

EXTREMUM

Extreme Underground 'zine

Issue #9, December 2023



**ATHEIST, BENEDICTION, BERZERKER LEGION, BLEEDSKIN
CRYPTOPSY, ETERNAL EVIL, HELLWITCH, HIRAX
IMPERIAL CRYSTALLINE ENTOMBMENT, MORTA SKULD
NECRONOMICON, OPPROBRIUM, PENTACLE, SADUS**

Introduction

Welcome loyal readers of Encomium 'zine!!! What you are holding in your hands is Issue #9, which came together completely spontaneously, since I didn't have much time to focus on it for three quarters of the year, but in the last three months, starting from October, I managed to interview 14 bands, and it is only thanks to them that the appropriate content for this issue was compiled in time. Therefore, I sincerely thank everyone for their cooperation. Each interview turned out to be quite interesting, of course in its own way, and I'm sure that the reader will also get a lot of interesting information while reading. Personally, I was very happy to be able to interview such cult legends of the thrash and death metal underground as Freddy (Necronomicon), Katon W. De Pena (Hirax), Darren Travis (Sadus), Wannes Gubbels (Pentacle), Patrick Ranieri (Hellwitch), Dave Ingram (Benediction), Kelly Shaefer (Atheist), Francis M. Howard (Opprobrium), Matt McGachy (Cryptopsy) or Dave Gregor (Morta Skuld), although the interviews with lesser-known but quite promising bands also brought great results in the end. I am also very grateful to all underground labels and distros who sent their material for review. Thank you so much for being here, supporting and believing in what I'm doing even in these extremely difficult times. This is the way!!! I don't know when the next issue will be published yet, but hopefully there will be another one in 2024, the anniversary Issue #10... But we'll see... And time will tell, that's for sure... Until then, everyone take care and keep listening to metal!!!

Musicians' favorite albums (Top 10):

Michael DiSalvo (AKURION/WARHORSE)

1. Entombed - "Clandestine" (1991)
2. Autopsy - "Mental Funeral" (1991)
3. Obituary - "Cause of Death" (1990)
4. Morbid Angel - "Altars of Madness" (1989)
5. Neurosis - "A Sun That Never Sets" (2001)
6. Yob - "Clearing the Path to Ascend" (2014)
7. Malevolent Creation - "Retribution" (1992)
8. Only Living Witness - "Prone Mortal Form" (1993)
9. Cryptopsy - "None So Vile" (1996)
10. Bolt Thrower - "Realm of Chaos (Slaves to Darkness)" (1989)

Terry Butler (OBITUARY/INHUMAN CONDITION)

1. Loudness - "The Law of Devil's Land" (1983)
2. Thin Lizzy - "Johnny the Fox" (1976)
3. Rush - "Signals" (1982)
4. Judas Priest - "Sin After Sin" (1977)
5. Iron Maiden - "Somewhere in Time" (1986)
6. Venom - "Black Metal" (1982)
7. Savatage - "Sirens" (1983)
8. Nasty Savage - "Nasty Savage" (1985)
9. Black Sabbath - "Mob Rules" (1981)
10. Rainbow - "Rising" (1976)

Jeroen Pomper (GOD DETHRONED)

1. Dismember - "Massive Killing Capacity" (1995)
2. Metallica - "Ride the Lightning" (1984)
3. Gorefest - "False" (1992)
4. Paradise Lost - "Draconian Times" (1995)
5. Machine Head - "Burn My Eyes" (1994)
6. Woods of Ypres - "Woods 5: Grey Skies & Electric Light" (2012)
7. Skitsystem - "Grå Värld/Svarta Tankar" (1999)
8. Anathema - "Judgement" (1999)
9. Pantera - "Cowboys from Hell" (1990)
10. Entombed - "Left Hand Path" (1990)

Sebastian Ramstedt (NECROPHOBIC/IN APHELION)

1. Iron Maiden - "Piece of Mind" (1983)
2. Judas Priest - "Defenders of the Faith" (1984)
3. W.A.S.P. - "I Wanna Be Somebody" (1984)
4. Accept - "Breaker" (1981)
5. Ozzy Osbourne - "Bark at the Moon" (1983)
6. Metal Church - "Metal Church" (1984)
7. Saxon - "The Eagle Has Landed - Live" (1982)
8. Kiss - "Lick It Up" (1983)
9. Scorpions - "In Trance" (1975)
10. Def Leppard - "Pyromania" (1983)

Mark LaVenía (OPPROBRIUM)

1. Black Sabbath - "Master of Reality" (1971)
2. Iron Maiden - "Killers" (1981)
3. Metallica - "Ride the Lightning" (1984)
4. Celtic Frost - "Emperor's Return" (1985)
5. Slayer - "Reign in Blood" (1986)
6. Voivod - "Killing Technology" (1987)
7. Morbid Angel - "Altars of Madness" (1989)
8. Sepultura - "Beneath the Remains" (1989)
9. Entombed - "Left Hand Path" (1990)
10. Obituary - "Cause of Death" (1990)

Erik Sayenga (WARTHORSE)

1. Dissection - "Storm of the Light's Bane" (1995)
2. Katatonia - "Dead Air" (2020)
3. Slayer - "Reign in Blood" (1986)
4. Dimmu Borgir - "Puritanical Euphoric Misanthropy" (2001)
5. Morbid Angel - "Blessed Are the Sick" (1991)
6. Cannibal Corpse - "Tomb of the Mutilated" (1992)
7. At the Gates - "Slaughter of the Soul" (1995)
8. Bloodbath - "Resurrection Through Carnage" (2002)
9. Mayhem - "De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas" (1994)
10. Vinterland - "Welcome My Last Chapter" (1996)

Andy Brings (DOUBLE CRUSH SYNDROME)

1. Hallows Eve - "Tales of Terror" (1985)
2. Mercyful Fate - "Don't Break the Oath" (1984)
3. Heir Apparent - "Graceful Inheritance" (1986)
4. Nasty Savage - "Nasty Savage" (1985)
5. Hirax - "Raging Violence" (1985)
6. Chastain - "Mystery of Illusion" (1985)
7. Loudness - "Thunder in the East" (1985)
8. Agent Steel - "Skeptics Apocalypse" (1985)
9. Manowar - "Sign of the Hammer" (1984)
10. Slayer - "Reign in Blood" (1986)

Nocturnal Overlord (NECROCHAMBER)

1. Black Sabbath - "Reunion" (1998)
2. Death - "Live in L.A. (Death & Raw)" (2001)
3. Iron Maiden - "Live After Death" (1985)
4. King Diamond - "Conspiracy" (1989)
5. Mayhem - "De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas" (1994)
6. Megadeth - "Rust in Peace" (1990)
7. Mercyful Fate - "Melissa" (1983)
8. Metallica - "Live Shit: Binge & Purge" (1993)
9. Sepultura - "Under Siege (Live in Barcelona)" (1992)
10. Slayer - "Decade of Aggression" (1991)

J.P. Brown (HELLWITCH)

1. Megadeth - "Peace Sells... but Who's Buying?" (1986)
2. Megadeth - "Killing Is My Business... and Business Is Good!" (1985)
3. At the Gates - "Slaughter of the Soul" (1995)
4. Demilich - "Nespithe" (1993)
5. Mercyful Fate - "In the Shadows" (1993)
6. Iron Maiden - "Seventh Son of a Seventh Son" (1988)
7. King Diamond - "Abigail" (1987)
8. Morbid Angel - "Altars of Madness" (1989)
9. Pestilence - "Consuming Impulse" (1989)
10. Sepultura - "Beneath the Remains" (1989)

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Hi Darren! I can't tell you how happy I am that on November 17th, 2023 Nuclear Blast Records will release the new Sadus attack. Since the last full-length album was released in 2006, please tell us about the formation and details of the upcoming sixth LP.

- Well, thank you, nice to talk with you. The time just goes by. Sadus is not a profitable band, so when it comes to life in general we have to have a regular job just like everyone. I chose to feed my family and have a place to live. That has been what we have been doing for the last 16 years. Hardly playing music, just for myself. I started writing a lot of songs and asked the guys if they were interested in listening to them and see if we wanted to get together. But no response. Everyone was just doing life stuff. I just kept writing and living for myself until Jon came into the picture. We started looking at my songs and finished like six of them, going into the studio and busted them out...

Fans can already experience 3 new songs/ lyric videos out of 10, which is pretty awesome. Personally, I'm very satisfied with what I've heard so far and impatiently waiting for the album to come out. By the way, what was it like working with Juan Urteaga at Trident Studios? How long did it take to record the new masterpiece?

- Three songs and it is a masterpiece? Cool... Anyway... We started off recording six songs with Juan at Trident Studios just like the last album. I of course LOVE working with Juan, he is the local hero around these parts and an extremely talented engineer. He is super cool and locally close to my house, so it really works out well.

We took those six songs, and asked around and an old friend Monte Conner from back in the day, if he knew anyone who would like to hear the songs. He said, YES. ME>>! and I work for Nuclear Blast now... So we worked out a deal and went back in the studio to record four more tunes. That was like a year or so, and another year to get everything together towards now November 17th release day...



Your new album is called "The Shadow Inside". Could you enlighten us about its lyrical content? What inspired you to write this time?

- I was in a place, just me alone, writing, playing, not talking with really anyone, out of the scene. So the music and lyrics are very personal. They come from various emotions and inner feelings that I was going through



at the time. "The Devil in Me", "No Peace", "Scorched and Burnt", all of them really are a piece of me, the inside of me, and not really a good place sometimes. So when it came time to have a title for the album, "The Shadow Inside" more or less represents the whole lyrical theme...

I can't leave without mentioning the amazing album cover created by Travis Smith. How does the cover relate to the lyrics? Whose ideas was it based on anyway?

- The lyrics and theme was presented to Travis, and we explained the concept. He started mocking up some things to represent "The Shadow Inside", and we worked together to make it what it is today. The large being as big as the universe holding the person hostage inside.

This is the first Sadus album that doesn't feature Steve DiGiorgio on bass, which is very unfortunate, although I know he's been too busy with other bands and projects lately. So who ended up recording the bass parts? And if you're going to perform live, who's going to fill in on bass?

- Steve has never, let me say that again NEVER left Sadus. He is and always will be a part of Sadus. That being said. When it came time to record our new music. He was really too busy to contribute (writing) and didn't feel part of the new material. And again was too busy to take the time to help us record. We pushed on, hoping for his return or just be there again, but he is still traveling way too much to sit and make music that does not pay the bills...

Like I said before Sadus is not profitable band and we do not and have not, ever, made any money from the band, still to this day. We do music just for the love of METAL!! Steve is a professional musician and that is his living, so he needs to pay the bills that way. Also, throughout time my (on and off) playing schedule of writing and playing music is not how he likes to do things. He is all in, and I have a hard time keeping a job and being all in... So when it came time to record the bass I did it. We could not bring someone in and still call it Sadus. Out of respect for him and the band name it could only be original members

contributing, and still call it Sadus, otherwise it would be called something else..... We will see what happens live in the near future...!!

In connection with this, will there be gigs, tours, festival appearances in the very near future? If so, please share some details and possible dates.

- Big stuff happening in 2024. That is all I can say as of now.

Your first three albums were recently reissued by Listenable Records. Since these are pretty damn sought-after releases, it was definitely a good idea to re-release them. How do you like the end result? What kind of deal did you do with Listenable Records? Will "Elements of Anger" and "Out for Blood" be re-released later?

- We have no control over any of these albums. The first three are owned by Time/Warner and the other two are Mascot. We have no control over any of them, which is not the case with this new album. I learned from the past and only licensed this new record to Nuclear Blast. We still own the album, so we control our music from here on out...

How did you get involved with Nuclear Blast Records? Is there a special story behind this alliance?

- Yes, I briefly told you the story of how Monte Conner grabbed us up after hearing the first six songs. The rest is now to go...

Tell us a little about your guitar arsenal. How many guitars do you have, which one is your favorite and which one did you use to record "The Shadow Inside" album? By the way, what brand of strings and gauge are you using?

- I recently bought a Kemper amp and made a couple of programs instantly and haven't really changed anything since. I love the instant tone change, everything recorded will sound exactly like the record when we play live, which will be freaking killer!!

Guitars used: SP Custom w/ EMG 81s, Dean ML w/ Fishman, Rickenbacker 4002.

Strings: D'Addario (mix pack 52-09).



Thank you so much Darren for taking the time to answer my questions. Please end the interview the Sadus way and send your greetings to all die-hard Sadus fans in Ukraine.

- Thank you for waiting so long for the interview, sorry. Thank you to everyone reading this, for the ongoing support for the Metal and Sadus!! And all of our longtime super fans in the Ukraine!! Stay STRONG!!

A few months ago, Cryptopsy unleashed their latest supersonic technical death/grind brutality on humanity, causing visible confusion among the faint of heart, but certainly not among the band's devoted followers. That's why I asked Matt McGachy, the howling death machine, about everything related to their new album and, of course, their future plans.



Hi Matt! Your 8th studio album, "As Gornorrah Burns", was released worldwide on September 8, 2023. Are you satisfied with the reactions you have received so far from both the press and the fans?

- Yes, absolutely, we are all simply blown away by the support that we have received regarding the new album. We spent many years writing and recording it, so it feels quite rewarding to have people enjoy it as much as we do.

You made your debut on Nuclear Blast Records with this album. How did fate bring you together? Are you only signed for one record or do you have some sort of long-term deal with them?

- I was recording a Vox&Hops episode with Charles Elliott (Abysmal Dawn & Nuclear Blast) back in the spring of 2019 and he mentioned after a few beers that he would be interested in working with Cryptopsy. I was very into the idea, but did not think much of it since it was late at night. I awoke the next morning with a message from Charles saying that he was serious about our conversation. It took some time, but we worked out a deal that would become "As Gornorrah Burns". I am looking forward to continue our relationship with Nuclear Blast.

Musically, it combines the classic elements of the band's past, as well as the constantly updated modern parts. How do you see this? Was it achieved on purpose or did it just come naturally?

- It was a very conscious decision to meld the old with the new. Back in 2017, we toured "None So Vile" in its entirety and I feel like it gave us a masterclass in what works for Cryptopsy from the 1st era. We saw and felt which elements worked for each crowd and decided to play with them while writing new material. Sprinkling in a bit of the grooves and melodic passages from the early eras with a mix of the chaotic "Whisper Supremacy" era and wrapping things up with a new ingredient from our current era. This new ingredient is a sense of malaise, an uncomfortable experience which can best be heard during the outro of "Praise the Filth".

Could you please elaborate on the lyrics of "As Gornorrah Burns"? What things motivated or inspired you this time?

- I approached the album's concept as a whole.

The concept for "As Gornorrah Burns" came to me in early 2020.

I wanted to explore the concept of what happened in Sodom and Gornorrah and make a connection to the birth of the internet. At first Sodom & Gornorrah were a haven of wealth, abundance and knowledge. But that wealth, abundance and knowledge was misused and the inhabitants were punished.

The same is true with the internet. There is an endless amount of knowledge and positive aspects that have arisen from the birth of the internet. But there are many instances where the opposite is true. Some people have misused the powers of the internet. It's these true stories that I dug into to write the lyrics which became "As Gornorrah Burns".

Stories about online stalkers, cults, misinformation, isolation and intimidation. I took these true stories and embellished them to expose the harsh realities that the internet has gifted us.

The cover painting turned out really cool. Paolo Girardi did a fantastic job. Whose idea was it to include the "Whisper Supremacy" parallel here? How does this relate to the lyrical content?

- The cover art was painted by Paolo Girardi. He is an Italian artist whose work we really loved.

As soon as I had the concept for the album, I did some research into Renaissance Art pieces that covered the subject matter of Sodom and Gornorrah. I stumbled upon a series of paintings which really depicted the idea I had well in my mind. I sent these paintings to Paolo and he literally just painted the cover in a few days. He is a machine. We were all beyond amazed with what he created. It fits the album perfectly.

The dates for your upcoming "Ashes Shall Reign" Asia tour have been announced. What setlist are you preparing for these shows? Will you invade Europe in 2024?

- We are super stoked to be returning to Asia, we had such a killer time when we toured there in 2019. We are crafting a setlist that showcases the new era of Cryptopsy while including a bunch of classics as well. We are getting ready for a massive 2024 that will include a bunch of tours in areas that we have not toured in a while.

How did the idea of creating the Vox&Hops Metal Podcast come about? Which interview are you most proud of and is there a "dream" interview in your trunk that hasn't come true yet?

- The podcast was born in 2018, from a melding of my two loves Craft Beer and in depth conversations. Since then over the past 5 years, I have released over 430 episodes where I sit down with fellow metal musicians to talk about their lives and music while sharing craft beers. I have also released over 80 beer collabs across the globe. There are a few "white whale" guests that I have not had the chance to talk to yet such as Mike Patton, Maynard James Keenan and Corey Taylor to name a few.

What do we need to know about The Monster Factory/La fabrique de monstres?

- The Monster Factory is a very unique company that uses the talents of extreme vocalists as voice over actors. Most voice actors can only perform harsh vocals for a very limited period of time, the Monster Factory supplies voice actors that have very little limitations. I am extremely proud to be a part of The Monster Factory. I have had the pleasure of being a part of the Guardians of the Galaxy game a few years ago.

Were there any records in the field of extreme metal this year that really stuck with you musically? What kind of music do you like to listen to at home? Name your 10 favorite metal albums of all time?

- This is a hard question... My top albums of 2023 are: King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard "PetroDragonic Apocalypse", Spotlights "Alchemy for The Dead", Herod "Iconoclast", Monika Roscher Bigband "Witchy Activities and the Maple Death", Tesseract "War of Being".

All time... Too difficult to choose, but there would be some Tool, Faith No More, Primus, Mr. Bungle on it...

Finally, share Cryptopsy's plans for the coming year. The last undivine words are yours.

- We have a big year planned for 2024. The pandemic added a lot of time into our album break/writing cycle, so we are eager to tour a lot. Just want to thank all the fans for their patience and support. We greatly appreciate you all!



THERE ARE SOME VERY GOOD THINGS BREWING IN THE ATHEIST CAMP. SO I ASKED KELLY SHAEFER TO TALK ABOUT ALL OF THEIR PLANS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE. NOW SCROLL DOWN TO FIND THE GREAT NEWS!!!

Hi Kelly! Since you haven't released new material from Atheist in quite some time, my question is, are you currently working on new songs, and if so, when do you plan to record/release a new album?

- Most definitely working on new stuff now, I personally have a ton of stuff written, and I'm working with my band members with stuff they have written, we have had a contractual snag that has held us up for several years. We hope to have it sorted out so we can deliver a record in 2024.

Musically, where do you intend to turn this time? Are you continuing the path of the "Jupiter" record or taking a completely different direction?

- I can tell you that is never something we "think" about, I just write what I wanna hear, shit that makes me interested to listen to. Same with lyrical topics. I truly never know till I put pen to paper what topic I might dive into. And many times I learn what my intention is after its written. I like that unknown factor, it creates proper tension.

Who are lining up next to you now and what is worth knowing about the new members? Will there be a difference between the line-up for recording the album and playing the shows live?

- I have a tremendous group of amazing young musicians that are more talented than any incarnation of the band to date in my opinion. Sky is the limit for what we will be able to create and that is super exciting to me as a writer and arranger. Dylan Marks – drums, Yoav Ruiz-Feingold – bass, Jerry Witunsky and Alex Haddad on guitars. We did a north American tour together early in 2023 and they executed this music to perfection. In many ways better than it's ever been played live. So yes the new album will be with this crew of super talented guys.

Speaking of concerts, where do you plan to perform live in 2024? Maybe some extensive US and European tours are planned as well? What songs can fans expect from you live?

- We just announced a co headlining European/UK tour with Cryptopsy that starts in Berlin in

late February. We will also be playing the sold out Maryland Death Fest pre party in May of 2024, we have a crushing set of songs from the first 3 records celebrating the 30 yr. anniversaries of those 3 records. Including songs that had rarely if ever been performed over the years. It's a blast!

Nuclear Blast Records reissued your back catalog this summer. How do you personally like these new vinyl & CD reissues compared to the original or the Season of Mist versions?

- Oh man, they did an incredible job on these reissues. The splatter vinyl is gorgeous, each of them amazing! As well the CD covers and colors of each are different than any of the other reissues from the past. Truly collectable. Nuclear Blast did a really great job. We also made the catalog available for streaming for the 1st time in years through our deal with NB.

Interestingly, your new band Till the Dirt's debut album, "Outside the Spiral", was also released around this time on Nuclear Blast. In addition to the actual Atheist members, it also features a number of guest musicians. How did you come up with the ideas for this project? The music has a rather modern flavor. How would you personally describe the music of Till the Dirt to the readers?

- TTD came about as I was trapped like many during COVID in 2020. I set myself up a home studio and began writing like crazy, today's technology allows for the ability to make high quality recordings from the comfort of home. So I wrote about 25 songs with no intentions of a mission. It was just so much fun, it became an obsession, each night writing something new. It was unlike anything I had written before, and so long story short I sent demos around to friends and when Scott Burns heard the demos he came on board to help me pull it all together and Till the Dirt became a reality, and Monte Conner and Nuclear Blast became the home for the debut album. "Outside the Spiral" for better or worse it is a super unique collection of influences that I have, that I had never combined in any other musical venture I

have been a part of. I'm super proud of it, and hope everyone will check it out.

What does the extreme music scene look like in Sarasota these days? What new bands would you recommend from your area? Do you have a favorite record store or metal venue there?

- Well, Sarasota is not a metal mecca, never was. We are about an hour south of Tampa and that's where we sort of built our dream back in the late 80s. Daddy Kool Records is a staple on the west coast of Florida, and has been since the early 80s and still thrives to this day. Favorite venues include Jannus Landing, The Orpheum, as well as the Brass Mug.

Speaking of records, which bands have impressed you with their music recently, name the last record you bought?

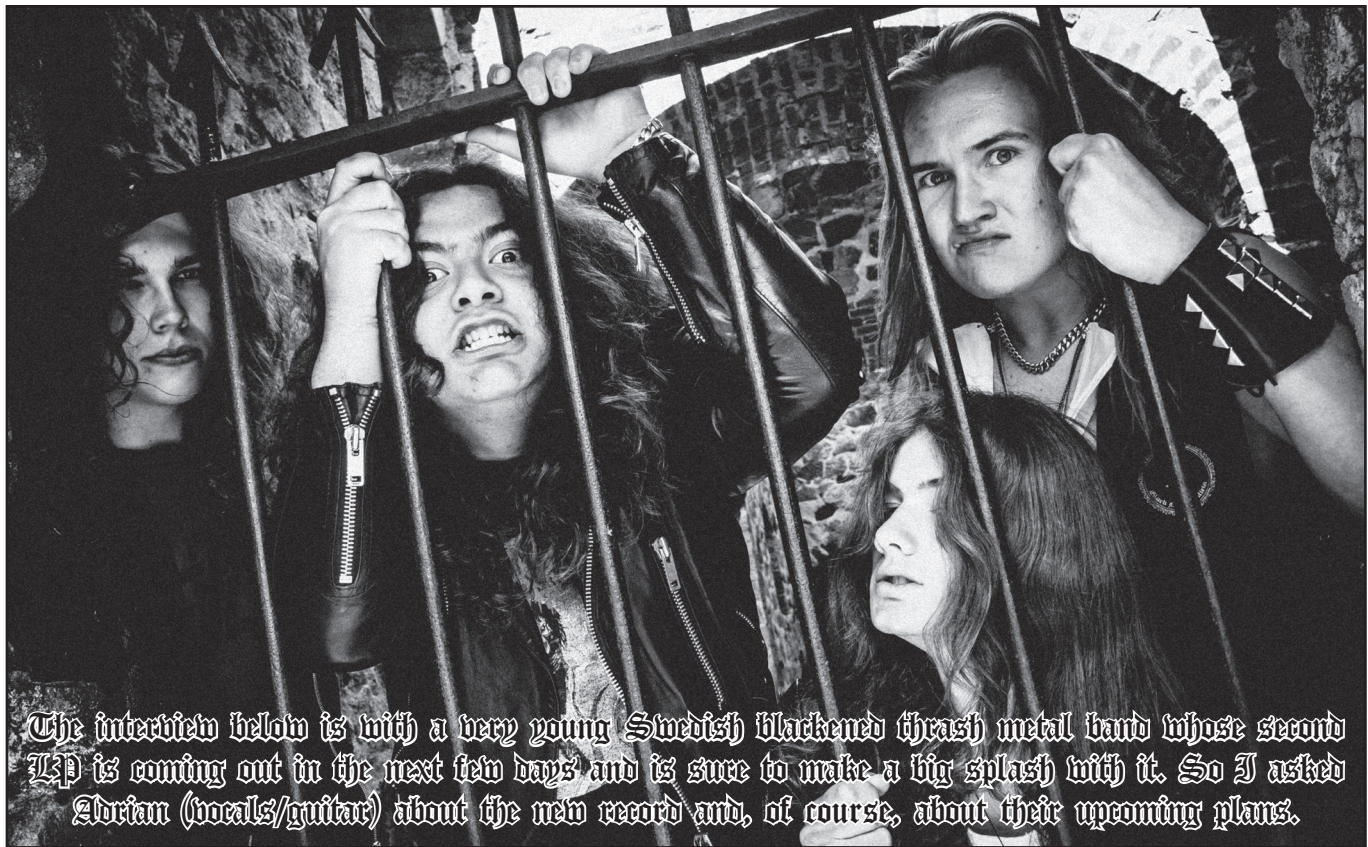
- Well, I find myself streaming most new music first, I don't even have a CD player in my car lol. I have such a diverse taste in music it would take me a while. Many great bands these days and a lot of garbage as well ☹️.

Your relationship with Scott Burns goes back quite a long time. Have you had a chance to read the recently published book about his activities? If so, what do you think of the book's content?

- Oh yes, indeed, I interviewed extensively with David for the book as many from the Morrisound days did. I could not be happier to see Scott's success. No one deserves the attention more than him. He was such an important part of the classic early days of death metal. David E. Gehlke did a tremendous job on this book. Setting the record straight on so many metal myths. As well as capturing unheard stories from so many sessions that happened at Morrisound! Great book!!!

Thank you Kelly for taking the time to answer my questions. If something important has been left out, please write it at the end.

- Thank you to all who have supported Atheist and Till the Dirt. Can't wait to see everyone on tour in 2024.



The interview below is with a very young Swedish blackened thrash metal band whose second LP is coming out in the next few days and is sure to make a big splash with it. So I asked Adrian (vocals/guitar) about the new record and, of course, about their upcoming plans.

“The Gates Beyond Mortality” is Eternal Evil’s second full-length album, which will be released worldwide by Listenable Records in a few days. What can the fans of the band expect this time?

- Our fans can expect nothing but a total lawless black thrash mayhem! With this record we have finally set ourselves free from any boundaries that have been in the band before. Now we have crafted a unique sound to the band and we do not intend to back down.

Apropos, how did you get involved with Listenable Records? What kind of contract did you ink with them?

- It’s quite a story actually. This was when we were opening for Deathhammer at a show in Sandviken here in Sweden. The journalist Janne Mattson from Sweden Rock Magazine was at the concert and absolutely loved it and he was the one to put us in contact with Laurent from Listenable Records. We’ve been in contact with them since late 2022, so it took a while before anything started going somewhere. But now that the album is gonna be released next week we are super excited to show the world this new album.

The spirit of 80s thrash metal and 90s black metal is mixed in your music. What bands inspired you to choose this alloy for your musical approach?

- With this record as I said before, we have freed ourselves from any boundaries from any party. So I wouldn’t say that any specific “bands” have influenced us since bands are the last thing that comes to our minds when we are writing music, we have our own sound and we are going to keep pushing it forward with no turning back. But to give the answer to your question, I would say that this record is more “Dissection” than “Kreator” if that’s good enough.

Where did you record the new album? Who mixed and mastered it? Please also introduce the current lineup of Eternal Evil to the readers.

- Our new lineup is: Adrian Tobar – lead guitars and vocals, Tobias Lindström – lead guitars, Niklas Saari – bass and backing vocals, Adam Schmidt – drums.

With this album we recorded it at Studio Humbucker, which is a studio located in Hagsätra, which is in the southern outskirts of Stockholm city. The studio is run by Robert Pehrsson who is a well-known musician from bands like Death Breath, Runemagick and Imperial State Electric. Our first album was recorded at the same studio 2 years before and we loved to work with Robert so we naturally decided to work with him a second time. The mixing and mastering was also done by Robert who

did a fantastic job to get the right sound for this album, all of us were involved and we managed to make the best out of this fantastic album.

What are the lyrics of “The Gates Beyond Mortality” about? Where did you get your inspiration from?

- The lyrics of this album are darker and more complex than the first one. With the first album the lyrics were mainly just random things altogether, there was no story or a straight line to follow, only words. When writing the lyrics for this album I myself studied and practiced a lot of black magic and witchcraft, which can be noticed if you read the lyrics, it’s part of my belief and part of my philosophy, so a lot of that shines through the record and making it more personal, which I think is perfect, because every band’s record should be unique and has to have their own touch. But I myself am stronger when it comes to writing a song than writing lyrics, so I think the personal aspect shines better in the riffs of this album.

Who is responsible for the cover image? What does it represent to you?

- Our artwork was done by the Australian illustrator James Campbell. He runs an art design group called Spectral Vision Art. It all started around February when we needed an album cover, so the designing of the album could begin. We checked a couple of people that could do the artwork, but most of them couldn’t start on our artwork until May, which we obviously didn’t have the time for. And that’s until I stumbled across James Campbell who was recommended to me by my good friend Gustav Ryderfelt from the band Xorsist. I got in contact with James and I explained to him how I wanted the artwork to be. The main idea was that the painting had to represent the album lyrically and musically, so I sent him the demos of the album including the lyrics and he did an absolutely fantastic job with it. The artwork for our first album is more different though, the artwork was done by Velio Josto and he also did a fantastic job, but the idea was more of a rip off than something original, if you look at it, it’s only “Endless Pain” mixed with “Stronger Than Evil”. Which actually fits that album perfectly considering how fast it is, haha!

Let’s talk a little about your live activity. You recently played a show with Necrophobic, General Surgery and Kvaen in Stockholm at Nocturnal Massacre. What was it like? Where will you conquer next?

- The concert went really well! But it started quite badly I would say, when we got to the place and started the soundcheck almost everything didn’t work, I think we and the crew spent about an hour just repairing things. The sound technician was a total fucking douchebag and we should have beaten him up after the show considering he treated us like fucking children. But after, everything went perfect, that is definitely one of my proudest moments to date when it comes to Eternal Evil. That night when I saw the crowd I felt like we had made an impact and we are actually something now rather than just a garage band that we used to be. There were tons of young people in the crowd all headbanging for us and knowing the songs! It feels like we will be heroes of our generation.

Speaking of Stockholm. How do you see the metal life there? What is your favorite place to buy records and go to concerts?

- The metal life here is actually quite good I would say! It’s just getting better now that more and more young people are growing out their hair and starting to wear leather jackets. Me and my friends frequently visit a club here in Stockholm called Fredagsmangel, which is the most important metal club here in Sweden I would say. It’s the place where we started and had our first gigs. The crowd and fanbase we built there have been extremely important and supportive to us. Bands are playing every weekend there now, so there’s always something to do when it comes to metal. I myself don’t really buy anymore records nowadays, but it’s always cool to hang around at Sound Pollution.

From what I can see, almost all members are involved in other bands and projects. Please keep us informed of any recent and upcoming activities.

- We all have had side projects. I have a band called Overture, which is a heavy metal band, but we’re not that active now and we don’t rehearse and you could say that we are split up. But Eternal Evil is all of our number 1 life priority right now. So now there’s very little room for any side projects.

Please end the interview by revealing Eternal Evil’s plans for the near future. The last mortal words are yours.

- Right now we are booking our Scandinavian tour to promote this new album that will be released on the 27th of October. We are also planning a European tour that we can do for this album, but we do not have an agent in Europe, only in Scandinavia. So if you’re a European agent reading this, contact us!

I did an interview with BleedSkin about three years ago, but since quite a lot has changed in the band since then, I thought I'd ask Céline Mazay (guitar/vocals) about their new perspectives.



Greetings Céline! After a short break and some lineup changes, you restarted BleedSkin with Rémy. Former member Logan Dykens stepped in as your new drummer and you shared vocals with Rémy. Tell us more about those decisions. What happened to Anouk and Julien?

- Hello! Yes, indeed we restarted BleedSkin as a power trio!

Julien has decided to leave the band early 2023, because his job takes too much time to play drums in a band. And with Anouk, we didn't see things the same way for the band anymore and decided to stop working with her.

Since your debut album "Blood Reign" was released in 2020, the question arises, when do you plan to release something new and how many songs will be on your second LP?

- Oooh yeah big question! Haha. We will release a new album in 2024. Maybe in the spring? You'll see... The album will have 7/8 songs.

What topics will be covered on the next album? Who writes the lyrics now?

- Our next album will be about torture, death, distortion, poison, contamination, etc. The whole album will have a common thread.

We will write the lyrics together. Logan was our former singer, so he will take part in the writing with us.

Have you been contacted by a label or do you plan to release new stuff on your own like before?

- No we will release new stuff by our own. We are not looking for a label.

As I can see, two concerts are already booked for the end of this year and one for the beginning of 2024. What setlist are you preparing for these shows? By the way, do you have any plans for extensive European tours? Tell us more about

your live activities for the coming year.

- Some songs from our EP and LP. For now, we're focusing on the new album, so no European tour, but why not later in 2024!

We'll play more gigs in 2024 and we'll announce them on our Facebook page and on Instagram!

What should we know about your involvement in bands like InHuman and Cathubodua? Will you continue to play in these projects in the future?

- I did stand-in for Cathubodua only for a few gigs while they were searching for a new guitarist. If they need me again, I'll happily stand-in again.

I joined InHuman a year ago as an official guitarist and we'll play gigs in 2024 and work on new things!

You used to play Ibanez guitars, but now you've switched to a headless guitar from another brand. Tell the readers more about your new guitar and its specs, and what strings and tune you're using for it. Which guitarist inspires you the most?

- Indeed, I change my guitar! This is my 6 strings fanned fret custom guitar 'Black Panther' Auxan brand. I use Fishman pickups and Ernie Ball strings (12-62).

For BleedSkin it's B standard tuning and for InHuman drop C.

I really like John Gallagher (Dying Fetus), Paul Ryan (Origin) and Muhammed Suiçmez (Necrophagist). All of these guitarists are so talented and play powerful death metal. They are great inspiration for me.

Lately, you've started covering classic songs from other metal bands and working with different musicians. Many of them are already up on your YouTube channel. Which are you most proud of and what will be your next covers?

- That's a good question! I'm so proud to have guests on my videos. I just do it to have fun and share

music. I'd like to cover more metal bands like Children of Bodom, Slaughter to Prevail, Slayer, Cytotoxin, Belphegor, Aborted, Epica, Mayhem, Dark Funeral, but also bands like Iron Maiden, Epica, Nightwish, Rammstein, Mötley Crüe, Ozzy Osbourne, etc.

Please choose your five favorite death metal bands and albums of all time and give reasons for your choice. What was the last record you bought?

- Dying Fetus "Reign Supreme" (2012): This album is one of the best death metal album, because of the songs, mix and mastering and because "Subjected to a Beating" is my favorite song from them, haha.

Cannibal Corpse "Red Before Black" (2017): How can I not mention Cannibal Corpse?! I really like this album, because it's old school death metal with a good mix!

Archspire "Relentless Mutation" (2017): I remember the first time I listened to this band and album. I was thinking "WTF am I listening to?!" This album is pure violence and technique and they are so talented.

Vulvodinia "Praenuntius Infiniti" (2021): Ok, slamming deathcore, but still I really like this album because of everything! The mix and mastering are really good, big guitar riffs (you can only headbang), good vocals, orchestrations are amazing, guitar tone, groovy drums, really good solos, etc.

Cytotoxin "Nuklearth" (2020): Modern, violent, breakdowns, tight drums, powerful leads, pig squeals, etc. Well, the perfect cocktail for headbangers.

Well, at the end, feel free to reveal BleedSkin's secret plans for the near future. The space is yours.

- I think we revealed a lot in 2023, haha! A lot of new things happened this year and we will work with the same energy in 2024. New album is coming and a lot of gigs!

HELLWITCH

To be honest, I was super happy that mastermind Patrick Ranieri (guitar/vocals) agreed to an interview about their new album "Annihilational Intercession". Hellwitch is a fantastic band and their new album, like their predecessors, delivers technical death/thrash metal songs at the highest possible level. So, have a good time reading our conversation below!!!

Hi Pat! The new Hellwitch album "Annihilational Intercession" is absolutely crushing in my opinion! Since it was released on June 30, 2023, how have fans and media responded to it so far?

- Hello Kornel! Thanks for the +++ feedback! I think it's been pretty well received. We have a digital press book compiled by Listenable Records and out of 30-40 reviews, the lowest rating is 8/10.

The album was produced, engineered and recorded by Jeremy Staska, as was the previous album "Omnipotent Convocation" (2009). He managed to create a quite devastating, but still crystal clear sound production. How long did you work with him to get the final result this time?

- We spent about 6 months at Studio 13 with Jeremy. We worked on it 3-5 nights per week during that time. We are quite pleased with the production. It's definitely clear and brutal!



In addition to the new tracks, the album also includes some re-recorded old classics. Why did you specifically choose these songs? Is there a special story behind their choice?

- Well, we wanted to re-record the best songs from our past that never were properly captured in a studio. Esp. "Torture Chamber" which I always thought needed some sound FX, etc. And the song "Hellwitch" was abandoned in '85. I started reviving it in 2019 and we think it really turned out to be an epic track!

The vinyl version includes an extra track which is a cover of Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama". If I'm not mistaken, you played this tune many times live, even decades ago. So how did this song end up on vinyl?

- It's actually on the vinyl and cassette versions of the new release. It was our drummer, Brian's idea. We thought it would be cool to pay some respect to our past due to the fact that our early performance roots are in punk rock. Back in Gainesville, FL from '84-'88 we ONLY played with punk bands! We were the "metal scene" in town! "Sweet Home..." is essentially a punk cover song!

Khaos Diktator is credited as the person responsible for the album artwork. What should we know about him? How does this cover art connect to the album's lyrical content? Speaking of which, tell us more about the new Hellwitch lyrics?

- Khaos (Stefan) is a pretty unique and (obviously) talented guy. I have to say he collaborated with me on the cover art more than any other artist I've ever worked with. He has done numerous covers for such

bands as Thron, Lock Up, and Nocturne to name a few. Very unique and diverse style. The artwork ties into the lyrics in many ways. "Delegated Disruption" is reflected in the apocalyptic backdrop of the cover.



"Solipsistic Immortality" connects to the art as there is no one alive. No matter where you were, you're dead. And where "The Judge" and his minions stand there once was a "Megalopalypsic Confiner". The new lyrics are once again more original (I hope!) interpretations of some classic metal topics: Pain, torture, world obliteration. Also, some concepts that are TRUE stories: "Epochal Cessation" (about all the females who have died after having been with me). "At Rest" (about the dead baby buried outside my bedroom window in the house I used to live in from '93-'08). "Megalopalypsic Confiner" (about how life in South Florida has devolved since I moved here in the 1970's).

This is your first album with Listenable Records. How did you get in touch with them, how do they treat you, and did you sign a multi-album deal with them?

- A good friend of mine from France told me that Laurent (head of Listenable) was a BIG fan of our music and would be glad to sign us. They have treated us better than ANY other label we have ever been on! Great budget, great promotion, great support, great interactions! We are signed to do 2 albums with them.

To support the new release, you made two music videos, namely the lyric video "Solipsistic Immortality" and the full-band video "Delegated Disruption". Where did you shoot the latter and who directed/edited it?

- It was shot next door to the recording studio where "A.I." was done! Our producer, Jeremy, is great friends with the video producer next door so we naturally went there to do it! Jeremy was actually one of the cameramen for the "D.D." video! Julian Prieto and Jeremy co-directed the video and Julian did all of the editing. Jeremy did some color adjusting to give it the dead, cold look it has.

What does Hellwitch's current studio/live line-up look like? Please introduce everyone in detail to the readers.

- The studio line-up from "A.I." is the same now. Our live line up is me on lead+rhythm guitar/vocals,

J.P. Brown on rhythm guitar, Brutal Brian on drums and we have 2 live bass players, Jason Flippo and Julian Guillen.

Speaking of live shows. How was your live performance at the Mass Destruction Metal Fest in Atlanta? Are you planning European concerts/tours for 2024?

- I think it was pretty solid! We had short set (40 min) and just blasted through 8 songs with no bullshit in between! Brian's timing was spot, etc. We all played our parts with possessed. It was our first appearance with new live bass player, Jason. He played especially well. Yes, we are already booked for one festival in Europe next year with several others in the works.



You've had some reissues from your back catalog recently, which are fantastic, but I'm most curious about the Iron Bonehead Productions limited edition vinyl box set. What should fans know about this particular box set?

- Thanks for the compliment! Well, that's quite a question, haha! Well, basically, it's our 30th Anniversary, 10 LP (!!!) (black OR gold splatter vinyl!) box set (which came out 3 years late, haha!)! It comes with a 12" size booklet featuring new liner notes as well as many never before released photos and studio notes. It contains early rehearsals which I NEVER released and the original demo of the song "Hellwitch". The '86, '87, '89 and '94 demos are in there and also the first 2 full lengths along with the "Terraasymmetry" EP. Finally, there is the 2005 promo recording (the one that got us the deal with Xtrem Music), and live/soundboard recordings from 2011, 2012 and 2013. It comes in a sturdy black box with sick cover art. Compilation of Death magazine editor Gabriel Gattaca K. also gets credit for bringing this project to life! Total HELLWITCHing mayhem through and through!

To conclude the interview, please send your delegate greetings to all Hellwitch fans in Ukraine.

- Thank you for the great interview, Kornel! To all the metal freaks in the Ukraine, we wish you all the strength and power that METAL brings! HELLWITCH appreciates your staunch support and hopefully we'll be able to show that gratitude in person one day! Keep it brutal!

Website: hellwitch.com

Facebook: facebook.com/HellwitchOfficial666

Bandcamp: hellwitch.bandcamp.com

NECRONOMICON



The German thrash metal band Necronomicon led by Freddy (guitar/vocals) has always been one of my favorites. So, with this interesting conversation, another bucket list interview was completed. Read below to find out exactly what we actually talked about.

Greetings Freddy. First of all, let me congratulate you on the 11th Necronomicon LP. The material of the "Constant to Death" album turned out to be really magnificent. What is the feedback like so far? And secondly, what drives the band forward in these difficult times, because frankly it's hard to keep a thrash metal band going smoothly these days, don't you think?

- Hi Kornel, thanks for the praise; and yes, the response has been overwhelming. Above all, we've also received outstanding praise and reviews from the really big magazines, which wasn't always the case in the older past. Because thrash metal doesn't exactly have an easy time finding broad appeal these days. And that brings me to your second question. Yes, the days of the glorious 80s are over. As a classic thrash metal band, you have to prove yourself on the market. And that's not easy. I only know one band that has ALWAYS managed that and that is and was... Slayer. That's why we've gone back to our punk roots a bit, which suits us very well and gives the band a more multi-faceted image.

You have been associated with Achim Köhler (producer, engineer and owner of Indiscreet Audio) since the release of "Construction of Evil" (2004). How did this close relationship develop? How long does it usually take to mix and master a record? For example, in the case of the new album.

- For me, Achim Köhler is one of the best producers and sound engineers there is in Germany... and he's a good friend of mine. But here too, times and the approach have changed a bit... at least for us. Since the "Invictus" album, we've been recording the drums, guitars and vocals in our own studio, so that Achim (who, of course, coaches the whole thing) has enough time for mixing and mastering, which as you know is most of the work. This has proven to be much less stressful for us than going into a studio and having to work under time pressure.

Your last three albums were released by El Puerto Records. Have you finally found the right label? What is your relationship like, how is it different from the previous record labels you worked with?

- Well, basically many labels are all the same. Spend as little money as possible and get a lot in return. Unfortunately, that's the way it is today. In

the near future, we will think about how we want to and will do this for ourselves in the future. I don't want to say any more about that yet. But El Puerto Rec. is ok.....

As of 2019, the Necronomicon line-up is also stable, which was mostly typical of the early era of the band. Is the atmosphere similar among the band members if you compare the lineups of these two eras? If not, how is one different or better than the other? In addition to the band, do you have a permanent job or do you only focus on music?

- It's not easy to find the right musicians; above all, they have to have the right people and character. It is quite normal for changes to occur over the years. Family or perhaps other interests often play a role. I'm no longer think in the long term. That sounds brutal, but in the end I have to decide who I want to work with. People come and go... it's the same in any other profession.

And yes, I have a second job. I produce videos and have my own small company while I'm not traveling or working with Necronomicon.

Do you keep in touch with your former bandmates (Jürgen Weltin, Axel Strickstroch & Lars Honeck)? What are they up to lately?

- I still see Jogi more often, as we meet regularly for a beer or wine and talk about the good old days... hahahahaha. I still have occasional contact with Lala via WhatsApp. With Axel, unfortunately, not at all.

The cover art for "Constant to Death" was designed by Katrin Peter of Kudulounge GmbH. It's pretty cool for sure. How does this relate to the album's lyrical content? Is there any symbolic meaning behind it?

- Yes, the album is not called "Constant to Death" for nothing. The lyrics are very dark this time and tell of what is happening in the world. The brutal war of aggression by Putin and his terror regime, violence against children in the church, global poverty and the consequences... these are all things that concern me and that I want to express. Katrin has realized this very well and styled a gloomy end-time cover.

What motivates and inspires you to write lyrics these days?

- Just look around you at what's happening in the world. It's complete madness. Humanity is broken. Government representatives are puppets of industry

and corrupt or strive for brutal goals. Where is this going to lead? The environment is being increasingly destroyed and there is a seething conflict everywhere and brutal wars are being waged. That's enough material...

How does a new Necronomicon song usually come about? You come up with the main structural riffs of the song and then you all create the final version together or there is a completely different routine?

- I wrote the last few albums completely on my own. The riffs have to harmonize with the vocals; that is absolutely paramount for me. Then I give the "framework" to the guys, who then have to implement my ideas. Of course, everyone has their own freedom and can realize their own ideas, but I set the framework.

What is the situation with gigs and tours these days? Do you play live a lot? Are there any special concerts or tours planned for the 40th anniversary? What setlist can fans expect at such an event?

- We won't be going on tour until next fall. I'm currently planning my long-awaited "punk project", which I really want to realize. I just don't know yet whether I'll do it as "Necronomicon" or under a different name. The fact is that I will invite several different musicians. My former drummer Chris will definitely be part of it, because he loves punk more than anything, and probably Jogi too... if he has time.

Your classic first records have recently been re-released by labels such as Battle Cry Records, Metal Command Records and High Roller Records. Which version do you like best and why? I personally prefer how HRR reissued your classics.

- HRR are doing an amazing job. I like how they realize and reissue our classic stuff. Really, really good and professional. I love it.

Okay, Freddy, that's all I could think of right now. Thank you for the interview. Please send your final necronomical wishes to all die-hard thrashers of Ukraine.

- Hey guys, I know you got hard times these days. I hope you will kick this fucker out of your country and will get your freedom back. We have a fantastic fanbase in Ukraine and I hope I can come back asap. Stay hard. With thrashy greetz, Freddy.

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THE DUTCH DEATH METAL SCENE HAS ALWAYS HAD VERY UNIQUE BANDS, AND PENTACLE IS NO EXCEPTION. THEY HAVE BEEN ACTIVE FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, AND THEIR DISCOGRAPHY IS KNOWN WORLDWIDE BY DIE-HARD DEATH METAL FANATICS. WANNES GUBBELS (VOCALS/BASS) ANSWERED MY QUESTIONS PAYING ATTENTION TO EVERY DETAIL. NOW GO AND ENTER THE DEEPNESS OF THE DEPTHS...



Hi Wannes!!! I know it's too early to talk about a new Pentacle LP, but since the previous one was released in 2019, I thought I'd ask if you have any new songs and, of course, plans for a possible split release?

- Hey there, thanks for the interview! No plans for whatever release right now. "Spectre of the Eight Ropes" was released just before the pandemic and because of this we weren't able to promote the album in a decent way, so to a certain degree it still feels we have to give this album a push as we really enjoyed it. We'll never do a perfect album, but we loved the result of the recordings. It's a very honest album and a worthy successor of the previous release, the "Five Candles Burning Red" MCD. But granted, time is moving on and we have to decide what our next move will be.

After more than 20 years of cooperation, Robert Smislaert left the band. Why did this happen? What should we know about your new drummer Jan Verdonk?

- Robert mentioned to us drumming was becoming more and more a strain to him. He had difficulties to keep it up. He was the oldest of the four of us and his age was more and more becoming a problem to him. His body was holding him back and it became harder to perform on the level he wanted to be/stay. Frustration grew and it was no fun anymore. Straight after the recording of "Spectre of the Eight Ropes" he told us he wanted to end his tenure with Pentacle and retire. We all thought it would be a good idea to end on a high note and to promote the new album with the recording line up. Maybe even a small tour through Europe. We did five shows and I was busy with two tours with Sadistic Intent and Capilla Ardiente when the pandemic killed all the fun (and more...). With no gigs in sight and unsure how long this situation would last, we decided to part ways. It was a pity we couldn't end it the way we wanted it to,

but circumstances decided different. We had a great time together and I will always cherish these times.

For a while Pentacle was without a drummer. It was a strange situation as we had a new album out, yet with the pandemic knocking at our doors and without a drummer, there was nothing we could do about. I met Jan through a mutual friend of ours. He knew Pentacle was without a drummer and at a BBQ he asked if we were searching for a drummer. I asked him if he wanted to give it a try and he responded positive. I said let's do it! That was all, haha! For 15 years, he didn't perform live and played in local acts. He mastered double bass when he joined us, so that was a major achievement from his side. He knows and loves the classic metal albums and is a very cool guy to have around. Jan is certainly a positive band member with the right attitude when it comes to this kind of music. We are glad he joined the band!

The band is still active with live performances, which is really awesome! So how was your last gig at the Eindhoven Metal Meeting Warm Up Evening?

- Indeed, we are still playing gigs, though more selected ones. The need and urge to enter the stage three days every weekend or to tour the world are over. Life asks different priorities these days, so it is what it is, but that doesn't mean I don't enjoy to perform on stage anymore. Especially gigs like the previous one we did in Erba, Italy with Into Darkness and Apparition are very memorable as they offer everything a Pentacle gig should have: a great venue with a friendly staff, awesome acts to share the stage with, a rabid crowd full of underground maniacs, a distro selling great items, a good sound and an overall very supportive vibe for everyone involved. We don't ask to enter the biggest stages on earth, but gigs like these are nothing less than amazing to me. I just love the underground vibe, the sweat and

the intensity of a club gig. Way more intense than a bigger stage. To get the audience (as a performer) or the band (as a visitor) in your face. Nothing beats this direct contact and intimacy.

I think the gig in Eindhoven went fine. It was a full house and people seemed to enjoy it. I rarely have seen a crowd going really wild at the venue (the Deströyer 666 gig was a positive exception) and this one was no different. Some headbangers while the rest enjoyed our set in a relaxed way. No death metal violence, hehe... Our change over and line check were executed with such a speed we were able to add some additional material to the live set, so we played almost an hour. It was cool to perform Hellhammer's "Reaper" again, a song which accompanies us since 1992 and has become a very distinctive link to our early days for me. Together with "Deepness of the Depths" (which we wrote in 1991 and is part of our live set to this very day) it goes back to the forming years of Pentacle. We cover (almost) all our major releases with the set and always try to change the songs and add a surprise for those who have seen and heard us more than once.

I visited the festival on Friday and Saturday as well and my personal high lights were Cyclone and Sodom. Too many familiar faces in the crowd, so socializing was a big part of this particular weekend.

You are one of the few bands in the death metal scene that keeps the formula intact. How can you be so true to your roots and ideas? What's your secret?

- I do believe there are many, many more acts which stay loyal to their cause and haven't forgotten their values. Pentacle isn't the only steady factor within the scene, by all means, but I get your point and I really appreciate the compliment.

My secret? Hmm... Stubbornness, I guess. Conviction, idealism, loyalty and integrity come to my

mind as well. But one of the most important aspect is "just" being a fan of this amazing music. I am still a kid at heart when it comes to my music collection. One can see me raging in front of the stereo and go wild to classics as "To Mega Therion", "Strappado", "Morbid Visions" or "Pleasure to Kill". This youthful enthusiasm which means far more to me than being a/the musician. The pure love for and addiction to our beloved music. The clenched fists and grinding teeth when one hears a great riff, pounding rhythm or scream from hell. Right now, I am listening to the rerecording of Sodom's "After the Deluge" and I am air drumming and making silly faces all along. I still feel the fire within and although I am not 16 anymore, I still understand and live the passion.

This feeling reflects my performance as a musician too. I am not really talented and rather mediocre in my playing, but as I keep close to the essence, I am still able to come up with simple (positive meant) and effective material for our songs. Certain musicians have become so advanced on their instrument through the years, they have lost this primitive edge which often made their early outputs so amazing. Granted, Pentacle in 2023 sounds somehow different than in the early days in 1992, but I am totally convinced we still have the same power and conviction in our material. We never lost our edge or got a polished sound. The energy is still there.

If I'm not mistaken, you've been working with the German underground label Iron Pegasus Records since 2000. It's been more than two decades. How did this close relationship with Costa develop? Talk a little about the beginnings and of course your plans for the near future.

- Yes, Costa is a damn cool guy. We go back quite some years and it's always great to meet up. We never run out of topics to talk about, but what to expect when you put two metal nerds together in one room. I love the work he did/does for Iron Pegasus Records. A very distinctive taste with many great items of bands like Desaster, Sadistic Intent, Zemial, Impiety, Taranis, Slaughter, Sabbat, Poison, Eurythmos, Messiah, Massacre, Force of Darkness, Mortem, Tyrus, Unholy Lust, Ripper and many more. Something to be proud of!

I got in contact with him through his zine, Tales of the Macabre. He contacted me to do a feature on the band. It was around the time we released our second tape, "Winds of the Fall", somewhere in 1993 or 1994, I think. From that moment, we started to get acquainted to each other. He visited me for the first time in Eindhoven and we visited the old Dynamo club together. Pentacle started to cross the border into Germany more and more and while getting in touch with our old allies Desaster, Costa was often around as well. It was one big and happy metal family, so to speak. The first release we did together was the split 10" w/Desaster and the first major Pentacle release on Iron Pegasus was "Under the Black Cross". We always loved working with Costa as he gives us complete freedom to act however we want and does whatever he can to promote us.

There are no concrete plans for the future right now, but I wouldn't hesitate one moment to give Costa a call whenever time is ready. I hope he will welcome us with open arms, as he did before.

Last year a book was published by Steven Willems entitled "Streams of Ancient Wisdom: The history of Dutch death and extreme metal". I'm sure you have it. What do you think of its content?

- This is a tricky one for me, as I was very, very close involved in the creation of the book, so I am not really objective, haha! So, what to say about it... I think Steven did an amazing job on this book. Mind you, it will never be 100% complete, but that was never the intention or goal. One can't interview every Dutch band or review every rehearsal/demo/EP/album ever created in The Netherlands. It would be just too much. Steven created an amazing overview of what happened during these formative years (and beyond...). I think it was a great asset not only bands

were featured, but promoters/venues/fanzines/labels etc. as well. They played a big part too and combined with the bands the content offers a very fair and correct picture of the Dutch scene at that time. I liked the part where foreign musicians reflect on their experiences with Dutch bands or gigs in our country. Some damn cool stories.

It was a pity we didn't get hold of the Scum club as they played a major part in that particular part of the country, but no one was interested in answering Steven's call for an interview. He really pushed it, but to no avail. Too bad, but what can you do about it? If one enjoys reading books about a certain national extreme metal scene, I definitely think this one is a very valuable addition to the collection. Not only the bigger bands like God Dethroned, Gorefest, Asphyx, Pestilence and Sinister are interviewed, but many less known, but certainly amazing acts in their own right too.

What do you think about the current state of the Dutch underground? Is it very different from when you started? Do you have any new favorite bands or discoveries?

- Hmm... In all honesty, when related to our scene, I am not up to date anymore since many, many years. I do believe there are many quality bands around which are able to create some cool music and deliver their songs with conviction, but it's rarely my taste anymore. Dead Head is my fave Dutch band as they still thrash like they were 16 years old. I love every album they did and always keep an eye open for what's coming next. Our guitarist Alex is a member of Lucifericon and if one enjoys his/her death metal blackened, this could be your band. Cool guys and some great stuff!

It might be a bit of a cliché question, but which bands influenced you to start playing death metal, and who influenced you to become a bassist/vocalist?

- Nothing wrong with answering such a question though! It's always fun to go back to the early days and remember and pay respect to those bands and musicians who made it all happen.

When talking about extreme metal bands you have to think about classic bands like Venom, Hellhammer/Celtic Frost, Possessed, Death, Destruction, Slaughter, Necrophagia (OH) and Messiah. When I got more into the underground and discovered these amazing demo acts such as Samhain/DesExult (DEN), Mutilated, Pentagram (Chile) or Necrovore, I was so much impressed with their vibe and intensity of the songs, they definitely "hopped over" into the Pentacle sound as well when I formed the band and became a bit more accomplished as a musician. On a national level I would say bands like Asphyx, Sempiternal Deathreign or Delirium left a certain mark as well.

I just loved their (early) outputs and it was great to see and hear such quality bands coming from The Netherlands. It made me proud to be part of such an amazing scene.

Musicians who inspired me are Cronos, Mantas, Tom G. Warrior, Martin E. Ain (R.I.P.), Jeff Becerra, Mike Torrao and Chuck Schuldiner (R.I.P.). Their stage presence, performance and song writing qualities/abilities are still very vivid in my mind.

Yet, without the classic Iron Maiden albums (everything up to "Somewhere in Time"), I wouldn't be doing this interview with you, that's one thing for sure. They were my first real love in hard rock/heavy metal. I listened to bands before them, but they certainly got me hooked until this day. They inspired me to continue this "metal-journey" and here I am now.

How do you see the future of Pentacle? How long do you think you'll spread the ancient feeling?

- Boah, that's hard to tell. Even after all these years, I still haven't found a magic crystal ball to look into the future, so I can't give you a sensible answer. In all honesty, my personal drive to spread our gospel around the world is a bit less than it used to be. The ambition and eagerness have become more modest and I find it harder to combine band related matters with the rest of my life as I become older. The days of spending complete holidays in front of the computer to answer interviews are definitely over.

Music wise, it's becoming harder to come up with new material after all these years. I always try to improve a bit from release to release while remaining loyal to our original concept as well, but this process leaves me drained. I don't want to rip off our own material, yet it has to be in the same vein as what we did before. You can do only so much in a particular style before one starts to rehash the songs you wrote before. Have I reached the limit of what's possible within our self-defined style? Sometimes I think, yet one only knows for sure when you have actually tried. I am really proud of our achievements with "Spectre of the Eight Ropes", but it's quite a mountain to conquer as well. Where to head next? Only the future will tell.

With the addition of Jan we found a great guy and our rehearsals and live gigs are definitely energetic. It's not about flogging a dead horse. No way...

Thank you very much Wannes for taking the time to answer my questions. The last mesmerizing thoughts from the depths are yours.

- I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to answer your questions. All support is welcome, so I appreciate your interview very much! Good luck with the zine and hails to the underground!

DON'T FORGET THE ANCIENT FEELING...
IT STILL RULES!!!





The frost merchants of ancient astral anti-god manifestations have finally returned. Their new album will guide everyone through the piercing blizzard winds of the arctic aurora. IceSickKill sent his replies at the speed of a raging storm, so now it's up to you to enter the frozen domains of Imperial Crystalline Entombment!!!

Hails! “Ancient Glacial Resurgence” is the title of Imperial Crystalline Entombment’s long-awaited second full-length album. Please tell us about the making of the new record, how long did you work on it, where and with what line-up did you record it?

- We did not plan or control the making of any of these sonic manifestations nor make any conscious efforts on its spoken tongue. It all just flowed from us, at the same time from the possession of the ancient anti-god Råvaskeith. The recording was done in the moment, spontaneously during the winter of 2022 at Nightsky Studios.

When we gather our conscious minds disappear and the spirits to which we were called possess our astral fluid, thus controlling our moves and upheaving the ancient hatred through the tools of our corporeal extensions. This is a very rapturous experience, as it is when we gather for the invoking rituals. If this music sounds inhuman to you, then you are correct. Just by playing the album in your speakers, you are opening the eyes of the other side to peer right into you... and you feel that as the music rages on. These songs all come from a collective, as the lyrics spill forth as warnings from Råvaskeith.

We gather together in this form only so often to spit forth this human way of expanding the mind and soul. Our inhuman souls are constantly colliding together on the astral level intertwining, and inspiring each other, hence all these songs come forth naturally as a combined unity of power and conviction. No one person creates, we all just flow. We do not handle things as normal human

men can comprehend. It is hard for me to explain... This music just IS... as we just ARE...

At the moment I.C.E. is 4 weapons/vessels for Råvaskeith (Mammoth, Bleak, IceSickKill and Blissered) but we are still just ONE force no matter how many vessels are currently being used by the ancient apocalyptic anti-god. It could be 2 one day, or 5 or 6 the next depending on the needs of the specific invocation ritual. There are no “people” or “band” members. We were each individually beckoned to give up our futile and pathetic human lives and to travel north and strip our mortal flesh naked into the freezing wastelands of arctic snow. We were each drawn north for possession, to become entombed in the crystalline hypothermia, and cast upon the great Blizzard shrine to become one with Råvaskeith and become the chosen astral gateway keepers (chosen to invoke the return to glacial doom). Together we are intertwined as one unstoppable force, the freezing breath of Råvaskeith, all acting as one for the obliteration of all mankind.

The cover artwork, just like for the debut album “Apocalyptic End in White”, both are fantastic and also similar. Can we talk about a strict concept in this case? What are your lyrics about and how does the cover relate to them?

- The artwork was created by another human servant of ours who goes by the name of Visual-Darkness. The artwork and photo of ourselves represents the pathway we live. The clothing we wear simply conceals us amongst the vast frozen landscape during our communions. We need not be disturbed by any who may spot our ritual

gatherings. Most often we are led to deep hidden caverns below the glacial frost, but we also need open and vast snow covered flats to perform invocations with the winds of the arctic banshees. Also, these cloaks and masks conceal and hide our now sunken and frozen bodies... hideous as flesh as become through the transformation that we have endured. We feel nothing and our blood now pumps sheer ice. Our masks further conceal not only our sunken flesh, but any symbolic reference to our once human identities, while instilling the cold, bleak and blank face of the crystalline spirit on the tips of our features for all humans to reflect upon. Humans put so much importance on the flesh molded features of a face and corporeal extensions. In the dead cold, all such things shatter off in the convulsing chills of truth and true power. The lyrics speak of this in more depth, and are spoken through us during our possessions. They are merely warnings of hatred and wrath from the great orbital Råvaskeith.

The black metal you play is quite fast, grim and incredibly relentless. Where did you get your musical inspiration from? Who is responsible for the music in I.C.E.?

- We are all responsible for this violent creation we have summoned. We keep hearing the reoccurring words of “black metal” whenever we speak to inquiring humans. We only create what comes through us while possessed by our specific astral anti-gods. Those who still dwell within the strain of the frozen bleak light and crystalline nebulae. If there are some forces within your world who produce similar soundscapes and sonic summonings then they are

among those who instinctively feel the pull of the great orbital Râvaskeith. Beyond the evil veil of mortal "black", there is a more painful dimension of pure blinding and piercing bleak white.

We have no inspirations other than the force that drives us, and bends our minds and wills to the blinding hypothermic power of the ancient. We speak the truth with our music, preparing the frozen apocalypse and raising Râvaskeith is a very time consuming thing, and takes many years... but our link to our human lives is still buried within us... and so perhaps our human talents and inspirations of the past have surged to create this album for the masses, as a taunting spit in the eye of humanity.

Before we took it upon ourselves to take the jump and move to the wilderness of the north – feeling the pull of the great orbital Râvaskeith, we were all musicians as humans... outcasts... different. I suppose that the powers we inherited through our astral communions, may have influenced our talents even more so, giving us even more power. All of our senses and abilities are constantly growing stronger, and the cold emptiness prepares us for the time, when we will be given the final power to raise the beasts, and bring the rightful unity of cold white emptiness to the universe once more.

It has been announced that you will finally perform live for the first time at Hellfest in 2024. So what can fans expect from you live? Do you plan to do more live shows with I.C.E. next year? Is the live lineup the same as the one that recorded the album?

- You can expect an avalanche of concaving pain within your brain and soul, the voice and sonic hatred of the almighty Râvaskeith will spill forth and enter your solar plexus with a convulsing violent thrust, taking control of all

your corporeal limbs and motions. The whirlwind blizzard of screaming and violent thrashing will encase your thoughts with the imagery of what will come of your pathetic human frail existence, and the murdered blood cries of your loved ones. The End will come in blinding white and snow...

Such glimpses of the frozen apocalypse that you will experience at Hellfest will leave you subconsciously begging for more, knowing: **YOU SHOULD NOT BE HERE... THE END IS NEAR...** Cosmic, cold and ancient, the chaos gods of ICE shall return to rule once more!!!

You will see the passion, feel the truth, and as the floor rumbles and the screamings ensue... embrace the horror and know that indeed, Râvaskeith will rise and conquer! And everyone will perish in ICE!

Of course we are glad to open the doors of truth to the ears of the contemptable human race... let them know of their oncoming demise... there is more pain and fear that way (unlike the wild animals who are oblivious to the approaching apocalypse). This is why we have gathered to create these mortal soundscapes, to have those who instinctively feel the ever rising pull of the orbital Râvaskeith, to rejoice in the return to old, and prepare for death with open arms, while we scorn and blaspheme the ignorant and childish, hope filled human race with hatred.

Such touring would be an ideal way to gather these open eyes and create an even greater magnetic pull of the distant white matter crystal fields, but at the same time our work must be done. It takes many years and much time and painstaking sacrifice to channel the correct astral wave for the ancient Râvaskeith to manifest from. We were called for a reason, and that goal must be achieved.

Perhaps on our travels from northern pole to

southern, and vice versa, while continuing the auro- ra alignment rituals we might feel the engraved human plight to perhaps appear at a gathering or two, as we have taken such time to record this album, but only the passage of time shall tell.

Debemur Morti Productions released the new album on LP/CD/MC and recently reissued the debut album on CD and MC. All formats look stunning. Which is your personal favorite and why? How did you get in touch with this French label and how are sales going so far?

- We believe that Debemur Morti Productions and their followers have the heart of I.C.E. within them. A deep calling from the ONE. The continual chanting of the Astral Frost Invocation has brought us back, so we shall bestow more shivering war chants upon the world. The nihilistic death obsessed flock of Debemur Morti contacted us so that they may assist in the opening of the archaic veil. It is working out nicely. All of these releases are favorites in the eyes of the frozen banshee lords of white death, because they all spread the message of Râvaskeith further throughout this doomed earth.

Are you getting ready to shoot a video clip to support the new album? If so, which song will be chosen?

- This idea has been presented to us, but we shall see how things develop. Capturing our communion summoning rituals may be a difficult task for our human servants to achieve, considering the extreme cold temperatures they would have to endure.

Almost 20 years passed between I.C.E.'s two records, why was that? Hopefully if the third album is planned, we'll have to wait less.

- After years of spreading the message of hopeless frozen extinction upon the earth in 2003, we felt the instinctual call of Râvaskeith to return our bodies to a hibernative state within the arctic, while our astral energies were displaced onto other distant planets and within four alternate entities, (spreading the cold white death further amongst the stars in our alternate life form shells).

The repetitive howling shrieks of the loyal mortal servants below, have opened the archaic portal and reanimated I.C.E. once more to reign again over Earth. We have been revived and have arisen from our tomb once more to destroy all life as you know it under an endless blanket of ice and snow. We will continue to pummel this earth for as long as Râvaskeith commands, and plans are already underway for a 3rd sonic manifestation communion ritual sometime next year.

OK, the last glacial words are all yours. If I missed any important news about I.C.E. please add it. Thank you very much!

- The great Râvaskeith, who came before all, and who will END all, is universally cold (as is all lifeless energy within the cavern of frozen emptiness). The return to ICE and the return to the bleak kingdom of snow is a natural circle of evolution. Your human existence only came to life, because of the clash of a chaotic starburst, and like it's rebellion to truth will soon implode on itself to join once again with the cold empty space of frozen origin.

The bitterness of the cold is the last and highest sensation existing life will have the pleasure/displeasure of comprehending. Beyond that, when the spirits of the ancient Râvaskeith tumble forward and each planet within each solar system is engulfed in frozen death, then the real I.C.E., and the real cold begins, beyond your concept of snow and subzero temperatures... will come an unfathomable universe of blinding white space and frozen emptiness. Thy kingdom come!



AGE OF AGONY
"Raven Black" CD 2022
 (Terranis Productions)

The latest chapter in the Age of Agony story is called "Raven Black". The Hungarians' new EP consists of 5 death metal war anthems. Both musically and lyrically, they are close to what the mighty Bolt Thrower has released before. But you don't have to accept them as cheap copies, because they certainly aren't. It's just that the vibe is very similar, you know. "Regicide" kicks off the CD and brutally storms with pounding bass drums, catchy guitar melodies and otherworldly solos. I especially like the mood of the solos and the grumpy grunts there.



"Invasion" follows the sonic carnage with rawer-sounding groovy riffs and dynamic drum parts. In this track, the overall effect was much more abstract, perhaps due to the meditative solos peppered with special sound effects. The title of the third composition is "The Battle of Kings". It's a well-measured, mid-tempo tune with brooding solos and lots of drumming footwork. The title track "Raven Black" comes fourth. It is the longest song on the over 25 minutes EP. And interestingly, it turned out to be the most varied in all respects. There are many tempo changes and the guitar riffs have also been made more heavy or let's say groovy. Around the middle of the song, the echo effect on the vocals became very cool as well. By the way, it ends with really beautiful medieval acoustic guitar melodies. The last track of the CD is "Corvinus". I think this became the most atmospheric song of the EP and those writhing solos turned out to be simply fantastic. The sound of the material became maximally raw, maybe too much, but in today's super-polished sounding music world, this is clearly a positive rather than a negative result. The demanding cover artwork and all graphic designs were created by Grafít és Hamu. Needless to say, they turned out flawlessly and to the point. If you like old fashioned death metal, then this material should be in your collection!!!
E-mail: ageofagonyhun@gmail.com
Facebook: facebook.com/AgeofAgony

BLIZZARD
"Disengaged From Life" CD 2021
 (Death Trap Productions)

If I say that Blizzard from Hungary was founded in 1995, then I have already answered what type of black metal they play, haven't I? Well, true to their name, they prefer icy black metal, the Norwegian kind,



especially Immortal's "Blizzard Beasts" record. Harsh riffs, merciless tempos and bloodthirsty vocals characterize the horde's latest material. But in addition to all this, the eight new compositions, with more than 41

minutes, are not only about speed, but also try to lead the listener towards atmospheric, almost ambient-like soundscapes. The sound production is devastating, but also crystal clear. Everything sounds very thick, but it also retains the coldness as it should. In the songs of "Disengaged From Life", the lyrical world steeped in darkness and the Nordic influence are perfectly mixed, so everything is given for a savage black metal album. For me, maybe only the arrangements of the songs "Corpus Christi" and "Shards of a Mirror" deviate a little from the usual black metal stuff, because these songs became much more experimental than the others, which is not bad at all. From the previous album "Les Litanies de Satan", released 15 years ago, only drummer Frostdemon remains. He was joined by Renfield (vocals), Typhon (lead guitar), Pnsa (rhythm guitar) and Andro (bass). These five members are in perfect harmony and have put together an incredibly good material, you can experience it yourself by ordering the CD at any of the links below. I really hope we don't have to wait 15 years for their next album!!!

E-mail: blizzardblackmetal@gmail.com
Bandcamp: blizzardhu.bandcamp.com

**CADAVERIC POSSESSION/
 AGGRESSIVE MUTILATOR**
"Influx Of Hatred" CD 2020
 (Bestial Invasion Records/Mythrone Promotion)

"Influx of Hatred" is a split CD release that brings together two maximally obscure bands from the depths of the underground spheres. Poland's Cadaveric Possession presents "The Rise of Eschaton", a 5-track stuff, which was recorded, mixed and mastered in Kraków in January 2020. The music created by Slav (guitar, bass, vocals) and Ketzter (drums) comes from that old vibe that is eternal. Their mix is catchy and very dark at the same time. It combines the trademarks of black and death metal. Let me also mention that their music and sound production is very enjoyable, even if it is far from perfect, although I don't think this was their main intention at all. So all in all, their almost 22-minute repertoire turned out very well.



Sweden's Aggressive Mutilator continues the split with their "Den svenska rebellén" material. Their 8 songs represent some sort of punk- and rock'n'roll-influenced black metal, which can sometimes be quite chaotic or simply tragic. This formation is also a duo starring Mikael Holm (guitar, vocals) and Micael Zetterberg (drums, bass). As is usually the case with Swedes, their music is full of interesting guitar melodies and the inevitable d-beat parts. It's also interesting that they added a lot of melancholy to their almost 18-minute stuff. In short, it's really not a typical black metal material, if you ask me. So, in terms of mood, this is a fairly diverse split release. In the booklet you will find the lyrics, member photos and all useful information from both recordings.

Bandcamp: aggressivemutilator.bandcamp.com

CULT OV BLACK BLOOD
"Abhorrence Ov God" CD 2019
 (Total War)

Cult ov Black Blood is a black metal formation from Poland, founded in 2015, and "Abhorrence ov God" is nothing but a compilation CD of the band's early demos, namely "Awakening the Archadaemon"

(2017), "The Ancient Curse" (2018) and "Penetration ov the Holy Vulva" (2018). These demos were recorded by Baptizer ov Blood and Goatsemen (bass, vocals) and Black Demon ov Vengeance (vocals, guitars, drum programming), although there was a guest drummer Grief on "The Ancient Curse" demo. The CD starts with 11 songs from the third demo "Penetration ov the Holy Vulva". It sounds very morbid and basement-like, as the band's name and nicknames would suggest. So what you can expect is a very raw sound production with under-produced sound quality. Next comes the 9 songs from the second demo "The Ancient Curse". This demo sounds a bit better, but don't expect drastic changes in their well proven necro formula. The CD ends with 7 songs from the first demo "Awakening the Archadaemon".



It's a pretty sick demo for sure. There are a total of 27 tracks on the CD, of which 6 songs are covers by bands such as Archgoat, Beherit and Sadomator. Only die-hard fans of the band should order this nearly 71-minute long CD, as it's definitely not for everyone. I don't know if there will be a sequel to Cult ov Black Blood, as Black Demon ov Vengeance passed away on November 24th, but the band's debut album "Apocalyptic Banner ov Abaddon" was released this June by Rex Diaboli, so give it a listen if you're a Cult ov Black Blood fan!
E-mail: cultovblackblood@wp.pl

CULTIC PULP
"Crush Conformity/Adrastea" CD 2022
 (Death Trap Productions/Hunug Records)

Death Trap Productions and Hunug Records from Hungary recently came out with a rather interesting CD release, including two demos from the long-disbanded Pécs-based death metal band Cultic Pulp. The Hungarian band from the early 90s played quite good music, so I really enjoyed listening to their demos. The five songs from 1992's "Crush Conformity" demo kick off the CD.



The demo has a decent sound, maybe only the bass guitar sounds a little annoying in places, which can be considered as a victim of the mixing. The trio's crypt-sounding compositions are very well composed, you can hear that they are proficient in what they did back then. Both demos have the same lineup, which is: Attila Bánfai (vocals/bass), Norbert Varga (guitars) and Gábor Szabó (drums). The track titles of the first demo are: "Kitchen Massacre", "Corpse Drowned", "Overdose of Love/C.C." (If I understood correctly, this song is a Carnal Carnage cover), "Digged Out of the Family Tomb", "Epilogue...". The second demo comes from 1993 and was also the last material of the trio. The demo called "Adrastea" sounds much more necrotic and if the first demo still had a lot of thrash metal influence, this demo focuses more on death metal, although there

are still abstract acoustic parts here and there. This demo consists of 4 songs namely "Crush Conformity", "Dead", "Digged Out of the Family Tomb" and "Again and Forever". But as a bonus, we can also find the '93 version of the "Epilogue" song plus a live track called "My Sins Deepen Me" from the same year. In short, there are many rarities here and at the same time it presents the band both from the studio and from the stage. This 46-minute CD edition is a real gem and rarity, which also comes with an 8-page booklet, with a new cover art & layout, some photos, lyrics, covers of old demos, concert posters, flyers, etc. In a word, with this CD material we can take a kind of time travel to the early messengers of death metal of the Hungarian underground – Cultic Pulp!!!

E-mail: gabor.andras75@gmail.com

DEMONIC LUST
"Unholy Devourer Of Souls" CD 2023
 (Necroscope Blasphemia)

Demonic Lust is a hellish duo from Valparaíso, Chile. Its members are Impure Desire (guitars, bass & vocals) and G. Nekromancer (drums). The music they cultivate is, of course, black metal, that kind of dark, occult and satanic. But by no means do they create in the style of modern black metal bands, on the contrary, in the spirit of the originally evil and unpolished hordes formed around the middle of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties. This CD is a compilation of their first two demos, "Demo MMXIX" and "Demo MMXXII". The more than 21-minute CD contains a total of 8 songs. All songs were recorded at Demonic Lust's Ritual Chamber in 2019 and 2022 respectively.



The atmosphere of these recordings is rather cryptic, but I think that was the main intention and they managed to achieve this perfectly. They storm with black anger and spread blasphemy. My absolute favorite tracks are "Unholy Vengeance", "The Heretic Call" and "Crush the Impostor". By the way, the last song on the CD, "Heavens Above", is a Necroplasma cover. It has a completely different atmosphere than their own songs, but since it's a cover, there's nothing wrong with that. The booklet states that you can only get this CD through the band, so please email them at the address below if you think this is the music you are looking for!!!

E-mail: demoniclustchile@gmail.com

DEPRIVED OF SALVATION
"When Stones Bleed & Era Of Disdain" CD 2023

(Total Därrness Propaganda)

The given CD contains Deprived of Salvation's latest EP, entitled "When Stones Bleed", as well as the band's 2021 EP, namely "Era of Disdain". The Hungarian band perfectly mixes Scandinavian death and black metal in its repertoire. The first song of the new EP, "The Heart of the Abyss", here and there reminded me quite a bit of the atmosphere of Necrophobic's "Tsar Bomba". In general, I feel a strong influence of At The Gates on their new material, and of course not only because of the specific HM-2 guitar sound. On the other hand, they were also strongly influenced by the last records of the Canadian northern hyperblasters Kataklysm. So we're talking about a modern melodic death metal approach that even has keyboard arrangements. The five songs of the "When Stones Bleed" EP sound quite good,

the proportions between the instruments are balanced. The sound of the 2021 EP has become much weaker, but its three compositions still provide interesting musical information. For the perfect sound comparison,



there's the song "The Era of Disdain", which appears on both EPs. If you're really addicted to the HM-2 sound, you'll definitely like this nearly 27-minute stuff one way or another. So grab your CD directly from the band or label as it's limited to 300 copies.

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

DESTRUCTION "Bullets Loading" BOX SET 2022 (High Roller Records)

Destruction had a very productive year in 2022, both in terms of the release of the new record called "Diabolical" and other reissues. If I count correctly, three box sets were released and "The Butcher Strikes Back" demo '99 finally got a proper reissue amongst other ordinary reissues of old stuff as well. The current box set focuses on the band's early material and is limited to 666 copies. I have the regular version as the other two versions are only sold in Germany, due to the included original bullet from Schmier's personal belt collection. This regular version consists of four super killer looking 12" splatter vinyls, four CDs and three MCs, a 32-page A4 sized booklet, a 16-page A5 sized booklet and a patch, all housed in a deluxe gold foil stamped case bound box.



I really enjoyed reading Mike, Tommy & Schmier's stories about the beginnings of the band, their influences and visiting one of the most important metal shows of their lives. The attached images in the A4 booklet are simply priceless. The A5 booklet contains rare interviews, articles and flyers that appeared in underground magazines from 1984-1985. Some are written in German, some in English, generally a pretty good read. By the way, this box set was released on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Destruction, thus combining the first demo "Bestial Invasion of Hell" in 3 formats (LP/CD/MC), the first EP "Sentence of Death" in 2 formats (European and American versions on vinyl) and the European version on CD, the first full live concert as "Black Mass in Altenessen" in all three formats, and the notorious Hell demo "Satanic Death" on CD and MC. Since the demo and EP have been successfully re-released by High Roller Records several times before, I'll focus more on the live stuff and the Hell rehearsal demo. "Black Mass in Altenessen" was recorded at Jugendhaus Emscher in Altenessen on December 1, 1984. It consists of 11 sequences and the tracklist is as follows: "Total Disaster", "Mad Butcher", "Satan's Ven-

geance", "The Ritual", "Mike Shreds", "Tortmentor", "Antichrist", "Death Trap", "Black Mass", "Black Death" and "Mad Butcher" (Encore). The sound is good, if you ask me, especially considering it was recorded on a cheap tape recorder at the time. Various glitches and technical issues occur during the live performance, which is also fine if it's a band's first full live concert. As you can see, the tracklist combines almost all the songs from the first demo and EP, as well as some tracks from the first full-length album "Infernal Overkill". Quite an impressive set of songs! It's a pity that "Black Death" fades out after 5 minutes and the encore version of "Mad Butcher" fades in right from the start, but us old-school fans all know why, don't we? Other than that, this is the most valuable piece of the box for me! A nice unearthing for sure! The other interesting thing is the Hell rehearsal demo, which finally got an official release after many bootleg versions. It consists of four songs, namely "Hell", "Satan's Hammer", "Death" and "Die for Metal", and lasts over 10 minutes. It's pretty noisy raw stuff to be honest. The song structures are simpler and contain fewer melodies than any other Destruction song. But since this was basically an experiment in exactly this musical field, it's easy to say that their mission was successfully accomplished. Oh, and there's another hidden gem at the end of the "Bestial Invasion of Hell" demo (only on LP and CD versions), four rehearsal recordings from 1984, namely "Death Trap", "Invincible Force", "Total Disaster" and "Antichrist". Awesome addition! Overall, I am very happy to own this box set and encourage other fans of the band to invest in this awesome anniversary box too!!!

Website: www.hrrecords.de
Facebook: facebook.com/hrrecords

DESTRUCTION "Diabolical" CD 2022 (Napalm Records)

Destruction's line-up has changed quite a bit in recent years and this LP is the first one without founding member Mike. Well, it's an unfortunate fact, but it didn't affect the band's creative and musical output at all. The new album of the German thrash metal pioneers, which has been operating as a quartet since 2019 again, is titled "Diabolical". In addition to the short intro song, the new LP includes 11 tracks of their own and a cover song, all in nearly 48 minutes.



Let's start with the sound. Well, V.O. Pulver brought his tried-and-true level, properly mixing the new songs and ensuring they correctly blow the listener's mind. Randy, who already helped out the band live in 2015, has been a permanent member since 2018. His drumming fits Destruction's style perfectly, so his performance is flawless. Damir has been a steady part of the thrash team since 2019, but for the first time we heard his incredible solos on the "Under Attack" album in 2016. After Mike left, Martin Furia took his place. It should be known about him that he previously worked as a guitar technician for the band, he comes from Argentina and plays guitar in such Belgian thrash & death metal acts as Bark and Furia. I can honestly say that the first joint work of the refreshed quartet turned out better than I thought. Although I only trace this back to the last 20 years, since the atmosphere of classic albums clearly cannot be surpassed.

The title track and "State of Apathy" could already be heard in 2021. Both are killer songs, but the new record is full of other well-crafted thrash pieces like "No Faith in Humanity", "Repent Your Sins" or "Servant of the Beast". Schmier brings his dizzying screams and hard as concrete bass parts. Overall, the album is crushing, but mostly sonically, as the variety of riffs isn't very impressive, at least in my opinion. I mean, if the new melodies don't stick in my head after a few listens, there's something wrong, right? Of course, it could also be the problem with me, ha-ha-ha... All in all, there's definitely something missing from their newer records that was magically there in their early materials, music- and chemistry-wise. The album's final track is "City Baby Attacked by Rats", a tribute to the legacy of the legendary punk rock band GBH. The cover and the booklet itself were designed by Gyula Havancsák, with whom Schmier & Co. has been working together for quite some time. Needless to say, they turned out great. Oh and one more thing I personally didn't like about the current CD version is the digisleeve packaging. It's not necessarily the band's fault, rather their new label, Napalm Records, is behind it, but I think it's pretty lame, especially at the price they sell it for. Okay, so the "Diabolical" album is here, taste it now and draw your own conclusions! Obey and thrash till death!!!

Website: www.destruction.de
Facebook: facebook.com/destruction

DESTRUCTION "The Butcher Strikes Back" CD 2022 (Vic Records)

"The Butcher Strikes Back" is a very cool and highly recommended Destruction compilation released by Dutch Vic Records. It contains a total of 12 tracks. The first three songs "Bestial Invasion", "The Butcher Strikes Back" and "World Domination of Pain" are from the extremely rare comeback demo from 1999. This demo was primarily intended to secure a new record deal for the band, so it was not widely distributed at the time. Two of the three songs appeared as bonus tracks on the limited 2CD edition of the "Metal Discharge" album in 2003, but since 1999 the three demo songs together have only appeared on this special compilation release. And for me, this is the most valuable part of the current compilation, so big thanks to Vic Records for making it available again. Then there are two covers, "Shellshock" by Tank and "We Are the Road Crew" by Motörhead, the first was previously only available on the Japanese CD version of the "D.E.V.O.L.U.T.I.O.N." album, while the second appeared on the limited digibook CD version of "Inventor of Evil" album along with the next track, which is "The Alliance of Hellhoundz (Schmier version)". These six songs made up the first part of the CD and the second part contains six more live cuts from the "Alive Devastation" live album.



They are: "Machinery of Lies", "Bullets from Hell", "Tears of Blood", "Invincible Force", "Bestial Wacken Incident" and "Bestial Invasion". The CD runs over 49 minutes and is a killer addition to any Destruction collection! The 16-page booklet includes a rad interview with Schmier, conducted by Pim Blankenstein in April 2020, lyrics to the first 6 songs, some great photos and Joachim Luetke's original cover art pimped up by Liné Hammett. There are some small typos

in the booklet, but they are not serious. I own both the CD and vinyl versions, but let me say right away that the CD version dominates in terms of sound, the vinyl somehow didn't do so well. Also, we have 11 songs on the vinyl version, "Bestial Wacken Incident" is not on it. Plus, the song "The Alliance of Hellhoundz (Schmier version)" is written on the back cover as the first song on the B-side, when it's actually the last song on the A-side. Anyway, this is an awesome release, so all the Destruction fanatics out there should try to get their hands on this gem!!!

E-mail: info@vicrecords.com
Website: www.vicrecords.com

EFFRONTERY "Mayfly" CD 2012 (Self-released)

Well, since this album was released back in 2012, we can definitely call it a "blast from the past" review. I got this CD from Attila (Fekete Terror Productions) and since it's a great release and I haven't written about it yet, I thought I'd give it a spin and give my opinion here. The 10-song "Mayfly" is the debut full-length release from Hungarian Effrontery, which contains 52 minutes of sophisticated death metal with symphonic elements. The recording line-up for the album was as follows: Zsolt Lédeczi (vocals), Péter Lipák (guitar, bass & vocals), Gábor Czene (guitar) and Zsolt Filák (drums), although some guest musicians also left a nice mark in the songs.



The technical side of the band reminded me a lot of Psycroptic, but the melodies are a completely different story. Then the combination of the symphonic elements with those deep death growls reminded me of a band called Garden of Shadows from the past. Despite the previous comparisons, I still find that Effrontery's music is very special and does not belong to the usual melodic death metal movement. Their members are very experienced both musically and technically, and I feel that classical music has a great influence on the structure of their repertoire. The album sounds crystal clear and balanced, making it very enjoyable to listen to. In 2017, they released their second album, "Seven Years of Agony", which if I'm not mistaken was a digital only release and was never released in physical format. It's a bit of a shame, because it's also a great album. Effrontery is still active, so I hope to hear new music from them in the near future. In the meantime, visit their bandcamp page and listen to both of their albums!!!

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

EXESSUS "Asynapse" CD-R 2022 (Self-released)

The second LP of Catalan Exessus forges the modern sound and musical currents of the 21st century with the thrash metal heritage of the eighties. The Spanish quartet of Iván Exe (vocals/guitar), Ferran Montasell (guitar), Gerard Colomer (bass/backing vocals) and Victor García (drums) pretty much focuses on grooves, catchy sing-alongs and crushing sound production. It is certain that these components are important, moreover, the musical abilities of the members are at their peak, but nevertheless I feel the lack of unique ideas and hooks. In addition, the more than 70-minute album with its 13 songs is not stylistically homogeneous at all. I mean,

it's quite confusing when the album starts with a great, dynamic thrash metal track, but then suddenly we're bumped into some soft, almost non-metal tune with clean vocals and pop choruses. Nevertheless, when they play some heavy stuff, it reminds me more of Xentrix, especially if we look at Iván's vocal style.



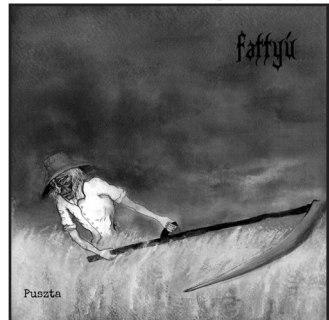
For the next material, I advise them to focus their writing skills on building something with a less wide combination of styles and less experimentation. In this way, a single cohesive force would bind their songs together and they would sound more unified. Anyway, this is just my personal opinion, because the members' idea of the initiative could have been the opposite from the beginning. In a word, we have a professional sounding release with songs that are too varied for me, but maybe not for the fans of the band. For me, the best or flawless part of "Asynapse" can be seen on the cover and other visual designs of Pau Pujadas. He did a perfect job, unlike the band itself!!!
Facebook: facebook.com/Exessus

FATTYÚ

"Pusztá" CD 2023

(Transylmedia Records)

Fattyú, the Hungarian dungeon synth black metal unit led by Avius (all instruments), appeared with very diverse material and that's for sure. Previously, this stuff was only available on cassette, but now thanks to Transylmedia Records, the "Pusztá" album is also available on CD. The album itself consists of 8 songs, which literally means 8 different musical journeys into the most unexpected cavalcade of moods. The core of the music is clearly metal, but not necessarily black metal, and since ambient type things are gaining more and more emphasis, Avius' music fits more into the atmospheric category.



Most of the time it's meditative, but when it goes crazy with some blackened vocals and guitars, it gets really metal. The album is about 39 minutes long, but there are 3 bonus tracks at the end of the CD that add another 22 minutes to this release. These were done in the same style and manner, so they tied in quite well with the main material. The 12-page booklet contains all the lyrics, which are all in Hungarian and have a folklore theme. Some of the songs also feature guest appearances, which make the overall picture a bit more colorful. So anyone who likes atmospheric, relaxing music should definitely check out Fattyú's "Pusztá". This CD edition is limited to 300 copies, so don't miss out!
Facebook: facebook.com/fattyumetal

FLESHGORE

"Carnival Of Flesh" CD 2022

(Xtrem Music)

Well, the long-awaited new album of one of the most prominent bands of the

Ukrainian brutal death metal scene has finally arrived. This is their sixth full-length CD in the row. Their previous record "Denial of the Scriptures" was released in 2016 and is still one of my favorites from them. But let's get back to the new material. "Carnival of Flesh" contains 10 well-composed and arranged death metal pieces in nearly 39 minutes. This material sounds very punchy, much stronger than their predecessors. Further, the band added vocalist Michele Borniotto, who suitably increased the level of growling brutalities. The other musicians remained the same as on the "Godless" EP from 2018, namely Igor Lystopad (guitars), Ruslan Drozd (bass/vocals) and Ed Litviakov (drums). The first song, "Distorted Lights", opens in typical Fleshgore style with a hint of Suffocation's "Funeral Inception" and a concentrated Dying Fetus spice. The grooves in this song are really cool. This is followed by the title track, which is perhaps even faster and more technical. The bass parts come out very well in some places, in a kind of bulldozer way. The third is "Inhuman Existence", which is another typical Fleshgore tune, nothing extra so to speak, just a brutal crush from start to finish. Then there's "Buried Truth", which starts with somewhat modern riffs, but then returns to the beloved masters of the New York school, that is, the aforementioned Suffocation and its companions, Internal Bleeding and Dehumanized. The fifth track, "Modern Arts of Slavery", roars with typical Dying Fetus-like grooves. The drum parts are really crazy there, especially the double bass patterns. The next song, "Hive of Insanity", has the most melodic riff combination and is also the most melodic song on the record. There are also many breakdowns, which eventually transform into a kind of ethereal Immolation vibe. The overall picture is intriguing and rather experimental, but I really like it. The seventh sonic spawn is "Invisible Reality". It's another killer composition where grooves alternate with bomb blasts and are covered by tricky bass lines and atmospheric guitar melodies. The eighth part of the album is called "Frail Utopia". This song ended up being less interesting and a bit boring, but the Dying Fetus grooves come through nicely.



The guitar riffs of "War is an Amusement" roll through our ear canals like a road roller, it's a brutal one that also features a very good solo. The last song on the album is "Ad Astra". It crushes very well and gives a perfect finish to this excellent album. There is also a good bit of chaotic solo in this track. In short, everything is given plus the album cover is awesome too thanks to Raymond Art. So if you prefer brutal death metal with mind-blowing grooves, then don't hesitate any longer, buy this record right now directly from the band or their label!!!

Bandcamp: fleshgore.bandcamp.com

Facebook: facebook.com/FleshgoreOfficial

FOGOS

"Corpses And Ashes" CD-R 2022

(Blood Fire Death)

Fogos from Barcelona is a fairly new black metal band, formed in 2021, but with a fully experienced membership, following the musical paths of the Scandinavian hordes of the 90s. Their music is direct and sufficiently dark, not over-thought or over-complicated, but because the more than 46 minutes of "Corpses and Ashes" has got a crystal-clear sound production, it affects our senses in a completely different way than

the early materials of their Scandinavian contemporaries. Nonetheless, the Spanish quartet's debut album has a lot of potential.



The vibe is there, the attitude likewise, so expect 10 well-crafted black metal pieces. I especially liked their tune called "Deimos" and wish they will write more songs like that in the future. Lyrically they forge themes about fatalism, nihilism, death and the human psyche. The fantastic cover art was designed by Beren. At first sight it looks plain, but believe me it has depth. I would advise fans of Mayhem, Dark Funeral and Marduk to pick this stuff for evaluation. Strong debut album for sure!!!

Facebook: facebook.com/Fogus.official

FROZEN WREATH

"Mea Culpa" CD 2023

(Filosofem Records)

We didn't have to wait long for the continuation of the debut album "Memento Mori" (2021), because here it is, the second full-length material of Frozen Wreath has arrived. It is called "Mea Culpa" and contains 7 precisely arranged songs in the spirit of atmospheric black metal. Their songs are mostly long, so the playing time of the disc is almost 50 minutes. Despite the stormy blast beat parts and bloodthirsty vocals, I felt that their repertoire was quite relaxed.



Their music is mostly measured, meditative and landscape-painting. As with the first record, Zoltán Szele is responsible for the instruments, and Roland Neubauer for the vocals and lyrics. The two musicians are in particularly good harmony, and this is, of course, reflected in the final production. If I brought up Cradle of Filth and the Scandinavian bands as possible influences on their debut album, I can now say with a clear heart that the band has found themselves as much as possible with this marching epic black metal attitude. Zoltán continued in the best possible combinations between the instrumental parts of "Mea Culpa", putting the whole music of Frozen Wreath on another level. As in the case of the debut album, the lyrics are included in two languages, i.e. Hungarian and English. The design and layout of the booklet are both professionally done and include the super rad cover art of Renáta Vörös. In short, the wait was not in vain, as the two Hungarian musicians created another masterpiece. Fans of atmospheric black metal should definitely taste the songs of Frozen Wreath's "Mea Culpa"!!!!
Facebook: facebook.com/frozenwreath

FUNUS

"Örökké" CD 2022

(Total Därkness Propaganda)

The Hungarian band Funus was founded in 2007 and after four demos it is finally

coming out with a full-length album. The main member of the melodic black metal band is Mathyas (guitars, bass, vocals, songwriter and poet), who was assisted on this record by Chris (drums), Moonchild (sound engineer, producer, vocals on "Varjútánc") and LXIV. King David (folk instruments).



"Örökké" contains 7 songs, which have a kind of wandering atmospheric black metal character. The lyrics of the songs are written in Hungarian and they are really literary, sometimes grim, sometimes gloomy, I could say depressing in nature, but this type of music wants and suggests just that. Funus' music is definitely not fast-paced, rather measured, free of blast beats and completely atmospheric. For example, this music is very good for relaxing, reading or simply meditating. The sound is icy and most of the riffs reflect Scandinavian black metal, but there is also a folk-inspired song called "Varjútánc". In addition to the current jewel case CD version, this material was previously released on cassette courtesy of NGC Prod. Grafit & Hamu and R.C. are responsible for graphic elements. The booklet contains the lyrics and some information about the record. Of course, it's interesting sound material, but it definitely depends on the mood. The CD version is limited to 300 copies, so hurry before it runs out!!!
Facebook: facebook.com/funusbandhu

HELLWITCH

"Annihilational Intercession" CD 2023

(Listenable Records)

Hellwitch is the kind of band that rarely releases new material, but when they do release a new album, it usually delivers on all levels, be it technical, musical or lyrical.



"Annihilational Intercession" is the third LP of the super-brainy, witch-speed-infused death/thrash combo formed in 1984, which also gained a well-deserved cult status. The new record is divided into 9 songs, and the membership is as follows: Patrick Ranieri (lead & rhythm guitars, vocals), J.P. Brown (12-string, rhythm guitars, bass) and Brian Wilson (drums). The over 41-minute stuff starts with the complex yet devastating song "Solipsistic Immortality", a typical Hellwitch composition with the usual ingredients: speed, blast beats, lots of crazy solos, hysterical screaming vocals. This is followed by "Delegated Disruption", which starts with a short drum solo. Killer composition, the tempo is even higher here and I really love the way the riffs are built. The third song is titled "Megalopalypsic Confine". This is a slightly more abstract composition, with some profound solos. Maybe even epic in places, of course in moderation. It is followed by "Sorcerous Imminence", a short but atmospheric instrumental piece. The name of the fifth composition is "Hellwitch" and it is, of course, an ancient song in a new

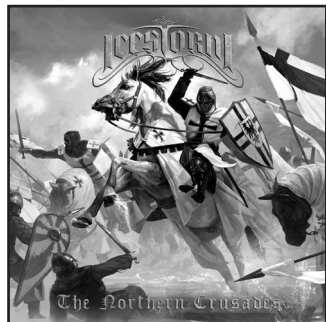
interpretation. It sounds great and the execution is outstanding, classic at its best. After that we get to the mind-blowing riffs and solos of "Epochal Cessation", which has a whiff of old-school coolness and is simply awesome. The last three songs were all on the "Anthrophagi" demo from 1994, although "Torture Chamber" is a much older song. As we know, "Anthrophagi" is a long track of more than 7 minutes, with a lot of tempo changes and riff weirdness. Brian Wilson goes absolutely bonkers in this piece. The fresh version of "At Rest" comes eighth. It comes in the most crushing way possible. And at the end there is the super classic and maximally thrash cut "Torture Chamber", which has been properly updated. It's so cool I can't even put it into words, ha-ha... In short, it was worth waiting for this excellent record, and the superbness of the cover art cannot be neglected either. I'm not saying anything new when I say that this record should be in every thrash and death metal fan's collection. Simply get it now!!!

Bandcamp: hellwitch.bandcamp.com

ICESTORM

"The Northern Crusades" CD-R 2023
(Self-released)

The Catalan band started in the field of melodic death metal in 2006 and this is now their fourth LP. "The Northern Crusades" features 9 epic songs plus an effective storytelling intro in over 34 minutes. Both their sound and musical ideas are very close to the Swedish Amon Amarth's concept. Maybe just with the difference that their lyrical themes deal mostly with the northern European crusaders and their campaigns. The core of the Barcelona horde is Marc Storm (vocals), Àlex Martínez (bass, backing vocals) and Jaume Roca (guitar, backing vocals), they are complemented by Xavi Puiggalí (drums) and Thomas Meier (guitar). Their music is quite melodic, but peppered with many dynamic moments and hooks, which are more reminiscent of representatives of modern groove metal. If you like the records of Amon Amarth, Thyrfing, Windir and Lamb of God, you can give Icestorm's new album a try. The sound turned out to be quite modern, thanks to Oscar David (AXtudio) and Tony Lindgren (Fascination Street Studios). I would also highlight the very appropriate cover painting, which is the work of Piotr Arendzikowski.



In short, if you want anthemic death metal, definitely listen to "The Northern Crusades"! Preferred tracks are: "The Iron Fist on the Lance Shaft (The Teutonic Knights March to War)" and "Clash of Titans (The Battle Begins)".

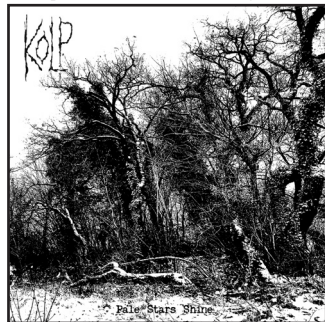
Bandcamp: icedstorm.bandcamp.com

KOLP

"Pale Stars Shine" CD 2023
(Total Dårkness Propaganda)

The Hungarian black metal duo under the Kolp banner hits back with their fourth full-length album. Their new material is entitled "Pale Stars Shine", which perfectly reflects the current mood of their music. Their music sticks to simple solutions both in sound and structure. Thanks to this, it is much more lively than 99 percent of today's recordings. If I had to compare them with someone, I would pair their performance with the early Norwegian black metal releases. It is minimalist in every sense of the word, with a rather cold but interestingly bleak atmosphere.

The six songs on the CD are more than half an hour long, and that's perfectly enough for such a harsh-sounding record. The two members, Knot (all instruments, mixing & mastering) and Jim Jones (vocals & lyrics), masterfully feel and mix the essence of black metal with a northern cold characteristic into musical landscapes. Each chapter leads to a different landscape, but with a sense of completeness, thus forming a moving sequence of images in the depths of our minds. The song titles are:



"Beyond the Edge", "Ignite in Cold Flame", "Till Only Nails Remains", "Low Tide", "Pale Stars Shine" and "Remembrance". If you are a fan of primordial black metal bands and their unique sound, then this icy release is definitely for you!!!

Facebook: facebook.com/kolpband

KREATOR

"Maximum Hate" CD 2022
(Metal Hammer)

Coming as a precursor to the new Kreator LP, the "Maximum Hate" CD is a really well put together compilation material. The first two songs "Hate über alles" and "Strongest of the Strong" come from the upcoming LP and are definitely successful in every aspect. The sound is bombastic and the guitar riffs hit hard as well, as we were already used to from Germany's best thrash metal band. In addition to these two new yet very killer & dynamic compositions, the following delicacies can be found here: "666 World Divided"



(this song was earlier published only on the 7" split release with Lamb of God), "Earth Under the Sword" (another 7" specialty released by Decibel magazine and as a bonus on the Japanese version of "Gods of Violence"), "Iron Destiny" (bonus track on the Japanese version of "Phantom Antichrist" and as a split 7" with Arch Enemy). Additionally, there is a cool demo version of "Strongest of the Strong", two live tracks from the Belgian Alcatraz festival ("Satan Is Real" and "Hail to the Hordes") plus a previously unreleased demo track "Flowers in the Midst of Hell" (produced by Phil Sunday). This exclusive 37-minute long compilation CD was published by Germany's Metal Hammer and included in their June issue. I found this 9-song CD very useful, especially if someone does not have the Japanese editions and the limited 7" splits. The CD comes in jewel case with a decent 4-page booklet, so it's definitely a collector's item! Hail to Kreator and hail to their hordes!!!

Facebook: facebook.com/KreatorOfficial

KREATOR

"Hate Über Alles" CD 2022
(Nuclear Blast)

The new album of the Teutonic thrash metal gods has arrived and of course it comes

in the ultra-melodic musical style developed in the last 20 years. This melodiousness can partly be explained by the arrival of Sami, because his solos are very melodic, almost bordering on epic heavy metal. Well, let's get back to the new LP. It is titled "Hate über alles" and includes 11 songs in more than 46 minutes. It continues where "Gods of Violence" left off 5 years ago. The band led by Mille can't make mistakes, whatever material they release, it is flawless! Even if those who like the thrash metal horde's early extreme and aggressive records would imagine something else as the direction of the new tracks, but Mille is not going backwards, but only forwards and he does it perfectly,



and achieve it with confidence. And Vantor's drumming is like good wine, the older he gets, the better he drums. This record marks bassist Frédéric Leclercq's first joint album with the band. After the short wild-western-influenced intro "Sergio Corbucci Is Dead", the thrashers jump into the title track and, needless to say, immediately hit the mark with its momentum. The record is full of killer riffs, humming guitar melodies and unbridled dynamism, which have become the band's trademark for quite some time. If I compare it with the previous record, then this one became a little more experimental, especially in terms of vocal melodies, I'm thinking of "Become Immortal", "Conquer and Destroy", "Midnight Sun" (completed with the vocals of Sofia Portanet, this became the weirdest song on the album) and "Pride Comes Before the Fall". But if you're looking for really old-fashioned thrash metal attacks, there are plenty of them here, such as "Hate über alles", "Killer of Jesus" and "Demonic Future", just to name a few. The mostly mid-tempo category of songs includes these pieces: "Crush the Tyrants", "Strongest of the Strong" (the album's biggest hit, if we can even say that for a thrash metal band) and "Dying Planet". Lately, when it comes to album covers, Eliran Kantor's name comes up and totally rightfully. Thus Mille & Co. also demanded his work. It shows the well-known evil mascot in a slightly different wording, perhaps too artistically, which gives this Kreator cover a much more serious effect. The album was recorded at the famous Hansa Studios and Studio Wong under the scrupulous direction of producer Arthur Rizk. Needless to say, both the sound and the mixing turned out really great. As we have already noticed, Kreator is becoming more and more melodic, and this has been confirmed even more with this record. In short, as the title of an early Kreator song suggests, it is about: "Love Us or Hate Us", so stick to it!!!

Website: www.kreator-terrorzone.de

LITOST

"Pathos" CD-R 2023
(Blood Fire Death)

Valencian Litost released an excellent, fresh-sounding and experimental second album entitled "Pathos". The Spanish extreme metal quartet has been around since 2015 and successfully mixes their black metal based music with all kinds of atmospheric elements. Their melodies and vocal parts are based on sadness and depression. As you might have guessed, we are dealing with post black metal. The album's creative team looks like this: Manri (guitar/vocals), Joaquín (guitar), Pedro (bass/vocals) & Daniel (drums). The

nearly 34-minute album contains 8 perfectly composed and arranged compositions, three of which are instrumental. Their guitar riffs are quite brainy, which sometimes border on progressiveness. The record has an ethereal sound, easy to digest and very transparent so to say. Despite the extreme nature of this



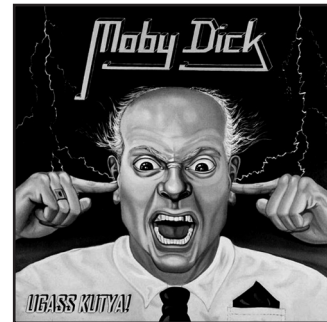
type of music, it creates a very relaxing overall effect. I also have to admit this is a very profound and intriguing material and I would heartily recommend it to any post black metal fan! My favorite tracks are: "Espectro", "Simún" and "Galerna".

Bandcamp: litostofficial.bandcamp.com

MOBY DICK

"Ugass Kutya!" CD 2022
(e-Music Records)

This digipak CD edition is a reissue of the first LP of the cult Hungarian thrash metal band Moby Dick. "Ugass Kutya!" was originally released in 1990 on vinyl and cassette formats only. To be precise, this is the second CD reissue of this great album, the first being released in 2009 by Hammer Records. Unlike the first reissue, which had a completely different cover, this one comes with László Hörcher's original artwork, albeit with slight modifications and in a vertically compressed manner. I have to admit, this record is still relevant both musically and lyrically, even 32 years after its original release. The nearly 40-minute album had a very great impact not only on Hungary's underground scene and its subsequent development, but also on the Hungarian metal maniacs living in the neighboring countries. So to speak, this is a timeless masterpiece with timeless songs and lyrics! There are 10 songs of pure old-school thrashing madness, plus an intro and an outro. The lineup of the band on this record was as follows: Tamás Schmiedl (vocals/guitar), Norbert Mentés (guitar), Gábor Göbl (bass) and Tamás Rozsonits (drums).



In my opinion, the album's best moments are squeezed into songs like the title track, "Többet nem tehetek", "Káosz és zűrzavar", "Bűz van" and "Átnevelés". But there is, for example, the ultra-melodic "Keresztes vitéz", which still has a very heavy metal flavor throughout, but is nevertheless an unavoidable part of any live Moby Dick concert. If I had to talk about influences, I would say that Kreator and Vendetta influenced their early material the most. But regardless of the influences, this record is really hard-hitting and perfect as a debut. Another interesting feature of this reissue is the 12-page booklet, the creation and unique graphics of which were designed by Winci's Imaginary Cover Arts. By the way, the album itself was remastered by the band's frontman – Tamás Schmiedl – at MD

Studio. Oh and one more thing, this great reissue is limited to 1000 pieces, so I suggest you order it now or cry later!!!

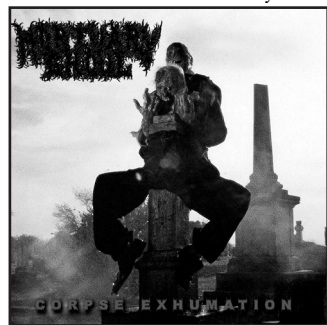
Facebook: facebook.com/mobydickzenekar

MORTUARY GHOUL

"Corpse Exhumation" CD 2022

(Unpure Records)

Ohio's Mortuary Ghoul is a one-man death metal slaughterhouse that is musically and lyrically very close to what Mortician stands for. Each of their songs begins with creepy intros taken from various horror movies to add a seed of fear to the already brutal music. The Mortician formula is so perfect in Mortuary Ghoul's approach that it's easy to mix them up, which of course isn't a big deal, I'm just saying. The sound is, of course, bulldozer-like, as it should be. There's a crazy mix of super-fast blast beats and slow agonizing riffing, perhaps Mortician's "Zombie Apocalypse" song could serve as an example, because it contains the whole essence of Mortuary Ghoul.



The EP consists of 6 own cuts and a cover, the latter being none other than Mortician's classic "Chainsaw Dismemberment". This 20-minute-long material is a fitting homage to Mortician, but don't expect any originality here. The four-page booklet contains all the lyrics to Mortuary Ghoul's own songs. Accordingly, this reissue was released by Unpure Records in a limited edition of 300 copies. If you're a big fan of Mortuary Ghoul, get this reissue and also look for the band's recently released debut album, "Friends with the Dead" (2023)!

Facebook: facebook.com/mortuaryghoul

NECROBLASPHEMY

"Necroblasphemic Rites/Crypt" CD 2022

(Morbid Chapel Records/Rotten Tomb Records)

The next release is a compilation featuring two demos on CD by the German death metal trio NecroblaspheMy. The relatively new band was formed in 2018 and consists of Patrick (vocals/bass), Jeff (guitar) and Daniel (drums). However, their members are experienced and have played in other bands besides NecroblaspheMy in recent years. The CD opens with 7 tracks from the second demo,



"Necroblasphemic Rites" (2022). Musically and sonically, the trio guides us to the death metal movement of the 90s. Their songs are raw and contain the uncompromising side of death metal without modern influences. Both demos were recorded at Rehearsal Room Records in Saarbrücken, which gives them a special basement feel, faithfully reflecting the right attitude of the members. The last 4 songs are taken from the band's first demo, "Crypt" (2019), and this demo is even more necrotic in sound. Listening to their songs, I realized that

although they didn't create anything original in their nearly 38-minute repertoire, they still presented a lot of good ideas and interesting riff parts in both demos. Fans of old-school death metal are encouraged to check out this NecroblaspheMy compilation CD!

Facebook: facebook.com/necroblaspheMy

NECRONOMICON

"Constant To Death" CD 2023

(El Puerto Records)

This is already the 11th LP of the German thrash metal legend – Necronomicon. Freddy & Co. confidently deliver quality thrash compositions, of which there are now 13 on the disc. The well-known and proven Achim Köhler is responsible for mixing and mastering, who once again did a balanced and flawless job, providing the German quartet with a modern soundscape. Next to Freddy



(guitar/vocals), the members of the already well-established previous LP are lined up, i.e. Glen Shannon (lead guitar), Marco Lohrenz (bass) & Rik Charron (drums). Their music is mostly a killer mix of grooves and melodies, which has been the band's trademark since the beginning. The more than 48-minute disc contains many interesting musical ideas that will fully satisfy both old and new fans of the band. I personally loved the title track along with "They Lie", "Children Cry Alone" and "Bloodrush", but the rest of the songs are great too. This is Teutonic thrash metal at its best!!! The album cover turned out to be simply fantastic. Katrin Peter gave the band's mascot a completely mysterious and fresh look. The design of the booklet is also excellent. Now you just have to catch the band live, because I think this kind of music is even better live. But in the meantime, familiarize yourself with Necronomicon's new material, definitely recommended stuff!!!

Website: necronomicon-online.de

NECROTUM

"Undead Symbiosis" CD 2022

(Morbid Chapel Records/Rotten Tomb Records)

Necrotum from Braşov (Romania) is a very young death metal band, formed in May 2019. Their second full-length album, "Undead Symbiosis", reminded me of a super raw mix of early Grave and Cadaver stuff, but unfortunately, good ideas are sorely lacking in their repertoire. So in their case it's literally an undead symbiosis, ha-ha...



The CD contains 10 songs in more than 40 minutes, of which the last song "Extremely Rotten Flesh" is, unsurprisingly, a Grave cover. The sound production is not bad, kind of necrotic, mainly because of the sick guitars and vocals, but overall it's still pretty lame. According to the booklet, the members are Filip Garlonta (vocals, rhythm guitar &

bass), Robert Brezean (lead guitar & backing vocals) and Alex Tampu (drums), but the last member's instrument sounds so synthetic and programmed that I'm not sure he played a single note there. In any case, if you take into account how young they are, the end result is not so bad, I hope that they will improve the overall picture on their soon-to-be-released third LP "Defleshed Exhumation". Until then, if you get tired of the old classics, which is somehow impossible for me, but only in that case I can recommend listening to this record. However, be prepared for plagiarism!

E-mail: necrotumdm@gmail.com

Facebook: facebook.com/necrotumdm

REBEL SOULS

"Dawn Of Depravity" CD-R 2022

(Blood Fire Death)

Rebel Souls is a crushing death metal band originally formed in Germany and active there from 2000 to 2003. After a 10-year hiatus, Stefan Hielscher (bass/vocals) reformed it again, but in Málaga (Spain). Their debut album "The Forces of Darkness" was released in 2017, which was quite well received by the underground death metal community, so there was no doubt that there would be a sequel. We had to wait 5 years, but it was worth it. Rebel Souls' second LP was recorded in the same Spanish studio as its predecessor, i.e. Wave Nation Recording Studio, of course this was again a perfect decision, because the ten new songs sound very cruel and massive. Their music is quite complex, but they don't exaggerate the variations, rather they focus on the power and catchiness of the riffs, which I think is completely appropriate. The quartet knows very well what drives the fly, so we only get quality death metal cavalcade from them. Apart from Stefan, the new line-up includes the following experienced musicians: Alex Guerrero (guitar/backing vocals), Thor Nay (guitar) & Arnau Martí (drums). The nearly 42-minute disc is excellently put together, and I don't just mean the sound and the great songs themselves, but also the graphic elements.



Thanks to Mitchell Nolte, the album cover is simply phenomenal and according to the cover letter, their stuff will appeal to those who like the music of Bloodbath, Suffocation, Krisiun and Hour of Penance. And it's a hit at its best! So welcome "Dawn of Depravity" as it will rip your ears and divide your minds with its anti-human lyrical approach!!!

Bandcamp: rebelsouls.bandcamp.com

RED ELM

"Arena" CD-R 2022

(Blood Fire Death)

This two-man team from Barcelona was founded in 2010 and "Arena" is their second full-length album. Their new stuff consists of 8 songs and 38 minutes of alternative rock music. Yes, it has elements of heavy metal, groove, stoner and progressive music too, but still what they propagate is rather soft and thus closer to the rock music, more specifically to alternative rock. The two members of the Spanish band, Raúl Morón (vocals) and Dany Valcárcel (guitars & backing vocals), have put together very professional sounding material, despite the fact that their music sometimes sounds more like neutral background music than progressive heavy metal as they claim. Nevertheless, the depth of their music and its instrumentation are worth mentioning. I think it's the vocal style that, if it were a little

harder, we could talk about the definition they use. By the way, all the lyrics are written in Spanish, which is rather cool. I personally don't imagine this kind of music live at all, I mean it's well composed, arranged, etc. and sounds really good, but hearing it live would definitely make me fall asleep. According to the introduction sheet, Red Elm's music is recommended for fans of Söber, Skizoo,



Soen, A Perfect Circle, Tremonti, Tool, Alter Bridge and Crobot. Well, if you like the previously mentioned bands, feel free to try the music of "Arena" as well.

E-mail: redelmrocks@gmail.com

Facebook: facebook.com/redelmband

SADUS

"The Shadow Inside" CD 2023

(Nuclear Blast)

It's an indescribably good feeling to listen to the new Sadus record. Even though it's been a long time since their last record "Out for Blood" (2006), somehow after the first song starts playing and Darren's aggressive screams explode, the long wait is pleasantly forgotten. The title of the opening track is "First Blood" and it is also the longest song on the record, which immediately brings the trademarks that Sadus is known for. Due to its length, this song is the most varied in every aspect. But if you're looking for more groove-oriented tracks, I highly recommend the following three songs: "Scorched and Burnt", "It's the Sickness" and "Ride the Knife". These songs are very mind blowing and in my opinion they are the best and most impactful songs on the album. They are followed by a rather fast cut called "Anarchy", completely in the spirit of the "Swallowed in Black" album. The next five compositions of the disc have a more abstract atmosphere and mostly focus on mid-tempo.



Among them is a two-minute instrumental piece titled "New Beginnings" that calms the listener down before launching into the album's title track. The sound of the album is excellent, I especially like how natural and organic the drums sound and the sharp, almost skin-peeling character of the guitars. In fact, only three people worked on the record, Darren Travis (vocals, guitars, bass) and Jon Allen (drums), along with producer Juan Urteaga, who also contributed backing vocals to "Anarchy". Oh, and there's a guest solo on "No Peace" by Claudeus Creamer (Possessed, Power Shift). To complement the visuals of this sonic masterpiece, Travis Smith creates a fantastic cover that perfectly matches the lyrical content. This pretty much looks like one of the best thrash metal releases of 2023. Aggressive, full of anger and motivation, the perfect Sadus attack!!!

Bandcamp: sadusofficial.bandcamp.com

Facebook: facebook.com/sadusguy

SCARS OF ATROPHY
"Nations Divide" CD-R 2022
 (Self-released)

Finally, I own this quarter-hour of thrash metal awesomeness. The wait was quite long, almost an eternity, but it was definitely worth believing in the return of this Tucson-located quintet. Any die-hard thrash-induced maniac should remember Atrophy and their two classic albums, "Socialized Hate" (1988) and "Violent by Nature" (1990). The musical form and core of Scars of Atrophy is therefore nothing more than the logical continuation of the once reformed Atrophy. However, since the membership is completely different from the previous ones, and according to the calendar, 2022 is to be reckoned with, therefore you have to count with a heavier, more powerful sound production and a rather bone-crushing amalgam of thrash metal. This fantastic EP featuring 4 heavy-weight thrash anthems was recorded by Mike Niggel (vocals), Bobby Stein (guitar), Dave Ruiz (guitar), Scott Heller (bass) and last but definitely not least Tim Kelly (drums), who is one of the founders of Atrophy, by the way.



The opener song is "Cross Contamination". It storms from start to finish and is packed with bloodthirsty vocal parts, killer groovy riffs, roaring bass patterns, fast double bass attacks, crazy solos and ultra-catchy sing-alongs. The perfect musical formula one would say and yes it is indeed. It is followed by "DSM-6" that comes with huge elements of groove and even more solos, which I think are much more melodic. Monster piece that has to be an absolute hit played live. Apropos, Mike's vocals are just brutal and brilliant in all possible ways there. The third track is called "Smoke Screen". Another fast yet complex tune, both guitar riffs- and drums-wise, and those doubled screams/growls plus the long chain of solos are simply mind blowing. I am very impressed! Their debut EP ends with the title track, i.e. "Nations Divide". To be honest, the starting riffs along with the power chords reminded me some moments of "In Their Eyes" and "Things Change" songs, both from "Violent by Nature" album, but afterwards the whole track turns into a massive riffing orgy spiced up by beastly sing-alongs and a lot of great solos. Kind of a perfect end for the EP, isn't it? Of course, it is and honestly this EP is easily the winner for the best thrash metal material in 2022. Change my mind, if you dare, ha-ha... Can't also neglect the superb cover artwork and inner sleeve design by Gabriel Turner Byrne. They both rule supreme! The only, but definitely minor, minuses of this release are, first of all, the very small fonts used for the lyrics (so it is mandatory to have a magnifying glass to read them and enjoy) and secondly, the burnt CD-R instead of the factory pressed CD. This latter one disappointed me more than the tiny lyrics-sheet, but their music is maximally rad, so no more complaints. All is left to say, I am eagerly looking forward to their debut full-length album, hopefully it will be released soon. This line-up is so good that I am sure their next stuff is going to be the non plus ultra of speed thrashing madness!!!

Facebook: facebook.com/scarsofatrophy

SODOM
"40 Years At War – The Greatest Hell Of Sodom" BOX SET 2022
 (Steamhammer)

I will tell you right away that this is a real value package for every Sodom fan in

the world. The real deal, if you will. You may not believe it, but for me the most interesting and, of course, the most valuable part of the box set was the 72-page LP-sized book with the band's official discography. It was great to see and observe the covers in their primary form (in high resolution digitalization from the original artwork or taken from the digital printing template for the original cover) and all the other cool photos & info related to the releases. Believe me, everything else in the box is just a great bonus, including the music itself. The musical part – the 40th anniversary album, which actually consists of 17 re-recorded songs (one song from each official Sodom release), comes in 3 different formats (digipak CD, gatefold 2LP and MC), plus 4 more exclusive songs on the bonus CD – has been meticulously selected by the band and recorded at Studio-Studios, Altenessen from summer 2021 to February 2022. The sound production provided by Toni Merkel is very good, but not as good as the materials produced by the mighty Harris Johns, those are simply unbeatable in every way. But other than that, Toni did a really good job not only engineering, mixing & mastering the re-recorded tracks, but also to drum like crazy. For me, the re-arranged versions of the older songs were also more interesting, that is, from the early period to the mid-nineties, more precisely until 1997, which by the way correspond to side A of the cassette. Of course, there's an additional cassette-only bonus track of "Equinox" at the end of side B, but I think this other side became less interesting, not because of the sound or the way of arrangements, but because the songs themselves are not as good as their predecessors. But don't get me wrong, I like these songs too, just not as much as their compositions between 1985 and 1995, for example. The exclusive blue in crystal vinyls produced only for this box are also noteworthy. They sound good, but after listening to all formats several times, I decided to stop with the CD version, as the given type of compilation sounds flawless on that format, sorry vinyl and cassette freaks.



The digipak CD version comes with a 24-page booklet and a two-sided poster. These poster images also come individually in huge A1 format. What else? Oh, a signed photo card from the whole band, double-sided and A5 format, plus a 10.5 x 10.5 cm sticker featuring Eliran Kantor's awesome cover art. And, of course, all these precious things are placed in a well-designed cardboard box. In a nutshell, a must to own for any sodomaniac worldwide!!!

Facebook: facebook.com/sodomized

SYMBTOMY
"Demo #2 & #1" CD 2022
 (Metal Age Productions)

Do you like Swedish death metal music and sound? Well, I sure hope so, because Symbtomy will treat you to over half an hour of quality and beautifully melodic HM-2 driven old school madness. The band itself was formed in 2019 and the CD contains both demos. The second demo of 2022 starts the disc with three songs. I should mention right away that this demo sounds better than the first one, even though it was mixed and mastered by the same person, namely Holly at HollySound studio. Well, the song titles are "Embracing Anxiety", "A Wooden Jail" & "Cadaveric Shapeless Roar". These songs have been tastefully orchestrated and

fully adapted to the Swedish atmosphere. The band on this demo is: Martin (vocals), Dejvy (guitar), Jarda (guitar), Duzl (bass) and Štěpán (drums). In addition to the really cool riff structures, grooves and melodies,



the band also brought in some well-known guests on top of their already killer musical mix, like Rick Rozz from Left to Die (you can hear his great solo in "Embracing Anxiety"), John Walker from mighty Cancer (guest vocals on "A Wooden Jail") and Max Otero from the French death metal cohort called Merciless (guest vocalist of "Cadaveric Shapeless Roar"). Needless to say, the result is incredibly good!!! This is followed by three tracks from the first demo of 2020, i.e. "The Sounds of Perverse Thoughts", "The Taste of Human Trophy", "...And the Knife Cut Surgically". These songs were composed in the same way, with the same melodic arsenal of riffs. The only slight difference is in the sound production, but apart from this small factor, you will love these older songs just the same way, like the newer ones. The exclusive guest list of this demo is: Jonny Pettersson (Wombath), Johan



Jansson (Interment) and Ralf Hauber (Revel in Flesh). All of them brought in charismatic guest vocals, which spiced up the end result quite well. Nevertheless, for me it was Frank who did the best possible guest work with his ultra-melodic solos. On this demo, the band featured singer Martin, guitarist Dejvy, bassist Duzl and guest drummer Štěpán along with bassist Adis. Both demo covers were designed by Jakub N. Rusek. Let me just say that they are flawless and fit Symbtomy's music perfectly. 4/5 of the band is based in the Czech Republic, but Duzl lives in the UK. I personally cherished listening to their stuff and can't wait to hear more from them. Hopefully their next stuff will be their debut album, but only time will tell... In the meantime, enjoy these great demos from them, which you can get separately on cassettes or both on CD!!!

Facebook: facebook.com/symbtomy

TANKARD
"Pavlov's Dawgs" CD 2022
 (Reaper Entertainment)

The latest and 18th full-length album of the German beerthrash masters also marks 40 years of the band's existence, which is an amazing achievement, isn't it? The new record is called "Pavlov's Dawgs" and as you can guess, the lyrics of the record are full of humorous twists. The ten-track CD sounds solid & powerful thanks to producer Martin Buchwalter, with whom the group already worked on the previous LP. To be fair, Martin has achieved an even heavier & punchier sound production this time around than for example on his predecessor "One Foot in the Grave" (2017), which of course only indicates that they are getting better at working together. This album has already

been released by Tankard's new record label, Reaper Entertainment, though it was preceded by the "Mit dem Jürgen! Für den Jürgen!" split release, where a new song was already included, namely "Beerbarians". As for the other new songs on the 18th LP, they surely continue in the style of the previous records. I would say that since Andi has been the guitarist, there have been a lot more melodies, and the team does not focus on speed, but rather on mid-tempo, well-developed songs. Andi's riffs, melodies and solos are not too complicated, but rather belong to the really catchy category. Gerre brings his sheer style, both in terms of vocal themes and lyrics. By the way, their ex-guitarist Andy Bulgaropoulos and Harald Maul provided great help in the latter ones. Olaf's drum parts were given the heaviest possible sound and Frank's thunderous bass lines only confirm this in the most positive way possible. In addition to the title track "Pavlov's Dawg", I think the most striking pieces on the album are "Ex-Fluencer" (the lyrics of which are very relevant these days) and "Lockdown Forever". But there are also, for example, the two super epic songs "Veins of Terra" and "On the Day I Die", or the strongly Slayer-influenced "Diary of a Nihilist" and "Metal Cash Machine".



To sum it up, there is certainly no shortage of variety here. The design of the digipak CD became super cool owing to Thomas Ewerhard, and then I didn't even mention Patrick Strogulski's masterpiece for the album cover. This is a hell of a thrash metal record in the notorious style of Tankard, which should be in the collection of every Tankard fanatic worldwide!!!

Facebook: facebook.com/tankardofficial

VENOM INC.
"There's Only Black" CD 2022
 (Nuclear Blast)

Finally, I got my hands on a physical copy of Venom Inc.'s second album "There's Only Black". Like their first album "Avé", it was also released in a digipak version by Nuclear Blast. Five years passed between the two records, and needless to say, I was very curious to see what this new LP would be like. Musically, it is the logical continuation of its predecessor, which in terms of style is closest to the thrash metal genre. I would like to mention right away that the sound production of the album, which was mixed by Mantas himself, turned out to be damn good.



The razor-sharp guitar sound is supported by a massive low-end wall of bass, which is combined with a very punchy soundscape of drums. The latter mainly captured me by the breathy character of the cymbals, plus the use of two hi-hats, which flavor well the already varied drum patterns. In short, the infernal trio is back and in extremely good

form. The only change in the membership took place at the drummer's position, where now War Machine is pounding the skins with full force. The CD's 12 songs are pretty multifaceted, there are fast, slow, groovy and, of course, atmospheric songs, and we can enjoy this in more than 53 minutes. Mantas' guitar playing is like good wine, the older the better. His solos are very well developed and his riffs are always up to date. Demolition Man's rumbling bass themes sound very brainy and fat. The vocal themes on this record are even more innovative than on "Avé" and have a completely individual thrash metal feeling. While the digipak version of the previous album only contained the lyrics of one song, here you can find all of them and that is really great. This album was worth waiting for, now you just have to catch the band live! My personal favorites are: "Infinitum", "Tyrant", "Don't Feed Me Your Lies", "Burn Liar Burn" and "Inferno", although I could easily list the rest of the songs here as well as they are all flawless ones! This is an album that I consider a must have for all underground metal fans around the world!!!

Website: www.venom-inc.co.uk

Facebook: [facebook.com/VenomIncOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/VenomIncOfficial)

WITCHER

"Lélekharang" CD 2022

(Filosofem Records)

Hungary's witchy black metal merchants are back with their new aural magic called "Lélekharang". It combines six songs in nearly 40 minutes. The duo – Roland Neubauer (vocals, guitars, drum programming) and Karola Gere (keyboards & vocals) – firmly follow the path of their predecessors and invite you to their new epic journey, into the

world of atmospheric keyboard passages, cold guitar harmonies and emotional screams. The CD opens with a short, but rather mysterious and medieval keyboard introduction. Then follows "Hamvak – Ashes", which is a monumental, marching black metal piece, in the well-established vein of Witcher, but also reminiscent of Summoning here and there.



What I liked most about this piece was how the lyrics were superimposed on the music. Perfect job! By the way, as before, all lyrics were written in Hungarian, but were also translated into English and included in the professionally designed booklet. The third and longest song on the album is the title song "Lélekharang – Soul Bell". It's a really passionate tune with lots of magical keyboard patterns and tempo changes. There you will find all the essence of the Witcher style. "Csendesen – Peacefully" is the name of the fourth track. This is another epic composition, with slightly slower tempos, but very melodic guitar parts that somehow reminded me of Cradle of Filth. In a word, the soundscapes are rather rich and massive there! The album's fifth piece is entitled "Hazatérés – Home-

coming". It's the second longest song on the CD, which mainly radiates calmness with its funeral-doom-metal-like pace, although in some places the guitar melodies speed up quite properly. As we've become accustomed to, the last song is a cover of a classical composer, this time Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata Op. 27. No. 2. I. Adagio sostenuto" was selected. A great closing for a great album! I also have to mention here the impressive cover artwork executed by Graft & Hamu. It's simply flawless! And this Witcher album is a must for all the fans of atmospheric black metal! So order it right now or cry later!!!

E-mail: witcherzenekar@gmail.com

Bandcamp: [witcherband.bandcamp.com](https://www.bandcamp.com/witcherband)

Facebook: [facebook.com/witcherband](https://www.facebook.com/witcherband)

XENTRIX

"Seven Words" CD 2022

(Listenable Records)

After the "Bury the Pain" (2019) record, I was excitedly waiting for the sequel, which successfully arrived a few months ago. The British thrash metal legend made their new album with the same line-up: Jay Walsh (vocals/guitar), Kristian Havard (guitar), Chris Shires (bass) and Dennis Gasser (drums). The previous album was already very strong, but with the material of "Seven Words" they raised the bar even higher. Among their early records, "For Whose Advantage?" was my favorite, and to be honest, I find the songs on "Seven Words" very close to that era. The new record sounds very fresh, with explosive dynamics and the quartet brings its best form. All ten compositions of their own consist of very well structured riffs and lyrics. Starting with the ultra-melodic "Behind the Walls of

Treachery", to the album's title track (which has a bit of a Testament flavor), to songs like "Spit Coin" (a raging thrash anthem), "Everybody Loves You When You're Dead" (an utterly heavyweight song that will surely slay live), "Reckless with a Smile" (typical Xentrix tune, the single we could taste in advance) and all the way to "Anything but the Truth" (an incredibly epic song to close the album). This is a flawless record with flawless sound production (the latter thanks to Andy Sneap)! The O-card CD version released by Listenable Records includes Alice Cooper's cover of "Billion Dollar Babies". Of course, this, as well as any of their previous cover versions, was properly adapted to the Xentrix style. I would also like to highlight the work of Dan Goldsworthy, who once again did a great job in terms of both the cover artwork and the layout.



I think every thrasher in the world should listen to this album, because it is definitely a praiseworthy record!!!

E-mail: info@xentrix.co.uk

Website: www.xentrix.co.uk

Facebook: [facebook.com/xentrixmetal](https://www.facebook.com/xentrixmetal)

Musicians' favorite albums (Top 10):

Lubo Lokša

(CONTEMPT/MORDUM)

1. Slayer - "Reign in Blood" (1986)
2. Atrocity - "Todessehnsucht" (1992)
3. Death - "Spiritual Healing" (1990)
4. Suffocation - "Effigy of the Forgotten" (1991)
5. Vader - "De Profundis" (1995)
6. Meshuggah - "Contradictions Collapse" (1991)
7. Obituary - "Cause of Death" (1990)
8. Cephalic Carnage - "Xenosapien" (2007)
9. Decapitated - "Organic Hallucinosi" (2006)
10. Hate Eternal - "Conquering the Throne" (1999)

Jerome Reil

(THE VERY END/DESTROY THEM)

1. Rush - "A Show of Hands" (1989)
2. Thin Lizzy - "Live and Dangerous" (1978)
3. Slayer - "Christ Illusion" (2006)
4. Iron Maiden - "Killers" (1981)
5. Meniscus - "Refractions" (2016)
6. Judas Priest - "Sin After Sin" (1977)
7. Kreator - "Hordes of Chaos" (2009)
8. Russian Circles - "Station" (2008)
9. GoGo Penguin - "v2.0" (2014)
10. Tom Misch - "What Kinda Music" (2020)

Kevin Hufnagel

(DYSRHYTHMIA/GORGUTS)

1. Fates Warning - "Awaken the Guardian" (1986)
2. Queensrÿche - "Rage for Order" (1986)
3. Voivod - "Nothingface" (1989)
4. Sonny Sharrock - "Ask the Ages" (1991)
5. Arvo Pärt - "Tabula Rasa" (1984)
6. Michael Hedges - "Aerial Boundaries" (1984)
7. Stina Nordenstam - "Dynamite" (1996)
8. This Mortal Coil - "Blood" (1991)
9. Dead Can Dance - "Within the Realm of a Dying Sun" (1987)
10. Anacrusis - "Manic Impressions" (1991)

Wannes Gubbels

(PENTACLE)

1. Venom - "At War with Satan" (1984)
2. Hellhammer - "Apocalyptic Raids" (1984)
3. Celtic Frost - "Morbid Tales" (1984)
4. Celtic Frost - "To Mega Therion" (1985)
5. Possessed - "Beyond the Gates" (1986)
6. Bathory - "Under the Sign of the Black Mark" (1987)
7. Death - "Scream Bloody Gore" (1987)
8. Messiah - "Hymn to Abramelin" (1986)
9. Slaughter - "Strappado" (1987)
10. Necrophagia - "Season of the Dead" (1987)

Bruno Kovarik

(HYPNOS/KRABATHOR)

1. Hate - "Erebos" (2010)
2. Entombed - "Clandestine" (1991)
3. Gorefest - "False" (1992)
4. Duran Duran - "Notorious" (1986)
5. Metallica - "Ride the Lightning" (1984)
6. Celtic Frost - "Morbid Tales" (1984)
7. Depeche Mode - "Violator" (1990)
8. Barbra Streisand - "Guilty" (1980)
9. ABBA - "The Visitors" (1981)
10. Tears for Fears - "Songs from the Big Chair" (1985)

René Blahušák

(BREAKING THE TAROT)

1. Iron Maiden - "Piece of Mind" (1983)
2. Slayer - "South of Heaven" (1988)
3. Kreator - "Extreme Aggression" (1989)
4. Death - "Human" (1991)
5. Morbid Angel - "Domination" (1995)
6. Children of Bodom - "Follow the Reaper" (2000)
7. Bullet for My Valentine - "The Poison" (2005)
8. Falling In Reverse - "Fashionably Late" (2013)
9. As I Lay Dying - "Awakened" (2012)
10. Attila - "Villain" (2019)

Sharon Bascovsky

(DERKÉTA/EVISCUM)

1. Bathory - "Blood Fire Death" (1988)
2. Argus - "Boldly Stride the Doomed" (2011)
3. Candlemass - "Epicus Doomicus Metallicus" (1986)
4. Fastway - "Fastway" (1983)
5. Lynyrd Skynyrd - "Second Helping" (1974)
6. Morbid Angel - "Altars of Madness" (1989)
7. Pink Floyd - "The Dark Side of the Moon" (1973)
8. Bolt Thrower - "War Master" (1991)
9. Carnage - "Dark Recollections" (1990)
10. Entombed - "Left Hand Path" (1990)

Joakim Stener

(NECROPHOBIC)

1. Iron Maiden - "The Number of the Beast" (1982)
2. Metallica - "Ride the Lightning" (1984)
3. Mötley Crüe - "Shout at the Devil" (1983)
4. W.A.S.P. - "Winged Assassins" (1984)
5. Kiss - "Creatures of the Night" (1982)
6. Entombed - "Left Hand Path" (1990)
7. Bathory - "Under the Sign of the Black Mark" (1987)
8. Judas Priest - "Screaming for Vengeance" (1982)
9. Dio - "The Last in Line" (1984)
10. Scorpions - "Blackout" (1982)

Michal "Kubo" Kubík

(KILLCHAIN/THORWALD)

1. Slayer - "Reign in Blood" (1986)
2. Metallica - "...and Justice for All" (1988)
3. Sepultura - "Arise" (1991)
4. Kreator - "Coma of Souls" (1990)
5. Fear Factory - "Demanufacture" (1995)
6. Death - "Symbolic" (1995)
7. Edge of Sanity - "Crimson" (1996)
8. At the Gates - "Slaughter of the Soul" (1995)
9. The Black Dahlia Murder - "Nocturnal" (2007)
10. Disfear - "Live the Storm" (2008)

METAL HORDE

Issue #26, 2020

The two editors of Metal Horde fanzine, namely Nuno and Inês, bring out a new issue every year, which nowadays, in the borderless world of the internet, is considered a very nice achievement. Number 26 has 68 black & white pages and, as I can see, was reproduced with a low-resolution printer or a risograph.

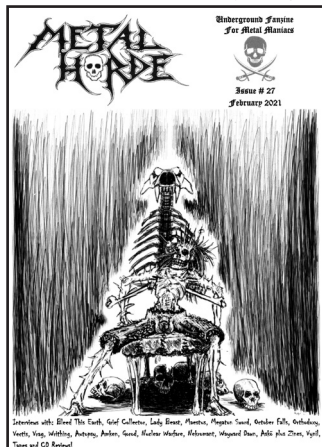


Thus the graphic elements, photos and texts are also of rather poor quality, which is not such a big problem, of course, in 2020 this could have been done better. From the content, the following interviews were included in this issue: Basalto, Cathartes Aura, Corpsefjord, Luvart, Paganfire, Paradox, Repulsive Vision, Terozin, Toxaemia and Undead. What I really like is that it is full of not only CD reviews, but also many fanzine reviews (I counted 27), which is quite rare these days within the columns of underground 'zines, plus there are also three book reviews. In other words, if the visual quality is not, but the content turned out to be very interesting. The A5 issue is entirely in English and was even published in the United Kingdom, despite the fact that the 'zine originated in Portugal. I don't know if this number is still available, but I highly recommend it in terms of content. This is an underground publication exclusively created for the underground metal music fans! That's it, enjoy!

METAL HORDE

Issue #27, 2021

The 27th number of Metal Horde 'zine is the first really high-quality issue, printed on silk paper, and I don't need to say how much this increases the quality of the already familiar design. In this issue of the A5 format 'zine, written entirely in English,



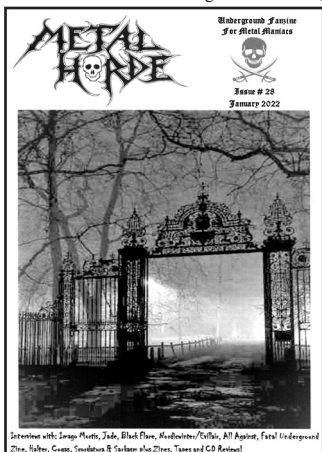
you can find the following interviews: Askö, Autopsy, Bleed This Earth, Grief Collector, Gorod, October Falls, Amken, Lady Beast, Orthodoxy, Megaton Sword, Nuclear Warfare, Maestus, Nekromant, Writhing, Wayward Dawn, Vectis & Vrag/Witcher. These are well-structured interviews, with exciting questions and, of course, good answers from the hordes mentioned above. The photos are of high quality and the text part is easy to read. You can also find many vinyl, 'zine, CD and tape reviews in the 68-page issue.

The given fanzine, as befits the underground publications, concentrates to the maximum on bands that are hard to come across in bigger magazines. That's what makes it good and what makes it 100% underground, but I think anyone who reads this really understands that. So, a word like a hundred, this is a highly recommended reading!!! Order now, while you can...

METAL HORDE

Issue #28, 2022

The latest 28th issue also symbolizes the 15th year of Metal Horde Fanzine's existence, which testifies not only to the perseverance of the editors, but also to their commitment to the underground. The 'zine originally comes from Portugal, but the latter issues have already been published in the United Kingdom. The parameters of the current issue are as follows: A5 format, 80 pages, English-written, professional black-and-white offset printing. The content is very well developed and reflects the true underground attitude,



which I think is quite rare these days. In short, it was a good feeling not only to read, but also to flip through the new issue of Metal Horde 'zine, which featured the following interviews: All Against, Black Flare, Cogas, Fatal Underground 'zine, Halter, Imago Mortis, Jade, Nordciviter/Kalseroth/Sinistral Doom, Scordatura and Sarkasm. The interviews are interesting and mostly quite informative, as are the reviews of the following underground products: CDs, 'zines & tapes. I counted 125 in total. The design is also true to the spirit of the underground, the font is easy to read, neither too small nor too big. There are also a few pages of advertisements, mostly related to concerts and underground releases. I can only recommend this flawless underground publication. Order from one of the addresses below, because it's worth it, that's for sure!!! Facebook: facebook.com/MetalHordeZinePortugal

NEW-BORN PATROL

Issue #2, 2021

The next mini fanzine, so to speak, comes from the creators of Metal Horde and fills the gap between issues 28 and 29. In this second edition you can read the following interviews: Svet (atmospheric black metal from Greece), The Peregrine (progressive/post black metal



from Australia), Rage and Fire (heavy metal from Portugal), Korseld (doom/death metal from Sweden), Buried by Lava (heavy metal from Portugal), Tomb of Minerva (death metal from the US) and Warsarius (symphonic death metal from Georgia). In addition, you can find many short but pretty interesting bios of maximally underground bands there. All this on 20 printed black and white pages, in A5 format and with the design Metal Horde is known for. As I understand it, the New-Born Patrol publications are distributed as a kind of bonus with the current number of Metal Horde 'zine. Thus, the second issue was limited to 50 copies. It's not a great throw in terms of quality, but it goes as a bonus, so no more complaints. If you see your favorite band among those mentioned, then feel free to ask the Metal Horde crew on how to get this number.

E-mail: metalhordezine@gmail.com

TALES OF THE MORBID BUTCHERS

Issue #9, 2022

And voila, as they promised earlier, the 9th issue arrives in connection with the fanzine's 10-year anniversary. The high-quality publication in A4 format contains 154 pages with the usual visual design, in black and white mode. This time interviews were made with: God's Funeral, Cadaveric Possession, Gargoyle, Necratory, Impure Declaration, Cryptworm, Humanoise, Diecold, Fadheit,



Mistcavern, Her Highness, Brygmus, Putrid Cult, Attila Csihar (Tormentor, Mayhem, Plasma Pool, Void ov Voices, Hiedelem, Saturnus Productions, etc.), Paediatrician, Sanguinary Misanthropy, Morbid Carnage, Unpure Records, Satan's Cross, Diabolizer (Throneum, Hell-Born, Mordhell, Moloch Letalis, Distres, Zmora, Worship Him fanzine and many more), Nagy Károly Róbert aka MirrMurr & Moroi fanzine. All these chats were conducted precisely, but somehow two of them stood out to me in particular, the one with Attila Csihar (it contains many facts, details, future plans and the interview itself is 15 pages long) and the other with MirrMurr (a Hungarian metal fan, collector,



previously participated in the Otomicosis fanzine). Of course, the other interviews are interesting reading as well, plus there are plenty of reviews of vinyl, cassettes

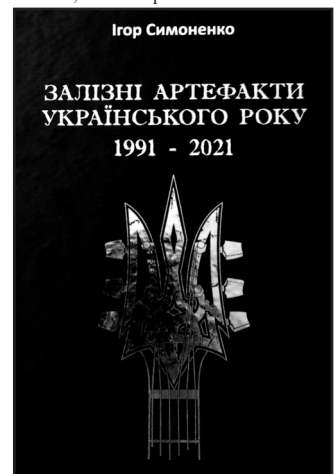
and CDs, so you won't be bored, that's for sure. What else? Well, a few articles about live rituals, label advices for underground warriors and four pages about different coffees. The latter was an unexpected topic in a fanzine, but it turned out well in the end, ha-ha... Obviously, it's all in Hungarian, as we were used to before, spiced up with black humor here and there. It's a great anniversary issue, but I can't wait for the next one!!! Facebook: facebook.com/totmb666

ІГОР СИМОНЕНКО

Залісні Артефакти Українського Року. 1991 – 2021

(ВММГО НОКТИУРН, 2022)

"Залісні артефакти українського року. 1991 – 2021" is the title of Igor Simonenko's new book. It's an informative publication dedicated to the recordings of Ukrainian hard rock/metal artists made during the first 30 years of independence. This is a huge 424-page A5 format book with premium quality hardcover with silver hot foil printing. The book begins with a three-page preface and three-and-a-half pages of how to read this book or how to deal with the information it contains. As it is written there, this is not an encyclopedia in its traditional form, since it mostly focuses on those recordings that left a mark in the history of Ukrainian hard rock/metal music. I counted 1409 bands, but of course I may have been a little wrong during the counting, as I had to flip through too many pages, ha-ha-ha... Needless to say, this book doesn't include all bands and releases, but it was still a lot of work to review the work of so many bands. Sometimes the author only writes 2 sentences about a particular band, sometimes 20-30 sentences, I think it mainly depended on what he actually knew about the band, so no complaints about that. I found



a lot of mistakes and misinformation while reading, but most of them are not necessarily the author's fault, since it is impossible for him to own all the physical materials of the given amount of bands or to keep them in mind. For example, some of the errors and fake releases were simply copied from online databases such as Encyclopaedia Metallum: The Metal Archives and Discogs. Unfortunately, nowadays it is too easy to supply the environment with false information, which is why there are materials in the book with incorrect release dates, or for example, information about its format, or the material itself was not published at the time, but this fact was later falsified in this regard. In short, it is very difficult to compile such a book flawlessly by yourself, and unfortunately I have to agree with that. In spite of all these, this publication is honestly pretty cool! I mean, if you can do it better, let's see! Many thanks to Igor for his great and persistent work towards the Ukrainian extreme music scene! I think it goes without saying that the book is written in Ukrainian, but I'll mention it just in case. Attention, this book contains no illustrations inside, only text! A total of 500 copies were printed, so if you're interested, you'd better hurry and get your own!!!

Facebook: facebook.com/terroraiser

Needless to say, it was a great honor to interview Dave Ingram from Benediction. The band is working on a new album, so I thought I'd ask what's in store for us. Of course, we've covered many other topics, so scroll down to find the information you need.



Hi Dave!!! Your previous album “Scriptures” was extremely successful in every possible way, so it would be very interesting to know where you will go musically and lyrically on your upcoming release?

- Hey mate, thanks for the interview!

In truth, I can't really say too much about the new album. We like to keep things as secret as possible. Though I can tell you that it's still going to be Benediction through and through, with dark lyrics as always. There'll be the odd lighter note, but it's still going to have a death metal aesthetic all round. No worries there!

You have a new bassist in the person of Nik Sampson from Omicida, where actually your former bassist Dan Bate also plays. What was the reason for Dan leaving and are you happy with Nik's performance so far?

- Dan made a choice to leave as our schedule was too much for him with his family, and it's an admirable decision that I totally respect him for. He is a good man. As is Nik, too. Indeed, we are happy with him, else he wouldn't have stayed around. He fits in well with our sense of humour also, and that is an added bonus.

You recently played a show at the Beyond the Grave festival. It was a 2-day festival with lots of participants. What was it like? What setlist did you perform there? As I can see, you will be very busy in 2024, I have already counted at least 5 confirmed festivals for you. Are you planning regular tours for next year as well?

- It was hot and sweaty, and grimy because it was in London... but I loved every minute of it. We did change the set list around a little for this one, as it was needed since we played in London last year. I think we will soon be totally re-vamping the live tracks once the new album is done, so we may bring back some unplayed tracks as well as favourites. We will see, as there's only a certain amount we get to play live, I wish we could play them all.

This year was the 30th anniversary of the “Transcend the Rubicon” album, and for the first time Back On Black reissued all 11 tracks on one vinyl,

which is great. What memories do you have of this record? Do you keep in touch with drummer Ian Treacy and bassist Frank Healy?

- No, I've no wish to contact them at all.

30 years is a long time ago, so the memory can get a little blurred. I guess beer was involved also. I remember the recording very well, as Karl Willetts and Jan-Chris were in the studio with us, along with some friends, and were doing backing vocals. Then we went out on tour in '93 around Europe with Atheist, and that was absolutely magnificent. Fond memories were made on that tour. And long lasting friendships.

Speaking of reissues. A completely annoying and yet totally unofficial 7" reissue of “The Grotesque/Ashen Epitaph” was released recently. What do you think of bootlegs like this? I guess no one told you there was going to be a release like this, did they?

- There was no consultation with me about it. I've heard that the quality is very bad, so it will really be down to the individual person if a copy is to be bought. I don't care for it at all.

In addition to Benediction, you are also active in many other extreme underground formations. Are there plans for new releases with any of them in the near future?

- Absolutely! I'm currently working on a new project called Sand Cadaver, and will soon after write for a new Stygian Dark album, new Down Among The Dead Men album, and then the next Hellfrost And Fire album. Plus, if anything else comes along the way I'll be doing that too... maybe a new Formaldehydist also.

You currently live in Copenhagen, Denmark. What's the metal life like there? What is your favourite store to buy vinyls? What were the last five vinyls you bought?

- I buy a lot from a Danish website called iMusic, and head into the city to record shops such as Accord and Sound. I also try to buy from Danish sellers on Discogs, and in fact I have a couple of packages on their way to me now. I really ought to slow down for the time being and focus on Xmas... and maybe listening to the ones I've already bought this last month! The last 5 vinyls were Mountain “Nantucket

Sleighride”, Metal Massacre VI, Tom Waits “The Black Rider”, Slayer “Undisputed Attitude” and Black Sabbath “The Sunday Show BBC Broadcasting House, Live”.

Many of your old musician friends are still in the game, in bands such as Cancer, Carcass, Napalm Death or the more recent Memoriam. Have you listened to any of these bands' latest releases? What do you think of them? Do you have any absolute favorites among them?

- I heard some of the latest Napalm Death, which was outstanding! I also got a listen to the new Carcass (well, last year wasn't it?) and found that pretty damn awesome too. Strangely enough, I don't listen to a lot of death metal these days. There's a couple of bands that I'm dedicated to, but for the most I'm into desert rock, stoner and old heavy metal and rock. I guess I'm mellowing in my old age, but I do LOVE to write and record death metal. It's in my veins!

Benediction is one of the few death metal bands in the underground that has stayed with their label since the beginning. How is this even possible, I mean from 1990? What kind of deal do you actually have with Nuclear Blast? I mean, how many more albums are you still under contract for?

- I can't really answer that since I was out of Benediction for 23 years and don't know all the details. Since my return there has been a wonderful relationship which shows strength and maturity in both parties. It can only grow stronger through time... especially when they hear the power and might of the next album.

In closing, please give your final thoughts to the Ukrainian Benediction fans. And if I missed something important, please add it here. Thank you very much for the interview.

- Many thanks to all of you for the continued support in these trying times. I stand with you.

Stay Metal, stay safe.

Dave Ingram

Check out these two albums that are my favourite releases of 2023: Triumph of Death “Resurrection of the Flesh”, Queens of the Stone Age “In Times New Roman...”.

If you are a die-hard fan of old school death metal and an admirer of killer grooves, then you should definitely get ready for the new Morta Skuld record. I had the pleasure of asking Dave Gregor (guitar/vocals) some details about their upcoming new album and of course their plans for the coming year.

Hi Dave! The new Morta Skuld album is just around the corner. What should fans know about the making of "Creation Undone"? I mean who created that awesome artwork for the cover?

- This art piece was definitely a way different process than what we have done in the past. There was an illustrator who had a digital piece of art and then we had Danielle Masek at PixelCore do some painting and basically we did a collaboration with the cover concept by Mike Wyatt. So it's kind of got a little bit of everything I guess mixed in so painting digital.



What will be the lyrical content of "Creation Undone"? Where did you get the inspiration to write the lyrics?

- The lyrical inspiration for "Creation Undone" pretty much came from the times that we've been living in in recent years, it's all basically about the savage destructive state of our world and present times and how we're all just trying to deal with things day by day regardless of who we are.

Musically, where are you heading compared to your previous album, "Suffer for Nothing" (2020)?

- The difference between "Creation Undone" versus "Suffer for Nothing" is we didn't really settle for songs at this point, we wrote directly for ourselves and what we like to hear in songs that we listen to. Also I think there's kind of an old school groove more so on this not to mention we wrote songs one by one.

As I see, two tours have already been confirmed for early 2024, one with Throne and the other with Malevolent Creation. What setlist are you preparing for these tours? Are you also planning to conquer Europe in 2024?

- Yes, we definitely have some small things going on here in 2024, as far as setlist goes it's always a tough one especially when you have, you know, six records plus demos and countless other things to really figure out what setlist you're going to play, we have had a lot of requests for, of course, "Dying Remains", which is our first record and seems to be the one the fans love the most. So we'll definitely do probably half for a little bit more than half of "Dying Remains" songs and, of course, try to work some of our current catalog in there as well as some of the new songs from the yet to be released album "Creation Undone".

Peaceville Records recently released a split with label mates Autopsy, Cancer and Static Abyss. What do we need to know about "Peace till Death"?

- "Peace till Death" was something that the label wanted to offer to the fans like outtakes or different versions of the songs that were going to be coming forward, as for us we decided to do a very nice basement addition of "Dying Remains" the title track, and then also some pre-production stuff we worked on for "Perfect Prey" off the new record coming out in February. And I think it was just something the label wanted to give back to the fans, kind of like in an

old school way where you used to get comps all the time with, you know, multiple bands coming out with something cool.



Speaking of reissues, Sewer Rot Records did a great job collecting your demos and some previously unreleased rehearsals for the "Nascency of the Prolific" CD release. What do you personally think of this compilation? Are there plans for more reissues in the near future?

- Sarah at Snapper Music did a great job at this and we were very pleased to work with them, they definitely wanted to release this and definitely cared about it, so we felt that they were definitely a label worth working with.

You are from Milwaukee. What does the underground death metal scene look like there at the moment? Oh, and how was this year's Milwaukee Metalfest? How do you remember your performance there?

- Yes, I am born and raised here in Milwaukee Wisconsin, as far as the scene I'm not really sure we don't really play a lot out locally and usually we're either at practice or at work, so it's kind of hard to say how the scene is really here, but I can say this we have an amazing bunch of bands in our scene and a lot of up and coming bands that are going to do really well. This year's metal fest was really amazing. We played at least eight of them between 1990 and 2000, and it was always a home for us. We cut our teeth at that particular venue in 1991 supporting Napalm Death,

so it's very near and dear to our heart the Milwaukee Metalfest. It was amazing to see all the people that literally came to see us at that time of day with all the other bands and really, really good bands going on too, so we were very happy and appreciative of the fans of Milwaukee and all the fans that came to see us at the Milwaukee Metalfest.

Besides the band, I assume everyone has a steady job, right? So what jobs do you do? How often do you have rehearsals these days? How long do you usually rehearse?

- Yes, almost all of us have steady jobs or whatever jobs we can work between traveling on the road, John actually works at Amazon distribution center, Adam actually works at QuikTrip, I actually do quality control for BMW cars, and Eric is a screen shirt printer. We rehearse once a week as two of the members come from more north of the state, when we do get together we usually practice for 2 to 3 hours and then, of course, there's always the hang-out time afterwards.

What kind of music do you like to spin these days? Please tell me about some of your favorite albums and their influence on you. By the way, what was the first metal record you bought back then?

- I personally listen to a lot more rock music, Scorpions, Michael Schenker, Accept, stuff like that, but I will say the new Dying Fetus is pretty amazing and the guitar tone is just awesome. It's hard to say which albums really influenced me, but I will have to say Ozzy Osbourne's "Diary of a Madman" was one of the major influences album wise and as far as buying a metal record back in the day hard to say, because rock and metal was one in the same for so many years before it got all categorized, so probably the first or second Accept record "Restless and Wild" was probably one of my first really heavy records to get besides, you know, Judas Priest or something of that nature.

Finally, please send your thoughts to all Morta Skuld fans in Ukraine. All subsequent visions are yours.

- Well, our thoughts, hearts and wishes go out to the Ukrainian people for everything and hopefully someday we will be blessed enough to come to your country and perform for you cheers all.



E-mail: mortaman1@gmail.com | Facebook: facebook.com/MortaSkuld | Instagram: instagram.com/mortaskuldofficial

It was fantastic to reconnect with Francis M. Howard (guitar/vocals) and chat with him about the latest Opprobrium happenings. They have quite a few interesting things going on in 2024, so read our discussion to find out the details.



Greetings to you Francis! A new Opprobrium album is currently in the works. How many songs will be on it and where will you record it?

- There will be 10 songs. The drum tracks are all done. We are taking our time on this one. It's being recorded in Florida.

Will you continue the musical line of "The Fallen Entities" album or will there be minor changes this time?

- Every album is different. This new album will be different from "The Fallen Entities".

Bassist Mark LaVenia rejoined the band last year. How is your cooperation going? Did he also bring ideas for the upcoming record?

- The songs were already written before Mark. So it has only my input and Moyses on this new album.

Now that the line-up is complete, we can finally expect live performances from Opprobrium, and as I can see, a lot of shows have already been confirmed for next year. Please tell us more about your 2024 tour plans and what we should know about your partnership with BeerBong Booking?

- BeerBong is booking Europe. We are in contact with Asia too. The US is going kind of slow, but we will try to get some shows in the US. So far we only got a cool festival already booked.

Since your debut album "Serpent Temptation" celebrated its 35th anniversary this year, your label High Roller Records has released some fantastic reissues of it. How do you personally feel about these re-releases and their different formats? Please tell readers more about the bonus material. By the way, which format was your favorite and why?

- We finally got a reissue of ST and ST the alternate version the way we wanted to be released. It took us a lot of work to get the details on these two releases. HRR did a great job and gave us complete artistic freedom. I like all formats that we got out.

You have special trademarks within the death metal you play, so it would be interesting to know which musicians and bands have had a big influence on you. What was the first metal album that piqued your interest and started the band?

- Before I sang I use to play guitar only. I really liked the guitar style of Vivian Campbell when he used to play for Dio back in the days. The first metal album that I picked up was Iron Maiden, Mötley Crüe, ZZ Top and many others at that time.

Do you still keep in touch with former members like Scot Latour, André Luiz or Brian Jeffrey? Do you know what they are doing now? Few people know, but you played with Scot and Brian in Decibel Demon and released an album in 2016 called "Declassified". What do readers need to know about this formation?

- The album "Declassified" is a bootleg album. Brian used to be our singer back in the days when we used to play heavy metal, but my song writing at the time came out very hardcore like lol. We try to stay in contact with Brian and Scot as much as possible. But we are all with so much responsibilities that is very hard to stay in touch, but as soon as an opportunity present itself we will definitely have a beer with those guys, they are very cool people to hang around with.

At the very beginning of the year, "Discerning Forces (First Mix Version)" was released exclusively in digital form on your bandcamp page. Are you sure you don't want to release this stuff as a bonus on some future "Discerning Forces" LP/CD/MC reissues?

- It's a great version indeed for something like that.



What's the metal scene like in Lady Lake, Florida? Do you regularly go to metal concerts these days? Do you have a favorite place to hang out with your friends?

- Florida scene has changed a lot. I like to hang out at comic book events, BBQ events, Bike Ride festivals. My clubbing days are over lol. I just like to chill at places that are more calm.

I'm sure it's hard to make a living playing in a death metal band, so what day jobs are you doing lately? By the way, how often can you rehearse together?

- If you look back in history, musicians back in the 1800's, if I am not mistaken, used to travel across the United States from town to town to play music. Back then they use to be called "Itinerary Musicians", that's how they used to make a living, so now the bands are back doing the same thing they used to do back then. 2024 we will be playing shows. It's not impossible that's for sure, but now bands have to keep on touring and sale merch to keep on going. Back in the 70's and 80's the record sales used to be the main source of income for bands, now touring is the main source of income for the bands since the arrival of the internet. But yes, there's a lot of bands making a living out of touring and merchandise sales.

We rehearse whenever we can. Professional musicians need only to get together a couple of days before a show. There are so many options to rehearse nowadays like videos a band can record to help each other learn a song, live Skype video calls for detail of a specific riff and also our band can do real time rehearsals at our warehouse that we rent. Each band member does their homework at home 90% of the time and then get together when there is a question or get together a couple of days before a show.

Thank you very much for answering my questions. Now please give your final thoughts to the readers.

- The new album is coming out better than we've expected. It's taking some time, because we want the best when it comes to song writing. So hang in there guys. Also I like to thank everyone that supports Opprobrium, be it a like on YouTube Channel or if buying a digital song or a physical copy from us. And when we start playing live again, please do the best to come to our shows and support us. Hope to see you all soon and get ready we will do our part and play some great songs live for you guys. It's all about having fun and enjoying life, that is what I want to be every show that we play. Once again thank you for this great interview and a thousand thanks for our fans worldwide, you guys rule!!!!

Bandcamp: opprobriumband.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/opprobriumofficial
Instagram: instagram.com/opprobriumofficial

The international death metal unit known as Berzerker Legion is about to release the second installment of their epic brutality. So get ready for some chaos! Tomas Elofsson (guitarist/composer) answered my questions. Now go ahead and enter the realm of the berzerkers!



“Chaos Will Reign” is the title of your sophomore release, which will be attacking the underground masses in a few days. Personally, I feel it’s even more melodic, epic and groove oriented than the debut album “Obliterate the Weak”. How do you see this?

- Yea the theme and structure of the songs haven’t changed, but the “epic” parts are a bit more worked on and are a more thorough thought I would say.

Thanks to Jonas Kjellgren, the sound production of “Chaos Will Reign” is extremely solid. How did the studio work go this time? Just like on your debut, did you record your parts in nearby studios or mainly in home studios? How did Jonas come into the picture? Is there a special story behind it?

- This is where the album is different. With Jonas stepping in we could take it to another level as he knew exactly what we wanted with the production. We recorded everything in our homes except the drums that was recorded in a studio in Poland. We sent the files to Jonas and he went to work right away. I’ve been friend with Jonas for over 15 years and we talked about this for years, even for the first album, but the timing wasn’t there back then, so we gave it a new shot and this time it worked, it worked out really well!

You have already shot some music videos to support the new release. Which songs were chosen? What locations did you shoot them in and who directed the stuff?

- The first video was a lyric video of the song “Choirs of Anguish” and the second video we shot was the title track “Chaos Will Reign”. The title track video was shot in the Netherlands in Alwin’s hometown with the whole band.

The cover art was created by Adi Christanize. Needless to say, he did a great job again. If I compare it to the “Obliterate the

Weak” cover, I’d say it’s very similar, just from a different angle and with a different color scheme. How would you explain it?



- That’s what we wanted. We want people to think “Yea, that’s a Berzerker Legion album”! To have the “barbarian berzerker” in the front is a red thread and is something that we will try to follow in the future as well.

You all play in bands that are a definite priority, so the question is how do you still manage to make time for Berzerker Legion, and do you have any plans to play live in support of the new album or on a possible tour?

- When something is fun you make time. And time is all we have here on this planet. To tour is gonna be hard, but shows are something that we will try to do as much as possible for sure. If someone wants us to come and play, they just have to contact us and we will make it happen.

Would you agree with me when I say that the new material is very close to the modern Hypocrisy aura in every possible way? Who was responsible for composing the new songs and what was the biggest influence on you this time?

- I’ve always written my songs with harmonies and epic stuff, so this just comes naturally. I write half and Alwin writes half. The other guys have their say, of course, but mainly it’s us two that writes the stuff.

What is the lyrical content of “Chaos Will Reign” about? Who wrote the lyrics?

- That is Jonny, he has an amazing feeling for this. We don’t interfere that much in the lyrics. It’s about chaos, controlled chaos ☺.

Listenable Records is handling the new release, and like the debut, it will be released on vinyl and CD. Tell us more about your collaboration with Listenable. How do they relate to you, what perspectives do you expect regarding the new record?

- Listenable has treated us great and are supporting us 110%! We have a great bond and tons of respect between us. We hope that they are as proud of us that we are of them.

How do you personally see the situation of the death metal genre in 2023? Which 2023 releases would you mention as your favorites and why?

- Orbit Culture “Descent” is the release of 2023! Amazing album and awesome guys. Hard working dudes that are gonna take the world by storm. I wish them nothing but great success.

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer my questionnaire. The final words of chaos and obliteration are yours. Please send your message to all Ukrainian Berzerker Legion fans.

- Thank you for the interview and thank you for keeping the scene alive! And to the Ukrainian people: Stay alive! We will come and play for you as soon as this shit is over. I have played in your beautiful country many times and I miss visiting and playing there. Stay safe!

E-mail: legionberzerker@gmail.com

Facebook: facebook.com/berzerkerlegion

Instagram: instagram.com/berzerker_legion

CAVE ALTAR

"Serenity In Ruins" MC 2023
(Fekete Terror Productions)

Cave Altar's new EP continues the musical journey of the debut material "Impermanence" to the fullest. Not only does it continue, but it even imitates it, as two songs are included again on the cassette edition. This time, Fekete Terror Productions released the more than 12 minutes of material, which was limited to 66 killer looking blue cassettes.



There is no change in the line-up either, so G.V. (vocals, guitars, bass) and Kryptagonist (drums) bring what and how they should, i.e. a very slow, super dragged doom/death metal mix. "Trembling Seas" opens the tape with sad guitar harmonies that slowly transition into funeral drum beats and otherworldly growls. It consists of 5 or 6 guitar parts that alternate cyclically during the 7 and a half minutes. The whole sound production is not overcomplicated or overproduced, it is made similar to the underground metal albums of the 80s. Thanks to this, it is free from modern clichés and thoroughly enjoyable. The second track is titled "Digesting Insanity". The song starts with an effected bass part that hits really well. This composition is a little shorter, but more intense and varied if I may say so, and also features an ethereal solo at the end. This is definitely a good continuation, and of course I still think the number of songs is few, but sooner or later the time for the LP will come. Until then, I can only recommend the new Cave Altar EP to all doom/death metal fans around the world!!!

E-mail: cavealtar@yahoo.com
Bandcamp: cavealtar.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/cavealtar

DEMENTOR

"Kill The Thought On Christ" MC 2021
(Immortal Souls Productions)

Ever since ISP announced the reissue of this killer album on cassette and CD, I've been anxiously awaiting its release day. This day fell on April 25, 2021. For me, Dementor is the best Slovakian death metal band ever, so I definitely needed these reissues in my collection. "Kill the Thought on Christ" is the second full-length release from these blasphemers, originally released in 1997. The recording lineup then was as follows: René Blahušiak (guitar/vocals), Roman Calpaš (guitar), Joseph "Pike" Piroš (drums) and Hans Šeliga (as session bass player). With this nearly 39-minute material, Dementor became even more brutal and antichristian, both musically and, of course, lyrically. Songs like "In the Name of God", "Kill the Thought on Christ", "The Lost Humanity", "Fate of Emptiness" and "Suppuration of My Soul" represented the band's new musical direction, while "The Law of Karma", "Rotting God" and "Mortal Melody" were taken from their debut album "The Church Dies" (1994) and naturally took on a much more brutal form here. The sound production is not polished at all, quite raw, but regardless, it sounds solid, I must say. The last track of the album is nothing but a cover of the legendary Tublatanka song

"Prometheus", which turned out to be quite interesting and also includes additional guitar parts by Miro Šulavik. The cassette is red in color with stickers on both sides, and believe it or not, this edition was limited to 50 copies,



so if you're interested in this special reissue, you'll have to hurry to make sure you don't miss out. It has an extensive full color J-card with lyrics, a band photo, the obligatory thank lists and information about the recording itself. By the way, the CD reissue was limited to 100 copies, if you want to know. I definitely recommend buying both for Dementor fans. This is the way!!!

Bandcamp: dementor-isp.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/ImmortalSoulsProductions

DESTRUCTION

"Trapped In Lunatic Possession" BOX SET 2023

(Darkness Shall Rise Productions)

Destruction's ultimate 9-tape box set is finally available to fans. Like the previously released "Tales of Morbid Brains" box sets,



this includes the early arsenal of the Teutonic thrash metal horde, i.e. recordings between 1984 and 1990. The most precious part of the box is the massive 184-page hardcover-book, which contains many previously unseen photos, album reviews/articles/interviews from old magazines and fanzines, all the lyrics, new liner notes, memories & opinions from fans & friends, and quite recent but extremely detailed interviews with the four members of the band (Schmier, Mike, Tommy and Olly) about the early days. Because of the superior interviews, this book turned out to be much more interesting or exclusive than the HRR version, though it is also



excellent in every way. Also included in the box: a metal pin, 2 regular patches, a shaped backpatch, a flag, 4 double-sided posters and a hand-numbered certificate, all housed in a heavy luxurious matte black casewrapped box with silver hot foil stamped printing. And all these Destruction relics are simply beautiful and high quality. But unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the quality of cassette recordings/dubbing, as they suffer from using poor quality tapes. Previously,



there were no such problems or complaints about DSR releases, but here they made a big mistake. Other than that, this is a well-made box set that, in addition to the picture LPs and CDs already released by HRR, now includes the following material on cassette: "Bestial Invasion of Hell", "Sentence of Death", "Infernal Overkill", "Eternal Devastation", "Mad Butcher", "Release from Agony", "Live Ruins (Dynamo '87)", "Live Without Sense" and "Cracked Brain". You may be wondering if this new box set is a must have for Destruction fans? Yes, this is it!!!

E-mail: darknessshallrise@gmx.de
Website: darknessshallrise.de
Facebook: facebook.com/darknessshallriseproductions

DIECOLD

"Rebirth" MC 2022

(Total Darkness Propaganda/
Fekete Terror Productions)

"Rebirth" is the comeback and also the second full-length album of the Hungarian black'n'rollers Diecold. The 10 new songs were recorded in 2021 by Ódium (vocals), Shadow (guitars & bass) and Peták (drums).



Music-wise they play some kind of plain, dirty, punk-influenced black metal that can be described as a mix between the old classics like Venom, Bathory, Hellhammer and Motörhead spiced up by Darkthrone's vibe. Their lyrics are written in Hungarian (except the last song "J. A. Must Die!") and mostly talk about the underworld, but there's a big dose of black humor and misanthropy there as well. Maniacs of old-school will definitely like this over 33 minutes long evil stuff. It sounds great and with the appropriate atmosphere. Of

course, the shell of the cassette is black and the b/w J-card has all the lyrics and credits included. This superb cassette release was limited to 100 copies, but thanks to Total Darkness Propaganda it was also pressed onto CDs with a limitation of 300 pieces. In a word, it's definitely a worthy release, so buy it or die in the cold! Preferred tracks are: "Tartaros", "Sápadt özevgy 1614" and "A vírus koronája".

E-mail: tdpropaganda666@gmail.com
Blogspot: tdpropaganda.blogspot.com
Facebook: facebook.com/totaldarkness

MALEDICTION

"A Night In The Valley Of Death (Live In Blue Hell 2023)" MC 2023
(Fekete Terror Productions)

Hungarian Malediction is a pretty old death metal horde, so to speak. It was formed in 1996, and after many member changes,



their current line-up looks like this: István Dinnyés (vocals), Ákos Várhalmi (guitar), István Rákosfalvi (guitar), András Gábor (bass) & Balázs Cserenyés (drums). Thus, with this line-up, on February 11, 2023, the 11 songs of this tape were recorded live at the Blue Hell club in Budapest (Hungary). I can safely say that their live set sounds quite impressive and balanced, thanks to Tamás Vincze, who recorded, mixed and mastered it. Most of their live performance consists of songs from their debut LP "Reductio ad Absurdum" (2009), namely "Reductio ad Absurdum - Intro", "The Army of Those Begging for Mercy", "Nameless", "Flood" and "Hymn to Destroy". But there is also a song called "Draconis" from their EP "Whirl Evoken by Prayers" (2002) and 3 relatively new songs namely "Valley of Death" (I think this track was heavily influenced by Morbid Angel, but it's also one of the catchiest songs they've ever written), "Faceless God" and "Reflections of Hatred". At the end of side B, we have an old track called "Nammtar" from the cassette release of "Eritis Sicut Deus..." (2000), which was my first Malediction stuff back then. And stylistically, the closing song comes from the same release, which is none other than the great acoustic guitar piece "Ashes - Outro". There are many live photos in the booklet, but what struck me most visually was the white cassette itself, which looks absolutely killer, with blood splatters all over it. A must for all Malediction fans!!! This FTP release is limited to 55 copies, so you better act now!!!

E-mail: gabor.andras75@gmail.com
Bandcamp: maledictionhun.bandcamp.com
Facebook: facebook.com/maledictionhungary

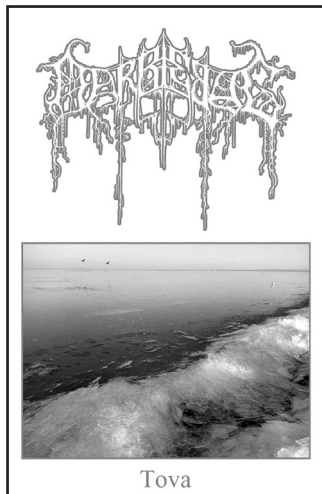
MARBLEBOG

"Tova" MC 2022

(Fekete Terror Productions)

Marblebog from Hungary was established in 1998 by Gábor Varga. It's an ambient black metal project that seeks for the grim soundscapes of nature and from time to time goes even beyond that. "Tova" is the newest creation by G.V. (vocals, guitars & synth) and Khurul (drums). It features two

songs in approximately sixteen and a half minutes, which were recorded from January 2021 to May 2022. The first one is "Beyond Time". It's a cold mid-paced black metal tune with really ethereal synth passages in the background. G.V.'s screams are rather dry and come in a speaking manner. The drums are sounding aptly and balanced. The second track is "Forest of Galaxies".



Tova

It's a lengthy song with over 12 minutes of playing time. This one comes with more variety and ambience, especially I like how the first part, the black metalish one, turns into the otherworldly keyboard parts and then afterwards is followed by a marching almost funeral-like guitar melody with respective drum patterns that slowly but firmly end the song. Epic stuff for sure! This simple-looking white cassette has been limited to 50 copies and by now it is fully sold out, so you can enjoy only its digital version at the band's bandcamp profile. I am personally looking forward to the sixth full-length album of Marblebog, hopefully it will arrive shortly...

E-mail: marblebog@outlook.com

Website: marblebog.com

Bandcamp: marblebog.bandcamp.com

MARBLEBOG/ODVAS

"Relinquished/Orchestra Of Bloodshot Dawn" MC 2023

(Fekete Terror Productions)

This split release contains two of Hungarian Marblebog's latest compositions, which are part of their "Relinquished" EP.



These two tracks were recorded between February and June 2023 by G.V. (vocals, guitars, bass, synth) and Kryptagonist (drums). The over 10-minute long title track opens the tape's A-side, a straightforward Scandinavian black metal tune with razor-sharp guitar riffs that circle the song quite a few times. In the middle of the song, the mood is pretty relaxing due to the keyboard passages, which are quite simple but do the job well. The fact that in some riffs the bass is louder than the other instruments creates an interesting overall effect. In addition, G.V.'s

vocals are quite grumpy in this song. The other track is "Mindgate" with its more than 8 minutes. This song has a measured tempo and is less monotonous than its predecessor, it even has a great melodic guitar solo followed by some really epic, almost heavy metal riffs. Side B of the tape is reserved for another veteran of the Hungarian underground, namely Odvas. They present the 3-song "Orchestra of Bloodshot Dawn" material. The first track is titled "Orchestra of Mgerradyo", a black metal-influenced, keyboard-oriented ambient composition with rumbling vocals in the background. The second track, "Barangolás a Völgyben", is an all-instrumental track with ambient keyboard parts and cyclic noises in the background. It's quite a calm piece. This is followed by the third and last song of Odvas, entitled "Awakening of the Bloodshot Dawn". It's more of an industrial piece full of crazy shamanic noises. In summary, both bands produced quality material that I can only recommend to fans of ambient black metal. The shell of the cassette is golden and trust me, it looks really cool, but note that it's limited to 100 copies, so be quick if you want one!!!

E-mail: feketeterrorzine@gmail.com

Blogspot: feketeterrorprod.blogspot.com

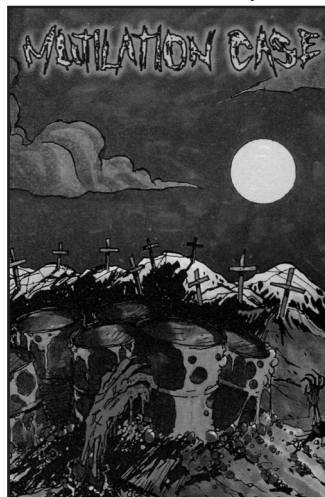
Facebook: facebook.com/feketeterrorprod

MUTILATION CASE

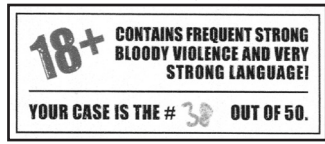
"MMXXIII" MC 2023

(Fekete Terror Productions)

Mutilation Case is a newborn band from Hungary that spreads Dadaist death metal. Their members are Jim Jones (vocals) aka Dr. Growlinger and Mr. N. (all instruments) aka The Riff-keeper. Their debut album "MMXXIII" is divided into 9 chapters, of which three are keyboard instrumentals. The album is about 46 minutes long and musically presents a strange but rather atmospheric death metal alloy with HM-2 guitar sound. The lyrical side describes the darkest murders in the Carpathian Basin. These crimes are presented in written form and illustrated with archive photographs in the 12-page, black-and-white A5 booklet. It's quite a sick sight to say the least, but the musical part is not so morbid, as their music is distinctly melodic.



Here and there I could feel the influence of Grave, not only because of the guitar sound, but also in terms of the riffs, drum parts and even the vocals. The sound of the material is very good and the mixing is also interesting. The keyboard parts and effects largely define the band's musical concept, which is mostly somber and at this point well connected to the lyrics. The album also features four session musicians, who contributed to the material some quite melodic solos, as well as vocals. I think Mutilation Case is the Hungarian equivalent of Macabre, although only in terms of



lyrics, as their music is very different. This cassette edition is limited to 50 copies and comes with a slipcase and 2 pins. So hurry, if you want one in your collection!

E-mail: mutilation.case@gmail.com

Facebook: facebook.com/MutilationCase

SICVLCIDIVM

"Utolsó Vágta Az Univerzumban" MC 2022

(Fekete Terror Productions/Sun & Moon Records)

"Utolsó vágta az Univerzumban" is the first album of the Romanian monotonous black metal masters from 2009, which at the time was released on CD by Sun & Moon Records. Since then, it has gone through a couple of reissues both on cassette and vinyl.



The current one being the latest, which was released in 100 copies on nice dark blue cassettes. The interesting thing about this release is that it also contains two bonus songs from 2007, namely the instrumental demo versions of "Talán" and "Bizonytalan ideák". In addition to the two permanent members Béla Lugosi (vocals, lyrics, visualization and artworks) and Pestifer (guitars, bass, music and arrangements), a guest musician – Khrul – can play drums on these songs. So with the 6 songs of the LP, a total of 8 are included on this cassette release. The design of the booklet looks similar to the 2019 vinyl version and, of course, contains all the lyrics in Hungarian. Their music has an immeasurably monotonous vibe, both because of the guitar riffs and the rhymer vocals. The tempos are mostly marching, kind of medium-tempo black metal all the way, which sometimes mixed with pleasant acoustic guitars. This type of music is about the beginnings of the genre and its roots, so don't expect modern things from them. This rerelease has a completely professional design and is the result of a collaboration between two underground labels, Fekete Terror Productions and Sun & Moon Records. Shortly, this is a warmly recommended item for all the fans of Sicvlicidium!!!

E-mail: scvledvm@gmail.com

Bandcamp: sicvlicidium.bandcamp.com

Facebook: facebook.com/Sicvlicidium

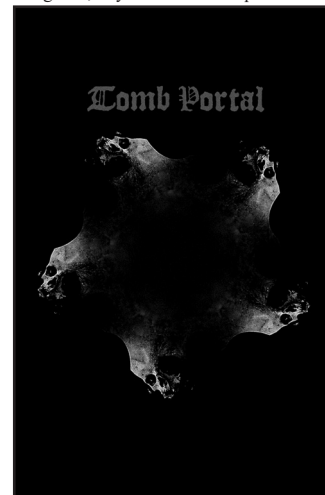
TOMB PORTAL

"Tomb Portal" MC 2022

(Fekete Terror Productions)

Tomb Portal from Budapest (Hungary) debuts with a rather cryptic 2-song cassette edition, strictly limited to 30 copies. Both the music and the band's line-up are shrouded in deep obscurity. The two compositions, "Lithoid Fetus Ritual" & "Blöd úr tóminu", recorded live have a very coffin-like sound and evoke in me the early materials of cult death metal hordes such as Incantation or Autopsy. Not only lyrically, but also musically, the name Tomb Portal fits them perfectly, because while listening to their songs, they open a kind of portal to the grave-like world. The almost 10-minute long material exudes darkness and its sounds rise up from the depths, we are dealing with real death metal,

no modern shit here, just dark riffs, distant death growls and bone-penetrating necrotic sound. The lyrics of the songs were written in Hungarian, they turned out to be quite morbid.



but that's what fits here, right? It is interesting that we are now dealing with a simple project, or will there be a continuation of this debut demo with live performances and later a full album? In the meantime, it is certain that the musical path has been found well. You can try to get this super limited tape directly from Fekete Terror Productions, but until then listen to their songs on the bandcamp site of the Bone Chapel Collective!

Bandcamp: bonechapel13.bandcamp.com

ZURKULET

"Fekete Sámán" MC 2023

(Fekete Terror Productions)

"Fekete Sámán" is Zurkulet's debut demo. It features three songs recorded live at XYK3Z studio. These songs come in their rawest possible form and have a very dark yet evil vibe. The musical aura of Zurkulet is pretty much focused on monotonous instrumental patterns, thus structuring an atmosphere similar to a shamanic ritual. The repertoire and the sound of the Hungarian horde is closer to black metal, although the vocal parts are quite death metalish. The first song "A kozmosz mögöl" has a super plain structure, with an almost one-dimensional drum beat throughout the whole song. Still, it's a very cool track and that's for sure. The second song "Sötétben fogant" opens with a very massive guitar riff and this song is much more varied than the first one. Of course,



while keeping the musical solutions as homogeneous as possible. The last song of the cassette edition is entitled "Rontástánc". There's a lot of groove in this one, supported pretty well by the basslines, even if it is the shortest piece on the tape. The almost 13-minute material is repeated on both sides and the release was limited to 30 copies. In short, if you're interested in this stuff, contact the Bone Chapel Collective or FTP immediately!!!

E-mail: bonechapelcollective@gmail.com

Facebook: facebook.com/bonechapelcollective

Hail to thee Katon! "Faster Than Death" will be HIRAX's sixth full-length album and is expected to be released in 2024, but before that, a 9-song rehearsal demo was released in April of this year on cassette and later on CD. Why was this necessary?

- We released the "Faster Than Death" rehearsal demo cassette tape, because it had been nine years since our last studio album "Immortal Legacy", and we felt that it was a great way for the fans to get ready for our upcoming 6th studio album FTD (Faster Than Death)... It was received very well by our diehard fans and music critics alike.



How many songs will be in total on the new album? What was it like reconnecting with Bill Metoyer and working on the album at Beach Avenue Studio? How long did it take to make the new record?

- I have been working with Bill Metoyer since 1984, so it's a very comfortable working relationship he's like a big brother and he totally understands our music and what we're trying to do... This has been the hardest HIRAX record we've ever made, but totally worth it in total, it took us about one week to record it, because we were in and out of town in between playing concerts. It is the ultimate HIRAX recording and the 9 songs are very creative and fast with a lot of unexpected tempo changes... When the fans hear it they will be pleasantly surprised.

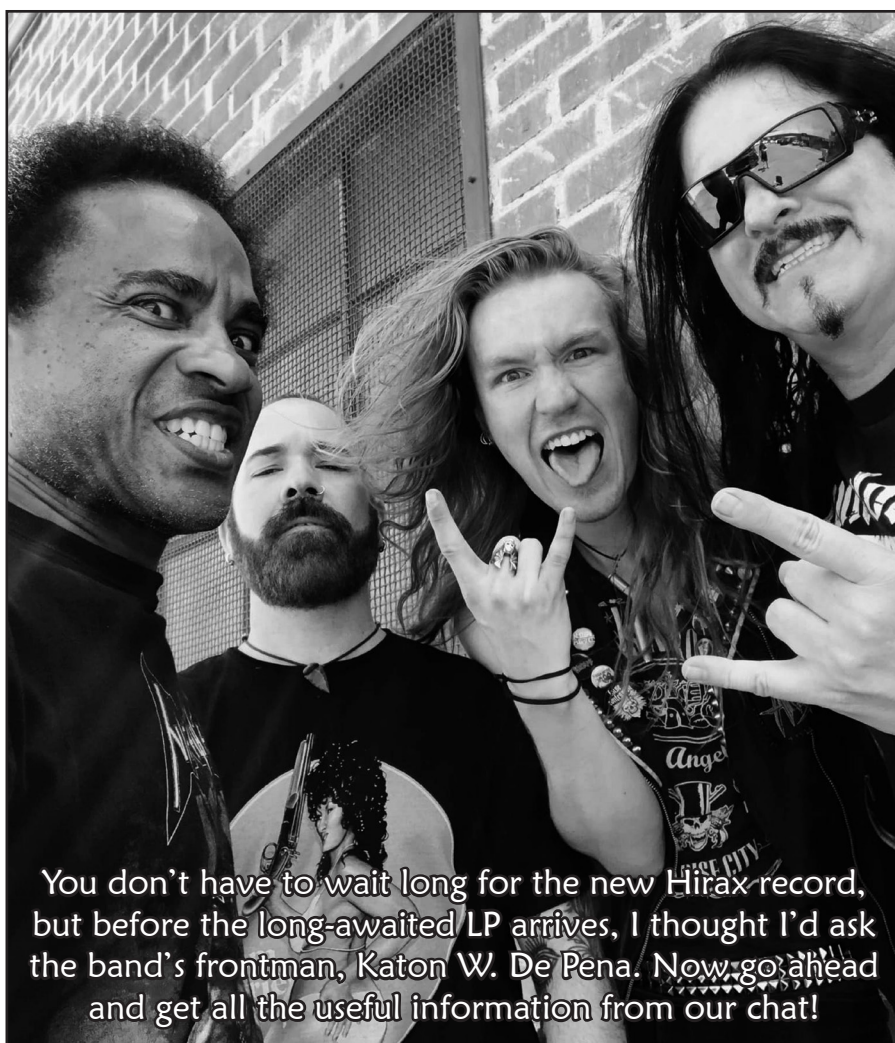
The album cover is pretty rad. Who painted it? I can already see a connection between the artwork and some of the song titles, but please shed more light on the lyrical concept of "Faster Than Death".

- The album cover artwork was painted/designed in Brazil by international artist Thomas Pinheiro, at the beginning of the pandemic, he started doing art for us, so when it came time to work on the album cover concept, he was the natural choice for us! We are very pleased with the artwork... Without giving too much away about the lyrics the record is inspired by the world events of the last four years, and they perfectly fit in with the brutal music...



Your previous album "Immortal Legacy" (2014) was released by Steamhammer. So are they going to release "Faster than Death" as well, or is another label interested in the new record?

- Fortunately, for us, we have a lot of record label



You don't have to wait long for the new HIRAX record, but before the long-awaited LP arrives, I thought I'd ask the band's frontman, Katon W. De Pena. Now go ahead and get all the useful information from our chat!

interest in this new HIRAX album; so for different territories, such as Japan and South America, we will release it with a different record label just like we will do for Europe!! On all three formats, vinyl, cassette and CD with very high quality packaging/layouts. Our fans deserve the best...

I also noticed the difference between the recording and the actual live lineup, please comment on these changes.

- The studio lineup will be different than the live touring band just because some of the musicians can't go on the road touring for long periods of time... However, I can promise you the band will be better than ever... And very loud.

You played quite a few shows this year, which were the most memorable and why? Oh, I can't ignore that you've already been booked for an Australian tour with D.R.I. in February 2024. That's awesome! Are you planning to visit Europe soon?

- Yeah we've had a pretty busy year in 2023 and yes we will be back in Europe for summertime tour/festival dates in August 2024.

On the 2023 tour as usual Mexico and South America were incredible some of the loudest audiences ever...

By the way, what is HIRAX's current setlist? How do crowds react to your live performances these days? Is it completely different from what you remember from the 80s?

- The current HIRAX live, setlist is: "Baptized by Fire", "Blind Faith", "Hellion Rising", "Warlords Command", "The Plague", "Black Smoke", "Faster Than Death", "Lightning Thunder", "Hate, Fear and Power", "Hostile Territory", "Mouth Sewn Shut", "Destroy!", "Criminal Punishment", "Broken Neck", "El Diablo Negro", "Bombs of Death".

The setlist normally changes, depending on if we are headlining or a support act.

Our audience has pretty much stayed the same over the decades still very wild crazy and there's always

a giant mosh pit.

Your famous first two albums, "Raging Violence" (1985) and "Hate, Fear and Power" (1986), were re-issued this year by the Armageddon Label. How do you personally like these reissues? Was your former label Metal Blade Records completely uninterested in these rereleases?

- Oh, trust me, Metal Blade Records are still involved, they still support us, even though we're not on their roster we will always be a part of the Metal Blade Records family...!!! Considering we were amongst some of the first to sign with them. And I do like working with Armageddon Label they have been working diehard on both the old-school releases.....!!!

You have a huge collection of musical relics in many different formats. What are your favorite bands and albums? Please mention at least ten. The last record you bought?

- Here are 10 of my favorite bands: Thin Lizzy "Thunder and Lightning", Kiss "Creatures of the Night", Motörhead "No Remorse", Iron Maiden "Live!! + One", Riot "Fire Down Under", Tygers of Pan Tang "Spellbound", Rainbow "Rising", Yesterday & Today "Yesterday and Today", Judas Priest "Unleashed in the East", Loudness "The Law of Devil's Land".

And the last record I bought was: Thor "Keep the Dogs Away".

Thanks Katon for answering these questions. Please give your final thoughts to all Ukrainian HIRAX fans.

- To all the fans in Ukraine thank you for your support and I want you to know that we support you too.....!!!

We HIRAX have been received messages/emails from soldiers on the front line in battle. Long live the Ukraine!!!!!!

Bandcamp: hirax.bandcamp.com

Facebook: facebook.com/HIRAXOfficial

Total Darkness Propaganda proudly presents



Terra Exitium

After more than 10 years INFECTUS finally brings new hymns of black souls with "Terra Exitium".

Songs has been written and recorded in 2015, but remained unreleased 'till 2023.

"Terra Exitium" will be released on limited cassette edition on 66 hand-numbered copies.

INFECTUS belongs to BFBMk.

Release date 26-08-2023 on BFBMk Hellfest, Balatonszepezd

tdpropaganda666@gmail.com
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