

DISPOSABLE UNDERGROUND

VOLUME 18 NUMBER 41

FREE

CHAMPIONING THE MUSICALLY JADED FOR OVER 15 YEARS

INSIDE:

interviews
with Cannibal
Corpse,
Ludicra, and
Voivod

music reviews,
local and
international

Musical
Darwinism
column



If you didn't see your release reviewed in this issue, it's because a) I didn't want to review it, or b) it didn't make it this issue and will (hopefully) appear next time. Thank you for your patience. Disposable Underground by Richard Johnson unless otherwise noted, in 2010.

Disclaimer: D.U.'s editor has or had releases on Relapse, Robotic Empire and Selfmadegod.

Contributors this issue: Asa E., JR Hayes, Mason.

—Richard Johnson, editor

All of the issues of Disposable Underground are online in PDF form.

Download back issues and view the photo gallery at www.disposableunderground.com.

Write a letter—you'll feel better! PMB #570, 21010 South Bank St, Sterling VA 20165-7227, USA

DISPOSABLE LOCAL REVIEWS

A grouping of the local bands (from Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC) for this issue

Hex Machine *Omen Mas*

MINIMUM UNDERDRIVE

Methinks these boys from Richmond have been sipping at the bottle for a little too long. The pickled brains from this four-piece come up with some twisted riffing, wacked-out vocal stylings, and circular and choppy drum beats that will get you dizzy before you realize it. Not because they're fast, but because their riffs are argumentative. The guitar chords have an aftertaste and the bass player won't take no for an answer judging by the playing. *D.U.* has a soft spot for these guys, who have several demos and EPs and tours to their name. Standouts here include "Black Skeleton" and "Godheads Full of Candy."

www.minimumunderdrive.blogspot.com

Lord Betta update

Lord Betta has been cranking out mixtape CD-Rs for a long while, straight outta Northern Virginia, USA. *Rhythm, Rhyme & Blues: The Mature Mix Revisited* sounds like its name suggests: good groovin', sometimes laid back, sometimes more bumpin' hip hop. The lyrics are centering around wooing the ladies and the progress this fella is making with doing so, along with said ladies coming and going and tripping (sounds like some autobiographical content here). There's 13 tracks and an intro, so plenty of tuncage to sink your teeth into. There's a download link for this release at Lord Betta's MySpace page.



LORD BETTA
COURTESY BETTA'S MYSPACE

BOH'Low presents: ...eL-betta where U @?!?!?! is a mixtape that contains a mix of tracks from four of Lord Betta's past mixtapes, plus some other material, totaling 21 tracks and an intro. A few different producers have their hands on the controls here, including Betta's longtime collaborator DJ OH'Low (that's one hung low when pronounced for the uninitiated). Betta's lyrics deal with everything from who controls the wealth in the world all the way down to lame-ass MCs. Check into it!
www.myspace.com/lordbetta

Lotus Fucker *Psalms of the Planet*

SPHC / RSR

Lotus Fucker's self-styled punk noise covers a lot of ground on this 12" on rice pudding-colored vinyl. There's everything from d-beats to 4/4 anthems, from blasts to repeating punchdown riffs (closing out side one). It basically sounds like how they play live, except less chaotic. They've come a long way from their demo. The thin, scratchy production is just how they like it. Plus there's plenty of packaging to sink one's teeth into. Put this on and rock the house (and try not to break any furniture while you're doing it)! But hurry—limited to 80 copies.

whydotheylive@yahoo.com or

<http://www.myspace.com/rsrec> ■

DISPOSABLE LABEL ROUND-UP: DARK HARVEST RECORDS

Hailing from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Dark Harvest shows its commitment to metal with the bands on its roster. Below Mason dives into the latest crop.

Blood Tribe *1369: The Death and Dying Chapters*



BLOOD TRIBE
COURTESY
MYSACE.COM/
BLOODTRIBE

DARK HARVEST / KILLCO AUDIO

Proficient if unexceptional thrashy death metal. All the components are there; the production is strong and the players are all quite competent, but ultimately *1369* is an average disc thanks to fairly formulaic songwriting, aside from a strong opener. Unfortunately for Blood Tribe, they're following a well-worn path forged by countless bands before them, and while they do a respectable enough job of delivering the death metal goods, they'll need to develop an identity of their own to stand out from the pack.

www.myspace.com/bloodtribe

Fates Burden *My Addiction*

DARK HARVEST / DAMAGE

Fates Burden keep the formula fairly simple: heavy groove riffs, crisp production, guitarists who can actually play, and a singer who manages to not ruin everything despite not bringing all that much to the game aside from an adequate Phil Anselmo imitation and some irritating idiosyncrasies. Several of the tunes here are reminiscent of a mix between Black Label Society and *Vulgar*

Display of Power-era Pantera juxtaposed with some interesting off-time beats and occasionally jarring (in a good way) tempo shifts. The songwriting is tight and the band's identity seems to coalesce the farther you get into the CD. Unfortunately, some

of the layered vocal bits are somewhat distracting, most glaringly so on tracks 1 and 7, but when they manage to rein in the vocal histrionics and let the guitars do most of the talking, Fates Burden are really good at what they do.

www.freewebs.com/fatesburden

Final Curse *Constructing The Destructive*

DARK HARVEST

The CD inlay announces "100% No Bullshit Pure Thrash," so I laughed when a Pantera-esque groove part cropped up within the first 40 seconds of the first riff. (In all fairness, my definition of "100% No Bullshit Pure Thrash" is probably a bit more rigid than the boys in Final Curse.) They are undoubtedly pretty good players who've clearly spent time on decent song arrangements and production, but come on, there's nothing at all new here, and I'm truly hard pressed to find anything else at all worthwhile to say about it. The retro-thrash thing is ridiculously played out and I can literally—and I mean literally—think of *several hundred* thrash releases you should hear before bothering with this. How about trying to do something unique and interesting instead of re-hashing riffs that were dated 15 years ago?

www.myspace.com/finalcurse

Sloburn 2009 album

DARK HARVEST

Oh Jesus. I'm going to try keeping this one short. Despite some decent musicianship and interesting riffs and arrangements that run the gamut from raw NWOBHM influences to a punky, occasionally stoner rock vibe, this otherwise cool band is absolutely killed by some of the worst vocals I've ever heard. It sounds like an 11-year-old girl is talking (literally, talking) over every song. No power in her voice whatsoever; just this monotone "don't I sound scary and tough!" vibe that robs this album of any listening pleasure whatsoever for me. I couldn't understand why this band allowed their material to be tanked by this vocalist, until I looked at her picture and it made a little more sense—to be cynical for a moment, whatever advantage Sloburn may think they have by having a hot chick in the band is severely undercut by the fact she's a terrible vocalist. If the rest of the band are smart, they'll promptly get her some Arch Enemy and Crisis CDs to hear extreme metal female vocals done right, and she'll get it together next time.

www.myspace.com/darkharvestrecords

Look up Dark Harvest at www.darkharvestrecords.com. ■

Musical Darwinism

with JR Hayes from
Pig Destroyer

D.U. played JR some records. Here are his first impressions of each.

Gollum The Core

ROTTEN RECORDS

It's a little early on, but I don't know if this label really has a sound, you know, but they have those schizophrenic-type bands that go from riff to riff, genre to genre. The riffs are kinda unconventional, which is good. That could be an Acid Bath riff. Sound like they probably listen to some Acid Bath. Transition's kinda shabby. If you're gonna switch vibes like that, there's a right way to do it and a wrong way to do it. It's kinda catchy; it's got a good groove to it. This song kinda sounds like it could be a Melvins song, a rockin' Melvins song. This band's pretty cool.

www.rottenrecords.com

Celan Halo

EXILE ON MAINSTREAM

I've already heard this album. This is the dude from Unsane playing with one of the dudes from Neubauten, some other German weirdos. It's a cool record. It sounds like a slightly more industrial Rammsteined-up Unsane, you know what I mean? A little bit darker, a little more atmosphere, but it's Chris Spencer playing guitar and singing, so it sounds like Unsane. As long as he's playing guitar and singing, it's always—it doesn't matter what they call the band, it's always gonna sound like Chris Spencer playing guitar and singing. There's a really interesting song at the end of this record that has, like, a piano in it. You should check this out; it's a pretty cool record.

www.mainstreamrecords.de

Seizure Crypt Under the Gun

BAD ELEPHANT

[sarcastically] Please be metallic hardcore. Oh man, I was really hopin' it would come in with some Hatebreed-type action. You sure this isn't the soundtrack to *Desperado*? Man, this is some odd stuff. You know, it's got that thin guitar sound, and, I dunno, it sounds like old—really old American hardcore punk, like Negative Approach or Angry Samoans, that kinda shit. The riffs are kind of interesting; they're aggressive. The singer of this reminds me of Schnauzer. The three goofy vocalists, you know what I mean? All this kind of shouting over each other like a bunch of morons? It's hardcore. It's not hardcore in, like, the Madball sort of way, but it's hardcore punk. It takes you back to that old—maybe the first Agnostic Front 7" or something. Anyway, it's pretty cool, and that's about all I have to say about that.

www.seizurecrypt.com

Satyrasis Creation of Failure

I don't know why I'm thinking of Sacred Reich. Prob'ly death metal, thrash metal, thrash death, death thrash. You know, not horribly produced, but definitely not state of the art. The drums are kinda weak in the mix. The vocalist knows when to shut up, which is always a good thing. Takes his time, picks his spots. It's kind of a tough voice, like, you could hear him singing for some old band in the '80s, like a Forbidden or a Faith or Fear, a band from that era. European death metal bands tend to have more of that Iron Maiden/At the Gates kind of melodic, you know, the Thin Lizzy thing, it's all kinda built into their programming, you know what I mean? American bands tend to have more of that, less of a melodic touch and more of an aggressive edge, and I guess that proves my point if they're from Michigan. The way they're thrashin' out kinda reminds of maybe the first Megadeth album a little bit; the first two Megadeth albums, maybe. Y'know, solid death metal band, the vocalist has got some balls, they don't seem to get all gay on you, like they're holding back. Cool band.

www.satyrasis.net

IREPRESS Samus Octology

TRANSLATION LOSS

Please don't be black metal, please don't be black metal ... Oh boy. We're in for a long night, aren't we? I dunno, right now, at least, the opening is pretty unconventional to say the least. This part kinda reminds me of City of Caterpillar or something like that. That kind of, I don't know what you'd call that type of guitar, that kind of flamenco sound. Just waiting for some serious Killswitch vocals to come in. The drummer definitely sounds like he's a jazz guy; prob'ly at least the bass player too. I guess they're an instrumental band? If they had a vocalist, he would've been stinking it up long before that. You know he would've been shitty as hell, too. Yeah, I mean, I guess the closest thing I could probably equate this to would be like a Pelican or maybe Dysrhythmia? They're a little stranger than this, I guess. It's like, kinda post-hardcore, kinda jazzy instrumental stoner jams. I dunno. It's not my thing, man. It's not my thing at all.

www.translationloss.com

Under Pressure Black Bile

ESCAPE ARTIST

Yeah, I think I mentioned Negative Approach earlier, but this totally fuckin' sounds like Negative Approach. It's just straight Detroit hardcore. You know a lot of hardcore bands nowadays, they have that automatic metal guitar sound. There's no metal guitar sound on this; it's definitely a punk album. Drums got a little punch to 'em, some nice little lead breaks in there. The guitar kinda reminds me a little bit of *Ass Cobra* by Turbonegro. It's high-energy punk, hardcore. I think really it's the

vocalist that makes it sound like a hardcore album. If they had more of a whiny type of vocalist, they could almost be a pop punk band. 'Cause the music isn't really super-aggressive. The vocals are really what's doing it for me. I have a feeling, I don't think we're going to get any curveballs from this band. Probably a whole album of this, but you could do a lot worse.

www.escapeartistrecords.com

Dr. Slaggleberry The Slagg Factory

CRASH

I can't really get down with the instrumental metal thing. Maybe I'm a vocalist but I'm biased, you know, but I really can't think of any instrumental metal bands that really do it for me. I appreciate the musicianship and stuff. It's kinda got a *Mental Vortex* by Coroner [sound], real unconventional riffs and unorthodox, but it just never feels like it's going anywhere to me. Good musicianship, but not my cup of tea.

www.crash-records.co.uk

Revolta Thought Police

Pretty cool band! That sounds like a Slayer move right there. That's a pretty cool mosh riff. I like the vocalist. That's some fucking *Years Of Decay* shit right there, fuckin' put the stink on it. They know how to mix up the mosh parts and the fast parts. Singer's got a pair of balls.

www.myspace.com/revolta

Walken 2009 album

If they were a waiter, their tip woulda just went down to zero. That is bad service right there when you start bustin' out those fuckin' vocals. I hate it. I fucking hate it. I hate when they do the—I was just about to give the guy a compliment on his voice, and then he fuckin' has to bust out the—I mean, anybody who's even remotely familiar with metal will understand, you know, when the vocals start to get, like, this operatic kind of—and not operatic in a Bruce Dickinson way, 'cause Bruce Dickinson's got balls—I'm talkin' about the Gregorian chant type of bullshit that these bands try to pull off. And it's like, they should all just have their dicks cut off and fed to them. Fuck these bands. I just got no use for that shit, man. I mean, I'm sure they're nice guys and they prob'ly love their mommies and stuff, but I don't wanna listen to their metal album.

www.walkenroll.com

Nasum Doombringer

RELAPSE

Is this the live album? It's weird, because I expected it to sound a little more pristine than it does. It's a little more raw than I figured it would be. 'Cause, you know, you think of Nasum, they have that very, like—it's like a nicely trimmed hedge, you know what I mean? It's like they've trimmed all of the excess fat off of their sound; the only thing that's left is what they wanted, you know? It just feels very, I don't know what the term I'm looking for is. I think in some ways a raw production kinda does them good, kinda humanized them a little bit. You can tell the drummer's going for it. I was actually at that show, and they totally ripped. I actually thought the second night [of the tour they recorded this on] was their best night. The night of Nagoya they totally tore it up, but it's fuckin' merciless grind, dude. I mean, it almost wipes the taste of that last band outta my mouth. Almost. Yeah, it's Nasum; it rules. What the fuck do you want?

www.relapse.com

The Lovey Dovies Baby We Miss You

I think when I heard this record before, I was sayin' this first song sounds like straight Dinosaur Jr., kind of like a grittier Dinosaur Jr. But there's other parts of this record that make me think of, like, Afghan Whigs or, you know, just various grunge bands of that early/mid '90s period. The singer doesn't have that nasally kind of Jay Mascis voice. Even though it's demo quality, it's kind of fitting for them. It's gritty, you know, the guitars are nice and fuzzy. The drums sound live-in-a-practice-space, type of sound. I like this guy's voice a lot. I wish I'd had a chance to see them live.

lovedovies.wordpress.com

Skullflower Tribulation

CRUCIAL BLAST

I've heard some of this band's older records, and it's like noisy, dirgy stuff like Earth or SunnO))) kind of stuff. But he's been doing it for a long, long time. You know when a song starts out like this, and you start thinking, like, 'How long is this gonna go on? Does it go on for a minute? Does it go on for 20 minutes? Is it the whole album?' I dunno. I was expecting there to be more musicality to this, you know what I mean? Just based on stuff that I'd heard before, which isn't much, but this is almost like a noise thing, like, I dunno—Masonna's too over the top, but it's not quite that harsh. Every track sounds like a band getting ready to play. Like you're on stage, you got everything turned up, and it's like, EEEEEEE. And it just not kicking in. I guess he's just going for a totally abstract, 'This is a noise album,' kind of vibe. Maybe I'm just not in the mood for this sort of thing right now, but it's not doing much for me.

www.crucialblast.net ■

THERE'S LOTS TO TALK ABOUT with Voivod. They have a new album, *Infini*, on Relapse in the States and Nuclear Blast in Europe. The circumstances under which that album was recorded is a story unto itself: Their guitarist, Piggy, passed away from cancer in 2005, but not before recording on his computer his guitar tracks for two Voivod albums the band wrote, *Infini* and *Katorz*. Drummer Away, vocalist Snake, and bassist at the time Jason Newsted completed the studio work for the albums.

Voivod finally returned to the live stage in 2009, playing the festival circuit and completing a tour of Japan, with original bassist Blacky and Dan Mongrain from Martyr filling in on guitar. With this lineup Voivod started a U.S. tour supporting Kreator, and *D.U.* sat down with Away after the first show of the tour.

Voivod has lots of releases planned, both on CD and DVD. They have two DVDs under their belts, *Tatsumaki*, covering the current live incarnation of the band, and *DVOD-1*, which tackles the original lineup—Away, Snake, Blacky, and Piggy—which dates back to the '80s (the first Voivod album came out in 1984). The next DVD, *DVOD-2*, will document the second lineup of Voivod—Away, Snake, and Eric Forrest—that was together for most of the 1990s.

"It's actually in production, along with the one about the years with Jason," Away reveals. "I'm slowly working on *DVOD-2* and *DVOD-3*, the '90s and the year 2000 and on ... Bits by bits and putting everything into digital format. I mean, VHS tapes and all kind of different, um—mainly for the '90 period, it's really confusing because we have, like, chas discs and DATs and SyQuest cartridge and all," Away shakes his head in bewilderment, laughs, "so I have to put everything in digital format like I did for *DVOD-1*, and it's always two, three years of—because I do most of it at home, and while working on the art book that finally came out, and also gathering enough energy to finish *Katorz* and *Infini*, and—yeah, so everything takes quite a bit of time, because I'm also very involved in doing art for other bands, tattoo design, lately I started to do book covers—so eventually it's gonna come out.

"The thing I was working the most on were the reissues of ['80s albums] *Rrröööaaarr*, *Killing Technology* and *Dimension Hatröss*. They were gonna be remastered, and then I was in the process of putting out the Iron Gang files into DVDs for every single CD, like a bonus Iron Gang DVD for every CD [Iron Gang is the name of Voivod's fan club]. And then halfway through my work, Universal bought Sanctuary, and everything went into bureaucratic limbo. But about two weeks ago, Sanctuary phoned, saying they finally cleared everything in their office so they can start working on the projects they put on hold for two years. So this year I'm gonna be working on finishing *Rrröööaaarr*, *Killing Technology* and *Dimension Hatröss*. *Rrröööaaarr* is all done. I put a very nice DVD together with the first shows of Voivod, and Morgoth Invasion, and high school, and the first show at The Ritz, New York with Venom. Tons of stuff: demos of us improvising and writing the albums. I found a cool collage of sounds from Piggy that dated from 1980, and as it was going into digital format it was just, like, disintegrating, so the tape was too old. So I lost quite a bit of it, but I saved about 40 minutes or so. Very avant garde for a kid, you know?"

"So, halfway through *Killing Technology* a couple of years ago, Universal bought Sanctuary and everything stopped, so I'm back at it again this year.

"And what else?" Away asks himself, and pauses to think. "I mean, I don't know about writing new material or anything like that."

This is a good question, because Voivod fans all over the world must be wondering about whether Away, Snake, and Blacky will stay together after touring and write an album with Dan.

Away takes up the subject. "Yeah, it's a tough one. We all think it's a tough one. We'll see. But we do have live recordings of the last tours, one festival in Sweden, Sweden Rock Festival, and then we played Heavy Montréal Christmas last December, and everything was recorded and filmed, so there's a possibility of a live album. We have enough master tapes; that's something. Also, Jason has a lot of tapes at his home, because we recorded a lot of material at his studio. But, you know, I try to make everything available as long as it has a certain quality.

"There are two [solo] albums that Piggy wrote in 2004 and recorded before he was taken ill, and it's something that Snake and I would love to finish. So there are two albums of guitar and bass that he did; it's perfectly recorded, and then he did some vocals ideas and then some beatbox—kind of sloppy but to give a direction. So it'd be really easy for Snake and I to finish it. Again, because everything is self-produced, it's

a matter of getting enough royalties from another source to invest. It's always been like that with Voivod: take some money from this and invest it on this, and so on. Yeah."

At this point we can turn to technical matters. One of the things that makes Voivod such a special band is the guitar playing that Piggy brought to it. He was truly unique.

"Piggy tuned differently on different songs sometimes, and I know that Blacky tunes differently and I know that Dan [who replicates Piggy's guitar riffs perfectly on stage] tunes differently. I can't really say what is the tuning at all. I know that it's a little lower than usual, than 440. And Piggy used to tune one string differently to make [drop D], something like that. And I know

that through his career he tuned other strings sometimes differently, just on one song, just to have—'cause he had small fingers and he wanted to, like, explore."

Through the '80s, both Piggy and Blacky played Liberatore guitars live, named for the custom instrument builder from

Montréal. But at some point around the early 1990s, Piggy packed them away.

"He probably got bored playing with these strange-shaped guitars and wanted to try—well, he played live with the Voivod guitars, you know? But at home, he always had Les Paul and Fender Stratocaster. So, eventually I think he got bored with the Voivod guitars and decided to play Les Paul and all these guitars on stage. He also really got into a 7-strings guitar back then and played it a lot. I think on *The Outer Limits*, *Negatron* and *Phobos* he played a couple of songs on 7-strings. One of the solo albums that Snake and I want to finish is only 7-strings.

While we've got Away, we'd be remiss if we didn't ask about his drum kit. Drummers sometimes realize over time that they can express themselves with smaller kits than they thought they needed. Away used to play a kit with lots of toms and cymbals, but on this tour has a four-piece kit.

"Oh yeah, I'm down to, like, the smallest possible. I even skipped the china on the hi-hat side. It's been gone for many years. All through the '80s I had two kicks, and then starting in the '90s I went for the one kick with double pedal, and also through the '80s I was getting rid of toms one by one,"

Away laughs. "I would say that the last thing I got rid of was a second floor tom. I got rid of the smaller one; now I have only one. So one tom, one floor, one kick, one snare. I think I can do pretty much everything with a drum kit like that. Actually, it's really, really efficient; when time comes to do a 10-minute change-over, it's the best. Otherwise it'd be impossible. And I like the minimalist simplicity of it, and I like the range between one tom and floor. I dunno; it's a choice. Especially in Japan, they were quite surprised by it. They have many questions about it, like, 'Is that the kit you usually use?' But I just like it like that."

"I'm gonna try to stay on the road for as long as I can"

Getting back to future releases, Voivod previously announced intentions to reissue the Eric Forrest-era Voivod albums as a box set, on top of *DVOD-2*. But some of them have already come out with alternate covers.

"Yeah. I had nothing to do with that. It's actually pretty ugly, yeah."

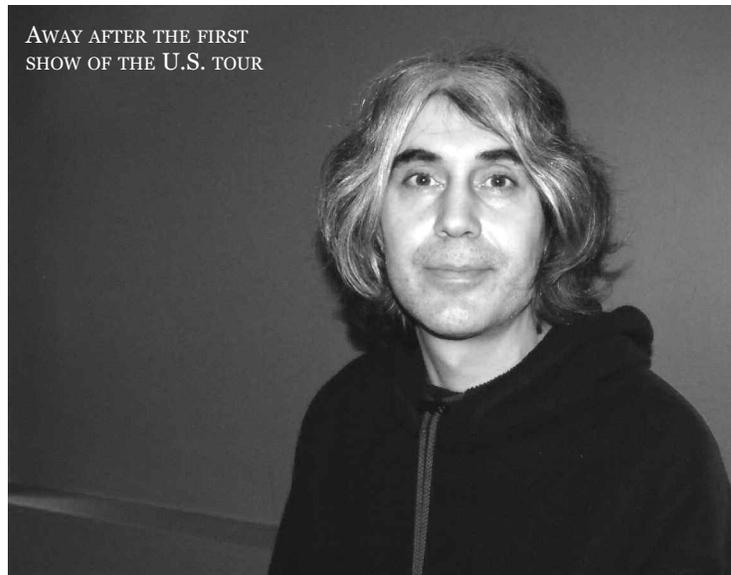
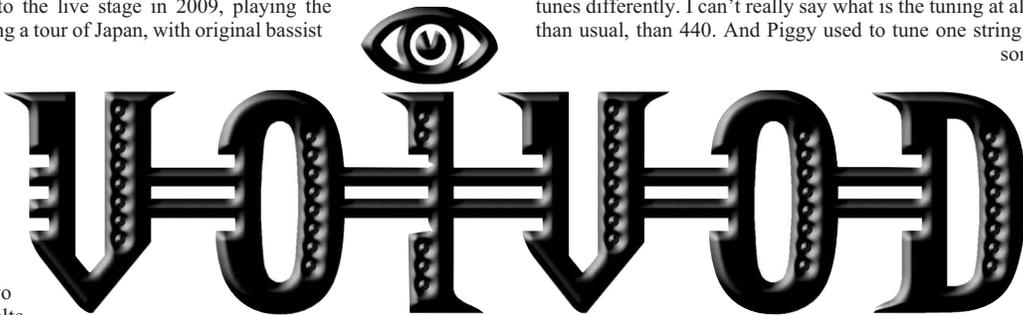
But that begs the question whether Away will still release that box set, or whether those plans have been shelved.

"Oh, no, I will, I will. 'Cause what I wanted to do was, to do like *DVOD-1*, where it was all the videos, some bootleg live footage, and some archives that we found at Musique Plus—it's the MTV of [Canada].

"And so, for Eric it's more like that; it's all the footage that I have that I want to turn into a DVD. There was also a lot of movies on the road, filming sculptures and architecture. I'd like to put that in digital format also—these are mini tapes. There's also one album that we wrote and demoed but never recorded professionally that I wanna put on there. And it's actually the

very last chapter of the [lyrical] Voivod [character] saga that we put into music and demoed everything.

"Piggy and I demoed everything while Eric was at the hospital in '99 for a year [from a bus accident while the band was on tour], and then he came out of the hospital and played the bass and sang the vocals. And we did a bunch of tours with Kreator and Neurosis in Europe and USA, and then time came to record the album. We had booked the studio, Steve Albini's studio with Steve Albini, and," Away pauses, "I don't know. In early 2000 the spirit was not there. We had lost the momentum, and I believe the



AWAY AFTER THE FIRST SHOW OF THE U.S. TOUR

accident in Germany was just too heavy, and we decided to split the band.

"I know that Eric is under the impression that he was fired, or we split the band to get rid of him, but it's really not the case. Piggy and I decided to, like, terminate the whole project, and this was in 2000, and then we spent the year 2001 doing other stuff. That's where I started to set up online galleries and establish myself a little more as a graphic artist. Piggy was working as a light man in the oldest theatre in Montréal; everything was cool. But about a year and a half after, maybe two years, we phoned each other; we had to do something, and decided to reform with Jason and Snake.

"But it's, you know, I have," Away searches for the right words. "Eric is really somebody that I appreciated all the way through. He's the only unlucky one in the whole deal, you know?"

Some Voivod fans are divided about that era of the band, but by *D.U.*'s measure the group released four amazing albums with that lineup.

"It's really what we wanted to do at that time, like all the other period we went through. We played what we wanted at specific times, and it has played against us. But we're still here," Away laughs.

As Away explains, there has been talk about putting songs from the Eric Forrester era into the band's live set.

"Snake really wants to. Blacky also. I dunno. It's a special tour. The past couple of years has been special because we played the '80s material, and we include a song from the new album to promote it, because there are labels putting money into it, so we better promote it. My reason for that, it's more like an '80s trip to me and to revisit some songs, which is great. I love playing that material, 'Overreaction' and all that! Of course I have forgotten about many of these songs, and I thought I wouldn't be able to play them again," Away laughs, "but it looks like we can, so we might as well enjoy it. I'm gonna try to stay on the road for as long as I can.

"I still dream about doing something with everybody, Eric, Jason, Blacky, Snake. That'd be awesome! That's something I would love to do one day. It's a dream that I have. We'll see. It's like a collective now, Voivod, because when Piggy passed away, it brought everybody together. It's a good thing that there's no more bad blood, even though we were always polite with each other. I remember when Blacky split and when Snake split, whenever we would meet, you know, we were never really angry with each other or anything like that. Everyone's pretty mellow. We're like metal hippies."

Do yourself a favor and visit these metal hippies at www.voivod.com. ■

BEATING THE DRUMS OF
RRRÖÖÖAAAARRR THE FIRST
NIGHT OF THE TOUR



THE TENANTS OF LUDICRA

LUDICRA'S PRAISES have been sung by *D.U.* many times before in the reviews section, but finally we had a chance to speak to the band, and are privileged to report it in these pages. Ludicra is bringing black metal to the masses, sans the "more Satanic than thou" boastings and trappings so tiring and common to the genre. Ludicra's music is a passionate and true shot in the arm to metal—grey metal as they refer to it.

The main subject under discussion is 2010's *The Tenant*, the Bay Area band's latest full-length, released by Profound Lore. In terms of influence, according to the band the new album is a cross between their first album, *Hollow Psalms*, and the classic Swiss metal band Coroner.

"There is some more metal influence creeping into our writing," reveals drummer Aesop Dekker. "Coroner is a band that we all agree on. One song really has that feel ... The blastbeats have returned, as well as the more traditional black metal guitar picking. There is a wider variety of flavors on this album; we have expanded our sonic vocabulary since our last time in the studio."

Ludicra are expanding their touring vocabulary as well. The band played the East Coast in the fall of 2009, a first for them, with Hammers of Misfortune.

Aesop recalls, "The tour was excellent. Hammers of Misfortune are pretty much our brothers and

sisters, our extended family, so being able to spend as much time as we can with them was an absolute joy. It was also an eye-opener that we need to be out more. There was a lot of 'Well, it's great to finally see you, but what took so long, and when will you be back?' So once the album is out we will be out again, sharing catharsis to those who wish to share it with us."

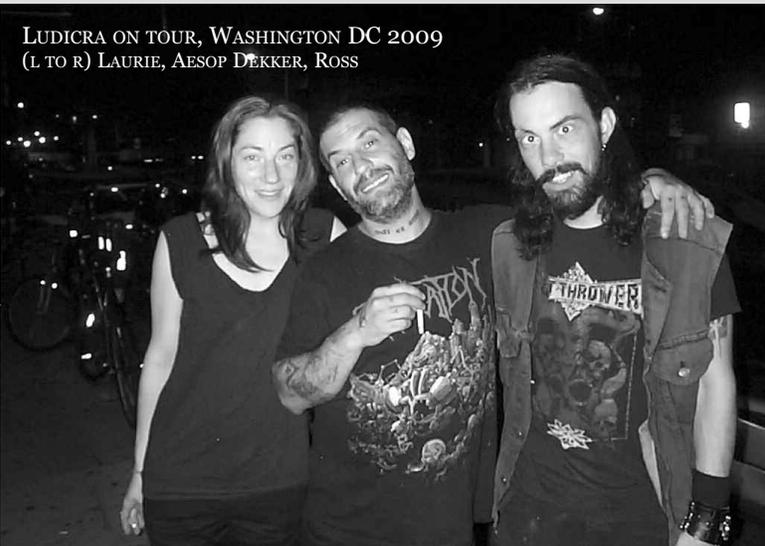
To that end the five-piece are taking it on the road in the U.S. to promote *The Tenant*. Until plans disintegrated, they were previously to be direct support of influential black metal titans Mayhem, with Tombs and Krallice along for the ride. But now they're heading out on their own.

Since the members of Ludicra don't dress up like Gene Simmons, some black metal fans might not take interest, and one guesses *The Tenant* won't change minds in that regard.

"We have always existed in a weird nebulous in-between world," Aesop explains. "The 'kvlt' kids aren't interested in us for surface reasons, mainly our unconventional aesthetic, or perhaps the fact that we have women in the band. Not sure, and I don't care. We have always attracted people who are a bit more erudite and appreciative of interesting and well-played metal regardless of trivial sub-sub-sub-genres."

Appreciative people should go to www.ludicra.org. ■

LUDICRA ON TOUR, WASHINGTON DC 2009
(L TO R) LAURIE, AESOP DEKKER, ROSS



MOVING REPORTER Asa E. has turned in an interview with and photos of another metal luminary. This time Alex Webster, bass master of Cannibal Corpse, answered his questions in faraway Norwich, UK, at a gig at University of East Anglia's on-campus venue, the LCR, where they were promoting the new album *Evisceration Plague*. Asa caught up with Mssr. Webster backstage before soundcheck as Alex was practicing some bass exercises.

D.U.: In addition to the gore factor in many Cannibal Corpse songs, there are also lyrics that can be perceived as misogynistic. Misogyny seems pervasive in extreme metal—for example, Devourment have a shirt that reads “She Should Have Said Yes.” What’s your take?

Alex Webster: Well, we had a lot more of that sort of stuff going on in the early days of the band. It wasn't to be misogynistic. Chris [Barnes], when he was our lyricist, in the old days of the band, he probably thought that women made better victims for the horror stories that he was writing. Because that's all our music is—all our lyrics are just horror stories, of course. I think that, at least for us—I can't speak for any of the other bands, and everybody's entitled to do what they want—but for us, we have a wide range of victims in our songs. Some are men, some are women ... there's definitely songs written from the point of view of the victim as well.

We definitely are not a misogynist band, but there are definitely songs that if you didn't know what kind of people we were, you could hear that way.

Among other elements, you personally are known for bass breaks/solos. How did this first come up as an idea? Was this a weird or groundbreaking thing? Normally, many bass players in death metal are buried in the mix, less so now, but...

When we first started out, in addition to death metal, we'd been listening to a lot of proto-death metal stuff. To me, the first two Kreator records are as much death metal as they are proto-thrash. That kinda stuff, with the real fast drums and the tremelo-picked guitars, didn't really have bass breaks that often. Kreator, Death, old Sodom ... but some of the other stuff we listened to that was more hardcore-influenced, the crossover kinda stuff, like SOD or DRI, that stuff had a bunch of bass breaks in it. It's kinda a signature thing of that kind of music. I think it kinda worked in that way. On “Put Them to Death” on the first record [1990's *Eaten Back to Life*] I wrote that riff, and the guys said, “well, why not introduce that as a bass part?” There's also another part in “Mangled” where the same thing happened.

For the first three records, we did write together a lot more. “Hammer Smashed Face,” same thing. It's not really a solo, it's more the bass introducing the part. And that's something that so many death metal bands did. Morbid Angel did it on the song “Suffocation” [from 1989's *Altars of Madness*]. It wasn't really that common—just something we did, and we didn't really think about it all that much.

I was listening to Sadus' and Autopsy's first records a lot, and they both had Steve DiGiorgio on them. [Sadus'] song “Twisted Face” started with a lot of cool bass stuff. The whole *Illusions* album had a lot great bass lines on it, and the Autopsy record [*Severed Survival*, 1989] has got really cool bass playing, so those were big influences for sure, especially back then.

In general, I just want the bass to be an equal instrument to the other instruments. Not overpowering, just equal.

In the past, most Cannibal Corpse album covers have been very explicit. [With the latest records] *Kill* only had the title on its cover, and *Evisceration Plague* just has a bunch of zombies. Was this an intentional downplaying of the gore themes?

We like the gore, and there's gore on the interior of the record. There's actually a very gory piece of art that's the centerpiece of *Evisceration Plague*, but we didn't put it on the cover. But my favorite piece of art we've used for an album might just be the

censored version of *Gallery of Suicide* [1998] where it's just the outside of a building. It's all dark and evil... I just like darker, more moody kinds of stuff. I mean, I love the gore, for sure—*Butchered at Birth* [1991] is probably the best of the gory ones. It and *Gallery* are both good. We definitely

like different types of horror. Like the more realistic and frightening horror like *The Shining* or maybe *The Exorcist*, movies like that where it's more believable because a lot is left to the imagination. We also like horror that's much more in your face—*Evil Dead*, that sort of thing, where it's very obvious and people are being torn apart. We have both kinds of album covers to reflect that.

I mean, if you look at *The Wretched Spawn* [2004], that was one of our most grotesque covers and that was only a few years ago. We still might have gory covers in the future. The thing about having two pieces of art and having the gory one on the interior is ... well, there aren't too many mom-and-pop record stores left in the United States. A lot are going out of business. They were the places where you could sell uncensored albums. Now it's at the point where if you make an album with a gory cover, it's not going to be in one of the big chains or anywhere except online. And as you can imagine, the record company wouldn't be too happy with an album nobody will sell anywhere. So it's best if we can find something dark and scary on the outside we're satisfied with, and also have something gory on the inside where a censor can't see it. They don't look too deeply into it.

We had been making censored versions of our records for so long and were tired of doing crappy censored versions with a boring piece of art and no lyrics on the inside. Now we've got two pieces of art we're very satisfied with, all the lyrics, and at least with all the American copies, a free DVD. So both artistically and from a business side of things, it works out well to do it that way. Everyone wins—especially the fans. If there's one big winner out of the whole illegal downloading thing, it's them. They're getting lower prices and more album content.

What do you think sets *Evisceration Plague* apart from the band's previous records?

It's really hard to say, because they're all death metal records. I think *Evisceration Plague* might have a little more variety than maybe some of the other records. We've always gone for variety, though ... It's another Cannibal Corpse album with a whole group of new songs, like every one before it, really. This one has some more dark melody and different rhythms on it. In general, it's just hopefully the best version of the kind of death metal we've always done. It's hard to explain ... more the kind of thing you have to listen to and decide for yourself if it's got good variety or not. It's hard for

me to explain without getting overly technical, like, “we use this scale here,” that sort of boring stuff. We tried some different things and tried to keep it well within the boundaries of brutal death metal. That's all we wanna be. We don't want anything else in our sound. But I do feel that within the genre's boundaries, there's still a lot of room to experiment.

Speaking of which—in a recent interview with the UK's *Zero Tolerance* magazine, you discussed what album's defining the death metal genre—Morbid Angel's *Altars of Madness*, Immolation's *Dawn of Possession* [1991], Death's *Scream Bloody Gore* [1987], but what about more out there, less straightforward death metal bands like, say, Atheist? I know you're a big fan of [Atheist bass player] Roger Patterson.

I'm a huge fan of Roger and really anyone else who played

bass in Atheist, too. But y'know, I don't think Atheist would consider themselves a 100% pure death metal band. They're just a great band, and the fact that they might not relate directly to a genre might be something they're comfortable with. I suspect that's the case. I think any band that's going for any sort of progressive or avant-garde take on death metal or any other genre are not particularly concerned with what label they get tagged with.



COURTESY METALBLADE.COM



ALEX WEBSTER, TEARING IT UP IN THE UK

Have you heard of Virginia's Cannabis Corpse, and if so what do you think of them?

Yeah! They're cool! Obviously, they're goofing around with our band name and song titles, but the music they're making is actually really good. Despite all the joking and silliness, they're making music that's worth listening to. It's clear that they actually put a lot of time into it.

What would you say is the best-yet-most-underrated CC song you've ever written?

There's a bunch. On our albums, especially in the past five or six, the more catchy songs are the first half, and then the second half is much more obscure, technical kind of stuff. Some of Pat [O'Brien, guitar]'s songs, like "Hacksaw Decapitation," get lost in the shuffle, I guess, because we have so many songs, and a lot of people only focus on the album's first half. I've done a bunch I'm really happy with—"Grotesque," "Sickening Metamorphosis," "Mutation Of The Cadaver" and on this record "Unnatural" as for songs not as many people get into. There was a lot of time put into every song, though, especially as we got better as players and songwriters.

"I love the gore,
for sure"

What's a great, old school Cannibal Corpse tour story?

All these questions are the hardest ones to answer—cool stuff happens, but some of it you just end up forgetting about. But there's been a lot of good times, and it all comes back to the people you meet. Like the friends you're hanging out with. Like when we shared a bus with Malevolent Creation back in '92. Two bands from Buffalo. Can't think of a particular story that merits retelling here.

In a behind-the-scenes-video for *The Wretched Spawn*, you mention that you like all sorts of music and often try to think to integrate it with death metal. What's a specific song that demonstrates this mix?

You can learn anything you want about music—it's all going to help your brain better understand music. I think it sparks creativity. With bass playing, there's a lot of emphasis on having a groove and doing things that are syncopated. A lot of the better bass players like Jaco Pastorius and Rocco Prestia and Gary Willis do killer fingerstyle playing, and I've been getting more and more into how to use that with Cannibal without it not being death metal. If you have 16th notes in a funk song in a happy scale, it sounds like funk. But if you play in a different scale and don't use ghost notes like funk players do, it can sound like death metal with a killer groove. With the right kind of rhythm, it can sound heavy as fuck. I try to do that on songs like "Monolith" and "Five Nails Through The Neck"—both have a heavy, 16th note sort of death metal groove thing inspired by the bass playing I've studied.

Do you think death metal's future is bright? What are some newer favorites of yours?

Yeah, I think it's bright. It's a music that gets a lot of interest from great musicians. I think if it was simpler, there would be less interest, because you've got your format and you follow it. With death metal, there's no real format except for boundaries like sounding evil, playing fast a lot of the time, having guttural vocals—but beyond that, how do you do it differently from other bands in the genre? There's boundaries, but they're not always clear. At what point does it sound like thrash or black metal, too? I think it has a bright future because of that openness. You can add to the genre just by being involved. There's no set tradition. You don't have to sound like death metal bands 20 years ago.

There's a lot of good new bands. Necrophagist definitely expanded on the formula. Spawn of Possession did too. Obscura are awesome as well. I don't see [the genre] ever stopping. Who knows if it'll ever get truly popular. I mean, I wouldn't say "who cares?" because I want to see these hardworking musicians not going home in debt and to some job they hate just because they spent all their money putting gas in the tank. I see it happen to bands that are unbelievably talented.

I think death metal can get popular, because it's great music, even if the bands aren't selling that well now, comparatively.

You guys have sold over a million copies, though.

Yeah, but for us, that was over the course of 9 or 10 albums, counting all the total sales per album. Whereas with a band like System Of A Down—who did something really different, whether you like it or not—sold a couple million records of each album. We've come a long way, but there's still a ways to go.

What are your current favorite records?

Blasphemic Cruelty's record *Devil's Mayhem*. Just got it on tour and it's killer. More of the old school Morbid Angel/Possessed kind of death metal. Also just got the Obscura record and it's awesome as well. [Bassist] Jeroen Paul Thesseling is amazing—we're gonna tour with them in the States in the fall. It's not metal, but I really like that album *Art Metal* by Jonas Hellborg. Messhugah's last one [*Obzen*] was good ... the new Psychroptic [*Ob(Servant)*] ... oh, the new Deeds of Flesh [*Of What's To Come*!] They've always had good bass players, but they have this guy Erlend Caspersen on it and it's fantastic. Hour of Penance out of Italy—check them out too.

Lots of good stuff out there. Anytime I hear someone go, "Oh, the death metal scene is dead," I go, "You're just not paying attention." ■

DISPOSABLE MUSIC REVIEWS

Agathocles *Mince Core History 1996-1997*

SELFMADEGOD

As the title suggests, the latest in the series of Agathocles *Mince Core History* compilations released by Selfmadegod covers the band's usual slew of 7"es and LPs released between 1996 and 1997, and it's more or less exactly what you've come to expect from the Belgian grind crew. While the mid-'90s saw AG occasionally trying their hand at incorporating metallic crust and crude death metal elements, the core sound remains the same: a raw and effective (if typically sloppy) hybrid of troglodyte grind and raw hardcore. You should know by now if you're interested in Agathocles' brand of impassioned, hastily written/performed grind; if you fall on the "not interested" side of the fence, it's extremely unlikely that anything on this disc will change your mind. While you have to really admire their unwavering dedication to DIY grindcore, when you're as absolutely hellbent to commit every riff you've ever written to vinyl as Agathocles seem to be, you're inevitably going to pay the price when it comes to the overall quality of your output, and subsequently there's been a fair amount of Agathocles material over the years that simply does not merit repeated listens. Luckily, this latest entry into Selfmadegod's series of Agathocles archives mostly avoids that, as it's packed with fairly strong material across the board. To boot, the CD includes extensive and entertaining liner notes by Jan AG, and is a must-have for the AG completist. (by Mason)

www.selfmadegod.com

Akercocke *Antichrist*

EARACHE

Antichrist is a record that this reviewer thought Akercocke didn't have in them. Earlier records such as *Goat of Mendes* were only halfway satisfying, but *Antichrist* is firing on all cylinders. It's catchy when it needs to be (hold on, how did those parts of "The Dark Inside" get on a death metal album? No matter—more of it, please), melodic and soft when it sounds good to be, extreme and pummeling when it should be, and pushes the Akercocke envelope in the right places, like in the definitely non-British influenced "Distant Fires Reflect in the Eyes of Satan." There's no "I hate it when they go into these sorts of parts" moments here ... maybe the die-hard fan never entertains such thoughts, but those on the fence might have. But fear not! This is a strong record, stays strong with repeated listens, and will not disappoint.

www.earache.com

Be'lakor *Stone's Reach*

RIOT! / PRIME CUTS

The boys from Melbourne's second album is impressive just when you look at the sleeve. Nice layout, nice fonts, nice photography. Be'lakor uses electric guitar harmonies, keyboards and acoustic guitars with the lyrics and packaging to effectively weave a mood while one listens to the record. Although they refer to themselves as a metal band, *D.U.* thinks they've got death metal going on, in the way that Opeth is death metal. In fact there's a huge Opeth influence here, as well as the post-At the Gates choppy guitar melodies that one hears so often these days. But vocally it's straight death metal. And Be'lakor are good at what they're doing and have done a fine job of it.

www.myspace.com/belakor

Buckshot Facelift *Anchors of the Armless Gods*

OLD SOULS COLLECTIVE

New York's Buckshot Facelift is a bitter lot. The insert reads in part, "This LP was self-released without any help from some shitty label. Do it your fucking self." Any questions?

They packed 14 songs onto the one side of a 12" (the other side features a cool etching), and as was described in the last issue of *D.U.*, these guys play grind/powerviolence music with plenty of breakdowns, raspy screams, low growls, and a charmingly generic goregrind-style pitch shifter on the vocals. The lyrics in the main are still hard to comprehend but leaves you with the impression—by way of talking about unpleasant things like venom, poison, goats, and bodily fluids—that as a band Buckshot a) does a lot of drugs, b) was traumatized as a child, and/or c) has a screw loose. But let all that be part of the reason that *D.U.* once more recommends its readers contact this band and order this vinyl. But do it fast! There's only 200 of these hand-numbered babies!

www.myspace.com/buckshotfacelift100

Cobalt Blue

ROBOTIC EMPIRE

Florida's Cobalt has an interesting mix of flavors, like jangly guitar, short blast beats, fast tempos, group yells, start/stop song structures, and varying song lengths. They keep things shifting to keep us attention-deficit slobs in check. But that's only part of the time. The rest of *Blue* consists of dirgy, droning instrumental material that goes on way too long. It would appear they have an identity crisis, but not in a good way. For a band

like Cobalt, throwing a shoegaze at the listener in small doses is great to keep them guessing, but one would think their listeners want their faces rocked off, and not led into a trance.

www.roboticempire.com

Conquest of Steel *StormSword: Rise Of The Dread Queen*

NO FACE

As much as I love epic metal, this relatively boring stab at a power metal concept album misses the mark due to a ponderous lack of interesting riffs and extremely similar, repetitive mid-tempo parts that seem to crop up in every song. Despite the relative brevity of the tracks (most hover around the three-minute mark), *StormSword* sort of goes on and on without any real variation (aside from a few run-of-the-mill intro parts) and leaves you with the impression of a rather rushed affair. Bottom line: solid players, undeveloped songs. Stick with your Brocas Helm and Omen CDs. (by Mason)

www.nofacerecords.co.uk

Death Breath

Readers won't remember Death Breath from the pages of *D.U.* since we've never written about them. They put out an EP, *Let it Stink*, and an album, *Stinking Up the Night*, in 2006/2007 on Relapse, and are working on a new album which they're recording in chunks (bloody, fleshy ones no doubt). The band is run by two musicians, Robert Pehrsson from Thunder Express and Dundertåget and Nicke Andersson from the Hellcopters. Nicke used to play drums in Entombed, so this is a kind of return to form for him, except Death Breath is much more simplistic and "traditional death metal" than Entombed ever was (although Entombed helped write the book in the earlier days). There's a big Repulsion influence with Death Breath, although there's no blast beats.

As opposed to full-length *Stinking Up the Night*, *Let it Stink* features seven songs, three of which are Bathory/Discharge/G.B.H. covers that give the record a punky hardcore feel, and also two versions of a bonus video called "Wrath of the Corpse," a fun little piece involving a zombie and a graveyard.

The production is perfect for the vein these guys are digging into, the old school death metal. This means the sound is dry and dirty, there's no drum triggers and a lack of Pro-Tools as the band proudly proclaims, and it sounds like the band is playing in an abandoned farmhouse or long-empty town meeting hall.

www.relapse.com

Harpoon *Double Gnarly/Triple Suicide*

INTERLOPER

When it comes to drum-machine grindcore bands, these guys are no doubt among the elite with a debut album teeming with a seemingly endless barrage of solid, savage (and even occasionally tricky) riffing and a sick buzzsaw guitar tone. Interesting: it sounds like they're playing in standard tuning (or close to it), which not only keeps the riffs distinguishable, but also gives them a nice, thrashy vibe. The drum programming is top-notch, and unlike a lot of grind bands who employ drum machines, the machine doesn't obscure the guitar riffs the moment the blasts kick in. It's refreshing to hear a drum machine grind band so clearly committed to putting out such strong, well-thought out material, and while Harpoon may not have much to offer aesthetically, I'll take a nondescript album cover and lyrics any day over the played-out, pedestrian, "shocking" misogynist or gore lyrics so typical of drum machine grind bands. Harpoon are no doubt far superior to the XXX Maniacs of the world! Definitely worth checking out. (by Mason)

www.interloperrecords.net

Landmine Marathon update

Arizona, USA has produced a band with aggression and spitting venom to spare. Landmine Marathon shows how mad at the world they are on *Wounded*, an album with thrashing rages and blast beatings.

In the riff and drum department, one hears a strong old Bolt Thrower influence, but the lead vocals have their own rasp going. That's where much of the aggression comes from. The band spends most of its time on *Wounded* playing at breakneck speeds, slowing down only for some crunching or double-bassing.

As for the split CD with Scarecrow, just three songs from each band and more of the same headbanging metal from Landmine Marathon. Scarecrow turns in a traditional fistful of thrash metal, with a little Metallica or Megadeth influence in the guitars, with clean vocals. Matt Harvey (Exhumed, Repulsion, etc.) is on rhythm guitar and sings.

Prosthetic Records reissued Landmine Marathon's *Rusted Eyes Awake*, but for these other two releases, check here:

www.level-plane.com or www.myspace.com/landminemarathon

Necroblaspheme *Destination: Nulle Part*

AGONIA

These French metalers sure know how to set a mood. The first song has an unsettling creep to it, especially when you check out the strange cover art along with it. But with track two (nine in all) the blast beats come in. Heavy production and the right kind of riffs and vocals to evoke the evil we all want in our death metal. The approach to the almost patchwork song arrangements at moments on this album, added with the un-death metal song titles such as "????>I" and "Sorry For Us" and the "Sussudio" sample [for reasons *D.U.* cannot fathom] ensure listeners that, while Necroblaspheme has old-school influences, it's not prepared to deliver the same old thing.

www.agoniarecords.com

Panzram *Demo*

WTFHTT? / HUMAN CRUSH

The last time I saw a tape with a sleeve that did something besides fold out sideways was Slayer's *Seasons in the Abyss* tape sleeve. Panzram's got a booklet built into their tape sleeve. That's pretty awesome!

The lyrics are emo, and are a real bummer to read, but not to the point of whiny. Musically, these two guys tear it up with copious amounts of d-beats, feedback, screams, and distortion, with some Assück-style blast beats thrown in. It's got a sort of old Born Dead Icons vibe, mixed with noise rock—not the A.C. kind or the Unsanse kind (as they've been referred to anyway), but the Caustic Christ out-of-tune sludgy hardcore kind of way, or maybe some Eyehategod kind of way.

hiszeroisgone@yahoo.com

Ratos de Porão *Hominem Inimigo do Hominem*

ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES

After more than 25 fucking years, RDP is still settin' 'em up and knockin' 'em down. Containing some elements from the past, like *Carniceria Tropical* for example, the *Hominem* album is a tough, fast, down south mother of a beatdown record. Each member of the band gets his spot in the sun here, and each one brings a fist to the face and a boot to the dome to our poor asses. Young whipper-snappers should give RDP a spin and see how the old timers do it, and do it right the first time.

www.alternativetentacles.com

Sourvein update

With several EPs and split EPs under its belt, the four-piece band Sourvein has been slogging it out, slinging doom at anyone who comes near, since 1992. *Ghetto Angel* and the earlier *Emerald Vulture* (both on This Dark Reign) are no exceptions, what with the high-end vocal brutality mixing with the thick, feedbacking guitar and bass and the thud of the drums. Add to that a creepy sample in places and the effective drone noise at the end of *Emerald Vulture*.

Sourvein isn't the type of band to lay out its lyrics in an easily decipherable way, if at all. Instead, they let the grinding, plodding doom metal do the talking on each of these four-song EPs. The music is somewhat simplistic compared to some faster bands in different genres, but so much the better for Sourvein to deliver the downtuned songs they're serving up.

www.thisdarkreign.com or www.myspace.com/sourvein13

The Communion / Compound Terror split 7"

JUST SAY NO! / MIDNIGHT SEA

By way of scratchy production The Communion appears on a thick- and colored-vinyl EP—these guys usually record for their demos/splits in their rehearsal room. But some Autopsy influence has crept into the grindcore/powerviolence the band from NY bangs out. Maybe it was there all along, but *D.U.* is picking it out now. Lyrically, The Communion is pretty bent! No electronic noise on their side, as was the case with the last split CD, so apparently they've saved it for their live sets.

Compound Terror is a three-piece with no bass; that set up that should be familiar by now. Seems like they tune pretty low. Their side starts out with an interesting, subtle soundscape before the grind kicks in. One can pick out a slight Pig Destroyer influence in the riffs. All in all, if you like it fast and furious and screaming distortion, put this split on your list!

www.justsaynorecords.com or www.myspace.com/mnsrecs

Under Pressure *Come Clean*

ESCAPE ARTIST

Fuck yes!!! Do you remember Poison Idea? Under Pressure evidently does, and they've taken all of the tricks they picked up from their P.I. releases and other '80s hardcore classics to create a truly fucking killer hardcore album. Even more exceptionally, they manage to capture the vibe of Poison Idea without sounding blatantly derivative; make no mistake, *Come Clean* is NOT the hardcore equivalent of some dime-a-dozen retro-thrash band. The sincerity and intensity bleed through here, every track is honed to crushing precision—even the lyrics are thoughtful and interesting. Better yet, Under Pressure are smart enough to know how to get in, do their damage, and then get the fuck out while you're still pulling your teeth outta the drywall. At just over 30 minutes, *Come Clean* is a compact, near-perfectly executed example that hardcore can still be amazingly, brutally vital. At the risk of sounding excessive hyperbolic, this is the best hardcore album I've heard in the last couple of years by a mile. (by Mason)

www.escapeartistrecords.com

Your Demise *Ignorance Never Dies*

VISIBLE NOISE

New York hardcore is alive and well in jolly old England, as evidenced by the raging Sick of It All/Agnostic Front/Leeway, maybe, worship at play on *Ignorance Never Dies*. More build-ups and break downs that you can shake a stick at. There's even old-school musings on each lyric in the sleeve (the layout is nice and chaotic, too). While they're clearly not original, these guys aren't just a throwback band as they feature modern production with an in-your-face triggered snare and a bass guitar that's nice and loud in the mix. There's also bass drops in every possible place to stick one, and a few soundscape pieces that perhaps are influenced by Aphex Twin. In any case, pull on your hoodies and start pickin' up change: Your Demise is in town and ready to go.

www.visiblenoise.com ■