

DISPOSABLE UNDERGROUND

championing the
musically jaded
for over eight years

NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 23

D.U. NEWSLETTER BY RICHARD JOHNSON UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. CONTRIBUTORS: R. MASON, JR HAYES, BLAKE MIDGET, JAKE CREGGER. ENJOY.
PMB #570 • 21010 SOUTHBANK ST • STERLING VA 20165 • USA

UDO DIRKSCHNEIDER

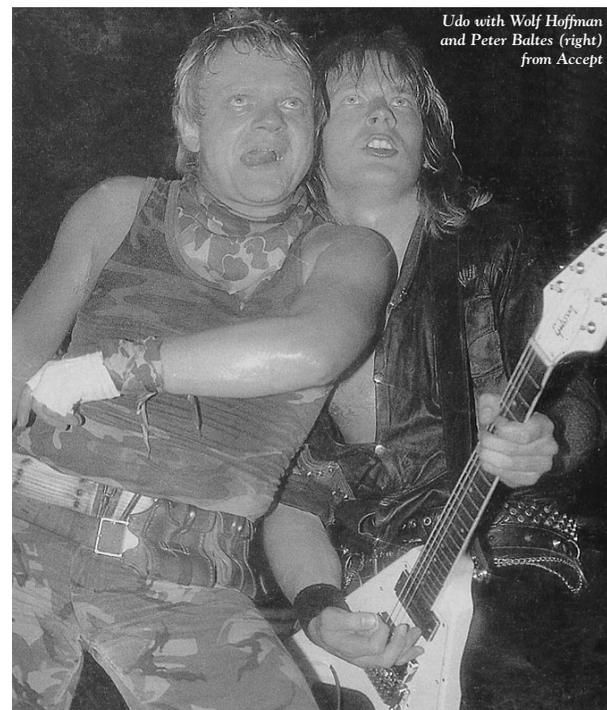
was formerly the singer for the important German metal band Accept. Udo's been rocking ever since he formed Accept in 1971 (the proper Accept lineup came together in 1976 and soon released its first album), and also has been playing in his solo band, U.D.O., for which he put out his first record in 1987 after parting ways with Accept. U.D.O. has a new album, *Holy*, out on Nuclear Blast/Breaker Records.

D.U.: Am I correct in saying that for the first U.D.O. album, *Animal House*, Accept wrote all the songs?

Udo: Yeah, so when I did U.D.O. at the first time, all the songs what I did on *Animal House* was planned for the [Accept] album after *Russian Roulette*.

Really?

Yes, but then they decide to go more commercial and was looking for a new singer, and then they said, "OK, we don't use these songs anymore. If you wanna have them, you can have it for the first U.D.O. album." So I said "OK, they're very good songs."



Udo with Wolf Hoffman and Peter Baltes (right) from Accept

I mean, it was also a very easy stuff for me to do the solo thing.

So after that they did *Eat the Heat*?

Yeah, then they did the *Eat the Heat* album.

I never actually knew why Accept got a new singer in the first place.

Yeah, so at this time in '86 they was listened to the wrong people, you know? And so when they was finished with the *Eat the Heat* album, they start an American tour and after six weeks the

whole band split up. And they was talking about this later on and then they realized that they did a big mistake, you know? So what can I say [laughs]. [The rest is] history.

Then they came back to you.

Yeah, and then we was putting out the live album, *Staying A Life*, and this album was selling a lot, you know? And then we get tons of fan mails from all over the world and they start asking, "Please get back together," and bla bla bla. And then we had a meeting in '92 and we said, "OK, we try it again." So then we did three albums with Accept, *Objection Overruled*, *Death Row* and *Predator*. But I think in the end with *Predator*, hmm ... how can I say this, um ...

It wasn't quite the same anymore?

No, you know, the atmosphere was wrong. It was nothing really a bad vibe but music-

wise there was the atmosphere, the chemical was not right anymore, you know? And I think that then we decide to do the last tour in '96 and then say, "OK, Accept is definitely over." So then I start U.D.O. again.

How long has it been that Stefan Kaufman [longtime Accept drummer] has been playing guitar instead of drums for U.D.O.?



There was the first U.D.O. album [the *Solid* album, at] the end of '96 after the split up with Accept; then he was doing the guitars. But Stefan, he was playing already the guitar before he started playing drums, you know? So he's doing it for a long time, so I knew he was very good on guitar. And so when I decide to do the reunion with U.D.O., I ask him, "So, you wanna join the band?" and he said, "Yes, of course, absolutely" [laughs]. **You wanted him to play guitar instead of drums.**

Yes, yes. But he cannot play the drums anymore. He has a big back problem. So that means now with a guitar he's in the front of the stage, and that was a little bit difficult in the beginning for him. But now it works out very well and he's growing better and better.

I've been reading in the past about some health problems.

Yeah, some stupid guy was telling the journalist that I had a heart attack, but it was not true. I mean, I had a ... how you say this in English ... a body breakdown, something like that. So that was around 1990, I did the *Faceless World* album. I

was overworked. I mean, I was composing for some bands over here in Germany, I was involved in different productions, then on my own production, I was my own management, I had some contract problems, a lot of things happened. I think it was a little bit too much. But then I did a rest for three months and then ...

That was it.

That was it. I mean, I'm fine, so there's no problems at all.

Did you guys all learn English in school?

Yes, we learned English at the school, and so of course if you are in this business and you work international, you have to talk English more than German [laughs]. So now let's say for example in U.D.O. at the moment we have two guys that are coming from Switzerland, from Italian part, so they speak Italian, they don't speak German [laughs], but they speak perfect English, and also we have two English roadies. That means in the nightliner most of the time we talk English.

You hear about bands that learn how to speak English at the same time they're in the band, and they're trying to write lyrics in English.

After all these years I think my English is not perfect, but it works [laughs]. Sometimes you search for the right words or maybe you say something in the wrong way, but so far I never had any problems [laughs].

Over the years you have to say it's gotten a lot easier to compose lyrics, right?

So you know, I got so many ideas for lyrics in my head. If you switch the news on on the TV, you got a lot of ideas, and a lot of things what happen around you, and when you on tour you see sometimes of things that you can make up some lyrics, but I write them down in English. But then finally we have somebody when from England, so he has a look over all the lyrics to make it in the right way. I think this is important. I don't want to do anything stupid [laughs].

That's everything. Is there anything you want to say to your fans out there?

Yeah, this year we are coming to America. I have to come, [laughs]. So also I hope there are still a good crowd for metal music in America, and what can I say, metal never dies. ■

After leaving the 80s rock/metal band Dokken, guitarist George Lynch formed Lynch Mob and has released several LPs, the latest, *Smoke This* (on Koch Records), featuring a new sound for the band.

Mason submitted the following interview for your enjoyment:

D.U.: Going back in time a little bit, what initially started you playing guitar?

George Lynch: I was just generally interested in music, not guitar in particular at first. Just listening to bands like, you know, old blues, R&B, basically black groups, a lot of classical stuff, flamenco guitar. My father kind of pushed me into guitar. [He] wanted me to play classical, and then of course I gradually worked into rock, and then I guess the Beatles were like my first big influence in rock music. It got me going.

I read that you were considered as a replacement for Randy Rhodes after his untimely departure from Ozzy's band.

Yeah, I was considered, and [I] actually flew out and did some auditions and hung out for a while and [did] some rehearsals and so forth. That happened on three different occasions.

Really? Wow.

But I never quite cut it. So yeah, that was kind of disappointing, I thought at the time, but maybe it was for the best.

Considering how closely you're associated with Dokken and all the incredible guitar work you did while you were involved with that, is it strange seeing that band continue after your departure?

Uh, no, not at all. I mean, I think that they're gonna milk that as long as they can [laughs].

I notice a sticker in your press pack that said "fuck retro rock". With that sentiment in mind, what is your whole take on the success of the Poison tour packages



and the Dee Snider radio show and the big insurgence of interest in straight-up melodic 80s metal?

Well, I think there was a quality to that music that we did back then that was very cool. I think [with Lynch Mob] we're isolating the elements of what it was that was really appealing, and discarding some of the more frivolous, less essential elements [of] that music, and maybe we'll be incorporating that into new music as we go forward. But I really think it's some kind of anomaly. As far as just bringing back the 80s, it's just nostalgic, you know. I don't think we're really ever gonna go back there. I think it was just kind of a fluke. Y'know, I went to see that [Poison/] Ratt show and I thought it was cool; I've always liked Ratt. But it really doesn't relate to what's going on right now.

What's your impression of how things started changing in the early 90s as the lyrical aspects of a lot of bands went for a more negative, nihilistic slant as opposed to the more straight forward, optimistic, cliché-ridden lyrical approach of a lot of the 80s metal bands?

Well, it was just a reaction to the fact that the 80s was a very shallow decade in a lot of respects. All that music was a reflection of that. And another generation came along in the 90s and discounted that last generation, which all generations will do and have done. They'll build their culture on the ashes of the previous generation. I think you need to break things down to grow. And I'm breaking down what I have been known for, if anybody cares or if it matters – I know it matters to me – and recreating myself. In one respect I can't say that I'm not trying to remain viable. I am. Music is my life; it's also a business. It's what I do for a living. In one respect you could look at it as a product or a company, you know? You have to remain flexible and continue to grow and find new areas and let the old stuff die [laughs]. But I could never just sit and

do the same damn thing decade after decade and live off something I did eons ago. I mean, what's the point? I'd rather just get a job.

Lynch Mob

Considering the awkward transition some metal bands have had trying to, for lack of a better word, modernize their sound, were you initially leary of the reaction you'd get from the long-time die hard

George Lynch fans with the new version of Lynch Mob?

Yeah, I expect that. I expect any kind of change to be painful. It's a painful process and I don't expect it to be seamless. I'm just catching up to making changes I should've made a long time ago. Although it may seem like a dramatic change to some people because it's been a while since I've done anything other than what I've been expected to do, really what I have always liked is really more groove oriented music that really goes more back to black music, ethnic music, urban music like Stevie Wonder, James Brown. I mean, these guys are my heroes, you know? Basically everybody's heroes. I mean, all music came from there.

It seems like some of that was hinted on your *Sacred Groove* solo record, so it wasn't totally a surprise, I think.

Hmm ... I don't know about that. I think on that album I pretty much covered every base without a whole lot of forethought as to what direction that was gonna go in. I didn't really have a direction. I just wanted to throw ideas off the top of my head out there and stretch out a bit. This album [*Smoke This*] also didn't really have a clear cut direction other than what the other members of the band brought to the mix. So I didn't say, "Hey, I want rap" or "I want hip-hop" or anything like that. I just played with people I liked who had good energy and we all got along together and this is what happened. It was not preconceived.

As far as the live shows go, how have those been going so far?

We haven't really started touring. We've done a few just one-off things here and there, some kind of record release parties and in-stores and some trade things. And we have done a couple actual real shows that just were kind of getting our feet wet locally in clubs and stuff. We did a show here in Phoenix and it was wonderful. It was a packed house, we played great, the audience was totally into it. And there's always gonna be three or four stragglers out there, you know. "What's all this? We just want straight-up 80s/early 90s Dokken/Lynch Mob. We're not happy with this." And so we got a little bit of that everywhere we've played, but not a lot, you know? And we also incorporate the older songs into our set.

Really?

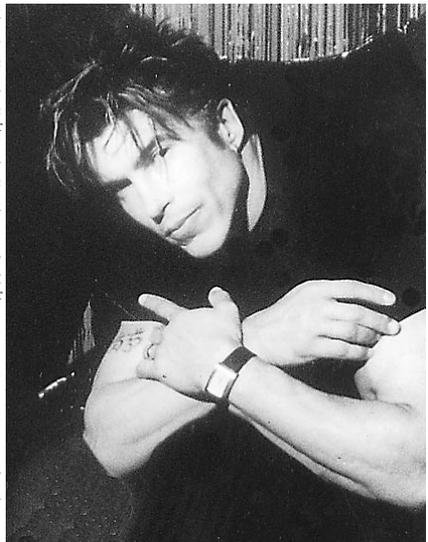
Because we want to ease people into it. This isn't a band that's like, "Well, we're not gonna do any old stuff." We don't care. I mean, we'll do anything. We play covers, we go off and do like funk stuff that every night changes, just improvising. The band's so good, I don't care what happens [laughs]. So I think when people come to see us live, they're gonna realize that the band has really a lot of substance and a lotta heart and isn't really trying to follow what's trendy. We do have our own distinct sound and I think that's what's unique about us. It's all about live, this band. I don't think the [new] record is up to what the band is when you see us.

Since you're considered a guitar god by so many people, I'd like to get your opinion on some other guitar players, your contemporaries, in a way. First one that comes to mind is Warren D. Martini.

Well, I think Warren and I have sort of similar tastes in what we like to convey as guitarists: pretty much blues-based rock with, you know, our own personal, unique style that we apply to that, and I think that's where we find our niche. And I think our styles are very similar; we both rely very much on a personal vibrato that we use in our technique and phrasing, and I think it's kind of basic Panatonic blues scale stuff with a little twist to it. I think I'm a little more adventurous in my style and he's a little bit more entrenched in, and is much better at, what he does and what he's known for, where I just kind of spread myself out over a lot of different areas, not so much so as, say, Steve Vai, who's everywhere.

Any comments on Vernon Reid's playing?

I never got Vernon Reid's style. I thought he was maybe a better composer, things in that area, but not as far as his soloing. You know, I read an interview with him in a guitar magazine, and if you'd never heard him play and you read the info, I was like, "This guy knows his shit. This guy's really technical. He sounds like the world's greatest guitar play in print" [laughs]. But it doesn't quite translate that way for me on record, so maybe I'm missing something.



Any advice to aspiring guitar players?

Oh boy, yeah ... well, I think there's a lot of different approaches you can take, and I think the best way to make sure you have all the tools is to cover all your bases and not just say, you know, "technique is unimportant", because maybe it isn't right now, but it always will be. They're just all tools to and end and you gotta ... if you're proficient with more of them then you just have a better chance of attaining what you want to attain. ■

INDECISION

Rachel Rosen is one of the guitar players for the Brooklyn, New York based hardcore band Indecision. Below she obligingly answered some questions I had for her.

D.U.: How did you become interested in picking up a musical instrument?

Rachel: When I was 13, a friend of mine got me into U2 and I was in love with the bass player, Adam Clayton, so I decided that I was going to play bass too. But my parents wouldn't let me buy one, so all I had was this classical guitar that I would play along to the bass lines with. Finally my parents let me buy a bass, and from then on I was hooked.

How did you come to be in the band?

I first heard the band in 1995 when I used to do this radio show. I had them come play on the show in 1996 and then I came on tour with them and sold their merchandise. I always bugged them about letting me play second guitar for the band. Finally in 1997 they gave in and I [joined] the band right before they did their first European tour.

Obviously being a woman in a hardcore band you are member of a minority in the hardcore scene. Whenever you play, do some guys and/or girls take more of an interest in you than they would otherwise based solely on their not being used to seeing a girl playing this type of music, regardless of the quality of the band's actual performance?

I think that the fact that I am in the band definitely sets us apart from other bands, but I don't think that it makes anyone take more of an interest. I can't see anyone liking us just because I play guitar in the band. The music still has to be good. On the other hand, I have noticed that all-girl bands seem to be able to get away with not being so



great musically, simply because they are girls. For example, if they dress sexy enough, then the audience probably won't be listening to the music and therefore they don't have to have good songs.

Do you feel or does anyone make you feel like you have some sort of real or imagined obligation to your fans as sort of representing women in music on some level, if that makes any sense?

I never feel like I have an obligation to anyone. There have been girls who tell me how happy they are to see a girl in a band and that they wish they could do it too, but I never consider myself representing women.

Is there any pressure in your band to be as "brutal" on stage as some of the other guys in the band might be, coming from the other members or yourself?

Indecision has never really put pressure on me to be "brutal" on stage. Bands that I played in before definitely have, though. All I would ever hear was "You never move on stage" or "All you do is stand there", and that used to piss me off so much. I knew that I wasn't just standing there. Maybe I wasn't going insane, but to me it's just as important to be able to play the songs well live as it is to be going nuts. So until I found a happy medium between the two I was a lot more reserved. But with Indecision I've become really comfortable playing the songs [and] I can let go more, so they don't really say anything to me.

How much of a contribution musically do you have in general on one of your records?

I come up with guitar parts sometimes that get used and I contribute a lot to how a song is arranged and stuff.

Let's say hypothetically you write material for a song and it isn't used. Is it because

D.U.

it's deemed not appropriate for Indecision?

There's been a lot of stuff that I've written that hasn't been used. Since I joined the band later, they already had a set way that they wrote songs. So when I joined the band I really wanted to write stuff but I think it was hard for Justin [Brannan, the other guitar player] to give up complete control of everything and have another guitar player writing stuff, and my writing style is pretty different from Justin's. So writing *Most Precious Blood*, the first album I played on, was like a nightmare because I felt like nothing of mine was used and what stuff was used was [included] after a lot of fighting about it. I was so upset at that time. But on the past two releases things have definitely gotten a lot better. Justin has relaxed a little bit and I've gotten better at writing, so when I do come up with stuff, it usually gets used. And now I concentrate a lot more on writing other guitar parts based on parts that Justin has written because it really adds a lot to a song.

What is your opinion of moshing at a show you go to see?

I don't usually mind it. I stand in the back and stay out of the way so I can actually watch the band, or if I can swing it, I try to stand on the side of the stage somehow. That's always the best. At our own shows we just try to tell people to watch out for each other and be careful, but there's always the occasional fight.

Is there violence at an average Indecision show that creates problems with putting on a good show with you personally, i.e. the mosh pit?

I've never really been in danger at one of our shows. I've been pushed out of the way by people jumping off the stage and I've been knocked over by a crowd of people, but I'm more in danger from the other band members, mainly the bass player. He runs back and forth on the stage and never looks where he's going. He doesn't wear [his glasses] on stage so he can't even see. Once he hit my fret hand while I was playing and my fingers swelled up. It hurt so much. And the singer, and I have definitely had our share of collisions but he always seems to get more hurt than I do.

Indecision's latest LP is released on MIA Records and is entitled *Release the Cure*. Contact the band at PO Box 09-581, Brooklyn NY 11209 or www.mostpreciousblood.com ■

DEAD BODY LOVE

Since 1995, Gabriele Giuliani, a.k.a. *Dead Body Love* and the *Less Than Zero* label, has been challenging people with his electronic noise and his ambient material under the name *Drift*. Mason conducted the below interview with Gabriele. Write him at Piazza A. Moro 7, 57025 Piombino (LI), Italy.

What artists originally inspired you to create your own material?

I'd say *Controlled Bleeding* and *Merzbow*. *Merzbow* is still the best noise manipulator in my opinion. The Japanese are #1 in noise, and my favorite projects are *Masonna*, *Hijokaidan*, *Incapacitants*, *CCCC*, *MSBR*, *Solomania* and *K2*. I also like Japanese guys; they're always so kind and they have much respect for others.

Living in a country renown for its 70s era gore/zombie/cannibal movies, I must ask you if you have any interest in this genre of filmmaking.

I love all those movies. The first time I saw *Cannibal Holocaust* I got really shocked. That was real harsh. The funny thing about it is that the "cannibal" genre is 100% Italian. We were good! In the late 70s we did some of the most sadistic movies ever made. Also some police movies were so violent they have to be seen to believe!

What other films types do you enjoy?

I love *Dario Argento* – one of my favorite directors. I met him in '92. Cool man. And I am a big fan of *Bruce Willis*, and I also like some funny people. Even though I have a deep interest for the macabre, I like to laugh and make people laugh.

What kind of political atmosphere does Italy have?

Politicians here are mostly fake assholes. Italy is actually under a liberal party, and things are okay. It could be better; it could be worse. Anyway, I hate politicians.

Is the church a large influence culturally?

Here's a quote from a *Brutal Truth* song named "Birth of Ignorance": "Religion teaching lies/Hypnosis of the weak/Believe what they want/Slaughter of the meek". This is what I think about religion.

You've expressed dissatisfaction in the past with many newer noise labels who use cassettes primarily. Are you speaking of Italian labels?

To make a long story short, people listen to noise and they think, "Hey, it's easy. Let's just record some feedback." People hear about tape labels and say, "Hey, it's easy. Let's just make a shitty cover." I wasn't talking about Italian labels; *Slaughter Productions* and *Old Europa Café* are both excellent – I was inspired by them when I started *Less Than Zero*. I have to say that all these guys who are annoying me are from USA. I got tapes that are really ridiculous: very poor, low-fi, meaningless sound, in bad, stupid packages. Take a look at *G.R.O.S.S.* or *Slaughter* cassettes and listen to some *Merzbow* or *Incapacitants*. If your work doesn't compare to them, quit! Some good tape ... well, not only tape labels, are *Labyrinth*, *Self Abuse* and *MSNP*. And let me say that each time I say "Most tape labels and noisicians suck", I get some letters of people asking "Are you talking about me?" That doesn't need any explanation, I think. ■

DISPOSABLE MUSIC REVIEWS

Abstain *World Full of Zombies* (S.O.A.)

Abstain is a terribly average band doing a terribly average version of something *Napalm Death* started and ended a long time ago. I'm so sick of shit like this. Just because a record has a blast beat on it doesn't automatically qualify it as "extreme". Shit, if I gave my cat a line of crack and a snare drum, he could play a fucking blast beat. These guys want to play a by-the-book grindcore style that's as boring as it is obsolete. If I want to hear this kind of thing done with skill and forethought, I'll stick with my *Discordance Axis* and *Pig Destroyer* records. Death to bland grind! (review

by Mason)
S.O.A. c/o Paolo Petralia, via Oderisi da Gubbio 67/69, 00146 Roma, Italy

Avulsion *The Crimson Foliage Hit* (625)

Avulsion are very dynamic in that they play at a wide variety of speeds, such as fast, faster, absurdly fast and perilously fast. I like Avulsion if only because they are one of the few grind bands who seem to actually *care* what their guitars sound like. If you like Assück or Benümb then you will like this. Did I mention this record is fast? Well, it is. And it's fucking good too. Still not sold? What are you, retarded? (by JR)
625, PO Box 423413, San Francisco CA 94142-3413, USA

Bal-Sagoth *The Power Cosmic* (Nuclear Blast)

Remember that kid in your high school with the greasy black hair, trenchcoat and army fatigues who'd always try to get you to come to his mom's basement to show you his Warhammer 5000, and thinking this was an invitation to play hide the bologna, you kicked the kid's ass? Well, now there's a band for misunderstanding role-playing fanatics across the world. Bal-Sagoth plays completely over the top epic metal. We're talkin' symphonic keyboards, dialogue between songs performed by old Welsh men babbling about "the 13 cryptic prophecies of Mu", and about every other over-dramatic gesture they could conceive of – just completely wonderful escapist metal to listen to over and over and over again while sending your Orks out on a mission to annihilate! Great metal for social inadequates! (by Mason)

The Berserker 2000 album (Earache)

Good riffs, scary multiple vocals and decent death metal songs. Unfortunately none of this matters as the entire CD is ruined by a drum machine these guys must've stolen from Kajagoogoo's tour van. I guess it's supposed to sound heavy, but it sounds like a box full of rabbits having a farting contest. The terrible sound of the drum machine aside, it sounds like it was programmed by a complete retard who shouldn't be allowed to program a VCR, much less a drum machine. I must mention in conclusion the hilarious, self-aggrandizing bio on this band's web site. Read it, then listen to the CD, then join me in laughter. Digby, you fat moron, you let Brutal Truth go and sign The Berserker? Now THAT'S what I call good business. (by Mason)

Blo.Torch 1999 album (Wicked World)

Man, for a label as downright fucking retarded in recent years as Earache, they sure have been picking up some decent bands on the Wicked World imprint. These guys apparently filled their bio with all sorts of completely unobvious influences, maybe in the hopes of distracting the listener from the blatant At the Gates influence evident here (and in every other Scandanavian band for the last three years), but they do it very well and do manage to bring new ingredients into the Gothenburg recipe often enough to make this record worth owning. Great riffs, inventive arrangements and top-notch musicianship. A really good first LP, and I'm excited to see what their next will sound like. (by Mason)

The Brain Dead 1999 album

I don't know what label released this CD, but it rules anyway. This band is weedcore and proud of it. The funny thing is I get the impression that a couple of times the band forgot to play certain parts of the riffs on some of the songs due to short term memory loss. But even so, this is a really fun listen, with songs like "Sex Slave Sluts" and anthemic choruses such as "Fuck the DEA", and they're even funny with the movies they chose to sample (everything from *Under Seige* to *Cape Fear*). I can always count on The Brain Dead to record some solid, entertaining metal music (semi reminiscent of the Mentors) to kick everyone's ass.

11021 NE 21st Ln Apt C-208, Kirkland WA 98034, USA

Cathedral *In Memoriam* (The Music Cartel)

A package containing Cathedral's original demo plus live tracks from 1991 (studio versions of some of those appeared on the band's first LP, *Forest of Equilibrium*). Of course this is old school Cathedral before they got goofy (a term of endearment, I assure you). Back then Cathedral was sometimes referred to as "the slowest grindcore band in the world" or some such, a stupid thing to say, but the band's punishing brand of music certainly grinded listeners into a pulp. I mean, with lyrics like "The only pleasure is pain" (from "Ebony Tears", included here), you know you're in for depressive, headcrushing D-O-O-M.



Lee Dorrian
(Cathedral)

Comrades/Agathocles split CD (S.O.A.)

The long in the tooth Belgians from Agathocles make their umpteenth release a split with relative newcomers Comrades. Nothing too out of the ordinary here. Pictures of dead bodies on the cover, lyrics against senseless violence inside (hee hee), wrapped up nicely in fairly generic but effective (for those interested, I guess) crust riffs and blast beats. On the upside, a very nice packaging job from S.O.A. You already know whether this is up your alley or not, so I'll leave it at that. (by Mason)

(See Abstain review for address)

Control Denied *The Fragile Art of Existence* (Nuclear Blast)

My initial review of this was just too mean, so here I am revising it last minute. Chuck's promised a power metal band and instead delivers what sounds like a toned down Death record with a legit vocalist. As usual, the musicianship is top notch, but as far as I'm concerned what makes a great power metal record is the RIFFS, and they're lacking here. I hope they stop noodling and get down to fucking business on the fol-

low-up. (by Mason)

Deceased *Supernatural Addiction* (Relapse)

If death metal was indeed dead, then Deceased just fucking resuscitated it. You know, I could sit here and tell you that this is an outstanding album; that the riffs, the song-writing, the production and the musicianship are all top notch, but this record is more important than that. This record, like its predecessor, *Fearless Undead Machines*, is a declaration of war on the Korn and the Emperors and the Broken Hopes of the world that have been cheapening and defacing metal for the last ten years. A lot of bands pay tribute to metal by trying to recapture what it once was; Deceased pays tribute to metal by showing you what it can still become. My friends, death metal's not just alive and well ... it's out for some goddam revenge. (by JR)

Deceased full tilt at the March Metal Meltdown



Photo courtesy Amanda Curtis

December Wolves *Completely Dehumanized* (Wicked World)

This is an interesting band. I'm not sure exactly what category in which to put them. They're total grind mixed with thrash and black metal (music-wise), and really awe-some at that. They do use the words "Satan" and "demon" a couple of times in the lyric sheet, but if they are in fact black metal, they certainly not obvious about it. Some of the album's lyrics are sort of Haunted style, such as "I'm gonna fuckin' kill you" from the song "To Kill Without Emotion". In any case, it's a great record. Definitely worth your time – I mean it.

Dimitri Ehrlich *As Nervous As You* (Tainted)

If you're going to try the "moody introspective singer/songwriter" thing, then you better have either a good hook or some damn good lyrics or both if you want to avoid putting me in a coma. This guy has a decent voice, but the guitars sound marginally out of tune and the drum machine sounds synthetic in the worst way (imagine listening to the percussion on Madonna's "Borderline" underwater). Oh, and there's a song called "What the Buddha Said", which I think warrants a hearty "fuck off you pretentious shit-hole" from yours truly. (by JR)

Disco Inferno update

The name Disco Inferno to some will invoke visions of men with brass instruments and white suits and sequins, but in this case it's hardcore from Germany. The band mixes in blasts, powerviolence-style riffs/vocals and old school metalcore with good arrangements. The band indicates it is heading in a His Hero Is Gone direction with its new material, which to be honest would be an improvement, and is looking ahead to releasing an EP. Disco Inferno is also the name of an underground distro which specializes in grindcore and hardcore releases. You can check into both by writing Michael Münnich, Rosenstr. 6, 66111 Saabücken, Germany.

Dismember *Hate Campaign* (Nuclear Blast)

The last Dismember LP to grace my ears was *Massive Killing Capacity* (which sported some of the all-time best cover artwork since Liege Lord's *Master Control*) and I really liked that record despite the rather shitty production. Regardless, I wasn't expecting *Hate Campaign*. Fucking masterful Swedish death that shits all over the second-tier At The Gates wannabes and leaves no time to catch your breath between songs. Yeah, you've heard this all before, but Dismember has gotten its formula down perfectly. A must for fans of Swedish death metal! (by Mason)

Displaced Person *Hurry Up and Appear Outside* (Born)

Making a return appearance in these pages, Displaced Person's new release is a four song EP of competent metal-core-rock. As with the band's demo tape, these guys are total crossover and they sound like they're having a grand old Japanese time playing this stuff. They have a good groove and also a powerful hook, and even mix it up with some grind parts. Check into them.

Born Records, 2-14-6, Minamisaiwai, Nishi-Ku, Yokohama City, Kanagawa 220-0005, Japan

Dream Child *Reaching the Golden Gates* (Metal Blade/NSR)

Boy, Metal Blade sure has been licensing some good stuff lately, such as Dream Child, a rare French export of fine, classy power metal recalling the glory days of (pre-Andi Deris) Helloween (especially obvious in the rich harmonies of the opening track, "To Our Dreams"). This band does a majestic take on the Eurometal sound without sounding dated or silly at any point – quite an accomplishment, especially considering all the attention paid to "retro" these days. Excellent! (by Mason)

Electric Wizard *Supercoven* (Southern Lord)

The bellbottoms ... dear god, the bellbottoms! For most of you, reading the name and album title should be clue enough, but for all the "special" people out there, the word

is DOOM. What we have here is what I like to call "an extended marijuana jam". How do I know they smoke marijuana, you ask? Look at the bellbottoms, for christ's sake! Look at them! Luckily for us, Electric Wizard is very good at what they do and *Supercoven* delivers the doom rock goodies in spades. (by JR)

Flotsam & Jetsam *Unnatural Selection* (Metal Blade)

I tend to put Flotsam & Jetsam in the same league as Overkill and other bands who somehow find the will to continue after years upon years of playing second fiddle to the Megadeths (yecch!) of the world, consistently releasing strong efforts, if nothing to write home about in the progress department. Flots has been moving away from the straight up thrash of *No Place For Disgrace* since *Cuatro*, but this new one indulges in the start/stop, mechanical riffing of Pantera a mite too much for my taste, not really coming across as a forced attempt to sound modern, but just trying to introduce some new ideas into the mix. Personally, I can't see myself ever listening to this again, but I think fans of the band will be very happy with this record. (by Mason)

Goat Shanty 1999 demo

Well, this ex-Tres Kids band is interesting. At first I figured this was noting but noise-core, but upon further investigation I find it to be a noisy hardcore band. There's a difference. The actual music sounds like metallic hardcore, but very manic and haphazard and very fast. I get the impression the band had a blast recording this tape. Goat Shanty is taking no shit from anyone.

255 Hillcrest Ave, Athens GA 30601, USA

Gomorrha *self titled* (Rhetoric)

Now this is what I needed – some straight-up grindcore. Gomorrha is a German band with lyrics in German and English, two singers (listed on the sleeve as "high end" and "low end"), and notably an Asian on one of the guitars. Kind of a mix bag band, but they rule. This CD is a compilation of the band's tracks from their *As Good As Dead* LP and their split with Tumult. The former session is more dirty than the latter, and the latter features better musicianship. The lyrics are about war and so on, but the actual music is no bullshit grind and hardcore ENT/AG style. I mean, it's been done before and all, but it's still awesome.

Rhetoric, PO Box 82, Madison WI 53701, USA

Gorgoroth *Incipit Satan* (Nuclear Blast)

Over the past couple of years, I've all but lost interest in the black metal genre. Too much in the hype department and not enough good bands to back it up. Now that genre staples have been moving in a more "progressive" direction, those still left with a Transylvanian hunger for undiluted "black fucking metal" will be extremely happy to hear *Incipit Satan*. Genre-bashing aside, this is a great disc of interesting, well-written and evil as all fuck black metal. A couple of the tracks even venture out into melodic territory, a la Rotting Christ, and the production is clean enough to really drive home the excellent musicianship, not to mention that "Litani de Satan" scared the bejesus out of me. (by Mason)

Grave Digger *Excalibur* (Nuclear Blast)

Having been a fan of Grave Digger since *Heavy Metal Breakdown*, I was of course thrilled to get my hands on their latest installment of their recent "concept" albums, this one based on the legend of King Arthur. More on the aggressive, Accept-inspired side of German metal (as opposed to sissypants Gamma Ray and their ilk), this album starts out furiously and rarely lets up. Fantastic German metal, and the story itself is well-written and interestingly executed throughout the course of the CD. An inspiring and vital record from a band approaching its 20th year. (by Mason)

The Gravel Pit *Silver Gorilla* (Q Division)

The boys are back with a new album. I don't know if I can say that I like this release better than the last one, *The Gravel Pit Manifesto*, but it is a damn fine indie rock record. The singer has a distinct voice and he knows how to use his pipes to project the melody. A lot of the songs have great hooks, as well. I found myself toe tappin' more than a few times to The Gravel Pit's brand of guitar/bass/drums/vocals/keys rock.

Hades *Saviour\$elf* (Metal Blade)

Was there a demand for a Hades reformation that I wasn't aware of? I can't honestly remember these guys being that noticeable even back in the day, they being more on par with maybe Realm or Paradox and never really rising to even cult status despite a couple of respectable LPs. Maybe I was wrong, 'cause here they are again with a new LP. Some good, ambitious ideas here, a really good riff here 'n' there, intelligent lyrics, a mix hampered by a terrible drum sound, and in general everything sounding pretty much as they left it ... not something I'll be spinning often myself, but hey, it doesn't suck. (by Mason)

D.U.

Human Drama *Solemn Sun Setting* (Hollows Hill)

This may be a terribly misleading reference, but this reminds me of some of the darker 80s pop like maybe early Phil Collins or a more organic Soft Cell. Anyway, Human Drama apparently has a black cloud hanging over them and they are determined to sing and sing some more about how increasingly somber it is making them. Which is fine, because they display a good sense of songcraft and they arrange their strings and piano with a great deal of taste. However, the album as a whole lacks any dynamic, which makes the 16 tracks feel just a bit excessive. Definitely a good listen in small doses, though. (by JR)

Impaled *The Dead Shall Dead Remain* (Deathvomit)

Carcass clones never had it so good. This record is a mix between Carcass' *Necroticism - Descanting the Insalubrious*, General Surgery's *Necrology* (a Carcass clone in itself), and a contemporary deathgrind style. It's good to see that a band like this has a sense of humor as well. The lyrics are clever and even funny in places (such as the song "Immaculate Defecation"), and the band photo inside the CD booklet is priceless. Two severed, gangrenous thumbs up.

Inhume *Decomposing From Inside* (Bones Brigade)

Yowza! It would be a disservice, I suppose, to call this band goregrind (essentially that's what it is), because I don't want people to lump them in with the "low fi" variety. The vocals, riffs and drum beats are what you'd expect from a band in this vein, but the difference is Inhume features good production and strong musicianship for this style, and they're totally over the top, brutality-wise. Write to the label and send whatever they're asking for this disc!

Bones Brigade, Rue de Crecy, 62140 Brevillers, France

Iron Monkey *Our Problem* (Earache)

A pleasant surprise. *Our Problem* has got these monstrous "movin' the mountain" type of riffs made up of big, meaty chord progressions. More "Into the Void" than "Children of the Grave" if you know what I mean. The vocalist has a very shrill, thin voice but I think it works well to contrast the thickness of the music. (If you dig this band I highly recommend you pick up *Paegan Terrorism Tactics* by Acid Bath.) Definitely a formidable heavy rock record ... on Earache, no less! (by JR)

King's X *Tape Head* (Metal Blade)

While I salute Metal Blade's good taste in picking up this painfully overlooked band, *Tape Head* is unfortunately not one King's X's strongest efforts. There are a few great songs here, and the soulful pipes of Doug Pinnick sound as good as ever, but ever since the Brendan O'Brien produced *Dogman* LP (1994), these guys seem to have been stuck in a holding pattern of letting faux-heavy riffs and recycled vocal harmonies compensate for what's perhaps a band out of new ideas. Don't get me wrong: in terms of content, songwriting, and talent, this album is doubtlessly more innovative and just all-around better than about anything else coming out these days, and I have faith that King's X can pull another great LP or two out their hats yet, but I can't call this one a favorite of mine. (by Mason)

Last Days of Humanity '99 album (Bones Brigade)

Total grindcore holocaust. If you're at all familiar with the goregrind scene, you should know this band already. If not, you are obviously a poseur and should walk directly into the path of the next oncoming bus. Sick, sick grind. The singer has more effects on his voice than George Lucas could ever dream of, and to top it all off, they have a song called "Raped in the Back of a Van". (by Mason)
(See Inhume review for address)



The boys from Lock Up

Lock Up *Pleasures Pave Sewers* (Nuclear Blast)

Wow. I wasn't expecting this at all. What the hell got into Shane Embury and Jesse Pintado? For the first time in years these guys are playing like they fucking mean it! Nick Barker is tearing into the drum kit and Peter from Hypocrisy is stripping the paint off the walls with his vocals. Apparently a few of these songs were originally written for a second Terrorizer record that never came out, but personally I think this sounds more like *Utopia Banished*-era Napalm with some sick, shrieking vocals. Come to think of it, maybe I'll draw an old school Napalm Death logo on this CD and then just pretend their last four

records were just a bad, bad dream... (by JR)

Megaptera *The Curse of the Scarecrow* (Release)

I like this record a lot. It kind of reminds me of a more ambient Will. The songs are basically the looped hum of droning, lush machinery and the addition of some clanking noises, with weird, obscure sounding movie samples woven in. The tracks "Hear My Bowels" and "Skullfracture" especially are disturbing, but so is the rest of this thing. I enjoy listening to this kind of material when I'm in the right mood for it, and if you

MEGAPTERA



The Curse of the Scarecrow

are the same, check into Sweden's Megaptera.

Merzbow *Tauromachine* (Release)

What can I say? It's Merzbow and it rules. The baddest of the bad in the electronic noise scene. Seven tracks this time, ranging from four to 12 minutes in length. I'm listening to it on my headphones right now at work and it's doing a good job of blocking out my co-worker's radio. This stuff will leave you broken and cold.

Metal Church *Live* (Nuclear Blast)

Wow, a full CD of Metal Church circa 1986! This is amazing! Fans of the debut LP and *The Dark* will love this

excellent display of one of metal's best and overlooked bands in all of its raw perfection. According to the liner notes they didn't do much refining in the studio, and while I'm a little skeptical of that claim in some parts of this disc, it's impossible to complain given how awesome it is to hear "The Dark" live! Go out and buy this immediately. (by Mason)

Monster Voodoo Machine *Direct Reaction Now!* (Dr. Dream)

Monster Voodoo Machine, or as I like to refer to them, Monster Doodoo Machine (insert mischievous giggle here) are back with another reason for you to give up on metal. Now I know it's not fair to prejudge an album by its song titles, but when you are faced with the likes of "Dragon Style" and "Slow Motion Moonshine" there are certain assumptions a sane mind is forced to make. Groovy, run-o'-the-mill, standard issue metal riffage with those dreadful, I'm-yelling-at-you-through-a-megaphone vocals. If you like this kind of stuff then I encourage you to pick this record up ... and then shoot yourself in the head. (review by JR)

Needful Things *The End of Personality* (Psychotherapy)

Whoa, this is total sludgy grind. This is a Czech band so you know it's totally distorted and saturated and fast as shit. As with many bands in this vein there's two bass players (but it's still the farthest thing from Ned's Atomic Dustbin you can think of), and I'd say about 75% of this tape is a blast, 15% is a fast beat, and 10% is mid-tempo. 17 songs in all, with titles such as "Nazifuck", "Human Pigs" and "Mental Carcass". I don't particularly like this tape, but the guy from Needful things has a distro, too, so check into that.

Otto Beran, Anenská 1296, Pardubice 530 02, Czech Republic

Night In Gales *Nailwork* (Nuclear Blast)

Listening to this CD was like relaxing in my favorite chair and kicking back an ice cold Coors Cutter. Sure, it looked like metal; it was made by the same people that made other metal; and it even tasted like metal. However, it was not metal! Now don't get me wrong - this is a good record. It just follows the growing trend of just cramming every style of music known to man into each song. Interesting to listen to, *Nailwork* is a very sound technical effort, but if you're looking for the mosh I recommend picking up something else. (by Blake)

The Obsessed *Incamate* (Southern Lord)

First of all, let me praise Southern Lord Records for having the exceptional taste to release this. If you're not familiar with St. Vitus or The Obsessed, well, I won't bother trying to explain them to you as you're obviously a complete fucking drooling mongoloid who is probably only looking at this newsletter to find a pretty picture to color in with your Crayons. Needless to say, if you call yourself metal, punk, or whatever, go to your nearest vile corporate record store and throw down however much they're asking for this, Corky. (by Mason)

Pegazus *Breaking the Chains* (Nuclear Blast)

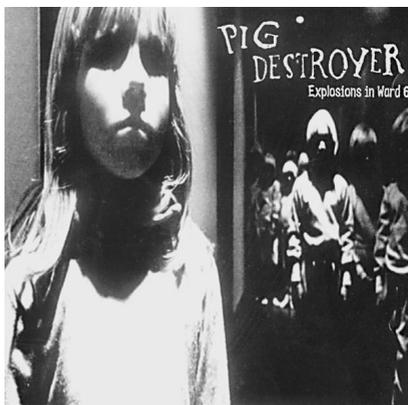
Pegazus is the kind of band that almost makes me embarrassed to be a metalhead. Stupid lyrics, rudimentary arrangements and riffs as dumb as a box of hair. It's a shame, because they're obviously talented musicians - they just happen to be dumbing down their skills (let's hope) for the sake of appealing to the "retro" crowd. Probably more retarded than Sacred Steel, and nowhere near as much fun to listen to. When I wanna get nostalgic, I'll look in the toilet before flushing, OK, boys? (by Mason)

pg.99 *document #5* (Reptillian)

Featured in these hallowed pages more than once before, pg.99 comes back with bite. This new CD of theirs is something I've been looking forward to for some time. Everything an extreme music fan (in particular a screamo/emoviolence head) needs is found within the plastic of this disc. It has speed, it has screams and growls, it has distortion, it has heaviness, it has darkness and evil, it has brutality ... I could go on and on. It's obvious the band has taken a long time working out all the guitar and bass harmonies, melodies, and song arrangements, and that hard work pays off on their *document #5*. They are masters at building up a song and then knocking your head off with it. Included here is an updated old song and some favorites from their live set (familiar to us fortunate locals). I was crippled for life by this record, but it was worth it. Reptillian, 403 S Broadway, Baltimore MD 21231, USA

Pig Destroyer *Explosions In Ward 6* (Clean Plate)

Originally released as a CD on Reservoir, this LP is a grade A example of audio brutality. Bandmembers JR Hayes, Brian Harvey, and strong-arm man Scott Hull all fully complete their musical mission with this record. It contains mutilated vocals, highly



bipolar drums, creepy sound clips and tons of six-string ridiculousness. This record has more hustle than Larry Flint and is filled to the brim with great tunes. If the kids from Columbine weren't in Hell, they'd be in prison equipped with two things: a comfy pair of kneepads and this overly intense, high speed piece of rock. If you're a balls to the wall grind metal fan, your grocery list should read, "Milk, eggs, Pig Destroyer LP", and if that's not enough to make you skip work and buy this album, you're probably either a racist or that retard from *Life Goes On*. (by Jake)

Clean Plate, PO Box 709, Hampshire

College, Amherst MA 01002, USA

Ricanstruction *Liberation Day* (CBGB)

I was pleasantly surprised by this album. The simple, no bullshit guitar lines give it a kind of spazzy punk rock feel, but the real attraction here is the dynamic rhythm section. I like the fact that the bass lines compliment rather than duplicate the guitars, and the way the extra conga type percussion widens the scope of these otherwise simplistic songs. I don't like the fact that the singer occasionally sounds like David Coverdale rapping, but hey, I'll take what I can get. These guys definitely have their own sound, and that's always a good thing. (by JR)

Sacred Steel *Wargods of Metal* (Metal Blade)

I'll start this review by mentioning that the sixth track of this CD is called "Army of Metalheads", the chorus of which is, "Metalheads! Metalheads! Metalheads!" which should right away give you a pretty good indication of whether this is up your alley or not. On the musical front, this is quite an improvement over the last LP, especially in the vocal department. A band obviously weened on the 80s Metal Blade catalog, these Europeans take their metal seriously, as should you, given that this is 45 minutes of pure fucking metal insanity! Go buy immediately, and kill a poseur on the way. (Mason)

Sally 1999 album (The Music Cartel)

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then Black Sabbath must be the most flattered fucking band on Earth. Proving there is no such thing as excess in doom rock, the fuzzy distortion is cranked up to a level that pushes the limits of good taste. I picture five stringy-haired, bellbottomed guys on a stage, all plugged into one 15 foot tall distortion pedal with a big portrait of Tony Iommi painted on it. If you're looking for full-on Sabbath/AC/DC worship a la Cathedral, then here you go. (by JR)

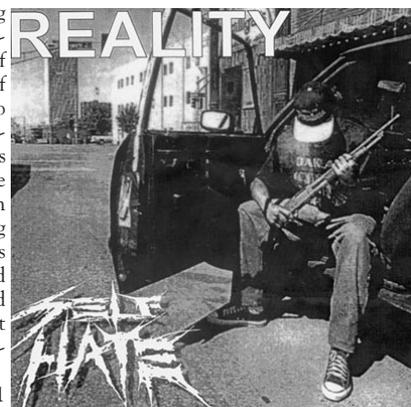
Sculptured *Apollo Ends* (The End)

When I was looking at the sleeve of this record before I put it on, I was liking the artwork and the lyrics a good deal. I was disappointed to find that those elements are the best this band has to offer. I was underwhelmed by their brand of melodic metal and even annoyed by the awful horn section that detracts instead of adds to the music. I would say that this band doesn't live up to whatever hype it is getting.

Self Hate *Reality* (Impeachment)

Andrew from Pignation and the boys are back with Self Hate. I had a good time listening to this record. It has everything a grind fan looks for: duo vocals, distorted bass, blast beats at least 75% of the time, and dirty production. Self Hate changes things up just enough to keep things interesting and they're creative with their choice of samples (what sounds like clips from movie soundtracks and even Ruby Rod from *The Fifth Element*). If you're wondering about the lyrics, song titles such as "Human Fucking Garbage" and "Mankind (Is Like A Shit)" should give you some idea. I'd like to see what the band can do with some proper production in the future.

Andrew Szpirko, PO Box 42, 95201 Pabianice 3, Poland



Sinner *The Second Decade* (Nuclear Blast)

The teutonic mullet-metal of Mat Sinner and crew might remind you of 80s era Priest, with simple arrangements, emphasis on big, dumb-but-perfect riffs and guitar wankery out the wazoo. This is a great collection of the straight up, unapologetic metal these guys have been kicking out forever. I hope they finally get some recognition in the States. I'd sure like to see the Sinner back catalog issued domestically. (by Mason)

Soul Reaper *Written In Blood* (Nuclear Blast)

These guys play aggressive, technical death metal in the vein of old Entombed or Dismember, but as you may have guessed, they aren't as good as those bands. The songs definitely have an overt melody about them, but still manage to sound heavy. Now on to the complaint department: I'm all for some clean, melodic guitar work, but I don't think acoustic guitars have any place in death fucking metal (what's next - a fucking

pan flute?). I don't care how much acoustic guitar work you put on your album, guys, but no one is ever going to mistake you for the fucking Eagles! (by JR)

Stratovarious *Infinite* (Nuclear Blast)

If you're unfamiliar with Stratovarious, they are among the upper crust of melodic Eurometal (the band hails from Finland) along with Helloween and Gamma Ray, with a more pop-oriented leaning come chorus time, similar to Europe's first LP (note: before they cheated out with *Final Countdown*, Europe was an excellent melodic Scandinavian metal band on par with just about any of the great bands of the time!). That said, *Infinite* is chock full of loudly mixed keyboard passages, soaring vocals, immaculate musicianship and extremely catchy metal anthems. My personal favorite of the bunch is the second track, "Millenium", a great example of what Stratovarious can do when they drop the overblown dynamics and go for the throat. Still, an excellent band at what they do, even if the crass American in me finds this particular type of German pompmetal a wee bit hilarious. (by Mason)

Steel Prophet *Messiah* (Nuclear Blast)

Steel Prophet is Maiden-esque metal, possibly reminding one of a more polished, less balsy Omen or maybe a more stripped-down *Walls of Jericho*-era Helloween. The vocalist is really good, though I wish he had a little more bite in his voice. The music is well-arranged and meticulously played, though lacks any real excitement upon first listen. Fans of mid 80s American power metal should find this on par with Warrior and Desity's End. Really enjoyable if nothing terribly new. (by Mason)

Terrible Headache 2000 album (E.A.R.)

The boys from the East are back with their first CD! Featured several times in these pages (interviewed in #21), Terrible Headache continues to, well, not refine, but alter their sound after securing a drummer on their last release. The nine songs on this record are fast and furious, and very unrefined, especially in the lead guitar and percussion department. It kind of sounds old school 80s because it's so haphazard and has such heart. It's a dirty kick in the pants.

Yusuke Adachi, 1-9-39, Shimizugaoka, Fuchu, Tokyo 183-0015, Japan

Therion *Deggial* (Nuclear Blast)

I was trying to make up my mind as to whether I liked this CD as I was listening to it. On the one hand it's very ambitious: according to the band's bio there are 27 musicians on this record, including a choir, a tenor, strings, brass and woodwinds. Accordingly the music is very classical except there's a Swedish metal band playing on it. It's not as bad as S&M, let me hasten to add (it's infinitely better than anything those Metallicrapheads can come up with), but having said that, several tracks veer deep into total cheese land for various reasons, be they the guitar riffs or because they're somewhat reminiscent of a poor man's *Operation: Mindcrime*. Put it this way: I don't see myself listening to this again.

Usurper *Visions from the Gods* (Nuclear Blast)

What I wouldn't give to be Tom G. Warrior's attorney right now. One listen to Usurper and you'd know why. I'm not sure if I've ever heard such a blunt ripoff in my life. Don't get me wrong, Usurper is an exceptional ripoff, and I thoroughly enjoyed listening to this CD despite myself, but this is basically a tribute band. The singer has Warrior's grunts and "Hey!"s down cold and they went so far as to mimic the guitar sound of classic Frost. I guess I shouldn't be hard on this band. I mean, Count Raven (among numerous others) have made a living cloning Sabbath for years, and this is honestly a really good album. So rather than going on a long-winded rant about bands who mimic their influences, I'll just say that Usurper has made a really good Celtic Frost record for those of you who are interested. Can't wait to hear their cover of the *Cold Lake* LP. (by Mason)

Will Haven *WHVN* (Revelation)

This band is comprised of four young professionals who play their little hearts out, hoping to be the centerfolds in next month's issue of *Metal Edge*. They've got that "new school metal" thing happening (Soulfly, Slipknot) with just enough hardcore thrown in to make 'em credible with the "kids": the heavy, dissonant sound, ambiguous esthetic, gutwrenching vocals – almost like a REAL hardcore band! But this one is designer made for the mall crowd, complete with a techno remix and a thanks list which sends "much love" to Limp Bizkit, Deftones and other such aural abominations. I'd rather suck the syphillictic discharge from a dead transsexual hooker's dick than endure this kind of pseudo-hardcore bullshit again. Eat my ass, poseurs! (by Mason)

Wives *Ripped* (CBGB)

Killer! Total hi-octane rock from these talented, straight up New York City punkers. They manage to incorporate strong vocals, good hooks and complimentary production into this record, they make the clichés of this kind of music sound fresh, and they pack a confident, powerful punch as well. I've already gone back for several listens. I really enjoyed listening to this CD. ■

DISPOSABLE CONCERT REVIEW

Ben Folds Five & Tracy Bonham

9:30 Club, Washington DC

After hearing how awesome a live band Ben Folds Five is from a couple friends (one of whom is a total diehard fan) I decided to see for myself when the opportunity presented itself. Hey, *Whatever and Ever Amen* rules, so what the fuck? And besides, not that I own any of her records, but I'll listen to Tracy Bonham go "Everything's fine!!" anytime.

Tracy Bonham, being the support act, went on first. Her backing band was adequate at playing the tunes she sings along to. I noticed they added a keyboard player that I

didn't realize they employed who didn't do a very good job at his backup vocals. Bonham's more upbeat numbers are the ones I enjoy. A lot of her material lacks the energy I crave in rock music, and isn't interesting enough to make up for it. So it was with the band's performance. Bonham herself didn't make up for the rest of the band's lackluster stage presence. She wasn't bursting with enthusiasm either, but one could see she was having fun playing her electric violin. She was greeted with appreciation from the audience. Her new album is *Down Here*.

Ben Folds Five, on tour for *The Unauthorized Biography of Reinhold Messner*, had the place gripped with excitement before they even took the stage. I noticed many of the girls and some of the guys in the crowd were singing along to the band's tunes and all were eating it up. Ben Folds Five has a lot more energy and presence than I previously gave them credit for. They had the place rolling for over an hour and a half, and that doesn't even count the encore. There were several instruments that the band



employed on stage, switching back and forth between this thing and that thing as the song at hand required, and of course they all handled those instruments as well as the crowd's attention as consummate professionals. The bass player and drummer belted out all the backup singing and they did a fine job of it, while Ben Folds bashed away at his piano and blew his pipes for the audience. They even played a new song that one of their road crew accompanied them on, and they did a cover of "Video Killed the Radio Star". They rearranged a couple of their radio hits as well (probably out of boredom) and that was interesting. I was glad I made the trip into the city to catch this band. They rock. ■

DISPOSABLE OPINIONS

"Horrors in a Retarded Mind"

by JR

"Am I prepared for two full days of metal?" I must have asked myself this question at least a thousand times during the four hour drive to Somefuckingville, NJ for the "March Metal Meltdown" 2000. We arrived in town just a CH behind schedule, promptly checking into our illustrious four-star motel (note: in "JR land" any motel that has a giant neon arrow pointing to it is a four-star motel) before heading off to consume a heroic dose of glorious metal. The fact that my band was playing the first day meant that I didn't have to pay \$55 for a two-day pass. Hey, that was \$55 I could blow on records as far as I was concerned. So with my spiffy new laminated pass in one hand and my trusty bottle of perocets in the other, I took a deep breath and readied myself for two days and four stages worth of death metal armageddon.

The building in which the Meltdown took place consisted of three gigantic where-house-style rooms connected by a lobby area. Now I know what you're thinking: "How can there be four stages if there are only three rooms?" Well, the promoters decided that it would be in everyone's best interest to put two stages side by side in the smallest of the three rooms. Then they innocently hung a black curtain between those stages – damning evidence of a dangerously retarded mind at work. I mean, if you can't see the other stage, then you certainly won't be able to hear the other stage, right? Fucking morons. Needless to say, that room sounded like a space shuttle taking off for two days straight.

The lobby area was in perpetual motion. Metalheads either scrambling to catch their favorite band or searching in vain for a broom closet so they could feed semen to their cow assed and/or pig faced girlfriends. The biggest sucker of the weekend, though, had to be the guy that shelled out around \$125 for official Slipknot coveralls, but that's another story for another time. What do you say we talk about some bands, eh? Right on.

DAY ONE

I had planned to catch the one-two punch of Beerzone and Fatal Aggression based solely on their so-bad-they're-good band names, but unfortunately, while trying to sort out where to put our equipment and such, I missed out. That really sucks, 'cause I'm sure they were both incredible (note: biting sarcasm). Things started turning sour early when we learned that Cattle Press would not be playing



as originally thought. I was wicked sad, but not as sad as Rich. Rich looked like he'd just sat down for a big, juicy steak and had instead been served a stinky pile of fresh dick. He was wicked, wicked sad.

As you can imagine, my day only got better when the Bad Luck 13 Riot Extravaganza decided to start a fire and get the room in which my band was playing (the one with two stages) shut down five minutes before our set was to begin. Eventually the room's stages resumed, and we kicked out a decent set, although I'm sure the by now infamous two-stage room made us sound like a Namanax cover band (note: Namanax is synonymous with shit, crap, doo-doo and so on. So basically I'm saying we probably sounded pretty vile. If you're unfamiliar with Namanax and are thinking about listening to them for a point of reference and thereby better relate to my comparison, don't do it! It's not worth it. You'll just have to trust me on this one.). For better or worse, our job was done and it was now time to go (ahem) "enjoy" (read: with paralyzing fear and apprehension) some metal.

Things started to look up when Spirit Caravan took the stage and rocked out like a sumbitch, achieving good sound on the stage my band played, which up to that point had seemed about as possible as Billy Milano turning down a box of twinkies. Other than Spirit Caravan, the horrifying sound of that stage mercilessly killed off every other band I saw on it that day, including Dave Witte's new project, Burnt by the Sun.

A little later on I shot over to the Nightfall stage in another room to catch Impaled Nazarene, who I'd been wanting to see for a long time. They put on a good show, but the weak sound undermined their performance and I walked away feeling woefully disillusioned with the Metalfest experience. Too much bass and too little guitar was the story for almost every band on this stage, which would be fine if this was "February Funk Fallout", but it fucking wasn't. I need crushing guitars - is that too much to ask? By the way, S.O.D. blew in case you were wondering.

DAY TWO

Day Two was a bit more enjoyable and eventful. A fully-clothed Jasmin St. Claire, the porn star, made an appearance, charging hordes of unwitting, undersexed metal fans American fucking dollars to get their picture taken with her! As if to say, "You know, Jasmin, I like the way you fuck other guys so much that I just have to give you my money." Many a metalhead was hoodwinked on that day, let me tell you.

Due to vehicular difficulties we didn't arrive until about 5:00 p.m. so I ended up missing the bound-to-be-legendary Lo-Phat (hint: more biting sarcasm). On a brighter note, I did manage to catch Deceased at the Relapse stage and they totally stole the show, proving that they are, without a doubt, the most unashamedly metal band on the planet (however, King Fowley, never one to rest on his laurels, decided he needed to further reinforce



Angelcorpse (pictured here smashing Christians with their "Christhammer") photos and Doro Pesch photo (below) courtesy Amanda Curtis



that claim by getting himself thrown out of the building later that night). Deceased kicked ass and took names and the crowd responded with a sea of devil horns and the most genuinely appreciative ovation I heard all weekend.

With my faith in metal restored, I checked out Dying Fetus on the Nightfall stage. They turned in my second favorite set of the night, laying waste to every trendy poseur in their unholy path. I don't know if Hate Eternal was blowing the sound guy or what, but somehow they managed to achieve far and away the best sound of the weekend. They sounded incredibly fast, incredibly heavy and incredibly extreme, the way death metal fucking should be. Finally, I stumbled towards the main stage to catch Testament (where S.O.D. had played). Much like Impaled Nazarene the night before, they performed well but were ultimately subverted by a muddy, lackluster sound.

Having just seen more metal than a goddamn scrap yard, it was time to collect the crew and drag our exhausted, war-torn carcasses back to the motel. Although I'd be lying if I said I didn't enjoy myself a little bit, I think it's apparent that these Metalfests are organized by people with too much greed and too few brain cells. I only traveled four hours and got in for free. I can't even imagine how ripped off I would feel if I had traveled 12 hours and paid \$55 to see my favorite band sound like shit. But you know, I think that deep down we must enjoy getting tortured, insulted and ripped off at all the same time. I mean, what other explanation could there be for Limp Bizkit selling that many albums?

"Leave Me the Fuck Alone"

by Mason

For the past few years I've been afflicted with agoraphobia. I don't like to leave the house, I minimize my interaction with others, and when I do go out with friends, the list of locations I'm comfortable enough to visit is a very short one. I am generally stressed out in social situations, which doesn't make the already arduous eight hours of work a day any easier. My co-workers likely think I'm a mute. Going to, say, the gas station is about as thrilling a prospect as getting a rectal exam. When my girlfriend mentions the idea of going into the city to hang out, I hide under the bed. I don't go to shows unless a) it's a band I really, really love and can't miss; b) my band is playing; or c) one of my good friends is playing and I've failed to come up with a good enough excuse to get out of going which won't hurt their feelings much. I don't keep in touch with many old friends and go out my way not to make new ones. For whatever reason, this is the way I am, at least until I went to a shrink and got a prescription for a "social anxiety" medication. I figured, I've got insurance. What the hell - let's try the happy pills.

I've been on these things for several months now. I guess they've helped quite a bit, in that I tend to go out more and not be too freaked out about it, which is cool. I've actually gone on a couple long drives on nice, clear nights, or just to look at the leaves changing colors with the seasons, which is totally unlike me. I'm still really awkward around people, including close friends, but I don't feel the pressure to project myself a certain way like I used to. Despite a couple of weird side effects (stomach cramps, x-ray vision, the ability to breathe underwater) I've felt a lot better since starting the pills. But still I've tried to ween myself off of them. I've been cutting down little by little because my first attempt at going cold turkey was greeted with vertigo, headaches and an overall numbness. It was kind of cool for a little while, but I started getting paranoid that I might be seriously fucking with the ol' noggin, so I fell off the wagon.

Why am I attempting to take myself off these things? I'm not sure I can adequately explain it. I guess the only thing I can compare my situation to is when you're on your third 40 oz and somewhere between nirvana and puking up your innards, that feeling where you're not all there and not in absolute control, acting in ways or saying things you wouldn't if you were in your right state of mind. I never liked being drunk. I always felt like an ass for letting a chemical alter me to such an obvious extent. Maybe I'm a control freak, but the idea of that is just not conducive to my retaining some self respect. I guess the straight-edger in me (HA!) wonders why people, if they're so cool and self-realized or whatever, are so desperate to alter their personalities so drastically.

Which is basically where I'm at. I'm a quick-tempered, antisocial, monosyllabic misanthrope in my natural state, that is, unaltered by this drug. And for all of my newfound shiny happy demeanor, I miss the miserable bastard. Sure, I still grunt incoherent responses to 99% of the questions asked of me, I still show an almost complete lack of interest or enthusiasm about anything, but I just lack, I don't know ... passion. The thrill is gone. I don't get the same satisfaction from walking into 7-11 and looking at everyone like they're walking dog turds. I feel almost guilty staying home Friday nights. I've found myself instigating small talk with individuals that, in my unaltered state, I'd sooner see smothered in honey and eaten alive by fire ants. I'm not sure if this drug thing is compensating for some sort of imbalance and is actually bringing out "the real me", but I can't help but feel it's just stepping on the gas pedal in a part of me that nature intended to be left alone. Despite the benefits of being on this medication I've experienced, I kinda feel like I'm walking around around in someone else's skin and I'm a little freaked out by that. There's a social butterfly fluttering around somewhere in my frontal lobe and I'm ready to bag the fucker and pin him to the wall. So if you come up and say hi when I'm on tour and I run for the hills, at least you'll know why. ■

My thanks to everyone who has sent in material for review. If you didn't see your release reviewed here, it's because a) I didn't want to review it, or b) it didn't make it in this issue and will appear next time. Your act of reading this zine is most appreciated.

- Richard

JR'S GRATUITOUS TOP TEN FOR THIS ISSUE

- 1) Acid Bath *Paegan Terrorist Tactics*
- 2) Deceased *Supernatural Addiction*
- 3) Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds *The Boatman's Call*
- 4) Agents of Oblivion 2000 album
- 5) Pantera *Power Metal*
- 6) Bill Hicks *Rant in E Minor*
- 7) Groinchurn *Fink*
- 8) Pungent Stench *For God Your Soul ...*
- 9) Coalesce *Functioning on Impatience*
- 10) Life of Agony *Ugly*

MASON'S GRATUITOUS TOP TEN FOR THIS ISSUE

- 1) Pixies double live/comp. CD
- 2) Alice in Chains *Dirt*
- 3) Catherine Wheel *Ferment*
- 4) Nirvana *In Utero*
- 5) Jawbox *For Your Own Special Sweetheart*
- 6) Weezer *Pinkerton*
- 7) Fugazi *Repeater*
- 8) Jawbreaker *Dear You*
- 9) The Van Pelt *Sultans of Sentiment*
- 10) Ride *Going Blank Again*