SLOTH 'ZINE DIGITIZATION PROJECT

ISSUE #4

Introductory Notes

The fourth installment of Sloth was in some ways a direct continuation of where issue #3 left off, but in several key aspects marks a solid line of demarcation into a different tactical approach. First and foremost, in the fall of 1997 I left my parents' home in Northern Virginia for my freshman year at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, FL. Somehow through all that excitement and change, of meeting new people and learning to manage your own daily life, I still found time to tend to the zine, which by now had become a legit part of the underground metal world.

Published in March or April of the following spring, Sloth #4 featured a dazzling layout that was both professional and sophisticated. 2 guest columnists added some great humor (the "Goth Kids Suck" comic is still a classic), and at a whopping 64 pages this issue was again stuffed with interviews and reviews.

The biggest change visually was the move away from pricey white paper stock into newsprint, which allowed me to print 5000 copies all paid for by the ads. Besides getting copies into music shops here and there, my main avenue of distribution was through a number of metal mail order companies. In a nice little symbiosis, these record label would send out copies with their orders—they looked good in the eyes of their customers by giving out freebies and I got Sloth into the right people's hands all over the world!

As for the writing, I was really hitting my stride in terms of confidence and knowledge about metal, and this shined in the better interviews as well as the larger number of positive reviews. Of course many albums and demos got smashed by my reckless hammer of justice, and a couple of the interviews were a bit silly, but again I was only 18 years old at the time.

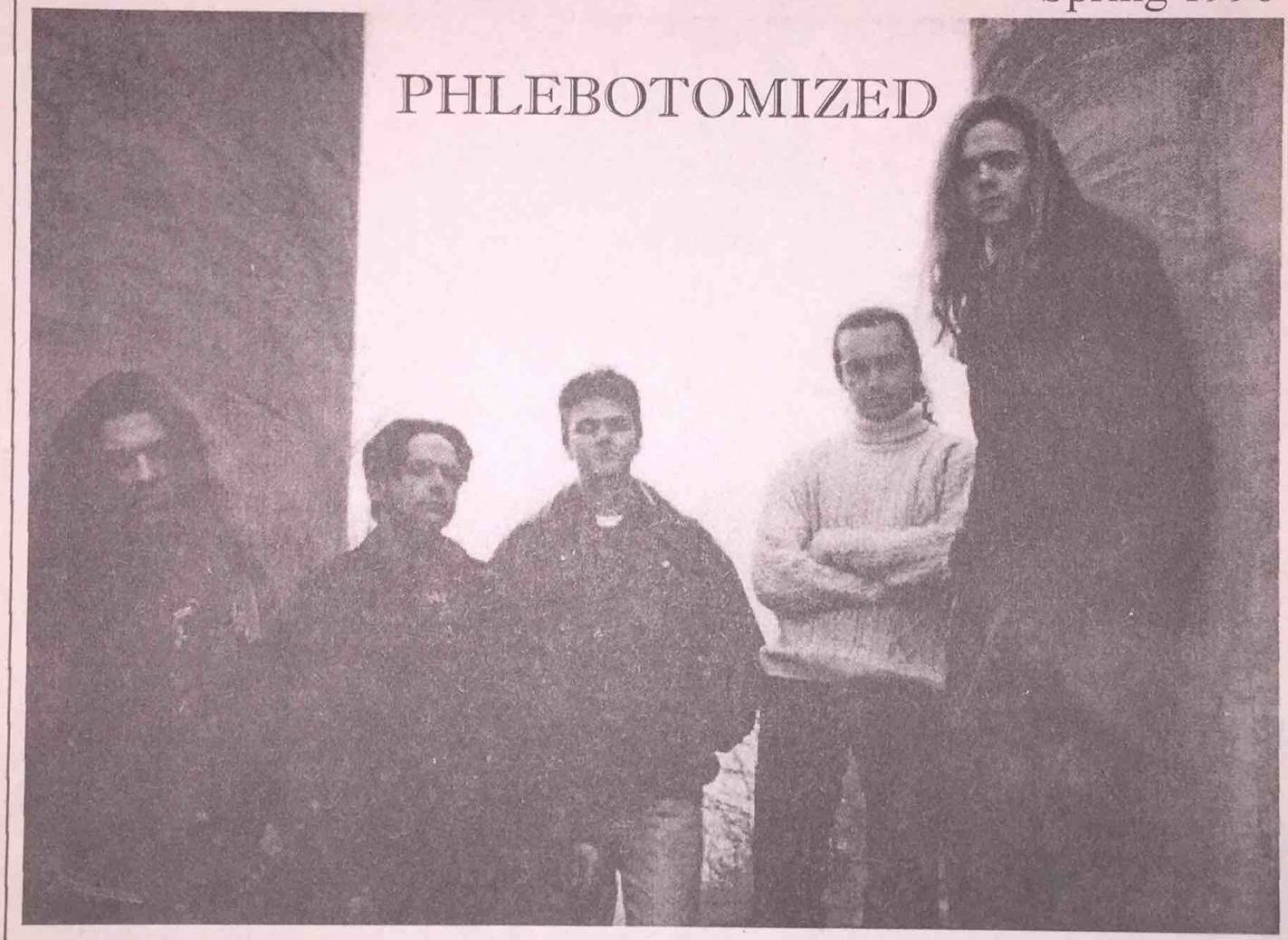
On a final note, I got a lot of help over the Christmas break through one of my father's veterinary clients, a computer wiz named Larry Dambra. He was working with a company called Cinecom Corporation down in Woodbridge, VA, and those guys opened up one of their rooms for me to work on the layout. It's nice to look back on your own creations and realize that without other people's generosity these things may never have seen the light of day.

-Phil Alterman
January 17, 2016

SLOTH

Issue #4

Spring 1998



PHLEBOTOMIZED

REVIEWS

GARDEN OF SHADOWS



THEATRE OF TRAGEDY

BILL ZEBUB

THE CROWN

DARKSEED

ANTI-GOTH COMIC

OBSCENITY

FUELED



MY DYING BRIDE

THE GREAT KAT

HATRED

DESTROY THE REVILED

RANTS AND RAVES

CONTACTS

DECEASED



brutal truth
sounds of the animal kingdom



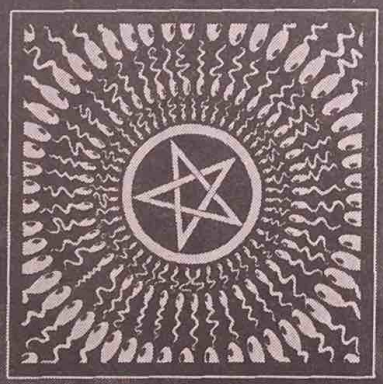
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SLOTH

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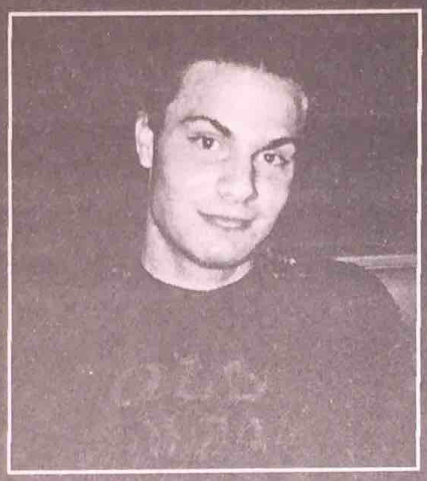
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The humble editor

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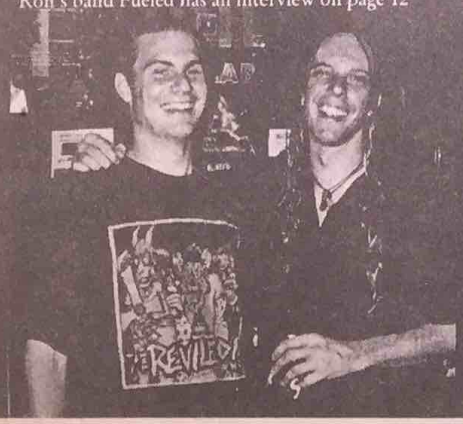
(note: I attend college in Florida and live in Virginia. Both addresses are permanent, meaning mail sent to either will get to me. If ever in doubt, e-mail me or call the Virginia phone number.)

So here I am again. Just hours away from finishing the fourth installment of Sloth magazine. This is by far the best issue, and I think you'll find the new layout to be far superior to most other mags. I hope the same holds true concerning content. In these 64 pages is everything you need to keep informed and involved in the worldwide metal scene. You'll find updated lists containing the addresses of over 150 legitimate 'zines and labels worldwide. There are over 200 reviews to ensure that you'll discover the best new music while avoiding the worst. And while last issue focused on unsigned bands, this one features signed but lesser known acts that deserve your attention. Comic relief from Chad Middleton, Jon Ezell, and Raul Caballero rounds out this great new issue of Sloth magazine.

Extra special thanks goes out to my family for always being supportive and helping me keep things in perspective. Also deep gratitude to Skip, Larry, and the rest of Cinecom Corporation for putting up with me and letting me use all of their equipment (sorry about the toner, guys). You wouldn't be holding this right now if it weren't for their generosity.

Hello to the following folks: The damn hoes of Rosborough 6 (Goldie!), all my friends from T.C. Williams, the cool folks at U Miami that are too many to mention, Bill Zebub, Sarah Gilbert (where are you?), and everyone else anywhere that thinks they should be here, because my mind is so completely drained that I can't even think about naked women.

Ron's band Fueled has an interview on page 12



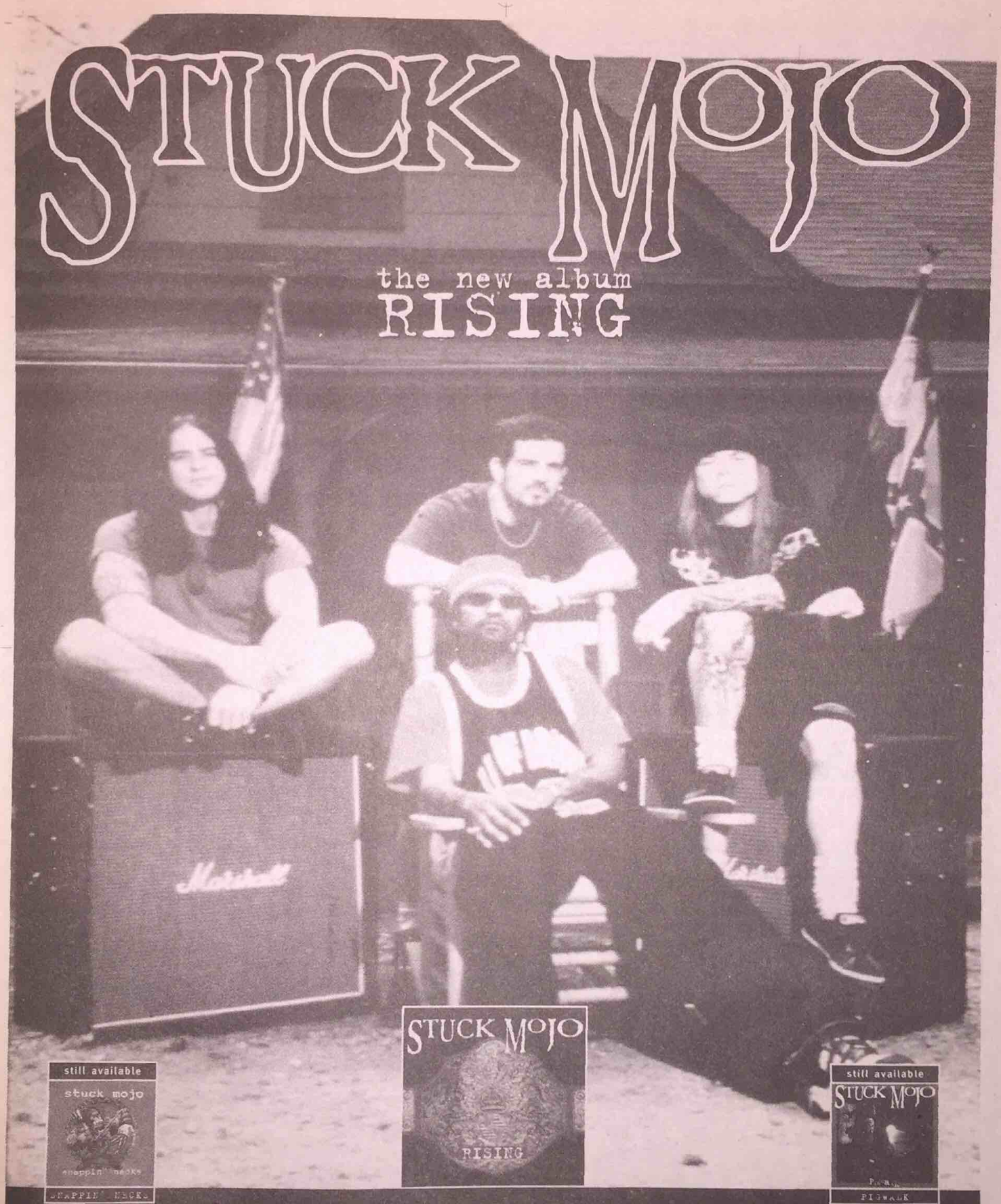
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This is a very special band. Rarely does a group come along that conveys a message so heartfelt and powerful. That is why I am quite proud to present Holland's Phlebotomized, one of my favorites of all time. I corresponded singer Dennis Geestman, and here's what he had to say...

Although the band has had two successful albums, it has yet to gain a large following in the US. Why do you think that is? What do you plan to do to increase your popularity over here? Would you like to tour North America?
We're not officially distributed in the US. Our label Cyber Music has no distribution in your country, except for some smaller mailorder companies. Unfortunately, music doesn't sell itself. It needs promotion. Without that, even the best albums will never be noticed by a large audience. There's no real financial support from Cyber, so all that's left for us is to try to get as many contacts as possible through means like these. We can't do more than that...yet. It all depends on people outside of the band with some power to get things done. Touring North America would be the best, but I don't see it happening that soon. We wouldn't know where to start. So, if you would like to see Phlebotomized in America, it's up to you (all) to get us there.

Since you're fairly new to Sloth's readers, tell us a little about the band. Where are you from? When did you form? How many members are there? How many demos did you put out before you got signed?
We're from the Rotterdam area in Holland. We started in 1989 under the name of **Bacterial Disease**. Two years later it all became more serious, and we changed the name into Phlebotomized. We recorded one demo called *Devoted to God*, which contained melodic death/doom metal. It sold over 3000 copies and then we were signed by M.M.I. Records from Germany for the *Preach Eternal Gospels* CD EP. On this we experimented with a violinist. He later joined the band, completing our seven piece lineup. Then, in 1994, we signed with Cyber and released our debut album, *Immense Intense Suspense*. We had quite a successful period, though three members had to quit. Then came quite an emotional period in which we were able to write our new material. We found two new members and recorded *Skycontact*.



How did the deal with Cyber Music come out? Would you have self-financed *Immense*... if you hadn't gotten signed? How did that album end up selling? Do you still play any of the old songs live?
Ted from Cyber saw one of our gigs and decided to offer us a one album deal. I don't think we would have self-financed *Immense*, because there were 13 other labels interested at that time. *Immense* sold about 5000 copies, which could have been much more if Cyber had done promotion. Contractual errors obliged us to stick with Cyber for one more album. At the moment we are unsigned. Of course, we still play old songs. We play "Mustardgas" from *Preach*, and from *Immense* we play "Barricade," "Mellow Are The Reverberations," and "Subtle Disbalanced Liquidity." We'll pick up "Dubbed Forswearer" again soon.



The band started out as simple grindcore, but then added a keyboardist and a violinist. What led to these additions? How did you avoid going "too far" with these new melodic elements? What do you feel they do for the band?
We were super amazed by the combination of keyboards and death metal on *The Key* by **Nocturnus**. That album was the true inspiration to ask Ben into the band in 1990. The violin is a different story. We came up with a violin melody and asked Maarten to play it in the studio. He then started rehearsing other songs as well. We thought it sounded cool, so we asked him to join full-time. Maarten is no longer in the band, but since our bass player Jaro is a violinist as well, there are still some violins on the new album. Going "too far" with these instruments, as you say it, has never been an option. We are a metal band. Aggression therefore is the most important emotion. We use the keys and violins to make our music sound more vivid, not less heavy.

Looking back, what do you think of the debut and earlier releases? When writing new songs, did you make a conscious effort to stick to your roots while incorporating new elements?
Oh, we're still very pleased with our earlier releases...of course. We didn't make this change because we suddenly hated our old material, we just wanted the new stuff to sound different and more diverse. Banning our roots wouldn't make it more diverse, it would just change the style. So that was never even a thought. We like the old stuff very much and would like to blend that with new influences, whatever those may be.

Speaking of the new album, tell us about *Skycontact*! How long did it take to write all the new material? When and where was it recorded? How long has it been out? Has Cyber been giving it a strong push? What have the critics been saying?
The songs were written from, say, the end of 1994 to the summer of 1996, when we recorded them at the Beaufort Studio in Holland (where **The Gathering**, **Nembrionic**, **Consolation**, **Evisceration** and other Dutch bands also recorded). *Skycontact* was released the 27th of February 1997. Cyber offers quite a large recording budget, yet cannot afford large promotional support. This is quite paradoxical. Ted is making our dreams come true by releasing our stuff, but on the other hand he is slowing down our growth. But maybe, we ourselves are doing that too. We slow ourselves down by releasing music that's hard to understand. *Skycontact* has to grow on the listener. It's quite a slow process, and since critics don't always put a lot of listening into an album before reviewing it, half the reviews say we're too weird, too complex, or whatever. Those people who did put some effort into listening and understanding *Skycontact* all reacted very well or even outrageously.

One aspect that shows the band's growth is its experimentation on the new material. Had Phlebotomized been at the edge of such a breakthrough for a while, was there just an explosion of creativity, or did you say to yourselves, "Forget what people are going to think, this is the way we're going to do things"? Was there any hesitation within the band to admit taking influence from Pink Floyd, Metallica, Nirvana, and Kyuss?
It all happened very spontaneously. We were writing the new material and knew that our new ideas sounded differently, but we didn't expect *Skycontact* would bring such change. It was just a moment in time, things happened and other things did not. *Skycontact* came out this way but we have no idea if the next album will continue on that style. At the moment we're learning from the album, trying to see what our strengths and weaknesses are. You're right, we didn't care what people would think of *Skycontact*, but for the future we want to bring our own type of music that the fans can rely on. Taking influence from the bands that you mentioned wasn't difficult at all. We obviously like these bands a lot

better than the bands we listened to in the past, and we always just play what we like. But, since the scope of bands and styles that we like is so wide, we cannot possibly combine them into one style without totally alienating our listeners. So, we'll have to start looking for a middle ground, a compromise between what we like to play and what people want to hear. It will be weird again, but we'll try to avoid it being too weird for the listeners.

How would you classify *Skycontact*? If you were to convince someone to buy it, what would you tell him?
Well, I'm not too good in sales talk, but as a musician I would classify *Skycontact* as a transitory album. It's in between things. It doesn't set out to accomplish one specific goal. And that is exactly what justifies the album, for it's from the heart, it's without prejudice, and it's open-minded. It's a unique album, unlikely to ever be imitated as a whole, not by us, not by others.

I noticed that after the third song, *Skycontact* becomes like a concept album, with certain riffs and vocal lines repeated, like "I've been living in shame." Please explain the details and how this came about.
Well, you're pretty close to the truth. After the fourth song, a song called "I Hope You Know" sets in. It lasts over twenty-two minutes and is divided into four parts. Right after the heavy, double-bass supported opening of the first part, a sweet, but tragic melody starts on keyboards. This melody is the main theme of the song, heard in the first, third, and fourth parts. The second part is based on a bass loop. "I Hope You Know" is basically something Lawrence had to get off his chest. It deals about a certain event his past. I'm not gonna tell you what exactly happened, because that isn't relevant to others not included in this certain event. What does matter is the feeling, the emotion that the song evokes. For me, it refers to that moment of clarity, the point of realization., which might be anything. It might be picking up the broken pieces of the cup that you dropped on the floor, realizing that this precious thing is now broken and will never be the same, for it's gone. The message of "I ope You Know" might then be to get some glue or a new cup.

Of course, the initial subject was an event much more disastrous than dropping a cup, but I hope this example shows that although this song isn't dealing with your specific problem, answers might flow from the emotions that it breathes.

There's a hidden track before the first song, supposedly a world's first. Who came up with the idea? Why was it included? Is it an intro this semi-concept album? How did Cyber design the CDs so that when you press 'play', this intro is skipped?
Well, the idea came from the guys who mastered the CD. They explained the possibility of hiding a song before the first one. We didn't think of using it until we found a song to match that principle. During the recording sessions, I found it very hard to fit my vocals into a song called "Dizz-tanz," as the lyrics were somewhat too personal, and they just didn't work. It then became very hard to accept the fact that this song now had to be excluded from the album, for its feeling was maybe underlying the entire album. So from that point of view it does function as an intro to the rest of the album. I don't know whether it was the world's first; fact is that it isn't the only one anymore.

Phlebotomized
P.O. Box 1230
3180 AE Rozenburg
The Netherlands
http://www.et.tudelft.nl/~ben/

Who did the cover painting? I see it as a combination of a Necrophiliac cover and Nirvana's Nevermind. Explain what it means to you and how it relates to the title.
The cover was done by a local artist. We saw earlier works by him and got excited. We gave him a tape with the music, explained certain details about the title, and this is what he came up with. You see what he saw when hearing the music! The cover expresses youthfulness, transition, and the big unknown that is out there. I don't know any Necrophiliac cover, but the thought of our cover resembling *Nevermind* has crossed our minds, too. The similarity is completely accidental, but perhaps not coincidental. Maybe some higher powers are involved, since "Achin'" has a lot to do with Kurt. Maybe that baby swam through the artist's mind when he heard that song.

Are you going on tour anytime soon? What notable bands have you played with? Does playing live better convey Phlebotomized, and do you make many new fans at each show?
Although I see Phlebotomized as a real live band, circumstances have never been that good for a real tour. We do play live on occasion, about twice a month. So far we played with **Anathema**, **Samael**, **Therion**, and The Gathering, but most of the times we ourselves headline a show. I don't know if we make a lot of new fans at each show. We do make a lot of *new* friends, but if all these friends start buying all our albums, I don't know. Our fans are not great in number, they are great in adoration. That's what I notice. We haven't got a **KISS**-like army of fans, but once someone's hooked on Phlebotomized, it's doubtful that this person will ever let go.

Our fans are not great in number, they are great in adoration... Once someone's hooked on Phlebotomized, it's doubtful that this person will ever let go.

Do you ever feel frustrated by the large number of lame bands that clog the underground and prevent possible fans from checking you out? What's your take on the underground ?
Well, yeah. But, it's not a secret that the world is an unfair place. I pray that in the end the audience will decide, not the bands or the labels. I can't blame other people for the fact that possible fans are missing all the action. How should they know us when our CD isn't distributed and our name isn't promoted in your country? I can only blame our own label for the lack of intelligence, not the fans. Cyber thinks a good album will sell itself, but it also needs to get promoted in order to attract attention. And the underground? Well, I love and support the underground, but still it's remarkable that it takes years to gain fame, yet only days to get ruined.

Any final comments?
First of all, I would like to thank you, Phil, for having this interview with us. I wish you the best of luck with your magazine and yourself. To all the readers I would like to say, if you see our new CD, *Skycontact*, please take a minute to listen to it. You'll be in for a surprise, I guarantee.

If you want to (sky)contact us, we have our own website called Phleb On The Web, which contains a lot of information about our band as well as e-mail addresses of the band members. Please enclose an IRC and your own address when sending letters.



DARKSEED

A new breed of metal is being born. Just as Dark Tranquility, Eucharist, Dissection, and At the Gates redefined not only the Swedish style but also established a new trend worldwide, Germany's Darkseed is a purveyor of something original. With clean vocals that border on thrash and James Hetfield, melodic guitars reminiscent of *Amok*-era Sentenced (but more Swedish), and an '80s rock sensibility that took lots of balls and skill to incorporate interestingly and convincingly, this quintet offers much to appreciate in *Spellcraft*'s ten songs. Without a doubt, these guys have found a niche that many will unsuccessfully imitate and you will appreciate. So sit back with a pipe, relax, and see what vocalist/guitarist Stefan Hertrich has to say...

***Spellcraft* is the type of album you'd expect from a band that had played death metal for many years and had released about six albums. Darkseed has been together for five years but is musically mature enough to have been around twice as long. How many albums have you released? Were you guys in other bands before forming? Did the years in those bands shape your current style and future direction?**

During the five year existence of Darkseed we've released a mini-CD called *Romantic Tales* (April 1995 through Invasion Records) and two full-length CDs. The first, *Midnight Solemnly Dance*, came out in May of 1996 through Serenades Records, and our most recent, *Spellcraft*, was released in March '97 through Nuclear Blast Records. Since we are quite young — the average age is 21 — you could suppose that we didn't play in other bands before forming Darkseed. So, all the different changes, improvements in the past and hopefully in the future, were typical side-effects of the collaboration between all the different members.

Despite the music's obvious intensity and depth, I can't help but sense how accessible *Spellcraft* is. Could it be the album that re-establishes metal as a "legitimate" form of music in the world's eye? Do you even think metal should even emerge from the underground to face the masses once again?

The reason for writing such an accessible album was due to the fact that our first release, *Romantic Tales*, was so complicated in structure that we quickly became bored composing in this way. Making good music doesn't only mean integrating as many parts in one song as possible. For me as a songwriter, the new challenge concerning *Spellcraft*'s songwriting was to make good songs by using only a few parts, and in my opinion this is much more difficult than writing a complicated song! Of course I have to admit that in this period of metal music, bands also try to write songs in a commercial way, because the time when metal only meant "revolution" is over. The market in Germany established itself so well that some metal acts have also gotten the attention of non-metal people. And that's why bands like **Manowar** can enjoy much commercial success despite it now being 1997.

Your voice can best be described as a melodic, toned-down shout used in '80s thrash, with hints of James Hetfield. Do you agree, or could you give a more accurate comparison? What sort of vocals did you use on previous albums?

Well, on *Romantic Tales* I did the ususal grunts, which I still like very much. But after that I wanted to improve and develop myself, because my nature is always to go one step forward. I personnally do not share the opinion of the press, which says that my voice sounds like **Metallica**, but I have to accept it seemingly as fact, because pretty much everyone says it. I will change my singing style a bit because Darkseed must be an independent band finding its own style. This is the next step for me on my path to musical improvement.

Are you often compared to Sentenced? Do you see any similarities between the two? I feel *Spellcraft* is the album Sentenced has been shooting for all along but has been hopelessly lost since Taneli Jarva's departure.

Only some people have compared us to **Sentenced**, and I'll readily admit that there are some similarities concerning the rock n' roll riffs.

Being from Germany, do you take great influence from the Scorpions? Have you ever pretended to be them by wearing really tight leather pants and being balding, washed up rock stars?

No, I don't listen to the Scorpions or any of the other old-fashioned German heavy metal acts, even though I admire their success. These bands don't reflect my musical tastes, as I prefer modern bands as well as classical and meditation music.

Nuclear Blast is a big label that's got many bands on its roster. How has the promotion been handled so far?

I'm quite satisfied with Nuclear Blast's promotion. We played a well-organized and well-attended tour with **Lacrimosa** in Europe, and we would like to visit North America.

Speaking of tours, do you feel playing live has benefited the band? What is a typical Darkseed show like? Do you have any memorable experiences from certain shows?

The tour gave us the feeling that Nuclear Blast is really interested in the success of Darkseed. We also got to know many important people and realized that making music doesn't only consist of partying. It would be interesting to know how CD sales have gone because we got many euphoric live reviews in the press.

Very rarely do we encounter bands with three guitarists, especially when they're not playing thick, whirlwind death or black metal. Has this extra guitar added depth to your music? Is it really necessary? Do you have any double or triple solos? Do you have songs which only require two guitars? Does you do the pretentious rock star thing on stage and just have his guitar hanging there, never actually playing it?

The three guitars are only used in the studio to make the music and melodies more perfect, but live we don't need this extra guitar because it would make the music less direct. We'll try to not to use three guitars on the next album, because it's silly to use an instrument in the studio and not live. But I have to admit that Darkseed is not the only band to use three guitars on parts of their CD. Oh, yes, I would like to use double or triple solos in the future.

The female vocals on *Spellcraft* bring an '80s Lita Ford quality to the music, but in a good way. Do you feel Darkseed has at last bridged the gap between '80s and '90s music, something bands have been trying unsuccessfully for years?

We were pleased with the way they came out; unfortunately this vocalist lives 800 kilometers away. We just got to know her when we recorded the album in Hamburg. Perhaps you are right by saying we built a bridge between '80s and '90s metal music.

***Spellcraft*'s booklet is interesting. It includes meat surrounded by candles (and covered by a B&W photo), a wishbone, more candles, and what looks like fun with alphabet soup. Please, explain!**

Yeah, the booklet looks quite strange, but for me it doesn't have a special meaning. It just reflects the parts of my lyrics about magic, voodoo, etc.

Tell me about the cover, too.

We often dispute about the cover because we don't exactly know what it is. I think it's an alien with a rose, but I can't say for sure. My wish of having a strange cover and booklet was fulfilled, so it doesn't really matter if we can't tell what's happening.



What does the band mean to you?

The band now is a great hobby where I can show that I am able to make creative things. It also means getting to know many different kinds of people. And for me, there's also the small hope that we've reached the point where we can earn money with music. And I'm quite willing to be independent from the normal civil life!

Any final comments?

Many thanks for your support in North America, it's quite important to us!

Darkseed
Postfach 1412
82135 Olching
Germany


GOTH KIDS SUCK
by chad middleton
LET'S GO WATCH THE CROW, IT'S SO GOTH.
He's crying on the inside
sigh I'M DEAD
Let's paint our faces and go into a public area
ALL BLACK
HEY, THAT'S ORIGINAL
Are they clowns?
THEN WE CAN ACT LIKE WE'RE SCARED OF NORMAL PEOPLE.
we are so different
we are alot deeper than just a painted face, we also like magic stuff.
OH, like david copper-field?
SOME OF MY FAVORITE GOTH BANDS ARE NIN, MARILYN-MANSON, GRAVITY KILLS, ya know really underground stuff.
duh
TWISTED FIRE STARTER
KMFDM
The funniest thing to see is 6th grade kids trying to "goth out".
THAT'S REAL GOTHIC
NIN
get in touch with the dark side with nerd hair cut
THEY HAVE THE LOST PUPPY LOOK
PETS
GOTH KIDS CHEAP
I wouldn't be suprised to find some goth nerd in a pet store
THEY SHOULD BE EASY TO TAKE CARE OF, THEY ARE ALWAYS PULLING EACH OTHER AROUND WITH A CHAIN
SAD
DOG GOTH
HOW CAN YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A FREAK WHEN YOU LOOK LIKE EVERYONE ELSE?
you make me sick.
It's the cool thing to do..
TAKE A DICTION-ARY AND LOOK UP GOTHIC, TELL ME IF IT SAYS DRESS LIKE AN ASS AND PAINT YOUR FACE.
GOTH
I BARF ON IT.

Garden of Shadows

Live photos by Phil Alterman

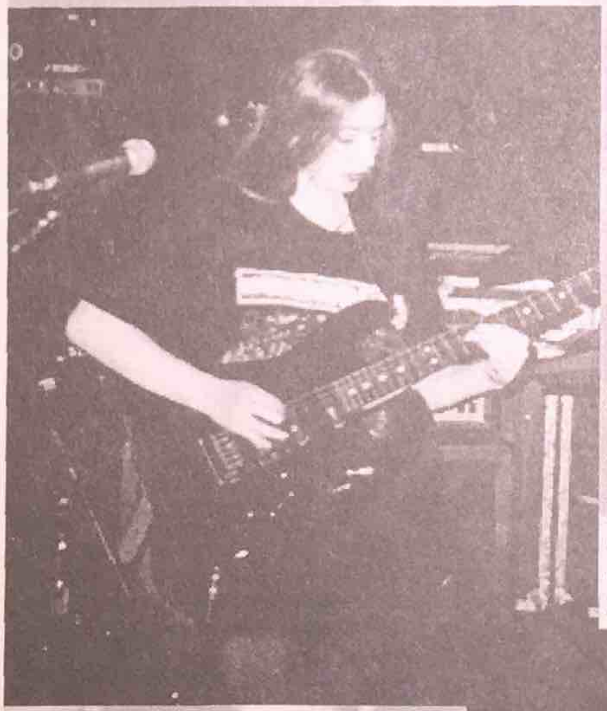
Never has a demo band proved itself as worthy as did Garden of Shadows on its first demo, *Heart of the Corona*. So much melody, power, and emotion is crammed into its thirty minutes that it is a challenge to play for just a "casual" listen. I know all of the members personally and they're great people, remaining humble despite their growing popularity. Guitarist Brian answered some questions for me, and here we go...

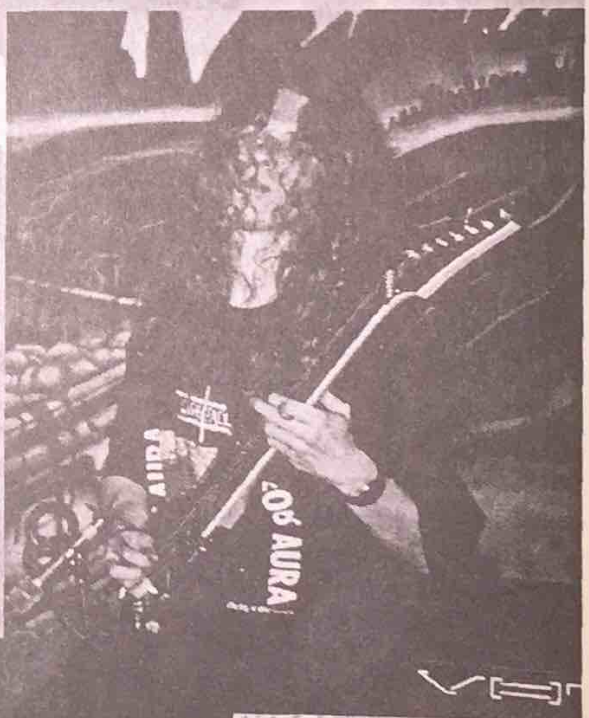
First give us a history of the band. When did you form? Who started it all? Were you in other bands before joining Garden of Shadows?
It all started in early '95. At that time Scott, Chad, and I were in a band called **Funereal Opera**. We had recorded a demo and it was awful. We were totally unfocused. Hearing that demo made us decide to get serious. The music became much heavier, faster, and more musically competent overall. I felt that our new material called for additional guitar parts, so we began to search for a second guitar player. During that summer we found Mary. Her musical goals and ideas were very similar to ours and we clicked right away. Our music was developing rapidly at that point, but the drummer we had did not want to follow the same route. He left the band and we went through a very long period of stagnation as we went through three different drummers before Bret joined the band in the fall of '96.

Your drummer Bret came from Sadistic Torment. How did you manage to get him to come to your new project?
Mary had been trying to recruit Bret for a while, but he was very serious about Sadistic Torment and had no time for another project. We were very excited when he called her one day to inquire as to whether we were still looking for a drummer. Apparently, Sadistic had parted ways and Bret wanted to get into something else as soon as possible. It didn't take long for us to realize that it would work out. His hard-hitting style was exactly what we had been looking for.

I met you at a show and you all seemed pretty young. What are your ages and how long have each of you been playing your respective instruments?
Scott is 20, Chad and I are 21, Mary is 22 and Bret is 23. I've been playing guitar for about 5 years and everyone else has been playing for longer than I have. I went to school with Scott and Chad, and Scott has been playing since before we met (over ten years). Bret has also been playing for about ten years.

Tell us about your demo, *Heart of the Corona*. Is it your first release? When did it come out? How long did it take to write its four songs? How much does it cost?
Yes, *Heart of the Corona* is our first release and we're pretty happy with it. We recorded at Oblivion Studios in Upper Marlboro, MD, during April '97 and released the first copies in May. Two of the songs on it ("Company in Solitude" and "Lovely Cold") were written prior to Bret's joining the band, although he writes all of the drum parts. The other two songs were composed as we started playing with Bret. I'd say each one took about a month to grow from an idea into a complete song. Right now, we have nine songs which total over an hour in length and are working on completing another at the moment. The demo costs $4 US/$5 world and contains over 30 minutes of music. Anyone interested get in touch!!!







How would you categorize your style? The music has a definite Swedish melodic influence, but the heavier parts and deep vocals prove you are American. What do you all listen to and how does it

affect what you end up writing?
We play atmospheric death metal. You are correct in that we are influenced by many melodic Swedish bands, but that is only one of many stylistic influences. Actually, I don't consider the heavier parts and vocals to necessarily be American sounding. Many bands we listen to from all around the world make use of deep, guttural death vocals and heavy, grinding parts. Both Mary and I listen to all styles of death metal, although atmospheric death metal is our favorite. Some of our favorite bands are In Flames, Septic Flesh, Rotting Christ, and Dark Tranquillity. Bret listens to just about every style of music, and this diversity is evidenced in his drumming. Scott also listens to various styles —especially jazz and classical music. These influences contribute to his writing more complex keyboard parts.

Scott's keyboards play larger roles only when there are breaks or intros. Does he write much music? Are keys essential to Garden of Shadows's musical success? How will you exploit Scott's skills more in the future?
I think that question actually underestimates Scott's role in the music. The keyboards on our demo play throughout. Although the guitars may be slightly more prominent on the demo to maintain the heaviness of our sound, the keyboards fill it out and elevate its level of atmosphere and emotion. If the keys were not there, you would definitely know that they were missing. We feel that his keyboards are essential to our music and plan to continue in this manner.

When I first saw you live, you won me over as well as the rest of the crowd. The intense music and Chad's awesome stage presence really complement each other! How have other crowds responded?
The show you saw with My Dying Bride was only our second! We had a great time and we were very happy with the response. We sold about 50 demos that night. The response at our other shows was pretty good as well. We really hope to play more and more as time goes by.

I truly feel your band is one of the hottest young groups around.What are you doing to promote yourselves? Are you flyering or sending tapes to 'zines or labels? Have any reviews come in? Have you done many interviews?
Thanks! We are really new to this and are just beginning to promote ourselves. We are sending out demos for review, and so far the response has been great. This is actually our first interview!

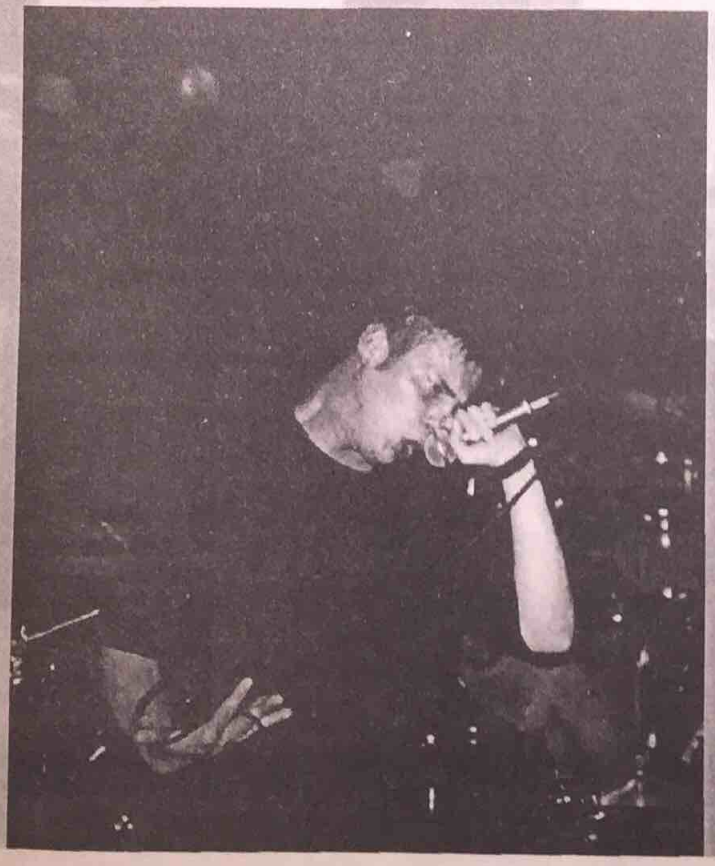
One of your guitarists is a female. Do you plan on exploiting your having a "metal chick" in the band in order to attract hordes of Beavises and Buttheads? Do lots of fat bikers hit on her at shows?
Ha, ha, ha! I don't believe she has experienced any problems of that sort. Seriously though, we have no intention of exploiting having a female in the band—except for her guitar playing and vocals! When she joined the band, we had accepted her based on her musical abilities. The fact that she is female doesn't change anything.

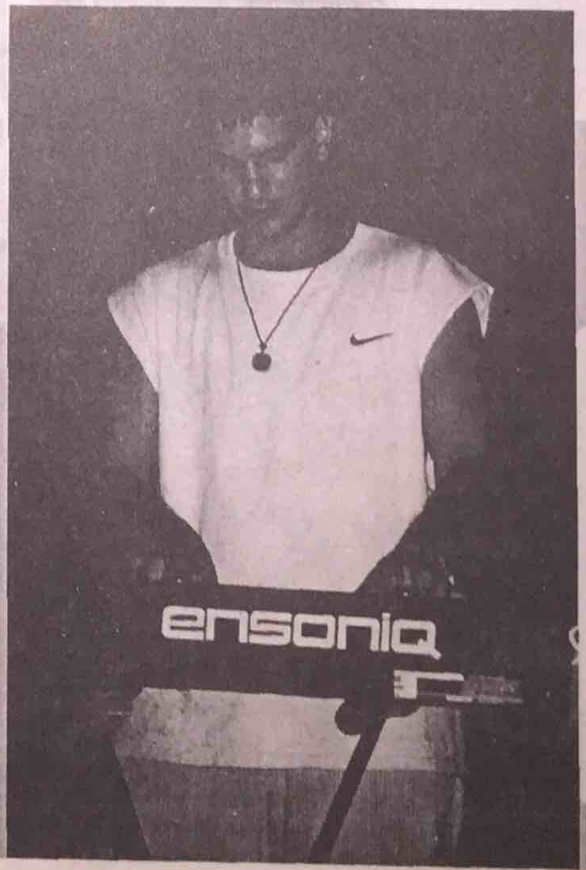
What merchandise besides the demo do you have to plug? Have you made any shirts or stickers up?
As of this interview, we have no other merchandise available than the demo; however, we are working on a T-shirt design and would like to have some ready soon to help spread the name.

Where does Garden of Shadows go from here?
Right now we just want to play out as much as possible, get our music out to as many people as we can, and hopefully find some way to effectively distribute the demo. Of course long term goals include things like recording more material, getting signed, touring, etc., but I guess we'll have to wait and see.

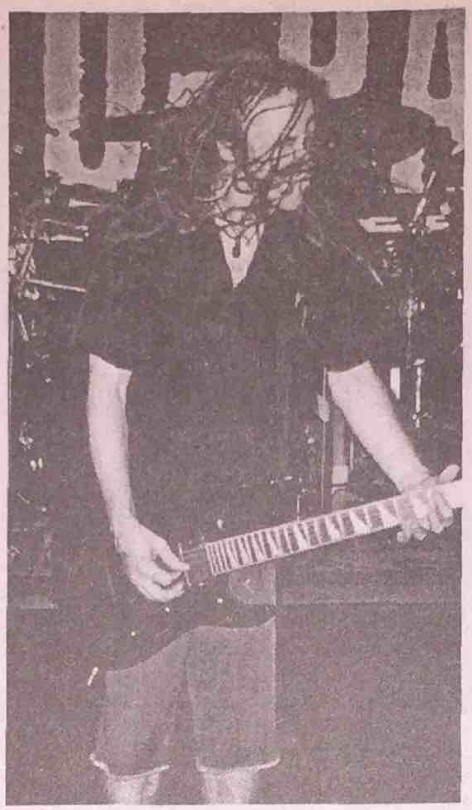
Any final comments?
Sloth Magazine kicks ass!!! Thank you for the great interview!!! I urge everyone reading this to write me and I promise to write back!

Garden of Shadows
14712 Botany Dr.
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
bmissant@aol.com





Groovy industrial metal with samples and guttural vocals. How could I ever interview a band that plays like this? Well, after hearing *In the House of the Enemy* and seeing the band live, I could not resist Fueled. It all boiled down to the music's power and how I was caught up in the quartet's brooding performance. I spoke with guitarist/vocalist Ron Shipes and drummer Eddie Colmenares (italics) after the show...



FUELED

PHOTOS BY PHIL ALTERMAN

You guys were saying how appreciative you were to Pro-Pain and the Spudmonsters for getting you on this tour. Was it a real trek to get where you are right now?
As far as getting to this tour stage, yeah. We've been playing for four years now, having come from when Ed and I started Fueled and went eight months as a duo. Since then we've been creating and forming our distinct style, having released two official demos, getting signed by Energy Records, and releasing *In the House of the Enemy*.

"We didn't want to be some local band that plays around town all the time."

Did you find that your location (San Francisco, CA) was a benefit or a hindrance to achieving success?
I don't know if it made a difference either way. Maybe the scene is alive now, but before, people weren't hopping over to California to see new bands.

So when you started out, did you play many shows at empty venues?
In the beginning, sure.

What were your goals when starting out? Did other bands inspire you or did you just want to be in a band?
*Both Ron and I were in a thrash metal band, but we left at the time I was being inspired by **Godflesh**, **Pitch Shifter**, and **Ministry***
We really wanted to be different from what was already out there.

Your style is hard to categorize because the vocals are guttural but not death metal, and the guitars play pit riffs. When you began, was your style more in the thrash vein?
Not really. What differed were the tempos within songs. Now we generally stick with a set tempo within each song and work from the core riffs.

I noticed that you don't have any solos.
No solos!
Yep, that was definitely planned. It's been done, **Yyngwie** is dead! He was fine for his time, but it's all over.

You don't think that slower, less aggressive soloing could work for your music?
Our solo is our sampler or vocal effects, or some sort of noise. It's not that we don't have solos, but we have a different kind of solos.

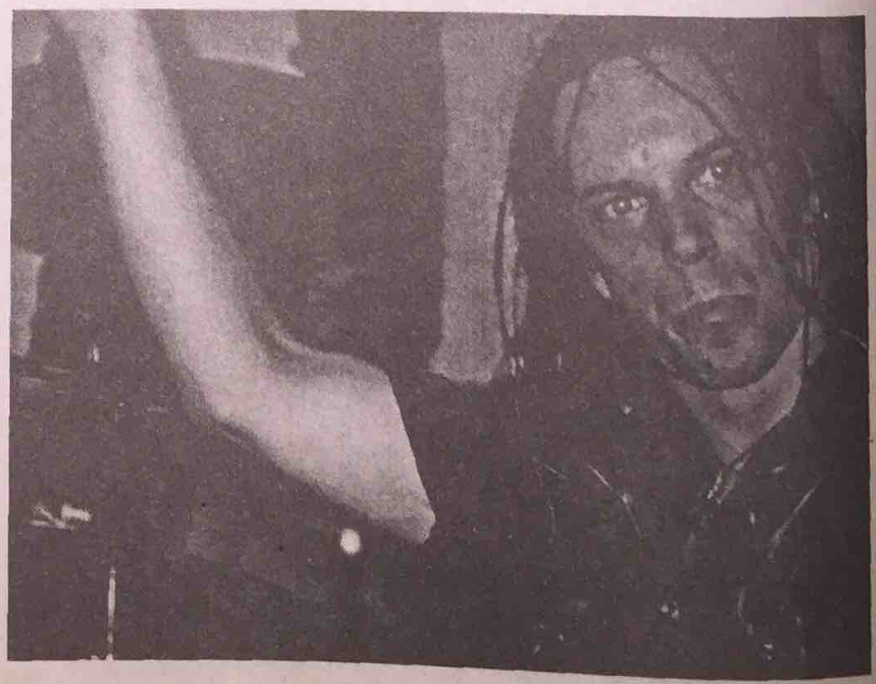
Will this be more prominent on the next CD?
We've toyed around with some ideas, but I wouldn't really know if you're going to hear more noises per se as solos.
It evolves however it evolves, you know.

So you guys are setting your sights worldwide now that you're signed to a label?
We play a combination of all different styles, so I think we appeal to people all over the place. Now we're finally getting to play for them.
When the band started, we didn't just want to float around California. The whole plan was to get signed and get the hell out of there! We didn't want to be some local band that plays around town all the time.



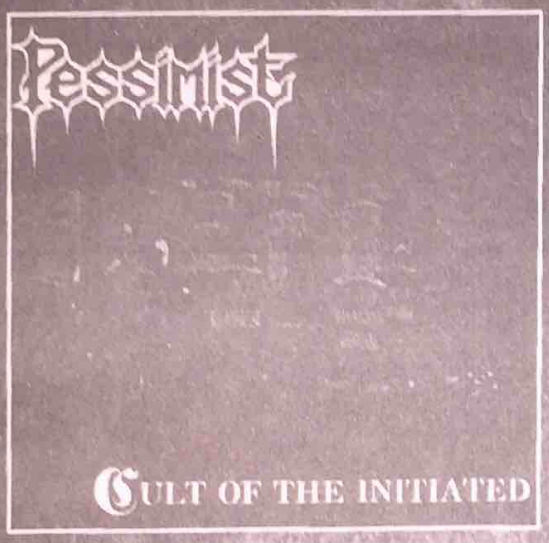
So where do you go from here?
More touring. We've got to do a few more US tours and a European tour would be great, because we're a live band and over there the audience goes off for the bands and the bands go off for them. I'm sure they would like us.
Many of these shows we've played with Pro-Pain and the Spudmonsters have drawn a lot of hardcore kids, and they liked us.
It's the energy. We're a new band with a new style, and though a lot of bands are doing similar stuff, they're not doing quite the same thing. Some are more techno oriented while others are less, and we're a really heavy band in the middle somewhere, with a lot of samples and grooves behind it. And we do this with an energetic live setting in mind.

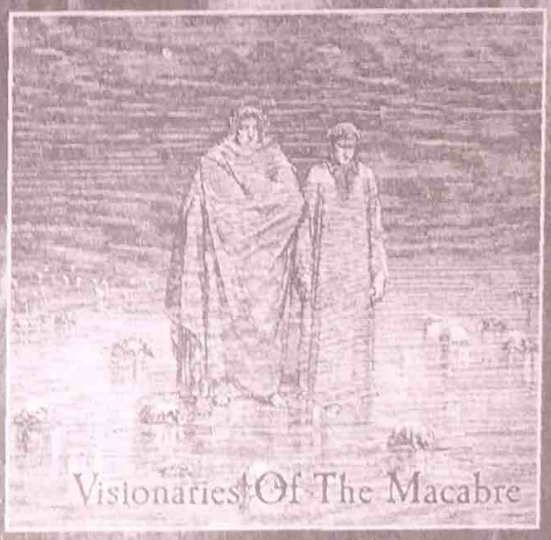




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THE CROWN

Here's a tremendous death metal act from the dark side of Sweden. The '80s and '90s thrive mutually in The Crown's pummeling assault. Guitarist Marko Tervonen filled me in on what the band is up to...

I know you're gaining popularity in Europe, but I don't think too many on this side of the Atlantic have heard of Crown on Thorns. Introduce yourselves to the American audience and tell them what they need to know!

The latest news is that we have changed our band name. The band is simply called "The Crown." I guess you know that there's a band from the US also called "Crown of Thorns," and we are very fed up with them and don't want *anything* to do with them. Fuck that Christian crap...

I don't know if *The Burning* or *Eternal Death* will be re-released under the new name, but I hope so. That way *everyone* will be aware of The Crown when our third album comes out. *Eternal Death* will be released as a picture LP very soon (probably out by the time you read this) under the new name. We will also be featured on a *Tribute to Sepultura* CD with the song "Arise." Check it out, it's fucking raw!

Some band history: Formed a few years back, have released two full-length albums on Black Sun so far. The Crown is: (me) Marko Tervonen – guitars; Marcus Sunesson – guitars; Magnus Olsfelt – bass guitar; Janne Saarenpää – drums; and Johan Lindstrand delivers the vocals from hell.

Your second album, *Eternal Death*, is out on Black Sun Records. How long after *The Burning* did you record it? How did the band improve from the first to second album? What makes *Eternal Death* better?

The Burning was recorded in April '95 and released the following June. *Eternal Death* was recorded in October '96 and released in March '97. A little shitty delay, but what the hell...What makes *ED* better first of all is that it includes newer songs. They sound a lot more *us*, if you know what I mean...It's not so easy to notice our influences. On the debut we had many old demo songs and most were written in "the early days." *ED* definitely has a more fresh feeling to it. If someone wants to check out The Crown for the first time, get *Eternal Death*, 'cause it rocks! We are *very* proud of it. Pure death metal written from our black hearts.

How essential was the sound production on this album? Is it better than that of *The Burning*?

The production on *Eternal Death* has a "live" feeling to it, not this machine-like production like on *Slaughter of the Soul* or *Domination*. We use no computerized drums, just the real things, so you get a very dynamic feeling. The production on *The Burning* is much drier, but I like both albums. They were recorded at the same studio, Berno, but have different sound qualities. I think that's cool.

I think Crown of Thorns is one of the few bands that effectively takes influence from early Metallica and Megadeth and channels it into its own brutal style. Were you inspired by these or any other '80s groups? Which ones? How do they affect or influence your style and arrangements?

I think that the '80s metal bands have influenced us more than the newer ones. Of course we like the '90s death metal style, but I think that the metal we heard in the eighties had a greater impact on us, so it's only natural that it shows in our music. I'm glad you mentioned Metallica because that is my absolute favorite band. James is a pure genius with a cool guitar technique. Of course, we don't try to copy any bands, but if you sense an '80s vibe on some songs, that's just great.

With the current trendy style being black metal, why have you stayed on your own path? Has it been difficult to subdue the pressures to change? What style will be the next "in" thing?

The most annoying thing about this black metal trend is that many magazines refuse to write about bands that play other styles of metal. It seems that if you don't wear corpse-paint you're not worthy of being in the mag. That just proves how much attitude rules the black metal circuits. The Crown has always been about music, not "cool" attitudes. In the end, the music is all that counts. I don't buy an album that has "cool" members, I buy albums that kick ass musically. Maybe you think that I hate



black metal, but that's not true. There are great bands like **Marduk**, **Lord Belial**, old **Bathory**, **Cradle of Filth**, **Dissection**, etc. These bands have something to offer musically instead of just being controversial. The reason we still play death metal is simply 'cause that's the music that makes us tick. To start playing black metal 'cause it's trendy just doesn't make any sense. If you write music from your heart, that's when you get the best results. **At the Gates** (RIP) said in an interview that if you write music from within, the result will end up sounding original. That's a damn good point! There's no need for weird instruments or female vocals, just stay true to yourself.

The next "in" thing will be to claim that "I've been into **Kiss** for 25 years, and always loved them." Even 15-year-old kids say shit like that. The '80s metal is coming, so make way 'cause the leather will rule once again. YES!

The 1:40 "Kill (The Priest)" is almost anthemic and reminiscent of '80s punk metal like Overkill, when songs were short and took a stand against society. What led to the inclusion of this song, especially considering it sharply contrasts the extremely lengthy songs like "The Black Heart" and "Death of God"?
We never plan songs in advance, so if a song turns out to be ten minutes long, that's not a problem as long as there is something happening all the time. There are no pointless four-minute synth parts! Usually our songs run 3-5 mintues, and the material we have started writing for our third album is a bit shorter and *very* energetic. Maybe a bit more in the "Kill (the Priest)" vein. Love it or hate it!!!

Did you put out any demos before getting signed? How did you and Black Sun get together? Were there any other offers? How long has Black Sun been around? What other sort of music does it release? Have you been pleased with the label's efforts thus far?
When *The Burning* came out Black Sun Records had just started and didn't have many distributors. So maybe that album could have sold more copies, but now everything is much better. There is now almost worldwide distribution (Century Media is distributing the albums in the US). Yes, we released two demos before we got signed: 1993's *Forever Heaven Gone* and 1994's *Forget the Light*. We sent the latter to Black Sun and the very next day I got a phone call from them because they wanted to sign us. We had already received a few offers from some "unreliable" labels, so Black Sun was a good choice. They have really grown in the past few years, and the latest news includes plans for a Black Sun-USA office, they have hired a full-time promoter in Germany (who used to work for Nuclear Blast), and a lot of labels are interested in licencing albums. I really have a good feeling about Black Sun.

How did the band decide on its name? Have any of you actually worn a crown of thorns? Would doing so project a really evil image, hence selling more albums?
Heh, heh...We always wear a crown of thorns, especially on weekends when we get together with friends to consume some alcohol. But Johan is the coolest one, he has a crown of thorns on his dick! That's his new way of having sex; chicks love it.

It was Magnus who came up with the name. And now that we were "forced" to change the name, "The Crown" felt natural. I mean, when we talk about the band we always call it The Crown. I know it doesn't sound as death metal as Crown of Thorns, but what the hell... I just hope that people don't think that we have changed musically and gotten wimpy just because of the name change. I guarantee...WE STILL FUCK YOU UP!



Have you toured before? Are any planned for the future? What makes your live show worth seeing? How many people usually come to a Crown of Thorns show? Do you prefer headlining or opening for bigger bands?
Opening for bigger bands. That's when you get new fans. We have a few tour plans, but it's better if I don't say a word 'cause things always fuck up at the last minute. Our normal crowd is 150-300 people, but playing in Sweden sucks. What makes our live show worth seeing? Explosions, whiplash, pure energy, and pure armageddon. Did I mention the 12 naked Swedish blond girls???

The lyrics on all of your songs are lengthy. Has this always been an aspect of your music? What methods do you utilize to ensure people don't get bored with the long songs?
As I said before, in the long songs there has to be something happening all the time. That's very important. Magnus writes most of the lyrics and he takes them 100% seriously. Many hours lay behind them...

One aspect of *Eternal Death* I enjoyed was the competent soloing. It seems many bands lack that skill these days. Do you think this is true? In the '80s and early '90s, most bands couldn't stop soloing and hitting their whammy bars — do you think today's absence of solos is a retaliation against the past or reflective upon bands' skills?
Since we love the '80s metal and those bands always had great solos, it feels natural to have this "nice/good" type of solos. Not just "noise" solos, if you know what I mean. There are some "noise" solos I like too, like on *Altars of Madness*, but personally I prefer the *Master of Puppets* kind of solos. Those solos haunt your brain for a long time. I don't know if today's metal bands lack that skill — maybe they just don't like solos. Very few black metal bands play them and most death metal bands have these "Florida/noise" solos. It can be cool sometimes, but it gets boring after about 30 seconds.

I noticed your singer has a short-long, in which his hair is short in the front and long in the back. Does he do this to look more metal, or is that all his boss will tolerate?
He had to cut it a bit when he joined the army, but it's getting longer again. Now he has a German '80s thrash hair cut, hah, hah!

How much does American music (any style), its popularity, and culture affect things in Sweden? Do the diverse heavier styles of music self-segregate the way they do in the States?
The American mainstream bands always have an impact on the Swedes. Not to mention this **Spice Girls** and Kiss invasion...zzzzzzz...

Any final comments?
Thanks a lot for a good interview. If you want to check out *Eternal Death* or *The Burning*, it's better if you look for these titles under the name Crown of Thorns. From 1998 and forward, The Crown is the name to remember. If you can't find our albums in the shops, contact Black Sun Records. Metal 'til Death! "Songs of death shall kill the lies forever." C-YA!

The Crown
P.O. Box 6045
S-46106 Trollhättan
Sweden

CD REVIEWS

AETERNUS
Beyond the Wandering Moon
1997 Elite Music

The first release from Elite Music, formerly Hammerheart Records, **Aeternus**'s debut starts things off well. 65 minutes of dark, brooding, and folksy metal are crammed into *Beyond the Wandering Moon*'s ten songs. Most begin with blazing black or pounding death metal riffs – vocals and production play a big part in the difference – but the music really gets good when the tempo abruptly slows down and melts perfectly into similar, groovy rhythms. A floating atmosphere is created, kind of like the feeling experienced just as you hit the low crest of a roller coaster hill. It's that kind of awkward but enjoyable sensation that defines the character and future success of Aeternus.

I know I may be doing Aeternus a disservice by mentioning this, but I don't care. The smooth, groovy sections mentioned earlier vaguely resemble **Smashing Pumpkins**'s "Cherub Rock," and the folksy parts remind me of **Ugly Kid Joe**'s rendition of "Cats in the Cradle." So what! Perhaps the band's "true dark metal" image has been tarnished, but I feel Aeternus is quite good and full of potential, and the only reason we tag a band as dark metal is because it fits no one particular style. So if you won't feel "true" if you listen to a band that resembles one riff from one song from one lame band, then you're obviously not able to handle the maturity of Aeternus. 👎👎👎👎

AGATHOCLES
Thanks for Your Hostility
1997 Morbid Records

One of the longest running and successful bands in existence today, **Agathocles** and its brand of crusty grindcore are still pretty boring. I'm no grind freak, being more into thought out music, so a 26-song album with each track averaging two minutes floats my boat like a torpedoed canoe. All of the regular sloppy, upbeat riffage and tandem yelling are here, as well as cymbal-flooded drumming and dirtily tuned guitars. Granted, the band is at the point all musicians come to when they at least have a grasp of their instruments, making these songs non-stop grind barrages, but this just ain't my style. 👎👎

ALASTIS
The Other Side
1997 Century Media

Have you heard **Samael**'s *Passage*? So has **Alastis**; it also has the album transcribed and re-recorded with unnecessary alterations. These guys have done the world a major disservice with this one! They've stolen from Samael by shamefully butchering the tempos and killing any uniformity, mimicking *Passage*'s guitar tone and start-stop beats, and topping it off with an awful singer who rips off Samael, Warrior Soul, The Nefilim, and Sepultura. Blah!

The Other Side -- music and title -- is lifeless nonsense that fostered no inspiration when written, just the unrequited love for the riffs Samael rejected. 👎½

ANGEL CORPSE
Hammer of Gods
1997 Osmose Productions

Mix American black metal with **Morbid Angel** and the occasional **Obituary** riff or solo, and you've got **Angel Corpse**. Big fucking deal. Every song sounds the same and the tempos are always at an apocalyptic pace. I really don't want to write this review. Songs like "Lord of the Funeral Pyre" and "Sodomy Curse" just drain the life out of me with their uninspired design and delivery.

I was playing some metal for a nonmetal fan last night, and he kept on saying, "Where's the soul?" You know what, after hearing this lame attempt at blasphemous war metal with a European vibe, I wonder the same thing myself. Angel Corpse, stop trying to be evil and play some good music! 👎👎

ARCKANUM
Kostogher
1997 Necropolis Records

Just when we thought there couldn't possibly be another style of metal, **Arckanum** presents us with "troll" metal. Yes, troll metal! The band's only member, Shaamatae, is very much a midget but looks like an out of place ewok adorned with too-big necklaces and forest attire (as if he were a gangsta in *Boyz in the Wood*). Plus, his pointy walking stick (that is covered with evil inscriptions and probably gives him splinters) is too big around to fully grasp and towers above him. God damn, that's evil!

All novelty aside, Arckanum is boring background black metal, or as Necropolis says, "The most primitive Dark Metal band of them all." Do I dare expose *Kostogher* for the garbage that it is, therefore chancing that I may face the wrath of some dark overlord who rides a ghostly horse? The production is thin, the pace is always frantic, and the raspy vocals are uninspired and echo incessantly. There are the obligatory I'm-black-metal-but-will-pretend-I-have-diverse-talent elements like short violin solos, guitar duets that come off as horrid **Burzum** clones, and the occasional clean singing. There are a lot more black metal bands worthy of your attention, stubby-fingered troll or not. 👎¾

AVULSED
Eminence in Putrescence
1996 Repulse Records

At first glance, this album's cover painting is quite impressive. It features bodies surrounding a blood river that flows into a blue-orb-creature, which appears to be the heart. Artist Joe Pentagno has good ideas but lacks technical ability – he's a young Vincent Locke as opposed to a Dan Seagrave. I mention this cover because it suits **Avulsed** quite well. The band has been around for five years and plays accordingly, and I'm just mumbling complete crap because I'm trying to humor singer Dave Rotten because he runs Repulse and won't send me any more promos if I give a bad review to his band. Fuck that! If you can't take someone else's opinion without whining like a little bitch then there's no way you should play the often-criticized death metal and try to be all tough by writing brutal lyrics to brutally-titled brutal songs like "Sweet Lobotomy," "Ecstasy for Decayed Chunks," and "Powdered Flesh." Dave reminds me of the character played by Matt Dillon in *Singles*. This guy was a singer in a band, and when he read a review that criticized his vocals he was literally devastated. Just because someone writes for a 'zine or a newspaper doesn't all of a sudden make him a literary genius and musical know-it-all. Personally, I'm sick of wondering what someone else will think if I write a certain kind of review, and I urge all music reviewers to stop worrying, too. I admit that it's great to receive free promos, but a) it's not the end of the world if Gnawed Guts Records doesn't send me anything, and b) I used to buy all (and still do purchase some) of my CDs, and I can't help but write from the reader's perspective. I know you aren't going to buy 50 CDs and 25 demos after reading this 'zine, and what good does it do if I proclaim 60 percent of the albums "brutal classics"? And for the ones that are mediocre, I refuse to totally contradict myself with a cop-out summary sentence that says, "The drums and guitars both need work, and I don't like the vocalist, but [read in a DJ voice] overall this is sure to please any fan of brutal death metal."

To make this a fair review, I'll explain why this is a total suck fest that has every reviewer (fearing no more promos from Repulse and) saying this has "no surprises, isn't really original, but these guys sure do like to play death metal, so they must be true, therefore making them good!" Achoo! – Dave, I want the new Incantation EP – Achoo! Excuse me, I must have caught a case of the sniffles. On with the review! Avulsed lacks the inner "umph" to drive home its brutal death; its riffs are genuinely boring, vocals without passion (but who could get excited over "Goreality" and "Frozen Meat" anyway?), and sound is cloudy.

The words "average" and "generic" keep popping into my head, yet I've only gotten through the third song. But that's okay, all ten – except for the cover at the end – follow the same pattern: start with some guitar fiddling that leads into a chunky riff, then have the drums come in with a trite 1-2, 1-2 beat, put in some growls, and repeat at will.

I said this last time and I'll say it again. The only reason Repulse Records began is because Avulsed couldn't get signed. Hmmm, maybe most labels are in search of original, capable talent. Alex Kauffmann, our foreign correspondent from Spain, saw these guys live and said their performance was "like a 45-minute sound check." (Insert charity bomb here for five years of "true underground feelings.")

BARCODE
Hard Jet Super Flash
1997 Diehard Music

After reading **Barcode**'s bio, I was on my knees worshipping, I will tell you why. 1) They are Danish. 2) What they care about is their local football team and partying. 3) They sing about farfetched alcoholic experiences and dead porn stars. 4) They cover **Twisted Sister**'s "We're Not Gonna Take It." I got my hopes up for one unbelievably brutal metal/hardcore act. After all, the bio said **Barcode** didn't give a shit about anything.

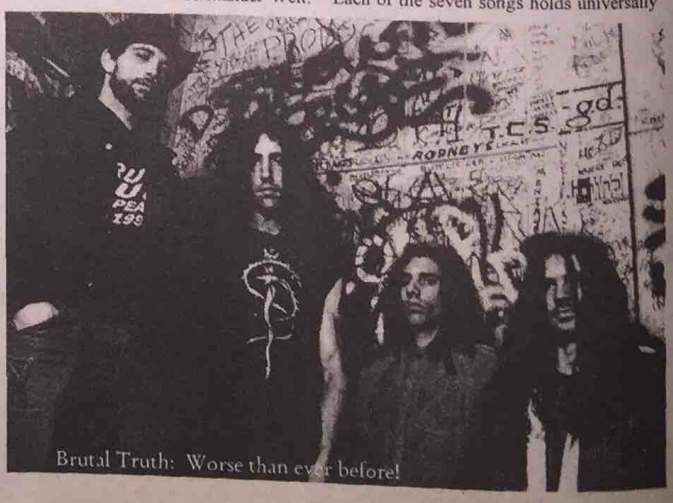
Apparently, they didn't give a shit when deciding on an original style of music either. **Barcode** certainly does hold its own but gets old after about one listen. The music is very predictable, full of fast verses and breakdown choruses. The growled vocals get annoying real quick, especially on "We're Not Gonna Take It." This is better than a lot of shit I've heard but needs a lot more originality.

The **Twisted Sister** cover fails miserably. The growly-ass vocals are just bad for that song. Also, Barcode brags about being "politically incorrect," basically meaning they aren't afraid to call somebody a fucking faggot. In my opinion, that isn't exactly something to be proud of, but I guess these Danish boys think so. 👎👎👎¾ (Metal Vader)

BETHLEHEM
Dictius Te Necare
1996 Red Stream

My god, this is the best album I've ever heard! **Bethlehem** has released the most powerful epic since **Kataklysm's** *The Mystical Gate of Reincarnation*. The stunning music is most appropriately titled "dark metal," since it is a perfect blend of the best metal styles and there are the wickedly tortured vocals of Landfermann. Imagine the fiercest, most horrifying scream you have ever heard, and multiply it by ten. Picture yourself in a dungeon where the tortures all involve hot pokers and sexual organs, and think of the screams you would make – in German, of course – when your balls got branded. That is the kind of lunatic-with-a-hostage-and-a-knife voice that Landfermann possesses.

There is no escape when one listens to *Dictius Te Necare*. The guitar riffs are simply tragic, and the wails that accompany them are sure to break even the most emotionless metalhead. Endure the pain of "Tagebuch einer Totgeburt" and "Verheikung-Du Krone des Todeskulter," for the agony of such heart gouging is soothed by the joyous "Schatten aus de Alexander Welt." Each of the seven songs holds universally



Brutal Truth: Worse than ever before!

appealing qualities of an album like *Slaughter of the Soul*, does not limit itself to one category (many branch into chilling ambient moods), and by album's end you won't have enough life left in your body, or blood in your gushing wrists, to press 'play' again. This is a masterpiece!! 💀💀💀💀💀

BEYOND FEAR

Haunted by Visions of a Third Atrocity

1997 Utopian Productions

"Warning! – This CD contains the most extremely brutal and violently fast death metal music you will probably ever hear." Not quite, but pretty damn close. It takes balls to put this on the back of your CD, and I give **Beyond Fear** credit for taking its own stab at brutality. Opting for the pioneering, frantic style of 1990-era death metal like **Malevolent Creation**'s *The Ten Commandments* and thrash like **Slayer**, this British trio blasts through three songs and thirty minutes of hit and run insanity. Besides a standard growl, vocalist Jon Betts also utilizes the Luc Lemay (**Gorguts**) "ee-yu" and the occasional "wahh".

It really takes a few listens for the intensity of *Haunted...* to set in. Most bands that write ten-minute epics do so with atmospheric keyboards and acoustic interludes, but Beyond Fear just keeps coming at you with pummeling drums and maniacal guitar picking. You might want to pick this up and pay homage to the now-defunct group. 💀💀💀¾

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 91
Orpington, Kent
BR6 6UE, England

BILE

Biledegradable

1997 Energy Records

At first, I was pretty excited about getting this disc, because I really enjoy trashing **Bile**. Then it dawned upon me that I would actually have to *listen* to it, something I wasn't too thrilled about. Well, I did and all motivation to trash this was killed by the monotony, industrial noises, and lack of coherence. So you won't hear me say how Bile is a lame unity of **NIN** and **Marylin Manson** wannabes. And of course I won't be able to recommend you avoid this EP like a naked Elvis impersonator. And there's no way I can tell people who are about to buy this to just throw their money in the trash and see how they feel, because that's what Bile is all about. Bile = 0.

BLOODTHORN

In the Shadow of your Black Wings

1997 Season of Mist

Slow, brooding melancholy paired together with a sense of dynamic aggression is how I would describe **Bloodthorn**. Initially, I was extremely hesitant to play this disc, as the cover art reminded me of some cheesy early 80s fantasy book, or any **Manowar** CD cover (not that the two are different). But, aghast! Rather than hokeyness, I was greeted with a very '90s style of black metal with doomy influences of keyboards and female vocals. "Breeding the Evil Inside" is a standout one, as well as Track 66. My only real complaints, other than the fact that nothing here is of a sublime quality, is the lack of variety in song structure. Every track plods along at basically the same rate, so after one listen, "*In the Shadow of your Black Wings* grows slightly stale. 💀💀½ (Tim Jaeger)

BROKEN EDGE

Cold Lies – 1996

Do I like this? At first, I certainly do not, as the music is this weak power thrash you'd expect to hear on the latest **Paingod** album. By the third song, though, more abstract and discordant elements appear. Due to these changes and light acoustic touches, a mechanized feel of crossing **Sadist** and **Neolithic** with hardcore groove sets the tone.

The best songs combine **Broken Edge**'s '80s thrash influences with the groove and distortion of today, probably why I like "Dance of Decay" and "Fear." Too many of the following songs revert to an excess of mosh and thrash, however, and I'm only thankful that four minutes of acoustics and mechanical sounds close *Cold Lies* out. 💀💀💀

$20 everywhere to:
Thierry Marquez
Rue Général Broissia
25290 Scey-Maisiéres
France

BRUTAL TRUTH

Sounds of the Animal Kingdom

1997 Relapse Records

Having gone downhill over the past few years, **Brutal Truth** had me dreading the inevitable follow up to the *Kill Trend Suicide* EP. Well, *Sounds of the Animal Kingdom* is out, and now throngs of sheepish members of the industry are singing praise with their mouths, crossing fingers on one hand, patting a back with the other, and getting their dicks sucked. Suck *my* dick! Doesn't anybody else hate these overly promoted, highly dissatisfying platters of worthless metal? You'd expect a company like Roadrunner to tout this as a "monumental tribute to the grandeur of metal." Can I puke now?

Brutal Truth plays a horribly produced mixture of (says the bio) grindcore, death metal, hardcore punk, and rock. Basically it's a jumbled mess of nonsense that totals 75 minutes. Yes, the guitars and drums are incredibly fast, but they are also unintelligibly fast. Haste, lack of discipline, and repetition plague *Sounds...* from the opening blasts of "Dementia" to the overdue conclusion of "Prey." Brutal Truth sucks and you know it. 💀

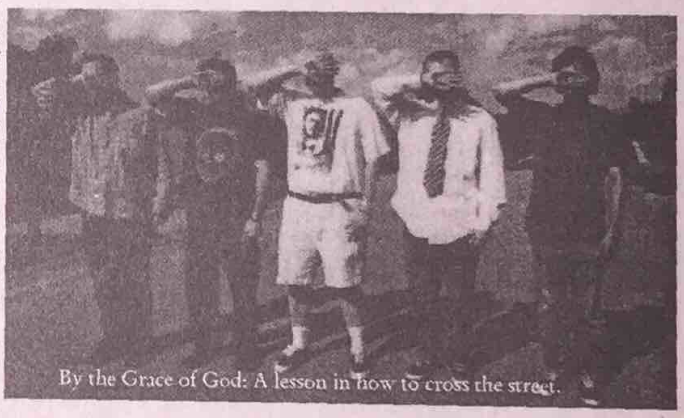
BY THE GRACE OF GOD

Perspective

1997 Victory Records

Wow, Phil actually gave me something to review that I've heard of. I'd never actually heard **By the Grace of God** before but I definitely like this CD a lot. This is by far the best thing I've reviewed for *Sloth*. If you like New York style hardcore or Victory bands then you'll probably dig this. As you may or may not know, BTGOG was originally a side project of some of the members of **Endpoint**, **Elliot**, and **Guilt** (also known as the worst hardcore band on the face of the earth). But the tables have recently turned and BTGOG has developed into a full-time band. I am not all that into most Victory hardcore but this stuff has a little more diversity than most. The slower parts are fucking great and they've got that metallic guitar sound that brings a stain to the crotch of my pants.

By the Grace of God combines the speed of **Gorilla Biscuits** with both the melody and intensity of East Coast progressive hardcore bands like **Muddfoot**. The guitar riffs are killer and the lyrics are sheer genius. The vocals are slightly annoying on one or two songs but they are cool as shit in the general scheme of things. Overall, this is very thought provoking and I think By the Grace of God are badass. 💀💀💀¾ (Metal Vader)



By the Grace of God: A lesson in how to cross the street.

COAL CHAMBER

Self-titled

1997 Roadrunner Records

Those who have *Sloth* #3 read my review of a **Coal Chamber** sampler. It featured three good **Korn**-esque tunes and I reviewed it accordingly: 💀💀💀¾. The group has unleashed its debut full-length and I am anything but impressed. The sampler's real intention was to trick people into wasting their money on junk. This philosophy also adheres to mainstream bands who have two hits – one rockin' tune followed by a sensitive ballad – and when people buy the album all they listen to is the same songs they could have put on a mix tape! Plus, the sampler's songs, "Pig," "Sway," and "I," were reworked to fit into the listless mode Coal Chamber was shooting for, killing the vibrancy and encouraging people to tag the group as "more second-rate Korn worship."

The conviction and intensity that make Korn thrive are completely lacking here as Coal Chamber grooves through fourteen tracks of uninspired and downright pointless "'90s pop metal." This is the stuff fans of heavier mainstream will embrace so they can look "hard" despite the fact that in a year they'll be hocking their **Marylin Manson** CDs for the latest act hyped by the blind industry, which is led by grown up incarnations of these little pricks who feel "special" and "important" because they're only 25 and already working in the music "biz" and wearing expensive suits to work!!!! Aaaaaagghhh!!!!! 💀💀

CORPSE

From the Grave

1997 Cling Recordings

Remember **Gutted**, the band who put out an album on Red Light Records way back when? Or what about the demo band from Massachusetts, **Desolate**? Each of these great bands hasn't been heard from in ages, so those of you who miss them will absolutely adore **Corpse**. *From the Grave* is your kind of primitive, yet restrained death metal. Lots of old school upbeat tempos a la **Napalm Death** abound, and Chris Barnes/Craig Pillard vocals take center stage. The dirty guitars add intensity, as the thirteen songs become more developed and memorable, bringing **Jungle Rot** to mind. The underground death metal scene is a better place thanks to Corpse. 💀💀💀💀

CRACK UP

From the Ground

1997 Nuclear Blast America

Simply put, **Crack Up** is a mid-paced combination of *Mindloss*- and *False*-era **Gorefest**, latter day **Morbid Angel** vocals, and midlife **Obituary**. Some of the riffs and beats are catchy, the singer does have his moments, and that old Gorefest feel shines through. Those are certainly not enough reasons to warrant signing a band, releasing a 15-song album, or buying it. There's just not enough going on! Crack Up is pseudo-metal, complete with lethargic drumming, forgettable songs, and minor potential. This is the only crack rock you won't become addicted to. 💀💀💀

CROWN OF THORNS

Eternal Death

1997 Black Sun Records

How shall I go about this? Should I start off by saying this is better than **At the Gates**'s *Slaughter of the Soul*? Or what about the fact that this earns a perfect five bombs? You see, when an album like *Eternal Death* comes along, reviewers such as myself are faced with a challenge; I must convince you to buy music so furious, so passionate, so damn immortal that once you hear it, it will remain in your collection forever.

Driven by the forces of hate and destruction, Swedish quintet **Crown of Thorns** has dug deep into its blasphemous soul and unleashed fifty minutes of genre-defining death metal. Song after song of rage-filled terror metal blaze ahead on classics like "Angels Die" and "Hunger." Witness the destruction of "The Serpent Garden" and its brooding middle passage, the rebellious '80s attitude of the minute-forty "Kill (The Priest)." If you survive all this, surely the ten-minute epic "Death of God" will strike the final blow.

Johan Lindstrand's impassioned wails are truly tormented, as if he were spitting out pieces of his rotted heart with each call of, "Broken beyond repair / Why do I still go on?" To elicit such sounds from most people, one would have to gouge them with a branding iron.

Each 3:29 in length, the songs "In Bitterness and Sorrow" and "World Within" would be perfect for the radio – of course we would have to remove the harsh vocals, technical solos, puncturing riffs, and precise timing that make this a classic. The drummer has an answer for every crushing riff the guitarists dish out, pounding with perfect technique. *Eternal Death* is the lethal dose you've been waiting to take, so indulge in this near hour of bludgeoning aural bliss. 💀💀💀💀💀

DARKSEED

Spellcraft

1997 Nuclear Blast America

If **Sentenced** had heard this album, maybe, just maybe, it would have had a clue when recording *Down*. You see, Sentenced is now a lost cause and **Darkseed** seems to have taken off where *Amok* left off. *Spellcraft* features ten of the most appealing, accessible metal tunes I've heard in quite some time. Showcasing the talents of highly skilled guitarists that have surely explored the heaviest of styles, Darkseed's core is an unassailable force full of melody and catchiness. Add inventive vocal techniques, '80s catchiness combined with '90s sensibility, and well-constructed arrangements and you have *Spellcraft*.

A quintet from Germany, Darkseed has spent the past five years honing its magnificent brand of crossover metal until it was capable of the pinnacle that is this album. A review cannot begin to touch on the band's complexity and ability to utilize acoustics and female vocals in an original way, all the while keeping the listener entertained by its masterful guitar leads and vocal yells a la *Metallica*-era James Hetfield. At last, '80s pop metal has been put to good use as Darkseed really *rocks* while staying true to the '90s. Bravo! 💣💣💣💣💣

D.A.B.

Beyond the Mirror – 1997

Of all of the new breed of thrash bands, I'd say **D.A.B.** (Delayed Action Bomb) is my favorite. Being as this genre isn't as popular or at its musical best this decade, I find it reassuring when a band can play the style well for an album's duration. Guitarists R. Decastro and S. Luc D. are the driving force behind *Behind the Mirror* (hey!). Their lively riffs set the mood and keep long songs like "I Believe" and "Incest" from losing impact. Restrained leads also ensure things don't get out of hand, as D.A.B. isn't the kind of band that needs screaming solos. Bassist J.F. Rey belts out the '90s thrash growl that many of his peers also use, but he never comes off awkward the others. As dead as you may *know* thrash to be, remember that a few embers are waiting to set the scene afire again. 💣💣💣 ½

15 US $ / 23 DM to:
Rue de L'Hopital
22300 Iannion, Fmace

DEATH PENALTY

Bitter

1997 Wild Rags Records

If the members of **Gorefest** had not grown up in the fields of Holland, but the mean streets of LA, then this is how their music would have sounded. Fueled by the rage of thrash bands like **Lunatic** in an urban way – which gives a hardcore feel – is the quintet **Death Penalty**. Having pumped out two demos in less than a year's time, these guys have shown both enthusiasm and progression. They are obviously into making music *and* improving with each new song. *Suffer*, released under the name **Penalty**, pales in comparison to the focused *Bitter* EP, which is a raw version of Gorefest's most recent pair of albums. Look for a steady climb from this ambitious young band. 💣💣💣 ½

$7 (US) / $10 (world) to:
Paul Diamond
221 Smilax Rd. #147
Vista, CA 92083

DEICIDE

Serpents of the Light

1997 Roadrunner Records

Well, they're back with another album of splendidly produced, mediocre metal. As inspirational as **Deicide** was back in 1990 with its self-titled debut, or two years later with *Legion*, 1995's *Once Upon the Cross* and the new *Serpents of the Light* show the band's inclination to tread in the unholy water.

Remember singing along with "Sacrificial Suicide" and "Dead by Dawn"? What about banging your head to "Revocate the Agitator?" Those were the days when Deicide ruled the death metal world, with a kingdom built upon strength and conviction. Now a crumbled empire lies decrepit after years of stagnation and neglect.

Every verse Glen Benton delivers is a predictable burst, followed by guitar fiddling and more vocals. As if you didn't get tired of this approach by the time *Once Upon the Cross* came out, *Serpents of the Light* is sure to leave you bored beyond belief. I hate absolutely everything about Deicide now, and can only hold onto the sweet memories of 8th grade aggression fueled by "Carnage in the Temple of the Damned."

DEMENTOR

Kill the Thought on Christ

1997 Immortal Souls Productions

Slovakia is now officially on the death metal map thanks to **Dementor**. Playing brutal death with touches of **Hypocrisy** and **Cannibal Corpse**, this trio has some moments here and there, but fails to make a dent overall. Most of the songs are nearly five minutes in length, making it difficult to sustain much brutality.

Fans of **Deeds of Flesh** and **Incantation** are encouraged to question their tastes, and also to check out this increasingly monotonous band. After listening to a few songs I'm totally indifferent to what's going on, not even able to develop a thought "on" Christ. 💣💣 ¼

DEVASTATION

Violent Termination

1996 Defiled Records

Recorded in 1987, this is the **Devastation** self-produced debut which hadn't been released until Defiled picked up the rights. Being from the '90s school of metal, I find it hard to get into this CD's death/thrash vibe. I know I've been spoiled by this decade's enhanced production and equally modern vocals, but does that mean I have to like this old stuff? That's like saying to a white Southerner, "You are against slavery now, but 150 years ago you would have been all for it." Of course that's complete crap, especially considering that only 25 percent of Southerners owned slaves and you can never predict how someone would have thought, just like Bill Clinton saying FDR would want himself to be in a wheelchair for his memorial statue. Roosevelt always tried to hide his handicap, and Bill Clinton finds Paula Jones attractive. Case closed. 💣💣



Gothic Abe Lincoln and his Satanic honchos

DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE

The Phantom Lodge

1997 Adipocere Records

Sick, crazy, and unique black metal awaits you at *The Phantom Lodge*. The sinister vocals of a conspiring demon coax you in, with soothing clean interludes easing your fears. The door slams behind you as a whirlwind of speed and cymbal crashes pin you down. Oh, 'tis the nightly **Diabolical Masquerade**!

A subtle but effective aspect that promotes this band's success is its old school influences. Blazing speed sections on "Astray Within the Coffinwood Mill" and the riffs of "Hater" embrace the '80s style, which is a good thing. These old-style riffs are amusing and instantly catchy, not to mention their power to separate Diabolical Masquerade from the crowd.

Intelligent song arrangement and angry black metal vocals unite in an interesting fashion, as the singer has different moods for certain speeds and riffs, and he gets more frenzied as each tune nears conclusion. There is no better example than on "Upon the Salty Wall of the Broody Gargoyle" (how am I supposed to make an intelligent point after typing that?), whose music is *very* old school. The chorus is where the singer goes off, screeching ever more furiously until his voice cracks and soars up an octave in an emotional "Aaaahhh." Conviction like this is truly lacking in today's music — *especially* black metal — and Diabolical Masquerade's attempts surely merit your attention. 💣💣💣💣

DIABOLIQUE

Wedding the Grotesque

1997 Black Sun Records

Before I tell you why not to buy this album, let me comment upon the stunning artwork that composes its 24-page booklet. Guitarist and vocalist Kristian Wåhlin, also known as Necrolord, has gone all out for his band's CD, including numerous paintings of beautiful gothic women. With *Wedding the Grotesque*, Wåhlin has surpassed all of his previous work, which includes **Dissection**, **At the Gates**, and **Cemetary**, to name a few. As an aspiring artist, I can't help but appreciate this guy's consistency and dedication.

I've never been a big doom fan, but lately some impressive releases from **Theatre of Tragedy** and **Within Temptation** have come in. There's just something about Diabolique that hits a foul nerve. First, the hollow, echoing vocals plod through endless passages of uneventful doom. God, I'm listening to this right now and I can't stand it. Aahh!! And what pisses me off is that this quartet is musically able but writes such boring, anticlimactic, and annoying music.

Imagine if *Erase*-era **Gorefest** teamed up with an **Atrocity**-inspired **Edge of Sanity** to play doom. Your stomach kind of hurts, huh? That's basically what you get here, with the added bonus of discordant organs and still more I-just-got-hit-on-the-head-and-can't-talk-very-fast vocals. My advice to you is to wait until the band's next album comes out, because *Wedding the Grotesque* is a snoozer. 💣💣 ½

DICK DELICIOUS AND THE TASTY TESTICLES

Drugs, Guns, Ski Masks, and Pornography – 1996

Cock fucking rock. It would be illegal for me to name all of the vulgar and demeaning words for "pussy" used in this album so I will simply tell you that if you think girls are to be used for the sole purpose of fucking, buy this bad boy. This Atlanta based band is all about drugs, guns, dirty women, porn, and crime. I was first introduced to them by an Atlanta skinhead who was quite proud of the fact that he lived in the same city as this bitch banging band. His name was Stewart White and I'd like to talk to him sometime, if possible. He was pretty cool, he smoked a lot, and his mom bought him cigarettes. Anyfugginhoo, Dick's band has most definitely listened to their share of metal. Soaked in metal drained riffs, this album could be called a tribute to the **Meatmen**. The only difference is Dick and the balls take vulgarity to an entirely new level. Enough of the adjectives. I like this album; it had me headbanging, laughing my ass off, and puking all at the same time. In the vein of **The Mentors**, this thunderpunching mix of metal, cock rock, and hardcore will make you blow your asshole clear out your ear. All I can say is if a XXX porn magazine had a soundtrack, this would be it. Buy this sonofabitch or I'm pretty sure Dick Delicious and his good friends the Tasty Testicles will stick a dirty needle in your face and then proceed to puke on your parents. 💣💣💣💣 (Charlie Dangerous)

Write for price to:
Suite 102 / Box #193 931 Monroe Dr.
Atlanta, GA 30308

DIMMU BORGIR

Enthrone Darkness Triumphant

1997 Nuclear Blast America

It could be hailed as black metal's answer to **At the Gates**'s *Slaughter of the Soul*. Such talent, such creativity, such brilliance all here on one flawless compact disc! To try to capture the essence of this epic in a review, no matter how long, would be futile. Get this album!

Norway's **Dimmu Borgir** killed off a whole line of black metal princes with *Enthrone Darkness Triumphant*, leaving the throne practically without challenge. I swear, if any of you have had negative experiences with this style in the past, here is the faith-instilling CD you need. You will be enthralled by the haunting, layered horror, inspired by the emotional solos, and sentenced to hell by the enveloping shrieks. If six souls can concoct such devious music without flinching, there really is no hope for mankind.

Key to Dimmu Borgir's success lies in its grasp of time changes. Too many black metal bands are addicted to endless, monotonous speed that reduces their music to a forgettable background constant; these guys knew exactly what they were doing, crafting chunky riffs with melodic overtones, intertwining catchy rhythms with exceptional keyboarding.

No more must be said, Dimmu Borgir is a musical master of metal. Indulge yourself. 💣💣💣💣💣

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DISCIPLE

Splinter in the Mind's Eye – 1996

The CD starts of interestingly, with a lively operatic piece that lasts about a minute. Then kicks in the real damage, aggressive **Malevolent Creation**-style death metal. Led by a swirling guitar attack and raspy vocals, "The Tyrant Must Die" sets the stage for a great album. Like many bands, though, **Disciple** does not live up to its album's first track. What sets the music back on songs like the title track and "Sentenced" is the band's worship of structure – the theory that each song must follow a pattern of body-chorus-body. If these guys realize that they're not vying for success on MTV, then they'll disregard song structure and just go off!! Songs like "Lycanthropy" and "Book of Shadows" sure touch on what the band can do, and with enough encouragement perhaps **Disciple** will be the next old school death metal powerhouse to knock our socks off. But until then, big deal, just another band! 💣💣💣

$12 everywhere to:
Jeff Lenormand
322 Genevieve
Pacifica, CA 94044

DISINTERMENT

Endless

1997 Severed Records

The story behind this CD is a great one. **Disinterment** is an experienced band from back home in Virginia. Each of the members is at most 21 years old, but these guys have been plugging away for years. Their song "Requiem for the Carrion" appeared on King Fowley's *Midnight Offerings II* compilation back in 1994, and at that time the band had a peppy but primitive death metal style. Since then, the band has grown tremendously, having improved in skill and taking positive influence from Scandinavia's best bands.

The product is *Endless*, a testament to the naivete of youth: that dedication and perseverance will ultimately lead to the recording of a world-worthy album. Congrats, guys, you did it! Any metal fan will be hard-pressed to find an album more convincing, energetic, well developed, and downright heavy. One thing that really separates Disinterment from the growing crop of so-called Gothenburg clones is its youthful energy. While the songs are quite polished, raw aggression breaks the mold with inventive time and rhythm changes. Disinterment also explores the numerous possibilities that each riff holds, as opposed to stringing together a bunch of them.

A quintet featuring three guitarists and two vocalists, Disinterment delivers a wide variety of entrancing melodies and brutal riffs, Swedish rasps and American grunts. The drummer must have four arms because I can't believe how many different duties he performs at once. From start to finish, my ass is kicked. Disinterment has paid its dues and is ready for your ears. 💣💣💣💣 ½

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DYSPHORIA

Hope Without Reason – 1997

Brutal Pennsylvania hardcore, huh? What makes this quintet any different from the hundreds of other pit makers out there? First, the vocalist can't pronounce a single word and sounds like an angry duck. You'll tire of him quickly. Also, all eleven of *Hope Without Reason*'s songs tread more water than the average orbital hardcore band. You keep waiting for explosions but all that you get are more stationary riffs and breakdowns. "At Day's End" is the only standout because here **Dysphoria** truly lets loose with aggressive discordance.

The success of this band lies in Dysphoria's hands. Either these dudes can be content with ruling the PA hardcore scene (ooh!) or have the balls to try something new and put their souls into their music instead of rehashing what's already been done. 💣 ½

Write for prince to:
P.O. Box 590
Buxkingham, PA 18912
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EBONY TEARS

Totura Insomniae

1998 Black Sun Records

After all the hype, it's finally out! I'd been receiving teasers about **Ebony Tears** for months and Black Sun was either setting the world up for the next big thing or a major disappointment. You'll be hard pressed to find a band as diverse yet focused as Ebony Tears, that's for sure. To get an idea of what this band is like, picture the twisted offspring of **Entombed**, **Skyclad**, **Iron Maiden**, **Belial**, and other similar notables.

Like all Black Sun bands, Ebony Tears is Swedish and sounds it. The grinding guitars of old school Entombed contrast greatly with the Skyclad violins (which aren't used as much as I had hoped), but you'll love this as much as the fierce **Dark Tranquillity** vocals. Balance between aggression and melody plays a key role in *Tortura Insomniae*'s success, as fifty minutes of one without the other would surely be a bore. Strong female vocals make their presence known on "Opacity" and my favorite, "Nectars of Eden." This song utilizes all that Ebony Tears can do, melding the old school with the new, harshness with melody, and raw underground with professionalism. 💣💣💣 ¼

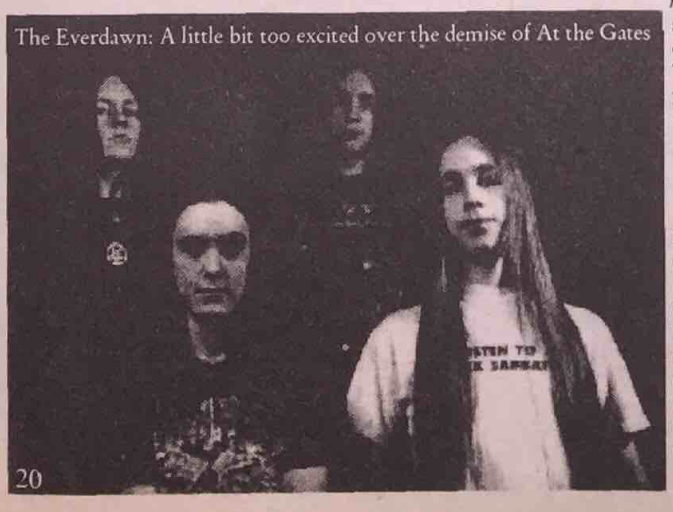
EDGE OF SANITY

Infernal

1997 Black Mark

For years Sweden's **Edge of Sanity** has been a purveyor of original, melodic, genre defining death metal. Probably just as much as **Entombed**, this band has constantly kept ahead of the competition, from the addictive *Unorthodox* to the epic *Crimson*. With five productive members whose need to create has spread their talents to many other bands, EOS returns a year after *Crimson* with *Infernal*. Back to writing multiple songs, the band has also gone back to its roots by writing simpler, less progressive music. Having accomplished so much with its previous slabs o' metal, Edge o' Sanity really lets us down with *Infernal*. You'd think that being so capable of advanced musical and production techniques, the group could handle a stripped down version of itself, but you soon side with the opposition. We want those brilliant pieces like "Enigma," "Darkday," and "Waiting to Die," not crap like "Helter Skelter" and "15:36." God!

The production is not raw enough to call this a real rootsy album, the songs drone on with mindless repetition, and only about half could be considered good. Sure, there's always one or two good riffs, but these guys are trying to be too smooth, melodic, and precise all at the same time. The vibgrant spirit that even drove the out-of-character *Until Eternity Ends* is vacant as the guitarists try to sustain the fifty-minute album with a collection of catchy riffs and rhythms. This is not Edge of Sanity! Gone is the passion and ferocity, gone is the insanity. 💣💣 ¾



The Everdawn: A little bit too excited over the demise of At the Gates

EMPEROR

Anthems to the Welkin at Dawn

1997 Century Black

From what everybody is calling the greatest black metal band ever comes **Emperor**'s long-awaited sophomore album, *Anthems to the Welkin at Dusk*. All I can say is wow. Actually I can say more, like that this is just what the black metal genre needed to get it back on track. Right now too many bands are imitating the same guitar-fiddling madness of years past or completely wimping out and going goth or whatever. Emperor returns with a different, focused, and downright brutal black metal album. This is too much!

Every song is a race against time, yet you never miss a thing. The grand keyboards haunt like the wind, the guitars crush rhythmically and drop jaws when playing lead, and the vocals remain strong, utilizing the classic rasp and deep clean singing. *Anthems...* is truly an epic and songs such as "Alsvartr (The Oath)," "Thus Spake the Nightspirit," and "With Strength I Burn" are instant favorites. 💣💣💣💣💣

ENEMY SOIL

The Ruins of Eden

1997 Clean Plate Records

Virginia boys **Enemy Soil** return with 11 tracks of Japanese-style noise mayhem. And that's why I am unable to compare this to anything. I just don't like music of this kind. It's totally one-dimensional, accomplishes nothing, and fails to fill me with anti-governmental rage. The Relapse-era material from these guys is really cool — more structured and hardcore — and recommended over *The Ruins of Eden*. 💣 ½

EROS NECROPSIQUE

Charnelle Transcendance

1997 Adipocere Records

This is simply crap. There's no metal, no substance, no apocalyptic shrieks that bring fear to your heart, nothing. Just a bunch of bored Frenchies who decided putting narration over keyboards was a good a idea, they were wrong. Supposedly, not being able to understand the words adds a new dimension, but that's wrong. This is not Bethlehem, nor is it old Obituary. Like hairy underarms on a sexy lady, this should not be.

ETERNAL TEARS OF SORROW

Sampler of *Sinner's Serenade*

1997 X-treme Records

How could you go wrong with something like this? Take **Amorphis** (2 parts), **Hypocrisy**, **Disharmonic Orchestra** (2 parts), and *The Red in the Sky is Ours*-era **At the Gates**, and you have **ETOS**. Why didn't I think of that? Oh yeah, I'm not Finnish. The review is pretty much complete considering that any band ambitious enough to earn comparisons to all of the above must be good. There's melody, the songs are well written, and the production is very like *Tales from the Thousand Lakes*. All this praise for four songs from a CD that has eleven. Get this! 💣💣💣💣 ½

THE EVERDAWN

Poems Burn the Past

1997 Invasion Records

Was this really necessary? It's a fact that everybody loves **At the Gates's** *Slaughter of the Soul*, and it's a shame that the group broke up, but are people clamoring for more? No, and so **The Everdawn**'s attempt at emulating or perhaps matching *Slaughter*'s greatness falls flat. Granted, songs like "Autumn Sombre Autumn" and "Poems" hold their own unique qualities, but overall the music relies upon the chunky riffing, tempos, and wailed vocals that made *Slaughter* what Calvin of **My Dying Bride** calls "the *Reign in Blood* of the '90s."

Elements of Swedish melody and **Kreator** thrash also appear on this eight-song, thirty-five minute assault, and together they make each song's chorus its highlight. Unfortunately, *Poems Burn the Past* is a shallow copy of At the Gates, leaving the listener disgusted at The Everdawn for disgracing his cherished Swedes. 💣💣💣

EVOL

The Saga of the Horned King

1997 Adipocere Records

Before we go anywhere, you need to know that this album was recorded under a full moon. My first encounter with **Evol** was a brief, laughable one, as I popped in the CD and chuckled at the evil dungeon photos and found the music to be poorly produced, old school nonsense. Subsequent listens have shown me the light (of darkness, kind of like turning on a flashlight and getting a shadow beam). I now obey Princess of Disease (she's the Keeper of the Unholy Feelings, you know), Prince of Agony (not only is he the Black Philosopher, he's *also* the Mercenary of Darkness; mom and dad, I mean Saraya and Odin, must be so proud), and Lord of Sorrow (Dark Warrior of the Rotten Lands and the one responsible for Total Sadomaso Fury, so complain to him if things aren't going well with your dominatrix).

As I was saying, I like *The Saga of The Horned King*,

complete with keyboards, intros, and evil concept. Perhaps it is the Princess and her enchanting narratives and calls to Satan, the soothing aura of much of the album, or Evol knowing its limitations and not being too ambitious. This is an album by average musicians with creative minds, take it for what it is and you might enjoy yourself. 💣💣💣 ½

EXTREMIST RECORDS
Compilation Vol. 1
1997 Extremist Records

Things start off well with a trio of gory tunes from **Hemdale**'s split with **Exhumed**, *In the Name of Gore*. Thick 'n meaty, this brutal stuff even gets me going! 💣💣💣 ½ **Entropy** plays loose mid-paced death with screechy vocals. "World Without Myself" resembles old **Skeletal Earth**, while the better produced "Reliant Struggle" shows progression. 💣💣💣 ¼ "Seas of Excrement" comes from Chicago's **Corpsevomit**, and the highlight of this average tune is the tight drumming. Other than that, nothing much to report. 💣💣💣 I'd wanted to hear **Gonkulator** for a while, and "Feast of Souls" was my first opportunity. The band is lame and covers up the garage recording with thick, belched vocals resembling **C.U.M.** All in all, a bad showing indeed. 💣 ¼ Although aided by good production, **Lividity** is just another band, albeit better than Gonkulator. It prefers to play generic **Cannibal Corpse** and **Deaden** death, flooded with multiple voices. Next! 💣💣 ½ **Morticite**, reviewed in issue #3, has good technical skills but writes songs that aren't catchy and last way too long. "Train of Thought" follows suit, with the annoying vocals and poor production not helping. 💣💣 ½ **Haruspex** follows up its promising 2-song demo with "A Unity." It follows the band's slow, chunky **Internal Bleeding** style, and is probably pit-inducing. Nothing too spectacular, it's pretty much like everything else on this CD. 💣💣💣 Now that I've said that, on comes **Abominant**'s "Corrupting Mortality." Speedy and catchy, the band reminds me of **Mutilage**, an LA band featured on Roughage Records's *The Heralds of Oblivion*. The song is relentless and accomplishes what a bunch of the bands on this CD were trying to do. Good stuff! 💣💣💣 ¾ **Hot Stove** is just as cheesy as its name suggests, and you'll easily sleep through the plodding 3 minutes of "Burping Blood." 💣💣 By now I'm already sick of this compilation and don't want to hear **Impetus**. "Choking" is slow, uninventive, and makes me wonder if death metal's weeding out process is really complete. 💣 ½ Of course we all know **Insatanity**. See its split with **Immortal Suffering** reviewed elsewhere in this section. **Ton** is back with "Gone," another heavy slab of death! Varied vocals show the band's progression, but Ton's similarity to the other bands on this CD don't help its cause. 💣💣 ¾ **Nun Slaughter** just plain sucks! These guys remind me of **Organic Infest** and its retarded drumming. Crap! 💣 Georgia's **Avulsion**'s "Gather in Ashes" stands out like a blade of grass in Ireland. Plodding, boring, sucking...💣 **Drogheda**'s "Maggot Spawn" is a mixture of Morticite, industrial, and death. It's pretty short and surpasses most of the other songs here. 💣💣 ½ **Spinegrind** closes things out with three songs of drum machine-enhanced madness. Because they have a pulse, these songs hold my attention more than many of the previous fifteen. C.U.M. would sound like Spinegrind if it were any good. 💣💣💣

FALL FROM GRACE
Self-titled
1996 Mayhem Records

Holy shitballs! **My Sister's Machine** got back together and they changed their name to **Fall From Grace**. I haven't heard from **My Sister's Machine** since their 1992 epic *Wallflower*. Only kidding. What's even funnier is that I wouldn't be surprised if this band actually was My Sister's Machine. The vocals sound eggs-actly like My Sister's Machine. They are sung like a pansy instead of screamed like a lion. That is unfortunate because there is a lot of good guitar work on this and it's a shame to see some good music go to waste.

Anyhow, this CD might appeal to you if you're a fan of My Sister's Machine (which I am not, although I did purchase *Wallflower* back in the day). Fall From Grace has promise if they get a different singer 'cuz this sure ain't my cup o' tea. I like a lot of the lead lines but the vocals are annoying. That's okay though because it gave me an excuse to say My Sister's Machine a lot in this review. 💣💣 ½ (Metal Vader)

FATAL EMBRACE
Shadowsouls' Garden
1997 Candlelight Records

Super-melodic in style, precise in technique, and punishing in delivery, Sweden's **Fatal Embrace** has taken up where **Dark Tranquillity** left off (you can't say *The Mind's I* is up to the band's potential). For those of you that love the quirky guitars a la **Dissection** and DT, hate-filled vocals a la **Crown of Thorns**, and the youthful quality of **Sacrilege**, you will worship Fatal Embrace.

The songs are simply inspirational. One is filled with optimism and new life when songs like "Well of Starclouds" and "Under Dark Red Sunburst" fill the air. Suitable homage is paid to **At the Gates** with the introductory guitar on "Blood's Icon," but the band's own primitive ferocity soon takes things to a higher level with scorching vocals and potent drumming.

Soul and passion, which critics say lack in metal but flow freely in jazz and classical, are the lifeblood of this quartet that most definitely has taken melodic death metal to a higher level. Get this or be forever doomed to radio rock. 💣💣💣💣💣

FILTHBOY
Diverse Reality
1997 None of the Above

I hate drum programming! Music good or bad – bad in this case – is so horribly affected by mechanical drums that I focus on nothing else. All I hear is that damn tinny tapping in the background. If I were a prisoner of war, my captors would soon have me a broken man if they were to play CDs like this.

Industrial experimentalists **Filthboy** contacted me a few years back and sent in a demo that showed potential. Thrash riffs and odd vocal narratives led each abstract song, and I was disappointed when mainman Buzzy Beck told me things had been greatly delayed. The group is finally back, having produced a full album.

Diverse Reality is a far cry from the demo days. Buzzy and company found a lot of fun buttons to press in the studio, as well as a damn drum programmer. Sure, the thrash riffs are still present, but they are drowned by excessively layered drums and the vocalist, who now sounds like a cheesy DJ gone apeshit. The songs themselves lack structure and purpose, shooting off into one experimental tangent after another. **Windham Hell** comes to mind when it comes to this random approach at playing music.

I am disappointed that Filthboy has changed paths, opting for the tried **NIN**/industrial path over its own creative ideas. Metal and industrial fans alike will be alienated by this album's lack of definitive identity. 💣💣

FORGOTTEN SILENCE
Thots – 1997

This Czech band is damn cool. I've heard both this album and a split 7" the band did. Progressive death metal is the closest label I could give, considering how divers **Forgotten Silence** is. Aggressive riffs, dramatic keys, and some female vocals all play a part, but many bands use these elements today. Jazzy progressions and time changes are what make *Thots* a cool listen, plus the overall flowing aura. You never know what to expect either, further establishing Forgotten Silence as a bright new face in the world of metal. 💣💣💣💣

$15 everywhere:
Máchova 487
665 01 Rosice U BRNA
Czech Republic

FROZEN DAWN
Compilation III
1997 Frozen Dawn Records

This label isn't too old but has already put out three underground compilations. Look for another one out this year! **Drogheda** starts things off with its simple, aggressive brand of terrorist grind. Half of the time the songs are catchy, but often the vocals come in and screw it all up. Also, for a band so experienced in playing and recording, Drogheda should have better production. 💣💣💣 New York's **Violent Fury** appears on its second straight Frozen Dawn compilation, so it's safe to say at least somebody finds this raw garage black/death exciting. Personally, I feel these guys fail to capture the total fury their name represents. Anybody can do this, and how evil can your music be when the effects on your vocals are harsher than the distortion on your guitars? I bet that a totally different


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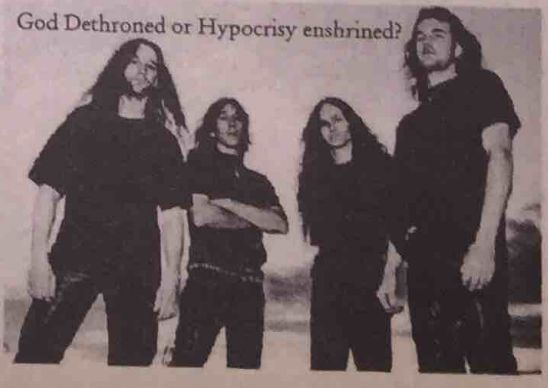
production would fool a lot of people; even me. 💣💣 ¾ **Goliah** apparently aims to get signed by Earache Records, for its brand of sour **Godflesh** worship sure strikes me the wrong way. I am further insulted by the blatant **Fudge Tunnel** touches. Frozen Dawn should be scolded for putting this band on a CD, but commended for only including two songs. Goliah is stupid and retarded and should be beaten with blunt objects. 💣 ½ See the **Exceed** review in the demo section for complete coverage. Prepubescents **Vials of Wrath** look quite tuff posing for their photo adorned in Vans and two sprouting goatees. Their garage metal is just as immature. Right about now I'm beginning to question the credibility of Frozen Dawn. 💣 Each of **Seminal Death**'s songs has about two riffs. Why didn't these guys just piece together a few of these "songs" to make something vaguely memorable? Oh yeah, they're pathetic musicians and going absolutely nowhere! Most bands that thrive on writing minute songs overwhelm you with sheer ferocity, but here you are lulled to sleep by uneventful riffs and few vocals. ¼ **Shredded Corpse** is highlighted by catchy, brooding guitars in its first song. The next one falls into the trap of pointless riffs providing a backdrop for guttural vocals. Pretty boring stuff, but not horrible. 💣💣 ¾

FUELED
In the House of the Enemy
1997 Energy Records

The first thing you'll notice about **Fueled** is the vocalist's incredibly deep yet crisp voice. Guitarist Ron Snipes sounds like he weighs 400 pounds, but of course he's the slimmest guy in the band. Backing him are chunky, brooding guitars that combine to give *In the House of the Enemy* a hardcore feel. Groovy riffs and electronic sampling also play a part in creating the Fueled sound, so I'm still unable to figure out why I enjoy this! Perhaps the songs' depth, that it's not just trying to get the crowd to mosh NY-style, and the sing-a-long quality of the pseudo-anthemic lyrics are what propel this quartet from an unknown Californian act into a prime contender for the more mainstream metal crown. I would much rather hear Fueled than **Biohazard** or any of those damn bands they play on 10 p.m. metal shows.

GOD DETHRONED
The Grand Grimoire
1997 Metal Blade

Metal Blade is the latest label to like black metal, having released albums by **Ancient**, **Hectate Enthroned**, and **Dark Funeral**. Here we have Holland's **God Dethroned**, which doesn't fit into the standard black metal mode. While most bands in this genre take influence from **Emperor**, **Mayhem**, and the like, this group appears to have been inspired by **Hypocrisy**. Everything, from production to riffing style to vocals, pay homage to Peter Tägtgren's now defunct trio.


God Dethroned or Hypocrisy enshrined?

An analysis of *The Grand Grimoire* produces the following results. First, fans of Hypocrisy will no doubt appreciate this tribute, or dependeing how you look at it, handoff of the baton. Adept soloing and overall musical competence make this an easy release to like, regardless of style preference due to the meaty production which blurs the lines between death and black metal. Certain moods created by a number of mid-paced body riffs are hurt by the incessant need for speedy sections to serve as background for pointless vocals. A slight **Deicide** influence rears its head in these cases. Finally, "The Somberness of Winter" is a guitar epic like **Obscentiy**'s "Disengaged" and **Gorefest**'s "Dragonman," and by album's end the listener is a satisfied customer. 💣💣💣 ¼

THE GREAT KAT
Guitar Goddess – 1996

There are four songs. They total 8 minutes. Yet the music is so damn good that you'll gladly let the CD repeat itself four or five times. Featuring two sped-up classics and two originals, *Guitar Goddess* showcases the incredible guitar talents of Juliard graduate turned metal chick, **The Great Kat**. Rossini's "The Barber of Seville" starts things off, and the lead guitar work is accentuated by incredibly fast picking. "Dominatrix" follows, with Kat screaming and soloing like a maniac. The only drawback on this, and other Kat songs, is the rhythm guitar sound, which resembles the thin metal guitars of the '80s (i.e., early **Megadeth**). "Feast of the Dead" plows ahead with more amazing frenzied guitars, and closing the festivities is a beautiful rendition of Sarasate's "Zigeunerweisen," complete with violin and cyber guitar duet. See the Great Kat interview for all your Kat info. 💣💣💣

HAEMORRHAGE
Grume
1997 Morbid Records

Damn! I know I'm not a fan of grindcore, but there's no denying the power of **Haemorrhage**. This is some damn catchy stuff! Great time changes, addictive riffs, and a slew of sick vocal styles all combine to make *Grume* a wild and fun carnival of high-speed depravity. Yuck!! And the hidden track that follows these fourteen tales of carnage is a never-ending scream fest full of great drum pounding and vicious vitality. Good stuff indeed. 💣💣💣 ¾

HERMH
Angeldemon
1997 Pagan Records

An offshoot of the black metal explosion has been the more doomy and melancholic operatic black metal. Poland's **Hermh** (great name, really; a lot of thought must have gone into this one) is in this genre, incorporating the styles of **Cradle of Filth** and **Moonspell** with **Morgion**'s epic keys and **Celtic Frost**'s vocals. An occasional listen ain't bad, but you'll find that only a couple of tunes, namely "Years of Dying" and "Streak from Kozmoz," are worth hearing.

Poor song development plays a large role in *Angeldoom*'s failure. Not enough progression and the reliance upon similar folk riffs from song to song show the band's immaturity, similar to **Agarthi**. Only when the guitarists forgo power chords for melodic explorations does Hermh impress, and hopefully that is something this sextet will work on in the future. 💣💣 ¾

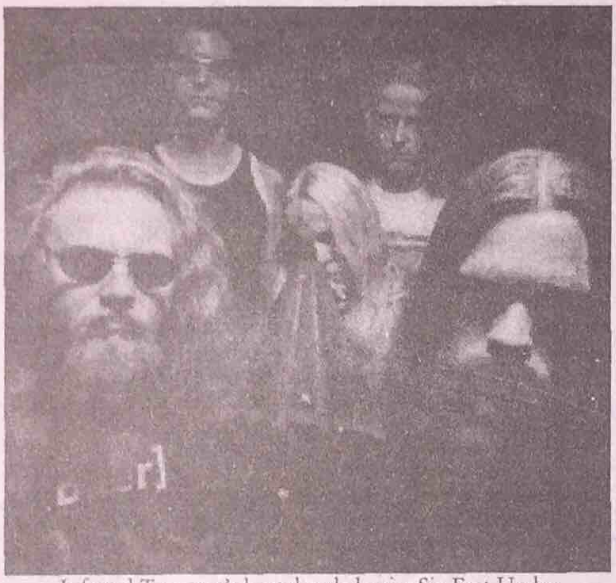
HEXENHAUS
Desavoodoo
1997 Black Mark Production

Hexenhaus's *Desavoodoo* is a must for any true guitar player. This Swedish quartet plays progressive metal with perfection in the likes of **Dream Theater** meets **Rising Force**. The guitar solos are amazing with a **Yngwie Malmsteen** feel. Keyboards are added to songs that give the album an atmospheric mood. One thing that didn't stand out was the vocals, because even though Thomas Lyon's **Maiden**-like vocals had good range his melodies were not catchy. The music overwhelmed me so much that this shortcoming didn't take away from the album. The songs have many sections that are instrumental, much like Dream Theater, which helped Desavoodoo greatly because I didn't appreciate the vocals much. Marty Marteen's bass playing did not stand out either, but Billy St. John's drumming was great. Guitarists Mike Wead and Marco Nicosia can easily be compared to "Guitar Gods" such as John Petrucci (Dream Theater), Marty Friedman (**Megadeth**), and especially Yngwie Malmsteen. The production of the whole album is great and is definitely a must for hungry guitarists who could care less about bands such as **Bush** and want to see beyond the whole "Alternative" approach to guitar. 💣💣💣💣 ½ (Forhad Hossain)

HYPOCRISY
The Final Chapter
1997 Nuclear Blast America

And so at last the saga of **Hypocrisy** has come to an end. Six years that spawned from Peter Tägtgren's experiences with the thriving Florida death metal scene, Hypocrisy's run inspired many and always managed to come back strong and with something new. 1994's *The Fourth Dimension* shocked listeners worldwide with its streamlined but addictive approach, while 1996's *Abducted* showed true musical passion and excellent production.

Ironically, *The Final Chapter* sums up the careers of two defunct and inspirational Swedish death metal bands, Hypocrisy and **Edge of Sanity** (without Dan Swano, the band will never be the same). I say this for two reasons; first, the production and some riffs could come off of any of the great EOS albums. Second, I see more EOS in *The Final Chapter* than in *Infernal*. So is the album good? Very. Tägtgren and company never forgot their roots, still playing the black/death



Infernal Torment's brutal style buries Six Feet Under

assaults like "A Coming Race" and "Through the Window of Time," while picking up where *Abducted* left off with the more laid back "Request Denied" and "Shamateur." Even some of the more popular Swedish guitar elements of today are present, but all are played in true Hypocrisy fashion.

"The Final Chapter" closes out Hypocrisy's career. With one song this trio had to collaborate and create something that would forever imprint the name "Hypocrisy" in our minds. Here, brooding guitars spin a web of melodic strings that tie you down, and you lay trapped to view the suicide of a metal deity. Farewell, Hypocrisy. 💣💣💣💣 ¼

INFERNAL GATES
Sampler of *From the Mist of Dark Waters*
1997 X-treme Reorcds

Great easy listening metal here from yet another Swedish band. Super melodic and soothing, **Infernal Gates** specializes in leads and melodies. The singer's growls and instruments' production are what really make this metal, and these factors do not take away from the music. Think of Infernal Gates as that bridge from the aggressive Swedish metal to the more accessible melodic music of today.

Slow paces akin to doom acts allow for guitar explorations, in which you'll notice touches of **Amorphis** and **Katatonia**. The gruff vocals don't play a major role, nor do they detract from the music's effect. They remind you that you're listening to metal while not stealing the show which is a damn good concept. Infernal Gates has set up a nice concrete foundation, so look for even more amazing creations soon. A quick note: "Greet the Storm" is full of great leads, and one is so fantastic and moving that I can't help but recognize it as one of the great musical moments. 💣💣💣 ¾

INFERNAL TORMENT
Birthrate Zero
1997 Diehard Music

Now this is brutal! And it didn't take overpoweringly thick guitars or a volcanic vocalist, either. All it took was practice. This Danish quintet simply put in the time learning how to play its instruments. *Birthrate Zero* has no weaknesses to cover up with mindless speed or hundreds of cymbal crashes. Instead, the ten songs are well developed, crystal clear examples of how to play death metal.

You may notice similarities to **Sadistic Torment** and (old) **Obituary**'s toned down rhythms and harmonics. A slight groove feel is created by string bending, and by not using a wall of sound, **Infernal Torment** lets the guitarists work their magic. The vocals are a more restrained version of Sylvain Houde from **Kataklysm**. In fact, **Six Feet Under** is put to shame by this CD. Oh, you'll just love the "Seventh Son of a Seventh Son" cover at the end! 💣💣💣💣 ¼

INSATANITY/IMMORTAL SUFFERING
Split CD
1997 Mortal Coil Records

Connoisseurs of this publication will note that both of these bands have received less than favorable reviews in the past. And while **Insatanity** and **Immortal Suffering**'s offerings on this split are not spectacular, a good deal of improvement has been made. For one, Insatanity now writes shorter, more listener friendly songs. The riffs are also slower and catchy. Meanwhile, Immortal Suffering has become tighter as a unit and writes more accessibly.

Keep in mind that these bands play brutal American death metal exclusively. You'll find no keyboards and operatic vocals, of course, but the riffs also rely on inducing pits and providing backdrops for barks and growls. Experimentalism is not on the agenda for these guys, either. Why this CD gets a decent rating is because I believe fans of this style will find it to be rewarding and worth the money. 💣💣💣

INTESTINE BAALISM
An Anatomy of the Beast
1997 Repulse Records

At last! An album that successfully combines brutality and melody into a non-stop metal fest. Honestly, folks, this rages from beginning to end, is full of punishing, memorable riffs, and some of the best soloing to be heard in a long while. Whether blazing along with death grunts or branching off into a soaring solo, Intestine Baalism delivers goods you won't soon forget.

Hailing from Japan, Intestine Baalism brings forth an onslaught that is anything but "Jap noise," having in fact some of the most well prepared and well executed death metal around. High rasps, excellent guitar antics and interludes, and tight drumming all play a part in making *An Anatomy of the Beast* one of the most enjoyable listens of the year. 💣💣💣💣 ½

ISRAHELLER
Metal Compilation
1997 Heller Productions

Here's a sample of what the Israeli scene has to offer, put out by Heller Productions. First is **Salem**'s "Eyes to Match a Soul," which sounds Swedish and is really melodic with strong vocals. 💣💣💣💣 Quite soulful is **Orphaned Land**'s "El Meod Na'ala," which features tribal drums and chanting. Cool stuff. 💣💣💣💣 ¼ **Betrayer** presents "Ignorant Mind" from the cool *Truth is Out There* demo. It gets a bit long, but the hardcore/thrash nature contrasts the more modern theme. 💣💣💣 ¼ "Beyond the Clouds" from **Human Sector** has a really catchy main riff that runs the song. There's nice variation within its guitars, tempos, and vocals. 💣💣💣 ¾ **Enochian Key**'s seemingly bland "By the Coldest Claws" grows on you. There's a horrified throaty yell, cool keys, and a great hand-off from vocals to guitar. It drags on a bit, though. 💣💣💣 ¾ I heard the whole **Sevants' Glory** demo of folksy black metal, which is basically a collection of screams and scales. "Pulsa Danura" is no different. 💣 ½ **Armageddon**'s "God's Dying Serenade" is really average, boring metal with black metal shrieks. The best part is the abundance of lead guitar work. 💣💣 ¾ Catchy death/thrash aided by odd timing is "Believe in Me" by **Superior**. It's not spectacular, but a fine tune nonetheless. 💣💣💣 ½ Another black metal group that's got some good lead work, **Enormity** presents "Tales of Insanity." However the raspy vocals are

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Koito 'zine

issue #7 - The Seventh Seal

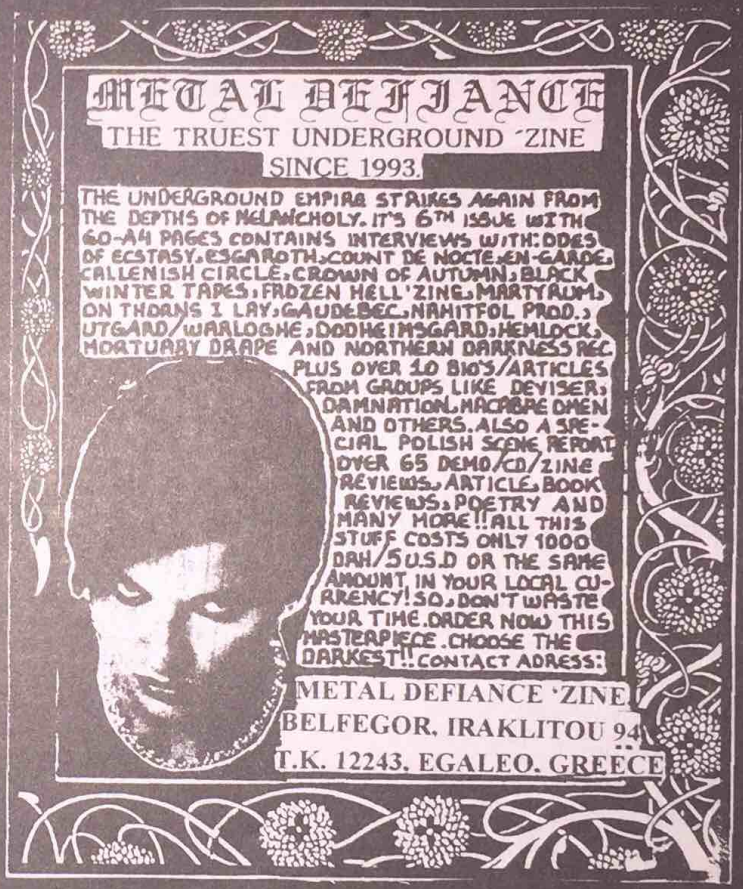
We are still here, once again.
In spite of the vulgarity of the scene, we're still constantly searching for something interesting to offer through our interviews, this time released with Enslaved, Windham Hell, Absu, Journey Through The Dark, Night In Gales, In The Woods, Malevolence, Sinister Footwear, Paradigma, Mortiis, Blood Stained Host, Lux Occulta, Retalliation and My Dying Bride. The aim behind our reviews is to make people avoid to waste money with crap-records, so you get over 150 extremely honest CD/miniCD/Demo/Video reviews. All this through 64 English written pages, with professional printing on glossy paper. Yours by sending:

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STAY TRUE / STAY UNDERGROUND

boring and the riffs are average. 💀💀💀 "Inside my Dream" by **Spirits** is half goth, half death, and half doom...wait, thirds, right? Anyway, I like the song because of the diverse male vocals, keys, and guitar solos. 💀💀💀 ½ **Azazel**'s cheesy corpsepaint photo is misleading. "Goetia" consists of peppy black metal led by catchy riffs (as opposed to high note fiddling). There are even some pit riffs, but they're "made black" by the evil vocals. 💀💀💀💀 First off, **Lehavoth** has stupid photos. One guy looks like a black metal chaplain! "Gey Ben Henom" is surprisingly okay, not too harsh or evil. But at over seven minutes, one cool riff can't make it great. 💀💀💀 **Mercenary** finishes things off with "The Merriment Within." It's an instrumental with circular keys intertwined with guitar leads. I wish there were more. There's a woman in the band; I wonder if she sings. 💀💀💀💀

JAWW
Southbound – 1997

If anything ever was the shit, this is it. So thick, so meaty is **Jaww** that I thought these guys would be ten feet tall and bulging with muscles. *Southbound* is a crushing blend of death and hardcore that contains enough groove, uptempo riffs, and breakdowns to appeal to a wide audience. Hardcore kids will like "Fit to be Tied" and "...In Spades," while "Free from Disease" and "Lockjaw" hold an addictive, universal quality.

Jaww only gets stronger as the album progresses, with "Sacrifice," "Lockjaw," and "Numb" brutally closing things out. And the damn vocals! Imagine Odorous from **GWAR** singing in a totally deep voice and you're in the ballpark. These vocals, combined with the sludgy-but-still-keeping-pace riffs, best demonstrated on "Lockjaw" (can you tell this is a good one?), highlight the brooding attack force known as Jaww. You go, you get, you happy! 💀💀💀💀

$10 everywhere to:
Doug McLarty
1576 Queen St. W., Box 30
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M6R 1A6
jaww@gadzook.lglobal.com

KATATONIA
Brave Murder Day
1997 Century Media

Yet another tremendous release from Century Media, *Brave Winter Day* is the first domestically released **Katatonia** product and probably all that's necessary to build a huge following. Led by a core of simple riffs, the band's music branches off into melodic leads and mesmerizing, soaring solos. Guttural but passive vocals add an important layer that reminds trendies to stay away; accessible as this music may be, it is not for shallow, pop-oriented souls.

The listener becomes hypnotized by the evolutionary riffs as they flow effortlessly into haunting interludes, leaving one in a state of pure musical bliss. Each of the ten songs (the *Brave Winter Day* album itself is only six, but four older bonus tracks also appear) defies time, floating past as if in a dream. Such a pleasant soundtrack is this that few will be able to call Katatonia "just another metal band." 💀💀💀💀 ½

KONKHRA
Weed Out the Weak
1997 Diehard Music

As predicted in issue #2 and proved in #3, **Konkhra** kicked some major ass with its sophomore album, *Spit or Swallow*. The hate and fury from this Danish quartet chugged and raged, pummeling the listener like so few have been able to do. So what did mainman Anders Lundemark do to capitalize on such success? Kick everybody out and bring in James Murphy? What the hell?! This new incarnation of Konkhra is half-American and half-Danish, and the music is about half as good as before. The aggression of old seems to have been a one time thing as Lundemark and co. reached a premature pinnacle. *Weed Out the Weak* is boring! I want to feel the grip of clenched fists driving knuckles into the side of my head. I need to be swallowed in the churning waves of encompasing riffs. I need *Spit or Swallow II* and I'm not getting it. What a waste! 💀💀

KRABATHOR
Mortal Memories
1997 Morbid Records

Czech trio **Krabathor** has built itself an impressive reputation over the years, having released three albums



...And all the kings horses and two Americans could not restore Konkhra to glory again...

in the last five years. The *Mortal Memories* EP features five of the band's songs from the '80s, revamped and re-recorded for the critical '90s audience. I am pleased with the results! '80s speed riffs keep the music at a blazing pace, while the chunky and crisp production allows for both grinding and solos. If nothing else, the sound on this disc is an accomplishment.

I 'm struck by how instantly catchy and modern these 1988 tunes sound. I am no big fan of old school, but the Krabathorian juggernaut has been keeping my head banging for days. Embrace Krabathor now or face the merciless attack of the new *Orthodox*. 💀💀💀 ¾

LIVING SACRIFICE
Reborn
1997 Tooth & Nail Records

Wow. That's what I'm reduced to saying right now. Wow, wow, wow. Where the hell did this come from? All of a sudden **Living Sacrifice** got *really* good. I mean awesome! Perhaps their pro-Christian beliefs are as much a driving force as those held by a majority of the religion-defying underground scene.

Having slowly built upon its thrash and death roots for years, Living Sacrifice now shreds with strong incorporation of hardcore, old **Entombed**, and vocals nearing the harshness of polar opposites **Christ Inversion**. The last song, "Liar," rages with the kind of ferocity fueled, until now, exclusively by anti-religious sentiment. Here, shouts of "Jesus Christ is Lord" whip the spine and hold limitless more weight than the silly Christian-metal-band-with-Bible-quotes-in-the-lyrics that have been a laughable trademark of this genre for years. It's about time one of these bands finally got some sense, and the results are highly commendable and downright awesome.

Sloth readers, never mind the short haircuts and the urge to doubt the capable metal of Christians (hey, I know it's been a long time since **Mortification**'s self-titled and *Scrolls of the Megilloth* came out), for as vocalist/bassist Bruce Fitzhugh says, "Approach this album with no preconceptions except that it will be heavy." Christ, this is heavy! 💀💀💀💀

LORD BELIAL
Enter the Moonlight Gate
1997 No Fashion Records

An absolutely beautiful digipak houses this album, with an ominous purple moonlit night setting the tone. As for the music, this Swedish quartet plays black metal with thick n' meaty production. The sound alone separates **Lord Belial** from a huge percentage of its genre mates, and the musicianship ranks highly among them as well. So what's the problem? Perhaps nothing, but when asked if I would buy this or not, I would hesitate. Too many pointless speed sections, characteristic of black metal, fill up time on this 8-track, 55-minute epoch of evil. Great moments on songs like "Unholy Spell of Lilith" and "Realm of a Thousand Souls Burning (Part 1)" are merely what **Dissection** patented, and while they may sound good, so do *The Somberlain* and *Storm of the Light's Bane*. A riff straight off of **Diabolical Masquerade**'s album opens "Black Winter Blood-bath," but who's to say that's not a coincidence?

Basically, Lord Belial could be at the doorstep of a breakthrough. Just a little more ingenuity and a touch of individuality would work wonders for these guys. 💀💀💀 ¼

LORDES WERRE
Canticles of Armageddon
1997 RIP Music

A duo from Indiana, **Lordes Werre** plays old school American black metal with a side of pickles. The guitar riffing is catchy but not layered, while the raspy vocals hint at but don't become annoying. Each spin of this 5 song disc is a decent one, and things are at their best when the thin black metal, one-string picking gives way to speedy, chunky riffing. Too bad these guys insist upon filling their songs with useless lyrics, because every good rhythm they come up with must yield to evil vocals and boring riffs. If Lordes Werre focus more on writing solid music and keeping its Americanism, the future looks bright... I mean a heavy metal holocaust is sure to engulf us all in a fiery flame of fire. 💀💀💀

LUCIFERS HAMMER
The Mists of Time – 1997

From what I gather, **Lucifers Hammer** (nice grammar, guys) has been playing heavy metal for a decade. That right there is commendable. What you get from such an experienced act is solid musicianship and knowledgeable songwriting. The band takes influence from **Bathory** and at the core plays black metal, but there's much more. Many slower instrumental passages add depth and length to each song, and keys a la **Christ Inversion** linger in the rear. Interestingly, the guitar tone resembles old **Gorefest**, a striking contrast to all of today's black metallers. The American touch Lucifers Hammer brings on *The Mists of Time* is sure to please anybody who yearns for music cut out of a different mold. And hey, ten years of experience didn't come from nowhere. 💀💀💀 ¾

$10 (US) / $12 (world) to:
1257 Hull Rd.
Mason, MI 48854

MASS PSYCHOSIS
Necroporno – 1996

Back with nearly thirty minutes of sick, quirky death metal is that vile foursome known as **Mass Psychosis**. If you like *Face*, you'll cream over the band's musical progression and still insane songwriting. There are more breaks and bends than on a **Pan-Thy-Monium** album, and Tom's "escaped madman" vocals are as deranged as ever. Each of *Necroporno*'s seven songs is executed with precise technique, and guitarist Doug displays his versatility on "Zombiechrist" and "Re-invented." "Bleeding Heart" is a great acoustic piece that shows just how fast Doug can move his fingers, and I challenge you to find a more complex piece similar in style. So check out some diverse orchestrated chaos, check out Mass Psychosis. 💀💀💀💀

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MERCURY RISING
Upon Deaf Ears
1996 Dominion Records

Mercury Rising, from Maryland, demonstrate good musicianship on all fronts. All five musicians execute intricate material that makes Mercury Rising sound as though they were formed at Berkeley College of Music. Technical, Hal Doliver and Gary Goldsmith's guitar playing is absolutely flawless. The rhythm section of Chris Brush (bass) and Jeff Moos (drums) is extremely well done and tight. The vocal range of Clarence Osborne is very impressive, and demonstrated on the chorus of "It's War." Mercury Rising can be appreciated by fans of **Queensryche** and **Fates Warning**. The guitar solos are well done and melodic, and keyboards give some of the songs an extra texture. The title track is one of the highlights of the album, and Goldsmith's guitar solo on it was one of my favorites overall. From the heavy tracks such as "Zeros And Ones" to the ballad "Prayer," *Upon Deaf Ears* includes a good variety of sounds. I liked these guys a lot, regardless of what other reviews said about them, and I'll be on the look out for a second album. 💀💀💀💀 (Forhad Hossain)

MIDVINTER

At the Sight of the Apocalypse Dragon

1997 Invasion/Black Diamond Music

First of all, I typed the band name and album title just as they came. Perhaps it's "Midwinter" and "The Apocalyptic Dragon," but as far as I'm concerned today is official Speak Vit Unt German Aksunt Day, and the dragon in question is either from the newest species terrorizing Loch Ness or a monster truck that shoots flames at the crowd, leaving them blinded like raptor victims.

"Majestic and symphonic black metal" is what they call this – my god, that's groundbreaking! – and while it is some strain of black metal, I wouldn't heap on the complimentary and deceptive adjectives. **Midvinter** has been around in a number of forms since 1993, and during this time has managed to become fairly tight and write over an hour's worth of music for this recording. But where's the fury? the passion? the hate that inspires the band to put 666, three inverted pentagrams, and three inverted crosses in its logo? The bio even says that a former drummer lost three ribs in a fight with mainman Damien, and a former vocalist overdosed on drugs while Damien fled from Sweden to Greece until he got into a motorcycle accident and was apprehended by the cops. This a group of twisted minds that should have been able to come up with something more eventful than this!

If you're a black metal fanatic and love those fast tempos that fade into a background constant, then **Midvinter** is for you. If you're smart and realize there are over 100 albums reviewed here, you'll pass and either check something else out or go to a monster truck rally. 💣💣 ¼

MISERY

Revel in Blasphemy

1997 Warhead Records

Take the sound and vocals of **Sadistik Execution**, mix them with a touch of latter day **Morbid Angel**, and you've got the Aussie quartet known as **Misery**. I've seen this group hailed in other 'zines as brutal gods, and its music really is dark and unfriendly, but overall I wasn't too thrilled. The songs seem more like collections of riffs and song structure quota-filling more than anything else. Any sort of momentum a body riff develops soon careens off chaotically in another direction to set the stage for a chorus. The only song in which the power Misery was aiming for showed up full-force was on "Morbid Dreams." Here a real Morbid Angel influence shines during the sinister slow riffs, and each molds well into the next. A foreboding middle features a catchy pit riff, echoing cymbals, and Diamond Darrell soloing. If Misery applies itself to making its songs as fluent as "Morbid Dreams," then I too will gladly revel in blasphemy. 💣💣💣 ¼

MOLESTED

Stormvold

1996 Repulse Records

When I press 'play' and the carnage begins, I transform into the hellish creature known as Mr. Cheesy Reviewer. Words like "destructive", "whirlwind", and "skullcrushing" invade my thoughts until I must scream out, "Brutal, fucking brutal death, brutal!!!" But can this really be my fault? When a CD actually scares you, shouldn't words like "bone-chilling" and "soul-freezing" paralyze your brain? And *Stormvold* is only five songs! I'm only being brutalized for eighteen minutes! Imagine if I had to face an album's worth of this hellish Norwegian barrage. Horrifying, bludgeoning, gruesome... 💣💣💣💣

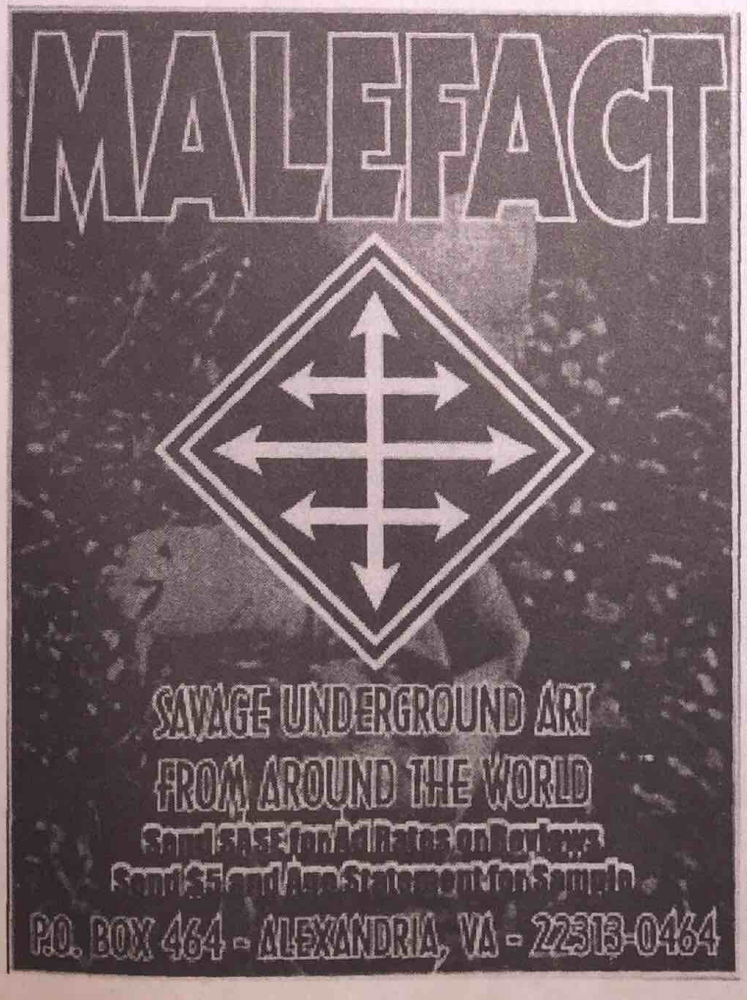
MOON

Daemon's Heart

1997 Pagan Records

A project with **Christ Agony**'s Cezar on guitars and vocals, and **Vader**'s Doc on drums, **Moon** is a rhythm guitar based metal band. If some of the riffs were played on the higher strings they might sound like black metal, but Cezar's Vader growls ensure this is pure death. The musicianship is marked by Doc's flawless performance, in which he utilizes his drum kit to the fullest. As for the guitars, I found myself torn; on one hand, some of the riffs sound similar, but overall I enjoyed what I heard.

Solid presentation from start to finish is what ultimately makes *Daemon's Heart* a success. What lacks in consistent originality is made up for in the overall quality. You'll swear that Vader and **Morbid Angel** have influenced Cezar's writing, but you'll enjoy yourself in the process, and that ain't bad. 💣💣💣 ½



MÖRK GRYNING

Return Fire

1997 No Fashion

Here we have a Swedish duo that plays an above average brand of black metal with **Entombed** influences. Especially impressive are the guitarists' skills in creating both memorable, high velocity riffs, but also in channeling their inner rage into twisted, violent ones. What sets *Return Fire* back is the prevalence of filler black metal speed sections, which do nothing more than hinder the listener from enjoying the guitarists' obvious talent.

Too many bands in all genres fail to see that following the standard songwriting style is a hindrance. Must there always be vocals? Whatever happened to the short anthems of the eighties? Why not use solos at the beginning or ending of a song? If **Mörk Gryning** were to take such steps to individualize itself, the results would be astounding. Until then, it will be a band forever doomed to "have potential." Progress must be made! 💣💣💣 ½

MORTALITY

Structure

1997 Warhead Records

Touted by Warhead as its most anticipated album due to the rabid following **Mortality**'s two demos – *Aggression = Power* and *Oppressive* – received, *Structure* is an eleven-song onslaught from regions so dark you won't see **Pantera** or **Machine Head** there anytime soon. This is '90s thrash with rough edges and true attitude, and while the aforementioned pair, which definitely influence **Mortality**'s music, are interested in commercial success, this band chooses to stay underground.

As punishing as this album is, I still must warn you that it is not for everybody. Fans of power thrash with fall in love with *Structure*'s aggression and pit-inducing riffs, but I doubt those of you that live for black metal will care for it at all. That said, I still think **Mortality** will win more fans over to this style than **Pantera**, due to the chunky guitars, active drumming, and rougher-than-**Machine Head** vocals that combine to pummel the listener. 💣💣💣 ¼

MURDER CORPORATION

Blood Revolution 2050

1996 Quablah Productions

Featuring three members of the ferocious **Deranged**, **Murder Corporation** packs a damn mean punch itself! Blending the beats of old **Entombed** with the most brutal of today's American bands, *Blood Revolution 2050* is five songs of catchy, wicked mayhem from start to finish. The tremendous guitars pound like weights being continuously dropped on your head, and Jens Johansson's vocals could come from a slew of *Death is Just the Beginning, Volume 2*-era Relapse/Nuclear Blast bands. All in all, this is a strong release for brutality's starved fans. 💣💣💣 ½ One funny note: This EP's opener is called "Bull's Eye Eight in the Head." It is printed three times throughout the package. I figured somebody was really awesome and when he first typed things up, mistakenly pressing 'e' instead of 'r.' Does 'bulls eye' denote eight bullets in the head, or one *right* in the head? Awesome, that's what!

MY OWN VICTIM

No Voice, No Rights, No Freedom

1997 Century Media

My Own Victim is a metal/hardcore act that hails from Kentucky. The cover of this CD shows someone holding their ketchup-covered hands over a American flag. I think these guys are blaming the government for making ketchup packets that are impossible to open. Fuck the system, man! Those fascist bastards!

This CD is chock full of generic songs that remind me of shitty New York hardcore. There are fast parts and then breakdowns with some street style chanting choruses thrown in. The music sounds like that of **My Sister's Machine**, somewhat powerful but not very catchy. The vocals are similar to **Pantera**'s Phil Anselmo but not really.

Don't get me wrong, this CD is pretty decent but it sounds like every other band that attempts to combine metal and hardcore. In my opinion, **My Own Victim** needs more wheedley-wheedley-whee solos in their songs because they are not metal enough. And everyone knows you can't have a metal band without wheedley lead lines. 💣💣💣 ¼ (Metal Vader)

NAZXUL

Totem

1997 Vampire Records

As is their want, the evil men of **Nazxul** play chaotic black metal that turns into death metal despite their attempts at Scandinavian savagery. Immediate comparisons to fellow Australians **Sadistik Exekution** and **Misery** can be drawn, just as bands from Greece and Poland have a knack for similarity. *Totem* is ruled by shredding guitars that got the short end of the stick in the studio, at times leaving their blazing movements and slower riffs behind the crisp drums. This average production doesn't really matter in the end. Nor do the low **Baltak** echoing-chicken vocals that serve as clouds. No, the lame riffs and indecipherable tempos alone make **Nazxul** a force not to be taken totally seriously. Only "Unearthed" and "Endless Reign of Power" successfully envelop the listener into their whirlwind of brooding power. The rest of the songs just go and go, traveling the same path over and over, like a boomerang. 💣💣 ½

THE NEFILIM
Zoon
1996 (I know!) Metal Blade

It is the soundtrack to a dark, frightening future. The night comes alive and you run from everything and everyone at full speed. Dark alleys explode in flames and masked bandits slowly surround you. They lull you into a false sense of security with the foreboding "Shine" and "Zoon pt. 3," only to strike angrily with "Pazuzu." There is no love in this dark world, only the cold, deep voices of those who know and dictate all, willing to end a human life if the wind blows. As they drag you to your cage, you hear the victims of "Xodus" scream in agony, and you know your fate.

Do not come here. You are not ready...to die. 6 6 6 6 ½

NEGATIVE REACTION
Endofyorerror
1996 Rot'en Roll Records

Well, the "Gods of Sludge," **Negative Reaction**, have finally come out with their well deserved first full-length CD. Staying true to their fight against corrupt "punk" bureaucracy they slowly but surely plow through 70 minutes of music for the people, and not the masses. Although my personal preferences lean towards their older releases, this album undoubtedly has many moments of its own, along with moments you can't help but notice their early hardcore influences. Since their split with **Violent Society** they have dropped their second guitarist and replaced their drummer, but this young trio has managed to produce a recording that will find itself as definitely a welcome addition to any metal/grind/doom fan's collection. 6 6 6 ½ (Steve Ritt)

NEOLITHIC
For Destroy the Lament
1997 Adipocere Records

For Destroy the Lament, huh? Something tells me English is not this band's native language. Actually, **Neolithic** is comprised of French frogs or Polish sausages who play a great strain of doom not far from **Celestial Season**. However, there are no endless passages of eruptive vocals over slow harmonies; just mid-paced emotional music that focuses on the exploratory nature of the guitars. So very appealing are the smooth leads and well-blended acoustics that one sometimes forgets the prominent piano and creative vocals. Besides growling melodiously, the singer also tends to narrate and whine, the latter what a hatched chicken would sound like if it had a Frenchman's voice. Duh, of course!

Neolithic has found a ripe spot for itself, somewhere near Celestial Season's moody doom but altogether more lead guitar oriented. 6 6 6 6

NEURAXIS
Imagery – 1997

It took a whole lot of listens, but I finally got what **Neuraxis** is all about. At first and for a while, *Imagery* was nothing but an average album. One day it occurred to me how cool it really was, and I wondered where my head had been! What probably turned me off was the mix, which put the drums ahead of the thinner-than-preferable guitars. I also struggled with not being able to tag a label onto Neuraxis's style or compare it to that of another band. The bio claims the group evolved from the brutal likes of **Cannibla Corpse** and **Carcass** to the European styles of **Dissection** and **In Flames**. The fact is that Neuraxis stands alone from (though not always above) everybody else. Via a combination of black and death metal, a unique drumming style and production, varied vocals, and an undefined guitar style, this Canadian quintet offers a new approach that sums up some of this decade's better metal accomplishments. A couple loose ends here and there regarding sound mixing and group coherence are the only drawbacks I can see, so brace for Neuraxis's next album, which is sure to shake the earth. 6 6 6 ¾

Write for price to:
1189 Cartier
Montreal, Quebec
H2K 4C4 Canada
steven@neoblast.qc.ca

NIDIN DIV. 187
Impergium
1997 Necropolis Records

I was less than pleased with this band's *Towards Judgement* CD, but since then it seems like they've refined their vengeful impulses to end all of humanity in a mass bloodbath...sorta...The riffs are slightly catchier (I can now distinguish the guitar from all the other instruments...thanks, guys). My only complaint: the drums almost *never* let up. The enitre 26-minute CD is one constant bombardment of ultra-fast blast beats coupled with breakneck riffing. In some parts the two meld together seamlessly, but I'm left with little room to just sit back and breathe, or take it all in. High-pitched shrieks of terror (care of Henke) eventually just get on my nerves as I yearn for an interesting interlude from the chaotic noise frenzy. Pass on this. 6 (Tim Jaeger)

NUM SKULL
When Suffering Comes
1996 Defiled Records

All right, here's the scoop. **Num Skull** has been around for ten years and this is its second album. *When Suffering Comes* features nine songs of upbeat, grinding death metal. I'm not a brutality fiend, but I can see this is well done, executed with precise picking and drumming. Illinois's **Disinter** comes to mind as I listen to this, as both groups utilize time changes and catchy riffs well. There really isn't much more to say; Num Skull isn't for black or atmospheric metal fans, but *discerning* brutal death fans should check this out. Before the rating, there's one final thing that caught my attention. "Inquisition of the Guilty" is about O.J. Simpson's murder of Nicole Brown and Ronald Goldman. The band firmly believes in Simpson's guilt -- and so do I -- but also takes a racist stance, despite one line of the lyrics saying, "It's not an issue of race." Nicole is referred to as "the white angel," and as the song ends in shouts of "Guilty," the final shout is "Nigger." I am repulsed by this racism and would like the members of the band to explain themselves! 6 6 6 ½ (I wrote to the band with a few questions, and the reply was to send the review and then my questions will be asked. I e-mailed this very review and never heard from Num Skull again.)

OBITUARY
Back from the Dead
1997 Roadrunner Records

Oh, how the mighty do fall. **Obituary** has been away from the scene since 1994's *World Demise*, a record which showed the band succumbing to the pressures of popular trends, as industrial elements were incorporated into its previously untarnished sound. Now, after a self-imposed hiatus, Obituary's back! Back from the dead, only to die once again.

This time around, the quintet has returned to its simplistic, riff-happy roots and John Tardy's trademark vocal mumbles. In a time when metal thrives as an underground force, there are just too many new, refreshing bands to support for Obituary to succeed. Death metal – or just metal in general – has come a long way this decade, and the aging giants like Obituary and Deicide are being left to rot in others' dust. How can you compare the conviction on this disc to that of **Crown of Thorns** or **Bethlehem**? Groups like **Malevolent Creation** and **Cannibal Corpse** remain at the top of their game because they've consistently returned with material that mesmerizes fans. M.C. came back strong after the *Stillborn* flop; Obituary comes back with clones of old songs ("Download") and rap ["Bullitary (remix)"]. Rap! And a multimedia thing for your computer, too. Don't be surprised if Roadrunner is unable to drop the band before it manages to break up for real. If they do stay together, these guys will pop up on some indie label with a "really brutal" album that stems from much "soul searching" after getting dropped and two of the guys divorcing from their wives. So unless you're an angry 13-year-old redneck, stay away. 6 6 P.S. I went to see Obituary live in an attempt to disprove this review. Obviously it didn't work, and the only good part was Donald Tardy, who is an awesome drummer. Brother and vocalist John was ill and had the guy from Pyrexia filling in. No problem. What sucked were the lifeless new songs, and coupled with the band's new skater look, show how Obituary has turned into a hardcore band. Rhythm guitarist Trever Peres, who used to look really scary and wear metal clothes, now stands around strumming and looking at his new pair of Vans. The bass player was a complete idiot! He posed hard with his gay goatee and kept on trying to fight some guy in the crowd. To finish the night, Alan West of **Six Feet Under** shame played lead on "Slowly We Rot" as if he being punished. Farewell Obituary, you are through!

OBSCENITY
The 3rd Chapter
1996 Morbid Records

Oh, how glorious! In a time when so many brutal bands play stale, generic, belch death, isn't wonderful when a band like **Obscenity** comes along and restores your faith? By channeling the emotion of melodic black metal into aggressive death metal, Germany's Obscenity stakes its claim in the vast underground kingdom.

Want specifics? The technical guitar riffs are catchy but retain maximum velocity, and the main deep growls occasionally yield to equally powerful raspy screeches. These are demonstrated plainly in the truly pit-inducing "Schattenspiele," the album's closer that explodes with vocal ferocity. Don't forget the stamina of "Nuclear Holocaust," or "Disgrace Over You" with its doomy passages and females vocals. The album's highlight, "Disengaged," also hints at doom but ends with two minutes of supreme drumming and guitar soloing that bring the close of **Gorefest**'s "Dragonman" to mind.

Similar to **Intestine Baalism** due to its fine combination of brutality and melody, Obscenity uses musical experience and supreme intuition to create some of the best pure death metal around. Don't let this pass you by! 6 6 6 6 ¼

OLD GRANDAD
OGD EP plus Sam Fran666co Bootlegs
1997 Hectic Productions

They're back! San Francisco's satanic blues metal trio is back with eleven antisocial platters of drug-induced sickness. There are six live versions of songs from 1996's *Vol. 666*, and five unreleased tunes that came from the same studio record-

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ing session. Those who love **OGD**'s obnoxious antics will find a warm place in their heart for this EP, and anyone who is interested in eating vegetarians, smoking crack, or insulting Jerry Garcia is encouraged to inquire within. And if you don't think the band is evil enough, the CD's booklet is filled with satanic imagery and flames. 💣💣💣¼

$8 (US) / $10 (world) to:
Hectic Productions
P.O. Box 401122
San Francisco, CA 94140-1122

OLD MAN"S CHILD
Born of the Flickering
1997 Century Black

To simply label this black metal would completely undermine all that **Old Man's Child** stands for. *Born of the Flickering* is one of the most inspirational albums the metal world is fortunate enough to call its own. Here, black metal branches off into deep riffing, screeches intertwine with growls, and each song resonates with passion and fury.

This opus has two certain songs that show why OMC is the pioneer of a new style of black metal, one that transcends the constraints of genre, especially Norwegian black metal. Sure, there are greats like "...Leads to Utopia," with its beautiful keyboards, and the catchy "Christian Death," but there are two specific songs here that exemplify the power this band possesses. The album's opener, "Demons of Thorncastle," starts off aggressively via chunky riffing through b.m. production, and flows into **Dark Tranquility**-esque pull-off guitar antics. The song settles into an acoustic interlude that serves as a base for a crushing note of electric power which marches into melodic bliss. Your heart is torn as electric and acoustic guitars duet over a piano, and this is only the first song! What did we do to deserve this pleasure?

"The Last Chapter" is an equally amazing song. It begins with a speedy b.m. section that blends into an exciting, chugging riff. Meanwhile, the lyrics tell of the singer's loss of all hope and decision to commit suicide. Each musical and vocal transition pulls your heartstrings as you feel the singer's painful decent into personal darkness, and when acoustics kick in you are trapped. An emotional solo commences, stabbing you repeatedly with metal hero techniques. And just when you think your battered soul was free, cleaner solos jab at the exposed wounds with a whirlwind of notes. A furiously dying voice comes in and ensures your death. The album ends soon after, leaving you an emotional wreck. 💣💣💣💣💣 A new opus, *The Pagan Prosperity*, is now out and just as recommended. It's less raw, seeing the band utilizing dead spots and timing like **Samael**. It's good, trust me.

OPHTHALAMIA
To Elisha
1997 Necropolis Records

Having been around for eight years in many different forms, **Ophthalamia** released this collection of old demo tracks and rehearsals to celebrate its "glorious existence" before forging ahead with its revamped lineup. Core member IT, of **Abruptum** and **Vondur** fame, put *To Elisha* together as a teaser before the band rerecords its debut, *A Journey to Darkness*, and then takes over the world.

Having never heard any of IT's previous musical accomplishments, I can't compare anything to these songs, which range in date from 1990-94. To me, they all sound like a young band struggling to put its wide range of experimental ideas onto a cheap recorder. Like all basement bands, Ophthalamia has a plethora of slow, guitar-fiddling laden tunes, along with the occasional black metal speed section. While there's no reason to buy this CD, one would not be too wrong in buying a more professional Ophthalamia product, assuming the band matured and took its experimental roots into the studio. 💣💣¾

ORPHANAGE
By Time Alone
1997 DSFA Records

More of the same stuff you heard (or didn't hear if you didn't buy it) from these guys on their *Obliveon* album can be found here in the guise of *By Time Alone*. Yep, I suppose there's "Melodic Aggression Gregorian Choirs" (?) (quoting from the fact sheet) and "danceable grooves" to be found here, but, once again, there's nothing that really draws me in and forces me to listen again and again. There are some keyboards and stringed instruments that add a nice touch here and there, but on the whole they come across as somewhat lackluster. Again, this might be an album that has to slowly grow on you, but immediately nothing on *By Time Alone* strikes me as forcefully as the **new My Dying Bride** or anything by **Dark Tranquillity**, so I'll give it some leeway. The Gregorian choirs, female voices, and keyboards are essential to Orphanage's life force, but take them away and all you have is a solid band that thrives on re-hashing the same stuff over and over and over again. Fans of *Obliveon* will definitely dig this, though. 💣💣💣

PAGAN LORN
Black Wedding – 1997

Cool indie release we've got here from Germany's **Pagan Lorn**. These guys truly exemplify the word "progressive" in the sense that their music may be rooted in death metal, but it holds a unique quality due to the many quirky little things that pop up. If **Faith No More** were to record a death metal album, it would sound something like this. Every song leaps off into multiple and seemingly hitherto unknown impossible tangents. Be there clean *Tales from the Thousand Lakes*-era vocals, organs, or simply retarded songwriting, *Black Wedding* works incredibly well.

Pagan Lorn is probably the only band to have every reviewer stumped. We simply cannot tag a label on the group! Emotional, ethereal, progressive gothic quirk death? The way in which the complex songs flow rival those of the mighty **Phlebotomized**, and you'll gladly find yourself singing along with the addictive vocalist. Highest praise goes out to Pagan Lorn, the true purveyors of the future of metal! 💣💣💣💣💣

Write for price to:
26 rue de la montée
L-3321 Berchem
Luxembourg, Germany

PAINGOD
Self-titled
1997 Century Media Records

This band started out as **Raped Ape** in 1990, and I remember for years reading about what a great brand of thrash it played, and how it deserved a contract. Well, only after a name change and adoption of a boring style did the now-**Paingod** crew get a deal. Mixing its thrashy roots with **Pantera** (that's original), hardcore, **Biohazard** (ya don't say!) and **Slayer**, the quartet's debut full-length shows instrumental maturity but songwriting mediocrity. While "Paingod" and "Not a Moment to Spare" get you into the music, the others lack diversity and much of a punch. The production is a little too cloudy for my tastes, and the multiple shout approach that worked so well on **Old Grandad**'s *Vol. 666*, comes up as monotonous and self-destructive here.

All said, Paingod can play occasionally groovy metal, but you'll probably get fed up after just a few songs. 💣💣¼


Why old men shouldn't have kids.

PAUPERS FIELD
Voice
1997 Cling Recordings

I simply cannot deny this band its due. Despite how nonmetal and utterly nonbrutal **Paupers Field** is, my conscience forbids me to review a completely less worthy, but metal album. Passion and energy drive each song from tragic depths to emotional highs, with soulful vocals singing, shouting, yelling, and wailing from the heart. You say you want a "true" album, well here it is.

Immediate comparisons can be drawn to


Two pessimists

Mutha's Day Out and **The Offspring**, as well as distant a **Black Sabbath**. If you're not familiar with Mutha's Day Out, it is/was a rural band from the Midwest that played lighter metal that ultimately gained recognition due to its heartfelt and aggressive songs. Paupers Field pulses with such unbridled neuroticism and I thought for sure this was the same group.

I mention The Offspring *not* to turn you off, but to recognize the speedy, erratic tempos that drive some of the more powerful moments. Don't be a little bitch and moan about this being pop-punk or I'll give you the slap you deserve.

Why do I like **Korn** and Paupers Field, which leads you to call me a sell out hypocrite? Emotion and conviction. If a group of people can convey its collective soul through a song and I feel the wounds that forever bleed in their hearts. That is what music is about. You can be as brutal as a sledgehammer blow the skull, but if your heart doesn't scream out with utter barbarism, then you have not created true music.

Disregard all those stupid 'zine editors who worship the god of repetitive brutality, the ones who shame you out of actually taking a fucking chance. If you want to spend fourteen of your own dollars then screw Trevor Dumbass in Illinois who says you can only buy his favorite CDs. 💣💣💣💣¼

PESSIMIST
Cult of the Initiated
1997 Lost Disciple Records

From my pals back home comes their debut album, *Cult of the Initiated*. A nice production that really blends the instruments and vocalist keeps **Pessimist**'s death/thrash attack in the '90s realm. Plus, the pummeling drums of Chris Pernia and clankety bass of brother Tony make for a strong foundation.

Is this as stunning as Pessimist's three-song demo *Absence of Light*? Probably not. The reason is that writing an album's worth of material is a lot more difficult than just putting a out a demo of your all-time best songs. With that said, here's what makes *Cult* such a success nonetheless. The eight-song album is less than forty minutes, so you won't get bored. Second, each musician's technique is well-crafted, and Rob Kline's alternating high and low vocals are not standard fare. Finally, these songs are memorable in a covert way. You'll find yourself raising a fist at certain intervals or nodding your head to a catchy tempo, but the music is intricate enough that listener involvement is required.

Pessimist, while not breaking tremendous ground in the death/thrash genre, has produced an easy listen for the critical masses. There's only one song on here I don't like, "Pyrosexual," and I recommend you check out "Innocence Defiled," the revamped "Stench of Decay," and the awesome combo of "Drunk with the Blood of the Saints" and "Dungeon Lorde." 💣💣💣¾

PHLEBOTOMIZED
Skycontact
1997 Cyber Music

I raved about this band's stunning *Immense Intense Suspense* last issue, and was overjoyed when singer Dennis Geestman contacted me. He had seen the *Sloth* website and was prompted to write. Well, after all was said and done I received this new album and was myself prompted to interview the band.

What initially made **Phlebotomized** stand out to a wide range of underground music fans was its ability to play brutally, melodically, and soulfully, while never losing

focus. *Skycontact* sees the band delving further into this concept of on-target, personal music. Yes, the grindcore roots are slowly giving way to, as the bio states, "psychedelic and symphonic music, guitar rockin' noise, traditional and more extreme buttkickin' metal," but the aggression remains. In fact, Phlebotomized has always had a knack for symphonic compositions – last album's "Dubbed Forswearer" and "Devoted to God" – and the final four tracks of *Skycontact* appear to be movements of a unified arrangement.



Sacrilege has burst upon the underground scene

Now let me tell you why this goes beyond the simple "progression" that many bands make between albums: the passion! There is so much sensitive, heartfelt emotion in Phlebotomized's music that I forget that it's metal and realize that it's just great music. It is albums like these that make me truly understand what it is I love about metal, and how no matter what the world offers or what religions fail to deliver, music is the one reliable constant that can make even the darkest days light, can inspire with a ray of hope.

Nearly an hour is packed into these eight tracks, including seven minutes hidden *before* the opener, "StoleShowSoul." According to Cyber Music, no one has done this before, and, according to me, it sure beats the plethora of bands who think it's a great idea to insert a hidden track after fifteen minutes of silence. Hey, if you want us to hear it just put it on there and list it! Anyway, this instrumental intro fits the CD's groovy, melodic vibe. Unless you're a close-minded underground purist, you'll have loads of fun with *Skycontact* and will embrace its somber moods, diverse tempos, and enveloping atmosphere. 💀💀💀💀💀

POINT OF VIEW SECONDHAND
Fractions of Faith
1997 Diehard Music

Diehard says the band combines the melodies of the eighties with the distortion of the nineties, like **The Cure** combined with **Type O Negative**. Nonetheless, I find **Point of View Secondhand**'s debut album to be quite an accomplishment. *Black*-era **Metallica** comes to mind more than, say, **The Sisters of Mercy**, but I grew up listening to the former rather than the latter. It doesn't really matter what style we say the band emulates, because what we should care about is whether or not the songs are good, which they are.

I'm not a big gothic fan, but I enjoyed the ten songs on *Fractions of Faith* because of their great choruses and overall accessibility. These are the tunes that kids should be filling up arenas to hear, not the Skalternative that draws today's sheep.

The emotional vocals of Rasmus Kabelka will appeal to fans of **Life of Agony**'s Keith Caputo's whiny style, though Rasmus sings deeper and with more variety. The guitars serve as a thick backdrop, subtly aiding the vocals withuot taking center stage. These elements combine for nearly an hour of soothing, entrancing music. 💀💀💀💀

SACRAMENTUM
Far Away from the Sun
1997 Adipocere Records

If you're a big fan of **Dissection**, you need this CD. If you are moderately into black metal but can't stand the bands who play one tempo for fifty minutes, you need this CD. **Sacramentum** packs lots of black metal insanity into this refined album that has some incredibly melodic moments. For instance, the final passage of "Blood Shall be Spilled" begins with a harmony so beautiful, so ethereal as to bring tears to the eyes of stone-faced men. It is one of the great musical moments!

Excellent use of melody accents the title track and "When Night Surrounds Me," as well, pointing out that Sacramentum is at its best when there are no vocals and the musicians are allowed to explore. The singer has a nice rasp, but any band can fill up time with evil words. Therefore, these guys would benefit from abandoning the rules that state "x amount of blasphemous stanzas must exist in each song." Just let your wonderful music unleash itself!

So there you have it, folks. *Far Away from the Sun* is an important step in the right direction for melodic black metal, and you are urged to purchase it if even vaguely interested. 💀💀💀💀 Century Media picked these guys up and just released *The Coming of Chaos*. While not as spectacular as *Far Away from the Sun*, it's cool. I was disappointed by the huge thunder buildup at the end of the CD. It putters out without chaotic explosions.

SACRILEGE
Lost in the Beauty You Slay
1996 Black Sun Records

Imagine what the love child of **At the Gates**, **Dissection**, and **Edge of Sanity** would sound like and you have **Sacrilege**. Basically. It would be a shame to drop these names and end the review because it really doesn't do any justice to Sacrilege. Countless bands either do or try to sound like the aforementioned trio, but just how many can pull it off and stand out in their own right? By incorporating Dissection rasps with full-bodied growls (not in the **Carcass** vein) akin to **Kataklysm** rather than the sheer guttural belches of **Suffocation**, as well as pounding out each song with melody and power, Sacrilege does just that. These guys truly care! They want to stand out, and you can really feel the rush on "Beyond the Gates of Pain" and "Silence in a Beloved Scream," songs accentuated by the driving beats and memorable transitions that are establishing this young band as an underground force. Add a soothing outro, "Initio Silentium Noctis," to its eight strong predecessors, and you've got a winner in *Lost in the Beauty You Slay*. 💀💀💀💀 Now out for 1998 is *The Fifth Season*! Even more refined than before, Sacrilege comes back with more memorable tunes in the dirty At the Gates vein. Once again, prime material worth consuming from Black Sun. Both Sacrilege albums are recommended, but this is plainly better than *Lost in the Beauty You Slay*. You'd be a true fool to ignore either Sacrilege or Black Sun, because both prove to powerhouses in the coming years.

SADIST
Crust
1997 Displeased Records

Hot damn! Just as I resigned to the fact that **Pan-Thy-Monium** was forever gone, shedding a tear, into my P.O. Box **Sadist** did flop! These Italians shred in the style of the suicidal Swedes while incorporating furious raspy vocals and rabid beats. Did I mention funk and jazz? And sci-fi keyboards? And that when playing live, one of the members provides both guitar and keys simultaneously?

With all these crazy, non-metal components playing a role in Sadist's music, one might fear that the basic goal of kicking some ass might be lost. Here's where the Pan-Thy-Monium influence shines, as dirty **Pungent Stench** riffs bounce like a seesaw with robotic accuracy. You will be reduced to punching at the ground repeatedly, dying for a pit to kick your willing ass.

"Instinct" is probably the most catchy song of all, with its infectious guitar giving way to funk bass and savage yells. The title track's eerie electronic aura yields to "I Rape You," which is highlighted by a mellow solo a la **Eric Johnson**. "Holy" is a progressive relaxation piece that lulls you into a false state of security, in which "Ovariotomy" smashes you against a rock many times. Need I go on? Need you keep sitting? Need you the address of Displeased Records, it is located on the labels page. You go now, no trouble! (Immortal quote from Falling Down.) 💀💀💀💀½

SATANIC SLAUGHTER
The Land of Unholy Souls
1997 Necropolis Records

The only way Necropolis bands will stop getting primarily mediocre reviews is if they stop sending me primarily mediocre releases! (Of course they could send call girls up to my dorm room, but, ahem...) While Satanic Slaughter is "good" in that it provides an attack of thrashy death metal, what else can be said about this band, or the album? There are a few notable riffs sparsely placed throughout, but the lack of any defining elements makes me cringe. While I have moved away from the "thrashier" metal, I can still appreciate the greatness of older **Slayer**, **Kreator**, **Venon**, etc., and use them as paradigms of which to compare the newer "old school" metal to. Therefore, I will not bend or modify my standards just because we aren't in the middle of a thrash-metal renaissance. I'd rather be listening to **Cattlepress** right now. They're pretty fucking raw. Go buy them, not this schlock. 💀½ (Tim Jaeger)

SATYRICON
Nemesis Divina
1997 Century Black

Recently I've been flooded with a ton of black metal, and this one really caught my eye. One problem I have with the style is how much of songs' bodies is just unintelligible, high-note speed picking. Another is one that can affect all styles of metal: Vocalists not putting the same effort and creativity when organizing delivery like they do with music. That's why **Satyricon** stands out so well...

Featuring an army of guitars similar to **The Abyss**'s self-titled debut, *Nemesis Divina* is nothing less than an all-out, brutal black metal attack. When we think of black metal, brutal usually doesn't come to mind unless there are death metal riffs, but Satyricon's whirlwind high-note madness will pummel you like a wrecking ball. The aggressive music is aided by an angry vocalist who puts personality into the lyrics, injecting passion into lines like, "This is Armageddon" and "I am the hammer."

We cannot forget the tactful musicianship displayed on these seven songs. The execution is flawless, from mellow guitar strumming to hyperspeed picking, as each member of the band has taken it upon himself to let his makeup and costume add to his music, not sell it. Bravo!

Nemesis Divina ranks up there with **Dimmu Borgir**'s *Enthrone Darkness Triumphant* as one of those black metal albums that took all of the positive elements of the genre and put recorded them originally, passionately, flawlessly. This is an essential addition to your collection. 💀💀💀💀💀



SACRAMENTUM-TU-TUM-TUM-TUMS!!!

SEA OF TRANQUILLITY / PAX MORTIS

Winter / Defiant Split CD

1997 Cursed Productions

Sea of Tranquillity fulfills its end of the bargain with a lively set of brutality. The raw guitar sound and quickly accelerating nature of the riffs make this trio sound more like **Pyrexia** than **Cannibal Corpse** or **Suffocation**. My favorites were the never-relenting "You have been Warned" and "As I watched from Below." Good stuff. 💣💣💣 ½

Less traditional is California's **Pax Mortis**. Maintaining an American feel, the band branches off into a futuristic vibe via sound bytes, varied vocals, and keyboard effects. Things really fall into place from the third song on, as if the band were just warming up at a live show. One could compare the music's dark atmosphere to that of **Fear Factory** or **Tool**, but the true metal nature of guitarist Chris Crites and drummer Aaron Copeland ensure that this quartet is strictly underground. By the way, the bio states that Pax Mortis plays progressive death metal, but in reality it's hard to categorize a band that plays so differently. 💣💣💣 ½

SEASICK PIRATES

The Return of the Helicopter Man

1996 Nuclear Blast America

I didn't know that Nuclear Blast put out punk records but I guess I was wrong. The **Seasick Pirates**, despite their profoundly stupid name and album title, actually deliver some decent songs on this album. The first song is called "Go Away" and I really like it. It is a slower poppy kind of song similar to **Screeching Weasel**. The rest of the CD sounds like **Good Riddance** with their feeble attempts at political themes. In fact, the singer sounds exactly like the dude in **Good Riddance**. It is obvious that this band knows that they are pop-punk and are desperately trying to cover it up with semi-fast songs. Unfortunately, their faster songs blow and the only two songs I like are slower sad songs about girls.

The **Seasick Pirates** do get props for their two covers. Their cover art is definitely one to be reckoned with since it is a parody of an Indiana Jones movie cover. As long as they realize that Indiana Jones is God then I'm all right with that. The other cover that is worthy of receiving props is their cover of **Billy Joel**'s "The Longest Time". The actual song is quite lengthy and it loses its effect after a minute or so, but "The Longest Time" is a superb song so I approve of that. I actually used to like **Billy Joel** but then I found my dick again so everything was all good. 💣💣 ¾ (Metal Vader)

SEDUCER

Sin Speaks – 1996

'80s speed metal? Thankfully not. Instead, these Carolina boys bring us an odd hybrid of groovy hardcore metal with an old school feel that makes tagging an actual label on them hard. Would you want your band to be considered "groovy hardcore metal"? *Sin Speaks* has a smooth vibe that warrants "groove", and while the guitars and vocals are for the most part straight up metal, you can't deny the influence of hardcore in the sound and riffs.

Dead Orchestra comes to mind when we consider the warm production and lively atmosphere created on songs like "Envy Denied" and "Sour Blackened Tooth." Between some songs are lively classical sections that you might find in Sunday morning cartoons. This weird addition only enhances the listening experience, and with fifteen years of experience, these guys probably know what they're doing. Check this out! 💣💣💣 ¾

Write for price to:
5108-D Cherrycrest Lane
Charlotte, NC 28217

SENTENCED

Down

1997 Century Media

Why won't anybody call this what it is? **Sentenced** has simply become a lame hard rock band. The genius, the passion, and the anger of *Amok* have been replaced by the intensity of a **Mötley Crüe** ballad! The departure of bassist/vocalist Taneli Jarva left an opening that should never have been filled – the band should have just called it quits. Instead, some guy named Ville stepped behind the mic and rasp/sang his way onto the catastrophe known as *Down*. Sentenced lost its fire with the departure of Jarva, and Ville's entrance added a layer of glacial ice. The eleven new songs are interchangeable power ballads that barely utilize the guitarists' technical skills, leaving the listener depressed and with an empty wallet. 💣💣 ¼

SIX FEET UNDER

Warpath

1997 Metal Blade Records

Demonstrating the height of pretension which some of death metal's stars have achieved, "supergroup" **Six Feet Under**'s latest album reeks of the sellout usually akin to mainstream alternative. Everything, from the plodding "Animal Instinct" to the lifeless "Burning Blood," reveals this quartet's lethargic approach to playing uninspired, money-grubbing metal. The riffs and vocals compete in a slow war of sleep-inducing proportions. Chris Barnes should rediscover his brutal roots, Allen West should become a monk since **Obituary** also sucks, Terry Butler should go jump off a bridge with the rest of **Exodus** to spare us from the comeback, and drummer Greg Gall should go back to the Nowhere from which he came. Six Feet Under is a disgrace; shame on Metal Blade for grabbing an udder of the cash cow! 💣 ¼



Six Feet Under: They smoke weed, so they must be cool!

SKEPTICISM

Stormcrowfleet

1996 Red Stream

I've been having trouble writing this review. It seems that every time I pop in this disc I fall asleep! **Skepticism** is the absolute slowest band on the planet, and that is not a good thing. Each of *Stormcrowfleet*'s six songs is a plodding, repetitive dirge that wanders aimlessly until it finds the listener a bed.

What makes this worthless and the doomy **Morgion** good is that Morgion uses its slow core to branch off into different tempos and arrangements, hence keeping the listener's attention. Skepticism is so slow that *any* group of kids could do this; just play really, really slowly and have a guy growl (if he is awake), then call the result the "towering plateau of crawling chaotic doom metal." You *will* get signed! Nevermind how inane the phrase "crawling chaotic doom" is, go for it! 💣

SKYCLAD

Irrational Anthems

1997 Century Media

The word is that England's folk metal enthusiasts **Skyclad** appeal to a select bunch. Well, rip me off the tree and remove the peel! I am so very impressed with *Irrational Anthems* (and the cool EP-ish *Oui Avant-garde Á Chance*) that it's taken me forever to actually review it. What is this?! Elements of folk, hard rock, and metal combine in insane ways to make each song a unique entity, and for the most part things work. Only on "Silence Never Sleeps" and "The Sinful Ensemble" am I left feeling awkward, primarily because the truly poetic lyrics aren't enough to save the songs.

"Inequality Street" starts off the festivities with the jaw-dropping line, "Life's really a chocolate box…" Before you can mock, faint, fart, or whatever, violins and drums wrap you in a blanket and carry you to Skyclad's fantasy land. "Penny Dreadful" drips with soul as it bashes the popular music mentality. "I Dubious," besides being a nice song, is lyrically a masterpiece, intertwining history's betrayed into a tragic retrospect. The ironic "Quantity Time" closes the album, calmly leaving you to ponder more than just how many goats to impale today. 💣💣💣 ¾

SLAPDASH

240.25 Actual Reality

1997 Nuclear Blast America

What's wrong with '90s metal bands? So many don't have it. **Slapdash** just doesn't go anywhere. The first song, "Nothing Remains," might tickle your belly with its catchy and groovy opening riff, but as the album progresses, *240.25 Actual Reality* becomes slow, repetitive, and boring. Slapdash does a spark of originality somewhere, but then again, originality doesn't necessarily mean quality. Mortensen's vocals are sometimes powerful, but too often he loses the live feeling of the opening tracks. If you're not into '90s decaying metal, never get near this poor effort. 💣💣 (Carlos)

SOULQUAKE SYSTEM

Angry By Nature, Ugly By Choice

1996 Black Mark Productions

Ah, another band attempting to combine hardcore and metal. Although most bands of this genre lack originality, I have to say that **Soulquake System** are pretty damn good. The vocals are reminiscent of **Integrity**'s Dwid and the evil guitar sound is similar to that of **Catharsis**. Some of the riffs blow my mind but others are bogus, dude.

The first three songs on this CD are mediocre but everything after that rocks. "Info Check" is probably my favorite song with its brutal chanted choruses and monster breakdowns. One thing **Soulquake System** could improve on is the lead lines. A couple of these songs have killer leads in them and the more generic songs would be much improved with a little bit of fingertapping. Lord knows you can never have enough lead lines. Despite the lame name (hey, a rhyme!) you should definitely check this shit out. 💣💣💣💣 (Metal Vader)

STRIFE

In This Defiance

1997 Victory Records

The last studio offering from **Pro-Pain**, *Contents Under Pressure*, was a real letdown. Nothing was really bad, and a couple of songs were quite good, but overall nothing showed the band making any strides toward progression. (Those guys do put on a good live show, though. I received a burst blood vessel in my eye from colliding with some guy.) Why do I mention this? Because **Strife** is Pro-Pain to the next level, full of the fiery riffs and aggressive vocals with that extra umph, like an elbow drop from the top ropes.

"Grey" and "Blistered" are sure to get pits going, while "Will to Die" and "Forgotten One" elicit good feelings because they're just so well executed. Hey, I find hardcore to be utterly boring a lot of the time, yet Strife had me bounding around the room with a clenched fist and the desire to break other people. It's about fucking time! No more of this pansy "vegan hardcore" or "punks for peace," let's kick some ass!!! 💣💣💣 ¾

SUNDOWN

Design 19

1997 Century Media

Damn, this is impressive! At first, I wasn't too sure if this "gothic rock/metal" was going to do it for me, but I was wrong. **Sundown**, featuring members of **Cemetary** and **Tiamat** (yuck!), creates simple, catchy songs that are driven by moodiness and discouragement. If **Billy Idol** played metal, *Design 19* is what you'd get.

Each of the ten songs has something to offer – except "Ghost in the Machine," I don't know what is going on there – featuring sing-along choruses, interesting keyboard

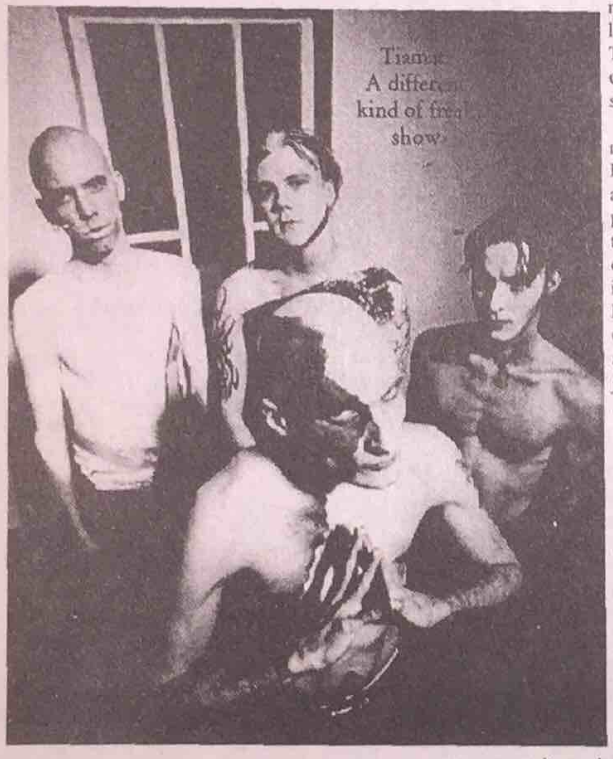
effects, and varied vocal deliveries that fit each mood. Feel the passion of "19" and the raw edge of "Slither," get haunted by "Judgement Ground" and soothed by the instrumental "Voyager" and its eerie keyboards.

Sundown has done it. I am now interested in hearing more gothic metal, a style I've been hesitant to explore. And if that can be done to me, how about you? 💀💀💀💀 ¼

TAINT
Perverse
1997 Red Stream

Don and Mike are a pair of DC radio personalities who are currently syndicated in over 40 markets. Some of their on-air games include "Low-Budget Jeopardy," "Strip Trivia," and "Honk for Cash." Another one involves callers putting their portable phones into clothes dryers, and whoever's makes the most noise or craziest sounds before conking out wins. Waco, Texas's **Taint** seems to have taken to this idea rather fondly, releasing a lengthy "album" that is nothing more than a collection of such obnoxious noises. *Perverse* is truly the worst, surpassing all those "ambient soundscape" releases that are at best soundtracks of a nap. That anyone would waste his time preparing – well, maybe they didn't – and recording *Perverse*, let alone release it on a label, is beyond me and I await an episode of *Unsolved Mysteries* in which Robert Stack delves into "Music That Just Plain Sucks."

Imagine lying across train tracks as a speeding freight train goes over your body, back and forth, for forty-five minutes. That is the joy of *Perverse*; that is the joy of life. That is crap!



TANELORN
The Other Side
1996 Dominion Records

When I first heard this album, I didn't like it much, but after each listen it gets better. The guitar playing is well done. Andy Cicalese and Ron Kulak are exceptional guitarists. The solos done over the clean tone arpeggios are the best ones on the album such as the one in "Bad Dreams." I don't like Joe Maniglia's vocals much. It's like **Michael Bolton** trying to sing for **Queensryche**. It just doesn't fit for some reason. Tanelorn is a band that has potential but they just aren't using it to the fullest. I would like it much more if the vocals were better. The drumming of Gregg Locascio is really well done. The bass playing didn't stand out much on this album. There are parts in this album that shine, but nothing really that great. 💀💀💀 (Forhad Hossain)

TARTAROS
The Grand Psychotic Castle
1997 Necropolis Records

Man, there's so much interesting stuff coming out these days! Here we have **Tartaros**, a solo act which Necropolis touts as playing "5 symphonies of enchanting horror." I could call this eerie-black-atmospheric-metal, or some other throw away term, but instead I'll make it simple. The band, Charmand Grimloch, has roots in black metal and expounds upon them with synthesizers and choir vocals. Here's an even clearer picture: Combine black metal with the amusing music that starts off movies like "Beetlejiuce" and "The Addams Family." It's that kind of upbeat and sometimes eerie, dramatic music that diversifies the black core. Grimloch definitely knows what he's doing, because I'd think twice before listening to this in the dark! Images of empty houses, lit candles, and winding staircases come to mind as this twenty-five minute creation fills the room. At last, a Norwegian black metaller that is doing something different than his countrymen. 💀💀💀 ¼

THEATRE OF TRAGEDY
Velvet Darkness They Fear
1997 Century Media

Beautiful bare breasts, a body wrapped in purple sheets, and two roses — one fruitful, the other withering away — rarely does a cover exemplify its album so well. *Velvet Darkness They Fear* is so beautiful, so sensuous, and so haunting that your soul will weep with both sorrow and joy. How tragic are these nine hymns of melancholy, yet how fortunate am I to have experienced this gift!

Soft, angelic female vocals break hearts with each poetic verse, and gruff but reserved growls provide a dark contrast. All throughout, one-upped **My Dying Bride** music provides more than a backdrop for these momentous dialogues. There is not a song on this album in which **Theatre of Tragedy** fails to achieve supreme clarity and purpose, and not a soul remains unstirred.

However foolhardy an attempt at conveying this record's importance into words is, one must try. Imagine yourself being so t ken aback by "Fair and Guiling Copemate Death" and its dual vocal/piano interplay, the floating atmosphere created by the soft drumming on "Seraphic Deviltry," or the chilling Vincent Price condemnation of Christianity in the heart-piercing "And When He Falleth." Picture such emotion and you will question your own strength. Nothing can prepare you for Theatre of Tragedy. *Velvet Darkness They Fear* is a journey that few endure with dry eyes. 💀💀 💀💀💀

TIAMAT
A Deeper Kind of Slumber
1997 Century Media

Well, the title pretty much says it all, eh? My god, do you think the singer could be any more lethargic and uninterested in his delivery? Every song, "I...don't...care...for...aahh..." Fuck you! The only reason your band sold so many CDs is because you altered your style, which your label promoted to death. This isn't even heavy, there is no metal. Each piece is an atmospheric, floating event that is layered with tons of keyboard, hollow vocal profundities, and the occasional memorable guitar melody.

The songs "Cold Seed" and "Four Leary Biscuits" are the only two that stand out; ironically, they're the ones that don't abandon the progression of **Tiamat**'s past endeavors. *A Deeper...* is just an unnecessary exploration of pretension, so I hope you enjoy "Trillion Zillion Centipedes," "Atlantis as a Lover," and "Alteration X." I'll be off doing something productive, like shaving my back. 💀💀 ½

TODAY IS THE DAY
Temple of the Morning Star
1997 Relapse Records

Let's just say that I'm still getting used to **Today Is The Day**'s unique take on, shit, just about every extreme form of music out there. In fact, just listening to this makes me want to say wow. Elements of noise, traditional rock, metal, and hardcore are all gelled together in one big motherfucker of a package in the form of *Temple of the Morning Star*. It's pure adrenalized aggression that leads into blissful melodies. I'm entranced, yet I'm listening to a song that's repeating "I hate you/ you're nothing/ oh I'm coming harder/ please harder/ fuck me/ fuck me". I love it. This piece of sonic art definitely ranks up there on the top 10 list of "Apocalyptic Albums to Welcome the Coming of the New Millennium and the Decline of Civilization as We Know It". Buy this album, you dumb fuck. It's an investment worth making. 💀💀💀💀 P.S. Just for reference, think **Godflesh** and **Neurosis**. (Tim Jaeger)

TRAINING FOR UTOPIA
The Falling Cycle
1997 Tooth & Nail Records

Four songs and twelve crazy minutes, *The Falling Cycle* is an orgy of **Korn** and the most extreme hardcore bands. The guitars of Don Clark drip with emotion, his brother Ryan grips your throat as he tortures his own, and drummer Morley Boyer stares to the ground as he pushes his body to its limits. Such is the ferocity of the frantic fanatics **Training for Utopia**.

The music on this disc transcends mere titles and descriptions, for it is an enveloping experience fueled by passion and fury, the joys and sorrows that make our lives worth living everyday. I shudder to think what a full-length album from these men would do to me. 💀💀💀💀

TRANSCENDENCE
Eternal Stream
1997 Gaïa Disk

Ethereal and enchanting, emotional and endearing. Such is Canada's **Transcendence**. With nine flowing songs of atmospheric metal, complete with soothing introductions and alternating male and female vocals, this quartet's debut ends up one of the year's best.

Sebrina Lipari's strong voice mixes power and frailty, characteristic of '80s and '90s female singers, respectively. She is the lead vocalsist, but male growls and singing also appear. As the guitars go from clean and floating to distorted and technical, so do change the various vocal styles.

A slow album, *Eternal Stream* is best for times of relaxation, not when you're ready to jump around the house in spikes, yelling "Fucking metal." Think of this CD as new age metal. Think of it as that eternal stream, complete with flowing currents and rushing rapids. 💀💀💀💀

ULVER
The Madrigal of Night
1997 Century Black

The final chapter in a trilogy portrayal of the "darkside," *The Madrigal of Night* just plain sucks. Each of the eight songs – which all begin "Wolf & ..." – is a non-stop blazing black metal affair with as much diversity as a KKK meeting. The vocalist's generic rasps are surpassed only by the guitarists' generic speed picking that makes each song more boring than its predecessor. Even the vague attempts at broadening horizons, like the acoustics on "Wolf & Fear," are short-lived and executed half-heartedly. To top everything off, the abominable production makes the album sound like it was recorded a kiddy toy, with the singer's four-year-old brother producing. Why Century Media licensed this is beyond me. 💀

UNLEASHED
Warrior
1997 Century Media

Here we go again! Slow and upbeat tempos are basically what differentiate each song, as always, though **Unleashed** branches off into a little emotion on "Ragnarök." You know, I could enjoy this band so much if the music weren't so damn simple! Each riff, catchy as it may be, shows know evidence of progress or exploration; the drumming is just as basic, and we all know how intricate the vocals are. The positive aspect of Unleashed is that its music is so simple the members probably go wild on stage without losing their places. As is the same with a number of bands, Unleashed would put on a better live show than record an album. 💀💀💀

VARATHRON
Genesis of Apocryphal Desire
1997 Cursed Productions

Greek underground cult favorite **Varathron** has existed for over a decade, and its old demos are again available. I know that Ray at Cursed has never been too critical of poor production (from his reviews in *Metal Curse* magazine), and as you guessed, *Genesis* has such a flaw. I don't dig the old school, ultra-prehistoric strain either. The vocals are lifeless death grunts that limp along with the slow riffs, which take an oddly considerable amount of influence from **Slayer**. Varathron isn't that great here, but I did receive a new sampler tape from singer Necroabyssious, and it was better. 💀💀

VOLATILE
Quarantine
1997 Warhead Records

Here we have **Volatile**, a quartet of sickos who are the Australian equivalent of **Abscess**. If that's a good thing or not, you'll have to decide. The music is not as punk as that of the California grinders' *Seminal Vampire and Maggot Men*, more deathly like *Urine Junkies*.

The music doesn't really accomplish anything and the production is average, making *Quarantine* something most will pass by, but those who love this sloppy style will buy it and cherish it. 💀💀 ¼

WITHIN TEMPTATION
Enter
1997 DSFA Records

A cleavage-enhanced beauty adorns the cover, and within hides an equally beautiful vocal temptation. Sharon den Adel fronts Holland's **Within Temptation** in its quest to gain international recognition from fans of the rising genre of female-led doom metal bands. So far, so good, because the only average songs on *Enter* are the ones that *lack* her presence. These songs – "Deep Within," most of "Getekeeper," and the instrumental "Blooded" – simply cannot match the soaring splendor of "Restless" and "Grace."

Adel resembles Anneke from **The Gathering** and at times **Fiona Apple**, while her style ties into the music, which is like **Theatre of Tragedy**, a band that also features a sexy lady on its album cover. Adel's higher voice tends to take center stage, as opposed to Liv of TOT, who assumes a more equal role with her band mates. The music is also emotionally lighter, more intent on soothing moods than entrancing epics.

The title track and closer "Candles" are also memorable songs, leading a certain fellow to believe *Enter* a worthy purchase. 💀💀💀💀 ¼

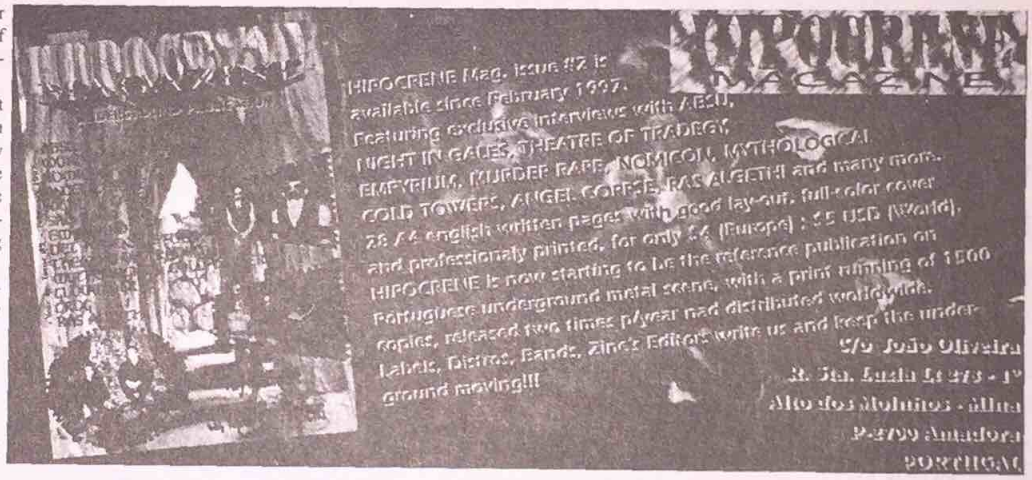
WITHSTAND
...And Anger Was A Warm Place To Hide
1997 Mayhem Records

This CD definitely gets the award for most evil cover art. I simply cannot say enough good things about this album'scover. I only wish the band were brutal enough to back it up. Almost all the songs are slow so they are hard to get into. The guitars are pretty cool but the vocals really irk me. They are sung in the most annoying manner. Instead of screaming or yelling, this dude sounds like he's talking really loud. It sucks.

A good deal of the music on this is nice and some fast parts would vastly improve it but the singing is the main downfall of **Withstand**. There is a neat instrumental on this CD but it's short, which is disappointing. I can totally picture it blending into a fierce lead line but it stops abruptly. **Withstand** has some promise but this CD is not to my liking. 💀💀 ¾ (Metal Vader)

WORLD OF SILENCE
Window of Heaven
1997 Black Mark Production

World of Silence is a progressive band in the likes of **Dream Theater**. The music is amazing. The drums, guitar, bass, and keyboards are amazing. Mathias Sandquist's vocals are well done, too. The instrumental segments in each song are awesome. These guys know what they're doing. The music is very technical. Mikael Dahlqvist's guitar playing is very much like John Petrucci's (Dream Theater), and Bruno Anderson's drumming is much like Mike Portnoy's (Dream Theater). The Dream Theater influence shines through with perfection. Thomas Heder's keyboard playing is extraordinary and his solos are very unique. This CD is a must for every progressive listener, may the style be metal, rock, avant garde, or whatever. World of Silence's inventive compositions stunned me. It's been a while since a band has come along in which every musician plays their instrument flawlessly. Unlike some bands who just have an extraordinary guitar player, this band is musically complex in every instrument that it uses. This is one of my favorites from the past year. I recommend World of Silence to everyone. If its keen musicianship shocks you, don't tell me I didn't warn you. 💀💀💀💀 ½ (Forhad Hossain)





NR020 - 'Under the Guillotine' CD
$14 US / $16 Overseas *(Also available on Limited Edition Picture Disc LP for the same price)*

There hasn't been a thrash metal album this intense since the early days of KREATOR! A leather and spikes retro-thrash blitz that will make you rip the sleeves off your jean jacket! Old school thrash wrapped in special old school packaging! The executioner is ready...you will for sure die "UNDER THE GUILLOTINE!"...



WAR
NR019 - 'Total War' MCD
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DISSECTION
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OBSCENITY

PROVING THAT THERE'S MORE TO GERMANY THAN TIGHT JEANS AND THE SCORPIONS!!!

***The 3rd Chapter* is one of those albums. One of those timeless gems that pumps life into a stagnant genre while sticking to its roots. Germany's Obscenity has blessed the underground with its undying spirit and dedication to technical brutality. Jens Finger, who plays "evil guitar" for the band, talks about Obscenity's ascent, as well as dishes some dirt, so read on...**

I know nothing about the band. Please give me a brief history and discography.
We started in 1989. Our first demo, *Age of Brutality*, came out in 1992. After that we got a deal with WVR Records, who released our first CD, *Suffocated Truth*. When WVR fell apart, we decided to record a second demo, *Amputated Souls*. We signed with DNS Records and in 1994 released the *Perversion Mankind* CD. After that we wanted to change labels because we got an offer from Morbid Records. They released our third album, *The 3rd Chapter*. This year we filmed two video clips for the songs "Disgrace Over You" and "Schattenspiele."

When the band started it out, what did you do to promote it? How did you get in contact with Morbid Records?
Actually, we still haven't done a tour yet. The problem is finding a promoter to put money into us.. But the even bigger problem is that we're all working — except for me, I'm a student at the University of Oldenburg. We hope to go on tour for the next album, *Human Barbecue*, which will be out on Morbid Records by the time that you read this. Morbid really rules! Once they just called and asked, "Hey, you want a deal?"

***The 3rd Chapter*'s cover features what appears to be computer guts overlapped by the images of skeletons and skulls. What the hell's going on?!?**
When our singer Oli got a computer, he was so fascinated with that shit that he decided to the cover artwork with computer parts. We wanted the cover to be colorful, so we just took all kinds of things and scanned them, put things together, and that's how it came out. That's all.

This is your third album, correct? How does it compare to its predecessors? What do you do on each new album to make sure it tops the others? Are the old albums still available. If so, from where?
I'm not sure if the old albums are still available. I think the first one is sold out, but what's up with *Perversion*, who knows?! *The 3rd Chapter* is (of course) our best album yet! We have grown as instrumentalists, songwriters, and so on. The music is technical but still fast and brutal. We don't think before we write anything, we just do it! We're not sitting in the rehearsal room saying, "This must be slower, death metal is out these days." We don't give a damn. We do what we wanna do and give a fuck about record sales.

What is your favorite song on *The 3rd Chapter*? I like the way "Disengaged" ends; man, those two minutes of soloing and drumming simply had me mesmerized! Definitely try to write more epics like that in the future!
We'll try! Thanks, but I'm not sure if we can write a song like that again. It's a little different from the others. The newer stuff is faster and more brutal, I think!

Being from Germany, you're in a prime spot to get offers from bands throughout Europe. Does the band play live often? Who has been the best to play with? Do you engage in any ridiculous behavior at shows? Are you banned from any clubs?
Ahh, no, we're not banned from any clubs and no, we do not engage in any ridiculous behavior at shows. We play metal, we live metal! No fucking poseur shit like all those black metal bands from Scandinavia. Of course we get totally crazy when we play live. That's the coolest thing I can imagine: Playing live! I fucking love it! I think we're more influenced by the eighties in that way. But, unfortunately, we don't play live often. As I said before, it's not easy to get everybody free from work at the same time. The best band we played with was definitely **Deeds of Flesh**. Those guys fucking rule!

I feel Obscenity is so good because you are able to incorporate inventive techniques and skill without losing any of the brutality. What do you feel makes the band stand out? What would you like a potential fan to know about the band?
Thank you for the compliments! I think it's our way of putting together the brutality and the eighties style of thrash and heavy metal riffs. What the fans like is that we still play death metal even though everybody tells you it's out. We don't care! That's the positive thing about Obscenity: We haven't changed our style like all the other death metal bands who tried to use industrial or hardcore influences... SHIT!

With there being so many bands and labels, has it been hard to get recognized in the underground? What advice do you have for young bands trying to get into the scene?
Quit! If you wanna make it, don't play Death Metal! (Haha!) I know it's hard. There are too many bands on too many labels. They all try to do something special and they're not true to themselves. If you wanna play an instrument in a band, do it! And play the music you want; otherwise you'll end up an alchoholic or something! There's only one thing that counts for a musician: FUN!

What is Obscenity currently up to?
Well, the new album will be out soon., which we'll try to support on tour. Some of *Human Barbecue*'s song titles are: "Soulripper," "Human Barbecue," "Infanticide," and "Lycanthropy." We're also considering rerecording an old song from the *Suffocated* album, "Utter Disgust." And maybe there will be a death metal version of "Raining Blood" on it. We'll see.

How did the doomy passage in "Disgrace Over You" come about? How come it's the only song featuring this style? What exactly are the lyrics discussing? It sounds as if the narrator has been castrated by his girlfriend...Did anyone in the band write this from a first hand account?
No, fortunately not! The lyrics are about a girl who recalls she's being raped. Now she wants revenge and she imagines how it would be cutting off her attacker's testicles. We though it was cool to have a girl sing those passages. But that will definitely be the only song where a girl sings. There are so many gothic-metal bands these days, and we let them do the female vocals. We wanna do the brutal, fast death metal.

Any final comments?
Thank you very much for the interest in the band. Maybe we can see you next year on tour through the US (if possible). Stay obscene!



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BILL ZEBUB

Bill Zebub is the outspoken mastermind behind the outrageous cult magazine, *The Grimoire of Exalted Deeds*. My first encounter came when I bought issue #5. Zebub's daring interviewing methods and heartless reviews instantly set him apart from other 'zine editors, and I have seen his popularity grow over the last handful of issues. Giants like Morbid Angel, Cradle of Filth, My Dying Bride, and Bathory have all faced Bill's mighty inquisition, and countless bands have been reduced to rubble by his jarring reviews. Some covers of the *Grimoire* have included Jesus crucifying Santa and the Virgin Mary flashing her contemporaries. Bill divulged to me that an upcoming cover will feature Satan's last supper, in which he eats baby Jesus. This guy is sick!!

Would you like to state your name, age, occupation, and sexual preference?
(laughs) Being that I'm a demon and sexless I have no preference, because I want nothing to do with humankind. Just kidding. Bill Zebub, editor of *Grimoire of Exalted Deeds*. And of course I love women.

Wonderful. Now, in one sentence, how would you describe the *Grimoire*?
The *Grimoire* was meant to destroy icons, but from the behavior of certain people, I have become an icon in the eyes of some, so I do not like that. But the *Grimoire* is just a big joke.

You've published issue #9, and #10 will be out by anyone reads this. When did you start you magazine?
I started it a little over two years ago, because when I was a radio DJ I was arrested on the air, which completely me cut off from the scene. I really missed it. When I was on the radio I used to keep on top of things, like new releases, publicists constantly called me and told me what was going on, and demos were sent to me. And all of a sudden I was just like everyone else and I had to buy magazines, I had to listen to other radio shows, and I really, really missed it because my radio show was a million times more outrageous than the magazine.

How'd you get arrested, exactly?
(chuckles) Well, uh, certain rats...I was betrayed like dracula. I fell upon the sword of assassins.

On the radio you fell upon a sword?
(chuckles again) I'm just putting it poetically. There are still people who must pay for what they've done, but because the *Grimoire* is so big they've actually done me a service. Anyway, where I worked I had free photocopying privileges and use of their software, so the first two issues — I don't know if you've heard of a program called Microsoft Publisher — they have templates where a magazine is already laid out. And all I did, being that I knew nothing about computers, is I put my own words over the words that were on the screen. And so it looked professional, but I had nothing to do with that. Now I know the program, and I use Quark express, too. And that is the birth of the *Grimoire*.

Did you set any goals when you first started writing it?
Because I had free photocopying privileges, selling the issue was not very important to me. I just made a ton of magazines that were stapled on the corner like everyone 'zine that begins unless the person's smart or rich, and I just really didn't care about selling. The attitude I use when I make bands angry at my questions was not made for sale. That has resulted in my popularity.

Did you have any idea of how popular it would become after you started it?
No. As I said, I only started the magazine to keep up on things, because I love the scene, contrary to what my critics say. They think that I'm an anti-metal magazine. I just like to have fun with people. All my friends, when we hang out, all we do is insult each other and get thrown out of clubs. We're drunken slobs, and that's the way I conduct interviews. I just really couldn't care...

Is this a full time job you've got going now?
It's fast becoming one. Not that I have 9-5 hours, but the amount of work that I put into the magazine, it's a full-time job for me.

When did things really begin to take off?
Things began to take off when I was almost shut down. I lost my free photocopying privileges because there was some nerd at my job that wanted the same kind of privileges and made trouble for me. So the corporation, just showing that everyone is the same, cut me off. When I was asking around for prices for photocopying I was really shocked. Before, I had never really asked for ads to be paid for, but because I was just pumping out so many free copies I became known. When I asked labels to buy ads for the issue, that's when I took off. Because of ignorance I pumped out 10,000 — that was with issue #6 and that was the turning point for me. The reason for that is the printer told me that that was the minimum run. I didn't know that with printers you shop around, I pretty much thought that every printer has the same price. That's a lie! I was basically ripped off but I'm glad that I was, because I pumped out 10,000 magazines and I had to find a way to get them out there, and free was the way to go.

So you sent out 10,000 for free?!?
Yeah, except through the mail it's three dollars, so I have these compilation CDs and the first wave of readers who write to me get the free CD and other treats. Plus, there are magazines out there that charge $5, and if you get them through the mail you're gonna have to pay more, but [the *Grimore*] is better, in my eyes, than other magazines that charge $5 or $6.



So does your advertising pay for the printing and mailing costs?
Yeah, it's a self-sufficient cycle. I don't lose a dime; I don't make any money but I don't lose any either.

Then how do you eat? Do you dig up dead goddesses or do you eat regular food?
I eat because of various side jobs that I do.

Male prostitute?
Occasionally. (we laugh knowingly) I prostitute myself in non-sexual ways.

I look at mags like yours, Headfucker, and SOD, and I wonder how they took off so quickly. Especially when there are publications with 25+ issues that only print 2000 or so. Can you offer any insight on how you get name recognition?
Personally, or with what happened to them?

In any sort of way, because I feel that I've got a lot of talent and that *Sloth* offers a lot. My problem is how will the average Joe be able to decide between *Sloth*, *Anal Feast*, and *Exploding Crotch* magazines?
Well, let me give you a personal story. I first saw *SOD* magazine when I was in Tower records one day, and there was only one copy. I don't remember it being super expensive, I know the price jacked up for some strange reason...Well, I took it home and I remember reading a letter in there from a fan that was just going off on how great he thought the magazine was. He also enclosed his band's demo, and I think it was David Horn who said, "Thanks for the praise and everything, and by the way, your band sucks, it's the most unoriginal thing, I really hope that this made you more popular in the underground." I really thought that was funny, but I heard that after that David Horn wasn't harsh anymore. I don't know how he got his name, but as for people like you and me, I guess what happened is I let people sample it. I saw this show about entrepreneurs once with Famous Amos, the guy who makes those chocolate chip cookies. It's funny but it's true! He made a lot of sense, and seemed to apply, though I didn't really go by his formula. He said in the beginning he thought he had a great cookie recipe and he didn't sell his cookies. He just kept making them and going around and giving them to people. (I'm laughing quite hard by now) Personally, if someone that looked like a homeless person came up to me and asked me to eat his cookie I'd spray him with mace or something, or spit on him, give him a dollar, say, "No, thanks, poison somebody else." But his idea of just giving out things for free, that occurred to me. 95% of the *Grimoire* is free. I've got labels like Relapse – even though they're slammed constantly in there and everyone makes fun of them, and they've sort of got the reputation of being assholes and a rip-off – they've been mailing free *Grimoires* with orders.

Well, I noticed they've got an ad in there saying, "Bill Zebub is Gay?!?"
Yeah! That is my crowning achievement of the *Grimoire*. You see, labels like Repulse Records in Spain, they can't stand me. They constatnly complain about how the *Grimoire* is not a professional magazine, blah, blah, blah, and they're constantly telling me how to change. Dave Rotten from Repulse wrote me an ultimatum. He said, "If you let Metal Monster review any more of my CDs, I'm not sending you any." So I just wrote him back a simple letter that said, "Well, can I print your letter? I think that American labels would find you very humorous." (laughs) That's a very common business law you should take into account, that in a negotiation, if you don't care, you'll win. If you look like you don't care, the other person will usually bow down. I couldn't care less if he services me or not. I'm not in this business to get free CDs. I make enough money on my own that I can buy stuff, and when I go to shows and people give me demos, I tell them, "Uh, you don't really want to do that." (laughs) They really don't want to give me a demo if they don't know about me already.

Tell me about your printing of rebuttals and general hate mail. When did you decide this was a "good idea?"
In issue #2, I first really crossed the line, and it was with a band called **Evil God Revival**. At the time, I was kind of new to the 'zine scene. I used to intern at Roadrunner and I read a lot of magazines. Everyone seemed to revere demo level bands, and even if they sucked there was some kind of support. And me just totally destroying this band was funny to me, since they put out such a weak and obviously trendy demo. I still thought it was kind of blasphem-

ing the underground. But I realized that there is no one opinion in this scene, there's no single opinion in any scene, really. Whatever you say, there are going to be people disagreeing with you. I thought I would show the world that I'm a fair man, I would let this band write whatever they want back. My letter to this guy said, "Write whatever you want, I won't edit in any way and I won't comment on it." I see a lot of magazines where the editor will print something from an angry person and then say something like, "Oh, yeah, you're really smart," or "Nice spelling."

"With the *Grimoire*, I show people that they can say what they feel and they don't have to worry about publicists at record labels."

Jerry Blaze is the guy's name. He didn't really send me a letter to be printed, which is a wrong thing that I did, I admit. (chuckles) He threatened me. He said, "If you print that review I'll sue you." And then he wrote me an explanation. I knew he totally didn't his expect his angry letter to be printed, but I thought it was so funny, I mean I was giggling the whole time! That's another thing that I have to confess to you. A lot of times when I'm writing the really brutally harsh reviews, I don't write them to be printed, I write them just to make myself laugh. I never expect to print them, but by the time the deadline for the new issue is coming, I'll go through my notes and the reviews will make me laugh. It's like a challenge: I don't really want to do it but the self-destructive part of me just says do it and face them when you go to a show.

I personally take a lot of time to perfect a review that trashes a band. For instance, the Internal Bleeding review. It was such an awful release, yet they had so much time to make it the best. I'm surprised you interviewed them in issue #5.
That was another point of crossing the line. I know they had a lot of promotion and everyone thought they were cool. I had never met them or heard their music before, and the interview and review destroyed them. I definitely thought I made brutal enemies. On top of that, they posed hard in their pictures and Frank Rini isn't the weakest looking person in the world. I went to the Cleveland World Series of Metal in '96, and I was in there before the club opened and there was this guy who I thought was a janitor or something. I asked where I was supposed to go, and it turned out to be Chris, who was really tall. Well, you know how on The Simpsons, Homer sometimes says to himself, "Don't do this, don't do this," and he does it anyway? I recognized Chris and knew he wouldn't know who I was unless I told him, and I said to myself, "Don't tell him you're Bill." I put out my hand and said, "I'm Bill Zebub from the *Grimoire of Exalted Deeds*." I swear to God, I thought that he was going to crack me right there, but he actually laughed because they're really good about humor. Whenever I meet him it's an exchange of insults all the time.

Let's talk about your interviews. First, why the Old English?
First, I love medieval fantasy, but that's not the real reason. I use it because there are people in metal who are the same kind of people who go to **Judas Priest** concerts and yell "Yooo!!" They're really mindless about the music and just rebellious kids, and they're going to grow up and listen to classic rock and abandon the scene. I also know that people like that are always trouble. I know that people who aren't very literary-minded, who don't read unless it's their favorite black metal band stabbing somebody, they get completely turned off by the Old English.

Do ask the questions in an English accent?
No, but most bands think that I will. I speak to them the same way I am with you right now.

Have you ever thought of doing them with German or Irish accents?
No, because the accent wouldn't appear in print. With Old English, they appear as they're pronounced, and you'd be amazed at the number of people who don't know what "thou" means. Dave Lombardo from Grip Inc. thought that "thy" means "I" because they rhyme, so instead of "I want the lollipop," he'll say, "Thy want the lollipop."

Readers find your interviews hilarious, but many find you to be a silly man who offers nothing to the scene. How would you counter such statements?
They're entitled to their opinions.

Explain your fascination with gayness, religion, and ethnic stereotypes. I recently chastised an editor of a forgettable Midwest zine for his racial ignorance and homophobia, yet I laugh out loud at so many of your observatory statements. Got any ideas?
Yes, those are all hot buttons. There's this girl from *Hellfire* 'zine who wrote me a nasty letter which I'm going to print, but I'm not going to say anything bad about her. One of her comments to me was that I should take journalism classes. Most people, like Paul from Necropolis, say I'm a brilliant journalist because I know how to get people to respond. My enemies have memorized my reviews. They know more of my writing than I do. There's a review in #9 of a Puerto Rican black metal band. The question was somewhere along the line of, "These Puerto Ricans are wearing corpsepaint, shouldn't they be wearing war paint like Indians in cowboy movies?" It goes on to say lyrics are about Newports and food stamps.

About how long does each band have to reply?
I'd say at least two weeks. In my letter, I ask them to reply within a week, and that way they'll be angrier in their response. The more they think about it, the less emotional they are. The band **Witch-Hunt** wrote an incredibly intelligent rebuttal. They were the first band in the history of the *Grimoire* to ever wrtie anything witty or with logic. Emotion does not really work well with logic, as you'll find in the rebuttals you're read so far.

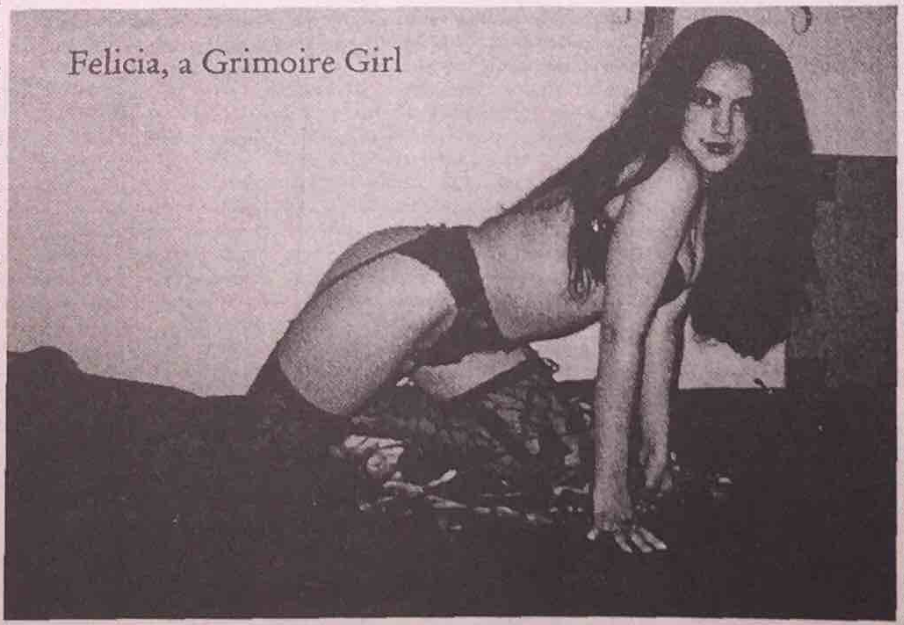
Do you have a method or game plan to follow when writing up questions? Is there a process you go through to research and dig up rumors?
I have what are called "dirt hounds." When I know that I will be interviewing somebody, I will consult these people to see what they know about this band. I'll never tell who these dirt hounds are, because they work *in* the industry or know the bands or are in the bands, but they help me find the embarrassing histories of bands. When I interview a band, I will pay very close attention to the person's voice throughout what I call "feeler" questions.

For instance, if you were interviewing me what would you ask?
Ah, but you've been asking me the questions. (laughs) I would try to find things that you guard, and I would go after them. You're a very calm person so it would be hard for me to break you.

Now let's talk about your most ingenious ploy, the "Grimoire Girl." I've got to hand it to you, simply brilliant! How did this idea come about?
I found an artist, who is a millionaire so he doesn't have to work unless he is inspired. I was the one with the idea for the cover of #6, where there is a crucifixion except it had the head of Ernie, the muppet from Sesame Street. I had other strange ideas too. I wanted as a hot button, something more blasphemous than that, which was the Virgin Mary in lingerie. And he drew her, except she didn't really look like the Virgin Mary, just some really hot model with a halo. As a joke, I wrote, "Be the next Grimoire girl." I really didn't expect anyone to send in a photo.

How many have you received since that came out?
A lot. Countless. (laughs) And a lot of women that send in photos say, "I saw the last *Grimoire* girl and I think I'm a lot better." There's something about womankind, and I don't think I'm very exploitative when I interview the girls for their page; I don't talk about anything sexual because it's sort of a goof interview. I'm very happy that they send me such photos. I like the kind of girls you would see at a metal show. I don't like when they're done up or it's their profession to appear that way.

About these girls, I've noticed that there's been no nudity thus far, only sexy lingerie.
That's important, because a lot people who read the mag are underage. I didn't want anyone's mommy or daddy to get me into any sort of trouble. But parents have already been outraged. It's been thrown into the garbage, another brought it to church and got up and asked for the family to be prayed for. One woman wrote a letter asking to have her address removed from our anti-Christian database. The crucifix scares vampires in movies, but the inverted crosses in the corner of every page scares away stupid people. Because of that people don't go after me the way they would a sleaze peddler. I don't think the *Grimoire* girls are sleazy, and I don't put nudity because I don't want girls who would've otherwise sent in photos decide not to because they think that toplessness is necessary. [The true hypocrite, Bill did of course include some nudity in #9. Oh, and I am thankful because this girl, Persiphone, is gorgeous!]


Felicia, a Grimoire Girl

Before I move to new topics, would you like to prostitute the *Grimoire* to my readers?
There's no big giant name in #9. I focused more on confrontational behavior in the scene. We have an exclusive interview with Jeremy from **Broken Hope** on what happened with King Fowley of **Deceased**. Also, Tim from

Oppressor was very mad and told me he was going to punch Danny of **Cradle of Filth** in the face at the Metalfest. I said I would be there with a camera to get it on tape. As it turns out, he lost heart and I gave him hell for it in the interview. We have **Acheron** from Florida, but I had to wait to interview them because I don't like interviewing bands at the same time as other publications. I didn't ever want to interview **Emperor** because they're in every major mag, but Lee from Candlelight has been my "ambassador" to the band. I'm trying to get Emperor to talk to me and for them to understand that in every interview they've ever done, the interviewer has been very professional, the interview was done just like with every other band, and they are a black metal band. A great deal of their success comes from the anger and evilness of the band, yet it never comes through in their interviews. I assured them they will have the last word, I will not interrupt, and I will not make any comments. But if I ask them a brutal question, they should rage with full Norwegian might! Are they Vikings or are they really the sheep who were conquered by the Christians? I'm trying to have them react to ego, and Lee is being phenomenal in his efforts to get them. It will be legendary!

What advice do you have for folks with young, small, or soon-to-exist 'zines?
There are people who just don't know how to get out there. For a young 'zine, it's important to give out free copies. You yourself have probably found a large number of 'zines that – with no offense to you, because I don't mean you at all – are made just to get free CDs from labels. If anything, there are only enough made to go to the labels to show they exist, and maybe a copy to a couple of friends. They still make flyers and get to people in the scene, and true supporters send money to these bogus fanzines. After being ripped off, they won't trust any other fanzine unless it's been reviewed. My advice would be to try to find a way to get out there free. It really can't be said in this interview, I can't encompass it all. But I will always have time to help, whether it is illegally duping publishing programs or hooking people up with contacts. Just with the *Grimoire*, I show people that they can say what they feel and they don't have to worry about publicists at record labels. I'm sure you, in *Sloth* magazine, have dealt with publicists who will pressure you.

"Wanna do an interview with Napalm Death?"
(laughs) Exactly! And if you tell them no, they come down on you. In the very beginning I never cared, and I hate when a new publicist starts at a label. They have a hard time getting used to me because I don't play any games. Smaller fanzines buckle under any threat. Say you're a kid, 15 or 16 years old – I don't mean kid in a bad way – and you call up a record company and after being approved, it'll start servicing you. Then the publicist will use that position to make it look like you don't know anything about music. You'll be manipulated. Don't pay attention to publicists, or people at shows. If you think things suck, say they suck! There's a belief that to be professional you have to write to a general audience. That's just being weak. If there's nothing of you in a review, why even write it? You should have your blood in the ink, and if they don't like it, you can live.

You're involved with things other than just the mag. You've got the video, DJ tapes, Painful Meow, and more. Briefly describe each.
The underground video makes no money. It's just a goof. It's slapstick, like Laurel and Hardy in the '90s. If you laugh easily, you'll like it. It's like chaotic Candid Camera. In a supermarket, we had some skinhead who was pushing a cart with another skinhead in it ram this guy in a wheelchair who was looking at some meat. The guy flew out of the cart onto the dude in the wheelchair, and they both fell right in front of a nun! (we laugh joyously)

I also hear there's a race with Jesuses carrying crosses?
The Crucifix Olympics! Yeah, I was in college and these four guys I new built life-size crosses and took them down to the track. I told the track coach that this was my senior project, and asked the athletes to get off the track. So I had these guys racing, and the winner cheated by tripping the others with his cross. [more outrageous laughter]

Where do your crazy interview questions come from?
Luckily I had a really frightening childhood…

In what way? Actually, I was just kidding.

That could be a very metal interview: Bill Zebub Purges His Soul!
I was an extremely happy kid. I got everything I wanted; a little too much of what I wanted.

Including the neighbor's wife?
(laughs) Neighbors didn't really like me, I did some strange things. Like I had this club, and to be in it I had to crucify you! I'm not joking!

All right, you're awesome! (joyous simultaneous laughter) I'm trying to ask serious questions but this is ridiculous. I was gonna ask about your articles about Jesus and how the mainstream media doesn't report on them, but I don't give a shit.
It's very important that you know that the world is in grip of a lie. The Dead Sea Scrolls actually show the code in which the Bible is written in. I'm talking to one of the guys from **Algaion** because he studied Hebrew, and he has come across in text that there have been deliberate mistranslations because they were too brutal for Christianity. Essentially the New Testament is composed of children's stories with a surface meaning that provides moral spiritual values. There's nothing wrong if you look at it that way, however Christianity is a lie, and in the next millenia people will look back at Christianity the way you and I look at the Greek gods.



Interesting point, because I ask Christian friends how we laugh at the Greeks and Romans, but *know* Jesus to be God.
The next wave of humans will know something else.

"My enemies have memorized my reviews. They know more of my writing than I do!"

I heard Svarog, because Elegy sent me a tape, and it sounds like a basement noise band. Are they really from the other side of the Apocalypse or whatever?
You'll have to ask Rob from Elegy, because whenever I'm given a history like that I laugh. Bands are just musicians, and as you know **Svarog** is a very political thing, trying to show the world what real honor is, and I don't believe. But I might as well tell you the real history. What do you think the real history of Svarog is?

You were drunk and decided to record something just as bad as Painful Meow.
You've heard Painful Meow then?

Uh-huh, and I hated it.
Painful Meow was made when I worked late-night radio shift, because when the phones died down it felt like nobody was listening. So I played something stupid – at first it was something nonmetal — and people called up and said, "What the fuck is your problem?" (laughter) And I realized pissing people off makes them call, or for the *Grimoire* makes them read, which is good. So I just recorded the most stupid, annoying things that still sounded legitimately written.

"Entombed in a Bathroom"!
Oh, you have that?! I'm very impressed. If you feel ripped off then you bought it.

I didn't. Somebody sent it to me. I have it here in this stupid purple booklet. Liquid Forehead, Piss, Svarog, it's really bad.
You see how annoying that music is! Svarog – this is an exclusive confession – is just me and a drum machine. And I'm drunk of course. It was a little bit of a joke I made with Rob of Elegy.

Please don't say you're putting out a CD.
Oh, yes! It was a joke for him and an experiment for me. At the time, it was the big '90s black metal explosion, and he was inundated with demos and wholesale prices, and the music just blew. You must've had the same wave hit your shores. It's either imitative or recorded in someone's basement. That's not a lie. Here are these people, in the name of black metal, sending out their shitty demos. If there were no controversy of this style, people would be throwing these things in the garbage. So I created the most preposterous biography for this band that I could. Like the name Svarog, it's actually the Slovakian god of wheat! (laughter!) And that one of these guys punched boulders to sculpt his knuckles into one? That was actually the forefather of Judo who did that.

The music on the tape wasn't the worst I'd heard, so I didn't think I was ripping anyone off. And if you're stupid enough to buy a tape based on a ridiculous bio, then you kind of deserve to lose three dollars. Svarog outsold two pressings of 1000 and is blazing through its third.

That's stupid!
That is stupid! Hahaha!!!

The Grimore of Exalted Deeds
245 Lakeview Ave., Suite 237
Clifton, NJ 07011

SEVERED SYNAPSE SHIT PAGE

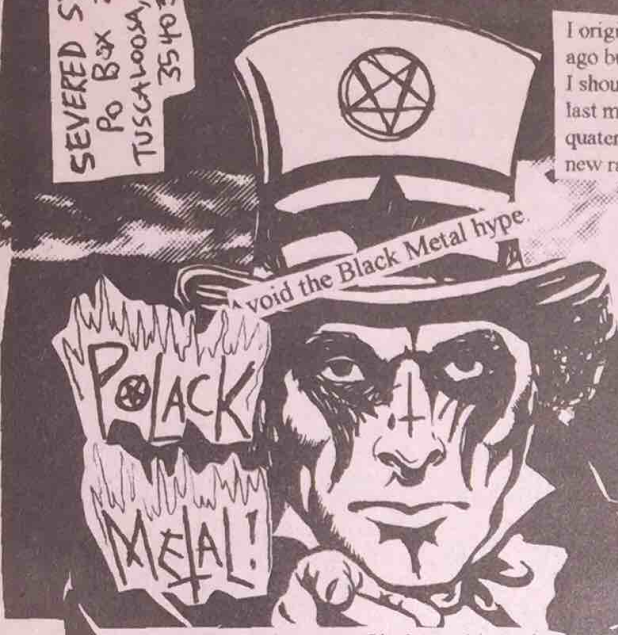
RANTS AND BLATANT ADVERTISEMENTS FROM THE DEEP SOUTH.

SEVERED SYNAPSE
PO Box 2226
TUSCALOOSA, AL
35403 USA

SEVERED SYNAPSE!
PO BOX 2226
Tuscaloosa, AL 35403, USA

I originally had written an article for Phil about two months ago but decided it was so worthless and stupid (etc) that I should write something else. This stuff is pretty goddam last minute and it's very easy to be a Monday morning quaterback when it comes to writing shit, but I read these new rants a couple o' times and decided I liked them, so there.

Email - OBITUARY25@AOL.COM



Ok here's the fucking deal. Black metal is getting fucking retarded. The other day I saw an ad for some black metal band from ALABAMA. That doesn't compute as hicks usually listen to that worthless powergroove garbage, but then again, I bet all of the cool people in Norway consider those make-up wearing pussies, like, Norweigan hicks or something. I'm sure you're thinking that this has been said a million times, but I do have a cure for this problem...

For years now, the strength of our metal brothers in Poland has been in check, waiting to be unleashed at a time such as this. During a recent nationwide poll of all Poles, 90% said that they had already, in their lifetime, brutally slaughtered a plethora of black metallers and also had the urge to destroy the entire lineups of Korn and Fear Factory, so Polish brothers, here and abroad, I urge you to raise your fist as I do mine as we annoint a new movement in metal.....

POLACK METAL!

(sing it to Venom's "Black Metal")

The lyrics would be sung in either Polish or Yiddish and all good Polack Metallers will strike back on what's left of that Inner Circle of Gaywads thing.

Plus it's kinda funny, y'know....polack metal.....

There are too many goddam people....

I read in some surely reputable publication that by the year 2050 there will no be enough food to feed the 8 billion people that will live here. It's time for us to grow up and be gay. Yes. Homosexual. Homo e homo. Backyard Gardener. Fudgepacker. Uphill Tunneler. Butthole Bartholomew. Rump Ranger. Puff Daddy Gay Person. Homo the Clown. Ass Master.....

I could go on for quite a while with this. The basic idea is: when you put a bunch of male rats in a cage, they begin to fuck each other uncontrollably because they are eager to have sex. We, like rats, are also eager to have sex, and we, also like rats, are scummy worthless creatures who would degrade ourselves in anyway whatsoever to survive if we weren't already on the top of the food chain. If we want to survive people, it is necessary to stop reproducing....it like, we fucking WON the war against natural selection because these days we pay and support people who would die had they nothing holding them up. But I say knock them down and dirty their knees....do whatever you can to keep the human race from increasing any more. If you refuse to fuck your own kind (like me) then cut off jock's cocks, drop atomic weapons on any nation Sally Struthers has visited, kick pregnant women, whatever. STOP THE HUMAN RACE GODDAMIT!!

Tapes + Zines

CREEPINSHADOWS - "Zombie Block Party"--11 tracks of electro-horror soundtrack surf/rock/dance influenced by Carpenter, Devo, The Goblins, etc.

GREEN BERET - "Elbow Dropping Mania" demo -- 20 tracks of pissed off metal/grind/new wave/dance/hc/noise...great!

Ski-Mask vs. The Lobotomizers split tape Ski Mask does awesome disgruntled synth-based new wave/industrial/punk. The Lobotomizers do turbo shock sci-fi art dance noise. Great!

tapes $3 concealed US cash or a TRADE!!

Zero Sanguinary Signal #1 -award winning debut issue! interviews: Hemdale, Tal Dorgar, Nile, Captain 3 Leg, Servotron, Kirk Hammett rant on College Kids, Internet & more. some reviews too. Cool cut & paste layout and a hand-colored cover. LTD to 500 numbered copies! only $1 ppd (usa) or $2 (not usa) or a trade for another zine

Zero Sanguinary Signal #2 - Carrying on the ass kicking tradition ints: Forced Expression, Scattered Remnants, DC Moon & Red Giant, Towpath, Deceased, Bif Tanen Records, Charlie Infection (Gonkulator /Psycho) and Ossuray Insane (MN) Columns by Ski-maSK, Bill Zebub, Matt Kessler, fiction, comix, shit on relapse, well done, Xeroxed. 36 pages, all cut and paste dope layout. $2 US (world add 2 ircs) Distros, freaks, assholes, bands, send $7 for a shitload of them.

Coming soon:

the Faceless Three - "BloodSport!" demo - studio, live, b-side shit and more from the mysterious punk/hc/metal psychos. in the vein of like, the Misfits meet Discharge with three PISSED vocalists.

Creepinshadows/Sheet Ghost - split tape— More insane ass kicking horror soundtracks from Creepinshadows, Sheet Ghost is all Farfisa organ noisy spook death! A horror freak's wet dream.

MY DYING BRIDE

The morose sextet known as My Dying Bride has been quite an influence on many bands throughout the world. And while I'm not really a big fan, I know that many of you are and might want to learn more about its less musical side. Eric and I spoke with Calvin, left-handed doom guitar monger, at a show My Dying Bride played in Virginia a while back. Due to its pointless nature, this interview's age doesn't really matter. Read on...

So where in England are you guys from?
We're from a little northern town called Radford.

How long have you been around?
We're coming up on our 7th anniversary.

Now are you a four piece or a five piece?
A six piece

Six piece? (At this point Calvin and Eric start to laugh at my complete lack of knowledge on the band.)
Yeah, there's two guitars, bass, drums, singer, and a keyboard/violin player.

(I them mumble crap about why I don't know anything, something about the singer being a guitar player...) Is this your first tour of the US?
First time ever being over here, yeah.

And I assume you've toured Europe and other countries.
We've toured Europe for every year an album was released.

Do you ever play with makeup on? No.

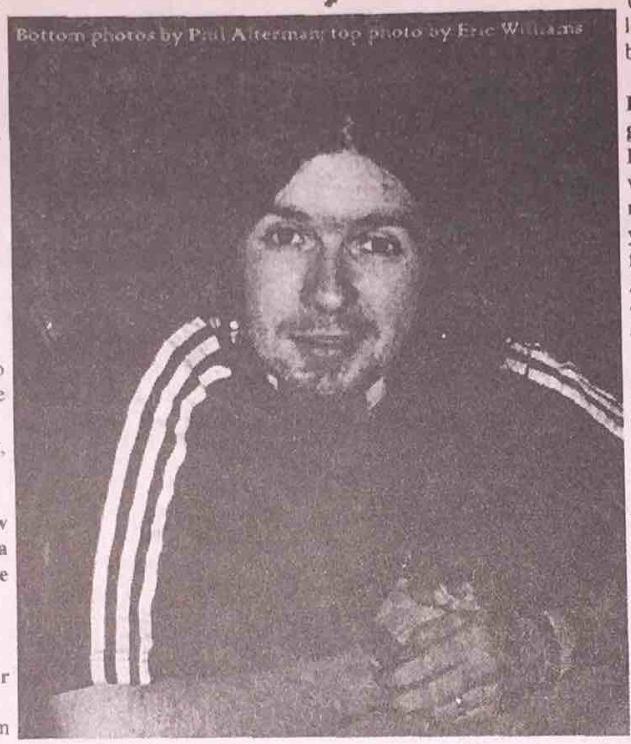
Do you ever wear bullet belts or...spiked collars with leashes hanging off of them?
(laughs) Uh, I think there's a lot of hype involved with black metal at the moment. I don't listen to too much of that or death metal stuff anymore.

What do you like then? All sorts of stuff.

Like The Beatles? (pronounced Bee-uls)
I never listened to the Beatles. (we all giggle gaily) Everybody in America seems to have this preconceived idea that English people know the Queen and listen to the Beatles. On a personal basis! "Oh, you guys are from the North of England! Do you know the Beatles?" Oh, doo-eey-popp (?). Unless we get pissed off we play along and say, "Oh yeah, we go out with them regularly, every Saturday night."



Bottom photos by Paul Alterman; top photo by Eric Williams



You like Elvis?
I've never been a big fan, no.

You guys should get really fat and grow sideburns.
Our bass player's trying to. Since he got to the US, he's done nothing but eat. Food's so cheap...

Hey, have you played up in New York City yet?
Yeah, we played Coney Island and sold it out.

That must've been cool as shit. New York shows are rough!
I liked the show but I didn't like the people. Too may hangers-on. Not polite in the interviews either.

Bunch of bloody wankers? Yeah, man.

Hey, have you seen the *Austin Powers* movie?
No I haven't, not yet. I want to see that *5th Element* first. Have you seen *Leo(n)*? Absolutely brilliant film. *Nikita*, now that's brilliant film. Hollywood got a hold of it, did a remake with Bridget Fonda and turned it into something completely different. It sucks like shit; *Nikita*'s brilliant. The entire essence of the film was lost in the Hollywood remake. It was terrible.

I gotta ask you this: *Clockwork Orange*.
Clockwork Orange? Yeah! Once many years ago I had it on a bootleg video, 'cause it's banned in England still. Same as *The Exorcist* as well. I've got an uncut bootleg version of that.

I got you on tape now; I'll get you arrested.
That's fine by me. They'll never find it; I don't even know where it is. Somewhere in me attic. I haven't moved out since less than a year's gone, so I've still got loads of boxes to unpack. I've never been there since I'm forever out, either in the studio or on tour.

What'd you think of that movie *Trainspotting*? Great.

Hey, maybe you've got your Exorcist video in your "100 Great Goals" box!
No. I wouldn't have thought so. "I feel sick! (laughs) The fucking video shop!" I watch loads of movies. That's all I ever do at home because we've got Satellite TV.

How many months of the year to you actually get to stay home?
It varies from year to year. Looking back all the way to '95, we toured two months in the summer, then we toured two months at the end of the year supporting **Iron Maiden**, then we toured for a month at the beginning of 96, later with **Anathema**, got into the studio in July, then we went out at the end of last year, did another eight weeks, and now we've done the US.

How long of a set will you be playing tonight?
Hour, hour-and-twenty?

What time are you going on? Midnight.

It will be ripe for metal! We'll get the full moon out and wolves in the parking lot...
No, there was a new moon last night so you won't get a full one tonight.

Well, we can, uh...
You can try.

I'll try to pull out my sideburns, kind of like *Werewolf in London*.
Good film. John Landis.

You have seen a lot of movies.
I've seen fucking hundreds. I must have two or three hundred videotapes at home.

They're all PG, right?
Oh yeah, all of them. There's no snub (?) films out now.

What about *Barbarella*?
I don't like that film.

I don't like it either, but...
Everybody wants to see it just for the cleavage but I don't even like Jane Fonda, she acts like shit. (laughs)

So, what're you trying to say??
I don't like her, she's all plastic and facelifts.



DECEASED...

Photos by Phil Alterman

Twelve years since Deceased began. Twelve years since thousands of bands have formed and broken up, yet Deceased lives on. Driven by eccentric drummer and frontman King Fowley, this Virginia quartet has laid low during the '90s mosh years, putting out solid releases like *Luck of the Corpse* and *The Blueprints for Madness* that received critical acclaim but not huge fan support. Now that the entire rock music industry lacks a leading genre to emulate, people are taking notice of styles once ignored. Metal itself is without concrete identity, and more and more fans are searching out the true musicians who put their instruments ahead of their image. Now is the time for Deceased. Years of dedication and honing its craft have resulted in *Fearless Undead Machines*, over an hour's worth of metal that embraces old school heroes Iron Maiden and Judas Priest, while remaining as heavy and extreme as any latter day metal monster.

***Fearless Undead Machines* is an eleven piece concept album inspired by George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead/Dawn of the Dead/Day of the Dead* trilogy. The story tells of one man's battle against a world of zombies, and how he accepts his fate to die in a purging, regretful manner.**

I spoke with King about all sorts of good stuff, so read on...

I'm sure you want to talk about the new album, musically and how the zombie concept came out.
We'd been working on it musically for the last two years, and conceptually it goes all the way back to the *Birth by Radiation* and *Nuclear* demos of 1988 and 1989. We started on it, but when Relapse offered us the deal for *Luck of the Corpse* we just didn't have enough space on the album to fulfill our vision.

So this concept has been brewing in your mind for years?
Oh, yeah! The old demos had different songs but were the beginning of it all, and I said that one day I wanted to get back to it and make a long album. And with the new one being 67 minutes I think we achieved that.

How come you didn't use this concept for *The Blueprints for Madness*?
I didn't think it was right at the time. Mike (Smith – guitar) had come along during *The Thirteen Frightened Souls* and had just gotten used to the band, so I didn't feel like it was the right time. My feelings were to do another album and see where we stood, then do this zombie thing. Another thing was that during the recording of *Blueprints* we were rehearsing in so many different places that we couldn't just sit down and put in the time we wanted. Finally I got everything set up in my basement so we could sit down and write some intense shit.

So I can assume you're completely happy with the album?
There are a couple of quirky things here and there that I would've liked to change, maybe mixed a couple of songs differently. But we just ran out of time and money. Everyone else that has heard the album hasn't said anything, though, so maybe it's just me.

It seems that musicians are a lot more critical of their own work.
Musicians know their material inside and out – well, most bands at least! I should hope that bands know their music inside and out.

These days you never know. Exactly.

They know their makeup inside and out. (we laugh) **I was speaking to Pops Stentor and he said it would be interesting for you, someone who has a lot of knowledge on the scene, to describe the differences from now and six or seven years ago, when the old 9:30 club in DC was packing metal bands. Comment on what you see and how things can get better in the future.**
The big thing about metal bands not playing the 9:30 club anymore is because metal has pretty much run its course with those people, having passed its commercial status and popularity. As far as the scene, I think around here there's just too much jealousy. I think there are too many bands and not enough fans. Nowadays people are starting up bands that just aren't worth starting up. Sure, everybody wants to do a little fucking around, but some of these bands just need to pack it up. I'm not going to say any names. As far as clubs, there's all this pay-to-play shit and jacking up ticket prices. As for the future, I think the scene has been really sad during the last couple years, because there have been little shows and even smaller support. Also, the bands haven't really put out anything worthwhile. Now it's picking up again. A year-and-a-half ago we played the Bayou in front of 40 people, and last time there were 125 people.

What do you think is and will bring people back?
I just think people are going to come around when they realize what they've been missing. They've been out searching for something better, and the realization of it all is that there isn't anything better. The metal crowd is mostly in their late teens and early twenties, and most of them are easily swayed into seeing what's out there. Be it drugs, techno, fuckin' clubbin', just everything. I think that the people that really love metal will come back to it and just stick with it.

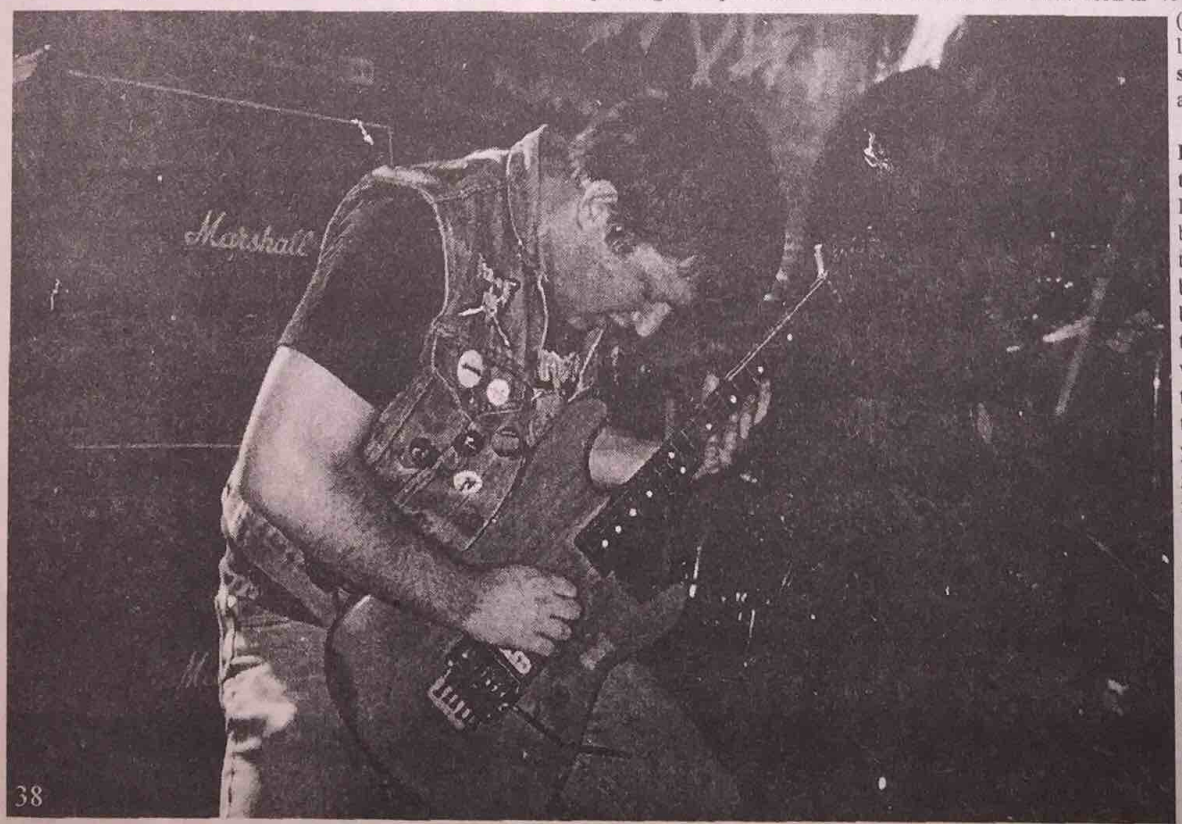
Now how old are you? 29.

How long have you been involved in all this?
My first show was in '79, when I was 11 and saw **KISS**. I really started going to the underground shows in like '82...

I was born in '79...
(laughs) I remember seeing bands like **Raven**, **Anthrax**, and **Queensryche** in bars. **YNT**, all this stuff, and it was great!

Do you feel that the romanticism of those days is over?
I feel that the initial charm has passed because it's not new. It's an everyday thing. For some people it'll be new, but it'll never be the same for me because – I won't say I've mastered the genre – but I pretty much know what's going on. I know what it's like to get a band, make an album, tour, all the ugly political sides of music. How you've got to know this guy or that guy, be in this click to get in that magazine.

Say that there would be something to come along that would spark interest in metal once again. What do you think that would be and how long would it last?
Free beer, nude women. It's a male dominated scene and there aren't many girls that come to shows. You'd have to give these guys some-



thing they don't get all the time, like free beer and nude women. Seriously, it just has to be good music and people have to come out and support it. There are also too many lazy people who say, "I can't go here 'cause it's there."

Do you feel that a lot of metalheads just fit the stereotype of drunken slobs?
Yeah! Burned out stoners! They put their priorities in the wrong places. You can do all that fun stuff in one place. Whatever happened to the days of going to shows and drinking beer and raising your mug and yelling, "Fuckin' heavy metal!"?

Do you think that of the various trends within the metal genre, the old school attitude is out? It seems as if people are afraid to say "metal."
I ain't, and people know that. A lot of people don't like metal because they feel it's not extreme enough, that it's been passed by. In the '80s, when people heard the word metal, they were like, "Metal, that's fuckin' crazy." Now they're like, "Metal, that's Beavis and Butthead. That's **Twisted Sister**."

Could there be some truth to that, though? I see some bands live, and although the music is aggressive because it's metal, they just stand there looking at their instruments.
There could be more theatrics in metal. I'm not blaming it all on the fans, because a lot of bands just got watered down. That's why bands need to perform to the audience just as much as the audience needs to respond to the bands.

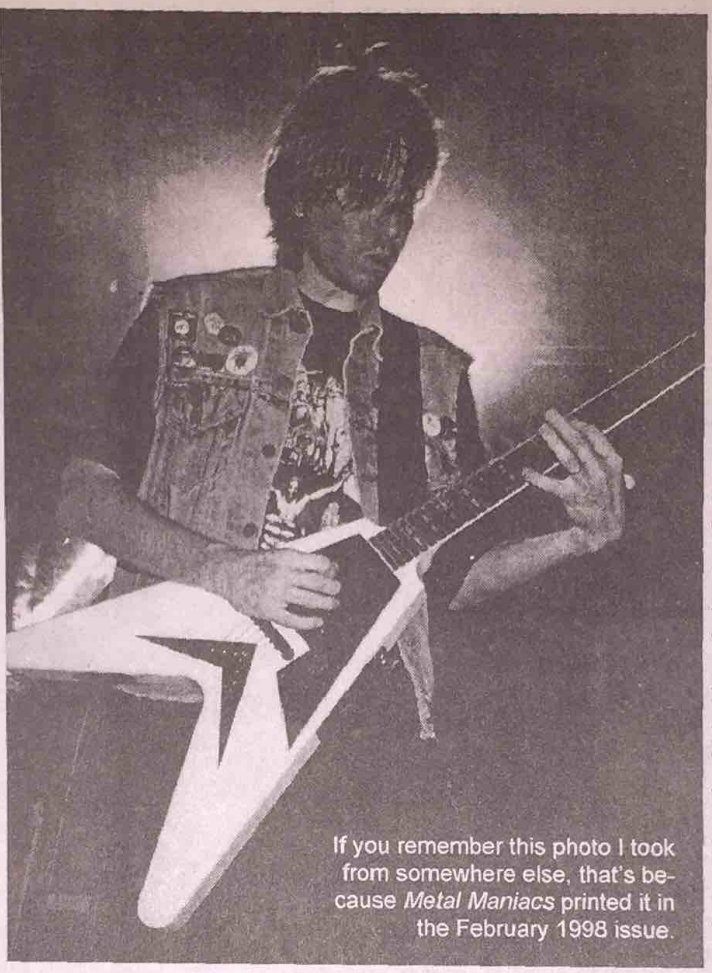
That's what I mean. The musicians' feet are glued to the floor.
A lot of the bands bite off more than they can chew musically. I've seen bands as simple as KISS completely rock the house jumping around, and I've seen bands who play their instruments as complex as **Iron Maiden** who can leap around. I saw Maiden last year and they were climbing onto the PA and jumping off without missing a beat.

Seems like bands should find a middle ground.
You just need to know your limitations and work with them.

Do your guitarists dress intentionally?
(laughs) Do you mean the old metal look?

Yes, I love it! The white tennis shoes with the poofy tongues.
"The white tennis shoes with the poofy tongues!" You gotta print that! Oh, that's classic. I guess they just wear whatever they like on stage.

Now, you're signed to Relapse, one of the bigger labels in the metal scene. How come you haven't really toured, and do you feel Deceased is not as popular as it should be?
It's our own fault about the tours. Between Mike and Mark's work schedules, it's hard to find the time off to get on one of the bigger tours. If we could get out and do a little promotion I think we could get further ahead. We've done pretty well for not having toured very much in the US.



If you remember this photo I took from somewhere else, that's because *Metal Maniacs* printed it in the February 1998 issue.

The first album sold about 20,000, *Thirteen* was about 10 or 12,000, and the last was only about 5 or 6,000. That was pretty good considering it came out during the largest drought metal had seen in a long time.

Do you think metal is in the middle of a resurgence?
Oh, yeah. Metal's definitely coming back, and whether or not it's going to benefit from this goofy retro thing, people should always stick through it, good or bad. We have! I remember playing the Bayou in '91 or '92 and we packed both floors with over 400 people. Now, five years later, and we get 125 people at best.

Where did the other 300 people go?
Fuckin' techno, man. They cut their hair and went raving. Went to see **Marylin Manson** concerts. Of course people change or they can't make it to shows, and you know how bad the world is. You can't go anywhere without locking your doors and watching your back, and that really turned people off. Now you can only have fun in your home without watching your back.

Throw some parties!
(laughing at me) Throw some parties.

Let's talk about your labels and the compilations you've released. How'd you get started?
I'd always wanted to put out some records and figured the only way to do it was through compilations. The bands and I put up some cash and shared the CDs.

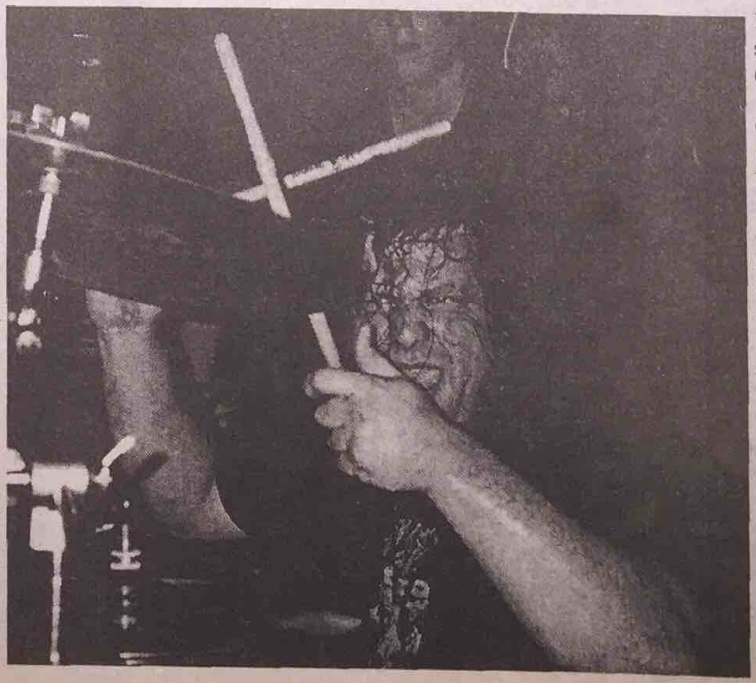
How many were made?
All three *Midnight Offerings* and both *And the Scene goes On* were a thousand copies each.

Anything else in the works?
I'm concentrating more on my other label, Old Metal Records (as opposed to With Your Teeth Records), which is going to release 7"s and unreleased CDs of forgotten bands. Stuff like **Nasty Savage**, **Hell Star**, and **Rock Goddess**. Stuff no one's gonna buy! (laughs)

Do you think someone like you, who's got zillions of contacts and knows the scene inside and out, could pump some life into it?
Yeah, and I think we're doing that. You hear my big mouth in concert screaming, "Fuck this, fuck that, metal!" I don't expect people to listen but it's worth a try. When we play, I'll say, "Fuck this, faggots that." I'm just so sick of gay people. Why is that so popular now? Can I ask that question?

I dunno.
Jesus Christ! Why is it cool to be gay now? I don't understand. It's not cool with me. I like women! I hope you do.

I love women.
(laughs) He said, "I love women!" You're a fuckin' madman, Phil. You might be more of a madman than me.



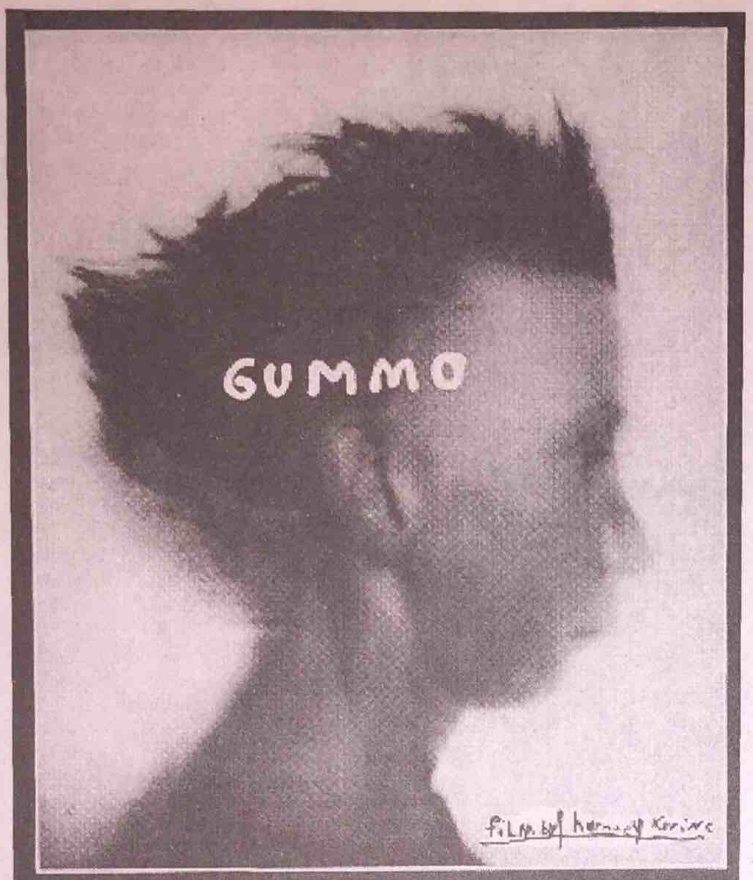
I don't know, King, I've heard some stories.
(laughs) What stories have you heard?

Of you just being a general troublemaker at shows.
Why am I a troublemaker?

Just having a good time at shows, I suppose.
(laughs) What kinds of stories of being a troublemaker?

Just that when people think of "loudmouth," they think, King Fowley!
Well, that's true. I am a loudmouth, and I'll guarantee you that I'm the loudest motherfucker in any crowd!

Deceased
5953 N. 10th. St.
Arlington, VA 22205



From the creator of KIDS

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MAKING FRIENDS!

I received the following letter from Raul Caballero of Dwell Records a few weeks after I sent him a complimentary copy of *Sloth* #3. Look at the next page to see the wonderful collage he spent way too much time preparing.

dwell RECORDS

Hey Phil:

Thanks for the "honest" review. Great to see you even bothered to review it, seeing that you don't really care for Celtic Frost. It's not often that I encounter an editor of a pure "metal" magazine whom does not like Celtic Frost.

The reson why I actually made the effort to write you is, because I know for a fact that you have no clue what you are saying. Not just because you didn't like the tribute, but because you dogged a lot of quality stuff.

And it's not good practice to suggest to others not to buy from a label that gives you free stuff, even if you don't like it. Oh yeah! and why are you requesting that we service you if you think our stuff is not worthy of buying?

Well, this is me being honest. Feel free to print it in your next issue along with the trash can. A disgruntled Cletic Frost fan and label manager! And, no hard feelings right?

Sincerely,

Raul Caballero
manager

PS Tom Warrior does not like the tribute because we slagged him in the liner notes.

dwell RECORDS



☒ We would like to be serviced by your company.

In Memory of Celtic Frost

1996 Dwell Records

Although **Celtic Frost** came before my time, I know it is a band that deserves credit for influencing many prominent metal acts of today. So, while I may not enjoy the band's music per se, I appreciate its seminal influence.

Relapse Records recording artist **Morgion** starts things off with "Innocence and Wrath/The Usurper," and the thick, heavy production modernizes it. Pretty catchy, the song is one of the best on the album. 3 1/2

Enslaved stinks things up with "Procreation (of the Wicked)," which is boring and repetitive. It sounds just like it may have been the original, and I don't really go for that old stuff. 1/4

Reforming to play one last song, Canada's **Slaughter** presents "Dethroned Emporer," complete with "oohs" and "yeahs." Just another mid-paced sleeper of a song. 1/4

Also reformed, **Mayhem** got things back in order after Euronymous's death and recorded "Visual Aggression" in 1995. Black metal with the old feel you'd expect, the song is better than the previous two but lacks enough hooks to deem itself worthy of multiple listens. 3/4

Inner Thought, featuring former **Slaughter** guitarist Bobby Sadzak, graces our ears with "Morbid Tales," a song notable because of its odd sounding drum programming. The rest of the music is pretty good, with crunchy guitars and a low growl ala **Macabre** rounding things out. A nice break from the garbage, don't ya think? 3

Taking a heavy approach while staying true to the original, **Sadistic Intent** belts out "Return to the Eve." It sounds a lot like **Scepter**'s whole *Up Thy Ass* demo, and has the repetitive nature of all of the songs on this album. Still, well executed. 3 1/4

The godawful **Cianide** brings us the snailcrawl "Dawn of Meggido." Big deal. This band has always had a knack for playing crap, so why should doing a cover be any different? Really cloudy production furthers the torture, and by this time you begin to wonder when the bands who took positive influence from **Celtic Frost** are going to show up. 2

The disbanded **Divine Eve** presents vintage **C.F.** on "Visions of Mortality" with its raspy low vocals and simple guitar riff. Sorry, I just can't appreciate this old stuff! Plus, it's damn boring. 2

One of the more seemingly promising bands on the tape, **Grave**, rounds off side one with "Mesmerized." So fitting that Jorgen would then try to actually sing, his voice really a my-pet-gerbil-died whine. The '80s pop influences show through on this song, and I was anything but mesmerized. More like comatose. 2

Featuring Tom G. Warrior himself, **Apollyon's Sun** presents the lengthy, almost atmospheric "Babylon Fell." The song sounds pretty modern due to either the crunchy guitars or Warrior's knowledge of the song and ability to alter it accordingly. 3

Sticking more to the original than **Obituary** did a few years back, **Opeth** plays an energetic "Circle of the Tyrants." A pretty raw song, it has a catchy riff that keeps the listener's attention almost the entire time! Wowsers! 3 1/4

Endless ambiance is **Closedown**'s claim to shame, and "Danse Macabre" is prehaps the worst "song" on the album. Nothing eerie is created by this track, unless you call sleep eerie.

An amusing cover of "Massacra" comes from Norway's scary boys **Emperor**. A cool drum beat keeps the song going, but when listening, I often think of how much better **The Abyss**'s version of this is. Still, it's better than **Closedown**! 3

Finally we have "Triumph of Death" from **13**, a band featuring Alicia Morgan, former editor of *Metal Maniacs*. This endless crawlfest is shameful, therefore an appropriate way to end one of the worst compilations of all time. No wonder Tom G. Warrior himself hates the "tribute." This album is more like putting another six feet of dirt on the long dead band. 1/2

So, there you have it, plenty of reasons why not to buy this. And unless you're in some cheesy Midwestern band, the message has gotten through.

DWELL RECORDS P.O. BOX 39439 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90039 PHONE: 213.663.8098 FAX: 213.669.1470

Theatre Of Tragedy

Not many Norwegian doom bands have been in the public spotlight, especially with every label clamoring for the latest black metal sensation. That's all about to change thanks to Theatre of Tragedy. Released stateside by Century Media, the band's *Velvet Darkness They Fear* album is a triumph in the death/doom genre. I've never been a big fan of this genre and bands like My Dying Bride and Paradise Lost, but after hearing this band I was prompted to call up and schedule an interview. And here is my chat with guitarist Maarten...

Things have really taken off for you pretty recently, huh?
We came home from a small tour and we played an open air show in Athens. But now we won't be playing until April or May because we're going to record our next album.

I want to tell you about the album's cover. I think it's great. I think that girl is hot! And before I talk to you about how much I want to have sex with her, tell me all about it.
(laughs) Well, actually she's not so nice. She has a wig on and I think she's about 35 years old.

So she's ugly?
Not a pretty face.

Is that why you have her leaning back?
Yeah. She's the photographer's girlfriend, and we just told them what we would like to have on the cover, with the velvet and the roses and the barely naked chick.

So Liv, your singer, didn't want to do it?
No, she didn't have any problems with it.

She didn't want to be in the picture herself?
Well, we wouldn't do it that way.

I showed the picture to some friends and they want that girl's phone number and more photos.
(laughs) We have a single out, and there you can see her face a bit better, and they would not like that.

Hey, I noticed that one of the song titles in German. Are any of your members from Germany?
No, everybody is Norwegian except the male vocalist, who is from Hungary. He writes all the lyrics and is very into the German darkwave scene. There every band sings in German and he thought it would be great to do a song like that.

Do you know what you could do because of your German lyrics? You could get '80s rocker haircuts like the Scorpions, and since you're from Norway you could put on corpse-paint and act like a bunch of idiots jumping around.
No, no, no, no, no. We're totally against corpse-paint. (laughs)

Oh, with the '80s haircuts it would rule!
We are totally against '80s haircuts and corpse-paint!

Are you anywhere near where Burzum is in jail?
Our drummer used to know him, but of course he's sentenced to 20 years in jail now. He's just released a new album...

Do you ever go by his cell and laugh at him?
No, no.

You should send him taunting letters and broken instruments.
I heard some rumors that he's getting lots of sex in jail from the other inmates.

Is he giving or getting?
Getting! (We both laugh with glee.) He's not the biggest guy you'll meet, and in jail there's plenty of guys with big muscles. They're staying in for three months, getting out, and coming back for two more months. They go around having sex with everybody.

So I guess he wasn't allowed to bring any swords or armor with him to jail?
He tried but they said no.

Back to the album, I noticed there was a sound byte on "And When He Falleth" that appeared to feature Vincent Price.
What movie is that from?
We took it from the movie *Masque of the Red Death*. I think it was released in '64 or '65.

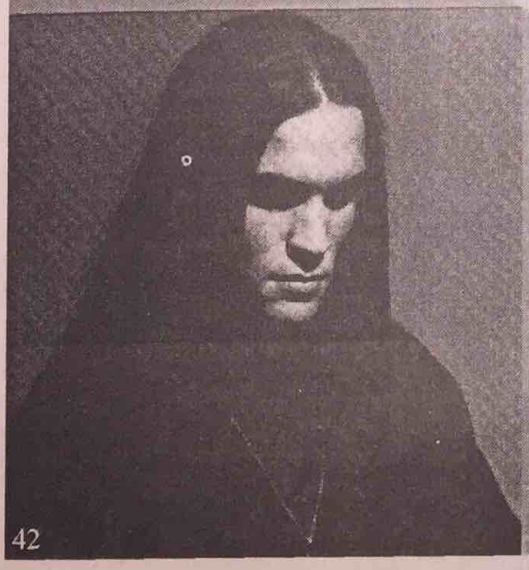
Did you write the backing music to go along with his speech?
We watched the video and took clips from here and there and sort of patched them together. I think we did a very good job to make the speech flow with the music, as well as the lyrical meaning.

Does that song represent what your religious beliefs are?
The band doesn't have any stance, political or religious. Everybody in the band is kind of anti-religious.

You have a whole bunch of 't's in your logo. You could turn those into inverted crosses or *something*! Just to be a little bit more evil...
No, we're not evil.

One thing I really like about the album was the combination of male and female vocals. How did that come about?
When we started, we didn't intend to have female vocals. Damon, our vocalist, wrote some theatrical lyrics and thought it would be nice to have a female accompaniment. It turned out so well when we tried it that we wondered if it would work to have two lead singers all the time. The female vocals would make it more melodic, but the male vocals would help keep a balance. I think it worked out well, to have this contrast between good and evil, which is an important part of the lyrics.

I just noticed that you speak English very well and was wondering if you or people you know get angry because the world basically caters to English-speaking countries?











For me it's just great. Once I was in Paris and I knew no French. I wanted to buy a telephone card to call home, so I asked a police officer, "Excuse me, do you speak English?" And he said, "No, no way!" So I said with a French accent, "Telephone card," and he said, "Yeah, just around the corner there, take a left and a right." So I think it's great for more people to learn English because it's so much easier to communicate. Like in Germany, where we are thinking of touring, some of the people speak English but their pronunciation and vocabulary are terrible. I think that's because they dub everything in German on TV, so you see Pamela Anderson speaking German on *Baywatch*, which is very funny. Here in Norway, we have every movie and series go in its normal language. They're mostly American or British shows, so we learn English much better.



But you can't forget that some of our favorite rock songs that were sung in English came from Germany's the Scorpions.
(laughs) Well I don't like the Scorpions.

You gotta give it up for the Scorpions!!!
They're bad.

Don't you think that Mortiis just sucks?
Sorry, I didn't get that?

The Swedish guy? Mor-tiss? Mor-tees? I don't know how you say it.
Mor-tees! He's actually Norwegian.



I thought he was Swedish!
He moved to Sweden.

Nonetheless, don't you think he sucks?
Uh, well, technically speaking, yes.

All right!
He was a member of **Emperor** earlier, but I think all he does is, [these are the exact sounds made, okay?] "Boo...ping...boo...ping." Just weird sounds and stuff like that.

Considering the amount of time that you put into your music, it makes me wonder why he gets so many interviews for fiddling around on his keyboard.
Many people find his music kind of evil and they buy it.

Maybe if you put on fake ears and nose and a dress, people will buy your music too.
(Laughs) I don't think that will happen, ever! It's very funny, when we go to Germany we see how the black metal scene has gotten very big, and if it's evil, people buy it! They're like, "This is cool!"

Germany's not even "evil."
They're totally into this because they see how the bands promote Satanism, and they go, "Oh, I want to be like them." We were playing some concerts in east Germany and people came up to us and said, "Are you evil?" And we were like, "Heh, heh, no!" All the images they see in the CD covers they accept as the truth without thinking, which is bullshit.

Do you think you started a new trend by having a naked chick on the cover?
I think so, because there are some bands that are copying it. A Dutch band called **Within Temptation**, also a German band called **Dark**. They have a half-naked girl with roses and velvet and face. I don't care about that because people will look back at us as the originators.



I'd rather see bare breasts than inverted crosses.
Exactly.

Well I think it's great. I can't stop looking at it. Do you have full-size posters of it?
We printed a poster for the tour we did with **Lake of Tears**, and we did a big one...

I want them...
Oh, our record company also made big cardboard one to put in shops.

I want many of those for my bedroom.
Well, I think they helped sales very much. We sold about 50,000 copies, which is *very* good.



What are you going to do for your next album cover?
That's what we're wondering about now. Our record company wants to do something similar but we would rather do something new.

How about a naked guy?
We were thinking of this. (we laugh a little bit too happily) That would be too corny, so we're going to give some ideas to a graphic design company and see what they can come up with. We want it to relate to past albums but not show any flesh either.

How do you expect to sell CDs without naked breasts or inverted crosses and pentagrams?
We've traded our image for the next album. The music on *Velvet Darkness They Fear* is a bit heavy, not too commercial, but the cover sells itself. On the next album we're going to create a deep, heavy cover, but our music is going to be very easy-selling and commercial.

Good idea!



DEMO REVIEWS

AGONIZING TERROR
Ways of Existence – 1997

This is truly an underground success story. Last issue I reviewed **Agonizing Terror**'s debut demo and claimed the band was just another in the supersaturated scene. Personally, I hoped to never hear from these guys and girl again. Imagine my pleasant surprise when *Ways of Existence* arrived and I was treated to four lengthy songs of melodic death metal that is well prepared, and even better executed!

I was especially pleased with how the band managed to develop its soloing and creative rhythm skills without compromising all of its brutal elements. Sure, the music isn't a crushing barrage like last time; instead, it is a spellbinding experience of memorable guitar leads, smooth transitions, and a bridge between Swedish melody and American brutality. 👿👿👿👿 ½

Write for price to:
Tójó & Sara
Rua Da Tecelôa, n° 100
Bom Sucesso, 3810 Aveiro, Portugal

APATHY
Demo 1997

This demo tape is fuckin awesome as shit. Unfortunately, it only has two songs and they are both pretty short so the listener is left wanting to hear more and then getting very angry since there is no more to hear. I can't tell which side is which and I don't know the names of the songs but they are brutal as all hell.

One of the songs is nothing but relentless driving insane metal riffs. The guitar work makes me have an orgasm and the vocals are definitely in the "not-to-be-fucked-with" category. There are two kinds of vocals in the other song; there might even be two singers but thanks to Apathy's extensive packaging, I have no freakin' idea. One voice is dry sounding and higher-pitched. I think if I sang in a metal band, I would sound like that. The other singer roars like a damn grizzly bear. At the end of the song, one of the dudes rambles about stuff and I am clueless as to what it's about.

The tape is intense. I hope Apathy releases something else soon and hopefully they will be smart enough to write more than their name and the year of the fucking tape. Look for big things from these dudes. 👿👿👿👿 ½ (Metal Vader)

Write for price to:
360 Gatewater Ct., Apt. 202
Glen Burnie, MD 21060

AURORA BOREALIS
Mansions of Eternity – 1996

Talk about committed! This guy Ron Vento saved up $5000 in order to record this CD at Morrisound with Scott Burns, which forced him to move to Maryland. He's in the process of saving money again. All for you , the underground. Is Ron out of his mind? Hell no! **Aurora Borealis** is one of the most convincing purveyors of death/black metal I've heard. The guitar wizardry is crystal clear, bringing to mind some of the early '90s best Morrisound products. When I hear this CD EP it makes me really realize how low quality so many demo bands are. While Ron perfects his trade and records his music at a quality facility, tons of redneck bands are recording their worthless junk of 4-tracks and releasing it on CD. Don't be fooled, folks. Here is the real thing: intense, able metal played with experience, tortured vocals from hell, and a guest drummer who plays like a true Floridian. For all those who constantly write "support the underground," here's a perfect chance to practice what you preach. 👿👿👿👿

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 1327
Clinton, MD 20735-5327

BELOW
Self-titled – 1996

Focusing around the riffs and solos of sole band member Ashley Cook (it's a guy, so don't go writing in hope of sexy pictures), **Below** harks back to another decade in metal. While many fear to play the first three strings on their guitar, Cook dishes out the leads amidst heavy '90s thrash riffs and muffled vocals. Below is for the most part *above* average, with the drawbacks being the poorly distorted vocals and Cook's inability to write songs that really flow. He's definitely got many catchy guitar licks, but stringing them together is a hindrance. The instrumental "Miserere" is a great example of Cook's talents, and you might find Below to be a welcome change in the land of demodom. 👿👿👿 ¼

Write for price to:
739 Grant St.
Reynoldsville, PA 15851

BLACK MASS OF ABSU
Some untitled piece of crap – 1996

This sucks. As in the words of Chef on South Park, "That is the biggest load of pig crap I have ever heard." Completely childish and utterly worthless, **Black Mass of Absu** is nothing but mere noise made at a snail's pace. I played it at high speed and heard what a shitty Norwegian garage band might sound like on a full moon. I really think this was recorded at regular speed and slowed down to fool underground fanatics into thinking the Black Mass was a viable act. This version is actually amusing, and the tape ends twice as quickly too! I pity those of you who disregard all of the good bands featured here and pick up this tape. ½

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 638
Kenmore, NY 14217

CARBON 14
Self-titled – 1997

The band's bio states that **Carbon 14**'s style is "power groove." No!! Don't admit that especially when your music isn't half bad. It's light and with a pop feel, so it won't appeal to brutal purists, but the fact that I found these three songs promising is worth mentioning since most towns have similar bands that spend years rockin' at the same redneck club without ever getting anywhere. Carbon 14 may not be condemned to such a sour fate. "Myself," "Falling Down," and "Infinity" are catchy tunes that would surely go over well live, probably drawing more of a crowd than just the trio's best buds who want to jump around and get drunk. 👿👿👿 ¼

Write for price to:
114 Fairview Ave.
Athol, MA 01331

CREMATORIUM
2-Song EP -- 1997

Judging by the name you'd expect some brutal Floridian death. Instead, you get weird, at times out of control, charging death. The vocalist really sells himself when yelling (as opposed to gutturally growling), giving the peppy music a truly aggressive feel. Also a plus is the unpredictable nature of things, as bassist Alex and guitarist Mark break out of the mold and play surprising riffs that don't just back up the singer. Bravo! In the future, **Crematorium** should be able to tie up the loose ends to make its songs flow more easily, and experiential knowledge in the studio should come in handy. Otherwise, cool first effort. 👿👿👿 ¼

Write for info to:
375 S. 3rd St. #113
Burbank, CA 91502

DEADPORNSTAR
Hearservice -- 1997

I am numbed by this band. I have so many demos and here I have to sit through eight songs of slow, uneventful metal. Obviously there are people who will enjoy **Deadpornstar**, but I'm so buried in tapes and jaded by consistently awful bands that it's hard to care about mediocre acts. *Hearservice* is barely okay, having only a few catchy riffs and an abundance of awful vocals (both gruff and deep). I expect nothing of Deadpornstar and get just that. 👿👿

Write for price to:
217 S. I-OKA
Mount Prospect, IL 60056

DEATHKIDS
Born in Hell – 1997

By now you must know about the underground's own delinquents, the **Deathkids**. Featuring a pair of brothers who aren't even teenagers and their dad, this trio is bound to stay around for a while. Musically, the band is primitive but you'd never suspect the members' ages. This is a death metal band, plain and simple. The goings are ususally mid-paced, with deep growls and **Mass Psychosis** rasps keeping pace with the **Fleshcrawl**-esque music. Hints of old **Deicide** are also present.

Personally, I feel that the novelty of Deathkids doesn't make a good listen great. I enjoyed "Smash Your Face," "Doomsday," and "Homicidal Suicide," but never got totally psyched for the rest. Not to worry, though. If *Born in Hell* is the accomplishment of a couple of boys, I fear for the world when puberty hits and they *really* become angry! 👿👿👿

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 139
Lindenhurst, NY 11757

DECEMBER WOLVES
Promo 1997 CD

They're not European, but these wolves from Massachusetts sure sound like they'd call Oslo home. With the technical guitar influences of Scandinavia and the American ferocity a la **Ember**, **December Wolves** keeps making a name for itself on the ten minutes of its latest promo. This kicks the asses of most of the demos I've heard in the last year! Experience the **Dark Tranquillity** on "We are Everywhere" and embrace the old school on "...Not with Tainted Blood." Even people who don't like black metal will appreciate what these guys are doing. 👿👿👿👿

Write for price to:
16 Fordham Rd.
Lawrence, MA 01841-4806

DISARRAY
Bleed – 1997

Thrash, **Pantera**, **Metallica**, and small venues all come to mind when **Disarray**'s riff-packed action attacks. Although somewhat catchy, *Bleed* will appeal to the lowest common denominator of metal fans, those who live in the backwoods and are always behind the times. I can picture Disarray playing small clubs, packing about 75 loyal fans with the promise of brewskies, and sweating through a repetitive but damn fun set as crimped-hair sluts look on in awe. There's nothing wrong with every town having a Disarray; the problem begins when these bands think they can get somewhere. 👿👿

$5 everywhere to:

I got Hyperchild's autograph. Now who's cool?



Chuck Bonnett
P.O. Box 975
Dickson, TN 37055

DISINTER

Desecration – 1997

Do you miss hearing brutal vocals that are worth singing along with? In need of the upbeat riffs that **Suffocation** plays so well? Is the primacy *Eaten Back to Life* lacking in your life? If you answered yes to any of these questions, **Disinter** a necessity. Take solace in knowing that you're not alone, and that *Desecrated* is here to break your back like *Pierced from Within*. Don't fear that Disinter is like every other latter day brutal band; these boys know their trade and don't fool around with pit riffs. If you want to move to the music, you better keep up!

As expected, I must say that Disinter's trade is not originality. However, in these supersaturated times any band that releases such infectious and mean-spirited music deserves high praise. 👎👎👎👎

Write for price to:
4132 N. Melvina
Chicago, IL 60634

DISMEMBERED FETUS

Bloody Vaginal Discharge – 1996

Those who love **A.C.** will most likely enjoy this childish platter of sickening chaos. There's not much to be said of **Dismembered Fetus**'s musical ability – c'mon, it's a freackin' noisy grind band for God's sake. I found that small doses of the thirty-something songs tend to work best, as most of the riffs are primitive and similar. And that's about it: movie intros and primal gore are Dismembered Fetus's claim to fame. 👎👎 ½

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 9450
Denver, CO 80209

EVILUTION

Self-titled – 1996

In need of a break from today's female-fronted, operatic black and doom octets? If so, inject a shot of **Evilution** into your cranium for solid, turn-of-the-decade death metal. None of that **Pantera** mosh shit here; we're talking angry Florida style death, complete with cheesy song titles and lyrics. When I am tired of all that Melancholyvokia has to offer, Connecticut's Evilution fills the void and takes me back to when death metal had its kings and wars of substance were fought between competing albums. 👎👎👎 ½

Write for price to:
403 Washingotn Ave.
West Haven, CT 06516

EXCEED

The Blood is On Your Hands – 1997

Previously known as **Dspayre**, a pretty lame group that released *Meet Death at Full Throttle* in 1996. On this new demo the guys show some improvement, and most notable are the guitarist's attempts at mixing up his delivery. The vocals still resemble **Vader** and don't accomplish much, but overall **Exceed** is striving to improve, and that's worth mentioning. 👎👎 ¾

$6 everywhere to:
15 Old County Rd.
Hingham, MA 02043
ajash@ll.mit.edu

EXMORTEM

Dejected – 1997

Yeah! **Exmortem** impressed me as a band that took its **Cannibal Corpse** influences and channeled them really well. Perhaps that is because the three songs of *Dejected* have an *Eaten Back to Life* feel. Therefore, the riffs soar as if you were being tossed around on a sheet as people tugged at the edges. The overall biting nature of "Obsessed," "Deathcult," and "Behold The Mighty Ravenholt" also bring Swedens mighty **Deranged** to mind. I worship Exmortem! The band isn't interested in inducing pits or setting a new standard of brutality, and that's why *Dejected* is simply damn good, catchy fun. 👎👎👎👎👎

Write for price to:
Ravnholtvej 145
8310 Tranbjerg j, Denmark



Imperial Foeticide: Brutality that's hard to beat

GARDEN OF SHADOWS

Heart of the Corona – 1997

This is the best demo of all time. This is why I put up with many worthless bands again and again, for that chance occurrence that some unknown musicians are out there and ready to take over the scene. That band is **Garden of Shadows**. How many demos have brought you to the edge of death and back? Can you remember being close to tears after listening to an unsigned band? I have heard *Heart of the Corona* a hundred times and seen the band live four times. Each is as refreshing as the first, when the quintet essentially stole the show from **My Dying Bride** at only its second gig. Amazing!

Fans of all the different metals will unite as one to celebrate Garden of Shadows. Death, doom, atmospheric, and the melodic Swedish style are all mixed into thirty minutes of gripping orchestration. The fury of American death metal is combined with the melody of Europe's finest, with vocalist Chad growling to the depths and guitarists Brian and Mary weaving intricate passages of melodious bliss.

The title track starts off in a refined manner but soon leaps from the norm and into ferocious territory. The same cannot be said for "Company in Solitude," which never sticks to the rules, instead driving forward like a runaway train. The song goes on and on, tearing at your emotions sadistically as it plunges the knife deeper into your vulnerable heart. Deprive yourself of Garden of Shadows and you shall remain an untouched soul, I assure you. 👎👎👎👎👎

$4 (US) / $5 (world) to:
14712 Botany Way
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
bmissant@aol.com

GHASTLY SECRET

Nachtmusik – 1996

A fifty-minute demo from a garage band? Someone shoot me in the head right now. Jesus, what could possibly fill up this much time? As expected, lots of interludes and lethargic riffs. **Ghastly Secret**, with all this time on its hands, has accomplished very little of anything, though some of the songs progress with early **Metallica** in mind. Therefore you'll find riff transitions pleasing, but the riffs themselves are utterly stale.

The vocals were obviously recorded through a broken microphone, as they sound like Rick from **Retaliation**, the prison death metal band that uses ancient equipment. Each song's length and overall composition bring **Deceased** to mind, as does the band's interest in horror, but it would be damaging to everyone if they were to get the impression that Ghastly Secret were of any caliber above that of the gun that serves a cigarette lighter. I wonder if it would light this demo very well... Ghastly Secret, I really don't like you but you sure damn try. I sense potential deep within your youth and inability. Work at your music like slaves or just give it up completely, because many walls must be scaled before I would give you another serious listen. 👎👎

$4 (US) / $5 (world) to:
P.O. Box 861
Minocqua, WI 54548

GLACIAL FEAR

Frames – 1997

Here's a creative young band for you to enjoy. Italy's **Glacial Fear** plays a rocking style of death metal, with quirky elements adding a **Phlebotomized** feel. The use of keyboards and a female singer is both restrained and different from today's norm. While things become tedious midway through *Frames*, I felt that this band was giving death metal a new twist. Anyone who's sick of the same old shit will enjoy Glacial Fear's progressive outlook. 👎👎👎 ¾

$15 everywhere to:
Gianluca Mole'
Via Conti Di Loritello 13
Strada C, 88060 Catanzaro, Italy

GODLESS TRUTH

The Desperation – 1997

I wasn't even going to review this demo, but the last song, "Individual," a seven-minute instrumental, forced me to. For nearly thirty minutes **Godless Beauty** plays vaguely experimental but overall average death metal, then decides to leave its vocalist on the bench and let the musicians bat. The music still isn't spectacular, but then a decent solo stops and in from left field comes an amazing progressive jazz lead. I'm talking calm cymbals, a touch of bass, and an inspirational solo. If Godless Truth were to come back with more original material like this instead of treading shallow waters, then its existence would matter. 👎👎 ¾

4 US$ / 10 DM to:
P.O. Box 53
771 11 Olomouc 1
Czech Republic

GRONE

Lesser Trials – 1997

Mmm...thick n' meaty...Groneburger. Chunky riffs, background guitar harmony, excited drumming, ten foot tall singer. Because of these things, **Grone** is good. Very good for an industrial-edged metal band. Occasional old **Fear Factory** touches appear in the upbeat but still mid-paced music, and after these twelve minutes of *Lesser Trials* you'll proudly say, "Waitress, I'd like another fat, meaty helping of raw Grone chunks." Slurp! 👎👎👎👎

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 271
Spotswood, NJ 08884

HOT STOVE

Murder – 1996

A friend of mine dropped in while I was listening to this and started dancing around like a fool. I informed this nonmetal fan that **Hot Stove** was not good. He replied, "Well, at least they gave you a jewel case." When I think about it, that probably is the only good thing about *Murder*. Everything else reeks like a chunk of leftover American cheese. Riffs chug along with glee as they go nowhere and provide a backdrop for the profound lyrics of "Burping Blood," "They Found Her Dead," "Dead Bodies Everywhere," and "She Stopped Breathing." You're a dumbass if you buy this CD. 👎¾

Write for price to:
1719 Memorial Dr.
Pekin, IL 61554-1837

HYPERCHILD

3-song sampler of *Wicked From the Womb -- 1997*

I was ready to rip this '80s style metal band to shreds, but by the second song I was hooked. Even the vocals, which are a Mustaine/Axl cat's whine, have sing-along lines that bring back the good old days. The heavy riffs and acoustic guitars, played accessibly, are interesting enough to round out the solid tape. You might like to know that **Hyperchild** has signed deals to release this album in Japan and Europe. Not bad! 👎👎👎 ½

Free + IRC or 3 stamps (album is $10 (US) / $12 (world)) to:
P.O. Box 7347
Fullerton, CA 92834

IMPERIAL FOETICIDE

Earlier Unknown World – 1996

This tape may be old but it is so damn brutal that I would be doing the underground a disservice by not reviewing it. **Imperial Foeticide** hails from the Czech Republic, and I'll bet that at the first instant of freedom, these wicked boys seized the opportunity to spill the years of oppression and frustration onto audio tape and let the world feel just what it's like to be ruled. My god, I am gripped by such a tight iron fist that I can hardly breathe. Someone save me from this dominating force!

In between the hyper blasts of brutality are entertaining classical interludes. Calm as your nerves may be, you can't prepare for the overwhelming title track and "Response." Help celebrate liberty, support Imperial Foeticide. 💣💣💣💣

Write for price to:
Oldrich Kolovratník Jr.
Slunecní 238
280 02 Kolín 2
Czech Republic

JESUS SKIN

Simplicity – 1997

Here's some sort of mechanized metal concoction. A little on the futuristic side, **Jesus Skin**'s experiments produce mixed results. While some of the riffs and keyboard effects are cool, the whispered vocals sound really stupid. Lack of cohesion from riff to riff also sets back *Simplicity*, showing the band's youth. As opposed to the more refined **Slightly Miffed** of England, Jesus Skin resembles California's **Depressor**. Only time will decide this band's fate. 💣💣 ¼

$4 everywhere to:
P.O. Box 3249
Scottsdale, AZ 85271

JUNGLE ROT

4-song sampler – 1997

Here's an even better batch of straight forward death metal than *Skin the Living*. Showing its true underground spirit, **Jungle Rot** worked hard and made the necessary adjustments to ensure continued success. Where *Skin the Living* drags along, these songs from *Slaughter the Weak* change tempo or just end. No superfluous excess detracts from the potent Swedish riffs, which happen to bring **Fleshcrawl**, **Gutted**, and **Puzzle Head** to mind. Touches of *The Bleeding*-era **Cannibal Corpse** are evident in the vocals, leaving me to believe that Jungle Rot is forging ahead while not forgetting from where it came. 💣💣💣 ¾

Write for info to:
6618 52nd Ave.
Kenosha, WI 53142

KADATH

Promo 1997

One thing I enjoy is reviewing releases from bands who have appeared in the mag before. **Kadath**'s last demo was well-received by these ears, with my only complaints being that the songs dragged on and the time changes lacked fluidity. Although vocalist Holger wrote to me saying that the latter was an intentional part of Kadath's style, the new three-song demo flows much more appropriately. Stylistically, this German quartet is a combination of early Swedish guitars and the overwhelming power of Canadian death metal, a la **Kataklysm** or **Cryptopsy**. The tight drum work of Erling is better than before and drives home the idea that Kadath is no sloppy fluke. This is for real! 💣💣💣 ¾

Write for price to:
Holger Friedenburger
Eifel Strasse 35
D-52068 Aachen
Germany

KWITCHERBICHEN

Self-titled – 1996

I wrote to this band because it was a metal offshoot and I thought it would be cool to broaden *Sloth*'s coverage. Since then I've realized that **Kwitcherbichen** is too far of a stretch for you and that reviewing hundreds of releases is annoying as hell; especially since most demos suck and since metal isn't pop, label releases are just as underground as most else. (I guess I'm not true underground anymore. Suck my ass.) This band plays easy listening classic rock with good solos, and every town's got one of them. The light production plays heavily into my description, because most find Kwitcherbichen to be a combination of metal, blues, and grunge. Whatever. The title track and various lead work throughout are impressive, but when I need a dose of hellfire and "Trainwreck" or "Algenon" is playing, I'm going to be quite a bitch. 💣💣 ¾

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 1608
Oshkosh, WI 54902

LETHAL PRAYER

Spiritual Decay – 1997

Lethal Prayer. That is a stupid fucking name. Strike one. *Spiritual Decay* is an hour of flawed old school and black metal that has the discipline of a community college attendee (which these old, multi-chinned men appear to have been). Strike two. Every band can have a few ideas; the truly gifted then create brilliant pieces of memorable musical bliss that is worth your time, unlike Lethal Prayer. Strike three! You're out! 💣💣

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 7942
Pittsburgh, PA 15216

LILITU

Servants of Twilight -- 1997

From the looks of this quartet, I'd say the members of **Lilitu** were in the drama department of their hick town's high school. Having been shunned by their clean cut peers, they opted to create an alternate reality in which to live. The product is *Servants of Twilight*, a very non-Georgian platter of atmospheric doom. All kidding aside (though I wouldn't be surprised if I'm right), I was quite impressed by the otherworldly nature of this demo (it's seventy minutes long), and the production is pretty good for an endeavor like this. Stunning are the alternating clean male and female singing on "Our Vessels of the Sea" and "Temple," and Derek Bonner's guitar skills are in plain view on the 9:25 "Nameless." Trouble brews during the forty-minute title track, but such are the failures of youth. Perhaps the members were experiencing torturous breakups at the time of this song's conception, because the vocals become extremely whiny and at times the music loses its focus. Maybe one of the male vocalists shed a



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tear and stopped what he was doing to conceal it, because as we all know, it's shameful for a man to show any emotion except primal aggression. Anyway, damn impressive, original stuff from Lilitu. Check it out! 💣💣💣💣

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 1795
Hardwick, GA 31034

MALEVOLENCE

Promotional Rehearsal tape '97

Much improved over its debut, *Dominium* (which the band was kind enough to send me), this latest sampler is a preview of the next album from **Malevolence**. What was once an above average European death metal band is now individualizing itself with galloping keys, a **Rotting Christ** style of black metal, and acoustic guitar and piano interludes. The band is at its best when playing this refined style instead of the straight ahead death of before. Look for the new album this year. 💣💣💣 ½

Write for price to:
Vale da Fonte, Lote 11 2° Dto
2400 Leiria, Portugal

MALIGNANT

Self-titled – 1997

Barely a year old, **Malignant** has already played with some big name acts and recorded a four-song demo. It's no surprise that this Maine quintet plays the vicious grindcore akin the New England area and the pit riffs straight outta Brooklyn, yo. For what the band and demo are, I wasn't disappointed. These guys will always stay deep underground, but enough grassroots support from Illinois will surely encourage more demos and even some out of state shows. "Meatpipe" and "Numb" contain some good riffs, as in nothing else drew my attention, but for these moments I was interested. 💣💣 ¼

Write for price to:
14 Chesnut St.
Auburn, ME 04210

MESSE NOIR

Self-titled – 1997

Sounds like chaotic Australian metal to me. Therefore, don't be surprised by a lack of structure or variation within the songs. The band stresses that its music is non-repetitive, but by blasting through and never looking back, **Messe Noir** is also not memorable. **Sadistik Exekution** and **Misery** come to mind as this four-track tape plays, with both the vocals and guitar sound resembling these Aussies. I am simply at a loss to describe this any more. Blasting and more blasting, followed by non-repetitive riffs. Whatever. 💣💣

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 4059
Meriden, CT 06450

MIND PHASER

Shiny Madness -- 1997

Take the guitars of *Beneath the Remains* **Sepultura** and experiment with progressive and discordance, while adding a touch of *Butchered at Birth*, and you'll have a good idea of what **Mind Phaser** is all about. Cool, huh? Tempo variation is also key in this band's persona, as the faster riffs tend to be well-executed and the slower ones more accessible. The final three of *Shiny Madness*'s seven songs are the best, with "Future" totally kicking ass with discordant interplay between the guitars and drums. 💣💣💣💣

$8 everywhere to:
Guido Manfredini
Via G. Fochessati. 7
46045 Marmirolo (MN) Italy

MORBID ENTRÉE

Smorgasgore – 1996

Good, good, good! At last, a band that pokes fun at the brutal gore genre *and* delivers the goods! Titles such as "Symphonies of Giblets" and "Blasphemous Butt Blast" may turn off fans of the extreme, but one press of 'play' will leave you "fucked with a dead and frozen thomper!" And that's precisely why I prefer **Morbid Entrée** over scores of other brutal bands. These guys play just for the fun of it, and are therefore not afraid to insert a lyric sheet-labeled black metal part with "ungodly screams of paganism" or play a song like "Vegan Slaughter," which depicts the killing of protein deficient vegetarians. There's nothing original in the music, but *Smorgasgore* is a good time just for the hell of it, and that *is* a rarity in the underground. 💣💣💣 ½

$5 everywhere to:
Evan Williams
347 Mattison Ave.
Ambler, PA 19002

MUCUS MEMBRANE

Shallow Existence – 1997

Vinnie's back! That's right, the man of **Sadistic Torment** and **Autumn Dawn** fame is back with his latest project, aided by a drum machine and guitarist Tom Persons. The overall overwhelming nature of these four songs, all executed precisely, harks back to the early '90s, when producing quality death metal really meant something. Vinnie's overpowering bark and rasp remain as hateful as ever, and Persons works well with the surprisingly natural drums. The title track is total mayhem, sticking a sick hardcore riff into the mix. So many demos are called "solid" by so many love-'em-all 'zines, but Mucus Membrane truly fits the description. 💣💣💣💣 ¼

Write for price to:
9014 50th Place
College Park, MD 20740

MYSELF AM HELL

Self-tiled – 1997

Five songs and no gimmicks. **Myself Am Hell** is offering itself to the underground, plain and simple. And with a catchy style that incorporates thrash with 1990-era **Malevolent Creation**, the band is sure to turn heads. The production and riffs resemble *And Justice for All*-era **Metallica**, but don't rip the album off. The songs chug along nicely, only really taking off on "Suicide My Cure" and "Unholy Plea," the latter of which contains a great **Atrocity** style riff. Not a bad CD at all. 💣💣💣 ½

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 416
Merrick, NY 11566

MYSTICAL FROST

Redemption of Tears – 1997

A Californian trying to capture the living hell of being a Norwegian is as impossible and ridiculous as it sounds. And **Mystical Frost** is all about such melancholy. Via overmechanized production and weak growls, *Redemption of Tears* is about as soul chilling as ice cream, despite the "haunting" keys that appear in the background. And one more thing, the music is dead! Each song consists of turtle riffs trudging along while the vocals shoot off into their own retarded world. Old ladies could rock harder than Mystical Frost, especially if they're from Norway. 💣 ¾

$5 everywhere to:
16691 Bartlett Lane #2
Huntington, Beach, California 92647

NILE

Ramses Bringer of War – 1997

After all the hype, I finally got my hands on a **Nile** tape. Guess what? This is incredibly brutal. I'm talking as mind blowing as the first **Deeds of Flesh** demo. And Nile also is infatuated with ancient Egypt! After the overwhelming "The Howling of the Jinn," the title track opens with horns and thudding drums, and the demo's closer touts a spiritual vibe. I picture thousands of obedient souls hoisting large stones, chanting in unison. At three songs, *Ramses Bringer of War* is but a dagger in the arm. Beware of the coming onslaught, my friends, for a full-length album is on the way. Run! 💣💣💣💣

Write for prince to:
P.O. Box 6062
Greenville, SC 29606
phammoura@aol.com

NOCTURNAL

Self-titled – 1997

A highly misleading flyer drew my curiosity and I wrote to **Nocturnal** requesting a demo. What I believed would be an aural whipping by death and black metal of magnanimous proportions was really a droning dose of JL America-era metal. That's right, you remember when **Samael** and **Immortal** were young, when tempos as fast as snails raced along with eyelid-dropping interest. Here, that and a little **Burzum** melancholy combine. But while the Count played emotional lead lines over the rhythm guitars, **Nocturnal** is content with endless background riffs. I guess the tragic nature of living in a country as beautiful and awe-inspiring as Australia just can't be captured by black metal. 💣💣 ½

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 182
Ingle Farm

Bow down and worship Morbid Entree and its unholy carrot metal or you will surely die



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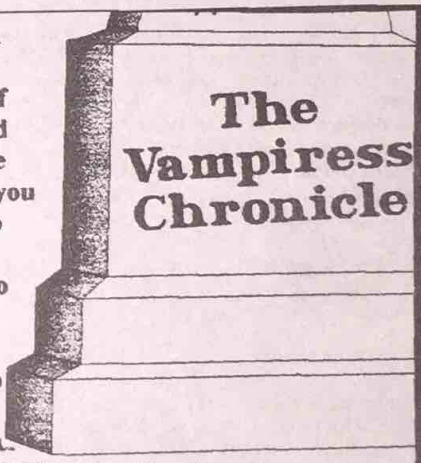
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I have issue #2 + #3 avaailable still. Also #4 has just been released. The cost is only #2.00 now you can't get better than that. Thanks!!

The Vampiress Chronicle* C/O Bloodlette
P.O. Box 716* Silver Springs, FL 34489

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Baltimore, MD 21212



CONSPIRACY Magazine



The second issue of CONSPIRACY MAG is now unleashed and it delivers 23 in-depth interviews with bandss like: CRADLE OF FILTH - NECROPHOBIC - BEHEMOTH - VARATHRON - ALGAION - GEHENNAH - DARKLANDS - NECROMICON - ENTHRONED - ANCIENT CEREMONY - MEMORY GARDEN - THRONEAEON and many more. There's also some articles and a high amount of reviews and a great layout. All in all it's 60 pro-printed A4 pages with the same text-size as on this flyer. To obtain it. Send 30 SEK (Europe) or 6 USD (Everywhere) to one of these addresses:

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NOCTUNRAL FEARS

F.I.G.H.T. – 1997

Well, there were supposed to be four songs here, but only the title track appears. Too bad, because **Nocturnal Fears** performs nice laid back European metal. The song starts like **Metallica**'s cover of **Queen**'s "Stone Cold Crazy" (or whatever it's called), then blends into contemporary melodic power metal, complete with crunchy riffs, gruff vocals, and a mellow section laced with singing. I want to hear a lot more from these guys! 💣💣💣 ¾

Write for price to:
142 rue B. De lespaul
59000 Lille, France

OBSECRATION

Promo '97

Having heard this group's last full-length, *The Inheritors of Pain*, I was pleased to receive this promo. It features two new songs of **Obsecration**'s Greek metal, which holds an old school quality due to the thin guitars and simple approach. "My Vision and My Dream" and "I'm an Odious Ghoul" show the band becoming tighter as unit and writing more interesting material. Excess fluff and awkward riffs no longer serve as hindrances either, leaving these metallers an improved batch that is finally ready for international recognition. 💣💣💣 ¾

Write for info to:
119 Dikearchou Str.
162-32 Byron
Athens, Greece

ORCUS

Aggression – 1996

I've been pestered by this band's management to review the tape, so here's the review, damn it! I think **Orcus** sucks! This is the most boring tape I've heard in years. That you would dare compare *Aggression* to **Metallica** is insulting. 90 percent of garage bands would discard the songs that Orcus plays with extreme joy. This trio's goal is to make a "lasting impression" on people – the day that happens is the day the "Orcus Gay Porno" comes out on videocassette. Until then, pray with me that the band never writes another song. 💣

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 414
Edgemont, PA 19028

ORIFIST

The 18th Key – 1997

Here's a solo project from my bud Steve Cole back home. He's put together four mid-paced songs to contrast the supersaturated speed death metal market. Each song is different on the demo, making it hard to draw conclusions about Steve's abilities. While he's obviously experimenting (check out the **Rotting Christ** influence on "The Dungeon to Ice" and almost industrial feel of "Ultra-violence"), his lack of experience forces him into the trap of following the songwriting formats of most other bands. He'll play a riff, growl over top, change riffs and growl some more, etc. I'd call this an average demo with potential. If Steve can get together other creative minds intent on playing interesting death metal, then Orifist has a chance. 💣💣 ¾

$5 (US) / $7 (world) to:
3212 Gold Mine Rd.
Brookeville, MD 20833

PAIN PRINCIPLE

...Until Someone Loses an Eye – 1996

I really hate quoting bio sheets, but why beat around the bush when the band appropriately tags itself? **Pain Principle** calls itself a "progressively heavy, groove-oriented metal" band, and I agree. This is a tight unit, and it's good to see a band succeeding due to hard work. Coverage in mags like *Metal Maniacs* and *Ill Literature* has opened up a whole new, deserved market.

The groovy, remnants-of-**Pantera** style of Pain Principle is not my favorite, per se, but as opposed to other reviewers who "bash if it ain't brutal," I see that the music is well done. Thrash riffs and guttural vocals help keep the songs modern, while tight guitars and drums blend together as one. Groove metal fans will not be disappointed. 💣💣💣 ¼

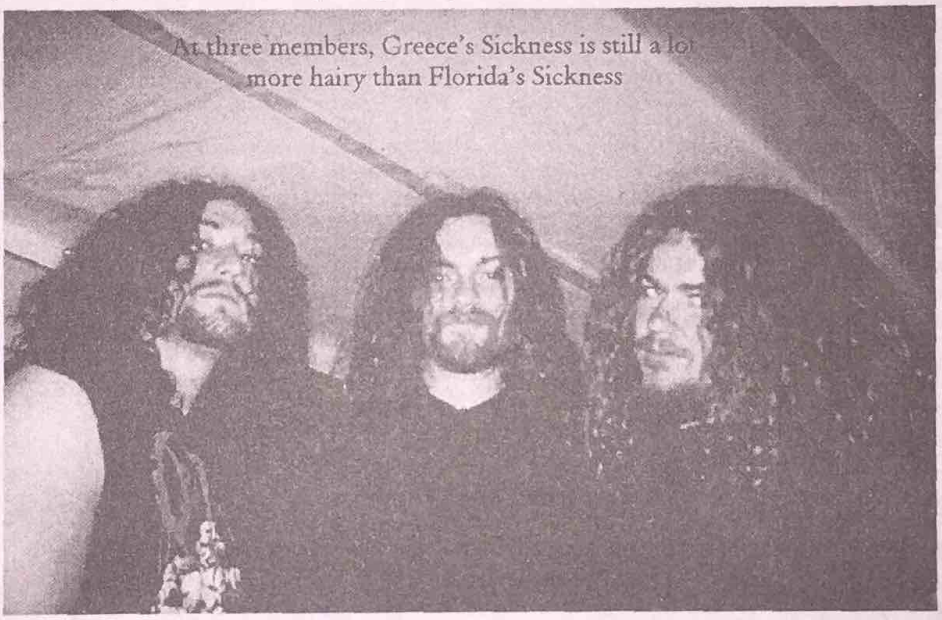
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Kevin Bullock
P.O. Box 141251
Orlando, FL 32814

POSSESSION

Scourge and Fire – 1996

This is a unique mini-CD in the fact that it's actually miniature! I don't understand why people incorrectly label CD EPs as MCDs. Get it right, dammit! *Scourge and Fire* is 3" across, about the length of Napolean's formaldehyde-saturated dick. Those familiar with **Possession** will be pleased to know that the band's quirky, genre defying style is still intact, if not more prevalent due to the less polished nature of these songs (two originals and a **King Diamond** or **Mercyful Fate** cover, methinks, and if I'm wrong I don't care). What's to say? You can get this disc cheap, the diverse metal is wild and fast-paced, and Possession is by far one of the more professional independent acts out there. 💣💣💣 ¾

Write for info about a 2 CDs for $11 deal at:
P.O. Box 3031
Olathe, KS 66063
possess@eternallyhaunt.com



POWERS COURT

Self-titled – 1996

Is this a joke? I tried to give this CD a serious listen, but all this shit about thunder and witches sang through a **Pee Wee Herman** voice was too much. Please, God, make the '80s more dead now than they have ever been before! You should see the band's photo. The leather clad duo is standing on stone steps, with Steve glancing away anxiously because he knows his greasy hair and never-seen-combat boots look silly; singer/guitarist Danie, who I believe is a woman, looks a lot like **Dee Snyder** and could probably beat the crap out of poor Steve. Musically, a stripped down combination of glam and heavy metal is **Power's Court**'s strategy, with Danie's voice soaring invariably as if she were a man having his scrotum kicked on random occasions. Steve is to blame both for detracting from any good riffs with his clankety bass lines, and because if his production job were any thinner it would be more transparent than the hair on his balding head. Folks, you just can't take Powers Court seriously unless you dream of hair with glitter, an MTV that plays videos, really tight leather, mirror sunglasses, etc... 💣💣

$10 (US) / $11(world) to:
P.O. Box 2441
St. Louis, MO 63114

PROPHECY

It Shall Come to Pass – 1997

However unmemorable **Prophecy** may be – the answer is very – I imagine a live show by this quintet would be a great experience for the masses of Texans starved for a little brutality and pit action. The riffs, swindled as they are, are big and invite headbanging by the new death metal fan. I'm sure that at age thirteen **Prophecy** would have been one of my favorites, but back then I hadn't heard over 200 demos. 💣💣 ½

Write for price to:
4267 Fry St.
Ft. Worth, TX 76115-1520

PUNISHED

Self-titled – 1997

After the first song, which sounds like **Anthrax** playing hardcore, things become lifeless. No matter how decent the riffs may be, they are played without vitality or urgency. The same is true for the vocals, which are gruff but not sung angry enough to warrant titling a song "Eat Shit and Die You Scumfuck." I guess I expected too much from this self-proclaimed death-doom-thrashcore-punk-metal band. 💣💣💣

Write for price to:
1412 Doncastle Ct.
Concord, NC 28025

PUZZLE HEAD

Pre-release sampler – 1997

I called this Virginia duo above average last time, pointing out that future releases would show the true face of **Puzzle Head**. Damn, was I ever right! This is one of the top twenty demos I've ever heard.

The **Malevolent Creation** influence is still there, but much more lies behind the intense minds of these former **Stentor** members. Mike Greenhall's drumming skills are up there with any Malevolent Creation or **Burning Inside** drummer, and his tortured growls show the deep emotions of the lyrics, an aspect sorely lacking last time. Mike Potter's guitars branch off to set moods, incorporating some **Korn** discordance into his death metal crunch.

I see true pits forming at Puzzle Head live shows, not to mention a satisfied crowd. You'll be a sore loser if you don't tap into the frustration of two guys named Mike. 💣💣💣 ½

Write for price to:
2441 Temple Court
Alexandria, VA 22307

SABBATIC FEAST

Reopen the Womb – 1997

So cheesy is **Sabbatic Feast** and I don't care. I wholeheartedly approve of this platter of early '90s death metal. Not because it is addictive from beginning to end, the most brutal demo I've heard, or totally over the top – because these things *Reopen the Womb* is not. It is five guys being themselves, playing simple death for the fun of it. They even get pretty damn evil on "Killing Christ." 💣💣💣 ¼

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 52894
Lafayette, LA 70505
sabbatic69@aol.com

SANATORIUM

Autumn Shadows – 1997

Playing very occasionally memorable death metal, **Sanatorium** suffers from what many other bands do: improper use of deep growls. Years ago barks torture were meant to act as another sledgehammer upon the listener's skull. Now bands just assume a voice is necessary (as the leader), which detracts from their capable guitar skills and enjoyable riffs. Such is the case with Sanatorium and that's why I'm bored by *Autumn Shadows*. 💣💣 ½

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METAL MAFIA

Issue #3 is still available for $3 U.S., $4 Foreign. Interviews with: Karyn Crisis of **Crisis**, George Fisher of **Cannibal Corpse, Ossuary Insane, Scattered Remnants, Deathkids, Critical Assault, Ton, Violent Dissorder, Mortal Coil 'zine, & Torture Chamber Music Reviews**. Plus an artist profile on JB of **JB Artwork**, poetry, show reviews, demo/album reviews and more. Issue #4 is due out in July/Aug. '97. So far, we have interviews with **Angel Corpse, Fleshgrind, Descendent, Avulsion,** Jesse Pintado of **Napalm Death** & Seth of **Anal Cunt**. Bands: send in material for review/possible interview. 'zines: let's trade, but write first. Everyone get in touch.....
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SAREPTA
S.U.N.K. – 1997

Self-described as a thrashcore band, **Sarepta** plays for a select audience. I felt the style to be hardcore hard rock, with some thrashy riffage of course. You may not go for this at first, but after you're familiar with these five songs, the catchy beats and moshriffic guitars will have your foot a' tappin'. Give it up for Sarepta, for every town has a band like it – one with a growling vocalist and simple songs. What's weird is that most of these bands, **No Saner** from Virginia, for example, are going nowhere fast, but these Germans have laid a nice framework for future releases to build upon. 🎸🎸🎸 ¼

$10 everywhere to:
Wolfsegger Strabe 9
D-84323 Massing, Germany
sarepta@t-online.de

SEVERED
Dearly Departed -- 1997

Absolutely nothing new is presented by **Severed** on its debut demo. I play the tape over and over, yet it is as if I'm hearing something different each time. I remember none of the riffs, nor the cymbal-happy drummer. The seven songs that compose *Dearly Beheaded* begin and end quickly, which is a blessing when they're entitled "World of Shit," "Follow the Lamb," and "Spooky Little Frog." Nothing is really that bad about Severed, but this Chicago quartet just doesn't *do* anything! You can find a thousand bands playing traditional death metal like this without ever leaving this hemisphere. I'm sorry, but holding a beat and growling deeply doesn't automatically merit high ratings in this publication. 🎸🎸

$4 (US) / $5 (world) to:
5401 S. Komensky
Chicago, IL 60632

SICKNESS
Primordial Brutality -- 1996

Asphyx or **Pungent Stench**? I can't tell because the rough production might be considered good to some and bad to others. To me, Greece's **Sickness** sounds like another demo band with the occasional bright moment. Speedy guitar work is what gives the band its personality, but this trio's insistence upon playing "brutal death metal" makes it hard for anyone to say, "This band really sticks out from the rest." A new demo should be out by now, if you cared. 🎸🎸 ½

Write for price to:
44 Bizaniou St.
14451 Athens, Greece

SHEOL
Seven Circles – 1996

In the mood for some straight ahead, turn of the decade death metal? Well, cart in **Sheol** and that's what you'll get. Damn brutal and full of catchy riffs, you'll swear this tape is straight out of **Morbid Angel**, **Malevolent Creation**, and **Cancer**'s set lists. The guitars and drums are on different planets at times, but for fans of this presently neglected style, you'll find a friend in Sheol. 🎸🎸🎸 ¼

$3 (US) / $5 (world) to:
326 Dundaff St.
Carbondale, PA 18407

SCHOLOMANCE
I Am That Which Is – 1997

I knew something was up when pianos and growls occurred simultaneously. Could it be that the melodic craze has struck the Midwest, the breeding ground for way too many brutal death bands? Apparently so, and the results are worth mentioning. **Scholomance** deserves credit, not just because playing the Swedish melodic style strikes my fancy, but also for its uniqueness. Progressive and jazz aspects provide a new perspective for the title track and "Innocence...Lustborn," while theoretical knowledge aids "Erotica Sequence." All in all, Scholomance is a welcome addition to the underground scene. 🎸🎸🎸 ½

$5 everywhere to:
8118 N. State Hwy AC
Willard, MO 65781

SILHAVEN
Mirror – 1997

Intent on enhancing its live set with theatrical props – one show involved a real roadkill carcass – sick hicks **Silhaven** look to please the crowd in an inbred **GWAR** style. The ten songs of *Mirror* are for the most part mid-paced rockin' death, with fleeting flowing riffs thrown in for good measure. Maybe it's the production, because the ferocity of a live band that puts dead animals in their mouths doesn't show up here. None of the songs explode into the necessary hateful rages. Instead, intended-to-be-catchy riffs fill the air until the vocalist is tired of each song thus ending it. 🎸🎸 ¾

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 5424
Decatur, AL 35601

SPASMOPHILIUS
Sampler of *The Maze -- 1997*

Heavy metal lead and death metal backing vocals are what first set this tape apart, but that wouldn't have worked if not for the melodic speed metal guitar riffs. Dry **Metallica** riffs of old combine with the aforementioned vocals in a unique fashion, making **Spasmophilius** an originator of something special. Besides their addictive nature, these four songs from *The Maze* are well-written and full of bright ideas. I recommend whipping out an IRC and writing to the band. 🎸🎸🎸🎸

Write for price to:
9/22 Petite rue de l'alma
59800 Lille, France

SUMMON
Tracks from *Dark Descent of Fallen Souls -- 1997*

On the b-side of this tape containing **Summon**'s 1995 *Fire Turns Everything Black* demo were a few tracks from the more recent full-length, *Dark Descent of Fallen Souls*. I found these newer songs more individual in nature than those on *Fire*. Supposedly other people have been less impressed by the new material, but when it comes to branching off in search of one's own identity, I am all in favor of transitionary releases. Such is the case with Summon, a band which I don't really like but look upon favorably because of its commitment to self-improvement. Its music is obviously not of Norwegian caliber, but fans of the old school feel that American black metal emotes will find Summon to their liking. 🎸🎸🎸

$12 (US) / $15 (world) to:
P.O. Box 24171
Lansing, MI 48909

SYSTEMS REBOURN
Incinerate – 1997

Every town has an average death metal band like this. The members probably just play when they're not busy and only put out a CD demo after being urged by their overly zealous and intoxicated local following. If not uninspired, the music is for sure uninspiring. All five songs are average and instantly forgettable. Don't be surprised if this is the last time you read about **Systems Rebourn**. 🎸🎸 ½

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 59293
Schaumburg, IL 60159-0923

TAKODA
II – 1997

I can't believe I like this! There's something about this band's country boy style of hardcore thrash that I can't get out of my head. I picture **Takoda** enthralling crowds with the alternating hardcore and John Bush vocals, not to mention the chunky, catchy guitars. You could say Takoda rips off **Pantera** and just writes pit riffs, but you'd miss the point, which is that this is one of the few bands that pulls off the style convincingly. I don't expect these guys to get a record deal, but they play their music convincingly enough and don't bite off more than they can chew. I wish Takoda luck in the future. 🎸🎸🎸 ¼

Write for price to:
1817 Meadowood Dr.
Marietta, GA 30062

TWISTED TOWER DIRE
Triumphing True Metal – 1996

True metal indeed! And how glorious **Twister Tower Dire** is, not only bringing us back to the inspirations the '80s, but also keeping to its own style instead of mimicking its idols. **Iron Maiden** guitars lead the way on these two songs, played by two old school experts. All five members are true professionals, with some holding degrees and the singer, Janet Rubin, is a professional opera singer. Her voice adds depth and power, as well as a unique quality. Most of metal's female singers just breathe their lines like waifs, but Janet belts out her notes from the gut.

I'm excited about Twisted Tower Dire. Out of all the bands that claim to embrace the true metal spirit, TTD ranks among the top. If you don't believe me, please know that two members wear bullet belts and another has an Iron Maiden headband. 🎸🎸🎸🎸🎸

$3 (US) / $4 (world) to:
10021 Scenic View Terrace
Vienna, VA 22182

UNHOLY DEATH
Demo 1994 (!)

I don't see why Tim and the boys are promoting their 1994 demo at this point, but I told him I'd review this, so...

Twisted Tire Dire is so metal your groin will hurt after you hear the tape!



One of the more raw demos to find its way in these pages, **Unholy Death**'s contribution is sloppy and loaded like a potato skin full of death metal's generics. Only by contrasting it with what else I've been reviewing lately does Unholy Death hold any special quality, and I'm sure that if more **Napalm Death** freaks were to send in material, I'd like this even less. As for now, *Demo 1994* takes me back to my early experiences with metal, when it only mattered if it was heavy, not if it was good. 💣💣 ½

Write for price to:
421 Ball St.
Ortonville, MI 48462

VICIOUS CIRCLE
Live Long and Suffer – 1997

Back in the day there was an American label called JL America, which folded quite soon after its formation (perhaps because it signed **Organic Infest**). One of the bands that was duped into a signing a contract was New Jersey's **Vicious Circle**, a thrash/death outfit that hearkens back to the harsh spirit of old, while keeping modern with a dirty *Eaten Back to Life* sound. *Nonexistent*-era **Living Sacrifice** vocals further please the ears, and various solos combine with the blistering drum attack. Despite Vicious Circle's unfortunate past dealings with labels, it has weathered the storms and is ready for you to suffer. 💣💣💣 ¾

$6 everywhere to:
Mel Leach
147 Tomlin Station Rd.
Gibbstown, NJ 08027

VIOLENT DISORDER
Demon Society – 1996

High school metal from the Midwest is just plain wrong. People should not have to be subjected to shit like this. The cover artwork of this atrocity features an American flag, barbed wire, a marijuana leaf, and half of a skeleton. The music contained on the pro-duplicated tapes (why??) is as original as you'd expect. Do you want muffled production and cloudy vocals? Naptime guitar riffs are definitely in order, not to mention lyrics about society's ills. I guess this is just another bad VD the world must deal with. 💣

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 51
Bethel, OH 45106

VIRAL LOAD
Based Fucking Skull – 1997

I'm trying so hard to look past the awful production. Could there be something of worth behind the distorted bass and **Body Bag** screeches. **Viral Load** could easily be written off as a lame death metal band from the middle of nowhere, which I'd like to do. I must mention the occasional significant moments or else be called a cocksucker, though. The guitarist can play, which he proves with interesting lead work and effects. He and the drummer sometimes blast with a European vibe, which is quite nice. A major percentage of these three songs remains a slave to annoying growls, rendering Viral Load yet another band unworthy of further mention. When will bands realize they're not going to sell a million tapes, so it's pointless to follow the same song structures of pop artists? Probably never, just as I will never run out of my stash of bombs. 💣💣 ¼ Just released was *Brutalized Beyond Belief*, a full-length album. From the band's productivity alone I see that Viral Load is intent upon becoming a known name within the underground. The new songs show positive progression from the demo's primitive style, and there are some great moments here, like on "Lacerated Flesh." The guitars continue to highlight this Texas trio, with problems arising from average production and lethargic riffs. Viral Load is sure to keep plugging along until it maximizes its potential, for the drive to succeed is there. 💣💣💣

CD is $11 everywhere to:
611 Booker St.
Diboll, TX 75941

COMICS
MIND'S EYE
Ashcan Edition – 1997

I really don't know why I agreed to review this. It's a friggin' comic book! I never used to read these as a kid, opting for baseball cards instead. I don't like **Mind's Eye**, nor do I hate it. I'm just as indifferent to this comic as I am to every other one I've seen in my life. From what I gather, this issue is a little xeroxed sampler of what's to come, with short stories from Russell W. Evans, P.J. Scoggins, and Mark Chapman. Judging the drawings, I think Evans isn't that good, Chapman is more traditional, and Scoggins loves stippling (that's using tons of dots). All the stories deal with monsters being violent and breaking people open. If you're into this kind of thing, contact Rob because he's a cool guy and I know comics like I know your mother. Wait…

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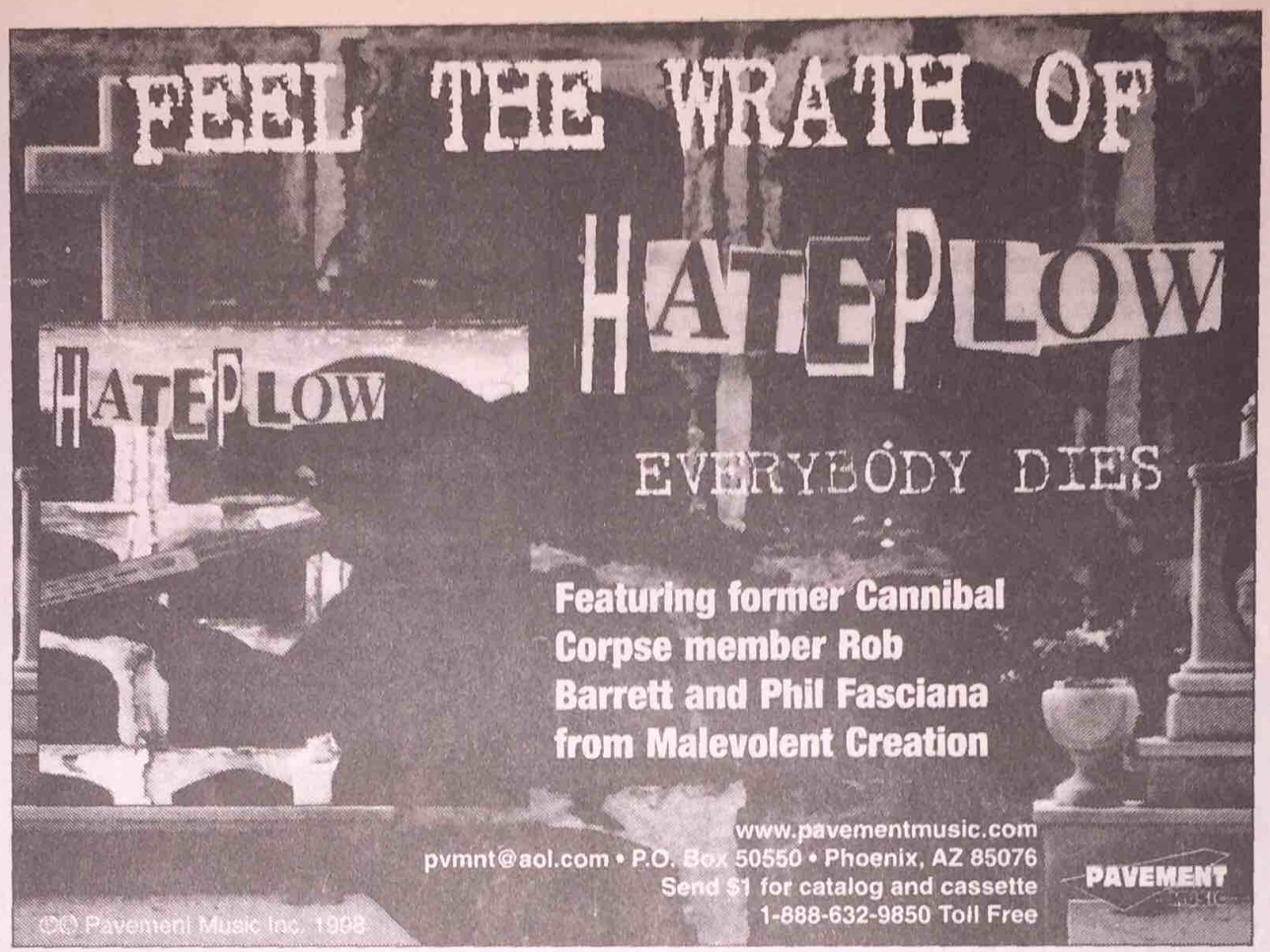
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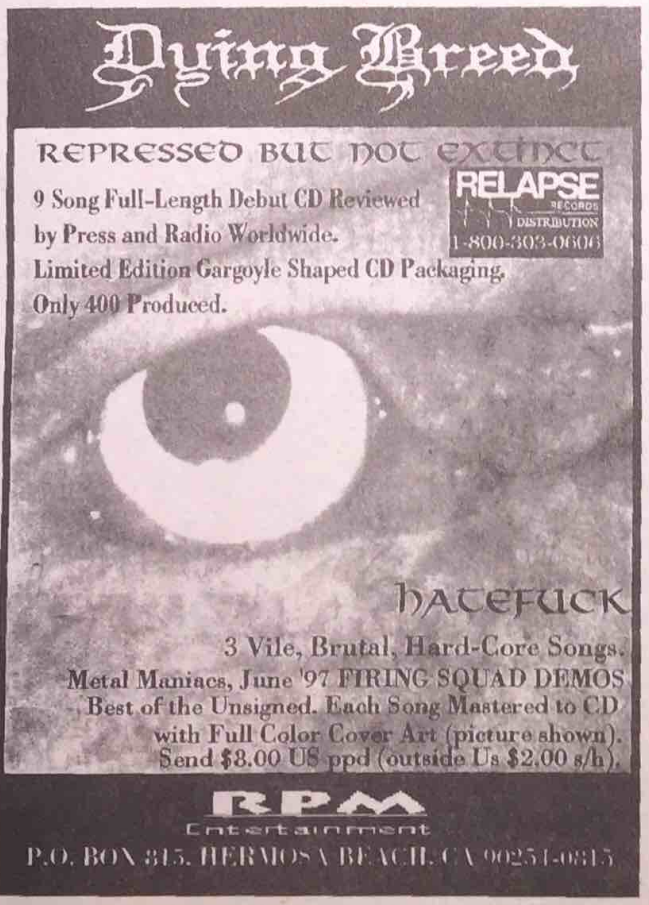
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Pete, introduce yourself to the readers of *Sloth*. Let them know about your membership to the Oprah Winfrey Book Club, addiction to crack, what it feels like to have survived a penal enema, and what your favorite flower is. (I like daisies.)

I am the last of the red-hot bass-master generals, supreme war-marshal of the lighted stage, vainest and most vile anti-rock hyena ever to scavenge the putrid depths and myriad tombs of the stinking earth, Texas "Pete" Reviled!!!

Ha! Of these things you say, all are lies! The only suffering I have been dealt to endure by fate was the DC-area death metal scene! Is it truly dead, or just "blackened" by the latest trend? Welcome to my ass!

You grew up around here in Virginia. Were you raised in a cesspool for a neighborhood? What first got you into music? What bands did you play in while living here? Have you always been into the more extreme styles of music? Finally, what the hell went wrong and turned you into a Satanic hyena metal warrior?!

I was born in deepest, darkest DC, then raised in Alexandria, VA. Since my parents were unable to afford private school, I attended public school with human refuse from the shallow end of the gene pool.

What "got me into music" was predestination. Prior to birth, I was a musician in the court of Set, and this is my vacation. My human parents, gracious hosts that they were, exposed me to classical, bluegrass, and folk music from a young age. However, true to my spiritual heritage, I was naturally geared towards violent, warlike music.

In junior high, drugs and alcohol introduced me to **Black Sabbath** and **AC/DC**. I bought a guitar. Since there were no bass players, I bought a bass and learned to play it, and soon I met some Ft. Hunt musicians and was playing in a rock/metal band doing sped-up, thrashing covers of **The Eagles**, **Robin Trower**, and **Animals** songs.

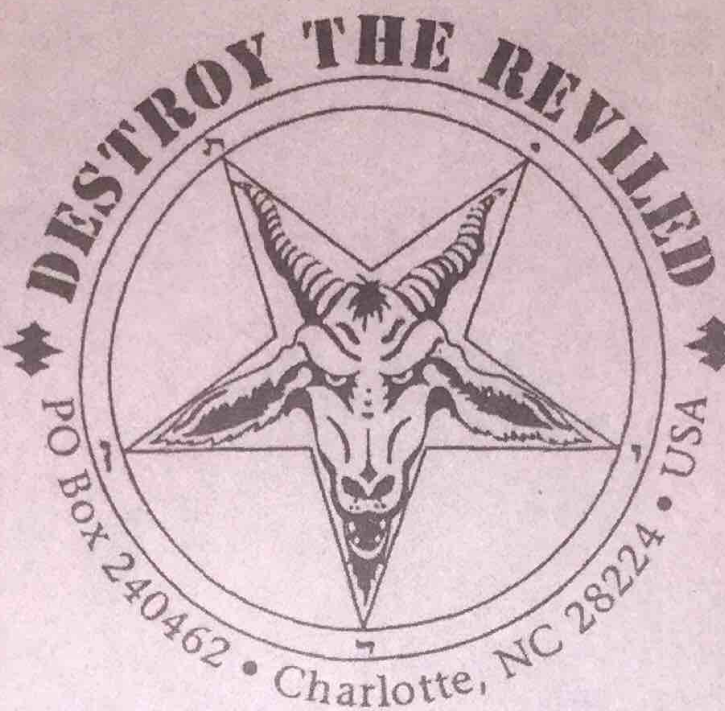
After high school, I joined up with a bunch of guys doing **Anthrax**, **Metallica**, **Metal Church**, and **Overkill** covers. We broke up as soon as I pushed them to do originals and play shows. Over the course of the next year, I tried out for a dozen bands before joining Annandale, VA-based thrashers, **Medussa**. Except for a brief tour with **Vox Humana**, I finished out a six-year stint with Medussa by moving to Charlottesville, VA, and joining **Hedonistic Cravings**. After HC, I followed up on a side-project I'd begun where Medussa had turned down a recording opportunity and left me the opportunity the write and record my own music.

Thus came the **Reviled**, who exhausted DC after a few shows, two 7" records, and a tape. Since the scene was at an all-time low, I took the opportunity to save some money and move to Charlotte, NC. I'd used up the entire pool of talented musicians DC had to offer, thus I had to move elsewhere.

I've always been into music that was graphic, physically challenging, and powerful. Bluegrass was fast and usually violent in subject matter, hence I naturally gravitated toward thrash, punk, hardcore, and speed metal, which I consider the "folk" music of modern times. That's why I had such a fascination with **Hedonistic Cravings**. They were basically rooted in contemporary folklore and the local mythology of south-central Virginia.

I became an Anarcho-Satanic Anti-Rock Terrorist Hyena because it sounds a lot more dangerous and unstable than "Inflatable Goatlord," yo.

You said you moved to Charlotte to "fuck goats, beat women, play loud music, drive monster trucks, wear a pistol out in the open, and become one with Satan." What did Charlotte offer that other cities did not? Got any stories to tell?



Charlotte offered the kind of sex that I like (i.e., with a rabid goat in the back seat of a '68 Impala). As to wild stories, well, I wouldn't want anything to fall into the hands of the State Bureau of Investigation.

Oh, you wrote that you've "discovered that goats do not need alcohol to fuck," and neither do you. I heard on Howard Stern's show a guy who said he screwed a dolphin. Are you discriminatory when it comes to what species you fuck, and if so, which are the ineligible applicants?

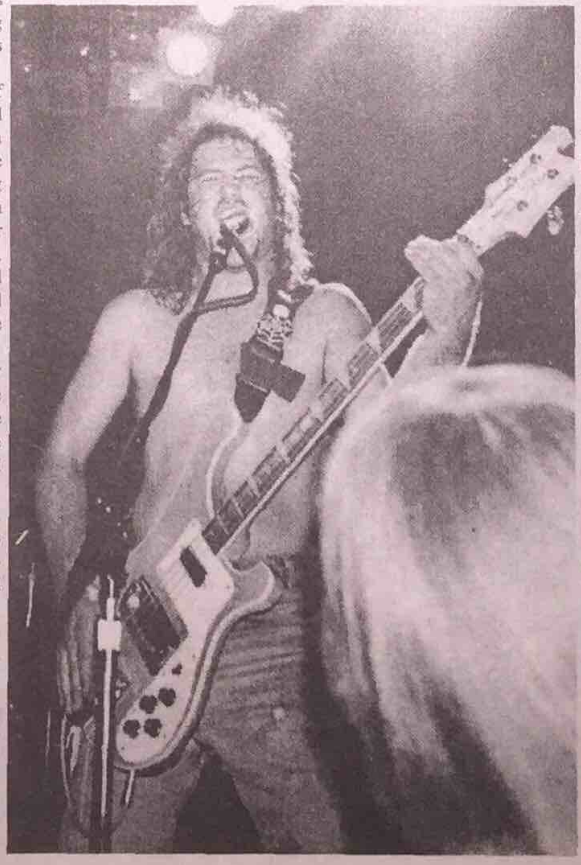
I'm actually very discriminatory when it comes to the species I engage in sexual activity with. Sheep, small dogs, cats, reptiles, primates, and "indigenous peoples" are all species I avoid and abhor due to their innate spiritual weakness or size. Animals like goats, horses, hyenas, and such are larger and have spiritual and supernatural significance. When I lived in Scottsville, VA, the drummer and I would raid the lairs of hibernating bears, dress 'em in ladies underwear and fuck 'em 'til they were full. That was fun because it made the Bear God angry, but since we did it when the Bear God was asleep, what could he do? I was really jealous when I heard about the guy who had sex with a dolphin. Next stop, Sea World!

Explain your relationship with Satan. He has played a large role in your music, as well as your social and sexual life, correct? In a letter, you said, "I am just so stoked that the power of Satan has brought me this far." Please let us in on your secret! Was there some sort of pact, does he get a percentage of the profits, are you his lover?

My relationship with Satan is indeed, very special. In fact, one might go so far as to say it's completely natural! I'm an American, and as any swine-lovin' moslem'll tell ya, Satan *is* America! Unlike the diabolical, warty, and foul demon of European folklore, riding the air with witches out to sour cows' milk, the American Satan rides a Harley-Davidson, owns a mansion filled with Playboy bunnies, eats hamburgers, and fills the willing people of his chosen land with *power*!

The very concept of America is totally Satanic! A land whose very charter is founded up on rebellion from its parent country? All other nations are jealous, whining from beneath the oppressive weight of their swollen hemorrhoid-ridden histories. We should bomb them silly.

Even American Christendom is rooted in Satanism! Not only has so much of Christianity been stolen from "folk" religions now regarded as Satanic, but the "American" version of the church is based upon splitting (rebelling) from the mother church and breaking up into sects (cults).



You've not gotten this far with Satan alone – there have also been some helpful musicians. Who aided you in your blasphemous quest to record total destruction, *Destroy the Reviled*? How has finding musicians in NC been thus far? What can we expect from The Reviled in the coming future?

Yes, there have been some musicians all right. Drummer Alan Meadows came from a commercial-thrash rip-off band called **Small Penis Strike**. They thought they were the whole metal scene and didn't acknowledge any other bands, but Alan was cool.

On guitar, I got JP Garali, who at the same time was playing in **Stentor**. Now both of these guys were incredible musicians, and we were able to get quite a bit done before they left, which was right after recording *Destroy the Reviled*. However, the guys from Small Penis Strike got a bad case of envy and convinced Alan to rejoin their band. After a series of embarrassing shows he was recruited by the **Reagans**, who are more of an MTV-radio-pop-oriented band featuring former Medussa frontman Chris Lilly.

JP joined a cover band, then **No Saner**, which was interesting because he used to hate me for dragging him out to Nick's to see them. But hey, I guess you've got to do what you can to climb that corporate ladder if you want to "make it in the music biz." However, without any help from anyone, I got over 4500 7"s and a thousand tapes out through the underground.

You're also helping out the band Punished.

Tell the readers what they should know about your involvement – musically and/or sexually – with these dudes.

I went to the Milestone to catch **Punished**, **Deviant**, and **Obey Bizar** one night in the fall of '96, feeling totally depressed about music to the point I told a buddy of mine, "You see that band on stage? I'll probably end up playing with someone like them!" Interestingly enough, I'm now playing with them. It turns out that all they needed was a decent bass player with a lousy temper to propel them into the inner ring of the Charlotte scene.

I'd have to say we're a strange mix: A cross between hardcore, punk, and thrash with a hint of metal. They're definitely the easiest bunch of guys I've ever jammed with, whether it's writing songs, wrestling, shoplifting together, or palling around in the locker room at the Y.

What cool, unknown bands have you been cranking lately? What do you recommend to bands who are looking to gain maximum exposure but don't have a lot of free time or money? For instance, would the purchase of human, goat, or giraffe skulls be more worthwhile? (Please consider overall "evilness", ability to toss them with blasphemous accuracy, and blood storage capacity.)

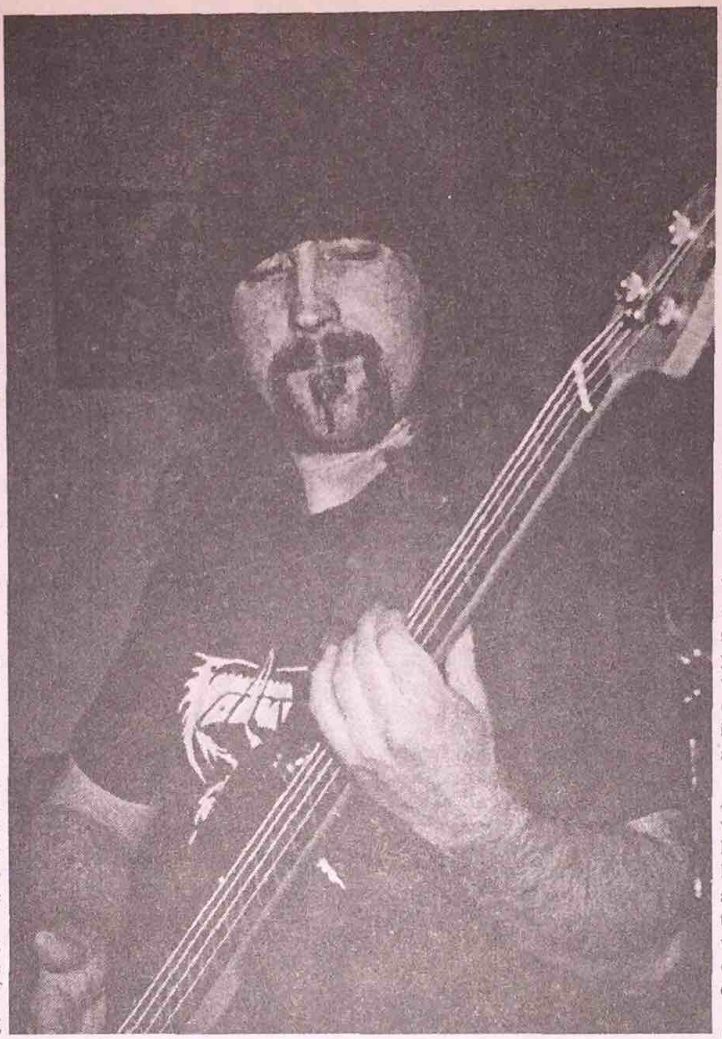
Lately I've been jamming **Violent Society**, **Towpath**, **Negative Reaction**, **Skinny Puppy**, **Ublisch**, **Johnny Cash**, **David Allen Coe**, **Buzzov-en**, **GG Allen**, and **Malicious Hate**. I would recommend to bands looking for exposure to practice really hard in the mirror first. If you're looking for a record label, or someone to do everything for you, stop reading and lubricate your asshole for entry, otherwise…

If you're serious about actually getting somewhere, there are a number of methods. One is a DIY comp CD put out between a number of bands, and distributed everywhere for cheap (i.e., $3-5). Also, one may record a CD, and use a 7" record to promote both the CD and boost show attendance by giving it away, both through the mail and at shows. Rot'en Roll uses a bulk mailing permit which keeps your mailing cost down to nothing. I would suggest that you write to me for details, as Rot'en Roll has just relocated to NC and is in the process of setting back up.

Explain your association with Rot'en Roll Records. What exactly are they all about, and how did you end up releasing a tape through them? Have sales and compensation been satisfactory thus far? Will the next The Reviled material be put out on this label?

My association with Rot'en Roll Records began shortly after releasing my first Reviled 7" (*Flying Through the Air as though Lucifer Possessed!!!*). I had wanted to take a more direct, DIY approach with the band, and I didn't like the way we'd done the 7", business-wise. I felt that $5 and colored vinyl was way too much, and that $100+ ads in 'zines would kill us financially. Rot'en Roll turned me onto an extremely direct and simple approach to promoting my band: Press a 7" record containing your very best songs, and put it all together as cheaply as possible. (If you already have a tape or CD, this works out great to sell them.)

#1. Use the 7" as a promotional tool to promote shows ahead of time, for example, sending 50 or so ahead of you to the club or a reliable fan to pass out for the show you're going to play a couple of weeks in advance.



#2. Circulate/purchase ads for $1 or a *free* 7" record. Rot'en Roll has a bulk mailing permit which enables you to mail a 7" anywhere in the USA for under 50 cents. If you keep costs down from the start, this shouldn't cost you a dime.

#3. Use mailing lists from other bands, or Rot'en Roll's list (over 6000 people) to saturate certain areas, 'zines, etc. Most underground bands and labels define success as a thousand or so 7" records pressed, sold, and/or distributed. I did a 4-way split 7" with **Basic Skills**, **Youth Gone Mad**, and **Bouncing Souls** which ended with 3500 copies pressed, sold, and distributed, and it cost next to nothing.

I use Rot'en Roll for distribution, but my own personal "label" is Cheap Liquor Virus Records, on which you'll see the next Reviled album issued. My sales are my sales. Rot'en Roll only takes a dime per 7" or CD for mailing, so the rest is all me. I still sell a tape, T-shirt, or record on the average of one a week.

Describe a typical day in the life of Texas Pete Reviled, from when you first wake up in a pile of trash to when you pass out drunk in an alley that night...

There is no typical day for Texas "Pete" Reviled.

I hear you bought a banjo. Have you plugged it into your DOD Death Metal pedal yet?

I would never plug a banjo into a distortion pedal. That would be "art," and "art" is not good.

We spoke on the phone about your age and future recently, and you mentioned something about a "4-year plan." Are you planning a world takeover, and if so, wouldn't it be wise to hasten it so it would coincide with the year 2000, hence throwing folks into a panic about Nostrodamus and Satan and JFK?

I have devised a five-year plan of Apocketofliptic proportions to explode on a world to be reeling in chaos from the petulant wrath of the God of the Weak. The labels of the world will be crushed. The accursed will flood out of the gates of Hell to catch the Reviled on tour. Our riffing will reduce cities to rubble. The rude beasts of the fields and forests will rise up and buy our records!

Finally, as somebody who has been an avid underground supporter for a while, please give your insights concerning the following issues:

Trends vs. Progression: Trends incite rebellion, and from rebellion, progression.

Corpsepaint: Aargh! vs. Ringling Bros.: Corpsepaint *is* Aargh! meets Ringling Bros!

Goats: Sex vs. Worship: Goats = Sex, Hyenas = Worship!

Bands and 'Zines: Too many vs. Bring 'em on! The more the better! For every dozen trend-zines and bands, there's at least one true underground-focused spirit in the bunch.

Whammy bar olympics vs. Max Cavalara 4-string guitar: As a strong bass player who's been on every side of the fence on this one, I'd have to say every situation has a place for one or both or either. For example, Punished doesn't need a lead player. However, the Reviled would be perfect for someone like Gus Lozano, JP Garilli, or Michael Schenker.

Metal chicks vs. Gothic divas (I ask because at the My Dying Bride show there was this incredibly hot gothic girl and I went up and asked like Butthead, "Hi, you wanna buy a magatheen?" She did and I was in heaven.): Ilsa, She-Wolf of the SS vs. Cleopatra, Queen of the Nile? I'd have to take Ilsa, simply because I need the discipline. However, being a musician from the court of Set, I am always partial to Cleopatra, especially if she's good in bed.



THE GREAT KAT

Insane egomaniac, musical genius, sexual fantasy. The Great Kat is many things to many people. Decide for yourself...

One of your selling points is that you take old classical tunes and jazz them up for modern metal audiences. Explain your philosophy behind these "renovations." Clue us in on what composers' music you have used.
The Great Kat, Juilliard graduate violin virtuoso turned High-Priestess of Guitar Shred is taking powerful, brilliant, and complex classical music and editing, arranging, and re-orchestrating it for the modern metal band! This is the same process that Beethoven, Liszt, Wagner, and other great composers used with classical music that existed before them. The Great Kat is cyberspeeding Wagner, Beethoven, Sarasate, Paganini, Bach, Liszt, and more!!! Now listen to the Great Kat *Guitar Goddess* CD and hear The Great Kat's cyberspeed genius for yourself?! *Guitar Goddess* Cyberspeed Songs:
1-Rossini's "Barber of Seville"-The Great Kat cyberspeeds the classical Italian Opera Overture!
2-"Dominatrix"-Dedicated to all boot-licking, Kat-possessed, submissive, Kat disciples and brilliant cyberfreaks around the world who demand that The Great Kat energize their brain!!!!
3-"Feast of the Dead"- Cannibalism and cyberspeed guitar shredding slice open your rotting mind!!
4-Sarasate's "Zigeunerweisen" for electric guitar and violin!!! The first electric guitar and electric violin duet ever recorded!!! Energize yourself with this wild rendition of the famous Gypsy violin waltz!!!

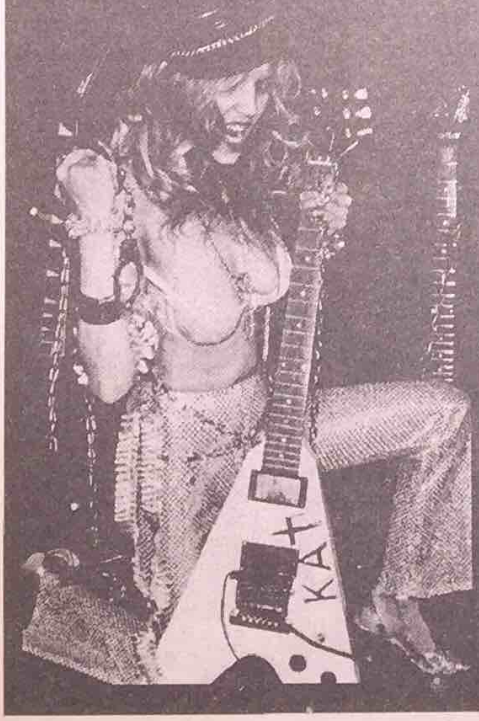
Explain the process you go through when arranging one of the classical pieces for your guitar. Begin with initial stroke of genius and describe until the slaughtering of session musicians in the studio after recording is complete.
The Great Kat genius cyberspeed music process: Choose Classical Piece that excites me (For Example: Beethoven's 5th Symphony)!! Next, listen to the original symphonic CD recording a million times (i.e., Leonard Bernstein's version of the 5th). Then take the symphonic score and choose all the important motives, melodies, harmonies and rhythms. Transcribe them for 3 lead guitars, 3 rhythm guitars, bass, and drums. Add additional instruments, such as acoustic violin, orchestra or anything else that is needed. Reedit, rearrange, re-orchestrate, recompose, and redo the entire piece so it cybergizes the moron masses! Record the final version and revolutionize classical music!!!

Are you more interested in modernizing the classics or writing originals?
Both!!!

Your new 4-song CD totals in at a whopping eight minutes! How much do you expect people to pay for this? No matter the price, what makes these eight minutes worth paying anything for?
The Great Kat's new Cyberspeed Masterpiece CD *Guitar Goddess* is a total of 7 minutes and 50 seconds of vicious, finger-bleeding, jaw-dropping, savage cyberspeed guitar solos, rip-your-head-off violent vocals and blood-curdling screams, and the fastest electric violin virtuosity that has ever jarred your flaccid body!!! If that is not worth $7.00, then you don't deserve to listen to the most powerful music since Beethoven, moron!!!!!

Don't you think it's a little pretentious to release such a short CD? Here you are, Juilliard grad and self-proclaimed fastest guitarist in the world, yet most demo bands put out longer stuff than you. Explain yourself!
Phil – I hate to tell you – you are the pretentious one to even ask your master that kind of question!!!! The Great Kat is a 180 IQ, Juilliard graduate violin virtuoso, and musical revolutionary, bringing to the ignorant masses in only 4 short songs, more excitement than any of other bands' 40 minute long boring, depressing, and suicidal sleep fest CDs!!!!!!!

You're really into this dominatrix stuff, right?
Yes!! The Great Kat is the only guitar dominatrix in the world!
What drives your need to control others?
You are all morons and must submit to The Great Kat's power!!
Have you ever sought help from a professional?
No! But I think you will need some professional help when The Great Kat is done with you!!!!
Do you feel you offer an interesting contrast to GWAR, who dominates women slaves?
WHO?????!!!!!!!
I assume you "wear the pants" in a relationship?
Get your brain into the 21st century!!!!!!!



Being so aggressive yourself, are you looking for a man who is passive and willing to obey, or do you want a bedroom combatant?
The Great Kat is looking for Kat-possessed genius thrashers and cyberfreaks to spread the gospel of the Great Kat's cyberspeed!! I am not interested in anything else!!!! Get it?????

I noticed some impressive dental work in one of your many open-mouth photos. What metal goodies lay hidden behind the Kat lips? Is this on your website in the "Body Parts" section?
DIE!!!!!!!

one of the legions of Kat slaves, followers, devoted worshippers, brilliant genius Kat-possessed slaves!!!!!!! Do you have the guts????????!!!!

3-Kat Club Guestbook: Sign the Kat Guestbook and interact with Kat slaves around the world!!!

4-Kat Body Parts: Kat Tongue! Bloody Leg! Foot Fetish! A macabre & twisted look at your demonic goddess, The Great Kat!!!

5-Kat Paparazzi: Wild and sexy Great Kat photos, like "Kat in Pink Lingerie," "Dominatrix Kat," "Lick my Bloody Leg!"

6-Order Kat's CD & music video: You have no choice! The future is now! Wake up or be left behind! Get into cyberspeed, now! Peon!!

You've also got a CD-ROM that has been out for a while. Tell us about it!

The Great *Kat's Digital Beethoven On Cyberspeed* CD-ROM is the first interactive multimedia CD-ROM which is playable on both Mac and PC. You can also hear the CD-ROM's 5 Kat songs on a regular CD player! The CD-ROM features these powerful cybergoodies:

1-CyberComposers: Kat analyzes, insults and destroys composers from Bach to Stravinsky!

2-Kat TV (TV shows in the 21st century according to Kat): "The Hyperspeed Show," "Kat Lingerie Shopping Network" and more!

3-CyberOrchestra: Play with 3D rendered Classical instruments!!

4-Kat IQ Test: Test your mind-power with such Kat Kuestions as: "Who wrote Beethoven's 5th Symphony?" If you answer "Beethoven," you are a genius! If you answer "Metallica," you are a truck-driving moron!!!!!!!

5-Lifestyles of the Neurotic & Psychotic Music Geniuses: Take a peek into the lives of the Neurotic Musical Geniuses in history brought to you by the number one neurotic musical genius: The Great Kat!

6-Kat Ride through Time: Take a ride with The Great Kat through musical history!

7-Kat Slave Club video: actual Kat slaves bowing to their master!!!!!!!!!!

8-5 Kat songs: Cyberspeed versions of Wagner, Bach, Paganini, "Cyberspeed," "Goddess"!!

9-Much more multimedia craziness!!!!!!!

For years you've been prancing around in "sexy lingerie." Have you ever thought about just giving us what we want and taking it all off? What sort of indentured servitude would one have to endure before he could gain complete visual access to the Kat bod?

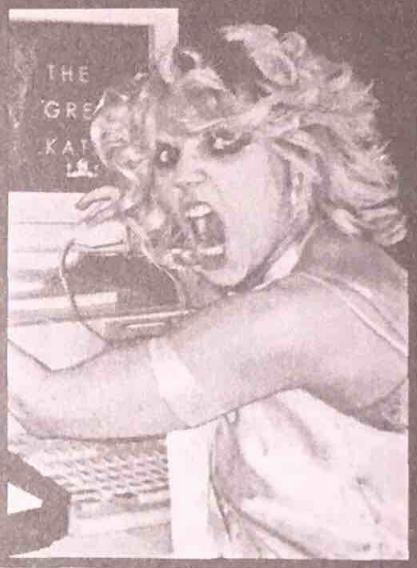
That's a total insult to The Great Kat's godliness!

What does the future hold for the Great Kat? In twenty years we probably won't want to see you in skimpy clothes – unless of course you've still got it, yow! – and metal will be quite different. Give us your predictions and how you fit into the success of mankind's future generations.

The Great Kat's prediction on how she fits into the success of "mankind's" future generations: The Great Kat will own all of music with powerful, complex and, energizing cyberspeed music!!!!

Finally, you often claim, "I am God!" What makes you so sure of that? I have often mistaken God for John Candy, Austin Powers, and Sloth from The Goonies, to name a few. Tell us something that will prove once and for all that the Great Kat is in fact God!

The Great Kat is God because: The Great Kat is a Juilliard graduate violin virtuoso turned Guitar Goddess! The Great Kat is single-handedly revolutionizing classical music!! No one else has the guts!! The Great Kat is taking powerful Classical Music and making it accessible for the moron masses!!! The Great Kat is the reincarnation of Beethoven!! The Great Kat is God!!!! Now bow to your omnipotent guitar dominatrix: The Great Kat!!!!! The Great Kat Guitar Goddess Web Site at www.greatkat.com. E-mail The Great Kat at greatkat@greatkat.com. Write to The Kat Slave Club at P.O. Box 20554, Columbus Circle Station, NY, NY 10023. Call The Cyberspeed Hotline: 212-799-9392.



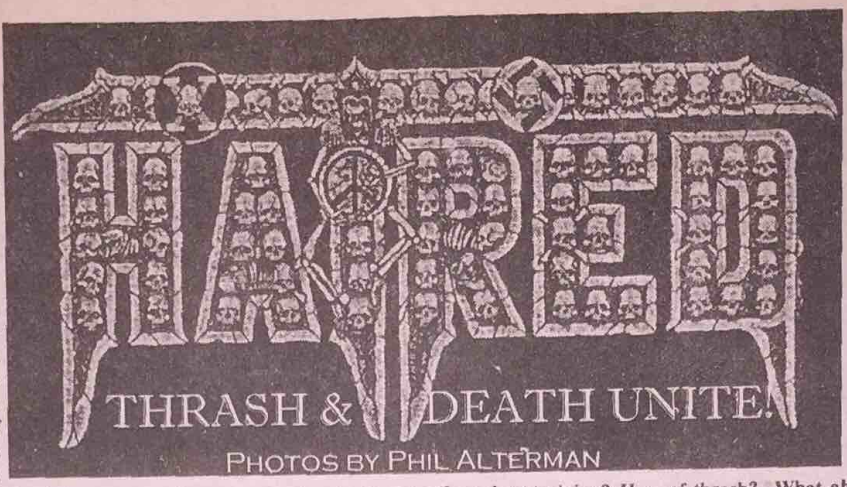
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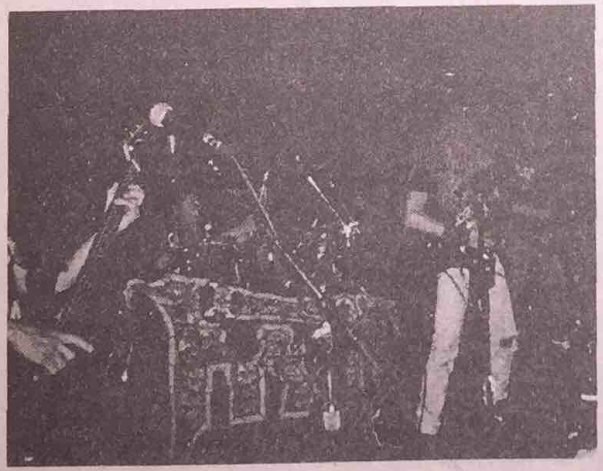


Virginia's Hatred made a great impression with 1996's *Suffer*, a CD EP that showed the quartet's improved abilities in its death/thrash metal. I've seen the group live a number of times and always leave the show satisfied. Guitarist and backing vocalist Joe Jablonsky answered some questions about Hatred. Enjoy!

Let's get a little history of Hatred.
Hatred was formed in 1991, after Tim and I had played with some other drummers and bass players in nothing too serious. Then one day after school Julio Castillo went over to Tim's house to play guitar, and later Tim asked him if he wanted to play bass for us. The next day he bought a bass and an amp and he has been with us ever since. David used to help us out at shows setting up drums and equipment. Our last drummer didn't put much effort into his playing or anything else having to do with Hatred. In mid-1995, we hadn't heard from him in a couple of weeks and a show was coming up. David had never played drums, but two days before the show he practiced with a demo on a friend's set. Anyway, our drummer never appeared so David stepped in and played five songs, and since then he's been our drummer.

You've already released two demos -- 1995's *Daze of Darkness* and 1996's *Suffer*. How have these sold? What did you do to promote them? Why did you release *Suffer* on CD? Do you sell many copies at shows?
Both have sold okay, *Suffer* having done better. We've sold the CD to a wider range of places. The only way that we promote is through ads in the underground; the underground is fucking amazing! The places where people are into this kind of music really surprises me. We released *Suffer* on CD so we could get David in the studio and used to recording. We wanted him ready to record *The Offering*, our upcoming full length CD. We keep postponing recording due to cash flow and Tim is in the process of moving.

Have you written any new material? Will a new demo be forthcoming? When writing new songs, what do you feel each must have to attract the listener?
For a song to attract a listener, I think it needs something that is catchy for people to remember, and it should have its own style. We just make songs we like to play and hope that other people enjoy them, too.



Do you think more people would check the band out if in your logo, the 'a' was an anarchy symbol and the 't' was an inverted cross? What if you called yourselves Christ Hatredation?
I don't know if more people would like the band or listen to us if we had these things. Personally, I don't care because that's not what we're into. I can respect the views of everyone if those are really their views, but I think that a lot of bands kind of overdo it to see who can be the most evil.

Your bassist, Julio Castillo, painted both of Hatred's demo covers. Does he have any formal art training? Has he done many paintings? Other bands' covers? Is any of his work for sale?
Julio hasn't had any formal training. I know he does a lot of pencil sketching and some airbrushing, but I don't think he has done any brush paintings or sold any of his work. The only cover that he did was **Odium**'s *The Blackened Sky*. I've been trying to get him to do more airbrushing because he's had a lot of offers to paint custom designs on cars and motorcycles. I'd really like to see him do an oil painting just for the hell of it. I'm curious to see how it would come out.

***Suffer*'s booklet has a quote reading, "It's not a hatred of race or creed but of ignorance." Did you feel the need to include this because people have misunderstood your name? What's your take on racism today? I recently read a 'zine from the Midwest that was full of blatant homophobia and racism. Do you think we as a society will ever be able to progress when people act so ignorant?**
There have been a few people who have misunderstood our name, but not too many. We just think that people should judge each person individually and not by group. There are cool people of all colors and races, just as there are dicks from all colors and races. I've been judged many times because of having long hair, and if someone is that ignorant to judge me when they don't even know me, I say fuck 'em, I don't want to know 'em!

Where do you see the band going from here? Do you think you'll get signed? Are you trying to? Does the DC area offer enough opportunities for young bands to play and promote themselves?
I don't know where Hatred is going. We've playing out of state and more shows coming up all over, so this makes us very happy. As far as getting signed, I sent out *Suffer* to some of the labels and got either no response or a negative one. Then finally I got a letter from Black Mark. The label is going to release a song from *Suffer* on a compilation CD called *Out of the Box* [out now]. The way they explained it to me was that instead of signing bands and then losing money because their CDs don't sell, they will release these comps to try and screen the bands. So if we get a good response I guess we could possibly sign with them, but who knows?
I think the DC metro area has some killer bands. And with more club support and more people like you working with the scene, we could have one of the best. I'd really like to put on some kind of metal fest in this area if I could ever find an affordable way. Also, I would like to see this area get a good metal radio show. This would definitely help with getting bands' names out and promoting the shows, as well as turning more people on to the music.

Are you actively involved in supporting the local metal scene? How often do you play live? Are there any really good local bands that you feel deserve the underground's attention? What are the best places for bands to play and/or sell their merchandise?
We play live about two times a month, and we go to as many shows as we can to support other bands. There are a lot of good local groups and I'm definitely happy to be part of the scene here. A lot of people rag on the scene, but I think with bands like **Deceased**, **Witch-Hunt**, and **Horror of Horrors**, and the fact that I see more younger kids at the shows than there were a couple of years ago, the DC area can have a killer scene. We just need more support from clubs, clubs that will put metal on a Saturday night instead of some fucking **Bush** or **Green Day** clone!

Your music incorporates thrash and death, would you agree? Why do you feel it has become taboo to play any sort of thrash these days? Why have you resisted this boycott of thrash? What about Hatred keeps listeners coming back despite its "outdated" style?
We don't put our music in a category. We just play what we like, and because we have a lot of influences it will show up in the music. We've been influenced by all kinds of bands, including '80s thrash like **Overkill** and **Vio-lence**, as well as



metal bands like **Judas Priest** and **Iron Maiden**. I don't know if our music is outdated or not, and it doesn't matter to us if people think it is.

How would you describe/classify Tim Claybourne's vocals? Are they more inspired by '80s, thrash, death, or black metal? Do you think they'd sound more evil if you called them "vokills"? Or what if you were really tough and just said Tim was the "throat"?
I don't know how Tim came up with his vocal style. It just sort of evolved through the years of practicing and trying to sound original. His vocals will never change, no matter what you call them.

Is there anything else you have to say that would make this interview complete?
I'd just like to say thanks for the interview and support you've given us. I think *Sloth* is an excellent 'zine, and it keeps getting better and better. Anybody that wants to get on our mailing list, please write.

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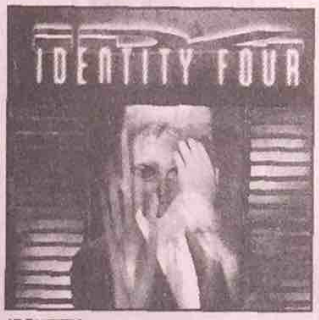
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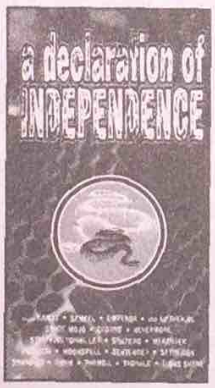
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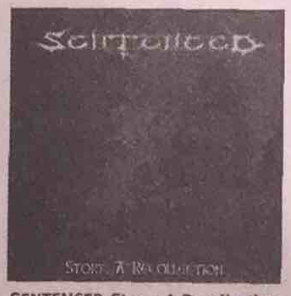
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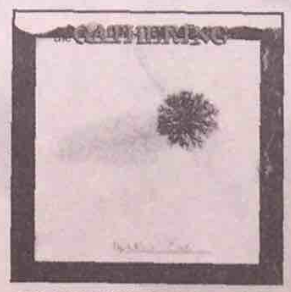
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P.O. Box 623
Kendall Square
Cambridge, MA 02142-0005

Balony Shrapnel
P.O. Box 6504
Phoenix, AZ 85005

Black Mark Production
354 1/2 Yonge St., Ste. #17
Toronto, ON M5B 1S5
Canada

Black Sun Records
P.O. Box 129
401 22 Gothenburg
Sweden

Breath of Night
P.O. Box 54
Dekalb, IL 60115-0054

Cacophonous Records
231 Portobello Rd.
London W11 1LT, England

Candlelight Records
P.O. Box 328
High Wycombe
Bucks HP15 6TY, UK

Century Media
1453A 14th St. #324
Santa Monica, CA 90404

Cling Recordings
P.O. Box 9033
Wyoming, MI 49509-0033

Conquest Music
4195 S. Tamiami Trail #180
Venice, FL 34293-5112

Cursed Productions
P.O. Box 302
Elkhart, IN 46515-0302

Cyber Music
P.O. Box 2
7050 AA Varsseveld
Holland

Defiled Records
P.O. Box 2063
Boulder, CO 80306-2063

Diehard Music
Vindegade 101
DK-5000 Odense C
Denmark

Dismal Records
P.O. Box 34414
Cleveland, OH 44134

Displeased Records
Veeringstraat 6
NL-1502 Zaandam, Holland

Dominion Records
P.O. Box 286
Colonia, NJ 07067

DSFA Records
P.O. Box 5058
4380 AL Vlissingen
The Netherlands

Dwell Records
P.O. Box 39439
Los Angeles, CA 90039-0439

Earache Records
295 Lafayette St., Suite 915
New York, NY 10012

Elite Music
P.O. Box 277
6300 ag Valkengurg
The Netherlands

Embassy Productions
27 Rue Pershing
60600 Clermont
France

Energy Records
545 8th Ave.
New York, NY 10018

Extremist Records
2221 13th St.
Akron, OH 44314

Frozen Dawn Records
809 Towering Oaks
Jacksonville, AR 72076

Full Moon Productions
948 Callahan Ct.
Lakeland, FL 33801

Gaïa Disk
1950 36e Rue
Laval-Ouest, Quebec
Canada H7R 2C7

Game Two Records
P.O. Box 22640
Denver, CO 80222
or
Game Two Records
11902 Lanner Pl.
Laurel, MD 20708

Hammerheart Productions
Seoul C.P.O. Box 8383
South Korea

Headless Corpse Records
P.O. Box 1164
San Carlos, CA 9407

Head Not Found
P.O. Box 447
1701 Sarpsborg, Norway

Heathendoom Music
P.O. Box 36
S-114 79 Stockholm
Sweden

Heller Productions
20115 Amirim
Upper Galile, Israel

Holy Records
4 Gutenberg
93190 Livry-Gargan
France

House of Kicks / No Fashion
P.O. Box 2140
103 14 Stockholm, Sweden

Immortal Souls Productions
Brezova 9, 03401 Ruzomberok
Slovakia

Invasion Records
P.O. Box 2119
15707 Königs Wusterhausen
Germany

Leviathan Records
P.O. Box 745
Tyrone, GA 30290

Lost Disciple Records
P.O. Box 340
Winthrop, MA 02152

Mad Lion Records
P.O. Box 3
32-606 Oswiecim
UPT 6 Poland

Mazur Public Relations
344 Dutch Neck Rd.
P.O. Box 360
East Windsor, NJ 08520

Metal Age Productions
P.O. Box 42
038 61 Vrútky, Slovakia

Metal Blade Records
2345 Erringer Rd., Suite 108
Simi Valley, CA 93065-2200

MIA Records
Highland Village
3935 Westheimer #224
Houston, TX 77027

Misanthropy Records
P.O. Box 9, Hadleigh
Suffolk IP7 5AU
England

Modern Invasion Music
P.O. Box 100
Gardenvale, Melbourne
Australia 3185

Morbid Records
Postfach 3
03114 Drebkau
Germany

Moribund Records
P.O. Box 77314
Seattle, WA 98177-0314

Mortal Coil
P.O. Box 308
Deer Park, NY 11729

Napalm Records
Krumpentaler Str. 3
8790 Eisenerz, Austria

Napalm Records America
P.O. Box 7905
Dever, CO 80306-7905

Necropolis Records
P.O. Box 14815
Fremont, CA 94539-4815

None of the Above
P.O. Box 654
Farmingville, NY 11738

Northern Darkness
P.O. Box 51
10052 Bardonecchia
Italy

Nuclear Blast
Hauptstrasse 109
73072 Donzdorf
Germany

Nuclear Blast America
P.O. Box 43618
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Osmose Productions, B.P. 57
62990 Beaurainville, France

Pagan Records
P.O. Box 12
85-105 Swiecie 5
Poland

Pavement Music
102 South River Dr., Suite 102
Tempe, AZ 85281

Projekt Records
P.O. Box 1591
Garden Grove, CA 92642

Pulverizer Records
P.O. Box 946
Dixon, IL 61021

Red Stream
P.O. Box 342
Camp Hill, PA 17001-0342

Relapse Records
P.O. Box 251
Millersville, PA 17551

Repulse Records
P.O. Box 50562
28080 Madrid, Spain

RIP Music
P.O. Box 41182
Chicago, IL 60641

Roadrunner Records
536 Broadway
New York, NY 10012

Rotten Records
P.O. Box 2157
Montclair, CA 91763

Season of Mist
24, rue Brandis
13005 Marseille, France

Sepulture Productions
P.O. Box 30624
Oshawa Ontario
Canada L1J 8L8

Soulside Records
P.O. Box 613
Arlington Heights, IL 60006

Too Damn Hype Records
P.O. Box 1520 Cooper St.
New York, NY 10276-1520

Tooth and Nail
P.O. Box 12698
Seattle, WA 98111

Unisound Records
84 Acadamias Ave.
106 78 Athens, Greece

Vampire Records
P.O. Box 669 Epping 2121
NSW Australia

Victory Records
P.O. Box 146546
Chicago, IL 60614

Warhead Records
1B Smith St.
Parramatta, NSW 2150
Australia

Wrong Again Records
P.O. Box 120 26
S-245 02 Hjärup, Sweden

X-Rated Records
Apdo. Postal 1-2023
Cuernavaca, Mor., C.P.
62001, Mexico

X-Treme Records
P.O. Box 11238
40425 Gothenburg
Sweden

Zandrah Records
P.O. Box 1666 Bondi Junction
NSW 2022 Australia

'ZINES

The following is a list of 'zines and their contact addresses. We have made the best effort to include only legitimate publications, going the extra mile to ensure you don't get ripped off. We know we're not perfect, so if any of these 'zines don't exist, let us know. And if you're an editor, please send something that proves your existence so we can put/keep you on the list. Enjoy this page and make new contacts, because metal will only thrive if fans like you get involved!

Amputation
Buskärsgatan 1
414 67 Gothenburg
Sweden

Ancient Tragedy
Agiou Ioannou 6
851 04 Kremasti
Rhodes, Greece

Are You Ready to be Digitized?
2441 Temple Ct.
Alexandria, VA 22307

Ball Buster
P.O. Box 58368
Louisville, KY 40268-0368

Before Dawn
P.O. Box 603
Anna, IL 62906

Beyond the Grave
P.O. Box 500107
San Antonio, TX 78280-6107

Brutalized
P.O. Box 886
Lebanon, PA 17042

hariot
P.O. Box 692814
Stockton, CA 95269-2814

Children of Caine
P.O. Box 9400
Waterbury, CT 06724

Close-Up
P.O. Box 2284
600 02 Norrköping, Sweden

Conspiracy
Säbygatan 3
723 41 Västerås, Sweden

Coroners Report
565 Drexel Ave.
Glencoe, IL 60022

D.B.N.
P.O. Box 3547
Lantana, FL 33465-3547

The Dead Sea
125 Fairmile Ln.
Cobham, Surrey
KT11 2BU England

Descent Magazine
P.O. Box 95931
Seattle, WA 98145-2931

Earsplit
P.O. Box 142
Congers, NY 10920-0142

Extremities (mag and label)
P.O. Box 14356
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Fantasies of Tragedy
Hamrev. 20 A
S-821 34 Bollnäs
Sweden

Fiberglass Diaper
166 E. Prospect St.
Port Washington, WI 53074

Goetia
Linnégatan 24
380 62 Mörbylånga, Sweden

The Grimoire
245 Lakeview Ave., Suite 237
Clifton, NJ 07011

Grind Zone
Via Biondelli, 7
20141 Milano, Italy

Guitar 2001
P.O. Box 651
Floral Park, NY 11002

Headfucker
C.P. 151, 25038 Rovato
Brescia, Italy

Hell Frost
9933 W. Argonne Dr.
Milwaukee, WI 53222

Hipocrene
R. Sta. Luzia Lt. 278-1 °
Alto dos Moinhos-Mina
2700 Amadora, Portugal

Ill Literature
P.O. Box 480275
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Infernal Archives
817 NW 20th
Camas, WA 98607

Intellektual Spew
P.O. Box 785
Cookeville, TN 38503

Isten
Peltolamminkatu 6 A 17
33840 Tampere, Finland

Koito
Casellina A.
65025 Manoppello Scalo
(PE), Italy

Lamentation
7187 Majos
VII. u. 22, Hungary

Lobotomy
P.O. Box 640
Winterville, NC 28590

Malefact
P.O. Box 464
Alexandria, VA 22313-0464

Mama's Fool Promotion
816 Putnam St.
Fort Wayne, IN 46808

Master of Brutality
Schuitvlotstraat 37
5251 KC Vlijmen, Holland

Metal-Core
13 Carraige Ln.
Marlton, NJ 08053-1109

Metal Curse
P.O. Box 302
Elkhart, IN 46515-0302

The Metal Crusade Report
P.O. Box 596
Lansdale, PA 19446-0596

Metal Defiance
Iraklitou 94
122 43 Egaleo
Athens, Greece

Metal Maniacs
233 Park Ave. S. 5th Floor
New York, NY 10003

Metal Mafia
P.O. Box 5101
Fostoria, OH 44830-5101

M.F. Magazine
P.O. Box 226
Benseville, IL 60106

Midwest Metal
120 Broadview Vill. Sq.
Suite 406
Broadview, IL 60153

Neptune
P.O. Box 770
Townsend, MA 01469

The Nocturnal Empire
P.O. Box 1505
Cahokia, IL 62206

Pit Magazine
P.O. Box 9545
Colorado Springs, CO 80932

Plethora of Sound
11 Crestmont Dr.
Dover, NJ 07801

the Requiem
1404 Lyons #B
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Sanguinary Surroundings
706 E. Marion St.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004

S.854
P.O. Box 143273
Coral Gables, FL 33114-3273

Seventh Sign
P.O. Box 34228
10029 Athens, Greece

Shadows of Michelangelo
P.O. Box 12787
Gainesville, FL 32604

Simbiotic
C/ Nâpols 27
Esc. A, SA 1°
08018 Barcelona
Spain

Sin Magazine
1586 Jefferson
Muskegon, MI 49441

Socialblast
308 Old Wire Rd.
E. London, AZ 72847

Sociopathic Despair
P.O. Box 100
Troy, IN 47588-0100

Sounds of Death
1069 Pinegate Dr.
Kirkwood, MO 63122

So, Why Worry?
1107 S. Bruce
Monahans, TX 79756-5511

Spectrum
P.O. Box 589
Hudson, MA 01749

Static
115 E. River Rd.
Kawkawlin, MI 48631

Stirred Emotions
P.O. Box 1484
Highstown, NJ 08520

Sub Terra
Vouliagmenis 13
11636 Athens, Greece

Testament
Los Huancas 171
Maranga, Lima 32, Peru

Toxic Flyer
P.O. Box 39128
Baltimore, MD 21212

Torture Chamber
P.O. Box 9563
Canton, OH 44711

Underground Metal Zine
2021 Key St.
Maumee, OH 43551

Underground Zine Scene
7300 N. Mona Lisa, #11168
Tuscon, AZ 85741

Unrestrained!
Att: Adam Wasylyk
3150 Spring Creek Crescent
Mississauga, Ontario
Canada L5N 4S2

Vampiria
Via San Clemente, 106
84015 — Nocera Superiore
(SA), Italy

Void of Tolerance
P.O. Box 4712
Victoria, TX 77903-4712

War Torn Magazine
79 Meadow Dr.
Tijeras, NM 87059

The Wild Rag
2207 W. Whittier Blvd.
P.O. Box 3302
Montebello, CA 90640

Worm Gear
P.O. Box 426
Mayfield, MI 49666

Wretched Corpse Monthly
P.O. Box 264
Danville, PA 17821

destroy the reviled XXX



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maximum rock'n'roll (usa/int)

-I hear the 70's updated...a celebration of pop death?
hast 'zine (ca)

-Satan Satan Satan much better said than those Butthole Surfers of old...Punk death meat at the hands of the wicked
pflugerville texass refuse to work movement 'zine (tx)

-full of gung-ho, over-the-top hyper punk/hardcore sickness
mindgrind 'zine (nc)

-The REVILED rip through their Satanic tunes with both fury and top-notch musicianship...not concerned with how laughable or predictable bands like Cannibal Corpse or Marilyn Manson have made death metal
sword of truth 'zine (nyc)

-hardcore punk/metal crossover...a fucking excellent release!
killing the conformist 'zine (il)

-violent rock, void of any pretty stuff. Punk rock and Black metal? I bet this bothers those 'true' black metal people.
static 'zine (mi)

-DESTROY THE REVILED is an amazing nine songs of punk/death/thrash/hardcore/hate/rock that has to be heard to be believed...vicious slander!
sloth 'zine (usa/int)

-banned and blacklisted in DC!
mid-atlantic music monthly (dc/md/va)

-call it BLACK METAL PUNK...join them in their crusade to destroy the music industry!
melodia (dc/md/va)

-fast, like speed-metal fast...horror, black, thrash, and death with quite a bit of punk rock/hardcore extravaganza...The REVILED are well, just plain fun!
tangents (nc)

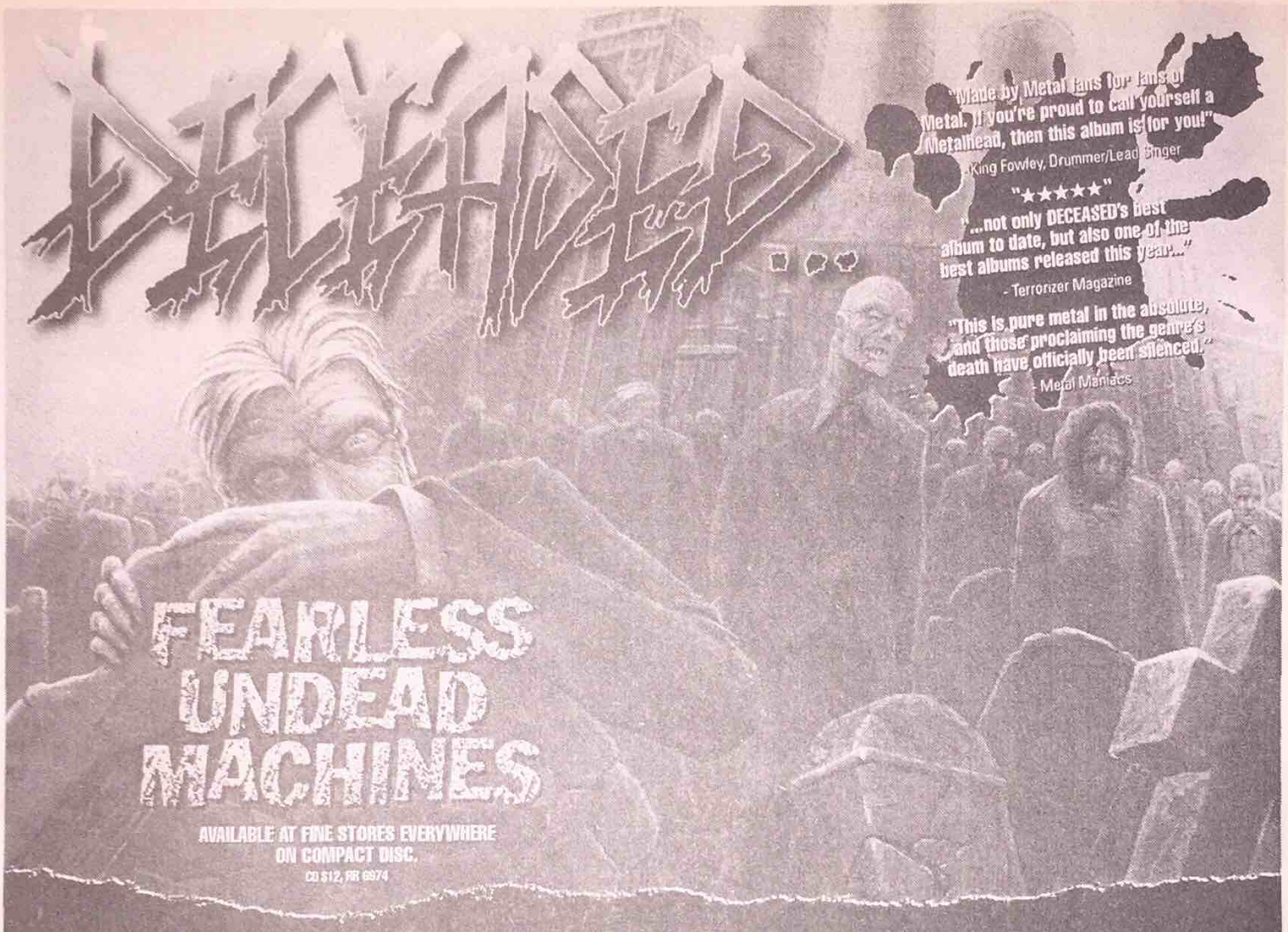
-marries black metal with punk rock recalling the Accused, Venom, and other vermin that reigned in the thrash scene of the 1980's.
indie-file (nc)

-Picture the REVILED as your nightmare hangover from Hell!
maryland musician (dc/md/va)

-Everyone should have this possessed little beauty...a fine mix of black metal and punk splatter rock...scare the pants off Gwar...You all need a dose of the REVILED's satanism to save your soul-twice a day! Excellent music...you need to check out all the cut-up b-movie horror/splatter film sound track/ porno flick bits in between the songs...
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