

DISPOSABLE UNDERGROUND

Number 25
Tenth
Anniversary
Issue

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Pig Destroyer
Pitch Shifter
Thrones



Ten years
still didn't finish us
Much to their disdain

Ten long years
regained the impetus
Thorns in cash-whores side

from "Can't Play, Won't Pay" by Napalm Death

Wow, I started *Disposable Underground* ten years ago. It makes my head spin. But here we are, continuing to champion the musically jaded. I'm chuffed.

I've reprinted the Pitch Shifter interview herein (from issue 18) as well as some of the photos which I've taken over the years.

Review contributors this issue are Jake Cregger, JR Hayes (who also helped with the crossword), R. Mason, and Mark Sloan. Cover photo by Chris Taylor.

Your act of reading this zine is most appreciated. No thanks list—thanks lists are bullshit.

Disposable Underground by Richard Johnson unless otherwise noted. 2001.

A few thoughts looking back on the last ten years...

I started this zine after developing my own ideas of how a zine should be done. Previous to that I wrote for a few other zines, being *Curious Goods*, *Deathcheese* and *Whatever*. The latter was the first one I wrote for. I had a class in community college with the editor and became interested in contributing after talking to him. The idea of writing about my favorite bands at the time like Autopsy and Deceased was very appealing. So I penned reviews and interviews with metal bands. Somehow I got in touch with the editor of *Curious Goods*, who was located on the other side of the country, or he got in touch with me. It might have been through a local band who we both knew; right now I find myself unable to remember. For the past several years he's been writing for established mags, *Metal Maniacs* to name one. While writing for his zine, I started tape trading with another one of his writers, HellFarmer, and that led to working on his zine, *Deathcheese*. When I came to the realization that I wanted to be the captain of my own ship as it were, I stopped writing for those publications and started this one in the fall of 1991.

I had them done up bi-monthly at a print shop. I knew someone from the local metal scene that worked there. I had between 250 and 400 printed each issue. I focused on featuring informative, fair and timely reviews, various opinion columns by a number of people I knew as well as by the writers I worked with who were doing reviews for me, and interviews that weren't the usual bullshit that you read in "professional" magazines. After a short while I strived for more innovative interviews, that is asking intelligent and original questions of the bands I liked, ones they hadn't heard before.

I eventually tired of distribution hassles, so starting with issue five I began photocopying the zine at Kinko's at smaller amounts instead of having it printed at a shop and I introduced limits on review lengths to conserve space in the zine. I was getting tired of the work. That method continued until 1995 when I ceased promoting and selling the zine altogether. I only produced enough



Agnostic Front at the old 9:30 Club, Washington DC

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Write a letter, you'll feel better

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USA

copies to distribute to the bands and labels that sent submissions for review and were interviewed. I was still getting quite a lot of mailorder due to word of mouth and the tons of ads I'd passed out in the mail over the years. The issues became shorter and shorter.

The slant of the reviews had been gradually changing for some time, ending up with being less and less concerned with being "fair," but yet remaining one hundred percent honest. It became such that I, nor any of my various writers who came and went, never bothered to look for something, anything, positive to say about a band anymore, nor would we go to the effort of listening to the entire release as we wrote the review if we decided we hated it enough by then. The reviews became very direct and even mean, because by that point I'd become sick and tired of the proliferation of rock stars with huge egos in the underground scene that took a negative review, constructive or otherwise, as a personal attack instead of with a grain of salt, because they couldn't believe anyone had the audacity to publicly express dislike of their shit band. I made a lot of enemies that way and became more and more jaded towards the scene, especially locally, and felt like a tired old man, even though I'd gotten into the underground music scene at a relatively late stage in the game (the late 1980s to be more precise). I finally flipped my wig and made the announcement in issue 7 (1993) that I'm changing the musical focus of my zine to exclusive coverage of political hardcore and grindcore. That was my way of dealing with all the static I was getting in the local scene and in the mail. I didn't have the gumption to actually make the change though, as it turned out. Then later, in issue 18 I proclaimed that I was "back with a vengeance," meaning I'd still take no shit but try to recapture the attitude of the old issues when I was trying to contribute something to the scene. It took me a few issues to get it together but I think I'm getting closer to my goal.

These days I'm totally reinvested in my zine and I'm having fun again. On more than one occasion in the past I've felt like giving up, but for some reason I kept the zine going. Today I can't imagine not doing my zine. I'm not going away! I hope some of you people got as much satisfaction out of my zine as I have. Thanks for reading. Bye. ■

DISPOSABLE MUSIC REVIEWS

Agathocles *Mince Core History 1989-1993* (SelfMadeGod/MCN)

This by far isn't the first Agathocles collection to come out. Indeed, you may hear some of this stuff represented on other ones, like for example *Razor Sharp Daggers*, but with this one you get all the lyrics. But what's really interesting is you get to see all the covers of the eps collected on this cd, with each one's vital statistics, as well as a biography of the band. That's cool.

PO Box 46, 21500 Biala Podl., Poland

Akercocke *Goat of Mendes* (Peaceville)

This sounds like any metal band from anywhere upon initial inspection of the first track, but as I continue to listen, I hear melodic black metal, goth rock and goregrind. That's an unusual mix—now they have my attention. The band inserts avant-garde intros to the tracks and vocal calesthenics that harken back to *Deathshed Extermination*-era Crisis. The last vocal line of the record is "Thou art my master, Satan." Not that anyone cares, but takes a lot to impress a jaded, bitter piece of crust like me these days, but Akercocke has what it takes in spades.

All Else Failed *Archetype* (Now Or Never)

Well, what we got here is a Pennsylvania band with a new cd out. Some of *Archetype* is new versions of old songs, but the whole thing is old—they finished writing this material in 1999 and recorded it in 2000. For the amount of time they've had these songs around, they sound polished and raw at the same time. In a small way they remind me of Deadguy, but

they're not as good as that band. All Else Failed is at its best when they (all too infrequently) cut off the distortion and perform their "calm before the storm" mellow passages, like in "Route 1," which isn't good for a hardcore band I suppose. Once in a while they do something unexpected in the way they layer opposing ideas in their songs, but again, not often enough to keep me interested through the entire record.

Backstabbers Inc. *While You Were Sleeping* (Trash Art!)

These guys are a bunch of pissed off mofos. The songs on this ep are very hateful. The lyrics are very hateful, too. It's as if the bandmembers are pointing these songs at whatever is bringing them down and with them setting fire to it. They play fast, sloppy, snot-nosed hardcore, falling over themselves to beat these songs out and bring their message home to the people. They are skilled with using samples, the lyrics are good, and the packaging is very nice, to boot. Pick D.U.

this cd up!

PO Box 725, Providence RI 02901, USA

Beyond Description *Acts of Sheer Madness* (Forest)

It's amazing that these guys are still around. I first heard of them when they put out their 1990 *Promo*. After all this time they've released this, their first full length, on their own label, no less. A few of these songs were originally on their *Calm Loving Life 3*" cd from a few years ago. This is a very crusty record for a clean cut band like Beyond Description. A lot of these songs sound the same, but they're short, and occasionally they break things up a little with a cool arrangement idea or a harmony lick on the feedbacking, fuzzed out guitar. Even the lyrics are fuzzy. The lyrics are well written too, like the line 'Make your ambitious dreams come true' from "Release." It would be sheer madness not to own this cd.

Ceramica 2 no. 301, 2-1-37 Minami, Kokubunji, Tokyo 185-0021, Japan

Burnt by the Sun 2001 ep (Relapse)

Burnt by the Sun is a very powerful band. I especially like them because of the small similarity to Human Remains, which I suppose is natural because two guys from that band are in this one. One of the differences between the two, though, is the hardcore influence, in large part brought in by the singer. He has a harsh voice which is coming from a very different angle than the insane, atonal guitar and bass acrobatics and grinding, spastic drums. He's hardcore through and through, even to the point of coming off a little too preachy,

explaining the meaning of each song for us in their album sleeve (although he has thankfully backed off on that a great deal live). Actually, the music is kind of hardcore in a way, too, when they have their "full steam ahead, mow 'em down" parts. This is an extreme record that reveals new details when you listen to it on headphones as well, which is unusual for pummeling stuff like this. I'm duly impressed.

Cadaver Inc. *Discipline* (Wicked World)

Apparently the resur-

rected Cadaver, Cadaver Inc. indeed must be disciplined to play their brand of metal because they're fucking good at it. At first they kind of sound like a grinding black metal band, but as you listen to the songs you see that they have a lot more going on than that. They have catchy, rocking metal riffs that you're compelled to bob your head to (I heard myself saying "hey, that's a good riff" more than once when I listened to this cd) and the guitarist plays distinctive, metalized solos. When they're fast, they're fast as shit, and it's almost as if the guitarist and bass player are barely keeping up with the drummer. When they slow down and give themselves room to breathe is when they set themselves apart from all the other bands out there.



Entombed in Washington DC

Circle of Dead Children *The Genocide Machine* (Deathvomit)

So much of contemporary death metal has grindcore fused into it in the tempo department that it's expected for a death metal band to incorporate it. A mix of death, grind, metalcore and doom, C.D.C. is anything but expected, however, and almost freeform at times. C.D.C. has a very interesting sense of arrangement, both on the song level and the album level. The singer often switches from low growls to high screams as the rest of the band goes from a breakneck death metal riff to a plodding doom passage quickly and easily. The songs are abrupt, and the band's conviction is evident. *The Genocide Machine* is a very raw album and has a live feel, lending the band a punkish vitality, which complimentarily sets itself apart from the usually slick, average death metal album. There's also strange sound effects and whispered lyrics here to put the listener further off balance. Reportedly the band has intelligent, socially conscious lyrics as well. I'm impressed with the versatile sound of Circle of Dead Children.



Nuclear Assault in Washington DC

Cripple Bastards *Misanthropo A Senso Unico* (Deaf American)

Whether you enjoy the raw noise offered up by these Italian misanthropes or not, in terms of importance, Cripple Bastards' contribution shouldn't be underestimated. Sadly, now that "grindcore" has basically becomes synonymous with "death metal", and the term "noisecore" (which could very easily be applied to much of Cripple Bastards' material; see *Life's Built On Thoughts* 1993 ep) is more likely to bring to mind Dillinger Escape Plan than Genital Masticator, it's kinda hard to imagine kids weened on grindcore these days appreciating the raw approach of Fear Of God, Lärm, early Napalm, and C.B. when there's much more "professional" fare to be had at local mall record stores. Still, Cripple Bastards are one of a handful of DIY grind/HC/noise bands still active past their 10 year anniversary, and judging by *Misanthropo A Senso Unico*, they still sound surprising vital. Straight-ahead, fierce hardcore, not too far off from the *Your Lies In Check* material or the grinding thrash on their side of the Suppression/Cripple Bastards split lp on Bovine awhile back; the new lp does not disappoint. As always, they manage to juxtapose short, melodic/quirky passages here and there to keep it interesting, and they toss on a demo from 1994 at the end (total noisecore chaos!). Also, there's about 16 pages of lyrics (in Italian and English) and as usual, nothing vague here. C.B. spits out anthems of pure fucking spite, earnest and well-written. While they make a point in the linear notes of stating that the subject matter for this lp centers around issues common to Italy's culture/government and to the "social background of the area where we live", I didn't find that much was lost in translation. In fact, reading these at times reminded me of some of the same feelings that got me interested in HC/grind to begin with.

Honestly, I've been kind of ambivalent about many of C.B.'s releases in the past, but this one just straight up floored me. It's great to see a band keeping it sincere, DIY, and totally pissed off. (by Mason)
#3 Bethel Church Rd, Dillsburg PA 17019, USA

Dee Snider *Don't Let the Bastards Wear You Down* (Koch)

Twisted Sister was arguably the most important American rock band of the 20th Century. Large, hairy and criminally wreckless with the cosmetics, the SMFs managed to come up with album after album of great rock 'n' roll, from the straight-up stomp metal attack of *Under the Blade* to the almost 60s pop influenced *Love Is For Suckers*. They managed to sell millions of albums to impressionable teenagers, horrify parents (including my own), and were ultimately so "offensive" that even Congress had to get involved. So obviously, myself being one of the few individuals willing to acknowledge the universal importance of Dee Snider & Co., I was anxious to hear the man's first solo outing since the ill-fated Desperado project with Bernie Torme. *Don't Let the Bastards Wear You Down* is mostly a collection of never released songs dating back to the Twisted Sister days, and with the exception of an ill-advised cover of "The Wanderer" (I never did care for those Twisted Sister covers) and Zep rip-off track, it's basically like listening to a Twisted Sister album. In other words, I played it non-stop for about three months. If you're a true SMF, you've already got this. If not, you deserve to be strapped to a chair "Clockwork Orange" style and forced to watch *Strangeland* on loop. Buy now. (by Mason)

Deceased *Behind the Mourner's Veil* (Relapse)

I find this ep to be a very interesting mix. It's sort of a cross between the band's older, more aggressive sound, which you'll remember from the *Luck of the Corpse* days, and their newer, more melodic, "mature" material, like *Supernatural Addiction*. There are unfortunately only three new songs here, but the band has given us our money's worth by including four covers from the likes of DRI and Anthrax and a video clip for "Elly's Dementia" from the last album, which has to be one of the most metal videos I've ever seen. I suppose this ep is supposed to tie us over until the next full length is finished, and if so I for one will be very happy to spin this release until then.

Defiled *Ugliness Revealed* (Baphomet/Necropolis)

Japan is famous for the totally insane bands it produces in the hardcore and metal genres. One of those is the death metal scene's Defiled. Their latest album, which features their earlier ep as a bonus, continues in that tradition with what their bio accurately describes as "jagged, angular riffing" (most pronounced on the song "Uncovered Plots"). Defiled has a unique sound which is definitely refreshing, and is one that takes a few listens for a person to get used to and decide whether he or she likes, which sometimes, most assuredly in this case, is an indication of a challenging album.

Diecast *Day of Reckoning* (Now Or Never)

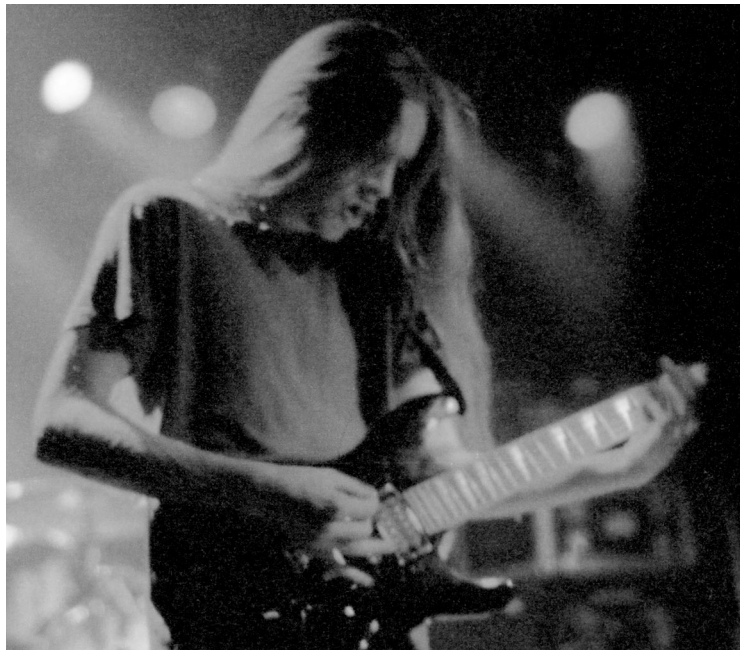
I can't believe that bands are still playing this style of hardcore. In a valley girl voice: "This is like SO 1997." Admittedly, the vocalist is trying to mix things up a bit, throwing a little melody in with his growling, but the riffs are really stiff and bland. Not the worst thing ever, but not exactly at the top of the food chain, either. (by JR)

Disgorge *Forensick* (Deathvomit)

As Bill from Carcass explained in issue 5 of *D.U.*, the first Carcass album, which many goregrind bands, or at least the older ones, look to for inspiration, sounded the way it did because when they recorded it they were totally inexperienced as far as studio work was concerned, and add to that their singer quit just prior to them entering the studio and they had an engineer that was either too incompetent or too uncaring to do a good job. Many goregrind bands, and Mexico's Disgorge is no exception, basically play in the style of the

D.U.

first two Carcass albums, heavy on the death metal element, except without any discernable riffs or for that matter the taste that Carcass had. They try to distinguish themselves from other bands of the genre with their tempo changes, and all around play some pretty punishing goregrind, but having said that I don't see what the big fucking deal about Disgorge is. They're not especially more extreme than other bands of the genre, which in large part is the goal of these types of bands. In conclusion, if I want a kick in the pants I'll skip *Forensick* and throw on *Symphonies of Sickness* instead.



Carcass at the old 9:30 Club in Washington DC

Existench update

A Canadian band, Existench plays crusty, dirty grind. Their lyrics actually used to be somewhat introspective in the early days ('You used to be my friend', etc.), but as the band went on they became more and more political. They've put out a demo, some split 7"es and a cd, so get in touch and give them a try.

13 Earleton Ave, Dartmouth NS, B2Y 2A6, Canada

Extreme Noise Terror *Being and Nothing* (Candlelight)

I was excited to hear the new ENT to see if they could pull out another worthwhile record, but unfortunately they didn't. Apparently there's only two guys left from even the *Retro-bution* lineup, Dean Jones and Ali Firouzbakht, and the band has two guys from Failed Humanity too. This is affecting the sound of ENT in a big way, much moreso than even the change we heard on *Damage 381*. It's unfortunate indeed, for though *Damage 381* was really too metal and too sober, and a lot of old time fans didn't like it because of that, I found elements of that record to have a cleaned up version of that old ENT attitude. This record sounds like a low-rate *Damage 381* without any of the old attitude that made the band so endearing. It's not even a particularly good death metal record, although others will disagree with me on that point. Sad.

Failed Humanity *The Sound of Razors Through Flesh* (Candlelight)

My promo copy has no lyrics unfortunately, so I don't know what wisdom is offered on the title track or songs such as "Kicked to Death." A shame. The music anyway is pretty kickin' death metal in itself. Plenty of blast tempos (death metal ones and traditional ones), harmony riffs and apocalyptic, punishing breakdowns. The singer employs the "buurh" style you've heard before, but the band mixes things up a little within the confines of this type of music, having D.U.

faster songs and slower songs, but varying the tempo within each one to keep the songs fairly discernable from each other. I wouldn't call them contemporary death metal exactly, which is a very good thing. They are a solid band and you'd be doing good by buying their cd.

Faust ... *And Finally Faust!*

A mini cd has just appeared out of a time warp. It's by a band called Faust. As it appears to be a solo project, it's evident this guy has listened to a lot of technical thrash metal before writing these songs, to say nothing of the big Morbid Angel influence. He also obviously has a deep seated resentment of Jesus. The music is dated but good. Talented instrumentation (even the drum machine programming) and interesting melodies that don't take away from the aggression. The weak link is the monotone vocal style. The growls don't compliment the music very well. But overall this is still a cool cd. V. le Resegone, 30/69, 20020 Arese (MI), Italy

Flame/Terrible Headache split 7" (Dan-Doh)

Flame is a totally insane and refreshing noisy Japanese hardcore band. They're one of those bands that make your ears prick up when you hear them. I can't believe their brand of, well, I guess you can call it organized chaos—barely organized. Distorted to all hell and extremely abrupt. Terrible Headache belts out three tunes here. You'll remember them from the interview in #21 of this zine. A band that plays solid Japcore with plenty of feedback. I suppose this stuff doesn't sound that different than what they were doing on their cd, which is cool, except no leads this time.

"K-Club", Honmachi 2-1-26, Kochi City, 780-0870, Japan

Gandalf *Rock Hell* (Wicked World)

Anyone remember the whole Gorefest debacle? You know, where musically they started sounding like bad Uriah Heap and the vocalist still sounded the same as when he was talking about "Confessions of a Serial Killer." Well, this sounds like AC/DC with John Tardy on vocals. Yeah, I know. Personally, if this band wants to continue in this direction, they need to leave their current singer in "rock hell" (wherever the fuck that is) and bring back Bon Scott for the next album. (by JR)

God Forsaken *Tomorrow is Never*

It's good to hear that God Forsaken is back on the scene after a long hiatus. We ran an interview with them back in issue #6 which was a long time ago. They're worshipping Black Sabbath now more than ever, but more their rocking side, which is good. This three song promo cd has a live, energetic sound and crisp production. I think this is the best thing the band has done.

\$5 to Mika Pajula, Kasperinviita 9 C 27, 60150 Seinäjoki, Finland

Godhead *2000 Years of Human Error* (Priority)

If you only saw the cover and the band photo, you would have every right to hate this band. They look like a bunch of fucking cretins. However, this record is actually surprisingly mature, well written, and entertaining. Not as guitar heavy as I was anticipating, but it maintains a good balance between trancey, subdued verses and solid, "not as anthemic as they would have you believe" choruses. The vocals are very strong and confident, always the mark of a band that has paid its dues and established its sound. A killer record that improves with every listen. (by JR)

Gronibard 2001 album (Bones Brigade)

Goregrind? From Bones Brigade? No, couldn't be! But it's true. These guys are really, really goofy. I laughed throughout the whole thing. They sing in French so I don't know what they're saying (not that it makes any difference; as with all goregrind bands, without a lyric sheet in English they could be singing a song from *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* for all I know) but I assume they're dis-

cussing the topic of shit and tits. For good measure they do covers of Last Days of Humanity, Gut and Bélénos. If Pee Wee Herman sang for a goregrind band this is what it would sound like.

BP 31, 62140 Hesdin, France

Halo Guattari (*From the West Flows Grey Ash and Pestilence*) (Relapse)

Apparently there's only two freaks in this band, but they make a lot of noise for a two piece, especially considering this was done live in the studio. As the label accurately describes, Halo is basically a cross between Swans, Godflesh and Disembowelment (only the best elements of the latter, which doesn't count for a lot). Minimal soundscapes and minimalistic, punishing drums/bass/noise is what you'll find tearin' outta yer speakers. Killer.

Hortus 2001 demo

You'll recall that we ran an interview with Gnob in issue 21. Hortus is Gnob without the guitar player, but the music is different. The band actually prefers Hortus to Gnob. I don't share that preference, but Hortus is an enjoyable band. It sounds as though the bass player has laid down multiple tracks, but that may be a trick of the ears, as he plays with tons of crazy effects. The music is very lo fi, and very loose, to the point that on the first listen you'd think it was improvised, more due to the drummer's style, but later you realize that there're verses and choruses there. Weird, but not bad at all. 1504 W Cary St Apt A, Richmond VA 23220, USA

Leechmilk/Sofa King Killer split cd (Tee Pee)

Tortured screams and swampy riffs and dry production all help in making the sound and songs of Leechmilk palatable. They change things up by throwing in some fast riffs to make sure we're paying attention. Sofa King Killer from Ohio doesn't have quite the complimentary production that Leechmilk has, but they seem to emulate Eyehategod a little bit more. Sludgy doom is a good way to describe each band. You've heard it all before and perhaps you've heard it better, but if you don't expect a masterpiece and give it a chance to grow on you, you'll end up digging this split!

136 Lawrence St #3A, Brooklyn NY 11201, USA

Lethal Aggression *From the Cunt of the Fucking Whore* (Relapse)

Containing the demo from 1985 and an unreleased lp from 1991, this is way, way old school. Lethal Aggression sounded like DRI or COC. This collection grew on me more and more as it went on, and it's classic. It reminds me of earlier days when the heartfelt, fun hardcore bands were out, when I was discovering the underground. Nice.

Love History *Desires* and *Galileo, Figaro - Magnifico...* (Northern Darkness)

A band that can be described as "progressive" death metal, Love History from the Czech Republic plays very emotional music, where the lyrics are both whispered and sung and growled, melodic and melancholic leads are performed, and, on the *Desires* ep, even a flute and saxophone and keyboards are played. Staying with the ep, it's interesting that the drums, bass, guitar and vocals are all center stage, but they're not cluttered. The music was recorded in 1994; the sound is marked by that time. You can hear the band was kind of young and

had some rough edges, but that unpolished feel makes it all the more enjoyable for me, kind of the same ballpark way the first Gathering album struck me. The *Galileo, Figaro - Magnifico...* album is better. This time the guitar and keyboards have center stage. The compositions are stronger and the metal sections have more impact. There's some lyrics provided in the sleeve, which are rather depressing. I hate to use this term, but the album is more mature. Even though both these releases are very old, they're evidently still available, and they are both worth picking up.

Via Torino 11, 10052 Bardonecchia (TO), Italy

Maharahj *Repetition* (Now Or Never)

These guys want to be an evil metal band in a big way while retaining their hardcore punk attitude at the same time. I think they are petitioning for entry into that new school of hardcore that sounds metal but are only accepted in hardcore and punk. This cd in places reminds me of Defiled and the first Converge record. The lyrics are really apocalyptic and well written, but in terms of music writing Maharahj has bitten off more than they can chew, most evidently on the track "An Insect." They do have some really interesting and unusual song ideas; it's just that in some instances they're not quite pulling them off.



Nasum in Germany PHOTO: Michael Münnich

Mastodon update

We've got two releases to talk about, beginning here with *Lifesblood* (Relapse). The first thing that strikes me about this ep is the packaging. Wow. It's tasteful, artful and graceful. Three people teamed up to put it together. The actual music is a swirling, cacophonous onslaught of notes, beats and growls. The lyrics have great style, too. It all makes my head spin. Four of these songs appeared on the band's demo (the vocals have been rerecorded and the songs remixed), but repeated listens only adds to the intensity of these tunes. Next is their 2001 picture disc "7" (Reptilian). The three songs on this slab are more raw than the above cd. They're faster too—lots more blasts. The more they grind, the less room they have for the wacked technical yet catchy swarm that is part of their sound, but having said that, when they grind, they're punishing. The artwork is in the same style as the *Daybreak* and *Pig Destroyer* picture discs on the same label. Mastodon features a member of Social Infestation and Blood Vessels and two former members of Today is the Day, but they're more than the sum of their parts. Mastodon will pick you up, fuck you up and drop you down. Strike another one up for the Atlanta

D.U.

Grind Posse!

Reptilian, 403 S Broadway, Baltimore
MD 21231, USA

Mayhem Grand Declaration of War (Necropolis)

I tried to like this album. I really, really did. Anytime a band tries to "experiment," I try to keep an open mind and get into their new direction. I can't do that here. Too bad; there's a lot of good ideas swirling around on this record. Unfortunately none of them seem to go anywhere. My real pet peeve is all the spoken word parts, which are about as riveting as the Robert Stack narration on *Unsolved Mysteries*. Merely a grand declaration of mediocrity. Steer clear of this one. (by JR)

Mental Degeneration Unit/Sale Hope split cd (Troudac)

We've got a split of French goregrind here. M.D.U. describes itself more as grindcore, and they grind better than Sale Hope to be sure. They're more white noise but have a similar goofy sense of humor, and delivers 24 tracks to Sale Hope's 17. Both band scream and growl and have very fast, short songs. A fun cd.
1 Rue Emile Zola, 66700 Bages, France

Needful Things 2000 promo

Noisy, loose, insane grindcore courtesy of the Czech band Needful Things, who've already put out a pretty great split 7" with Wadge and are obviously familiar with the idiom of skin-stripping, primitive grind, most likely via Napalm Death's nearly white noise first two *Peel Sessions*. File with Warsore under totally unhinged, saturated, low-fi grind madness—in my opinion, the only way to do it! Get in touch.
(by Mason)

Anenska 1296, Pardubice 53002, Czech Republic

Neurosis *A Sun That Never Sets* (Relapse)

If I need to introduce this band to you then just fuck off and die, but if you're interested because you know that Neurosis is one of the heaviest bands around, then read on. This album is definitely a sign of maturity on behalf of Neurosis, and that's a good thing in this case. I was worried that these guys might start putting things out that were overly pretentious and almost some sort of musical inside joke. I was wrong. The vocals are very different in certain parts, because there is actual singing and much more emotion being tossed around than in the past. By the same token the music has a lot of mellow intentions, while still waiting to crush you at just the right moment. All the songs have much more structure and more variety than on the past few albums but you still get a mouthful of that good old Neurosis feel that we all love so much. In the end I would compare parts of this record to Tom Waits and The Black Heart Procession, and it even has parts that are almost lifted out of God Speed You Black Emperor albums. With all these great influences under the umbrella of a Neurosis release it's very hard to go wrong with *A Sun That Never Sets*. (by Jake)

No Rest For the Dead *The End of Space* (Deaf American)

One would never think a band could mix '70s prog rock and grindcore, but No Rest For the Dead has, and done an amazing job of it
D.U.



Sepultura, again at the 9:30 Club in Washington DC

too. There's five songs and their opus, an instrumental work in five parts, at the end. I can't believe this much music is being produced by just three Japanese people. Good lyrics to boot. If you want to try something different, check it out.
(see Cripple Bastards review for address)

Orphanage *Inside* (Nuclear Blast)

Wow, I'm blown away. This album is just as good as the last one. The lyrics are rich and melancholy, as is the music. It very much sounds like an Orphanage album. One of the many trademarks of the band is the vocals, and the way the vocals are arranged. There's death metal type ones and also extremely melodic ones. The band uses rhythmic, choppy riffs and layers of harmonies to achieve the atmosphere they're going for. I think the way they combine the metal and sort of North Europe ethnic influences are very unique, even on what is to my knowledge their second full length doing this. Both this one and their last album make my hair stand on end.

pg.99/City of Caterpillar *A Split Personality* (Level Plane 14)

On the one side of this emo 7" is pg.99, which churns out a number which is among the band's newer material. For those keeping track, this is *document #9* for them. They also do a good Filth cover, although I haven't heard the original. City of Caterpillar, on the other side, has improved a great deal since their demo and has an interesting dynamic, going from mellow to frantic and back again.
PO Box 280, New York City NY 10276, USA

Pig Destroyer *Prowler In the Yard* (Relapse)

You need this album. It's as simple as that. This album is something that everyone must hear. *Prowler In the Yard* is beautifully disturbing, delicate, offensive and oppressively crushing all at once. The lyrics (which are my favorite part of the entire thing) are very influenced by writers such as Nick Cave and are strategically placed to tell a story of confused life, obsession, and ways to make it stop hurting. The song structures, which will simply cause you to cream your pants, are led by a legion of guitar parts that are very technical yet still manage to engage you and force you to bang your head. In addition the drums are very complimentary to the vocals and guitar, which shows that he, the drummer, is not here to show off but to make music that is as heavy and effective as possible. This is a great breath of fresh air from the overly tech Relapse stuff that has been coming out lately. Although this by no means indicates that the drummer is poor or out of his league; he simply understands the "less is more" take on percussion. In short you owe it to yourself to buy this album. It is not mindless grind, but rather a well crafted piece of extreme music. (by Jake)

Pissed Happy Children *Pissed Playground* (Crowd Control Activities)

I don't know if this is a rerelease or not, but it sure sounds like it. Pissed Playground sounds like it was recorded in the '80s when Reagan was president. It's really primitive, obnoxious, hateful hardcore punk but with really goofy lyrics ("Smear the Queer," "Pit of Freaks"). There's several instrumentals ("Pop! Goes the Weasel") and samples from for example The Three Stooges movies it seems. This record is a lot of fun.
PO Box 2060, Upper Darby PA 19082, USA

Rabies Caste *Let the Soul Out and Cut the Vein* (Earache)

This Russian band's music is a little too monotonous. I can understand why they went in that direction: it's an effectively dark and warped record, partly due to that. It's their way of pummeling the listener with their songs. Bits of the music remind me of the doom stuff that came out on Rise Above Records early on. It's evident the drummer is influenced by the groovecore scene. The singer is very monotone. This isn't a record you can throw on and get into right away; you have to go back for a second listen to appreciate it. To me it's more like background music.

Rotten Sound/Unholy Grave split cd (MCR)

Awesome! Rotten Sound from Finland as usual kicks out some brutal grindcore with crisp sound. They're good at doing covers and here is more proof. They do a Terrorizer song and an Unholy Grave song, along with one of their own. Unholy Grave, true to form, blasts through five songs, two of them Rotten Sound covers, risking a heart attack for each member resulting from playing grind so recklessly. The two bands compliment each other well, and you should send immediately for this short but sweet cd.

157 Kamiagu, Maizuru, Kyoto 624-0913, Japan

Selfhate *At the Beginning God Created Fear* (SelfMadeGod/MCN)

I remember liking the *Reality* album (reviewed in issue 23) better, but that must have been a later recording, as this one is from 1988. All of the lyrics are listed in Polish and English. That's cool. The music is start-stop grindcore; the lyrics are political. What more do you need to know?

(see Agathocles review for address)

Strike Anywhere *Change Is A Sound* (Jade Tree)

If I had to pigeonhole this band I'd call them pop punk, but I don't want to simply call them that because a lot of times that would make a person who hasn't heard Propagandi assume that these guys are wimps or cheeseballs. Far from it. On record, and especially in the live setting, Strike Anywhere shreds. They're very melodic (the singer can carry a tune and be aggressive just as well), they're fast, and they're a political band without being preachy in the slightest. There's a couple brief places where I think they'd do well to insert a couple blasts a la Quadriach, but that's just an observation. Killer band.

2310 Kennwynn Rd, Wilmington DE 19810, USA

Sublime *Cadaveric Decomposition 2001* album (Bones Brigade)

There's an air of obscurity about S.C.D. There's no lyrics provided, and for that matter no song titles. You have to look at your cd player to see how many songs there are. In case the band name didn't clue you in, these guys are a goregrind band, which means they play grind and sing about gore. In a way they're turning the genre on its head because half the fun of goregrind is the lyrics and song titles. They aren't the type to put sound effects such as puking noises on their records like other bands of the genre either. They just rely on ripping guitars, jackhammer drums and ultra distorted vocals. (see Gronibard review for address)

Testament *First Strike Still Deadly* (Burnt Offerings)

I get worried when bands go back and record their classic old tunes (like I'm one to talk). It's an indication that they're trying to recapture some of their old glory because they're washed up as a band. But *First Strike Still Deadly* is quite good, and worth owning even if you have the originals, specifically the first two Testament records. They

threw on "Reign of Terror" which appeared on the *Trial By Fire 12*", but what's really intriguing to me is that Steve Souza, the original singer, is back for two numbers, the aforementioned track and "Alone in the Dark." I have to admit that his voice fits the music much better than Chuck Billy, no offense to Chuck Billy. Also back for this recording is Alex Skolnick on the guitar of course and John Tempesta on the drums, the latter being another reason this record is interesting. He's a much better drummer than Louie Anderson. Some of the songs have different arrangements than the originals, and Chuck is approaching the vocals with more panache, albeit less aggression, than the first time around back in the day. Of course, the recording sounds great too. Testament fans old and new would be well advised to buy this cd.

Unholy Grave *The Unreleased* (Living Dead/Nuclear BBQ Party)

This ep brought a smile to my face. It's the Unholy Grave demo from 1994 pressed on vinyl. Back then I think they were a lot more death metal influenced and the singer sounded like he was flipping his lid. This is the thing that is most noticeably different compared to the later stuff—the vocals are totally nuts but yet almost charmingly dated here. A 7" that's a lot of fun.

444 S Clarence St #73, Los Angeles CA 90033, USA



Unholy Grave on their summer U.S. tour

V/A *Five Ways to Reconnect With Old School Most Wanted Grinders!* (Infected Area)

This is a compilation cd of mostly drum machine goregrind bands from a local scene in France. Running Guts, Meat Paunch Mafia, Gronibard, Dogmatic State and Splatter. None of them really stand out to make this a particularly must-have comp., but if you want to check out some young bands in this genre, order this thing.

6 rue Sainte Barbe, 59250 Halluin, France

V/A *Show Your True Colors* (F.A.R.)

A Japanese three way cd. URGExx plays hardcore with short, fast, loud songs with group yells, quick leads and some fastcore blasts. They're cool, but nothing you haven't heard before. Acme is interesting because they kind of sounds like a Japanese hardcore version of emo. There's the melody and melancholy riffs, but totally hardcore at the same time. I've talked about Terrible Headache already in another review, but I'll say I like these songs better than that other release because they're not quite as basic and there's some guitar leads, some cool bass riffs, and some songs to get the pit going. 1-9-39 Shimizugaoka, Fuchu, Tokyo 183-0015, Japan

Witchery *Symphony For the Devil* (Necropolis)

In case you haven't heard of this band, Witchery is one of the premier death/rock outfits around. Boasting members of The Haunted and Satanic Slaughter, Witchery's lineup is comprised of veteran and proven musicians. In most regards, *Symphony For the Devil* (SFTD)

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is very dissimilar from the material found on either of the aforementioned acts' records. Anyone familiar with Laibach or the Rolling Stones will recognize the "wondrously diabolical wit" employed in naming the album. A more observant listener will also discern the remarkable similarity between Laibach's miserable industrial remix album and *SFTD* in that both records essentially sound like the same track repeated ad nauseum. The material on this record, according to guitarist Jensen, was written in only a few weeks, attested to by the formulaic and tired delivery. Stylistically, *SFTD* resembles a straight-up '80s metal band a la Mercyful Fate infused with growling vocals in place of a cleaner, more screechingly irritating vocal delivery. The musicianship and production is outstanding, as one has come to expect from most Necropolis bands, but unfortunately there is virtually nothing to showcase. Some catchy songwriting can be found sporadically on *SFTD* but for the most part precious little new ground is broken here. Fans of mid-tempo, simple, and insipid Euro-metal should find this album a pleasing, even soothing listen. While technically not a bad record, *SFTD* boasts none of the bone-crushing mayhem that has garnered Sweden such unholy acclaim in the past. (by Mark)



Godflesh in Washington DC back in the day

a guitar machine to write riffs for them. The album features an intro of the sounds of wind blowing by, which is very typical for this kind of music, and then the usual fast songs, screams and et cetera come in. Belfegor sounds like the band Fog except sloppier. Fog has an album called *Through the Eyes of Night...*, the cover of which looks like a dirty car windshield, which makes me a little confused when I try to balance that with their bio, which in part informs us that "these wanderers of darkness ride above the clouds, severing the heads of all marked by the beast." This stuff sounds standard to me. Fog is just another well-produced American band with good musicians for this kind of music, who use screechy black metal vocals, black metal riffs, fast black metal drums and occasional black metal keyboards, with a "Viking" edge. Hate, on the other hand, is from Poland and English is a second language for them. I can say this because of their song titles, e.g. "World Has to Die," "Enter the Hell," "Lord Is Avenger," and the best one, "Paradise As Lost." Cute. The musical execution, however, is top-notch, but not just for Polish bands: it stands up to death metal bands from any country.

Apparently these guys, too, are Satanic, but the music and vocals are straight up death. Very solid stuff, but as with the other bands on WWII, not very original. Hate kind of sounds like Hate Eternal, notably in their guitar solos, but their song tempos are not half as fast as Hate Eternal, though they play fast most of the time. ■

If you didn't see your release reviewed here, it's either because a) I didn't want to review it, or b) it didn't make it this issue and will appear next time. Thank you.

World War III Records

The label has three cds out now, by Belfegor, Fog, and Hate, which we'll take a look at. First is Belfegor's black metal album *The Kingdom of Glacial Palaces*, and I could have reviewed this recording without even listening to it. All the songs sound the same, as if they employ

DISPOSABLE CONCERT REVIEW

Napalm Death, Soilent Green, Isis and Diecast
Fletcher's, Baltimore, MD

Like any good knee length shorts-wearing new school hardcore band, Diecast has scream along choruses and synchronized hardcore jumps. The drummer swung his sticks in the proper jazz style, which you don't see too often in this kind of music. The crowd watched the band and a small number bobbed their heads and swayed with the beat, most often with the slow grooves. They were well practiced and tight, but as is often with this type of material, they were a bit stale and they obviously had their moves that they made with the music worked out in advance. The crowd applauded them, however, even when they demanded that the audience "show some fucking respect" for their rendition of a Slayer song.

Lots more people were up front for Isis. The red stage lighting suited their devastatingly heavy, dissonant, atonal music. The comparison to *Through Silver in Blood* era Neurosis has to be made, but these guys have their own style going on. The droning riffs and the dark, moody noises and keyboards and the pummeling bass and drums made it seem that Isis was of one mind, out to warp the audience with their music, but at the same time the band obviously knew the power of subtlety. The crowd was very appreciative, but they kept plodding along, seemingly oblivious.

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Totally crushing as usual, Soilent Green, with their whacked riff upon riff structures, breakneck tempos, and imposing stage presence of their singer, delivered a strong set. The crowd hooted and hollered after each song was done, and Soilent Green had a confident stance on stage as they belted them out. They have a sort of "people's band" air about them—they're regular joes with southern fried grind in the offering. Their music is anything but common, rather groovy, complicated, and impressive.

The club's DJ played some Placebo in between bands, but before Napalm Death, the new *Lock Up* album was heard. You could feel the energy of the band blistering you when they hit the stage running. They were all on the same page that night; they seemed much more invigorated than the last time I saw them, when they were on tour for the last full length. They played songs off *Scum*, *From Enslavement to Obliteration*, *Harmony Corruption*, *Mass Appeal Madness*, *Utopia Banished*, *Diatribes*, *Inside the Torn Apart*, *Words From the Exit Wound*, *Leaders Not Followers*, and of course the new one, *Enemy of the Music Business*, from which they took the first two songs of the set. I was totally blown away by their performance. ■

MASTODON

One of the best bands on Earth right now is Mastodon. I won't repeat myself introducing them and lauding their praises when you can read it in the review section. Here Troy Sanders, the bass player and co-vocalist, talks about his sick band.

D.U.: What are advantages and disadvantages of being in more than one band at once?

Troy: For me, the advantages are being able to release myself through extreme music when the other band is having downtime. It is also great when there are more shows to be played. I live for the high of musically destroying people that are standing and observing this madness. The occasional disadvantages are having to turn down shows [and] tours, because someone's other band is already booked [or] playing those nights. This doesn't happen too often.

Mastodon has had a fairly quick rise to relative popularity in the underground from the time the band came together. Would you agree?

Yes, we are very aware and flattered that we've gotten such good attention after only months of [forming].

This is based on two reasons: after being together for a

few months, we started booking tours all over the southeast, mid-U.S.A., and east coast. We saturated the entire eastern part of the U.S. and had some really good shows, played with lots of good bands and played some big fests, like the Milwaukee, Syracuse and New Jersey shows which exposed us to a couple thousand people real fast. The other reason is because fifty percent of Mastodon came from the band Today is the Day and lots of their fans followed and created a very cool buzz about Mastodon.



Mastodon live in New York City PHOTOS: Ralphyboy



Is Mastodon aligned more with metal or punk/hardcore?

We seem to have a very metal feel to our music. We're all metalheads, but do have a huge punk hardcore influence in the music we grew up to. I think collectively, the music we write happens to be more of a super-driven, heavy aspect of all music that we love.

Some of you guys joke around on stage to an extent. How important to the band is it to keep an air about you live that parallels the feel of the music you play?

There are two sides to this question. We take our music very seriously, as it represents what we live. We do take pride in a delivery that shows how we feel, which is usually very straight up, to the point, music that crushes the listener and comes across to them in a manner in which makes no mistake to the magnitude of emotion that we pour into it. On the flipside, we have a great time on tour, and we're very good friends. We enjoy this so much that sarcasm is a staple in almost every observation we make, so it would not be "real" if this behavior didn't bleed into what we do on stage that night.

Are the song lyrics more or less important than the song music?

After the riffs are aligned, and the song becomes itself, I take great pride in putting lyrics to it. All four of us have lyrical input, and it comes together very nicely. As the "main" vocalist, I take lyrics seriously, and feel grateful to write lyrics and do vocals in front of a band of this caliber. Like a conversation, I don't want anything to come out of my mouth that doesn't fit the magnitude of the music that the vocals are complimenting. So the song is completely crafted with music first, and lyrics second, and it all becomes one, so the lyrics are neither more nor less important than the music itself. ■

■ NAPALM DEATH ■

IT'S BEEN SAID that Napalm has its second wind now, that they've returned to the aggression and attitude of the earlier days of the band when they made a name for themselves playing totally intense grindcore, spawn from the hardcore and

punk scenes of their youth. Actually, the music they are showcasing now with their new album, *Enemy of the Music Business*, sounds more to me like a mix of the best elements of music they've been playing over the last ten years. The lyrics likewise are the strongest since *Fear*, *Emptiness*, *Despair*, four albums ago.

Some of the albums they recorded over that decade of recording and touring stylistically sound very different from one another. What specifically happened with *Enemy of the Music Business* was the band created a totally grinding, extreme album, something



COURTESY Twisting the Knife

they haven't gotten close to since *Utopia Banished* in 1992 and to a lesser extent the follow up, *Fear*, *Emptiness*, *Despair*.

The amalgamation on this one album of the different influences the band had brought into the mix since 1990, from which time they recorded six albums, "wasn't a conscious decision. It just happened," says Barney, the band's singer and co-lyricist. What was specifically done, however, was an agreement with all five members to make a totally extreme album, an idea put forth by Barney, that ended up being *Enemy of the Music Business*. Napalm splits everything five ways and they all contribute to the music, even Barney, tossing out suggestions about song arrangements and humming ideas for guitar riffs in the rehearsal room.

One of the intriguing elements of the new album is the successful marriage of what we, in our last conversation with Napalm (issue 19), called "indie rock/Sonic Youth" influences and blast parts, the former sound featured on *Diatribes* and more prominently on the following *Inside the Torn Apart*. They had tried unsuccessfully to merge the two styles while writing for those two records and so didn't feature the mix on those albums, but started to bring it out on the next album, *Words From the Exit Wound*, with limited success. But with *Enemy of the Music Business* they definitely got it right.

With new management, a new label and a new album, the band is as strong as ever, but things haven't been as rosy as they are now for the band. They actually considered breaking up around the time of *Words From the Exit Wound* because they were broke, unhappy with their management and longtime record label Earache, and had a hard time getting any support from European booking agencies. The band is used to controversy, however, as they'd been accused of selling out for years, especially the period following their debuting of material for their album *Harmony Corruption* in 1990, the accusations continuing two albums later with *Fear*, *Emptiness*, *Despair*. The band wondered who their detractors thought they had sold out to. Barney recalls, "We do what's in our heads and in our hearts." Napalm sounds to have more conviction now than they ever have. To hear that, all you have to do is listen. ■



Red Square, Moscow, 1991

PHOTO: Ed Sirris



Danny, Mitch, Jesse, Barney, Shane

COURTESY Spitfire

PIG DESTROYER

BRIAN HARVEY PLAYS DRUMS for Pig Destroyer. He joined the band before they (being Scott, JR and Brian) recorded their first lp, *Explosions in Ward 6*. After that the band did a picture disc, which also came out as a split cd with Gnob except without all the samples, a split 7" with Isis, a split 7" with Benümb which has yet to be released, and now the second full length, *Prowler in the Yard*.

A basic conversation a person has with a musician can start with finding out how he or she first picked up an instrument.

"It was back in the day. My friend, he liked the drums, so he started playing, this was back in maybe fifth grade. Hung out with him through sixth grade, like, 'Hey, the drums are pretty neat,' and he got a nice new Tama set. Went over to his house, beat on it, playin' on it like a fuckin' retard. [He] got me into drums and he was into metal, all the old school metal, and that's it. Started playing drums from there, started taking lessons a year later. [I got my first drum set] prob'ly six months after I started taking lessons. It was a Christmas present. It was a little ghetto, uh, I don't even remember what the name of the drum set was." These days Brian has a Pearl set and plays Zildjian and Sabian cymbals, Pro Mark sticks, Pearl heads, and DW pedals.

It's also interesting to discover a musician's source of inspiration, whom he or she initially wished to emulate.

"I'll tell you a hundred percent straight up it was listening to Slayer. Slayer did it for me. My friend's house, he was another drummer, I'd go over there. He had a drum set set up in his room. He had like three huge super woofers and he'd play Slayer as loud as he could and we'd play along to it. That's how I learned speed metal, and that's where it all started gettin' fast. Up till then it was, you know, Metallica, Megadeth, and all the basic shit. So yeah, Dave Lombardo, he did it for me, got me right into the speed metal."

Sometimes with bands, one person is the leader and takes care of everything and the rest of the members can just coast. One wonders if this is Brian's philosophy of being in a band.

"Not at all. But that's been the luxury of my situation through the two major bands I've been in. For Enemy Soil I was a weedhead like a mafucka, so I'd sit back, get zooted, everybody else'd take care of everything. And in Pig Destroyer, I'm not a weedhead anymore, but Scott and JR have, y'know, the connections, the hookups, they communicate better than I do, so they just handle all that stuff and I don't see it as a problem. I've done little things here and there. But it's a typical scenario drummer. I'm the drummer. Fuck the

drummer in the ass with a rusty pipe, that's how that goes. But I enjoy it. I mean, if I had the contacts and connections to set up shows and all that stuff and had all my email rollin' and all that, then I'd do it, 'cause I enjoy playing shows. I love playing live, that's my favorite thing to do. Studio recording, can't stand it, but I do it anyway. I hate it because I think it should be as perfect as it can, even though they never come out that way."

Musical contributions are divvied up differently. Scott will sometimes demonstrate drum ideas to Brian.

"He will definitely give me some suggestions on drum beats, just as I will every once in a while on guitar. I'll be like, 'Try to play a riff like this,' or helping out with a bridge to something. As for JR, he just sits back and says, 'That sucks, I don't like it,' or 'yeah, that rocks,' which is good, because he's the tiebreaker sometimes."

Pig Destroyer has an unusual way of composing and recording due to their unique situation, either writing the music to a song on the spot and recording it, and adding the lyrics and vocals later, or writing the entire song together and recording it together.

"For *Prowler* it was a big mixture of both. About fifty percent of those songs were written within a day and recorded within a day or two, y'know, polished up, little things put in here and there. And the other fifty percent was we had them written for weeks and weeks and worked on them a lot. It goes both ways. It's not necessarily whether we like doing it that way, it's just the way it happened, which is the way I believe it should be. Music should just come out. It's a soul thing, y'know? You feel it. If you're in the middle of recording, and we're like, 'Hey, we need something in here, another song,' because our songs are basically really short, [and] we need filler, we just write it on the spot and record it. But hey, filler is good!"

Pig Destroyer is not above purposely inserting blast beats into their songs, however, forcing the issue.

"Yeah, definitely I will admit that some of that went on. The first full length was pretty raw grindcore, y'know, for the most part, and we felt somewhat obligated to hold that reputation up. But *Prowler*, it just didn't come out like that, and there's a lot of blast beats in there that we were just ... y'know, they sound good to us, but there's a few songs on there that we were just like, 'Alright, we need to write a fast song real quick to put some fast stuff in here.' But then on the other hand a lot of them were written naturally."

Some Pig Destroyer fans may not be aware that the band was shall we say not entirely sober when they



played some of their more high profile shows.

"Me personally, I used to be fucked up all the time, recording or playing live, and that didn't work out, so over the years I've adopted a strict policy of not getting high or drunk before I play a show. After the show, the minute that snare hit or tom hit or bass drum hit hits, that's another story."

Having heard that, a Pig Destroyer listener would be curious to

know if there's a band policy where this is concerned.

"Absolutely not. Everybody's on their own. Scott usually has a few beers before we play, because, y'know, he usually gets little butterflies, just like me, but being the drummer, being the most physically demanding part, it doesn't work out to get high or drunk because I'll play ultra shitty." ■

THE THRONES

The Thrones aren't led by Joe Preston.
The Thrones IS Joe Preston.

He records by himself. He goes on tour by himself. He plays shows by himself. The amount of sound generated by one person at one time as he does live has to be heard to be believed. You might imagine a vaudevillian character marching around a stage with a drum lashed to his back, a cymbal propped on his head and an accordion strapped to his chest. That's not the case, but it's just as nutty. Joe sings into a mic while wearing a bass guitar, but he isn't alone on stage, though. Like J.F. Sebastian, he has his machines to keep him company: his amplifiers, his drum machine (a "groove box" by Roland—part drum machine, part synthesizer), a sampler, again by Roland, and finally distortion and other effects for his bass (B.C. Rich these days) and his vocals.

Joe confesses he's not easy to get along with, but you have to ask if he gets lonely and bored on tour. He'll tell you he's lonely and bored at home. But actually in person he's very affable and polite, even on stage. You'd likely be afraid of him if you walked in on a performance of his mid-song, as you'd feel assaulted by the kick of the mechanical percussion and the rumble of the bass and the strained vocals, but when the number ends you'll see an easy smile and a nice "thank you" from Joe as he is inevitably greeted with applause.

Joe Preston is in the middle of writing a full length cd for Neurt Recordings, and you can attempt to track down his other released recordings by contacting the record labels Kill Rock Stars and Communion, and the distributor Revolver. But don't get any notions about how Thrones recordings sound with the knowledge that it's a one man operation. It doesn't sound that way. If you were to listen with your eyes closed in the live setting you'd think there was a small army playing on stage. In fact Joe doesn't think about whether he can physically play live the music he writes. He looks at the live show as him doing covers of Thrones songs.

The man of the Thrones will admit that touring is hard, but after playing for eight years, he's not about to stop now, which is good for us. ■



COURTESY Kill Rock Stars

PITCH SHIFTER

I decided to pull out an old dusty tape that I've been saving for a while but never knew what to do with. It's a recording of an interesting conversation I once had with Jon Clayden of Pitch Shifter fame, backstage at the old 9:30 Club in Washington DC when they were touring with Carcass. Anyway, to start things off I asked him how the tour was going and he replied ...

I'll tell you a story. The night before I was supposed to fly to America a week early with my manager to do press -- just me, because I write all the lyrics -- we were at a Napalm Death show in London, and there was, I dunno, a thousand people there, and we were stage divin' and slammin' and everything. And our manager got his nose broken; someone kicked him in the face at like two o'clock at night, and my flight was at six. So I had to take him to hospital.

our manager got his nose broken; someone kicked him in the face at like two o'clock at night, and my flight was at six. So I had to take him to hospital. When we got to hospital there was a psycho woman in there who'd been havin' a machete fight with her husband. She asked us for a cigarette, and I said, "look, just fuck off, I don't smoke, my friend's just broken his nose, get the fuck away from me." And she said, "oh, shall I break it again for him?" She tried to hit him in the nose again. Like blood was coming out of his mouth anyway, and the police came and took her away and took statements from us and everything. An' they said, "there's no way your manager's goin' to be able to move, he's gonna have to go an' get a nasal operation under full anesthetic tomorrow mornin'". So I left hospital at four, got a cab at five, met our roadie, got to the airport just in

time and left.

When I got to the airport -- we use visuals live, reel projectors -- I had all these big black boxes an' videocassettes, an' they stopped me for two hours at the airport. That was before I got to America, you know what I mean? When I got to America it was like "fuck me!"

An' then, the day before we did the first gig, I was in the New York office [of Earache Records], and I heard that our drummer had been mugged by three guys, one with a gun an' two with clawhammers. They hit him once on the top of his head and once in the back. He got six stitches in each thing. This is before we started tourin'. I was thinkin', "someone is tryin' to tell me somethin'."

pg.99

PG.99 IS ONE OF THOSE BANDS that is coming up very quickly in the underground. They deserve all the accolades they are receiving. They've worked hard to get where they are now and they have the talent to back up anything they have to say. They are a punk band which has elements of screamo, but they're way beyond just that. They create dirges which scoop up the listener and takes him or her on a trip to the local insane asylum, using layers of opposing melodies and harmonies to prep you for your stay in your padded cell. Contact them at 203 East Beech Road, Sterling VA 20164, USA, or www.pg99.com.

I have developed the idea, from watching the band play over the years, that at times in the live setting they are intentionally trying to piss off their audience. The band has a song in their set, for instance, the last one on *document #5*, which, when they perform it, tends to stretch out to twice or three times its originally recorded length. Mike Taylor, guitarist, explains, "It's self indulgence. Who cares what anyone else thinks? So we play the song as long as we want, and we don't play it if we don't want, and we do play it if we do want. And yeah, sometimes it's fun to annoy people, but that's not why we play it. Probably the better half of pg.99 is a bunch of stoners, and if they aren't literally stoners, they're definitely stoners in theory, so we don't realize we're playing the song half that long when we do play it."

Also on *document #5*, pg.99 has a song in the middle of which the band stops playing and blasphemes Jesus, a tune that for a long time was a staple in the live set. Mike reveals, "The whole 'F. you, Jesus' was never literal. It was making fun of the Bible belt religious kind of characters. It was almost like us saying, if Jesus did exist and we were in an argumet with [him], we'd say, 'Fuck you, Jesus, you know?'"

All that aside, pg.99 it seems actually is full of substance on a lyrical level. Mike, his brother Chris (or Brewdog, as Mike affectionately calls him), the singer, and Blake Midget, the other singer, all contribute lyrics. One of their earlier records, *document #4*, had a concept about suicide attached to it. I was under the impression that the band was using that angle to screw with their audience, but as it turns out that wasn't entirely true. Chris tells us, "My friend tried to kill himself, so that record's for him." Mike continues, "The whole reason it's grey and black is 'cause we wanted to do a more of a moody theme kind of record. Then we realized that a lot of people took that literally, and in some way we made the lies that we were telling mean something to ourselves, just like every true neurotic person does. We got the idea when we found out that this little boy that lived out by our aunt's house had killed himself at the age of twelve, so we thought it was pretty ridiculous if we started wondering what a twelve year old boy's reasons would be for actually killing himself, which spawned the idea of a record based around suicide. So nowadays, the record has a little bit more meaning."

An area that's unique to pg.99 is the way they present their lyrics on record. On many of the band's releases, the sleeves aren't laid out



Chris Taylor PHOTO: Eliza Bulla

in a way that's sympathetic to a listener's desire to clearly read and understand the song lyrics. Instead the band is more concerned with



Mike Taylor PHOTO: Chris Taylor

presenting the lyrics in a visual context, with the content's actual legibility being secondary. Chris expands on this: "First and foremost they're for myself. Whatever anybody else can get out of it, secondly, if they care that much, they will get out of it. If people can't read my lyrics, I really don't care. Here's what I'm saying: some people have come up to me and said that it's helped them through a relationship or whatever. The whole purpose of music is to be a relief, to be out there so people can see it. If

**"the feeling's out there
that we're overkilling,
but it's punk rock.
it's supposed be overkill"**

I get a record that [when] you open up the booklet and there's noth-

ing in it, there's just nothing to that band, automatically. There's no point in not printing it. The lyrics are so about myself and not about something that I think anyone else would be able to relate with unless they went through it. So if they can't read it, whatever."

Another interesting dynamic of the band is the way they perform their sets live. The band is very emotive onstage, to the point of being cathartic, and in the early days was even theatrical. "In the beginning it was a new band, we were trying something new," Mike says. "The whole thing of wearing clown masks and paper bags, and angel heads missing and broken Mary statues, and [wearing] all black, and falling down [together] and the angel samples; it was all experimenting around, fucking around, seeing how much fun we can have. Since [then] it's become more about the music."

The band eventually backed off on these signatures, but trademarks have a tendency of resurfacing. "Now it's come kind of full circle and we kinda want to start doing stuff like that again, just for fun. I mean, we've been a band for four years; things get boring, especially when you're playing punk rock, so you begin to want to recreate, make things new again, fuck around, take it back on an old idea, reinvent it."

pg.99 is a fascinating band first and foremost—and most noticeably when you see them play (they tour incessantly)—because they have eight people in the band: three guitar players, two bass players, two singers and a drummer. They're sort of like a clan because different people are in the band at different times. The last tour they went out on they accomplished with just two guitar players. I saw them play once in Sterling and their drummer was playing guitar and they had a different drummer. Another time they had a different guitar player who later created the noise that begins and closes out the *document*

#5 record. When they started as a band they had a less unusual setup, and when they one day told me they were adding a third guitar player, I thought it was a bad idea, but they made it work, and very well. Even still, I was taken further aback when they informed me they were adding a second bass player. "At the time we needed somebody new and enthusiastic," Mike recalls. "So enter the second bass player, not for any strategic reason, but more because we just wanted to have fun and party. The louder, the better. The louder, the more

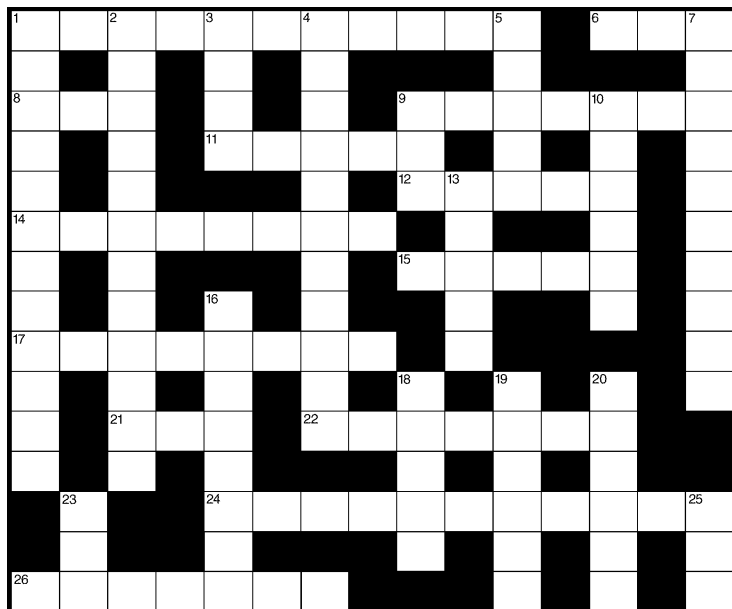
impressionable, the more effective. Basically the backbone is Johnny and I and Brewdog and Blake and George. The O.G. members. All the new members can kiss my ass." They'd even go so far as to add a second drummer if they could figure out a way to physically and economically do it. "I think it's a shame [that] there's a limit

on the boundaries [of] what's supposed to be considered a punk band," Mike says. "I seriously would like to break that limit, but you need a lot of willingness to do it. I don't think anyone's directly said that, but I think that feeling's out there that we're overkilling, but it's punk rock. It's supposed be overkill. I think people should test their limits, push their own envelopes, and do whatever they wanna do, no matter who says that's too much."

pg.99 is very prolific, and you'd think the band would have a plethora of songwriters in their ranks with eight members, but you'd be mistaken. "I have a problem playing other people's songs, literally, but I can do 'em," explains Mike. "It's just that in this band alone, and the bands that we've done, I just write the songs." You'd assume that either he has a personal problem working with other musicians, or he's a band fascist. "I admit defeat. I suck. Yeah, I can't play other people's riffs very well. That's because I don't think I'm actually a musician. I'm a punk rocker. I don't know what I'm doing." ■

**"if jesus did exist
and we were in an argument
with him, we'd say
'fuck you, jesus,' you know?"**

DISPOSABLE CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

1. Their demo was called *Hatred Surge*
6. This band told you to speak English or die
8. Early crossover band
9. *The Return of Martha Splatterhead* by The Accüsed was the first record on this label
11. ___ *Back to Life* by Cannibal Corpse
12. Watchtower is from here
14. ___ appears on the *Horriified* album by Repulsion
15. *A Life of ___* by Zoetrope
17. This band used to be called Nihilist
21. Casey ___ played bass for Rigor Mortis
22. Mick Harris, "The Human ___"
24. Justin Broaderrick used to play drums for this band
26. Mercyful Fate sings about this person

Down

1. They refer to their fans as "our dead"
2. *Violent ___* by DRI
3. ___ *Undead* by Slayer
4. The singer of Therion received one of these
5. This band recorded *Raging Violence*
7. Their second album is *October File*
9. They recorded *Phonophobia*
10. "Open ___" by Death
13. ___ *A.D.* by Misfits
16. Their first album is *The Karelian Isthmus*
18. Black metal musicians used to commit this crime
19. *The ___ Rape and Honey* by Ministry
20. This band told that the blackguards control
23. Yamatsuka ___ sings for The Boredoms
25. Their second album is *Universe*

For the answers, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope (outside the U.S. send a self-addressed envelope and an IRC) to the zine address.

Hellchild on tour in America



Malaysian scenesters PHOTO: Mizi



Peter Tägtgren

plays metal and likes it.

Just look at what he's involved with: He has his bands Pain (the second album of which is out now in the States) and Hypocrisy, he did vocals on and mixed the first Lock Up record, and he has his Abyss studio, where he records bands, located in his home country of Sweden. Here we talk about all these subjects and more.

D.U.: To be honest I haven't heard Pain yet.

Peter: Oh, you haven't? That's a bummer. It's really hard to describe it then, you know?

Can you try?

Oh, fuck. Uh ... I dunno, I mean, it's nothing unique or anything like that, but since you haven't heard it, it's really hard to ...

When you say it isn't unique you mean you're just doing it for fun?

No, no, but it's not so unique so I cannot explain what it is. That's what I mean, you know? So I mean, it's ... I dunno, in general, it's metal, in the bottom, and then with some techno influence or industrial influence in it, a little bit like Rammstein or Rob Zombie kinda vibe into it, but not so much industrial, though.

It's more metal than industrial.

Yeah, I think so. I mean, you have tuned down, heavy guitars and it's kinda clean vocals, but in a heavy way, you know.

So is it just you in the band?

Yeah, but not live, though.

PAIN

HYPOCRISY

What's going on with Hypocrisy right now?

Actually working the new album. We just released ten year anniversary box.

Was the last studio record that came out *The Final Chapter*?

No, no, there's been two after that and plus the live album.

***Hypocrisy Destroys Wacken*. This is where you get a second guitar player when you play shows.**

Yeah, we always have a second one when we play live. I think it was like in ninety three or ninety four we did tours in Europe with only one guitarist, and then it worked fine until we started

doing a lot of harmonies and stuff like that off the album, and you could just tell right away we need a second guitarist to make it as fat as possible live.

Is it safe to say you're going in the same direction as the last few records with *Hypocrisy*, with the melodies and so on?

Yeah, but actually the last album was one of the most brutal album we've done for the last six, seven years.

This is back to the older sound with your first few records?

Yeah, we went like backwards on the last one. So it's a lot of blast beats and fast and growling and shit. Yeah, it felt like was time to go back a little bit. It's always like that, you know? One day you feel like this, another day you feel like that.

I guess that's part of the reason you have more than one band, too.

Yeah, exactly.

THE ABYSS

I'm sure the studio takes up a huge amount of your time.

Yeah, it does. You know, it's a fortune to have a job that I really love.

Is there an Abyss sound in the same way there's a Sunlight sound and that kind of thing?

I dunno. Now I just bought ProTools and stuff like that. The Abyss sound is definitely changing. The shit I been doing [since] is definitely standing out much more in sound and quality and productions than I ever done before. It's a step forward. I need to renew myself and Abyss sound. It's very important to renew yourself, otherwise you get in the same shit as Morrisound and Sunlight and stuff like that and I don't really wanna get in that situation. That's why I invest a shitload of money in equipment to just renew myself all the time. I just wanna become better and better and not to have a stamp that you can hear, "Oh, the guitar sound is the typical Abyss sound," or drum sound or whatever. The quality should be like, "Ooh, the quality is very good. It's gotta be this," you know? That's what I'm aiming for, to get like totally ninety nine percent killer productions, no matter what kind of guitar sound it is, if it's clean guitar or whatever. The same with drums and bass and everything.

LOCK UP

Do you mind talking about how you're not involved with the band anymore?

Okay, yeah, it's very simple. We did it as a cool one time thing, and I guess we got a lot of offers to do festival gigs and stuff like that, and I was up to my neck with work and I turned down one festival after another one and the other guys were still wanted to go. So I guess they asked Tomas At the Gates if he could do some festival gigs and stuff and they felt that they had more time than I did, and I didn't have a problem with that. So it's very simple, it's no big deal, we're not enemies or anything like that. It's like they wanted to take it further than just a side project, you know, and I didn't have the time.

SWEDEN

Is it still that situation in the death metal scene there where most of the audience is either doing a band or they have a label or a zine?

Yeah, I dunno, it's getting a little better, actually, I think. Metal is getting more attention again, the same as the States. It start to coming back, slowly but safe, you know? It's getting the attention in the daily news and stuff like that again, like it did in the beginning of nineties and something, so it feels like people are getting thirsty for some more brutal music again.

Is the government subsidizing bands still?

Yeah, you know, some bands can get help to get like a practicing place and stuff like that sometimes from the government. At the end of the month you can get some kind of social service money, not too much, but enough if you practice for a half a year you can go and do a proper demo in a cool studio.

Why do you think that's such a priority there?

The whole Swedish music scene has really grown a lot internationally. There's bands selling millions and shit both in America and the whole world. And plus all these producers like Max Martin and people like that. So yeah, they really try to put their effort to get young people to play music 'cause I guess there's some quality stuff that came out here, you know? So it's really cool that they're trying to do something for the youth.

Does that mean there's high taxes in Sweden too?

Yeah, for sure. I mean, on gas there's like eighty percent tax, so what you pay for one gallon, we pay for one liter. But on the other hand, we don't have to pay to go to the dentist or if we need an operation or whatever. There's good things with it and there's bad things, you know?

How do you feel with all the changes that are happening with the E.U.? Like you've got the euro coming out and all the countries are trying to become uniform. Do you support that sort of thing?

Not really. I like to see my kind of money from my country, for example. I like to see our king on the crown, you know, the same as a quarter in your country. Also the same thing where you have your presidents on the dollar and stuff like that. I still would like to see that with our king and stuff, and not do some stupid logo that represent the whole Europe on the money, you know? I'm not into that.

It doesn't seem like it has too much culture with it.

No, exactly, you know? I mean, no matter where you come from, be proud. Why be like everybody else? They try to be one unit, for me that's ... I mean, first of all I'm not really into politics and shit like that. I do my own race, but these kind of culture things, they're unique for every country, and why change that so it's like you lose all that and put it into one country for everything?

When I ask different musicians from Europe this question, a lot of times they say the same thing: they're against the trend of the E.U. because it benefits the rich and not the middle class and the poor. Without staying too political, do you feel that way too?

I mean, it could be good be good but it also could be bad, you know? It's pretty cool situation for me. Like if I would import a new mixing board from Germany because it's cheaper in Europe because they have more people and more businesses there, so they have to lower their prices and stuff, than in Sweden. I mean, there's 65 million people living in Germany and it's only nine million in Sweden, which means that they can raise the price on the shit here in Sweden 'cause they don't have all these stores or whoever imports it from the manufacturers and stuff, you know. I can order it from Germany, I don't have to pay taxes through the border and shit like I used to which is good. But it comes a lot of shit with that also, like terrorists that they don't have to show passports and shit like that in every country so you have no clue who's coming in, who's coming on. Same thing with trucks and the gangster kind of mobster shit, so there's positives and negatives. ■