

WITH 18 PAGES OF ALBUM REVIEWS!

MAXIMUM METAL

ALL THAT REMAINS - ANGELUS APATRIDA - BLIND GUARDIAN - BLOODY HAMMERS - ENSLAVED
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ALKALOID

"Gentle Defiance"

DARK TRANQUILLITY

"Construct(ing) A World Stage"

MICHAEL SCHENKER

"Portrait of a Spirit"

KING FOWLEY

Shrieks from the Hearse

HAZEXPERIENCE

Lenny Haze

METAL MAIDENS

BOOBTUBE TO YOUTUBE

WELCOME TO ROCKVILLE

AXEGRESSOR

CHAINFIST

HEADBANGER'S

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MAXIMUM METAL



Eddie running wild on Instagram

Around the mid-80s, I was a youngish kid in middle school who had heard whispers of this band that was "really heavy and cool". That band was named--IRON MAIDEN.

Times were a little different back then where getting your hands on new metal music wasn't as easy as jumping online and browsing half a billion songs and videos. You either listened to the radio, borrowed records, traded copied cassettes or got music from someone older. The rulers of the wasteland back then were Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, and Priest. Getting anyone lesser known required more effort.

Before long, I heard the singles for "Number of the Beast" and "Run to the Hills". Those songs were enough that I grew interested in this band that wasn't bluesy,

wasn't doomy, and had a lot of melody with wailing vocals. I may have seen a pic or three in my go-to rock magazines back then--Hit Parader and Circus.

Around '86-'87, music giant MTV set aside a block of time on Fridays, if memory serves, to show a full concert from a band. I remember tuning in to watch the latest episode and it was announced the feature would be--Iron Maiden from the "World Slavery" tour.

Oh, SHITE! Here they were! THE Iron Maiden I had grown intrigued by! My old tube TV had a VHS tape recorder hooked into it so I could record videos for playback later. The race was now on for me to find a tape that wasn't already filled with a mixed three-movie collection copped from the HBO cable channel. I grab a tape and slap it in starting the recording halfway through "Aces High". The tape then runs out at the end of "Two Minutes to Midnight" and I'm scrambling to open a fresh tape to get the rest of the show recorded!

I had never seen a concert like it before, since most were just the band in front of speakers and some lights. Maiden had a fully-themed set design with props, they had tons of lights, they had pyro, they had fog, they had a walking Eddie and a 30-foot inflatable Eddie. Watching it was like going from seeing a pond to standing in front of an ocean.

I didn't know the majority of the songs, but the impact was made and I eventually got the "Live After Death" album (probably from a 12-for-a-penny music service where I had signed up my entire family including grandparents), cassette, CD, posters, etc. I learned every Maiden song and wore that VHS tape out. They became one of my favorite metal bands.

DVDs came to replace VHS players, but I could never find "Live After Death" in that format. After years of frustration and the movement into the digital age, I was able to get a friend to make a dubbed copy onto a DVD burn with home printed artwork. Years later in 2008, they officially released the concert on DVD with tons of extras. I bought that too.

Today, I can get on YouTube and watch "LAD" with just a couple clicks. In fact, you can probably watch every Maiden concert I had sought after--Behind the Iron Curtain, Maiden England, 12 Wasted Years, and so much more--pro-shot, fan shot, interview, documentary, behind the scenes...

Today's generation of metal fans...you have it easy and I'm so glad to be here with you.

Welcome to Issue 2 featuring interviews with Dark Tranquillity, Chainfist, Axegressor, and Demonstealer of Headbanger's Kitchen! Our new guess-the-song challenge "**Bring the Noise**". Lenny Haze from Y&T contributes to a new feature--"**HazeXperience**". King Fowley's newest "**Shrieks from the Hearse**". We reminisce in "From the BoobTube to YouTube". We have songs that break the speed of sound, Tuska Open Air pics and much more! --F.Hill

SOMEWHERE BACK IN TIME...

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Bring the Noise!

Our staff has been listening to rock and metal for a lot of collective years. BtN is our new Name the Song Challenge to see just how much they have and haven't absorbed into their bloodstream over the years. For this set, segments of less than eight seconds were clipped from classic rock and metal and all they had to do was name...the...songs!

BATTLE 1: EDITOR VS. EDITOR!

ERIC "ICED EARTH" COMPTON VS. TROY "MEGA" COLE

ERIC	TROY	SONG
—	+	Anthrax - "Got The Time" Album: Persistence of Time (1990)
+	+	Black Sabbath - "Sweet Leaf" Album: Master of Reality (1971)
—	—	Iron Maiden - "Purgatory" Album: Killers (1981)
—	+	Ozzy Osbourne - "Lightning Strikes" Album: The Ultimate Sin (1986)
+	—	Scorpions - "Still Loving You" Album: Love at First Sting (1984)

B1 WINNER: TROY!

MAXIMUM MUSINGS...

"Which band is most likely to keep you alive in a freak snowstorm?"

- A) Amon Amarth – By Odin's Beard! They are Vikings and the average temperature in winter is 30 degrees
- B) Immortal – Average winter temperature in Norway is 19 degrees, plus they look so damn cool in all of those frosty photos
- C) Manowar – Loincloth city. New York can see single digits frequently in winter. Plus "Black Wind, Fire and Steel" just sounds so toasty.
- D) Fozzy and Rowlf – They are both furry. And cuddly. 'Nuff said.

Eric Compton - I'm going with Manowar. Eric Adams has three sons that ride by his side. Their names are Fierce, the Black and the Wicked. If there is a hot soup kitchen nearby then "we will ride down our enemies". That's Nordic for "we be taking all that shit by force".

Greg Watson - My gut says Amon Amarth. They could hunt, make mead, build a fire and if push came to shove make nice coats outta Fozzie and Rowlf!

Nate Turpin - "Conan, what is best in life"? Conan begins, "To crush your enemies, see them die before you and to hear the lamentation of the women". All while eating some grizzled steak by a fire with some Swedes.

Troy Cole - Have to go with Amon Amarth. I'm pretty sure one of them could spit fire to keep us warm and if not Johan Hegg could warm us with his beard.

GIVE 'EM THE ACTS

New, old, used, and abused, here's some of what the Maximum Metal staff is listening to lately:

FRANK HILL:

Danko Jones - *Fire Music*
Farmikos - *Farmikos*
Triosphere - *The Heart of the Matter*
Armored Saint - *Win Hands Down*
Nightwish - *Endless Forms Most Beautiful*

GREG WATSON:

Shattered - *New Atlantis*
Shredhead - *Death Is Righteous*
Yesterday's Saints - *Generation of Vipers*
Inacave - *Inacave*
Unleashed - *Dawn of the Nine*

NATE TURPIN:

Misery Loves Company - *Your Vision Was Never Mine to Share*
Marriages - *Salome*
Kowloon Walled City - *Gambling on the Richter Scale*
The Bug - *London Zoo*
Pitchshifter - *Submit*

TROY COLE:

Father & Son - *Unholy Ghost*
Unleashed - *Dawn of the Nine*
Impellitteri - *Venom*
Enforcer - *From Beyond*
Venom - *From the Very Depths*

VINAYA SAKSENA:

Elder - *Lore*
Steven Wilson - *Hand. Cannot. Erase.*
Beardfish - *+4626-Comfortzone*
Enforcer - *From Beyond*
Raven - *ExtermiNation*



FACES & VOICES OF ACCEPT

ACCEPT has just released **Blind Rage**. Eric Compton looks at the three faces and voices of Accept's history.



UDO DIRKSCHNEIDER:

Don't let his 5' 6" frame fool you. Udo is a powerhouse vocalist and is widely considered the band's true voice. His origins with the band can be traced back to the late 60s. His charismatic raspy delivery is iconic and gave the band a signature sound that many try to replicate today. Udo belted out many of the band's classic hits like "Balls To the Wall", "Fast As A Shark" and "Metal Heart". His tenure with the band lasted until 1987, then an on again off again relationship through 2005. He has released fourteen solo albums under the name U.D.O and is currently signed to AFM.

DAVID REECE:

In 1987 Udo parted ways with Accept to pursue a solo career. Accept actually wrote all of Udo's first album, 'Animal House', but during that time they were searching for a replacement. The band auditioned and hired an American, David Reece. His style was more melodic with a flair for hard rock. He cut his teeth with Delta Force in the early to mid 80s and had a commercial feel that the band wanted to gravitate towards. Reece sang on one album, 'Eat The Heat', and was

let go in 1989 prior to a world tour with W.A.S.P and Metal Church. Reece went on to sing for Bangalore Choir and currently fronts Malice.

MARK TORNILLO:

After some fest appearances with Udo, the band officially announced Tornillo as the new voice of Accept in 2009. The New Jersey native originally sang for T.T. Quick, releasing three full lengths with the band from 1984-2000. His style is similar to Udo with a raspy high vocal register. Fans and critics alike have embraced his role with Accept. The group have released three albums with Tornillo; 'Blood of the Nations' (2010)--their first in fourteen years--'Stalingrad' (2012) and 'Blind Rage' (2014). The first two albums with Tornillo both charted in the top 200 on the US Billboard charts. The last three albums were produced by the esteemed Andy Sneap.

"Fast as a Shark" is considered to be one of the first speed metal songs

Englishman Andy Sneap has also been the guitarist for bands Sabbath, Fozzy, and Hell

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www.facebook.com/californiadeathfest



CHAINFIST

GETTING SCARRED

Most metal heads worth their salt know that Denmark is fast becoming a veritable hotbed of metal activity. Veterans like King Diamond, Volbeat, Hatesphere and Mercenary call Denmark home as well as newcomers like Sea and Aphyxion. A relative newcomer, Chainfist, offers up aggressive, in your face metal tinged with thrash and modern elements. 'Scarred', the band's latest offering, was released on October 6th through Mighty Music and proves to be a whirlwind of rage that hits hard and leaves major damage in its wake.

'Scarred' is a definite departure in sound from the band's first album, 'Black Out Sunday'. Vocalist Jackie Petersen explains, "Black Out Sunday was already written and recorded when I joined the band in late 2009, but with 'Scarred' I was able to be a part of the whole songwriting process." He also credits the addition of lead guitarist Thomas Hvisel for the change in the band's delivery. With the newer sound, 'Scarred' is an album that is built on heavy, catchy riffs and monster vocals. Part of the modification also comes from producer Michael Hansen as well as the inimitable Jacob Hansen. "We became friends with Michael back in 2010 when we toured together with his band Phonomik. That gave us a great opportunity to work with him and he's really nice and a great guy to work with." When asked about landing Jacob Hansen, Petersen explains "that there was no doubt we wanted Jacob to be a part of 'Scarred' because we felt he could bring out the dirty and massive Chainfist sound and meld it with great production."

What we get with 'Scarred' is an album that packs as much punch as it does sleaze. You can feel the dirtiness ooze from your speakers as

you're blasting any track off the album and the Hansen duo clearly worked their magic on this album. Listening to Petersen, you can hear a Hetfield styled delivery to some of his vocals. "I listen to a lot of different music and bands and I get inspired all the time. I believe that a singer should strive to be able to be as diverse as possible." On specific influences, Jackie gives in and says "Well if I have to point out a few singers that inspired me, I have always looked up to a singer like Mike Patton. He can do it all and he does it with absolute perfection." Petersen's vocals are an intriguing element on the new album simply because you aren't sure what style he's going to hit you with. He can deliver harsh, barked vocals, evident on "10,000" or incredibly melodic clean vocals on "Know Your Hate".

Everyone knows what it's like when you hear a song and the music, lyrics and ambience come together in one crushing blow as you revel in that song's power. So while talking with Jackie, I asked him what he thought made the "perfect song" and his answer took me by total surprise. "The perfect song to me is a song that can be played acoustic, simple as that. To me, melody is the main driver." Following that thought process, the acoustic version of "Black Rebel Noise" is included on the album as the closing track.

"The perfect song to me is a song that can be played acoustic, simple as that."



With the formats that albums are released these days, we got to the age old question- digital vs physical album. Chainfist understand the importance of both markets. Jackie states that "You have to do both today that's for sure. 'Scarred' is out in both digital and CD format. So grab a CD copy before the CD dies out" *laughs*. The resurgence of vinyl has been a phenomenon that all audiophiles have seriously geeked over. "Everything seems to be focused on vinyl at the moment and I think it's because people miss having music that they can physically touch and hold in their hands. Also the amount of immersion is bigger with an LP. With vinyl you listen to the whole album, but with streaming services or downloads, people don't do that. Maybe this will bring back the album as a whole."

"We want everyone to grab a copy of the new album and bang your head."

Along with album merchandising comes the obligatory road travel. When I asked him what kept the band going with the rigors of touring, Jackie explains, "Well it isn't for the money, that's for sure. But in all seriousness, it's fun for us and it's our call. That's why we do it. Nothing beats being on a stage with a crazy crowd, it's worth it all right there."

Taking a trip down memory lane, Petersen was asked if there was a moment he knew he wanted to be a metal musician. "It probably wasn't until I was 14 or 15 that I got into metal. I was kind of a nerd in school and got picked on a lot because I was small and chubby. But then this new kid came in listening to AC/DC and Metallica. He took me to my first show which was Monsters of Rock in Copenhagen and I immediately fell for metal after that".

Nearing the end of our questions we hit Jackie with two big ones. We asked him if we were able to come back and do an interview exactly one year from now, what he hopes Chainfist will have accomplished. "Hopefully we'll get a lot of people to listen to Chainfist and have played some memorable shows and bigger festivals. Maybe even get some radio play on some of the larger radio stations."

We ended asking if he had any idea what made Denmark such a hotbed of metal mayhem as of late. "Denmark's got a pretty good metal scene and the bands from here realize that they have to get outside of Denmark to gain a larger audience. There's a lot of people in Denmark but having only 5.5 million people comprising the country still makes us a small country."

In closing Petersen adds "we hope to be able to come to the States and show the American people what Chainfist is all about. We want everyone to grab a copy of the new album and bang your head."

--Greg Watson



SCARRED

Scars of Time
1,000 Ways to Bleed
Black Rebel Noise
Another Day in Hell
Poison Moon
10,000
Know You Hate
Seven Minutes of Pain
Statement
Mass Frustration
Black Rebel Noise (Acoustic)

METAL HAMMER, IT

★★★★★★★★★★★

METALIZED, DK

★★★★★★★★★★★

HEAVY METAL.DK

★★★★★★★★★★★

DEVILUTION.DK

★★★★★★★★★★★

EXTREMEMETAL.TV

★★★★★★★★★★★

METAL TEMPLE-COM

★★★★★★★★★★★

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*The Gentle
STORM*

A SCENDIA

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:green carnation
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REFUGE

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SERIOUS BLACK

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When one thinks of that sweaty, mosh pit dance we refer to as thrash, often America's big four of Metallica, Slayer, Megadeth and Anthrax come to mind. The denim and leather crowd abroad may also interject Germany's big three of Kreator, Sodom and Destruction into the discussion. The thrash lineage is thick in those countries, US bands like Testament, Exodus and Overkill have sewn their roots in much the same fashion as Germans like Rage, Tankard and Holy Moses.

But what about those other areas where the thrash genre isn't as thriving?

Onslaught has bled for thirty years in the UK. For almost twenty-five years Channel Zero has represented Belgium. The same can be said for the quarter of a century output of Canada's Exciter. So, is it any surprise that an unturned stone in Finland hides a nearly decade-old secret?

No, not really.

Finnish thrashers Axegressor have practiced what they preach, exhibiting their brand of vigorous and punishing mosh-riffs with exuberance to any spectator. But is the audience there?

"In the dark and gloomy 90's there were maybe two thrash bands in Finland. Solitaire and another which no one can remember. But during the last seven to eight years many new bands have risen to play furious thrash or sonic speed metal. And even the one and only A.R.G. was summoned back from the dead, and I assure you they still kick fucking serious ass! But certainly thrash metal is and has been more an underground based style (in Finland), compared to the melodic metal bands which are widely known and accepted abroad", states Axegressor lead vocalist Johnny Nuclear Winter.

The band's guitarist, Seba Forma explains, "I concentrated pretty much just doing good heavy metal songs and they turned out to be more evil than usual (laughs). To be honest, we have never been this 'let's go to the beach and drink beer' kind of band, there's always the darker side. I have said many times that we are not re-inventing the wheel here, for me our songs are more like tribute to those bands with whom I have grown up and who have given me so much. But yeah, those German bands are some of my favorites and big sources of inspiration. We try to develop by each album, so I'm not sure what kind of songs are going to emerge after 'Last', but we are definitely on the right path anyway.

That proverbial path has led to the signing with world renowned



Axegressor

"An Unturned Stone"

label Listenable Records. The path wasn't easy, encompassing a departure from the band's four year home at Dethrone Music.

Prior to the pre-production sessions we had decided not to continue with Dethrone anymore, although everything had worked very smoothly with the label, but to be able to take a step further, we needed a label with wider distribution and better chances to get our music heard in the ears of a potential Axegressor fan", says Winter.

He elaborates further on the label decision:

"We recorded the whole album first, completed with mixing and mastering, and then offered the complete package to dozens of metal labels. We had the package ready even with the cover art, so Listenable knew pretty much exactly what they will get. We had another similar-sized label offering a same kind of deal also, and we had probably the most difficult decision to make in the history of this band."

"Last" is indeed the best of the Axegressor catalog thus far, each song brimming over with Teutonic thrash that was made famous by

the likes of Kreator and Slayer and most recently perfected by bands such as Dew Scented and Havok. Unbolted staples like 'Command to Last' and '15' benefit from vituperating vocals, frenzied riffs and the modern production qualities that often propel the genre. Axegressor are a band that metal enthusiasts should and will be talking about in the years to come.

Seba offers, "I have a much better self-esteem to write songs compared to the 'Command' LP. I have a certain confidence when I grab my guitar that something's gonna pour out. Of course one can have millions of riffs, but the arrangement is pretty puzzling always, so you have to think those over and over again. As for the live shows, I am always pretty nervous and it seems I will never get rid of it. I usually warm up before the show about thirty to forty-five minutes, just to make sure that my fingers are warm enough (laughs). But I can guarantee that every time we go to the stage, we give 100 % and play as good as we can!"

Winter closes, "To make one thing clear: this is not intended to be our last album or the end of some trilogy whatsoever".

If Johnny Nuclear Winter has his way, "Last" is certainly not the least.

--Eric Compton

Link: www.axegressor.net

Link: www.facebook.com/axegressor

In 1974, **Lenny Haze** was a founding member and named the hard rock band known as Y&T (formerly Yesterday & Today). The band's 1985 hit, "Summertime Girls", off their album 'Down for the Count', became the California act's most successful to date, reaching No. 55 on Billboard and No. 17 on the U.S. mainstream rock charts. Many rock connoisseurs consider the group's early 80s albums, "Earthshaker", "Black Tiger" and "Mean Steak", as groundbreaking triumphs of US hard rock. Esteemed Canadian author Martin Popoff, heralds the band as NWOBHM trapped in American commercial tendencies.

Haze Experience

Lenny Haze has played drums for forty years for successful acts like Ronnie Montrose and Ian Gillan (Deep Purple, Black Sabbath). This is the first of many monthly columns that Lenny will be writing for Maximum Metal to share those experiences. From dropping a hotdog on Ian Gillan to a rare poolside introduction to Dee Dee Ramone, Haze's passion for storytelling encompasses his experiences as a professional and a fan.

Bill Ludwig III, his father and his grandfather should be in the Rock 'N Roll Hall of Fame. His grandfather, William F. Ludwig, invented the trap drum set and the bass drum pedal. Ludwig also originated putting drums together into configured kits and his grandson, Ludwig III, came up with rocker heads and double flanged rings so the heads don't pull out. He created super heavy duty touring grade hardware and an artist research department. Ludwig was completely in house, making and shipping all of their own drums as well as the best hardware heads and sticks in two buildings. When I say the best hardware ever, I mean EVER.

I got all of the hardware I am using today in 1980. I replaced two cymbal stand tilters and re-riveted one set of legs since 1980! This hardware has been on all but one tour with me. I've left them in the back of a trailer that filled with water and they never even got rusted. All the nuts, wing nuts, pipes and stands can be bought at Ace Hardware. You remove the wing nut tightening collar, put it on pipe and it works. I know a guy that lost his pistol grip tom tom mount and I sent him to Ace Hardware and he got pipes and an elbow and it worked perfectly. Try that with Mapex or Pearl.

The way Bill III did his Ludwig guys...he never once made me feel that my problem meant less to him than Nick Mason's, Mick Fleetwood's or even Ringo. I can recall one time Bill and I were discussing something about pictures that were going to be in an ad and poster with myself and A.J. Pero (Twisted Sister) and I hear Bill say, "Tell Ringo I will call him back. I'm on the phone." I was like "dude you gotta talk to Ringo over me, it is cool". He said "No, I don't. Your problem is as big to you as it is to him. Both of you get the same crap disrespect". Then he cracked up. He would call me up at midnight at home and go, "guess who" and then hang up. But whenever we were on tour he had an itinerary too and would call about once every other week to see how it was going.

I am currently using my champagne sparkle 2007 kit. The snare drum I bought at Leo's Music in Oakland (long gone but what a

great store and repair shop). I paid \$96.00 for it in 1972. Ludwig 6 ½" x 14" Supraphonic 400. Every company has attempted to copy it but no one has come close. Why? The alloy it is made from. Who knows what it was, you probably can't use it because of toxicity when making the alloy. The sticker in the drum still says Ludalloy, made using Ludalloy. Whatever that was gets the .357 Magnum shot sound I love. I have three other Supraphonic 400s of different years. No other Ludalloy shells.

My kick drum is a 14" x 26". If you think about it, all the really fast kick drum stuff is played with a 14" x 26". Coincidence? Maybe. You can tune it a bit tighter for more response. When I use a 22" kick I must work harder for less success. For real. No joke. Could be mental but if you believe, then it is.

I have two rack toms, a 10" x 10" and a 10" x 14 inch". I am still looking for a perfect spot for 10" x 10"...but closer. Two floor toms, 16" deep but around one is 16" x 16" and one is 16" x 18". I use Ludwig coated heavy Dot rockers on the tops of my floor toms with Ludwig thin coated rockers on the bottoms. On the rack tom toms I have a coated thin Ludwig rocker on a 10" x 14" bottom. When I can get them, a Ludwig heavy Dot coated rocker or a coated Evans head that has a muffling band around the edges. It's a good solid sounding head. On the 10" x 10" tom tom is a Ludwig silver Dot on top and bottom.

On the snares is an extra thin snare head. An Aquarian is on number 1, a Ludwig is on 3 and a Remo is on two. Four is in pieces in my house. On the batter side, a Ludwig model 4414 is my number one pick. Getting them is another story. Evans coated reverse Dot or Ludwig silver Dot is what is in use now.

All my hardware is circa 1980 Ludwig modular except the snare stand, with is a 70s Atlas. I used to find them for free but now collectors have driven the price to stupidity. I can rebuild, if need be, any of the Ludwig stands with parts I can buy at Ace or Home Depot. Everything is repairable with a pop riveter or nuts and bolts. Some use pinch pins. But I haven't rebuilt any as of yet. Changed two cymbal stand tilters. Nobody makes great hardware like these stands. Yamaha has a pro grade that looks

Maze Experience

comparable to my reliable Ludwig modular stands, but I have never seen them in a store, just on tour. Mine work perfectly so don't fix it if it ain't broken.

I took the new Ludwig hardware out with Gillan and my Y&T return tours and broke it all and threw it away. I don't

recommend anything, but DW is pretty good. Axis is making a great high hat. I use one. My rack tom stands are for the 10" x 10", a pistol grip Ludwig Modular. I even put the modular Ludwig kick drum legs on my new kick drum. I hate the new style legs on kick drums. They come loose at the tightening nut and that sucks. On my 10" x 14" rack is a Rogers memory lock seat base and a Ludwig Atlas snare stand basket and tilter. The Ludwig Memory lock works with the Rogers stool base. This stand was what I made up in the 70s and 80s. I lost the stands from back then so I searched high and low for the Rogers base. Just found another recently so mine is backed up.

DW cuts their cymbal arms down for me so I can mount them on the 26" kick. They are solid. Ludwig did it for me when I used their cymbal arms. I still have one shorty. Only one though and that is why I have a DW arm on the kick now. On my kick drum I am using a 1976 black and silver trimmed Ludwig logo front to audience rocker head with a hole melted out with a soldering iron.

An 18" across by 14" inch wide foam rubber cushion is super glued in. If not it would bounce all over making noise. The batter side is an Evans with the small holes and the tone ring. Since I am using the hard DW Mallet on my DW twin chain drive pedal, I use the little impact pad that comes with the head. I have an idea for bass drum pedal mallets and snares that I thought someone would be bright enough to make but not yet.

Now that I am old and not out on tour, I am without a cymbal endorsement. I have purchased some cheap cymbals for rehearsal, which I have done for years, but I love the sound of the cymbals I used since 1978. Plus the guy running the US office is a first class asshole. He also owes me a cymbal that I bought

from his predecessor. I never needed a receipt so I didn't get one. Didn't get cymbal either. New guy says I did. But with his head so far up Danny Carrey's ass how would he know? Oh well, karma will pay him.

On my kick I use a very loose spring DW 3000 double chain drive pedal. Totally stock. Love it. Simple, easy fix and bulletproof. My philosophy is loose spring, no resistance in moving the mallet. Just need enough spring to return it to go again.

The sticks I use I swear by. Vic Firth is the best bar none. End of story. I use MS 2s. Marching Stick 2. Any stick from Vic

Firth is the king. His salt shakers, pepper mills, salad bowls, tossing forks and wooden utensils are that of legends and Vic is a

very nice man who takes pride in his products. They have always been great to me and I love them. I know a cymbal A&R guy that could learn how to treat people that way. I don't have a Ludwig or Peace endorsement now but they were class acts all the way.

I don't have techs. You must be able to fabricate as well as "McGuyver" my drums because I mutilate things. People always say

this person hits harder or that guy. I say whatever. I use marching sticks and there is only one size bigger. They are 13/16 of an inch around and 18" long.

I am not doing progressive rock. I am pounding.

--Eric Comptom



Lenny pounding his Ludwig kit

**"I am not doing
progressive rock.**

I am pounding."



Alkaloid - "Gentle Defiance"

Interview with Hannes Grossman by T. Ray Verteramo

If you have been following Obscura, Dark Fortress, Aborted, Noneuclid, Spawn of Possession, or Blotted Science, then you have been made very aware of this prog-death "supergroup" known as Alkaloid – a phantastical brainchild of Hannes Grossman, inspired by work of the Maestro Florian "Morean" Maier. Their highly anticipated debut, "The Malkuth Grimoire," which has been in the works since July, richly produced by V. Santura (Triptykon, Dark Fortress), had hit the Indigogo campaign trail on December 1, 2014.

What is making this project turn heads is not just the tremendous sound or their tremendous line up of Christian Muenzner (Guitars), Danny Tunker (Guitars), and Linus Klausenitzer (Bass), along with Hannes and Morean (drums; vocals / guitar respectively), but consciously choosing to divert their eclectic, daring vision out of the corporate network and taking their chances straight with the public. Being that some would consider this move a step towards career suicide, regardless of their pre-established fan base, it would have been foolish to resist the chance to speak to Hannes, himself, about the motives and the work.

While searching for this warmongering rebel who laughs in the face of conformity and tweaks the nose of naysayers, what was found was a gentle, thoughtful soul, who just simply wants to make music. This, of course, was far more radical...

Would it be fair to say that when it comes to your art that maybe you have control issues?

Control issues? Uh...it depends. It depends on how far an idea has evolved. Like I'm very happy to give away all the lyric credit and all of that because for me, I think, like in Alkaloid, what we did for one song which is not online yet but will be on the album, I wrote a riff. Just eight bars of music and sent it to Flo and he sent back a whole song just made out of this one riff. He created themes around that one riff, with lyrics and a guitar solo and everything and I got it back like *snap!* And I thought that was perfect!

It's just – sometimes, I'm very lazy. Sometimes, I can just send riffs to somebody and have full songs come back so there is no whatever control issue there. That's like the best case to me. But, let's put it this way: If I have made a song and there's someone making a remark and saying I think this song could be better if you do this or that and that's always helpful and I always appreciate that...But, once everything is done and everything is put in place and I have used hundreds of hours to create that song, then I am...hmm...how do you say it? I don't really accept a lot of change, because the vision has gone too far into reality.

You have to be open for criticism if you want to create music, it's one of the main rules and I'm totally open for criticism. Anytime. Also for harsh criticism because I think you don't get anywhere without feedback. So, sometimes, depending on how far the song has shaped the more we go towards a finished song, the more we have – how did you say it? The more control issues I have.

Fair enough! It sounds to me – well, art is meant to be selfish, anyway. That's one of the reasons why finding a band is so difficult because it's very much like trying to find a coven. All of you have to be on the same page, with a similar goal, but you all have to bring your strengths to the table. But, it sounds to me that what you've experienced [from your past], by what you're describing, sounds more like communication issues than creative issues.

Yes! Yeah, exactly.

Which I think is slightly different.

Well, it's always communication issues. I would say 90% of issues in relationships of any kind, you have to communicate with people in that sense. 90% of being in a band, I would say.

90% of being a human being...

Yeah. Absolutely, I totally agree.

So, with that, now Alkaloid first – what are you getting from this project that you didn't get from your previous works? And also, you're working with, well, with yourself included, you're working with monster talents, huge talents. Please, describe to me what the working dynamic is like from your perspective.

Well, first of all, it's amazing to be able to create music with those people. That's like to me, the most important thing. I've always considered myself a 'band guy,' you know? Even though I did a solo record, I would have never done it if it weren't for the circumstances and everything. I always considered myself a band guy because I think you can achieve more – depends on what kind of person you are – but, I believe you can achieve more when you are on the same page and share the same vision. And of course once that's not the case anymore, then something has to change without bad, hard feelings.

And I'm very psyched that I am able to play with all those talented guys. I've worked with Linus and Chris before in Obscura and – actually the whole band idea came together while I was still in Obscura because I wanted to make music with Flo. The new Noneuclid record came out recently. It was actually recorded a few years ago and I knew that record and it was like a big influence on me and a big inspiration because it's very very diverse and unique. It sounds like nothing else on a superficial level, you have to listen very carefully to what's going on. It was very, very impressive. We just share similar views on things and music.

Then leaving Obscura finally left me some time to do it, finally because there was nothing holding us back except for the scheduling. And since you asked, what I get

from this collaboration is that it goes much, much further. It's not limited to one direction of music. It's not limited in any case.

The risk, technically, the music that you're doing now could be either, because it is extreme, it can either destroy your career or it can make it.

"IN WHATEVER YOU DO, IF YOU ARE AUTHENTIC, I BELIEVE YOU WILL HAVE SOME SORT OF SUCCESS. AND IF YOU JUST LIMIT YOURSELF TO FIT IN A CERTAIN COMMERCIAL ASPECT, OR A CERTAIN COMMERCIAL FIELD, I DON'T THINK YOU CAN MAKE IT"

I have nothing against making a record with 12, 4-minute songs, all catchy hit songs. I don't have anything against it. I'd love to do that. But, I just don't think that anybody in the band is any good at that!

Ha! Do you think that's a curse or a blessing?

If you want to write hit songs, you have to be able to write hit songs from your inner self. In whatever you do, if you are authentic, I believe you will have some sort of success. And if you just limit yourself to fit in a certain commercial aspect, or a certain commercial field, I don't think you can make it.

What is so striking about Alkaloid is that these tremendous talents are coming together, creating this tremendous project, that is extremely risky to your careers, and saying, "We're just not going to bother with the labels, we're just going to bring it to the street," and as of last night [December 9, 2014] the campaign, which began on December 1st, has already surpassed 80% of your goal...with 50 days left! I see this and I find myself thinking, wow, this is a really big "fuck you" to the industry. Was this your intent?



Hannes Grossmann

Well, I'm not sure. We're not the first band to do that, like Protest the Hero, when they were done with their obligations with the label, they did a crowdfunding campaign and they collected something like 300,000 dollars or something like that. Insane!

Yes, but they were done with their obligation, it wasn't a deliberate choice to bypass...

We had an audience already with Obscura, my previous bands, and all the bands I was in. So, these people, they keep following me and the other guys and what we're doing. So, they were already into that. So, what the crowdfunding campaign finally shows off is that we have a fan base. And...I'm not against labels at all. In fact with Relapse and Obscura they were great! They were really really good to us and helped us a lot and they're probably the biggest reason why Obscura was successful at all because they invested a lot of money and time.

And the thing is, I just couldn't see that it was realistic to get any support like that from a label anymore at this present day. Labels have made the mistake to invest not in the product, itself – because to me, what you're offering, the product itself is the music. It's not the format the music comes with, it's not the LP, it's not the CD, it's the music, itself. Instead of investing in that, in the

"art" as you say, they are investing in the format that is maybe not the future, you know what I mean? And that's why a lot of labels have struggled. They've stopped taking risks, that's the point.

If I were to work with a label, I would have to be sure that they are into the stuff. That's what makes the difference, after all. Somebody believes in us as artists and musicians, I'm pretty sure they would be successful, because at the end, they will deliver quality...To me, at this point, there was no question that we should do it directly to people who are interested. And it's way more fun!

The campaign, itself, is gorgeous! Those packages that you put together are incredibly impressive – whole instruments, solos, and original compositions and then this beautiful pictography, the t-shirt designs...You're also marketing yourselves extremely well, which I would say definitely works in your favor. And we love stuff. Metalheads love merch! And obviously you get that. How much of that came out of your pocket?



Lol! Well, most of...well, thanks, first. That was very nice! We invested a lot of time to do that, especially our bass player, Linus (pro. LEE-nuz), is a programmer. He works as a programmer doing websites -- by the



Morean

way, if you or you know someone who's looking to do a website, he's really good! He's doing a lot of I.T. stuff. And without that knowledge, it's nearly almost impossible to pull off a campaign that looks that good. When you see the campaign's website on Indiegogo, that's mostly all his programming and graphic works. You need a guy like that and we're lucky to have somebody like him.

We had to invest a little out of our own pockets for our photos because we wanted to have... the visual aspect is very important for this band, so we did have to spend a lot of money for photos. [Photography by Christian Martin Weiss, from Bavaria] and he is amazing! He is an art photographer and does a lot of um...uh...umm...how do you say, not art, but...stuff from Vogue magazine?

Fashion?

Yes! Exactly. I was missing the word. We were looking for somebody to do that because we want the artwork of the album and everything, we want to have photos and work ourselves into the artwork. Not just

have this...I like it, but not this typical animated whatever planet or demon or, you know, it's always the same theme with a lot of the same stuff of layers...



Christian Muenzner

Fire...corpsepaint...outstretched hands...trees?

Or drawings and stuff like that. I mean, it's great! I love Dan Seagrave or Travis Smith, but every second album looks like that nowadays. We want to use photos. That's why we had to work with grade professional photographer who is also an artist and could also put his own mark on the whole visual aspect. That was important – to create something unique.

How hard was it to get all of you on the same page regarding the visual package?

Actually, we just thought let's find us a good artist, photographer to do that and we found a guy. And we asked him, "What do you think would be a good idea?" and he pretty much gave some input. And since I'm not the main lyricist, that's Florian – and he's also very into art and all that stuff, so I was saying, "Hey whatever you guys think could work." I'm not a very visual person!

Ah, I see. So you basically left it to the experts, like, "Here, go think of something!"

laughs Yeah, more or less! It was like the same thing with my solo record. I hired a guy whose style I liked and I explained to him the lyrical concept and made a few remarks. I mean, I do have certain things that I don't like. But, if the basic things that I'm searching for or are done, then I'm happy. It's not like I have a super precise visual idea or super precise motives for everything. I think it's a better way to work with people who do! Who are actually photographers, because I'm not a photographer. So, a second opinion is very helpful and can create something I would never have come up with.

There's wisdom in that! There's wisdom in trusting someone's strengths...I think that's a lesson that can be learned in any band or any group dynamic.

Exactly. For instance, I do a lot of session work, like studio recordings for bands and stuff and really most of the time they give me rough sketches of what they want to have and I just do whatever I want. And they're happy with that because they're actually hiring me as drummer. And as they know my work, they trust my work and they trust my skills as a drummer better than their own skills as a drummer...you're hiring people for a reason.



Danny Tunker

We were talking about the dynamic and bringing all these talents together and I saw a Facebook update by [a member of Alkaloid] and it said, "This album was a lot of fun to create and a constant source of inspiration and joy." And he tagged all of you and said, you are all "amazingly gifted musicians and the true embodiments of visionary artists. I consider myself lucky to be in the company of these giants." To me, that is a testament you don't usually see...

[Pause] Yes. That is true. And I also read it and it made me very happy because basically, because everybody...for example, like Danny is in Aborted and it's very time consuming. And he's teaching in music college and all of that. And he's still like -- because nobody knows what Alkaloid will be like in a couple of years. But, he's totally into it! Invested all that time and did all those solos and was totally enthusiastic about the whole thing. That's the best part. It's not just some kind of business you do. It



Linus Klausenitzer

So, please, before we go, tell us: What is the end game?

I'm always thinking in steps. First, bringing the album on the market, actually making it happen. Once I hold this entity in my hand, then we will distribute all the perks – that is the first step. Done. Then, the second step would be releasing it officially and doing some promotion and press. And then, the next step would be playing it live, of course, as much as we can. So, what I would like to do is get us on tour, basically. I don't think it can ever be something like my friends in Black Dahlia who are touring like 8-9 months a year, that would be insane! But, it's their thing, I don't see that ever happening for us. But, definitely, we would like to do touring. That would be our next biggest goal, to play as many places as possible, broaden our fan base, then do the next record. I already have some ideas...

--T. Ray Verteramo

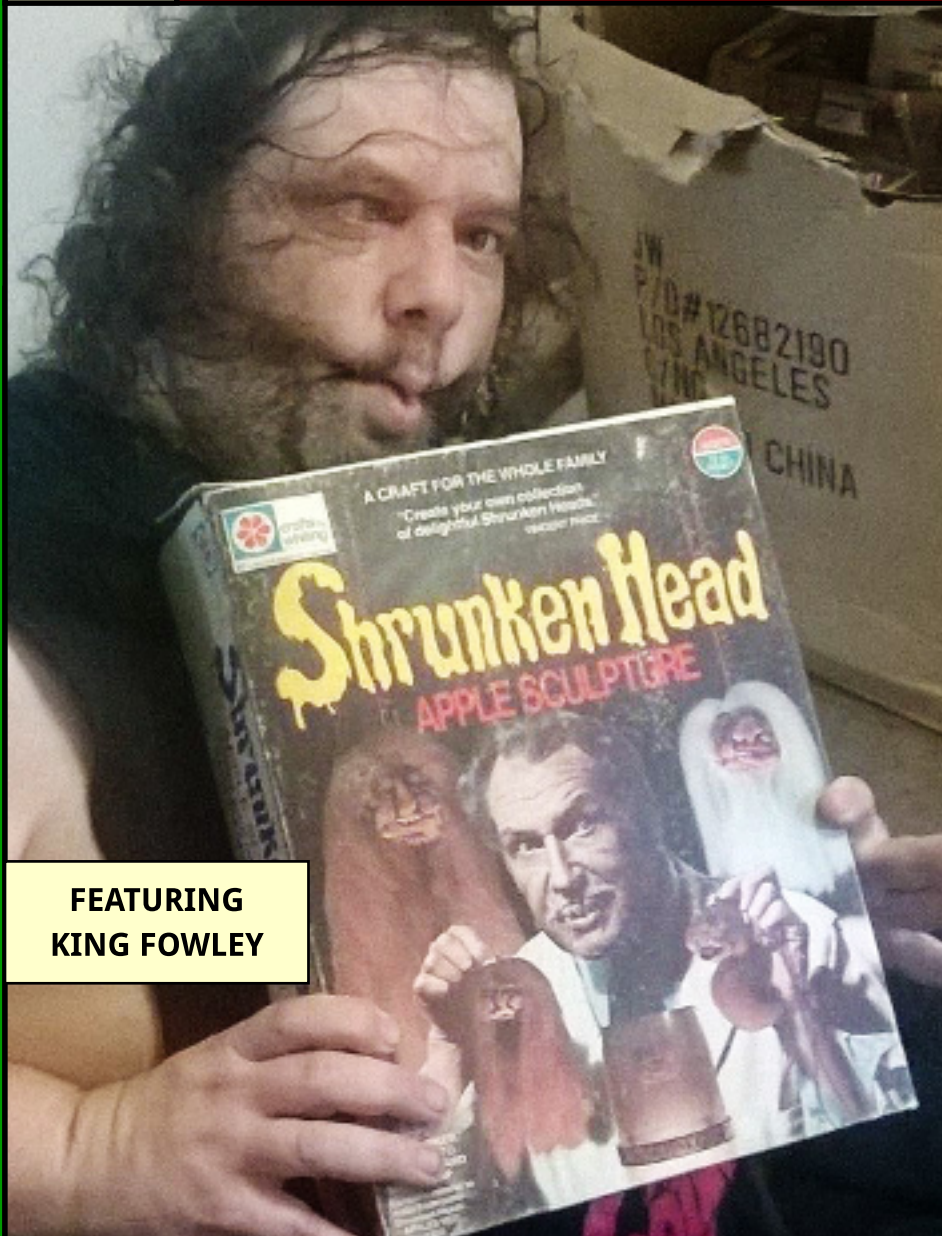
To fund their album they started a [crowdfunding campaign](#) in late 2014 that turned out to be a huge success. With twelve tracks of 73 minutes of mind-bending music, ALKALOID seamlessly ebb and flow through an arrange of styles and genres, creating an intelligent and fascinating blend of prog, death metal, and fusion.

www.alkaloid-band.com

SHRIEKS

FROM THE

HEARSE!

FEATURING
KING FOWLEY

He is heavy metal's Moses. He broke into the business in 1985 and put his thrash-death hybrid Deceased on the map as one of the first signings by Relapse Records back in 1991. Throughout his nearly thirty year career, both with Deceased and true metal stalwarts October 31, few have surpassed this man's extensive knowledge of bands, albums and pop culture. He is the living, breathing, walking, talking icon of horror, metal and rock and roll. He is KING FOWLEY and this is his SHRIEKS FROM THE HEARSE!

FIST / MYOFIST

Thunder in Rock
(1981 A&M Records)

1. Double or Nothing
2. Thunder in Rock
3. Leather and Lace
4. On the Radio
5. It's Late
6. Better Way to Go
7. Evil Cold
8. Fleet Street
9. Open the Gates



LINE UP

Ron Chenier (V,G)
Jeff Nystrom (B)
Bob Patterson (D)
Ivan Tessier (Keys)

It was 1982 and I was turning on my usual Monday midnight metal show on DC 101, a heavy rock radio station out of Washington, D.C. They would play heavy metal and hard rock LPs in their entirety. It got me turned on to so many "new" bands in the genre quickly. Tank, Baron Rojo, Sound Barrier, Anvil and The Rods were just a few of the hundreds of bands that had albums played on the Monday night shows.

SHRIEKS FROM THE HEARSE!

So who was gonna be the band of the night?

This time it was 'Thunder in Rock' or, as I heard it that night, 'Thunder AND Rock' by a band from Canada called FIST. The 1981 opus kicked off in super heavy fashion with "Double or Nothing", a ripper that sounded like Gene Simmons at his heaviest vocal, spewing out over a wild keyboard and a crunchy guitar. The title track came next and it too had that heavy guitar tone that made it all the more vicious. It had a sax solo in it too. WILD! The LP got more keyboardy and 'lighter' as it played on, but it still ripped my brain apart. The whole thing had a nice vibe to it and the heavier voice songs made me love it. I always enjoyed the Sherlock Holmes spoken part intro they made for the song "Fleet Street". My favorite songs are "Double or Nothing" and "Leather and Lace".

I dug a little deeper into mags, mainly Kerrang, and found out the LP in the U.K. had another name for the band—it was MYOFIST. Bizarre! FIST in the U.K. had come before them, so over there the band was called Myofist. Then I found out in Canada the LP was called 'Fleet Street' and had totally different artwork. The 'Thunder in Rock' version is a big metalized glove coming out of the ground where 'Fleet Street' has a barber's chair.

A&M Records had put 'Thunder in Rock' out in the states and it was pretty easy to spot in the stores. I picked up my own vinyl copy as a promo for \$2.99 and have played it many times over the years. The band never made it much outside of Canada, but they continued to release LPs over the years. They even reformed after a short hiatus and still rock out to this day. Ron Cheiner, the guy with the killer vocals, has even been an email pal of mine for a few years. Super good guy!

Out of all the records they've done, 'Thunder in Rock' still stands as their best album to me. If you like hard rock with hints of metal, keys and some pretty heavy vocals you'll be diggin' it too!

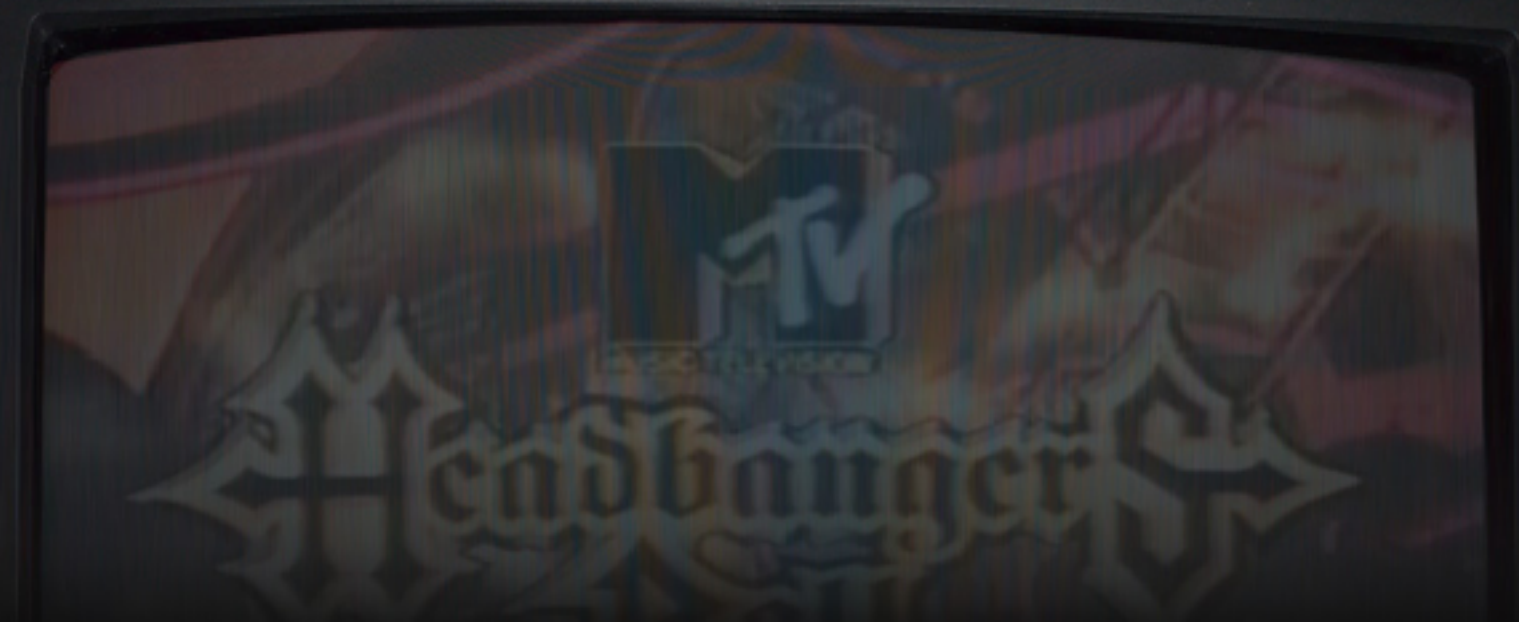
Burnin' the candle from the other end. --King Fowley



Round One	1979
Hot Spikes	1980
Fleet Street	1981
In the Red	1983
Danger Zone	1985
Reign of Terror	1993
Loud Loud Loud	1995
Bolted Door	2006
Thunder in Rock (live)	2008
"Leather and Lace" http://youtu.be/ZIQY2QCNNIU	

FROM THE

BOOBTUBE TO YOUTUBE



I was part of a holy trinity in my younger days--Wrestling-Horror-Metal.

The first vice was removed around the same time that WWF lost their "F" and the "Attitude" era became a faded memory. Growing up as a wrestling fan brought some growing pains with it. Not the flying elbows from the top bunk but the real pain in the 80s and early 90s of "media poverty". Kids like myself had to resort to VHS tape trading with other fans all over the globe. While watching some scrubs from Georgia battle it out on a Saturday night telecast, the real action was happening overseas. I had heard names like Cactus Jack, Bruiser Brody and Terry Funk and the brutal matches they were having in Japan. However, unlike today's simplicity of pulling up a YouTube search for Terry Funk, back then it required me sending some sort of rare match or event on a VHS tape to someone in Hong Kong who happened to have a match recorded also.

MTV LAUNCHED IN 1981



GUNS N' ROSES - "ESTRANGED"
\$4,000,000 ESTIMATED COST

That same media poverty was the culprit for my horror woes. Living in a small town with very little access to rental stores, my horror fascination limped around the confines of Camp Crystal Lake and Elm Street. I had heard of Lucio Fulci, Dario Argento and other cutting edge directors in my youth, but the only ability to grasp such auriferous genre entries was tape trading. "I mail, then you mail" was a foisted method to view world cinema.



MESHUGGAH - "NEW MILLENNIUM CYANIDE CHRIST"
HAND-FILMED ON "TOUR BUS"

Deceased drummer, front-man and Maximum Metal contributor King Fowley would be considered by many the king of VHS. You want '83 footage of Mercyful Fate playing Denmark coffee shops? Fowley could pull a dozen tapes from boxes and show you King Diamond all night. I've been there, done that. You want a killer snake movie? Let King run through ten VHS tapes that may or may not have been banned from domestic shores in the 70s.

For decades, the only way to see this sort of frowned upon media was through VHS tape trading. Now, one simply hovers their sweet little finger on the YouTube app and that world of tape trading disappears. Poof. In its place is a window of opportunity, a map of wonder that allows you to search for anyone, anything from just about any electric age. You want Mercyful Fate coffee shop footage? Easy. The real pain now is deciding which videos to watch from what year and on which screen. YouTube is on everything I touch. My television has it built in. My blu-ray player. My Apple TV. My PC, phone and iPad all have this magical portal to media Shangri-La.

YOUTUBE CREATED IN 2005



CRIMSON SHADOWS - "RISE TO POWER"
OFFICIAL LYRIC VIDEO

The really interesting thing about YouTube is that the technology has re-invented the promotional music video. Remember MTV videos? VJs? "Headbanger's Ball" (or "Super Rock" if you aren't Gen X)? By the mid-90s the "Real World" culture had removed music videos from television. In 1995, labels like Century Media, Nuclear Blast, Relapse and Massacre were nearing a fevered pitch from underground metal. Those labels were actually still producing videos, but there was no U.S. format to air them. By the

late 90s those labels had created their own home video series that compiled eight to ten videos per tape. Metal Blade had their "Metalmeister" VHS series. Century Media sold their "Visual Chaos" video compilation. Nuclear Blast was actively marketing their video series "Death Is Just the Beginning". At a price tag of about \$12 you could special order them from your local store and experience the horror every heavy metal fan of the 90s experienced--back-order Purgatory.

Now, as we sit in 2014 and I go through promo stacks and news feeds, nearly every band that has an album out has a promotional video. Typically, a lyric video hits first for the lead single followed by a professional video of decent to superb quality. How do you see it? Tape trading? Special ordering the compilation? Nope, it's all on YouTube for free.

Hundreds of promo videos a year are coming out with YouTube links. The media sensation is at an all-time high and not only are we seeing the typical promo videos, those derelict factory rooms showcasing the five bopping mop-heads (and there are tons of those) but now you are seeing whole concerts. You didn't make it to Wacken this year? Watch every band on YouTube through professional cameras, the band's cameraman or the cell phone eye from that hairy kid in the fourth row. Missed Megadeth playing acoustic in a Buenos Aires public park? Yngwie Malmsteen shred-busking on a street corner? Bruce Dickinson in a leopard pattern suit hamming-up "Delilah" on a variety show? It's on there.

YouTube is peaking while spotlighting and giving us an insight into to the industry that no generation has experienced before. Full albums. Full DVDs. Backstage footage. Interviews. Studio reports. Lyric and promo videos. Fan films. Enough 70s and 80s

horror movies, wrestling matches, mosh pits and cat videos to last my bloodline's lifetime. It is all for free right inside there.

Pardon me while I go update our Maximum Metal YouTube channel. I think Metallica just released tent footage of James having a hotdog in Honduras a few minutes ago.

--Eric Compton & Frank Hill



UNLEASH THE ARCHERS - "GENERAL OF THE DARK ARMY"
HALF INDIEGOGO FUNDED . OVER 2,00,000+ VIEWS



AMARANTHE - "THE NEXUS"
FILM-LEVEL HIGH PRODUCTION



IRON MAIDEN - "THE WICKER MAN"
FAN-MADE WITH LEGOS

HELLFEST

17-18-19 JUNE 2016
CLISSON FRANCE

FRIDAY 17 JUNE



RAMMSTEIN

VOLBEAT

BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE

ANTHRAX

TREMONI - HALESTORM

AUGREY HORNE - THE SHRINE

THE OFFSPRING

**Dropkick
Murphys**

TURBONEGRO - HATEBREED
MASS HYSTERIA - LE BAL DES ENRAGES
KANSVILLE PUSSY - SHINEDOWN - DELAIN

TESTAMENT

OVERKILL - SACRED REICH - VADER
BAVON - SABBOT - SKELETON REMAINS
DUST BOUT - WITCHES

Abbat

KORPIKLAANI - AURA NOIR - INQUISITION
KAMPAN - BEHEXEN - SOLEFALD
CRUACHAN - MOONREICH

sunn

THE MELVINS - EARTH - MAGMA
IMBIBING - MINDHUNT - NO FAT
STONED JESUS - MONDLOBO

**KILLSWITCH
ENGAGE**

CONVERGE - KYLENTAK - ARCHITECTS
VISION OF DISORDER - VICTIMS - ALL PIES MUST DIE
HARM'S WAY - EDWARDS

SATURDAY 18 JUNE

**TWISTED
SISTER**

FINAL FRENCH RUN

**— WITHIN —
TEMPTATION**

Gutterdämmerung
FEAT. HENRY ROLLINS

FOREIGNER

SIXX AM - JOE SATRIANI
GIENNE HUGHES - LOUDNESS

KoЯn

**BRING ME
THE HORIZON**

DISTURBED - SICK OF IT ALL
THE AMITY AFFLICTION - ATREYU
AUGUST BLINDS RED - BLUTY TOMORROW - TRY OUT IS MURDER

**JAPANESE
DEATH**

TERRORIZER - ASPHYX - ENTOMBED AD
ASOTAPHOBIC MISERABLE - CATTLE DECAPITATION
ENTRAILS - DROWNED - UNDEAD PROPHECIES

DARK FUNERAL

PRIMORDIAL - MOONSORROW - ARCHGOAT
FLESHED APOCALYPSE - HEIDEVOLK - DARK FORTRESS
MYROR - OTARECS

down

HERMANO - GOATSLAKE - WITH THE DEAD
TORCH - SAVIORS - CHERRY
HANGMAN'S CHAIR - DOPPELHORN

BAD RELIGION

LUDWIG VON 88 - THE TOY DOLLS
DISCHARGE - UN SUBS - LES SALES MAJESTES
STRIKE - MANTAR - DIRTY FONZY

SUNDAY 19 JUNE

**BLACK
SABBATH**

THE END

SLAYER

MEGADETH

GOJIRA

VINTAGE TROUBLE - NO ONE IS INNOCENT
MUNICIPAL WASTE - BAVENYE

Ghost

**King &
Diamond**

AMON AMARTH - BLIND GUARDIAN
TARJA - DRAGON FORCE
ORPHANED LAND - NYTILUS - NIGHTMARE

**PARADISE
LOST**

KATATONIA - GRAND MAGUS - INSOMNIUM
GRIDEQUIN - THE SKEEL - FALLOUT - ACHESON
CORROSIVE ELEMENTS

DELICIE

ENSLAVED - EMPYRIUM - TAAKE
VELA - THE VISION BLEAK - SKALMOLD
STILLE VOLK - REGIMON

**James
ADDICTION**

RIVAL SONS - FU MANCHU - KADAVAR
UNSAFE - KING DORE - VIKARYE
LECHEROUS GAZE - STONED BIRDS

REFUSED

HEAVEN SHALL BURN - WALLS OF JERICHO
CALLIDON - RUTOS DE PORAO - BACKTRACK - TURNSTILE
POWER TRIP - ALEA JACTA EST

MAINSTAGE

MAINSTAGE

ALTA

TEMPLE

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DARK TRANQUILLITY

PHOTO BY DANIEL FALK

The metal scene is a constant, ever changing landscape. Full of peaks and valleys, it can be a hellish terrain to navigate for many bands. Experienced acts have been able to carve out their footholds and maintain their path with little to no deviation. Dark Tranquillity are one of those. The Swedish natives, who began their career in 1989, have succeeded and triumphed in their endeavors. Being in the business for a quarter of a decade, the band have proven countless times they are nothing to scoff at.

With the touring cycle for *Construct* (2013) nearing its end, it was announced that Dark Tranquillity will be taking part in a whirlwind tour with Finnish stalwarts Insomnium throughout North America. The band's guitarist, Niklas Sundin, explains the group's decision to journey across the pond.

"The previous North American trek with Omnium Gatherum and Exmortus went really well, so our booking agent looked into opportunities of returning to the US for another round. The venues were

positive about it and after the usual negotiations and practical and logistical stuff we were really happy to get Insomnium on the bill."

This isn't Insomnium's first run with the band either, Sundin explains. "They were main support for us on the European leg of the 'We are the Void' tour some years ago. That made me a fan of theirs plus they're just great people as well as an excellent band."

Touring is a big part of the package deal for both the performer and the fan, both parties chomping at the bit to connect with each other. And when you're as well established as Dark Tranquillity, there are lots of destinations to run through on the live circuit. After touring for over two decades Sundin advises of the importance of touring.

"Living for weeks on end in a bus can be a bit taxing at time, especially for a bunch of forty year old guys...but this is what we do. Having garnered a bigger fan base and being able to bring a solid production on the road has definitely made the

touring experience very exciting and rewarding."

The band's dance card is usually filled to capacity with dates, yet this could be a rare "off season" for the Swedes. "This is actually our least-busy summer in several years. Normally we're playing festivals almost every weekend but with all the recent touring we've done, we felt it best to take a small break and recharge the batteries."

In addition to the wear and tear of touring rigorously, there are also international regulations and guidelines that bands have to comply with during their tours. With the recent issues that Polish deathstars Behemoth experienced in Russia, Sundin explained the tolls and tribulations of document and visa purgatory.

"Touring in various countries can be very difficult. There have been cases where we've done everything by the book but the country in question had so many questionable practices that it really didn't matter. I'd say our worst experience so



PHOTO BY DANIEL FALK

far probably was being detained in a police station in China and it causing us to almost have our passports confiscated. Another time, we were denied exiting India and ended up having to spend two days in bureaucracy Hell to obtain a permission stamp to return to Sweden."

Dark Tranquillity's last album, *Construct*, was a pivotal album for the band because it was the "contract" record, one that solidifies or bids farewell to a label. In this case the band re-signed with longtime partners Century Media in April of 2012 and then began writing for the record in October. The release, the band's tenth, was released in May of 2013.

"I think that *Construct* was a well needed departure for us", says Sundin. "After a few riff-based records that were pretty similar to each other, it was time to revisit and re-explore some of the more atmospheric sides of our sound."

2015 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of *The Gallery*, the influential 1995 album that was as important to Swedish melodic death as *Kill 'Em All* was for San Fran's

80s thrash.

"It definitely was our breakthrough album in many ways. We had been an established underground band for a few years by the time *The Gallery* came out but it was a pretty unique sounding album for its time, as well as being way better promoted than many of our previous releases."

That promotion was from independent French label Osmose Productions, created in 1991 by Herve Herbaut.

"They were a very passionate label and we got along well with Herve and his team. Rather than sign with one of the bigger labels that made us an offer, we felt at the time there was something really appealing about their no nonsense attitude and unorthodox way of getting things done."

Aug 02	Rock Off Festival	Istanbul, Turkey
Aug 08	Jalometalli	Oulu, Finland
Aug 09	Stade Régis Perrin	Saint Maurice De Gourdans, France
Aug 14	Summer Breeze	Dinkelsbühl, Germany
Aug 29	Moscow Metal Meeting	Moscow, Russian Federation
Oct 10	Loud Park Festival	Tokyo, Japan

Will the 2015 North American dates celebrate *The Gallery* and its place in the band's history? "It's too early to tell. There is a fine line between respectfully honoring your past and milking the cow so to speak. I doubt there will be any massive anniversary celebration or full on *Gallery*-based shows." But realizing that you can't speak too soon about these things, Sundin slyly added "But who knows. We'll see what happens."

--Greg Watson

Link: <http://www.darktranquillity.com>

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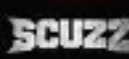
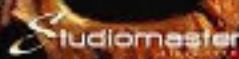
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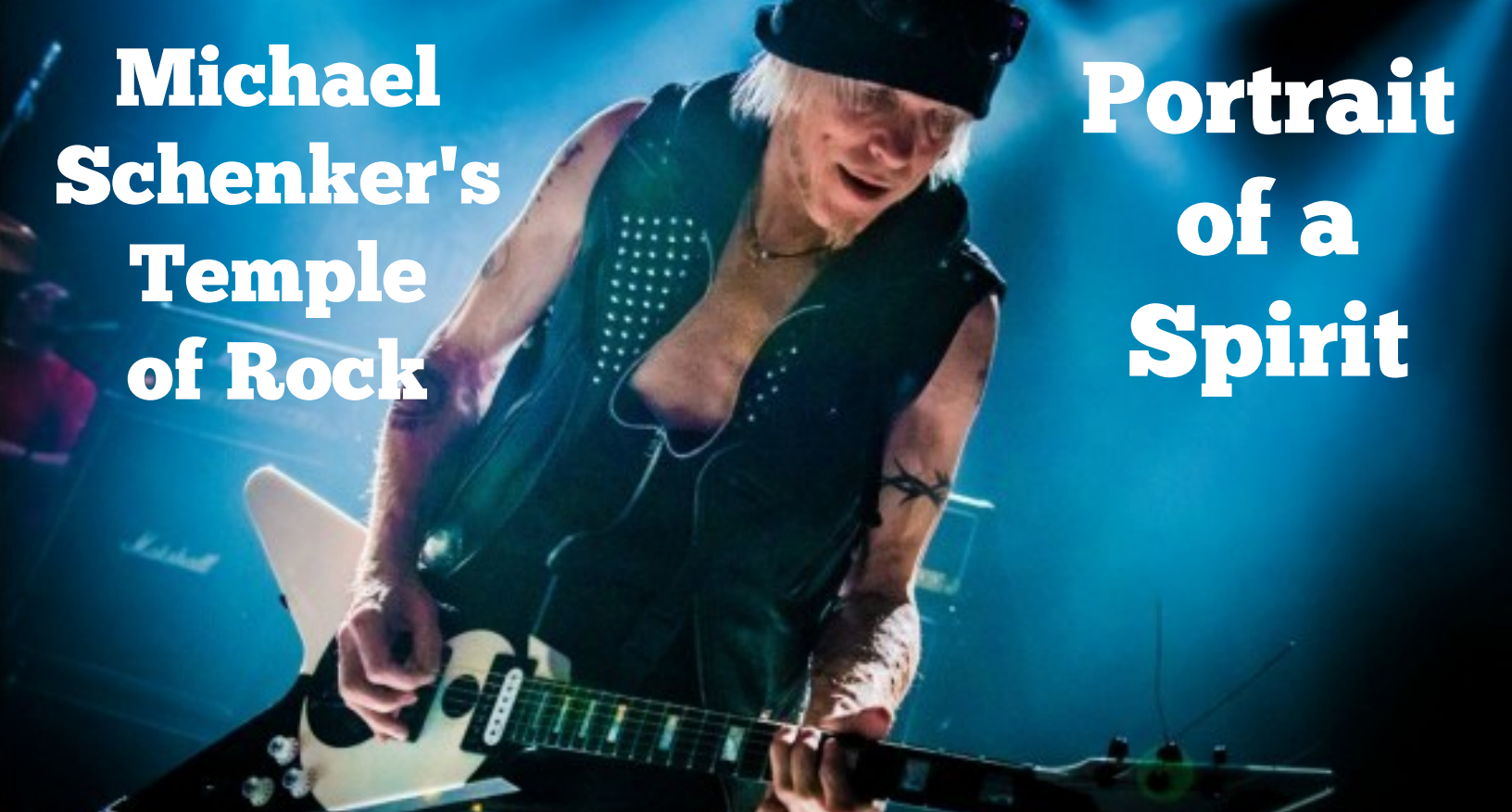


venue subject to licence

bill subject to change

Michael Schenker's Temple of Rock

Portrait of a Spirit



"It's a celebration."

Not the words you would expect to hear from an immortal influence having a mortal experience. But, sixty years -- and going very strong -- of glory, defeat, trudging through self-destruction, diva drama, angry women, ventures come and gone, triumph, and treachery have laid the ashes for the phoenix to rise. Michael Schenker's Temple of Rock in 2012, began as chance and experimentation gone viral and has now developed into a brick-and-mortar being that is poised to release the anticipated follow-up to its grand 2013 full-length introduction, "Bridge the Gap."

Classic rock set on a metal foundation, laced together with the pure energy and majestic six-string signature that is exclusively, unmistakably Michael Schenker is backed by some of Herman Rarebell's strongest drumwork in his career since Scorpions, Francis Buchholz' grace of bass, and Wayne Findlay's bold 7-string compliments. Crowned by ex-Rainbow Doogie White's vocals and lyrics, whose talents almost earned him a job with Iron Maiden, "Spirit On a Mission" is a rare instance where the sophomore effort compares or even trumps the debut.

"The Temple of Rock concept is a mixture of the past and the now," Mr. Schenker stated. "The idea is for The Temple of Rock / Michael Schenker platform to develop into its own entity. The first Temple of Rock album, which was successful around the world, we didn't know what it was developing into. Step-by-step, we had 'Bridge the Gap.' It's like a story and it continues. By the time we make the third album, The Temple of Rock will be capable of standing on its own feet and its own identity. We're just using the past in order to create a connection. The Temple of Rock, once the jump start is completed, will propel by itself."

But, "Mission," like the man, himself, could have ended in travesty. After the setback and heartbreak of having his studio robbed of equipment, tracks, and some of his iconic collection of guitars, according to their news release, the incident pushed them to work that much harder. The result is a dynamic, explosive project of rock and reality, a fiery page torn from the Tao of Schenker, "combining all the emotions that have been experienced and been part of, altogether in the now," he sagely explained. "It's a celebration of the year of my generation of rock that started for

me, that I fell in love with, and so many other people that have already passed away like Gary Moore and Ronnie James Dio. I want to bring that incredible era in that time and put it into the foreground and celebrate it. And so, simultaneously, I'm celebrating my own progress, my own accomplishments from the 'school of Life,' that I have learned from. It's kind of looking back and looking at the now and combining it all."

Yet, as well-received his namesake's Temple may be to the world, Schenker is still very cautious to remove the tank of his name and let it breathe its own air. "Everything happens step-by-step and you can't leave any steps out. It's already happening. When will it be completed? I don't know if it will ever be completed. But, it is developing its own entity. I think after 3 albums, I would imagine that there would be enough material we need."

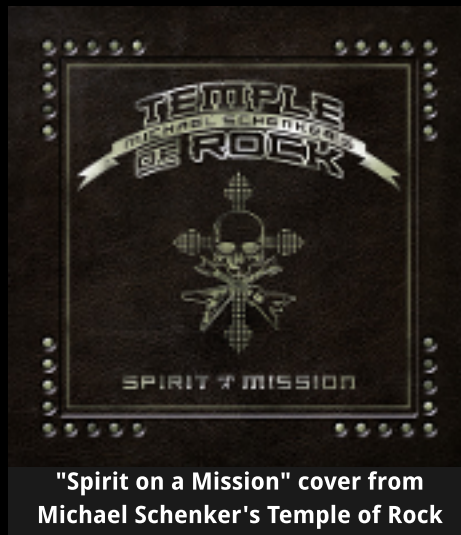
The reluctance may not make sense on a musical level, given Temple's collective talents and accomplishments. However, in the art of seduction lies the real wisdom of his slow-hand, meticulous foreplay. "I know that sometimes when you bomb people with too much material, you might lose people's focus and interests if you give them too much in one

go. So, you want to give them a little and develop in a slow, nice pace that people can develop with you. You don't want to go ahead and leave things behind. You want to make sure that it's part of entertainment and make sure you put it together in such a way that you enchant people."

Regardless of what his tempestuous history may read in the rags, the soul may have wandered, but it was never lost. Schenker knows what he's doing. "It's a step-by-step development. It's about being a human being, at least myself, I have developed step-by-step all these years and what I'm doing now is what I'm ready to do now. It cannot rain until the conditions are there for it to rain. So, there are many many steps before you can come to that outcome. Steps in between are just as important as the outcome."

"My art is also inter-related of who I am. And so I think the more we can understand about art, the more we can understand the person who is creating the art. Because it's a spiritual expression – but, it's not always easy to read what it means."

"If I look back," he says, "I see my life in three stages. The beginning, the first stage of my life, was dedicated to the development as a guitarist and to my music contribution to the world, creating an entity for the 80's. And then the 80's, the 'Lovedrive' album with my brother that opened doors for America, for the Scorpions. So, my brother took my black and white Flying V [laughs], took over, and I withdrew into the 'school of Life.' I experimented in development more and more musically and having my own face, without being in a touring machine that was looking for fame and success from me. I was hungry for learning to play on a personal level. And then 2008, somewhere around that time, all of a sudden, I felt the urge and really enjoyed being on stage, which never happened before. So, I knew that time that I should be back in the world of rock and roll now and The Temple of Rock is that group where it is happening."



"Spirit on a Mission" cover from Michael Schenker's Temple of Rock

It is very curious that it has taken over 50 years for a man, who was officially proclaimed a Golden God Icon by Metal Hammer last year, to come to peace with the stage. "I once went to a metaphysical program where a millionaire couldn't understand why he couldn't enjoy his millions. Then it was found out that his money was based on hate. He brought in all his money going, 'I will show you!' He had some trouble with his uncle or something and so basically was looking into why he couldn't enjoy his millions that he had. So, then the coach was telling him, 'Well, why don't you make peace with that person and then see what will happen?' And so, he made peace with that person and he was all happy and he was able to enjoy his money. For me, it was kind of like that." He elaborated, "When I was doing my music development and contribution in the 70's, I always said that I didn't even know what I was doing. I was just being myself, I wasn't looking for anything, it all happened by itself. Then I went through the 'school of Life' and all of these things I learned, all of these things opened up for me, these understandings, etc. etc. and now they make it possible for me to enjoy all of this. It's a bit similar, you know?"

"When I have ideas and stuff like this, I never try. I just put them on a piece of paper to clear my mind and keep it open for receiving more and more insights, ideas, etc. etc. and deal with them as they come. It's something to be able to receive as much as I can," he said. "So, really I don't really like to go too far ahead of time. I don't like to go too far back, either. I go back to maybe, if I have to for

mind about something, just for gathering information, or I go forward to make a blueprint of a possibility."

And in this "school" where he is doing his homework, but knows may never graduate with a Masters, it seems the faceless, merciless teacher he describes as, "Anything that blocks you and keeps you from moving through it," keeps showing him over and over that the most beautiful gifts come in really ugly packages. Fortunately, the one thing that has always worked in his favor is his insatiable curiosity. "It's like first it was all about play. I love to play and discover. I don't want anyone to teach me anything. I just want to find out for myself. Guitar playing was the same thing. The guitar was standing there. The moment I pressed the string and I put another note to it, I thought, 'Wow, this is great!' And it never stopped. On the guitar, I could always play and discover something new. Always play and discover and when I discover, I go, 'Wow! Another thing!' I get that excitement. So, at some point it's like – I don't know how the world works, but I can say and I can feel that it's all related. It's the mind, body and soul, it's all related to each other. Everything needs to get attention to develop and if it's balanced, it's probably the best way."

So, with Michael Schenker's Temple of Rock booked solid to tramp through the States and Japan through the end of July, 2015, it would seem the "Golden God's" golden times are still ahead. But, the man would disagree: It's now. "I have grown really into the philosophy that there's nothing more important than the moment. Whatever comes this moment, challenge or not, it is. I like to put my energy into the now. I don't want to waste any energy on something that may happen in the future. You don't want to insist that it has to happen because it's going to be a big letdown. But, just leaving things loose in the future and being present in the now, that gives us more energy to enjoy in the moment, rather than waste it, spreading it all over the place, in front or behind."

"Now is all we have."

--T. Ray Verteramo

[METAL MAIDENS]

Spotlighting women in the hard
rock and heavy metal genres

GUITARISTS! ORIANTHI

Associated Acts:

Alice Cooper, Carrie Underwood, Steve Vai,
Carlos Santana, Richie Sambora

Orianthi was born in Adelaide, South Australia. She began playing piano at the age of three and, at the encouragement of her father, moved to acoustic guitar at the age of six. When she was eleven, she took up electric guitar and began her professional career by age 15.

ESSENTIAL LISTENING:



Violet Journey (2007)



Believe (2009)



Fire EP (2011)



Heaven in This Hell (2013)

FACT:

She is the first
female member
of the Alice
Cooper band.

www.orianthi.artistintersect.com

Hailing from Argentina is another female who will leave you breathless from her skills on the electric guitar. Her third record, "Transmission", was recently recorded at Steve Vai's Mothership studio in Hollywood and if Steve is willing to produce your CD, then you have to be damn good.

CARINA ALFIE

KATRINA JOHANSSON

Melodic instrumental shred guitar has a lot of heroes, but off the top of your head can you name very many females in the field? With influences ranging from Gary Moore, Yngwie Malmsteen, Ritchie Blackmore, Joe Satriani, Michael Angelo Batio and Jimi Hendrix; Katrina Johansson is one who will spin your head with her fretboard licks as quick as she'll snap your neck with her girl-next door looks.

www.katrinaguitar.com

www.alfiecarina.com.ar



ALKALOID

Malkuth Grimoire

5 / 5

2015 Independent

A Game Changer

You knew it was going to be audible, at the very least. The second they announced this insane supergroup of musical whores, (I prefer the term "shameless hussies"), who have been plugged, unplugged, and still plug some of the most brilliant and beloved Death, Black, Prog, Extreme, and all points in between, Metal acts that you knew this Alkaloid thing was something to pay attention to. This is why their independent crowdfunding campaign raised 159% of their goal within 60 days. You knew when you heard the sneak peek tracks, "Carbon Phases," "C-Value Enigma," and the skullcruncher, "Cthulu," that this had potential to even be better than what you expected.

What you may not know is no matter how high our expectations may have been, we underestimated them.

"The Malkuth Grimoire," to those who have a clue of the Quabalah, instantly advertises the intention to explore the extraordinary in the ordinary -- the majick in the mundane -- and they do. Through such musicianship not heard in decades, this show is perfectly cast in every element, even down to the sorcerer at the board. Morean's well-tamed, dissociative identity vocals play all the characters under the proscenium in this tumultuous, relentless drama of thought and sound. Complex off-beats, jolting time changes, and demonstrative chord progressions in less skillful hands would be patched together like an ugly collage designed to trigger the car-wreck mentality, at best. But, this work is not sewn, it's woven. True, this most likely wouldn't be the first choice for background noise while taking in some black sunshine, though the title track and "Funeral for a Continent" would certainly belong on that playlist, it's a journey you can't stop once you start. Each song has its own ink that stains you with riffs and words and phrases, while keeping you on edge, intoxicated or intrigued. Then when it's done, like a kid who just got off the roller coaster, you'll want to ride it again. And when you do, you find twists and turns that you didn't remember or notice before, so you ride it again...and again...

Very often a "prog death" or a "prog anything" band has a tendency



to mix too much prog with not enough death, or a whole lot of anything with not very much prog. Fusion propels the industry forward and it's a precarious medium to find the balance, which is when your audience is not aware they're listening to anything but music. These men perform so tight, so fluent, so intuitively, it rivals the likes of a very dark Yes or a Rush from a forsaken abyss. The only hint of humanity this work reveals is that at times, it risks getting up its own ass with brazen displays of sapiosexuality. Granted, getting off on brain food is better than brain damage. However, regardless, they set out to create Metal, but delivered an experience. And if this is what they've got for a debut, how could anyone possibly imagine what they could do for an encore?

There are many primal, brutal, and glorious projects out there worth every ounce of respect and support -- and comparison's a disease, so don't catch it. But, this? Unexpected. Powerful, masterful, bold, flawless, inspiring, haunting, uncomfortable, igniting, grotesque, and exquisite, the sacred geometry that is "Grimoire," whether despised or revered, is not an accomplishment. It's a game-changer.

-T. Ray Verteramo



"If you want to write hit songs, you have to be able to write hit songs from your inner self. In whatever you do, if you are authentic, I believe you will have some sort of success. And if you just limit yourself to fit in a certain commercial aspect, or a certain commercial field, I don't think you can make it."
-- drummer Hannes Grossman



ALL THAT REMAINS *The Order of Things*

3 / 5

2015 Razor & Tie

More accessible to non-metal fans

Massachusetts metallers All That Remains return with "The Order of Things", a more hard rock offering that is full of catchy hooks, choruses and feels a bit more

accessible to non-metal fans. With clean vocal singing dominating most of the album, I get the feeling that the band are continuing to try and expand their sound even more. Songs like "This Probably Won't End Well", "For You" and "Bite My Tongue" have a late 90's era hard rock feel to them while still incorporating the speed and heaviness that has been a trademark feature of ATR. That being said, there is still quite a punch packed into the tracks and the heavy portions of the song are monstrously heavy, like the breakdown on "Pernicious" and the groove-fest that is "No Knock". The track "True KvlT Metal" is easily the heaviest and fastest song on the album. When all was said and done with this one, I didn't hate it but I felt as though there was something missing from the album. The more streamlined and radio friendly songs seem to take away from the overall heaviness of the album and left me wanting a little more heavy riffs. The production, handled by Josh Wilbur on his first album with the band, was crisp. If you're looking for something catchy, easy to sing along to, and that you can bang your head periodically to, this has your name all over it. **-Greg Watson**



ANGELUS APATRIDA *Hidden Evolution*

4 / 5

2014 Century Media

Trash infested

Right now, it's probably in the 50's temperature wise near Albacete, Spain. What's significant about Albacete and the temperature you ask? Well, Albacete is the home of Angelus Apatrida and the

temperature is about to skyrocket once people get ahold of "Hidden Evolution", Angelus Apatrida's fifth studio album. This album is so hot and thrash-infested that it would make a lava flow from an active volcano seem like a dip in a hot tub.

From the outset, Angelus are out to show that they are a force to be reckoned with as the opening notes of "Immortal" kick in. The death metal tinged stomp that kicks the song off is just skull crushing and then once vocalist Guillermo Izquierdo brings his voice into the mix, it's all over as the melee begins. Furious guitar work, bombastic drumming and bone-shaking bass permeate the track all while Izquierdo is snarling and sneering his vocals like a rabid hyena. "First World of Terror" kicks off with a militaristic drum cadence that is slowly quieted by a swirling guitar riff that then melds with a heavier drum march before the song cranks up the speed and begins to rip

through a classic thrash riff like Freddy Kreuger's claws ripping through a sleeping teen. Izquierdo's vocals take on a bit of a cleaner tone on the chorus but still retain that classic thrash delivery during the verses. The guitars on this track are insanely fast, precise and incredibly technical.

"Architects" comes out next with all guns blazing as the speed of this track hits you from the jump. The chorus of this song ends with a catchy riff and some bad ass drumming. Guillermo throws in some excellently placed shrieks on the track to give it some extra kick. "Tug of War" may be one of the best songs on the album. Beginning with a buzzsaw guitar riff and then being built upon with a staccato drum beat, Izquierdo's vocals start out with a bit of a death metal growl and then move back to the more familiar thrash tinged vocals. The line "Something is killing this world, riding fast through its entrails" is just a phenomenal lyric that is easy to repeat over and over in your head. At the 3 minute mark, the solo starts out as a slow burner before becoming a shred-fest that is just ridiculously fast. Then the drums join in as the guitars begin a furious sweeping riff. From beginning to end, my neck is bearing the weight of furious headbanging on that track and whenever I finish listening to it, I want to find something to destroy. "Serpents on Parade" has a very power metal influenced riff to kick it off a la Edguy or Dream Evil. The drumming of Victor Valera really shines on this track as he is pounding the skins for all they're worth and his double bass lines are insanely fast and almost mechanized, reminding me a lot of Pete Sandoval from Morbid Angel. The riff in this track is some of Izquierdo's and David Alvarez's catchiest on the album with this riff that will get stuck in your head for days. "Wanderers Forever" seems to be a nod to being able to tour the world.

A great, anthemic track to just punch your fist in the air to. The first single released off the album, "End Man", greets you next and takes you on one hell of a ride. Speedy guitar work kicks you in the face as the track takes off at warp speed. This track may be Guillermo's finest performance as you can hear the venom just spewing from his delivery on the song as he sings "You probably never knew my name. You think I could forget yours?" The chorus on "End Man" is a bit more catchy, almost pop influenced and I use the pop reference lightly, with the vocals taking on a bit of a Udo Dirkschneider tone to them. This song was the perfect choice for the first single as it showcases the band's improved technical skills and really has the aggression cranked up from 2012's "The Call", which is amazing in and of itself as that album was incredibly angry and heavy. The final delivery of "I am the end...man" makes it sound as though Izquierdo is stating that he is the end of all things, let's hope not cause I want more from this band in the years to come.

One thing is clear from this album, the band have upped their technical abilities and their musicianship. The precision with which they play is nothing short of incredible and the way everything flows and fits together is simply magic. The production on the album is solid, with Daniel Cardoso once again handling producing duties. This is the third album that Cardoso has produced for the boys and each album brings out a little more clarity and a beefier sound than the previous one had. Bottom line is this, this album is a must have thrash album. So, throw your horns high and be prepared for an album that will leave you gasping for air as though the humidity of Spain is crushing the breath right out of you!

-Greg Watson



CORROSION OF CONFORMITY

IX

4 / 5

2014 Candlelight

For all COC eras

Funny how this worked out: just months after the three-piece incarnation of COC unleashes an album that finds them truly coming into their own after the departure

of longtime guitarist/vocalist Pepper Keenan, it seems ol' Pepper will be rejoining them next year, thus resurrecting the much loved Deliverance/Wiseblood lineup. And as much as I'm loving that news, I'm also feeling that something might be lost in the process. Because after delivering a fairly enjoyable self-titled album that was a partial throwback to their hardcore roots, plus a decent EP of slightly sludgier stuff, the Pepper-less lineup of COC finally seem to have found a direction that truly fits them on IX.

Combining a liberal dose of the sludgy Sabbath/Trouble riffing that began to show up again on the Megalodon EP (after having tapered off somewhat since Wiseblood) with the odd bit of hardcore-influenced chaos (sometimes in the same song, as in "Tarquinius Superbus"), IX is solid, enjoyable and musically interesting largely because of this mixture. "The Nectar" and the aforementioned "Tarquinius..." are perfect examples of this, veering from fast, frantic and simplistic power chording to slow, sludgy and rhythmically smart Sabbath-influenced riffing. Woody Weatherman has long been a tasty, articulate lead guitarist, and with no other guitarist in the band (plus a decent amount of open space in the music), he truly comes into his own, tearing off more impressive lead work than he's usually had the opportunity to do on a single album in the past.

To my mind, the album's crowning moments come after the pleasant, mellow instrumental interlude called, um, "Interlude." It's then that "On Your Way" kicks in with some sludgy power chords and then a snaky single-note riff that is among the album's catchiest. Then, "Trucker" (which at first sounds more stoner than trucker) lopes into view with a long, mellow, slow-paced jam that then makes way for a simple but effective and super-catchy uptempo riff that drives much of the rest of the song. And if you want a serious throwback to metal's glorious beginnings, check out "The Hangman," with its opening siren noise and slow, crushing 12/8 intro groove, which bears a more than slight (most likely intentional) similarity to "Luke's Wall"- aka the instrumental intro to Black Sabbath's "War Pigs." Gotta love it! And like Sabbath, COC mix a bit of jamming in with their sludgy riffs, making much of this album seem like the product of really fruitful and fun jam sessions, with the band clearly beginning to enjoy and revel in their power trio status. Factor in the aforementioned hardcore punk touches, and you've got something for COC fans of all eras, even if it's often scrambled together into a single complex concoction rather than being served in separate bits for lovers of each flavor to enjoy in isolation from the others.

-Vinaya Saksena



ENSLAVED

In Times

4 / 5

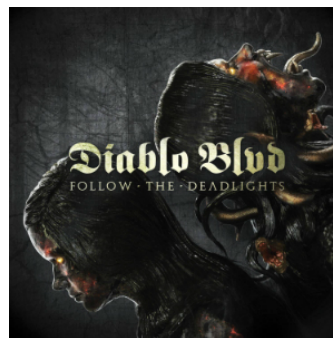
2015 Nuclear Blast

Accessible and solid

Black metal vets Enslaved return with "In Times", their latest offering that continues mixing post black metal stylings with their classic black metal sound. What you get with "In Times" is one of

the band's most accessible and solid albums to date. Mixing beautifully sung clean vocals and jazzy passages with aggressive guitars and vocalist Grutle's snarled and venomous raspings really create an incredible sense of duality. The songs flow with an alternating feel of calm that is quickly replaced by chaotic anger and vice versa. Ivar's guitar work on this album is a study in art as he seamlessly goes from these lush, very emotive progressions to skin-flaying, hate-filled solos and riffs. In all my time of listening to Enslaved, "In Times" may damn well be my favorite album that they have put out. I know black metal purists turn their noses up at this stuff and it's their damn loss. Just because the band aren't playing the type of black metal that you want, doesn't mean that this album is any less black metal than the traditional stuff. The production on this album follows the post black metal formula of keeping things very crisp and clean with a little bit of lo-fi mixed in. All in all, I was totally blown away by "In Times" and will definitely be going to back to this album again and again throughout 2015 and beyond.

-Greg Watson



DIABLO BLVD.

Follow the Deadlights

3 / 5

2015 Nuclear Blast

Middle of the road

Follow the Deadlights' is the third album from the Belgian act Diablo Blvd. (named after a Corrosion of Conformity track). This album hit Europe in May of 2014 via Sony and it took nearly a year for a

domestic release via Nuclear Blast. Musically this is about as middle of the road as one can get. Nothing...nothing is a stand out here, yet lyrically and vocally it still remains interesting if not entertaining. I can hear moody influences ranging from Danzig to Mustasch with plenty of slower bass driven tracks dispersed among the mid-tempo groovy cuts. 'We are Legion' is the album highlight, a gang vocal chant preaching unity through rebellion.

-Eric Compton

Diablo Blvd. is named after a Corrosion of Conformity song.



JUDAS PRIEST
Defenders of the Faith
30th Anniversary Edition
3.5 / 5
2015 Legacy

Truly a work to celebrate

Skeptics have scoffed the re-issue as a cheap financial move. But, their latest release, "Redeemer of Souls," which was less than a year ago, did very well. Anyone who

understands Metal understands that "Defenders of the Faith" is truly a work to celebrate by a band that's worth a thousand-gun salute.

There is much to be said for a band who have deified themselves...and no one argues.

When thousands of us first tore off the plastic on "Defenders" vinyl in 1984, we all went for a wild, ruthless ride on the back of the "The Sentinel" that never ceased. From the first thrumming engine chord of "Freewheel Burning" to the deliciously controversial "Eat Me Alive," to the battle cry that was banned from the radio for three days after 9/11, "Some Heads Are Gonna Roll," to the haunting power ballad, "When the Night Comes Down," all the way until Rob Halford led us all to chant that we are "Defenders of the Faith," Judas Priest hasn't hit the brakes and neither have we. So, to the naysayers, you can kiss our big, buckled, leather boots.

The 2015 re-issue is a 3-disk package containing a re-mastery of the masterpiece and a full length live recording at the Long Beach Arena, California on May 5th, 1984. The overwrap design, itself, seems to be very well intended but poorly executed. At first glance, all you can see is an awkward "floating head" of the album's mascot, "The Sentinel," in cliché blackness, which just looks strange.

However, if one takes a closer look, the rest of the artwork is very slightly etched. Unfortunately, too slightly, as when I mean "closer look", I mean you need to hold it up to a very certain light and hit it just right to be able to see it. Once the black sleeve is pulled off, one anticipates a re-design of the original album cover, but alas that is not the case.

So, the initial impression does not so much say, re-issue or celebration, as it says, "another version of the same, just add black." This extremely subliminal print is also found on the inside of the first bi-fold, where you'll find the revision of the metal monster in deep vampiric crimsons and shadows. But again, it is so faint, it is difficult to "ooh" and "aah" what you can barely see, which is a shame because at a certain angle, it is very striking.

The booklet is appropriately retro, red on black, block print, classic 80's, with an energetic intro from the band telling the story behind the original recording (and how it almost didn't happen), some live photos from the epic near-riot show in Madison Square Garden that year, and a testament by journalist, Bryon Reesman. Nice, but not flooring.

Listening to the original disk and the re-master back-to-back, the most noticeable distinction is some of the original reverb was cleaned. But, for some inexplicable reason, the re-issue's vocals are pushed further back from the guitars – it's like painting over a Giger with a gray wash. The background has a little less sizzle, but other than that, much like the packaging, there is very little difference unless you're looking for it.

Again: Nice, but not flooring...until you hear the live recording.

What makes a live album worth listening to is the experience. When the sounds trigger the rush and the visuals of being before the stage with the smells, and the singing, and the screaming, with the ground trembling and your bones splitting and your ears ringing, that is how one knows it was done right – and this was done right. They delivered all the goods: "Electric Eye," "You Got Another Thing Comin'," "Victim of Changes," "Hell Bent For Leather," and "Breaking the Law," along with Defenders' classics. KK, Tipton, Hill, Holland, and Halford kicked it up and delivered such a show that night and you can feel it in your spine for hours in the agony of silence when it ends.

This is why they call themselves gods and no one contests them. And that is why this re-issue is worth a place in your collection.

Listen to the original "Defenders of the Faith" for that full-bodied metal flavor. Go online or through the archives for the eye-candy. But, it would be a crime and shame to miss out on the rock-n-rumble in Priest's temple.

Happy anniversary, indeed.

-T. Ray Verteramo



MALRUN
Two Thrones
4.5 / 5
2014 ViciSolum
Productions

**Just may be the answer
to American radio metal**

Denmark's Malrun just may be the answer to American Radio Metal.

However, don't expect to hear these guys on our airwaves anytime soon.

With their 3rd release, Malrun pull out all the stops with their brand of Alternative Metal ensuring there is enough mayhem for the metal fans, while excelling with made-for-radio vocals and memorable melodies. However, what makes Malrun stand out is their lack of whiney vocals (replaced with exceptional vocals by Nicklas Sonne), backed by a very talented band that knows how to keep the music fresh and relevant on every track.

I'm glad that after 10 years, these guys are still releasing amazing music.

-David Loveless

**MALRUN JUST FINISHED UP A 17
DATE TOUR OF EUROPE
SUPPORTING
FOZZY!**



PANZER

Send Them All to Hell

4 / 5

2014 Nuclear Blast

Classic thrash & metal

Panzer is a super group that will have fans of German metal scrambling over each other to get their hands on "Send Them All To Hell". Comprised of Schmier of Destruction fame, guitarist Herman

Frank of Accept and Victory and drummer Stefan Schwarzmann, also of Accept, Panzer deliver some classic thrash and metal on their debut release. Knowing the lineage of the band members puts some lofty ambitions on this album to be truly incredible. After sitting with this one for a while, I can say that Panzer has done just that!

Schmier's vocal delivery is as venomous as always lending some extra aggression to an album that is teeming with vicious musicality throughout. Frank turns in some of his best guitar work outside of Accept and lends the album that "Accept sound" with a bit more speed and malice but still making sure you know it's him wielding the axe. Tracks like "Death Knell", "Temple of Doom" and "Mr. Nobrain" are filled with blistering riffing, scorching solos and some damn fine guitar playing. Schwarzmann's drumming is nothing short of stellar and really fattens up the sound and provides some great melody to Frank's axework.

Having a nostalgic and modern feel all at once, this album is one you'll find yourself hailing with the horns and throwing 'em up every time you are listening to it. Standout tracks are "Panzer", "Hail and Kill" and "Bleed For Your Sins". The album overall is one that I've found myself listening to through in its entirety and never getting tired of it. With the influences the band members have, they keep things interesting and change things up so things don't get stale and so you don't feel like you're listening to another Accept or Destruction album. That variety keeps me willing to stand in the tank path of Panzer regardless of the consequences.

Fans of old school thrash or the aforementioned bands will be praising the metal gods for getting this album. And if you aren't a fan of those bands or old school metal, you still need to give this album a listen. Aggression, rage, plenty of riffs for air guitar--it doesn't get more metal than this! **-Greg Watson**



REQUIEM FOR OBLIVION

Dark Tales of Forgotten...

3.5 / 5

2015 Independent

Not enough strong composing skills

Dark Tales of Forgotten Mindscapes was described by the band as "a concept album based on founder

Steve J.'s personal experience with depression." So, with that, one would expect to experience some empathy while following in the shadows on a dark, convoluted journey. One anticipates the story, the mood, the setting, and the anguish that the suffering of depression inflicts. One expects a concept in a concept album.

There was no concept. There were songs performed with moderate and sometimes adequate skill, there were flashes of diversity with some prog capabilities, but there were no shadows. As much as I listened, there was no experience. All I could do was just hear what was going on. Frankly, "Tales" gets about as dark as a lit hallway with a 40-watt bulb. (If they want to know what real "dark" is, they should take some notes from Blut Aus Nord or Schammasch. It's not the same as "pissed off").

What was going on starts with the snorefest called "Inception". Now, what that is supposed to mean is difficult to decipher with a cliché thunderstorm (yeah, that's never been done before) and some acoustic strumming and then some metal riffs. Something happened, but what, who knows? The music doesn't illustrate, it just changes. I did not get a sense that anything actually happened, just sound.

And this is the project, throughout. Unremarkable guitarwork that is played well enough to convey every riff we've already heard before to paint a picture of...what? Some solid drumming carries the band fine, but to go...where? Every time there is a sense of atmosphere or an attempt to get inside this patient's head, the band pushes the "hell no" button and goes into just another metal song that's fronted by a vocalist that sounds like he needs a lozenge.

It saddens me because this album is obviously done with good intent. The composer(s) really wants this to be impactful. Unfortunately, other than some personally poignant lyrics, it's not. But, in all fairness, it sounds like they just bit off more than they could chew. And that not only brings failure to the band as a band, the consequence of their inabilities can potentially have a negative impact on those under depression's oppression and those who are trying to understand the infliction. Sufferers know exactly what they're supposed to be feeling and they're the ones who are going to call Requiem's bluff.

I am not discounting Steve J.'s experience – no no, not by any means! And I am truly so sorry that he has endured such pain. However, it is clear that there are simply not enough strong composing skills among the members to share or relay that intense, drowning, suffocating pain as effective art. 'Disconnect'.

-T. Ray Verteramo

RANDOM THOUGHTS OF METAL
"Mud is the new corpse paint." **-Greg Watson**



SLIPKNOT *5 The Gray Chapter*

3.5 / 5

2014 Roadrunner

Pissed off

Personal loss is one hell of a motivational tool. Anyone who has experienced it knows that it can galvanize you into any sort of action, positive or negative. With the untimely and tragic death of

Paul Gray, many fans of Slipknot weren't sure what to expect with the band going into stasis and the remaining members focusing on other projects. Then with the announcement earlier this summer that drummer Joey Jordison had been released from his duties, you could hear the collective groan of the "Maggots" and feel that the hiatus would continue. Then Slipknot started posting on social media that they were starting work on a new album and they released several creepy, cryptic videos giving fans a taste of what was to come.

On October 20th, the agonizing wait was rewarded with the release of "5: The Gray Chapter". To say that this album was one of the most anticipated of the year would be an understatement. Fans and critics alike have been salivating. I've sat with this record for almost a month now and have finally gotten to the point where I feel I can offer a decent review for it. Since getting my hands on it, I've waffled between detesting and loathing the album, feeling kind of 'meh' about it and really getting in to it. While I am still not in love with this album personally, it's undeniable that this is Slipknot's heaviest album to date, both musically and lyrically. Taking all their sadness and anger over the death of Paul, the ensuing trial of the doctor who had been charged with his death, the dismissal of Jordison and the band members own personal issues, there was plenty of fuel provided for the raging fire that this album is. The opening track is a 3 minute long, discordant intro that has an overall creepy atmosphere to it that leaves you going "WTF?!?" at the end of it.



Once the actual opening song, "Sarcastrophe" kicks in, you can tell that Slipknot is back and fueled with the rage of a horde of demons.

The biggest takeaway for me from "5" is just how pissed off Slipknot is, making this album the angriest of their career, in my opinion. With a sound that blends the band's debut, 2001's "Iowa" and 2004's "Vol. 3", Slipknot shows that they've matured in their musical abilities as well as their sound. They are still capable of blasting the skin from your face as if you were staring straight into a sandblaster but have also thrown in some new tricks. The use of electronic sampling on this album is heavier than it has been since their debut and the placement and tones of the samples add to the angst and eeriness of what the band must be going through in dealing with the loss of Gray. There is an incredibly beautiful and stirring interlude in the song "AOV" that features the bass providing much of the driving melody and pace, which feels as though it's a tribute to Gray. "AOV" itself is just a bombastic assault of the senses until it reaches that interlude and then returns to it's crescendo. The tracks "The Devil in I", "Kilpop" and "Goodbye" remind me a bit of Stone Sour with Slipknot playing the music and Taylor's clean vocals cascading like a waterfall. But each track includes heavy breakdowns and that anger that is present throughout the album that quickly erases any notion of each song being in Stone Sour's repertoire.

The song "Skeptic" is a song that I feel is a direct nod and tribute to Gray, given that the chorus is "And the world will never see another crazy motherfucker like you. The world will never know another man as amazing as you." And the way that Corey Taylor screams the chorus shows just how fresh the loss still affects both he and the band (presumably). The song is pure Slipknot through and through with heavy percussion, swirling aggressive guitar work and Taylor's guttural bark. "Lech" starts out with just Corey Taylor screaming before the rest of the band come in like a line of M1 Abrams tanks battering your chest with a cannonade of hellish power.

One thing that I love about this album is the duality of Corey Taylor's vocals. He has his trademark Slipknot bark that is ever present throughout but he's also using his clean vocals a good deal more on this album and it's amazing the strides he has made as a vocalist since the band broke on the scene.

Hands down, my favorite track on the album is "Custer". With a chorus that is so fun to scream out loud, this song is Slipknot at their finest; sure to unleash a pit at their shows. The chorus of "Cut, cut, cut me up and Fuck, fuck, fuck me up" is done gang style after Taylor barks it out and the electronic work just adds to the frenzy. If you are squeamish or afraid of pits, don't be anywhere within 500 yards of it when this song starts as there is sure to be insanity and some serious GBH occurring during this one. The album closes out with the track "If Rain Is What You Want" which is a bit of slow burner at the outset. But once it gets going, it shows just how far the band's sound has evolved and matured. Melodic guitar work, latent percussion that is heavy hitting without being blastbeat driven, and the bass line makes this song an epic closing track and a fitting end to this album.

All in all, this album will take a few listens to truly get into and peel back all the layers that are present on each song. While the band may never truly recover from the loss of Paul Gray, it's clear that they want to try to carry on to honor him and to continue their run as a dominate metal band. So, do Slipknot a solid and go out and get your copy of this album. It's well worth your time and will find a permanent home in your library very easily.

-Greg Watson



SOLBRUD

Jaertegn

5 / 5

2015 Mighty Music

Primal roar

Mighty Music is on a tear of incredible bands that are virtually unknown on this side of the pond but are sure to make a big splash. The next band that the Americans should be ready for is Solbrud, a

Danish black metal outfit with a sound that is so extreme that most seasoned black metal fans (myself included) will be taken aback. The sound on this album is aural evil plain and simple. The guitars are that trademark black metal buzzsaw sound taken to another level. Imagine that a whirlwind of straight razor blades is encircling you and alternately one to three blades dive bomb you at any given moment. The sheer brutality of the guitars alone is enough to make your jaw drop. The bass is so heavy and thick that I had to cut my sub-woofer off because the thumps of the bass were making my heart jump. But wait, I haven't even gotten to the drums. Drummer Troels Hjorth has got to be a robot, a machine, a Terminator or some sort of alien lifeform because his drumming is just disgustingly ridiculous. The

speed at which he continues on every song, which clock it at 10 minutes plus, is just totally mind boggling. What I'm about to say may be considered blasphemy by some but please know that I wouldn't say this

unless I sincerely meant it: Troels could go tete-a-tete with Pete Dinklage and have a very good chance of outdoing Pete. I haven't heard drumming like this since I heard my first Morbid Angel album way back in 1999. What's even more impressive is that given the lengths of the songs (11:42, 10:51, 15:57 and 9:58), the band is able to maintain your interest and keep you focused on the music rather than looking at the track time to see how much longer is left. Traditional black metal through and through, there may be a total of 5 minutes on this album where there is any sort of easing up on the extremity and the heaviness. I am in awe of Solbrud and given how raw and organic this album is, black metal purists and metal fans in general will be thoroughly impressed with this band, especially since this is their sophomore release. The production has that gritty, lo-fi feel to it, which just adds to the savagery of the band's sound. Solbrud have unleashed a primal roar that dares all of the metal world to ignore them at their own peril. Well guys, you've got my attention and I'm sure many others will follow suit after they pick up their copy of "Jaertegn".

-Greg Watson



STONEWIRE

When the Crow Flies

5 / 5

2014 Century Media

Top line bluesy rock

Hailing from the UK, Kent to be specific, StoneWire were a veritable shot in the dark for me. I liked the band name and decided to roll the dice and see what I came up with. Well, let me say that this being the

band's debut EP, I am utterly and totally floored! The band sounds tight and as though they've been doing this for decades. The highlight of the album is vocalist Sky Hunter who's voice is soulful, sultry, sassy and powerful. With a sound that is a mix of Janis Joplin and Abigail Lenz from the criminally underrated Swamp Boogie Queen, Hunter shows why you shouldn't just pass on StoneWire.

And if her voice weren't enough, the musicianship on "When the Crow Flies" is top of the line bluesy rock that will have you stomping your feet and seeking out the nearest crossroads to make a deal with Satan himself. Tracks "Walk the Line", "Southern Honey" and "Vamanos" epitomize the band's sound and will reel you in like a deep sea angler hooking a mako shark. Opening track "Walk the Line" starts off like a slow moving train and then the engine roars to life when Hunter's voice kicks in and the guitars start in with a bit of The Allman Brothers Band flair. "Favourite Bitch" is just a marvelously confrontational track that dares you to look the other way while the band just lays the hammer down. "Southern Honey" has a bit of an Eagles "Life in the Fast Lane" intro before becoming a little more refined and very bluesy.

The songs just keep getting better as the album goes on. StoneWire clearly know what they want their sound to be and execute it with a surgical precision that is matched by the album's production, allowing for a crisp, clean sound that hits all the right spots in all the right ways. The bass is fattened up and so are the drums and the production just adds to the driving rhythm that guides this album from start to finish. This is definitely a band that many people would probably overlook or pass on checking out but believe me, you need to give this one a listen. With a great sound and soul for days, StoneWire are a band not to be missed. -Greg Watson

LOOK FOR **STONEWIRE** AT **HEROFEST 2015** IN
GRAVESEND, UNITED KINGDOM





WITCH MEADOW

Cry of the Wolf

3.5 / 5

2015 Divebomb

Sheer energy

Now, this brings back memories! And let that serve as a disclaimer of sorts, as this long gone metal act from my home state of Rhode Island played a significant role in my musical coming of age during

my college years (late '90's to early 2000's). Full disclosure: I count Witch Meadow guitarist Bryan Martin as a friend and former bandmate, having briefly served as rhythm guitarist in his post-Witch Meadow band, Metal Rising. Having said that, I think I can nonetheless be somewhat objective here.

As this collection's liner notes state, Witch Meadow were a four-piece traditional metal outfit that had the somewhat unfortunate distinction of arriving in the early nineties- late in the game for this style of metal and more importantly, a time when the Grunge-dominated American music scene had started to become markedly unwelcoming for any band with long hair and even slightly pointy guitars. But like untold (but diminishing) numbers of similar acts carrying the torch during this dark period, the band soldiered on for a time, issuing two self-released albums. Both of those releases - the 1995 EP "When Midnight Calls" and the 1996 full-length "Down Eternity's Hall" - are included in their entirety here, in what I feel is a nice addition to Divebomb Records' growing collection of archival releases.

Musically, Witch Meadow seemed to take most of their cues from the likes of Iron Maiden, Manowar and Judas Priest, lacking the technical precision of those acts in their prime, but making up for this minor shortcoming through sheer energy and conviction. This was particularly true of their debut EP, where Martin churned out basic but effective riffs and solos that eschewed the ornate melodicism and complex, jazz fusion-influenced licks favored by some shredders in favor of tried and true metal basics. (Although his solo on leadoff tune "Cry of the Wolf" boasts a pretty impressive tapped run.) Vocalist Paul Wyrostek, meanwhile, makes valiant attempts at Halford-like levels of vocal grandeur. It's all pretty basic and a bit on the rough side in terms of production and execution, but on this six-song, cassette-only EP, it worked, due in no small part to memorable songs that played to the band's strengths.

Less successful in this regard was "Down Eternity's Hall," on which the band attempted to diversify its sound somewhat. With drummer Mel Taylor being replaced by the more progressively inclined Norm Wrigley, the band mined some of the same territory, but tried a few different moves, and with what Martin has acknowledged were somewhat mixed results. "Soldier of Fortune" rocks fiercely, in what was probably the closest the band had ever come to thrash metal, and "The Gift" is a minor epic based on a riff more intricate than the band's previous work. On the downside, however, there are two ballads, one of which drifts into an almost pop metal style that sits uncomfortably amongst the other songs here. In my opinion, however, what really kept this album from reaching the potential hinted at on the EP was the production. Cleaner and simultaneously more minimalist than that of its predecessor, it left the guitars curiously low in the mix. (Both releases appear to feature minimal

overdubbing, but here the resulting sound is often thin to the point of distraction, while somehow also lacking the pleasant sonic rawness of the EP.) In a recent interview with Maximum Metal, Martin said this album's production process was actually more labor-intensive than that of the EP, yet to my ears, it always sounded distinctly unfinished. (Odd observation: Martin's guitar and Dennis Stimpert's bass are mixed in a way that reminds me of Manowar's "Louder Than Hell" album.)

For this release, Divebomb has produced spiffy new artwork, including a lovely full color booklet that features an interview with Martin, lyrics to most of the songs and lots of pictures (a two page collage and a few individual shots of the band). The mastering is also worth noting, as it makes some (mostly welcome) sonic tweaks, particularly to the "Down Eternity's Hall" tracks, which have been given some much needed punch and clarity. The only drawback to the remastering done here is that if anything, it's a little too hot (although definitely not as bad as "Death Magnetic" and other offenders in the Loudness Wars). For the most part, though, it doesn't detract from enjoyment of the music, and again, some of this stuff has definitely been improved, clarity-wise.

If you're an old school metal fan hearing about Witch Meadow for the first time here, chances are you'll find this collection enjoyable, but most likely not life-changing. However, if you (like me) have been wishing you had a clean, professionally pressed CD version of "When Midnight Calls" to replace the worn out cassette copy you dubbed from a friend back in the day, then you need this.

-Vinaya Saksena



VISIGOTH

The Revenant King

3.5 / 5

2015 Metal Blade

Frosty mead soaked Viking hymns

Salt Lake City, Utah isn't typically known for its grandiose traditional metal, yet Visigoth are making a valid attempt to convince the world that frosty mead soaked

Viking hymns aren't exactly a far-fetched concept for the Beehive State. 'The Revenant King' is the full-length debut from the five year veterans and comes by way of prominent label Metal Blade. Think 80s Heavy Load meets Grand Magus with a singer that utilizes a lower clean vocal delivery. While not the most original thing in the world, you could do worse in your pursuit of Swedish styled traditionalism. -Eric Compton

Visigoth's album cover was created by Kris Verwimp. The Belgian painter has illustrated over 100 heavy metal albums including works from Arch Enemy, Old Man's Child, Nagelfar, Sabbath and Vital Remains



YESTERDAY'S SAINTS *Generation of Vipers*

4.5 / 5

2015 Draconum

A masterpiece story

Washington, D.C. is the home to the President of the U.S. It is our nation's capitol and has also produced a few well known heavy metal and hard rock bands. Well, the next band to come out of there

that people should take notice of is--Yesterday's Saints. Brandishing an amalgamated sound of Death, Doom, Power and Thrash metal, "Generation of Vipers" is an incredibly complex, intelligent and scorching debut. A concept album through and through, "Generation" is broken up into three parts detailing the history of Satan from his creation to present time with a few twists in there for good measure. What's more metal than an album chronicling the history of Satan? The first thing that hits you is the sheer heaviness that Yesterday's Saints possess. Riffs that are suited for monstrosities like the mythological Kraken or Thor litter most every song on the album. The riffs aren't heavy for the sake of being heavy either. They're well-thoughtout, strategically placed, and are bone-grindingly heavy.

The album's opener, "Fall of the Ancients" sets the tone for the album as the band incorporates every element described in their sound. The song starts out with a traditional death metal riff with classic death metal vocals and transitions over to a more thrash based riff and vocals. Then the chorus hits and the vocals shift to more of a power metal delivery with a death metal blastbeat accompanied by melodic guitar work. Vocalist Matt Rice's ability to transition from death to thrash to power metal and back to death vocals and all points in between is just incredible.

Most of the tracks do incorporate the multi-genre style that comprises the band's sound, but there are a few tracks that are more singular in style, such as "Sangreale" that has a power metal feel throughout with majestic acoustic guitar work and more heartfelt and emotive vocals all sung cleanly for the most part. As the album progresses and the story unfolds, the listener becomes immersed in an everchanging soundscape and story, making this album an incredible listening experience from start to finish.

It's albums like this that I live for; albums that really make you pay attention to what's going on. The variety on the album, particularly with all the genres represented, makes the album accessible on so many levels that any metalhead can pick this album up and find a song or two that they can grab hold of and relate to. These aren't lyrics that the band wrote on the fly; they took their time with them and made sure every piece fit together perfectly to paint the clearest picture possible. The production on the album is pretty solid, with a few hiccups here and there. I do wish that the death metal vocals didn't sound so muffled at times and that the bass was a little more prevalent. But overall, I was pretty happy with the overall sound the band achieves.

The more I listen to this album, the more invested and further entranced I become not only with the story but also with the band. "Generation of Vipers" is one hell of a debut. Yesterday's Saints have truly crafted a masterpiece of a story. Go out and buy this album or feel the sting of the viper's bite! **-Greg Watson**



ZERO DOWN

No Limit to the Evil

3.5 / 5

2014 Minotauro

Basement party metal

U.S. based hard rock band Zero Down hasn't changed much over the course of four releases in the last decade. Their comfort zone is in the heavy metal parking lot of rural Anywhere, USA, where

denim and leather meets NWOBHM and punk rock.

I ain't gonna shit anybody. You can't go into a Zero Down release listening with a high level of seriousness; not with lyrics like "Going down on my angel witch" and an inner sleeve amalgam of the Pontiac Trans Am eagle with chest pentagram. This is top-notch, basement party metal. The production is slightly unpolished, but with a nice guitar crunch thanks to Martin Feveyear's bigger budget recording. Hawk Hawkinson has a vocal change-up from mid-range to falsetto that could be jarring to the uninitiated, but the raw gang chants are always welcome. Zero Down excels at fast-paced, fun metal songs, but on half of these I really wanted them to open the throttle, put the hammer down, and catch the tires on fire.

Welcome back to the wild-eyed, snake-handling reverend on a hot Ed Repka cover. Drink up some liquid courage, maybe some Trooper beer or some AC/DC wine, and get loud, proud, and evil!

-Frank Hill



GUJARIST LENNY BURNETT ON ZERO DOWN'S INFLUENCES: "WITHOUT A DOUBT WE HAVE A GREAT LOVE AND CONNECTION TO THAT LATE 70'S NWOBHM ERA STYLE ROCK AND METAL. THROUGH ALL THE TRENDS OF METAL, AFTER IT WE FIND OURSELVES STILL INSPIRED AND EXCITED TO CREATE AND PLAY MUSIC ROOTED IN THAT VEIN."

SUMMARIES

MAXIMUM METAL



ANIMA MORTE - *Upon Darkened Stains*

4 / 5 (Transubstans)

Sweden's Anima Morte release their third album with 'Upon Darkened Stains'. The four piece are captivating in their spacey instrumental rock, complete with vintage 60s and 70s instruments like the Mellotron and electric organs. Each track gradually evolves from slower visions to grand crescendos that are reminiscent of Italian cinema, the spaghetti horror films like "Deep Red", "Suspiria" and "Zombi" that were frequently paired with progressive rockers Goblin. Goblin cuts like "L'alba Dei Morti Viventi" ("Zombi OST"), "Black Forest" ("Suspiria OST") and "Profondo Rosso" ("Deep Red OST") were clearly the inspiration for Anima Morte's twelve track opus. Songs like opener "Blessing of the Dead" builds with a steady march of electric pianos, organs and synths to a melodic despondency. While other tracks like "Halls of Death" follow the same formula, other cuts like "The Carrion

Crow" and "First Snow on the Last Ashes" incorporate more acoustic string instruments that portray more of a rock feel. Heavy distortion and electric instrumentation flow through the more audacious efforts such as "Ephemeris" and "Illusion is the Catalyst". The band's previous efforts 'The Nightmare Becomes Reality' (2011) and 'Face the Sea of Darkness' (2007) are equally as entertaining. -Eric Compton



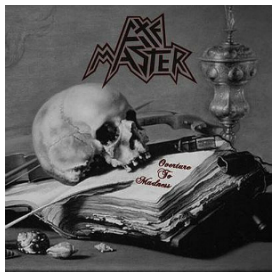
AUTERE - *Amal'i*

4 / 5 (Inverse)

So, who the hell are these Autere people? They have less than 1,000 likes on their website, barely more than 530 on their Facebook page and they're practically non-existent on Twitter. The album cover is about as interesting as the side of a barn...in fact, I think that's what it is. YouTube? WhoTube. WhatTube? There is NoTube. And yet, they sound enormous. These boys can play. Based out of Turku, Finland, Autere is hiding innovative and piledriving metalcore with skillful and pugilistic intricacy under a rock. Complex timing and tempo changes flawlessly executed by a relentless rhythm section (Markus Virtanen, bass and Tatu Turunen, drums) and rich, pissed-off guitars (Petri Huhtala and Joona Alamaki) frame egocentric, human lyrics that get the blood pumping and the brain thinking.

Anssi Rissa delivers bi-polar vocals with an honest, not-too ugly / not-too pretty style that make this "core" unit truly unique and easy to connect with. The songs have a way of snapping you out of whatever you are and giving you a smack upside the head if you're not paying attention. And just when you think a verse or a phrase isn't going to go anywhere or that bizarre, augmented chord progression is going to lose you, they go in for the kill and smack you again. There is absolutely no reason why "Circle of Kinetic Damage" should not be made into a video and streamed to death. It's full of visualization, tons of energy, and is a force to be reckoned with. There is absolutely no reason why "Redeemers" should not get airtime. It's got a great hook.

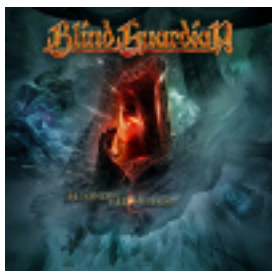
There is no reason why we should be asking "Who the hell is Autere?" Yeah, sure, as I said, there are some awkward spots scattered along the list. But, they work like little suspenseful teases and for every awkward spot, there are about 10 good ones that make up for it. This is good metal. Good metal makes you listen. These mysterious Finnish boys don't say much on the computer screen, but when they're in your ears, they own you. "Amal'i" is done well. The music is done well. It is written well, produced well, and performed well. What sucks is their publicist. -T. Ray Verteramo



AXEMASTER - *Overture To Madness*

3.5 / 5 (Pure Steel)

Led by guitar virtuoso Joe Sims (Reign, Dream or Nightmare), these Ohio natives released two underground classics in 'Blessing in the Skies' (1987) and 'Death Before Dishonor' (1990) before changing names to The Awakening and Inner Terror. Now Axemaster is back with a third album and first for the Pure Steel label. These are mid-tempo power punches that are elevated by newcomer Geoff McGraw's solid vocal performance. The busy percussion, gang vocals and quicker pace never waver from the red, white and bruise intensity. This is metal for metal's sake, skillfully played and polished with an old school approach. -Eric Compton



BLIND GUARDIAN - *Beyond the Red Mirror*

3.5 / 5 (Nuclear Blast)

Germany's kings of the power mountain, Blind Guardian, are out with their tenth studio album--Beyond the Red Mirror. It's speed, power, precision, and a fair amount of really BIG orchestration. The group takes the listener on a musical journey that is often majestic, yet sometimes too epically busy with symphonic layers, taking away from Hansi and the band (The Throne is an example that isn't trying to outdo itself). For the most part, there are some filler tracks mixed with tracks of pure genius. Fans of older Blind Guardian,

may want to pass on this. Fans that can hear and enjoy the band's progression over time will enjoy this immensely. -Anthony Burke



SUMMARIES

MAXIMUM METAL



BLOODBOUND - *Stormborn*

5 / 5 (AFM)

Sweden strikes again! Bloodbound's "Stormborn" is a power metal opus for those of us who love our metal fast, epic and anthemic. Blending Edguy and DragonForce together, "Stormborn" is a damn fine piece of metal. Aggressive riffing, insanely fast solos, bombastic and rhythmic drumming, soaring vocals, it has it all. From the opening number "Bloodtale" to the closer "When All Lights Fail", Bloodbound show that they know how to craft a power metal album that would get even the staunchest opponent of power metal to pump their fists in a power metal pit. The vocals are a bit reminiscent of Tobias Sammet of Edguy fame with a little bit of Udo thrown in for good measure. Vocalist Patrik "Pata" Johansson wails and sings his way through the album with plenty of emotion and passion in his vocals. "We Raise the Dead", "Satanic Panic" and "When All Light Fails" are some of the

highlights of Johansson's voice. Guitar brethren (literally) Tomas and Henrik Olsson provide plenty of shredding, bone-shearing riffs and some fiery, fret-frenzied solos on the album. They never seem to slow down and I swear they speed up as the album goes on; which is just insane if my ears aren't deceiving me. "Iron Throne" and "Seven Hells" are the musical highlights for the guitar, though any of the songs just kick ass straight through. All in all, "Stormborn" is a hell of an album; what Edguy wishes their last few albums were. Bloodbound has released a banger and you'd be wise to go snag this one up. -Greg Watson



BLOODSHOT DAWN - *Demons*

3.5 / 5 (Independent)

Hardhanded metal act Bloodshot Dawn return with their sophomore effort 'Demons'. It's hard to place this extremity in the confines of a genre, yet the speed and finesse rank among death metal's coveted skill set. Deathcore theatrics abound with chains of punishing grooves placed on the rails of high speed double bass. The melody and chord progression combine to elevate it just beyond the typical aggressive batch. I'll be shocked to see the band remain an indy after these two successful albums.

-Eric Compton



BLOODY HAMMERS - *Under Satan's Sun*

4.5 / 5 (Napalm)

The cabalistic shenanigans continue for Charlotte's purveyors of swanky doom with 'Under Satan's Sun'. Much like the band's previous outing, "Spiritual Relics" (2013), vocalist Anders Manga is oracular from his pulpit as he dabbles in 70s mysticism and pop culture. Opener "The Town That Dreaded Sundown", based on the 1946 phantom murders and documenting film of the same name, prances eerily around Alice Cooper and Blue Oyster Cult. The band's writing style is similar to John Shirley's contributions for Blue Oyster Cult (i.e. "Harvest Moon").

That same creepy melody and

storytelling permeates "Death Do Us Part" and "Welcome to the Horror Show", both delivered with grunge-thick string buzz.

It isn't as foggy on more up-tempo cuts like "Dead Man's Shadow on a Wall", "The Necromancer" and "Spearhead". Although still dressed for the part, these tracks represent a more empirical approach of chugging, heavily distorted guitar. "The Last Alarm" is the most exploratory, like a strange marriage of Christian Death and White Zombie. With their medieval devices, arcane symbols and strange tales, Bloody Hammers could be the most compelling band in America. -Eric Compton

**"THE TOWN THAT DREADED
SUNDOWN" IS BASED ON THE
PHANTOM KILLER MURDERS THAT
PLAGUED TEXARKANA, TX IN 1946**



SUMMARIES

MAXIMUM METAL



BONZ - *Broken Silence*

3.5 / 5 (Pavement)

I'm probably one of the biggest Stuck Mojo fans in the world. I can remember seeing the band in the 90s in sweaty bars and warehouses all over the East Coast. The rap-core pioneers were innovative and influential with their blend of Black Sabbath heaviness amongst Run DMC street poetry. The last album to feature vocalist Bonz, 'Declaration of a Headhunter' (2000), was sadly the group's Century Media demise and the vocalist's departure from the band. After a long absence the charismatic front man returns again with his own project, simply titled Bonz. The vocalist teams up with Primer 55 guitarist/bassist Curt Taylor to deliver a quality album of heavy groove-based tracks that are orchestrated by Bonz's speak-easy rap delivery. Fans of Stuck Mojo's early days, notably 'Snappin' Necks' should enjoy this electric frenzy of rapcore that comes full circle and delivers a

triumphant return to form for this highly under-rated vocalist. Look for a possible Stuck Mojo studio album in the near future based on Bonz performing with the band last December. -Eric Compton



CALIBAN - *Ghost Empire*

4 / 5 (Century Media)

Metalcore is one of the more maligned genres in metal. Most metal heads have a love/hate relationship with it, which can make it hard for bands in the genre to really break out. Caliban is one of those bands. For a while, they've been shrouded in the shadow of the genre's best and brightest, waiting for the spotlight to finally bring them out of the shadows. With "Ghost Empire", Caliban is close to achieving that status. From start to finish, "Ghost Empire" delivers a heavy punch and a solid dose of riffs. Songs like "King", "I Am Rebellion" and "Chaos-Creation" have a great mixture of melody and big, down tuned riffs. Metalcore staples like chanted choruses and drastic switches from clean to death vocals abound throughout the album.

What strikes me most about this album are two things in particular. First off, the guitar playing on this album is pretty damn precise. If you take out the down tuned riffs, the melody and chops of the guitarists Marc Gorte and Dennis Schmidt are really very solid. Playing with speed and precision, this duo shows that they've honed their playing abilities to a razor sharp precision. Second of all, the song writing on this album is quite impressive. Songs such as "Good Man", "Devil's Night" and "Your Song" are very well written songs and songs that perfectly mesh musically and lyrically. A hidden gem off the album is the track "Nebel". Sung in their native German tongue, the song is just a fun break from the norm. "Nebel" reminds me of the hidden track on Solemnity's "Reign In Hell", minus the hilarious folk kazoo. Overall, "Ghost Empire" is a solid release. While it isn't on the level of BMTH's "Sempiternal", "Ghost Empire" is the springboard that could catapult Caliban to the top of the metalcore ladder. Check this album out, you won't be sorry you did. -Greg Watson

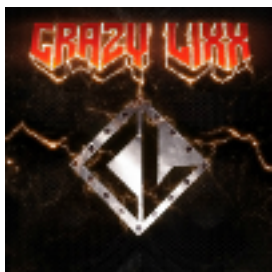


CONCEPTS - *Transitions*

3.5 / 5 (Independent)

Up and comers Concepts deliver an impressive debut EP with "Transitions", a post-hardcore/metalcore/punk tinged offering that is somewhat expected for the genre yet defies some of the stereotypical elements that most metalcore/post-hardcore bands use. While some of the songs reflect a heavy djent influence, as the EP continues the band shows that they are definitely evolving their sound with longer clean vocal sections and with some of the vocals even taking on an almost R&B quality/timbre at times.

Musically, the album is metalcore through and through with some ridiculously heavy breakdowns and monster riffs. One of the refreshing things for me on the EP is the lack of gang vocals that seems to have infested recent metalcore albums. The absence of these chanted vocals really allows the listener to focus on the death and clean duality and really appreciate each singer's ability at any given moment. After a few listens, the songs do become a touch repetitive but they are still fun to listen to. The opening track "Abomination" and "Mirrors" are my two favorites off the album with the prior being a straight bruiser of a metalcore track and the latter being a more progressive approach that shows the band branching out into a more song-driven focus. As this band continues to find their niche and their sound, I believe they will be a force within the coming years. And the production on the album is so clean I had to make sure I read that the EP was self released and produced. -Greg Watson



CRAZY LIXX - *Crazy Lixx*

3.5 / 5 (Frontiers)

These Swedes have drastically transformed from their original sleazy sound to precise and prissy version of Danger Danger. That isn't necessarily a bad thing, it will just be discouraging for those fans that were hoping this act would completely morph into Hardcore Superstar or Babylon Bombs. Most of the street grime from 'Loud Minority' and 'New Religion' has been replaced with a flair for European AOR. The soulful vocal melodies are saturated with robust harmonized vocal patterns and polished riffs. The heaviest rippers are 'Call to Action', 'All Looks, No Hooks' and lead single 'Hell Raising Women'.. -Eric Compton

RANDOM THOUGHTS OF METAL

"I like hard rock music that makes me want to crash a car into a swimming pool." - Frank Hill

SUMMARIES

MAXIMUM METAL



THE CROWN - *Death is Not Dead*

4 / 5 (Century Media)

Swedish death metal vets The Crown return after a 5 year hiatus with "Death Is Not Dead", an album that also commemorates the band's 25th year. Back is original vocalist Johan Lindstrand, whose vocals are just as vicious as they were on 1999's "Hell is Here". Tracks like 'Headhunter', 'Iblis Bane' and 'Godeater' show he still has the growl to send goose pimples up your spine. Musically the band still follows the formula of melodic death melded together with a dash of thrash. The band rips and tears through 10 songs and throw in an instrumental just to throw you off. Death metal fans will enjoy battering their skull. A triumphant return!. -Greg Watson



CYCLE BEATING - *The Age of Depression*

3 / 5 (Independent)

Cycle Beating are a German Groove/Thrashcore band who just sort of blend in with the other bands in this genre. "The Age of Depression" is a decent debut with solid songs and a great mix of death and grind style growls. The problem is in the repetitiveness of the record. After hearing the first few tracks, the formula is pretty clear --crash the cymbals, abuse the hell out of the low E chord and create lots of groove and crushing riffs. The production is mostly clear, with a few muddled hiccups here and there. This album isn't going to break any barriers and with some evolving, the band could definitely move up the ladder. -Greg Watson



DESOLATE SHRINE - *The Heart of the Netherworld*

5 / 5 (Dark Descent)

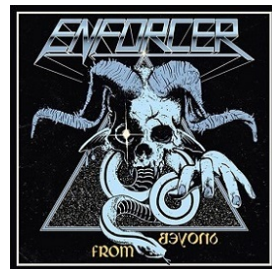
Desolate Shrine has unleashed hell upon the masses with The Heart Of The Netherworld, their 3rd album of early 90's influenced Swedish death metal. Hailing from Finland, Desolate Shrine crank up the distortion (gotta love that HM-2 Boss pedal) and massive drum production to create over an hours worth of grim anthems, ranging from brutal death metal to ferociously slow doom metal, that will burn your soul. With 3 of the 7 tracks over the 10-minute mark, this epic blood bath of punishing ear candy is my favorite metal album of 2015 (so far). Each track, relentless from beginning to end, set a new precedence for death metal for years to come. -David Loveless



DIE NO MORE - *Elected Evil*

4.5 / 5 (Rocksector)

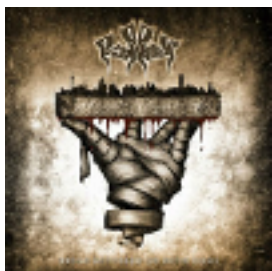
The four piece UK thrashers have done it, creating an album full of throwback thrasherpieces of yesteryear. Vocalist Marc Farquhar has a style and sound like James Hetfield, but that is where Metallica stops and Die No More starts. All eight tracks showcase Steve Orchiton on drums, Martyn Simpson on bass, and Kev Smith on lead guitar in a huge way. Each song has a sinister start ala King Diamond, then kick into a gallopy signature sound. This is a great debut from a band with an unending supply of talent. Personal favorite--One in the Chamber. -Anthony Burke



ENFORCER - *From Beyond*

3 / 5 (Nuclear Blast)

Swedish traditional metal outfit Enforcer are back with "From Beyond", a heavy dose of 80's, NWOBHM-infused speed metal that sounds like it was pulled out of a time capsule. Vocals, music, and production scream retro like a Castle Grayskull He-Man set with ripping tracks chock full of whammy bombing, frantic noodling and speedy solos. I found myself getting a little worn out as the album went on as the songs started to blend together. Overall, this is a collectable, nostalgic album for fans of metal's "Golden Era". But for the casual metal fan or those of us that are all over the metal tree, this one is better left unplucked. -Greg Watson



EXHUMATION - *Bread Buttered on Both Sides*

4 / 5 (Independent)

This Russian outfit is listed as melodic death metal but I feel they fall more into the Lamb of God and Killswitch Engage area. This four track EP is absolutely impeccable. Opening track "Threshold" is an incredible mix of melody, raw aggression and a bit of thrash to give you a metal smattering to start. The vocals are more like a mix of hardcore and metalcore with very little death growling. The closing track, "Windwalker", is hands down my favorite of the bunch. The catchy, sweeping guitar riff just makes it bang from beginning to end. The production on the EP is a little lacking. The drums and bass seem to be overshadowed by the guitar and the vocals. The guitar tone is off at times, sounding a bit tinny and muddled. Regardless, the production suits the music to a tee. The only other grumble I have is that I only have four songs. I want more dammit!. -Greg Watson

SUMMARIES

MAXIMUM METAL



HATE - *Crvsade: Zero*

3.5 / 5 (Napalm)

Poland's Hate return with "Crvsade:Zero", a blistering 12 tracks of...well...hate and anger fueled DM. Tracks like "Death Liberator", "Leviathan" and "Hate Is The Law" are classic, cut and dry death metal. It's hard not to hear a little of Behemoth in the band but Hate are their own entity, through and through. While the album isn't anything new from the band, it is a bit more polished and a little less predictable than some of their prior releases. The production is very tight and makes the guitars, vocals and drums sound brutal. If you're looking for a good, solid death metal album, you could do with a listen to "Crvsade:Zero". -Greg Watson



HELLION - *Karma's a Bitch*

3.5 / 5 (New Renaissance)

California-based Hellion was a bit too heavy for the Sunset Strip era to make a national impact, but thirty years later, Ann Boleyn still reigns as the Queen of Hell. Powered by the Priest-ly speed riffs of shredder Maxxxwell Carlisle and the drumming of Simon Wright (former AC/DC), the production and combative anthems may sound dated to modern ears, but when Ann Boleyn coos "Hold my hand" in the dark opening of Betrayal, you reach out. When she belts out "Hell hath no fury", you're hearing a traditional metal vocalist of mythic proportions. If you still covet that style, the new five-song EP shows their heyday wasn't just in the 80s.. -Frank Hill



Hellion vocalist Anne Hull uses the pseudonym Anne Bolelyn. The real life Anne Bolelyn was Queen of England from 1533-1536 as the second wife of King Henry VIII.



INGESTED - *The Architect of Extinction*

3 / 5 (Century Media)

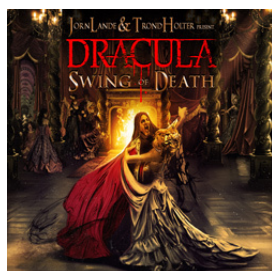
Ingested have unleashed their latest dose of brutal death/deathcore with "The Architect of Extinction". Following in the style of Chelsea Grin, "Architect" is chock full of gurgles, pig squeals and insanely fast drumming and riffing. After about three songs though, the formula becomes rather predictable and the songs begin to stagnate somewhat. This being the band's third full length, I had figured they'd change up their sound a little, but the sound retains some of the slam roots that they started out with, interspersed with deathcore elements. While there are some truly heavy breakdowns, the luster tends to fade rather quickly. -Greg Watson



THE LAST TEN SECONDS OF LIFE - *Soulless Hymns*

5 / 5 (Workhorse Music)

On The Last Ten Seconds Of Life's 3rd album, Soulless Hymns, they firmly plant themselves as the Obituary of the deathcore genre. They replace technical riffs and blast beats with down-tempo brutality and ultra low-end dirges that will drag you to the depths of your mind and soul. This 40 minute metal opus has no fillers and each of the 12 songs inspire hatred and aggression like no other. The production is excellent and Soulless Hymns sounds best at extremely loud volumes if your headphones or speakers can handle it. I highly recommend this if you want to hear an alternate side to the overpopulated (and sometimes bland) deathcore genre. -Grim Gaijin



LANDE / HOLTER - *Dracula: Swing of Death*

4.5 / 5 (Frontiers)

Jorn has a knack for compromising simple titles with over-indulgence so the band name is still a mystery to me. Nevertheless this Dracula concept album is damn near perfect no matter what we call it. Jorn teams with guitarist Trond Holter to deliver a multitude of riffs, powerful vocals and a diverse storytelling approach of symphonies, choral arrangements and atmospheric elements. The Gothic overtone is kept intact throughout the heavier numbers while slower ballad style offerings are complimented with Norwegian singer Lena Floitmoen portraying Stoker's characters Mina/Lucy. At this point both 'Dracula' and Jorn have reached iconic stature. -Eric Compton

SUMMARIES

MAXIMUM METAL



LEVEL 10 - *Chapter 1*

4 / 5 (Frontiers)

Napalm Death has enjoyed a lengthy 33 year history and it definitely doesn't feel as if they've lost the extreme edge that has always made them a great band. On "Apex Predator-Easy Meat", Vocalist Barney Greenway's voice is recognizable but there's a bit more going on than on previous albums. Ranging from scary screams, to more a death metal range, this listener is liking the different ranges that Barney provides here. As always, there's a classic punk vibe to a lot of Napalm Death, coupled with grinding parts or intense speed. While there is variation in "AP-EM", it's not enough to add to the collection of great grind releases. -Eric Compton



MESSIAH'S KISS - *Get Your Bulls Out*

4 / 5 (Massacre)

Germany's Messiah's Kiss have been an uncompromising hard rock outfit over the last fourteen years. Unlike other bands of the flock, the group haven't released an abundance of recordings, only four over the course of their career. The group's first two records, 'Prayer for the Dying' (2002) and 'Metal' (2004), could be juxtaposed with Primal Fear and Sinner in terms of hefty power driven metal. American vocalist Mike Tirelli (Holy Mother, ex-Burning Starr) has a mid-range delivery somewhere between Dio and Tony Martin and reminiscent of fellow American Johnny Gioeli's treatment of like-minded European flare with Axel Rudi Pell. The band's third album, 'Dragonheart' (2007), embraced more traditionalism and power metal mentality that displaced the band into a heavily-crowded genre that lost some of the early momentum. Seven years later the band are back on target with 'Get Your Bulls Out' and a return to the band's hale and sturdy early sound. "Time to Say Goodbye" and "Nobody Says Your Name" are

lively rockers that utilize harmonized vocals and ascending riffs throughout. Both "Mission to Kill" and "Only Murderers Kill Time" are album highlights, faster frenzies of classic heavy metal that permeate with twin guitar runs and busy cymbal work. The steady bass lines and double bass rhythm elevates "Buried Alive" to the top of the stack. Overall this is a homogeneous mix of powerful vocals, polished strings and a production standard that exemplifies professionalism.

-Eric Compton



NAPALM DEATH - *Apex Predator-Easy Meat*

3 / 5 (Century Media)

Napalm Death has enjoyed a lengthy 33 year history and it definitely doesn't feel as if they've lost the extreme edge that has always made them a great band. On "Apex Predator-Easy Meat", Vocalist Barney Greenway's voice is recognizable but there's a bit more going on than on previous albums. Ranging from scary screams, to more a death metal range, this listener is liking the different ranges that Barney provides here. As always, there's a classic punk vibe to a lot of Napalm Death,

coupled with grinding parts or intense speed. While there is variation in "AP-EM", it's not enough to add to the collection of great grind releases. -Nate Turpin



ORANGE GOBLIN - *Back from the Abyss*

3.5 / 5 (Candlelight)

If you know Stoner/Doom, you've heard the music of Orange Goblin, or at least you've heard the name in passing. In the case Back from the Abyss, you'll find a lot of different types of musical styles--classic rock, doom metal, stoner, and blues--all while still making sure the listener knows it's OG. They do a great job of making sure that the riffs and groove do not come across as boring or played out from start to finish, and don't fall into the bracket of making every song predictable like some of their metal brethren fall into. By far, the two strongest tracks on this album are Ubermensch, (my personal favorite), and Blood of Them..

-Nate Turpin



PANDEMIA - *At the Gates of Nihilism*

2 / 5 (Mighty Music)

Czech unit Pandemia unleash your prototypical death metal album with "At The Gates of Nihilism". The songs on this album sound like a plethora of death metal bands that have saturated the market these days. You've got your typical chainsaw sounding guitars, blast beats galore, and Cookie Monster vocals--Death Metal 101. The production is great but, it's material that's been done and redone time and time again. In a genre that is so stagnant, even the flies are becoming bored, Pandemia does very little to set themselves apart from the masses. If you're just looking for another death metal album to add to your menagerie, this is it. -Greg Watson

SUMMARIES

MAXIMUM METAL

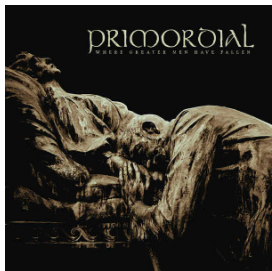


POETS OF THE FALL - *Jealous Gods*

3.5 / 5 (Insomniac)

Poets of the Fall have released five albums prior to 'Jealous Gods', two of which went platinum and two gold in their homeland of Finland. The Helsinki band have been active since 2003 and have a number of charting singles including "Carnival of Rust" (#2) and "Locking up the Sun" (#3). So the question is...why have I never heard of these guys before? Probably because this brand of meticulously played commercial rock doesn't make my playlist often. The band are thorough in their skillset, elaborating on these heart-felt songs with soothing guitar leads, piano and layers of harmonized vocals. None of it is particularly heavy, but as an alternative power source, the musicality and talent is full force. Marko Saaresto, the band's primary songwriter and lead singer, is similar to Jorn Lande on the more soulful vocal melodies. The album's diversity is the band's forte, showing off some hip hop influences on "Choice Millionaire" while the instrumental "Rogue" displays more cobalt

riffs and soaring leads. Fans of the band should be pleased with this offering and it's lyrical approach; this completes the conceptual trilogy started in 2008 with 'Revolution Roulette'. -Eric Compton



PRIMORDIAL - *Greater Men Have Fallen*

4 / 5 (Metal Blade)

Blackened folk metal outfit Primordial return from the Emerald Isle with their eighth album, "Where Greater Men Have Fallen". This album is one of their best to date, easily ranking up there with "To The Nameless Dead" and making a strong case to surpass it as the best album the band have put together. From the opening of "Where Greater Men Have Fallen", the guitars and drums are in perfect sync and produce a great driving riff that just grows and embellishes as the song continues. Singer A.A. Nemtheanga's voice is so distinct and so incredible that it always feels as though he takes the music to another stratosphere with his impassioned singing. The track "The Seed of Tyrants" takes the band back in the direction of their traditional black metal sounding days with the more snarled vocals, blast beats and speedy riffs galore. Overall, the whole album is a great

microcosm of what the band are all about, which is creating an album that exudes passion and emotion while still allowing the music to be heavy and melodic at the same time. The one rough spot on the album comes in the form of the song "The Alchemist's Head" which feels glaringly out of place. That said however, "Where Greater Men Have Fallen" is an album that will have you punching your fists in the air and garnering a new appreciation for this band if you're a longtime fan or blowing your mind on first listen. -Greg Watson

RED HOT REBELLION'S 'THE MISSION' IS AVAILABLE ON CD, DIGITAL, VINYL AND THE ALBUM'S STORY CONCEPT IS FEATURED AS A FULL LENGTH COMIC BOOK!



RED HOT REBELLION - *The Mission*

4.5 / 5 (Independent)

Unbolted, unbridled and fiercely independent, Red Rock Rebellion are the epitome of what's great about do-it-yourself music. This Ohio act's debut, is a hard rock and blues soaked gospel, conducted like a sweaty Hellfire and brimstone preacher bent on saving the Devil himself. Cuts like 'The Seething Horde' and 'Victory is Ours Now (For Now)' represent some of the faster cuts, a culmination similar to Ted Nugent meeting Motorhead at Myrtle Beach. The slower licks, emphasis on hook-laden blues, diversifies the punk intensity. Album highlight is 'You Bring the Thunder, I'll Bring the Lightning'. The album comes with an album themed comic book.. -Eric Compton



SCANNER - *The Judgement*

3 / 5 (Massacre)

Make no bones about it, this is not the Scanner line-up that released pivotal German power metal staples like "Terminal Earth" (1989) and "Hypertrace" (1988). Those remarkable albums were a cornerstone for the genre alongside other mid-tier heavyweights like Heaven's Gate, Reactor and Squealer. While "The Judgement" isn't as tenacious as earlier works, this isn't the same Scanner that released the somnolent Scantropolis record in 2002. In fact, the only member left after 2002's complete overhaul is the founder, guitarist Axel Julius. Many would agree that the band removed themselves from traditional form with their last album thirteen years ago. The Judgement seeks to better that stale predicament with a record that sees the band return to their early roots with a headlong escapade into speedy German pageantry. Meticulous runs through double-bass overtures, galloping speed picking and operatic vocals are all vigorous reminders that Scanner are back on track, perhaps delivering their

best work in nearly twenty years, yet something still seems somewhat suppressed. Where "Terminal Earth" and "Mental Reservation" had more of a roistering Teutonic sound (Grave Digger, Running Wild), this new album sacrifices the gritty pound-for-pound strokes for more European theatrics that wouldn't be out of place in the Italian or Greek scene. This 2015 version of Scanner has more in common with Freedom Call than dauntless acts like Accept. I'm not sure I am completely on board with this band's continued identity crisis. -Eric Compton

SUMMARIES

MAXIMUM METAL



SISTER SIN - *Black Lotus*

4 / 5 (Victory)

You can largely put the last four Sister Sin releases in a stack then randomly grab a disc and get a similar listening experience of high-energy, Swedish hard rock. Unlike others from the Stockholm Strip, there is little glam and a lot of violence, aggression and nihilism. Lead vocalist Liv Jagrell has always had a sticks-and-stones, I'll break your bones vocal approach with signature vocal lines that usually end on a shout. Is it any wonder you often see her in boxing attire. Gang chants abide and the guitars are furious. The party here is having sex while the world BURNS. For fans of 80s sleaze and early Motley Crue. -Frank Hill



SPEEDBREAKER - *Built for Speed*

3.5 / 5 (Dying Victims)

Speedbreaker are a rather complex sound to describe. Essentially the band comprises pieces of the NWOBHM era, punk's raw intensity and skillful guitar playing. In essence the band are the epitome for the platform that is NWOTHM. The band's newest album, 'Built for Speed', is a raging speed fest, one part Motorhead and one part pure Teutonic metal worship. Hailing from Germany, the 'mother' of two big three movements, Kreator-Sodom-Destruction (thrash) and Helloween-Running Wild-Rage (power), the four-piece are quick to deliver an assortment of goods sure to please fans of Tankard, Rogue Male and Killer. -Eric Compton

We should check that question in a few years and see if there is a new wave of bands that play music in the style of Thin Lizzy, Blue Oyster Cult, Wishbone Ash or Bachman Turner Overdrive. Would not be a bad thing at all!"

- Speedbreaker guitarist Simon on New Wave of Traditional Heavy Metal



SOLBRUD - *Jaertegn*

5 / 5 (Mighty Music)

Mighty Music is on a tear of incredible bands that are virtually unknown on this side of the pond but are sure to make a big splash. The next band that the Americans should be ready for is Solbrud, a Danish black metal outfit with a sound that is so extreme that most seasoned black metal fans (myself included) will be taken aback. The sound on this album is aural evil plain and simple. The guitars are that trademark black metal buzzsaw sound taken to another level. Imagine that a whirlwind of straight razor blades is encircling you and alternately one to three blades dive bomb you at any given moment. The sheer brutality of the guitars alone is enough to make your jaw drop. The bass is so heavy and thick that I had to cut my sub-woofer off because the thumps of the bass were making my heart jump. But wait, I haven't even gotten to the drums. Drummer Troels Hjørth has got to be a robot, a machine, a Terminator or some sort of alien lifeform because his drumming is just disgustingly

ridiculous. The speed at which he continues on every song, which clock it at 10 minutes plus, is just totally mind boggling. What I'm about to say may be considered blasphemy by some but please know that I wouldn't say this unless I sincerely meant it: Troels could go tete-a-tete with Pete Sandoval and have a very good chance of outdoing Pete. I haven't heard drumming like this since I heard my first Morbid Angel album way back in 1999. What's even more impressive is that given the lengths of the songs (11:42, 10:51, 15:57 and 9:58), the band is able to maintain your interest and keep you focused on the music rather than looking at the track time to see how much longer is left. Traditional black metal through and through, there may be a total of 5 minutes on this album where there is any sort of easing up on the extremity and the heaviness. I am in awe of Solbrud and given how raw and organic this album is, black metal purists and metal fans in general will be thoroughly impressed with this band, especially since this is their sophomore release. The production has that gritty, lo-fi feel to it, which just adds to the savagery of the band's sound. Solbrud have unleashed a primal roar that dares all of the metal world to ignore them at their own peril. Well guys, you've got my attention and I'm sure many others will follow suit after they pick up their copy of "Jaertegn". -Greg Watson



STAR INSIGHT - *Messera*

3 / 5 (Inverse)

Finnish sextet Star Insight put out their full-length debut in August with "Messera". After listening, I am still not quite sure exactly where the band fits in genre-wise. They are billed as a symphonic melodic band, which is definitely apparent in certain points throughout the album. Yet there is also a very heavy influence from The Kovenant with lots of programming and synthesized melodies. There is some identity on standouts like "Emanuela", "Raven and Hell" and "My Time is Out". Album closer "Poem of Misery" follows the formula of bands like Sirenia and Epica with female fronted vocals. I would have enjoyed this album much more if the band had put their own stamp on things rather than emulating The Kovenant, though they do list them as a heavy influence in interviews. That being said though, the album is not without merit. The act is incredibly talented at their instruments and the vocals are spot on and well done, whether it be clean, melodic style or harsh, barked vocals. The

production is first class and allows all the elements to shine together cohesively. In the end, the album is worth a listen and hopefully the next release will show the band flexing their own muscle. -Greg Watson

SUMMARIES

MAXIMUM METAL



U.D.O. - *Decadent*

4 / 5 (AFM)

This German icon has been prevalent through the course of history with creating the same album again and again. The typical U.D.O. offering references his Accept discography, those songs fabricated using the familiar pattern of verse, verse, bridge, huge harmonized chorus, repeat it all once more, cue solo and repeat chorus two more times. It literally makes up 99.9% of the entire back catalog. Seriously. With that familiarity, I typically have strayed from the man's creations for the last fifteen years. Yet somehow 'Decadent' found its way into my stack...and I'll be damned if it isn't one of the better U.D.O. albums of his career.

The biggest improvement is the stout production on the guitars. Gone is the higher string treble, a synthesized sound that has permeated and plagued the band for years. Thankfully this production focuses on slightly more muffled and down-tuned strings, creating a heavier and spaced-out sound comparatively speaking. The songs are written and arranged in the typical paint by numbers fashion, yet the pace has quickened and Udo just sounds more youthful and energized. Maybe he found the previous albums dull and uninspired...or the label wanted a bit more power behind this offering. Nevertheless the end result places this one alongside 'Holy', 'Animal House' and 'Solid' as top four material. . -Eric Compton



VYRE - *Initial Fronter II*

3.5 / 5 (Supreme Chaos)

German band Vyre have released the second part of "The Initial Frontier" but this review will cover the first part, which was released in 2013 as well as Part 2, which is the latest release. Having a theme focused on outer space and alien elements, the music mirrors the theme. While there are some ethereal and otherworldly melodies that make their appearance throughout both albums courtesy of samples and eerie keyboards, the main base is symphonic black metal adding even more ambience and credence to the theme with some very alien sounding vocals and guitar work. What impressed me even more was the length of the songs on both parts. With the exception of a 40 second intro on Part 1, the majority of songs clock in at 7 minutes plus, with several delving in

to double digit length.

It's clear the band are beyond proficient at their respective instruments and looking at the list of bands each member has/had been associated with, none of the members are newbies by any means. Cypher D. Rex' vocals are a combination of vitriol and emotion, each appearing when deemed necessary by the lyrics and music. The songs stay interesting as they move from your typical black metal speed to jazzy, prog and even electronic bridges and interludes, keeping you guessing as to what is coming next. With the variety of musical styles and the subject of the songs, you feel as though you are traveling through another dimension. These albums would be the perfect soundtrack for a jaunt through the cosmos and will transport you there if you tire of your earthly shackles. If you are looking for something a bit different and outside the box, then I seriously recommend giving "The Initial Frontier" a shot as it may provide you the cosmic escape you've been searching for. -Greg Watson



XERATH - *III*

3.5 / 5 (Candlelight)

UK symphonic metal group Xerath are one of those bands that aren't an outfit you can listen to day in and day out. It's more mood music of a sort that you really have to be in the mindset to listen to. 'III', the band's latest opus, is an album that somewhat bucks that trend. While there is an ever present symphonic overtone, the album feels more like a death metal album with an orchestral backing. There aren't intricate arrangements that the guitar just works itself into, the arrangements go around the guitar. There are songs where the arrangements are the featured instrumentation and on these tracks, the guitar doesn't try to compete but rather turns into a gracious spectator.

Vocally the album features a mix of death and hardcore style singing. With the aggressiveness of the guitar and the arrangements, the vocals tend to mesh quite well with whatever instrument is featured on each track. Tracks like "Death Defiant", "I Hunt for the Weak" and "Ironclad" feel more like traditional death metal tracks through and through. However, the blend of death metal and symphonic metal together create an interesting dynamic, where they almost feed off each other like parasitic partners, each growing stronger on the other's mettle. As the album progresses, it creates an almost paradoxical partnership. This album provides listeners with a unique soundscape that appears to be constantly shifting and changing as the album moves along. The album closes out with a two-part orchestral piece that also features some aggressive guitar riffs in the second part of the piece. This album won't be for everyone but I found it to be a very intricately, well-put together offering and will find myself going back to this one more and more. -Greg Watson

RANDOM THOUGHTS OF METAL

"I'm seeing a facination with moose antlers on album covers...a face in a circle with moose antlers." -Eric Compton

All pics by Eric Compton. View more bands at Maximummetal.com!

Eric Compton
Maximum Metal



TESTAMENT



QUEENSRYCHE

LIKE A STORM



WELCOME TO ROCKVILLE FESTIVAL 2015

MAXIMUM METAL
CONCERT PICS

BUTCHER BABIES



VAMPS



STARSET

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Breakin' the Speed of Sound!

It's no secret that metal is fast, loud and adrenaline producing music. I'm sure all of us have been behind the wheel at some point or another blasting our latest purchase, only to look up and see those flashing red and blue lights behind us or noticing that our mph has just crept up over 100. That being said, I compiled a list of personal songs that I could easily break the speed barrier to. Send us yours as well! My picks in no particular order:

1. **Vader-"Xeper"**: This track is like a German Panzer tank steamrolling through gridlocked traffic. Between the riffs and the cadence of the vocals, it's really damn hard for me not to mash the accelerator down to the floor.

2. **Testament-"Shades of War"**: The second this song starts, the flux capacitor goes into overdrive, my mph jump, and I am hitting 1.21 gigawatts. The solo in this song also causes my steering wheel to turn into a fiery Les Paul that I'm playing like a demon.

3. **Bring Me The Horizon-"Antivist"**:

From BMTH's Sempiternal album, this track not only makes me want to smash the speed limit but also someone's face. The chorus is an all time classic!

4. **Megadeth-"The Disintegrators"**: The speedy, thrash heavy track from Cryptic Writings, Mustaine must have been thinking about tearing down the road when writing this track. From start to finish, you are sure to want to push your ride to it's limit.

5. **Bloodbath-"Iesous"**: This track is a slow burner but once it gets going, other drivers beware. You will be dealing with an enraged, full on metal attack from whomever is blasting this banger!

6. **Lamb of God-"Contractor"**: Right out of the gate, the "Woooooo" with the country inflection that kicks this track off is the signal to start driving like you're at the Daytona 500.

7. **Iced Earth-"Violate"**: One of the band's heaviest tracks, the heaviest in my opinion, is probably the number one offender in my car for causing the speedometer to creep up with increasing ease.

8. **Pantera-"Domination"**: One of my all time favorite Pantera tunes. The second that breakdown kicks in, my accelerator is stomped to the floor like I'm delivering a curb stomp to some poor, defenseless bug.

9. **Judas Priest-"Painkiller"**: Now some people may think "Breaking the Law" would be the choice here because of its apparent irony but for me, "Painkiller" is a track that is a damn fine driving song. The drums at the beginning are enough to get my motor running on high octane.

10. **Slayer-"Raining Blood"**: Picking a Slayer song for this list was like pulling teeth for me. There are so many great songs to choose from, hell, the entire "Reign in Blood" album could be used. For me though, this track is the track that no matter when I hear it at any point in the song, I find myself trying to drive like I'm going to outrun a cop hot on my tail.



There are three hard rock/metal references on this license plate. Answers at the bottom of the final magazine page. Go Speed Racer!

--Greg Watson

HEADBANGER'S KITCHEN

Fighting the Revolution with Bacon

Sahil Makhija, a/k/a "Demonstealer," a/k/a "that Headbanger's Kitchen guy" has his hands in a lot of pots – figuratively and yes, literally. And yet, there's a whole lot more to this corrupted cook than just a great recipe and brutal taste.

Headbanger's Kitchen is an old formula, food and music, with a new life. "It's very simple really. Anyone can do an online show. All you need is a good idea. Without a real solid idea, you'll just make another thing to watch. Then have good, quality content. And with a little technology, you could have a good looking show."

"Oh and garlic. Garlic in everything!"

Demonstealer's on tour this summer, (including a spot at the Sonisphere Festival), with his band inamorato, Demonic Resurrection, which is enormous in itself. However, not before he made sure that the Kitchen's episodes were filmed first. Though his footprint in the music industry has been

**"I GET TO BE ARTIST AND MAD SCIENTIST AT THE SAME TIME.
IT'S GOOD TO BE A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING!"**

well set for over 15 years, if you were to ask him to choose between the mic and the apron, surprisingly, he wouldn't hesitate. "I know with the industry being what it is, it would be unlikely that I would be able to make a living from it. But, I would choose the food show, anyway."

"I was lucky to be brought up in a house of good food. My granddad and my mom, especially were the real cooks of the family and they found I was inclined to be a chef by the time I was in 5th standard [grade]. Yet, cooking always remained a hobby no matter what I was doing – a hobby, but a serious one. The food came first."

"We have an amazing team. Cryptos has been with Demonic Resurrection since the beginning and it was actually him that came up with the name, 'Headbanger's Kitchen.' It was just perfect. The growth has been awesome!" the gentle-mannered Gemini exclaims like a little kid opening a present. "I was able to bring guests to the show through my personal music connections, which is so great to have. The support has been really great."

"Of course, we would love nothing better than to take the show on the road and cook for bands in Europe and America, but that will take money that we just don't have. Not yet. But, it is definitely something we aim to do in time. As it is, things can be a little expensive."

"The technical reason why the bands don't cook with me is because the show is shot in two parts. First, there's the cooking and then we have to travel with our gear to the bands as they usually cannot come to studio." He credits, "Our sound engineer, Furtado, does all the music, imports the equipment, takes care of the retail and the social media."

The **YouTube foodie** host wears the hat of singer, guitarist, computer engineer, video producer, and makes his living in a recording studio while rubbing elbows and feeding the finest of the grindists--in black, of course, because "black makes you look good," he muses. What started off as a simple pastime, just a blog showcasing his favorite recipes, has



spawned into a monster with an average of 15,000 hits per episode including feeding Lamb of God his "Black Label Chicken," in less than three years. With the buffet of crowd-funded episodes still going strong, he's not only giving the world a taste of the good life, he's showing a different life in a strange new world in the process. As the heads keep spawning and germinating on the great Hydra of metal, there is a neglected part of the beast sown and grown in India that has not enjoyed any particular attention from the west until Demonstealer sat them down and fixed them a plate for all of the world wide "interwebs" to see. An impressive list of the country's favorites and legends such as Scribe, Skyharbor, Bevar Sea, Devoid, and Zygnema have all enjoyed a nice sit down with DM after a nice plate of spaghetti or a 1-wing chicken pakara.

"I know that people are surprised but there is a thriving metal scene in India."

**"If I were to cook for
MAXIMUM METAL'S crew,
I would make a gourmet
Indian feast that would
include Chili (2nd season),
Tanduri chicken, and
Black dal rice. But not too
spicy. I don't like spicy
food."**

--T. Ray Verteramo

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All We Are... MAX METALGRAMS

Maximum Metal has social sites in addition to our website and magazine. Our Instagram page recently featured some great pics of Battle Beast by our Euro-contributor TJ Fowler.



More pics at: [instagram.com/maximummetal](https://www.instagram.com/maximummetal)



MAXIMUM METAL

Meanwhile, Backstage...

Maximum Mingling!



"Spotted John Gallagher from Raven after the Saxon show in Baltimore. Very nice guy and a big influence on me as a musician." --Josh Greer of Maximum Metal

NEXT TIME: Issue 3 coming out whenever we feel like it with whatever we want in it. May the force be with us!

LICENSE PLATE REFERENCES

License Plate
designed by
Frank Hill

Concept by
Dave Hansen

Tutorial at
pshero.com

WORLD WIDE LIVE

WWL is a live
album by German
heavy metal band
Scorpions
released in 1985.

NM-156

"NM 156" is a
song off the first
Queensryche full
album, The
Warning, which
was released in
1984.

14095

"1.40.95" is the
cell the singer is
in from the song
"Sad Man's
Tongue" by
Danish band
Volbeat.

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