

# DISPOSABLE UNDERGROUND

Issue 30

Championing the musically jaded for over a decade

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## Amon Amarth *Fate of Norms* (Metal Blade)

Well, one thing you have to say about these Swedes is that they are metal. That would be obvious to an infant. They also sing about Vikings and Norse mythology. That in itself is metal, let alone the music, which on this album sounds very interesting as it seems to be a bit different than some of their previous material. Just to take such tracks as "Where Death Seems to Dwell," "The Beholding of a King," and the title track, Amon Amarth is playing a lot slower than they have in the past, especially in comparison to the first album for Metal Blade back in 1998 as I recall. This isn't to say that the songs are slow, but instead they keep on truckin' and are very catchy and well crafted, with effective harmonies with the guitars. You could pump your fist, or better yet, swing your beer mug from side to side, to these songs. As my friend from Mannequin likes to say, "Fuck yeah."

## Bastard Saints Promotional Copy

As the name suggests this CD spreads the good news about Italy's Bastard Saints. There's tracks from the band's *La uno Bianca (To Arm the Integrity)* EP and from their split EP with Antigama. There's a couple of covers here which are interesting because of the band's approach to them. With all of the songs the singer it seems approaches the vocals according to what he feels is appropriate for each verse. Therefore the vocal style changes within each song, whether it's from a scratchy hardcore or a goregrind angle or something else. Bastard Saints are somewhat sloppy, sounding like they are simply throwing themselves into each song and struggling against them. The rough production adds to this feel. They still pull it off though, and it works.

Bastard Saints is an over the top grindcore band that has a lot of death metal influences such as Incantation as well. They have a little more going on than your average band of this type, while still being primitive at the same time. Good stuff.

<http://bastardsaints.cjb.net>

## Blood Duster 2003 album (High Voltage)

These porno grind madmen from Australia are at it again. Their self-titled album (named thusly because they couldn't think of a title that would beat the last one for Relapse, *Cunt*) to me sounds kind of like the first full-length, *Yeast*. This is a good thing. Where *Yeast* had plenty of grind to go around, along with some snippets of rock and other craziness, the new album has whole songs of rock, still a minority to the grindcore songs. What's also in abundance is the band's lovable sense of humor and also its love of pornography. While I find 99% of porno grind infantile and stupid, Blood Duster is a solid and real band that doesn't take itself too seriously, and has delivered another entertaining album. You'll quake from the grind and then nod your head to the rock.

## December *Praying Hoping Nothing* (Earache)

December's producer apparently never heard of a vocal compressor it seems, or doesn't know how to set it. That aside, unfortunately the second record for Earache is lesser to the first, *The Lament Configuration*. It might—well, mainly—is because of the singer. "But he's so hardcore, dude!" So are the riffs. Both are quite lame, but especially so with the singer. His style is boneheaded and pedestrian.

It's way too easy to try to have it both ways in the scene today. If you want to be marketed as a metal band but have hardcore cred, and more to the point have hardcore fans moshing in front of you (they had to pay to get in), then write a bunch of metal songs and put a hardcore breakdown in the middle of each one. Then if you're not doing as well as you thought, get a hardcore singer. That should clinch the deal.

I thought *The Lament Configuration* was mostly a good record. At least it was fast and had an abundance of metal riffs. I can't say either of *Praying Hoping Nothing*. Although I must give kudos for the fine and attentive cover of "Seemingly Endless Time." December has taken a turn for the worse.

## Defy *False Authority* album (Six Weeks)

First off, these guys are fast. The guitars are fast, the drums are fast, the vocals are fast. In a way it makes me think of *Animosity* or *Terrible Certainty* because of the pissed off attitude and the buzzsaw speed picking on the rhythm axes. I've employed this saying before, but this record does not let up for one second. Even when it does slow down—inrequently and briefly—it's still intense. This is fastcore thrashcore, Grade A. The call and response group vocals and the again, majorly pissed off lyrics pack a serious punch. I mean, there's artwork of a dead cop on the back cover!  
[www.sixweeksrecords.com](http://www.sixweeksrecords.com)

## The Dillinger Escape Plan *Miss Machine* (Relapse)

Bands that have been the trend setters were always one step ahead. Each time they broke new ground, by the time everyone else caught up, especially the clone bands, the innovators like Carcass, Voivod, and even David Bowie had already moved on. I won't class The Dillinger Escape Plan as an innovator exactly, but that band is one of the ones who are responsible for the tech metal screamo thing that is so boring because everybody else is doing it and doing it badly.

It's not Dillinger's fault of course, but the band is, however, starting to take the innovators' lead

by taking steps to move into different territory, while still keeping its signature sound in tow. The band hasn't gotten there yet, but is well on its way. Songs on the new album such as "Highway Robbery" and "Phone Home" and "Setting Fire to Sleeping Giants," just to name three, show glaring examples of new thoughts, ones that are looking forward in the right direction, about riffs and arrangements. The band is actually working to make its music more digestible in places, and sounds all the better for it. The new singer is varying his vocals as well, tailoring to the mood of the verse, which is very important in my book.

I've not been a Dillinger Escape Plan fan for some time, not counting *Irony is a Dead Scene*, which I think works extremely well, but with *Miss Machine* I have been pleasantly surprised and for the band I hold much more respect.

## Farmakon *A Warm Glimpse* (Elistit/Earache)

Listening to this record again after a long time, I remember why I hate Farmakon. They not only take influence from Scandanavian death metal (more on that later), but from Mordred too. What, you don't remember Mordred? There's a reason for that. They tried to mix funk, record scratching, and metal, and guess what? It didn't work. At the time they complained that metal listeners were too closedminded, that they didn't get it. What Mordred didn't realize was that the problem wasn't with their audience, but with the fact that they sucked.

As for Farmakon's other "influences," I can hear that Opeth is rubbing off in the vocal delivery and to a lesser extent the riffs and drum beat arrangements. Wait, scratch that—these guys are totally ripping Opeth off. A piece of advice, guys: Only Opeth can do Opeth. Everyone else just sounds like they're trying too hard. I'm surprised that Earache's ad campaign for Farmakon doesn't go something like "Do you like Opeth and funk music? Then you'll like Farmakon, too!" I guess that's why they cite Scandanavian death metal and lounge jazz in Farmakon's press. Those must be Earache code phrases for "Opeth rip off." I think that I might possibly be taking this just a little bit too far, so to quickly wrap this up, *A Warm Glimpse* is nothing but A Big Joke.

## Incision *Revealed and Worshipped* (Wicked World/Earache)

The second album from these death metal dudes is an improvement over the first in that the guitar riffs and song arrangements are a little better. The first record was a good death metal record in itself. Incision is solid and is a good time. I could do without the "blurgh" vocals but at least they break it up some with some high pitched screaming. And, wait a minute, was that a cow bell? I haven't heard a cow bell on a record with blasts since the first Assuck 7"! That's pretty cool.

The guys from Incision certainly know how to play their instruments and they know how to write a solid, heavy death metal verse that shows their ear for death metal history that goes much farther back than just a few years as is the case with most death metal acts these days, and for this Incision should be commended. The only problem is the blatant Morbid Angel ripoffs in the riff department. It's a little ridiculous. But then the band pulls a neat idea from their sleeves, as in the case of the obscure title track. I've been thinking about giving this another listen, but I haven't done it yet.

## The Jam Session *Att Skingra Det Mörker, Sor Betäcker Landet...* (Crucificados Pelo Systema)

Well, these Swedes certainly jam, all right. The production is very heavy, the band rocks at a midpace walk and then slows down into a plodding, smash rocks with a sledgehammer riff, and then in the next song, grind! All this with the vocalist growling over the top. They hack through their songs in a way that would make Eyehategod proud. The singer yells too. There's a little bit of everything with these guys and they have their own sound, which is a very good thing.  
[www.crucificados.de](http://www.crucificados.de)

## Karma Payment Plan/Triac split 7" ep (Chaotic Noise)

The first appearance on vinyl for both bands. Both of them have grind parts, the former not as much as the latter. Sticking with KPP, as they sometimes refer to themselves, the music is a bit stiff and the vocals are a bit sharp and tinny, but the music is catchy enough. They assuredly have some toe tappin' songs. The guitar player once said he was majorly influenced by Kurt Cobain's playing, and you can hear that underneath the metal, interestingly enough. The band has a fine sound as well.

And as for Triac, they go from grind sections to railroading into sick doomy dischordant sections with watery chords over the top. The hardcore vocals are a little monotonous but they do deliver the hate-filled edge that Triac has. The guitar work, to come back to that, is quite unusual stylistically here. The jackhammer drums add to the punch—this drummer pounds on the skins hard, giving his all. Triac has its own sound to be sure.  
<http://listen.to/karmapaymentplan>

## Kittie *Until the End* (Artemis)

The first thing I'll say is that I'm surprised. On the new album, which features several enhanced

CD goodies, Kittie doesn't sound half as bad as they did on previous efforts. Much of the improvement is due to the movement away from the nu-metal sound the band embraced before (they stated in a *Disposable Underground* interview that they weren't a nu-metal band as evidenced by their not dressing like one), and although the band hasn't completely walked away from that style, *Until the End* is a dark record, darker I'd say than their previous EP and album, not the least because of the artwork that seems to fit the lyrics that touch on depression, failed relationships, and also cynical observations. The melodic vocals here, often that almost have a Juliana Hatfield tinge to them, fit better than the raspy growl, and the music, although very repetitive, and tiringly so (they could have made their point for each song in two and a half minutes instead of three and a half or four), partly because of the band's adherence to a small handful of time signatures, sounds more convincing and more pissed off this time around. Kittie is headed in the right direction.

### Living Colour *Collideoscope* (Mayan/Sanctuary)

It's nice to hear that Living Colour is still hammering out strong music. You might remember them as having the quasi-metal song 'Cult Of Personality.' I haven't heard anything since *Time's Up* but I quite like the new album. As with most records every song isn't top notch but each one has charm and the record as a whole is a pleasure to hear. The standouts in the band, the vocalist and the multi-talented Vernon Reid on guitar (backed up ably by the rock solid rhythm section) are still tearing it up and all of them know how to commit a mean hook to tape. The band has attitude, not only in the material and performance, but in the recording, using different approaches with different songs. There's nods to a range of musical styles, such as gritty electronic, 60s hippie rock, and bare bones rock and roll in the form of a snarling AC/DC cover, not to mention Living Colour's own rage with Reid's distorted guitar going off. The moods the band takes us through from track to track are fascinating as well.

### Lunaris *Cyclic* (Elitist/Earache)

Band number one billion and one from Norway. I like the dry sound of this record. All too often these days metal records are so slick that they lose some of their edge. Not to say I'm nostalgic of the days when most "true" black metal sounded like total garbage. Anyway, these guys don't seem to be afraid of showing themselves, even the parts that aren't perfect: there are a couple of small flubs in the drum playing that most of the big time metal bands these days would have cleaned up with computer programs in the studio. That's very cool of Lunaris. Another surprise is how much musical ground the band is daring to cover. The first song is a black metal blast, while the second goes into mid-career Fates Warning territory. Then on the third song, they go from black metal blasts again to early 90s tech/prog metal, and along the way throughout the record dropping in late 80s style death metal riffs. And so it goes, and somehow it works. These guys have huge balls. The singer has a range the size of Montana, as anyone would have to have in order to pull this off, and he is terribly good. Lunaris is effective with the keyboards as well, being careful not to overdo it, which is a very easy thing to do in metal. I'm very impressed. Keep your eyes on Lunaris. I for one am interested to see where they go with their music next time, and if they can pull all this stuff off live.

### Never Enough *Our Will Is Done* (Vendetta/Firestarter)

If you're looking for a modern day Agnostic Front or Sick Of It All that "supports the atheist lifestyle," then look no further than these guys from Maryland who are bringing it back. The lyrics are pointed and well written, as was the case with the band's demos, but here they are less philosophical and more personal. They point fingers, but more in the "this is my opinion about your actions" instead of the "you're an asshole because of your actions" vein. The music is old school as anything and is a great deal of fun. It's all fast except for the raging breakdowns. 2004 style! Firestarter, 2981 Falls Rd, Baltimore MD 21211, USA

### Roma Delenda Est *Summer 2003 Tour demo*

The best thing I can say about Roma Delenda Est is that it's a powerful, spastic live band, not including the singer who fronts the standard screamo posture. The two instrumental pieces are very interesting as are the brief, well done, spacy jazz interludes in the proper songs. Besides these bits Roma plays average screamo with some grind bits and some Dillinger Escape Plan-ish

discordant riffs, rapid fire arpeggios, and a City of Caterpillar section found in one song here. Some time has passed and some lineup changes have occurred since the demo, so check up on the band. [www.romemustbedestroyed.com](http://www.romemustbedestroyed.com)

### Sceatic *Unbeliever's Script* (Candlelight)

Poland's Sceatic offers something fresh to the death metal thrash crowd. The band seems to have taken care to write some songs that have not only impressive musicianship, while not going overboard with the technicality, but also composition and arrangement. The band isn't afraid to slow down if that is what the song calls for, or be melodic, or use clean guitars and quiet distortion for longer than an introduction or more often than the odd interlude. "Controlled by Mind" is a good example. Plus their attitude seems to be the right one. They're not too concerned with being more "brutal" than the next band: in the group photo the guy in the Morbid Angel shirt is smiling, and another guy has on a *South Park* long-sleeve! How refreshing.

### Ulver *A Quick Fix of Melancholy EP* (Jester)

Whenever I read Ulver's liner notes I can never figure out what the fuck they are talking about, but from what I can understand one of the four tracks here is a "rearrangement" of a song from *Kveldssanger*. There's a good 23 minutes here so don't think you won't get your money's worth. This EP is quite haunting and mesmerizing, and yes, melancholy. It's more amazing each time it's played, and the emotional impact is increased as well. The first track relies on plucked strings and vocals, while the second has keyboard and studio effects in addition to strings, and percussion makes its first appearance, and so on. By the time the fourth track comes in and washes over you, it's downright creepy. It's amazing that a band that recorded what one person described as the most extreme black metal record ever has released something like this, and that's so well done, but we can see that Ulver exceeds at whatever the band puts its mind to.

### Ulver *Swidd Neger - Original Soundtrack* (Jester)

I don't know what this movie is about but you can bet I'll be looking for it based solely on the soundtrack. There's some clips from the film which is in Norwegian here that sound intriguing, and when the clips are woven into the music it's downright scary. The images from the film included in the sleeve help make a very dark atmosphere. The music that Ulver has created is beautiful and pleasant, but jarring and twisted as well. It soars above in the night sky and then also stays low to the ground, into the soil. It makes me wonder what the hell is going on in the film while the music is pacing underneath. Ulver's modern style employs contemporary recording techniques and electronic sounds as well as soft jazz music, acoustic percussion and doublebass, brass instruments, violin and cello and other strings, keyboards, and more—even an accordion.

And there are other sounds which are strange and unnerving. Do yourself a favor and pick up this soundtrack.

### Wetnurse 2004 album

With the sticks coming down on the drums, the guitars and bass doing whatever the hell they want, and the gnashing song arrangements, you know Wetnurse has something unusual going on. They're all over the place musically speaking. This punchy and heavy eight track album is an improvement over the last demo. There's piercing high vocals that make you wonder what they are doing there, more middle of the road yelling, and death metal grunts—part of what sets Wetnurse apart. The spinning, swirling songs do that too. [usapr@earache.com](mailto:usapr@earache.com) ■



COURTESY WETNURSE

# JAPANISCHE KAMPFHÖRSPIELE

One of the things that differentiates Jaka (for short) from other bands that have their sights set on the international scene is that their songs are sung in German and their lyrics are printed in German.

Bony says that although the band hasn't discussed the topic yet, "as lots of people are really amazed or at least interested in our lyrics and their meaning we might think of a translation sheet for the upcoming releases."

Perhaps it's more of a test of the band's audience, but there is the question of whether non-German speaking music fans will still appreciate and enjoy Jaka even though they can't read the lyrics.

"I think that most of the response we get outside of German speaking countries is based upon the German lyrics. German is quite a good language to sing over grindcore songs 'cause makes the music sound somewhat more aggressive and weird. It just doesn't sound like the 258,671st death metal band from Germany trying to create scary gory lyrics in English. And it also might have an exotical and unusual touch," responds Bony.

Bastardized Recordings has released Jaka's two CDs.

"We're very content. We're a small band and they're a small label so we can grow together. Though they don't have the opportunities that labels like Earache or Relapse have, they are very busy and really believe in the band. If they keep up their good work, they'll be quite big metal label in the future. By now all I can say is that Bastardized is the best that could happen to a band like Jaka."

The full length Jaka record sounds to be more, shall we say, polished in terms of production and clean in terms of performance than the Jaka EP.

"When I joined Jaka, they were already in the studio to do the EP so I couldn't contribute anything to the songs like I did on the new album. I'm not really from the grindcore scene but was heavily influenced by 80s thrash metal which you'll probably notice when you hear the new

album," reveals Bony, adding, "but I promise the next regular longplayer will be a more extreme one."

Bony expands on the way the German thrash wave affects the way Jaka writes music. "I was heavily influenced by bands like Slayer, Dark Angel and of course Kreator. Though I am only the singer in Jaka, I still play guitar very often and the other members liked the riffs, so they ended up being on the album. My first band rehearsed next to Kreator's rehearsal

room back in the eighties. No matter how hard you try you cannot wash away that influence."

Jaka is from eastern Germany and this impacts the band as well. Bony explains, "The eastern part of Germany is a very good platform for extreme music. The economy there is going down the drain, unemployment everywhere. So the people there are really, really pissed off and therefore in a mood for 'pissed off' music."

In addition to his thoughts on music and his band, Bony has something of interest



COURTESY JAPANISCHE KAMPFHÖRSPIELE

to say on the subject of the German Chancellor.

"It doesn't really matter for whom you vote. You have the choice between warm shit and cold. No matter if the recent chancellor is Labour or Conservative. He has to sail the ship through a sea of shit. The only thing you can do is not vote anyone from the right wing or any other radical party. Give your vote to some democratic party, sit down and wait for the shit to disappear by itself."

Someone fairly recently said that citizens of foreign nations, in addition to the Americans themselves, should vote for the American president. How much does American foreign policy

affects Germany? Bony has a response.

"I don't like the way American foreign politics affect other countries in general. I was really pissed off how the American government tried to make France stoop low. Fortunately it didn't work so the Americans may now call their french fries "freedom fries." Congratulations. How much more stupid can things get? My only hope is that the upcoming president's name is not George W. Bush."

The new album *Hardcore Aus Der Ersten Welt* is out now.  
www.japanische-kampfhorspiele.de ■

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION to Mannequin. No, not the movie, not the doll in the window, but the band. You know, the smelly one with the split with Transistor Transistor on Robotic Empire Records, and the CD EP called *Mannequin Warps Yr Head* on Reptilian Records. (It's to come out on 10" on FuckItTapes as well.) The band is well on the way to becoming road dogs, playing every club and basement into which they can get their equipment.

# MANNEQUIN

*Mannequin Warps Yr Head* is a very dirty and very much with a punk attitude release, with hard driving songs and a bleak lyrical outlook. According to the band, the direction of the music is going to change, however, for their next recording, a full length for Robotic Empire. Mike Widman, one of the guitarists, begins.

"It's gonna be a lot better."

"Oh god, it's gonna be one of these interviews," laughs guitarist Mike Taylor.

"It'll be Mannequin, that's all. How do you answer a question like this?" Widman laughs.



"I think it'll probably get a little bit more mean" with the addition of their new drummer, Jake Cregger (who interestingly comes from a grindcore background), says Taylor. "A little more noise rock ... It'll probably be all over the place."

and I think it'll always do that a little bit. We were writing some extremely poppy stuff before [former drummer Johnny] Otter left. Stuff that sounded like FYP or something."

The band will record with Steve Albini for the full length. Something the band does live that it won't do in the studio is play its 12 minute long noise rock dirge, with which they end some of their sets and which really has nothing to do with the rest of the band's current sound. Their motivation?

"I do it 'cause it's amazing," states Widman.

"Every band I'm in, it ends up writing a song that goes on for a long time and we get to make noise. You know I love that."

"The song [itself] is actually about a minute long," reveals Widman. "It's a party, man."

"Man, these days all I enjoy mostly about Mannequin sets for a while was us doing all the feedback and the noise, 'cause it really doesn't have to be good; it just has to be in your face and harsh," explains Taylor.

"I just love the party that comes with every time we play it," deadpans Widman. Much of his sense of humor is in the form of deadpan. "That's basically what it all comes down to, is making a ton of noise and annoying people."

www.mannequinsmokes.com ■



PHOTOS: JASON HORNICK

WHAT SHOULD BE SAID about Cathedral that hasn't been said before? That they are an important doom metal band? That they started out slow and heavy as fuck and ended up rocking and heavy as fuck? Cathedral is on Nuclear Blast now but one thing we can say is that they have a new two CD collection on Earache called *The Serpent's Gold*. Because of this Gaz Jennings, founding member and guitar player for Cathedral, obligingly made some phone calls to the press.

He spoke on a variety of subjects. Chris Barnes, when he was in Cannibal Corpse, to begin with one point, said in this very zine that his band didn't downtune the guitars and bass, as often is the case with death metal, because with most downtuning bands, if they were to tune their instruments up to standard and play their songs, those bands would sound wimpy. Gaz agreed with this assessment. He told of an occasion where he tuned his guitar up to standard to play along with some traditional heavy metal records, one being a Saxon LP, and for the heck of it he started playing a Cathedral tune, "Hopkins (Witchfinder General)." He jovially said the song sounded "terrible" in the higher tuning.

Cathedral has recorded different records at different guitar tunings, as other bands have done, but as compared to some bands, who would in the live setting play all of their songs in the same tunings, or others who would have different guitars and basses in different tunings and would play whichever one was appropriate for a particular song, Cathedral plays their songs live in whatever key their songs are in.

The collection consists of two cds of music, one a sort of best of and the second rare tracks.

D.U.



COURTESY EARACHE

On the first appears a song or two from each album and some of the eps, one of the former being "Stained Glass Horizon." Gaz described the video shoot for that song as a bit of a disappointment because of a director unreceptive to the band's ideas. The band scouted out an old abandoned castle that was overgrown with foliage, a really gothic looking structure, that they felt would be perfect. The building was the first in England to receive electricity and took a large amount of travel to visit. But instead of that rich locale, the director put the band in front of a brick wall for some of the shots, a wall not dissimilar to any down the street from Gaz's house.

Cathedral has gone against the grain and what is expected of it many times, a good example and not the least of which being the video for "Midnight Mountain." One of the guys who was in the band at the time was wearing a chef's outfit in the video, as if he were cookin' up some riffs. This is because he was a horrible cook, at least for one occasion when he first jammed with the band. The drummer at the time was dressed like Stan Laurel from Laurel and Hardy because of his personality. Then there's the white disco outfit the singer had on, the disco ball, the dancers, the magic carpet the band was riding, and all the rest of it. Gaz chuckled a bit when recalling all of this, saying they certainly got a reaction when the video came out. People didn't

know what to make of it.

One thing you can make of Cathedral is that the band is very good at what it does, whether it be rocking or grinding out slow tempos from hell. Watch out for their new album, and look for *The Serpent's Gold*. ■

# Musical Darwinism with JR Hayes

We went "into the listening room" with JR and played him some records. Here are excerpts from his first impressions of each...

## Beaten Back To Pure The Burning South (Dark Reign)

Way too early in the record for an intro like this. This is like a track five thing, you know what I'm saying? What are we on, track two? I mean, so far this is kind of like Buzzov\*en, southern hardcore. I mean, this isn't bad stuff. If it's from the south, it's cool, you know? I like it. I wish they were faster, a lot faster, like way faster. The packaging's pretty fucking cool. I dig this. It's pretty cool. It's a little too midpaced for me, but the guys got riffs; he's bringing the riffs to the table. The singer sounds like he likes to break a beer bottle over his head every now and then, and I don't know where from the south that they're from, but they're from the south, so that's cool, you know? Yeah, I give this, uh ... three thumbs up.

## Agent Steel Order of the Illuminati (AOS/Artillery)

Oh god. This is all about like ... I mean, this reminds me of Flotsam and Jetsam, you know? Just like old '80s like American thrash metal. Well executed, but too heavy on the musicianship, not heavy enough on the hate. The hate right now is maybe on about one. We need more hate in this thrash. The cover looks like a lost Journey record which is kinda cool, so points for that. The singer is something completely out a time warp too. I mean, anybody who misses Joey Belladonna needs to buy this record. This is all about some operatic thrash. This gets one thumb up for the execution. It's kinda like if you're judging like, say, a gymnast or a dancer or something like that, it's like, good marks on the difficulty, but kind of a cliché routine. Lack points on the style. Not vicious enough for me. I mean, this is a good record. It's up somebody's alley; it's just not really my thing. It's thrash but it's straddling that line between thrash and power metal. The singer's just like a little too retro for me, but if people like old Queensrÿche, shit with this kind of vibe, they might eat this up. So props to Agent Steel.

## Chainletter My Parents Fuck Me

I really have no idea what to say. I mean, it kinda almost has that Anal Cunt disregard for its audience; just strangeness. Interesting perverse sense of humor, but I really don't know where they're trying to go with this. This is one of those CDs where every track is a little bit different, every track is coming from a different angle, so it's hard to get overall perspective on the concept. It's kind of anarchic grindcore. They're doing whatever they want to do, they're having a good time, I'm sure they laughed their asses off when they made it, but it's a demo. It's what you would expect out of a demo, so good for them. I hope their parents are good in the sack. <http://listen.to/chainletter>

## My Fate Happiness Is Fiction (Crash)

First line, first song on the album: "God, Satan, Shit." How can you argue with that? They have a song called "Sickness" but they took all the vowels out. I guess they don't like vowels. Good production; production's heavy. Well, it's really, really, really bargain basement thrash stuff. It's not fast. The drummer's definitely not a basket case; he's playing it pretty straight. This band's trying to do kind of heavy groove nu metal stuff. To me it sounds like Disturbed; that's the first thing that pops into my mind. It's got that kind of groove, it's got the kind of gothy lead singer. I mean, they're from Finland and that's cool. I like Finland, I'm a big supporter of the country. I think more bands should come from Finland, but this band's definitely into too much commercial shit for me. You know when you go to see a band and the guitar player's playing his guitar like two inches off the floor and he's all hunched over like the dude from Korn? This is those kind of riffs. This is the kind of riffs you play when you're all hunched over. And I don't like riffs that are like that. I like riffs that people have to stand up straight to play, but that's just me. I don't have any money, I'm usually pretty broke, but I would bet all the money in the world that this guitarist plays hunched over. I don't know, this is sooooo not my thing. This needs to stop. This needs to come out right now.

## Failure Trace demo 1

This kind of reminds me of Enemy Soil, dare I say it. It's a demo, it's primitive as hell, it's crusty, it's grindy, it's angry, it's good. It just needs something else. It needs anything else to distinguish it from ... I don't know, I like the vibe a lot, but there's nothing that makes it jump out at you, like the drums or the guitar or the vocals; it's all good but not unique, so it's missing that extra personality that it needs to rise out of the muck, you know what I'm saying? But their heart's definitely in the right place, so I give them props on that. I would say out of 100 thumbs, this is about 73 thumbs. And they're from Thailand, so I don't know how easy or difficult it is to get a band together in Thailand, but good for them. Hopefully they'll rock Thailand. [failuretrace@hotmail.com](mailto:failuretrace@hotmail.com)

## Cult of Luna Salvation (Earache)

Oh man, this is gonna be rough. These guys are audacious. "Coupling mountainous sonic audacity with organic open-hearted honesty." Interesting. This is good stuff, it's well executed, it's well produced. I think some of the arrangements are a little bit overdone; certain parts I think go on longer than they should. This is in that Neurosis, Isis kind of vein, but kind of along the lines of the later, post-*Times of Grace* Neurosis, where there's a little more subtlety in the arrangements, but it's not quite as unique and creative as old Neurosis kind of stuff. It just kind of more sits, knows where

it stands, the tempos don't change too much. It's good and it's heavy, but there's not that sense of the unknown where it just feels familiar. It doesn't feel, like with old Neurosis, where you never know where they're gonna take you, you know what I'm saying? It's not nearly as much fun when it's like that. But these guys are a good band. I really wish Earache would put out more stuff like this as opposed to the stuff they normally put out, but that's my opinion.

## Lair of the Minotaur Carnage (Southern Lord)

It's definitely metal from the old school, back when Mötörhead was still influencing metal bands, you know what I mean? You can definitely hear tons of Frost in there too. It's nice and thick and noisy, it's got that High on Fire type of vibe. I bet you a million dollars these guys fuckin' play with no shirts on. They have to play with no shirts on, probably bullet belts or something. It's good and heavy but it doesn't sound dated. The production's really good. It still sounds very contemporary. I like the cover. Kind of reminds me of *Pleasure to Kill* by Kreator, which is always a good thing. I mean, the album's called *Carnage*. It's on Southern Lord. I dunno, what's not to like, really? I'm down with this. These guys are doing exactly what they want to do, and that's cool. It's heavy metal. Fuckin' thrash, man. Awesome. I don't know what else I can say about this.

## Spinal Cord Remedy (Crash)

It's Polish death, man; it's Polish death. It's the way they do death in Poland. The guitar player's trying to get melodic on your ass a little bit kind of like Carcass does on *Heartwork*, you know? But that kind of stuff annoys me because I just like it being brutal. I don't need the extra guitar solos and all that stuff. If you dig something like Vader or the early Pestilence stuff, this isn't that bad. You can tell they probably listened to Meshuggah a few times too. They're trying to do some of that off-time rockin', which is cool if you're into rockin' off-time. Did I mention that this is Polish death? It's death metal from the Eastern Bloc of Europe where they like death metal a lot and they do a lot of death metal. I'm not really into this whole scene. I mean, I like Entombed, I like Carnage, I like the first Dismember. I don't really know what's been going on with death metal in the past fuckin' twenty years in Europe. I mean, I'm glad these guys don't sound like they're trying to rip off At the Gates like everybody else is ripping off At the Gates nowadays, and that's good, but like I was mentioning earlier—Entombed, Dismember—this is a direct descendent of that type of death metal. If you like this kind of death metal, this is pretty well done. There's no lame choruses where he's trying to sing like the dude from Depeche Mode, there's not any cheesy Cradle of Filth keyboard bullshit. It's death metal, you know? If you like death metal, this is some more death metal for you. I would say, out of, let's see, seven thumbs, I'd give it five opposable thumbs for this album. ■

## How to Be a Fashionable Trend-Follower in Punk, Screamo, and Metalcore

I haven't run one of these "Disposable Opinion" columns in a while. But written herein needs to be said, for those who are in search of a trend.

Fashion has a great deal to do with youth culture and so does music. You can read any copy of *Rolling Stone* or whatever to see that. In youth culture people are pressured by two opposites, the need to be part of a group and, in some cases, a need to be different. That latter need is definitely in play in the underground (only in relative terms) music scene, which is getting more and more notice and play in the mainstream (MTV, Fuse, et. al) these days. As for the more extreme side of things with which we are concerned here—punk, screamo, and metalcore—these have their cheerleaders in TV shows such as *Headbanger's Ball* and *Uranium*.

Bands look to music listeners at large, and listeners look to bands, for clothing and hair tips. You can pick, say, a metalcore band out of any lineup of bands (although it's almost impossible to differentiate one metalcore band from another) as soon as you hear them go into their metalcore song part, just as you can spot a screamo person from a mile away.

These days in screamo and metalcore and both punk in general and garage or basement punk in particular you'll be a hit if you wear your keys outside of your pants pocket on a chain or large ring or link hooked to your belt or a belt loop of your pants, just behind one of your hips. The more keys the better. It's also important to work hard at looking like you don't care what you look like. Mussed hair, dirty clothes, and bathing infrequently are methods often employed.

Garage punk is an exception in the emphasis on wearing black, which is crucial to screamo and metalcore. It's more about blue jeans and flannel shirts under a t-shirt with the garage punk scene.

Crusties represent another area of punk. They're in the hardcore or crustcore vein and they have spiky hair or a mohawk or dreadlocks, piercings, tattoos, wash their clothes and bodies infrequently, wear lots of black, and have an absurd number of patches on their jacket, vest, pants, or on a flap of some kind that hangs down in the back, and sometimes have studs or spikes added as well. It's similar in approach to the old glam scene from the '70s and '80s: on stage or on the street, patches instead of glitter, a look and a lifestyle.

With screamo and metalcore a tight-fitting heavy metal black t-shirt and black jeans or black

slacks and black Chuck Taylor shoes are best. White or studded belts are a plus. Also, the more tattoos the better. Add to that with screamo the often seen black hair dye and thick black-rimmed glasses.

Posturing is a huge element in being trendy. No one postures better than screamo and metalcore vocalists. With screamo, if you are a screamer, or are planning on becoming one, part of your image will be shaped not only by the clothes you wear and your hairstyle and your accessories, but if you're in a band by your stage presence as well.

On stage, you should have one hand on the mic, holding it with your thumb up as if it were a bottle of beer and you were examining the label, so that when you scream into it you're holding the mic vertically, and your other hand should either be on the back of your hip or behind your back so that your forearm goes across.

There isn't a "guy" way or a "girl" way to conduct one's self on stage. However most of these tips are directed at young men and teenagers because most of the audience and bandmembers of these scenes are made up of males. There are a few females in bands though, moreso in the audience, whom we will come to in a moment.

The asexual side of screamo is another matter in terms of clothing choices. Asexual guy screamers should wear a light scarf or a feminine top such as a tight fitting sweater, or both. If you are a member of the audience, you can wear your hair as a girl in the scene does, with long bangs that curl on the sides of the head towards the cheek, for example. Also the bottom of the legs of your pants should be folded up on the outside to expose the ankles which is the way most scene girls wear theirs.

There aren't many other cues for a guy to follow when he wants to dress as an effeminate member of the scene because girls mostly follow the guys' lead in terms of fashion with the few exceptions mentioned above, and with the addition of wifebeaters which are the choice of females here.

If you conduct yourself onstage and present yourself at shows in these ways, you will become indistinguishable from anybody else in your particular scene, but at the same time be different than the larger mainstream. What more could any young person want? ■

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. 2004. Andy Low graciously maintains our web site. Contributors this issue: JR Hayes, Jason Hornick. ■