

EXTREMUM

Extreme Underground 'zine

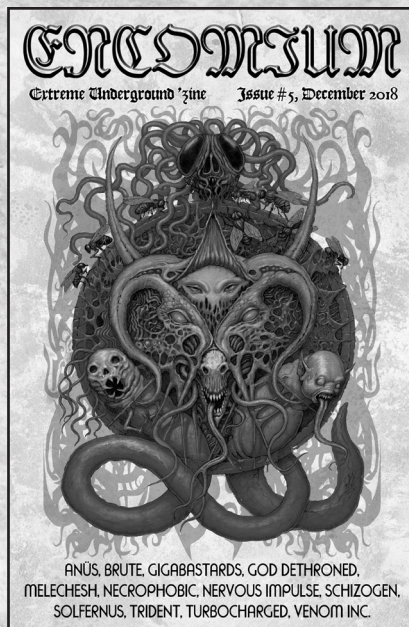
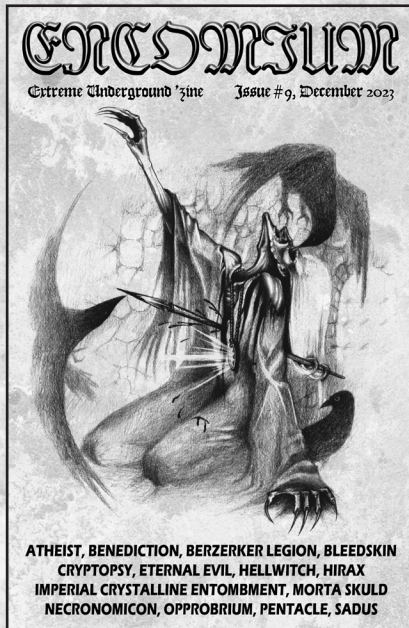
Issue #10, December 2024



ASSASSIN, BRODEQUIN, BRUTALLY DECEASED, DISMEMBER,
EARTHBURNER, FEKETEFAGY, GORGON, HALIPHRON,
HYPOXIA, INSEPULTUS, KAIVS, LOUDBLAST, MALIGNANCY,
MASSACRE, MERCYLESS, SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION, VRAG

INTRODUCTION

My deepest underground greetings to all the loyal readers of Encomium!!! This is the 10th printed issue so far, which in a sense I can formally call an anniversary issue, although as the first printed edition was published in 1998 and it is now 2024, this can be a bit confusing, which I fully acknowledge here. This is also the third one, born in war and pain. For this issue, I have managed to collect 17 interviews, which, as always, I am very happy about. But here the thanks go first and foremost to the bands and their members, because they all gave great answers and cooperated fully to make it a joint success. Personally, it was fantastic to interview bands that I've known for decades, like Assassin, Brodequin, Dismember, Loudblast, Malignancy, Massacre, Mercyless or Six Degrees of Separation, but it was also interesting to talk to newer bands (like Brutally Deceased, Earthburner, FeketeFagy, Haliphron, Hypoxia, Kaivs & Vrag) about their latest releases or plans for the near future. There are two other very old bands, Gorgon and Insepultus, who I also interviewed, but honestly and pleasantly this was my first encounter with them, for which I am also grateful. As always, a thousand thanks to the underground record labels, distributors and fanzine editors who sent their stuff in for review and kept me busy in the right way. Thank you so much for being part of this issue, for your support and for believing in what I do, even in these very difficult times. This is the only way, the underground way!!! Well, I think I'll stop here and wish you a good read, take care and of course keep listening to metal!!! By the way, if you missed the previous issues, you can still order them via any of the links below!!!



Thanks & hello to: Victor Hitter, Olly Zubor, Volodymyr Osypov, Alexander Erhardt & Bloodbucket Productions, Björn Sondermann/Ingo Bajonczak/Jürgen Scholz & Assassin, Jamie Bailey & Brodequin, Michal Štěpánek/Tomáš Mařík & Brutally Deceased, Matti Kärki & Dismember, Jeremy Wagner & Earthburner, Attila Győr & FeketeFagy, Christophe Chatelet & Gorgon, Ramon Ploeg & Haliphron, Mike Hrubovcak & Hypoxia/Azure Emote, Robert Pieptan & Insepultus, Max Foam/Tiziano Mortician & Kaivs, Stéphane Buriez & Loudblast, Danny Nelson & Malignancy, Kam Lee & Massacre, Max Otero & Mercyless, Vlastimil Urbanec/Radek Zábajník & Six Degrees of Separation, Nate Yuggoth & The Crypt, Roland Neubauer & Vrag/WitcheR, Coro & Axa Valaha Productions, Crypt of Dr. Gore, Csaba Poller & Deadly Illness 'zine, Attila Dudás & Fekete Terror Productions/Tales of the Morbid Butchers, Steffie Giroit & Listenable Records, Gabriel Skowron & Nihilistic Holocaust and everyone else who has helped and supported Encomium in any way! You rule!!!

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The new Malignancy album turned out to be incredibly cool, so I couldn't miss asking vocalist Danny Nelson. We talked not only about the new record, but also about the New York scene and other plans for the near future. The result of our conversation can be evaluated below. Have fun reading it all!!!

Greetings to you! The new Malignancy full-length is titled "...Discontinued" and was officially released on June 14th, 2024 via Willowtip Records. From the first listen, I realized that it had become more refined and technical, but still retained the brutality that Malignancy has been known for over three decades. Was it a conscious decision or a natural progression to develop in this way?

- Cheers and thanks for the interview. I think the production of "...Discontinued" has helped bring the technical aspects of the band out in the open. We have always tried to progress and take the sound in different directions. Many of our early releases had a more low-end sound and the technical riffing got lost. So, in turn, yes it is always a conscious decision for us.

Willowtip Records has been your trusted label since the release of "Inhuman Grotesqueries" in 2007. Please tell us about your collaboration. What kind of deal did you make with them at the time? What kind of propaganda (album formats and merchandise) did "...Discontinued" come out with?

- Willowtip has been great to us from the start. Our first deal was for two albums which we delivered: "Inhuman Grotesqueries" & "Eugenics". As a band we decided to look for other interested labels to bring the band to more listeners and fans. To no avail that larger label failed to materialize. Through our absence from Willowtip we released "Malignant Future" and re-recorded "Intrauterine Cannibalism". "...Discontinued" has gotten the typical treatment; CD, LP and cassette. The label also made short sleeve, long sleeve and zipper hoodies for the release. Willowtip has grown as a label since 2012 and they have a farther reach and can push bands more. We are happy to be back on the label and look forward to working with them for the next one.

The new album was mixed and mastered by Lasse Lammert and I can confidently say that this is the best sounding Malignancy album to date. How long did it take to make the final mix and what was it like working with Lasse?

- Thank you, Lasse did an amazing job on this

one for sure. Lasse is in Europe so there was some time in between mixes. He had other projects going on as well. All in all, maybe a month or so to iron out what we needed. Working with Lasse was easy as hell. Total professional and a master at his craft. We are extremely lucky he had the time to work on "...Discontinued". He also did a favor for us and tweaked the CD version "Malignant Future" released on Seared Records.

The rather sick album art was created by Tony Cosgrove. How does it relate to the lyrics of "...Discontinued"? Can you share more details about the topics covered this time?

- Tony is a pleasure to work with! We have worked with him for years and will again! The cover art is loosely attached to the lyrical content. Much of the lyrics pertain to how humans are failing as a species. These are things that, I believe, can lead to the end. The focal point is the tentacled creature that is a mutation of the Malignancy mascot. It also coincides with "Eugenics". The mutoid creature is cradling the last human being. This is a new species mutated from experiments by humans on humans. This concept took Tony and I some time to hammer out. The final result is killer.

Are you planning to shoot a new music video? If so, which song would you use for this purpose? By the way, I really dug the way you did "Contagious Psychosis" from the "Malignant Future" EP (2016).

- No plans to shoot a video for any of these tunes. If we do, we would definitely go with the video producer of "Contagious Psychosis", Dead Haggis Productions! Shot on location in Europe on tour!

Will there be tours in the US and Europe to promote the new album? I mean, I see a gig on June 30th with Narcotic Wasteland, Tombstoner, Coronary Thrombosis and Ozoth at Shaker's Pub and another at RiffHouse Pub on July 20th, but that's about it.

- Not at this time, touring costs much more lately and I cannot afford to tour personally. We are supporting and pushing "...Discontinued" playing as

many gigs as we can. Festivals and one offs for the remainder of the year.

What should fans know about the recent reissue of "Frailty of the Human Condition" on Primitive Recordings LLC?

- Primitive Recordings is run by our longtime friend and ex bandmate, Roger J. Beaujard. Who coincidentally played on "Frailty of the Human Condition". This is the first reissue in the Malignancy catalog with Primitive and Malignancy Music LTD. We plan to collaborate with the UG catalog as well. "Frailty of the Human Condition" received a little boost in volume and the addition of a demo version of "Cross Species Transmutation" with no vocals. Turns out I only had a title when we tracked it and I did not have the lyrics worked out yet. I rediscovered this track on an old CD-R and thought it would be cool to include. Added liner notes and some pictures from our 1st European tour to support the release.

What does the brutal death metal scene in New York look like these days? Are there newcomers who surprise you with their talent/originality? How has the scene changed since the 90s?

- Brutal death metal is alive and well in New York these days. Killer bands like Thaetas, Reeking Aura, Sickbay, Coronary Thrombosis and Tombstoner. They all bring their own flavor to the scene. The scene is ever evolving, it has been since the 90's. The locations have changed, almost no underground venues in Manhattan anymore. Most of the shows take place in Brooklyn.

What do you do in your free time away from the band?

- I have been working in the art field since the late 90's. Mostly production work, dealing with licensors and producing product packaging. I also lay out all the Malignancy releases and merch.

Finally, please pass on your thoughts and wishes to Ukrainian Malignancy fans. Thank you very much for the interview!

- Thank you again for the opportunity. Cheers to all the fans in the Ukraine and abroad for supporting Malignancy for the last 32 years! \m/



If you're looking for a really punchy, misanthropic black metal release, I highly recommend the new Vrag album. Read more about it and Vrag's plans below.

Hails! The new Vrag album is out and it's already taking black metal fans by storm. How would you personally describe the songs on the "Rendületlenül" album, and what influenced the creative process this time?

- Greetings Kornél and the readers. What I would like to say about the "Rendületlenül" album is that, this is the angriest album I have ever released from my hands. When I was writing it, there was a huge chaos in my head and the fast, furious songs just popped out, one after the other; songs that some places almost recall the glorious time of Swedish black metal. This album is a perfect reflection of my past few years.

How long did it take to record the new songs? Has your studio routine changed compared to the "Harcom" recordings? If so, how did this manifest itself?

- Right after releasing "Harcom", I started writing the new songs, started recording them, so the whole procedure took around three years. My studio routine is continuously developing, trying new things out, I try to learn this and that, if I have the time, but I also put my studio gear on another level. I managed to put together a quite serious home studio by now.

The new album consists of 6 songs and lasts 39 minutes. Could you shed some light on what the lyrics are about? How does the graphics of Grafít és Hamu connect to the textual and musical world of "Rendületlenül"?

- The album is all about my tenacious fight against the filth of this modern world, about how much I cannot accept all that things I see around me these days. Back then, when the 2nd generation bands started making their albums, this is what black metal was all about and this is what it means until today – regardless that nowadays this genre represents for many people a completely different aspect. With the 'Grafít és Hamu' made cover artwork I also wanted to show that this album is ideally and musically a big bow to the 90's black metal.

The last two Vrag albums were released on Filosofem Records, which you run. Will this continue to be the case, or are you open to collaborating with other record labels? In what quantity was the new album released? Are there any other formats besides CD expected in the future?

- Actually, the "Remete" album was also partly released by Filosofem Records, though Werewolf Promotion from Poland took part in the job. I would be completely open to work with other record labels in

a case of a good offer, but let's face it, opportunities do not come just like that and from my part, I also do not really search for labels. "Rendületlenül" was printed in 500 copies in the first round, if sells out then I reprint it, there is no limitation. I would like to release it and the previous album on tape, but now I do not have the time to deal with that.

What kind of merchandise do you plan to implement to support the new release? Where can fans order from?

- Only T-shirts were made for this album – moreover pins and stickers, which get all customers as a bonus – I do not plan anything else now. T-shirts are already close to sell out and there will be no re-print. I do not see the sense of it in this case, as there will be silence once more around Vrag for years. CDs and T-shirts can be ordered from my Bandcamp site, but you can reach out in e-mail, as well, which one is easier for you.

I know this might be a stupid question, but have you ever thought about putting together a line-up for live shows? I mean, this kind of music is definitely great live, don't you think?

- In case of Vrag I do not think about this at all. I do not like standing on the stage at all and even if I changed my mind, it would be impossible to find the right persons for the posts, who have the right outlook and mentality. I could rather put WitcheR on the stage...

Let's talk about the Hungarian black metal scene. How do you see it these days? Do you keep in touch with other active bands? Do you have any favorites? What new albums have caught your attention recently?

- I follow the Hungarian black metal scene for 25 years. Although there are many good bands here even nowadays, we got far away from the mysticism and the great albums of the late 90's, early 00's. Back then, numerous unique albums were born; I can still recall any riffs from the first Ahriman EP or from the first Fagyhamu EP, the genial demos of Baskírta or Hetumoger and I could continue the line with many names. Today there are also very good productions, but somehow the mysticism, the magic lost a little bit for me. I keep in touch with many Hungarian bands, of course, someone get in touch with me with respect, my principle is to return this favor. I follow the scene and I try to listen to every new releases, moreover the albums which are released in physical forms, I put in

my collection. As I am a bit forgetful, I do not want to mention any favorites, as I certainly will leave out couple of them, but I have an answer for you that from the Hungarian black metal scene I listened the latest Sear Bliss album to the most in the last couple of months.

Speaking of music. What are your top 10 bands and albums of all time? Is there a band you would really like to see live in Hungary?

- You ask a difficult question, because I listen to so many bands and so many different genres that it would be possible that tomorrow I would put together a completely different list, but the following 10 albums influenced me the most – without any particular order: Pokolgép – "Pokoli színhjáték", Burzum – "Hvis lyset tar oss", Helloween – "Helloween" EP, Mayhem – "De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas", King Diamond – "Conspiracy", Dimmu Borgir – "Enthroned Darkness Triumphant", Death – "The Sound of Perseverance", Summoning – "Minas Morgul", Metal Church – "Hanging in the Balance", Iron Maiden – full discography.

If I look at any of your photos, they are all taken in the forest. Do you spend a lot of your free time there? Do you like to hike? What natural features would you highlight from your surroundings?

- You see that very well. I am in a lucky position that I lived in my entire life next to a forest. Even in my childhood I hiked a lot all alone. I was enchanted by the forest inexplicable mysticism, by the power emanating from it. Although I do not spend nearly as much time in the woods as I would like these days, I practically live in the middle of a forest, so when I look out my window, I see huge beech and pine forests on all sides, and I find myself in a forest just a few steps from my house. In case of Vrag this is not a forced thing to take photos in the woods, it is not because anno the Norwegian black metal gods also took photos in the forest, this is simple who I am. This come honestly from me, I feel good there and I would like to see myself in the woods on the photos.

Thank you very much Vrag for the interview. Finally, send your greetings to the readers.

- I would like to thank you this chat and your endless support towards my bands. If someone would like to order some CDs or T-shirts, please do not hesitate to contact me. As for the future, keep your eyes open, as a new WitcheR album comes out in 2025 and hopefully the third Frozen Wreath album will be also released in 2026.



Needless to say, I'm very happy to present this interview with Loudblast, a band I've been listening to since the mid-90s. Their new album was released over a month ago, so I really wanted to interview Stéphane Buriez (vocals/guitar) about it. And voilà, find our chat below!

Metallic greetings to you Stéphane! "Altering Fates and Destinies" is the title of the new Loudblast album, which was released on October 25, 2024. Where did you record it and how many songs are on it? Will this be a logical continuation of "Manifesto" or can we expect some musical changes?

- The new album is a 10-track + 3 bonuses on the CD version. Like our previous album "Manifesto" we recorded "Altering Fates and Destinies" at the Vamacara Studios with producer HK Krauss. "Altering Fates and Destinies" is a very dark album, powerful, more mid paced than its predecessors, I would say it's the heaviest album in the band's career so far in terms of patterns, sound and production wise. It's a good synthesis of what we stand for in 2024. We don't forget where we come from yet we didn't set any boundaries and vowed to do whatever the fuck we wanted. There's great amount of melody on the songwriting without losing intensity.

Honestly, I did compose the songs without thinking of an album in the very beginning. I didn't ask myself the question of how many slow or fast pieces I was going to compose, in fact I let my ideas unfold over the months, when I had to finalize the album, I realized that there were perhaps more heavy, mid-tempo pieces than on any other Loudblast albums.

Will the new album feature all the members from the "Manifesto" record, or there is a change in the lineup? If so, please detail them.

- A new member joined us as guitar player, he's named Nicklaus Bergen, he shared most of the lead parts with Fred Leclercq on "Altering Fates and Destinies".

What themes does "Altering Fates and Destinies" deal with? What inspires you in writing nowadays?

- I would admit that "Altering Fates and Destinies" is a fairly personal album, it's an album that I composed in its entirety, you can find there what characterizes the sound of Loudblast, but I tried to explore facets of our music that I had perhaps not previously dared to explore, it's probably the first time in my life that I don't set barriers for myself, I would say that it's a more accomplished album than "Manifesto", it's an album that will surprise but once again I didn't ask myself these kinds of questions, I composed a lot of pieces and I selected those which seemed to me to tell the story that I wanted to print on this album.

Talking about the lyrics, the album is divided into 2 main themes: Lovecraftian mythology, themes that we had already talked about in the first albums, in

fact I reread all of Lovecraft last year and I said to myself that it was cool to return a little to our first loves, "From Beyond II (The Return)" necessarily refers to the short story of the same name for example. What's great about Lovecraft is that his universe is completely crazy and imaginary, so you can also reinterpret what he wrote, so you are free to do with it what you want in the end. "Putrid Age of Decay" talks about the inexorable end that awaits us all, finally there is this dark side, which has always been approached in our lyrics, but we will say that on this album, I did not want really be lighter but there's a moment sometimes when you say to yourself "shit, I've gone over all the uncool things I wanted to say".

Stefan Todorović designed the new cover, which, to be honest, turned out to be quite fantastic. Can you please talk a little bit about the meaning of the cover and the collaboration behind it?

- Indeed, Stefan did a fantastic job, he came up with this idea after he listened to the demos I sent to him, we wanted to have this main character, this king of chaos overwhelming the world, that is coming to change your destiny. He's the King of Darkness ☺.

You have a close relationship with Listenable Records, which has resulted in all of your previous albums being reissued through them recently. As I noticed, the bonus tracks are usually on the CD versions. Please talk more about these vinyl, CD & cassette re-releases, slight cover changes and bonuses. Which format do you personally like best?

- It's always a challenge to re-release classics of a band, my band for example ☺. First the remastering got to fit with the original release when bringing a higher quality of sound for the listener, HK Krauss did an amazing job on all the remasters.

Then comes the artwork and archives and I got tons of "never seen before" pictures or items, so it's a long work, you got to keep the spirit of the original releases, and sometimes you got to adapt the cover, for instance the "Cross the Threshold" cover was banished from the platforms, because of nudity, so we were obliged to change it a bit, by the way I'm very lucky to have this close relationship with the whole Listenable crew, we are a team, so everything is easier to put in shape.

My format is definitely vinyls, I owned a big collection myself and I want our releases on vinyl to be unique.

What about live shows? Where will you conquer next? Can we expect an extensive European tour in 2025?

- We're gonna start the first tour with Disbelief

in March/April 2025, then celebrate the 40 years anniversary of Loudblast. I have been working on it since the beginning of the year, we will celebrate this anniversary in April in our hometown Lille. We will play 5 different concerts in 4 days, April 17/18/19/20. We will cover the entire career of Loudblast and we will play songs that we haven't played on stage for a very long time or never ever played on stage. We're working on 70 songs, one of the concerts will also be more festive with quite a few guests. It's going to be a historical moment, and the 40th Anniversary Tour will follow. Then will start the summer festivals' time and another tour is planned with Seth in September/October 2025. We want to play in every city we can visit.

What Loudblast fans should know about the following active bands/projects: Le Bal des Enragés, Sinsaenum, T.T.T. and Undead Prophecies? Is there any new material in the works with any of the previously mentioned?

- Le Bal des Enragés was an amazing journey, but it's over: I can confirm to you that the new Sinsaenum album is completed. Tribute to Thrash still raging the covers from the 80's Thrash Anthems. Undead Prophecies - can't talk about a band I'm not playing in ☺.

I recently caught my eye on a large selection of merchandise. Who designs your t-shirts these days? Where can fans get it?

- We're working with different artists: Gary Ronsdson of Bite Radius (Kreator, Sepultura, Napalm Death, ...), Raf the Might of Too Many Skulls (Slayer, Machine Head, ...) and many more, but still trying to give the best designs with the best artists to our fans. Get it here: <https://loudblast-music.com>

How do you see France's death metal underground scene now? How is it different than when you started? Do you think it got better or vice versa?

- Bands like Loudblast, Massacra and Agressor created this extreme scene back in the days and I definitely think that we opened the doors for this scene to become way bigger. Then came Mercyless, then Benighted, Kronos, Anorexia Nervosa, Gorod, Seth, Regarde les Hommes Tomber and many more, without talking about the international success from our friends Gojira.

So as you can see our extreme scene is way more bigger and professional than it used to be.

Thank you very much for the interview. At the end, please add if I missed anything important with my questions.

- Thanks a lot for the great support, I hope to see you Kornel and all our fans very soon on the road next year. Make death metal great again!



If you like minimalist black metal with deep lyrics and honest commitment, you should definitely check out FeketeFagy. But in the meantime, read the interview below with the band's creator and learn the details of how "Káosz" came to be!!!

Hails Attila! FeketeFagy's new album, "Káosz", will be released soon by Death Trap Productions. Since your debut material was released in 2012, I'm a bit curious, why did it take so long to prepare and record the follow-up?

- Hi, and firstly thank you for the opportunity to answer some questions that others might have as well.

Well, during the last decade I was facing many problems as an individual, and the name FeketeFagy is pretty much me, so everything was depending on my actual situation at the time. The other members of the band had, and still have, their own bands/projects. For example, Typhon is playing in Blizzard now. The main issue was that we all lived in different cities, additionally I struggled financially a lot, and was busy with work. Later I just got fed up with everything and I moved to the UK to start again. I cut many ties, and I had no inspiration. For me the most important thing with FeketeFagy is that it comes from deep inside, and the songs must have a meaning, not just posing in corpse paint with some animal carcass or guts, and scream Satan. That doesn't work for me.

Will the new album have the same lineup as the debut "Átokhold"? By the way, where did you record the new material?

- Unfortunately, not. There were talks with the old members to try to record things together online, but eventually I recorded and mixed the whole album in my study room with what I had at home. It was a long process to learn mixing and recording. In the beginning I was using a drum machine, but I wanted live performance on the album, so I purchased a cheap electric drum set from marketplace and used that one. I'm not a drummer, so it was hard.

As I noticed, the new lyrics are quite outspoken, hateful and misanthropic, but also very depressing. Five of them were written in Hungarian, the last one in English. Could you share some details about each? What inspired you to write such lyrics?

- The lyrics represent how I feel most days generally in my life. It's not easy to put such words onto paper and open up, but that's what I did. I don't like to make up things, I just sit down and write. This is all me, all my thoughts and feelings. This is why I named the album "Chaos", it is my inner chaos. Except the last song which has English lyrics. That song is more like a fantasy story which points out a real danger about human expansion and the destruction of nature and

our spiritual beliefs. I'm not talking about religion, I talk about our personal freedom and connection to nature. That song is a kind of bonus track only though.

You used a black and white photo of a house surrounded by trees as a cover. How does this cover relate to the album title and lyrics?

- I live near the forest, and that little house is a place in that forest where I walk or ride my mountain bike to. That's when I can relax and switch off. The house is nicknamed the Witches' Hut.

The black metal you play is simplistic and cold, but also quite monotonous at times, but I think that's your goal from the beginning, isn't it? So how would you personally describe FeketeFagy's music to the readers? What influenced you musically?

- Other musicians used to mock me that I should learn to play the guitar. I have never been taught how to play or write music, I just do. Perhaps this is why my music is simple and even boring at times. I don't really care about it. I consider the lyrics more important. I don't want to describe my music because I can't, and I don't want to stick a label to it. It is just me and fortunately in the past I found similar people to share with and play together. The only influence I have is my father who used to play the guitar when I was young. He always wanted to teach me, but I kept refusing it ironically. He was a very good player, and I'm still trying to catch up. Unfortunately, he is not with us anymore to help me.

Death Trap Productions will release the new album on CD and T-shirts will be printed in support. Do you plan to release the new material in other formats later, for example on vinyl or cassette? By the way, how did you join DTP?

- Honestly, I haven't thought about other formats yet, I just went with the label's recommendation on this one. The T-shirt was my idea since people were asking me a lot if they could get one. The reason why I picked DTP is simple. It's because I still feel strongly about my old local scene. DTP is a small label from Pécs and I'm just a regular guy from the same place. DTP released Blizzard, Malediction, and Gylliath before. I know these guys and these bands, with some we even used to play together. To support each other and the local scene there was always important to me.

If I'm not mistaken, you currently live in Bewdley, Worcestershire. What is your job there and

how's life there compared to Hungary? Do you go to metal concerts in your area? If so, what was your last visit and how did you like it?

- I would not like to comment on where I exactly live, but let's say it's close enough. I worked as an IT engineer and I'm currently unemployed due to an injury. I'm waiting for surgery at the moment, and I'm not very excited about it. Life here is different. The pace of life seems slower, yet the days just fly by. I go to gigs only occasionally as I can't stand crowds, and a night out can be expensive.

The last gig I visited was in Nottingham with Sathamel and Heathen Deity. We played with my other band (Arrogant Destruktor) there. The gig was in a very old pub which was nice. The downstairs was like a regular pub while the upstairs bit had a stage and an extra bar. It was an interesting yet good experience. That was my first show as a new vocalist of my other band.

Before that I visited a festival in Birmingham with CryptWorm, Defod, and Heathen Deity again.

Since "Átokhold" was released a long time ago and only in cassette format, in a strictly limited number of copies, are there any plans to reissue it on CD?

- Limiting the copies wasn't my idea. The only thing I could do is to upload it to the major streaming services, so people would have access to it. I've only done that recently. It's a bit of a shame to be honest, because a lot of people ask me this question. I'm planning on releasing a full-length album with a few songs from each album and a few brand-new songs as well.

What do you enjoy listening to lately? Are there any new albums that really impressed you in 2024?

- I don't listen to much new stuff. They almost all sound the same to me. The new Sear Bliss was not bad, or the new Necrophobic from last year was okay, but haven't listened to much else which could be considered new.

I keep listening to my old favorites, such as Ahri-man - "... from the Dark Nature", Frost - "Black Shining", Koppjafa - "Awakening" this sort of things.

The last chaos inspired words are yours. Please end the interview by revealing the future plans of FeketeFagy.

- For the future I was planning some live shows perhaps next year in Hungary and in the UK as well, but we will see how it goes. As well as I mentioned there will be a new long album at some point. Hopefully within the next 12 years, hahaha...



Czech death metal quintet, Brutally Deceased, released a rather devastating and dark album that I heartily recommend to extreme metal fans worldwide. My questions were answered by Michal Štěpánek (vocals) and Tomáš Mařík (drums). Have fun with our conversation!!!

Hi there!!! “Chasms” is the fourth full-length album by Brutally Deceased, released on June 19, 2024 by Doomentia Records. How would you describe the new compositions in terms of evolution, sound and atmosphere? What kind of feedback have you received about the new album so far?

Tom: Hello! The reception of our new record has been very positive even though I think it's quite different from the previous works. It's the first album that includes me and Adam who also composed majority of the new songs. In my opinion “Chasms” is way more aggressive, atmospheric and less old school. To be honest, we expected to lose some old school fans with this one but fortunately it seems like it's not the case. You can also hear some underlying black metal influences since me, Adam and Marek used to collaborate on a black metal project called Somniate.

It was recorded at Davos Studio, like all its predecessors. I guess the work went on routinely this time as well. Anyway, how long did it take to make the 8 new songs? What was it like working in the studio again? I mean, it's been 8 years since “Satanic Corpse” came out.

Michal: In 2019 we released a split with the Polish blasphemous band Embrional called “Scornful Death Trail”, so it's been 5 years since the last record. The main reason why it took us so long to put together new material this time was undoubtedly the personnel changes in the band. As a first we had to practice songs for the concert performance with new members and then we started working on new compositions.

The new songs for our fourth full-length album “Chasms” were composed between the beginning of 2020 and October 2023. Most of the songs on “Chasms” were composed by Adam this time, because Marek was very busy with his Somniate project and I have to admit that recording process in the Davos Studio was definitely not a regular routine. This time it was a demanding process caused by the high technical level and speed of the new material.

“Chasms” gets an incredibly killer cover and layout courtesy of Maciej Kamuda. What is the relationship with the texts? What inspired you to write the lyrics this time? Do they have a hidden message?

Michal: Maciej Kamuda, who was recommended to us by our friend Marcin Sienkiel from Embrional on our tour, did a perfect job and created a beautiful artwork, for which he deserves huge respect and recognition. It needs to be said that Maciej is not only the author of the front cover of the new “Chasms” album, but he made the entire layout including the booklet. He is a really great painter, a professional and it was a great pleasure to work with him. All the lyrics for the new album were prepared by the guitarist Marek and they go hand in hand with our music, so there is a shift

from old school into significantly darker waters with light touch of black metal.

Doomentia Records has been your label since 2013. How do they treat you these days? What contract did you sign with them? Will other formats of “Chasms” be available in addition to the digipak CD release?

Michal: Our long time cooperation with Lukas and Doomentia Records is simply great and easy. We agree on everything very quickly and what we say always applies. Thanks to 100% mutual trust is our contract imaginary as usual and we don't really need it at all. The record was released as a limited 6-panel digipak and on digital platforms in June 2024. As for other formats, “Chasms” should be also released on vinyl next year on Doomentia Records.

Since the formation of Brutally Deceased in 2007, you have gone through quite a few line-up changes, so please introduce the members of the “Chasms” album to the readers. By the way, how often do you have rehearsals these days? Do you spend a lot of time together outside of rehearsals and other band stuff?

Michal: There have been a lot of personnel changes in the band over the years, but the most fundamental one came five years ago. In the middle of 2019, 2 founding members of the band left us – drummer Štefý and guitarist Tomáš, who were replaced by drummer Tomáš Mařík from Mallephyr and guitarist Adam Kulich from Feeble Minded.

We meet in the rehearsal room as needed, but as a standard we try to meet there at least once a month. In our personal life, we are all good friends and spend time together outside the band with our families.



Let's talk about your live activity. Have you lined up any shows or tours to support the new album? Where will you play next?

Tom: We've been playing several songs from the new album live for some time, even before the album was officially released. However, our guitarist Marek has decided to leave the band in August, so now we

are working hard on preparing a new setlist with a new guitarist. First show with him will take place in Pilsen in January. Besides that, many interesting gigs are planned for next year including a few summer festivals. Stay tuned!

There's another band you've been in since 2007 called Shampoo Killer. What news can you tell about this musical entity?

Michal: I've been playing in Shampoo Killer a few months longer than Brutally Deceased. We are currently working hard on a new album, that I would like to record within the next year. The new songs will continuously follow the album “Mankind Depravity”, which was released four years ago on Bizarre Leprous, and it can be assumed that it will be a bit faster and more technical. Shampoo Killer crushes such an extreme crossover and I think it works great. In addition to death metal, our music includes a lot of thrash, grind and hardcore ideas, it has a groovy feeling and most of all live it's a ride as fuck. If you are interested, the current recording can be listened to and purchased on bandcamp, or it can be ordered directly from us.

What does the death metal scene in Prague look like these days? Are there any newcomers you'd highly recommend for us to check out?

Tom: Unfortunately, it seems like death metal is a dying genre and not only here in Prague. Young guys are way more interested in old school thrash metal or other genres, which is perfectly fine, but I'm not aware of any new Czech death metal bands worth mentioning. Maybe we could mention Sněť that has made quite an impact in a short period of time. But again, although the band is relatively new, the guys from Sněť have been a part of this game for years.

Speaking of death metal, what releases have caught your attention lately? Which concert have you been to recently and how did you like it?

Tom: I'm not the right person to answer this question, because recently I've been listening exclusively to dissonant black metal, rap or dream pop.

Michal: Just last night I went to see the Immolation concert in Prague and it was great as usual. They are currently on tour with Cannibal Corpse, Municipal Waste and Schizophrenia and they played great show as usual. The playlist was built on newer songs from the last 2 albums “Acts of God” and “Atonement” and at the end there were also classic hits like “Into Everlasting Fire” or “Father, You're Not a Father”. Immolation confirmed their position on the death metal throne and delivered a perfect experience.

At the end, feel free to send your empyrean words from the nether realms.

Thank you very much for giving us a platform and thanks to those who have tried our new record. Support underground music, attend concerts and keep the spirit alive!



Interviewing Matti Kärki from Dismember was a dream come true, so read our chat below and let's hope the new album is ready soon. In the meantime, listen to their previous records and try to get a copy of the incredibly awesome "Historia Mortis" box set as I think it's a must have for any Dismember fan!!!

Hi Matti! Since the reactivation of Dismember in 2019, you have been moving forward with full force. How does it feel to rehearse and play live with the original line-up again?

- It feels really good, when we started rehearsing for the re-union shows it was like time had stood still, same personalities, same stupid jokes and pranks.

I know it's too early to talk about it, but if I read correctly, you're already working on the new LP. In what direction do you want to move musically? I mean, in the direction of the first four classic albums, or do you plan to continue where you left off with the previous album?

- At the moment we have only talked about a new album, but nothing is written so far. Which direction it takes musically is impossible to say right now, but I guarantee that it will be Dismember.

Lyricaly, what themes are you preparing for the new record? What inspires you lately?

- All the new lyrics I've been writing so far is horror based, not the old school splatter, gore stuff, but more of an existential horror. Maybe there will be war themed lyrics, kinda hard to not to be affected by the ongoing conflicts in the world at the moment.

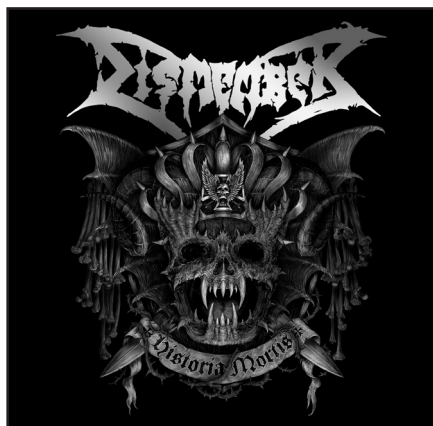
It was wonderful to see Nuclear Blast Records re-releasing your back catalog in all its glory, starting with the limited 1000-copy "Historia Mortis" box set. How do you personally feel about these reissues? Also, what do you think of Daniele Valeriani's exclusive artworks made for the box?

- Well... the re-issues were definitely needed, the albums have not been available for some time and there is a whole new generation of metal heads who needed to complete their collections. The box turned out really cool, the artwork and design is top notch. It is supposed to be a limited edition collectible, but maybe someone underestimated the demand for it,

because there is a lot of people asking for it. Anyhow, we still have some left which will be sold at upcoming shows so there is still a chance to get it.

In the last four years, you have visited many places. What was it like reconnecting with Dismember fans around the world? Where was the band most welcome? What was your favorite festival or club performance during this time?

- All the shows have been amazing everywhere we played. But as usual South America is the most fanatic and crazy. It's hard to pick one favourite, so no one mentioned, no one forgotten.



Speaking of which, what are your plans for 2024 in terms of festivals and tours? I have already noticed the confirmed Hellfest and Sweden Rock festivals. By the way, what does the actual Dismember setlist look like?

- Like you mentioned we are doing Sweden Rock and Hellfest for the first time, we are also playing Maryland Deathfest and some other shows in the

states, Mexico and Italy. Maybe there will be more shows this year, we'll see.

Base Record Production from Spain has just announced the release of "Dreaming in Red, Dreaming in Death: A Tribute to Dismember" which will be out in the fall of 2024. What do you think of this tribute CD? Have you heard all the songs in their entirety?

- I have not heard any of the songs yet, but it will be cool to hear how they will be interpreted. I had to dig up some of the old lyrics for some of the songs, had a good laugh.

I have to admit that your new merchandise designed by Misanthropic-Art is very apt and stylish. Do they create these new designs entirely themselves, or do they get strict ideas and rough sketches from you first? How did you get in touch with them anyway?

- Usually we have a basic idea of what we want, then the artist has the freedom to flesh out the design with ideas of his own. We never sold our designs to big merch companies and kept control over what was released, even if that meant that it was harder to our shirts, but it definitely kept shitty designs away.

What kind of music do you enjoy listening to these days? Did you stay with the old bands as much as possible, or are there newcomers who also attract your attention with their music?

- I mostly still listen to what I grew up with, heavy metal, thrash metal and early death metal. I do enjoy some of the "newer" death metal bands like Lik and Imperishable, check them out if you have not heard them.

Okay, I think that's it. Thank you Matti for taking the time to do this quick interview. The last dismembered words are yours.

- Many thanks for the interview and we will see you all somewhere sometime, all the best.

KAIVS IS A VERY YOUNG BUT PROMISING DEATH METAL BAND FROM ITALY. THEY RELEASED THEIR DEBUT EP LAST YEAR AND NEW SONGS ARE ALREADY IN FULL SWING. MY QUESTIONS WERE ANSWERED BY MAX FOAM (VOCALS) AND TIZIANO MORTICIAN (GUITAR).



To start off, talk a little bit about the founding of Kaivs. When and what motivated you to start the band? Please introduce each member to the readers. By the way, what does the name of your band mean?

Max: The will of death metal! That move started this band! We write albums and songs in steamroller style!

Tiziano: I discovered them when I've been texted by Max in June or July 2022, all members were already in and he asked me to join them playin' guitar. I said yes and after a while, I met the others. Kaivs is the name of a demon as far as I know.

"Horrend" is the title of the 3-song debut EP, which was released in February 2023. To my surprise, it has a completely old-school death metal feel. Was it a conscious decision from the beginning that you would play this kind of music, or did it just come naturally?

Max: Both of your premises are right! We want to be much as old school as we can be, as for the overall sound and for the rest including artworks, lyrics and much more! In the end, I think that all we did... well, it's the fruit of a natural choice, which came without any external pressure! We just do what we want!

Tiziano: It came naturally, in my opinion, we figured it out when the first songs were leading that way. Ultimate step was the addition of a monstrous sound like HM-2.

During the song "Sepulchris" I found some kick drum/trigger issues, where the bass drum disappeared for a few parts. What happened? Couldn't this be fixed afterwards?

Max: Huh? What! Never noticed that! Gotta hear it quickly if you're right or it was just a false impression! However, "Sepulchris" is always brought up, the song our fans love to feature in their videos the most... by the way... it always seems to be something wrong with it! Pretty strange, isn't it?!

The band logo looks great. Who made it? The same applies to the cover art of "Horrend" which by the way was quite reminiscent of Dan Sea-

grave's style. How do you see it and how does the cover relate to your lyrics?

Max: Oh yes, the cover was made by Juanjo Castellano, who's maybe very near to Seagrave's style! It's gonna be a great appreciation to his craft! For a long time, I glued my eyes to certain illustrations of early Iron Maiden, Pink Floyd and King Crimson! Full of details, so what a record is without an awesome cover art? I want great illustrations for my albums!



Speaking of lyrics. They are quite dark and satanic. Where do you get your inspiration these days?

Max: Nothing of satanic, if you mean about "Kru-shing All Altars". Well, it's a song about medieval inquisition throughout Europe during those years. It's something like my historic opinion about that, after some studies of the topic, you know! I just write only about what sucks in life as there's nothing to wonder more I think!

I see you play a total of 9 songs live, so are you planning to record a full album anytime soon? Since you self-released the EP, will the next material be released by a record label or will you continue to self-finance your releases?

Max: One does not exclude the other... Maybe, who knows... I don't know how things will be in

the future about this situation. There are still things need to be fixed, and that needs time indeed!

Tiziano: A full-length album has already been recorded during last summer, but we don't know yet about how and who will release it.

What's the atmosphere like when you play live? What can death metal fans expect from a Kaivs show? Do you play live a lot anyway?

Tiziano: Yes, all of us like to play live besides the few occasions happened. People can expect a totally 90's old school death metal show, played as well and furiously as possible.

Max: Energy! Fuck you attitude! Moshpit, stage-diving and headbanging! Adrenaline! Totally insane and fuckin' hardcore, man!

You are from Rome. I'm sure there are a lot of metal bands out there. So what's the underground scene like now, can you recommend some great bands?

Max: There are some great bands here! The list would be too long, confusing and annoying.

Let's talk a little about the music you like. What bands do you like to listen to these days? What was the last concert you went to?

Max: Too many! Last year, I found amazing the new album from Suicide Silence! By now I'm relaxing... winding down with the new Mario Biondi's album, "Crooning Undercover" just kicks ass! Then, I just got in my hands Idle Ruin, who's really a weird band, really interesting! I usually dig in the underground, to discover new and old surprises! Discogs helps to purchase such rarities!

Tiziano: If I remember correctly, the last one I went to was Fleshcrawl, whereas lately I've been listening to the same stuff every other day.

At the end, please reveal your future plans and send your greetings to the readers.

Tiziano: I hope great things lie ahead, not just for me, but for all of us, including personal and collective goals. Have a good one you all, folks!

Max: Hoping to have our new album out very soon... and touring too... wherever and whenever it's possible!



Hails Max! Mercyless' upcoming album is titled "Those Who Reign Below" and will be released on October 25, 2024. What should death metal fans know about the new material? Are you following the musical path of "The Mother of All Plagues" album, or can we expect some changes?

- On this new album we tried to push the limits of old school death metal even further. This album is a continuation of the previous one, but with a dose of violence, hatred, even more powerful. The blasphemous side is always there to remind us of our aspirations and our vision of this atrocious world.

What themes will you explore lyrically in "Those Who Reign Below"? What inspired you to write the lyrics this time?

- This album is a tribute to the underground and to those who have always fought to keep it alive. The lyrics deal with the human being through his darkest image, and I often compare him to the devil in his biblical representation. They created an image that represents the enemy of religion and beliefs, but in fact through the centuries we realize that the devil is often identical to our image and our most abominable sides... pride, hypocrisy, lies, manipulation, etc. Our superficial and self-absorbed society reminds us every day that the devil rules this world.

Néstor Ávalos created the graphics for the new album, as well as for the previous one. The result is quite evil and satanic. Which lyrics directly relate to it? How would you describe the visual meaning of the artwork?

- Nestor's work and ideas correspond in every way to what we had in mind for this cover. It shows a monster with the appearance of a devil who leads the masses by threatening them with his diabolical sentinels. That's also it, "Those Who Reign Below", powerful people with bad intentions who manipulate the common mortals. The first song's title "Extreme Unction" represents this cover well... a sacrament in which a priest anoints and prays for the recovery and salvation of a critically ill or injured person.

For the release of the new album, you signed a contract with Osmose Productions, who wasted no time and have already re-released your first album, "Abject Offerings". So what do you think

of this reissue, which version do you personally like better, the vinyl or the CD version?

- Osmose is the only label that directly took the orders to make the reissue of "Abject Offerings" without asking questions. They did a great job keeping the spirit of the time... We had wanted this album to be released with a real worldwide distribution for a long time. Today I am still a fan and attached to the first version of 1992, because it was our first album and it represents a lot for us.

How did you get involved with Osmose anyway? Have you signed a long-term partnership?

- Very simply, after the re-release of "Abject Offerings" they offered us a contract for the new album and of course, we validated it straight away... for the rest we will see what the future will tell us.

Are you planning some extensive touring in support of "Those Who Reign Below"? If so, please let us know your plans. Speaking of live shows, what are your memories of the Left To Die concert and your appearance at the Back To The Symbolic festival?

- Obviously we will continue to play as much as possible to promote this album with festivals, concerts and tours... We are in the process of setting up a lot of concerts for the end of the year 2024 and 2025... as well as we are working with our promoter on a tour in 2025. Otherwise the concert with Left To Die was huge, sold out and old school... We had a great time with 2 legends of the history of Death... Today I can allow myself to say that I have played with all the members of Death since the beginning. Same for the Symbolic fest, great festival in a great exceptional setting, with a great organization. We had a great time with a very wild audience!

You have been spreading your type of unholy death metal since 1987, even if there was a 10-year gap, how do you look back on the past and all your successes? Would you change anything?

- Honestly I wouldn't change anything at all, because whatever our past we have learned a lot from our mistakes and the bad choices we have made. It's a long career with ups and downs, but despite the years we are still here motivated and more determined than ever! The main thing for us is always to have enjoyed playing this music that we are still passionate about.

You are from Mulhouse. How is the current metal scene in the Grand Est region? How do you see the attitude of fans changing recently compared to the 90s?

- The death metal scene in our region had disappeared for a long time, but for a few years a new generation of groups has appeared and who are the new representatives of the style, not necessarily old school, but with a good spirit. Groups like Sacrifizer, Dawohl, Post-Mortem, Dionysiaque... represent the scene currently. It is true that we realize that the new generation is less attracted by the death metal style, brutal death, etc. We realize it more and more, but there is still hope, because the fashions and inspirations of people change regularly over the years.

Do you keep in touch with former members? Who do you meet most often?

- I am still in contact with Stéphane Viard, the original guitarist, because we have been friends since school... but not at all with the others, whom I no longer see at all. Life...

I see you use B.C. Rich guitars. Which is your favorite model and why? How many guitars do you have in total? What brand of strings are you using lately? What tune are they in?

- I have been using B.C. Rich since the beginning of Mercyless... My first was a black Mockingbird (Japanese) in 1987... and so on until today... Ironbird, Warlock, Warbeast... These guitars have always pleased me for their very aggressive shapes and their sound... They are always equipped with EMG pickups and Floyd Rose... I also have Jackson RR, but I prefer my B.C. Rich... We use Savarez strings, because they are our sponsor and we are tuned in C.

Thank you very much for your time. Please end the interview properly by sending your greetings to all die-hard Mercyless fans in Ukraine.

- Thank you for your support and interest in Mercyless. Thank you to all those who support us for all these years and who support the real death metal scene... Our new album "Those Who Reign Below" is a concentrate of hatred and blasphemous violence, you will not be disappointed. And finally, all our thoughts to the Ukrainian people who suffer; we are with you.

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION



If you're looking for a bit of technical, yet fresh-sounding metal alloy, be sure to check out Six Degrees of Separation's latest album. I sent my questions to Vlasa (guitar/vocals) and not only did I get great answers from him, but their mastermind Doctor (bass/vocals) joined in and expanded the final result. So read our chat and discover the greatness of this Czech band!!!

Hi Vlasa! Your new album "Never After" was recently released. I noticed you consistently release new material every 4 years with Six Degrees of Separation? Where did you work on the new material this time? Who produced, mixed and mastered it?

Vlasa: Hi. Yes, that regularity is due to a certain perseverance and talent of the Doctor (bass, vocals). I dare to say that if myself and Canni weren't occupied also by Bruno in Hypnos there would be a new record every two years ☺.

Doctor: We work on our music more or less continuously. The first new songs for the "Never After" album were composed and arranged shortly after the last recording session for "Old Dogs". Releasing new album every two years would be nice, but keeping the four-year period has its benefits. We have to take into account the absorption abilities of our fans. Less is usually more. And it also depends on opportunities and possibilities of getting together as we no longer live on the same spot, some of us live about 300 km from the rehearsing room. So it requires some skills in planning and finding compromises.

With the album "Old Dogs" we have also adopted new modus operandi – recording the album in two or more separate sessions. The first 5 songs for "Never After" were recorded on November 2022, the rest of the album in January 2024. Such an approach allows us to get more focused on the detail.

For the cover, you used a photo showing water drops on a spider web. What does this cover symbolize for you and what is the lyrics of the album about?

Doctor: Well, regarding the cover it is a picture taken by my friend Petr Horna and when I saw it for the first time I thought it would be a pretty cool artwork for an album cover. For myself it presents the transience of everything, and the beauty caught in the moment of time... or the venus balls ☺. Whatever you fancy ☺.

Your previous albums were released by MetalGate in CD format. Did they also release the new album? What other merchandise will you be making to support "Never After"?

Doctor: No, on this album we haven't been cooperating with MetalGate. We were actually offering them this release, they said they will think about it... and you know how this usually ends ☺. So we have

decided to conduct the release by ourselves (which is something that we did earlier in our history when releasing of the 4th album "Of us"). And since I started working in the book publishing company a couple of years ago and releasing books is not that far from releasing CDs, we have come to an agreement and our new CD was released by this label named Nakladatelství Olomouc. There will be some new t-shirts, hoodies, patches, etc. of course.

Let's talk about the new songs, of which there are a total of 12 on the album. How would you describe them compared to the previous "Old Dogs" material? The final track, "Breeding the Wrath" is a bonus, and also a cover of Hypnos' "Breeding the Scum" featuring guest vocals from Bruno. What is the story behind this track?

Vlasa: Hm, maybe more rock. More lyrical. Lighter. And the idea that both bands would cover one song of the other one came up during COVID. Hypnos covered "Light Hates Me", Degrees chose "Breeding the Scum". Going back to the first question, our good friend and brilliant studio engineer Stanislav Valášek worked on all the recordings. Cooperation with him is essential and irreplaceable for us.



Are you planning to make an official music or lyric video for any of the songs on "Never After"? If so, which songs were chosen for this purpose?

Doctor: There will be some lyric videos for sure. I can imagine we could prepare them for all the new tracks, one at a time.

Since you are involved in the creation of Vlasa &

Black products, I would like to know what equipment was used to record the new album?

Vlasa: Everything ☺. The guitars were recorded on Vlasa & Black 4x12 Metal Man boxes. Vlasa & Black SuperBlade amps and my vintage V&B JCM800 replica. We used Vlasa & Black Bruthus 4x12 for bass.

I also noticed that both Canni's and your guitars are custom made. Who made them? Tell us more about your guitar arsenal and list your favorite instruments among them?

Vlasa: My entire "guitar career" I have been working with master Pořízka (Pořízka guitars). He has made a number of instruments for me over the years. It was never a miss, always top notch instrument. I currently own about fifteen guitars from this bespoke manufacturer, and I can't let go of a single one. Of course, there are guitars that are closer to me like my V models and ML, which I currently use with Hypnos.

You both also play with Hypnos, so how do you manage to set up the Six Degrees of Separation gigs? Have there been any problems or overlaps in this area so far? Where are you performing with SDOS next?

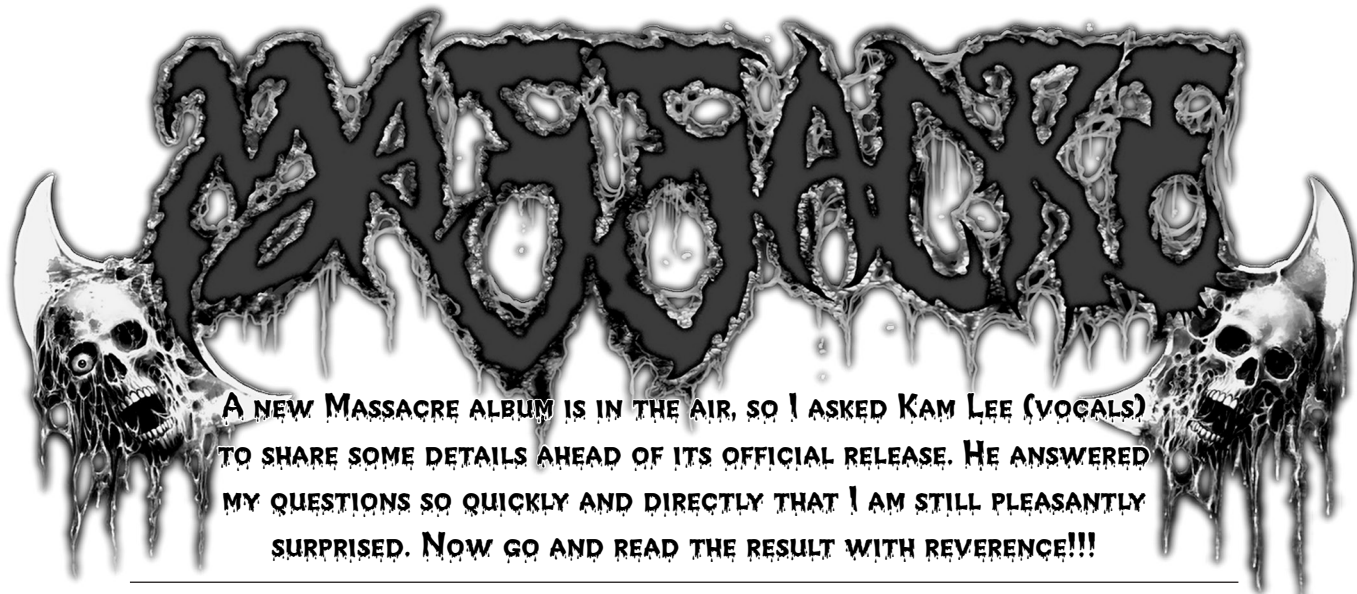
Vlasa: We have two more concerts planned with SDOS before the end of the year. Next year, something is already in the making. Even a joint SDOS and Hypnos concert. Everything is planned in advance on shared calendar.

Now let's talk about the music you enjoy listening to these days. List your favorite bands and records? Was there a band in 2024 whose album caught your attention?

Vlasa: Lately, if I ignore the classics that I grew up listening to (Pantera, Death, Slayer, Grip Inc. and others), I really like to listen to classics like Toto, Maiden, Scorpions and others. This year at a concert in Paris, I came across the young French band Witchorious. I found them very interesting. Great stoner rock ☺.

OK, Vlasa, that's all I had in mind. Please complete the interview with any SDOS news or plans omitted above.

Vlasa: ☺ Maybe only just that we're working on new material again. And the first draft recordings sound pretty good. We will be very happy if our new record, and perhaps the older ones, reach listeners in your country. Music is universal language. It has a gift for bringing people together. This is more important than ever these days.



A NEW MASSACRE ALBUM IS IN THE AIR, SO I ASKED KAM LEE (VOCALS) TO SHARE SOME DETAILS AHEAD OF ITS OFFICIAL RELEASE. HE ANSWERED MY QUESTIONS SO QUICKLY AND DIRECTLY THAT I AM STILL PLEASANTLY SURPRISED. NOW GO AND READ THE RESULT WITH REVERENCE!!!

Hail to thee Kam!!! It was recently announced that Massacre’s new full-length album will be released on November 8, 2024 via Agonia Records. I’m sure there won’t be any drastic musical or lyrical changes, but I’m still curious what the 16 songs of “Necrolution” will bring to old-school death metal fans this time around? Could you summarize the essence of the new album in a few words?

- It’s pretty much the same statement I said in the promotion PR statement. It’s basically a nostalgic album with a retrospective look back at the late 80s early 90s style and sound of death metal. So it’s not an album or material to basically emulate and represent former previous albums from Massacre, but rather something that stepping back and taking influence from the era that death metal was created and formulated in. The early days – those mid to late 80s early 90s sound.

So it’s not necessarily an album that’s going to sound like something that came before from Massacre – but rather an album that reaches back and takes influence from the era that all of the bands that came from that timeline created. It’s not necessarily rooted in a Florida sound or a Swedish sound or any other sound. It’s a combination of all the death metal genres that were formulated and created in that time era.

Your previous album “Resurgence” was released by Nuclear Blast in 2021, and the “Mythos” EP followed in 2022. So how did you get signed to Agonia Records to release “Necrolution”? Have you signed a long-term partnership with them?

- So after NB dumped us for whatever pathetic reason that they’ll come up with – I started looking right away for a new label. I talked to several different labels that all came to me, and the one that seemed to fit the best was Agonia. I didn’t want another trendy label that only cared about trends and what is popular at the time – example: like all female member bands or some pathetic excuse to sign someone like that – and no I’m not saying that all female band members means the band is bad. That’s not what I’m saying at all – but what I am saying is that’s what labels started looking for – when certain bands that were completely female members got popular. That has nothing to do with the bands themselves, but that has to do with the labels way of thinking, so let’s get that straight and out-of-the-way before someone jumps on me and calls me a misogynist or something for whatever reason just because they wanna start some problems.

But labels that were only concerned with trends was not the label I wanted.

See I wanted a label that had integrity in their mindset – not popularity – and also had a roster of underground bands that still were strong and not just some popular trend. This is what I got from Agonia.

Not to be overlooked are Timbul Cahyono’s professional artworks, which perfectly match

Massacre’s style. Please talk a little bit about making the cover for “Necrolution”. Did you send Timbul your ideas and rough sketches, or did he come up with the whole design?

- So actually I discuss a lot of the covers and artwork with Timbul that he has done for the band. He’s not only done this album cover, but every one of the singles and EP covers since “Mythos”.

He’s done them all; “Dead Beyond Death”, “Ancient Evil”, “Headless Halloween”, “Casket Mutilations”, “Corpus Umbra”, “They Never Die”, “Tri-pocalypse”, & “Evil Dead Rise”.

I think a lot of people don’t realize how many releases we’ve had since I’ve come back as the leader of the band since 2019.

Timbul and I have a very open professional relationship that we can discuss things and send ideas back-and-forth to each other. When it came to the new artwork, I basically started talking to him about what I was looking for, and I had a certain vision and aesthetic that I shared with him. But that’s about all. I don’t go into deep detail. I like to let an artist create his own concept with just me giving very little my details to what I’m looking for and I might add something here or there later like I think I told him to add spiders and rats, they fit a certain aesthetic in the lyrics, but other than that, he gets it with the first go. Honestly, that’s why I like working with him, because he has the same aesthetic and mindset that I do, so when it comes to me explaining something, he usually gets it without me having to deeply explain it.



The album’s first single, “The Colour Out of Space”, has already been premiered in the form of a lyric video. I think it turned out fantastic. Can we expect a full band music video in support of “Necrolution”? If so, what will be the chosen song and what visual elements do you plan to implement for it?

- Personally I despise music videos. I think they’re a waste of time, but I understand their purpose. I will never do a lip sync, pseudo, music video while the

bands faking it in a dilapidated old building or I’m standing in a garage or out in a desert or on a mountain side lip syncing to my own song – fuck that – that will never happen. If anything a video could be comprised of live footage or something like that, but I will never fake a performance for a video. I did that once for a friend of mine’s video that I did vocals on, and it felt so unnatural that I told myself I would never do it again. So there is a plan perhaps for the next video to be live footage from a show spliced in with some story or horror visuals but that’s about it – like I said I will never do one of those faux music videos lip syncing to a song while standing bollocks deep in swamp water or some silly shit like that.

The strangest aspect of Massacre these days is that there are two lineups, one for studio work and one for live performances. How did this develop and why is it good for the band to work this way?

- I work with what I got. I work with musicians that are willing and ready to work regardless if it’s in a live situation or a writing and recording situation.

I’m not one to sit around and wait for someone else to get off their lazy asses to work. I did that for almost 35 years of my life – waiting around for some other musician to work and I realized all that did was hold me back. I’m done being held back. I want to work with musicians that are just as anxious, serious, and willing to work as hard as I am. And if that comes with working with different people at different times and different lineups and that’s what it will be.

See because I’m out there pushing and working hard, so I expect the musicians that I work with to work just as hard. Sometimes it comes into positions where certain musicians that I’ve worked with in the past just happened to know the type of writing and style that I want as opposed to someone new coming in and trying to force them to do something.

So rather than waste a bunch of precious time, waiting for someone to get in the mindset or to learn to play in a certain aesthetic way – if I have people that know the style and can write in the way I’m looking for – then I’m gonna be working with them as opposed to someone who doesn’t – all in all this is a business and this is like a job.

When managers interview people for positions at their job, they usually look for people that have experience in the type of work that they’re looking to do. Sometimes they might not be able to find the right type of people in their area that they have to branch out and reach out to others outside of their area in order to find people that have the experience in the type of job that is required.

Now I tried to work with musicians for years in my area and none of them knew or had the correct mindset that I was looking for – it’s more than just playing music – it’s a mindset. Certain people have to be able to click and get along and unfortunately a majority of musicians in Florida are a bunch of rock star posers,

narcissistic, toxic people, and I wasn't going to lower myself to work with such people like that ever again.

I did that before with former members of this band and I told myself never again!

I need the right people that are on the same level, and the right type of musicians that I needed just so happen to live in Sweden. And so the majority of my musicians that were writing the material are Swedish musicians. However, both Jonny and Rogga have their own bands and lives – they can't easily tour or be a part of a band that completely tour all the time – as such even though they are writing musicians, they weren't necessary the right musicians to do shows and tour with and do live performances with.

I was forced to find a lineup that could do that and that's why there is a separate lineup now that performs live.

I just luckily found Florida musicians that aren't part of any of the clicks or scenes – especially guys like Carlos and Tim who are completely not involved with the scene locally whatsoever and have removed themselves from being around such toxic people in the local scenes.

However, the members in the band now – the lineup that performs live – that make up the live performance members – yes now they are also the new members of the band that will be moving forwards as of this moment.

Speaking of live shows. How do death metal fans feel about the band at concerts these days? Is there a big difference in this compared to the late 80s and early 90s? Tell us a little about your recent visit to Europe. Did everything go smoothly?

- I tend to think a majority of fans once they see us – they realize that this lineup regardless of who is in it is still bringing the best performance and the best musicianship on stage.

They can do the material justice – regardless if it's the older material or the new material.

The biggest difference between the 80s crowds and 90s crowds and today's crowds is today's crowds are there because they want to be there – as opposed to 80s and 90s crowds who were only there because it was something to do or somewhere to be. I mean you still get that in small local scenes – you still get that

sort of high school immaturity and mindset where everyone's just showing up someplace because it's the place to be – to be seen and to be recognized. It's all about being the "cool kid"... it's so pathetic.

However, we've been playing a lot of festivals lately and I can tell you that our crowd has been some of the biggest crowds, especially in Europe. The fans have always been more supportive of this band than any of the US. That's just how it's always been so I'm very appreciative of the euro fans.

What is the story behind the constantly changing logo? Is it adapted to the given cover design, or is there something else behind the changes?

- Both reasons actually. I like to have an ever changing logo to represent the band in its current theme, although I like to retain the updated version of the original logo. I never liked the logo that was used on the debut album. That logo was implemented without my consent and it was something done behind my back and I never liked it at all. I referred to that logo as the Superman logo as it always reminds me of the logo from the first Superman movie from the late 70s.

I always preferred the original logo with the axes. That's why when I finally became the sole trademark owner and leader of the band I implemented that logo back into the band. I also don't like logos, because logos represent a brand. I've never been about brands – to me that is so commercialized and so commodity driven in the way of thinking. It goes against my own self nature of what I feel music should represent. I know most 98% of musicians think of themselves as a brand – however I don't think of myself in that way, because I think that's very egotistical and narcissistic. To me the band should never be thought of as a brand... that might be counter intuitive to most, but that's just how I am I always go against the grain. Honestly, the best representation of anti-branding is the movie Repo Man – although that movie may seem dated now – if you go back and watch that movie, everything entirely in that movie is nothing that is a brand label. Everything has no brand – every food item, every packaged goods, everything in that movie is just a complete absence of brand based packaging. That movie represents my mindset when it comes to branding.

Let's talk about books and movies that you like and that especially inspire you when it comes to the world of Massacre. What was the last movie you watched or the last book you read? Is there a movie you're looking forward to?

- Well it's pretty evident that I'm a horror movie fan. I'm a fan of the horror genre in general – but doesn't always necessarily have to be movies. It could be books, magazines, comics, manga, online web series, creepy pastas... if it's horror I'm drawn to it.

Of course, I'm a huge H.P. Lovecraft fan, so that is the main source to my inspiration and lyrics. Everything is rooted in cosmic horror or should I say the complete utter madness and absurdity of the universe. That's what I view the real reality of our universe as – madness and insanity – it's all just one complete absurdity. So Lovecraft aesthetics is that type of absurdity that I view the world and the universe as.

Complete utter chaos and absurdity that makes absolutely no sense whatsoever, it's only fitting that I would use such absurd simplistic explanations to my lyrics to describe such absurd things. It's probably why I like hentai and Japanese anime that has tentacle demons having engorging sex with human females. It's not that it's a turn on. It's just such an absurd, absolute complete chaotic mindfuck of a thing to happen. I just enjoyed the absurdity of it all.

I don't ever try to get political or religious or try to use my lyrics as some social commentary – I just simply want to entertain people and if they find some macabre entertainment in my complete chaotic absurd lyrics of horror, that's all I ask for.

The last movie I watched was Dead & Buried – it's one of my favorites from the 80s and I revisited again this morning. Kind of a hard question to ask me what was the last movie I watched since I watched movies every single day of my life and usually one horror movie a day – sometimes I watch something new, sometimes I re-visit something that is one of my favorites.

That's all I wanted to ask. Please finish the interview and send your greetings to all Ukrainian fans of Massacre.

- Thanks for the support and love of our fans in the Ukraine.



E-mail: casketcreeps@hotmail.com | Bandcamp: [massacre3.bandcamp.com](https://bandcamp.com/massacre3) | Facebook: facebook.com/MassacreBandUSA

AMON

"Sacrificial/Feasting The Beast" CD 2023
(Darkness Shall Rise Productions)

Let me start by saying that the latest CD reissue of Amon's cult demos is very well done. Apart from the other releases with these demos, the current DSR version sounds slightly better, thanks to Dan Swanö, who carefully remastered them. The booklet is expanded with all the lyrics, as well as two band photos, the original demo covers (inside), four concert flyers and a cool 2-page article by Jeff Tandy (Imprecation/Trenchant). There are a few minor typos, nothing serious, but these days there is almost no edition without them, so unfortunately this has become the norm.



Incidentally, these demos were first released by Roadrunner Records in 1993 under the title "Amon: Feasting the Beast" with the Deicide logo on the cover. That release included the obligatory info on both demos and even had two pretty killer band photos. Okay, back to this reissue. Amon's second demo, "Sacrificial", kicks off the CD. This unholy death metal demo was recorded and mixed by the mighty Scott Burns in December 1989 at Morrisound Recording in Tampa, Florida. It consists of six time-tested death metal classics, notably "Lunatic of God's Creation", "Sacrificial Suicide", "Crucifixion", "Carnage in the Temple of the Damned", "Dead by Dawn" and "Blasphemerion", which were re-recorded shortly after Deicide's debut album. These songs sound absolutely fantastic and their vibe exudes pure evil energy. Then there's Amon's first demo, "Feasting the Beast", recorded in a garage in August 1987. The tracklist is as follows: "Feasting the Beast (Intro)", "Sacrificial Suicide", "Day of Darkness" and "Oblivious to Nothing". This recording is super raw, but still enjoyable, especially for die-hard fans of the band. It's also worth noting that Darkness Shall Rise Productions honored these demos by releasing them not only on CD, but also in cassette and vinyl formats. So the choice is yours, but act fast because this will sell out pretty quickly!!!

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ATROPHY

"Asylum" CD 2024
(Massacre Records)

Like all Atrophy fans, I was very happy when the band announced their comeback in 2015. The line-up of the new beginning included three founding members, which was great news and gave even more meaning to the reformation. The band began performing live and the possibility of a third LP was in the air. Then in 2019, bassist James Gulotta suddenly left the band. But they continued to work on new material and released the song "Riptide" on YouTube later that year. When I heard this new song I was completely relieved because the spirit of Atrophy was there. Another bit of bad news came in 2020 when singer Brian Zimmerman left the band after the European tour was cut short due to the pandemic. Then the remaining members, along with drummer Tim Kelly, recruited a new singer and eventually changed their name to Scars of Atrophy. After a few months of inactivity, Brian announced in 2021 that he would be forming another version of the band, still using the original name Atrophy. I was really weirded out by this whole situation, but somehow I still had a lot of faith that Brian

would manage to put together a third album worthy of Atrophy. And now, after 34 years of waiting, the successor to "Violent by Nature" has finally arrived. It's called "Asylum" and it has 9 songs in over 44 minutes. In addition to Brian, the following musicians took part in the recording of the new album: Mark Coglan (rhythm guitar), Nathan Montalvo (lead guitar), Josh Gibbs (bass), Jonas Schütz (drums) plus two guest musicians Krage Lum (lead guitar on "American Dream") and Justin Stear (bass on "Distortion", "American Dream" and "Close My Eyes"). The CD opens with "Punishment for All", which is a really great song, sometimes reminiscent of Atrophy's past style, although overall it's a pretty modern approach to thrash metal, with an Annihilator-like effect in the guitar melodies. "High Anxiety" follows with a full Testament/Xentrix vibe, both musically and vocally. The riffs are quite heavy, as is the sound production, and this move makes Brian's vocals less Atrophy-like, as he is more brutal not only in this tune, but in the whole material. Don't get me wrong, I like it when the music is heavy and brutal, but unfortunately it seems that the special character of Brian's voice, which was maximally present on the previous materials, has disappeared from the "Asylum" repertoire. The third song is called "Seeds of Sorrow". This is another good track that reminds me a bit of the old Atrophy, but again with an absolutely modern feel. That being said, I found the vocal themes to be pretty cool there. This is followed by "Distortion", which reminded me of Sodom's recent style. It's a completely mid-tempo song that focuses more on rhythms and melodies. "Bleeding Out" is the fifth track on the CD.



It might sound weird, but in addition to the aforementioned Testament/Sodom influences, this song reminded me a lot of what Scars of Atrophy did on their "Nations Divide" EP (2022). After that comes "American Dream", a very groovy and dynamic cut, again with a totally modern soundscape, but unfortunately missing the stylistic features of Atrophy's past. "Close My Eyes" follows, opening with an atmospheric acoustic guitar intro with Brian's rather unusual clean vocals. After the short acoustic part, the song turns into a heavyweight Testament song with proper vocal parts. Sorry to say it again, but this composition has nothing to do with Atrophy's style. Fortunately, "The Apostle" improves things somewhat, as there are very few Atrophy-like fragments in it. The album closes with "Five Minutes 'til Suicide". Another song that is too modern in style and more typical of what Sodom and Xentrix represent today. In short, no matter how you look at it, feelings about this new Atrophy album are mixed. I mean, if anyone was expecting "Asylum" to be a musical follow-up to the albums "Socialized Hate" (1988) and "Violent by Nature" (1990), then you can forget it right away. On the other hand, the new material is not bad at all, the new musicians are top class, but it has very little to do with Atrophy's legacy. And while the packaging and visuals of the "Asylum" CD booklet turned out to be excellent, the production we've all been waiting far too long for was nowhere near convincing.

Facebook: facebook.com/atrophyofficial

BRODEQUIN

"Harbinger Of Woe" CD 2024

(Season Of Mist Underground Activists)

Well, the wait is over, the new Brodequin album is here, the fourth in their discography,

and it's sure to impress fans of brutal death metal. Since their first demo in 1999, the band has been a trademark of non-stop blasting brutality and has always remained at the forefront of the genre. The new masterpiece is titled "Harbinger of Woe" and features 10 methods of total sonic destruction. Their 32-minute record has the best and most devastating sound quality to date. This material was recorded by Jamie Bailey (bass/vocals), Mike Bailey (guitar) and Brennan Shackelford (drums).



The trio performs their kind of bulldozing brutality with the greatest possible precision, while not forgetting to introduce some dark atmosphere here and there, leading the band's musical soundscape to new paths. The best example of this can be heard in the song "Of Pillars and Trees". Brodequin fans know that Jamie appreciates history in general, but he really spends a lot of time researching the so-called Middle Ages, so the new lyrics are mostly steeped in torture and execution techniques from the 500-1500 AD time frame. Accordingly, they reinforce their lyrical world with suitable graphic illustrations, for example José de Brito's painting "A Martyr of Fanaticism" was aptly used on the album cover. This digipak edition comes with an excellent 16-page booklet containing all the lyrics, individual photos of the members and a band photo. The whole packaging design is simply great. If you like brutal death metal at extremely insane speeds, this record will definitely not disappoint!!! Welcome back Brodequin!!!

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BRUTALITY

"The Complete Demo Recordings 1987 - 1991" 2CD 2021

(Vic Records)

There have been quite a few box sets and compilations in the past that have attempted to collect Brutality's early demos in one way or another, but this Vic Records release definitely succeeds in my opinion. The title speaks for itself, but I must also admit that they really tried to cram as much as possible into these two CDs. There are a total of 42 songs with a playing time of over 140 minutes. The development of the band can be traced from 1987, when it was still called Abomination,



until 1991. Disc 1 contains 3 songs from the famous "Metamorphosis" demo recorded in 1991, its home demo version from the same year and a 14-song live show recorded on 06.11.1990. Disc 2 contains 8 songs from the cult "Dimension Demented" demo from 1990, 3 demo songs recorded between 1988-1989, two versions of the 1988 demo with 4 tracks each, plus 3 songs from the "Abomination" demo from 1987, but without the Onslaught cover. It has a 16-page booklet with extensive

liner notes, some lyrics, lots of rare pictures and some concert posters. I personally find this compilation very informative, it was also interesting to hear the band's early thrash metal stuff and their evolution towards the more technical side of death metal. If you're a fan of Brutality, you need to own this compilation of demos, that's for sure!!!

E-mail: info@vicrecords.com
Website: www.vicrecords.com
Bandcamp: vicrecords1.bandcamp.com

BRUTALITY

"Sempiternity" CD 2022

(Emanzipation Productions)

While Brutality fans aren't giving up hope for a new LP, Denmark's Emanzipation Productions released a compilation CD titled "Sempiternity" in May 2022, confirming that a new record could be in the works soon. But while we wait very patiently for the new album, I will analyze the contents of this compilation CD. "Sempiternity" combines 8 songs in over 44 minutes. The first two tracks, "Orchestrated Devastation" and "Fluent in Silence", can be said to be Brutality's latest studio recordings, as these songs were recorded in June 2021. Both songs perfectly reflect Brutality's unadulterated style, but in their case, I think it can be recognized even from the first riffs and growls. These new tracks were recorded by Scott Reigel (vocals), Jay Fernandez (guitar), Jarrett Pritchard (guitar),



Jeff Acres (bass/vocals) and Ron Parmer (drums). Then we have two tracks from the "Antecedent Offerings" limited edition 7" EP from 2018. Both tracks are old classics re-recorded. "Crushed" is from the debut album "Screams of Anguish" (1993) and "Artistic Butchery" is from the second album "When the Sky Turns Black" (1994). I love new adaptations of old classics, but honestly I prefer the originals. These tracks have the same line-up, except for Jarrett Pritchard, who didn't play guitar there yet, but was responsible for the production, recording and engineering of these two classics. The second half of the compilation CD features four live tracks recorded at Maryland Deathfest in May 2019. The live songs are "These Walls Shall Be Your Grave", "Cries of the Forsaken", "48 to 52" and "Cryptorium". Three songs from the debut "Screams of Anguish" and one from "Sea of Ignorance" (2016). The live atmosphere is simply fantastic, as is the sound production. It's pretty raw, but I think it's very enjoyable. This compilation CD definitely kicks ass! The 8-page booklet includes the lyrics to all the songs, a killer band photo, all the info you need about these recordings and an awesome cover artwork by Dr. Winter. A must for all Brutality fans and also available on vinyl!!!

E-mail: promotions@brutalitytheband.com
Website: www.brutalitytheband.com
Facebook: facebook.com/BrutalityTheBand

BRUTALITY

"Brutality 2003 Demo & Bonus Tracks" CD 2022

(Vic Records)

This is another compilation CD from Brutality, released by Dutch Vic Records. As you can see, this compilation focuses on the 2003 demo material. This demo consisted of three tracks and was self-released and distributed on CD-R by the band at the time. These songs were "As Darkness Falls", "I Deny" and "Ashes and Snow". This Vic Records release

expands to a total of 13 tracks, with a running time of just over 58 minutes. Honestly, the content is a bit boring even for a die-hard Brutality fan, as there are multiple versions of these three songs, including "I Deny" five times, "As Darkness Falls" and "Ashes and Snow" three times. However, if we look at these versions as phases outlining the processes of the songs, we gain an insight into the creative process, from the drum recordings to the final products. The original 2003 demo tracks were recorded with Scott Reigel (vocals), Larry Sapp (guitar/backing vocals),



Demian Hefel (guitar), Jeff Acres (bass/backing vocals) and Jim Coker (drums). They sound a bit unpolished, but they reflect the true Brutality vibe, and these songs are definitely a pleasure to listen to. Accordingly, in the 8-page booklet we can see two excellent photos with this line-up. Then we have two unreleased tracks, "Valley of the Kings" and "Gates of Thorn". They were recorded as a trio: Larry Sapp (guitar/vocals/drum programming), Demian Hefel (guitar) and Jeff Acres (bass/backing vocals). A slightly different approach musically, but still great songs overall. Then there are the 8 bonus tracks showing the making and arrangement of the 2003 demo material (drums only versions, instrumental versions and versions with different vocalists). The CD booklet also includes an introduction by RVK (a.k.a. Raine von Kiszka, formerly known as Larry Sapp) and an interview related to this period of Brutality. This compilation comes with a new cover, but also includes the original. A nice addition to any Brutality fan's collection!!!

CRYPTIC PROCESS
"Human Snack" CD 2023
 (Self-released)

Cryptic Process, a brutal death metal duo from Valenciennes, France, was formed in 2020 by Dam (vocals) and Ugo (guitars & drum programming), who previously played in Goryptic, Heresy, Trepan'Dead and Unsu.



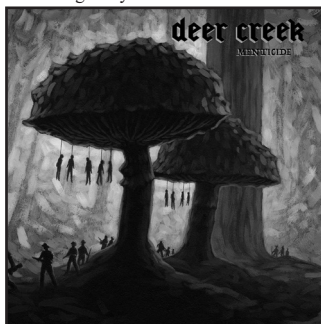
"Human Snack" is their debut album, which represents 9 songs written and performed in the most modern possible way of brutal death metal and deathcore. Musically they do something similar to Cryptopsy, Dying Fetus, Necrophagist, Psychroptic and Spawn of Possession to name a few. Of course, Cryptic Process isn't as original or technical as any of the aforementioned, but overall they still have quite a complex repertoire. The more than 33-minute material sounds solid and balanced. Their music mixes so many things that it is almost certain that fans of modern deathcore and brutal death metal will easily find their favorite tunes or parts. It's got it all, like ultra-massive grooves, bulldozer-like slam sections, furious swoops, hyper-fast drums, insane growls, hysterical screams, pig snorts and more. The programmed drums so-

und very good, but sometimes the panorama is not optimal, or simply the volume of the samples is a little louder than it should be. I know it would be pretty hard to find a human drummer to play these parts, but I do hope they find someone to play their stuff live, because this kind of music needs to be presented live. The self-released 6-panel digipak CD wasn't overdone in terms of design and layout, but it still looks killer. You can order the CD directly from the band or their partners in crime, Crypt of Dr. Gore and Drowning in Chaos Records.

E-mail: crypticprocess@gmail.com
Bandcamp: crypticprocess.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/crypticprocess

DEER CREEK
"Menticide" CD 2022
 (Game Two Records)

Deer Creek formed in Colorado in 2002, and after a demo, a single, 2 EPs and several split releases, they've finally unleashed their debut full-length album "Menticide" in 2022. The album's 6 lengthy tracks were recorded by Paul Vismara (guitar & lead vocals), Conan Hultgren (guitar & vocals), Stephanie Hopper (bass) and Marc Brooks (drums). The quartet's music is sludge metal. Their kind of musical fusion is very atmospheric, not one where the guitars, bass and vocals are too extreme or too distorted, but the kind that relaxes the mind and brings back the 70's vibe. I especially found the clean vocals very meditative and calm. The entire sound production radiates the sounds of the past and of course presents them very organically in the more than 39 minutes of "Menticide". Most of the time, their approach is about looping riffs to put the listener in a trance. By the way, their music is so relaxing that you can listen to it for hours.



There are 5 own compositions on the CD, of which I liked "A Dark, Heartless Machine" the best. The album's sixth track is called "The Working Man Is a Dead Pig" and is a sort of compilation or homage to bands like Black Sabbath that includes well-known parts of the classic "War Pigs", at least for the first two verses. In short, I can highly recommend Deer Creek's music to anyone who likes sludge, stoner or doom metal. Their second full-length album is also on the way, so keep your eyes peeled for the follow-up to "Menticide". The 6-panel digipak version features great artwork and layout by Paul Vismara, along with lyrics, a live band photo and the usual information about the recording itself. As it is, it's a perfect sludge album, so order the CD or vinyl version while you still can!!!

E-mail: gametworecords@hotmail.com
Bandcamp: deercreek.bandcamp.com

DEICIDE
"Banished By Sin" CD 2024
 (Reigning Phoenix Music)

Damn, this new Deicide album is pretty cool! "Banished By Sin" is the 13th full-length album of the evil death metal legend, containing a total of 12 songs. The almost 39-minute material keeps the listener excited from start to finish. I particularly enjoyed the songs that somehow relate to the repertoire, dynamics, and evil atmosphere of the first two records in one way or another. The rest of the album consists of songs written in the style of recent albums, which are much more melodic and have a different energetic approach. But let me tell you, this combination turned out to be pretty killer. This is the first Deicide album

in a long time that I really like, and after several listens I like what I hear even more. The sound is fantastic, ultra-polished, maybe a little too sterile, at least compared to the raw and brutal death metal energy that Deicide is known for. Glen Benton's doubled vocals are remarkable and wicked, and his bass rumbles in just the right way. The guitar tandem of Kevin Quirion and Taylor Nordberg are in great harmony and spread one hell of a guitar tone and riffage. Oh, and their guitar solos are simply fantastic to listen to. And all this is topped off by Steve Asheim's flawless drumming. This is Deicide-style death metal at its best! The 20-page booklet includes all the lyrics, along with a recent band photo and two sick artworks. My favorite songs are: "From Unknown Heights You Shall Fall",



"Sever the Tongue", "Bury the Cross... with Your Christ", "Ritual Defied", "Banished by Sin" and "The Light Defeated". If you are a true death metal fan, this album should be in your collection!!!

Website: deicideofficial.com
Facebook: facebook.com/OfficialDeicide

DEMENTOR
"The Church Dies/Morbid Infection" CD 2024
 (Nasphyr Records)

I really dig and support the re-release of early Dementor material in various formats. Nasphyr Records began by reissuing the first two full-lengths and the second demo on vinyl in 2023 (see reviews elsewhere). This was recently followed by a special digipak CD edition featuring the debut album "The Church Dies" (1994) and the second demo "Morbid Infection" (1993). I added the word "special", because the particular digipak was designed in the shape of a 12-panel inverted cross. These twelve panels include lyrics, artwork and band photos for both materials. Although compared to the vinyl version of "Morbid Infection", the original artwork was omitted here and only the new one was used. But regardless of this small detail, this digipak really looks fantastic from a design perspective. Well, while those vinyl reissues were completely exclusive, the same cannot be said for the contents of this CD reissue, as 1000 copies were already pressed in 2016, in jewel case CD format, courtesy of Dark Symphonies. In favor of the Dark Symphonies edition, I would mention that it contained a lot more archival photos. However, if I compare the sound production of the two CDs,



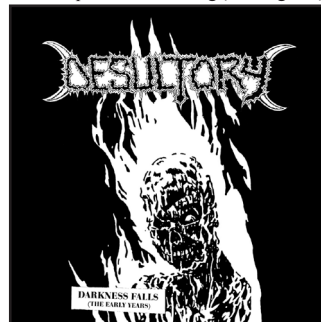
they are completely identical. I am not exaggerating when I say that "The Church Dies" is a cornerstone of Slovak death metal and a timeless masterpiece. The album's eight compositions combine the classic character of death metal with impulsive drum patterns, sophisticated guitar riffs and super catchy solos. It has fast, slow, brutal, melodic, tech-

nical parts and it sounds fantastic. In short, it has everything a death metal fan could want. In addition to this killer album, you also get six songs from the second demo. It's raw in terms of sound, but it shows where it all started. Thanks to Nasphyr Records for a job well done, feel free to order this awesome 59-minute digipak CD as I'm sure it will be a brilliant addition to any death metal fan's collection!!!

E-mail: info@nasphyr.cz
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DESULTORY
"Darkness Falls (The Early Years)" CD 2024

(Darkness Shall Rise Productions)
 Even though all three Desultory demos have been available to die-hard fans in the past, in various formats and as bonuses on various re-releases, I think this DSR version is especially great as it brings all three demos together for the first time. Another great thing about this release is that these demos were newly mastered from the original DAT tapes. Then I definitely have to mention the massive 24-page CD booklet full of extremely rare archival material such as original demo tape covers, lyrics, loads of fantastic footage with band, live and studio photos, some concert posters and last but not least a very long interview with Klas Morberg. Needless to say, this is what a top quality release should look and sound like, as it really has everything a Desultory fan could need when it comes to the demo era. As is known, all three demo recordings were made by the same line-up, i.e. Klas Morberg (vocals/guitar),



Stefan Pöge (guitar), Jens Almgren (bass) & Thomas Johnson (drums), at Sunlight Studios with Tomas Skogsberg. You can easily hear the transition and rapid development of the band from the thrash metal songs of "From Beyond" (1990) to the much heavier and more characteristic death metal songs of "Death Unfolds" (1991). However, personally, I think Desultory's signature sound and unique atmosphere was achieved on the third and final demo, "Visions" (1992). Now, thanks to Patrick W. Engel (Temple of Disharmony), we can enjoy these 10 demo tracks in the best possible quality. In addition to this killer jewel case CD version, true Desultory fans can purchase these demos on regular black and cream white vinyl as well as a special 3-tape box set!!!

EXODUS
"British Disaster! The Battle Of '89 - Live At The Astoria" CD 2024

(Nuclear Blast)
 Definitely the surprise release of the year, I mean, even if it's not a studio album, Exodus' 1989 live performance is a total blast in every possible way. The fact that this was recorded live during the band's heyday also adds to the charm. "Fabulous Disaster" came out just a few months before the live recording and is also my favorite line-up that also recorded the brilliant "Pleasures of the Flesh" album with Steve "Zetro" Souza (vocals), Rick Hunolt (guitar), Gary Holt (guitar), Rob McKillop (bass) and Tom Hunting (drums). The disc's 15 tracks were recorded live on March 8, 1989 at The London Astoria in London, England. However, all die-hard fans know that two songs, "And Then There Were None" and "A Lesson in Violence" previously

appeared as bonus tracks on the 1989 reissue of "Bonded by Blood". Anyway, I can't stress enough how fantastic the atmosphere is on this live recording, and it also sounds pretty killer and crunchy to the delight of thrash metal fans. Then the live set itself, which combines the evergreens of the first three records, is a pure feast for all admirers of the classics of the 80s. The band was definitely on fire that night and crushed the fans at the Astoria. The energy from their performance is simply wild and relentless. Their crazy live set lasts over 77 minutes. So go ahead and enjoy 6 songs from "Fabulous Disaster" (1989) such as "The Last Act of Defiance", "Fabulous Disaster", "Corruption", "The Toxic Waltz", "Like Father, Like Son" & "Verbal Razors", 4 songs from "Pleasures of the Flesh" (1987) such as "Til Death Do Us Part", "Chemi-Kill", "Parasite" & "Brain Dead", and 5 songs, namely "A Lesson in Violence", "Piranha", "Deliver Us to Evil", "And Then There Were None" & "Strike of the Beast", from "Bonded by Blood" (1985).



Needless to say, I loved every moment of this live set, so thank you Exodus and Nuclear Blast for this kind of blast from the past. The cover, layout and overall design of the CD version is just brilliant, it fits so well. Thrashers of the universe need to get this live album or stop calling yourself a thrasher!!!

Website: exodusattack.com
Facebook: facebook.com/exodusattack

HOLY MOSES

"Invisible Queen" 2CD 2023
(Fireflash Records)

"Invisible Queen" is officially the last and farewell album of German thrash metal legend Holy Moses. It was recorded with the line-up of the previous album "Redefined Mayhem" (2014), i.e. Sabina Classen (vocals), Peter Geltat (guitar), Thomas Neitsch (bass) and Gerd Lücking (drums). The album's twelve songs represent a professional and highly technical thrash metal material that lasts over 47 minutes. If you compare the band's albums from different eras to this final album, you will realize that overall there are huge musical changes, but somehow, thanks to Sabina's charismatic voice, whatever the music is, the end result always tastes like Holy Moses. The same goes for the sound production, which for me was a little strange this time, mostly due to the very synthetic sound of the drums and cymbals. Nevertheless, Peter's tricky guitar riffs, Thomas' crazy bass lines and Gerd's precise drumming make the album's musical production flawless.



Out of the twelve tracks, I liked "Cult of the Machine", "Invisible Queen", "Alternative Reality", "Visions in Red", "Outcasts" and "Too Far Gone" the most, because they were perhaps the most similar to what I liked about their early records. Don't get me wrong, the other songs are also very good, but they

combine more modern influences and approaches, which sometimes even border on progressiveness, and that's a bit much for me, ha-ha... I have the 2CD digipak edition with the bonus "Invincible Friends" CD. Which is none other than the album's 12 songs performed by guest vocalists, i.e. close friends of the band. Here are the ones I liked the most: "Cult of the Machine" featuring Bobby "Blitz" Ellsworth of Overkill, "Alternative Reality" featuring Tom Angelripper of Sodom, "Forces Great and Hidden" featuring Gerre of Tankard. This killer digipak edition includes 2 booklets: the 16-page "Invisible Queen" booklet containing all the lyrics, 2 great band photos, individual photos of the members, recording information, long thanks lists and Gyula Havancsák's fantastic cover artwork, while the 12-page "Invincible Friends" booklet contains great stories about Holy Moses directly from the guests as well as some cool photos. All in all, it's a beautiful and perfect ending from the queen of thrash metal. My deepest respect to Sabina and most importantly, Holy Moses will always be a part of our metal hearts and souls!!!

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HOROH

"Aberration" CD 2023
(Crypt Of Dr. Gore)

The French Horoh is a one-man death metal unit that draws on the raw sounding death metal of the 90s. This is a fairly young formation, as only one 4-song EP was released earlier, in 2021. The mastermind behind Horoh, J. (all instruments and vocals) is very capable of recreating the horror and gore feel of bands like Autopsy, Cannibal Corpse, Deceased, Impetigo, Macabre, Necrophagia and even adds his own musical approaches here and there. His music is not about the technical side, it's more about creating the right atmosphere, but musically and even cover-wise it reminded me a lot of Cannibal Corpse. "Aberration" is the debut full-length material, consisting of 9 well-arranged but also very sick death metal tracks. The 29-minute CD sounds rather obscure and faithful to the early demos and albums of the aforementioned bands. Still, beyond the obvious old-school feel, the riff structures contain a lot of exciting experimentation and avant-gardeness. In my opinion, this is an area that needs to be explored more thoroughly in the future. All instruments were played at a good level, although I found quite a few mistakes in the drum parts. The latter should therefore definitely be improved for future releases. The growls and screams, which are the highlights of this album, are executed in a completely malevolent way. I really dig them. Also don't forget J. did all the recording, mixing and mastering, so hats off to him. In that respect, it's a very decent debut album, not flawless, but honest. I made a reference to the cover comparison earlier.



so let me just say that what Seb Mocky did for "Aberration" pretty much reminds me of Vincent Locke's cover of Cannibal Corpse's "Worm Infested". Speaking of Seb, he also did some killer guest vocals on "Devour the Saviour". This aptly designed 6-panel digipak CD is limited to 200 copies, so act fast if you feel this release might interest you!!!

E-mail: horohdeathmetal@gmail.com
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Facebook: facebook.com/Horohdm

IMMOLATION

"Acts Of God" CD 2022
(Nuclear Blast)

"Acts of God" is the eleventh studio album by New York death metal legend Immolation. Musically, they continue where they left off with "Atonement" in 2017. Their line-up has not changed since then and continues to combine the darkest forces of Ross Dolan (bass/vocals), Robert Vigna (guitar), Alex Bouks (guitar) and Steve Shalaty (drums) with perfect chemistry. I can state that the 15 songs and more than 52 minutes of material became the longest album in the band's history.



With this album, the quartet perhaps delved even deeper into the musical embodiment of abstract darkness. The way they combine eerie riffs and melodies is completely unique, I think only they can create the most ominous musical formulas of the death metal style with such great precision and devotion. In terms of mood, this record became incredibly abstract, in which, of course, their old colleagues, Paul Orofino (engineering & tracking) and Zack Ohren (mixing & mastering), played a big role. The aural production of the album is crystal clear, powerful and balanced, I especially liked the way the drums and cymbals appear in the final mix, because they sound so natural to me. Ross consistently delivers the most anti-religious lyrics and evil death growls, his manner has remained the same for years, simply hats off to him. The way Robert and Alex share their riffs and structure the songs is absolutely remarkable. Then there's Steve, who always brings the beats and fills in the craziest way possible. Well, let me call it death metal perfection! The 16-page booklet has a fantastic layout thanks to Rob Kimura, but it wouldn't be as great without Eliran Kantor's stunning cover artwork and Santiago Jaramillo's inside artwork pieces. Oh, and you can hear Dan Lilker's additional vocals on "Let the Darkness in". This is obscure death metal at its best, a must for all death metal fans worldwide!!!

Website: www.immolation.info
Bandcamp: immolation.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/immolation

IMMORTALIS

"Indicium De Mortuis" 2CD 2021
(Dark Symphonies)

Dark Symphonies have made another worthy dig from the past, reissuing Immortalis' only album along with the entire demo archive. "Indicium de Mortuis" was originally released in 1991 by Morbid Music on LP/CD/MC. These originals can still be found for sale, but the prices are usually exorbitant and the conditions are very poor. So it was definitely a blessing that Dark Symphonies did justice to this exceptional death metal album three decades later. And not only have they re-released this amazing album, they've added a second disc with bonus material. Unfortunately, the German Immortalis was a rather short-lived band. They were formed in 1989 under the name Blasphemy, and between 1990 and 1994 they operated as Immortalis. In the past, only the cassette demo "My Requiem" (1990) and the already mentioned full-length album circulated in the underground spheres. But now, thanks to Dark Symphonies, we have the full audio arsenal from these Germans. Disc 1 contains 10 songs from the debut album "Indicium de Mortuis" (1991). The album is around 42 minutes long and presents an impressive mix of atmospheric death metal with

the following line-up: Sebastian Bielecki (vocals/guitar), Thomas Scharm (guitar), Karl Dittel (bass), Stefan Hartmann (drums) and Ulrich Dammer (keyboards). Thanks to the latter, the music of Immortalis belongs to the category of non-typical death metal bands. The eccentricity and uniqueness of the keyboard additions can be verified not only in the two instrumental tracks, but also in quite a few other places. These Germans also played a technical type of death metal, which was something special even in 1991, especially for Europe. The production of their material is top notch thanks to Andy Classen. In addition to their killer own compositions, at the very end of the disc you will also find a great death metal version of Venom's "Countess Bathory". Disc 2 contains 3 demos with a total of 16 songs with a running time of approximately 80 minutes. It starts with an unreleased demo from 1993 called "Final Death". The six songs of this demo show a different line-up and musical approach. The members of the demo are: Sebastian Bielecki (vocals/guitar),



Gregor Zelazny (guitar), Olaf Sichler (bass) and Marco Gebert (drums). Their music is still very technical on this demo, but their riffs aren't as catchy as on the album. This is followed by five songs from the 1990 demo "My Requiem", recorded in the same line-up as the debut album, except that Ulrich Dammer did not play keyboards on this demo, but was in charge of the recordings. This demo is super awesome, even if quite a few parts of the tape are rendered in poor quality. An interesting fact is that the titles of some of the songs were changed after they were re-recorded for the debut album. It was also funny to notice the opening riff of the Slayer classic "Black Magic" at the end of "My Requiem". Disc 2 closes with five songs from Blasphemy's only demo, "Blasphemy Resistance" from 1989. This now cult demo was recorded by Sebastian Bielecki (vocals/guitar), Karl Dittel (bass) and Karsten (drums). Musically, death metal still has quite a thrash influence on this material, but you can see where it all started. The twelve-page booklet contains lots of band, live and rehearsal photos, the old demo covers and an interview with Sebastian from 2020. A decent reissue, that's for sure!!!

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INSEPTULUS

"Deadly Gleams Of Blood, Steel And Fire" CD 2023
(Loud Rage Music)

My good friend Coro of Axa Valaha Productions sent me this CD of Insepultus' debut album to review. The one-man Romanian black metal band is led by Robert "Sepultus" Pieptan (vocals, guitars, bass, keyboards & effects). An interesting fact is that the band was formed in 1998 and had a 4-song demo in 2002 called "The Hell Will Rise Again". After a little more than two decades, the long-awaited debut album of Insepultus has arrived, which was definitely worth waiting for. The debut album consists of 7 masterfully composed songs, which can be said to be conceptual not only lyrically, but also musically. The musical side is maximally atmospheric, but also very sad, as it must fit perfectly with the lyrical ingredients, which are excerpts and adaptations of various war poems. Robert's songwriting skills are amazing, as he was able to combine the gruesome facts of war, the fear and horror that a young man can experience on the front, and even a near-death ex-

perience, with an incredible musical undertone. The album opens with the slow, marching rhythm and cold guitar harmonies of "The Last Battle I", which here and there are very similar to the opening parts of Mayhem's "Freezing Moon", but when the trumpet comes in, everything changes into a completely surreal soundscape. This is followed by "The Last Battle II", which is done according to black metal standards, albeit with some modern sound effects. The third track is entitled "The Wreckage of the Earth". The basic Norwegian atmosphere is there, but the keyboard parts hidden in the background create an interesting effect, and the well-composed guitar solo is also not to be neglected. Robert's vocals are quite harsh and gloomy, but they fit the music perfectly. Opening with air raid sirens, "The World's Heart" is perhaps one of the most varied songs on the record. It's mostly mid-tempo, with pounding kick drums, measured vocals and a scene reminiscent of an air raid at the very end of the song. Coincidentally, as I'm writing this review, there's an air raid alert going on outside. Welcome to the horrible reality! Well, this is followed by "Hell upon Earth", the album's most epic and heart wrenching song, with accompanying acoustic guitars and lyrics taken from J.B. Priestley's "Great War Letters Home".



The sixth track on the disc is "The Old Lie". A kind of super melodic composition, in which the inclusion of weird trumpet melodies turned out to be simply fantastic. The approximately 29-minute recording closes with a slow piece called "The Trumpet Sound". Obviously there are trumpets in there which sound amazing, but this tune has some killer death metal growls and even haunting whispers. In conclusion, "Deadly Gleams of Blood, Steel and Fire" is a flawless release with some great avant-garde solutions that I highly recommend to those who are not afraid to experiment within the black metal genre. In addition to Robert, the following people participated in the recording of the album: Nikola Dušmanić (drums), Ezequiel Lagrotta (trumpets) and Jeremy Diener (narration). The 12-page booklet contains all the lyrics, as well as the matching cover art and illustrations by Costin Chioreanu. Romania's Loud Rage Music took care of the CD release, so contact them or the band directly to get your hands on this exceptional yet experimental black metal masterpiece!!!

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JUDAS PRIEST
"Invincible Shield" CD 2024
 (Sony Music)

Since their previous album "Firepower" (2018) is, in my opinion, Judas Priest's best album in decades, and they set the bar very high with it, I was really looking forward to seeing if the new album would surpass it, or in what direction would take it on musically. So the title of the long-awaited new LP is "Invincible Shield", which I think fully continues the musical formula of "Firepower" and can be considered a logical continuation in every possible way. However, I have to admit right away that the new material is very well done, but not nearly as flashy as its predecessor, so this is their second best album in decades. In terms of sound production, we got another flawless work from Andy Sneap, which can easily be considered the twin brother of "Firepower". Mine is the deluxe hardcover digi-book version which has 3 bonus tracks over

the regular digisleeve CD version. So this version has a total of 14 songs in nearly 64 minutes. The album opens with "Panic Attack", a super punchy tune with flawless energy, dynamism and insanely melodic solos from Richie Faulkner, clearly one of the best songs on "Invincible Shield". This is followed by "The Serpent and the King", another damn good song with catchy vocal harmonies from the metal god himself – Rob Halford. The third is the title track itself, which has some old-school vibes with a slight "Painkiller" touch. This kind of mix is simply great and very enjoyable. Anthem at its best! By the way, this is the longest track on the album. "Devil in Disguise" continues at a measured pace, focusing more on the weight of the riffs and the variety of the vocal themes. "Gates of Hell" is the fifth. Another mid-tempo song packed with plenty of melody. Next up is "Crown of Horns". It's a super soft metal anthem if you ask me, where the guitar melodies are matched with the proper vocal parts. With "As God Is My Witness" we return to heavier and more crushing metal songs,



which is pretty similar to "Hard as Iron" due to its opening riff. The solos are awesome there and the whole track just rocks. The eighth cut is called "Trial by Fire", which is the second best song on the album. These guitar riffs are so catchy and majestic along with the super cool vocals that once you hear them, you'll definitely never forget them. "Escape from Reality" opens with a hellishly heavy riff where Ian Hill's bass lines come through crystal clear yet massive. The vocal effects used there are also very remarkable from an atmospheric point of view. The tenth song is "Sons of Thunder", a typical Judas Priest tune if you ask me. The grooves are great and the guitar riffs are quite heavy sounding. "Giants in the Sky" starts with a Black Sabbath-esque riff before transitioning into "Children of the Sun"-like guitar and vocal harmonies. Then there are the bonus tracks. "Fight of Your Life" reminded me quite a bit of the "Ram It Down" era because of the vocal arrangements. The "Vicious Circle" follows with an unadulterated Priest atmosphere, I really like the hymn-like character and heavy sound of the guitars there. The last song on the CD is "The Lodger". A rather strange and unusual tune, the writing of which is attributed to Bob Halligan Jr. So overall, I really enjoyed this new Judas Priest release. Which is accompanied by a fairly thick booklet with lots of high-quality visuals and all the lyrics. A must for any Judas Priest fan in this damn sick world!!!

KOURISTUS
"Demo 2022, Demo 2019 & Teurastamo EP" CD-R 2024
 (Visceral Circuitry Records)

Kouristus is a grindcore band from Finland. They have been spreading their kind of musical chaos since 2013. This release, which is a compilation of sorts, by the way, contains 15 tracks clocking in at just over 15 minutes. Two short songs from their 2022 demo start the disc. Both tracks explode straight away, there's no time to catch your breath, ha-ha... That's what I call dedication, hats off to them. To my surprise, the sound production is very good and enjoyable. Then we have 5 songs from their 2019 demo. These short cuts sound a bit rawer, nastier and crazier, partly because of the hysterical vocal outbursts. It's really cool when they suddenly slow down to break the fast pace with some ultra-heavy



and groovy riffs and then explode again with new energy. It's not a mindless mess, it actually has great riffs and song structures, just played really fast. The second half of the disc is the 8 songs of the "Teurastamo" EP from 2018. This EP sounds incredible. I'm not sure of the purpose of this disc, but it's limited to 50 copies, so Kouristus fans should act fast. In any case, I warmly recommend this Finnish band to grindcore, hardcore and punk maniacs. They are definitely worth investing in. I hope we get more music from them in the near future, but in the meantime, try to get this stuff from Visceral Circuitry Records!!!

KREATOR/TORMENTOR
"Bonecrushing Demos & Rehearsals '84-'85" CD+DVD 2023
 (High Roller Records)

This release is a very cool compilation of early Tormentor and Kreator work. Although both Tormentor demos were available on various bootlegs prior to the official release, this was definitely the first time I heard these Kreator rehearsals. Needless to say, High Roller Records did justice to these antiques by giving them the best possible sound and packing the rarest of photographs into the booklets. All tape transfers, audio restoration and mastering were done by Patrick W. Engel at Temple of Disharmony. The CD opens with Tormentor's famous second demo, "End of the World" from 1984. It was recorded at Zeche Carl Studios and consisted of "Armys of Hell", "Tormentor", "Cry War" and "Bonebreaker". This is a very good thrash metal demo with a chaotic performance as it was played at the time. Next comes Tormentor's first demo, "Blitzkrieg". The songs on it are "Armys of Hell", "Cry War", "Satans Day" and "Messengers from Burning Death", recorded live at Inferno in 1984. They were played even more chaotically, and in these songs you can still hear the strong influence of heavy metal, which later completely disappeared in favor of thrash metal. The other part of the compact disc contains two Kreator rehearsal recordings, both from 1985. Ten songs in about 43 minutes with a super raw sound and some out-of-tune instruments here and there. However, I have to say that I really enjoyed the early versions and rehearsal vibe of these later thrash metal classics. The track lists for the two rehearsals are "Endless



Pain", "Command of the Blade", "Storm of the Beast", "Death Is Your Saviour", "Living in Fear", "Son of Evil", "Tormentor", "Total Death", "Storm of the Beast" and "Endless Pain". And if that kind of "blast from the past" isn't enough for you, there's also a bonus DVD with 11 songs. These songs were recorded live at Rudis & Neudis Heavy Metal Battle on January 11, 1986 and restored from a VHS copy by Patrick W. Engel. A

nice dig from the past, that's for sure! Every recording has the same line-up, namely Mille (guitar/vocals), Rob (bass) and Vektor (drums/vocals). This so-called export version comes with 2 booklets (8 pages + 24 pages) and a slipcase, which are also a must-see. By the way, High Roller Records has cleverly released these demos and rehearsals on 3 separate vinyls with new covers and excellent layouts (hand lettering) provided by Alexander von Wieding. So Kreator/Tormentor fans should get them all and that's not debatable!!!
 Website: www.hrrrecords.de
 Facebook: [facebook.com/hrrrecords](https://www.facebook.com/hrrrecords)

KRISIUN
"Mortem Solis" CD 2022
 (Century Media Records)

The Brazilian blasphemers of Krisiun systematically break into the underground spheres with a new album every 3-4 years. "Mortem Solis" is the title of their latest masterpiece, which contains 11 songs in the explosive death metal style they are known for. These infernal brothers – Alex Camargo (vocals & bass), Moyses Kolesne (guitars) and Max Kolesne (drums) – have been firmly spreading Krisiun's sonorous brutality for over 3 decades now. On this album they collaborated with Mark Lewis (producer, mixing & mastering), Hugo Silva (producer & engineer) and Otávio Rossato (assistant engineer). The production of the new album is quite solid, yet it sounds crystal clear. I guess the band's loyal fans have noticed that for nearly 20 years now, as they have been coming up with less chaotic productions, each of their new works is cleaner, more melodic and perhaps more thrash-oriented.



Which is not a problem, because the trio is constantly developing and trying to steer their already brutal death metal repertoire in a new direction. So the one thing you have to remember once and for all is that Krisiun always represents quality death metal. Marcelo Vasco provided the cover art and layout for this excellent death metal creation, which definitely adds to the visuals. In short, the approximately 44-minute album will not disappoint fans, that's for sure, so get this record in time! Krisiun rules as always!!!

Website: krisiun.com.br
 Facebook: [facebook.com/krisiun.official](https://www.facebook.com/krisiun.official)

MASSACRE
"Tri-pocalypse" CD 2024
 (Doomentia Records)

The Florida gods of death are back with a new EP called "Tri-pocalypse". Led by legendary singer Kam Lee, Massacre has been more active than ever since 2019, releasing new material mostly in the form of EPs. The 7" vinyl version of "Tri-pocalypse" contains five tracks, while the CD includes two additional bonus songs. The latter was released in a well-designed 4-panel digipak courtesy of Czech Doomentia Records, complete with a killer mini-poster and lyrics. The music of "Tri-pocalypse" is maximally faithful to the early period of the band, supplemented with a little Swedish flavor, which mainly affects the sound production. As the title suggests, this is an EP directly influenced by horror director John Carpenter's three apocalypse films: "The Thing", "Prince of Darkness" and "In the Mouth of Madness". So the lyrics, the cover, and the whole musical concept are all based on the aforementioned apocalypse trilogy. The CD opens with the intro "Into the

Tri-pocalypse". It's a minute and a half instrumental piece with a foreboding start/end feel, plus some nice old school drumming and grinding riffs in between. This is followed by "Terror at Outpost 31", inspired by "The Thing". It's an extremely great song with just the right vibe, perfectly representing late 80's/early 90's Florida death metal as it should have always been. Next up is "Begotten Antigon", a cut inspired by "Prince of Darkness".

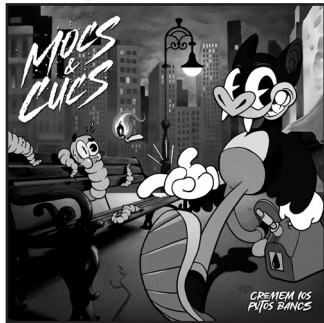


It's more groove-oriented and focuses on the heaviness of the riffs. The vocal parts also fit well with the dynamics of the song. The fourth song is titled "Hobb's End Horror", which was influenced by "In the Mouth of Madness". It has quite ethereal guitar melodies, and even the slowest parts can be found in it, almost doom metal. The outro that marks the logical end of "Tri-pocalypse" is entitled "Escape from the End of the World", composed exclusively for this EP by Rob Reider. It has a perfect soundtrack character, interwoven with elements of horror and despair. As a bonus, we can also listen to remixes of two previously released songs, the terror remix of "They Never Die" and the horror remix of "Beyond the Dunwich Hills (The Dunwich Horror Part 2)". Both are truly fantastic remixes that extend the CD's playing time to 22 minutes. I also have to highlight Timbul Cahyono's artwork as he did a great job creating the perfect visuals for Massacre's musical and lyrical horrors. "Tri-pocalypse" was recorded by Kam Lee (vocals), Michael Borders (bass), Jonny Pettersson (guitars/keys), Rogga Johansson (guitars), Jon Rudin (drums) and Rob Reider (composer), mixed and mastered by Jonny Pettersson at Studio Unbound in Sweden. To be clear, old school death metal fans should invest in this stuff right away along with the recently released second EP, "Evil Dead Rise"!!!
Bandcamp: massacre3.bandcamp.com

MOCS & CUCS

"Cremem Los Putos Bancs" CD-R 2024
 (Self-released)

Mocs & Cucs (also known as Milford Mocs & Gunther Cucs) was founded in 2010 in Lleida, Catalonia. "Cremem los putos bancs" is their second full-length album with a total of 10 songs. The members of such a strangely named formation are: Guillem Tugues (bass/vocals), Jordi Castells (guitar/vocals), Marc Pérez (lead guitar) and Txus Nogales (drums). Almost everything about this band is pretty weird, at least at first glance,



or if you look narrowly, otherwise there's nothing wrong with them, neither with their music nor with their visual world. The music they play is quite heavy, especially the sound of the guitars is quite close to the thrash metal genre, but since they have a kind of gangsta in-your-face lyrical and vocalizing attitude, I would classify them in the hardcore and

somewhat punk rock-influenced camp. So, as you might have guessed, their musical crossover is diverse, like mixing Anthrax, Agnostic Front and Rammstein together. The latter came to mind because of the Catalan lyrics and the language in general, as it adds some rigor to songs with a harder tone. The nearly 45-minute material was recorded, mixed and mastered by Gerard Porqueras at Heartwork Recording Studios (Barcelona, Spain). Needless to say, Gerard gave these songs a super brutal yet breathtaking sound production. There are actually 9 new songs on the album, plus a radio edit and a shorter version of "El candidat" at the end of the disc. And of course there's an intriguing cover art by Sergi Diaz, so you're sure to be in for a little surprise with Mocs & Cucs' new album, so get ready!!!
Facebook: facebook.com/MocsiCucs

MORTA SKULD

"Creation Undone" CD 2024
 (Peaceville Records)

The new Morta Skuld record, "Creation Undone", has finally arrived, which is also the band's seventh studio album. It was recorded in the line-up of the previous album, i.e. Dave Gregor (vocals/guitar), Scott Willecke (guitar), John Hill (bass) and Eric House (drums). The CD contains 10 ultra-crushing death metal songs with a playing time of over 44 minutes. From the first riff of "We Rise, We Fall" to the last riff of "By Design", this album literally captivates the listener with its relentless energy. Their songs are full of grooves and brutally pounding death metal madness. The sound production is so killer, yet crystal clear and proportionate, with a so-called bulldozer character, that it is simply a joy to listen to. Dave's vocals are not too brutal,



more of the rougher kind, but their music is so heavy and full of brutality that they don't even need to be toughened up. The entire repertoire radiates an old school death metal attitude. It's not about the super speed or the mind-blowing techniques, it's more about the heaviness of the riffs and the dynamism in general. It's mostly the usual Morta Skuld kind of slamming death metal, but the song "Perfect Prey" has a riff that reminded me quite a bit of a combination of Celtic Frost and Mortician vibes. Then there's "Soul Piercing Sorrow", which suddenly has a very atmospheric keyboard passage in the middle, an interesting solution that gives the moment a haunted feel. Eric is a great drummer and loves to bomb blast in the songs, that's for sure. I must admit, I really enjoyed listening to "Creation Undone". The 8-page CD booklet includes all the lyrics, an awesome band photo (by the way, there's another great band photo on the back), the usual recording info and a sick cover art. A must for all Morta Skuld fans worldwide!!!
E-mail: mortaman1@gmail.com
Facebook: facebook.com/MortaSkuld

NAGLFAR

"Vittra" CD 2023
 (Century Media Records)

This is the latest reissue of Naglfar's timeless debut album. "Vittra" was originally released by Wrong Again Records in 1995. This Century Media version comes in a 6-panel digipak with a 16-page booklet and a remaster by Dan Swanö. It looks good and sounds good, but I still prefer the way the booklet looks and the album sounds on the

first press of the CD. Even the cover of the album was properly modified here, Kenneth Johansson's cover photo became smaller and got a thick black frame around it, plus the logo and the album title got a different color. Unlike the Necrophobic reissues, which I really liked because they tried to get as close as possible to the first press releases, here you can say the complete opposite, but I know, it's a matter of taste. All this does not change the fact that "Vittra" is a flawless album and also my favorite from the band. This fantastic debut album contains 9 songs recorded by Peter Tägtgren at Abyss Studio in July 1995.



The recording line-up was as follows: Jens Rydén (vocals/keyboards), Morgan Hansson (guitar), Andreas Nilsson (guitar/keyboards/vocals on the title track), Kristoffer Olivius (bass/backing vocals) and Matte Holmgren (drums). The more than 46-minute long album can be defined musically as melodic death metal, of course with a large black metal influence, which primarily affects the vocal parts, close to what their colleagues from Gothenburg were doing at the time. Although Naglfar's repertoire always contained rougher and more extreme content. This reissue includes the bonus track "12th Rising". This promotional track, recorded in 1996, has been part of the "Vittra" CD reissues since 1998. The reissued CD booklet includes all the lyrics to "Vittra", photos of the band and members, and liner notes by Chris Dick. In short, a highly recommended album for all fans of melodic death and black metal!!!
Website: www.naglfar.net
Facebook: facebook.com/naglfarofficial

NECROMONICON

"The Demos" CD 2024
 (Vic Records)

I think it was really time to release all the early Necronomicon stuff together. Sure, the "Blind Destruction" demo was a bonus on many reissues, and the two "Break Out" compilation tracks were already part of a vinyl reissue, but exhuming the "Total Rejection" demo was a really commendable idea.



Needless to say, hearing the songs from the "Total Rejection" demo for the first time was pretty cool. The strong punk influence is clearly felt there, but it is also noticeable that the metal side continues to develop. This demo with 6 songs and about 21 minutes of playing time was recorded in 1985 with the following members: Freddy (vocals/guitar), Lala (bass) and Axel (drums). Just a few months later in the same year, they recorded the second demo "Blind Destruction" with a second guitarist, Jürgen Weltin. It was the demo that outlined the signature Necronomicon style and also landed them a record deal. All songs from this demo were re-recorded for the debut album, except for the intro. Then there are the two compilation tracks from 1986, namely

"Possessed by Evil" and "Blind Destruction". These versions are different but definitely awesome. All audio was compiled, restored and mastered by Patrick W. Engel at Temple of Disharmony in January 2022. The CD has a total of 14 tracks in 49 minutes. The 12-page booklet has a new and very cool cover courtesy of Thomas Pinheiro, but includes the old demo and compilation covers and four band photos, as well as an interview with Freddy about the past. I found a few typos, which is normal for Vic Records releases, but that doesn't change the fact that this is a must for any dedicated Necronomicon fan!!!
E-mail: freddy-necronomicon@e-mail.de

NECROPHOBIC

"The Nocturnal Silence" CD 2022
 (Century Media Records)

Let me start by saying that I consider Century Media's 2022 Necrophobic reissues to be very successful in every way. These reissues have been expertly crafted with dedication and are as close as possible to the originals in sound and design. Well, it should be known that there have been many other re-releases of these classics in the past, but none have been as good as these latest ones. So what follows will be a sort of comparative review. I would also note right away that regardless of the many excellent Necrophobic albums, "The Nocturnal Silence" will always be my favorite from them. OK, now let's listen to the audio production of the current CD and compare it to the original Black Mark Production version. To my surprise,



the levels are audibly the same (although some normalization has been applied to the waveforms compared to the original), and only a tiny bit of brightness (read: high frequencies) has been added to this current reissue, which makes the entire production a bit sharper. It's definitely a good twist if you ask me, especially if you listen to the vinyl version as well, because that little element of sharpness comes out even better there. The other great thing about this reissue is that it includes all 10 tracks from the 1993 recording session, and no more messing around with "Inborn Evil" and "Shadows of the Moon". So the final length of this blackened death metal masterpiece is 46:23. This current booklet and its graphics have a few changes from the original, but nothing too drastic if you ask me. First, they all have higher contrast. Second, the 8 pages of the original booklet have now increased to 12 pages, so now each member's photo is on a separate page, whereas previously there were 2 members' photos on one page. Then there are no background motifs for the lyrics of the reissue, which makes them easier to read now, ha-ha... However, the biggest graphic difference can be seen on the CD itself, as the current one contains the color necrogram of the cover image, without the band's logo, the album and the song titles. It was an interesting move and to be honest it looks pretty cool. Then there is an additional black and white necrogram image that can be seen on the insert below the CD. Oh, and let's not forget about the awesome looking slipcase, because it really is a killer addition to this reissue. All in all, I'm completely satisfied with this reissue and recommend it to all Necrophobic fans to get it with the vinyl version. The latter comes with a 4-page booklet and a double-sided A2 poster.
E-mail: info@necrophobic.net
Website: www.necrophobic.net

NECROPHOBIC
“Spawned By Evil” CD 2022
 (Century Media Records)

Necrophobic’s “Spawned by Evil” EP was originally released in 1996 by Black Mark Production with 4 tracks: “Spawned by Evil”, “Die by the Sword” (Slayer cover), “Nightmare” (Venom cover) and “Enter the Eternal Fire” (Bathory cover). Over time, these 4 songs have been expanded, with almost every reissue, and now the latest version from Century Media Records already contains 10 tracks. So this is the most extended version of “Spawned by Evil” to date, with a running time of 39:43. If I compare the sound of the first 4 songs of the current reissue with the 4 songs of the original CD, I can immediately admit that they sound a little louder and thicker thanks to Dan Swanö’s remastering. Since 2012, four more bonus tracks have been added to this EP, namely “Ridden with Disease” (Autopsy cover), “Moonchild” (Iron Maiden cover) and two songs from the ‘94 demo, “Bloodfreezing”, i.e. “Black Moon Rising” and “The Call”. The most recent addition to the EP are two previously unreleased demo tracks recorded at Montezuma Studio on December 30, 1994. These tracks are “Darkside” and “Into the Crypts of Rays” (Celtic Frost cover). This is a very good addition for sure. If I compare the design of this reissue with the original, I have to say that there are a lot of changes and of course expansions. First of all, the cover of the reissue is black and white, while the original had more colors, but both have a silver logo.



The same goes for the backs when comparing them by color. Secondly, while the original booklet was only 2 pages long, the reissue has expanded to 12 pages, including the lyrics of their own compositions and two more super cool band photos. Thirdly, the label side of the reissued CD is completely different from the original and, like “The Nocturnal Silence”, it also features Urban Skytt’s cover art. If you ask me, these latest modifications have turned out to be pretty good, and of course, this reissue is also equipped with a beautiful slipcase. In short, a must for Necrophobic fans!!!

NECROPHOBIC
“In The Twilight Grey” CD 2024
 (Century Media Records)

The masters of eerie blackened death metal are back. Their new album, “In the Twilight Grey”, continues the musical journey of the previous two records, “Mark of the Necrogram” (2018) and “Dawn of the Damned” (2020). What I’m reviewing here is the standard jewel case CD version, which consists of 10 songs. Musically, this is a refined and improved version of the two previous records, as the quintet always tries to expand its sound world and technical possibilities. Four members remained intact, namely Anders Strokirk (vocals), Sebastian Ramstedt (lead guitar), Johan Bergeback (rhythm guitar) and Joakim Sterner (drums), but they have a new bassist in the person of Tobias Christiansson. I’ll tell you, it’s a very good addition, because both the bass parts and their clearly audible sound are outstanding on the record. So on this album, the band continued to develop their haunting harmonies and expand their sonic arsenal. There are typical Necrophobic songs like “Grace of the Past”, “Clavis Inferni”, “Stormcrow” or “Cast in Stone”. Then come

the more experimental ones, but only in a few small details that mostly touch the mood aspects, giving a new angle and approach to their songs. Such is the case with “As Stars Collide” with its super epic atmosphere and otherworldly solos. It definitely doesn’t have a typical black metal structure, which is why it stands out. “Shadows of the Brightest Night” is another one that focuses mainly on atmosphere and mysterious guitar harmonies. I especially loved Sebastian’s palm-muted guitar melodies which, along with the solo, are the highlights of the actual song. Then there is “Mirrors of a Thousand Lakes”. This is a next level Necrophobic song thanks to the well-crafted guitar parts and fantastic solo. “Nordanvind” is the slowest, but also the most ethereal track on the album. The whole song is dominated by medium tempos, marching drum beats and a special cold atmosphere. Anders’ voice takes on a new dimension there, more evil, yet deeper. The ninth song is the title track itself, which is also the longest. Due to its length, it shows many changes in rhythm and mood, so it is one of the more experimental ones. The 54-minute album ends with “Ascension (Episode Four)” on an epic note, the other three episodes were on the “Darkside” (1997). If I had to sum it up, it’s a very solid record with great songs and an absolutely captivating atmosphere.



The only thing I didn’t like was the strangely gated sound of the overheads, so if a crash or a Chinese cymbal is hit on the right, a pressure gap appears on the left. It’s pretty annoying to be honest. This jewel case edition comes with a thick 20-page booklet with lyrics, band and member photos, and flawless cover art and graphic design by Jens Rydén. But since the limited edition digibook CD has two more killer songs, one of which is a cover, I decided to order it right away.

NILE
“The Underworld Awaits Us All” CD 2024
 (Napalm Records)

This is Nile’s debut album on Napalm Records and what a debut it is. I mean, the members of Nile went absolutely crazy on this record, and it’s obvious after the first listen. Not that their previous album “Vile Nilotic Rites” (2019) wasn’t great and flawless in every way, but this new material contains unexpected and truly exciting ingredients that add a refreshing twist to the established Nile soundscape. On the one hand, “The Underworld Awaits Us All” is such a super phenomenal album that it is very difficult to put into words all the subtleties of its true musical and lyrical essence. But on the other hand, I can try to list the few but quite effective modifications that make this material absolutely exceptional. First, there are enough riffs that aren’t over-orchestrated or over-complicated, and are simple enough that the melodies transcend the beloved brutality, and are often colored by various cymbal accents, giving the listener a better sense of the underlying mood. Secondly, the heavily emphasized role of grooves and dynamics, which reached a new level on this album. For example, listen to the fourth song called “Naqada II Enter the Golden Age”. Those ultra-groove-oriented drum patterns, their occasional progressiveness and the extremely catchy guitar riffs behind them, do not mention the super-crazy solos and vocal arrangements that lead to serious goosebumps with their dynamism at the end of the song. Definitely

the highlight of the album! My other favorite song is “True Gods of the Desert”, where you can hear the choppy riffing that is not particularly characteristic of Nile, and of course the title track “The Underworld Awaits Us All”, which is also the longest and most varied composition on the CD. The songwriting triumvirate of the album is Karl Sanders (guitars, keyboards & vocals), George Kollias (drums) and Brian Kingsland (guitars & vocals), and this time their creative cohesion is absolutely mind-blowing. The talents of Zach Jeter (guitars & vocals) and Dan Vadim Von (bass) strengthen and unite them for the album’s 11 songs and approximately 54 minutes of crushing sound. The clarity and transparency of the sound production also greatly contributes to the absolute success of the album, for which Mark Lewis was once again responsible. To complete the impact of the massive sound production, it is worth paying attention to the monumental visuals provided by Michal



“Xaay” Loranc, because these are truly unique creations. The digipak version comes with a thick 28-page booklet containing the prologue, liner notes and lyrical content accompanied by fantastic images. In short, this is a must have album for all death metal fans worldwide!!!
Website: nile-official.com
Bandcamp: nile.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/nilecatacombs

OPPROBRIUM
“Serpent Temptation” 3CD 2023
 (High Roller Records)

While all Opprobrium fans await the new LP, I thought I’d check out the deluxe reissue of their debut album “Serpent Temptation”, which celebrated its 35th anniversary last year. Mine is the 3CD clamshell edition, but it was also released in a 3-cassette box set with the same audio content. Needless to say, High Roller Records did a very good job as usual. So the box contains a voluminous 20-page booklet with the lyrics of the debut album and lots of great archive photos, a cool double-sided poster with quality album art and a photo collage matching the vinyl insert, and each disc in a separate card sleeve. Now let’s see the audio materials in detail. Disc 1 contains the original 1988 version of “Serpent Temptation”, restored and remastered by Patrick W. Engel as befits all HRR releases. On this debut album, the trio did not yet play pure death metal, but rather a mixture of songs from the early demo period and newer songs, perfectly showcasing the band’s thrash metal background as it slowly but surely transitions into death metal. This material was already considered a classic when it was released in 1988, but now it has rightfully gained cult status. Needless to say, “Serpent Temptation” with its 8 songs and 38 minutes playing time is a must for all thrash/death metal fans worldwide! Disc 2 contains the band’s first demo “Supernatural Death” from 1987 in all its glory, with a total of 10 tracks. I write this because die-hard tape traders know that the original cassette version of this demo only contained four songs. In this demo, the tracks sound pretty raw, but all the instruments can be heard, except maybe the bass lines, which somehow get buried under the huge guitar sound. The full track list for this awesome demo is “Death”, “Hell’s Fire”, “Serpent Temptation”, “Sadistical Sinner”, “Cataleptic”, “Voices from the Grave”, “Rigor Mortis”, “Incu-

bus”, “Blind Vengeance” and “Assault”. More than 34 minutes of great thrash metal repertoire with some death metal touches, a real treat that has finally been released in its entirety. Disc 3 is the pinnacle of this box set featuring 11 songs from 1987 recorded live at the VFW Hall in New Orleans, Louisiana on August 28, 1987. The soundboard recording sounds very good and enjoyable despite some minor mixing issues. This was the material that combined the demo songs with new songs from the then-unreleased debut album.



At the time, the band distributed it on cassette along with the advance tracks of the “Serpent Temptation” LP. All recordings of the box set feature the same members, namely Scot W. Latour (vocals/bass), Francis M. Howard (lead guitar) and Moyses M. Howard (drums). This is such a perfect anniversary reissue that I can only recommend it to everyone!!!

PESTILENCE
“Exitivm” CD 2021
 (Agonia Records)

“Exitivm” is the ninth studio album by Dutch death metal pioneers Pestilence, consisting of twelve chapters in their easily recognizable style. Like all previous studio albums, this one also has a different line-up, so this time the mastermind Patrick Mameli (vocals/guitar) gathered the following musicians around him: Rutger van Noordenburg (guitar), Joost van der Graaf (bass) and Michiel van der Plicht (drums). This album also marks the beginning of a new alliance with Poland’s Agonia Records, which will hopefully be more fruitful and lasting than any previous one. The nearly 39-minute album opens with the ominous sounds of “In Omnibus (Intro)” filtering through to the listener from deep space. This is followed by two crushing death metal songs, “Morbvvs Propagationem” and “Deificvs”, both represented by online music videos, and incidentally, both deal with Ancient Ones lyrics.



Then there is the slightly more abstract “Sem-piternvvs”, mainly because of the very experimental solo part in the middle. It is noticeable that the modern sound and elements of the last four albums have continued to develop in the songs of “Exitivm”, but if I had to keep it short, I would say that it is a fresh combination of the “Testimony of the Ancients” and “Spheres” records. Although there are more twisted and technically insane songs like “Intemicionem”, “Mortiferum” and “Dominatvi Svbmisssa”, where some of the drum patterns reminded me a lot of Meshuggah. “Pericvlvm Externvm” is one of the less successful tracks on the album, overall I found it a bit worn and boring. The next piece, “Inficial”, has a lot of ultra-heavy and modern riffs and exciting drumming, but somehow it’s not Pestilence-like at all. The album’s title track has such a massive “Spheres” vibe

that it could have been part of it back then. And if I may say so, "Immortvos", the eleventh song, even added a dose of "Testimony of the Ancients" to this "Spheres" effect, but of course everything here sounds thicker and more brutal. The album closes with "Personatvs Mortem (Outro)", which starts very upset at first, but later ends quite peacefully after the croaking crows. Thanks to Agonia Records, you have many formats to choose from. I have the digipak CD version with the slipcase and the 12-page booklet, and I have to say it's pretty cool. I would also like to highlight the striking sound production of Jory Hogeveen and the fantastic cover by Michal "Xaay" Loranc, with whom they already worked on the cover of the "Hadeon" album. What else? That's it, a must for Pestilence fans!!!

Website: www.pestilence.nl

Webstore: pestilence.store

Facebook: facebook.com/Pestilenceofficial

SODOM

"1982" CD 2023

(Steamhammer)

Die-hard fans of the band were able to enjoy this content even before the current CD/LP release, as these songs appeared in one form or another on the "40 Years at War - The Greatest Hell of Sodom" box set released in 2022. The difference is that while the "1982" CD boxed version only contained 4 songs, this new version contains a total of 5 songs. So, in some ways, this is an expanded version of the previous one. Another difference is that the title track was remixed for this release. So you can enjoy "1982" with some minor changes in the mix, like sharper guitar sound, louder and better sounding toms, different kick drum sound, additional effects on vocals, etc. This new remix really sounds more interesting, balanced, open and with more air. The other four old classics, "Witching Metal", "Victims of Death", "Let's Fight in the Darkness of Hell" and "Equinox" arrive intact. But since "Equinox" was previously only available on the cassette version of the box set, now we can finally enjoy it in CD quality. Hell yeah!



Another significant and positive difference is related to the packaging itself, this time the CD comes in digipak packaging with an 8-page booklet. The booklet contains all the lyrics, credits and recording information. The line-up for this EP is Tom Angelripper (bass/vocals), Frank Blackfire (guitar), Yorck Segatz (guitar) and Toni Merkel (drums). This is a collector's item for sure. Every Sodom fan should have this nearly 19-minute CD in their collection. So buy it now or cry later!!!

Website: sodomized.info

Bandcamp: sodomofficial.bandcamp.com

Facebook: facebook.com/sodomized

TANKARD

"Alcoholic Metal" CD 2024

(High Roller Records)

The Tankard demos were first unearthed in 2002 as a bonus disc for the "B-Day" album. Then in 2011, HRR released them in a more professional way. But now with this current reissue, HRR has surpassed even the previous edition, at least I personally think so. First of all, this version comes with a slipcase, and the pages of the booklet have been increased from 24 to 32 pages. Then there's a little bonus poster with both demo covers, but with a colored background, just like the slipcase. But the biggest advantage

of this reissue is that these demos have been newly transferred from the original cassettes courtesy of Gerre, Buffo and Patrick W. Engel. The latter completed the transfer, mastering and audio restoration in October 2023. So from now on we can enjoy the 8 songs of the "Heavy Metal Vanguard" demo from 1984 and the 9 tracks of the "Alcoholic Metal" demo from 1985 with a slightly different soundscape. These demos sound pretty raw, but they give a perfect picture of Tankard's beginnings, early musical direction and perspectives. The best of both demos were re-recorded for the debut album "Zombie Attack" (1986) and some other rarities were re-recorded for later releases, such as a new version of "Alien" with different lyrics for the mini-album "Alien" (1989), "Death by Whips" for "Disco Destroyer" (1998), "Incredible Loudness" for "Kings of Beer" (2000) and "Rundown Quarter" for "B-Day" (2002). These early demos were recorded in the classic line-up of Tankard,



which was together until 1989 and consisted of Andreas "Gerre" Geremia (vocals), Andreas Bulgaropoulos (guitar), Axel Katzmann (guitar), Frank Thorwarth (bass) and Oliver Werner (drums). If you're a Tankard fan, I don't think I need to tell you twice to have the current version of the demos in your collection. Available formats: CD, cassette and vinyl (two colors). Hurry up to get your copy in time!!!

Website: www.tankard.info

Facebook: facebook.com/tankardofficial

TANKARD

"Himbeergeist Zum Frühstück - Frühschoppen Edition!" CD 2024

(Reaper Entertainment)

In May 2024, Tankard's current record label, Reaper Entertainment, announced the reissue of three classic albums: "Disco Destroyer" (1998), "Kings of Beer" (2000) and the second album from their side project Tankwart, "Himbeergeist zum Frühstück" (1996). Since these re-releases are expected on October 18, 2024 in CD and LP formats (and limited edition box sets containing all three albums will also be available), a 4-song promotional CD has been released as a precursor to properly prepare those interested for these well-designed reissues. The CD opens with "Himbeereis zum Frühstück", a cover of the Hoffmann & Hoffmann schlager song.



Needless to say, this Tankwart variant takes on a rather metallic form. This is followed by "http://www.planetwide-suicide.com", a song from the album "Disco Destroyer" that still has painfully relevant lyrics. The third song is the title track of "Kings of Beer". Quite a moody song to be honest. Incidentally, this album also marked the debut of guitarist Andy Gutjahr. The promo's extra track is "Diary of a Nihilist" from Tankard's latest full-length

album, "Pavlov's Dawgs" (2022). The CD has a playing time of approximately 18 minutes and comes in a cardboard sleeve. The audio of the three aforementioned reissues was carefully remastered by Alexander Ecker at Pearlsound Studio. Then there are these absolutely amazing redesigned covers by Kai Brockschmidt. In short, I'm very excited about these reissues and can't wait to examine them in detail. So die-hard Tankard/Tankwart fans can start collecting the money like I am doing.

E-mail: info@reapermusic.de

Website: www.reaper-entertainment.com

TANKARD

"Reaped CM-Years" 3CD 2024

(Reaper Entertainment)

The following is a limited edition boxset containing three remastered classics, two from Tankard and one from Tankwart. I must admit that the packaging is very nice, especially with the three old covers redesigned by Kai Brockschmidt and his fantastic collage design on the front of the boxset. This boxset would be perfect if it weren't for the poor quality of the old images transferred from the "Disco Destroyer" CD, which are so pixelated that they could have been downloaded from the internet in the mid-90s. I don't know who was responsible, but it's definitely screwed up. Sonically,



the 13 songs of "Disco Destroyer" are not to be complained about, as Alexander Ecker has done a fantastic job with their remastering. Fortunately, everything about the "Kings of Beer" album is perfect - the quality of the old and new pictures and the sound. So here you can enjoy not only the 11 remastered tracks, but also the visuals that go with them. Then there is the third CD, which contains Tankwart's second album, "Himbeergeist Zum Frühstück", originally released in 1996. At some point it's a strange addition to this box, although makes the mood of the listener with all the schlagers being metalized the Tankwart way pretty much worth it. I am pleased to write that this reinterpretation has also been well done. In a word, only the "Disco Destroyer" booklet and the corresponding back cover have been undeservedly spoiled in this boxset. I'm completely satisfied with the rest of the content, but all I can say is that every Tankard/Tankwart fan has to decide for themselves if this boxset is worth the investment. Oh, I almost forgot to add that this boxset is also available on vinyl. So if you're interested, hurry and get this boxset in the format you like best!!!

Website: www.tankard.info

Facebook: facebook.com/tankardofficial

THE CRYPT

"Provenance" CD-R 2022

(Self-released)

In the case of The Crypt, you can never be sure what the next material will be like musically, as Nate is constantly straying into new areas and is never afraid to experiment. This time, the song "Provenance" properly avoids the usual metal elements, instead using a completely classical musical approach. The music itself was written by Nate Yuggoth (who plays bass and guitar on this single) and Adam Haste, while the lyrics were also provided by Nate. The orchestration was done by Fredber Hernandez and the hymnal vocal themes were served to a high standard by Vchyzhovych, Maria Elia & Millicent Chimonyo-Ntubi. Despite this, the epicness

and anthemic nature can still be compared to certain metal bands, such as Manowar or Bathory. I can easily imagine this piece of art as the soundtrack of some medieval or more precisely Viking PC game, or even a film of similar inspiration. The nearly 9-minute disc also contains the instrumental version of the song, which was definitely a good idea, since there you can concentrate more



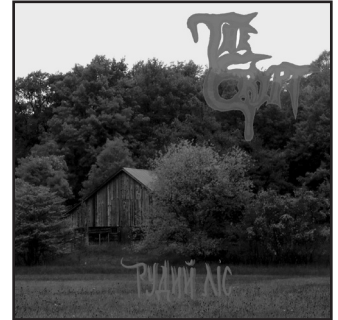
on the fine details of the arrangements. The CD-R comes in a simple cardboard sleeve with Anna Gibson's cover photo on the front and all the information about the recording on the back. So, if you're into epic stuff, I recommend "Provenance", but hurry because this physical edition is limited to 50 copies!!!

THE CRYPT

"Рудий Ліс" CD-R 2023

(Self-released)

With the fifth full-length album, The Crypt pushes the boundaries of experimentalism even further. On this record, their music would fit an ambient-like post-apocalyptic motion picture. The metal parts are almost completely absent, although the vocal themes here and there remain quite metallic. The album's six tracks evoke different moods, but somehow form a common overall picture. In their music, I hear the gloomy reality of barren, bleak wasteland and areas soaked in radiation, although apart from these distressing elements, there are also many beautiful musical moments that sometimes border on progressiveness. However, the mood of the songs is mostly ominous. In addition to the main members, Nate Yuggoth (bass/vocals) and Adam Haste (lead guitars/organ/keys), many guest musicians took part in the creation of atmospheres and soundscapes imbued with mystery and horror. Let me mention them:



Paul Taylor (lead guitar), Mazuz (sitar), Lukas Kubelka (drums), Tybot (programming), Dony Larsan (programming), Mike Browning (theremin), Tommy Elbrich (percussion/flute), Alexander Kubyshkin (vocals/lyrics) and Olha Lishchshyn (vocals/lyrics). Quite a lot, right? Oh, and let's not forget the importance of Zach Vogel (producer/main recording) and Daniel Pavlov (producer/engineer/mixing/mastering). The playing time of the album exceeds 45 minutes. The visual presentation of the sonic journey is well illustrated by the 6 matching photos inside the 6-page CD booklet. This particular edition was limited to 100 copies. Fans of all things creepy try to get your hands on this release!!!

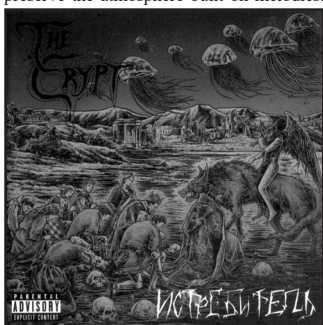
THE CRYPT

"Истребитель" CD-R 2023

(Self-released)

Needless to say, when a band releases two full albums in the same year, it indicates extraordinary productivity. So did The Crypt,

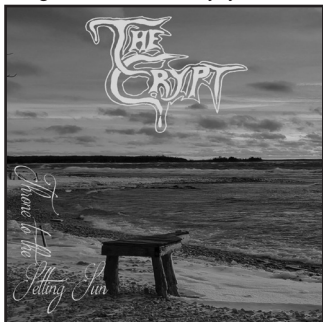
and unlike previous experimental material, "Истребитель" returns to the beloved death and black metal genres. The 9 compositions of the more than 34-minute material radiate a unique blend of the aforementioned styles and their unbridled dynamism. Their music is extreme, rather old school, but they try to preserve the atmosphere built on melodies.



Sometimes I feel the influence of bands like Morbid Angel and Decide. However, The Crypt has plenty of its own to spice up its repertoire. Their songs are full of blast beats, catchy melodies and plenty of thrash metal riffs. The vocals are also very varied there, but mostly deep death growls are paired with high-pitched screams. The core of the band on this record is: Nate Yuggoth (vocals/bass), Adam Haste (lead guitars/organ) and Aliaksandr Kubyschkin (lead guitars/vocals). They are complemented by quite a few guest musicians, namely Paul Taylor (lead guitars), Thamnos (rhythm guitars), Ian Garcia (drums), Maria Elia (vocals), Mason Berglund (vocals) & Mortifer (vocals). Thanks to Daniel Pavlov, the sound is solid and proportionate. I used to worry that the band would get lost in experimentation, but with this record they've returned to what I love most about them. The 12-page booklet contains all the lyrics, member pictures, some nature photos and the great Doomesia cover. Which together means a perfect release that I can only recommend to every death/black metal fan!!!

THE CRYPT
"Throne To The Setting Sun" CD-R 2024
 (Self-released)

Unfortunately, the metal magic didn't last long, as The Crypt took another unexpected musical turn with this new 3-song EP. I thought I was fully prepared for the next attempt, but I definitely wasn't expecting the 80's synthwave vibe, ha-ha... Despite this, the nearly 18-minute EP still has details and influences reminiscent of traditional heavy metal. "Memories of the Sky" starts the record, which primarily focuses on the clean vocals and its melodies, unfortunately the background music has a very synthetic feel,



so I think it can only play a secondary role in this song. Due to the epicness of the second and title song and its very cool vocal parts, it became a bit more metal, of course, here you have to imagine its softest possible version. The double bass drum parts make it heavy at times, but the vocal themes make this song a real hit. "Warwind" closes the EP, which is almost like the first song, giving off a melancholic ambient feel rather than traditional song structures. The cyclical melodies or rather patterns and the meditative vocal parts make the whole track quite mesmerizing. On this EP, The Crypt was: Adam Haste (synths/backing vocals), Skyler Champeau (vocals) and Nate Yug-

goth (bass). But as usual, guest musicians helped them achieve the final result, and they are: Thamnos (rhythm guitars), Tybbot (programming/synths), Paul Taylor (lead guitar), Mazuz Shah (sarangi), Kaira Rouer (flute) and Frank Maloney (backing vocals). This edition comes with a 6-page booklet and is limited to 100 copies. It has some pretty unusual music, but if you like the retro 80s synth sound, definitely invest in this EP.
E-mail: nate_jacobs@hotmail.com
Bandcamp: thecryptdc.bandcamp.com

UNLEASHED
"Before The Creation Of Time" CD 2024
 (Darkness Shall Rise Productions)

This CD compilation is a great addition to any Unleashed fan's collection as it includes all the material from the pre-album phase. Of course, there have been reissues of the "Where No Life Dwells" album before with some early stuff as a bonus, but not as complete as this DSR reissue. I will also point out that the recordings of these early materials are preserved in very good quality on this reissue. This is largely due to Patrick W. Engel (Temple of Disharmony) who has done a fantastic job of completely restoring and remastering the band's past sound arsenal from the original demo tapes.

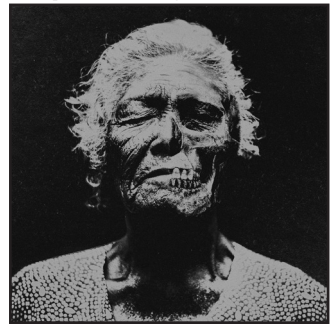


The contents of the CD are: "The Utter Dark" demo '90 (Tracks 1-3), "...Revenge" demo '90 (Tracks 4-6) and the complete Bielefeld recording session (Tracks 7-13), which contains songs from the "And the Laughter Has Died..." 7" EP '91, the "Century Media Promo Tape" demo '90 and songs from the Century Media Records compilation "In the Eyes of Death" '91. The first two demos were recorded at Kuben Studios in Stockholm, Sweden with the following line-up: Robert Senneback (guitar/vocals), Fredda Lindgren (lead guitar), Johnny Hedlund (bass) and Anders Schultz (drums). The third demo "And the Laughter Has Died..." (full recording session) was recorded at Nobel Studios in Bielefeld, Germany in the so-called classic line-up of the band, i.e.: Johnny Hedlund (bass/vocals), Fredrik Lindgren (guitar), Tomas Olsson (guitar) and Anders Schultz (drums). All three demo recordings were made in 1990, but the rapid development of the band's unique death metal style can be clearly traced through these materials. The 16-page booklet contains a wealth of archival information such as demo covers, band photos, concert/tour posters, flyers, reviews and even a recent interview with Johnny Hedlund about the beginnings. In short, this is a perfect release and a must for Unleashed fans!!!
E-mail: info@darknessshallrise.de
Website: darknessshallrise.de

VIDRES A LA SANG
"Virtut Del Desencis" CD 2024
 (Abstract Emotions/Eternal Juggernaut Records)

"Virtut Del Desencis" is the sixth full-length album by Vidres A La Sang from Terrassa, Catalonia. And, as befits the sixth album, it also contains six rather long and varied compositions, totaling 44 minutes and 40 seconds. The kind of blackened death metal fusion that this four-piece institution presents really stands out from today's dull and drab music scene, because they are not afraid to weave together an incredible amount of avant-garde, experimental and ethereal

elements. Their music has soul, character and atmosphere, which distinguishes them from the dozens of soulless bands and their boring creations. In addition, their sound production is very airy and incredibly well mixed, again thanks to Eloi Boucherie (vocals and rhythm guitars). He is joined by Albert Marti on lead guitar, Cristian Vilches on bass and Jordi Farré on drums. Believe me, the quartet plays masterful music that is outstanding to the extreme, and the lyrics, sung in Catalan, only add to their success. From the first track to the last, it's like an unexpected journey into the spheres of avant-gardism, where there are no musical boundaries or limits that require compromise. It's a perfect album that as many metal fans as possible should listen to, because it's not only impressive and progressive, but also very inspiring. Thanks to Alejandro Tedin, the album cover also has a deep meaning, which only adds to the visual atmosphere that is integral to the music. Oh,



and let's not forget that the song "Sempre És Incert" features guest vocals by Arnau Tordera of Obeses fame, the only track on the album whose lyrics are from a poem by Miquel Martí i Pol. In short, Vidres A La Sang is an exceptional band with exceptional music, so you better pay attention!!!
Bandcamp: vidresalasang.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/vidresalasang

VRAG
"Rendületlenül" CD 2024
 (Filosofem Records)

The fourth chapter of Vrag's story has arrived. The recently released album is titled "Rendületlenül" and consists of six songs in a misanthropic black metal style. The album explodes with the title track, which is as cold as the north wind. The more than six-minute composition reveals the tried and tested Vrag formula, which rushes through the listener with aural black metal vengeance. This is followed by "Egyedül a világ ellen", which is a rather somber and meditative piece with slow and mid-tempo parts, mostly immersed in an ambient atmosphere. And, fittingly, it became the longest song on the album at 7 minutes 22 seconds. The third track is "Árny vagyok", which starts with a slow, distorted guitar intro and then seamlessly transitions into an icy guitar riff that goes on for quite a while, setting the mood in a Nordic way.



Needless to say, the vocals are full of pure hatred and anger, and their combinations are quite devastating throughout. "El múlt" is the title of the fourth song, which starts off with fast blast beats and harsh melodies, but then suddenly switches to an ethereal acoustic guitar pattern, which then continues in a distorted way. This composition has great dynamics and a powerful vibe. One of my favorites on the album. Then comes "Ahol az érték megsemmisül", which starts with

mysterious guitar playing, creating an epic atmosphere for the following riffs. In my opinion, this is the most hymnal black metal song on the album. The last track is "Önmegtagadás", which continues the epic mood. It is mostly mid-tempo and melody driven, but occasionally switches to fast blast beats that are uplifting. The lyrics are in Hungarian, but as usual, the 8-page booklet also includes English translations. Besides the lyrics, there are four photos of Vrag (all instruments & vocals) with a bludgeon in his hand and of course the impeccable cover design by Grafit & Hamu Artworks. The CD is 39 minutes long and is highly recommended for black metal fans all over the world!!!
E-mail: vragforest@gmail.com
Bandcamp: vraghungary.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/vraghun

WITCHER
"Boszorkányszimfóniák" CD 2024
 (Filosofem Records)

WitcheR from Hungary is quite an active band. Their latest release is a 7-song EP, which cannot be called short with its 27-minute playing time. The special feature of this EP is that it contains covers of classics, and there are 6 of them. It's not like they haven't had covers like this before, but the current edition specifically focuses on them. The CD starts with Tchaikovsky's "Hymn of the Cherubim - Op. 41, No. 6.", which with its layered keyboard structures and gloomy monumentality also serves as a perfect opening song. This is followed by Händel's "Sarabande - Suite No. 4 in D Minor, HWV 437". It's a somber piece by nature. Here, the instrumentation is more metallic and northern, i.e. guitars and drums are also present in addition to keyboard instruments. We get a different approach from the original and a much shorter version that is completely in line with WitcheR's style. Grieg's "Åses Død - Peer Gynt Suite No. 1, Op. 46, No. 2." is the third, a completely keyboard piece that transports the listener to landscapes full of incredibly sad feelings. Next comes Chopin's "Spring Waltz (Mariage d'Amour)", which somewhat breaks the concentrated sorrow of the previous three songs. This cover version also includes the metal parts, i.e. the guitars and drums. Then there's Ralph Vaughan Williams' "Three Shakespeare Songs: The Cloud-Capp'd Towers - No. 2.", adapted entirely for keyboards and given a rather ethereal sound compared to the original choral version. The sixth cover is "Carmina Burana: Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi - I. O Fortuna" by Carl Orff.



I really like the evil and incredibly sinister feel of the original version, but here everything seems mechanical, mainly due to the drum patterns and the cold sound of the guitars, making the arrangements less legitimate in general. The seventh and final track of the CD is nothing more than a bonus, an own instrumental composition entitled "Summer-night Melancholy", which was previously released in digital form in 2021. Despite its title, this song exudes an incredibly positive calm, and the keyboard parts are as epic as possible. In conclusion, I can safely say that Karola Gere (keyboards) and Roland Neubauser (guitar & drum programming) have put together a very interesting material, which will appeal not only to devoted WitcheR fans, but also to fans of atmospheric music!!!
Website: witcherband.hu
Bandcamp: witcherband.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/witcherband

Teutonic thrash metal legend Assassin is about to return with a fabulous EP, so it was time to ask Ingo, Scholli and Björn about the new material and their plans for the near future. Now enjoy our conversation and get ready for "Skullblast"!!!



Greetings to you! "Skullblast", the new Assassin EP, will be released on November 8, 2024 via Massacre Records. What should fans know about this 5-track EP ahead of its official release? I mean, where did you record it, who mixed it and in what direction are you going musically?

Ingo: "Skullblast" was recorded at Lucky Bob Studios by Jean Bormann (among others also known as guitar-player for Rage), who also did the mixing and it was mastered by Manu Cohnen at Parabol Audio.

On these 5 tracks we tried to keep the focus on more compact songs with drive, power and on the other hand with an approach to find a hook line to each song, something the fans can relate to and maybe scream along with us!

The special thing here is that every band member was involved and contributed to let the songs grow!

What was the recording lineup for the EP? Is it different than what fans get to see live these days?

Ingo: The partaking line-up on "Skullblast" is: Björn Sondermann (drums), Joachim Kremer (bass), Jürgen Scholz (guitars), Stefano Smura (guitars), Ingo Bajoncjak (vocals).

Additional backing vocals on 2 tracks by Patrick Pagliaro.

A lyric video for the EP's title track was recently unveiled. It's a very cool and powerful song and the visuals are awesome. Are you possibly doing a full band video for another track?

Björn "Burn": Thank you so much! We're thrilled that you enjoyed the lyric video and the power of the title track. We had a lot of fun experimenting with different formats to bring the themes of each song to life in a unique way. Beyond the lyric video for the title track, we're actually releasing a lyric video for each song on the 5-song EP, each with its own story and visuals that reflect the song's message. We also created some special videos using Unreal Engine to add another layer of depth to the storytelling.

On top of that, we've got a VR documentary coming out on November 11 on our YouTube channel, which gives a closer look at our journey and the inspiration behind the music. Make sure to check our Instagram and YouTube regularly to catch all these releases. And who knows – maybe a full band video is something we'll bring to life in the future. We'd love to do it!



The EP cover is fantastic. Who made it and how does it relate to the lyrical content? Can you share more about the lyrics? What inspired you to write this time?

Ingo: The cover-artwork was made by Plamen and edited by Karim König and yes, they did hell of a job! We wanted to make a connection to the iconic cover of our classic-album "The Upcoming Terror" for it is kind of a trademark-visual for the band Assassin – and bring it to 2024! Also it visualizes the content of the title track illustrating the devastation of a battle-scenario in war!

The lyrics are about:

The lyrics of "Blood for Blood" deal with the tran-

sience of values in human life, partly from a personal point of view, partly in relation to music and its healing effect in a colorful/turbulent life!!!!

The song "Skullblast" is about a dystopian war scene – the 2nd verse line stands for itself: "...rolling terror strikes at midnight, machine gun fire sound...!". This also fits the cover of the EP perfectly.

The lyrics to "In and Out by the Tide" deal with the topic of using violence in general as a means of attracting attention, both in a figurative sense, e.g. in media representations, religions (fundamentalism!) and art, and unfortunately also in real life through war. The title ironically alludes to the "fast pace/superficiality" of our zeitgeist!

The lyrics of "Cut Your (Own) Throat" are to be understood as a clear verbal reckoning of the band...!!! With increasing age one unfortunately learns that it is important to show certain people from time to time where the "hammer hangs"...

I see a cover of Fleetwood Mac's "The Green Manalishi (With the Two Prong Crown)" on there. Whose idea was it to cover this particular song? I mean, Judas Priest has covered this song pretty flawlessly before. So the question arises, what can we expect from your interpretation?

Björn "Burn": The idea to transform this song from blues rock into a thrash metal track didn't come out of nowhere. I've been playing this song with Bernhard Groll (RocknGroll, a 60's blues rock band) for almost two decades, and he has a special connection to Greeny, the legendary Gibson Les Paul. For years, I felt the itch to turn Peter Green's work into something completely new, and when I presented the idea to our Assassin guitarist Steve, he was immediately on board, almost as if he had been waiting for it. I consciously avoided the Judas Priest version to preserve my own vision. The end of the track is the complete opposite of the original and symbolizes total destruction – a dramatic twist I was able to realize with the support



of Pearl Drums and Jean from Rage. Pearl provided us with a ton of gear, and I think Jean really enjoyed the drum recordings as well.

In this context, tracks like “Blood for Blood” and “Cut Your (Own) Throat” on the EP are particularly important to me, because they tell deeply personal stories. While “The Green Manalishi” remains a masterpiece, we’ve wrapped it in a completely new form that highlights our unique interpretation.

Are you planning any special shows or tours to support the new EP? What setlist can fans expect live? Could you list the titles of the songs here?

Scholli: Yes of course! Did you get any information about our upcoming Skullblast Tour with Nuclear in the beginning of November? (*Oh, I see now – Ed.*)



The fans can expect a really good choice of songs of all our albums, expect “The Club”, with special appointment on the first 2 albums and of course our new EP.

Sorry, but as usual, we do not get out the titles of the songs we will play.

We want to have surprising evenings and unexpected moments with our fans ☺.

High Roller Records recently did justice by re-issuing Assassin’s first two classics, “The Upcoming Terror” and “Interstellar Experience” on LP, CD and MC formats. What do you think of these re-releases, which format do you personally like best and why?

Scholli: High Roller have made really, really good rereleases with the exquisite additional old materials that I still had from that time. The vinyl variations in the great colors is an absolute highlight for me! ☺

The MCs are also a more than successful old-school bonus point ☺. I love that kind of thing!

I still have several high-end tape decks, mostly with Dolby S (this Dolby version was used more in cinemas) and still listen to my MCs on all devices from 1974 to the present day.

My car radio also only has cassette players ☺ ... because the car is now 32 years old! ☺

Some fans probably also buy MCs, because of their rarity value, even though they no longer have a device for them. But I don’t think it matters, because it’s the thing itself and the recognition and appreciation that counts!

CDs, on the other hand, no longer have any value for me.

I don’t even want to talk about streams and other online services... A complete dismantling of the value of music in the end, but only for the producing musicians, because for the consumers it is probably a nice thing to be able to consume music so easily and cheaply. For the musicians themselves, especially which got only a small audience, that’s another step towards bankruptcy for the small bands.

You have been working with Massacre Records since the release of “Bestia Immundis”. How do they treat you compared to Steamhammer and have you signed a long term contract with them?

Scholli: The work and relationship with SPV was ok in the 80s. But the included contract with the mu-

sic publisher Wintrup Musik was a big fucking shit. They never did a single thing for us, but they are taking 40% of the royalties still today!

And in the end of the 90s the release of the first Assassin album by Axe Killers from Belgium was also not funny. We noticed that by coincidence in 2001, although they sold 3.000 copies... under license by SPV, but we never got any penny. In the 2010s we worked again with SPV and it was also ok like in the 80s.

Do you keep in touch with former band members? I mean, for example Markus “Lulle” Ludwig, Andreas “Psycho Danger” Süther, Dinko Vekić, Robert Gonnella, Frank Nellen or Michael Hoffmann? What are they doing these days?

Scholli: Yes of course, since the beginning I always stay in good contact to our first drummer Psycho Danger. We both were still good friends, and whenever we meet up where there are instruments, we always like to play some old song for fun after we’ve warmed up a bit with “Fight (to Stop the Tyranny)” we did a special version of full speed “Bullets” for ourselves like in the beginning ☺.

I had contact with Robert until the beginning of this year, as well as with Dinko. I had invited both of them to the upcoming 40th Assassin Special Anniversary Show in Düsseldorf next year.

Unfortunately, especially Robert suddenly behaved completely out of line in the course of the rereleases, and out of frustration that he is no longer with Assassin, due to his self-chosen exit in 2013. As his last resort he is now shooting in the media against the current band Assassin and has even entered into a collaboration with our ex-manager, whose only goal is to fight against the band Assassin and with all possible bad words and means, try to make down. A total disgrace!

But... they haven’t managed that so far and they won’t manage it in the future either!!!

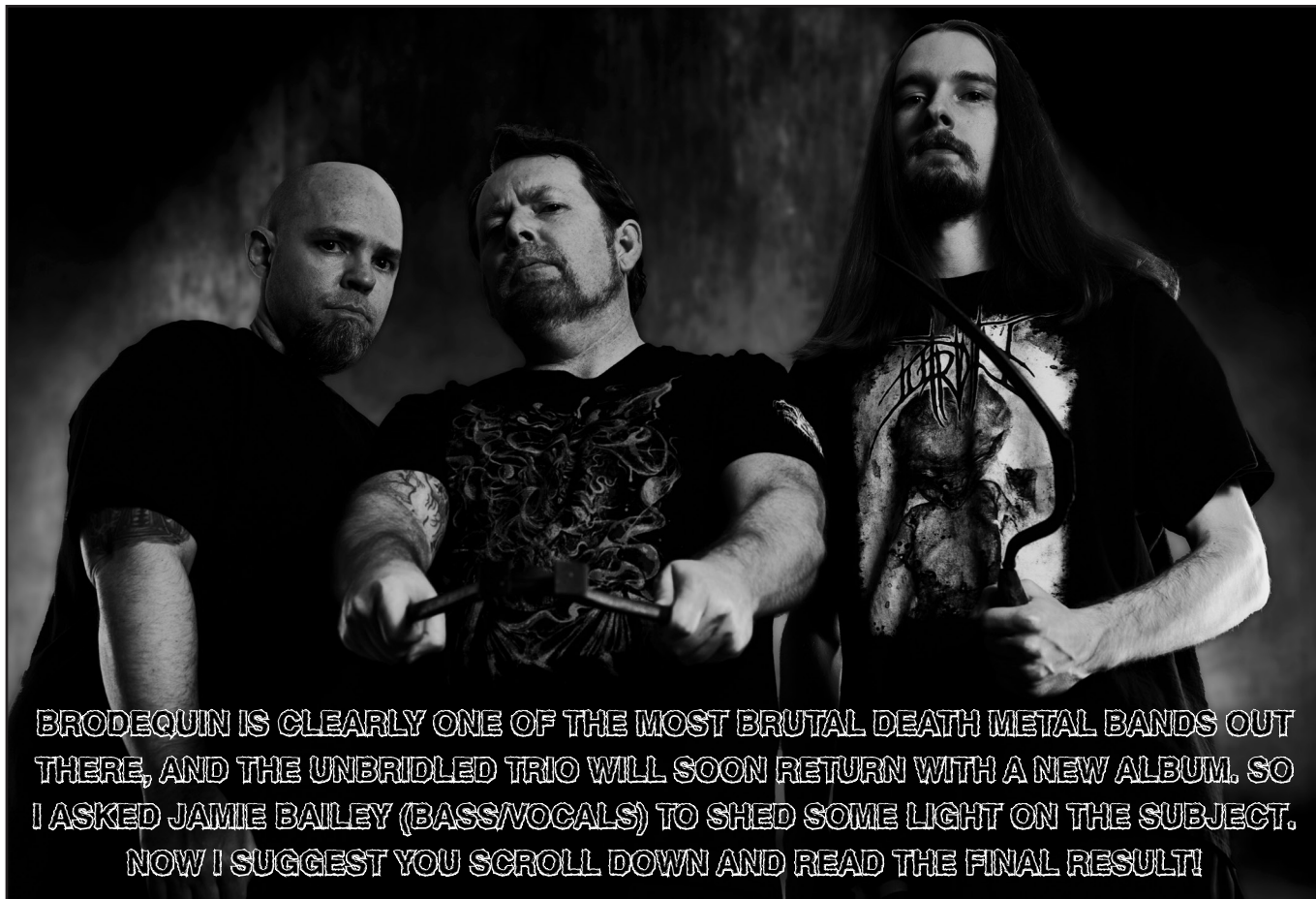
So... Go fight kill ☺.

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer my questionnaire. Please end the interview by sending your wishes to Ukrainian Assassin fans.

Best wishes, stay strong & keep on believing, you are in our hearts, dear Ukrainian metalheads!!! Thank you for all your support and your love for thrash metal! It’s fans like you that keep the fire of Assassin burning strong. So keep thrashing – we can’t wait to see you all soon. Together, we’ll keep the metal spirit alive! Yours, Assassin band! ...

E-mail: pennypacker@gmx.de | Website: assassin-band.de | Facebook: facebook.com/AssassinOfficial





BRODEQUIN IS CLEARLY ONE OF THE MOST BRUTAL DEATH METAL BANDS OUT THERE, AND THE UNBRIDLED TRIO WILL SOON RETURN WITH A NEW ALBUM. SO I ASKED JAMIE BAILEY (BASS/VOCALS) TO SHED SOME LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT. NOW I SUGGEST YOU SCROLL DOWN AND READ THE FINAL RESULT!

Hi Jamie! Your long-awaited new album “Harbinger of Woe” will be released on March 22, 2024 via Season of Mist. I’m sure all Brodequin fans are excited to hear it, but why did it take exactly 2 decades for you to come out with a new full-length record?

- Hello! Yes, that is correct the new album will be out on March 22. As many are aware of Mike and I are brother. Unfortunately, our family went through some difficult times with a series of deaths that were in close proximity. Dealing with all the issues and emotion that come with that made it impossible to think about writing music and giving the band the attention it deserves. So, we found ourselves taking more time away than we originally thought we would. Once we decided to start writing music again we had some issues with finding the right members to work with which also contributed to the delay.

A new song called “Of Pillars and Trees” has been premiered online and to my surprise it has some pretty exciting new elements added to the sheer death metal brutality Brodequin is known for. Please tell us more about the incorporation of these slow atmospheric components.

- There’s certainly no doubt that we enjoy playing fast, we also have a lot of parts that we feel may fit a given song that’s not non-stop blasting. “Of Pillars and Trees” is one of those occasions where we had a section that we felt this approach fit well. We have always been fans of brutal death metal, and we listen to a wide variety of metal. Eventually, it was certain something like this section would make its way into a Brodequin song.

In our opinion it sticks with the overall feel of the song and the mood we are trying to set with the album. The dark vibe of the piece, in our opinion was a positive addition to the song.

Drummer Brennan Shackelford joined the band in 2020 and debuted in 2021 on the 2-song EP “Perpetuation of Suffering”, which served

as a precursor to the new album. Where did you find him? I see he’s also been added to the Liturgy line-up, so does that mean a new Liturgy album is in the works?

- I met Brennan at a festival, I think it was Chicago Domination and then ran into him again at the Las Vegas Deathfest. The Las Vegas Deathfest had a drum kit outside that Lille from Defeated Sanity and I were hanging around. Lots of people were playing on the kit and then Brennan started playing, he played a few Brodequin songs and they sounded great! I already had Brennan on my radar to ask about joining the band, but didn’t realize he already knew some of the songs we perform live.

You are correct about Liturgy. A new album is being worked on now and the drum tracks have all been recorded. We are thinking it may be a summer 2024 release.



Can you talk a little bit about the lyrical content of “Harbinger of Woe”? What historical facts and books inspired you to write the lyrics this time?

- The lyrical content has the expected inspiration as the other albums do. Pretty much all torture and execution techniques from across the

ages, mainly from 500 AD – 1500 AD. But not 100% limited to that time range as many fantastic pieces of art and literature based on elements from that timeframe were created after 1500. I have a deep appreciation for history in general, but the so-called “Middle Ages” is where I really spend a lot of time researching. There are certainly challenges, different languages, pronunciation of some words is different depending on who you ask. I always reach out to a native speaker about any questions I have as I am putting together ideas for lyrics, etc. “Harbinger of Woe” itself comes from the idea of a person bearing/delivering something negative.

harbinger; plural Noun: **harbingers** – a person or thing that announces or signals the approach of another.

woe; interjection – a condition of deep suffering from misfortune, affliction, or grief.

When you look at the cover art, it’s easy to see that the unfortunate woman was delivered some misfortune to end up where she is.

A quick mention on a couple other songs. The first track is entitled “Diabolical Edict”, which is based off of the accounts of a French priest named Urbain Grandier. He faced allegations of sorcery as he was believed to have bewitched a group of nuns. He was an early inspiration for the band as a whole, and in fact an image of him suffering the “Brodequin” is on the back of our “Instruments of Torture” shirt.

Another track called “Suffocation in Ash” deals with the practice of throwing victims into a specially prepared room, usually a pit. This room/pit was on fire with executioners turning large “fans” or “wheels” that would churn the ash and embers keeping them swirling around as the victims were thrown in. Of course death could come from the shock of scorching heat, but the intent was to have them choke to death on the ash and hot gases from the fire.

For the cover of “Harbinger of Woe” you used José de Brito’s famous painting “The Martyr of Fanaticism” from 1895. Are there any connections to this painting in your lyrics?

- Yes, I felt it was a perfect match to what I wanted to accomplish with presenting the album and the content. I have wanted to use it for some time, but never really had the chance to tie it to something that we were doing. I feel that the image captures the overall feel of the album, there’s an almost acceptance on the woman’s face as she realizes nothing will stop what is about to happen. The inquisitors arguing or discussing the situation almost are so involved in their conversation that they aren’t present in what’s taking place before them. Perhaps they are debating whether or not all this is necessary, or they just want the situation resolved and would rather not focus on how that happens. She is opposite and positioned in a similar fashion to Christ on the cross, which is certainly an intentional element as Christ is seen as the greatest martyr to Christians. It’s there that the third Inquisitor has his back turned to the entire scene, as if he can’t bear to witness her martyrdom.

Lyrically there is a certain connection to this kind of posture. The lyrics this time on some of the songs have elements from the victim’s point of view or from the Inquisitor’s and or executioner’s. These sections are *italicized* in the lyrics.

For me, so much of the album deals with hopelessness, her expression captures a lot of the emotions I tried to put into the lyrics. In many cases with art we used in the past there was no artist to credit as that information was lost to time. In the case of José de Brito and this piece, we were able to obtain permission from the Museu do Chiado in Lisbon, Portugal to use his work. Which, first, we are very honored that the museum recognizes our dedication to presenting history accurately.

Secondly, we want to introduce this piece of art to many who may not ever see it otherwise. That’s been another element of the band from my point of view. I really want to get pieces of art that are specifically related to what we write about in front of people. Actual woodcuts, paintings etc. that were displayed to the public of that time or later as based on those times, in front of people of our time.

Since signing to Season of Mist in 2022, they have reissued the entire Brodequin discography on LP and CD. How do you personally like these reissues?

- Yes, I think they did a great job with the reissues. They look great and give people a chance to get them in a variety of formats. We have been fortunate in the fact that we have gained many fans that otherwise would not have been able to get these releases.

Oh, and now that you are part of Season of Mist, are there any European tours and festivals planned for 2024?

- There are certainly plans for festivals and perhaps smaller tours. Our schedule makes it difficult for any prolonged tours, but you never know what can happen. We will be working with Jon at The Flaming Arts Agency and we encourage European promoters to reach out to him in order to facilitate any appearances.

What news do you have about your label Unmatched Brutality Records? Are there any new signings, releases or reissues in the works?

- Nothing new is on the schedule for the moment. It’s hard to say what we will do with that. There are many challenges for the small labels. The cost of manufacturing is continuing to go up and international shipping costs are ridiculous. With all the fees continuing to go higher, and many people not wanting to pay more than \$10 for a CD (with free shipping) it makes it very

challenging to stay competitive in that market and be able to offer bands anything for their hard work.

For example, I recently had an order for one (1) CD that was to be shipped to Peru. The shipping fee was \$40.25!! no one is going to pay that kind of shipping rate.

You are from Knoxville, Tennessee. What is the brutal death metal scene like there? Do you have a favorite place, I mean club or music store, where you hang out with your friends?

- Knoxville is not known for its extreme metal scene, or the entire state of Tennessee for that matter. Tennessee is most well-known for Nashville (The World capital of Country Music) and Jack Daniels.

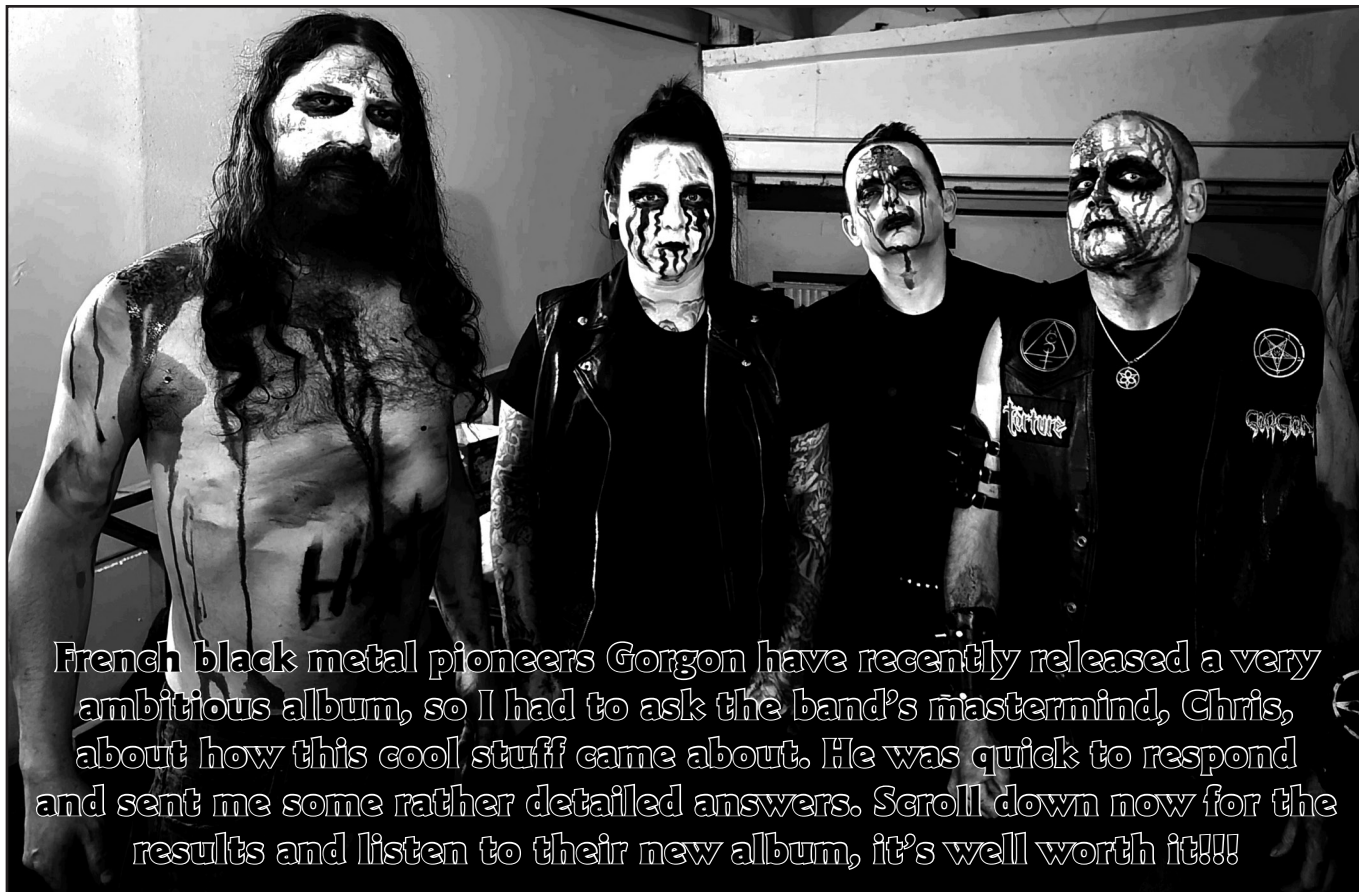
Perhaps the best known metal band from Knoxville is Whitechapel. I’ve never met any of the members, I definitely like their nod to history/Jack the Ripper with their name. Unfortunately, the best of our music stores, at least in my opinion have closed. But there are some good places downtown to hang out, restaurants and bars mostly.

Thank you so much Jamie for this interview. Now send your greetings to all Brodequin fans in Ukraine.

- Thank you very much for the opportunity to reach out to our friends in Ukraine! I encourage everyone to get in touch with us at any of the web sites listed below and we would be more than happy to talk! Thanks for all the support, it is greatly appreciated and we hope you all enjoy “Harbinger of Woe”.

E-mail: brodequintn@gmail.com
Website: www.brodequinofficial.com
Facebook: facebook.com/brodequinTN
Instagram: instagram.com/brodequintn
Label: www.season-of-mist.com





French black metal pioneers Gorgon have recently released a very ambitious album, so I had to ask the band's mastermind, Chris, about how this cool stuff came about. He was quick to respond and sent me some rather detailed answers. Scroll down now for the results and listen to their new album, it's well worth it!!!

Salutations à toi, Chris! Gorgon's 7th full-length album "For Those Who Stay" was recently released on Osmose Productions. Please describe in detail what black metal fans can expect from the 11 songs.

- Our style is very frontal, direct, wild, with catchy melodies which allow each title to be well separated and to avoid linearity in listening. To do this, we avoid music based solely on speed or brutality, and on the contrary we include numerous breaks in rhythm. The guitars are very present, and are not there to make a succession of riffs, but on the contrary to serve the pieces and make very distinct and varied tracks. In my opinion, this is our most aggressive album to date.

Where and in what line-up did you record the new album? Who did the mixing and mastering?

- The recording and mixing were carried out by Sebastien Camhi, who runs the ArtMusic Studio, the latter located in the South of France. He had already done the same for our two previous albums, and as we were satisfied with the result, we returned to his place. The mastering was done in Germany by another studio which worked for Aborted, Crematory, Powerwolf...

On this album I recorded all the guitars, bass and vocals and our drummer, Hellsylt, recorded his instrument, of course. We had 2 guests, one who sent us 3 keyboard files that we needed and another one who came on site to do very guttural vocal backings on 2 tracks. These additions once again make it possible to have tracks that stand out from the others.

Tell us about the lyrical content of the new album. What inspired you to write the lyrics this time? By the way, who did the cover artwork?

- The lyrics mainly talk about death, possession, war and the dark and occult side, in general. We nevertheless spend time looking at our texts because we also want to bring quality to this part of our work. We often use less commonly used terms, and we try to match our words to the music by writing only what we need. The music is therefore always written first. Inspiration can come from a cinematographic work, or from our readings, but we also combine our texts with personal elements and reflections.

The album artwork was designed by Alex Shadrin of Nether Temple Design, who worked with us on the previous album. There too, we repeated the ex-

perience with this person, because we had a good understanding and we had appreciated what he had provided us previously. He based himself on elements that had been provided to him and enriched the result with his own vision.



Besides the release party, are you planning an extensive tour in support of "For Those Who Stay"? Where can fans see you live next? Are there any festivals planned for 2025?

- No, for the moment there are only one-off dates planned, including fests among others in Switzerland, Italy and Germany in 2025. The public will therefore be able to see our current live line-up which since summer 2023 includes A. on guitar and Nia Vile on bass. We have already performed with these new members in Romania, Canada, Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden, etc. and we have received great feedback following our stage performances. Since then, we have established a new set list, which will eventually evolve over time, and which includes titles from different periods. And we see that the titles of the new album fit perfectly with the old ones.

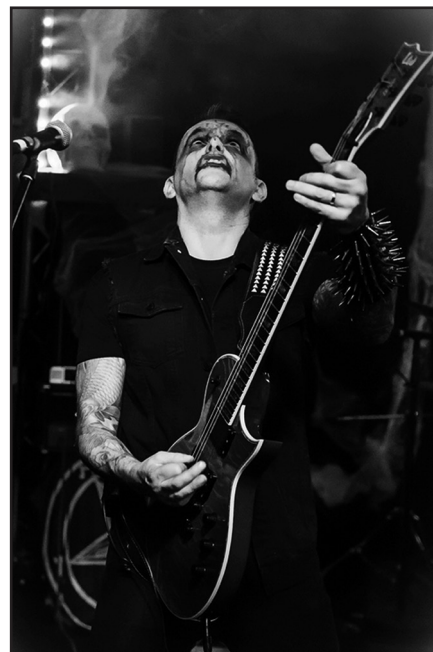
What is a Gorgon live show about? Do you use blood, pyrotechnics or other special effects on stage? What setlist are you currently playing live?

- Our concerts are very energetic and there is very little down time. Since "our return" live in 2019, we play as a quartet with 2 guitars, 1 bass and drums. Indeed, by choice, we don't have any keyboards on

stage, like we did in the 90s. The selected songs do not lend themselves to this. We actually use blood during our performances, but no pyrotechnics. There are sometimes elements of stage decoration, but this is quite rare, because this is not always possible when traveling by plane abroad. Our set list can vary depending on the playing time at the fests, but we generally headline 13 titles. Our last date saw us play 3 tracks from the first and last album, 2 tracks from the 3rd, 5th and 6th album, 1 from the second. We have a good balance between the different rhythms played, which helps to maintain interest for the spectator because they do not always listen to the same speed of execution.

You are from Antibes. What is the local black metal scene like there? Do you have many clubs/venues where you can play live? Are there any other good bands in the area that you would recommend to our readers?

- Yes, Antibes is a city by the sea, located in the South of France, next to the better-known city of Nice, and one hour from the principality of Monaco and the Italian border. Agressor, one of the oldest thrash groups in our country, originated from the same city before moving to the North of the country. There is no local black metal scene, just a few more or less affiliated groups like Assacrentis or Darkenhöld. Less than two hours from here, in the city of Toulon, you could see for example Seigneur Voland, Funeral, Blessed in Sin, etc. To play live, we have a venue in Nice, where we performed the day after the release of the album. Taake, Shining, Necrodeath, Mystifier, Impiety, Absu performed there a few years ago. If not, you have to go to the neighboring department, where a more modest venue, but well equipped with proper gear, has also welcomed us in the past and organizes concerts, often metal in the broad sense, every week. But what is most successful in terms of attendance in our area are the tribute bands, and we have Cradle of Filth, Pantera, Iron Maiden, Megadeth, etc. We also have an old metal record store in Nice which saw members of Iron Maiden and Metallica pass by in the 80s before they performed the same evening. Our sector is not focused on extreme metal. However, we played there with Sadist in 1992, and Samael in 1993, in Nice. I also organized a date for Opera IX in 1996



a few kilometers away.

I just noticed that all seven full-length albums have 11 songs. Is there a story behind this fixed number of songs?

- It turns out that for the 2nd album we had, as for the 1st, 11 tracks to include on it. Since then, it has become the rule, there are always 11 tracks on each of our albums. There is no particular meaning, it is more like a sort of trademark per say. Die-hard fans will have noticed that the first print of our 4th album contained a ghost track, therefore one more track, listenable after a few moments of silence after the 11th track. The reissue released a few years ago, deliberately did not include this bonus track.

Since the release of "The Veil of Darkness" (2019) you have been working with Osmose Productions. What is your contract with them? How are you treated these days? What physical formats and merchandise has Osmose created for the new album?

- Indeed, in the 90s Osmose Productions distributed our creations, and has done so since the 1992 demo. By signing with them, we joined their stable, with a contract established for each new release. There were 3 new albums, but also in 2019, the re-release of our demo on CD, and the first 2 albums on CD and vinyl. For "For Those..." formats include CD version, blue vinyl, black vinyl and a cassette

version. There is also a t-shirt made. In themselves, these are the usual formats. Some groups also benefit from the digipak CD format or a hoodie, which is not currently the case for us. We are treated well by this label and our common language facilitates dialogue. Their graphic designer is competent and very responsive, and we have artistic freedom in what we release and submit. This may seem curious, but in so many years, I have only physically met the owner and this famous graphic designer once, in 2021, during one of our concerts in your capital where they had traveled to. Osmose Productions is based in the North of the country, the complete opposite of where we live.

Gorgon is quite an old band, having been formed in 1991. If you had to compare the band's current fans to the fans of the early days, what do you see as the differences, if any?

- There is none in my opinion, the only difference would be that nowadays, with internet, I receive messages from admirers from many more countries. Before then, I knew that our records were being sold in South America, Asia or Scandinavia for example, but, it was rare that I received letters by mail to tell me that we were appreciated over there. It was more zines from these corners of the world that wrote me. The ease of contacting groups, sending photos of

their collection and the free nature of the thing allows another exchange from now on. During a concert in 2021, in a city in France where we had never performed before, a fan came to have me sign almost everything that had been released by the band. Except for one or two things, this guy had everything. It was impressive because we are talking about each album available on CD, cassette, the 2 colors of the vinyls, the period versions, the reprints, the demo, the EP, etc. In conclusion, I would also say that I noticed a great respect for the group, what it represents for many people, but also a real pleasure in the eyes of some who had not been able to see us live in the 90s, and who now finally meet us on our various dates. There is a whole generation that has remained loyal to the band over the years.

Okay, Chris, I guess that's all I wanted to ask. If I missed something important, please add it now. Thank you for your answers.

- We discussed quite a few topics through which, your readers will discover us or, on the contrary, learn more about us. We have dissected this new album with your questions, but being a matter of taste, it is now up to them to listen to it to judge its potential. For our part, we are very proud of the result which honors our discography and we invite them to form their own opinion.



PURVEYORS OF RELENTLESS DEATH METAL CODENAMED Hypoxia ARE SET TO RETURN WITH A NEW ALBUM SOON, SO I ASKED MIKE HRUBOVCAK (VOCALS) A FEW QUESTIONS TO GET THE LATEST NEWS AND FUTURE PLANS AHEAD OF RELEASE DAY. ENJOY OUR CONVERSATION BELOW!



Hello Mike! It was recently announced that Hypoxia's third LP, "Defiance", will be released on February 23, 2024 via Selfmadegod Records. Please tell our readers all the details about its creation, such as when and where you recorded it, what was the recording line-up, how many songs will be on it and who mixed and mastered it.

- Everything was recorded sometime last year by Carlos and Carolina, I think it was finished around summertime with 11 songs total. The majority of everything was recorded, mixed and mastered in Ohio by Noah Buchanan at Mercenary Studios (Midnight/Embalmer/Nunslaughter, etc.). The vocals and bass were recorded in our home studios. I live in New Jersey unfortunately and Mike Poggione my old bandmate from Monstrosity/Vile lives in Florida, so he had to send his files in as well. Noah did a great job though making everything sound great and coherent and I'm happy with how it came out.

A new song titled "Bleed for Blasphemy" has surfaced online. This is a really crushing death metal track, spiced up with some rather melodic thrash riffs that remind me of Kreator here and there. How would you personally describe the musical approach of the new album?

- I think Carlos the main man would be happy with that comparison, as he loves Kreator as well. I think his riffs are awesome and I love the old-school approach. I can't speak for him since I'm only the vocalist, but I think these songs are a step above from the previous albums and only getting better as far as the song writing. They're catchy, memorable, and brutal at the same time. Not too much slam, not too much melody, just a perfect

mix of everything that keeps the songs interesting and keeps you headbanging.

Since "Bleed for Blasphemy" was a lyric video, are you planning to shoot a music video to promote the new album? If so, which song will you choose for this purpose?

- Yes, definitely, we've been talking about doing a music video, I think "Pathway to Charon" would make a good video, the song is super dark, it's more mid-paced than the other songs, but it's catchy and memorable. Visually though it would be challenging to represent the supernatural lyrics on that song, so we were also thinking "Agonized Asphyxia", which is more straight-forward death metal about killing and suffocating your enemy with a black plastic trash bag over his head in a back alley. I think something like that would be easier to pull off visually, haha.



Daemorph's art for the "Defiance" cover is simply jaw-dropping. So I'm really curious

about the album's lyrical approach and, of course, how the lyrics relate to this killer cover? Speaking of which, what kind of literature did you use to write these lyrics?

- Yes, his artwork is killer. All the lyrics I handled myself and sent Daemorph the concept of what I was envisioning, and he brought it to life perfectly. The cover artwork idea was created from the lyrics for the song "Scorched and Skinned", it touches on the idea of rebellion and defiance for what you believe is right, even if it means bleeding, suffering, and dying for it. As far as inspiration for the lyrics, it comes from different things: old horror movies, historical events and real-life murder cases etc., mixed with my anger at the current climate of censorship in the world and the silencing of creditable scientific sources by the powers that be. (The normalization of controlling the narrative through defamation, slander and the removal of opposing voices altogether from the internet is getting way out of hand and is the digital equivalent to book burning in my opinion.) Along with the lyrics, here is the actual idea I sent to Daemorph to inspire him to create the artwork from: "I'm envisioning the main focus being a guy who is being laid on the torture rack in a public square back in the day. (His body is badly burned and skinned in places from previous torture.) I'm envisioning 1700's era British fashion, perhaps British judges and politicians looking on in scorn. This is not religious persecution but rather political persecution, like the guy had discovered a conspiracy amongst the elites and was being publicly tortured for speaking out against them and exposing their lies. Visually I'm thinking for it to be in the style of the 70's cult horror movie

“Mark of the Devil” but instead of priests burning witches, it’s politicians and a tortured town rebel/whistleblower”.

As I see it, Ryan Moll (In the Fire, Azure Emote, Total Fucking Destruction, etc.) joined the band as a second guitarist. Does that mean you’ll be hitting the road and playing live with Hypoxia soon?

- Yes, Ryan was brought on board to contribute his killer solos as well and he had played live with us before and clicked great with everyone and we all get along as friends, so it seems only natural. If anyone is interested in booking Hypoxia for a festival or tour you can contact: hypoxiaofficialnyc@gmail.com

I also see that you live far apart, so it’s interesting to know how you handle band rehearsals these days. How often do you rehearse in full line-up and where is your main rehearsal room anyway?

- Yes, Carolina has since moved to Ohio, Carlos is still in NY, I’m in NJ, Ryan’s in PA and Poggione is in Florida. Things are a lot different these days though when it comes to being in a band. Back in the 80s/90s everyone had to be from the same town, but that’s not the case with today’s technologies. We’re all seasoned professionals though, so practicing on our own and just getting together once or twice before a show is not a problem. As long as everyone does their homework, we have enough live experience that we could just jump on stage and be ready to rock and everything clicks no problem.

Let’s talk a little about the new Azure Emote album. As I noticed, its works started in January 2023. What phase are you in now? Which members and guests will be on the new record, and in what direction are you moving musically/lyrically?

- Yes, all the demos have been recorded and mapped out already, there’s 10 songs total. Ryan and I are entering Nightsky Studios in Maryland this weekend to start recording the real guitar tracks, so I’m excited about that. It’s been too long

and I’m anxious to get the guitars done, so we can have Kelly Conlon finish his bass parts and then move onto the vocals and the mix, etc. Pete Johansen (The Sins of Thy Beloved) has already recorded his violins, drums were already recorded by Mike Heller, and I had some guest vocals done from Anna Murphy (Eluveitie/Cellar Darling) that came out great as well. I have a few guest solos coming in from some prominent guitarists too that still need to be placed in. Musically it’s a bit more straightforward and darker and heavier than the previous albums. More progressive black death than experimental this time I think. Still crazy shit as usual, but maybe more focused and darker. I can’t wait to finally bring it all together.

You are from Hackensack, New Jersey. What is the underground metal life like there? Are there many venues nearby for metal shows? What was the last concert you attended?

- There’s a handful of good bands around here, and we have Dingbatz Bar and The Wellmont Theater close by that have some good shows and fests, but other than that it’s pretty dead here. Technically I’m like 20 minutes outside NYC, but with the insane congestion of the northeast it takes like 2 hours in bumper to bumper rush hour traffic to get to any shows in the city now. I used to travel all the time to Brooklyn or Queens and Philly, but things have gotten bad and it takes twice as long, with twice as many tolls, zero parking and it’s a real headache, so I’ve gotten somewhat sick of it. Plus, the shows there are overcrowded, and shoulder to shoulder. The last time I saw King Diamond and Mayhem in the city you could barely move, (with dudes with giant teddie bear back patches and chicks dancing sexy to Mayhem like they’re at a goth rave or something), It’s just kind of disillusioning for me since I remember seeing these bands with like 30 people at the shows back in the day, but now it seems like every single show is sold out. I guess I’m just getting old, but I prefer to go to the local shows out in the burbs where there’s less people, haha. The last few shows I went

to were Suffocation, Decrepit Birth, Pathology, Overkill, Hypocrisy, and I’m looking forward to Malignancy and Cannibal Corpse coming up as well.

What albums have caught your attention recently? Do you mostly listen to death metal, or do you have a broad musical taste?

- I would say 75% of what I listen to is black/death/doom, 15% classic thrash and traditional metal, the other 10% is stuff like Dead Can Dance, Wardruna, Lycia, Laibach, some industrial and trance, horror movie soundtracks, etc. I really like the new Tetragrammacide album, and love everything Akhlys is doing. I recently pre-ordered the new Merrimack and Dusk albums. Also digging the latest Revulsed, Fulci, Sadus and Thy Catafalque and Djevel. Really looking forward to the new Mörk Gryning and Skeletal Remains that’s in the works as well. I have to give props to Undeath too for doing the old-school justice for being a newer younger band that’s been killing it these days.

Thank you so much Mike for taking the time to answer my questions. The last words of defiance are all yours...

- Thank you for the interview and for keeping the old school underground real by publishing a killer physical zine, that people can hold and read and collect and own and revisit years in the future. Everyone these days are just doing video zoom calls or online podcasts that people just scroll past and click onto the next post kinda thing, in a sea of fleeting streams (that may be taken down one day for whatever reason). Physical print forces you to sit down and immerse yourself into it, much like physical music and can’t be taken away from you. If you want to support any of the bands in this zine, please buy their physical albums if you can! © HAILS!

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ANTIHUMAN KUTTE
“Apokalyptik Sorcery & Warkraft”
MC 2024
 (Bloodbucket Productions)

After three EPs, Canadian raw black metal unit Antihuman Kutte returns with their debut full-length album titled “Apokalyptik Sorcery & Warkraft”. It consists of 12 noisy militant-sounding anthems devoted entirely to wartime themes in just over 24 minutes. The red translucent cassette contains 6 songs per side, with the band’s rather sick logo printed on one side. I would describe Antihuman Kutte’s music as some kind of relentless northern black metal, partly reminiscent of Impaled Nazarene due to the militarized tone and harsh screaming vocals. Their songs are connected by intros that evoke all kinds of hellish warfare. Overall, the



material has an end-of-the-world vibe that is all too relevant these days. It’s a soundtrack to the apocalypse, if you will. Let me mention all the song titles here: “Apokalyptik Sorcery & Warkraft”, “Antizionist”, “Atomic Lightning Bolt”, “Eye of the Sniper”, “Becoming (The Will to Kill)”, “Omega Tide”, “Bloody Wolf Teeth”, “Bayonette”, “Winter Warfare”, “Chemical Mist”, “Military Witchkraft” and “Hammer of Eternal War”, which will give you an even more accurate description of what to expect there lyrically. The sound production is quite necrotic and cellar-like, as if everything is happening somewhere far away. The awesome looking cassette has a plain but fairly thick colored J-card and the cover image is sick too. Need more? Better order this tape before it’s too late!!!

Bandcamp: antihumankutte.bandcamp.com

DEAD SOUL ALLIANCE
“Spiralling To Lunacy”
MC 2023
 (Crypt Of Dr. Gore)

Dead Soul Alliance is a 2-piece band from Ottawa, Ontario. They have been around since 2010 and “Spiralling To Lunacy” is their second full-length album to date. The kind of death metal that W.D. (vocals, guitars, bass) and E.H. (drums) create is completely old fashioned, with plenty of catchy melodies and significant atmosphere.



Their new album is just over 31 minutes long, and interestingly, their music sounds more like the death metal of Scandinavian bands than of Canadians. Just listen to the sound of the guitars and you’ll immediately understand what I’m saying. This super limited cassette edition contains 5 songs on side A and 4 songs on side B. The colorful J-card contains all the lyrics, member photos, recording information and an awesome cover art by Mörtuus. I have to say that their music made a good impression on me and after several listens I like their material even more. So until they come out with new material, it will be very interesting to listen to all their previous stuff. As this cassette edition is limited to 50 copies, you’ll want to hurry to get your hands on one, and note that the CD edition is already sold out. In short, I definitely recommend everyone who likes melodic and atmospheric death metal in the Swedish way to check out the music of Dead Soul Alliance!!!

Bandcamp: dsadeath.bandcamp.com

INFECTED PRIEST/HUMAN TARGET
“Split”
MC 2023
 (Nihilistic Holocaust)

Gabriel from Nihilistic Holocaust was kind enough to send me some promos, this is one of them. This cassette edition, otherwise limited to 100 copies, features two Finnish bands. Infected Priest featured on the A-side with 8 songs from the “...Of the Flesh” EP (2023). After the short intro, the five-piece band, i.e. Wellu (vocals), Ville (guitar), Pekko (guitar), Joni (bass) & Santeri (drums), starts shredding with short but well-composed death metal songs. Some of their songs also have an early Carcass-like grindcore feel, although I don’t detect any blast beats there. Their sound production is very cool and kind of old-school. Vocals are divided into growling and screaming types. If you ask me, their music is quite varied, sometimes even melodic, plus you have to consider that the maximum length of the songs is 2 minutes, so they did a very good job for such short tracks, ha-ha... By the way, their EP is more than 11 minutes long. The B-side is reserved for the membership of the Human Target. They are also a five-piece band, namely Heikki (vocals), Tommi (guitar/backing vocals), Samppa (guitar), Jeeppi (bass/guitar) & Anssi (drums). They present 5 songs from their “Human Target” EP (2023). The death metal they perform is quite typical, and their production is less proportionate and intriguing, but it’s still worth listening to. They try to keep it old school throughout, which is great. Their material lasts almost 13 minutes, but the production is still quite chaotic for me.



The cassette comes with a fairly thick black and white J-card that contains all the necessary information about both recordings. Get it direct from the bands or Nihilistic Holocaust!!!

Website: nihilistic-webzine-distro.fr

MILITIA
“Psalms Of The Crimson King”
MC 2024
 (Fekete Terror Productions)

The Hungarian thrash metal unit called Militia originally started as a studio project in

2008, but became a full-fledged band in 2019. The blackened duo’s first EP titled “Nightmares in the Church” was released in the same year. Their second and most recent work is entitled “Psalms of the Crimson King”. It consists of 8 songs. Khrul (all instruments) and Blasphemy (vocals) are solely responsible for the almost 25-minute material, but NorskeN also helped them with the lyrics. Their music is mostly based on thrash metal riffs, but I found a lot of death metal and even progressive influences, and the church-sounding keyboard parts reminded me a lot of King Diamond’s “Conspiracy” record. What I immediately liked about their stuff is the sound of the guitars, which are quite razor sharp, a bit reminiscent of Kreator’s “Terrible Certainty”. The sound production is excellent and has improved quite a bit since the debut EP. Blasphemy’s vocal style is close to a mixture of John Tardy and Martin Missy, although the former should be imagined specifically in a black/thrash style. When their music is fast and maximally thrash metal induced, I would compare them to Hypnosia, but when they experiment with other genres, it becomes quite unique and intriguing. Just listen to songs like “Conspiracy with the Crimson King”, “The Dark Pilgrim” or “The Gospel of Revenge”. They turned out really good. It’s not your usual thrash metal stuff, that’s for sure.



The 8 songs are repeated on both sides of the beautiful gold-colored cassette, supported by a gold case. The booklet is made on thick paper, it has a great cover art by Balázs Pénczes (Grafit & Hamu), apt layout by Zsolt Benkő and all the lyrics. Since only 50 copies were made, I recommend that anyone interested act quickly. After two EPs, I think it’s time for Militia to release a well-deserved full-length album, I’m personally looking forward to it!!!

Bandcamp: militia666.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/khrulmusic

OLDSKULL
“The Defeat Of Humanity”
MC 2023
 (Nihilistic Holocaust)

French Oldskull, as their name suggests, specializes in a killer mix of old school thrash and death metal. Since they formed in 2005



and released a demo called “Death and Metal” in 2009, this tape is their second material to date. “The Defeat of Humanity” EP consists of six well-constructed songs that also have great production. Oldskull’s lineup on this cassette release is: Seb (vocals), Manu (guitar), Nico (guitar), Yan (bass) and Herve (drums). The quintet did a fantastic job on their more than 28 minutes of material, which appears on both sides of the tape. I wouldn’t say they play super unique music, but they have a lot of good ideas, that’s for sure. Of course, if someone wants to know which bands their music is close to, I would mention these classic bands first: Bolt Thrower, Grave, Massacra, Protector and Gorefest. All these had a great influence on their music. The members of Oldskull also made sure that their songs always had a good amount of great melody and catchy hooks, so the previously mentioned influences only very rarely come to mind. Their label Nihilistic Holocaust also did a great job releasing this stuff on cassette, which was limited to 150 copies anyway. The lavish looking silver cassettes have been professionally duplicated and feature a fairly thick full-color J-card. In short, I hope they come out with something new soon, because I think this EP is pretty decent, which I definitely recommend to both thrash and death metal fans!!!

Bandcamp: oldskull1.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/oldskulldeath

PARAGON ZERO
“Hexikon”
MC 2024

(Neverheard Distro/Fekete Terror Productions)
 This Hungarian black/death metal entity was born in 2011 under the codename Paragon Zero. After two EPs and a single, their debut full-length album was finally released in February this year. This long-awaited record is called “Hexikon” and consists of 10 songs.



The material of “Hexikon” includes all the almost finished compositions written during the 2020-2021 pre-production sessions together with the late Péter “P” Bonnyay (guitar). His guitar playing also appears on selected tracks, preserved in good quality from the early demo recordings. Thus, in 2023, these rough demo recordings were completed by the remaining members, i.e. András “A” Gergely (guitar/bass), Vivien “WN” Brányi (guitar) and Zsolt “Z” Lédeczi (vocals), with the additional contribution of Gravel S (lead guitar/backing vocals), Marielle Montagnon (bass), Tamás Galántay (drums) and István Kosovics (spoken words). Big thanks and respect to them for completing this album in memory of their friend, bandmate, song-writer and main visionary. Now let’s focus on the music itself. Their combination of black and death metal is very atmospheric. It is maximally based on melodies and harmonies. Their approximately 59-minute repertoire is clearly not about speed, but about the right soundscape of the songs. Musically and sonically, they are very close to the Scandinavian approach, which is fine. Their melodies are mostly cold and simple, but they captivate the listener with their brooding atmosphere and eerie soundscape. Side A of the cassette contains six songs, while side B contains four songs. There is only one small

difference compared to the CD version, and that is the placement of the Hobo Blues Band cover tune. On the cassette, it is the 6th song on side A, while on the CD it is the last one, i.e. the 10th track. This cassette edition is limited to 50 copies and comes with an A4-sized J-card containing lyrics and photos. A must for all Paragon Zero fans!!!

E-mail: paragon0zero@gmail.com
Bandcamp: paragon-zero.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/ParagonZero

SCABLORD

“Posthumous Flagellation” MC 2024
 (Bloodbucket Productions)

Scablord from Toronto, Canada is known for their super raw combination of goregrind and brutal death metal. It is fueled by two maniacal gore merchants, namely Scablord (larynx lacerations) and Alexander “Wurm” Erhardt (instrument butchery). “Posthumous Flagellation” is their third full-length album, previously released in digital format on April 29th, 2023, but now on a beautiful translucent blue cassette, strictly limited to 25 copies. Their new material contains 18 audio chapters full of gore and sick horror,



with 9 songs per side. The cave-like sound production is truly eerie, but effective at the same time, and definitely scares off the unprepared listener, but that’s exactly the

goal in this kind of genre. The nastier the songs sound, the more successful they are in the blood-soaked spheres of the underground. And let’s be honest, Scablord’s nearly 23-minute repertoire fully meets these requirements. They combine their songs with various sick intros, sometime from horror and gore movies, giving their stuff the perfect creepy feel. The variety of riffs is simply amazing, even in this somewhat limited genre of music (or call it anti-music if you want), as you can run into really punchy grooves, slam-like brutality, grinding atmospheres, but all this with the ancient attitude and feeling, nothing super technical, you know. This cassette release comes with a simple but rather thick colored J-card that includes the brutal cover photo and song titles. Since it was produced in fairly limited quantities, act quickly and order it at any of the contacts below.

Bandcamp: scablord.bandcamp.com

TREMOR

“Tape Collection 2003–2008” 3MC 2024
 (Fekete Terror Productions)

Well, don’t be fooled by the band’s hackneyed name, as this Hungarian power trio released very good material during its existence. Tremor was founded in Budapest in 2000 and released its first 4-song demo entitled “Elveszve” in 2001. It’s a very strange fact that this first demo is missing from this special and really cool three-cassette collection. Although if I look at the design of the cassettes and the cover, maybe this was the right way, since everything was based on the colors of the national flag. Thus, the 8 songs of “Homályba menet” EP from 2003 were dubbed onto a red cassette. The nearly half-hour long material presents rough thrash metal with aggressive vocals, in the style of Mille Petrozza and Tom Angelripper. The first song, “Add meg...” is definitely my favorite of this stuff. Musically, there are some similarities with Mille’s horde, although their music is much more brutal and has some black metal influences. But if I had to narrow it down to a few bands, I would mention Kreator, Sodom, Necronomicon and Absu. Their lyrics are in Hungarian and talk about rather obscure and occult topics. The second cassette is white and contains Tremor’s best material, “Thrashtamentum” EP

from 2005. Fast, very extreme and unique in every possible way. I think this material sounds the best and most interesting of all, and also represents the true essence of the band. It contains a total of six songs in about 22 minutes. Four tracks with Hungarian lyrics, these are “T-error”, “Nem leszel törvény”, “A nyugtalan”, “Földjeim embere térdre (Gaia)”, and as an experiment, English lyrics were paired with the latter two, which became “The Restless” and “Man of My Lands, Kneel (Gaia)” respectively. The trio’s 2008 and only full-length album, “A falakon belül”, was reproduced on green cassette. It consists of nine carefully composed and elaborated songs in about 38 minutes. These songs are less chaotic or crazy than anything they’ve done before, but it’s an evolution and the material has gotten really good. Their sound production became much cleaner and therefore less aggressive. While listening to this album, Moby Dick’s name popped up in my mind most of the time, especially their “Kegyetlen évek” record,



but the guitar playing sometimes also reminded me of Coroner. The line-up of the band on these materials is Norbert Balogh (vocals/guitars), Sándor Lichtmann (bass) and Tibor Dobó (drums). Tremor is such a great thrash metal band that it’s really a shame they broke up in 2009. The 3 cassettes come in an exclusive triple box with a large color J-card and a black and white 20-page A5 fanzine. Awesome release and a must have for all Tremor fans worldwide!!!

E-mail: feketeterrorzine@gmail.com
Blogspot: feketeterrorprod.blogspot.com
Facebook: facebook.com/feketeterrorprod

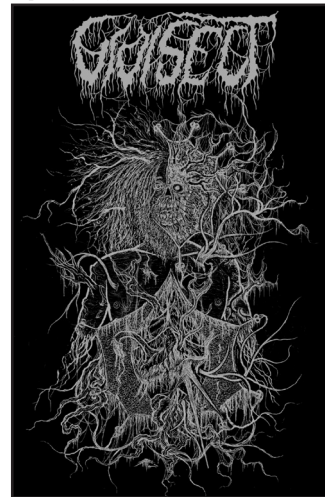
VIVISECT

“Barbaric Death” MC 2022

(Nihilistic Holocaust)

Vivisect formed in Trenton, New Jersey in 2019, and this cassette release is nothing more than a compilation of their previously

released tracks. The nearly 22-minute, completely sick death metal stuff presented by the quartet takes us back to the 90s, when death metal was considered underground. So their line-up on these four tracks is as follows: Dan Sclavi (vocals/guitar), Randy Cavanaugh (lead guitar), C.G. (bass) and M.W. (drums). Musically, there’s a killer mix that reminds me a lot of early Autopsy, Death, Obituary and Incantation records. Their music is not about complexity, but rather about the true essence of the death metal underground. That being said, they paid a lot of attention to the production, because these songs sound really good. I really enjoyed listening to all their tracks, they are definitely a great band and hopefully they will release a full album soon.



The song titles are “Prison Planet” (from the 2019 single), “Order of the Solar Temple” and “Rat Torture” (from the 2020 EP), and last but not least “Extraterrestrial Proliferations” (from the 4-way 2020 split). The “Barbaric Death” cassette is limited to 200 copies and comes with a professionally printed color J-card that I can honestly recommend to all old-school death metal fans worldwide as it is definitely worth the investment. Get the tape directly from the band or contact Nihilistic Holocaust!!!

E-mail: Vivisectnj@gmail.com
Bandcamp: vivisecttrenton.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/VivisectNJ

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DEMENTOR

“Morbid Infection” 12” LP 2023
(Nasphyr Records)

Finally, Czech underground label Nasphyr Records did Dementor’s early material justice by releasing it on vinyl. They started with the band’s second demo, “Morbid Infection”, originally released in 1993 under the title “Chorobná nákaza”. It consists of 6 songs, which were recorded in the famous Slovak studio Exponent. The demo line-up is as follows: Jaro Kyselica (vocals), Roman Lukáč (guitar), René Blahušiak (guitar), Luboš Gazdík (bass) and Roman Gazdík (drums). On this demo, the band had not yet forged their unique death metal style, but they were well on their way. The title track kicks off side A, which is a great song with some thrash influences here and there. “Predestined Future” follows, with lots of mid-tempo drum patterns, catchy guitar riffs and solos. Jaro’s grunt was already sick as hell, like a real caveman. “Soul Insanity” is the third song where René and Roman’s riffs begin to noticeably shape Dementor’s future style. Side B opens with the Obituary-like riffs of “Altars of Death”. This song is a bit monotonous for me, but it’s still good,



I would especially highlight the solo here, because it turned out really badass. “Birth of the Messenger of Death” is the fifth cut, another track with Obituary influences and some “Harmony Corruption” type Napalm Death riffing. The final composition is “Fate Sealed by Fool” and with its five and a half minutes it is the longest piece. This is a pretty solid death metal track with fantastic solos and a gloomy outro. A new cover was used for the vinyl version, from one of Gustave Doré’s woodcuts. The original artwork can also be found on the printed inner sleeve, along with the lyrics and a cool band photo. The vinyl itself is standard black at 45 rpm. Needless to say, this vinyl is definitely a must have for Dementor fans!!!

DEMENTOR

“The Church Dies” 12” LP 2023
(Nasphyr Records)

“The Church Dies” is my personal favorite from Dementor. Originally released on cassette by Immortal Souls Productions in 1994, it is also the debut long play of the Slovak death metal pioneers. The album lasts over 32 minutes and consists of 8 well-crafted death metal tracks that sound fantastic thanks to the Exponent studio. I can’t say enough how much I love the songs and sound production on this album. The energy and dynamics of this record are simply flawless. And now, for the first time,



we can enjoy these songs on black vinyl courtesy of Nasphyr Records. This masterpiece was recorded by the following members: Jaro Kyselica (vocals), Roman Lukáč (guitar), René Blahušiak (guitar), Roman Thorn (drums) and

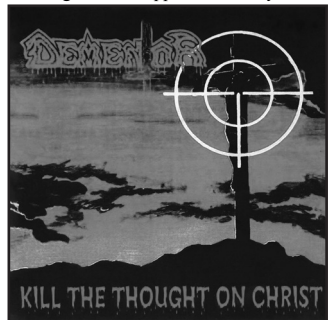
Robo Janičik (session bass). They did a perfect job, as did their producer Tomáš Kmetl. There are four songs on each side and the song titles are “Mortal Melody”, “The Law of Karma”, “The Church Dies”, “Robbed After Death”, “Rotting God”, “Darkness”, “Revived for Condemnation” and “Discoveries of Catastrophe”. The kind of death metal they play is closer to traditional, of course their songs are also well equipped with brutality, but the overall picture is still about majestic riffs, melodic solos, elaborate drumming and sly bass lines. Jaro’s growls took on a slightly different character compared to the demo ‘93, they became much more expressive and characteristic, if I may say so. His pronunciation in English is quite strange, but at one point it makes their material unique. Most of their lyrics are of course antichristian, but this can already be understood from the album’s title. This vinyl edition features original artwork by Ján Sakmár and includes a printed inner sleeve with lyrics, member photos and a band photo. This is a sparkling death metal gem from Slovakia that is not only a must for every loyal Dementor fan, but highly recommended for all death metal fans worldwide!!!

E-mail: info@nasphyr.cz
Website: www.nasphyr.cz
Facebook: facebook.com/NasphyrRecords

DEMENTOR

“Kill The Thought On Christ” 12” LP 2023
(Nasphyr Records)

I’ve previously written reviews of Immortal Souls Productions’ 1997 CD version and their 2021 reissues on MC/CD, so I’m taking a slightly different approach and focusing more on the pros and cons of the vinyl version. Let me start by saying that it feels really good to finally have Dementor’s second full-length album on vinyl. Like previous Dementor vinyls, it was released by Nasphyr Records. This is the first time this blasphemous death metal record is available on vinyl. The vinyl itself is black and spins at 33½ rpm. There are 4 songs – “In the Name of God”, “Kill the Thought on Christ”, “The Law of Karma” & “The Lost Humanity” – on side A, and 5 songs – “Fate of Emptiness”, “Rotting God”, “Suppuration of My Soul”,



“Mortal Melody” & “Prometheus (Tublatanka cover)” – on side B. On this album, the band’s line-up shrank to a trio (although they once again used the services of a session bassist, namely Hans Seliga), and from the beginning only the guitarist René Blahušiak remained, who also performed well as a singer starting with this record. So his comrades-in-arms became guitarist Roman Calpaš (who also did some backing vocals) and drummer Jozef Piroš. This material was recorded at Pro Art Studio with producer Miloš Rojko. The whole musical concept and even the sound production became much more vicious than on the debut album. René’s growling took on a rather brutal character, and his lyrics became even more blasphemous, but I think this is already evident from the album’s title and cover art. The guitars sound very powerful and massive, but Jozef’s drumming somehow lacks energy and dynamics. Nevertheless, “Kill the Thought on Christ” is a killer death metal release that I can only recommend. This vinyl edition has a printed inner sleeve with all the lyrics except for the Tublatanka cover and photos of the band and members. Unfortunately, I discovered too many mistakes and typos in the lyrics, which made me a little sad, since

it is a vinyl release. Otherwise this is a great release and you better get it before it’s too late!!!

DESTRUCTION

“No Kings – No Masters” 12” EP 2024
(Napalm Records)

It’s been two years since the release of “Diabolical”, but the German thrash metal quartet already hinted that they will release a new album in 2025, which is now preceded by a magnificent two-track EP, entitled “No Kings – No Masters”. Destruction’s line-up has remained unchanged since 2021, consisting of the invincible forces of Schmier (vocals/bass), Damir Eskić (guitar), Martin Furia (guitar) and Randy Black (drums). Well, the new song “No Kings – No Masters” unsurprisingly follows the musical path of the previous album, but with an even fresher,



2024 approach, with a much more modern sound, that is, their perspective on how German thrash metal should be represented and played today. It starts with a combination of their trademark parts, with Randy’s crash cymbal accents under the opening guitar riff, backed of course by Schmier’s massive low end attacks, then once the crazy drum fill kicks in, they start wreaking havoc. The rest of the composition is structured quite routinely, but in the middle of the song, starting with the words “Say No, No Way, Say No”, the guitar riffing and drums jump into a fantastic gallop, followed by a distinctly heavy metal-flavored solo. Continuing in the magic of heavy metal, we get a cover, a thrash metal version of Accept’s “Fast as a Shark”. It’s a very famous song and an absolute classic from the “Restless and Wild” album, so it’s been properly treated and brutalized in the Destruction way. I have the blue vinyl, but Napalm Records also pressed it in red, gold and silver, if I’m not mistaken, strictly 100 copies per color. So this is a very limited vinyl release that is sure to sell out fast. The vinyl A-side spins at 45 rpm and sounds pretty awesome, while the B-side has some impressive etching. The mixing and mastering was done this time by none other than Martin Furia himself, who did a perfect job! The same applies to the artwork on the front and back covers, created by the reliable Gyula Havancsák. This EP definitely makes me curious about the upcoming new album, I really hope they come up with some exceptional material, but we’ll find out soon enough, in the meantime get this killer and super limited 12” vinyl!!!!

DISMEMBER

“Historia Mortis” 12LP BOX SET 2023
(Nuclear Blast)

This is definitely the kind of dream box set that every true Dismember fan should have in their collection. Released nearly a year ago, it is limited to 1000 copies and compiles all 8 studio albums, 2 EPs, 3 demos, selected rarities, a 36-page booklet, plus if you ordered directly from the band’s online store, it also includes a t-shirt and a slipmat. All these treasures are housed in a fabulous looking cardboard box. There are six blue and six yellow vinyls that are transparent. The ones in blue are “Like an Ever Flowing Stream” (1991), “Pieces” EP (1992), “Indecent and Obscene” (1993), “Massive Killing Capacity” (1995), “Misanthropic” EP (1997) and “Death Metal” (1997). Finally, after so many represses and reissues of the debut album with extremely loud and rather distorted masters, we get the

songs from the “Like an Ever Flowing Stream” album with the more dynamic version (June ‘91), which always represented the only correct version of this masterpiece, but in the past was only used for the European first pressing of the CD. So first time on vinyl with the right master, needless to say it sounds and feels fantastic! By the way, I will point out that there are quite a few “for the first time” in this box. For example, the “Pieces” EP never featured lyrics before, but now we have them all on the insert. Nice surprise! The “Misanthropic” EP was also released for the first time on vinyl and is also exclusive to this box set. The songs on “Misanthropic” and the tracks on the “Death Metal” album were the only ones remastered by Patrick W. Engel under the supervision of Fred Estby. The first six vinyls represent the classic era with the band’s original line-up. The other six vinyls are yellow and they are: “Hate Campaign” (2000), “Where Ironcrosses Grow” (2004), “The God That Never Was” (2006), “Dismember” (2008), “The Complete Demos 1988-1990” (2023) and “Historia Mortis – The Rarities” (2023). The 3 demos, namely “Dismembered” (1988), “Last Blasphemies” (1989) and “Reborn in Blasphemy” (1990), were previously released by Regain Records in 2005 under the title “Complete Demos”, but new tape rips were used for the current vinyl version. Another exclusive vinyl for this box is “Historia Mortis – The Rarities”, which contains rare songs previously available on various compilations, Japanese CD versions or later reissues. However, no matter how you look at it, these songs are being re-released together for the first time on vinyl. So the tracklist for this special vinyl is as follows: “I Wish You Hell” (unmastered version, originally released in 1992 on “Rock Hard presents Monsters of Death” compilation), “Torn Apart” (alternate master, taken from “Death...Is Just the Beginning II” compilation, released in 1992), “Justifiable Homicide” (taken from “Death...Is Just the Beginning III” compilation, released in 1994), “Hill 112” (originally released in 1996 on “Death...Is Just the Beginning IV” compilation), “Beyond the Unholy Grave (Death cover)” (taken from “Death...Is Just the Beginning V” compilation, released in 1999), “Live to Hate” and “Unhealing Scars” (both originally released in 2000 as Japan bonus tracks of “Hate Campaign” album), all the previously mentioned songs are on side A, while side B contains “Collection by Blood”, “Life - Another Shape of Sorrow” and “On Frozen Fields – Shadowlands” (taken from the instrumental pre-production demo of “Massive Killing Capacity” recorded in 1994). Then there’s the exclusive full-color 36-page booklet. Produced in 12-inch format, it includes a wealth of rare and previously unseen photos from the band’s private collection,



an annotated discography, posters, flyers and more historical content. Nice addition and valuable for sure! What’s more, the box also contains exclusive artworks by Daniele Valeriani, which are definitely worth paying attention to. The entire audio was mastered to vinyl by Patrick W. Engel at Temple of Disharmony with the highest goal of preserving the “true to the original” sound as much as possible, which I can 100% confirm after thoroughly listening to all the vinyls. Very good work indeed! All vinyls are 33½ rpm except for the 2 EPs which are 45 rpm. In conclusion, I can only say that I am very happy to own a copy of this very well done box set. Hail to the Stockholm death metal legends, hail to Dismember!!!

DISMEMBER

“Casket Garden” 7” EP 2024
(Seven Metal Inches Records)

Every Dismember fan knows that the “Casket Garden” EP was the precursor to the band’s third full-length album, “Massive Killing Capacity” (1995), which was only released in CD format at the time. Of course, these 3 songs have already been included on other vinyl (and especially CD) releases and reissues before this release, although always scattered and the “Justifiable Homicide” track mostly as a bonus, but now thanks to Seven Metal Inches Records, the 3 songs are being released together on vinyl for the very first time. This limited edition 7” vinyl comes in two colors, transparent red and transparent blue, and features Skaðvaldur’s exclusive new artwork, which is simply fantastic, and is presented in a matt interpretation on the cover. I have the translucent red vinyl which looks pretty good and plays at 33½ rpm. On side A are “Casket Garden” and “Wardead”, both part of the “Massive Killing Capacity” album, while on side B is “Justifiable Homicide”, the song most often used as a bonus. It is very strange that the latter song is labelled “previously unreleased” when it has been released and re-released continuously since 1994. Well, never mind. All three songs of the 7” EP were mastered for vinyl by Patrick W. Engel at Temple of Disharmony and were previously released as part of the incredibly successful “Historia Mortis” vinyl box set.



If I compare them sonically, these songs definitely sound better on the vinyl records that are part of the box set than on this 7”. But it’s still a must-have for Dismember fans, even if it’s not flawless. Speaking of mistakes, the song title “Wardead” is misspelled everywhere, and is listed as “Warhead”, as a Venom song title, ha-ha... I know I’m being a bit picky, but if I’m paying money and there are mistakes like this that are ridiculous at some point, it’s very unfair, isn’t it? I could pretty much imagine an insert for this release with lyrics, a band photo and the original cover, but these are just a few wishes I would have liked to see included with this 7” EP. Don’t get me wrong, in some ways I still like this 7” edition, but towards the end I was in a bit of a sour mood. So let’s see what the other Dismember fans have to say, it will be interesting to read their opinions.

Website: sevenmetalinches.com

HIRAX

“Faster Than Death” 7” EP 2024
(Doomentia Records)

Well, although die-hard Hiram fans already got a taste of the full 9-song 6th album “Faster than Death” in demo version back in 2023, this 7” EP is the one that contains 4 songs from the upcoming new album in superior quality. The band’s current label in the Czech Republic, Doomentia Records, has done a great job and released the 4 new tracks in two colorful 7” vinyl versions, in translucent red and translucent yellow, both strictly limited to 250 copies. Of course, I had to buy both colors, that’s the way, you know, ha-ha-ha... The 7” vinyl, which spins at 45 rpm, comes with a glossy gatefold cover and a Hiram/Exumer tour 2024 poster. In addition, let’s not forget to mention that the cover and interior images by Thomas Pinheiro are fantastic, so the visual elements and the packaging itself are incredibly cool. Now for the main thing, which is of course the music. The A-side opens with “Drill into the Brain”,

which offers the listener a totally old-school, fast riffing, one-minute thrash metal assault. Then comes “Drowned Bodies”, a track that should be a blast live, with a heavyweight Exodus-like opening riff. This is a much longer tune with different rhythm changes,



a crazy guitar solo and Katon’s quite varied vocals. The B-side starts with the title track “Faster than Death”. Where the thundering drum intro is followed by a guitar riff that is super cool in every way, but very reminiscent of what we heard in Sodom’s “Deadline” from the album “Tapping the Vein”. The second half of the song, as the title suggests, is one hell of a fast 6- and 4-string orgy, with the right drumming, of course. Oh, and what a tornado-like solo there is at the end of the song, in short, pure awesomeness. The EP closes with “Relentless”. This is another super diverse song, especially when I look at Katon’s vocal variations. The opening riff is quite grindcore-like, while the second one reminds me again of the great Exodus. The beginning has the usual thrash metal vocals, but the second half of the song after the solo has the melodic vocals that pay homage to the heavy metal bands of the 80s, a good addition for sure. These four tracks were mixed by the one and only Bill Metoyer and recorded with the following line-up: Katon W. de Pena (vocals), Neil Metcalf (guitar/bass) and Danny Walker (drums). Needless to say, this is a must-have 7” for any thrash metal or crossover fan, so act fast or cry later! Oh, and get ready for the release of Hiram’s 6th full-length studio album “Faster than Death” on February 21, 2025, via Doomentia Records!!!
Bigcartel: hiram.bigcartel.com
Bandcamp: hiram.bandcamp.com

IMMORTALIS

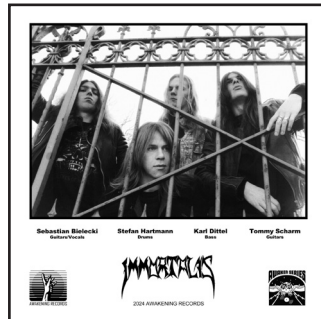
“Indicium De Mortuis” 12” LP 2024
(Awakening Records)

I have to say that I was pleasantly surprised by the sound quality and visual variety of the recently released vinyl reissue of Immortalis’ “Indicium de Mortuis” album.



Chinese Awakening Records has done an incredible job. This is a really professional and definitely worth the money reissue! I also have to admit that this is my first vinyl record from this underground label, and I definitely like the result. First, let’s look at the sound of vinyl. I have the classic black vinyl, printed in 200 copies. It plays at 33½ rpm of course, and I have to say that to my ears it sounds absolutely fantastic. The gatefold cover states that the album was remixed and remastered by Mehdi Salkhi in 2023, and then remastered exclusively for vinyl by Loïc Fontaine at Krucyator Productions in 2024. To be honest, it was just remastered, the album wasn’t remixed at all. Compared to the original sound, the mid and high frequencies have been touched up a bit in the

remastering process to give the album a crun- chier sound. I love this new approach to sound, especially on vinyl, but the original sound, with more low frequencies, is what I’m used to and will always like better. There is also a slight distortion effect in some parts of the keyboard sound of the instrumental title track, which I suspect is caused by the remastering settings. Despite this small tonal flaw, I really like the way this vinyl plays and sounds. “Indicium de Mortuis” is a massive death metal masterpiece, no doubt, and now it has finally been officially materialized and immortalized on vinyl for the second time in its career. Now let’s look at the cover and



the content inside. First of all, it is a gatefold cover with an excellent matt print. There you will find 17 photos that are frankly super cool. If that’s not enough, there is also a 4-page black and white insert with 6 more photos, a short history of the band and some text descriptions. The reissue’s cover art has a slightly “zoomed-in” effect, while the logo and title are in a slightly different location and size than on the original cover. No big deal, but it’s better to mention it. In addition to the black vinyl, Awakening Records also pressed this gem in red, black with red splatter and clear with black smoke, in 100 copies each. And also on cassette, in 3 colors (black, red, yellow), 50 copies per color. So hurry up and get your copy as soon as possible, as quantities are, as you can see, quite limited.
E-mail: awakeningrecordscn@gmail.com

KING DIAMOND

“Masquerade Of Madness” 12” EP 2024
(Metal Blade Records)

This 3-song 12” EP comes as a precursor to King Diamond’s long-awaited 13th studio album “The Institute”, featuring the new track “Masquerade of Madness”, which of course has been circulating online since 2019 in digital format, as well as two live cuts from Graspop, namely “Welcome Home” and the “Arrival”. All of these songs are available on vinyl for the first time. I have the 180-gram regular black vinyl, but limited edition vinyls are also available in clear violet brown marbled, bone and translucent black ice. All these editions include a paper mask with the lyrics to “Masquerade of Madness” and a download card. Since there are only 3 songs in total with a playing time of almost 15 minutes, the heavyweight vinyl plays at 45 rpm to the delight of audiophiles. Well,



“Masquerade of Madness” is a typical King Diamond hit, which riff-wise reminded me of the turn between the albums “Conspiracy” and “The Spider’s Lullabye”. It is quite full of keyboard parts, which also refers to the atmosphere of the last mentioned album. The sound production is incredibly solid as usual. Needless to say, I can’t wait to hear the new album in its entirety, I hope we don’t have to

wait too long. Side B has the two live tracks. Both were captured at the Graspop Metal Meeting on June 17, 2016. Their vibe and sound are perfect, I really dig them. These old evergreen tunes are awesome in every possible way and we know it for sure! The front and back covers of the EP were created by Yannick Bouchard, which were aptly adapted to the lyrical concept of the new song, and of course both works of art were mind-blowingly well done. I think it goes without saying that this item is a must have for fans of the King!!!

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PROTECTOR

“Excessive Outburst Of Depravity” 12” LP 2022
(High Roller Records)

“Excessive Outburst of Depravity” is the title of Protector’s latest release, which, like its three predecessors, perfectly combines the European thrash and death metal styles of the



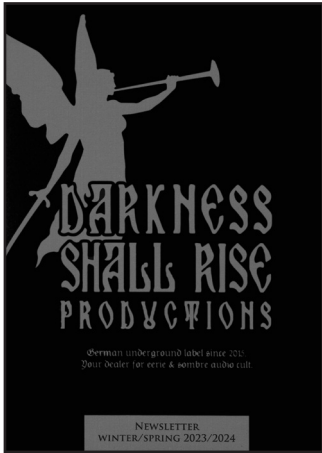
80s and 90s. Since it was intended for the maximum old-school atmosphere from the very beginning, you won’t find any modern elements in it, that’s for sure. The album’s 11 songs were recorded and engineered by Robert Pehrsson at Studio Humbucker (Stockholm, Sweden) between October 30 and November 13, 2021. It was then mixed and mastered by Patrick W. Engel at Temple of Disharmony (Bamberg, Germany) in December 2021. In essence, it is thanks to them that the sound production is old school to the core. The members of Protector have been the same since 2011, and that’s a pretty killer fact. The quartet – Martin Missy (vocals), Michael Carlsson (guitar), Mathias Johansson (bass) & Carl-Gustav Karlsson (drums) – does everything perfectly, leading them to another great Protector record. With more than 47 minutes, this new album is more thrash metal than death metal in my opinion, and it also embodies the epicness of the heavy metal bands of the 80s. The guitar sound is so penetrating that it tears the listener’s mind apart, while the dynamism of the riffs is even more impressive, not to mention the super solos. The drums are also natural sounding and that makes it all the more exciting. I also like the sound of the bass, it rumbles quite massively in the background. Then there’s Martin’s unique and rough voice that’s unmistakable from anyone else’s, and that completes the picture of a successful album to be honest. I have it on vinyl, in a beautiful transparent beer color, and frankly, this record should only be played on vinyl, because it sounds better on that format. The whole design suits the vinyl release better, not to mention the masterful artwork by Patrik Tegnander, and of course the album cover poster is bigger and



better quality than the CD version, and there’s a super cool A5 photo card. In short, this release is a must for Protector fans worldwide!!!
Bandcamp: protectorofdeath.bandcamp.com

DARKNESS SHALL RISE PRODUCTIONS
 Newsletter Winter/Spring, 2023/2024
 (Darkness Shall Rise Productions)

German underground label Darkness Shall Rise Productions was founded in 2015 with the sole purpose of releasing cassettes. So far, they've released tons of killer MCs and special box sets, making them a well-known and respected label worldwide. However, in 2023, they decided to expand their range of releases with LPs and CDs. The current newsletter lists the entire back catalog as well as their latest releases. The format of the newsletter is A5, and its printing and design are of the highest quality. There are 48 pages in total, which of course are in color. In this issue you will find two interviews by Steven Willems, one with Le Morte (death/doom metal with industrial influences) and the other with Trenchant (blackened death metal), both American bands. These are definitely good reads. The rest of the newsletter's pages, which are otherwise quite thick, focus mainly on visuals from recent releases and some band and format information. Of these, I would highlight the following promotional pages:

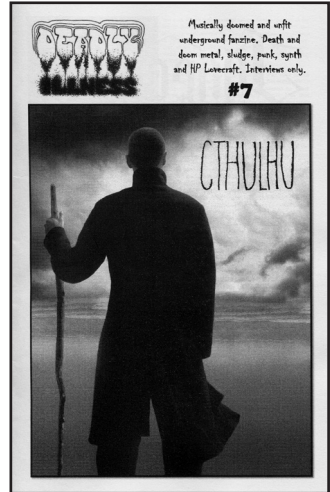


Amon "Sacrificial/Feasting the Beast" MC/CD/LP, Desaster "As the Deadworld Calls" 3CD+DVD, Immortal "The Northern Upires Death" MC/CD/LP, Mefisto "Megalomania/The Puzzle..." MC/CD/LP and Katharsis "Hell Metal" 8MC boxset. You can also read a short history of DSR Productions on one page, and you will also find a list of distributors at the end of the newsletter. It's a professional newsletter, that's for sure, and I can't wait to get my hands on the Desultory "Darkness Falls (The Early Years)" 3MC/CD/LP versions!!!
Website: darknessshallrise.de

DEADLY ILLNESS
 Issue #7, 2022

I recently traded with Csaba from the Deadly Illness 'zine and he sent me a bunch of cool stuff along with the last three issues of the magazine. I will state right away that we are not dealing with the traditional content of a metal fanzine and that is for sure. First of all, Csaba only focuses on interviews. Secondly, he is not only interested in musical genres such as death metal, doom metal, sludge, punk and synth, but also in the nightmare worlds of H.P. Lovecraft. The latter really makes the publication very interesting and a bit unique. The current issue is already the seventh in a row, which comes in black and white A5 format with high-quality laser printing on 60 pages. The interviews were conducted with: Jääportit (frostbitten winter synth post-rock from Northern Finland), Daniel Gildark and Grant Cogswell (in relation to the 2007 film Cthulhu), Sun Crow (heavy stoner rock from Seattle), Skeletal Earth (crossover death/thrash from Madison, Alabama), Deaph (crossover of hardcore, punk and metal from Huntsville, Alabama), Black Syrup 'zine (Serbia), Nastrom (doom rock from Serbia), Rato Triste (sludge noise band from Prague, Czech Republic), Betelzeuz (sludge/doom metal band from Lahti, Finland), Kohina Records (Finland), Ruinas (grinding

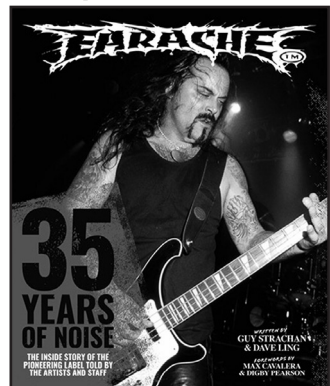
death metal from Spain), Ovakner (crust death metal from Spain), Residue (sludge/doom metal from Birmingham, Alabama), Repuked (death metal from Stockholm, Sweden), Hybernoid (industrial/electronic metal from England) and Carnage/Impaler (death metal from England). Most of the interviews are very in-depth and quite informative, and as you may have noticed, some of them are with bands that have broken up a long time ago. I have no problem with that, as these chats have also become very interesting. As far as I can see, these interviews were completed over the course of a year, from December 2020 to December 2021. Pretty good job if you ask me.



Let's hope issue 8 comes out soon, because I'm personally looking forward to it! Oh, I almost forgot to mention that everything is written in English and Csaba's English skills are above average. Highly recommended underground reading, so try to get your copy in time!!!
Facebook: facebook.com/deadlyillness

EARACHE
 35 Years Of Noise, 2022
 (Earache Records)

There's no doubt that Earache was the label that infamously cemented its name among death metal and grindcore fans in its first decade of existence. The amount of great bands and albums released between 1987 and say 1997 is simply fabulous. Digby Pearson & Co. have always been adept at signing and promoting exceptional bands (on the other hand, taking great risks to see if what they believed in would bring success to the label and their bands) that were not only original and extreme in their musical repertoire, but over time catapulted to legendary status. The likes of Napalm Death, Carcass, Bolt Thrower,



Morbid Angel, Terrorizer, Carnage, Entombed, Nocturnus, Massacre, Vader, At The Gates and Decapitated to name but a few, they've all achieved cult status, and their Earache releases are among the best in the genre. Around the mid-90s, the label takes a 180-degree turn and starts experimenting with completely different genres of music to compensate for the unfortunate nadir and overpopulation of death metal. Around this time, it marks the signing of bands such as Dub War, Mortiis, Iron Monkey or Cult of Luna. However, the label's real breakthrough came a decade later,

when they signed blues rock bands such as Rival Sons, The Temperance Movement and Blackberry Smoke. This book provides the inside story of the pioneering independent record label, as told by artists and staff, and tells the 35-year story behind its legacy. Fun fact, this book was originally written and completed in 2017 for the label's 30th anniversary. The full-color hardcover book has a total of 154 pages and includes lots of rare photos and never-before-heard stories. It was a lot of fun to read their story from the inception of the label to the present day, although honestly the stories about the beginnings and their very first bands were the most valuable facts for me. So my heartiest congratulations to the Earache staff and I really hope they bring us many more good releases and re-releases in the near future!!!
Facebook: facebook.com/earacherecords

NIHILISTIC HOLOCAUST
 Issue #16, 2023

French Nihilistic Holocaust is doing a very good job in the underground scene, I can definitely say that. This is the 16th issue of their small, but all the more meaningful newsletter from October 2023. A total of 8 pages in A5 format, black and white, professionally printed on premium quality glossy paper. There are only 2 interviews, both on 3 pages, with precise and very good questions, plus 2 pages of reviews. The entire content is written in English. The first interview deals with French death metal band Oldskull and their latest material "The Defeat of Humanity" EP (2023). Although the interview touches on many other topics such as the beginnings, the first demo, live activity, influences, musical evolution, other projects, the local scene and the band's future plans. I really enjoyed reading it. The second interview was with the band Prescience from Strasbourg, France. This band plays progressive thrash/death metal and since they only released a demo called "Out of the Grave" in 2019, the interview itself is more about the band's future music and what to expect from them in 2024. It also covers topics related to the band's name, musical approach, influences, lyrical themes, and local scene. Another good read for sure. Then we have 2 pages with reviews of the releases of Putriditium (Finland),

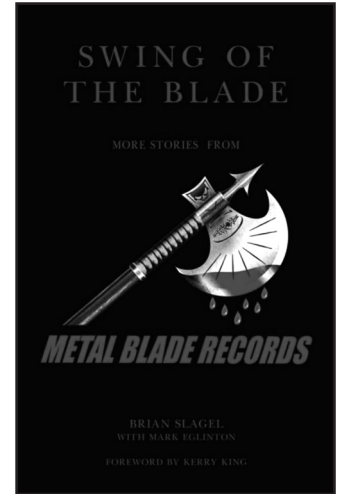


Columbarium (Belgium), Simpulmati (Indonesia), Ruined Age (USA), Eternal Perdition (Sweden), Ambulance (Mexico) and Congealed Putrescence (USA). These reviews are well written, you can feel the competence and the underground spirit in them. And if all this did not convince you of the commitment to the underground, then I will tell you that this newsletter is free. In a word, hats off to the editor, keep up the good work!!!
Website: nihilistic-webzine-distro.fr

SWING OF THE BLADE
 More Stories From Metal Blade Records, 2023
 (Metal Blade Records)

"Swing of the Blade" is the sequel to Brian Slagel's "For The Sake of Heaviness: The History of Metal Blade Records" (2017). This new book is sort of an extension to the

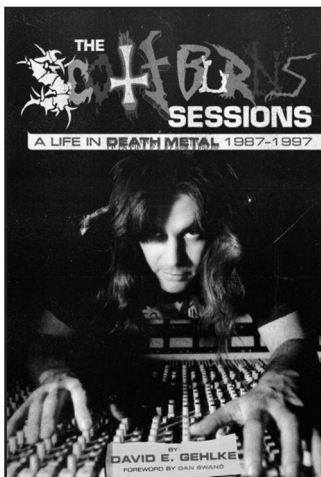
first "main" book, with lots of interesting stories/memories about L.A.'s underground life and beyond. It tells the story of how author, label founder and CEO of Metal Blade Records, Brian Slagel, started out as a passionate fan of hard rock and heavy metal music, and how he turned all his dreams into reality and built the stellar label we all know as Metal Blade Records. It's been fantastic to read Brian's evolution from working at Oz Records, trading tapes at Capitol Records swap meets and editor of the New Heavy Metal Revue fanzine to releasing the first Metal Blade record in 1982, the now famous "Metal Massacre" compilation. I especially loved the stories of him finding and signing bands like Armored Saint, Fates Warning, Lizzy Borden, Omen, Witchkiller,



Flotsam and Jetsam, Cirith Ungol, Helstar and more in the early 80's. It was also great to see the recognition of the importance of Warner Bros. and Bill Metoyer in the early days. Furthermore, you can also read details about his long and ongoing relationships with Metallica, Armored Saint, King Diamond, Cannibal Corpse, Amon Amarth and other heavyweights. There's a lot of great and intriguing information in there, and given that Brian's label has been around for over 40 years, it deserves all the credit. Unfortunately, as is inevitable these days, there are a few typos, missing punctuation marks and doubling of some words or band names in the same sentence, which aren't that annoying, but it's a shame they weren't filtered out before printing. The paperback book has 181 pages, of which 11 pages are in color and 8 out of 11 pages are full of awesome photos. In addition, the foreword is written by Kerry King, and for a few pages you can immerse yourself in Brian's favorite sport, which is hockey. A great journey into the world of the metal underground from someone who was involved in building and shaping it himself. Needless to say, highly recommended reading!!!
Website: www.metalblade.com

THE SCOTT BURNS SESSIONS
 A Life In Death Metal 1987-1997, 2023
 (Decibel Books)

Wow, this book is pretty brilliant and definitely one of the best I've read in a while. Author David E. Gehlke has done a fantastic job collecting and interviewing people involved in over 100 albums recorded by Scott Burns throughout his career. The 474-page hardcover book features a wealth of rare and never-before-seen photos by Tampa music scene photographer Tim Hubbard, highlighted by a glossy 16-page photo section and a foreword by Dan Swanö. It was very fascinating to read how it all started for Scott somewhere around 1981, I mean how he went from running live sound for punk bands to being a full-time assistant engineer at Morrisound Recording in 1983. During Scott's early years at Morrisound, he worked mainly on punk and rock albums, during which he received a masterclass in sound and production under the guidance of Jim and Tom Morris and Rick Miller. But just a few years later, Agent Steel's "Unstoppable



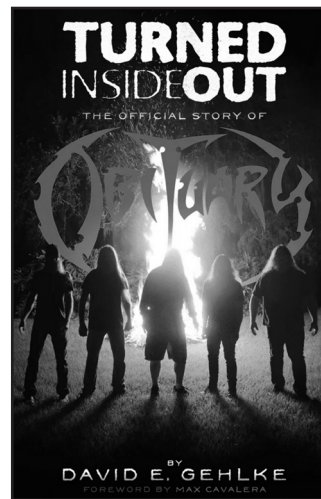
Force” album started Scott’s metal path, after which his popularity skyrocketed, thanks to which he began to attract heavier and more extreme forms of metal, such as thrash, death metal or grindcore. Of course, he was open to working with other types of bands, which sometimes happened, but somehow fate tied his name and work to death metal. Hence the title of the book “The Scott Burns sessions: A life in death metal 1987–1997”. If my memory serves me right, I became aware of Scott Burns and Morrisound Recording in the early

90s. I think Obituary’s “Slowly We Rot” and Sepultura’s “Beneath the Remains” were the first records where I noticed his name and the incredible sound production coming from Morrisound. And from then on, every time I read his name in an interview or in an article about a certain release, I knew the result would be a quality production. Well, I can’t stress enough how happy I am to own a copy of this book, not only because it includes many of my favorite death metal bands and their timeless releases, but mostly because it contains detailed, insightful stories that have rarely been read before. Scott revealed so much invaluable information about his past studio sessions and relationships with the bands and their members that this alone is worth an award. On the other hand, the book has a lot of positive feedback from band members, record label representatives, studio owners and others, which only reinforces the myth of how cool and laidback Scott Burns was and still is. He’s a living legend and that’s it! In short, if you claim to be a death metal fan, you must read this book, otherwise you are not a death metal fan at all!!!
Website: davegehlke.com

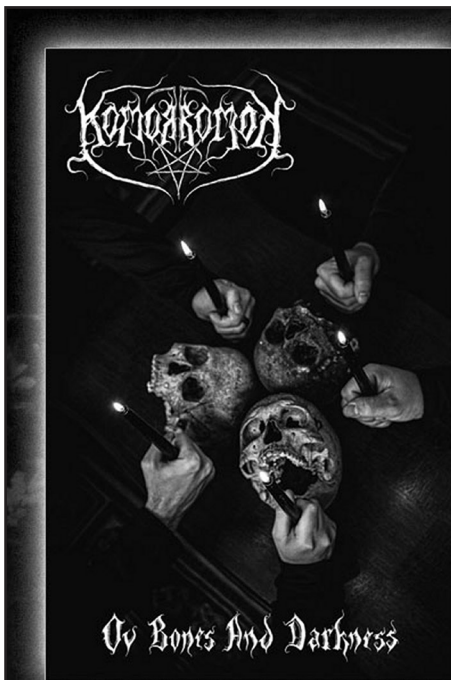
TURNED INSIDE OUT
The Official Story Of Obituary, 2021
 (Decibel Books)

Obituary is one of those unique Florida death metal bands that formed in the mid-80s as Executioner, later shortened to Xecutioner,

and quickly established their own brand of sonic brutality. Just take a look at their first two LPs, “Slowly We Rot” (1989) and “Cause of Death” (1990), which are undisputed classics and have had a great impact not only on death metal fans, but also on new generations of metal bands. Despite this, Obituary faced many obstacles on their way to the top, such as member changes (sometimes due to drug and alcohol problems), bad contracts with record labels, financial problems during and after the tour, etc., but their dedication to music and the unbreakable bond between the Tardy brothers and Peres has always been triumphant and has catapulted Obituary to its well-deserved cult status. Written by David E. Gehlke, this 324-page book is the first fully authorized biography of Obituary. With the exception of the color hardcover, all pages are black and white with high-quality printing. The author built each chapter in a professional manner, enriching them with many in-depth interviews, studio memories, road stories and a great series of photos. The foreword was written by none other than Max Cavalera. Needless to say, I had a great time reading it. This book really conveys stories that were probably hidden from fans during the band’s development, but if you read them carefully, you will get a complete picture of how a death metal formation like Obituary survived and developed into one of the most respected metal bands of our time. On the other hand, it is indisputable that their unwaver-



ing commitment to their fans is what made them so great. With nearly 40 years of history and 11 LPs, the band is still playing and delivering high-quality Florida death metal around the world. These facts alone make them even bigger and more recognized. So get this book quickly and listen to the band’s latest album “Dying of Everything” (2023)!!!
E-mail: contact@decibelmagazine.com
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Hi Jeremy! First of all, let me congratulate you on the release of Earthburner’s debut album. “Permanent Dawn” was officially released on November 8th, 2024 via M-Theory Audio. What has been the reaction from grindcore/death metal fans and the media so far?

- The response has been great. I’d say about 99% of the reviews are positive and journalists loving the album. The fans are really into it and we just did our 4th show at a festival in Denver and it was sold out. The response has been that this first Earthburner album has really captured the spirit of old-school grindcore/grinddeath – so that’s great as it was part of the mission.

From the beginning, you described Earthburner’s music as a reference to Terrorizer’s classic album “World Downfall”. The influence of this masterpiece is definitely present in your music, but no matter how you look at it, the unadulterated character of Broken Hope’s music can also be found in 10 of your own compositions. I feel like it’s the mix of these that makes the whole picture really different and interesting. How do you personally see this?

- I’m glad you noticed that because it sums up that “deathgrind” sound I mentioned. Terrorizer’s “World Downfall” is a masterpiece and it’s the main reason that Earthburner exists. My vision was to embrace the elements of grind and extreme music. Earthburner has evolved into what is best described as a “deathgrind” band, because of the bands you mentioned – Terrorizer and my Broken Hope style of music. Musically, the early inspiration for Earthburner has always been my worship of Terrorizer’s “World Downfall” – that album is what made me want to play/write grind since 1989 as I mentioned. When I first got that album at age 19, I was like, “I want to do THAT” as well as make a sick AF death metal band. I picked up “World Downfall” and Morbid Angel’s “Altars of Madness” on the same day at a record store and both of those albums changed my life in all kinds of ways. So basically, grindcore and death metal play a role in Earthburner’s music – it’s like mixing peanut butter and chocolate. Haha!

You were a trio on the 3-song EP, but now the line-up has changed a bit and you recorded your debut album as a quartet (or rather a quintet). Please introduce the current Earthburner line-up to the readers. Oh and how did Mitch Harris become an honorary member?

- In 2011 I was first introduced to Mike Miczek – drummer for Earthburner and Broken Hope. Mike was literally a teenager at the time. I met Mike, and we were instantly doing Earthburner. I had a logo, a singer and a drummer. As I mentioned, we didn’t have a bass player, but we recorded a three-song EP, so I played the bass and guitars on that. Then Broken Hope came back into my life in 2012 and Mike and I have been doing BH ever since and put Earthburner to the side – but as of 2023, Earthburner came back in a big way and we have this amazing lineup and album coming out.

That said, I was “all in” to do EB full-time in 2011... so we recorded a 3-song EP (I played the bass on that) and we made a music video and released it all – then it got put to the side.

It wasn’t until 2023 that things with Broken Hope slowed down a bit and I started talking to Mike Miczek about really doing Earthburner... not just talking about it, but really DOING it... so we focused on Earthburner, got the right lineup, and made it happen.

The evolution has involved to Earthburner “finally” becoming a real band and getting solid musicians to the table to make Earthburner something special – and also, it’s no longer a side-project, it’s definitely a band I want to keep doing as much as possible forever.

We got singer Devin Swank from Sanguisugabogg, my stepson Tyler Affinito from Gloryhole Guillotine on bass, and Mike Miczek on drums from Broken Hope and me of course. I don’t write the lyrics for Earthburner – Devin does that – so that is another big difference, I’m more of a horror guy, while Devin is a lyricist who has the current, dark climate of society in hand and speaks of these things. Song-structure-wise, in EB, it’s a that is simple: savage blasting with savage breakdown riffs-and then story is over fast.

Regarding Mitch Harris: Yes, we have our “honorary member,” Mitch Harris (ex-Napalm Death) in

the lineup! Mitch’s here in a unique, “when available,” sort of way – and that’s all just fucking great! I reached out to my pal, Mitch Harris to do some guest vocals for “Permanent Dawn” at first... for like one song. I always liked Mitch’s high-pitched screams/vocals he did in Napalm Death and thought it would be cool to have him guest appear on a song. Well, when Mitch showed up to contribute in the studio vocal session for a song, he ended up having ideas for EVERY song! So, we just let him roll with it. His contributions and ideas were so good that we kept it. Since he’s on every song, we were like, “Fucking, aye! Mitch! You’re an honorary member of Earthburner now!”

Mitch is all over the album, initially he was only going to be on one or two songs, but came in with ideas for everything. It sounded so great we decided to have him in there as much as possible. We want Mitch to be on every Earthburner album. Mitch unfortunately has limited availability to play with us live, but sometimes he will if he can. No matter what, we want Mitch with us any way possible. He really helped “level up” our “Permanent Dawn” album.

So that all said, I look at Earthburner’s “Permanent Dawn” and lineup being one part “fate”, one part “meant to be”, one part “things happen for a reason”.

When I look back, I realize that this band wasn’t supposed to happen in 2002 or 2011... it was meant to happen NOW. I wouldn’t have had this powerful lineup that you mention if I’d have made this band a priority back in those former years as I had attempted. I wouldn’t trade this lineup for anything.

The debut album also features guest vocals from Ross Dolan on “Necrodisiac” and Jake Cannavale on a cover of Corrosion of Conformity’s “Positive Outlook”. Are we talking about spontaneous guest appearances, or was it planned from the beginning? By the way, what do you think of Immolation’s latest album, “Acts of God”?

- The guest vocals were planned early on – like as soon as I knew we’re gonna do this album. Basically, when I wrote all the music for the Earthburner “Permanent Dawn” album and prepared to record it, I reached out to some friends of mine to invite them to be guest vocalists as I wanted to make our debut album extra

special. I hit up Ross Dolan of Immolation – who I’ve been friends with since we were teenagers – and Ross immediately said, “Yes!” which made my day. Then I hit up my pal, Jake Cannavale – singer of the grindcore band, Vixen Maw, and he also signed right on. And as I mentioned before, I asked my longtime pal and hero – Mitch Harris of Napalm Death and Righteous Pigs, etc. – if he’d be down to contribute something to a song vocally and he was into doing it immediately and ended up being on the entire album.

Ross Dolan’s style is what you would hope for – his brand of pure and unique death metal vox. Ross is on the song called “Necrodisiac”. I was so very happy Ross came on board – he took it very seriously and delivered massive vox. Then Jake Cannavale appears on our cover of COC’s “Positive Outlook” – and gave us a really, a really awesome and aggressive delivery when he came on board, and that also made me very happy. And Mitch Harris just killed it across the album.

Due to their schedules, Ross and Jake couldn’t make it to Chicago to do their vocals at studios in New York at separate studios. We did the vocals at Hypercube Studios in Chicago with Sanford Parker. But Mitch came in when Devin came in. So, Devin’s freaking out because he’s a huge Napalm Death fan. And again, we thought Mitch was gonna sing on one song, but he said he had ideas for every song. So, we’ve got Devin and Mitch on every song and thanks to that, Mitch added a whole new dimension to the album that I didn’t see coming.

As for the new Immolation, I love it! I’ve been friends with Ross from Immolation since we were teenagers... I loved Immolation’s music from their demos to their new album. They’re an amazing, legendary band.

“Permanent Dawn” was recorded in two studios, namely Criteria Recording Studios (Miami, Florida) and Hypercube Studios (Chicago, Illinois). How do you remember the entire recording process? Did everything go smoothly from the beginning?

- There’s specific reasons why we chose those studios to record “Permanent Dawn”. From the get-go, I knew that I wanted to record at Criteria Recording Studios... it’s my favorite studio on the planet and close to my winter home in Miami Beach. Plus, they have very diverse rooms, state-of-the-art consoles and gear plus vintage gear – then there’s the incredible history. I wanted the best production possible, so between the studios and the team I had on board, I got everything I wanted in terms of attaining that high-end production and quality.

Earthburner entered the legendary Criteria Recording Studios in Miami, Florida in April 2023 and recorded all of the music for “Permanent Dawn” there – 11 tracks total. We recorded digitally to a Pro Tools HDX System through a Discrete Class A Vintage Neve

8078 console. All of the main vocals were recorded at Hypercube Studios in Chicago, IL, because of the schedule of the vocalists and I was back in Chicago-land for summer by then.

Mixing was handled by mixing-god Scott Creekmore. The album was mastered by the legendary Mike Fuller of Fullersound in Davie, Florida. The entire process went amazingly well and fast. My co-producer, Tommy McWilliams was a godsend... he made the whole process go quite painlessly and I’m very grateful to him for all that. But that day is finally here... Earthburner has arrived!

Overall, I believe my goal of making a sonically superior album was achieved... sure, it’s deathgrind/grindcore, but I believe no matter how extreme, what the genre is, make an album that stands the test of time and give listeners their money’s worth.

I always aim for QUALITY. I’m talking about making sure that no music I write and record is “filler” on any level – only the best riffs and compositions. That high-quality goal is also in the production of any album I record – I want the best quality sonic assault for the fans who pick up anything I release, so I’ll even dig into my own pockets to ensure that criteria is met at the end of the day. I never do anything “half assed”, know what I mean? That all speaks for my ambitions: music, books, everything... always aiming high (and I encourage others to do the same).

The vinyl and cassette releases feature two types of mastering, with Mike Fuller’s “digital version” on one side and Scott Creekmore’s “analog version” on the other. Why did you choose this solution and what is the background? Otherwise, which mastering do you personally prefer?

- Thanks to the wisdom of my big-brother and genius, Trevor Fletcher – VP of Criteria Recording Studios – we were given the opportunity to mix down not only digitally, but also, we mixed down to analog tape as Trevor said they had a vintage tape machine on hand we could use. So Earthburner offers TWO versions of our debut album: the Digital version and Analog version were mixed through a Neve, but the Analog was mixed to a Quantegy GP9 on 1/2” analog tape.

The vinyl and cassette editions of “Permanent Dawn” are like the way Slayer originally did “Reign in Blood” in 1986, where you get the entire album on each side of the vinyl and cassette – except with “Permanent Dawn”, Side A is the Digital version (“Digital Dawn”) and Side B is the Analog version (“Analog Dawn”).

Again, mixing was done by Scott Creekmore. The “Digital” version of the album was mastered by the legendary Mike Fuller of Fullersound in Davie, Florida while Scott Creekmore mastered the “Analog” version of the album at his Mercenary Digital Studios in Zion, Illinois.

As far as the impact of the sound, the Digital album overall is razor-sharp and kills at all volumes and the Analog version also slays and most people find that version to have a certain punch and warmth.



The album cover was created by Fabrice LaVollay. It’s a wonderful piece of work, for sure. Is it based entirely on the lyrics of your songs, or is it mostly the artist’s imagination? Please tell us more about the themes that your lyrics touch on.

- I love Fabrice LaVollay’s art. I had seen he’d done for Napalm Death and Brujeria and others and was always in awe of his work. He has a real grindcore visual style if you know what I mean. He captures the “vibe” that we’re after. I got to meet Fabrice in Belgium when I was on tour there some years back – he’s a great guy.

With the “Permanent Dawn” album, I basically told Fabrice that Earthburner wanted something that would encompass the visuals of a “bleak world” where we’re faced with war, social media nightmares, the dark side of humanity – and to embrace that “vibe” of classic grindcore bands in a collage-type album cover. From there, Fabrice just went with it his own way and did an amazing job.

There are already 4 videos circulating online. Two music videos for the songs “Broken Head” and “Like Dogs”, as well as two fantastic visualizer videos for the title track and “Slaves to the Screen”. The 3D-animated visualization videos were created by Andrea Mantelli. Can you tell readers more about these videos and how they were made?

- When we turned the record label (M-Theory Audio), we were told to select radio singles, and also, to get visualizer videos made for each single. Thanks to Shaun Glass of Repentance (and ex-Broken Hope bassist), he turned me on to Andrea Mantelli who did the first 3 single videos. The video for “Like Dogs” was done by Tyler Affinito’s film director friend – Christian Martinez – who did a great job. I also hired artist Daniella Batseva to make individual artwork for each single that was also used in the video (like “Broken Head”). Aside from all that, all I did was give the video guys the lyrics and ideas and they just ran with it.

I think Earthburner fans are definitely interested in whether you will be performing live in support of the “Permanent Dawn” album? If so, what are your plans for the near future, do you have any concerts planned, and will you be treating your fans to tours and festivals in 2025?

- Earthburner has done 4 shows to date and they’ve been fun, but now that the album is out, we really want to tour properly. So if things go well, we will tour everywhere possible, play festivals everywhere as much as possible – and just get out there. I’m already writing the next Earthburner album!

Well, Jeremy, that’s all I wanted to ask. Thank you very much for the interview. At the end, please send your earth burning greetings to the Ukrainian fans of grindcore and death metal.

- Thank you for the interview, Kornel and Encomium magazine! I send all of my love to the Ukrainian metal fans and to the Ukrainian people – you are ALL in my heart! SLAVA UKRAINI!!!





I am delighted to present the following in-depth interview with Robert Pieptan from Insepultus. He gave us all the details of his masterful debut album and also talked about the future of Insepultus. Now join us on the paths of horror and despair.

Salut Robert! Insepultus' debut album "Deadly Gleams of Blood, Steel and Fire" has been out for a while. I personally think it's an incredible album, but please let us know what feedback you've received so far. Are you satisfied with the results achieved?

-Hi Kornel and thank you so much for your kind words and support for the album! It means a lot to me to hear that people connect with "Deadly Gleams of Blood, Steel and Fire" on such a profound level. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, particularly from those who appreciate atmospheric and experimental elements in black metal. Many listeners have commented on the cinematic and immersive qualities of the album, which was exactly the kind of experience I hoped to create. Satisfaction as an artist is always a complex thing. While I'm proud of what we've accomplished with the album, there's always that lingering feeling of wanting to push boundaries further and refine the craft. This isn't out of dissatisfaction but rather a natural desire to evolve and grow. Each album is a steppingstone, and while I'm pleased with how this one turned out, I see it as part of a larger journey. I used "WE" because even if Insepultus is a one-man band, I believe that the result is the one of a team that includes all the ones involved in the material.

Do you remember how and when the ideas for music and lyrics first appeared in your head? Was it a long process to make and record this album?

- The ideas for this album started forming a long time ago, and they grew slowly over the years; some of the initial musical sketches go back nearly a decade. I believe 3 main points influenced my willingness to record one new material: the first influential point was the Colectiv Club fire from 30th of October 2015, where some of my friends died during and after the fire (rehearsal room colleagues, childhood friends, underground mates) – this inspired me to start thinking over each individual reaction in front of death. The second point was the Pandemic Period when we changed our way of life and that allowed me more time home to try to record the first test songs, and the third point was the War in Ukraine which inspired me to make the connection between the reaction in front of death for a soldier

who got his family back home, he sees the horror of the war and mainly he knows what is the end. The imagery of blood, steel, and fire was ever-present in my mind, but the lyrics are adapted after WWI poets who were first line on the front. I believe that using the poems written by the soldiers (poets) from the front provides a more real point of view than what I can write. As a timeline, when everything was prepared, in a maximum of 5-6 months everything was ready, but the work done before starting the recordings was much longer, considering I had no reason to hurry up the things than the normal.



The black metal you play is quite monumental and atmospheric, with experimental overtones. The latter gives it a very original character in terms of atmosphere. Did these elements develop early on or in the studio during the recording of the album?

- I've always been drawn to music that transports the listener to another world, and that was a driving force behind the creative decisions on this record. I firmly believe that the atmosphere in a black metal album must not only exist but also be defined for the entire work. Each track, while distinct in its own way, was crafted to paint a vivid picture that captures its individual essence. This is why the tracks differ so much from one another—each represents a unique scene or emotion—but together, they create a cohesive atmosphere that the listener can feel

throughout the album.

The experimental overtones emerged as I explored ways to enhance the songs' dynamics and textures. While writing, I often found myself adding layers and elements that didn't strictly fit the traditional black metal mold—whether it was unconventional chord progressions, odd time signatures, or unexpected ambient passages. In the studio, these ideas were refined further to ensure they complemented the atmosphere of the album without overshadowing its essence. I aimed to balance the monumental with the intimate, creating an emotional journey that resonates from start to finish.

The cover and other illustrations in the booklet are by Costin Chioreanu. Were they based entirely on your lyrics, and he was free to shape them in his own way, or did you give him strict instructions from the start about the ideas you wanted to portray?

- Costin Chioreanu is an incredible artist, and it was an honor to collaborate with him on this project. His ability to translate abstract ideas into visually stunning artwork is unparalleled. When we first began discussing the cover and illustrations for the booklet, I provided him with a broad outline of the themes and imagery present in the lyrics and pictures from WWI that define the ideas of each song. However, I didn't want to stifle his creativity by being too prescriptive. Costin has a unique way of interpreting concepts, and I trusted him to bring his own vision to the table. The result was even more powerful than I could have imagined. His artwork captures the essence of the album perfectly and adds another layer of depth to the overall experience. Seeing the final product was a deeply satisfying moment.

The album was released on CD by Loud Rage Music from Romania. How did this collaboration come about? How many copies have been published and what are the current sales?

- The partnership with Loud Rage Music came after the discussions between Coro of Axa Valaha Productions and Adrian of Loud Rage Music. I had been aware of their work with other Romanian metal acts, and I admired their dedication to supporting underground music. When they heard some of the early material from "Deadly Gleams of Blood, Steel and Fire", they expressed their enthusiasm for the project.

Their passion and professionalism made them the perfect fit for this release. As for the physical release, the album was published on professional factory-made CD, 400 normal copies and 100 with slipcase. While I don't have exact sales figures on hand at the moment, I know there were around 300 units being sold/traded in the first 6 months, so I can say that the response has been encouraging, especially given the niche nature of this kind of music. Loud Rage Music and Axa Valaha have done a fantastic job of helping the album reach listeners around the world, and I'm grateful for their support. The first t-shirts we printed were sold-out fast, in a matter of days.

I suppose we don't have to wait as long for the follow-up as we did for the debut album, and I know it's a bit early to ask, but do you have any song ideas ready for the second album? Will it continue the musical lineage of "Deadly Gleams of Blood, Steel and Fire" organically, or are we in for a surprise?

- It's true, listeners won't have to wait as long for the second album! The debut took quite some time because it was such a personal and ambitious project, but now that the groundwork has been laid, I'm eager to build on it. I've already started working on new material, and the ideas are flowing more freely this time around. The second album will continue the musical lineage of "Deadly Gleams of Blood, Steel and Fire", but I'm also keen on exploring new territory. There will likely be some surprises in store, as I don't believe in repeating myself. The goal is to stay true to the spirit of Insepultus while pushing the boundaries even further.

I only mention "surprise" because on February 12, 2024, you premiered a new composition called

"The Sound of War as You Will Know It", written in the dungeon synth/dark ambient style. So how did this musical idea come about and what inspired it?

- "The Sound of War as You Will Know It" was an experiment in a different kind of storytelling. I've always had an interest in dungeon synth and dark ambient music because of their ability to evoke powerful emotions and images without relying on traditional song structures. This composition was an opportunity to explore those possibilities. I've worked on these as an Intro & Outro for the Live performances. The inspiration came from imagining the psychological and emotional impact of war—its chaos, despair, and moments of eerie stillness. Instead of describing these feelings with lyrics, I wanted to convey them purely through sound. The process was liberating, as it allowed me to work with textures and atmospheres in a way that's quite different from black metal.

You've had a full line-up in the past, so don't you plan on adding new members and performing some live shows in support of "Deadly Gleams of Blood, Steel and Fire"? Or will this not happen at all?


- If the opportunity arises and it feels right, I will consider bringing the music to the stage. It would be a challenge but also a chance to reimagine these songs in a live context and share them with fans in a more direct way. At this moment I'm still working on the show; firstly, we imagined a show that looks far over what we can have regarding the logistics, but now we consider a less complex show, but with the same amount of war spirit.

Please tell us about your relationship with Mihai "Coro" Caraveteanu from Axa Valaha Produc-

tions. He did quite a lot for Insepultus and was also the executive producer of your debut album. So, when did you become friends? How did it all start?

- Mihai "Coro" Caraveteanu has been a steadfast supporter of Insepultus and a true friend. We first crossed paths years ago, brought together by our mutual love of extreme metal and underground culture, and we used to play together in a band called Irkalla, built in our local city. Years passed and when I told him about the demo songs recorded, he was the first one supporting me in working further on the recordings. His involvement in the material was more than a producer and manager for the project, considering we advised on 99% of the stuff related to the album and the next steps. From the very beginning, he believed in the potential of this project and offered his guidance and support in numerous ways. As the executive producer of the album, Coro played a crucial role in helping it come to fruition. His experience in the music industry and his understanding of artistic integrity were invaluable to me, considering I do not have the experience. I'm grateful for his contributions, and I look forward to working with him on the next Insepultus projects.

If I left out anything important, please write it at the end of the interview. Thank you very much, Robert, for taking the time to respond. The last sepulchral words are yours.

- Thank you Kornel for allowing me to share my thoughts and experiences. To all who have supported Insepultus and connected with the music: I am deeply grateful. This project is more than just music—it's a journey through darkness, strength, and transformation. May the gleams of blood, steel, and fire join you on your paths. 

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FROM THE NETHERLANDS COMES HALIPHRON, WHO HAVE JUST RELEASED THEIR NEW ALBUM, AND I HAVE TO ADMIT THAT OVERALL IT'S A SUPER CAPTIVATING PIECE OF ART. SO, I ASKED RAMON PLOEG (GUITARIST AND FOUNDER) TO TALK ABOUT IT AND THEIR OUTLOOK FOR THE NEAR FUTURE. NOW READ OUR CONVERSATION AND ENTER THE ANATOMY OF DARKNESS!!!

Metallic greetings to everyone in Haliphron! Your second full-length album, "Anatomy of Darkness", was recently released on Listenable Records. So what feedback have you gotten on it so far? Has the new album increased interest in the band in general?

- Heavy greetings to you too! All the feedback from day one till now is amazingly positive. Very happy so far and it increased the interest in Haliphron a little bit, yes.

Since both of your albums were released by Listenable Records, please tell us a little about your relationship with them. What type of contract did you have with them and how do they manage Haliphron these days?

- Well, because it's a little bit smaller label than the regular major labels, we have some more one on one attention. We are not a number, but a real band with people. They are very kind people and really love our band too.

The kind of black/death metal you play pretty much focuses on the dynamism and engrossment of those genres, with symphonic parts giving it an epic feel. How do you see this personally and how would you describe your music to readers?

- I personally should describe it more like death metal with symphonic influences. Absolutely not black metal. But everyone hears it with different ears and influences.

"Anatomy of Darkness" was recorded and engineered by Hans Pieters at Plug Unit Studio, while mixed and mastered by Andy Classen at Stage One Studio. Needless to say, the audio production is excellent in every possible way. How long did you work on it and what was it like working with Hans and Andy? Did everything go smoothly from the beginning?

- We wanted to go back to a 'real' studio this time. Our previous album "Prey" was recorded at our home studios during the pandemic, so we hadn't had the chance to go to a studio. But we wanted to go back to a more vintage 90's/2000's sound, so I contacted Hans and Andy. Both are old school engineer and mixer and worked with bands like After Forever,

Gorefest, Legion of the Damned and Belphegor.

So I knew both guys from that period in time and liked their style. They are both very easy going guys to work with and you get all the space you need from them. From the moment of the first contact till the release it was very fine working with them!

The lyrical content is about the dangerous addictions and inner darkness of the human being. What inspired you to write about such topics? Who wrote the lyrics anyway? By the way, the slowly dissipating dark figure on the cover pretty much describes the essence and mood of your lyrics, doesn't it?

- Marloes is 100% responsible for the theme and lyrics. We had to have a new subject for this album and the idea was addiction. But not the 'normal' addiction people struggle with in life, but more the rare ones. So we have some tracks about addiction to cannibalism, serial murder, arson, painkillers and self-mutilation. We already have some feedback from fans that they were emotionally involved by hearing/reading some lyrics, because a friend of theirs had this addiction and can understand him better because of our lyrics. That's a huge compliment of course.

The dark figure on the cover (and back) represents the darkness (addiction) people can struggle with. Everyone has an inner darkness. But the question is what type of darkness and how to deal with it.

You play live as a five-piece, but there is also an auxiliary sixth member who is responsible for the choirs and keyboard parts on your albums. Why didn't he perform live with you? Anyway, is Haliphron the main priority for all members since some of them are also involved in Bleeding Gods, Dictated and Weapons to Hunt? How do you plan your concerts and tours?

- Yes, David Gutierrez Rojas is responsible for all the keys and choir arrangements. He performed live with us when we had our first shows, but he got a burn out and needed a break from traveling and live performing. Actually he was struggling with his own personal darkness. He's doing fine now, by the way! So that's good news.

At this time Haliphron is the only band we are

active in. So we can concentrate 100% on this band.

How often do you have band rehearsals? Do you hang out together a lot, or is it not typical at all? Besides music, do you have time for other hobbies, if so, what are they?

- Actually we only rehearse before a show or hitting the studio. 25 years ago we all rehearsed on a weekly basis with our former bands. But the time came to stop doing that because of time management and experience in this band. Personally I only have my full time day job and Haliphron is my full time hobby. So I'm a busy bee.

The Netherlands has always had a huge and very diverse metal scene. How do you see this from the perspective of 2024? What are your personal favorites and top recommendations for readers?

- We have a very rich history of metal bands. Back in the day we had Sinister, Orphanage, Occult (now Legion of the Damned), Asphyx and Gorefest to name a few. We also have a huge representation of black metal like Ordo Draconis, Carach Angren and Asagrum and symphonic metal too like Epica, After Forever and Within Temptation. I think Haliphron is a mix and is inspired by all of the above, but suitable for this age in time.

The band was formed in 2021, so it is considered a fresh band, but you are quite fast in releasing studio albums, so the question is, is your third album expected in 2025? Have you made any new songs for it and what direction will they take?

- Well, I never sit still writing and composing new music, but no, there's not gonna be a new album in 2025. Because we only had one album, our live setlist was always pretty the same. We already had written some new material and talked to the label to do a new album release. Now we can put more variety in the setlists. It was the right time to do so.

Thank you very much for the answers. Please share your final thoughts with our dedicated readers.

- Thank you for all the support and we hope to visit your country in the future! Haliphron wishes you the very best!

ASSASSIN

“Skullblast” CD 2024
(Massacre Records)

Teutonic thrash metal veterans Assassin are back with a new EP entitled “Skullblast”. Housed in a 4-panel digipak, the CD consists of 5 tracks and lasts exactly 26 minutes. The EP was recorded by Ingo Bajonczak (vocals), Jürgen “Scholli” Scholz (guitar), Stefano “Steve” Smura (guitar), Joachim “Jo” Kremer (bass) and Björn “Bum” Sondermann (drums). The CD starts with a long piece called “Blood for Blood”, which I would divide symbolically into two parts, the first, quite groovy, sounds like an absolute intro of just over a minute, which then turns into a standard Assassin cut.



The sound production is super punchy, and since the band advises playing it at maximum volume, it will punch through your ear canals in the right way. This is followed by the title track, which is literally a super explosive and heavyweight thrash metal anthem and is sure to be a big hit at live shows. The third song is called “In and Out by the Tide”. Quite a catchy tune with great solos and memorable singalongs. Then there’s “Cut Your (Own) Throat”. What a song title, you might say? Accordingly, it is characterized by fat riffs, roaring bass lines and rather bloodthirsty vocals. At 3:55 an error makes it sound like the CD is skipping, but of course it’s not. I’ve noticed similar, but less distracting glitches on other tracks, I’m not sure they should be there at all. Well, never mind, the CD closes with a cover of Fleetwood Mac’s famous “The Green Manalishi (With the Two Prong Crown)”. Assassin offers a rather innovative approach to this classic, which is an unexpected choice if you ask me, but it ended up with a pretty positive result. This EP represents Assassin’s sound, vision and musical style for 2024, so get ready for a devastating sonic assault!!!

Website: assassin-band.de
Facebook: facebook.com/AssassinOfficial

CRYPTOPSY

“As Gomorrah Burns” CD 2023
(Nuclear Blast)

“As Gomorrah Burns” is the title of the 8th studio album by the technical and brutal death metal band we all know as Cryptopsy. This Canadian band has always been notorious for their extreme music. Accordingly, with 8 songs from their latest album, they have once again proven what makes them unique in this genre. The CD contains more than 33 minutes



of material, showcasing a mind-blowing mix of explosive death metal brutality, reminiscent of the band’s earlier recordings, with the inevitable modern edge of course. The quartet of Matt McGachy (vocals), Christian Donaldson (guitar), Olivier Pinard (bass) and Flo Mounier (drums) is simply on fire with

their repertoire. On this album, as on the previous ones, they bring a lot of crazy guitar riffs, twisted drumming, complex bass parts and just super killer vocals that you will definitely have to listen to several times to remember. But it’s always been like that with them, you know, ha-ha... For me, it was nice to hear some similarities with my all-time favorite album, “Whisper Supremacy”, but also Paolo Girardi’s excellent cover reminded me of it in some ways. The sound is top-notch, thanks to the masterful work of Christian Donaldson, who was once again responsible for producing, mixing and mastering. I personally liked the first four songs of the album the most, namely “Lascivious Undivine”, “In Abeyance”, “Godless Deceiver” and “Ill Ender”. The second half of “As Gomorrah Burns” is more about modern influences, which are a bit less my thing. The jewel case CD contains a 12-page booklet with all the lyrics and a rather dark band photo. Overall, a very good release that shows how Cryptopsy envisions extreme music in 2023!!!

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HIRAX

“Faster Than Death” CD 2023

(Iron Shield Records/Rock Stakk Records)

This demo from 2023 was the first hint of new material for the forthcoming HIRAX album, which was first released on cassette by Destruktion Records (Germany) and then a few months later on CD thanks to a collaboration between Iron Shield Records (Germany) and Rock Stakk Records (Japan). The CD version thus contains eight new songs and one re-recorded track from the band’s debut album “Raging Violence” (1985). The members of the demo were Katon W. de Pena (vocals), Neil Metcalf (guitar), Chris Aguirre (bass) and Danny Walker (drums). The 9-song rehearsal demo was recorded on April 21st, 2023 at MDM Studios. And just like in the old days, a single microphone, or more precisely a Scarlett condenser mic, was used for recording. It’s 100% live and completely raw, but you can hear all the instruments and vocals well, so it’s enjoyable if you’ve been used to rehearsal recordings in the past. The tracklist is “Armageddon”, “Psychiatric Ward”,



“Worlds End”, “Faster than Death”, “Revenant”, “Relentless”, “Warlords Command”, “Mammoth” and “Drill into the Brain”. By the way, “Mammoth” was later renamed “Drowned Bodies”, and as you may have noticed, “Warlords Command” is the old re-recorded classic. These 9 songs were mastered by the legendary Bill Metoyer, directly for this CD release, which is also a welcome fact. The CD contains a black and white 4-page booklet and a sticker depicting Katon with hand-imitated devil horns. Oh, and I almost forgot to add that the demo is about 23 minutes long. We all know that HIRAX plays a pure old-school thrash metal/crossover mix, just the way it should be, so no more praise needed, buy it or die!!!!

Bigcartel: hirax.bigcartel.com

Bandcamp: hirax.bandcamp.com

Facebook: facebook.com/HIRAXOfficial

LOUDBLAST

“Altering Fates And Destinies” CD 2024
(Listenable Records)

The new Loudblast album finally found its way to me. Needless to say, the French quartet have produced another groundbreaking re-

cord. Personally, I’d rather call their music eclectic death metal, because they draw ideas and elements from a pretty wide musical palette. I mean, the core is definitely death metal, but they’re not afraid to be abstract and avant-garde, their music is diverse, refreshing and quite experimental. “Altering Fates and Destinies” consists of 10 songs,



but since I have the digipak edition, it also includes 3 bonuses (one of them is a cover of Necrophagia’s “Forbidden Pleasure”) and clocks in at almost 54 minutes. The recording line-up is Stéphane Buriez (guitars/vocals), Frédéric Leclercq (lead guitars/bass), Nicklaus Bergen (lead guitars) and Nicolas “Ranko” Müller (session drums). The soundscape provided by HK Krauss is very airy, transparent and balanced, but at the same time absolutely heavy, as befits a death metal album. If you listen carefully to the album, you will find that the new songs are darker, heavier and more mid-tempo oriented than on any previous Loudblast material, but also generally more progressive and innovative in their approach. This album was composed entirely by Stéphane, so it’s quite personal, dealing lyrically with the dark side of life and Lovecraftian mythology. To back up the music and lyrics, Stefan Todor has come up with a fantastic cover depicting the king of chaos and darkness who is coming to change your destiny. All in all, it has all the ingredients of a perfect death metal album, just waiting to be seen, heard and honestly appreciated. The tastefully designed 6-panel digipak includes a 12-page booklet with lyrics and photos of the band and members. Flawless release and that’s for sure!!!

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MASSACRE

“Necrolution” CD 2024
(Agonia Records)

“Necrolution” is the brand new full-length album from death metal legends Massacre and their debut on Agonia Records. The basic version of the album consists of 16 chapters, but since I have the slipcase edition,



there is an extra bonus track called “7 Doors of Death”. Together, the CD contains almost 51 minutes of playing time. From start to finish, it’s all about horror and old-school death metal. The material is certainly worthy and absolutely sounds good, and this success is due to the contributions of Kam Lee (vocals), Jonny Pettersson (lead guitar & keys), Rogga Johansson (guitar), Mike Borders (bass) and Jon Rudin (drums). Two songs feature guests such as Michael Grim with additional vocals and Fraa Mancini with a melodic lead on “The Colour Out of Space”, and Carlos Gonzalez with a ripping guitar solo on “Shriek of the Castle Freak”. If you’re

looking for an uncompromising old-school death metal album, then “Necrolution” is a must listen. The CD comes with an 8-page booklet containing all the lyrics except the bonus track, and an incredible cover art courtesy of Timbul Cahyono. Mark Riddick also did an alternative cover design for the slipcase, so that’s pretty cool too. Now about the failures. First, on most CD players, the bonus track does not play in its entirety, stopping at 1:57, or at best skipping a few milliseconds, and then continuing to the end. Second, there is no sticker as announced. But the latter is a minor issue compared to the faulty CD. And we also know that these bloopers have nothing to do with the band, the label should be blamed for them. So be careful ordering the slipcase edition, just saying...

MERCYLESS

“Those Who Reign Below” CD 2024
(Osmose Productions)

France’s Mercyless are one of the few death metal bands that still keep the dark spirit of the underground alive. When I start listening to the songs on the new album, I immediately feel like I’m transported back to the glory days of death metal, the early 90s. It’s a mystery to me how Max Otero (vocals/guitar) and his bandmates can still compose, play and sound like they did on their classic debut album “Abject Offerings”, so hats off to them. Oh, and don’t get me wrong, they are not copying themselves, on the contrary, they are evolving and starting to sound even more evil. So the new masterpiece is called “Those Who Reign Below” and consists of 11



chapters. The 43-minute album was recorded at Heldscalla Studio in France, where Max was joined by his trusted bandmates Gautier Merklen (guitar), Yann Tlguui (bass) and Johann Voirin (drums). Their commitment is pure and unparalleled, which is not often seen these days. Accordingly, their music is full of great riffs, dynamic hooks, wild solos, energetic drumming and bloodthirsty vocals. Their musical formula is perfect, and that’s commendable, but if you feel otherwise, I don’t think you’ve ever experienced the true essence of death metal. In 2024, Mercyless is still delivering death metal the way it should be! My favorite songs are “Extreme Uncion”, “I Am Hell”, “Crown of Blasphemy” and “Prelude to Eternal Darkness”, but there are no fillers, just flawless killers. In some songs they are joined by guests such as Bonvin Patrick, Stephan Baillot and Münch Thomas, who all delivered great guitar solos. I must also mention Raph Henry’s mixing, he is a true master of his work, and of course Néstor Ávalos’ infernal painting, which goes very well with the music. The 20-page CD booklet includes all the lyrics, live photos of each member individually, album credits and a huge thanks list, in a distinctly old school style. In short, everything is in place for a brilliantly devastating, old-school death metal album that can be thoroughly enjoyed. Needless to say, it’s a highly recommended release, and if you don’t buy it, you’re not a fan of the genre at all!!!

Bandcamp: mercyless.bandcamp.com

Facebook: facebook.com/mercylesscult

MIRROR

“Harvest” CD-R 2024

(Visceral Circuitry Records)

Mirror is the project of David Andriano from Almendralejo (Spain), founded in 1998. Since then he has released several albums,

EPs and a few demos. To be honest, he is a very active musician. And now he presents us his new 4-song EP called "Harvest". The EP is a little over 18 minutes long and features a rather doomy mix of death metal reminiscent of early 90s classics. I mean bands like Autopsy, Dismember, Grave,



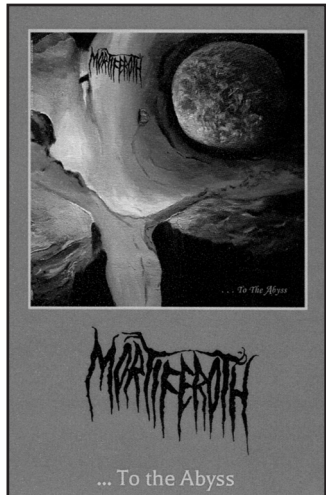
Nihilist and others. The guitar tone is of course built using the indispensable HM-2 pedal. The whole musical concept is a kind of homage to the herds of the past. And I have to say that David (all instruments and vocals) did an excellent job in evoking the beloved atmosphere of the 90's death metal bands. "Planet Death" kicks off the EP with a creeping tempo and a maximally old-school death/doom vibe. This is followed by "The Stygian", which is even more funereal in nature due to the rather slow and sad guitar harmonies. At one point it reminded me of Dismember's "Massive Killing Capacity" repertoire. The third is the title track itself, which to my surprise is an instrumental tune. This is a pretty good song, with a definite Grave influence. The EP closes with "Funeralism", which is not only the longest but also, in my opinion, the weirdest piece of this material. Maybe it's the acoustic guitar parts and the very hard rock sounding solo that makes me feel that way, but somehow this song stands out a bit for me. Apart from that, of course, David has put together a very good old-school death metal stuff, which I highly recommend everyone to listen to. The promo CD-R contains a printed black

and white insert with a cemetery photo on the cover and all the information about the recording on the back.

Bandcamp: mirror1.bandcamp.com

MORTIFEROOTH
 "...To The Abyss" MC 2024
 (Nihilistic Holocaust)

Mortiferoth is an underground death metal entity that was formed back in 2015. "...To the Abyss" is their latest work, originally released in 2023 on vinyl by Hail Shitar Records. Now, thanks to the French underground label Nihilistic Holocaust, this 5-song EP has been released on cassette, a single-sided black tape with a sticker. The band defines their music as "thrashing apocalyptic death metal in the old school way".



Well, they definitely are, but I'd classify them more as obscure death metal with a blackened edge, mainly because of the additional vocals. The EP was recorded by Jose Cabrera (guitars & vocals), Brian Hobbie (bass) and Steve Miller (drums & vocals). The almost 25-minute long material starts with the intro "Unholy Frequencies". It actually has some pretty annoying frequencies, ha-ha-ha... but

that's the way it should be. This is followed by "The Vatican's Elite", a pure death metal massacre in the old school style. By the way, this is the longest track on the EP, with over 7 minutes of crushing brutality, lots of tempo changes and great vocal arrangements. The third piece is called "Cosmic Winter". This song was already on their demo released in 2022. This is a mid-paced death metal cut with punchy double bass attacks. "Decay" is a faster song with great hammer blasts and some really catchy thrash metal riffs, it was also featured on "Demo 2022". The last song, "Retaliation of the Ancient Sorcerers", is all about groove and heavy riffs. It has short bomb blasts and cool solo parts, and is the second longest tune on the EP. The cassette is accompanied by a color J-card featuring Dick Lucas' excellent cover painting and all the useful information about the recording. I don't know what the limitation of this cassette release is, but if you like old school death metal, hurry up and get your hands on a copy as soon as possible!!!

Bandcamp: mortiferoth.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/Mortiferoth

NOCTURNUS AD
 "Unicursal" CD 2024

(Profound Lore Records)

"Unicursal" is the second album by Nocturnus AD. Musically and lyrically, it organically continues the concept of "Paradox" (2019). What's more, it was recorded with the same line-up as its predecessor: Mike Browning (vocals, drums, percussion, theremin, tuning fork), Belial Koblak (lead and rhythm guitars, synthesizers, backing vocals, bass, ebow), Demian Hefel (lead and rhythm guitars, dumbek, mini moog), Daniel Tucker (bass) and Josh Holdren (keyboards and samples, djembe). The album consists of 8 songs with lyrics, plus an intro and an outro, but there is also a bonus track if you buy the CD version, so it contains 11 chapters in total, at just over 64 minutes. Mike & Co.'s music is very sophisticated and technical, but it's always been that way, with a super variety of moods and instrumentation. You could also call it sci-fi death metal, or oc-

cult with horror elements. So, after a little over a minute of intro, the band kicks into their fictional story with Dr. Magus and immediately teleports us to "The Ascension Throne of Osiris". It's a rather sinister sounding song, followed by "CephaloGod", a song about an ancient being from space who wants to destroy the human race. The fourth track is "Mesolithic", which is the longest piece on the album. It begins with a rather ritualistic intro featuring goat toes, dumbek and djembe. It then turns into a fairly progressive death metal tune, with the usual Nocturnus AD ingredients, lots of tricky tempo changes, crazy guitar and keyboard solos. "Organism 46B" tells the story of a 38 foot long, 14 tentacle, squid-like creature that musically takes a rather aggressive death metal approach. The sixth song is "Mission Malkuth", another complex piece with exciting thrash, even black metal riffing from the middle of the song. And now that the portal to another space and time has opened, it's time to gather all the symbols of power.



The interstellar journey and exploration of symbols continues in "Yesod, the Darkside of the Moon". The guitar riffs in this song are quite dynamic and catchy, and there are a lot of great solos in there as well. Then comes the second longest composition, "Hod, the Stellar Light". It's all about a cavalcade of riffs and solos, blasting drum patterns and the vibration of secret words of power. One of my favorite songs, to be honest. The ninth track is called "Netzach, the Fire of Victory",



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a quite varied tune with a lot of fast drumming and some heavyweight doom metal in the second half. "Unicursal" concludes with an outro of over four minutes, dominated by ritualistic drum parts and haunting keyboard sections. The bonus track on the digipak edition is "Nocturnus Will Rise", a new version of an old song that was featured on the first Nocturnus demo in 1987 and was called "Nocturnus". Of course this new adaptation contains new parts and arrangements, but the text is the same as in the 1987 version. Thanks to Jarrett Pritchard, the sound production is very enjoyable, I mean every little detail comes through and gets the attention it deserves. The CD is issued in a 4-panel digipak with a black tray and a professionally designed 16-page booklet. The front and back cover artworks by Uwe Jarling are also worth looking at and observing, flawless works of art for sure. All I can say is buy this album now or you'll regret it later!!!

E-mail: afterdeath666@gmail.com
 Facebook: facebook.com/NocturnusAD

SODOM
"Tapping The Vein" 3CD 2024
 (Noise Records/BMG)

The reissue of Sodom's 1992 masterpiece "Tapping the Vein" was long overdue and has finally arrived in a luxurious way,



especially if you look at the bookpack edition. To be honest, it's such a rad album with such excellent sounding production that I don't think it really needed to be remastered, but they did it anyway. When I compare the original sound of "Tapping the Vein" with the sound remastered by Eroc, I am happy to say that his remaster was not at all about loudness like it is today. It's just a bit louder than the original, and it mainly focused on balancing the frequencies differently, so the remastered album sounds more massive and less grainy (especially if you listen carefully to the guitars). For me, the original sound by the mighty Harris Johns is still perfect and flawless, but the remaster gives a whole new approach that I admit I also love and enjoy listening to. These 11

remastered songs with a running time of 46:20 are included on the first CD of this digisleeve release. The second CD contains 14 tracks at 62 minutes 17 seconds and is part of the "Tapping the Vein" (Redux version). These songs were mixed by the imitable Andy Brings and mastered by Eroc. For me, the Redux version (11 songs) and its alternative remixes (3 songs with different vocal and solo takes) were a great experience, because the raw studio tracks gave me a completely new vision of the album.



I had the feeling that Andy concentrated a lot on Chris' drumming and Tom's singing, so the other instruments were a bit over-shadowed, but not in a guilty way. It really does feel like you're sitting in the studio with them as they're recording the album, which is fantastic in every possible way. The third CD features a complete concert recorded live in Tokyo in 1992, 12 songs with a duration of 45:54. Quite a great addition to this reissue. It sounds decent and the setlist is fantastic, but let me list all the songs here: "Sodomy & Lust", "An Eye for an Eye", "One Step over the Line", "Deadline", "Agent Orange", "Skinned Alive", "Shellfire Defense", "The Crippler", "Bullet in the Head", "Wachturm", "Body Parts" and "The Kids Wanna Rock (Bryan Adams cover)".



The 8-panel digisleeve version comes with a 24-page booklet featuring a 6-page article by Ronny Bittner, lots of never-before-seen photos from the band's personal archive, original album and reissue credits and, of course, lyrics. Well, the latter not in all its glory, as the lyrics to "Hunting Season" and "Reincarnation" were somehow left out. There's one other little thing I don't like about this digisleeve edition, how the

CDs are positioned, I mean the ones in the middle are quite a pain to get out of the damn sleeve. I don't know whose idea it was, but it sure would be better with proper CD trays. Oh, I almost forgot to add that in addition to the original cover, the digisleeve panels include the fantastic artwork of the Redux version by Krasimir Talev, as well as separate member photos that are not the ones from the original first press release, but different shots of the same photo shoot. Okay, enough chatter, this is a must-have for Sodom fans worldwide!!!

SODOM
"Tapping The Vein" 12" 2LP 2024
 (Noise Records/BMG)

As I have already written a review of the 3CD reissue of "Tapping the Vein", I will now focus on the features of the vinyl, the insert and the cover and how they differ from the original first pressing of the album. Firstly, this new double vinyl reissue comes with a beautiful gatefold cover. Thus, the inside of the gatefold features an extra band photo, thanks lists and credits for the remastered original and Redux versions of the album. If I compare the front cover of the reissue with the original, it's pretty much the same, except that the logo and title are positioned a bit differently and the cover image is darker. However, there is a significant difference on the back cover, and I don't mean the additional track lists in the top right corner, but the fact that the shadow guy in the top left corner is in a completely

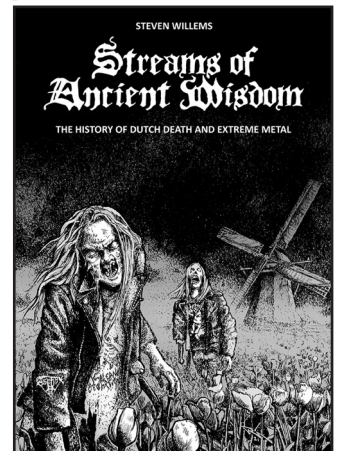


different place to the original, moved more to the left, closer to the edge. No big deal, I just don't understand why they did it that way. Of course, the reissue has two inserts, but if I compare the original insert with the remastered one, the first thing I see is that the background is grey, whereas the original was white. Then, for the reissue insert, they used different member shots, but of course from the same photo shoot. There's also a bit of a mess with the song titles and their highlighting, as the song title "Hunting Season" is omitted, and the song titles

"Tapping the Vein" and "Reincarnation" are not highlighted in bold like the other song titles. Okay, forget it, and let's not be so meticulous. The second insert, which is for the Redux version, contains lots of great band photos, some live photos, concert tickets and posters. A cool addition, for sure! Both the remastered album and the Redux version were issued on transparent red vinyl, while the original was, of course, on black vinyl. Now about their sound. I always considered "Tapping the Vein" to be Sodom's most aggressive sounding album and now this beast sounds even more massive than ever thanks to Eroc. The Redux version also sounds really good, and it has this special raw feel to it that gives all the songs a different aspect. And when you compare the two, you realize how sublime Harris Johns is, because now you have the mix of raw tracks, thanks to none other than Andy Brings, the way it all started in the studio, and you can compare it to the finished album. In short, if you like Sodom, you should own this double vinyl edition!!!

STREAMS OF ANCIENT WISDOM
The History Of Dutch Death And Extreme Metal, 2022
 (Cult Never Dies)

Let me start by saying that this book about the Dutch death metal and extreme metal scene is simply incredible. Steven Willems has done a tremendous job of delving deep into the history of many bands, both the very well-known and those that have been forgotten and buried in the dust of time. The hardback book has a page size of 30x21 cm and 400 pages in total. These large format pages are all in black and white, with excellent print quality. For me, it was especially interesting to read about the bands that have always been in my collection and that have stuck with their unique style on first listen. These bands are Asphyx, God Dethroned, Gorefest, Houwitsier,



Inquisitor, Judgement Day, Pentacle, Pestilence, Sinister, Soulburn and Thanatos. On the other hand, there are so many other great underground acts that have somehow escaped my attention, and thanks to this book and all the great stories, I'm going to dig them up one by one. It was also interesting to read about how the famous Aardschok magazine, the Stampij and Thrashing Madness radio shows, Dynamo Open Air and Metal Attack got started. Pretty cool reminiscences and conversations for sure. Then there are the essential sections on studios, venues, fanzines, booking agencies, you can read about quite a lot of things. It's also great to read the impressions of other well-known musicians from all over the world about when they first encountered the Dutch scene and how it affected them. This book is so huge and literally so heavy, and so full of invaluable information, that I highly recommend it to anyone interested in death metal or other Dutch extreme entities. Worth every penny spent, so get it before it's too late!!!
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