touched by their move towards unimaginative lighter realms of heavy music, what makes a ten song effort too easy listen, which you check and forget in a short time. Sort of know one – know all the tracks impression. It is not about requiring a few listeners before getting into it, in fact you may turn bored after three or four spins already. If anybody thinks *Inhuman* has turned into *Paradise Lost* copy of 1993-1995, then have in mind that these monsters had a much wider spectre of emotions in their albums of that period. I would put Portuguese hunters closer to the worst moments of *Lake of Tears*, or *Beesech*, though much heavier and more metal. But it is definitely not heavy enough, and keyboard dominance throws them down to mainstream goth/metal maze. I wonder where the hell all these smart ideas of the debut have disappeared? Just *Stigma* keeps that intelligent line here...

To claim that *Pedro Garcia* is the destroyer of their former gothic doom/death sound would be an overstatement, but vocalist means a lot, especially in this case. So he has moved from rather interesting raspy metal growl to a bad excuse smelling melodic singing, what really pisses me off. At least several lines with brutal voice would add that necessary heaviness to *Foreshadow* it doubtlessly lacks, but am I that cool dude to make the band change their music once again? No I am not, they can develop their goth metal, but me is far from offering to follow them in the future. *Strange Desire* is the record I suggest to choose from their yet tiny collection. Cover art is the best thing with this cd. *Torre mgmt.*, Joao Paulo Pina, Rua do Jasmim, 44, 2645-530 Alcabideche, Portugal, tel. (351) 214649110, fax (351) 214649111, torre.mgmt@mail.telepac.pt

INNER SHRINE
Fallen Beauty
Dragonheart

Woowoo, the cover looks really artistic, in spite of cliché used (two teen girls, one dressed in black, another – in white, laying on the sand or some sort of ground, covered with massive chains). Though cliché may look really wonderful at times, especially when the album is named in just what you

see. I wonder why not *Fallen Beauties*, hah. Nevermind, it looks much better than *Nightwish* or any other crap with just an erotic message with no meaning. *Inner Shrine* is about artistry, and luckily – with their gothic metal as well! Not often I am enthused about mellow metal records these days, but here we go with a definite exception. Mind you – they were more death metal three years ago, when debut *Nocturnal Rhymes Entangled in Silence* was out, yet moving away from heavy style has not turned the band into wimpy rockers. The only thing a bit annoying is *Anna's* so called 'mystic' voice, which I find too weak for metal, and too loud for the moments she opens her mouth. In addition album is marked with *Cecilia's* operatic singing, which is then brilliant, and creates a monumental aura! Could be more of that. Aye, both girls are just session members, whilst *Inner Shrine* consists of purely male trio – *Leonardo, Luca* and *Claudio*. So it more or less explains why they enjoy teen girls on the cover so much... Seriously, gothic metal composed by them has much more feelings than loser bands around these days bring up. I can grope not just romanticism or melancholy, but real sadness, majesty, and the whole rainbow of sincerity. And it happens to be recorded between the lines – *Inner Shrine* are the martyrs of true music, not just clowns to sell out their souls for cheap popularity. That surely imposes. Check out non-metal intermezzos as well, especially the closing *The Inner Research of the Shrine*. Returning to the visuals, booklet meets the band pictured at military graveyard, with rows of crosses white as snow, grass down there brightly green, and figures of musicians black as night... brilliant idea, marvelous execution!

I keep my both thumbs highly up for Italian dreamers! *Inner Shrine*, leonor@mlclink.it

IN THE WOODS...
Three Times Seven On A Pilgrimage
Prophecy

Marvelous numerical greetings for the new century! You see, *ITW* have released three seven-inch records in the past, and meanwhile decided to put all of them onto one record, thus three times seven equals twenty one! Get it? Anyway, it is just title periphrases, which has nothing to do with the actual music, except maybe the strife for eternity with links to the future, which prevails not only in that title, but also in music, lyrics and visual tones. As usual, to get into the woods you need to spin it for a dozen of times before it truly gets under the skin. Like an infectious worm, huh, yet the message is completely opposite to anything material – here we go with spiritual experience, that obviously puts *In The Woods...* above all worms of the scene. It is also common for them for quite a while now, hehe. But no, this disc is not that typical at all, because of its broad wandering nature. Mind you, together with 7" eps here come a bunch (four, to be precise) of cover versions from early seventies psychedelic rock bands, that Norwegians have been

constantly working on since debut album times. So, it has turned that distances between sound expressions are truly long this time, both making you flashed realizing their abilities, and also slightly confused at times, bombarding with almost avantgardistic approach. Highlights yet must be tight covers of *Let There Be More Light* (*Pink Floyd*), *White Rabbit* (*Jefferson Airplane*), and reshaped *Mourning The Death of Aase* from the debut album.

I have no idea if guys want to state that this is not entirely new album (most probably they do not care about these matters at all), but what I also would like to point out – there cannot be 'official' and 'not official' records for *ITW* (like for *Theiron*, for example), because it always sounds exclusive. Welcome to the twenty first century, boys...

INTO THE SUNLESS MERIDIAN
Into The Sunless Meridian
Near Dark

Ok, *Mike*, I respect your dedication with the music we all love and enjoy, I must admit you have damn descent impulses when it comes to conducting this quartet (guitars, bass, drums, and voice) of yourself, you are good in performance, you finally evoke some really dim and cold meditative atmosphere with your music, at least you should have spent entire life to rise up your music, and that is what I do enjoy. But one thing cannot fit my brain completely – where is a point in running two one-man projects, when the music is basically the same? Even concept of both is described similarly, as the main point is to pay homage to metal music and its founding bands. I am heading my sting into *ITSM* and *Tearstained*, which album was out on UK based *Mordgrimm* earlier this year. Both releases reflect *Mikael's* different possessions, which end up on metal anyway. But wouldn't it be better to keep at least minimal styling restrictions for both bands, like to keep *Mercyful Fate* inspirations and high toned voice this side, and let us say – black or death metal that side? Now it seems to me that mastermind just picks anything he finds in his archives, and keeps building his cd releases in such a way. It is fine if you have heard just one of the albums, and personally for me *Tearstained* was that project that I found slightly better. But when the next one arrives with the same attitude, I start thinking he must have switched over another monicker, or what? Confused – *ITSM* tracks were composed and recorded earlier than *Tearstained*. Not to insult the artist who has some passion indeed, I would suggest to call it a day with *Into The Sunless Meridian*, and put all the effort to *Tearstained*. Unless that monicker suits him better... Old thrash/death riffs are the best thing on the slabs. *A Corpse Without Soul* strikes real heavy too. Try to obtain a limited picture lp version, if you dare... *Into The Sunless Meridian*, c/o Mikael, P.O. Box 174, North Greece, NY 14515, USA, mikael@trontier.net, www.frontinternet.net/~mikael

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ISHTAR

Krig Hammerheart

Swedish band has no worse criteria of black metal than the rest, but not for the reason: According to the label, it is a legendary band. Well, if I found their name only a few months ago, it might be one of two ways: either it is bullshit talks about their cult status, or Swedish scene is too big to count every village cult band. Seems like Ishtar is one of the latter. If their tm is ok, then vocalist sounds like an emigrant from Mexico or Colombia. Not that I make a joke on Latin American people, more like on local blackers, where everyone and all of them scream as butchered pigs, and basically destroy the music of most Southern American bands. So Ishtar have one more screaming guy, who has nothing to do with average Swedish screamer, he is much worse. When music is fine, voice makes it average. If instrumental execution were great, I guess to be disappointed with this album. Now, when it is just good, I am fine putting Ishtar music among these average records.

If you know my rating of Scandinavian black metal, you definitely follow that Norwegians are the masters, producing the most majestic piece of this music, whilst Finnish musicians fail to create majesty within the sound. They usually stick to silly melodic or amateurish romantic stuff. Sverige is in the middle then, their music is not as great nor as easy predictable. Of course, this "rating" is highly generous and actually stupid, since there are plenty of bands above or below my rating. But if you succeed to catch the entire bunch of Scandinavian bands, the result would be more or less like this. So, to cut the story short, Ishtar keeps Swedish position a bit closer to Norway, and definitely far from Finland. At times I clearly hear Satyricon influence, some catchy atmospheric interludes pops up here and there, yet it is too much polluted with synth, destroying that majestic feel with music. And please - no more piggy vocalist. Take a listen to Krig's follow-up then.

KABAK

Descompcion Cerebral American Line

A three-piece from San Salvador reminds me my teen ages, and not only mine I suppose... You see, back then even in Lithuania some grind/gore supporters did lived, and even die-hard fans actually. No no, not me, but some freaks were forming immature bands, and trading shit spitting lyrics. I think it is over, and you will never hear about gore/grind band from Lithuania, at least in that sense of the word that it was spread in late 80-ies/early 90-ies... Southern and Central America are simply flourishing with such music, and according to demand from listeners, it is damn listened down there. It might sound as a surprise for us, Europeans, but it is a plain truth. They are obsessed there with old *Carcass*, *Repulsion*, or *Napalm Death* records. For example, *Kabak*, this trio with one of the funniest band names ever (in Russian it means 'a pub'), are not the best grindcore outfit around, but they still fit into a standard, and that is enough for a consumer. Relieving blast beat lacks some heavier production, but that is a thing aside for a real maniac. I would better prefer a band with a chunky heavy double guitar riffing though, and a lick of death metal in there, instead of thin grinding.

Expect all the other shit together like perverse lyrics in Spanish, gore cover picture, and tons of mistakes in a booklet. I think *American Line* could take a look before sending their print files to the printing house. One distinction - *Kabak* write pretty long tunes, one of them lasting for over 8 minutes. Still they are grinding... You can get this for lame 12\$ from *American Line Productions*. *Kabak*, c/o Jorge Lopez, Apdo Postal 0522, Metrocentro, San Salvador, El Salvador, grindthis@hotmail.com

KEEP OF KALESSIN

Agnen - a Journey through the ages Avantgarde Music

Doubtlessly highly matured and skillfully performed, this album does not hit me as hard as *Through Times of War* did last year. That is about the different effect of debut album, and its continuation. It is not necessary supposed to be worse, but with quite a few artists the impressive effect gets smaller, even music remains as intense and acclaimed as well as progressed. I have been thinking long enough about this phenomenon whilst getting into second album of Trondheim's fantasy black metalers. Another point that much likely caught me a bit disappointed is that material performed here is as definitely heard thousands of times before, however hard the press sheet may claim that it is the opposite case. I mean, yes - *Keep of Kalestin* have turned really tighter and even more extreme than before, but behind these diabolical speeds there is a feeling that is missing. Debut had calmer and more mid-tempo parts, that got them a right atmosphere. Now the speed sort of diminishes that aspect, making me regret about the past. Why the hell atmosphere should suffer then?

Going through every single song I kind of culmination comes in the very middle, starting with *Deny*, climaxing with *Pain Humanised*, and ending with *Orb Of Man*, Guys as if larry for the inspiration to come in first couple of tracks, then finally get used to their role, but at the end of the album they are fed up with that higher spirit that has visited them, and move down again to an average level with just the speed that remains. Again *Keep of Kalestin* share a vast Satyricon influence. Just recollect their speed and you have a right picture about *Agnen*... but it is definitely rather a plus rather than a minus. Just that feel is not really certain...

Anyway, Norg blackmetal fans know what to expect from the band, which was featured in *Ledo Takas #7* - this effort is doubtlessly still very good, and has no shoot in the dark label on it. Just my nasty habit to criticise... *Keep of Kalestin*, obsidian_c@hotmail.com, http://ly.to/kalestin

KRANIUM Testimonia Plasmatica

Look for something uncommon? I mean, really really different from the rest? Then Peruvian six piece is something you will not forget for ages. Just totally original, without any pretensions to be in fashion bandwagon jumping, nor even to gain tons of glory with the music they have been practising, well... for 17 years now. Ergh, impressive? I think so. To start with I must tell that *Kranium* have been a (heavy) progressive rock outfit at their very beginning, changing with time into heavier team, but nonetheless - their roots are still here, on the debut album. And that is great, as far as my humble opinion is concerned. Imagine a *Deep Purple* like groove, or *Pink Floyd* kind of emotion, followed by doom metal link to Andean, as they name it, heritage, this record is loaded so heavily. Their influences go further than you think - from growling voice of *Daniel*, to true or even hippie doom metal riffs, and from exotic traditional music to progressive landscapes.

The band (or correctly - the label, owner of which is descendent from Peru either) strongly reminds the cultural value that guys bring with, and I, so firmly lulled by their native magic, can just re-tell my experience that weird music of inca tribes reminds me: documentaries about exotic countries I occasionally catch on TV. It might have less to do with metal, or darker side of music at all, but it is magic, sort of monumental moments to experience. Yes, their heavy side might be just ok, with further improvement to be gained, yet they have their own highlights, which are so distant for the some we are boring in. I could speak about the strange instruments they use, but it is sort of not the most important thing for reviewer. If listener gets interested, (s)he will notice it without any comments. Just to inform about entire experience - this one hour long record is something for everyone who claims to love trippy music. Not strictly metal. Singing in native language is included in the price of 16\$ (Europe)/20\$. *Kranium*, P.O. Box 55 Correo, Av. Brasil 924, Lima-5, Peru

LONG VOYAGE BACK

Long Voyage II Modern Invasion

Phil Gresik of *Destroyer 666* fame goes postmodern metal way, trying something totally different from his main brutal thrash/death/black band, and he is pretty successful with that! No idea what kind of music was monumentalised on debut album, but its follower deserves my warm attention, surprisingly! It is not that rare that gifted musicians can express themselves in more than one sphere, so it is twice as pleasant when creative ideas happen to turn into good slab after all. Another example might be *Blakheim*, or *Dan Swanö*, or *Hellhammer*.

Yes, *Long Voyage II* is melodic atmospheric music, tearing its origins in gloomy slow motioned rock music, adding something you can name a trend (female vocals, synthesizer), and smashing it all with fuzzed guitar riffs. From time to time it all turns pretty heavy (*Ghosts Of The Past*), then older *Katonia* or *Opeth* come to mind, and *Phil* recollects that he can scream also beside his hypnotizing voice. But in general and most of all *Long Voyage Back* is for droning relaxing ambience and catchy moods around. Poetic, mysterious and listener-friendly, that would be my short assaults about it all. Surely I would like several parts to be more aggressive, monumental, or his voice - darker, but not for much. Actually *Phil* is supported with a drummer *Sham* either. This album is surely to be checked and experienced. I wonder about the reaction of *Bastial Warlust* and crew down there though??

Yeah, small four page booklet features some universal symbols and textures, which make me think over the natural roots that composer tries to reach with this project, though his lyrical side is much wider than that - searching the deep within his and thy souls.

LYMPHATIC PHEGM / FLESH GRINDER

Malignant Cancerous Tumour... / From Rotten Process... To Splatter Millennium

Anybody interested in Mexican serial killers? No, you will not find any delicious lyrical recipes here, describing their adventures, but you will get here tons of gooooore! Mexican flavour, natural addiction to anything sick and disgusting - such is a way for both participants of this split album. It is not their new material (with one exception), but older demos and unreleased versions re-released on compact disc. For all maniacs out there. I am sure that there is no necessity to discover anything new in this genre, nor both crews die to record some sort of innovative grind - on the contrary it is about the essence of grind/gore. Just to tell you - both bands, especially *Flesh Grinder* are far better than old purveyors of gore like for example Brazilian *Rot Lymphatic Phegm* is yet worse, both with performance and especially with weak sound. It is really weird, in addition, their bass guitar is too loud and sounds like a creepy grand piano in horror flicks. But it is not impressive, more sort of irritating. Also drum computer sucks. I have not found anything exciting about their compositions either. *Flesh Grinder* are known already due to their debut album, which has suffered from the bad sound quality. Here they present four demo '94 tracks, as well as two re-mixed songs from the mentioned cd, as well as two new songs which also appear on their new full-length. A bit strange idea indeed, as far as my humble opinion is concerned, but anyway - it is fine and better than *Anatomy & Surgery* cd. New stuff tends to sound more death metal, which is not bad at all. They have found a new bass player which might cause more original and heavy ideas either. Cover inlay still bursts with gore pictures, so if anybody miss that stuff in *Flesh Grinder*'s new tracks, check it out... *Lymphatic Phegm*, c/o Andre Luiz, R. Joao Squario 242, Osvaldo Cruz I CIC, Curitiba, PR 81-170-000, Brazil *Flesh Grinder*, P.O.

Box 1641, Joinville, SC 89.201-270, Brazil, www.flesh-grinder.freeservers.com

MACABRE

Unabomber Decomposed / Hammerheart

Ahh, sweet little macabre... Are you ready for its another sick dose?! It is not as shocking as it once was, some ten years ago. They were probably the first band to dig deep the serial killer phenomenon in their lyrics, and I remember it was scary back then. Unlike the music, which kept you amused and really refreshed. It had some sort of punk feel to it, but I would never name *Macabre* as metalcore band or something. Just funny metal with yelling vocalist - that are my reminiscences from the past... You know, in these times when buying one single cd was just impossible here, and everything you could afford was a dub on tape, I still have not had any *Macabre* album at its fullest, but the ends of many tapes were stuffed with their short slaughtering tunes. Especially off *Sinister Slaughter* sessions.

And so they have once again risen from the grave! Two new albums are scheduled for later in the year, namely *Dahmer* and *Murder Metal*, whilst this one is just a pre-taster containing three new songs (no exclusive tracks), and four old classics from 1989 and 1986, which I remember were so many times promoted by *Nuclear Blast* and *Relapse* on various compilations. Ha, my experience got similar reaction - *Macabre* music fits a wider jam of artists, and once again *Macabre* music has a fun element in their music. But wait - new stuff is much sicker, has more heaviness and fewer jokes. And high-pitched screams are gone leaving them grunting, as if wiping all the shit left by another serial killer. Music reminds a bit the new *Necrophagia*. I guess they have turned more gloomy and closed with their obsessive thoughts... So there is nothing else to expect from the forthcoming albums... just pure fucking gore!!! Ok, I would still wait until real new album comes out - it should prove them to be in form again. *Macabre*, Mind Melt Media, c/o Rodney Pawlak, tel. (1) 6306031060, macabre@mindmelt.com, www.mindmelt.com

MALEVOLENCE

Martyrialized Maquavel Music

To my huge surprise, this band did it - recovered from a bad songwriting syndrome, and composed an excellent dark metal album, after the disappointing debut few years ago. I remember slugging them down so heavily that I do not have that tape dub the band sent in anymore. But let me just comment this new release, as *Malevolence* more or less sounds as a new band now. Indeed the main singer *Carlos Cariano* at some stage was left alone, so he simply got new musicians, and that really works. This cd, almost two times shorter than their predecessor, is nonetheless more than two times better. It was like a revival for me, after so many amateurs and pretenders popping into mailbox, who try to be dark, symphonic, majestic, heroic, etc... Even though not something truly unique, Portuguese four-piece delivers nine tunes full of pure metal madness, which is both dramatic and solid. No fakes on how true or untrue one might be, I would even say - leave aside any labeling either. It is enough to be heavy and dark, in spite of some baneful moments. I especially enjoyed dark menacing voice of *Carlos*. This guy finally has enough of passion to be a very strong stageman, even before entering the stage. Some reminiscences come to old *Moonspell*, as well as one of the oldest Portuguese dark deathrash bands - *Sacred Sin*. To end up with this, I have found some recent years *Samael* influences either. But it is important to hail *Malevolence* once again - they have their own gems to be heard and wonder about. I am sure that with a development like this they will rule the scene pretty soon. Definitely the production performed in *Studio Fredman* has a lot to do with this success. *Fredrik* has not made a typical Swedish sound, moreover that music is different. Cool for the band - there is nothing to complain about the sound here. And the whole disk is damn heavy and good mystique metal - obtain a copy! *Malevolence*, Vale da Fonte, Lote 11, 2.º Direito, 2400 Leiria, Portugal

MALIGNANT TUMOUR / SQUASH BOWELS

Eat The Flesh... And Vomica / Dreams Come True... In Death Obscene

Let the hammer fall! I guess *Hammerfall* music has done its dirty job, and after a dozen heavy listens to their latest cd my mind decided that the hammer has really fallen onto my head, so the sensation happened! Or how to name it: can you believe that *Leão Takas* editor might enjoy grindcore album?! No it is impossible, even at parties. Even if I draw at times into recollections of the past... Indeed there was a small amount of grindcore albums that were listenable ever. Neither is this. Just for fun or refreshing sake... to keep away from the black/death/atmospheric bunch... if you ask me. Actually, it is impossible to keep your attention to its full extent in whole 46 minutes, but for some 7-10 it is fine. Then ideas, riffs and whole tracks start to repeat, and the resting part of album flows like an insatiable mass, where musicians themselves are these unstoppable heroes. They march with this funny music, and seems like you are outsider within their dedicated grinding.

I bet Czech *Malignant Tumour* are better, and not because they start the madness, but because they are more groovy and gurgy. By the way, *Radim* from *Love History* plays with them now. Polish band is more violent, straightforward and faster. MT surprisingly declares that it is their last effort with medical lyrics. So what else they can write about?! SB lyrics are more social oriented, so the fun is gone. Well, the difference is indeed tiny (musically either), but both bands are way better than for example Brazilian *Rot* or any other crappy trio. I am sure this one sells very cheap - ask the label about that, as well as countless 7" ep releases with

both bands. *Malignant Tumour*, c/o Martin 'Bilos' Bilek, Branecka 546, 725 26 Ostrava 26, Czech Republic
Squash Bowels, c/o Christopher 'Rogal' Rogucki, ul. Kozłowa 10/11, 15-868 Białystok, Poland

MANES

Under Ein Blodraut Maene Hammerheart

For someone it is just another boring Norwegian black metal band. For me it is an excellent new record by someone, who has been for a long long while in the circle of most respected musicians, still without an official release. Finally it is done, and let the world tremble behind these six blasphemies! Actually there could have been more of them, as 37 minutes of total satisfaction run much faster than expected, so album seems a bit too short for that sake. Otherwise, it is easy to enjoy every bit of it, as none second is wasted for too repetitive misanthropic melodies or too often bloodshed attacks.

I do not know. I can name some bands which have something in common with *Manes*, but it might be misleading. Well, remember *Dark Medieval Times*, *Again Shall Be*, *The First Spell*... Try to shake every single song of these albums in your head, then add a bit more standard Norwegian bm sound, and 'record' drum computer over it all. The result should be something similar to *Under Ein Blodraut Maene*. Traditionally raw guitar sound, a bit too background sounding harsh voice, subtle addition of melody by synths, and totally misanthropic mood prevails on this record. I still think there is no big deal to record drum parts live, as they are not that difficult to play... A bit of effect is used whilst a blast beat goes: together is some additional warlike drumming added. On the other hand, *Manes* is not that hyperfast band, as you might have guessed from these related records I have mentioned. Nor it is necessary with a mood that this record has.

Final remark is: if you feel pleasure to founder among various Norwegian bm records, take notice that *Manes* do not have the same kind of cliché structuring. It is rather special with every tune. Just go through such an energetic *Ulen liv Jigger landel ede*, and compare it with the sick doom or melancholic rest of the pack... Enough. This is a must have purchase.

MANIAC BUTCHER

Invaze Pussy God / Alkana Zeme

Yes, at the start they were a bit clumsy and too primitive with their ideas, and it deserved a good critical job taking first albums into consideration. But the necessary improvement has come, so starting with *Krvestreb Maniac Butcher* have finally jumped over that barrier when skills and imagination are trained enough to independently produce good qualitative black metal. It was probably the most nordic album of them (*Barbarud* was not satisfied with this comparison of mine though), and ever since guys have stepped off it, bravely introducing everyone around with their own blackmetal rage, which has definite influences from different corners of the black world, but anyhow keep rather own approach to it. Here is their fifth full-length, traditionally six-tracker, and not longer than 35 minutes album. I still would offer the band to break the rule, and to write once, let's say, 13 songs and 66 minutes cd. Just for variation. But nonetheless - *Invaze* really stands on the top of black mountain, proudly waving the flag of hate and destruction. Purely brutal pace and sudden harmony coming up of that, which means tight and fat set of compositions. Even though it is hard to except any, the whole makes you feel immensely charged with energy. Something you cannot expect more from raw blackmetal band. Great that they manage to accomplish that without additional ingredients, neither computer effects. One more positive improvement is *Barbarud*'s lyrical evolution. He seems as raw and straight in the heart as earlier, but manages to convey the essence with so much more clever, philosophical position. Once again - traditionally written in Czech, and translated into English. Nothing to be afraid in the record shop, or mail ordering. If you consider it too short album, check out that price of cd must be quite low (at least from *Pussy God*). Tape (5\$) is released by *Alkana Zeme* and distributed by your faithful.

MID AUTUMN NIGHTS

And I Entitled It A Dirge Euphonious

A bit of a delay, as this was released in December (at least promo arrived at that time), since the mood is so autumnal within desolate soundtrack to loneliness and grief. *Mid Autumn Nights* prove basically the potential that was present on *Conjured By Weather* track on *Euphonious* compilation last year, and overstep it at times. Music on this album is not just about metal with screams; it includes symphonic arrangements and acoustic combinations, narration and decedent sampled voices.

Since I am fed up with symphonic *Invasion* into underground (metal), I cannot really say it has taken me by storm, but as such it keeps on a fairly high level, definitely too complex for amateur musicians to reach, it is professional pianist *Eder*, who has been contributing to countless metal bands in the past, writing material for this embodiment of misery. I am sure that is what he has been dreaming about from the moment he got interested in metal, besides his piano lessons, and what he kept in mind until the proper moment came, when he is able to upcome with fairly original ideas to deliver. It is about that time, yes. There is a link to *Arcturus* undoubtedly, though not as evident as other artists cannot escape. It is more about the spirit that prevails - once again I need to use a term 'symphonic'. Other band, which crosses my mind, is *Septic Flesh*, when they used to go non-metal way. *Lahav* from *Grimoire* contributes to this album with his harsh voice, that is a lame choice I would conclude, it pushes *Mid Autumn Nights* into the field of other 'black metalers' who

try to jump a sympho-band-wagon. I am sure that hymnic and narrative vocalisation would have done much better standing alone. Or totally instrumental approach, like the brilliant hidden track. Yes, I find it the most impressive where *Eden* proves to be overwhelming in technique, and as a composer - by no means. A safe buy, this one.

MISTIGO VARGGOTH DARKESTRA The Key to the Gates of Apocalypses The End

Kniaz Varggoth, the soul of recent Slavonic sensation - Nokturnal Mortum, goes solo with his 'side-project', presenting a blackmetal/ambient music soundream which should mark the end of millenia. He is not the first with the idea, not the last. Not the best, not worst. But I cannot imagine the apocalypse, listening to this forcefully prolonged cd. The main confuse starts whilst black/dark metal parts interchange with ambient symphonies. There is an obvious lack of unity between separate sides, and unfortunately - it is too evident to ignore. Simply the links, the bridges are missing. You cannot switch from *Bathory* to *Ordo Equilibrum*, within the same tune, moreover that it is a concept track. I would never made it a forced one track cd; it would be better to keep separate tunes, however different at times they are. On the other hand, a lack of metal side completion makes *The Key...* suffer even more. One cool riff, another cool riff, and it cuts off, letting the ambient thing to reign again. So, where is the line to the music? As soon as you start to get into, everything turns upside down. Ok, music like this is not about order or precision, though I do not imagine chaos interpretation like this either.

To those curious - I vote for (rare but firm) fast *Bathory* fragments on this cd, at least they represent the morbid side of what is meant to express the concept. Mid tempo metal is average, typical, heard. Synth parts differ from pretty good to pretty bad. Anyway - cd lacks the unity, which is a must for concept cds, and especially when you refuse to divide 74 minutes into separate songs. I am not sure if there is part II of *MVD*, but if it appears, it must be better. So far, it is pretty enough for *Kniaz* to cash on *Nokturnal Mortum*.

MORIFADE Across The Starlit Sky Loud N' Proud

Debut ep of Swedish five-piece creates a bright view inside my mind, not because they were any mellow rockers, but due to their promising tunes of speed/heavy, or traditional metal, if you want. Standard is the keyword, and *Morifade* keep it up tight & packed. Heroes like *Halloween* and *Blind Guardian* lead their path, with similar soundscapes popping up behind my ears, but *Across The Starlit Sky* has more to do with pure power metal, that guys so strongly believe in. I mean there are no pompous breaks here, or dark intros/interruptions to match up the before mentioned groups, but I guess it happens due to Swedes push this as just a pre-taster for the upcoming record. Do not get me wrong - here is a slight keyboard lick, and even piano on *Distant World*, yet I am sure *Morifade* will return back to that epic character once again on their full-length, much more developed and impressive of course. As well as vocalist *Christian* who could use his skills better. Anyway, it is a question of weeks before a new album is out.

Four track ep shows that *Morifade* are capable of reviving the old heroic metal at its fullest these days. And they have good opportunity with label like *Loud N' Proud* is, moreover staying one of their top priorities, or best bands on the roster. So I actually expect them continue growing and conquering new stages, one after another. *Mcd* is available at *LTR* address for lousy 11\$. Get it now, or bite your nails after it is too late!

MORIFADE Possession of Power Loud N' Proud

They did it finally. Several years has been passed trying the new singer *Stefan Petersson*, along with finishing a massive writing session to complete this debut full-length offering. And so they have a neat power/speed effort so perfectly matching the scene these days of revivalist movement. Just excellent addition to your growing collection of traditional metal cds. *Hammerfall*, *Pegazus*, *Morifade*? Yes, these guys are worth being placed together. I wonder why they have not insisted on putting it on vinyl as well? Aye, I must admit much improved production, comparing to previous effort of *Morifade*, which is so obvious that just pushes me to mention it was done in *Wet Paint Studio*, Norköping with *Jan Strandh*. This fact and new vocalist, who takes a much wider range than his predecessor, and sings stronger in general, are both main keys to that significant improvement that has led *Morifade* from *Across...* *mcd* to this rather long (51+ minutes) cd. Music remained metal to the core - melodious and proud in itself. From fast speedy *Ending of Time*, *Dragonlord*, to pretty much monumental hymns like *The Signs* and epic *Ancient Prophecy* with a *Bathory/Blind Guardian* touch in its initial introduction. Positive message and fight with evil (!) in the lyrics might scary some very dark souls, but then again - that is a typical standpoint of traditional melodic heavy metal - to keep the balance, and to bring good instead of evil, so if you want to complain, open your mouth at *Halloween* or *Iron Maiden*. Alright, I am too far into these polemics. Actually I care about music first of all, and just recommend *Morifade* for that sake. Good powerful metal, dot. Get it for 16\$ from *Lead Talks Records*, right now. By the way, recent guys have added a new second guitarist and one more guy who should take care of keyboard I believe, so expect even more power from them further on. *Morifade*, P.O. Box 54, SE-590 50 Vikingstad, Sweden, morifade@telia.com, http://fly.to/morifade

MUSICAL MASSACRE Necrobestiality Deadly Art

I remember someone from old fanzine editors in my

hometown had a copy of *Musical Massacre* demo. It was back in dreary 1993 or so, when it was passed to me for checking. Nothing spectacular it seemed for me, and I had a good laugh about their moniker; at that time when death metal was euphoric, when it meant quality, and many fans required just polished massive releases. That demo naturally was quite amateurish, made in purely underground way... yet time makes its own perspectives, and what once sounded as lame piece of rubbish, may turn into quite good music afterwards. So to say, for the fans of *Purgatory* (another German band, which still keeps on grinding with two ex-members of *Musical Massacre*) it can evoke some good reminiscences. Once I was quite excited about the latter band, but I have not heard their latest works... However, juicy rasp of *Rene* easily points out where is that connection between *Purgatory* and *Musical Massacre*. Riffs are simple, brutal, straightforward, production is quite empty and weak around the guitar sound, yet bearable. Ouch, forgot to tell that this is the re-release of the demo, coming in 10" mp exclusively, bloodred vinyl format, and limited to just 500 copies. In such cases it is necessary to add - for die-hard fans only, and I hope this small quantity of vinyl will be spread just among these old time fans of the band, but on the other hand they might find new supporters, especially that such raw underground material is highly rated among nowadays death metal freaks. Yeah, if you enjoy old crispy tunes of *Autopsy* or *Asphyx*, why don't you check this either? You never know what can be the new refreshment for try cruel soul. Moreover that *LTR* has a few copies in the moment of printing these lines (\$11). You can still get info on MM from: *Rene Kögel*, Hauptstrasse 63, D1683 Nossen, Germany

MUTANT The Aeonic Majesty Lisbonable

Huh, what happens! Even technical metal masters pay their homage to current trend, diving full circle into melodic black/death hurricane, as the press sheet names it. Heard about *Theory in Practice*? So, *Peter* and *Henrik* are responsible for this side-project, being the course of typical evil music that you and me so perfectly are acquainted with... And that is about the reason for this release to be drowned inside the vast infernal spheres. To make a necessary honour for the input done - *The Aeonic Majesty* is not a bad album, especially if you consider its work - like a damn tight clock. In fact, *Theory in Practice* lessons are truly tangible, meaning these complicated structures, defining the class. Another good reason to check it out are invoking and provoking riffs, actually reflecting the black/death standard, but done with care. And that is about it, in my humble opinion. I mean, I find here quite a few layers, which still cast the mutants into the same old ball to cook their sound cave a bit more before targeting it to the elite. *Henrik's* vocal style is below the average screamer plank, and it sounds exactly the same through entire album. Together with mechanical way of sound (of course they have used a typical drum computer, again) this minimalist vocal variation does not allow to really mutate within the genre's frames. That mutation, or a line off the standard would be much more appreciated than usual typical set of songs, that *The Aeonic Majesty* undoubtedly is. Ok, and finally about the standing up manifestations - the band name is way lousy, in my opinion; and to use the cliché aeon/millennium/century/bia bla bla thing in the album title is damn worn-out & surely boring. after all! Let us find some new ways of expression instead. It is my wish and suggestion for the duo, but if you are ok with black/death with no big difference, go ahead. *Mutant*, c/o Henrik Ohlsson, Saljansv. 183, 81152 Sandviken, Sweden, tel. (46) 26214724, henrik.ohlsson@mbx303.svipnet.se

MUTILATION Remains of a Ruined, Dead, Cursed Soul Drakkar

Old dust has been blown away once again, this time from orthodox French blackmetal history. *Mutilation* were one of those which has set the ultimate satanic standard in these southern lands, following the purely black way, and refusing any compromise imaginable. Booklet of this tribute says it right: none of those pieces has the pretension to give a new breath to black metal, it is just a reflection of dark past... It is absolutely raw filthy piece of violence, hardly imaginable in the polished crossroads of 2000's metal mainstream... Veterans always recognise that specific sound for sure, so there is no need to explain why this release sounds so straightforward or archaically stuck in a hazy & sick milieu. Mostly taken from 1993's studio sessions, it depicts the project taking attention to the effect of horror, violence and extremity - something blackmetal was about to choose back then. I cannot agree that it is one of the most proficient pieces of music that this style has ever witnessed, but it doubtlessly has something special, hidden inside these riffs and infernal screams. No matter that drumbeat suffers from being tight, that nothing is worked out to the end here - it is about spontaneity of feels that are registered, behind music (if it pretends to be named as "music"). This feel comes from the first *Burzum* record, from *Mayhem* rehearsals, and from first *Bathory* records. Emotionally and visionary. Besides, there are two raw rehearsals of *Mutilation* from 1996, before *Meyna th* has passed to another spheres, forever closing his chapter of ultimate satanic violence. I am sure fans will find this release a cult, and so it the purpose of it. Not by chance *Cyrl* has limited it to 1000 copies. Is it necessary to add that nobody needs more than that? For the chosen circle of dedicated people it is fairly enough. Just hate it, as to love it is impossible.

MYRING Engage the Enemy Northern Sound

This four tracker starts with a typically old school heavy metal riff, but later on turns pretty much more modern dark

melodic metal, which naturally means the blend of melodious heavy and black metal, that the scene is overcrowded with. I would put it in a dustbin of crap if not these aggressive metal parts accompanying screamy / wheezy melodic trend. Even with that, *Myring* are far from finding their niche, especially that there were so many (Finnish) bands of the same kind which simply failed to write good metal music and make major impact in the hearts of the fans. Surely here we go with obligatory keyboards, typical scream and tiny guitar sound, as if it were for the sake of melodic harmony. But in reality it turns *Myring* into another mediocre band, which strives to jump onto the greedy market. Take their pagan image, lousy performed front cover, whatever - it means the same. Thus I do not see a point to have the heavy metal influence. Let it be what it is but I expected more regarding that initial riff. Without synth and precise production their music would be oh so poor, simple and uninteresting that you would go nuts obtaining a copy by mistake! Sort of wrapped in, or - plastic metal, as some colleagues smartly named it. I mean, for how long can these bands write same and same music? It is time to change the boring formula, at least one part of it. Be it tuning, voice, or composing character. Imagine one single pattern alternated, and the whole sound differs, gets a more personal feel. That is just one thinking of how to be an interesting band. I wish Finnish guys more ideas.

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MYRSKOG Deathmachine Candlelight

Ah, how could I hesitate before featuring them in this volume of *Lead Talks*? The closing *Pillar Deconstruction* (that is a remix of this album's hit *Syndroma 9*) confused my system pretty much, and now I see why. But actually, as it sort of got used to my mind and vice versa, I must admit that even ultimate break of the metal rules shows *Myrskog* as extremely thick and top-notch formation, with a definite *Northern scene rules supreme* trademark on their record, on their foreheads and in their thinking. I could not imagine a better newborn infant of Swedish black/death and supreme Norwegian blackmetal. It sounds cliché, but this time, and this particular band, beats the whole shit out of the scene, combining the best Nordic purist can imagine. Ok, just some names *Myrskog* can proudly be mentioned among: *Dark Funeral*, *Satyricon*, *Setherial*, *Marduk*, *Dissection*. Ha, just one Norwegian name, but agree that it weighs about the same as the rest foursome together. Such is the balance in *Myrskog's* terrorizing masterpiece, filling try heart with insane lethal lunacy. Music is a fine match to their 'death in a horror war' concept. The entire disk long you are enchanted by the breeding hate, it is spreading around with every new riff. I feel their energy boasting out of the speakers, swirling around my body and bursting off the room and fleeing down the city. Hell yes. *Myrskog* is the plague which rages, which is meant to be loud and violent! There is no need to speak about their technics, since the whole pleiad of precision masters are uttered above, but the crushing production must be mentioned, alongside close to brutal deathmetal dose of intensity, that was left with the master tape. That is something blackmetal grand bands turn about these days. Thus you may look at *Myrskog* as the new wave. But music is definitely traditional to pieces, yet majestic to the bone. Definitely a newborn four-piece that Norwegian elders must be proud of. Applauses.

NB Reality... late Scarlet

Press release is too unfair about Italian quintet, as far as metal is concerned. Unlike its suggestion about this band's direction towards heavy progressive rock, I hear only thick progressive metal, without any major jumps into more mainstream-oriented musical fields, on their debut cd. What they still do in a modern way are several grooves a la *Machine Head* and *Craw* (especially on *Save*). Nothing to scream about such an attempt, even though *Andrea* (vocals) does scream at any imaginable occasion. However, *Reality... Fate* is not a modern metal record, thus these influences are minor and cannot make it any worse or, moreover, better. I find it rather typical progressive metal album, that usually means quite mellow for heavy music attitude, and hard to remember memorability of compositions. Not that they all were as one, but due to progressers use to compose in a similar way, so it is sort of similar music created in that milieu. Especially when smaller bands are concerned. Masters are masters, they usually bring something own, with extra gems, and followers just repeat the basics. That is where *NB* fall into. One exception yet arrives in form of *Paradise - Paranoid*. A cool dramatic chorus, and follower bridge in this track make it sound so powerful - something *NB* could get more of that for their next efforts. So I do not think this one is somehow exceptional, rather just ok for that style of metal, yet it would be cool to hear more than that... maybe next time. It is not a new *Queensryche*, *Dream Theater* and absolutely not new *Black Sabbath*, as their press clips suggest you to believe. Give it a try anyway, though.

NAKED SCARECROW Naked Scarecrow

Not typically death metal and rather sloppy sound keeps listener to spin it more than once to get into self-titled and self-released debut album. Their approach to metal is individual, and effectively avoids most of musical clichés. Guys have chosen another way to discover their niche in heavy music, adding a controversial 'indus' moment, as they name it. Well, to better understand its manner - it is not industrial metal side, but rather modern music influence that is infiltrated into the classical rock or metal formula

(guitar, drums and vocals). Synth player *Julien Kuntz* is one to blame for various tricks and progressive moments, but if the whole band did not contribute, it would remain just another death metal album of starters. I mean that, because there is a definite space for *Naked Scarecrow*. Sometimes their compositions lose the track, that more professional band would definitely avoid at any stage! Especially it is noticeable when you are still not used to that special atmosphere of this release. And vocalist *Florent* could work harder with his diverse style. I suppose it reflects a lack of studio experience. Maybe it was fine when rehearsing, yet studio requirements were of another kind that eventually ruined that ambition this guy definitely had. Anyway, it should start somewhere, so if they managed to release this cd themselves, with tour of decadent pictures from cemetery inside, this means something. No idea if *Naked Scarecrow* spread lots of these cds, but name is settled, and hopefully - with a word to spread around. Get this album from them for 270M. *Naked Scarecrow*, Elabeth / Tomata, BP 75, 67033 Strasbourg cedex 2, France, elabeth@wanadoo.fr

NEBULAR MOON ...of dreams and magic Last Episode

Listening to this cd I had some wish I have finally found out that pop black is not the worst thing invented by black (?) hearts. Much worse shit is named gothic black, or at least the sort of it formed by musical imbeciles from Germany. I cannot refer to the whole subgenre, but *Nebular Moon* are too take and too short-minded to interest at least one serious gothic black metaler. If they have any follower, then it should be their mothers or sisters. *Herbst der Philanthropic* might be used for a demo tape, if guys would have done several songs similar to it, but that is all about good points in their music. By gothic metal in this case I name Cemetery like steric melodies, mid-tempoed rhythm, which is but the same all over it, and have nothing to do with that scream vocal, which does not fit the gothic metal concept. Do you imagine Cemetery with scream vocal? Neither do I, so *Nebular Moon* have definitely made a bad choice here, thus confusing many people related, and selling up less than 1000 cds of this. Hopefully this review will make some people to stay far away from a nine tracker, which cannot be named as an album. No less stupid are their structuring, where guitar riffs do not differ one from another, and are followed by one finger 'keyboard arrangements', which just follow guitar riff. Incredibly childish! To continue with that, German polifolk should take care on one of their girlfriends which is depicted naked on cd tray. I am sure she is under 15 years of age... Truly okay, isn't it? Burn this shit, please. Hell pop black.

NECROPHAGIA Black Blood Vomitorium Red Stream

At times I wonder where is a point in releasing mini albums, especially when your band had one or couple of full-lengths unleashed before. Actually, when your favourite artists are finally done with so long awaited long player, there is always more pleasure to obtain it. Just think over *Morbid Angel*, *Immortal*, *Death*, *Darkthrone* or *Decide*... Not that strange that four-tracker of *Necrophagia* came along as a small surprise for me. I thought them to be strictly more conceptual, that would never let the band to release just 15 minutes long taster. One reason says it all: guys want to be alive in the eyes of their listeners, unlike thirteen years ago, when the only album was their only rise and fall. So it is rather explainable, moreover that new piece of sick metal madness proves the legend to be in the best form ever. I mean both longer compositions *And You Will Live In Terror*, and *They Dwell Beneath*, which both have a decent groove of diwiles metal, with cool aggressive riffing and raw ominous production. *Killjoy* is brilliant as on *Holocusto...* session, and my wild guess whispers that *Mr. Anton Crowley* (aka *Phil Anselmi*) adds his firm scream on the second tune. Err, I guess it is not a secret any more that *Necrophagia* has him in their line-up? I am really enraged that they diminished long slow motion psychodelia (I named it 'sludge influence' in the previous issue), and now rather doubled these thrashing attacks. Music has not turned more typical thrash or something, anyway. It would doubtlessly do good for their next full-length too. Aye, expect even more intense horror-filled atmosphere, no cheese... I wonder about *Necrophagia's* video, which must be out very soon.

NEXUSSEIS Four Seconds To Die Iberian Moon

Limited to just 300 copies and released by a starter *Iberian Moon* label, this 48 minutes slab is impressively well-arranged and carries on impulsive charge of neurotically addictive music. Clearly fall is composer's experience within electro/ambient milieu, and even if he has never done anything similar before (I am not sure), he knows about combining darkness and light under synthesizer equally much more than your street's own mortals, or your local prison's varg. Taking cd into hands you never guess to expect that pompous majestic neoclassical ambient, interrupted by gloomy serie music at times. Cover art reminds an industrial music standard by no means; actually it does not look very nice and it is not easy to draw parallels with the actual music. Though I can find that link between labyrinthine symbolising, and neverending travel of *Nexusseis* music. Listening to it is harmless, there are just a few darker approaches, yet they are very strong, that it makes you scared if listened at full volume, in the dark. Not weaker than *Puissance* or *Blend*. For the rest of *Four Seconds To Die* - it is quite weird, with retro rhythmic parts, or just added atmosphere in the air. Definitely not your typical symphony with just one sort of tracks. *Nexusseis* dedicate this album to a bunch of movie sound-

track composers, and that explains the sticking around purely electronic sound. Even though this cd is not exactly a copy of soundtrack cd, but Spanish guru could easily make one. It might be unusual, not appealing but never - amateurish. Take my words for real! And get in touch with them.

NIGHT CONQUERS DAY Rebellion Is The Art Of Survival (adv.) Hammerheart

Mikea Bayusik has done it. Finally, his main band happened to write and record a totally impressive album, which must wipe all the pretensions of American black metalers out. If you read carefully this and previous issue of *Ledo Takas*, you must notice some sort of polemics. I have been writing for myself, mainly wondering about Mike's numerous projects and the raison d'être of them. So, here is an end to my anxiety. I have finally got the point of his efforts. This guy keeps moving towards perfection, with his view of metal, and his composing skills doubtlessly grow with every new record he releases, be it his main band, or solo album. And the monickers given are not that important to be so confused as I was at first (see *Into The Sunless Meridian* review for details). I have noticed that every new album, even every new song Mike writes has a trek of improvement, and surprisingly enough - he manages to render it via aural signals.

So, *Night Conquers Day* is his only 'real' band, besides numerous one-man projects, and here probably some other guys take part in composing as well. Anyways, I am sure the major riffs are courtesy of Mike's mind, since music deceives him being the main composer. All in all, one obscure intro and six monumental in its length songs make it a real pleasure to listen. Sort of instructive lesson in adventurous black/death, journey with stops at every noticeable point through the nine gates of human soul. It is musically expressed, with moods changing from aggressive and totally uncontrollable, to refined, melodious and sunk with hateful message within. Mike is famous for his wide range of vocal styles, what is but used on this record as well. What especially appeals to me is *Night Conquers Day* individual approach to the style, unlike other projects he has unleashed. In this way music gets much more respect, and I am sure not from me only. It is catchy, not boring at all (mind you - six songs last from 10 to 15 minutes each), in one word - something you can hardly find among 73 minutes long albums. That is why I must bow deep behind genuine master Mike, who achieved what he aimed for ages. Hail *Night Conquers Day*! Aye, it is your second cd, and first for *Hammerheart*. *Night Conquers Day*, c/o Mikea Bayusik, P.O. Box 174, North Greece, NY 14515, USA, mikael@frontier.net, www.frontier.net/~mikael

NIGHT TO DIE All Evil Crying Repulse

After an announcement that it is a cross between death metal and traditional Spanish temperamental music, I expected something different with this release. Still not an expert of flamenco, me thinks that the contents of mcd have a minimal amount of it. Anyway, it is significant and fits the musical context perfectly. Besides colourful guitar passages, I truly enjoyed the closing *The Storm Is Coming* where someone vocalise in arabic style, melodious and sensitive. It makes a great alternative to *Chuck Schuldiner* type of death scream (*Daniel González* to blame). Well, I am not sure, maybe it is *Daniel* himself alternating both vocalists? Must admit that these weird influences bloody enrich *Night To Die* music. Not a new style though, but some new experience with traditionally sounding metal. Generally, music is death metal, and in the vein of the latest *Death* albums, minus speed parts. Everything is pretty melodious and damn catchy. If it were just plain death metal I would blame them for being too much influenced. On the other hand, you have no problems to trip together with these songs - impulse is a right word to tell how they can grab you. Guys added some synth lines here and there, not pushing them too much, but keeping in a back for a good reason. That doubtlessly works. It is definitely not easy to set a final characteristic of the band with three tunes only, but as far as this mini goes, I can predict a great future for *Night To Die*. (In fact their biography counts a couple of demo tapes prior to this mcd.) At least it is pleasantly innovative unlike the rest. Just push that flamenco button hard next time, guys! *Night To Die*, c/o Francisco Rey Manzorro, Ceballos #14, 1º Dcha., 11003 Cadiz, Spain, souldevoeur@cbv.es

NOCTURNAL WINDS Everlasting Fall Aetherial Music

Ah. Once my favourite NWOSDM, the very core of it. Finnish musicians have much to do with early *In Flames* (without violin) and *Eucharist*. But it was 1993, and now we have six years older scene, tastes, and requirements. I have started to feel this genre's limitations back then already, even I have been enjoying almost every new band playing melodic death then... But this time is over, over...

Nocturnal Winds bring nothing spectacular, so to say. Heard one song - know the entire album. It proves as never correctly with this debut. Some faster arrangements could have saved their mark, yet this does not happen due to this rare interrogation. The band loses heaps of heaviness slowing down. And *Jani Lukkas*, who takes care on a screamey voice, does not add that real heavy metal feel to it, absolutely. It is like the first (and only?) *Miscreant* cd, which was a pure embodiment how weak and helpless sound could turn due to melodic approach, taking no care on the whole picture.

Well, if you want to realise the worth of this album, you do not have to go to the nearest shop. Just play old melodic death records, and you know it. *Nocturnal Winds* would be then another addition to the same stamped musical collection. Though I would suggest ignoring it, together with not so bad looking booklet and separately coming fourfold band poster, fitting the cd size. Please, more power, kick

ass heaviness and real metallic aggression next time!! Do not be these next hopeless Finns!

NOTRE DAME Coming Soon To A Theatre Near You Head Not Found

This project, first of all being quite special in its ways of expression, is built with hands of *Snowy Shaw*, heard from his drumming contributions for *Mercyful Fate*, *Witchy* and *Memento Mori*. Surprisingly, he is not beating the skins anymore, going forth writing music, lyrics, executing guitars and synth and vocals this time. So to speak, guy expresses himself. And bet you - here is some special weird bunch of extreme metal meets gothic/bizarre. Anyway, these 25 minutes are just a taster mcd of what should come in a full-length later in this year. So the songs are much different one from the other, the opener *The Bells of Notre Dame* being maybe less innovative but much appealing to a standard gothic or related style track.

Though it is not as easy going as that tune, and someone who named *Notre Dame* a cross between *Edit Piaf* and *Venom* has not missed the message of weird sickos. Wrapped in sarcastic-make-fun-of-vampires image it cannot be taken too serious, and is meant for an entertaining pleasure instead. Just take it as it is. Me personally has varied feelings according to each tune, as I am not that much fan of *Edit Piaf*, you know, but for the sake of innovation, *Notre Dame* have something to offer. Remember *Adams' Family* soundtrack? Add some guitars and blast beat to it, and you have got *Notre Dame* (*A misconception of the french kiss*). do not think they can win it with their seems like funny concept behind music, but if music itself keeps improving and getting more packed, then - why not? It is like some fresh blood on your black leather or white shirt, whether you like it or not.

NOVEMBERS DOOM Di Sculptured Ivy and Stone Flowers Martyr Music

Truly revelation worth album for doom/death music, or how should it be named another way - slow death metal? Nah... if you at least know *As The Flower Withers*, you must get a point here. It brings memories, and quite clear memories, yeah! Hardly a band with such passion towards gloomy yet brutal music can be found anymore these days. Well, from those who tried to bring back the feel into it any have honourably succeeded. Whilst the pioneering masters of slow death metal subgenre, namely *MDB*, have moved away for a long while now, I point at *Novembers Doom* who are but the right musicians to continue its glory. Now stop reading, and take a listen to *As The Flower*... electrifying charm of majesty. Back to *ND*. Not a very innovative approach nor a ton of jumps over the extravagant music hills, but it grabs thy soul owing to tuneful riffing, which is combined with Aaron's worth disciple *Paul Kuhr* and female tone by *Cathy Jo Hejna*. *Novembers Doom* sound milieu bows within emotional changes, created with a help of gloom and anger I believe, since some moments here are rather warlike. Then again it is amusing to follow the moods which bring you to reflective changes (as if sun still shines at times in their heads...). It culminates in *Forever With Unopened Eye*, drifting away from death metal to pretty classic *Sabbath* doom, and this tune actually remains the biggest surprise on this cd. Anyway, the closer *Dawn Breaks* points out that it was just a sudden good moment to write a refreshing tune, but that is about it. I am glad that these doomsters keep up dm spirit with them, as far as they are capable to write effective music. Get it for 12\$ (USA/15\$ and put it together with the first *My Dying Bride* album. Not literally, but they are brothers. *Novembers Doom*, P.O. Box 1756, Bolingbrook, IL 60440, USA, novdoom@aol.com, www.novembersdoom.com

NOX MORTIS 7 lies Prophecy

Happen to know their first cd? Expect a different music on the new long-player. Minimal amount of what was close to death metal riffing, and guttural voice only here and there. This was the cause of their resemblance to *Crematory*, which was too obvious, and which finally has faded away. But has *Nox Mortis* become a better band since then? Well, more various - without doubt, less heavy - of course... Expressive or deeper - err, difficult to say, simply because this blend of gothic and metal now has got another picture, once heard in the past. It is *Katonia*, and this band has much to do with not only accidental riff or refrain. Many drum parts, breaks are characterized by Swedish four piece, mostly of *Brave Murder Day* era. It is not copied, no, but *Nox Mortis* effort to achieve something unique has stroke against firm monolith music written some years ago... Thus it is too early to speak about NM songs that are far away from standards. They are standard in gothic metal field, however huge it is. And their attempt to combine it with rough metal is not really convincing, some mid line is lost behind the doors of *Klangschmiede Studio*. That is why I choose the debut instead of its follower, if it comes to voting for the better one. Not to forget that *Nox Mortis* are not poor or unexpressive anymore. Most probably their experiments will continue with death/dark symbols disappearing, at least in voice department, so me already wonders if this one would have been more acceptable moving that far to become totally gothic and singing? You can skip 7 lies and wait until third cd is out then.

OCULT Of Flesh And Blood Massacre

Ignoring their first two albums, which I have not heard, and black metal past of certain members (*Bestial Summoning*), here we just go with a comment on the band's latest album, debuting with a noticeable German label. No no, *Occult* have

not softened their metal to stay more or less acceptable for German metal public; it is yet intense and provoking deathrash. Obvious riffs and vocal contributions for older thrash a la *Kreator*, and newer era of 90ies death metal. That is how *Occult* have definitely distanced themselves from a bunch of pretty mediocre Dutch bands (like *Eternal Solecis*). I cannot hail them as the most refreshing band of 1999 though, as even the album sounds ok, it definitely lacks bits of music you define as highlight. So to say - an ok metal album, having many memories from the past, but nothing groundbreaking. They can try to count on their female singer *Rachel Heyzer*, who has nothing to do with sopranos or spring-like vocals. Whilst *Maurice* performs desperate scream parts, then *Rachel* growls no less aggressive and deep than latest *Testament*. Haha, maybe I am slightly exaggerating, but not much. So, actually it is not a sensation anymore, at least for me. Hard to surprise anybody these days, really.

If you wish to enjoy these thirteen songs, do not try to listen to it as a band with female growler, or as a band of *Massacre* rooster, or a band with a long career. Simply see yourselves, if you can identify with this hateful music. Not the worst, although not the best, but one phrase has stick to my mind: on *Dreamsweeper Maurice* (or it was *Rachel*?) shouts out: *the world deserves to be dead!* Bloody impossible to put it better...

OCCTINOMOS Welcome to my planet Baphomet / Hammerheart

Return of nuclear chaos and totalitarian destruction! Four years ago his debut was one of the pioneering Swedish black metal albums, focussing on raging yet melodious approach. And *Fredrik* was one of the first to introduce programmed drums to the black metal milieu. Even it was unusual, it was hardly recognizable at first. On *The Demijurge* has stayed for a month or so in my favourites list back then, though after a while, when the amount of similarly styled Swedish musicians immensely enlarged (forcibly or not?), the initial idea has sunken beneath the higher creativity level, and right - many newcomers have managed to build even more monumental fortresses of neat bludgeoning sound. I still find *Octinomos* debut as the style's classic disk, though. To cut it shorter, the return is surprisingly awesome and totally grindcrushing!! If you are aware of *On The Demijurge*'s dark harmonies, wrapped in technical calculated decisions, then expect the same tight delivery, but charged with double, no - with triple chaotic intensity! Three times thicker riffs, three times huger sound constructions, three times sicker ideological combustion! Are you anxious about the programmed drums? Hell, forget it! Sounds precisely neat, no forced feel to it, no bitter (sweet?) taste in the mouth, indeed. If music may be comparable to anything, then it is *Söderlund*'s brother in (nuclear) arms *Henry* and his *Parnassus*. Melodies are likely of the same Swedish school. And that increased fury definitely reminds *Marduk*, and *Dark Funeral*. There is just one mid-tempo song this time - *World Pulverisation*, but it is so sick due to evil screaming voice.

Wow, the artsy inlays impress me, depicting all evil visions of the mastermind - it looks great, the idea is damn frightening, and it has the intelligently shocking image behind it. Truly the force to terrorize all feeble minds. Your days are counted, my friends, whilst *Octinomos* is unleashed, once again. *Octinomos*, Fredrik Söderlund, P.O. Box 399, 581 04 Linköping, Sweden

OCULTAN Belliscus Profanus Evil Horde

Occultan represent the essential Brazilian black/death, something difficult to misunderstand or look for innovations at. Just pure satanic terror, expressed through violent music. Meet their demon faces in cd booklet, and you will get a point where guys are heading to... Definitely not towards peace and happiness.

Although they are not as intense nor extreme as old *Sarcófago*, but do not expect slow torturing black metal a la *Mythos / Murder Rape* as well. Occultan pace their path somewhere between the two extremes, still keeping that Brazilian black/death, acclaimed by many other bands.

It is a bit strange as a debut album, running for 29 minutes and including quite a few intros and instrumentals among 9 compositions. I miss the worked out unity among them all, that it could be called real tight album. If Occultan had it like a late version, or some kind of old stuff compilation, that would be approved as a good piece of music before the debut full-length. Nonetheless, if you want to buy Occultan, be ready for a rather raw sound, straightforward riffing with a burning blastbeat here and there, topped with a hellish scream of *Count Imperium*, which is sometimes substituted with a singing voice and sounds rather untraditional then. If you ask me, I would wait until next release, as I miss the feeling on *Belliscus Profanus* quite a bit. Cd design is weird and exotic. Costs 16\$ from *Evil Horde*. Occultan, R. Belem, 348 - B. Paulicela, sac Bernardo, do Campo - SP 09.690-060, Brazil

OF THE WAND AND THE MOON: Nighttime Nighthymns Euphonius

Kim has proved to be capable to produce another sort of dark music, passing ok two most examining barriers basically - to free this solo project from the influence of his main band (*Saturnus*), and to achieve that haunting feel between the riffs, since a sort of music he performs under this poetic monicker is about simplicity and naturalism, where you cannot invent extraordinary new things. To explain further both factors, there is a definite influence, as the person is the same behind laying down the tracks, and at some point *Saturnus* guitarist is not able to avoid repeating acoustic music clichés, yet it sounds fairly good, so to say.

Perfect late night listening, and it is not necessary to tune it at high volume at all. If someone says like this, I surely think it is no trouble to use such compositions as a background for your deeds. Hell yes. *Of The Wand And The Moon*: suits that perfectly. Though you would better be busy with relaxing things (reading, discussing on life and death) rather than intellectual or physical work. Then music helps you and creates an aura around. And whispering *Kim*'s spells act like a mystery being born nearby. I am sure that performer feels like taking part in a cosmogonic mystery himself. He uses quite a few mythological and occult images to support nature-ridden music. Some extra description of this band would be calm, harmonious, slightly innocent, mesmerizing and crusty. Unique violinist, percussionist, cellist definitely add that quest folkish touch, completing otherwise patiently built harmony of *Kim Larsen*. Check it out, at once! *Of The Wand And The Moon*; kim@saturnus.dk, www.saturnus.dk

ORDO DRACONIS In Speculis Noctis

I catch myself thinking again that such music is but average, like tons of other bm cds these days. And it is so hard to merge the feelings you have to put into it, avoiding the clichés and standards. It is weird to realise that music you hear is basically ok, but you still nod off after a while. It is so much times re-composed, re-recorded and heard that it turns to be really worn out, if you see what I mean. OK, the scene is changing, mutating all the time, with new kids coming and old mongs leaving. I mean, average bands still get some response and it is not so bad as far as their music is bearable. If it is light and skilled (I refer to this mcd), then it is even better.

But for me *Ordo Draconis* are slightly too much of the same mid-tempoed mid-atmospheric and definitely too synthesizer dosed black music, so half an hour of these soundscapes make me yawn much more often than any old science fiction flick. Their problem number two (have I written what was number one?) is so unimposing vocal style of *Moloch*, who is a bass player in a band either. If you remember *Enthroned* scream on their debut album (the only one I had 'luck' to acknowledge myself with), expect nothing better here on. Problem number three. I cannot count all these melodies since they are average, mediocre. No fury of harsh bm, no depth of misanthropic solitude of black music. Ok, one dramatic moment in *The Conjunction Complete*, whilst guitars and drums are played in accents with breaks, make some shivers run down the spine, but it is so lonely moment on a four tracker...

Concerning self effort with production, everything is done perfectly, including mesmerising inlay background pictures, and sound registration in *Excess Studio*, also used by *Sinister* and *Danse Macabre*. They name it demo cd, and ask just \$8 for it. *Ordo Draconis*, c/o Rahab, Archimedesstraat 12, 2871 XL Schoonhoven, Netherlands, tel. (31) 182558565, fax (31) 182549964

PAINFLOW Audio-Visual-Aids Massacre

If you are a journalist, do not try to make an interview with a main songwriter *Jarkko Mäki*, who has ended up committing suicide even before his music was released worldwide. He did not want *Kurt Cobain* fame or what? Oh, this extraordinary event should not influence *Painflow* album review somehow, however fatal it might seem. Let us be honest with music, and take care on other things elsewhere than review section.

What is evident on *Audio-visual-aids* - totally commercial approach, where metal, industrial and dance beats unite in one. Their label does not dodge the fact that *Painflow* is pushed to conquer dancefloors, and that is probably the main audience to listen them. How could anyone not compare them with *Pammstein*, *Minkley* or *Pitch Shifter* then? I cannot, as their compositions make me think on this easy listening version of heavy beat. Mind you - lots of power is engaged within their guitar and rhythm sections, which easily shut mouths of those who might claim *Painflow* is not metal enough. Even *Woodhouse Studio* would be unable to make a bad project yet worth listening. So, if these heavy beats kick some ass, that means it is not only *Siggi Berrin* to thank for. Yes, you cannot get the grind or blast beat on here, but if it comes around metal, be sure to have it here. I cannot fully enjoy this debut though, as their vocalist simply... sucks. That is it about his weak distorted yelling voice, which has nothing to do with that heaviness of the band. If *Painflow* rushed to add another singer with a new guitarist, which is rehearsing and performing together already, I think all these people into industrial metal would shit their pants. Not bad effort for debut.

PARZIVAL Anubhava Narayana Euphonius

Listening for the first time I supposed to be too careless to get it, next time I caught myself thinking: *what a shit spins over there in my stereo*, and third time I could not believe it is the same band which was earlier named as *Stiff Miners*. Finally it was obvious that both their music, and especially my taste has changed since 1997, so the outcome of that is I think this record is sort of crap really. Danish inhabitants of Russian heritage has kept their dark marching atmospheres, yet nine-tracker is thin, crusty and totally unconvincing. It is a theoretical concept of music to blame, or that is how they name it nowadays. That means *Parzival* has less to do with these electronic ups and downs from the past, putting an end to most of connections to other artists of the genre. *Laback* is still a reference point though. *Drinji*, *Pavel* and *Mikhail* kind of leave it flow itself, and add some trip or how it is called rhythms here and there. But a feel of emptiness still prevails on this record, something extra should have been mixed in, to make it sound more refresh-

ing and alive. Not that one could jump around throughout the listening session, but to keep a minimal interest to bear it all. Orchestration is a good thing, yet not always convincing, especially when decadent feel takes over anything else. Wrathful atmospheres reminds at times some symphonic music, and operas' culminations particularly, where Russian spirit is truly conceived, so for the sake of authenticity one might find this record rather characteristic. Sort of nostalgia out there in Denmark? Or attempt to bring the native culture to the world? To cut it short — maybe one's own experience would be the answer to all expectations from *Anathema Maranatha*.

PAZUZU The End of Ages Avantgarde Music

Pazu offers an apocalyptic ambient opera for the end of the millennium, however cliché it may seem. But music actually corresponds with the finish of something frightening, mysterious and huge, like the universe itself. Musician's mind has invoked these ancient spirits to fill up his thirst for decadence, evil, filth, suffering and plague, what eventually turned Pazu into the path of their debuting album, which had an indelible impression over the stagnating musical world back then in 1994, unlike its follow-up *Awaken The Dragon*. Still remain worshipping the first attempt the most, but the return at the end of 1999 sounds fairly decent, with combination of pride, glory at one corner, and menace, catastrophe at another. Like Sumerian master of all things ruthless says: *this is the antidote for life!* No doubt about it. No, Pazu neither crams his new album with screaming vocal, nor uses these chilling samples that make your spine go shivering, but rather plunges into the oceans of pompastic battle magic (*Eclipse: Final clash of swords*) and tribal invocations of the forces from beyond. Even a bit of modern rhythm reaches the ear on *The Weeping Willow*. Music brings a universal spirit though, as it is not concentrated around any defined standard — neither musically nor lyrically. I mean the typical "pazuzian" range of languages used (English, German, French) and overall magical theme that surrounds it. Like after ambient swarth *Saturn's Sombre Moons*. There is quite unexpected intermezzo by loud and sublime harpsichord. Indeed *The End of Ages* brings to mind dimly lit lodging where you appear just when you wish to derive knowledge of the universe, otherwise it is just imagination, a dreamworld. An object to discuss over long winter nights, but by no means it is one more fairly good release by the child of the damned, Pazu, pazuzu@egocable.net

PENUMBRA Emanate Serenades

I cannot share that enthusiasm flowing from *Serenades Records* promo sheet, claiming Penumbra to be the most promising or even "the most famous black metal band" in France. Even without listening to the actual record it is clear without saying that such promotional slogans are too drastic. It cannot make me dislike this record more, than I would do without any promotional suggestions, but it surely makes an expert of blackmetal tuning! We have yet another case with meeting up with dilettantes; so cut this time from the label, not from the musicians. I hope Penumbra guys and girls do not name their music *bm* themselves, and will deny that mentioned biography fact in countless (???) interviews in a not so distant future. Or how to comment it when *bm* is misunderstood for emotional symphonic gothic metal? Here I hate these links to *bm* anyway, especially when harsh scream vocalstyle is concerned. And that epic classical aspect does not convince me, both due to trend following, and due to typical forms connected to heavy music. Their writing is much to be desired, at least from the complexity point of view. You can have soprano, baritone vocalists, whatever you want, but when it sounds typical comparing to a bunch of other bands around, it cannot be outstanding. I truly hate the same simple danceable drum beat, and following that direction guitar lines. It is even difficult to speak about heaviness of metal here, plainly forgetting about black or dark soundscapes. No, I will never enjoy the new generation of symphonic metal, as far as it is so poppy and easily composed. Common, metal should be metal, and if you dared to include classical music, please be so honest and make it for real, not mainstream ears. Yeah, I am against the easiest way when it comes to musical art.

PESSIMIST Blood for the Gods Lost Discipline

Ok, let us end these competitions who is better in the scene. Unlike some Americans, who cannot decide if *Nile* or *Pessimist* are that best horde to rise up the actions of brutal American death metal. In such a case I bet it is useless even to compare *Blood for the Gods* with *Cult of the Initiated*, band's debut. For me both bands, and both *Pessimist* albums in particular, are damn great, even in both cases I had several "promo" spins (as I name them) to really get into the stuff. Whatever... it is yet brutal, yet technical, yet overpressing the brain in its full rage death metal. No forced grind parts to keep the rage, no pseudo experiments or another feel than pessimism for the listener. Take no care that you have heard such music before. I am sure not many albums of the past had such a passionate extremism filled within guitars (especially crazy leads), bass, drums and of course — abandoned-by-two-million-girlfriends voice of the growler, and deceived-by-three-million-foes screamer. Both guys should have gone nuts while recording this, haha... Engineer must had his ears covered with his hands... Once again *Pessimist* have not shot in the dark with their masterful lines combining separate parts into one whole. Any death metal band can learn how to be catchy and not that boring, even if you use to repeat the same parts twice or even three times in a song. To stir up atmosphere a bit,

get the clean guitars based into *Unborn (Father)* and completely menacing *Wretched of the Earth*, putting up a thought the doom has come on earth. Actually this one closes nine tracks, and the period is as if put. Ha ha, I am sure that guys do not have it in mind, and any ever best selling thriller, they will make pt. III of their bloody massacre, as it was done with pt. II. Usual 15\$ (USA)/16\$ from *Lost Discipline*.

POSTHUMOUS My Eyes, They Bleed Evil Horde

Easy to juxtapose Posthumous with other Brazilian black metal bands, as they belong to the most popular style there combining dark obscure riffs with brutal attitude, yet remaining pretty black metal. Actually I am not the biggest admirer of that approach except one or another band, but still it is quality material, yet not stepping above average. I believe that with style as theirs it is damn difficult to keep it own and fresh. Just the opposite — it is too conservative and circled. Thus is their idea — to be true to themselves and the music they love. Evil negro blackmetal, violent, fast, heavy and savage... Some descriptions are ok, others are not as convincing — Posthumous still lack some bunches of violence and heaviness with it. Faster than *Murder Rape or Mytifier*, it is not yet high speed *bm* la European bands. Southern American in its essence, and if you do not imagine what it is get this cd to realize that separate school of dark music exists there. Me is not so excited about their way to put down their lyrics. Ok, music is straightforward, that is fine. But texts are yet more straightforward, and when you read things like this on and so many years, it happens to be nothing stunning after all. Some souls may enjoy bestial invocations, but for me personally these things about satanic domination are clear without saying. Hell yeah, that is better than to sing about flowers or romantic journeys, yet I fail to enjoy the whole... On the other hand, label has done a decent job with the layout, and it is truly impressive. So dark, sophisticated and still metal. Front cover picture could be better, but that thick glossy paper compensates that. I wish music compensate disappointing lyrics, but seems like it is not done on this record. Neither *Sarcophago* cover helps. Posthumous, P.O. Box 647, Criciúma - SC 88901-970, Brazil, tel/fax (55) 484373434, postumo@engeplus.com.br, www.geocities.com/sunsetsstrip/bistro/9883

POTENTIUM Bólavn Wounded Love

For those who are not aware of old split tape featuring two Icelandic bands *Thule* and *Asmodeus*, I tell that back then *Thule* warriors were quite pissed about one more local black metal formation, namely *Solstaffir*. There were some severe words addressed towards the latter, briefly. So, to my huge surprise — *Potentium* line-up successfully places *Eldur* (ex. *Thule*) and *G.O. Palmason* (*Solstaffir*) under one team! Pretty funny indeed. Ok, these second plan details away, since *Potentium* is a force to be reckoned with. Bringing the leftovers from their earlier projects, these guys have remained faithful to epic blackmetal, and Icelandians would not be Icelandians, if they performed anything else than majestic nordic art. Great to notice individual character of almost every song, which at the same time end up around the same mysterious mid tempo characters. (catch a bit similar to earlier *Hades* atmosphere, but it can easily move towards even wider mournful horizon, or suddenly clear up that compositions — moods turn upside down! That is what I name diversity of music. Then there is ten minutes long *Altafóki*, which consists of surprisingly weird instrumental (first part) with certain innovation of trumpet lead, and typical nordic epic blackmetal (next part), as if being the more metal side of the same song. *Potentium* is still not the most innovative band in the world, but with that amount of fresh ideas they sound really cool — in frames of nordic blackmetal. The band has brought a piece of their origin, where severe nature has a definite influence on creative ideas, I am sure... Only their outro (*Flames of potentium*) is too long, in spite of its *Burzum*'ish (from his debut album) character. It is not a huge trouble though.

POWERSOÖ Evolution part I Messacre

Oh shit! This is heavy metal revelation before the new millennium! This is the real power of metal, released as the example for generations to come!!! It takes you by storm, with no minute left to yawn. Adoration is the only word to describe the enormous punch these guys have under their bullet-balls... NAH!! Am I *Rock Hard* or *Kerrang* to write such boring and stupid reviews or what? I believe that half of you after reading such a review would yawn and take no shit about *Powersoö*, believing more into promotional trick rather than my sincere fascination about them. So I would better try to lay down all the main details which make *Powersoö* debut album a real killer. First of all they are loyal to metal, without any background idea to pollute the circle of monolithic compositions. Next, metal canon is pretty various, if you ask me. Ok, these faster-midtempoed-faster-midtempoed track order might seem a bit too calculated, and sales-oriented. Well, I can answer you: this is not an album of high avangardism, this is simple easy-going heavy metal, meant for headbanging, or just enjoying neat steel-like compositions. On the other hand, please remind me any album of *Accept*, *Judas Priest*, or even early *Metallica* which had a messy order of tunes. You see, heavy metal must be catchy and 100% completed in details. That is what surprises with these German warriors, who are not ashamed to name their tunes like *Into The Battle, No Brain No Pain, or Gods of War*. Musically it is great to notice several keyboard lines and grim spoken word, adding bits of darkness to otherwise very aiming-high spirit of the record. I have nothing against their metal-pumping-leather-shining lyrics, too, if it is a boring

thing to anyone, then switch on the next channel.

I sincerely believe *Powersoö* have nothing to do with a trend of retro *hm*, at least they seem to be old freaks of the style, finally putting their shit together and getting some deserved exposure. Ok, vocalist *Leo* could be a bit more profound with his melodious notes, but hopefully that is just a question of time. Otherwise part one of *Evolution* will lay a bridge to even better parts of it. A must have item!!!

PSYCHOTRON Chaos Cosmic Time

Self-released album of heavy/thrash outfit, where singer sounds like a slightly heavier version of *Scorpions*. Sounds refreshing, no less! Typical German school is massively noticed, but it makes them a tip example of the genre. If anybody wants to question their ability to perform this aggressive music, then please cool down and be quiet. *Psychotron* are great musicians, and it is about their compositions that are the unit of evaluation. Kick ass thrash tunes are changing with classical heavy/power songs, thus making a healthy combination for the most of 55 minutes record. For a moment or next it may sound a bit too standard and shuffled, but that is about the tradition — just remember the German heavy metal bands of the past, and here you are. If *Psychotron* were just to follow anyone's footsteps, their debut cd would not be as imposing, anyway. Calm acoustics are not just fake fillers, but sort of intermediates between a few intense riffs. I see no reason why a decent label would not pick them, especially when such heavy/thrash thing is living the new hype right now. Even the most respected music business activists would not lose anything releasing German live-piece on worldwide basis. I still catch myself comparing Matze Morbitzer's voice with *Scorpions*, and wonder if veterans could ever write something as heavy? Well, if their youth was these days, maybe... *The Crossroads* is damn rocking, initially I thought it was a cover... Hopefully *Psychotron* will not lose the track, and will keep thrashing everyone out, but balladesque side of their set is not bad at all, once again. For a self-released debut album this one is damn good, trust my word. And I am looking forward to their next release, hopefully on a firm basis! Get this one, with a massive booklet, for 14\$ (Europe) / 16\$. Their shirts will make your pocket thinner with the same amount of \$.

Psychotron, Gert Kopf, Laurentiusstr. 12, D-71282 Hemmingen, Germany, tel/fax (49) 7150826889, psychotron01@aol.com

PUISSANCE Mother Of Disease Fluttering Dragon

Tremendous. Astonishing. Horrifying. Beautiful. You know how many world wars mankind has witnessed yet? No, not two. I think three. Or that latter has not happened yet? Really?! I thought *Puissance* has invoked it already... Ok, if you dare to take a listen to this album, you will think like me. Music sounds pretty nuclear blowing. Not due to that title lyric about atomic reactors (which is damn terror-inspiring, and actually pretty hard fist in the face of humanity), but generally, I mean, music which is so pompous and bombastic; it definitely works on you. You think this influence is harmless, symphonic, or even peaceful, but in fact it is not. As far as message is so dark and world exploding, that recorded code reflects in the listener's heart. So, daring to listen to *Puissance*, you automatically accept that destructive charge within yourself. I mean, their two first cds had more of that drowning ambient side, with less majesty and more marching soundscapes. Like first two world wars, which were much more simple than upcoming age of darkness. Back then you knew where to expect the attack from, and how to fight. Now it is stated — there is no weapon against the third *Puissance* attack. The beauty these ambient compositions might carry is tricky — it is but a lie. Nonetheless, at times there are some themes which make forget the radiation effect, and enjoy pure magic of synth (but not synthetic!) dark empire. Of course, links with previous material do exist, and there is no wonder about it. But I would risk to name *Mother Of Disease* an advanced album, breaking the chains of atomic aggression. Bloody get it! Comes with a great booklet with coinciding atmosphere and marvelous anthuman pictures. Massacre! *Puissance*, P.O. Box 399, 581 04 Linköping, Sweden, puissance@hotmail.com

PUISSANCE War On Fluttering Dragon

A bit of a wonder is this new *Puissance* remixes record, but let us believe it is done not just to cash on some die-hard fans over there. Since their army is growing day by day, I believe label and guys have an excellent sales position with it, anyway. But heroic duo is not meant to be shifted into the realms of sell-out projects, as their music remains purely obscure and hellish. If they have done some remakes of the old material, that means precisely neat quality one more time around. Like these atomic reactors, which are built with precision, where all the systems are supposed to work out fine. Do they really work so perfect? That is another question... and another comparison to *Puissance*. Seems like those symphonic decadent lines go into total harmony and love towards mankind... which is surely not the case! One single mistake turn upside down huge regions behind the atomic reactor, whilst one sudden dark soundscape make the entire *Puissance* music tremble in darkness and mystique. You are never so sure when to expect the explosion, and whether epic majestic notes will end in that good way... Two exclusive tunes take presence anyway — *Erlangen*, and *For the days of Pestilence*. Both are kept in typical manner of the previous albums, with more links to dark meditative experience, and not less merciless symphonic way. I found though the remix of *In Shining Armour* (from the latest full-length) the highlight anyway — it sounds damn powerful and

monumental, maybe better than the original. At some point majestic voice reminds me symphonic singing of *Ihsahn*. And please wipe out that smile off my face, reading their note's final statement: "Love / Puissance". Love under will, they forgot to add. To cut it short, bow to your gods — nothing to complain about this being the taster between two real records. Comes as digipak.

RAPTURE Futile Spikafarm

At first their inspiration and resemblance to *Opath* and *Katatria* is too evident, thus listener needs a couple of test spins to enjoy the stream of darkened autumnal melancholy in its full extent. Yes yes yes, slightly too much of the same riffs here. But indeed this debut album is fairly good, nothing to regret about, except that misanthropic state their music and lyrics absolutely invoke. Although for a moment of despair, and if you have a strong sensitive will, it is truly excellent. Of course, like both mentioned Sverige bands are as well. I mean, this Finnish band is probably third in a row to be genuinely masterful in the niche they are working at, since rarely a doomy band like them happens to achieve that vibrating mood at the highest, climaxing point, and from the first trying, what is but a surprise. So to say, this jump is done just with several unreleased and rehearsal recordings prior to this new release, and overall jamming for three years. Their trademark is not any separate musician, but the whole band, which sounds as one tough fist. Something that I imagine as the excellence within this lighter form of metal. You must understand each other from half a word, one single look or note for that matter. *Rapture's* music inspires me to think about this five-piece band as such. Drummer *Samu* and vocalist *Petri* are really talented professionals. They just breathe the abilities that they are let in to express ferocious layers of crying fatal souls. *Rapture's* sensations for solid powerful riffs are amazingly diverse, and its combination with no keyboard attitude creates a unique duo of twin guitarists. Well, they use keyboards on the last part of the final tune (*About Leaving*, but it is about an effect to end it up on a misanthropic note. It is not even *Rapture* member to perform that. Once again check out simply structured but deeply stabling lyrics with straight-forward dramatism, and you will agree with me that *Rapture* is about purity, in spite of a portion of re-hashed metal melancholy. Go buy!

REBAELLIUM Burn The Promised Land Hammerheart

Gosh! That is an album I name as the surprise!! In one word — killer. Come on, let us face the truth that when someone screams out that there is another excellent death metal band from Southern part of America, we usually say *ok, it should be nothing special again*, and in most of cases a listener or two prove us right, as these new brutal conquerors remain quite average due to weak sound, bad communication in the band, or simply with mediocre tunes. Hereby I introduce you the true Brazilian revelation, which might probably has risen as fast as *Septultura*, if it were 1989 outside... But this deal with Dutch premiere metal label means growing by no means. Anyway, their music is nothing retro or nostalgic reminiscence of the past. Well, if you dare think upon brutal and tight death metal the intense way as the past, then would you please fuck off? Nothing to complain about nine tracks, it is something in the league with *Decide* and *Morbid Angel*, not 'in the vein of...'. But the next exclusive album leading the genre. At some point their riffing is even more intense than *Benton's* company, and that is what draws my comparative analysis closer to *Azagath* and friends. There is also that heavy symphonic intermezzo *Flagellation of Christ*, in the peak of the album, which sounds like a pt. II of *Hatework* or recent *Morbid Angel's* horror musicals. Only it has no vocalization there. Once again I highly enjoy what they composed, and have no reproach for stealing any ideas or being unoriginal. Aye, exceptional compliments to vocalist for mighty growls, and for surprisingly great sound, done in Brazil by the way! European hordes should try their studio for the change, or what? Not often, but from time to time chaos might be bridled, and used for other purpose, for example — to show how many rage is hidden beneath the human skin. If someone is really close to rule the Absu chaos, then it is definitely *Rebaellium*. Beware, be extremely beware before they cast a spell on your metal head with uncontrollable consequences of chaos. Remember that they are the masters of it all... Super! The only negative point is their hairless heads, though I am not against putting some wigs on their scalps, hehe... *Rebaellium*, rebaellium@yahoo.com

RHYMES OF DESTRUCTION A Sun Revolution Shiver

To start with, I have not heard the first album by Belgian four-piece, just lots of negative response from *bm* dudes, and warm comments from people who consider music above image. That is why I imagined they were performing some sort of not pure ("untrue") black. The new effort yet hardly confirms my expectations, or is it *Hans* from *Shiver* who "lies" again telling *R.O.D.* have not moved far from their earlier material? So to say, music on here is pretty atmospheric, melodic, but not too sweet, more like dreamy or what? No, black metal is nothing to speak about here too, forget it. Ok, if you consider new *Algalon* as *bm*, then this 66 minutes long cd might seem to you likewise. But not for me. Argh! I have mentioned Swedish dudes not by chance. *Bart* handles his vocal in the same style as *Algalon* singer. That is — boring and irritating. You know, it does not fit music even more than with Swedish duo. *Rhymes of Destruction* are less thrash/aggressive, so that voice is a foolish shout in the dark, a real drawback. Another strange thing for me was to hear acoustic/symphonic parts: a la *Kveldssanger*

(naturally worse in composing and performance). I mean, it makes me move at times, but has nothing to do with metal side of the record. Or to put it the other way: a link between is very thin, almost non-existent. The final nail to their coffin are programmed drums. I believe they kill half of metal sound in here, in spite of melodious nature of it. I would definitely use only live drummer instead. End of the story.

Well, not the worst experience anyway, this cd is listenable, and actually it could be good if not these drawbacks. Then again - it is just next 15\$ worth cd in the pile of average... Want you that or not. **Rhymes of Destruction**, Bart Marascaux, Mgr. De Haemlaan 18, B-8500 Kortrijk, Belgium, bartmarascaux@usa.net, http://bewoner.dma.be/rhymes

RINGNEVOND

Nøttrøvd
Edgerunner

Young debuting Norwegian four-piece, and a drum computer. Argh, how much I would love to hear it at least recorded properly (this means - to have a good sound and avoid any machinery feeling, if the music is so symphonic and majestic). But that is a spot Ringnevond must work more for sure, it is too evident - this lack. And I find the recording a bit too weak to stretch the metal feel, it gets based on synthetic melody that arrives from the main songwriter Nevrod's mind. He is a keyboard player, so it gets clear then... But guitar sound is drowned a bit. Though it still cannot overshadow that immense strength in the context, and apocalyptic feeling which flies from their notes and riffs. Parallels are still here; I can mention quite a few bands. It implies me a thought Ringnevond are moving towards their special style that is yet to come. Good that they do not stick somewhere for too long. My surprise lies in Kvist (great legendary band) and Parnassus influences. At times seems that guys have been copying the first band, but after a more careful listen I must admit that is just a wrong impression. This sort of blackmetal is based on constant progression of riffs - they go up and up, melodies get sharper at the end of songs. But Kvist have done it tighter, right. Though Ringnevond are not full-ahead speed freaks, guys rarely incorporate classic folk themes (*Trolsyn*, *Mellonstev*), thus proving to be loyal to their pagan image. Both hate and spirit correlates rather fine, creating a diverse epic feel to it. Still they are not another 'pagan' band. It is just additional gam, if you want. To cut it shorter, one more straight-Norwegian album, love it or hate it. But it has doubtless potential in there. And solid inlay design. Check their song on *Armed Forces!* Ship178 to their label for cd! I expect something vast with the follow-up album!!!

ROOT The Book Redblack

Diverse and controversial newborn child of the scene's veterans. Once defining the black metal term, they still force the family of reviewers to lose a track, inventing new labels to shape Root music. Big mouths should better shut up, as eleven compositions stand out as a unique approach to undoubtedly heavy music. On one hand tempos are really slow, and thus you feel relaxed listening to *The Book*, but it is impossible to name them doom or melodic metal, because it is too narrow description. Some riffs just bump into balladesque nature of 80-ies or even 70-ies metal/rock, though modern touch with eerie synth or a sudden vocal experiment towards traditional music ruins all the prejudices. I do enjoy that avantgarde folk spirit in several songs, like *Coraban*, which makes me recollect *Hell Symphony* quite a bit - once again, even at another angle these days... And I am sure Root would have succeed if intensifying folkish melodies and singing.

Controversy comes when I hear a Def Leppard lick behind, reconsidering recent musical structures in *Big Boss* head is it really about getting older? Nah, Root would never turn so mainstream. Probably *The Book* is even less public oriented than old records due to that weird decadent feel. Anyway, it still keeps going, so that might be like a timebomb... You should know what I mean. *The Book* is really perfect in cold winter nights, when your thoughts keep on the darker side than lighter... Check out an impressive bloodred booklet, hiding *Big Boss* teachings and his psychedelic poetry. Something wicked speaks by mouth of this noble man. Let it come to you, *The Book*. You can get a copy from *Leob Takas* as well - for 15\$.

ROTTEN SOUND

Drain
Reputse

For a four years in hc/punk experienced band the outcome is rather satisfying. *Rotten Sound* has been receiving positive response with their debut full-length few years back, already as a grinddeath slab, so this follow-up should have confirmed their status, or something. I know little of their past, but *Drain* breathes of grinding brutality, with a mean dose of aggressive death metal. Just wonder how come they grew into a brutal metal, from the punk past? Their roots are still here, naturally, but the sound is so intense and powerful that makes listener not to care on it, and dive into the ocean of grime. Sort of *Brutal Truth* meets new generation of *Osmose* roster (*Dellamorta*, *Disfear*).

Through the set of fifteen songs you would find not a step from intense metal musicianship, supported with ugly vomited words by *Keijo* the crowd have made more effort on that Swedish death growl though, and their trademark - drummer *Kai Hahlo*, also heard on countless other Finnish cds of recent years. On this record he plugs in the entire set of his engines, to deliver the roaring hell of a drum accompaniment. If sort of fits the whole band higher, this technical light as a machine rhythm structure.

Lyrical they are still rather straight-forward (*Dirty Currency*, *Losers*, *Narrow Mind*), thus not that much of an issue to speak about. Let us better take attention to *Rotten Sound* music, and its raw fashion, something far away from the 'haute culture'.

For me it mean much more energy than dozens of shitty death or blackmetal bands, whatsoever. If it were my band, I would just drop all reminiscences of the past though. This shifts in yer face!!! *Rotten Sound*, c/o Mika Aallo, Raastavankatu 22B, 65100 Vaasa, Finland, tel. (358) 505247469, fax (358) 508247469, keijo.niliminas@nmp.nokia.com

SACRED SIN

Anguish... I Harvest
Uniao Lisboa Ul Iv

Respect! That is the reaction towards Portuguese veterans, starting it all there for nowadays fundamental *Moonspell* and countless others. However, guys still keep paving their traditional dark deathrash, what receives my deepest support and respect. The funniest thing is that I have never had enough of *Sacred Sin* listening experience, several occasional tunes here and there was all, but I usually knew what they are all about, and kept enjoying that gloomy heavy sound flowing from there. And who can forget the *Darkside* video on MTV so many years ago, when death metal video was an event as such? I remember it left a huge impression on me then... well, 1993.

So, darkside followers have been working hard to carve on that unlighted way, what is so obvious in this, their third album. By the way, seems like sophomore release was put down by their crappy label, namely *Dinamo* Nevermind, and check out this ten tracker! Comparing to debut, I think they have moved forward incredibly. It brings *Sacred Sin* to their best shape, so loyal to the roots, and keeping exploring darker layers of deathrash. At some point they remind me mid-tempo side of *Samael*, definitely. Well, not that atmospheric nor bombastic, but still... I think keyboard mastery handled by *Artur* has a lot to do with that. At times he is not afraid to sound unusual or even trippy, what works encouraging! Other than that, *Jose's* grim vocalstyle must be pointed out, as well as his self-seraching lyrics that are pleasure to go through. Tips are easy noticeable at the beginning (*Ghoul Plagued Darkness*) and at the end (*Seal of Nine*), though don't ask me why... I wish their new label make them fairly good promotion, and not in Portugal only... Cause this is fundamental in metal. *Sacred Sin*, P.O. Box 4030, 2745 Massama Codex, Portugal, http://alfa.lst.ul.pt/~137858/sacredsin.htm

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SANATORIUM

Arrival of the forgotten ones
Erebos / Dandy

Their naturalistic death metal still cannot convince my taste, simply because I think death metal scene has much better bands, and even in the same Slovakia. Just take their label mates *Surgical Dissection*, for example. Or any other recognized worldwide horde.

Sanatorium precisely keep the old death metal spirit alive, it is so real and obvious that it takes listeners back to 1991 or something close to that date. It can be so good with other albums, but I cannot feel pleasure with *Arrival of the forgotten ones*. Actually it reminds these older bands of early 90-ies which I have been skipping ever back then, when the style was on the wave. I am plainly confused by separate riffs, which do not stick together. Seems like *Sanatorium* move towards brutality for the most of the timing, but then slower melodious moments are so out of place. They are not bound with the rest, they confuse the whole idea. And *Martin's* voice, which is like a twin brother of *Adramelech* singer's growl, would fit any crazy grinding band much better. Melodies again, I cannot hear the bridges that would naturally connect them to blasting low-tuned death metal parts. Suppose their lyrics say it all. First of all, they are printed on a long line in the booklet, that makes a total mess of it; and sincerely - I hardly understand *Martin's* ideas behind them, usually. Such is the music too - seems like heavy and intense, but in fact lacks an elementary way of composing. It is not about my confusion, it is about learning. By the way, album has several songs from their previous demos. Cd costs 15\$, tape is yours for 6\$.

SARCASTIC

Macabre Human Mutation
Millennium

To start fooling around that a pop/black project appeared in Brazil would be stupid even on the 1st of April. Since it is far from that date when this review gets form, I will just stop tricking and name it for the devil's sake - brutal grinding gore death, typical for Central American so-called. And that says it all - know one or several bands from this region, guess about the sonority that hides behind eleven smashing compositions of *Sarcastic*. It is about love it or hate it thing really, especially when early *Carcass* music is mentioned. Oh yeah, to top it off this album has a cover of *Swarming Vulgar Mass of Infected Virulency*. I am sure there are still pretty much freaks around who love that style, and not in Central America only, or Brazil in particular. So check it out, if you want to make your sickest collection a bit wider. I find it slightly short in length though, clocking in just a bit more than 28 minutes. For true grind maniacs it might be a bit too quick spin, as the horror tale gurgles at its sickest, when the end suddenly comes... It is not a big deal to push a start button once again, or repeat button before dwelling into your sickest dreams, but anyways - sounds like *Sarcastic* could add several extra tracks. Their package naturally includes sick gore pictures, medical type of phrases that people sometimes name as lyrics (yeah, it would suit some gravestones, sure...). Since lyric sheet is printed in two separate fonts, I guess the later three or four songs are recorded separately, but that is just a remark about the contents. Booklet, on its own, has a terrible layout, sort of D.I.Y., with tons of grammar mistakes and inaccuracies. Label should care about it, in my opinion!!! Music sounds sick, anyways. *Sarcastic*, R. Alegrin 15, Cinquentenario, Farrupolha, RS. 95180.000, Brazil

SARGATANAS

The Enlightenment
Conquistador

I cannot help myself thinking that such music cannot be released on cd. Is it an album? Just a pile of long monotonous songs, which bore listener to death, however hard yhe or she try to listen to them. Even if it were a three-song cd, it would have bored me. Even if had *Morbid Angel* cover, it would have bored me. Every composition has a minimal imagination, when it comes to be somehow interesting to the who listen. And you are caught into one hour of audio torture. Yes, it works better than any industrial noise album, believe me. I do not practise to give presents to people I dislike, but if I resolve to fulfill this idea anytime, I know which cd will be provided... Some journalists have guessed about death metal hype, reviving the style again. With all these qualities of the nineties - raw sound, brutality, straight-forward attitude... However, I am afraid that low quality outfits like Mexican *Sargatanas* might destroy all the fascination around such jump in time. The same that is going on with eighties thrash these days. They cannot count on *Possessed*, it is not honest. Overall, give me *Possessed* album instead of such one hour long crap with miserable growler. It is not the problem anymore when *Combat* records have been re-released. It means yet harder times for *Sargatanas*, or any other band wishing to release something too blind-following. Better luck next time!!! *Sargatanas*, P.O. Box 1-521, C.P. 44101, Guadalupe (Jalisco), Mexico, tel. (52) 36270963, fax (52) 38247777, sargatanas@lettera.net

SARNATH

Life... Noe
Shivur

Everything is familiar on here: heavy metal spirit and the school of Finnish melodic metal. Even the level of turning more swallowable and easy going is pretty much comparable to *Amorphis* and *Sentenced*. I mean, *Sarnath* earlier played something more intense, even with links to death metal. Something you will never find in their newest album, nor on any possible next stuff they will ever release. It sounds to me so known and used. This formula of abandoning real heavy music, but switching onto something sissy/hippy and sickly melodic.

Ok, now here is that hm side too, which has obvious reasons to be grouped together with a bunch of Iron Maiden followers. I mean this influence is a bit more styled not to be plain copy of old riffs, and that is a pretty good sign for the band. Although *Ville Sappela* is not always able to hide his fascination of *Bruce Dickinson* vocalstyle. Not to forget that guy is definitely weak comparing to a rockstar. Once again *Sarnath* had something to surprise me: viola and violins performance on a handful of tunes. It must be the reminiscences of their death metal past, or have you ever heard heavy metal with violins? So, lyric violin themes are used in calm intro-like moments, before it bursts into plain metal riff. To end with, it also reminds me the first *Celestial Season* cd at times, what is another nice reminiscence. If not that huge jump into simple sweet melodic metal, if not the bands playing similar songs on their average top, if not a mediocre voice of their singer, I would probably even enjoy *Sarnath*. Due to their catchy song-writing and untraditional use of violin + viola. But you see, there is too much of 'ifs...'. That basically says it all. *Sarnath*, mikka.mateinen@kolumbus.fi

SCULPTURED

Apollo Ends
The End

Amusing. They are so heavily obsessed by apocalyptic morning, that it happens to be their main theme, and creates a really weird aura around it, not speaking about music already. Personally I have never met a band capturing that deceptive time of the day, similar to twilight actually, like its opposite, but which nonetheless has so much mystery and charm, hidden in the first rays of the sun. Unlike your average blackmetalizer mind, *Don Andersson* is much more critical to his experiences, and instead of screaming his guts out for forces of evil summoned by the fullmoon light, rather despises the patterns that the arising sun gives him. Hour of the wolf, just from another corner? Well, contempt is not a right word, at least that does not flow from his lyrics. But it shapes a sort of weird reaction that early morning evokes in his sorrowful soul. Add vast plain nature sort of pictures around these lyrics (should I tell they depict EARLY morning?) - the whole pack really hits your brain...

Ok, music suits me in morning, evening or night - in a similar way. Maybe *Sculptured* have not worked it out till the end? Nae, I think it is just one single reaction, why to restrict it anyways? One thing is sure - metal is truly avantgarde here on, throughout seven melancholic progressive compositions. To better describe it right I would name *Beyond Dawn*, *Opeth*, *Ved Buens Ende*, and maybe progressive rock/metal? As it keeps to that milieu, every bit of it. *Apollo Ends* is an album you are getting into for a good week, and I think even in a distant future it will not be fully discovered. Or what is that effect when trumpet and trombone screech mix with progressive metal? (Unfortunately, I have not heard their initial record, which is said to be more traditional. So, do not expect that with *Apollo Ends* - it basically is a hard-hitting drive, with consequences observed just in the early morning (next day, yes...). *Sculptured*, c/o Don Andersson, 817 NW 20th, Camas, WA 98607, USA, fax (1) 3608343212, sculptured117@aol.com

SEVEN

Break The Chains
Loud N' Proud

A slab of traditional heroic heavy metal, which has a set of reminiscences from earlier years. It demands a few spins before really getting into, but to say the truth - album grows with every new listen. Anyway, it definitely loses against

quite a few new traditional metal cds, both of new bands and revived dinosaurs. It gets clear after a few listens either - both structure and performance wise *Seven* is a step behind the masters. No rage of that heavy metal power in *Wiktor's* voice, no totality in heaviness department, and a bit over the top mellow links in balladesque tunes. Someone could improve me and tell that it upcomes together with *Seven's* style, which is rooted in old heavy/power and even true doom metal releases. And that is absolutely true. But anyway - *Break The Chains* would not score a Grammy in either rank, being this released in 1981 or something. However, album is not bad at all, especially for those who miss old good days, who are sick of nowadays extremities and prefer heavy music plain and majestic. Not a huge comparison, but in some way *Seven* have something to do with epic side of *Manowar* either. No wonder that most of lyrics bring forth 'heavy metal forever' type of glorificative message. Right, it is expressed in a bit sophisticated way, but the message is there.

If balladesque piano tunes would be excluded, it would make this debut album shorter, and more packed. It is not that much prolonged now either, but tends to stay like that. *Seven* should grow up a bit as composers until their next recording, and then will surely register more memorable tunes with potential hitting to the hearts of steel eaters. *Seven*, P.O. Box 1140, 800 41 Norrköping, Sweden, http://seven.web-page.net, sevenrock@hotmail.com

SEVEN SINS

Illusions of evil

This one gets big in few weeks, as soon as it is publicly unleashed - that is for sure. Music stands out, and that is about it. Imagine a blazing rage that comes out of Emperor's symphonics, *Dimmu Borgir's* majesty and mysticism, and yet brutality that death and black metal are respected for. Everything is done with precise neat building of the compositions, where no detail remains unnoticed, and does not act as filler. Just real, emotional, innovative blend of yet used formulas. Cannot say that *Seven Sins* are these new messiahs to re-shape the Norwegian sound once again, but what this five song sampler shows is a masterpiece indeed, and it should not be considered as the next worn out melodic blackmetal, or something hypertexture. Well, enough to lie in hiding, time to throw all aces down (even I would more like to leave this review as it is, without any names; but since the project is brand new, it needs a presentation): *Seven Sins* was started by an infamous drummer of war *Tjodalv* (ex. *Dimmu Borgir*) and guitarist *Cyrus* (*Satyricon* and *Old Mans Child* session player), and later completed by two other no less talented guys *Mernrock* (bass) and *Athra* (vocals), with *Mustis* (DB) performing keyboard lines in this promo recording session. If you feel sorry about their ex. bands, simply wait a few months when *Seven Sins* sign a multialbum deal with the decent company and unleash their debut. Great that they do not stick on just being exceptional musicians - they are also creative composers, already wandering about any norme modern metal clichés. There is simply no other way but to get high whilst you are thoughtful enough to use your experience and imagination. See ye guys in *Wacken*, August 2001. By the way, this promo is meant just for record labels, and is shipped (January 2000) to secure a record deal. *Seven Sins*, c/o Tjodalv, P.O. Box 117, 1305 Haslum, Norway, tel. (47) 90192882, tjodalv@c2i.net

SEVEN WITCHES

Second War in Heaven
Massacre

In spite of dark astonishing intro *Rising Torches* and follow-up kick-ass heavy metal marathon *Dying Embers*, debut album of four scorers leaves to wait for something more impressive next time. After two tracks all the power and rage is gone, and left is naked power metal with rather weak hooks, and pretty mediocre vocal. I believe *Bobby Lucas* wants to be as expressive as *Rob Halford*, and as monumental as *Bruce Dickinson*, but his effort is simply less convincing. In music as *Seven Witches* execute it is damn important, so - voice is not their ace.

I see no point to have faster speeds showcased several times, since in general their compositions are more solid, and even tend to doomy *Black Sabbath* at times. Me personally have a 'program' in my mind - to enjoy faster tunes when I have troubles to like mellow parts in music. Such is the case with these Americans, and I bet something is not worked out to make their album catchy enough. Company has put a right label once again, pointing on *American metal* within eleven tracks. Yes, that is what is and was enjoyed by US metal mongers years ago, and that is actually this retro factor playing the role. If you hated stamped heavy metal bands back then, skip *Seven Witches* from your which-cd-to-buy-next nets. Why the hell all these retro bands are so possessed to make tons of covers? Ok, you can release them with singles or mcds, but why to put two covers on your actual (debut) album? One is damn enough (please take a listen to *Hammerfall*). The *Chain* (*Fleetwood Mac*) and *Metal Daze* (*Manowar*) are more rock'n'roll than metal actually... To sum it up - cover picture deserves a better album.

SILENTUM

Infinita Piango Vuinera
Spilofarm

Short-haired waltz with heavy origin and gloomy rebellious lides is the start of a new *Spinefarm* sublabel, with memories not to be forgotten as quick as yesterday's weather, or as debut album by their labelmates *Erbivne*, for that matter. Not often you can hear seven-piece gathering of musicians, who do not disturb to each other. That is right, yes, female vocalist and violin including, not to forget *Sami's* keyboard. Though it has much more to do with term melodic doomy metal than any crap band which pops up with its childish shitty music, what is typical for 90's. Ok, some

major riffs could be replaced by more minor notes, and the same goes for *Meth's* vocal range. It could have turned great if not these average parts, when *Silentium* go by a standard melodic metal approach. The whole cd proves that they can be way more original and greater than that. I do not care for *MOB/Anathema* influences, music is still very strong with that. It gets bigger after the peak of album, highlighting with *Tina's* silvery voice on *With Blood Adorned*, and already rising actually up with the whole idea on *Requiem*. Just vocally, it has something to do with *Karl Rueslatten's* brilliance of 1994-1995... Cannot forget her masterpieces with *The 3rd and The Mortal*...

Thumb up for *Silentium* that they use only new songs for this debut, unlike many newcomers simply putting the entire demo material and lying it to be the debut album. Nothing plays against *Silentium* so far, except that they must step forward to become the new star of melancholic metal. No doubt about this album's potential, though. I wonder if they know Russian poet *Fiodor Tyutchev*? In some way, I hope so... *Silentium*, silentium@immetti.fi, www.jamsankoski.fi/silentium

SIRIUS Aeons of Magick Nocturnal Art

No way to escape the same bunch of praises, assigned to their demo tape, since Portuguese new-born heroes has completed a hell of a great album, worth of the highest evaluation, not hesitating a second. I do not give a damn that their symphonic blackmetal strongly reminds the mighty *Emperor*, or other monsters from *Nocturnal Art - Limbolic Art - Aeons of Magick* is the work by masters of the genre, simply tearing pathetic orchestral bomb wannabes off the face of earth. Nothing to complain about, if you also feel ok with the true experts of the deal. Sometimes one stunning addition to the known genre than countless crappy copies or stupid clueless search for untrodden paths, is really better.

So this is more than a safe buy for admirers, and actually, including some extras not heard in other albums of such a class, for your attention, I was struck by *Sirius* feel to combine exalted passionate orchestral soundscapes with paths of fiery dark metal. At times it creates a so grand and solemn feel, as if you listen to the classical marches, composed by immortal musical geniuses, yet they wrap it in magic and scapes of secret knowledge - you are deaf if you cannot feel it! Ah, I cannot resist against sublime shapeshift melodies (no, wrong word; it is more a line of arpeggios than melodies) in the title track, or purely intermezzo-like *The Stargate*. But synthesiser is definitely not the only thing that fascinates. Take into mind the top-notch production (mixed in *Akkerhaugen*, mastered at *Strype Audio*), supreme scream-like vocalisation, which at times intertwines with dark narration or infernal growl - every bit of this album breathes with an own reverending majesty, staying far away from immature musicianship. Avoid the symphonic blackmetal trend, and better check out the real jewels, one of which this is doubt undoubtedly is. Just a lack of time prevented me from conducting a chat with *Sirius* - check out the next issue! *Sirius*, www.darkmetal.com/sirius

SIX FEET UNDER Maximum Violence Metal Blade

Ok, *Barnes* and co. deliver it as a surprise - for all chunky death metal fans. Forget their easy listenable records and predictable songs with the same rhythmic all over, and meet something heavier, to the core, and definitely much more appreciated. I mean both debut and *Warpath* were not bad, kind of addictive. When you listen to them, they constantly grow and surprisingly do not make you bored. Remove that repetitiveness, and for the bigger part - slow structures of both albums, and add energy and diversity instead. You get *Maximum Violence*, eleven angry songs (and two bonuses if you are lucky enough to get a limited edition digipak). If you crave for synthesizers or atmospheres, better switch on another review. First of all *Chris* voice is put where it always belonged - under the lowest chords, and violent attitude. For the first listen it is sort of a shocker, reminding nothing else but *Zero The Hero* cover by *Cannibal Corpse* on ep '93... But when you are used to his new (old) approach, it is fine, a real death metal growl. It is the most noticeable on *Kiss cover War Machine* (the cover itself is a weakest part of cd though). With a new guitarist, *Steve Swanson* (ex. *Masacre*) *SFU* are still not as sticky band as *Masacre*, *Obituary* or *Cannibal Corpse* once were, but you cannot ignore their professionalism and homage paid for death metal. It is him re-structuring the usual *Six Feet Under* tunes, and adding more blood, guts and sweat into them. Not the fastest though, not the most virtuosous, nor the most technic, but groovy, aggressive and (still) easy swallowed for heavy music mongers.

SKEPTICISM Aes Red Stream

Heavy mournful doom, or funeral doom as they name it, has individual approach to timing and infinity as a vision transformed into music. Musicians of these genres may easily turn dust into flesh, not mentioning the opposite. They can easily make slow killing music sound visionary, and exclusively dramatic, naturally. Consequently, they are able to extend the time you spend with their releases. *Mcd* may turn into a longplayer, minutes you see on particular display may play a trick or two on you either. Just take a listen to latest *Esoteric* album, or to new effort of Finnish *Skeptical*. I mean, that is fine with me - one tune lasting for 27+ minutes, but if you will program the thing with a repeat button, you may end in your own funeral, with a soundtrack of leave for yourselves to figure out which! To cut it short, *Skeptical* succeed to shape this song into cyclical progression, which comes to an end physically, but

not mentally! If you were mentally ill, you would easily catch the vibe. I will not defend myself that I am sane though, make your own conclusions...

On a minor note, by the way, Finnish doomers can hardly be named as Innovators - expect the same heavy road they have been travelling since the inception. Just love it or hate it. Me thinks they are not very much popular, but that is the style chosen to blame. Sort of die-hard fans should be to the bones in them, whilst others do not bother to give a damn shit about getting into *Skepticalism*. But shouldn't all good music turn like that? I do not belong to any, but I feel what they really mean with this music. Recommended for your worst enemy. Artsy job with the cd layout (I have got it! Cover art features a pictured part of female body) and minimalism around it.

SLAUGHTER LORD Thrash 'til death Invictus

Archaeologists do love different types of excavations, especially when they find a historical value, and when they are valuable in general. I think metal music is about the same. Real aesthetes always know what is old but good, and what is modern but crap. Don't be afraid of unknown Australian metal name, and let me introduce the label behind it first of all. It is a new Irish company, with none other but *Alan Averill* of *Primordial*, and his friend *Danagh O'Leary* managing it all. And they are backed up by *Hammerheart*, so... Now the band they have chosen for their initial release; they were a true thrash metal legend back in mid 80ies, when *Kreator* ruled the scene. *Slaughter Lord* were the Aussie mirror of what was the most extreme and reactionary metal music back then, keeping local freaks go nuts about their demos. By the way, it has also been featuring *Sadistik Exekution* members. Unfortunately, they disbanded in 1987, and the complete collection of material sees the light just thirteen years after that.

If you have never heard them (as well as myself), the best way is to think over the thrash records from 1985-1987 you have, and compare them with this release. I am sure some allusions will be drawn, and that is natural. These limited budget demo recordings surely cannot compete with *Kreator* or *Dark Angel* albums. I cannot say that this one is musically better than recent re-releases of *Pledisiver* or *Destructor*, but well - it is unique, like no retro band would ever be able to achieve. It is obvious that such tribute releases are still meant for die-hard old schoolers, and such is the destination *Slaughter Lord* cd must follow. Old school layout + packaging completes the saga. Buy or die, then?

SOILWORK The Chainheart Machine Listenable

Sounds alike debut record, this one. Or music has got an overall advance since then, eh? Dilemma easily solved after *The Chainheart Machine* spins on your player for the third or fourth time. It is superior than many wanna-be's around, and it fully beats up the *Silblirthe Suicide* album. Thoroughly. Music is exactly the same - brand new wave of Swedish death metal, that is why it might work as a suspicious thing with *Soilwork*.

There is no point to deal with details further on, if reader enjoys the music described above. But freaks should learn that a new album works harder, tighter, like fist in the face of a preacher. Plunged even more into *Slaughter of the Sun* manner, *Soilwork* guys removed any allusions to melodic *Göthenburg* wave, and now use purely heavy metal kicks (that is - melodies and harmonies) instead. Indeed it is not as easy to build, as it might seem. Have it in mind, boys and girls. Here we go with advanced masters of the style - one which needs bands as *Soilwork* not to be destroyed by pathetic newcomers.

As their line-up now counts a keyboard player (*Carlos del Em*), I wonder that it is pretty low in a mix, actually too low! A favour to all those hating synth domination, but it could have been a bit louder, anyway. Another remark (positive? negative?), *Millionaire* sounds like a thrashy death version of *Dimmu Borgir*, but it also has one of the most refreshing riffs of the whole cd. In general, groove is much more important for Swedes, that was felt on the debut album either, and I just wonder how they managed to build their songs adding heavy metal trademarks to that modern groove. So, *At The Gates* is not all, if you return to *Soilwork's* inspirators. Ahem, obtain this album instead of other hundred Swedish *In Flames* clowns. This one blows them all.

SORHIN Deden MCMXCVIII Near Dark

On waves. After a mediocre slab of Swedish black metal with debut mlp in 1996, and a masterful full-length *I det glimrande märkrets djup* one year later, Swedes as if turned back with their music, since these three compositions, being an appetizer for the forthcoming new cd, are surprisingly inspired and easily predictable. Production is definitely better than their early stuff had, but when it comes to execution of black metal - it is nothing to scream about, especially if you are well informed with Swedish kind of black metal. It is too much to enjoy one more mediocre release. Moreover, that *Sorhin* were better in the past.

They abandoned emotional side of melodies, which yet was that key which made *I det...* a masterpiece. Now *Sorhin* again play rather straight-forward kind of metal, which at times reminds quite a few old br era of New Zealand, now English *Demoniac*. Not only guitar riffs are kept in that vein, but vocals either. This turn might be named as return to br roots, but anyway - performance and composition of stuff is not convincing at all... I miss more energy here, more passion and more variation. Overall, it is just three tunes, just 12 minutes, so hell knows what effect *Apokalypsen ängel* will have, but if it is about the same kind of mid-paced one-lined black, then forget it even before it is recorded...

Mcd is limited to 1996 copies, and picture disc is released in three different cover versions (222 copies each).

SPIRAL ARCHITECT A Sceptic's Universe Sensory

True Norwegian technical metal, hehe. Sounds familiar, please drop "technical" and it is clear without saying what the hell it tries to describe! But stop, it is really technical, no joke - I deal here with ultimate progressive band which has truly no boundaries to deliver highly rated slab of subtle musicianship. Hell, they really make it so well, that many progsters would cut their hairs off envying that clock tight performance! No thrills, no gimmicks - just pure music from the hearts. I doubt if an eternal discussion whether it is metal or hard rock in progressive surrounding fits them better, just a bit of this and a bit of that. For example, if you enjoy *Atheist* and *Cynic*, you will find their reflection in this album as well. If you are stuck to *Fates Warning* and other emotional conspirators, here is that model also prevailing. At first sight high-pitched slings of vocalist *Oeyvind* might work a bit irritating, but not after you get into the atmosphere which is not determined by one or two, or even ten ingredients. *Spiral Architect* are in the process of creation through every and all moments of their album, thus never sounding familiar or the same. In a long run you might recognize their special tricks, but only when the whole full-length is absorbable by the mind, not earlier.

This band has been paving a hard but patient and clever underground path, seven years in a row releasing just demo tapes and appearing on various compilations. Later the media has definitely noticed their exceptionalism, and recognized even these demo recordings. With a help of *Intramental Management* they have got this deal, and recorded stunning nine tracks in States. A lesson for others indeed, like they say: *Spiral Architect* choose further development over quick fame. You cannot utter that any better. Here they are - ready for an ultimate breakthrough. I am pretty sure of that. Indeed one of the best (if not the best) *Sensory* cds so far. *Spiral Architect*, Chr. Krohngst. 30, N-0186 Oslo, Norway, sceptic@spiralarchitect.com, www.spiralarchitect.com

STIGMATEIST It All Ends Today Ephobius

Marching proudly with dark/black metal flag, and redefining what is true and wimpy in their booklet statements, Dutch 'down-to-earth-blackmetal-message' bringers actually forget that it is not enough to be evil, heavy and metal. To accomplish something memorable you need to be much more precise with your approach, not just repeat what was done by others. That is their biggest trouble so far, and if I utter *Dimmu Borgir*, it must mean here we have one more bandwagon album, with destination "mediocre", most luckily. It is irritating to hear the same vocal tone once again, as well as the synth accompaniment throughout entire album. Not that they were awful in performance, but that I feel initial frames which were defined before composing this music. Keyboard captures old *The Gathering* mood in one of the tracks, but that is about its positive side, really. Instrumentally they are more death metal than black, that melodious 90-ies sort of thing. Not very light or thin, due to decent production, but also slightly different composing than most of Swedish bands do. Yes, how can they be major tones tuned, if the concept and lyrics deal with end of it all? They suit me fine at least on this point. Nonetheless, it has almost nothing to do with blackmetal as a philosophy, neither musically it is noticeably connected.

I do not know. Seems like I am fed up with these similar sounding bands. But on the other hand check *Stigmatheist* yourselves, maybe writing reviews makes me too sick sometimes... One thing is clear - six-piece formation is about to be there by any means, one word - metal - makes them alive... Though, more input please! *Stigmatheist*, Patrick Koning, Rietdijk 2, 7671 SG Vriezenveen, The Netherlands, tel./fax (31) 0546641082

SUIDAKRA Lays From Ajar Last Episode

Holy shit! I am shocked. I even feel a bit uneasy with my review in *LT #8*, where my expectations for the next *Suidakra* album were pretty high. Ok, that disc (*Old Lang Syne*) was damn worth to be enjoyed, unlike its follower. How can the band move so far away from lively and creative music to gray trendy (read: NWOSDM) piece of songs. Even difficult to believe, if you have previous record, but it is the truth - on the cd itself. Nothing exceptional at all - a blend of boring heavy/death melodies, and so much times heard clichés. Arrghh. Black metal vibe is gone at all. If they managed to experiment with hymnic vocals quite successfully earlier, so on this record just usual screams and some very weak choruses are combined, and they add no points to average long-player.

I bet to take a wild guess that band has less time to work on their music this time. Maybe they thought about a quick release after previous record, thus their music has definitely suffered. I think so as no deeper tune is found, all of them sound so miserably and monotonously, in spite of a perfect sound engineering by *Andy Classen* (*Rotting Christ*, *Nagelfar*), and even several intermezzos with acoustic passages, which used to be that brilliant, now are just pale copies of *Old Lang Syne* (yet they are slightly better than these screamy tracks)... A big disappointment indeed, *Suidakra* were so promising, but I gravely doubt now that they are capable to grow into a really innovative band, proud of their own music.

SUPREME MAJESTY Divine Enigma Loud N'Proud

Please remember the name of these supreme lords, since they are starting a big deal and should go far, if their jour-

ney is neat and imaginative enough. *Power/epic* heavy metal is the fucking pathway, and you really cannot demand more groovy approach to it than *Supreme Majesty* already have in this debut mini album, counting four excellent songs. Just think of the glory days of *Helloween*, *Running Wild* and doubtlessly - *Stratovarius*, and meet thy maker. Swedes are not actually rip-offs of any mentioned veteran band, but rather supply the scene with refreshing new metal blood to the bone, accurately riffing between the lethal temptation of stealing any known lead or chord. They are named as gothic metal band by the label, that is actually not the case at all, except some keyboard line here and there. But this dark feel is with you through the lyrics and visual concept behind this mod.

Majestic hymnic choirs, mournful proud keyboard melodies, and pretty strong voice of *Rikard Larsson* - this makes an alternative to imbecility of the dilettantes. They might be too mid-tempoed for some elements, too epic for speed freaks, and maybe even too mellow for those who do not dig *Stratovarius*, but believe me, *Supreme Majesty* are pretty talented when it comes to performing their own thing. Actually they are probably the biggest *Loud N'Proud* hype thus far, so to lose a chance to check it would be a shame. Not only for simple ordinary fans of heavy metal, but for several bigger sharks in music business either. If you want to combine good sales with good sincere heavy music, you have got it here. Available from *Ledo Takas* mailorder for 11\$ - a pure bargain! *Swords* and *Shields!* supreme_majesty@hotmail.com, <http://listen.to/suprememajesty>

SURGICAL DISSECTION The Inborn Malignance Erebos

Pure slamming blast, this five-piece formation continues what Czech and Slovak scenes have as their finest - straight old school death metal, of course fast and extreme. With a monicker like theirs I have been expecting nothing less than gargling grind, but it is far from that. I guess that guys have abandoned that sort of intensity after demo '97, and then happened to grow into a much more solid formation, choosing the death way.

In veins of *Krabator*, *Surgical Dissection* upcome with similar social aware or dark nature based lyrics, yet they sound very poor imagination-wise, just nothing to discover at all. I would better keep these poems for myself, and would never publish them in any kind of a booklet. Yep, that is a drawback, and pretty serious one. Yet when it comes to music, I cannot resist against the neat technical playing and high quality of eight tunes. They are close to premiere death metal bands, and as already mentioned, with firm annotations to Eastern European scene. Plain aggressive extreme performance, with dark guttural vocalist, which sometimes puts an agonizing scream. What is sure that I enjoy such form of death metal more than any crappy American clown just following the steps of its elder brother. Aye, this debut cd is slightly short in length (26 minutes), yet the quality beats it for sure. Want to realise that? Get cd for 15\$, from *Ledo Takas*, or tape for 6\$ from the label. *Surgical Dissection*, c/o Martin Majer, Moskovska 48, 974 01 Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, tel. (421) 884230537

SURREAL PERDITION Surreal Incisions from the subconscious eyrie of Perdition Haunting Ambience

From this package I have totally enjoyed most of guitarist *Jamas'* lyrics and a sample from *The City of Lost Children* movie, used at the end of *Versimilitude of Reality*. First thing mentioned is so negative and self-searching within the dark images of cosmos that it is close to orgasmic pleasure to steal all the thoughts that are put on paper there. Seems like his brains rule the pen and guy subconsciously uses his ink to fulfill what is deep within. Well, maybe I have found some things common with my strives for universal matters, that is... Concerning that sample, it ends up a chaotic vast song with broadened atmosphere with a shallow evil laugh of the witches, that eventually makes my spine shiver every time I listen to them, especially whilst staying alone in the twilight shapened room with the stereo volume put at its highest.

Unfortunately, *Surreal Perdition* are not that great with the whole album, musically. I see their ultimate goal is to be as atmospherically chaotic as possible, still having spherical orchestral domination and far reaching harmonious strings, that is - keyboard based filters. At times experiments heard sound really weird. I mean, there is no big deal to program synth to play at its highest speed, that even *Nicola Paganini* would fail to perform, but it does not sound natural. I appreciate their horror-filled riffs and at times - not that lame vocal pattern, but it is just bits and pieces in the whole ocean of heavy dreadful opelette; the rest is slightly clumsy, unfinished with production much to be desired. Main screamer *Quarbit* takes too much influence from *DaniLOF*, and not *Varg*, as their bio states, and that is also their bad side. Anyway, Australian fourpiece (+drum computer) is damn interesting and not typical at all black (?) metal. Distributed by *Modern Invasion Music*. *Surreal Perdition*, P.O. Box 952, Pennant Hills, Sydney, NSW 1715, Australia, surrealp@hotmail.com, www.angelfire.com/au/surrealperdition

T866 Troops Of Satan

What kind of deal would you expect from a horse named as T866? I would guess - a pure bloody blackmetal, moreover that it comes from the down under. But no - there is no blasphemous *Bestial Warlust* chaos, nor the confusion of *Sadistik Exekution*. But the music is damn intense and you guess it right - brainbombing. Total brutality of death metal, the way it was destined to be respected! Yeah, with early *Cannibal Corpse* albums and not their followers, who just plagiarised some riffs, and filled the rest with boring slow

downs that turned into a cliché within American death metal. **T666** grind from the beginning until the very end – at a full speed rage and disastrous will to smash your skull, dear christian believer. Oh yes, your four-piece looks rather young in age, and I can just pray their unique capacity to record the music like a decent stream roller would doubtlessly fail to Wonder about **T666** ideology? This single-cd consists of the following tunes: *Conrads In Slaughter, Execute All Christians, Smash The Cross*. To sum it up, I found eight lines within three lyrics where guys want to kill, rape, or desecrate christians in any other way. That is what I would name true sons of satan! At least they pretend to be so ultimately engaged. Well, their picture does not look that cruel, but you would better listen to *Lee's* growl then... So, three-tracker is just a pre-taste of what should come soon, and I really predict the world to discover **T666** in a short time. Their brand of brutality cannot be unnoticed. Eat them without bread! By the way, excellent self-released execution of cd, with eye-catching layout and necessary credits. They seem to be damn serious about their **Deathmetal Company T666**, P.O. Box 7666, Bondi Beach 2026, Sydney, Australia, info@t666.com. www.t666.com

TENHI

Kauan Prophecy

Prophecy are setting new standards in underground music. Yeah, it was up to **Uiver** and **HNF** to start it all, but German label has firmly taken over melancholic folk acoustic guitar music, and actually collects one band after another, naturally delivering them to the thirsty market. I truly believe they will cleanse it up to bring gifted and sophisticated formations only, and not just next and next band from the street. Wish you luck, guys. Few years later the scene will be full of hundreds of labels promoting such acoustic music?

On a more serious note, I almost hated *Hallavet*, **Tenhi's** tune from a single cd last year, which I had a chance to hear on any compilation. I do not know, maybe the context was extremely unacceptable to swallow such mournful stuff together with usual black/thrash/retro shite. I must admit that **Tenhi** must have improved/re-arranged their music, thus making me to re-shape my humble opinion towards them, and even towards that older tune, which yet appears on a debut full-length once again. *Hallavet* means *The Glacial Waters*, and that basically says it all... Guys are as never big Suomi patriots, promoting its mystique of nature and dreamy + musical visions, upcoming out of that. To be honest, **Amorphis** with *Tales...* still sound for me more Finnish, but **Tenhi** are one of the better bringers of modern times Finnish national music identity anyway.

I can just imagine the dipak design, but promo version pictures already make me wordless – they fuckin' rule and bring you with tears: music and art make a damn strong connection with **Tenhi**! Probably the strongest side of this album. Music is good either, yet with obvious vests to get bigger and more impressive. By the way, vocalist, singing in mother tongue, reminds me Latvian language (and do not ask me why). I thought Finnish has much more to do with Estonian...Ok, let me cut it – for dreamers and autumn freaks walking deep in misty forests through the rainy weather – exclusively, with walkman in the pocket – no other album to bother about. It is your music!

THANATOS

Emerging From The Netherworlds Unwelling The Wicked

One more **Hammerheart** re-release album, revealing the early 90-ies, or 1990, to be precise. Once out on German **Shark Records**, it is now enriched with extra demo tracks, and re-mastering, naturally. Yeah, it must have been sounding fairly ok back then either, since recording carries that light & clear production. Music is technical deathrash in an aggressive furious way, and yes, for these times it must have been sounding powerful enough. It is not lame even in 2000, and brings much better blend of clear sound and angry music, than many bands of today fail to find the perfection within. Just the sound is not as heavy as musicians usually choose to record these days.

Thanatos remind me old deathrash era, and records of **Death**, **Atheist**, **Sepultura**, **Slayer**, **Dark Angel...** Something extra would still be preferred as their songs sort of fall down behind the undying masterpieces left by afore-mentioned gangs. But if Dutch team would have been around with no break, I am sure they might have produced their breakthrough record until now. Yeah, guitarist/vocalist **Stephan Gebedi** has revived the team last year again, recruiting this time **Slister** drummer **Aad**, and bass player of **Houwitser Theo**. The three-piece prepare their new cd later in the year, tentatively named *Angelic Encounters*, so that should be the record which answers all questions about their might. Not to forget that **Thanatos** had one more album in 1992, which will be re-released as well by **Hammerheart** pretty soon, coming with unreleased demo again.

Aye, returning to *Emerging...* old demo tunes of 1986 and 1987 (mostly the same songs re-recorded later for the album) are not so convincing, so it is just a gift for their old time followers. I am not convinced by their 'biting' lyrics too. But in general, if you miss some old authentic deathrash – grab this 70 minutes long tribute **Thanatos** are back! **Thanatos**, c/o Stephan Gebedi, Bliersen de Haanweg 105, NL-3076 DB Rotterdam, Netherlands, sgebedi@hotmail.com, http://go.to/thanatosdeathmetal

THERGOTHON

Fhtagn-nagh Tog-Sothoth Eibon

The year was 1991. I would lie to myself claiming this is my favourite heavy doom record through years. Neither was their only full-length years ago. Actually *Disembowelment* were much better once. Or **Winter**. Who still remembers that weird trend to play as slow as possible, still remaining brutal (since death metal was the guide back then)...

Yet in spite of controversy of music, these four tracks are cult. **Thergothon** were pioneering with such mind-expanding material in 1991, and they are still highly underestimated with psychodelia like metal, or doom for devil's sake. Even if it is slow as hell, it is impossible to fall asleep during the 26 minutes of torture. Performers simply make thy doom come true! Forget about pain that musicians felt performing music so slowly (or was it easy to reach that trance like performance without hard drugs at all?) – it is worth it. *Disembowelment* at least used to include several fast breaks into their straining sound, what British **Esoteric** later started to practise too. Here is just rivers of blood and rooms of torture. Or deepest, most abandoned caves of ruined cities. There is no other way to express that brutal atmosphere such negative machinery bursts with.

Eibon have made everything this fucking old demo give the pleasurable approach possible. Still hiding an original artwork somewhere inside special dipak – sort of hard paper box (limited edition, by the way). It has a number of neatly designed artworks and even an old photo of a four-piece. Yeah, you can notice famous editors of nowadays cult – *Isten*, too... *Fhtagn...* is probably the fundamental point to start it all... Lyrics are surprisingly intelligent yet gloomy as November's sky. Worth of checking out. Love it or hate it, but just take a listen for curiosity.

THROES OF DAWN

Blinding of the Spirit Wounded Love

I have nearly hated this Finnish band for setting up the melodic synthetic plastic trend in Finland. It is not clever to hate something you do not like, it is always better just to ignore it, but well – their both previous albums were so alien to me that it has invoked that weird reaction afterwards. To a huge surprise, they even managed to step further, signing a deal with respected Italian label... what the hell, anyway. It would not stop me from despising the sissy character of their package. But well, to be honest, *Blinding of the Spirit* is not that hopeless at all, because **Throes of Dawn** has again increased the extremity level (as far as melodic dark metal is concerned). Sort of return to the debut cd, but since they are constantly improving their writing abilities, these new compositions sound much more packed, to the true sense of symphonic way of writing. The initial riff of the opener *The Last Rainbow Warrior is Dead* reminds old **Dark Funeral** (not kidding), but that is it about their links to extreme metal (knitting). Cannot hail this plastic side of things, anyway. Just take a listen to this album, or to any other modern dark metal band, and you will hear that all of them sound the same. I am sick to hear the same repetitive screamy voice or tiny guitar sound. Not convincing at all. And of course here we go with vast dominating synthesizer, which usually overgrows the metal itself. It is not metal music, if you ask me. Ha, **Dimmu Borgir** at least make it sound heavy and intense, but not **Throes of Dawn** and their likes. I am too much rooted in pure metal it seems, and this one is just an opposite. Yeah, why don't you listen to blackmetal symphonies like **Dark Funeral** instead???

THYRFING

Yaldr Galga Hammerheart

Let me ask what is the difference between black and viking metal? The latter is more epic, not so violent and has more melody. Black metal was known as bloody violent, sick and brutal. Until the era of pop culture has started... So, let me ask you now what is the difference between pop black metal and pop viking metal? If you possess this sophomore album of **Sverige** vikings, as well as heard something about such band as (oh boy, I am sick to repeat this name again) **DB**, you will definitely agree that difference is at point zero, fucking zero. And that says it all what is the basic idea of their music – to keep listeners fascinated by majestic melodies and catchy performance. But where is the viking identity then? At least on their debut it was much more evident...

Nah, I am disappointed with worn out concept, which obviously is still kept within lyrical line, but which is gone musically (in spite of some samples), yet it does not stop me from enjoying to a certain point this cd. Of course it is heard many times already, yet **Thyrfing** have guts to keep music proud and ambitious. They do not afraid to perform these poppy choruses neither sweet harmonies, as long as it fits musical concept, without turning too honeyed. Why pop viking then? Because *Yaldr Gang* has nothing to do with fiery **Enslaved** sagas, or epic **Falkenbach** monumentalism. Everything is way more easily swallowed with **Thyrfing** music, and it is a very important detail defining Valhala worshippers. Finally, I hardly can combine synth domination in music and 1000 years old tradition. Ok, this will still pretty good, but to find a deeper meaning of viking myth era, please choose bands mentioned above...

THY SERPENT

Christcrusher Radiation

Sami Tenetz should have led a real struggle to prevent anyone pointing at his brainchild as blackmetal band. He thinks that master of puppets could even register it as a dark metal band in any catalogue or state department, but it would not make **Thy Serpent** music different. If influences are more than obvious, then colleagues journalists cannot miss a chance to stick me label to it, I would add 'modern'. And it means just one thing – **Christcrusher** is a fucking awesome release of unholy melodious yet sick music. It surely has several weaker moments, eh... could be more fistful in particular, but comparing to other modern blackmetal bands, this is impressive indeed. At some (vocal) point **Thy Serpent** tend to sound as **Primordial**, whilst combination of guitar riffs and hellish synthesizer symphonies make resemblance to **Dimmu Borgir**. Finns are not as possessed with fast blastbeat; their atmospheres are composed in calmer moods and tempos.

To tell the truth, this was my first time I have finally got a grab of **Thy Serpent** music, so the back catalogue is naturally mystique (and wanted for the sake of interest) to me. But even if you know by heart their music from the past, still advise is to sink into *Christcrusher*, and experience that antichristian hate of the title track! Finally, let me make justice for my contradictions. In almost any other Finnish dark/black metal review I complain about Suomi bands being too aggressively, atmospheric and mellow. And I know which band drive them write these tunes; that is **Thy Serpent**, naturally. Though it does not mean that they are bad. Their imitators are really carelessness and incompetent. That must have been stated before calling it a day. Hail **Sami**, and keep up fighting for black metal banner to be kicked off anywhere close to **Thy Serpent**.

TORN SKIN

Mislead Blacklight

This one is slightly different from label colleagues **Fatal Blast Whip**, but as far as these are not their official full-length albums, it is not easy to judge and say this is bad and this is good. Electronics are supplied with 'live' bass and guitar, but that does not make me like them more than **FBW**. I guess it is title track to blame. Like with that other **Blacklight** cd, it is remixed by a dozen of other artists, and it is really not easy to bare the same tune for 40 minutes in a row. **Jennifer** might be a good singer, and I suppose the whole disc with her ethereal voice will be ok, but when her sweet singing appears every three seconds repeating the same line again and again, I feel rather bad. That is about drawbacks of such remix albums. Well, at least my taste has nothing enthusiastic to claim about it. It is not a waste of time, yet I reckon three different versions would be more than enough.

Again the label has brought a bunch of different industrial artists to work on this tune, including **CMJ Sanctum's Jan Carlekjev** and already mentioned **Fatal Blast Whip**, but I was impressed most of all with **Culture Whore's Dub Machine Remix**, which is both darker and punchier than original. Some versions are quite average, and tend to be inverted into a crappy mainstream radio airplay... Ah, so how to describe their music? It is industrial, neither very dark nor gloomy, but definitely moved away from money making pseudo artists. It has much more to do with underground music than many of poppy metal bands around. Last two songs are finally not **Mislead** remixes, namely *Addiction* and *Shame*. They are in the same vein, but do not have that voice which irritates at times. You cannot name them trendy industrial, as **Torn Skin** include a peculiar atmosphere within that mechanic sound. That is most notable in these closing compositions, and it is good, I tell you. Let us just wait for their upcoming debut album.

TRANSPORT LEAGUE

Satanic Panic Pavement

Such albums make me puka. Yeah, it is absolutely subjective opinion, as I hate the style they play – modern groovy macho metal/hardcore, with a definite mainstream tinge a la **Kom/Fear Factory** (hell, I even never carefully listened to a single **Kom** song, but is it really dilettantism??). The one and only plain truth that becomes as evident as the growl of **George Corpegrinder** (not in this band, hehe) is enough to feel my soul totally against every bit of this album – there are making this music with a purely commercial attitude! There is nothing that can be named as the heart of musician, of artist, of creator! Just simply stolen riffs from your *Viva* run of the day, with an aim to be next big thing, to be a new trend. Fuck this attitude, just fuck it, man. I hate this behaviour, I do not give a smallest flying fuck, if this review means no more promos from **Pavement** or the entire world! It makes no difference if the band members are just beginners, or their cymbal performer is ex **Rolling Stones** frontman (which is again obviously not the case)! 'Underground music' like this cannot be tolerated with so prostitution-like attitude.

It really makes me feel angry about music industry, it pisses me off to the bottom of my dedicated patriotic heart. I cannot take and be satisfied with a candy which is done of plastic, that masses so adorably enjoy, and certainly – leave it after they realize that it is just plainly plastic thing, which you cannot eat in any way. Yeah, sometimes it might be glued around with sugar, but it is just a trick for fools. And masses is the biggest fool I have ever witnessed in my entire life. Yes, they like it when they see big sized words in trendy magazines, they like to be led – they like to be blind and deaf! They lose their wish to choose beyond any thinking that they can do it; to search (or own forms) to satisfy their spirituality. Fuck, if you belong to that herd, go and buy filthy **Transport League**.

TROPA DE SHOCK

The Blade of the Wind

This band is named as becoming one of the most important groups from Brazil, executing pure heavy metal. They have a full-length release *Angels of eternity*, followed by four song mini cd, which I had a chance to grab. Guys are pretty much influenced by German scene and **Metalica** in self-titled instrumental, yet performers are not as monumental and impressive. I could go as far as naming **Tropa de Shock** music anachronistic since it is built on 80-ies musical clichés, yet having in mind the latter trend to scream about retro thing, I would better agree that such music has never disappeared, and it is a problem of media to create a retro discussion. Whilst you love traditional heavy metal, you might know **Brazilian** band already.

Ok, their vocalist is not convincing, I feel his voice trembling at times, and he has hard times to sing high notes. Production could be a bit more heavy, especially for that pounding mid-tempo or even hooky rhythm filled style they usually approach with. So to say, some true metal power is still not with **Tropa de Shock**. Or that is about music which could be harder, more to the core and fistful? Maybe both yes and no.

Another story is the cd design and lyrical aspect, which both are critical from my point of view. Yep, Latin American culture is different from European one, but their aim to sing about mysteries and myths of the world is pathetic. My four year old niece could write something more spectacular... A thanks to God in block characters finalise everything then. Sorry, which god? Seems like they are in the wrong direction so far... Ask the price of self-released mcd from their manager, and suggest the band to keep growing in heavier direction! So do I. **Tropa de Shock** mgmt., Katia Ferraz, Sao Paulo, Brazil, tel/fax 55118813074, tropashock@hotmail.com, klime@mandic.com.br

TWISTED TOWER DIRT

The Curse of Twisted Tower (adv.) Miskatonic Foundation

Even 55 minutes stuffed with epic metal, with a band which is going to perform in this year's **Wacken pen Air** festival. Sounds pretty familiar these last years. Leather, spikes, swords, chains and hot steel! Album cover actually reminds 80-ies records with band members depicted around the fire demon. What American amigos of metal perform is clear without any careful listen at all – metal, metal, and once again metal! Epic one, like they use to name it themselves. I must mention however, that it is heavy, and not any sissy symphony sort of, like **Saviour Machine** or their colleagues use to name their crap. Epic means heavy, as far as metal is talked about!

To really tell you, I would love TTD add even more energy and tape into their truly traditional compositions (or it is my rage copy to blame for a weaker sounding dub?). Anyways, if **Iron Maiden** is a worship worth name for you, this one must be within the collection, naturally. The older path of **Maiden**, to be more correct. Tearing such a comparison I should explain also that screamer **Tony Taylor** is nowhere as good as **Bruce**, but it would be a miracle if anybody were as good as **The Master**, so you know what to expect – a fairly strong heavy metal voice. Twin guitar parts, at times getting close to **Hammerfall** (or should I say **Helloween** and **Running Wild** instead?), with loud head-banging melodies pushed forward. In one word, feel the ancient glory ride, with this rather new (five years in existence) American band, and head your bang, ergh... bang your head that is, in the name of metal! Nothing more, nothing less. Their UK based label means the return to the roots, no wonder – it is owned by **Solstice** member(s). **Twisted Tower Dirt**, c/o Scott Waldrop, 10021 Scenic View Terrace, Vienna, VA 22182, USA, tel. (1) 2024384330, twistedtower@earthlink.net

UNDER THE MOON... I AM DYING

Dream of My Majestic Landscape...

Maggot

Alright, this must be an event in **Leao Takas** history – first ever full-length album reviewed, which has been released on vinyl exclusively! Traditional black wax, and a decent waiver picturing cover. Right, guys – this is the format I pay homage to myself, and it is not a fashion thing, you morons! Just listen to music which gets from a good turntable speakers, and you will never return to your usual cd player again. Well, enthusiasm slightly vanished when Canadian musical ode started to roll. Purely ambient tale of synthetic kind, as if painting the landscape of Canada, or Quebec for that matter? Their English on the back cover is quite poor, but the message is still there – forests and oceans as domains of solitude; beauty of mountains and lakes. I have absolutely no single doubt that Canada is so beautiful, I would love to travel there any day, but **Under The Moon...** guys do not render all that beauty, so from these minimalist synth tunes I cannot imagine neither that natural majesty, nor themselves dreaming around these fields all the night long. Other synth/ambient perfectionists at least try to invoke any motion within their clumsy realms, whilst these three guys behind the equipment simply fail to achieve anything memorable. Like if you see any weird documentary which is so boring, and has a background music which just makes you even more, completely asleep. That is the impression with this album, released on Italian label.

It consists of just four tunes, quite long for sure, but whether they are so different one from another, I would put a huge question mark about. Interest is lost in the initial part of it all, and nothing can change it in its entire course. Though it goes just for 11 or so bucks, so that is a bargain to get it. However, quality comes first, so you would better play that old **Mortalis** album again... **Under The Moon...** I'm **Dying**, c/o Glacial, c.p. 62, Valleyfield, QC, J6S 4V5, Canada, fax (1) 5142645204

UNHOLA

Inferno (adv.)

Plasmatica

The major switch of Suomi bands from Finnish **Meathook Productions** has begun. Young and ambitious record label from Göteborg has nothing to do with bewarm trend, and menacingly leans towards Northern black/death, so **Unhola** are their first Finnish four-piece to examine the market, with mighty **Moonsorrow** to join later in the year. Who still does not know my position towards an average Finnish 'blackmetal' band, should learn that most of them sound pathetic and can please if only teenagers with no clue about the metal music. I am glad that **Unhola** have another approach to melody in black/death, which is closer to early **Gehenna** I would say, with a hint or two from traditional heavy metal. Nonetheless, *Inferno* is not an album to wipe all tears around, simply the rage that it brings has a decent amount of harmony in there, created mostly by duelling guitar riffs, and deep background synth in addition. But slower or mid tempo tracks are rare, unlike Norwegian legend used to compose in their primordial age. I am not sure but Finnish black/death heritage is still with **Unhola**, and I mean much older times, circa 1992-1994, as I find similar tuning and way of performance to old

Impaled Nazarene, Bellal, Mythos... Yes, I know that they are way different when the music comes, but anyway – something bounds these bands together.

Another peculiarity – *M. Tyni's* vocal style, who uses both scream (as a more background effect actually) and dark growl, sort of *Wallachia's* kind. Indeed it works, and if you have heard *Mythos* demo '93, or *Bellal's* mcd '92, you will find out what I am talking about these special leans among them. I would even dare to name it old school of melodic blackmetal, if you get a point, since these days it is done in another, completely useless way, based on keyboard melody. *Unholy* is like an unchained beast, yet controlled by the band in a way they enjoy it. An interesting debut, and the album to add to everyone's lethal collection!

U.N.I.T Dreamdance Loud N' Proud

Traditional progressive metal, which leaves me untouched even if I tried to get into it. At some point it is fine as music to put in the background if you hate anyone babbling around, but nothing that could grab thy soul. Not minding heaviness, progression is closed to rock music on *Dreamdance*. Thus for a die-hard thrasher it turns out to mellow with quite a few tunes matching radio airplay schedule (*The Fourth Stage, Cover Girl*). Ok, being that unexperienced in progressive music I definitely leave details for experts. What can be argued against U.N.I.T's tight performance and various hints they use throughout the whole album?

But the charge that my soul is filled up is rather on a low level. In spite of these tricks, their arrangements still belong to old type of metal bands, where rhythmic do not live up real shakes to shock the listener. Music is closer to experimental one, if we take progression as its feature. Lyrical thoughts and wanderings fit in the style's concept, although I found them mostly too impersonal and naïve at some point. Of course it is not glam rock shit, but some in-depth attitude would make them more interesting.

I am not sure if real progressive metal fans get a picture out of this review, so the best thing for them to do would be checking this cd themselves, and then judge if there is any reason to believe *Ledo Takas* prog. reviews. But for others discussing over that style of metal I want to warn that this might be a disappointment, and a major one. Though for starters with no guts to swallow real heavy and intense records this might act as a good taster of metal.

U.N.I.T, c/o Christian Ljungberg, Gränden Duvan 2, SE-582 22 Linköping, Sweden, unitpower@hotmail.com

V/A Candlelight Collection III Candlelight

One of these compilations that are meant just for promotion, so – first of all it must be cheap, next – editors/reviewers like me usually have not much to do with such albums. The biggest part of songs are delivered to our postal box sooner or later, together with actual albums of these bands featured in. It is ok when most of songs are from cds not released yet, but in case of *Candlelight* number three there are just two bands like this – both Norwegian, namely *Myrskog* and *Source of Tide*. Since music of both has drawn my attention, I was so kind to all readers and browsed their worldwide web pages, just for curiosity. I mean, you will absolutely not get any info on the artists featured in these samples, at least when promotional copies are concerned. *Source of Tide* features *Lord PZ* as the vocalist, and *Myrskog* for example are rooted somewhere close to *Emperor*, I mean, both bands ended up on *Candlelight*, which could be named as coincidence, or not? Anyway, *Source of Tide* actually turned to be worse than first impression might imply. I find their metal a bit too fashioned in traditional modern atmospheric/symphonic way. Even some parts are truly masterful, and the band is highly potential to kick *Myrskog* on the other hand keep growing on me with every new listen, and I cannot wait to put hands on their debut *Deathmachine* some time very soon! Imagine a brutal death/black with thick rhythmic a la *Morbid Angel* and *Satyricon*.

On totally useless for reviewer side, here we have *Peccatum*, *Agent Steel* with their latest examples out from released albums. The same must be uttered about *Daerona*, but I have missed their first full-length, so it was a nice surprise to hear their clean goth metal, much improved since times of old material. I am left with *Christian Death*, which never were one of my favs, nor I enjoy *Peek A Boo*, the track, and *Emperor* with kind of exclusive contribution, rounding up the bill with one remix and opening song of the latest cd in live situation. Nothing more, nothing less.

V/A Massacres from the Jungle 3 American Line

Together with three newborn signed bands, which can claim already: we have a debut album out on *ALP*, this compilation features another twelve artists hungry for exposure and attention. If label name does not suggest you, nor a word *jungle* matters much, I can tell that this whole lot of death/thrash/grind comes from Central America, and even Cuba for that matter. This is the heart of music – Southern No European influences at all, everything you find here smells of exotic Brazilian bands of the eighties, with heavier or more brutal approach here and there. Production-wise this compilation will return you to the past – it really smells of 80-ies demos, which you rarely get these days. Ok, to tell you the truth, my promo copy has arrived broken, so I have missed last five performers on it, shortening the whole 70 minutes message. From what I have checked, I cannot say that any band made me jumping of excitement, but if you feel like hungry for that dirty sound and dark metal approach, you might enjoy expressive deathrash of *Cuban Medium* (really veterans of the scene), or technical playing of *Stigma* from Peru, and definitely not bad music of *Soul Path Dying* from Salvador. I have found here bad demo level

music either, but that is about compilations, which usually include tracks of various levels... Though some mediocre bands are not worth to be featured, in my humble opinion. Anyways, you will never get a better opportunity to check 15 exotic metal bands at once for measly 6\$, so inquire. Comes with contact address sheet.

V/A Megadeth – A Tribute to Megadeth Dwell

With rare exceptions taking place, this is a crime and not a tribute to one of the better heavy/speed legends! Anything performed in average inspireless vein is not a *Megadeth* cover, as music is ruined in such cases. Either bad production, crappy attitude (to perform heavy metal in death or hardcore way), stupid arrangements (keyboards, altered lead guitar parts), and especially far from ok vocals are the main disappointing things about this (first *Megadeth* ever) tribute. Label mentions *Killewitch* (a side project of *Floetsam and Jetsam*) as a tip of this cd quality, but even their vocalist fails to hail *Dave* in a proper way.

Compilation actually makes me realise how important *Mustaine's* vocal style is for the band. It means a hell lot to them, and these tribute bands usually make fine instrumental side of the job, but fail totally to make justice for *Mr. Megadeth* himself, that is – *Dave Mustaine*. Tunes are selected from almost all and every *Megadeth* album, though many capital songs are still missing, and thus it makes a picture of a tribute with quite a messy attitude. As if bands did what they found easiest to perform. When it comes to selection of bands, many of them are small and unknown, what makes a tribute worth a province league name. I am sure some bigger bands would perform it all much better. Take some previous *Dwell* tributes – *Iron Maiden*, *Celtic Frost*... Yet it is good to hear bands not just from States, but Germany, France, Austria, Australia as well...

Hardcore crap makes the biggest harm to the cd, it should be forbidden for them to take part in metal tributes! As better ones I would mention rather weird but attractive *Go to Hell* by *Darkside*, traditional metal of *Fury*, *Wasteland* and *Fatal Influence*. Pessimist brutality of *Killing Is My Business*... is acknowledged, but they obviously miss *Megadeth* feel to it. Anyways, if you die for any of *Megadeth* albums, go for tribute (16\$) as well. If not – forget it.

V/A Moonfog 2000 – A Different Perspective Moonfog

Moonfog has not resisted against millennium bug and enthusiastically named the new compilation according to all commercial rules. But here is where ordinary things end, and the usual strive for unexplored starts. It is easily acceptable – this double cd idea, even though the whole thing takes you just in less than 80 minutes ride. Booklet explains it all: the main disc features exclusive, never to be published again, material from all *Moonfog* bands, and thus for the fan it is more than great to get every single minute of such a gem. Second cd is compiled of the latest releases of this label, by *Moonfog* website users themselves, so it is sort of bonus, and great chance to check the stuff you otherwise missed in the past. With no shame I can tell that I voted in that contest either. One interesting remark is that public has chosen the *Moonfog* trademark – violent hateful tunes, instead of some experiments that *Moonfog* bands are not afraid to either. Is this conservatism, or true devoted standpoint? The answer is: both. No wonder those artists think different, and they have plenty of their reasons. As *Satyr* states in the booklet, *Moonfog* is about individual way, about being alternative to big labels. Here you are: absolutely thought provoking *DHS* *Deidhelmsgard* dive into trance techno, or electronic passage of reincarnated *Wongraven* (versus electronic *Piransoda*). It is not the urge to change your face due to new age that has come – no. It is just ways in search of new dimensions. And listener's disappointment with one or another approach is included into the picture.

Together with many others (I presume) my mind was jumping with the tradition, *Thorns*. They are much rarer and to the point now – this is a pre-taster of the debut full-length! They even recruited *Satyr* to sing on this special tune, *Darkthrone*. Anyone who misses the classic *Necrohell* production, should no longer search for the dirtiest blackmetal sound! *Gehenna*. Surprise again – there is nothing left of early years now! And the deathmetal world shall perish! *Ebon*. At first hand sounds as nothing special, especially that *Phil* puts in his shouting voice all along, but later on true fucking metal riff turns it into a groovy tune with *Satyr's* firm vocal arrangement and firm *Fantz* (a la *Bathory*) drum pattern. Some more tunes, and they might find their identity pretty soon.

So – no hesitation about this album, it is a must. *Moonfog* remains a flagship for the generations to come, and that is about them.

V/A On The Brink of Infinity Cthonic Streams

I am proud to present this unique compilation, conducted by *Dream Into Dust's* *Derek* hand. Marvellous walking on the edge – that is my reaction towards this hour of natural mysticism... The journey is not always as pleasurable as in company with nostalgic transcendence of *Empyrium* (*Die Schwäne in Schilf*), intriguing *Karsten Harme's* look behind the threshold with *Arcane Art* (*Ullumination*), or peaceful misanthropy within *Backworld* domain (*This Tree Born of Man's Affliction*). These artists as if bring the tranquillity back and forth whilst others have a more chilling and monstrous ideas. There are much more foggy, numb and anti-life compositions just on the corner, when listener is least prepared for. At one moment, when three or four tunes of dark rhythm/ass ambient take control over the horde of exclusive artists, it gets a character of unpredictability. The approach, that definitely brings you closer to the

death... However, as the slogan of this compilation suggests: journey begins at the end and ends at the beginning. Then are you sure that destructively sounding tracks are about death? And all the classical reminiscences are about life? It is intermingled, that is the question. I think when combination of both makes different bands get closer to each other, or simply to confront, for that matter, then there is something more than just a collection of separate bands. To mention some more known names, here we go with *Tony Wakeford* of *Sol Invictus*, legendary *Funerary Call*, 15 *Delights of Dionysus* (another project by *Reddick* brothers), and *Dream Into Dust* themselves. The most intriguing matter is that all the tracks are exclusive, and the album itself comes in just 1000 copies with special packaging. I think it is fair enough to realise how much sought after release it would be in a short time. And I doubt you will find it in the nearest shop. Look better in the lists of some dedicated mailorders around... A must have!

V/A The Earle Sampler Earle

Surprisingly cool 4-way split cd, unlike many lame low budget and quality releases of second rate demo bands. Aha, you can name it four demos re-released on cd either. Both labels are true. Actually these tapes were released earlier, or musicians were straightly related to small *Earle* tape label. *Tom's* decision to put it all on cd is brilliant! Instead of four high-priced demo on cd things you get one neat album, paying no more than your usual cd. I bet you have heard something about at least three of four bands featured. Before passing to the stage of musical comment I bet we should hold another decent label around. Let us believe next steps of *Earle* will be no less groundbreaking and important. *Wizzard* – a band of *Hakenmeister* aka *Teemu* (ex. *Darkwoods My Betrothed*), blending together traditional heavy and rougher majestic metal. My first acquaintance with them, even after this demo until this moment *Wizzard* have done three more albums. So, sounds amusing, fresh and fistful, except some harsh vocal lines, which are a bit far from being refreshing. *Opener* and title tune *I Am The King* is doubtlessly the best. *Wizzard*, Box 216, 40101 Jyväskylä, Finland, wizzard66@hotmail.com, www.sicom.fi/eejee/wizzard

Gravferd – *Norga* horde, much talked about lately. In the underground of course, yet they are about to break-through with a debut album nowadays. Demo number two sounds pretty unusual, even Norwegian spirit is fully displayed there. I dare to compare them with *Wallachia*, but do not take it as a musical comparison. They are pretty different. I mean that charge which hides in their heads: both bands have some innovative ideas, discovered under bm banner, and both must work on them to fully realise it with further endeavours. *Gravferd* suffer from lack of tightness within the performance as well as from bad recording, but anyway – this demo tends to remain a cult with the years to come. Just check out how monstrously their vocalist sounds, and trust me, *Gravferd*, c/o Lars C. Larsen, Agmund Bolts vei 3, 0664 Oslo, Norway

Raven – Finnish majestic project, where symphonic arrangements are dominant towards distorted, acoustic and bass guitars. Vocally it is balladised with grim dark poetry and morbid narration. It is not far from ambient music too, or very atmospheric metal, but I would not risk closing them in any box. Band does not need any, nor it can be missed for another *Monumentum* incarnation. Something interesting for sure, yet one full tune and outro is not enough to make a splendid opinion. Contact *Raven* through *Earle Productions*.

Darkwoods My Betrothed – not much of a comment indeed, except that it is their second demo tape before shaking dark metal world with three records, containing several early versions of *Heirs of The Northstar* songs. Necessary in collections of black metal kids. *Darkwoods My Betrothed*, P.O. Box 30, 82500 Kitee, Finland

V/A This is Bad Taste vol. 3 Bad Taste

This time completely alternative experience for my stereotypical taste, more or less unfriendly with something what is at least an inch closer to hardcore and punkrock side of things. The case is that *Bad Taste* lives with these styles, currently establishing itself as a really strong and potential label with various tour offers for their bands, and I suppose not bad distribution in specific circles. Yeah, I quickly noticed that distribution companies for each country are rather different from these you usually find on metal records. It says it all about the styles they are dealing with. Well, the experience went successfully. In spite of the bigger part of their roster is not what I could name as pleasurable listen (it is basically about traditional punkrock and hc teams), yet to a decent extent *Bad Taste* is knocking at wider musical chamber as well. To start the wondering with, let me introduce *Langhorns* – Swedish performers of retro music you could easily refer to your parents' collection. To describe it shortly is not easy, yet imagine moody Spanish temperament expressed by classical guitar and accompanying rock gang. Damn, it is really laid back and groovy music, for truly aesthetic listener! They have two albums out, and their recent video is quite frequently spinned by *MTV* and other stations. Nothing to do with usual punk indeed...

Next I hear several sweet bands jumping around simple melodic rock (or is it really melodic punk?), namely *Last Days of April*, All Systems Go, *Astream*. They could easily end up on TV channel at a daytime either. Not that music was of my appreciation, but technically it is no worse than these important oddities offer you to consume through telly... I think with *Bad Taste's* targeted politics all three bands can go much further than usual underground. And last but not least I was stuck by female rage of *Everyday Madness* (since split) vocalist, there is something to learn for all screamers around, hah... Would you like her

to be your girlfriend? Aye, some other bands participating are *Within Reach*, *Satanic Surfers*, *Trigger Happy*, *Intensity*, *Turtlehead*, *Hard-Ons* and so on. Should be on sale for cd-single price.

V/A A tribute to Master's Hammer Redblack

Tricky! It was announced as a set of totally improvised versions of occult black metal legend's compositions, still shining through the thick layer of the past black metal decade. Damn, whenever far from that dark spiritual spot *Franta & Co.* are now, their bequest is forever inked in the hearts of blackmetal people, and nobody – really no one can deny the influence that *Ritual*, *The Filenicky Okultista*, as well as early demos have made for entire generation. Even for the whole range of Czech metal scene, that has grown on their music as well. This tribute simply proves that. Even in the hearts of doom / atmospheric / grind (!) / avantgarde (!) bands the rebellious spirit is alive!

Another compliment for this tribute is simple as the action itself – listening to it, I strive for old *Master's Hammer* records, immediately! Young and leading Czech bands force to sit comfortably and follow the brilliance of both albums, enriched with Czech language, step by step... So, that entertaining matter... Yeah, quite a few versions have a much rockier feel to them, especially when the rhythm is concerned, and at times it is a bit confusing, having in mind how important the rhythm always was for *Master's Hammer*. Thus rhythmically I enjoyed *Endless Promises*, *Fleshless*, or *Silent Stream of Godless Eglu* tunes less than others. But when it comes to improvisation, fuck, almost all the bands have contributed to make the whole pack one kind of creative extravaganza, that you are not bored to listen, and actually can admit their own styling subtleties matching these songs. I am impressed, and I must publicly admit that. The greatest cover is done by always charming *Forgotten Silence*, but damn – this time they have accomplished their best composition ever, making *Utök* a blend of aggression, fatality and improvisation. These three parts go one after another, making the tune more and more impressive until the end... Yes, I could go on for another half page how perfectly *Hanka's* voice suits *Master's* guitar solo (that is *Forgotten Silence* own innovation), and however near that smooth turn into jazzy improvisation later on in the song, which finally ends with the same vocal pattern repeated... One of the most impressive songs I have heard lately, in general!!! So, take a listen to *Sad Hammer*, *Entrails*, *Insanita*, *Ingrowing*, *Dissolving of Prodigy*, *Asmodeus* and few others' versions as well – if you are a *Master's Hammer* worshipper! This tribute rules!

VADER Litany Metal Blade

Vader!!! This must say it all Death metal purveyors. Leaders of the genre. The foursome to get inspiration from. The close to perfect metal machine. They have nothing to prove anymore, to anyone: neither media, nor critics, nor fans. But with every new album guys as if start it all anew, and upcome with no less rage or intensity that any of their previous releases have. That is why I start to use of *Peter's* peculiar singing style, approved since *De Profundis*. I sort of guys you used to it after all these years.

Well, I think Polish dudes have stuck to the style of short in your face tracks, and manage to clock in here 11 smashers in all, in less than 31 minutes! This account includes one remake from *The Ultimate Incantation* album (I think for the second time already?). Anyway, *The Final Massacre* sounds as if it was written in a period of *Litany* sessions, once again proving that *Vader* are as good as they have always been. Listening through the set is not that easy to realize that one tune is over and the next bursts in its peak! No fillers, no experiments (unlike *Kingdom* mcd) – music which is purely and sincerely devoted to the death metal roots. The only alliance with previous mcd is a multimedia video track of *Cold Demons*, but only on limited edition digipak. Ten years of astonishing musicianship make them to be as precise with separate nuances that flow from music as possible. And concerning the new label that *Vader* are signed now, I am sure it means the deserved tribute they have not been receiving in the couple of past years. Just check out the occult and obscure looking inlay covers with masterful colours, lights, effects. That is about their concept gone visual way, if you ask me! Most of lyrics are traditionally written by *Pavel Frelik*, old time supporter of the band. Nothing else to add – this one is an ultimate must. *Vader mgmt.*, Mariusz Kmielek, P.O. Box 991, 10-587 Olaszyn 10, Poland, tel./fax (48) 895351982, kmielek@frik05.onet.pl

VANITY Enslaved Euphonious

Rooted in deathrash, the model of this Greek band is yet styled out around the classic hellenish metal of the nineties, which probably makes them sound more interesting than they were at a point of *Fatal Submission* demo, in 1994. Me was not that lucky guy to check it out back then, but I am sure it was something deathrash based. This album is yet their sophomore release, sort of award thing for so long time spent in the depths... Here we go with a thicker approach, mostly thanks to a tip promoted by *Nightfall* in the beginning of this decade. No, *Vanity* is not that sort of doomy band, entire effort flows in a mid tempo, which gets faster every now and then. That is of their initial vision to be metal, I suppose. But otherwise it is oh so Greek to the core, and no one is going to deny that, really. To approve guys, *M.V. Daotho* had nothing to do with production of *Enslaved*. So it is not just sound, it is more about music. Well, on one hand it seems so many

times heard, but whilst you ever enjoyed the ethereal melodic waves flowing from Southern Europe, you will doubtfully love this slab, since it is composed with heart and feel. Dark metal, or dark/death suits it pretty well, to name this firmly thought out musical concept of dragonic energy and that mist it is wrapped up with. Forget about virtuosic instrumentalism though, the point is not here. I doubt **Vaniry** have ever dreamt to become the metal band with technical as hell approach. Just at the point it does not harm your ears, that is enough for this styling.

I wonder though about their keyboard player **Michael's** position, since he puts his instrument here and there, but does not sound somehow special. Thus where is a point to keep another band member, since synth can be done in the studio with less effort, and more imaginative guy? Though it is just me complaining. Not much of a deal, then, what makes me rush everyone to obtain a copy of *Enslaved*. **Vaniry**, c/o Costas Hilarides, Ionias 13 B, Nikea, 18450 Piraeus, Greece

YOMITORY Redemption Fades

Uhh, so powerful and kicking death metal! Swedish way – the purest dm album of the last three years! Forget all melodious wimps and pretenders to the throne, and even if you are bored with 90-ies **Grave** or **Necrophobic** material, get a slab of **Yomitory** music! Me was rather sceptic either, until I have heard *Redemption*. Scepticism was based on rather limited excitement concerning their debut album, which I have actually not heard, but people speak it was not astonishing at all. No idea about the real truth, their 7"ep in 1993 was brilliant. And such is the newest material. Try to recollect legendary since gone Swedish bands like **Crematory**, **God Macabre** and pleiad of less known, and realise that the same sound and catchiness is revived with *Redemption*. I dare say that **Yomitory** have managed to put it even tighter, executing quite complex structures, and in such a manner being so welcomed to any death metal ears. Probably *Inverted* were close to that perfection on debut cd, but **Yomitory** simply blow them away with excellent production, brutal grunt of *Juss!*, no waste of time for unnecessary drag outs, and the same high quality music throughout eight low-tuned songs. They were so kind to remind all sissy bands and fans about one of the better Swedish death outfit **God Macabre** with their cover *Ashe's Of Mourning Life*, of their only 1993's album *The Winterlong*... No doubt that was the best tune of dudes, and it perfectly does with angry **Yomitory** mood. Well, if you fail to get a limited 1000 copies dipak edition, ask at least for a normal cd package!!! They rule. **Yomitory**, c/o Urban Gustafsson, Grossbolsgratan 2B, S-667 30 Forshaga, Sweden, yomitory@hotmail.com, http://listen.tu/yomitory

WARLOGHE The first possession Drakker

Not the next Finnish revelation or groundbreaking earth-quaking release, but definitely a huge kick in the "romantic bm" areas of their contemporaries. Honestly executed pure 90-ies black metal with as raw sound and as much of dis-

torion that **Darkthrone** could envy. **Gorgoroth** maybe not. Actually me is not 100% positive about the recording, and even for some mystical reason I dig most of the drum sound, but snare sounds pretty funny. So thin and tin can like that it is worse than your average grindcore band. At least such recording creates an authentic feeling about playing to satisfy the satanic bm needs both band members suppose to live for. Which one is more evil though – guitarist/vocalist **Eori Torih Tyrannos** or drummer **Morath Warlock**? I believe it is impossible to answer... Actually I am pretty sick of all that bullshit about how untrue others and how true they are... Music counts fucking whatsoever! Yes indeed **Warloghe** are so much better than thousands of crappy "black metal" bands, and it is clear without saying they forgot all hints of beauty. But please do not try to prove me that all big bands are shit and craving for money only. It is pathetic to act this way. Back to **Warloghe**, they have definitely learnt to write more memorable lines after 7" ep which was yet melodic (!) black (and much worse indeed). So, what were your roots boys? Good turn after that mediocre ep, and hopefully it is just the start for a duo. For all these freaks still playing on and on *A Blaze In The Northern Sky*... It is not anything cult like that, but the spirit is at least as imposing as one could imagine. I wonder though what the media reaction on them were if **Warloghe** had taken **Darkthrone** place back in 90-ies to release a cd via death/doom metal label... I mean it is so amateurish sounding that it were a unique chance for *Hammy*... Ah, 1991...

WILLOW WISP Delusion of Grandeur (A Gathering of Horrors) Full Moon

These guys are so pissed about nobody understanding (as it seems to them) their music and not accepting their weird chaotic blend of different styles. Fuck. I would better listen to pure blackmetal, or some good old gothic rock, than such a weak sounding mix of both. I am not as radical to name them faggots (even I do not like their image and make-up at all), I have no wish to state they do not know their goals with music; but man – I do not like this album at all! Isn't it a good reason to describe why and then to be hated by the band members? I suppose, yes. Fuck their industrial/electronic/hardcore elements – it has nothing to do with the rest, at least in a way **Willow Wisp** perform it. Just a bad laugh on their effort to be blackmetal – even if I were a COF fan, this is just a pathetic poor copy with the most boring riffs ever written. Ok, ok, gloat lamentations sound the best off the pack, worth of listening, finally, it is not as gothic as one imagines though, combining it with melodious music, and some ambient parts, like on the closing *Time: A Journey to Failure*. Nothing encouraging about the artwork, images inside and lyrics either. They are simply not worked out. So me thinks there is one chance for **Willow Wisp** – not to drop their progressive feel to music, but definitely kick off anything else but cold gothic metal. That might work then. But not now – 67 minutes are way too much to stand this utterly boring album. **Willow Wisp**, P.O. Box 9352, North Hollywood, CA 91609, USA, tel. (1) 8183774571, wwisp@aol.com, www.willowwisp.com

WINDIR Antor Head Not Found

Ummmm. I have missed **Valfar's** debut *Soknadrar* two years ago, but have his demo in the collection. Something unique it is not, but something extremely brilliant it is! I mean, this sophomore full-length of plain folkly black metal with a hauntingly Norse atmosphere. You got it here – a typical Nordic riffing, approved *Grighealen* sound, full range skiffs (that is – screams), but here we also go into folkloric area – harmonious chorus-like singing, emotional yet stinging melodies launching between the raging hateful parts, as well as enchanting traditional soundlines. Now let me say why it is a way different from, err, let us say, **Isengard** and **Kampfarr**. **Valfar** does not exclude major melodies off the pack, especially when it comes to faster riffing; nor **Windir** music is extra aggressive. Rather on the contrary – many hymnic melodies tend to have something from lyrical (or how to name it) metal bands, or traditional metal? Well, probably folk music has got another shape, that I am a bit limited to realise and name it. Guitar solos have that echo effect, so well known from gothic metal/rock and beyond *Paradise Lost*, *Nightingale*. A bit funny is **Windir** lyrical subject, mostly some of it. Like *Antor ein vindir* tells a story of a brave warrior who killed a local *Gjovmor* just because the latter wanted some extra taxes from poor people to celebrate the christmas. What do you think – **Antor** and his crew have celebrated the damn 'festival', that is – christmas, after all. **Valfar** could write something like *winter solstice* or what... And his picture with a tractor in the background oh so reminds a village where my grandma lives... Hehe, black metallers, who are still reading this – get **Antor** as soon as possible, simply because it is the first rate Norwegian black metal, performed with soul and belief of the native land's traditions and legends. **Windir**, Box 429, N-5801 Sogndal, Norway

WUTHERING HEIGHTS Within Sensory

Remember that eery *Kate Bush* song? Or at least its cover done by **Ataraxia**? Well, should know that melodramatic flick by no means, but take notice that Danish rockers are much heavier and groovier than that, but the magic is still with them, like the band name suggests. They have been around heavy music for quite a while, inlay photos reveal their solid age (comparing to the most of teenage musicians, or "musicians" who fail to take the metal world by storm, with the help of pseudo labels anarchy). It seems to me that Danish *Intramental* mgmt. have intensified its activities, since it is their second promoted band (after **Behind The Curtain**) signed to **Sensory**. Sort of Scandinavian invasion into the lands of the dollar? Ok, no more belles-lettres, time to tell you that **Wuthering Heights** play a diverse metal music, including elements of speed, heavy, power and progressive metal into one ball of running force. If it sounds a bit too much for one record, then I suggest to really get into their music, which needs

time, as any other album dealing with progressive character. They have no troubles upbringing the epic feel to it, but they can easily turn into folk stream of sounds, with addition of session flutist and violinist. It is definitely their plus, not minus. They have also recruited a pretty famous progressive metal singer **Kristian "Krille" Andren** (**Tad Morose**, **Memento Mori**, **Fifth Reason**) to take over lead vocals, so the innovative compositions are firmly led by majestic and strong voice. I feel so fine about their record since it has enough of power, unlike other newcomers lack of, in progressive music. Probably more metal, more easily understood, but also more impressive, in my opinion. Do not pass by the fantasy type of artwork by **Kristian Wähler**, aka **Necrotora**, strange that press sheet praises him just for the fantasy art he has done in the past... he is much more evil in general, hahe... Ok, nothing to complain about – good album! **Wuthering Heights**, wuthering@intramental.com, http://intramental.com/wuthering

THE ZEPHYR Impure & Divine American Line

One of a few Mexican bands performing melodic death (instead of grind/gore). And it sounds ok, despite the exploited genre in general. Cannot claim it is the revelation album of 1999, but it sounds fairly good. I am especially amused by their acoustic influences not only between, but also within the actual songs. And it sounds different from **Dark Tranquillity** and co. too, even musical spirit is around these melodic spheres. To my surprise, vocalist uses a high prolonged scream in one or two occasions what is damn good looking too. He just needs to assure the rest of **The Zephyr** crew to use this refreshing element much more often. I am sure it would work just fine!

The Zephyr still has a major trouble – how to make the sound heavier. Let us face it – that is not new in melodic death genre, and if you dedicate yourself to be harmonious, the metal heaviness is never kept as powerful as brutal or power bands manage to maintain. Unless you turn slightly groovy (like **Gardenia**). So, zephyrians are not an exception from this tendency, invoking me to encourage them to produce next material with a heavier production, the least. Though I do not share label's opinion this slab is anyhow influenced by black metal. Soreamy voice is not enough, especially when the rest just breathe of gothenburgish death. I know that this description might scare some people away (myself including, if I had not heard music), but suggestion still remains to check this debut cd out, especially for that funny price that **American Line** offers (12\$). It is but a bargain, concerning the original death metal that is performed. Features **Anarchus** bass player **Ciro Gutierrez**. **The Zephyr**, Ciro Gutierrez, P.O. Box 86-275, CP 14391, Mexico, D.F., Mexico, thezephyr@hotmail.com, www.angelfire.com/n/zephyr

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This is a phrase from Penitent official web page, and it plainly explains that to feature them was one of my ultimate wishes ever since I have heard *Melancholia*, their first full-length effort. But either bad postal service or any other reason caused my fail to get the interview answered from the band earlier. It is finally accomplished, with a help of cool contributor Yury Arkadin. Both him and me have made the questionnaire you will find below, and Karsten has kindly answered it on 26th of November 1999. It was about time when *Roses By Chaos Spawned*, their new album, was released on German *Dark Vinyl Records*.

Going through features of this issue, one can clearly notice that I am not that enthused to re-print biographies of the artists, but well, there always are exceptions, and this time it is Penitent, since their story looks rather rich and intriguing for me... Take notice, that me is not the author of it.

It all started in 1994, when Karsten Hamre, the founder and the mastermind of Penitent, was obsessed by the idea of combining his poetry with the music, in order to create more powerful atmosphere than one could get by only reading his poems. These poems, emanated from the shadowside of life, reflected his thoughts and visions, which came from deep within the soul and mind. They dealt with themes and topics such as life and death, pain and torture, sorrow and depression. Acclaimed as *mad poetry*, all of them indeed had deep sense, however unreachable to an average human being. It is obvious that the music also should be not a kind of regular music, but a kind of musical Art, growing on people and becoming something special to each and one of us, in our own way. And Karsten Hamre fully succeeded his goal by creating such unique musical act, recognized as Penitent. Not long after the creation, *Asbjørn Log* joined the band. Together they made the material for the band's first and only demo tape, which was recorded at *Eternal Damnation* studio and released in March 1995. This demo received very good response, and as the result the band got offers from the several labels, from which the well-known *Cold Meat Industry* was chosen. The band's debut album *Melancholia* was released in 1996. It was the album of sad and sombre, but majestic synth music, which together with the spoken poetry awoke the most dark and depressive feelings. During the summer of 1996 Penitent though left *Cold Meat Industry*, with a bitter taste in the mouth. It was described many times in the specialized press, anyway. In August 1996 Penitent signed with *Draenor Productions*, a division of *Napalm Records* for two albums. During November Karsten Hamre spent his time at *Sans & Samling* studio and recorded the second album *The Beauty Of Pain*, which represented a drastic step forward for the band. The synth sounds were largely replaced by the piano, and the songwriting reached an utterly spellbinding level of development. Most of the music was written by *Asbjørn Log*, except the final track which was written by *Karsten Hamre*, as well as all the poems were written by him too. Not everyone could see the beauty that walks alone with darkness, a beauty that

Build, Conquer and Destroy!



What kind of emotions guide us when we feel the loss of hope and the whole life seems to be nothing but a mournful bridge over a river of tears? One got to live his life, and bear all the pain and sorrows, sadness and depression. Fatal for the majority, these dark emotions may become the pleasure for the others and give them power to survive. The punishment will come and everybody will be punished one way or another. To await or to undergo this punishment is to be a PENITENT.

is both attractive and fascinating in a thousand different ways. The title is a metaphor, a way of underlining a deeper meaning, which here is used to illustrate that pain can be beautiful. One has to see it as a unity and not as two separate words. Beauty can be seen as well as experienced, in the changes of autumn, when the leaves slowly change colour and fall from the branches. Nature holds many beauties, but beauty can also be harsh and in that way it often manifests itself through sorrow, grief, depression and pain. The magical and mystical atmosphere of Norwegian nature always had an enormous influence on Karsten, and was the source of inspiration to most of his works. *The Beauty Of Pain* was released in February 1997 and there is absolutely no doubt that this work of Neo-Classical Art had already become a real classic of our times. At about this time *Asbjørn Log* left the band, and Karsten became the sole member of Penitent again. In the time hereafter *Melancholia* was re-released by the German label *Prophecy Productions* both on cd and picture lp. They came with different artwork and the cd edition had 3 bonus tracks, which were taken from the debut demo of the band. New compositions were made and in late April 1997 Karsten Hamre started to record the third album. It has been entitled *As Life Fades Away* and was finally released in January 1998. On this album, which consists of six instrumental tracks, the music of Penitent develops in mostly classical direction, heavily influenced by the late Baroque period, when court/chamber music was at its height of popularity. During the second half of 1997 some instrumental remixes, three taken from *Melancholia* and three from *The Beauty Of Pain* were recorded along with two previously unreleased tracks. They were planned to be released as a split tape with *Arcane Art*, which is

another project of Karsten, but the remixes has remained unreleased. In October 1998 he decided to sign the contracts offered to him from *Dark Vinyl Records*, for new album releases for both Penitent and *Arcane Art*, via their *Memento Mori* sublabel. On the 12th of January 1999 Karsten entered *Mansion Studio* at his native Stavanger to record the *Roses by Chaos Spawned*. The recording session was completed when the album was finished and mastered on January 22nd 1999. This time the vocal parts were done not by the author of the poems Karsten Hamre, but by the new vocalist Mark Andrew Goldfine of *Amidst The Leaves and Alone With Blades* whose expressive manner of performance fitted the music very well. Beside him, there is a guest vocal appearance by *Ellen White* on *A Bleeding Heart Of Desire*. The music on this album is beautiful, sublime and mournful. In general it is prevailed by the variety of orchestral samples, but also piano and organ are taking the leading roles in several compositions, just like it was on *The Beauty Of Pain*, yet on the track *In Mortal Fear* one can even hear the drums similar to those which were used on the debut. With this new Penitent work Karsten proves one more time that he is a real artist, for whom the Art is the only and the true way to express the deepness of the emotions he carries inside. Art is a struggle to penetrate as deep as possible into one's soul, and when performing your chosen form of Art you have to work hard to transform your emotions into an everlasting vision, which reflects the true atmosphere of you, your soul and your own personality...

- Penitent's first release was painfully emotional and depressing, the second release just the same, the third more in a lighter vein and with a greater sense of optimism, and the most recent

Penitent appears to be a concatenation of the first and third Penitent releases, only with a greater maturity and sense of balance. Have these changes corresponded in any way to the growth of your own character as a musician - your outlook on life - or were they purely coincidental and impromptu decisions. Spur of the moment?

- I would say that the changes in music is a result of different elements, some being my own spiritual growth (the growth and development of my character), my experiences and thereby views on life. Nevertheless, it is rather impossible to pinpoint why things have changed like they have. Though the music develops as you yourself develop both as a human being and musician, and also how you develop spiritually. All is connected to one another, as they are all elements of who you are. It is not that I consciously focus on all this when creating music; it happens by itself. I always try to do what feels right to do, and to have the right gut-feeling about what I do is most important to me as an artist.

- *Melancholia* was recorded in 3 days time. Was it mixed and mastered so quickly too? Maybe it is your phenomenon to work so professionally, or synth music is not that difficult to put on tapes perfectly? What about next sessions? You managed to finish both Penitent's latest album *Roses by Chaos Spawned* and *Arcane Art's* full length *The Cursed Artist* in 10 days. You feel it was enough of time to make everything in a descent way?

- *Melancholia* was recorded and mixed in 3 days. The mastering was done the day thereafter. The reason why it has not taken a long time to record the Penitent albums is that most of the music has been prepared and arranged beforehand, with the use of midi. This way all you need is to bring the midi files to the studio and find the right sampled instruments to use there. It is the beauty of digital recording. The recording for *The Beauty Of Pain* took about 5 days, while *As Life Fades Away* was not recorded all at once, just one day here, one day there, but I did not use more than 5 days all in all for that either. We spent around 6 days to record the latest Penitent album, and some material for the *Arcane Art* debut was recorded during the remaining 4 days of that studio session, though in the time thereafter we decided that some songs were not good enough, so we did more recordings after that. The debut album was finalized in August this year (1999 - ed.). I am satisfied with the outcome of the albums and I feel enough time were spent in the studio. I do not see any reason for using 2 weeks in a studio, if all you need is one. Do you?

- Of course not. A lot of veterans of the gothic scene, in my experience, consider the groups that are releasing material today to be pale shadows of what many would consider to be the masters of many years back, such as *Sisters of Mercy*, *Joy Division*, *Fields of the Nephilim*, etc. What do you think about this? Is the gothic area of music dying or flourishing? And, finally, could Penitent be classified as gothic music, in your opinion?

- In one way one could classify Penitent as gothic, as the music of Penitent does express much of the feelings and atmos-

pheres found in gothic music. I would not say that gothic bands of today are pale shadows of bands from the past, though there are indeed some bands around who it seem like are trying to sound like the old 'masters' of gothic music. The gothic scene should not be seen as one separate scene I think, as it more or less goes hand in hand with the darkwave scene, and I cannot say that either of them is dying. They are rather flourishing.

- You dropped away Norwegian lyrics after the debut album. Maybe it was a mistake you did with *Melancholia*, and it will never appear again? Or you simply have worked your English better, and now want everyone to understand your thoughts?

- The use of Norwegian lyrics on *Melancholia* was not a mistake at all, and at the moment I have no plans to include Norwegian lyrics again, but I will not say it will never happen again. I might change my mind about it, or simply feel that it will be right to have Norwegian lyrics instead of English ones on one or more songs. As for now I feel it works best with English lyrics, and I always do what I feel is right for me.

- Explain the story behind the change of vocalist for Penitent. How did you meet Mr. Goldfine and how has the response been so far to the new vocal direction? Could you share the emotions that music of *Amidst the Leafs & Alone With Blades* put on you? Do you think Mark Andrew has done it in a unique way, for Penitent?

- I do not really remember where I met Mr. Goldfine for the first time, but I met him a couple of years ago. Already at that time we were talking about a possible co-operation, but unfortunately nothing happened in the beginning. It was therefore good that we finally managed to do something together when it was time for the recording of the 4th *Penitent* album. We were very satisfied with the final result of the recording, and it was therefore great to hear that people really liked the new vocal approach. The response has been very good so far. In fact, as far as I know only one magazine wrote a really negative piece on the album, but that does not really bother me that much as one can never expect everyone to like what you do.

I have not heard the latest offerings from *Alone With Blades*, but I did like what I have heard. I am in no way influenced by their music, and since I have not listened that much to their music, I cannot say it has had any affect on me. If Mark has done the vocals in a unique way it is up to others to decide really, but I am more than satisfied with what he has done. It was a good thing for *Penitent* to get him on the vocals; it added a new element to the band.

- It was said that co-operation with him will for sure continue. Does that mean Mr. Goldfine is a full-time band member, or you will better work just during recording sessions?

- Mr. Goldfine is indeed a full-time member of *Penitent*, and he will not only do the vocals in the future, but also contribute to the musical parts too.

- Could you tell us about Ellen White which sings on *A Bleeding Heart of Desire*, exclusive song for the vinyl edition of *Roses by Chaos Spawned*?

- Well, *A Bleeding Heart of Desire* was meant as an exclusive song for the vinyl

edition, but when the label received the master and heard the song they thought the song was too good to only be on a limited edition lp, and I agreed with them on that. Therefore, you will find the song on the cd, though there is an exclusive song on the lp named *A Cathedral for The Silent dead*. There is not too much to say about Ellen's vocal appearance on that song, other than the fact that her vocals

adds a new element to *Penitent*.

- Let's talk about some of your other active projects. I have heard the Arcane Art mlp on *Prophecy Productions* and was generally impressed. It was Lord Vendictus or F. Fugelli who did the vocals, or you had yet another vocalist back then? There is very little information that comes with the picture disc.

- The material on the debut album *The Cursed Artist* is much in the same style as the 10" picture lp disc. As that mini album never were released on cd we chose to include two of the songs from the original recording of it, and to rerecord two others with new vocals. Beside that there are 3 new tracks. Strangely enough, as many probably will say, we chose to do it this way, even though that the album tracks then will present 3 different vocalists (on separate tracks). One of the vocalists is Fredrik Fugelli, who was the first *Arcane Art* vocalist, on two of the tracks there is Lord Vendictus on guest vocals, and the last vocalist featured is Brynhild.

- How could you determine *The Cursed Artist* as opposed to *Penitent* symphonies?

- The most evident difference lies in the arrangements and instrumentation of the songs, and the fact that we experiment more with the use of effects in *Arcane Art*.

- How does *Veiled Allusions* differ from your other bands?

- *Veiled Allusions* is just a project I do

now and then. It is far more experimental in sound and style. There are elements from industrial, dark ambient etc. to be found in the music. It is not easy to classify the music of *Veiled Allusions*, so one better listen and judge by oneself.

- Has *Penitent* or any of your other projects performed live as of yet?

- Sadly enough we have not had the chance, nor have anyone been interested

- The reaction has been good I would say, but due to some printing errors I trashed most of the printed books. That is also why I have re-edited the manuscript, removing some and adding other poems. It is uncertain when and if the re-edited manuscript is going to be released, but I hope it will. I have gotten some interest for possible release, but nothing concrete, so if anyone would like to publish

enough in having *Penitent* or *Arcane Art* to play live at their arrangement. I certainly hope that will change now that the debut full length of *Arcane Art* is to be released (late November 1999). If there should be any tour/concert organizers out there, no matter where in the world, we are open to any serious offer.

- In your poetry book, *Essence of Soul*, you sometimes refer to yourself as a philosopher. What does philosophy actually mean to you? Is there some particular philosopher who has influenced you greatly, or have you taken the Cartesian stance of 'the less solidarity, the purer one's train of thought'?

- Philosophy to me is more about finding your own ways through life, and making up your own mind about various matters. Your interpretation of what is written in *The Essence of Soul* is not necessarily what I had in mind when writing. On the other hand it is good that you have your own interpretation, as I think people should find their own meaning, or search and find what the text/poem represent to them and not the author. I just write in order to put words to my thoughts and feelings, and at times like when releasing them I decide to share my thoughts and visions with other people. Just remember, it is what it represents to you that really matter.

- How has the reaction been to your publication of poetry? Do you plan to compile another work sometime again?

it and are serious about it they are welcome to contact me with an offer.

- Is there a specific poet or poets that you admire? The first *Penitent* album had a track dedicated to *Marquis de Sade*. Can you describe what this 18th century French writer means to you, and how he can be related to the art of *Penitent*?

- It is merely the essence of the piece used on *Melancholia* that caught my interest, and then on a personal level one might say. Basically it deals with the freedom of speech, or more correctly the oh-so-often lack of it. I do admire poets like Shakespeare, Dante, E.A. Poe, Shelley, Yeats as well as Jim Morrison, etc.

- Antichristian attitude was/is a natural thing for *Penitent*? What about satanic image (of others), acts of violence, church burnings, satanic literature - it received/receives your support or attention somehow?

- To say that *Penitent* as a band/act has an anti-christian attitude would not be completely correct, but that I personally have expressed such an attitude is right. I do not believe in the christian dogmas and I view that religion as a religion for sheep, but then again I feel that all organized religions are for people who do not have the ability to think for themselves and live their own lives based on their own thoughts and visions about this world. Organized religion is nothing for me. I prefer to make up my own mind about things, I certainly do not need anyone else to tell me how I shall live my life. I believe in full

freedom of speech no matter what, as every man and woman are entitled to express their own thoughts. You do not need to agree with what people stand for but they should have the right to express how they feel about certain matters. I believe it was *Voltaire* who said it in a good way that *I disagree with what you are saying, but until my death I will defend your right to say it*. I am interested in literature of various kinds, be it satanic, occult, poetry etc. As for acts of violence and church burnings it is not anything I would say I support. I think those are quite useless things. You do not get rid off christianity by burning the churches or killing the priests. One has to act in a more intelligent way than that, if one is to be taken serious, and if you want people to really listen to what you have to say, violence and vandalism will not open the eyes of people in a good way.

- Ever thought about a soundtrack to any movie? What about your own videos you were making for so long time, and finally it is out? Some comment? What visual pictures you included, or is it possible to describe them at all?

- The short films I were working on has been released, but not spread enough. The short films are works of art and are not to be explained. I do not believe in explaining every aspect of an artistic creation, it is to be experienced. I would like to create music for a movie soundtrack, just as I wish to create music for more short films. That is also why I am constantly seeking for independent film artists who would be interested in a co-operation. Anyone into making art movies or short movies are hereby encouraged to get in touch.

- I understand you sometimes help bands and labels as a freelance photographer for venues. What concert would you recollect has been your most exciting experience? And what band would you like to see and further aid in the future with your photography? I personally enjoy your contributions to Gehenna *The Second Spell* booklet very much.

- The concerts I remember as the most exciting experiences is Rammstein (1998 in Budapest), W.A.S.P. (at Rockefeller, Oslo 1992), Iron Maiden & Anthrax (Drammen 1990). Bands/artists I would like to see are Pink Floyd, U2, King Diamond, J.M.Jarre, and most of all Devil Doll! When it comes to photography I prefer to work with bands that has an artistic approach as well as a clear mind on how they picture their art and thereby presentation of it.

- How do you see the incorporation of technology into music today, the prevalence of techno-music, programmed drumming, mechanized rhythms, etc.? What are your views of bands that have changed their image and sound radically such as Ulver, Arcturus, Dødheimsgard and Fleurety? This seems to violate a lot of the ultra-conservatism inside the circles of the metal underground, which I realize you have interest in.

- Let me first say that I have a great respect for bands and artists who are

willing to revitalize and develop their musical style by incorporating new elements. They have my utter respect, though far from everyone manage to do it in a good way. I guess Arcturus as a band as well as Kovenant are examples on how it can be done, and then turn out good. Though I am not that amazed of how the Ulver *The Marriage...* album turned out. I did not like it at all.

- What can you say about intros or instrumental synth tracks metal bands like so much to include on their albums? Is it something worth of checking in your opinion, or you rarely find a good slab of ambient/synth music there? Some names?

- There are some bands which do make good intros or instrumental synth tracks on their albums. Some good examples would be Emperor's remaking of *Inno A Satana* (which in the new version were named *Opus A Satana*), as well as Crown of Autumn (on their debut cd), Tristania (the last track on their *Angina* cd single) and some others that I cannot remember right now.

- What prompted you to start your own label, Art Vision? And what future plans do you have for it?

- Art Vision was started because I was in need for a company that could deal with any given form of art, be it music, photography, poetry or film. The future plans for Art Vision is among others to produce a few short movies, as well as I intend to release some special cds (maybe some cd-r series in limited quantities).

- As the millennium is drawing to a close, there is increasing panic in the public over old superstitions and religious myths. Is it justifiable to hold this christian calendar to heart like so many people are? And how do you feel about many so-called antichristian groups and activists that are contributing to the hysteria by incorporating these ideas into their music?

- I try not to care too much about this hysteria at all. Life goes on, in one way or another.

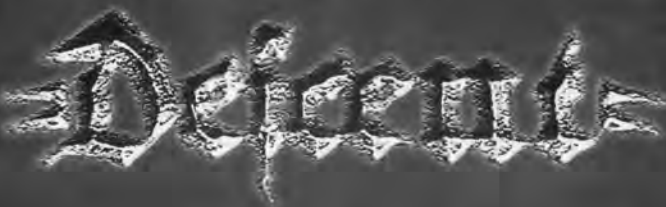
- Is there hope for humanity, or is this leg of the journey drawing to a close for this random universal accident that is mankind?

- I am no prophet, nor do I predict the future, so if there is hope or not I am not sure, but I guess there is always hope if one want there to be one. Mankind will continue to build, conquer and destroy!

- I thank you for the interview possibility, Karsten. Best wishes with all of your future endeavors. Have you any special way of ending this interview, so be it.

- Thanks for the interview.
Arcane Art, Penitent & Veiled Allusions MP3 files are available at:
www.mp3.com/arcaneart,
www.mp3.com/penitent,
www.mp3.com/veiledallusions
The Official Penitent Homepage - <http://penitent.ic.ru>
The Art of Karsten Hamre - <http://members.xoom.com/khamre>
The Domain of Arcane Art - <http://members.xoom.com/arcaneart>

Descent from creative spheres



There is no need to introduce Stephen O'Malley, at least you must know his contributions for countless legendary albums released in the past and meanwhile. No, Stephen has never played or did guest vocals/lead guitar in Mayhem, Burzum, Emperor or Primordial. He has put his soul into the albums of these masters designing the booklets of their art. Making it visual look haunting and astonishing. No wonder that the whole world is usually excited about his works either.

But it is not all about his talents and interests. Just to mention the legendary *Descent* magazine, which is the baby of Stephen's ideas either. It is as outstanding as his visual contributions. You can check one example over here, as Stephen has contributed to Ledo Takas with the Darkthrone interview... I was not able to resist against chatting a bit about everything, slightly disclosing the aura of Stephen's mind ocean...

- When have you started *Descent* magazine, and was it your first own experience to make something out with this music that you were listening?

- Yes it was. I think the whole idea for the magazine probably birthed in the summer of 1993, although I cannot remember exactly what the original spark was, or when. At the time I was really excited about the possibilities of discovering so many new sounds at that level. The underground social level - with all the letters, flyers, tapes, zines, rumours, gossip, legends, etc. I do not need to describe it I think. Anyway, I was deep in the fold at the time and felt like doing something within it rather than feeding off it, maybe feeding it. *Descent* became a seed which has shaped my life in many ways by now. Seems a little bit pathetic to say in a way, but on the other hand I am proud that it has developed its own identity, consciousness, character and life.

- When have you started listening to metal and underground stuff in general? It was any friend of yours that turned you on the path?

- I probably started slipping down beneath the barcode levels in 1989-1990 or so, it was a special moment for me. Being impressionable and open to more things in a naive curious way really helps. Basically I suppose it was bands like Nihilist, Vomit, Mayhem, Carbonized, Incantation which it seems were among the first for me at that level. After and since it seems the number of bands increase almost exponentially. There were a few friends of course whom made some amazing introductions, notably a guy named Ron Guardipee from Seattle whom blessed my ears with Hellhammer and Celtic Frost (this was the same time I was playing for him Dismember I think).

Seattle was not exactly a haven for underground metal at the time, so I was more or less on my own to some extent. By the time I met Odin from Moribund things were in full swing on that level. Thanks for Burzum, Emperor, Manes, Carpathian Forest, Odin. Damn glad he was around (and still is).

- Did you have any confrontations with your parents due to that way of life, especially at the beginning?

- There was not too many confrontations with my folks then, beside normal teenage battles I suppose. I did not exactly have a prospering relationship with them at the time, but I have to say that they have always been really supportive as far as musical and creative endeavors, especially my father. It seems that he probably attended most of the Seattle Burning Witch shows on his own will, and genuinely is a supportive person of whatever I am doing at this point. Great guy, I guess he is a lover of music too, of many varieties (he likes *Transilvanian Hunger* and *At The Gates* on his own accord) and as an architect we have had many good relations and conversation in recent years as far as design aesthetic and structure are concerned.

- I think the scene accepted *Descent* rather quickly, due to its dedication and ability to feature right things at a right place. Like you have been getting bands and people to feature whilst others were still hesitating about them, and simply following afterwards. Sort of advanced attitude, I would say.

- Thanks. But that is your impression, as we never had a motive of being "advanced" or "different" or "progressive" or anything of the like. It was (and is) just honest interest and musical addiction. That is BASICALLY the root of *Descent* in a sentence. I think the motivation and hunger was genuine in the beginning, there

was no jaded viewpoint which has stained my impressions since having the "pleasure" of living behind the curtain of the music business for a while. It is really discouraging to get caught up in a materialistic aspect of something, which begins as a soul-touching. I guess as you get older you get more detailed, or wider viewpoints on things, tastes change, or develop. Anyway, the magazine never really had any problems getting what it wanted sooner or later. Lately it has become more or less swept away somewhat I think... but the climate is different now anyway (for example the internet and e-mail aspect are things which had 0% to do with the magazine until the fifth issue, and have completely changed the nature of the "underground"). It is less exclusive and more commercial.

Anyway, as far as metal goes, where is the new life right now? There does not seem to me to be any massive surge of fresh blood and ideas going on lately. Or maybe I do not care... maybe there never has been but an illusion in youth made it seem that way as it was all new anyway. Now it is too saturated. Am I getting old?

- At some point we all are...

- It is funny today, for example, to see a band like Emperor winning top album of the year in several of the larger metal magazines (on an international level)... I still think about that band on the scale of typewritten letters on the back of flyers and photocopied photographs for zine paste-up. It is a positive thing for them as humans I suppose, as they are definitely forging their reality, very effective magick... but on a personal level it seems strange. Maybe the problem as seeing this as a characteristic of THE BAND rather than what it really is THE PRESS'S REACTION TO THE BAND VIA RECORD LABELS. The structure of promotion and record labels is interesting, but I think insulting to the art in a way as it all lays down to trade for \$\$\$\$. Probably the best and worst thing I have learned from doing design for labels is this fact: cases where it is not really about the art itself, but the budget. This is something that is my fault too, and there is a definite invisible ceiling that exists where in order to get to the next level money has to become more important, but the business side of music is not appealing. I am sure there are many other ways of looking at this, but currently I am having problems breaking out of linear and polarized opinionated thought.

I just need to get the fuck over it.

- Receiving your flyers back then, I thought well, just forget this thing and do not write him, he will not answer anyway, his magazine is too good to correspond with you... It was not like this, or?

- No, not at all. I toss letters for sure, but it is usually from the ones just wanting free shit, which I cannot afford (or do not want to) send out. There is got to be a two-way rapport going on, AC not DC, otherwise forget it. If there was lack of correspondence in any way, it was probably because of lack of time or will to write letters. It is different now, but there was a time where everything was answered in a systematic way in a timely fashion, now I have 78 emails from last September still laying around. I guess the sphere of my universe became much more localized.

Anyway, why did you think that? The flyers have been designed to a standard in order to attract/deter in a certain way of course. Maybe too much so though...

- No, it was simply one of my soviet relicts to be afraid of being not accepted nor understood by 'the western world', that is it... Step by step *Descent* has started to be involved into industrial scene too, thus heavy metal has been put aside to some extent... Would you name it as a plain interest, which appeared discovering the other musical path, or rather disappointment with metal? But I guess it has not completely faded away? What makes you pissed about metal scene'2000?

- Metal scene 2000 to me equates to internet and commercialism in 95% of the cases. I guess it has been increasing (in my perception) about 10% per year. That is the fucking problem. It is shit because it just slipped right into the clutches and systems of the fucking western society. Not the individuals, but THE ESSENCE.

Regarding "industrial". Yeah, of course it is honest musical interest. I am not going to lie and say that metal is the only music that appeals to me, rather the opposite. I find it a little hard to believe that there are folks out there like that, but whatever. Their loss....

I suppose meeting *Tyler Davis* (next person behind *Descent* - ed), really was of mutual musical benefit, as we both introduced millions of sounds to each other. So blame it on him. Heheh....

I have to say that there are more complicated structures / emotions / sounds / ideas / visions / patterns evident in many "industrial" or electronic types of music, or at least I have found this. It is more appealing at certain times to a certain part of me... seems more abstract in ways that conjure moods and visuals. More evident to cause some planer shifts when listening, at least to me.

On the other hand, there is no way I think I could get over metal. Never really thought about it as a positive or negative thing to include "x" or "y" style of music in *Descent*. The magazine is just a forum of the musical interests of the editors is all, not a "X" magazine (insert topic in "X"). There is no outside standard involved any more, otherwise what would be the point... this is not a commercial endeavor.

As I said before (or hinted), there is a disappointment with metal now. I do not exactly think it is metal itself but just my personal taste and viewpoint which are the "problems"... Abolishment of judgmental preconceptions is one of the main points in my life right now. It is damned hard.

- Anyway, you still look like heavy metal dude (hopefully your long hair-cut has not been cut off!), with that steel running through your veins... Do you dress heavy metal way? I think quite a few persons that turned into industrial scene after the 'metal years' still act and dwell like metal all in all. They claim to have bunch of badges on their jackets, and look like they were metal to the bone. Where is the reason for this? Can we say it is a stereotype you cannot escape?

- Yeah, it is just an expression... most living creative individual people have

personal dress taste is all. I do not want to escape the metal stereotype (although I would not say the stereotype was I)... at all. I want to be more grim, leather, spikes, nites, etc. It is inhuman, barbaric, it is a cult. Why not? I have the long hair, denim jacket / *Aske* backpatch / *Skynyrd* / *Manion* / *Slayer* / *Sab* badges, *Mayhem* / *Tormentor*, cape, spikes, have gone through 3 bulletbelts (last was lost while arguing with police at 6AM in an airport security trying to get on my plane following a festival, drunk as fucking hell), boots, scythe. I have a 2 meter blowup poster of *Dead* on my wall (well, not currently), framed fucking *Darkthrone* record, *Burzum* flag, guitars, amps.

There is koldvoid in my veins and fucking iron in my bones, but it is not from the music.

- You have been participating in different metal music projects yourself, as a guitarist. It has something to do with earlier fascination with metal? How could you describe the experience with *Thorr's Hammer* and *Burning Witch*? Seems like both bands have gone to dust already? Weren't you bored by playing that slow music, or there were any other reasons to quit?

- No, not bored at all, it is not exactly easy playing slow music. *Thorr's Hammer* split because *Runhild* (the vokillist) was moving back to Oslo to attend University, and *Greg* was going on a US tour with his other band. It was perfect timing, and fit that band exactly... we had just a few months of grave digging black summoning, pot holocaust, necro-doom and then it ended. Even before it birthed. The primitive/autonomaton structure permeated every aspect of that band. So anyway, that band stopped in summer 1995... a few months later *Greg* came back and we started playing again, with the drummer, that is what turned into *Burning Witch*... it is like the spirit died in *TH* and *BW* was the subconscious chthonic moth that flew out of its corpse/shell. The music evolved and became an entity and started growing. Also, some other amazing personalities (*Edgy* and *GS Dahlquist*) became involved and their magick for sure was essential in causing some of the *Witch's* births. It was an excellent but extremely difficult time, at least the music was essential in a growth of myself, and provided the excess I needed to live and move amongst that crystallization of shit. It died in march 1997... by that time I had finally broken something and was offered an opportunity to change my life in the way I had worked so hard to devise, so I took it. This involved moving out of the country, so obviously the band could not continue.

I think guitar expression became part of my reality after *Buzz Osborne* of *Melvins* shuddered my foundation one outdoor gig in Olympia. God.

I guess I saw *Thorr's Hammer* as slow music (as you described), but *Burning Witch* was like a trigger to open up some gateway in my mind. Shapeshifting my form, soul and thought. Time/space explorations. Way beyond the music.

- You also mentioned to have any new musical project going on there. I suppose it has something to do with industrial/ambient soundscapes



already? Every time you start something new seems to you a spontaneous thing, or rather thought out beforehand, more likely in subconscious level?

- Yeah, I really like that. I think it is spontaneity on the surface but actually a manifestation of long standing subconsciousness. I think spontaneity by definition is impossible, as we have potential of memory and a concept of viewing and understanding/processing movement called TIME. This renders the moment as a point on a line, but it is still part of the line, not individual. I tend to live my life by whatever comes, and whatever I am able to manifest or cause to come, there is really not too many structured long term, or even short term plans going on in my head. Maybe that is the source of the problems. Anyway, there is a couple projects going on right now, but no "band" or "group" in a formalized way so much. Just projects.

Sunn O)) is a group consisting of myself, *G. Stuart Dahlquist* (ex-Burning Witch bass player, now he is in *Goatsnake*), and *Greg Anderson* (also, ex-Thorr's Hammer, part of the original formation of *Burning Witch* and a million other bands. Now he is guitar in *Goatsnake*). So it is old chemistry and doom blood working again. The music is entirely based around guitars and bass tuned to very low frequency. Drone. Many many layers of slow moving drifts, glaciers, radiation, energy, sound pressure. This is absolutely mind clearing pressurized presence. Really. Live performance is a wall of speakers, many amps, and the room begins to rumble, the air swells, and skin shudders... aural tectonics. There is a cd coming on *Hydra Head Records* in the USA this March, and a second album (2lp/cd) on *Hydra Head* and *Rise Above* (for Europe) in May. The tracks are around 14 minutes minimum, and are more landscapes than anything else. Also, we are doing a 10 day tour in the UK in May, so that is interesting.

Kuboa is a slow, mathematical, plodder, which I have been screwing around with; just two guitarists and a drummer so far. Probably will develop into more of a band in a conventional sense (meaning vox, bass, maybe moog).

We will see. If we get time and motivation to move it that way.

Something else will probably cross my path soon as well. I see speed metal involved.

- I think *Southern Lord* is hardly known for many people around. Can you say some words on it, and current state of the label? You are not alone involved in it? Something has changed after your move to NYC?

- It is basically run by *Greg Anderson* (yeah, we have collaborated on a lot of things), and my involvement has been primarily on design only, which is how I like and prefer it, if that. He released *Thorr's Hammer* and *Burning Witch*, as well as *Electric Wizard* (heavy doom/drone band from England), *The Obsessed* (legendary doomrock from the USA, featuring one of the greatest guitarists ever, *Scott "Wino" Weinrich*) and *Goatsnake* (*Greg's* own Sabbath heavy rock). It seems it is moving more towards the rock side of things now, which is not entirely interesting for me (in this case), but good for him as that is what he likes. So, yeah, moving to NYC defined the roles in the label. It is his.

- *Ajna Offensive* is run by your partner in crime, namely *Tyler Davis*. Aren't you involved either? What kind of concept has the label? To release just limited edition cute vinyl things? And it must circle around ambient/industrial music exclusively? Do you think *Ajna* has its place among the scene's finest labels? I am curious to know where your customers and people who are interested in generally come from?

- Well, *Ajna* is the *Descent* label, which is run by both *Tyler* and I (although more by him it seems). I think it is mostly similar character as the magazine, and may be seen as an appendage of it somehow. A tentacle. This is actually much more interesting to me as the label is absolutely uncommercial and very core oriented as its premise. Thus the editions of small vinyls, less customers, and unknown musics. I do not think *Ajna* has any business being thrown in with any scene's labels actually, much less the finest. It is something run out of our bedrooms and closets with under-desk space and kitchen becoming our storage areas. Up until this point we

BURNING WITCH

Crippled Lucifer Southern Lord

One more *Stephen O'Malley* ex-band (see *Thor's Hammer* review), and once again it delivers nothing to scream about, unfortunately. Album is compiled of two recording sessions, but I hardly hear a difference, if it is ever possible to notice it in slow torturing doom with ultra sick vocalist. If anybody thinks over *Esoteric* or *Skepticism* at this very moment - forget about them. Neither this is as profound nor as adventurous. One would add - more American, and I can reason it: pissed off vocalist brings *Burning Witch* closer to sludge doom bands as *Grief*, *It Is I* and so on. That is not my beloved style at all, and thus this review would turn into a slagging one, yet there is one reason stopping this to happen: the other side of the coin, that is - *Edgy 59's* clean echoed voice, dragged out of 70-ies metal box, and 80-ies doom type. Naturally guys then get much more room to shape the picture, even it is still that slow riffing and drumming. Vocal can easily change them, that surprises me a bit. And how sick the music can turn if you add a rough crispy vocal to it.

No way for *Burning Witch* to be better in a traditional doom standards though, as voice is still one ingredient of the whole, but in these epic moments this cd sounds much better, more original, trippy and still mysterious. In spite that voice and music go different ways at times... *Crippled Lucifer* is too ill-natured to be enjoyed. Or my taste is too much polluted with pop black metal, eh?? No, my taste is the best in the world, that is what you should know, if you have not yet, hehe.

I am not aware why guys have split, yet I see a reason in it, if you think you have nothing extra to offer with the stuff you have done, better go off it, and try something else. Never try to keep it going without a single serious reason. If you think you are mentally ill, order this album.

PLECID

Plecid Ajna

It is sort of a bliss to review an album, which does not have neither press release nor any information in the booklet. You just get band name, and track list on the disc itself. Isn't it sweet? Let the music do the job! That is - influence your opinion. As far as I am concerned, *Plecid* perform an adventurous blend of dark wave, but involving pretty much gothic rock elements either. No, rock is not an appropriate term with this album... Maybe dark industrial music without ambient soundscapes, but with fixed rhythmic structures all the time. Though if you listen to *Mortified*, you will argue about ambient part of the deal. In my opinion such tunes as *Leave* (the best) shape them better. At least they are the most laid back, atmospheric and free-spoken.

At some point *Plecid* music acts on you additively, either damaging or curing (right, *The Cure*) the mood all the day long. At another point I can compare them with melancholic hippie goth of *Beyond Dawn*, and that is either true; they have something in common. But *Plecid* are avantgardish in another way. They use some synth and effect variation, adding some vocal oddities at times, instead of searching for guitar based drones. Most of time bass and guitar accompaniment is of rather classic kind.

If anybody still wonders, *Plecid* package includes that dark dreaming verses, a pity that poetry is not included in the booklet. By the way, it is totally black, like *Abruptum* have once done, but printed on hard cardboard paper, so it looks pretty massive with violet logo printed over... Ask about it from the label now.

THOR'S HAMMER

Dommedagsnatt Southern Lord

Quite a disappointment, even it features contributions from *Stephen O'Malley* (guitars) and Norwegian *Runhild Gammesæter* (vocals). The project existed for a very short time in 1995, when *Runhild* was in States for a while, yet they managed to record three songs, adding one live track.

The only moment I enjoyed on this record was beginning of the opener *Norge*. Slow sombre voice of the girl sounds majestic, together with the same kind of music. But what happens after that? She carefully takes a microw with her precious hands, and starts to growl like *Chis Barnes* in his CC times... Well, I see that it is heavy torturing doom, where many musicians have tried this formula - to combine it with harsh lung voice. However, it does not work. Every effort then becomes blurry, monotonous and ineffective. It is not that difficult to miss one song for another. Too less of imagination, and too much of repetitiveness. On the other hand, *Thor's Hammer* have something to do with American sludge music, thankfully without core influences. Remember *Grief* on *Century Media*? It is in the same league.

Ok, I suppose it would have been much better if normal singing voice were used in much bigger quantities, yet the project is defunct now. Nevertheless, in these dreams their music would have been much more atmospheric, much more open-minded, and I bet - there would have been quite another angle to heavy riffing itself. Vocalist has lots to say actually, when riffs are slow and droning. Moreover that no one could be surprised to hear the girl growling... Nope, sorry, cannot recommend it.

have released the following: *Plecid* cd, *Mortiis Keiser of a Dimension Unknown* lp (edition of 300 with booklet), *Tormentor Anno Domini* picture lp (edition of 666), *Mayhem Pure Fucking Armageddon* lp (edition of 333 with silk-screened cover. This is the first version of this, which was later released on cd by ME and then bootlegged by some others to lp and plp I guess. Our versions are approved by Mr. *Necro-Butcher*), *Taint/Strict 7"* (severe USA power electronics, edition of 300), *Ultra 7"* (amazing atmospheric project from the US, really original and evocative, edition of 300), *Psychonaut 7"* (excellent ritual incantations, edition of 300), *Den 7"* (volkish music and soundscapes, edition of 300). So quite a few items. Next month we also have *Robert X Patriot/Voluspá split 7"* (power electronics from USA / militaristic electronics project of *Maniac/Mayhem*, edition of 300), *Earth* lp (awesome heavy dirge/drone from USA, edition of 360). Later we are doing a cd of old *Allerseelen* recordings, and probably an *Ultra* lp. Basically all of the music we have released I can say we are behind 100% and are complete admirers of. It almost seems as we release these things for our own personal satisfaction and pleasure (and collections) as I am not sure where they are going, or who is buying them. I guess *Tyler* sells most of them, but my copies I have been mainly trading, which has the added benefit to my own music library. But I would like to think that the customers are the kind of people who also are interested in the magazine, but that is not true. General music addicts I assume.

If anyone is interested in these titles just get in touch with us. You will get your fix.

- Design. Is it your favourite thing when it comes to the underground? I would like you to name a bunch of rather well known bands and artists you done the design for. Not just to show off for readers whom I have here spreading a word, but that I myself do not know and want to know more about your works. Let me start - Emperor, Mayhem, In The Woods..., Burzum, Primordial...

- Right now it has. The projects are not having too much meaning as they are becoming more WORK than anything else, which is not good. I just have too much going on to the point that I am neglecting the needed things. Here is a partial list of things I have done recently: *Morphosis*, *Morbid Angel* (maybe), *Primordial*, *Goatsnake*, *Heid*, *Emperor*, *The Want*, *Warning*, *Zyklon-B*, *Necrophagia*, *Tiermes*, *Den*, *Bluebird*, etc... The list is much longer though.

- It is no shame to admit that you are one of the most professional, thoughtful and wanted designers around, when it comes to the circles we both are wandering within. Do you look upon it as an exclusive capability or talent to let your mind create these small pieces of art, or it is about other designers who do not use their potential, still making it look cliché? Has the design become a routine for you?

I appreciate your kind words, but design is definitely not my favorite thing in the metal underground. With some exceptions, it is usually quite budget on that facet of things. Something like using the newest Photoshop filters to mass excess, glows and drop shadows and shit. It is maybe like video games are the starting points for these people, not aesthetic or architecture (which is a better way to look at it I think). I am not so interested in such obvious imagery, which is used commonplace in metal (in general)... I guess it is more appealing to remove the ego and the human at this point, but please do not replace it with a penguin or firebreathing musclebound humanoid demon! Grrr..... not into the boys club look. I do not want to feel you sweat or play on your team or fight for YOU.

I think the design work I do is just the current preference of visual expression, not exclusive. Since I have always been drawing, photographing, designing, collaging, etc since childhood. There are many other sides of art I would like to explore. I guess one of the main unappealing things about design for me at this point is that I do it primarily with a computer, and it is becoming more like a limiting tool. You cannot really drag this thing around and do things, can you? Also, I guess I am hitting the limits (for myself) of excitement of experimenting

with some programs, so it is either move to simpler, less imagery based ideas (which I have been doing lately) or move to use other media. Or move to movement, I would like to try editing of video for example...

- You mentioned to take a six months break off the design recently. Don't you think the thirst to return to it again will force you to break this promise, and some smaller or bigger project will catch you working over it before the summer?

- Yeah, you are probably right. I definitely will not be during May/June as I will be traveling in Europe, together with Sunn O))) for a few weeks in UK and some dates in Holland, then later with Mr. O'Malley, the one who I forgot about for a while there when the Babylon Whores / Emperor / Electric Wizard / Burzum / Morphosis / etc were occupying the reality. But yeah, I guess I just meant slow it down a little and make it more real.

- Even the question might seem to you way too many times posed already, yet recollect the years spent in Europe, with Tiziana and co. Is it something you can name as the best time you have spent in recent ten years? As an insider back then, you were told about possible collapse of the whole thing? Maybe you can comment why it has happened. Agree that it is not usual case when you see dedicated company to give up, well even not at its peak, so at a prosperous moment for sure.

- It definitely was a great period in my life and I do not regret a minute (well maybe a few days actually). I see myself probably living in Europe again, but not in the UK, although not in the immediate future as New York is THE PLACE I need to be now. Europe is great.

Yeah, I think I was one of the first few people Tiziana told, when I was actually visiting in summer 98 (I was already living back in the States at that point, but still designing for her of course). It was a simple case of her tiring of the music business. She wanted to do other things, and move on with her life. Tiziana is a very strong willed person and usually accomplishes what she tries to do, it seems. I suppose she felt she had.

I do not exactly agree that the company was at its peak, but I think it seems unusual that a company does not sacrifice its integrity in the final throes of trying to stay alive, or trying to keep it going "because it should not end". *Misanthropy* managed to keep that, and now it is a legend. It is an appropriate end, yet unfortunate (amongst other reasons I lost a good job)... the bands live on, but to me it seems like they have not found labels of the "level" of *Misanthropy* yet. Maybe this is an arrogant thing to say, but I think that *Misanthropy* was separated from the usual bullshit filled trap of labels floating around. It was a REAL LABEL.

- You have sense to state that... Together with your girlfriend you also contribute to American pride of metal journalism - *Metal Maniacs*. I must admit that it is really a good piece of writings, even turned the commercial way. However customers-oriented it is, when the magazine has skilled contributors, then there is always a result. Can you talk a bit about *MM* from your as writer's corner, and how do you like it as a simple reader?

- It has got some good writers I think, and you are absolutely correct as far that being the importance. While I definitely think the look of it is far below what it could be, it is kind of a miracle that the magazine emerges from the publishing company it does. It is a source of pride "that the metal underground is still alive and strong" I guess. Well, I do really appreciate *Spider* and *Zahler*'s writings, and I think they are good examples of the fact of individual character being present. It is cool and fun to read, even if I do not really like so many of the main bands featured all the time.

I have not really been writing too much for the magazine beside the reviews and a *Darkthrone* interview (which was blasphemous in itself, how can *Darkthrone* appear in such a commercial mag????? Well, they are not exactly promoting rehearsal tapes out of their bedrooms any more). It is a fine line with writing for them, on one side you get the attitudes of (this exists in Zine land too of course): I am a writer, therefore I PASS JUDGEMENT. And I MUST GET FREE STUFF. Fuck that... It seems to get to the point where the music is not as

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Upgraded audio noise terrorism, or power electronics from the United States. Wow, this must be an experience, since these two underground performers actually take influence from the "most-most" of the scene. I presume these noises are the true pleasure for all Whitehouse or Sutcliffe Jugend admirers, and it definitely needs some basic preparation to consume what is vomited on black as night small piece of vinyl. I am not an expert of the technicians that this "music" is accomplished with, nor a fan of it, but believe me - it hits thy nerve system, like a blue light therapy, hehe. Take a chance, and don't be afraid of screeching noise. I mean, just flipside tune (I believe it is *Strict*) has any guy screaming his guts out of the mic, accompanied with not so sweet drones. But *Taint* which opens this split up have actually heavier approach to laying down the avalanche of noise, and if you have a broader imagination, thick brick wall falling down the piece of cake would be a nice enough example of what the ears are acquainted with. No mercy for neighbors festivals.

They have worked out a cute packaging altogether, handmade on thick cardboard and depicting small and teen girls nearby adult shops, on natural pictures that are stuck there. Always an original idea for everyone who loves alternative ways, so why not to add one copy to collection? Inquire for \$5 (USA)/7\$ from the label of one of *Descent* Magazine makers, if it is still available.

Ajna Offensive, P. O. Box 11741, Olympia, WA 98502, USA, ajna@telisphere.com

Descent #4 (6884) magazine

Ah, the long awaited literature quality at *Ledo Takas* headquarters. *Descent* is something special, and after so much talks about its glory I am totally satisfied and not a single line upset with *Stephen*'s effort. Well... ok... reviews are a kind of I would never do, nor I ever could be able to put them on that angle *Descent* reviewers describe the music. I mean my reviews are much simpler to read, and it is not just English language barrier to overcome. That is the nature of writing. So, *Stephen* and co. spew forth tons of tiny typed reviews in five pages, devoting just one or two sentences to a dozen of albums.

But other than that deserves respect, and pretty firmly: trippy inventive interviews, mostly arranged with so well known but hard to reach artists. Dwelling among them it is possible to learn something, not just to follow when the band did a tour and had a party. Inside: Pan-Thy-Monium, Waldteufel, Dedheimsgard, Con-Dom, Atrax Morgue, Opeth, SSHE Retina Stimulants, Gorgoroth, Darkstyle, Aeternus, Pazuzu, Sutcliffe Jugend, Ain Soph, Abruptum, Allegory Chapel Ltd., Beyond Dawn, KDNR, Plecid, The Moon Lay Hidden Beneath A Cloud, *Attila Csihar* (kull!!!), *Trevor Brown*, The Grey Wolves + more. Excellent arty layout (what could you expect from a guy composing *Emperor* and *Burzum* albums booklets?), a definite must to look at for every serious zine maker.

Concerning music covered, a huge drift to industrial is evident, and even I have not seen previous volumes of *Descent*, it is obvious they were more metal oriented. At times a bit unusual for me to read pretty different musical descriptions, since they are so diverse from usual metal stuff. Well, most probably it is a natural move for *Stephen*, yet some thoughts might seem slightly odd for you, headbanger.

Descent #5 (64 21x22cm pages) magazine

Poor me - I have been exploring this piece of art for a good month, or so, because *Stephen* has managed to design it in a way that you hardly can read anything!! Typing is so small, that my old eyes are not able to decipher the messages at times... Ha, it is not a complaint though, it is a reaction to his manifestation to be exceptional... Another reason not to rush things reading *Descent* is due to exceptionally packed issue, where you cannot just run from one feature to another and be done in a few hours. Fuck, it is not *Terrorizer* after all! *Descent* is about exploring the unexplored, then you feel like wiser or more stable with your own ideas. This is a collection of so different opinions that at times you feel like protesting about so wide selection... But what a heck - it breathes quality, and that is not just about the layout. Not just about the questions that *Taylor*, *Stephen* and their contributors upcome with. Not just about that doomed textures and subconsciousness involved. It is about the way of manifestation that rules! Cannot describe it better, indeed. You must read it to realise. Personally I am already influenced by *Descent*, and I must admit that. No idea if it will correlate with my own attempts in the future, but you are warned, anyway.

Like with #4, all the participants seem to be destined to appear in that rag, so there is their place: *Angelcorpse*, *Blood Axis*, *Brocas Helm*, *Bethlehem* (highlight conversation!), *Coll*, *Control Resistance*, *Darkthrone* (*Nocturna Culto* speaks - fucking cult), *Der Blutharsch*, *Destroyer 666*, *Dream Into Dust*, *Enslaved*, *Ernte*, *Eyehategod*, *Genocide Organ*, *Stephen Kastner*, *Marduk*, *Mayhem* (exclusively interesting!), *Orplid*, *Pentacle*, *Psywarfare*, *Boyd Rice*, *Sleep*, *Tiermes*, *Turbund Sturmwerk*, *Valefor*, and a few articles related. Ha, again their review section is naturally showcasing them pissed off, in a way not everyone would enjoy... whatever. I suggest to get in touch with *Stephen* asap, otherwise this issue will be sold out too quickly. Try at 7\$.

Descent magazine, *Stephen* O'Malley, POB 2339, Stuyvesant Station, NYC, NY 10009, USA, soma@khanate.org

much of a decision about what is said as are things like: relationship to the RECORD LABEL/PROMOTER, popular opinion about the band, circles where the band exists, record sales, etc. I guess being involved with this almost ruined my objectivity about sounds at one point, but it is come around again. I do not want to get much further into what I am doing for *MM* than where I am now in other words.

Otherwise it is great! hahah...

- Through *Descent* questionnaires that you prepare for the highly respected interviewees, reader can find out quite a bit about your philosophy as well. Well, at least looking at the set of artists involved in there... Do you admit that making your own magazine, and writing so many thoughts of yourself there, you sort of show for readers pretty much naked. I mean the striptease of thy soul, hehe. At some point it is like a mirror of your inner essence and pride, that at times is risky to expose... Well, as far as I am concerned... No negative matters that could probably question the existence of it?

- I think to a certain point any sort of creation is of course reflective, but it also could be looked at as a projection of some ideals or masks, or propaganda of some sort. I have to say, as far as I know, the views reflected in the QUESTIONS and editorial writing are mostly honest, but there are a lot of loaded ones as well. One of the main points in *Descent* is finding that trigger to get exposing statements from the interviewees, which involves questions that hopefully probe into the mind and send electric jolt. But no, I would say that *Descent* is not my naked soul; that would be too easy. I think this may be an impression which I have run into several times, but I would rather not be so predictable (initially anyway). How can you lay it all down on paper anyway? 60 pages? I have not figured it out. It is definitely not my egoself, which is under the interrogation light. Likewise the interview is a perfect example of propaganda, one can easily create a myth around oneself through planned responses, wording etc. I am ignoring honesty here....

What philosophies of mine did you see? Would be curious to know.

- Well, it is just my overall generalization. In fact I could hardly define any concrete way or line, except strife for the plain Creation...

- I have in several cases run into impressions that I am somehow politically or racially motivated which is not the case. It is funny to see peoples reactions/defensiveness towards opinions or comments which they disagree with or do not understand (or do not attempt to understand or think about). It is generally quite abrupt and definite. Humans seem to like to give off the impression that they are open-minded but fear/difference throws them right back into the cattle car with the rest of the robots. You must think this IS wrong! You must NOT think about this! BELIEVE US!

- How does your inner world look like?

- Good question. I do not know. It presently seems to be filled with tar, slag tektoniks and khaos. Half the time I feel like my mind is torturing my SELF, killing instinct, drive, personality, will, perception. The other half things are ok (generally) thanks to a few recognitions of stars in the blue field.

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Robert Frost

Love and a Question

A STRANGER came to the door at eve,
And he spoke the bridegroom fair.
He bore a green-white stick in his hand,
And, for all burden, care.
He asked with the eyes more than the lips
For a shelter for the night,
And he turned and looked at the road afar
Without a window light.

The bridegroom came forth into the porch
With, 'Let us look at the sky,
And question what of the night to be,
Stranger, you and I.'

The woodbine leaves littered the yard,
The woodbine berries were blue,
Autumn, yes, winter was in the wind:
'Stranger, I wish I knew.'

Within, the bride in the dusk alone
Bent over the open fire,
Her face rose-red with the glowing coal
And the thought of the heart's desire.

The bridegroom looked at the weary road,
Yet saw but her within,
And wished her heart in a case of gold
And pinned with a silver pin.

The bridegroom thought it little to give
A dole of bread, a purse,
A heartfelt prayer for the poor of God,
Or for the rich a curse;

But whether or not a man was asked
To mar the love of two
By harboring woe in the bridal house,
The bridegroom wished he knew.

After Apple-Picking

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,

And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.

But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary gossamer.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.

But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing dear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.

There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

To his village neighbors, *Robert Frost* was a farmer who wrote poetry into the late hours and milked his cows at midnight. To many of his readers, he was a wise white-haired man, who could be called a master-poet by world standards.

Robert Frost was born in San Francisco in 1874. He moved to New England at the age of eleven and became interested in reading and writing poetry during his high school years in Lawrence, Massachusetts. He was enrolled at Dartmouth College in 1892, and later at Harvard, but never earned a formal degree. *Frost* drifted through a string of occupations after leaving school, working as a teacher, cobbler, and editor of the *Lawrence Sentinel*. In 1895, *Frost* married *Elinor Miriam White*, who became a major inspiration in his poetry until her death in 1938. With his grandfather's help, he bought a farm where for eleven years he struggled to make a living from the rocky soil. These years, when money was short and family life was especially difficult - the *Frosts* had five children by that time - were gloomy ones for *Frost*. He more than once thought of suicide. Nobody bought his poems because the poet was too far ahead of his times. His first professional poem, *The Butterfly*, was published on November 8, 1894, in the New York newspaper *The Independent*.

The couple moved to England in 1912, after their New Hampshire farm failed, and it was abroad that *Frost* met and was influenced by such contemporary British poets as *Edward Thomas*, *Rupert Brooke*, and *Robert Graves*. While in England, *Frost* also established a friendship with the poet *Ezra Pound*, who helped to promote and publish his work. By the time *Frost* returned to the United States in 1915, he had published two full-length collections, *A Boy's Will* and *North of Boston* in States, and his reputation was established. English critics were the first to note the mastery with which *Frost* managed to combine a poetic form with colloquial language. By the nineties, he was the most celebrated poet in America, and with each new book - including *New Hampshire* (1923), *A Further Range* (1936), *Steeple Bush* (1947), and *In the Clearing* (1962) - his fame and honors (including four *Pulitzer Prizes*) increased.

Frost's personal life was never easy. He demanded great loyalty from his friends and was quick to suspect them of treachery. Perhaps because of his 'provincialism', he never received the *Nobel Prize*, which his friends *Yeats* and *Eliot* had both won. However, by the end of his life *Frost* had become a national bard.

Though his work is principally associated with the life and landscape of New England, and though he was a poet of traditional verse forms and metrics who remained steadfastly aloof from the poetic movements and fashions of his time, *Frost* is anything but a merely regional or minor poet. *Frost* is by no means a 'philosophical' poet, yet there is a meaning in each of his poems, and it is almost always an important meaning, an important truth. The author of searching and often dark meditations on universal themes, he is a quintessentially modern poet in his adherence to language as it is actually spoken, in the psychological complexity of his portraits, and in the degree to which his work is infused with layers of ambiguity and irony. *Frost's* poem is some kind of clarification. Without simplifying the truth, he makes it understandable to every reader. As he himself wrote, a poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom. It seems that we recognize something we knew but had forgotten.

Robert Frost lived and taught for many years in Massachusetts and Vermont, and died on January 29, 1963, in Boston.

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Plays

A Way Out, 1929 • *The Guardeen*, 1943

My Butterfly

Thine emulous fond flowers are dead, too,
And the daft sun-assaulter, he
That frightened thee so oft, is fled or dead:

Save only me
(Nor is it sad to thee!)

Save only me
There is none left to mourn thee in the fields.

The gray grass is not dappled with the snow;
Its two banks have not shut upon the river;
But it is long ago—

It seems forever—
Since first I saw thee glance,
With all the dazzling other ones,
In airy dalliance,
Precipitate in love,
Tossed, tangled, whirled and whirled above,
Like a limp rose-wreath in a fairy dance.

When that was, the soft mist
Of my regret hung not on all the land,
And I was glad for thee,
And glad for me, I wist.

Thou didst not know, who tottered, wandering on high,
That fate had made thee for the pleasure of the wind,
With those great careless wings,
Nor yet did I.

And there were other things:
It seemed God let thee flutter from his gentle clasp:
Then fearful he had let thee win
Too far beyond him to be gathered in,
Snatched thee, o'er eager, with ungentle grasp.

Ah! I remember me
How once conspiracy was rife
Against my life—
The languor of it and the dreaming fond:
Singing, the grasses dizzied me of thought,
The breeze three odors brought,
And a gem-flower waved in a wand!

Then when I was distraught
And could not speak,
Sidelong, full on my cheek,
What should that reckless zephyr fling
But the wild touch of thy dye-dusty wing!

I found that wing broken today!
For thou art dead, I said,
And the strange birds say:
I found it with the withered leaves
Under the eaves.

October

O hushed October morning mild,
Thy leaves have ripened to the fall;
To-morrow's wind, if it be wild,
Should waste them all.

The crows above the forest call;
To-morrow they may form and go.
O hushed October morning mild,
Begin the hours of this day slow,
Make the day seem to us less brief.
Hearts not averse to being beguiled,
Beguile us in the way you know;
Release one leaf at break of day;
At noon release another leaf;
One from our trees, one far away;
Retard the sun with gentle mist;
Enchant the land with amethyst.
Slow, slow!

For the grapes' sake, if they were all,
Whose leaves already are burnt with frost,
Whose clustered fruit must else be lost—

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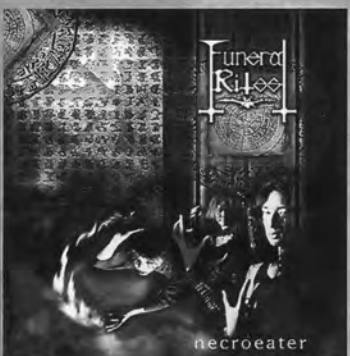
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