

DISPOSABLE UNDERGROUND

Issue 31

Championing the musically jaded for over a decade

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NAPALM DEATH WENT ON TOUR for their latest album, and when they came to Virginia, vocalist and lyricist Barney Greenway agreed to sit down after the band's set and speak about a few aspects of British and American politics, which one could say wasn't a problem for him, as the members of Napalm Death are no strangers to taking stands on political issues. Taryn Wilkinson contributed to this interview.

To begin, the British Parliament took Prime Minister Tony Blair to task for a period in late 2004 for what they felt was Blair's misleading the body on WMD in Iraq, the stated reasoning for the invasion and occupation.

"Yeah yeah yeah, people went fucking nuts over it," said Barney. And that wasn't the only issue over which Prime Minister Blair was in hot water.

"Yeah, he wanted to send more troops. That was recently. And of course, people said, 'What the fuck are you doing? It's already a disaster.' It's a funny old situation because I'm sure you're probably aware that ninety percent—ninety percent—of the British people were against, opposed, to the war. Yet still Britain sent troops to Iraq. How the fuck does that figure, you know? I mean, my god, could it be any more clear? And you know, the craziest thing is that Bush has been reelected. I didn't see it, so I can't quote per se, but I heard that Bush and Blair were on television ... saying that they were going to clean up the Middle East. Now, what the fuck? What are you talking about?"

Tony Blair was the first foreign dignitary to visit President Bush after the US presidential election in November 2004.

"Well, Bush came over to England, and I think it's safe to say he got a very hot reception," recalled Barney. "I mean, people were throwing shit at him everywhere he went." And this fed into the British discourse over Tony Blair's handling of US-British relations.

"There's gonna be a general election I think within the next couple of years, but what they're talking about is that they were actually trying to raise the point: should Blair still be the leader of the Labor party? 'Cause I think what main traditional Labor members want, and I used to be one of those, they want someone that's gonna be less subservient to Bush. Figure it this way. Blair comes from a party traditionally that comes from the left. Bush comes from a party—and Bush in particular couldn't really be much more right, you know? We're kinda curious as to where this kind of crossover comes, that Blair so willingly is led by the hand. It really angers a lot of people traditionally in the Labor party. People are fucking pissed, man. There are a lot of people against the war. I mean, you gotta figure, it's not like the Democrats over here who were like, once all the smoke had cleared, like, I dunno, eighty-five percent of them came out in favor of the war. In England, you could reverse that figure, and eighty-five percent of them were fuckin' against the war, so go figure."

An important issue in Britain is that of the national press' coverage of politics in its reporting, the British Broadcasting Corporation being discussed here.

"There was a BBC scandal where the BBC reported about the doctor that supposedly committed suicide. Very sinister thing," Barney explained. "But you know what? The guy that investigated it found very little fault with the government and so it got white washed, you know what I mean? It got papered over ... I'm not exactly sure how the BBC's being run at the moment. But yeah, it seems that the very fact that the BBC was left with egg on its face after that would mean that they would be reluctant to be so ultra critical of the government again over such matters. You know how things are, man. Once you're kinda blackballed or whatever it's very difficult to convince people that they should again speak for themselves."

Barney has paid attention to the press in America as well.

"There is some good regional press over here that I've seen. And you know, in this sphere you get the free magazines which are always very good, you have the local culture magazines; they're always very good. Every magazine I saw in the week of the election had anti-Bush covers and stuff like that. 'Ten reasons why you shouldn't vote Bush' in fucking big letters on the inside cover. It all helps, man. Sadly, it wasn't to be, but then a week before the election it kinda was looking that Bush was going to win."

Napalm Death is conscious of the political climate in the areas in which they tour, and yet Barney had strong words about the new American president in between songs while the band was performing.



BARNEY GREENWAY PHOTO: CLAIRE WHELPTON

"You know what, man? I've got to say, and I'm really happy to say this, that every night—I mean, I couldn't have made it much plainer from the stage, really, and no one heckled, man, no one said anything. Whether people are just keeping quiet—but usually people aren't afraid to speak up. The reaction's been really good everywhere. One guy after Dallas came up to me and tapped me on the shoulder and said, 'Don't talk shit about my president.' And I just said to him, 'I really don't need to talk shit about the president. He's doing it for himself. I don't need to enter the fucking debate.' I said, 'We'll agree to disagree.' You know, Bush has gone into his second term now, and I truly believe that people are starting to realize—it may have taken a term for them to realize—you get people coming to this gig in here tonight; do you think Bush gives a shit about them? I fucking don't think so. He'll take away their jobs, he'll fuckin' deny them basic healthcare, stuff like that. He don't give a shit about them. He's already proved it. I saw him on TV today. His new anti-terrorism initiatives involve cutting down on social plans and education."

In America the population is 30 to 40 percent poor but one wouldn't know that because of the

way the government structures the tax system.

"Well exactly. And you've also got to think where you've still got increasing ghetto-ization in this country, and they kinda talk about social plans and stuff like that. They don't want the ghettos cleaned up. Certainly the Republicans don't, because it helps to create a division in society, where it's almost a distraction to have this gap between haves and have fuckin' nothings, you know what I mean? So it's good because they're always going to fight against each other and it's a great distraction for the government. They haven't got to deal with as many people bitching at them."

Sobering talk. To hear more of what Napalm Death has to say, look for their back catalog. Their new album, *Leaders Not Followers: Part 2*, is out on Century Media. Their new album on the same label will be released in April. ■

AN INTERVIEW WITH HARAM

Haram is a new band consisting of guys that should be familiar to fans of ex-members of some heavy hitters in the underground hardcore/punk/indie music scene. They have a new website, new shows booked such as a two week tour in August, and new music, such as a demo, and a full length to be created as well.

In terms of what to expect, however, let's allow Matt from Haram put it in his words. "I would say not to expect anything. Come with no ideas and give us another chance. I'm sure people will hear our old bands in this band but it feels totally new to me."

Like one of the ex-bands, Haram is going to be active and put its name out there socially and politically, getting behind issues and writing about them between the lines lyrically.

"We [and] I will always be like that. I can't hide that stuff.



It's just a part of saying and living what you believe is honest." Since Haram is new, Matt and his former and current longtime bandmate Kevin, on bass, are writing with two new people, one of whom, Andy on drums, is newer than the other, guitarist Mike, who has worked with Matt and Kevin in their last band.

"It's fun. And weird. Pat [from the old band] was the only drummer I had played with for eight years. So it's just fun to get used to someone else's style."

Finally, a straight question and answer. What's the "mission statement" for Haram? Raping, pillaging, beer drinking, plundering?

"I think it's just to make some damn serious songs, and not look back. Maybe drink and plunder a little."

For more info go to www.harammusic.com ■

MAJORITY RULE WAS a band of gents from the Greater Metropolitan Washington DC area, one that should be unknown to not many people who pay attention to punk and hardcore and indie rock from there. For those who are unfamiliar, Matt, one of the singers and guitarists for that band, very generally describes a typical "Majority Rule part" as "smoothing melodic stuff against abrasive stuff." The band was brilliant, really, going through a metamorphosis throughout its existence from a typical hardcore band to one that stood head and shoulders above most of the music in its genre that was out there before and since.

MAJORITYRULE

After many US and European tours and releases, the demise of the band was an upsetting subject to I'm sure a large amount of people from that music scene. Making his first appearance in these pages since issue 27, Matt begins here to talk about what happened. He once said, "I just think we all have some pretty different ideas on why the band had to end and when the band really ended."

He later expands on this. "For me, the band ended when I was at the beach with my family last summer. I realized the point wasn't to keep something going that we had worked so hard on, forever. The point was to keep making music and being a band, with my friends, that everyone wanted. It's when I realized that I had no control over how the other guys feel about it. If they were not into it, better to just stay friends than keep on going."

One thing Majority Rule had in abundance was not only intelligent lyrics but intelligent and strong political stances. They put their money where their mouths were, although for one

reason or another only some of their audience responded to what the band was doing.

"I feel like lots of people never even knew our specific political beliefs. Mostly because the lyrics are usually pretty vague, and we never talked that much at shows. I would like to think that people took the time to read into the lyrics since you can't really understand what we're saying ... I'm guessing more people responded to the music than the message."

Majority Rule did get some shit from listeners because of what the band stated and what the band put its name behind in support. However, "Surprisingly, not that much. I got into it with people about Palestine often, but that happens anywhere. Usually punk kids are pretty curious about that conflict rather than confrontational. The people that gave me shit were usually the obvious 'down deep we don't like brown people' types."

Given what the band has been through, then, in the wake of its breakup, Matt has some advice for other bands who come to a crossroads, where they have to decide on replacing a band member, breaking up, or some other unpleasant situation.

"I would just encourage people to be honest and direct. If you aren't into something and don't want it continuing in your absence, say that. Then you can have a dialogue. It's just like any relationship. Being in a band, for me, is sooo similar to being in a serious physical [or] emotional relationship it's ridiculous."

One can still go to www.majrule.com to find past releases, other merchandise and more. ■

AN INTERVIEW WITH HISSING CHOIR

Hissing Choir is (or was) an exciting and incredibly talented group that a bunch of friends from different bands in Virginia USA formed. There had been high expectations locally toward Hissing Choir. The band has been inactive for quite a long time due to everyone in the band being in another band previous to and during Hissing Choir's existence, among other reasons, and although a local record label had already expressed interest in the release of a full length recording, the band only played a handful of shows and did not even record anything besides a rehearsal before it went on hold. In this interview, reprinted from *Violence Magazine* from Poland, bassist Chris Taylor and drummer Jake Cregger talked about their band at one of their shows. It will hopefully be of interest despite the large amount of time that has passed since the interview took place.

"If you wanna classify it, it's just basically structured noise in a traditional band format," suggests Chris. "A direct reference would definitely be Swans. My Bloody Valentine."

Jake adds, "Like Neubauten type stuff could possibly be thrown in there. I mean, we're thinkin' about employing more industrial percussion."

"Sheet metal and chain saws. Basically we want it to be open ended enough to where any influence or whatever could just come in," says Chris. "More or less what we're comfortable with right now is really slow stuff ... that all five of us really relate on ... But it's going to change into something else."

"We're trying to make something a threat again," explains Jake, "really in your face and really loud and obnoxious ... I think the intent behind this is the type of thing where [you] walk into a room [in which we're playing] and you can't avoid it."

"We just want it to be extremely confrontational, like pretty much if you're in there you're in there because you can't get enough, or you're fuckin' walking out the door," Chris declares.

"We're trying to make something that is threatening," says Jake, "something that a lot of those kids who think they're into something badass, who think they're into something that's heavier than the next guy, will just be like, 'Oh my god, this is more threatening than stuff I thought was the most brutal stuff ever.'" Jake goes on, "Yeah, people can throw around the Swans thing, but you know, Swans are a great band,

and yeah, it's heavily influenced us, but I think we're doing our own thing with it. I think with this band, it's at the vortex of a creative plane. I think in the future ... the sound's gonna branch out more, and I can't say exactly where it's gonna go, and that's kinda the beauty of it."

The conversation moves on as they often do, from the effect Hissing Choir wants to have on their audience to the audience and bands in the underground themselves.

Chris begins, "I've toured around the country a buncha times, and what you see looks like a blank fuzzy television screen on fuzz or whatever in terms of bands, because bands are takin' so much influence off each other that they just all end up sounding like this big mess, and more or less when I see bands like, you know, Kylesa, or just in general any band that's doin' somethin' that's a little off kilter or a little refreshing, it's almost like I have to wake up when I watch 'em play. Whether I like it or not, it's obviously different, and there's not enough bands doing that on an underground level, where they're going around the country in basements and stuff and bringing a good, quality alternative to the aggressive, screamy punk that's going on right now. And there needs to be something else ... That's what I'm here to do: offer a healthy alternative to your average generic rock show," continues Chris. "There's a lot of people [that are jaded and are complaining about the state of the scene] but you go to fourty shows in a month, and you realize why everybody's like that ..."

Jake interjects, "Because no one's done anything different."

Chris continues, "Everyone's doing what the other guy did, only a little bit worse. And I'm being straight up about this. It's really hard to find another band out there that's doin' somethin' that you haven't heard before ... That's my opinion. The only thing that anyone's doin' is rippin' off the next band, the big flavor of the month, and it's very uninteresting and very bland, and I can understand why anyone gets a little bit tired of shows or whatever because I've seen it."

While the future and even the next move for Hissing Choir remains uncertain, perhaps a few words of encouragement will help the band stay on track. Contact Hissing Choir at mikeprophet@hotmail.com. ■



"Every [band]'s doing what the other [band] did, only a little bit worse"

GRIDLINK

WHO IS GRIDLINK, you ask? Put it this way: Jon (formerly Discordance Axis) is on vocals, Matsubara (of Mortalized) is on guitar, Terada (from Melt Banana) is on drums and Okada (Discorformity) plays bass. Not surprisingly, GridLink plays grindcore. Impressive in terms of performance as well as composition, and about the farthest thing from primitive as you can get. The band will release a CD on Hydra Head in late 2005. You might be able to tell from the names of the bandmembers that three fourths of them are from Japan. For those who didn't know, Discordance Axis was an American band. So here the hell, you ask, is a truly international band supposed to record a CD?

"At first, the guitar is recorded in Kyoto," explains Matsubara. "Then drums and bass are recorded in Yokohama. We make a rough mix and send it to Jon. He does his track in the USA and returns it for the final mix in Yokohama. Our music is mixed and engineered by Okada. He is the final key in our work."

Jon adds, "I've considered flying to Japan for the final LP recording, but we'll see if time and budget allows for that. I was very happy with the results in the test track we recorded so it may not be necessary."

Continues Matsubara, "We are all driven to making our first album now. Every member is concentrating on the work and has the passion for it, so it's not a problem."

GridLink's test track, "Naked Pieces Scattered," will be on the forthcoming final Discordance Axis release, *Our Last Day*. That's the one that will have a bunch of Discordance Axis covers, a remix of the last album by Merzbow, as well as this first recorded GridLink song.

"Despite geographic separation and even cultural separation, we have a very good chemistry in this unit. I've been really surprised how well songs have come together so far," says Jon. "In all honesty I was really worried about my contribution. I haven't really

done any music since 2001 when Discordance Axis died so I was really worried about my vocals sucking."

Based on the first song recorded, listeners won't have to worry on that point. In addition, the production on the track is excellent. Matsubara's comment is, "The song and the production were created as an test type. We needed to experiment in order to know how we work and what kind of music we can make. We also

needed to know if we could make music to our standards in such a unusual situation. It took a lot of time for that mix, but Okada believes the production will be better when we produce the album."

So how does a transcontinental, indeed, transhemispheric, band such as GridLink get together? Jon reveals, "Matsubara asked me and I said yes. He was the first guitar player I'd heard since Rob Marton [the original guitarist for Discordance Axis] that was writing grind stuff who I really wanted to work with. He had already gathered Terada and Okada by the time I got involved."

Matsubara continues, "I was going to make a solo album and had asked Terada to play drums for it. Terada had just started a new grind band with Okada and he was invited to join. Okada ... plays bass, piano and engineers recording sessions ... All members live pretty far from each other, but we are very motivated and disciplined."

One of Jon's contributions to the band is with lyrics, which along with artwork was the main thrust of his tenure in his former band.

"The same writers influence my writing now as during Discordance Axis, though there are probably a few more added to the pot," he says. "Actually the basis for many of the songs is material I had started on for what would've been the fourth Discordance Axis LP had it happened. I was planning on using some of this for War Chalking [featuring former Discordance Axis, Human Remains and Burnt By The Sun members] but that project is on indefinite hiatus so I will probably use it here. Everything will undergo refinement and editing, so who knows how close it will be to what I wrote three years ago."

"I've been looking at a lot of artwork trying to bring out new feelings. The work of John Harris in particular has been a big part of what I write about now. And of course the usual anime and video game influences as well!"

Continuing on the subject of growth as a writer, Jon goes on to say that, "What I was writing in college is what a lot of young angry kids write. Things seemed very black and white in those days, but it's naive to be so binary with the rest of your life. I mean, you have your tag lines, your ensemble and neat little pins that show the world who you are, but I got tired of that. When I approach writing now I try to think about things in my life that I can speak to from the heart. In some cases these are the same things I cared about when I was 18 or 19 but in others they are not. I'm not in such a rush anymore either. I can take my time and go for the long view. Thinking about albums as a whole or thinking about a story as whole, which I always tried to do, but there is a refinement present now that is only possible now because of past choices I've made as a creator."

There must presumably be something about this kind of music that draws these four people to it, and to GridLink in particular.

"The songs of Gridlink are created around themes Jon presents and then expressed as music. Although it is naturally grind music, we want our music to have the same depth as works of art, like pictures and movies. So our music will be newtype grind. We aren't influenced by other grind music," offers Matsubara, who also adds, "We're still improving our skills to write the kind of songs we want to make."

"WE COULD RUN through a list of what bands we do listen to or draw from but that would take forever," says Chuck, the drummer for Lovers And Killers. "Just speaking for myself I don't know that there is any particular drummer I draw inspiration from."

Lovers And Killers has a mix of a few different musical approaches, from lofty melody to scorching hardcore.

Thejus is the bass player for the band. "As far as I can tell, the kids really seem to enjoy the melodic interludes. They sing along to the vocals, they sway to the music. I think we've got a good blend of it in our songs, but I would be amenable to being more melodic in some songs and harder and faster in others as long as the net melody to rock ratio is maintained."

The band has recorded two demos to date and are planning a third, and the members can see a change in their music from the first to the second, and after.

"We're more cohesive as a unit and more precise as individual musicians," says Mike. "The songwriting has definitely improved, and each new song becomes our new favorite. Three minutes of palm-muted riffing gets boring to play and listen to, so we want to work as much texture, detail and change into each song as we can."

Chuck describes, "I think that a lot of our musical growth comes out of our personal interactions with each other. We really are just like a family and when there is communication things just go better."

Some of the band's lyrics have at least on one level to do with relationships.

"Well, I think that relationships play an essential role in everyone's lives," offers Thejus. "They

Jon explains, "When Matsu asked me for materials to work with I sent him images of paintings, comic books, and manga. I also provided him with video game and movie soundtracks. It has been very difficult for him to compose material I imagine!"

Matsubara continues, "We perform severe corporal training. It is almost like acting for music, training to create feelings, mental states and then refining the method of expression."

"Our music will be newtype grind"

require writing traditional songs."

With declarations like those Jon and Matsubara have made here, we can only wait with breathless anticipation for their song to appear on the Discordance Axis CD, and more importantly for their album to see the light of day! To bug them about it in the meantime write ender@studio-grey.com ■

define who we are in relation to other people, be it lover, friend, or sibling. As such, troubles within those relationships force us to redefine ourselves and the process of redefinition clarifies who we are and what we do. I feel that we, as individuals and as a band, are in a constant state of redefinition."

Mike explains, "The easiest way to express those kinds of losses are with the romantic relationship metaphors, so we just ran with it."

Chuck says, "You tend to write about what's on your mind and that just happened to be it ... Just like the expression says 'a picture is worth a thousand words,' we're just working with a different medium."

The guys in Lovers And Killers are trying to have their own approach, and have a mission statement at their website on trends and fashion in hardcore and punk.

"Passion is always more entertaining than funny dance steps and nice hair," offers guitarist Mike.

"I like to stay as animated as possible on stage," says Nick, the vocalist. "If my body language isn't congruent with what I'm screaming about it's uncomfortable at its best and hazardous at its worst."

"I just try not to make any dumb faces while playing and avoid hitting my self with my sticks," confesses Chuck. "Unfortunately both of these happen more than I'd care to admit."

Lovers And Killers plan to release an album and go on tour, so check up on them at www.loversandkillers.com. ■

Lovers & Killers

PIG DESTROYER TOUR JOURNAL by Blake Harrison

Blake acted as the merchandise and roadie person for Pig Destroyer's tour as part of the Grind Over UK 4 package with Halo, Narcosis, and Total Fucking Destruction. Below is his account of his experiences on the road with Pig Destroyer, being Brian on drums, JR on vocals, and Scott on guitar. Their new album, Terrifier, is out on Relapse Records.

November 12. Heathrow Airport, London, 6 am.

Got into Heathrow, was asked at where I was staying in London. I lied and they finally let me through. Went to a pub to drink my long, sleepless flight away only to find they don't start serving until 10 am. Lame. Went to go play video games, until I realized that they were 1 quid each. That's like \$1.80.

Heathrow Airport, London, 10 am.

Met the Pig Destroyer (PD) guys, and our driver drove into London to pick up the rented equipment. Went to go pick up the Halo guys and off to the show in Nottingham.

Nottingham, 8pm.

Drove to the Old Angel. Cool place, pub like with an upstairs for the bands to play, also a house attached for the bands to crash. Friendly people. No sleep. Set up the mountains of merch that hadn't been sorted, met the Narcosis guys, had to set up merch downstairs, so didn't get to see the show. Drank 1000 Guinneses and crashed at about 5 am.

November 13, Leeds.

Hungover and tired as hell. Drove to Leeds, loaded into Joseph's Well. Again, I can't see the bands. It's crowded as hell. So hungover, nursing beers until the show's over where I finally feel fine. Went to the house we were staying and went to some dance club where they were playing metal and kept telling people that I was the bass player for Weezer. It got me some free drinks. Two kids recognized me from my old band Daybreak which was pretty weird. Took it a little easy and got some sleep. Actually I think the sleep got me.

November 14, Glasgow.

Made the long, cold, cramped trek to Glasgow. It started raining, but was looking forward to seeing my friend Ryan who goes to school in Edinburgh. Walked around Glasgow by myself for a little, found and internet café and tried to answer email. I was too tired to concentrate. Went to a KFC and they didn't have Western fries. Go figure. I hate having to ask for a drink on the rocks, get strange looks, then have to explain that I want ice in it, then having to send it back because they never put enough in it. I finally get to see my first show of the tour. Packed as hell though. It was good to see Ryan, who I put on the guest list. Somehow didn't make it on. No problem, he got in anyway. Narcosis was awesome, Halo was awesome, Total Fucking Destruction was fun and PD ruled. I also had a hard time understanding the Scots. It was loud and I'm deaf too, so ... Crashed at some girl's house where some drunk Scotsman was yelling at us and we had no idea what he was saying. We went to sleep and then he peed on the girl's bed that we were staying with and had to kick him out.

November 15, Manchester.

Starting to get sick, or it's jet lag. Drove to Manchester to play the Jabez Clegg which had a nice

downstairs pub. Went shopping for guitar stuff and drum stuff. Set up the merch and had the sound man run me a mic so I could talk between the PD songs. Great time but was feeling worn down. Went to the house we were staying at and crashed once we found it in the pouring down rain. At this point, I am familiar with all of the people on the tour who were all great, especially our drivers, Dan and Greg.

November 16, Birmingham.

We pull into Birmingham, the home of Napalm Death. I was stoked. Loaded up three flights of stairs which sucked, but the club, Edward's No. 8, ruled. Didn't hang out that much and went to bed. Great show though and great crowd. We were across the street from Europe's largest strip club and only Brian and I wanted to go, so we were boycotted ... lame.

November 17, Wales.

Drove down to Wales to play Cardiff. The club (The Barfly) was across the street from a castle! Wales and Cardiff were both beautiful. Got to sit in a pub and eat a decent meal and chill with JR. Got some postcards, addressed them and wrote them. Went to the largest grocery store after the show. It was the size of an airplane hangar.

November 18, Milton Keynes.

I miss Wales already. No one can get me to eat blood pudding. We drove to Milton Keynes to play this huge auditorium. The show was good but the turnout was the first non-sold out show. Drove to Dan's parents' house and crashed there. Nice of him to let us get a good night's sleep, a shower, and a clean house. Swindon is a tiny town that's like 20 years old. I was glad to leave. The crowd that was at the show was great though.

November 19, London.

Giddy London. Did too much driving around, loaded in, checked into our hotel room. Got back to the club and met up with PD (they had some press to do) and went to SoHo with Brian and JR. Somehow lost JR. Did a little shopping and went back to the club. Met a couple of people, and met Chris Thackaberry, who got me pissed on Guinness. Went and stage dove. JR also jumped into the crowd, didn't get caught and had to go to the hospital. It was a weird night, but fun regardless of my concern for JR.

November 20, Swindon.

Got to Swindon late. Our van finally had some problems, on the last day, go figure. JR said he couldn't play, so me, Johnny Boy, and Pete (both from Narcosis) sang the Pig Destroyer set. Great time. Utter chaos, but great time.

November 21, London.

Hit Heathrow and was anxious to get home to see Napalm Death. I missed them as they played really early. Nice flight though.

When he's not humping gear, Blake is the vocalist for the American band Triac. ■



COURTESY WWW.LINK2WALES.CO.UK PHOTO: MWJ

Buried Inside *Chronoclast* (Relapse)

There is a quandary faced by some screamy hardcore bands that are attracted to metal music but don't want to alienate their screaming hardcore friends and listeners, if they have any. Fortunately for them and unfortunately for the furtherance of good music, there is a solution of which all bands in this situation it seems take advantage, and that is to become a "metallic hardcore" band. That is, to play metal—but not too much metal—while still looking and smelling like a screamo band, partially achieved by the employ of a stylistically monochromatic singer. Metal hardcore singers typically either scream over the music, regardless of whether it's a metal part, a hardcore part, or subdued or acoustic part at the time, or they scream and sometimes sing, as if on the brink of tears. In the case of Buried Inside, the band's vocalist comes from the former camp. On *Chronoclast* the band is presenting a grandiose and epic album direction around that of time as a concept. There are duo guitar workouts in the rhythm department going on which is commendable, but the song by song melancholy passages present here, creating the same mood each time they appear, and the similarly stagnant atmosphere of the distorted songs unfortunately make Buried Inside sound fake. They turn on the jerky aggression or alternately the weepy melodic back and forth for the length of the recording, the result being well before the record's over the listener, without even trying, will know Buried Inside's formula inside and out.

Common Enemy *Late Night Skate* (DRP)

Take any simplistic skatecore band that sings about work, the music scene, skating, and that's what Common Enemy sounds like. There's bands out there that are not as skilled at skatecore as these guys, and there's bands that are better at it. In other words, Common Enemy is another totally average band that emulates their influences, playing punk hardcore with songs that don't crack the two minute mark. The CD has some pictures and a video included.
www.drprecords.com

Conga Fury/The Nitz split 7" ep (Complete Distort)

A very nice package on colored vinyl. Two raging hardcore punk bands. Conga Fury basically is insane d-beat distortion. Okay, they slowed down on this record, sure—for about 15 seconds! These guys are from Japan, so that explains it. The Nitz are from California, and the best thing about them is their lyrics. The band is witty and doesn't take itself too seriously, and have good production, too. Fucking go.
www.reptilianrecords.com/completedistort

Darkthrone *Sardonic Wrath* (Peaceville)

Sardonic Wrath is exactly what you would expect from a two man (fiend?) black metal band on their 11th full-length record. That's right, 11 records to date plus a tribute album and numerous bootlegs. Not surprisingly, the now trademark under-production and no-frills songwriting on this disc is similar to that of such classics as *Transylvanian Hunger* and *Under A Funeral Moon*. Which leads us to the obvious question: Why not just listen to those records instead of a lesser facsimile produced a decade later? Don't ask me, but I will say that this record is worthy of purchase if only for the dreamy photo of skin pounder/vocal dictator Fenriz. Apparently, this self-proclaimed Dirty Old Uncle is the spitting image of Telly Savalas and will be appearing in numerous fashion magazines in the upcoming year. Personally, I'm a fan of Darkthrone's early aforementioned opuses but haven't been impressed by the last four or five efforts. This being said, *Sardonic Wrath* is still light years ahead of the drivelt excreted by numerous slavish Darkthrone imitators. I also admire Darkthrone's uncompromising tenacity. To summarize, don't waste your time buying every existing copy of 'true Northern' Lithuanian, Hungarian, Moroccan, Hawaiian, and Ugandan black metal in all of its various incarnations. Instead, pick up any Darkthrone CD on Peaceville (besides *Soulside Journey*) and play it with any infernal stereo of your choice. For a unique listening experience, press "shuffle" and Voila! Instant black metal record collection! (review by Mark)

Exmortem *Nihilistic Contentment* (Wicked World/Earache)

Firstly, I like the vocals a lot, a very rare thing for me with death metal. There are yelled ones and deeper ones, but not to the point of being gurgling. There's some riffs here that are memorable, which these days is an achievement in this genre. The bass guitar sounds menacing in the background. Exmortem does a commendable job in putting their songs together as well, although they rely way too much on double bass and blast beats and in several places they go overboard with the technical riffs. There's some brief but really cool soundscape interludes that I think remind me of Defiled's *Ugliness Revealed* record. At least some of the time their songs aren't just a bunch of technical riffs thrown together with "blurg" vocals over the top like most death metal bands, although they betray their influences (later Morbid Angel, Hate Eternal). It's obvious that, at least part of the time, they put in the hours coming up with the right dissonant chords and distinct riffs that they feel work. But this isn't the case on all of the songs. If they come out with an album that's all killer and not at all resting on the typical contemporary death metal sound, Exmortem will definitely make a great name for itself.

Makeshift Suicide Device Records update

Dot Flash Line *The G7 EP*. This band is going for the alternative indie metalcore crowd by playing their energetic songs with clean guitars and a cello, switching over to distortion when the songs get turned up a notch. The singer alternates between traditional melodic vocals that everybody in the trendy 'core scene is employing and screaming. I suppose the latter and the badly executed metalcore parts are there so that the band can appeal to the metalcore screamo crowd, but neither fit the music unfortunately.

Kage Bunshin 4 Song Demo. Another screamo band that shat out some songs and called it a demo worthy of a label release. It seems in the screamo scene to gain some small measure of acceptance all a band need do is write some songs, no matter how ludicrous in concept nor laughable in performance, have some lobotomy patient posing as a vocalist scream "meep meep" at the top of his lungs at various points during the songs, prompted by a catterprod by the usual sound of it, and put it out without any thought put towards production values. That's what seems to be the case with Kage Bunshin, except with a broken keyboard and drum machine thrown in. It's apparently more "punk" and "underground" to use crap equipment when recording—any self respecting screamo band should not have money left over to purchase pro gear after spending all of his money on tattoos, hair dye, and thrift shop clothes anyway.

Sunrise Sunset *Is This Progress?* The worst thing about this Massachusetts band is the backup singer. Screamo bands have no quality control in the vocal department and this guy is a perfect example. If a given screamo band has a good singer it must be purely by chance. I guess these guys are playing lo-fi sloppy indie core with a keyboard because doing so is punk or avant-garde or something, but it's coming off like they should go back to the practice room form six months or a year and get their shit together and try their hand at doing a CD again. The only compliments I

can give are that the lyrics are solid, kind of blunt and open to interpretation at the same time, and the packaging is quite interesting.

Sunrise Sunset 9 Song Demo. It's good for a band to do demos so they can work out their kinks, but whether said demos should be released by a label is another matter. In the case of Sunrise Sunset's demo, it should have been seen by the band and especially the label as a loud warning that Sunrise Sunset needed, again, to go back into the rehearsal room, write more songs, practice them five times as much as they did the last time, and THEN record. This is the worst demo I've heard in a long time. The playing is terrible, the sound is horrible, the compositions again are (I'm guessing) supposed to be "arty" or "wacky" but fall flat on their faces.

Vincent Price's Orphan Powered Death Machine 7" EP. Another utterly boring and even more annoying screamo metalcore band. I was made sick by this band when I had the unfortunate opportunity to watch them play once. They have their blast parts, their metalcore breakdowns and high-pitched guitar chords, their mindless screamo vocals, and their melancholy clean guitar slow parts. It's all by the numbers and the lyrics are just as embarrassingly pedestrian as the music.
www.msrecords.com

Numinor *Wolves And Mice* (thecomunion.co.uk records)

Surprisingly, this band is growing on me as the 3" CD spins away. The vocals I think are the most annoying thing however. The whiny emo vocal I always had a hard time with. Numinor is keeping a raw edge which is a good counterpoint though I think, with slightly distorted vocals and meandering songs. They don't have a loud sound (much better production would do them a world of good), but they do have variation, going between clean and lightly distorted guitar, playing with more passion one one song section, subdued the next. I imagine the guys in Numinor are very geeky or dress like emo/screamo nerds. But don't hold that against them as their band is not bad; again, growing on the listener, so give them a try, but make it fast. This is limited to 150.
www.thecomunion.co.uk/records

Olam Ein Sof *Immram*

One of Brazil's fine exports, the band employs phrases such as "inspired by celtic mystic journey" and "acoustic folk metal and heathen culture" to describe what they're trying to do here. Another way to look at it is by a comparison to Ulver's *Kveldssanger*, but in the most complimentary way. Olam Ein Sof ("world of the infinites") effectively creates a mood, dark and somber. Sure, you can call it background music if you want, but there's a lot more going on with this record and its concept than that, so if you pay aural attention, let it pick you up and take you along, you will appreciate it much more. Olam Ein Sof deserves that.
www.olameinsof.com

Toxic Bonkers *Seeds Of Cruelty* (Selfmadegod)

That's what I like to hear: something different. These Poles are interested in playing music that's their own. Sure, they have their influences, like for example *Fear*, *Emptiness*, *Despair*-era Napalm Death, but they are presenting their music and their lyrics in a stylistic way and are using their brains. The songs are heavy, usually midpaced, very catchy and fun to listen to, and they make you want to raise your fist and start thrashing. Toxic Bonkers aren't the most original band in the world, but they are doing their thing with attitude and confidence and they're very good at it.
www.selfmadegod.com

Various Artists *As The Sun Sets* (Killzone)

A four band compilation of black metal from Houston, Texas? I had no idea that town was so infernal. Bahimior is pretty old school, and by that I mean not the best production and a little bit sloppy musicianship, and simplistic and fast music. Funeral Rites sounds more like a death metal band. They're old school too, but for me in death metal "old school" means "good." They have a song called "Vehemently Christian Behavior" which is a great title. Crimson Massacre is interesting. They're very technical and they don't have a bass player. It sounds like they're set up like a black metal The Fucking Champs with a singer. Adumus is rather acidic and I think they might be the most angry and sick of the bunch. They're kind of like Bahimior but more raw and insane, and they employ a keyboard player.
www.killzone-records.com

Various Artists *Fabulous Floyd: OHLow Radio* (Red Room)

Many of the songs, or most of them, on this mix tape deal with gangsters, bitches, niggas, glocks, chronic, and motherfuckers, everything one needs to include to make a proper street rhyme. There's a mostly solid track selection and they all slide into each other seamlessly so the party doesn't stop until you tell it to. I don't know who's on this because a) I don't listen to hip hop enough to keep track, and b) there's no packaging, but if you throw this disc in your player that shows track names in the display you'll get them then, or you can write the label and get what you need that way I suppose. Anyway this is fairly good shit. There are some strong tracks and several not bad ones, with quality beats, rhymes and production.
onehunglow@hotmail.com

Various Artists *Transfiguration Songs* (thecomunion.co.uk records)

I've said elsewhere that the bottom line of any compilation is, are the bands good? In the case of this one, the answer is yes. Some are better than others, such as the ripping Aconite Thrill, Seven Feet Four, and Callisto just to name a few, but there aren't really any bands here that are bad. As with any self-respecting compilation there's contact info for each band so their records can be sought out, and with this particular compilation (featuring but not limited to several UK bands) the packaging is nice but minimal so as to keep the focus on the bands. Pick this one up, motherfuckers.
see Numinor review for address

Withered *Demonstration Disc 2004*

Considering what band two of these dudes were in previously, I was surprised at the turn they have taken with death metal's Withered. Don't get me wrong, it's an awesome, crusty live band and a heavy, punishing studio band as well. There's some straight up death metal on here: fast drums and double bass, fast note runs on the guitars and bass (the bass deviates from the guitar lines sometimes too, which is a definite plus), and especially the vocals. They're in Incantation territory somewhere, or somewhere else in the American death metal realm. But Withered shows their hardcore punk roots as well, with their rough edge, and some of the riffs show melancholy melody that a post-hardcore band might play, or a death metal band that's crossed over to depressive doom metal. This demo comes highly recommended!
www.withered.net

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. 2005. Contributors this issue: Mark Sloan. Thank you: MWJ and www.link2wales.co.uk. ■